

Introduction

This book makes a first contribution to the archaeology of the Kirfi area of northern Nigeria. It is based on the excavation of test pits at three sites, carried out as part of a doctoral research project at the Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, the Americas and Oceania, University of East Anglia. This chapter introduces the aims, objectives and scope of the research, and the conceptual framework guiding it. It also introduces the Kirfi area, which lies in Bauchi state, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

The choice for this study of the southern Bauchi area, and more specifically Kirfi (see Figure 1.1), was guided by the presence of numerous visible archaeological remains (Effah-Gyamfi 1986, Allsworth-Jones 1993a&b, Aremu 1999a&b, Sule 2007, Darling 2008, Sule 2010, Horlings 2012), some of which had been surveyed previously, but never adequately investigated.



Figure 1.1: Hausaland, Borno, Bauchi area and other important centres mentioned in the text (Adapted after Haour and Rossi 2010, figure 1.1).

The Kirfi region also presents interesting historical questions. The capital of this Local Government Area, Kirfi, shares historical connections with the state capital, Bauchi. Kirfi contributed to the struggles which led to the emergence of Bauchi as one of the seven powerful allies of the Sokoto caliphate that thrived in the early 19th century throughout the region, comprising much of northern Nigeria and the Niger Republic of today. The modern Kirfi population claims they are all of one ethnic group and of the same root, speaking the same language, Hausa, with only slight local variations between settlements; yet different accounts exist of the origins of the population. Three common versions exist: those that claim eastern roots from Yemen or Saudi Arabia or Asia, via Gazargamo in Borno (about 300km to the north-east); those which look at Jukun/Kwararafa kingdom about 250km south of the present study area; and finally, and less commonly, those that see Hausaland, some 250km north/north-west, as an origin for the Kirfawa. This last tradition is deeply rooted, but mainly observed to relate to the majority population with no ties to the royal families. This is a point to which we shall return.

Thus, the nature of socio-cultural contacts here, as elsewhere in West Africa, makes it appropriate to envisage the theme of migrations and conquests. New social groups have emerged with reorganisations of the political order taking place due to the successive immigration of various populations. This makes the question of the identity of past groups a difficult one. For instance, S. McIntosh (1994:185) remarked that in West Africa “frequent movements of peoples into new areas and a constant splintering and fusion of groups who combine and recombine with other groups, poses virtually insurmountable problems for the identification of ethnicity in the past”. As we shall see, population movement is a core theme in the reconstruction of the African past generally, and particular reference will be made here to Kopytoff’s (1987) theory of internal African frontier developments.

A key question I explore in this book is that of the extent to which Bauchi and Kirfi can be considered to have been part of Hausaland – the *Kasar Hausa*, the land in which Hausa is spoken as the first language – in the past. The Hausa language is hugely influential in Bauchi today and historical records mention the impact of Hausa cities on Bauchi. One key question of the present research will thus be to test the degree, and time depth, of this Hausa influence. Certainly, some scholars feel Bauchi has not been a principal part of the Hausa area historically. Adamu (1982), for instance, describes the people of *Kasar Bauchi*, Nupe and Kwararafa as groups who had relations with the Hausa during the period 1200-1600 AD. The exclusion of Bauchi seems to be based on the orthodox use of the Bayajidda legend and the idea of the core and ‘bastard’ Hausa states (see below), which ignores processes outside the central Hausa areas such as Kano (see also Figure 1.3, below, for a similar view).

It is often stressed that understanding of the West African past is improved if the associated disciplines of archaeology and history recognise their diversities and close the traditional gaps between them. DeCorse & Chouin (2003) explored how a variety of sources can examine African landscapes and produce similar frameworks for categorising them into useful social units. They suggest that sources can be married into another to create research areas such as ethnoarchaeology, historical archaeology or ethnohistory for the common goal of reconstructing the complex social history of African landscape formations. In the specific case I consider here, it is legitimate to speak of the question of a ‘Hausatisation’ of the Bauchi landscape (Sutton 1979, Haour & Rossi 2010, Sutton 2010).

In summary, the goal of the research presented here is to contribute to a better understanding of the cultural history of the Bauchi area over the past millennium, highlighting the contribution which archaeological research can make, and exploring the role of Hausa-speaking communities. Specifically, this book will seek to:

- a) Evaluate archaeological data to reconstruct the means of cultural exchange through goods, services, ideas and beliefs and to locate trade and long-term social networks within the region.
- b) Explore the complementary use of oral traditions and archaeology to bridge knowledge gaps about southern Bauchi (and northern Nigeria more widely).
- c) Examine the potential for generating analogical parallels for the interpretation of archaeological evidence through the investigation of the social networks of craftspeople today.
- d) Devise a typology of diagnostic artefactual assemblages, specifically pottery, which may shed light on the cultural transformations that embedded themselves in material products and which may be applicable to the wider sub-region.

In order to further these aims, my book explores various sources of evidence – archaeology, written history, archival data, oral histories and ethnographic data – to shed light on *Kasar Bauchi’s* past. Specific objectives of the field research presented here were:

- a) To excavate test pits at three archaeological sites within the study area: Kirfin Sama Hill, Tudun Dangawo and Kagalan, in order to obtain a collection of material culture from secure stratigraphic contexts and samples, suitable for dating;
- b) To survey the area around them to detect any artefact-based distributional pattern on the landscape, with a view to reconstructing patterns of settlement and economic systems in the region;
- c) To conduct both geochemical and physical examination of pottery and other artefacts, to characterise and identify the cultural variability of attributes over sites;
- d) To investigate modern socio-economic relations behind three major craft productions – potting, ironworking and weaving – to better frame the archaeological data;

e) To cross-examine the potential for enhancing knowledge of Kirfi’s past through literature and other historical sources.

The remainder of this chapter will set the scene for the study, beginning with what was known linguistically and historically of southern Bauchi prior to the research presented here.

1.1 Kirfi and its settlement history

Kirfi is the administrative and political headquarters of the Kirfi Local Government Area, covering an area of 2,371 km², with a population of 147,618 (FGN 2006). The people of Kirfi today principally engage in subsistence agriculture: the cultivation of crops such as millet, guinea corn, beans, groundnuts and maize, and the rearing of animals such as cattle and sheep, goats, guinea fowl and chickens. Fulani people, traditionally cattle herders, now settled in the area also cultivate the land. They are concentrated in a few historically known settlements such as Cheledi, Tekkira, Badara and Wanka.

There are three fundamental ethnic categories based on the perception of the local populations; Kirfawa or Giiwo who consider themselves as the original settlers, Hausa (perceived to be the relatively recent migrants) and Fulani (both nomads and the settled population). Hausa is the lingua franca today, spoken by all groups, but while the Giiwo language is dying out, the Fulani language Fulfulde is maintained as most Fulani are bilingual.

The population, who hold no chieftaincy title, are categorised into groups based on their professional trade such as blacksmiths, builders, fishermen, hunters, potters, woodcarvers, tanners, traders, dyers, tailors or weavers. Overall the whole society falls into one of the three

categories, the aristocrats, the wealthy (who are mainly merchants and categorised by their economic standing), and the commoners (identified in relation to their craft as mentioned above). M. G. Smith (1958; also, Hill 1972, Adamu 1982) deliberated on the Hausa socio-economic system where farming, like that of other African societies, is the principal mode of subsistence, with relationships expanding through other trades; Kirfi appears to follow the same pattern, as the archaeology will come to show us later.

Islam is the predominant religion today, having gained ground since the periods of Sokoto Jihad in the early 19th century and conversion to Islam having been completed around 50 years ago. Any remaining animists in Kirfi have converted, and there is some level of syncretism with Muslim practices (MY 2010). There also exists a growing number of Christians, mostly due to civil service, police, and educational postings to the area over the past decade.

As mentioned above, nowadays Hausa is the lingua franca of the population of Kirfi. The original Kirfi language, Giiwo, appears to be dying out, as only the elderly speaks it now. All the Bole family of the Chadic languages spoken in the study area are considered to be of the same family, related to the Kirfi or Giiwo language. But although linguists recognise many subdivisions (Figure 1.2), the situation at present seems less complex, with such fine divisions not recognised by the local people. It may be that differences that once existed have been erased in the present by the growth of certain languages that are seen as prestigious.

As alluded to above, Kirfi traditions suggest three various waves of influence and migrations: from Borno to the north-east, from Jukun to the south and from Hausaland to the north/north-west. Traditions do not clearly state the

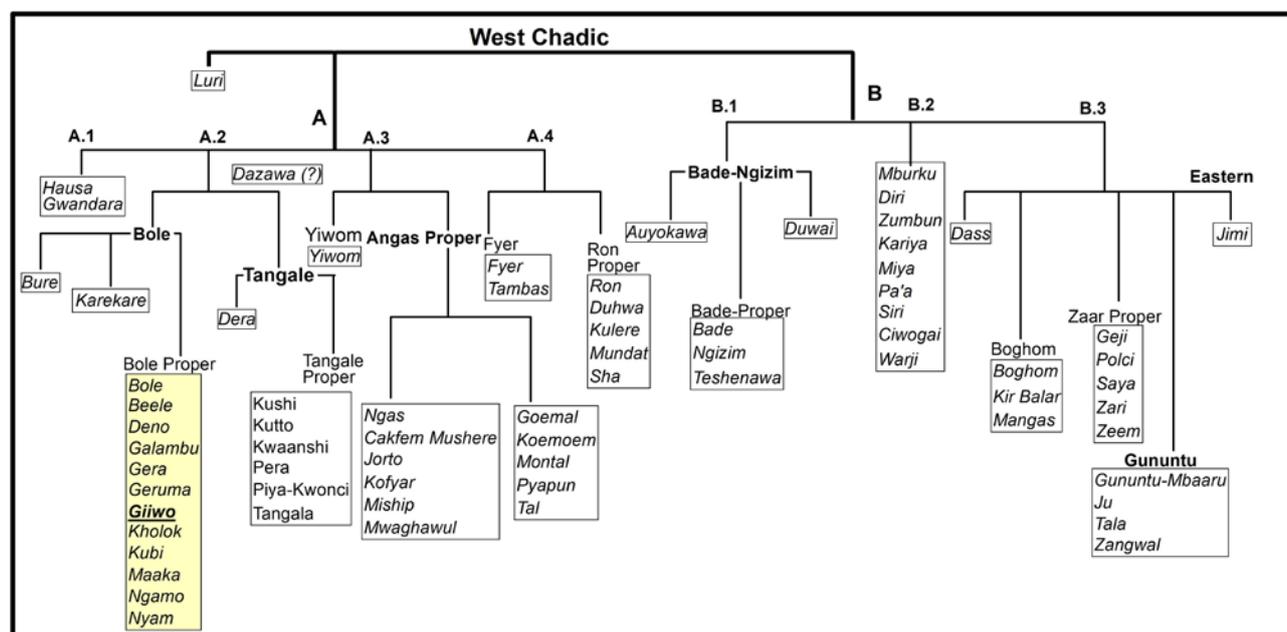


Figure 1.2: West Chadic languages showing some of the southern Bauchi language groups.

presence of other peoples in Kirfi before these immigrants; they commonly claim to have been the first to inhabit the hills and valleys before the more recent arrival of Fulani and Hausa peoples. However, archival sources, such as Dyer (1912), suggest the existence of an early autochthonous group, called Gumfu. Today no account mentions this specific name, but there is occasional reference to disappeared others, who were giants and built stone houses.

This research begins with the question of who the people were who occupied the Kirfi area over the last millennium. I acknowledge that archaeology cannot tell us the specific identities of peoples, much less pinpoint successive migrants into the area as claimed by traditions, but we shall be looking for material signatures in terms of technology, and variations suggestive of cultural rupture or continuities. A range of questions can be raised at the outset. With regard to claims of the existence of an autochthonous population, is it the case that they were displaced by later intruders, for instance from Hausaland or Bornu, or were they assimilated? Can the material culture excavated from the three sites under study – Kirfin Sama Hill, Tudun Dangawo and Kagalan – serve to judge homogeneity or heterogeneity? And in what way does the evidence fit with the popular oral traditions that dwellers of these abandoned sites belonged to the same group?

Moreover, what factors influenced the settlement and economic history of these settlements: geography, soil, environment in the choice of hilltops, riverbank and valley? Was there a diversity of subsistence systems? Was the availability of natural resources, such as iron ore and clay, decisive in the spatial location of settlements and of industrial sites, or did people take part in the final production of artefacts for trade? Craft specialisation is another symbol for a complex urban way of life in most African societies (see e.g., McIntosh 1994 & 2005). Dye pits and slag mounds are amongst the traces of past industrial activity visible in Kirfi today. For example, I documented 57 abandoned dye pits and another 13 at the Kirfin Kasa settlement within an area of 50 x 20m showing a high accumulation of waste from past dyeing operations, while 14 mounds of slag debris exist at Tekkira (Sule 2010) and about 7 at the Tasma site, covering an area of about 2 km². These debris are associated with the remnants of furnace walls (some of which are still standing), and there are high amounts of tuyère fragments. Naturally there may be a chronological gap in the creation of these remains – another question to be answered by the archaeological research. Finally, what factors influenced the prosperity and subsequent decline of the sites under study? Did southern Bauchi participate in the trans-Saharan trade between North Africa and Kano, and could Kasar Bauchi have supplied articles such as dyed materials and textiles, iron tools, and slaves?

To help address these various questions I have chosen to focus on the question of Kirfi's relation to the Hausa world. Defensive walls, remains of craft activities and a system of

settlements on hilltops as recorded in the Kirfi area (Sule 2010) are characteristic features of the Zaria and Kano regions and appear to be a common feature in the Kasar Hausa generally (Insoll 2003, Haour 2003a & 2010). If we examine this more closely, a pattern of cultural similarities can be observed between Kirfi sites and known sites of the core Kasar Hausa, such as Kano, Turunku, Kufena and Zaria.

The story of the development of the Hausa city-states is, in itself, the story of cores and their peripheries. The historical phase of development of the Hausa states which is collaboratively addressed by historical sources (including oral accounts) indicates the existence of polities such as Zazzau (Zaria), Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Biram, Rano and Daura, shown in Figure 1.3.

Legend and mythology have shaped understanding of the origins of these city-states. The Hausa tradition of origin refers to sources due north and east (Bovill 1970, Sutton 1979 & 2010, Last 1985, Haour 2003a, Lange 2004). Their traditions articulate the orthodox legend of the great Bayajidda who came from the east, to Daura (nowadays consequently acclaimed as the earliest Hausa city), where he encountered a dreadful snake occupying a well, which was preventing the inhabitants from accessing their only source of water. He killed the snake, and the queen of Daura married him for this gallant act. The children from this union beget the 'Hausa Bakwai' (legitimate sons) and the 'Banza Bakwai' ('bastards', symbolising the non-original Hausa states). Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Zazzau, Rano, Biram and Daura itself became the legitimate sons according to traditions, ultimately creating seven Hausa states (see Figure 1.4). On the other hand, Kebbi, Zamfara, Gwari, Kwararafa, Yoruba, Nupe and Yawuri that had Hausa as their second language are understood as the 'Banza Bakwai'. Lange (2004: 229) argued that the division into the Hausa and Banza Bakwai originates from the parallel social roots of pre-Islamic cult systems of the Hausa which impacted on the modes of oral histories, while Sutton (1979) sees the Hausa/Banza Bakwai rather as a political construction with frequent association to exotic origins.

Locating Hausa identity historically is difficult, as is the case with most identities and even more so when 'Hausanness' is often defined by language. Hausa identity and meaning will have undoubtedly changed through time and space; scholars such as Sutton (1979, 2010) and Haour (2003a, 2010) opined that 'Hausanness' is not an event but a process that kept changing. 'Hausaisation' is defined by them as a set of activities of a people, such as trade and craft, language, religious system, appearance by way of clothing and a system of parkland farming. Hausaisation is seen as a process that expands, creating a situation with a 'frontier moving forward each generation to claim new territory' where the expansion may have been 'assimilative, existing local communities gradually identifying themselves with the dominant Hausa system and adopting its language and mores' (Sutton 2010: 279 & 280). The process is challenging to define but can reasonably be expected to

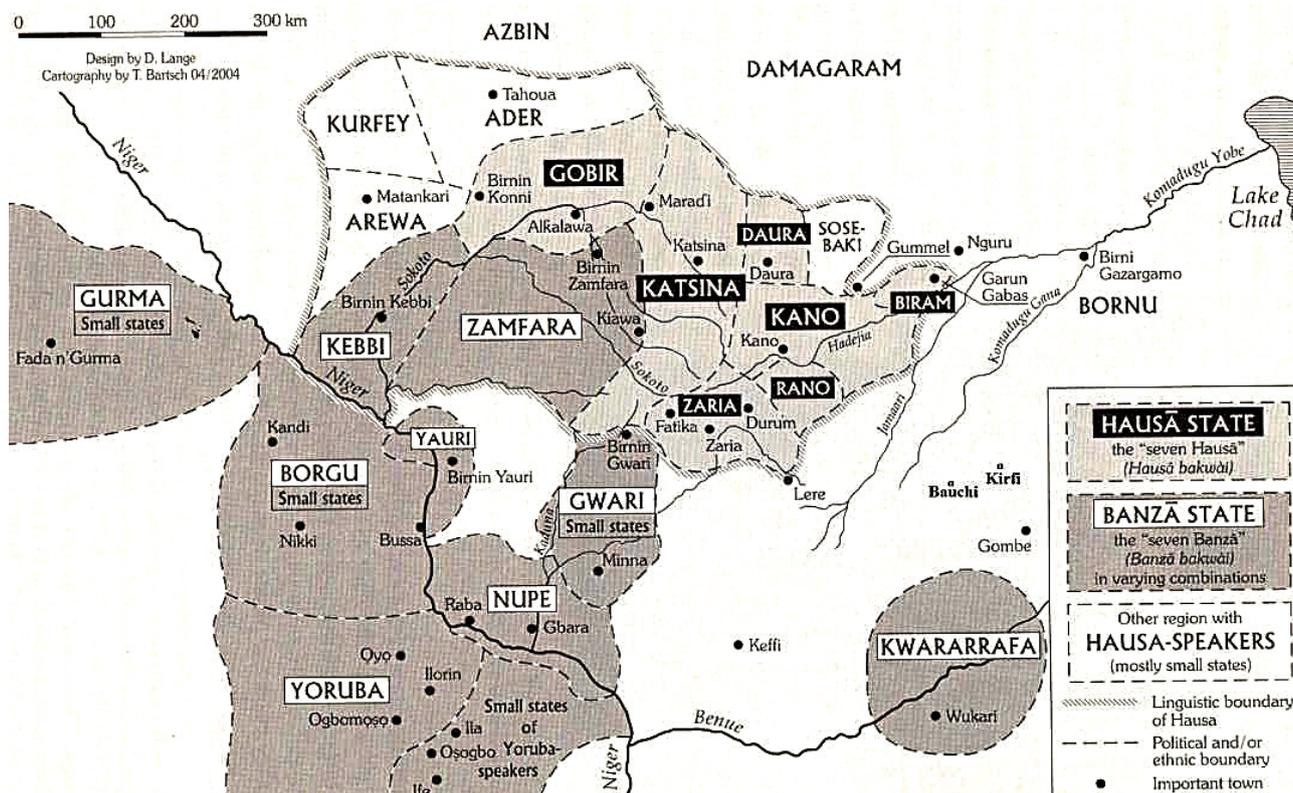


Figure 1.3: Map showing the Hausa states – including the so-called Hausa Bakwai (Adapted from Lange 2004).

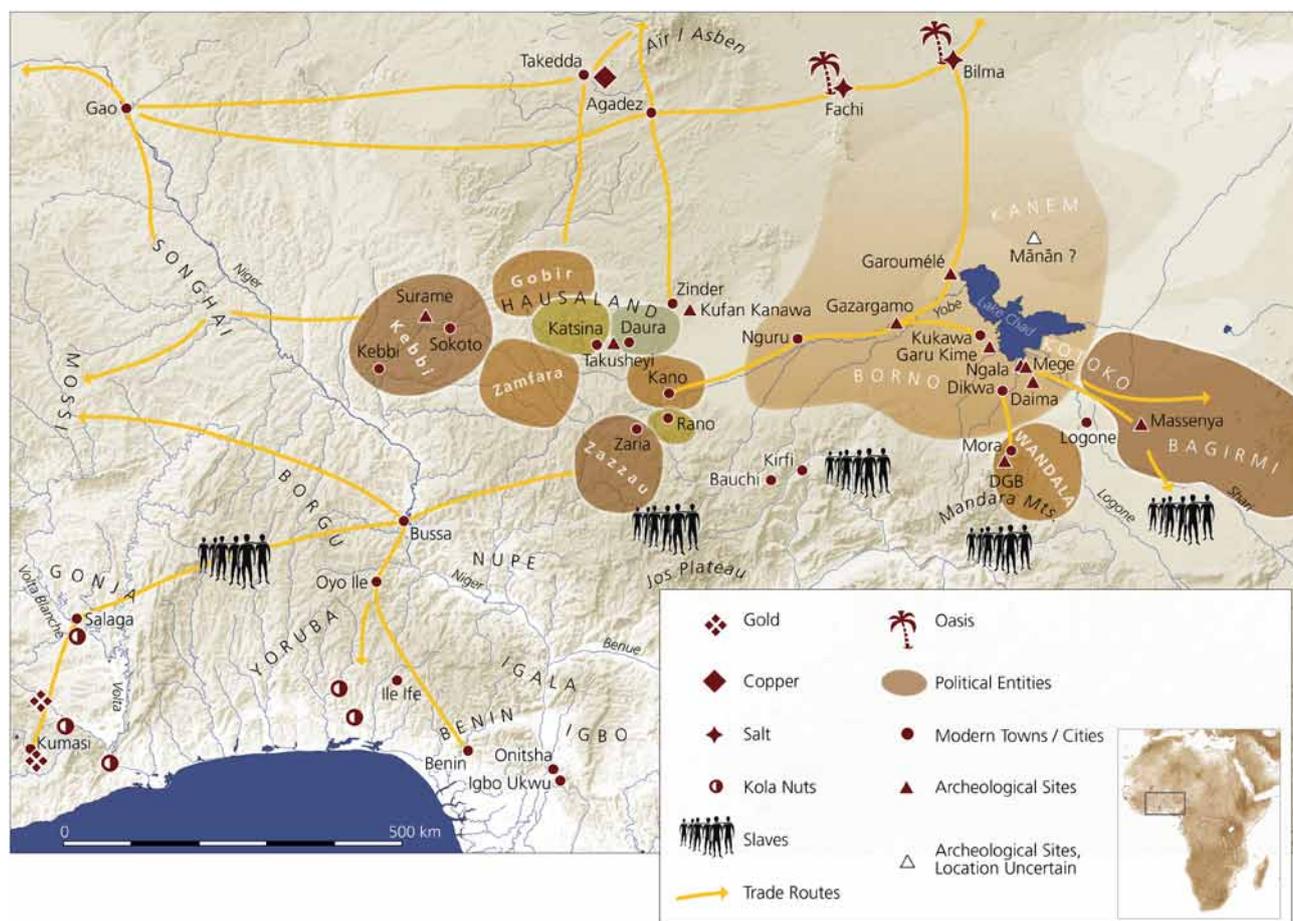


Figure 1.4: Kirfi (slaves, as a commodity, to its economy) and some important centres mentioned in the text (Adapted from Gronenborn 2011).

have had some archaeological visibility. Events such as Islamisation, colonial expansion, Hausaisation and 'frontier expansions' may likely portray levels of cultural continuities and discontinuities in the material culture. The oral traditions claim monolithic and linear direct historical connections between its past and present populations, but this is simplistic. The collaborative use of research methods should be productive, especially from the 19th century onwards, which is assumed to be markedly dissimilar from earlier periods when traditional religious practices held sway. The influence of Islam (as opposed to formerly practiced ritual systems), long-distance trading systems and the role of slaves as a commodity, 'Hausaness', craft and economic specialisations are all put forward as factors in the sequence of events that played out in the settlements under study here.

1.2 Theoretical framework

The author wishes to explore to what degree the cultural traditions at the Kirfi area of southern Bauchi can be related to developments in the Hausa area. To do this, I use several bodies of theoretical knowledge, considering known Kirfi archaeological remains as a manifestation of social and cultural identity. In this section I set out key points from models of the 'African frontier' hypothesis as my major theoretical ground to understand the archaeology of the southern Bauchi area as a frontier of the Hausa 'world'. Other secondary models, such as the roles of landscape and territory, ethnicities, and technological styles, will aid my understanding of the material culture and I here relate them to the general themes of this research.

To problematise the impact of the Hausa world, the author found the framework of African frontier theory useful. This considers the expansion of complex African societies and their exchange of social, cultural and economic practices, and it is a particularly strong analytical tool for understanding the political geography of peripheral spaces in Africa. Kopytoff (1987) borrowed the use of 'frontier' from Frederick Jackson Turner's study of American political systems to propose a local 'African frontier' thesis through which he tried to understand the processes that shaped the emergence and development of marginal societies in Africa. He argued that new social groups, with distinctive economic and political systems, develop at the outside borders of dominant groups, reflecting the cultural influence of the expanding of the borders. In his view, these processes occur more at locally and internally-driven smaller scales than at regional levels – the dynamics of people's movements across and into peripheries appear as a cultural process deeply rooted in African social historical traits. Social relations based on kinship systematically produce frontiersmen, with a tendency for individual actions to coalesce into collective sentiment that results in the emigration and diffusion of kinship groups (Kopytoff 1987: 11). The frequent myth of leadership struggles culminating in the expulsion or exile of princely leaders and the metaphorical arrival of a heroic leader is one example which reflects Kopytoff's model.

In a similar vein, other scholars (e.g., Ashmore & Knapp 1999, Lightfoot & Martinez 1995, Wells 2005, Naum 2010) interested in frontiers, contact zones and marginal cultural developments outside Africa, have examined how cultural systems are altered across boundaries and where social territories emerge when human factors are recognised on spatial grounds. How do people perceive themselves and others at a distance, and is the way that potential resources of the landscape are collectively exploited located through the material production of objects? This is a useful approach, as people in Bauchi today consider landscape as part of their defining identity, where Kasar Bauchi is perceived through geography and economic relationships. An example is the categorisation that 'we are the people of the hills' associated with Kirfin Sama or the reference to water 'yan ruwa' for Zamani and Guyaba where children born into specific families up to today spend their first 7-10 days in the river under the custody of the water spirits. Lightfoot & Martinez (1995) specifically use the example of trade-outposts in western North America to argue that frontier zones are culturally charged environments, facilitated through trade, conquest or other forms of contact, and whose materiality leaves marks. They argue that approaching world systems through regional scales is important to locate parallels operating at micro-scale levels across sites, and that only site-specific models can consider 'interethnic interactions along frontiers' as regions of active cultural interface. In short, according to Lightfoot & Martinez (1995:477) site-specific research allow understanding of how groups respond to encounters with "others" and how new cultural constructs are created, transformed, and syncretised on the frontier.

In an archaeological study such as the one presented in this book, of course, the question of the nature of cultures must be approached largely through material objects. The human factor in the making and shaping of objects has attracted considerable attention from archaeologists over the years. Although it has now become clear that material culture distinctions do not correlate one-on-one with social boundaries, it still appears that group identities do impact on how individuals act and make decisions on the production of materials. The role of material culture in mapping identity has therefore been much written about (Kramer 1985a, Hegmon 1992, 2000, Pfaffenberger 1992, Gosselain 1999 & 2000, Hegmon 2000, Livingstone 2000, Sillar & Tite 2000, Stark 2003). A body of theory usually glossed as the 'theory of technology' has recently made important advances by considering technology as a cultural product. The study of people is approached from the standpoint that groups develop their collective, distinct cultural identity through the acquisition of shared values, such as technology which becomes part of their daily living. These attributes are learnt and shared among members over time. An important way to visualise these is through the processes of the production of knowledge and in the material making of artefacts; here the way of making cultural objects is a product of long-term cultural experience. Pfaffenberger (1992, also Gosselain 2000)

alludes to differences in traditions and styles of making objects that are spread across boundaries and shared as one group relates with another through these imitations, copying and borrowing and adopting new methods which are absorbed as traditions, but still bear witness to a social boundary.

In short, the theory of technology (Pfaffenberger 1992, Gosselain 2000, Hegmon 2000:267, Sillar & Tite 2000, Haour & Galpine 2005) revolves around technological choices and variations inherent in manufacturing styles. The roots of these approaches lie outside archaeological practice itself. Pfaffenberger (1992) concedes that a 'sociotechnical system' emerged from recognition of ideological immersion of belief systems into the technological production and use of artefacts, and he recognises the sociological baggage of any technological activity. The technical process is not a static event but is the product of intercultural negotiation between people with varied backgrounds. In the same manner, the idea of 'embedded technology' presupposes that "[L]ike economic activities, technical acts are contingent upon the context that they help construct, they are embedded technologies" (Sillar 2006:2). These modes of technological theory emphasise the ideology and materiality of social agency to the continued reproduction of the technological action of peoples as they produce artefacts. Locating embedded features of technologies or 'sociotechnical systems' (Pfaffenberger 1992:500) help us locate variations in techniques, as well as suggesting which attendant conditions may have created such disparities.

Tying technology to social phenomena has thus proved beneficial to African studies. Here, I examine whether the set of social and technological systems that developed the kind of material culture in the Kasar Hausa were similar to those found in the Kasar Bauchi.

Approaching the subject of ethnicity and identity from an archaeological angle is difficult. Archaeological evidence has been used to examine interactions and to suggest differing levels of cohesiveness and disparity through material manifestations that are suggested, to be correlated with ethnic entities or other social units (MacEachern 1998, Gosselain 2000, Insoll 2007a & b, Jones 2007). This view contributes to the discussion on the broader concept of social identity in the archaeological context within which is set Kasar Bauchi. It tends to encompass both boundary (Emberling 1997:299, Stark 1998), and difference (Emberling 1997: 299). Identity is seen as a dynamic and changing concept as well as perception and creation. Its value is more obviously suitable in archaeology when looking at the recent historic past (MacEachern 1994, Insoll 2007a: 1, Jones 2007); but it is also a useful tool to question the social character of individual identities even as they result from negotiations that become even more complex to untangle since the constituent units are interrelated. For example, the process of constant accommodation of competing craftspeople's requirements in the face of unpredictable resources, is

addressed by McIntosh's pulse model (2005), which I go on to discuss below.

Because approaching the subject of identity through archaeology is difficult it has become normal practice to use ethnographic data alongside archaeological data, and this is the approach I take in this book. As defined by David & Kramer (2001: 2; Stark 2003) in their *Ethnoarchaeology in action*, ethnoarchaeology is a 'research strategy embodying a range of approaches to understanding the relationships of material culture, to culture as a whole, both in the living context and as it enters the archaeological record, and to exploiting such understanding in order to inform archaeological concepts and to improve interpretation'. They argue that the researcher interacts with the subjects and affords access to primary data capable of improving analogy and interpretation.

This feeds back into the question of technology. For example, there are many ways in which potters work with their raw materials to obtain the desired physical products, different ways of manipulating the sequence to arrive at a finished product and diverse means to form a vessel, decorate and fire it, all of which are dependent upon local cultural practice. Successful application of ceramic ethnoarchaeology in studying cultural systems in the Nigerian region (David & Shaw 1989, Garba 1999, 2002, Ogundele 2005) informed my work in the southern Bauchi area. Because of the importance of pottery to my research – as an evidential resource to understand technological systems, styles and decision-making – I will apply ceramic ethnoarchaeology principles to recover data about the traditional set-up and functioning of social factors in the production, consumption, and subsequent abandonment of pottery in the archaeological record. Ceramic ethnoarchaeology recognises that making pots represents a technological embodiment that shows a complex interplay of technical choices and decisions on the part of potters to forego one set of actions for another, from the initial idea to construct a pot through the selection of raw materials, moulding and finishing (Gosselain 2000, Hegmon 2000, Sillar & Tite 2000). It extends to people's decision about how the pots are used, and the final deposition of the ware in archaeological contexts. To Gosselain (2000), pottery technology provides avenues to understand the array of options available to potters as they produce their wares, using the notion of 'chaîne opératoire' – which should not be viewed as merely a monolithic system of achieving a process, but as a collective expression of individuals and group experiences, indicating levels of preferences to achieve single end products. Pottery traditions, to him, are the 'sociotechnical aggregates' that display inventions and manipulations over time. Then, since artefact assemblages and chaîne opératoire indicate the dynamic nature of human behaviour, they can be useful indicators of cultural changes. For instance, Stahl *et al.* (2008) documented continuity and change in ceramic production, exchange and consumption over the past 1000 years in the Banda region of Ghana. Much as Pfaffenberger's assumptions (1992) about a sociotechnical basis for technology, Stahl

et al. (2008) also support the idea that the technology of a people cannot be separated from the broader social, political and economic circumstance within which they function. Technology itself is a form of culture which integrates knowledge systems, options, constraints, intuition and so it is technical processes, rather than physical objects, which in some respects translate the identity of makers and users.

The same is true of ironworking. Iron smelting has received some attention at sites within Kasar Hausa such as Turunku, Kufena, Tsauni and Samaru West in Zaria and Dala in Kano (Sutton 1976a & 1985, Effah-Gyamfi 1981b, Aremu 1999a&b, Jemkur 2006, Odojin & Mangut 2008, Odojin 2008). The survival in the landscape today of large mounds of slag associated with tuyère fragments and furnaces connects smelting to an important part of the local culture history. Technological production of objects and the social relevance of the processes that underlay such production is a large reservoir for knowledge about the past. It codifies the values that people attribute to the landscape and how they relate with it. Smelting studies were generally centred on its technology and an interest in the understanding of its physical social manifestation in the Kasar Hausa (Sutton, 1976 and more recently Kola 2010). They now afford West Africanist archaeologists insight into what the people who once occupied the Kasar Hausa share with others elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. Furnaces are not merely physical components for smelting but reflect deeper social meaning attributing their internal and external mechanisms as symbolising human forms, spirits and gestures (Schmidt 2009). The ritual, sexual and reproductive manifestation of the analogous perception of the human body and its activities led to the interpretation of Shona (Zimbabwe) and Fipa (Tanzania) furnaces as socio-technological representations of humans and people. These meanings and the human symbolism associated with smelting are shared expression across ethnic groups in Africa with knowledge-sharing relationships, where a pattern of such traditions can suggest social boundaries.

In the Mandara region, south of the Lake Chad Basin, decades of anthropological studies of pottery (MacEachern 1998) led to the conclusion that it is very difficult to use stylistic variations and styles to arrive at an understanding of a linguistic and ethnic demarcation of identities. These data however do not mean that differences do not exist and that material culture cannot inform us about group identities. Pottery styles and variations may in fact inform region-wide boundaries rather than smaller more localised landscapes. Regional ceramic variations may signify regional interaction of the specialist potters and producers. MacEachern (1998) therefore suggests that it is difficult to study today's ethnicities, or even the past, using ethnography or archaeology alone, because identity is a negotiated construction, not always clearly visible in material products by such groups. On the value of an ethnoarchaeological approach to ceramics, Hegmon (2000) has summarised the current state of research and although she concedes that there does not exist a straightforward

relationship between pottery style and social interaction, she argues that a connection does exist. In other words, the situation is not as simple as we once thought but there is no cause for despair.

The historical need for people to moderate their competing tendencies to live as a group sees social relations through the eyes of accommodations to world systems. These approaches addressing long-term patterns of diplomacy were applied by McIntosh (1993 & 2005) to understand African social systems through intergroup 'accommodation' strategies through what has become known as the "Pulse Model". McIntosh applied this model to the understanding of the rules of 'accommodation systematics' embedded in archaeological cultures of Middle Niger landscapes where individuals, economic specialists and corporate groups collectively exploited resources and congregated harmoniously over a long period of climatic trials and tribulations. Using environmental data over a long-term period, McIntosh described the complex relationship between people as they interact, competing for available but limited resources due to unpredictable climate variations. Environmental unpredictability was a central factor that influenced how people cohabited in a landscape of diverse regions.

Because of the lack of paleoenvironmental data for the Bauchi region, I cannot apply McIntosh's model in such detail, but I can nonetheless use its general principles, attempting to locate evidence of a growing variety of groups, represented by different economic systems and crafts that would ordinarily result in friction, but where the pulse model allows alliances and a recognition of the need to live in harmony. Diversity of specialisation is, of course, often identifiable through archaeological evidence, and attempts at revealing corporate identities through variations and shared cultural systems are manifested through characteristics such as pottery decorations and shaping techniques. In modern times, for instance, the River Gongola is attractive to Fulani pastoralists, living on pasture lands alongside agriculturalists; both groups must be contented with this cohabitation. The historical episodes of the multiple inflow of emigrants from far and near into the Kirfi area as recorded by oral traditions, shows a tolerance of both autochthonous and strangers, a re-occurring theme in West Africa (Haour 2013). The archaeological data I will present in this book show human resilience over time to cope with the risks coming from slave raiding and resource competition among others. The pulse model offers a way to connect these clues in the landscape to notions of ethnicity and technology, examining the cultural systems of the people whose archaeology we see today.

1.3 Scope and methodology

This study concerns a part of the Kirfi area shown below (Figure 1.5 & 1.6). The archaeological sites are abandoned settlement sites: Kirfin Sama Hill (Sule 2010), Tudun Dangawo (field notes 2010) and Kagalan (field notes 2010).

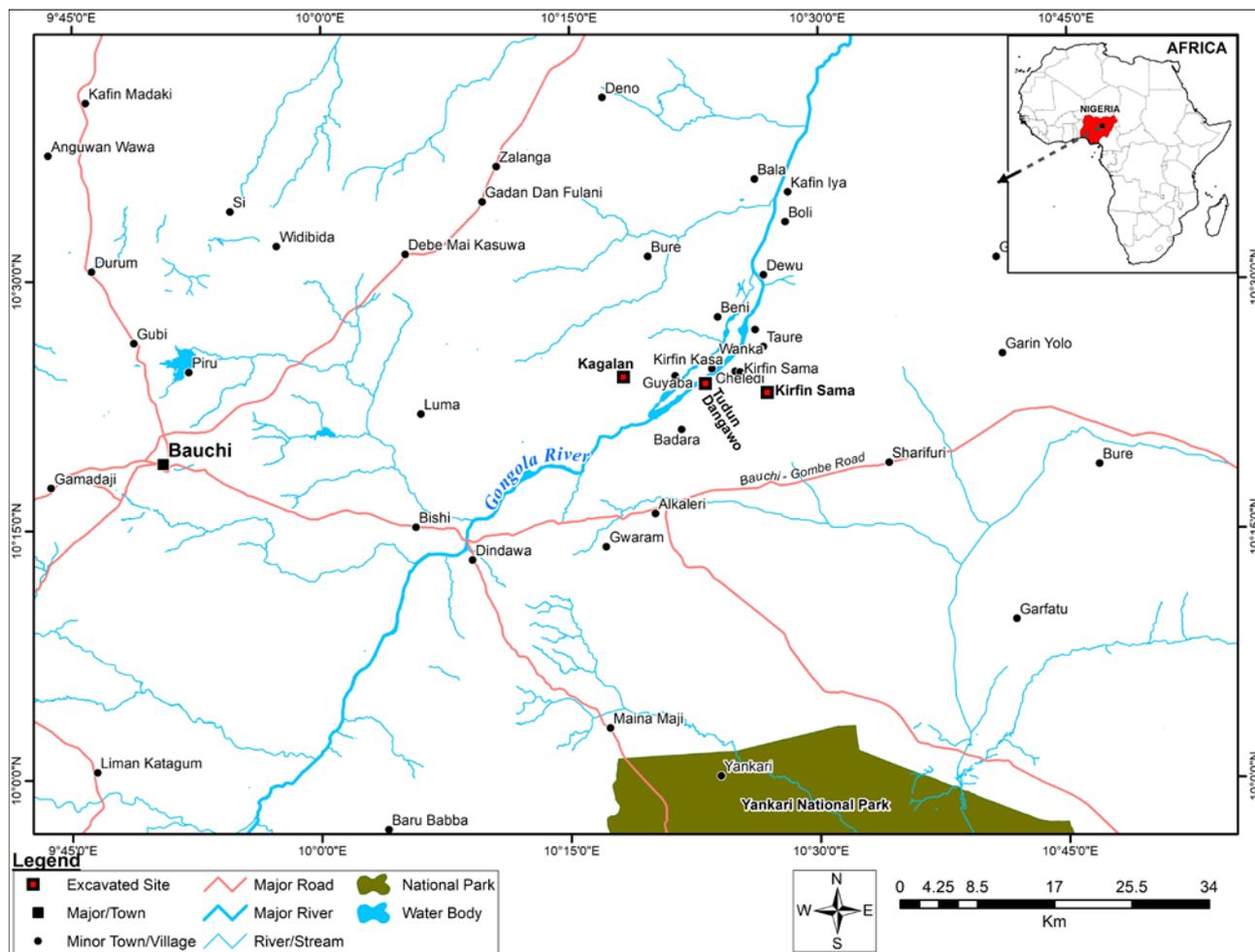


Figure 1.5: Map of important settlements and sites mentioned in the text.



Figure 1.6: Dye pits near Kirfin Kasa settlement.

There are also the extant settlements that provided the bulk of the ethnographic data: Zamani, Kirfin Sama and Kirfin Kasa (Sule 2010, fieldwork 2010), Guyaba (Sule 2010, fieldwork 2010) and modern Kagalan (fieldwork 2010). Each settlement claims a direct historical connection with one of the three archaeological sites and serves as a source of analogical parallel.

During this research, data were recovered through ethnographic observations and oral interviews, archival studies, literature surveys and archaeological methods including systematic surveys, excavation, and laboratory analyses. This book aims to provide insights into material production relevant to our understanding of data on specific domestic functions and material culture change. Given my research aims, pottery is a valuable artefact, not only in terms of the quantities recoverable archaeologically, but also because of the key role it will play in defining social boundaries and identity, and its ability to embody changes associated with the makers and users of such objects. The focus of the work is archaeological because there had not been previous detailed archaeological research in the area. In the next few pages, however, I will give a brief overview of pertinent historical evidence, which I was able to glean from interviews from contemporary occupants of the Kirfi area, to show how useful these were in shaping my archaeological enquiries.

In terms of my ethnographic enquiries in 2010, data were provided from the following modern settlements; Kirfin Kasa, Kirfin Sama, Zamani, Cheledi, Guyaba, Tekkira, Gujimba, Wanka, Alkaleri, Kangere, Badara, Wuso, Kagalan as well as Bauchi and Ningi (See Figure 2.1). During the period, interviews were collected at Zamani, mainly related to traditions of origins and to blacksmithing, fishing, leatherworking and dyeing. As I had previously studied Kirfin Sama (Sule, 2010) only a further interview was conducted on the peopling of the region by Kirfawa and their later movement into what is now Bauchi area. Some interviews were also recorded. Evaluation of information about craft specialisation involved studies of pottery making and blacksmithing, which is the end-product of smelting, and is interwoven with the complexities of gender. The field notes record the common occurrence of marital ties between male blacksmiths and female potters. Social connections between the related practitioners provide an interesting picture of the Kirfi guild as a common practice in past African societies (Schmidt 2000). These findings are detailed in Chapter Three.

In addition to the collection of oral traditions, the 2010 fieldwork season allowed me to discover sites such as Kagalan, an abandoned settlement and ruins of ironworks. Based on the surface assessment of sites, and in trying to address questions relating to craft specialisation, I earmarked three sites – Kagalan hilltop, Kirfin Sama Hill and Tudun Dangawo mound – for excavation based on their potential in view of the overall research questions. The results of the landscape survey I carried out are outlined in Chapter Four.

In my enquiries with modern informants, I focused on questions of settlement history. According to traditions (AM 2010; IB 2010; ZK 2010), Guyaba is now cosmopolitan but settled by mostly migrant Hausa Muslims from the Kano region about 250km north-west. In addition to the observation that there existed a flourishing blacksmithing industry, further information was generated about the later history of migrations and settlements. *Tsangaya* Quranic scholarship was recognised as the mainstay of the Kano immigrants, while iron processing was seen as the practice of the original inhabitants. Oral tradition gathered here led to the rediscovery of the abandoned site of Kagalan. Informants in Guyaba recognised that the ancestors of the modern Kirfawa dwelling on a hilltop west of Guyaba were responsible for the Tekkira slag heaps as well as being masters of pottery making and they continue to be so. I followed up with a visit to Kagalan, and after a series of oral interviews that dispelled their suspicions that I was a precious stone miner, they indicated that their ancestors were another original branch of the Kirfawa. According to the interviews, these ancestors settled on a hilltop surrounded in similar style to the Kirfin Sama hills. They descended from the hill more than a century ago due to the frequent threats, and subsequent capture, of ‘200’ of their able-bodied men by the warriors of old ‘Ningi’ who finally forced them to move further east. Historical sources indicate that Ningawa were animists who fought with powers such as Kano and resisted subjugation by the commanders of Shehu Danfodio during his early 19th century jihad staged from Sokoto (Last 1985, Patton 1987).

To return to my 2010 visit, the chief of Kagalan arranged a guide for the exploration of the Tasma-Tekkira smelting sites and of the deserted hilltop sites. This turned out to be very worthwhile; in the course of subsequent desk-based research I determined that Kagalan had been mentioned by European travellers Rohlf (1872) and Falconer (1911). A map source (stamped and signed by a then British resident) at the National Archive of Nigeria, indicates the documentation of the site in 1911 as one of the important settlements of that time. This was preceded by the acknowledgement of the site by a German traveller, Rohlf (1872), who reported on Kagalam in his *Reise Durch Nord-Afrika von Mittellandischen Meere Bis Zum Busen von Guinea-1865-1867* which was later identified to be an important centre of iron manufacturing. The traditions so far collected from the Kirfawa settlements indicate it was a core aboriginal settlement of Kirfawa. The value here is the identification of a second abandoned site beyond the one excavated, both of which closely connected with modern Kagalan (see Figure 4.1). The present Kagalan has the remainder of traditional blacksmithing and pottery making, welded together in social arrangement. The Kagalan traditions strongly claimed the past glory of the Tasma/Tekkira smelting mounds, which was confirmed by traditions collected at other locations. The Kagalan abandoned settlement sites and the Tasma/Tekkira smelting ‘workshops’ were surveyed.

I also studied Gujimba, a walled settlement. The Fulani settled there but it was originally built by the Kirfawa. They claim descent from the Ganjuwa Fulani stock; these are the Fulani who at one time or another, stayed under the political control of Kafin Madaki, where the Madakin Bauchi formerly held a military garrison against the serious threat of Ningi against Bauchi, and in another version, that of Kano itself. From the various traditions collected from the current occupants and Kirfi people elsewhere, it is however problematic to ascribe the building to any specific group at this stage. However, a local Arabic script (reviewed by the chief of Gujimba in 2012) written by a famous Islamic scholar, mentioned several internal struggles between principal Bauchi ‘emirate’ settlements and clearly identifies the continued loyalty of Gujimba to the Jihad struggles. Traditions indicate that they followed the instructions of Yakubu of Bauchi to fight in defence of the emirate and the Jihad (MA 2010).

Badara is described by oral tradition as being the earliest settlement of the Fulani living in the Kirfi area. The traditions of Tekkira clearly recognise it as the settlement from which it split. They have a related chain of migration, mentioning Shira as the last important settlement at which they resided and recognising marital links with its ruling house (ST 2010). On the other hand, the Fulani of Wanka also maintained their origins lay in the region, a claim that is treated to be the earliest, even before the Badara (ST 2011). The Fulani settlement on the Gongola river ridge provided data for the reconstruction of the settlement and an economic history of the area. While modern Badara is associated with an archaeological site, Wanka is associated with a long economic history of dyeing in the region. Its existence was mentioned by Barth (1851), and when I further surveyed it archaeologically in 2012, it is where the highest number of dye pits was recorded.

1.4 Concluding remarks

This book aims to generate a local material culture sequence that will situate aspects of the early history of the Kirfi region within wider cultural developments in West Africa. By examining technology and stylistic variations combined with absolute dates generated from the excavation, we can expect to identify phases based on the differences and similarities in the material cultures of the sites under study. Similarly, confusing chronological gaps stemming from the oral histories of the major lineages of the modern Kirfi groups can be assessed through archaeological evidence.

From the corpus of archaeological and historical sources, there is strong evidence to associate the early relationship between the makers of artefacts known at Kasar Hausa and those of Kirfi in the Bauchi region. Walls associated with a human preference for hilltop settlement, intensive production of iron and dyeing industries known in Kasar Hausa are similarly found in our study area. Linguistic tools are not yet proficient enough to elucidate the early social relationships between the wider Hausa cultural

sphere and frontier Kasar Bauchi, but Hausa and Kirfi’s relatedness within the West Chadic group of languages is another factor to consider. The eventual avenues for cultural exchange would have been facilitated by the drive to source slaves, extend economic interest southwards and in the effort for population to expand to places of less stress as suggested by the accounts of wicked Hausa rulers.

Despite variations in the technologies of the sites under study, this study will investigate cultural continuities in the human occupation of the area over the last millennium. Of course, at this point we are constrained by the lack of archaeological knowledge of the Kasar Hausa and beyond to create a longer sequence for the whole region. In addition, undoubtedly the environment today is not a simple reflection of the past. The regional human-land relationship is likely to indicate a changing ecological balance; tree cutting to fuel the intensive nature of iron working, for example, will have deeply affected the landscape. We shall see later that the Kasar Bauchi region was important to other peoples outside, suggested by the role of trade and the production of iron for example. This book will also show how external influences were to alter a native system by the integration of Islam into the socio-political development of Kirfi, including it in a world system that shaped the evolution of the Bauchi region, which then became a principal actor in the spread of a political system in the early part of the 19th century, after the jihad of Shehu Uthman Fodio. This finally transformed ancient socio-political systems leading to the modern ways of life of today. The book contributes to widening the scope of our understanding of the cultural distribution of ‘Hausaland’ in the past.

The collaborative use of modern ethnographic data will help shed light on social relationships and the production of cultural materials in the region, and even if the producers of the archaeological evidence are likely to remain anonymous, we can start to recognise the character of their socio-economic and political systems.