

# ARCHAEOLOGY, SLAVERY, AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

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In February of 2016, I began archaeological excavations for my dissertation research in southern Ethiopia. The preliminary excavations consisted of nine shovel test pits and five excavations units intended to locate the former palace of King Tona, the last King of the Wolaita. While the exact location of the palace is still unknown, the excavations uncovered hundreds of ceramic, lithic and other historical material that shed light on the occupational history of the site. Subsequently, I returned to Ethiopia in August 2016 to analyze the ceramic and lithic material. Funding for this research was provided by the Graduate School Doctoral Research Travel Award and the Charles H. Fairbanks Fellowship.

In addition to the archaeological work, I conducted ethnographic research concerning museum representation and cultural heritage tourism amongst the Wolaita. I assessed three prominent cultural, natural, and religious heritage sites in the region and interviewed docents and heritage professionals concerning the challenges, opportunities, and aspirations for these sites. This research will contribute to a cultural heritage management plan for the region as well as offer a more critical look at the relationship between museum representation and identity construction. The findings from the archaeological analysis will be presented at the 2017 Society

for American Archaeology annual conference in Vancouver, Canada. The museum research will be presented at 2017 Society for Historical Archaeology annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

## Mozambique

In addition to my dissertation research in Ethiopia, I also participated in two weeks of excavation and archaeological survey in and around Mozambique Island and Metangula. I completed my PADI Open Water Certification in June 2016 and accompanied members of the Slave Wrecks Project on maritime and terrestrial exploration related to the archaeology of the Indian Ocean slave trade. While the work is still in the preliminary phases, the larger project hopes to assess the impact of the Indian Ocean slave trade on interior and coast communities.



## St. Croix

Finally, turning my attention toward the African Diaspora, I am collaborating with Diving With a Purpose (DWP) and the Society of Black Archaeologists (SBA) to establish a two-week maritime and terrestrial archaeology training program in the US Virgin Islands. DWP is “a community-focused nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of submerged heritage resources by providing education, training, certification, and field experience to adults and youth in the fields of maritime archaeology and ocean conservation,” while SBA is a group of archaeologists and heritage professionals committed to the training of archaeologists of color and the promotion of archaeological research pertaining to Africa and the wider diaspora. The project intends to introduce St. Croix students and community members to academic and career opportunities in terrestrial and maritime archaeology while also forwarding archaeological research on the African Diaspora in the Caribbean. The project is slated to begin July 2017.

Justin Dunnavant is a PhD candidate in anthropology.