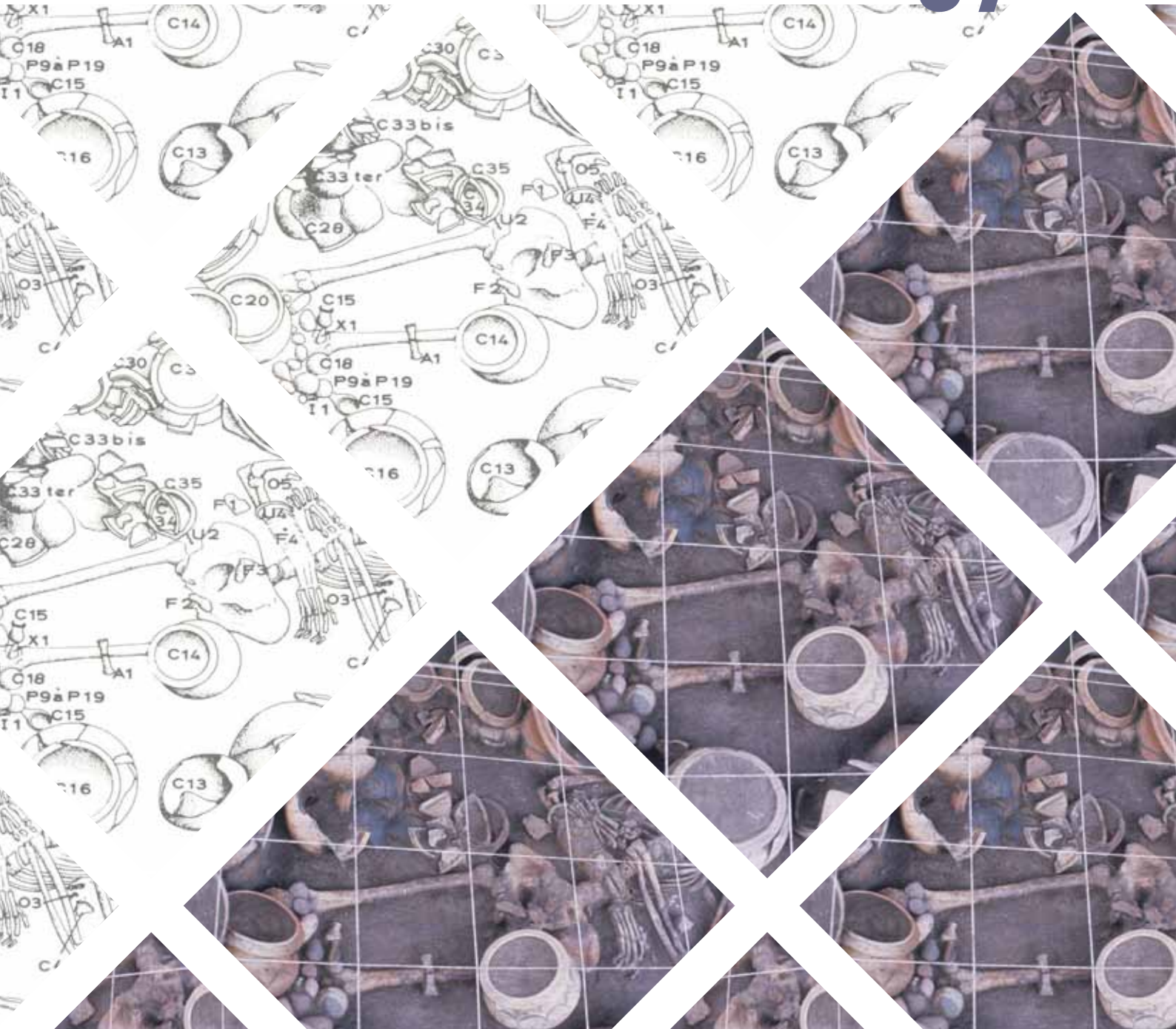


Field Manual for African Archaeology



EDITED BY

Alexandre Livingstone Smith
Els Cornelissen
Olivier P. Gosselain
Scott MacEachern

ONLINE SERIES

'DOCUMENTS ON SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES'

ROYAL MUSEUM
FOR CENTRAL
AFRICA

Afrika

TERVUREN

COLOPHON

This work belongs to the ‘Documents on Social Sciences and Humanities’. It is only online available on the Royal Museum for Central Africa website: www.africamuseum.be

This project has been supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD).



Cover: tomb in the Upemba depression with grid, 3.10.51. Photo © P. de Maret. Sanga 1974, from de Maret, P. 1974. *Fouilles archéologiques dans la vallée du Haut-Lualaba, Zaïre*, vol. I: *Sanga et Katongo*. Tervuren: RMCA (‘Annales de Sciences humaines in 8°’), fig. 28, p. 128.

Editorial coordination: Isabelle Gérard (RMCA).

Cover layout: Bram de Rudder (RMCA).

General layout: Mieke Dumortier (RMCA).

Translations & revisions : Emily Divinagracia (RMCA), Lee Gilette, Tadzio Koelb, Scott MacEachern

ISBN 978-9-4922-4427-7

Legal Deposit D/2017/0254/06

© Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren 2017

www.africamuseum.be



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

Please address all requests or queries regarding this publication to the RMCA Publications service,

Leuvensesteenweg 13, 3080 Tervuren, Belgium.

publications@africamuseum.be

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	6
INTRODUCTION. Thinking and writing on the past in Africa	7
Introduction. A. Livingstone Smith & S. MacEachern	8
Recovering the African past: looking back from the present. J. Sutton	10
Archaeology in Africa: who or what sets the agenda? S. K. McIntosh	15
Academic research in West Africa: the case of Senegal. M. Sall	18
African perspectives on academic research: the case of Cameroon. C. Mbida Mindzie	24
CHAPTER 1. How do archaeologists plan projects in Africa?	27
Introduction. A. Livingstone Smith	28
Organising an international archeological research project in Africa. A. Haour and D. N'Dah	30
Cultural heritage management in Africa. P. Mitchell	34
Case study: heritage management in Central Africa. N. Arazi	37
Rescue and preventive archeology: roads, thermal power stations and quarries. R. Oslisly	42
Managing cultural heritage in Africa: a study of IFAN in Senegal. I. Thiaw	45
Relations with local communities. N. David	49
CHAPTER 2. Finding and describing archaeological sites	53
Introduction. A. Livingstone Smith	54
Archeological exploration in an urban African context: Bangui. A. J.-P. Ndanga	56
Case study: rainforest. M. K. H. Eggert	60
Field survey in the Sahel: an informal guide. K. MacDonald	65
Ancient polities: archaeological survey in a metropolis. A.Ogundiran & B. Agbaje-Williams	69
Surveying towns. J. Fleisher	76
Archaeological field survey and the recording and cataloguing of archaeological materials. P. J. Lane	79
Large scale reconnaissance and excavation strategy on the Loango Coast. J. Denbow	86
Case study: participating as a student in an impact assessment. P. Nlend	91
Surveying funerary sites. I. Ribot	94
Finding rock art. B. Smith	97

CHAPTER 3. How to protect archaeological sites	101
Introduction. A. Livingstone Smith	102
The excavacation of Stone Age sites. R. Vogelsang	104
Village sites. H.-P. Wotzka	109
The pit: archaeological excavation and analysis. A. Assoko Ndong	116
Excavating in urban contexts. J. Fleisher	121
Megalithism. L. Laporte	125
Metallurgic sites. C. Robion-Brunner & V. Serneels	129
Excavating funerary sites. I. Ribot	134
Recording rock art. B. Smith	138
Documenting and studying a rock-art site: the Lovo massif. G. Heimlich	142
Rock art management and conservation. B. Smith	146
 CHAPTER 4. Analysis of materials	 149
Introduction. A. Livingstone Smith	150
From the field to the lab. D. Bosquet	152
Cataloguing finds. S. Ozainne	157
Making sense of lithics. N. Taylor	163
A case study: analyzing lithics from Shum Laka, NW province, Cameroon. E. Cornelissen	168
Pottery analysis. A. Livingstone Smith & C. de Francquen	173
Defining pottery styles. T. Huffman	180
Iron objects. D. Killick	187
Copper. L. Garenne-Marot	190
Case study: copper ingots in Central Africa. N. Nikis	197
 CHAPTER 5. Ecofacts and related studies	 203
Introduction. E. Cornelissen	204
Archaeobotanical remains. A. Höhn	206
Archaeozoology in Sub-Saharan Africa. W. Van Neer	210
Case study: domesticated or wild? V. Linseele	214
Soil cover in Central Africa. D. Schwartz	218
Case study in a Sudano-sahelian fluvial setting. M. Rasse	223
Human remains. I. Crevecœur	228
Radiocarbon dating. P. de Maret	232
By means of example: Interpreting C14 dates. E. Cornelissen, P. de Maret & D. K. Wright	236
Other radiometric methods of dating. D. K. Wright	237
Relative dating methods. D. K. Wright	243

CHAPTER 6. From present to past	247
Introduction. O. P. Gosselain	248
The direct historical approach. A. B. Stahl	250
Oral tradition. D. Schoenbrun	253
Historical Linguistics. K. Bostoen	257
The ‘words and things’ method. B. Ricquier	261
Artworks. J. Polet	264
Ethnoarchaeology. D. Lyons	270
Pottery and oral history in the Faro. A. Mezop Temgoua-Noumissing	275
Architecture. V. Brunfaut & J.-F. Pinet	280
Ceramic technology between past and present. A. Mayor	286
Comparative technology. O. P. Gosselain	292
Genetics and African archaeology. S. MacEachern	296
CHAPTER 7. Publishing archaeological research results	301
Introduction. I. Gérard	302
Preparing a manuscript and the process of peer-review. P. Robertshaw	304
Wheree to publish? Elena A.A. Garcea	307
On-line publication and Open Access. J.-P. Devroey	311
CHAPTER 8. Afterword	315
The future of the past on the African continent. P. de Maret	316

FOREWORD

Alexandre Livingstone Smith, Els Cornelissen, Olivier P. Gosselain & Scott MacEachern

Pierre de Maret retired from the university in October 2015. A prominent scholar with a worldwide reputation, his scientific contributions to the field of African archaeology could have been celebrated through a *Festschrift* bringing together an international panel of friends and colleagues. Yet Pierre also dedicated an important part of his academic career to the training and funding of students in African archaeology, many of whom became professional archaeologists and currently occupy academic positions.

A large number of these students had spent time at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, a Belgian federal institution with which Pierre has been associated since the early 1970s. Besides consulting documents and analysing collections, they often sought practical advice for conducting fieldwork in Africa. They asked basic – but critical – questions, to which Pierre's colleagues and friends tried to provide effective, no-nonsense answers. Through this process, we gradually realised that despite the wealth of books dedicated to African archaeology and to field archaeology, there was no publication specifically devoted to field practice in African archaeology. Keeping that in mind and wanting to celebrate Pierre's commitment to the tutoring and supervising of young researchers, we decided to edit a *Field Manual for African Archaeology*, drawing on the expertise of the international community to which Pierre belongs.

This manual is about how to find, excavate and study archaeological sites in sub-Saharan Africa. Obviously, archaeological methods in Africa do not differ from excavations in any other part of the world and any student with an Internet connection will easily find references on how to do things in the field. But knowing about the tool is not the same thing as using it. This is where the experienced professionals contributing to this manual make a difference. Sharing tips, describing possible pitfalls, contextualising field methods and research orientations, they help prospective Africanist archaeologists becoming more knowledgeable and autonomous out in the field.

Readability and ease of access were a crucial issue. First, we wanted the text to be as clear and concise as possible. Hence authors were asked to submit short contributions, avoiding jargon and focussing on essential and straightforward concepts and methods. References were kept to a strict minimum, focussing on key and accessible sources. Second, in order to reach as large an audience as possible, especially in Africa, we chose to publish in French and English and opted for an online open-access format. We also decided to offer each chapter as a separate download, which might prove useful where Internet access is expensive and irregular.

This manual is certainly not perfect. Not all topics could be covered and there are overlaps between chapters, which sometimes correspond to slightly different perspectives or field conditions. Also, the sheer number and diversity of contributors may lead to some stylistic heterogeneity. At the same time, it definitely opens a wider perspective on doing archaeological fieldwork in Africa. The manual might thus best be viewed as a work in progress, liable to evolve in parallel with the field of African archaeology.

On a final note, we would like to thank all the authors involved in this unusual project, as well as the people who helped them directly or indirectly. Special thanks are due to Isabelle Gérard and her team at the Publications Service of the RMCA and to the Belgian Development Cooperation for funding the translations.

To Pierre, with respect and admiration for all he has achieved.