African Archaeology Without Frontiers


Published by Wits University Press

Sievers, Christine, et al.
African Archaeology Without Frontiers: Papers from the 2014 PanAfrican Archaeological Association Congress.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/51607.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/51607

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1954151

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
Keynote Address 2
A Continental Vision for African Archaeology

Akinwumi Ogundiran

Distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I respectfully acknowledge all the previously established protocols. I bring you greetings with as-salāmu ‘alaykum in Arabic, ṣālam in Amharic, hujambo in Swahili, ḍ kù’kàleè in Yoruba, ndewo in Igbo and sawubona in Zulu. I am grateful to the local organising committee for giving me the honour and privilege to address this second joint conference of the PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies (PAA) and the Society for Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA). I dedicate this talk to the founding fathers and mothers of our two associations, and to the younger generation of African and Africanist archaeologists.¹

I would like to start my brief remarks by sharing with you a story from the vast repertoire of Yoruba mythology. This is the story of Èsù and two best friends. These two friends were archaeologists. They were in the field one summer digging at adjacent sites when Èsù, one of the major deities in the Yoruba pantheon, passed by. He walked on the narrow path that divided the sites of the two friends. That fateful day, Èsù was wearing a very tall hat, blue on one side and red on the other. He exchanged pleasantries with both men. Later in the day, while the two friends were taking a break, they talked about the man with the gorgeous hat. One of the friends referred to him as the red-hat man. The other called him the blue-hat man. Then they stopped to ask each other whether they were talking about the same man. They agreed that indeed it was the same person but they could not agree on the colour of his hat. The two friends argued passionately, each saying he saw and knew the true colour of the hat that Èsù was wearing. They exchanged unpleasant words as each man professed to know the right answer and demanded to be acknowledged as the victor in the emerging violent discussion. They were on the verge of destroying their long-standing friendship when Èsù suddenly reappeared. He stopped the quarrel. The friends explained their disagreement. Then, Èsù showed them the two-sided coloured hat and lectured them on the partiality of perspectives. The lesson of the tale is obvious by now. But I am not yet done with Èsù.
In the Yoruba worldview, Èsù rules over the interstices of all networks. He is the master of communications, and he embodies the spiritual principle of connection and juxtaposition of time, space and experience. Èsù occupies the delicate seams of different worldviews and multiple perspectives. He strives to change convention into innovation and stasis into dynamism (see Aiyejina 2010; Falola 2013).

I have brought up the mythology, metaphysics and metaphors of Èsù at this auspicious and unlikely occasion – a scientific gathering – in order to introduce a classic African conceptual clarity to the theme of this conference – African Archaeology Without Frontiers. A place beyond or without frontiers could be a space of newness, a Shakespearean ‘undiscovered country’, or Èsù’s crossroads where tradition collapses, where truth and meaning are negotiable. The theme of this conference agrees with the guiding principle of Èsù. And, if there is to be a patron deity for archaeology among the 400+ divinities in the Yoruba pantheon, I believe Èsù is best qualified to serve in this capacity. The predisposition of archaeology to communicate across disciplines and with multiple audiences is not only consistent with the vision of Èsù; it also makes archaeology the nexus for an emancipatory science and liberal arts education.

Not too long ago, archaeologists in Africa – expatriates and citizens – responded with enthusiasm to the nationalist call to help build postcolonial nations rooted in the prideful memory and history of the precolonial past (Robertshaw 1990; Mitchell & Lane 2013). Our pioneers along with their colleagues in the fields of history and literature saw it as their responsibility to provide intellectual rationale for the multicultural, multi-ethnic or multiracial postcolonial state. Decades have passed. Our task is unfinished just as our nation-states remain a work in progress. However, archaeologists must now respond to the new imperatives of globalisation, cross-border movements, cultural overlaps across national boundaries, and the reality of historical cultural fluidity across the continent. Why must we respond to these reshufflings of experience? Because our fundamental task as scholars of historical science is to capture the experience of time in particular places (Ogundiran 2013). There is another reason: how the present time is experienced and the aspirations we have for the future affect how we view, interpret and interrogate the past.

In preparing for this occasion, I was tempted to pose the question: What archaeology do we need for twenty-first-century Africa? In the spirit of the multidimensionality of Èsù, my muse for this presentation, I knew that there would be as many answers to this question as the number of archaeologists in this room. Therefore, I thought we could perhaps reach a consensus on the kinds of intellectual imperatives and social practice of African archaeology that should serve as the guiding framework in our journey to reach that place beyond the frontiers, the crossroads where Èsù resides. I was meditating on this subject when I fell into a trance. I dreamed that Èsù took me to the top of Mafadi mountain (the highest place in southern Africa). There he showed me this mathematical problem written on a slab: Africa + archaeology multiplied by
x + y + z minus boundaries a + b + c equals cultural history + continental vision multiplied by 55 + n.

I am sure you have memorised the equation. I will need your help because Èṣù asked me in my dream to solve this mathematical problem. He sternly told me that if I did not, he would refuse to take me down the mountain. And, he knows very well that I am afraid of heights and cannot climb down from the peak of Mafadi by myself. I was now filled with anxiety and drenched in sweat. Mathematics is not my strength, but Èṣù comforted me that this was only tenth-grade algebra. I should be able to solve the problem. Then this provocateur disappeared. Left to my own devices, I rolled up my sleeves and decided to first establish the dependent and independent variables in this equation. Then, I generated this hypothesis: a continental praxis of African archaeology plus cultural history should equal these four goals: 1) to meaningfully account for Africa’s long and variegated experiences of time, 2) to build bridges across the frontiers of archaeological knowledge as well as scientific and humanistic disciplines, 3) to realign the interests of multiple constituencies into a common cause, and 4) to use archaeology as a critical basis for facilitating a new African consciousness relevant for meaningful living in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Cultural history as anthropological archaeology with history
In the course of making the efforts to solve the mathematical problem, I made a number of discoveries on Mafadi. The first one is that cultural history is the crossroads where all pathways of human experience converge (for relevant perspectives on this, see Hunt 1989; Ortner 1999; Pauketat 2001). Cultural history privileges process-based frameworks and conceptualises culture as socially constructed, experimental, historically constitutive, agent-centred, self-representational (referential) and performative. In its archaeological frame, it is not concerned with the anthropology of the dead but seeks to answer questions about the history of local communities, and the ancestry and genealogy of living cultures, practices and traditions. It is a historical, processual-ist-approach archaeology that takes what living communities say about their past and how they relate to that past as an integral part of formulating archaeological research questions and research design. For this reason, cultural history is a juxtaposition of oral historical sources, ethnography and archaeological methods/data. Cultural history is not an old-fashioned opponent of anthropological archaeology. It is what makes anthropological archaeology a liberating historical science because it challenges us to explore the fluidity, interpolation and experience of time, space and material in the process of culture making, the creation/re-creation of societies and the self-realisation of individuals and communities (Ogundiran 2011).

I am an interpolation of this fluidity of time, experimental dynamics of materiality and multidimensional spatiality. I grew up in a place where the majority of farmers
still use hoes and cutlasses whose forms date to perhaps AD 300. In my youth, I worked side by side with my father using those tools to cultivate African, American and even Asian crops – yams, millet, black-eyed peas, plantains and corn. I helped my mother grind peppers, tomatoes and onions on grinding stones with prototypes that go far back to 9000 BC (Alabi 2005; Ogundiran 2005). I grew up eating vegetable concoctions cooked in clay bowls, pounded yam made in wooden mortar and pestle and I drew my drinking water from the communal vat permanently located in the corner of our courtyard. The forms of many of these domestic material lives predated me by 3 000 to 1 100 years but the spatial arrangement, visual scape and sonic ambiance of the place where all of these happened in the 1960s through the mid-1970s would have been unrecognisable to those ancestors of many millennia ago. As a postcolonial child of Africa, my experience is not unique. Many African archaeologists can identify with these interpolations of time and space that are the building blocks of my experience. This experience is central to my approach to archaeology, and it influenced my attempt to solve the mathematical problem that Èṣù presented to me.

The cultural historian does not merely investigate the chronological and distributional patterns of the archaeological record. Instead, he or she seeks to account for all aspects of the archaeologies of social action, practices and ideas. If this were not so, the article titled ‘In small things remembered: beads, cowries, and cultural translations of the Atlantic experience in Yorubaland’ (Ogundiran 2002a) would not have been possible. Cultural history enables us to fulfil the epistemological stance that the present African heritage is a continuity of disruptions and changes that have defined African lives for about 200 000 years. Our renewed efforts at community archaeology and heritage studies can also only be meaningfully realised within the framework of cultural history. To do otherwise is to alienate these communities from their cultural patrimony in the same way many of our African communities have been alienated from their natural resources such as oil, diamonds, gold and land. It is this spirit of cultural history that many of you in this room have used to push back the dominant narratives of chiefdom, complex society, pristine states and urbanism in World Prehistory and World Archaeology textbooks (see McIntosh 1999). And, it is in this spirit that many of us have insisted that historical archaeology cannot and must not be defined in terms of European expansion and documentary sources alone but also in terms of the deep-time historical artefacts of African subjects (Schmidt & Patterson 1995; Reid & Lane 2004; Schmidt 2006). Our discipline has therefore been pushing methodological boundaries far and wide, collapsing the boundaries between prehistory and history (Ogundiran 2013).

What are these spaces and places beyond the frontiers?

During my wanderings on Mafadi, Èṣù reappeared. He must have noticed that I was lost with the mathematical problem that he had asked me to solve. He was in a better
and nurturing mood this time. He asked me to pay attention to the space around me as the likely source of information for solving the equation. He drew my attention to the different roads that lead to the base of the mountain. Some of them are wide and clean, and others are narrow and bushy. Some have signs, and some do not. None of the roads has an endpoint in sight.

**African epistemology and ontology**

Èsù pointed out a road that he identified as ‘African epistemology and ontology’. He reminded me that the discussion of interdisciplinarity has always been an important dimension in the study of Africa’s past (for a recent endeavour, see De Luna *et al*. 2012). He then asked: ‘How come we have spilled so much ink on the epistemologies of the cognate disciplines and their relationships with archaeology but we have said comparatively little about the epistemologies and ontologies of the people that form the subject of our studies?’ He reminded me that our empirical archaeological data repeatedly demonstrate the cosmopolitan, accumulative and experimental principles of African societies and their cultural production. One of the challenges facing us today, he reminded me, is how to place these African epistemologies and ontologies at the starting point and centre of our theorising and explicating of past African experience and the implications for the global present. This type of challenge is not limited to archaeology. It is a task that confronts virtually all disciplines concerned with knowledge production about Africa. The challenge is exacerbated by the profound impact and legacies of the Enlightenment order of knowledge in Africa and other previously colonised spaces, especially in the global South.

It is good that many of us are aware of and have called attention to this problem (see Lane 2011; Mire 2011; Ogundiran 2012; Giblin 2013). Likewise, various national governments and international institutions as well as academic journals (for example, *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*) are developing policies and intellectual frameworks to recognise and make use of Africa’s indigenous knowledge as an integral part of the global and universal order of knowledge (for example, IKS Workshop Declaration 2004; World Bank 2004; Bates *et al*. 2009). The emerging perspective from these efforts is that African ways of being and knowing over the past several millennia privilege dynamism over dogma, and a collage of practices over cultural purity. Time and time again, these collages of African practices have confounded many of our attempts to make sense of African innovations through the millennia. Don’t get me wrong. I recognise that we have been studying the symbols, meanings and hermeneutics in the archaeology of African experiences and practices (such as MacEachern 1994; Insoll 2009).

However, there is a vast ground to cover in using Africa’s deep-time philosophical principles to interrogate the meaningfulness of our archaeological data. This would involve going beyond the use of ethnoarchaeological methods that only collect data
on material practices and oral history (see Lane 2011; Mire 2011; Giblin 2013). It is also important to listen carefully to the transcripts of experience in multiple spheres of African knowledge systems (such as Ogundiran 2014), especially those dealing with some of the hot topics in archaeology: cultural production (tradition), settlement formation (for example, urbanism), technology, trade and exchange, rituals, socio-political formation, power, authority, identity, materiality and natural resource management. To make our interpretations compatible with the historical sensibilities of our subjects, we must understand their conception of time, space, person and community. Roderick McIntosh’s (2000) exploratory work on the Mande weather machine offers a good model to follow in our efforts to reach this place beyond the frontiers – where the deep-time African philosophical principles are used to explain human experiences of time and place as well as the causative factors of cultural processes that are the substance of our studies. The facticity of African epistemologies and ontologies in terms of their accumulative and experimental dimensions would, for example, need to inform our debates and interpretations on the beginnings and mosaic of iron technology in Africa (see Killick 2004; Holl 2009). And, our interests in the beginnings of food production in Africa would need to shift from the end product – domestication – and instead focus on the processes of ecological management so that we can capture the true mosaic of strategies that undergirded food production in Africa’s fragile landscape for many millennia.

And the recent surge in genetic studies in archaeo-zoology and archaeo-botany holds promise to investigate not only animal and plant domestication and human–environment relationships but also human-to-human interactions across short and long distances (see Gifford-Gonzalez 2013, and other papers in *African Archaeological Review* 30). The conjoining of new opportunities of genetic studies with the materiality and metaphysics of human–animal and human–plant relations is also one of those places beyond the frontiers that awaits our exploration. To reach this Promised Land, we must be guided by the sensibility that it is in these plant and animal lives that we have been realising our own humanity.

**Archaeology of consciousness and ‘useable’ or socially relevant archaeology**

I looked eastward from this crossroad mountaintop and what I saw was this beautiful and seductive view of a road with many names. Some people call it Useable Archaeology Avenue and others name it Socially Relevant Archaeology Road. In response to multiple constituencies, African governments and institutions, funding agencies in the west and the local populace among whom we work, we are confronted by the need to generate products that have relevance for problem solving in contemporary Africa and in the global world (Davies 2012). This road looks familiar. It seems to be the expanded version of a narrow path first created about 30 years ago. You will recall that
the structural adjustment programmes imposed on almost all developing countries in the 1980s by the global North, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund resulted in hyper-inflation in the face of stagnation of wages and scarcity of foreign exchange in Africa. This also translated in many African countries into the idea that archaeologists should be concerned with using the knowledge of the past to find solutions to the problems of underdevelopment and material poverty (for example, see Andah 1985, 1990). The recent efforts, however, emphasise how archaeological methods and data can help recover the past and present knowledge systems in Africa for solving contemporary problems about the environment, farming practices and even heritage management. An example of this type of useable past archaeology that moves beyond documenting, protecting or managing an archaeological site is the African Farming Network led by Matthew Davies of the University of Cambridge and involving researchers from different disciplines (landscape archaeology, geo-archaeology, bio-archaeology, social anthropology, environmental science) at six universities in the UK, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, including the host institution of this conference, the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). The goal of this network is to share knowledge and develop research capacity concerning the archaeology, history, development and current operation of farming systems across Africa. Its modus operandi is novel in that the network is conceived as a pan-African entity to facilitate reciprocal knowledge sharing across the continent. In a project like this, we are confident that the continental vision for African archaeology is more than a dream. It is a reality. We must be steadfast, though, that heritage management does not become an excuse to abandon archaeological research as has happened in a number of archaeology departments in West Africa. The heritage managers will have nothing to manage if archaeological knowledge is not being renewed through ongoing problem-oriented research programmes.

Trans-border archaeology

A continental vision for African archaeology cannot, however, be realised without breaking down the barriers of our national and ethnolinguistic boundaries in the ways we conceptualise research questions and implement research agendas. During that period of my trance on Mafadi, I saw a jeep speeding up to the base of the hill with a flag bearing the words ‘Urban origins in eastern and southern Africa project’. The driver was Paul Sinclair. One project that epitomises the transnational framework of archaeological research in Africa is the Swedish government-funded ‘Urban Origins’ project, otherwise known as the SAREC (Swedish Agency for Research and Economic Cooperation) archaeological project. Initiated in 1987, this interdisciplinary and multi-country project not only reveals the long-term archaeological history, indigenous origins and environmental contexts of urban centres in eastern and southern
Africa, but also helps to build capacities for archaeological research and education on
the continent. The project gave birth to a new generation of archaeologists in eastern
and southern Africa, all of whom are now leaders in the discipline from Somalia
to Madagascar, Kenya to South Africa (for a few of the publications that originated
from or were inspired by the project, see Chami 1994; Pwiti 1996; Radimilahy 1998;
Pirikayi 2001; Sinclair et al. 2011). The project inspired the creation of the African
Archaeology Network programme, with seed funding from the Swedish International
Development Cooperation Agency and SAREC.

The African Archaeology Network includes not only eastern and southern Africa
but also a number of countries in West Africa (Chami et al. 2001). It is a pan-African
project that seeks to generate new empirical evidence and develop new models on
how ancient African societies exploited resources, developed settlements (especially
urban landscapes), adjusted and responded to political and environmental upheavals,
and established long-distance trade networks. The African Archaeology Network has
allowed African students to be trained in African countries other than their own and
has therefore exposed them to new methodologies and archaeological experiences that
are different from those of their home countries. The SAREC archaeological initiatives
remain a golden and exemplary model in north–south as well as continental cooper-
ation. One can hope that this model of cooperation will be emulated by similar well-
funded foreign interventions on the continent as the platform for empowering African
archaeologists as true collaborators and for creating transnational cooperation among
African institutions.

**Comparative framework for trans-border archaeology**

Inspired by the intercommunicative vision of Èşù and his methodic use of comparison
as a process for disclosing patterns and generating theory, systematic comparative
archaeology is an essential tool in this vision of continental archaeology. This is not
new in East African and southern African archaeology. But cross-border and cross-cul-
tural comparative work has eluded West African archaeology for a long time. If you
are a West Africanist you might have noticed, as I have, that the ceramic complexes of
Ile-Ife and Benin in Nigeria, the middle Niger Valley (Jenne-Jeno) and central Ghana
(es especially Begho and Banda) share a number of diagnostic decorative elements ‘rou-
tinely placed on discrete areas of the pots’ of similar forms from about AD 1000 to
1500 (Stahl 2001: 125). These similarities include rustications and incrustations on
the rims of bowls (Ogundiran 2002b). What could be responsible for these subcon-
tinental similarities? Did these similarities in Jenne-Jeno, Begho and Ile-Ife originate
from population movements between the northern rainforest and the Niger Bend and
vice versa, and were these linked to trade and other commercial activities at the begin-
nning of the eleventh century? The ongoing studies across western Africa indicate that
these questions can no longer be ignored. Our tendency to demarcate West African archaeology into the current ecological bands – Sahel, savanna and rainforest belts – has militated against comparative and integrative approaches. These demarcations may be relevant for studying environment-determined moments such as food production but certainly not for the archaeology of social actions and practices at multi-scalar levels. We need to come up with new spatial frameworks for African archaeology beyond these ecological schemes.

The recent efforts by Anne Haour and her collaborators on African pottery roulettes are exemplary of the kinds of cross-border collaboration that must lay the foundation for effective comparative continental archaeology (Haour et al. 2010). Building on the work of Olivier Gosselain, the project has sought to find answers to a problem: How to develop systematic classification parameters for roulette decorations as the basis for investigating several archaeological questions dealing with identity, technology, economy and social interactions in West Africa?

**The need for changes in institutional practices**

In order to realise the full promise of this continental vision of African archaeology, our national archaeological administrations would need to bring their policies forward into the twenty-first century. In addition to the African Union (AU), we have five regional economic communities, each focusing on creating free-trade areas, common regional customs unions and a single market. What is striking is that our cultural policy experts at the AU have not been proactive in speaking the pan-African cultural language consistent with their pan-African economic visions.

If a single currency and a single market are desirable for the well-being of the people in each of these regions (and I agree they are), then a single archaeological permit that allows multinational archaeological teams to think, study and research across national boundaries must be possible. The cultural department of the AU should be able to issue archaeological permits that cut across two or more economic blocs. The artificiality and porosity of our national boundaries makes it urgent for national administrators of archaeological patrimonies to look beyond the boundaries that constitute the positions they occupy. Our colleagues from the global North have long been attentive to crossing these boundaries despite all the inconveniences and apprehensions that such border crossings tend to generate. This border crossing has produced wholesome approaches to the archaeology of trade, regional interactions, urbanism, ethnicity, iron technology and landscape history across Africa. It is imperative that PAA and the African Archaeological Network collaborate with the scientific communities in their respective regions to explore the establishment of regional laboratories that would advance archaeological research on the continent. Recently, it was announced that Wits University has established Africa’s first accelerator mass
spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dating lab. Ladies and gentlemen, after this conference, we need to go back to our respective institutions across the continent in order to explore collaborations that would generate support for this new facility.

For this continental collaboration to become a reality, large national cultural institutions such as the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in Nigeria with a total appropriated budget of about US$27 million in fiscal year 2013, must return to their original mandate: to award research grants to university professors and graduate students for archaeological research. We need our heritage management institutions to become agents of positive change, not cogs in the wheel of archaeological progress in Africa. We need them to become advocates for pan-African collaboration through regional blocs and the AU. We need them to provide the infrastructure that would strengthen African archaeologists and institutions to enter into partnership with foreign and continent-based institutions as co-equals for the kinds of trans-border research agendas that we need to do at this time.

At this crossroads, the leadership and members of our two associations – PAA and SAfA – must be ready to raise their voices against these lingering colonial archaeologies that sometimes connive with the ‘patronage and corruption’ of national governments and bureaucrats to the detriment of the development of local and national archaeologists (Karega-Munene & Schmidt 2010: 326; also see relevant chapters in Schmidt 2009). When the leading archaeologists of those countries raise their voices against unethical practices, it will not do us any good to bury our heads in the sand or to remain in defiant silence against their outcry for justice and mutual respect. Our science is worthless when we are unable to manage basic human relationships in the national spaces where we work. We will have collapsed these boundaries between us and them when we learn to write with the local scholars instead of writing for them.

**Transcontinental archaeology**

A continental vision for African archaeology is not for Africa alone. Many of us have built on the pioneering works of Merrick Posnansky (1984, 2009), who led the efforts towards the creation of what we now refer to as African Atlantic archaeology or archaeology of the Black Atlantic. This is a sub-field that allows us to think comparatively across the Atlantic ‘pond’ on the making of African cultural formations in the modern world from about 1500 into the 1800s. In collaborative publications such as *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora* and *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic* (Ogundiran & Falola 2007; Ogundiran & Saunders 2014), we have succeeded in Africanising diaspora archaeology in the Caribbean, North America and to some extent in South America. Ours has been a rewarding effort in collapsing the
boundaries of cultural history and anthropology and in pursuing a scientific archaeology that locates the analytical framework of cultures, peoples and societies in their proper historical moments and geographies.

The continental, Africa-centred framework has also taken us to a new plane of understanding in East Africa, showing that part of the world as an important focus of ancient transcontinental and regional trade from around 1200 BC even before the formation of the Swahili states (for the latter, see Kusimba 1999; LaViolette 2013). Felix Chami’s (1994) work in particular has blurred the mental boundaries between the Nile Valley and the rest of the continent. We now know that Juani Island off the coast of Tanzania was an entrepôt of commerce supplying African ivory and possibly iron to the north and east in exchange for glass beads from Ptolemaic Egypt and pottery from India (Shubart 2002). The discovery of a 600-year-old Chinese coin on the Kenyan island of Manda by Chap Kusimba and his colleagues does more than prove the existence of trade between China and East Africa (Prigg 2013). We now need to move beyond mapping the flow of trade goods to also investigate how Africans shaped these ancient trading networks and the societies they traded with. Similar to what we have done for Black Atlantic archaeology, we need to apply a continental vision of African archaeology to explain the African diaspora cultural formation in the Indian Ocean world.

**Conclusion**

The theme of this conference references the elasticity of Èṣù in his propensity to widen the path for the people of the world. As Èṣù dealt with me in my dream, this conference points us towards innovative strategies of studying the past, asking us to reflect on the collage and juxtaposition of methodologies as a window to absorbing the experimental moments of cultures, communities and societies in the making. We are being challenged to explore new grounds of collaboration, networks and connections in Africa’s cultural history. In order to go beyond the frontiers, we must be ready for some chaos. But this chaos, consistent with the spirit of Èṣù, is ‘the creative wellspring from which beauty and delight flow, where passions arise’ (Iles 2000: 17) and new solutions are brought forth. In this continental vision for African archaeology and those frontiers beyond the frontiers, cultural history beckons us to write humanistic archaeological science stories that balance imagination with facts, myths with history and experiment with experience.

At this point I woke up from my dream. It had been a good dream. Wide awake, I realised that we need not look too far for this place beyond the frontier. You and I: we are the crossroads of time, space and material. We are the moment, the subject, the agent and the place beyond the frontiers.
Notes

1 This essay is the updated version of the keynote address presented at the joint 14th PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies and 22nd Society for Africanist Archaeologists Conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), 14 to 19 July 2014. I have preserved the oral presentation format of the original version and the timeframe of the occasion it was prepared for. My appreciation goes to Arlen Nydam, Adisa Ogunfolakan, Kola Oseni, Dele Odunbaku and Lea Koonce Ogundiran for cheerfully serving as my sounding boards during the preparation of the essay.


References


