

The Archeological Research Agenda in Uganda from 1922-Present

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Abstract

Colonial aspects of African archaeology include how national archaeology institutions operate, how archaeological research is funded, how archaeological knowledge is produced and disseminated, and who is practicing archaeology. Most edited volumes about African archaeology continue to be dominated by European and North American authors, even several decades after scores of African archaeologists began to research and publish on the continent. Hence, it is essential to ask who and what determines the archaeological research agenda in African countries. This paper presents findings from the quest to historicise the archaeological research agenda in Uganda. It particularly identifies the archaeological research agenda in the last century, examines how it has directed the nature of archaeological research, and questions the role of Ugandan institutions and scholars. Primary and secondary sources in this research include archival research, individual interviews, and literature reviews. The results suggest that despite the well-established Ugandan institutions, including Makerere University, that deal with archaeology and the emergence of Ugandan archaeologists in the 2000s, funding sources continue to dictate the patterns and trends of archaeological research agendas and the impact of practitioners and institutions.

Keywords: Uganda; Archaeology; Funding; Knowledge creation, knowledge dissemination, Makerere University

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Introduction

This paper builds on our previous research, Mehari (2015) and Kyazike & Mehari (2022), whose focus was on historicising archaeology within and outside Makerere University. In Mehari (2015) and Kyazike & Mehari (2022), we emphasised the formalisation of teaching and learning with less emphasis on research, a vital mandate of any higher education institution such as Makerere University. In commemorating a hundred years of Makerere University's existence, we wish to interrogate its role and impact in setting a national archaeological research agenda since its existence. The key questions addressed in this paper are: Who and what has determined the archaeological research agenda in Uganda in the last century, 1922-2022? What has been the nature of archaeological research and the role of Makerere University and other national institutions in setting Uganda's archaeological research agenda?

A research agenda allows practitioners, organisations, national and multinational institutions to set, prioritise and achieve their goals. For example, Ertmer and Glazewski (2014; 54) noted that a research agenda serves as a framework and provides professionals with a map to address a common theme or topic. Similarly, a national archaeological research agenda also gives a country and its professionals a chance to assess the relevance of archaeology and its contribution to national

and community needs. Thus, it contextualises archaeology in national and societal settings by questioning why and how archaeology should be practiced and taught. So, what should be the goal of archaeology? In this paper, we present preliminary research results derived from primary and secondary sources by highlighting the importance of a clearly defined national archaeological research agenda and the active role of national institutions and scholars in that agenda. These results suggest that despite the well-established Ugandan institutions that deal with archaeology: (the Uganda National Museum and Makerere University) and the emergence of Ugandan archaeologists in the 2000s, funding sources continue to dictate the patterns and trends of the archaeological research agenda and impact the practitioners and institutions.

Institutionalisation of archaeology

Institutionalising archaeology in Uganda occurred in various formats, including curatorial, legal, teaching, and outreach institutions. This paper starts by focusing on institutionalising archaeological research in Uganda. By doing so, it examines the nature of archaeological research, practitioners, and forms of knowledge production and dissemination while pinpointing Makerere University's role.

The institutionalisation of archaeology and setting of the archaeological research agenda started with the declaration of

the Antiquity Law in 1937 and the Colonial Monuments and Preservation Ordinance of 1937 (Bwasiri, 2011: pg. 62), “formed to protect cultural heritage in Tanzania.” Historical and Monuments Act 1967 Amendment Decree 1977 mandates the Department of Museums and Monuments, Ministry of Tourism, Trade, and Industry to manage heritage resources in the country, including archaeological remains (1995 Ugandan Constitution). The recent Museums and Monuments Act of 2023 also mandates the Department of Museums and Monuments, Ministry of Tourism, Trade, and Industry, to manage heritage resources in the country, including archaeological remains.

Since its inception, the history of archaeological research in Uganda has been closely tied to British colonialism in East Africa. British colonialism has been the central umbrella for establishing archaeology in the region. This is because “archaeology is inherently a colonial discipline; the discipline has its roots in Western knowledge systems (Birch et al., 2022, pg. 1.)” In the case of Uganda, British colonialism has been the central umbrella for establishing archaeology in the region. This colonial legacy has heavily influenced how archaeology is practiced, even in contemporary national institutions such as Makerere University.

While colonialism created dependency, the history of archaeology continues to depict its colonial underpinnings. Moro-Abadía

(2006, Pg.4) examines the colonial discourse of archaeology, stating that

the history of archaeology has traditionally been limited to ‘consensus whiggish histories’, to a simple chronicle of spectacular discoveries ‘without taking much account of the ideas and institutions surrounding them’, or to the hagiographic veneration of precursors and daring heroes. It is only in the last two decades that new works in the field have been cited (e.g., Trigger, 1989; Christeson, 1989; Schnapp, 1993; Pinsky, 1989; Coye, 1997) which has helped to overcome the ‘Whiggish history of archaeology’ that had previously dominated the field.

In examining the archaeology research agenda, there is a need to discuss the history of archaeological research in the country. While Kyazike, and Mehari’s (2022) emphasis was more on the chronology and location of the research, Okeny, Kyazike and Gumoshabe (2020) analysed the geographical orientation of archaeological research trends from 1920 to 2018. Mehari (2015) explored the institutionalisation of archaeology at the Uganda Museum, the Department of Antiquities, and Makerere University. Since its inception, the history of archaeological research and institutions in Uganda is closely tied to British colonialism in East Africa since it was the central umbrella for establishing archaeology in the region. This British legacy has heavily influenced how archaeology

is practiced, even in contemporary national institutions such as Makerere University.

During the colonial period, Mehari (2015, pg.96) argues that three opportunities contributed to the institutionalisation of archaeology in Uganda. These opportunities include establishing a museum, creating the conditions for the beginning of scientific archaeological research (O'Brien, 1939), and establishing a department of antiquities. The museum was the Geological Survey Department Museum located at Entebbe. The Geological Survey Department and Museum started in the early 1920s and evolved into the Uganda National Museum, mainly in the 1950s. Thus, archaeology's institutionalisation mostly occurred within the Uganda National Museum. The Geological Survey Department, whose focus was on geology, identified would be chance finds that constituted the first collections in archaeology.

Therefore, the archaeological research agenda was institutionalised through the Geological Survey Department and Museum in Entebbe starting in the early 1920s and through the Uganda National Museum mainly in the 1950s" (Mehari, 2015, pg. 106). James Wayland directed most of the archaeological research at the Geological Survey Museum. The Uganda National Museum took over the responsibilities of the archaeological collections from the Geological Survey Museum at the end of the 1950s.

Eventually, it became the country's leading national institution that houses archaeological collections (Mehari, 2015, pg. 106). Thus, the institutionalisation of archaeology mostly took place within the Uganda National Museum, which served as both a research and curatorial institution. Since the 1950s, the Uganda National Museum carried out most of the archaeological research in Uganda.

Makerere University is part and parcel of the history of the Uganda National Museum. Established in 1908 at Fort Lugard in old Kampala in 1941. The Uganda National Museum was transferred to Makerere University as part of the Margaret Trowell school of Fine Art. It was in 1954 that the Museum took up its current home in Kamwokya, which has continued to be at the centre of archaeological research. This is due to its mandate as a body to regulate and monitor archaeological sites in the country. This brief history of the Uganda National Museum suggests that Makerere University has been at the centre of the institutionalisation of archaeology in Uganda. While that is well known, the history of Makerere's role in knowledge generation in and outside the ivory tower is unclear.

Following the Uganda National Museum was the Department of Antiquities, established in the mid-1950s as a responsible body for overseeing and protecting antiquities, monuments, and reserved areas in Uganda. "The institutionalisation

of archaeology in Uganda in the postcolonial period in the 1960s, with the establishment of the Uganda Museum and the Department of Antiquities, played a significant role in archaeological research and the preservation of cultural heritage” (Mehari, 2015, pg. 119). The “Department of Antiquities oversaw archaeological activities and promoted the development of expertise in the field” (Mehari, 2015, pg.157). Both archaeologists and museum professionals influenced the institutionalisation of archaeology. Ugandans started working at the Uganda Museum in the late 1940s and were involved in archaeology voluntarily by the late 1950s. The official recruitment of Ugandans within the Department of Antiquities began in 1966. Merrick Posnansky, an expatriate archaeologist, played a crucial role in the early development of archaeology in Uganda and facilitated the postgraduate studies of Ugandans in museology in the United States. The leadership of the Department of Antiquities and Museums transitioned to Ugandans in the 1970s. However, political instability, such as the Idi Amin regime, hindered the progress of archaeology in the country. The lack of qualified personnel and limited training opportunities for Ugandans in archaeology were significant challenges faced by the Department of Antiquities. The return of stability in the mid-1980s allowed the resumption of archaeological research by foreign institutions.

Overall, the institutionalisation of archaeology in Uganda during the colonial period aimed to document, preserve, and manage archaeological sites and artefacts and involve East Africans in archaeological research and access to institutional power.

In the 2000s, Makerere University and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania also institutionalised archaeology in Uganda through academic programs and collaboration between Ugandan and Tanzanian archaeologists. The process of institutionalisation faced challenges such as political instability and limited access to formal training opportunities for Ugandans. Overall, the institutionalisation of archaeology in Uganda involved establishing institutions, developing expertise, and collaborating between local and international institutions.

Attempts at historicising archaeology in Africa have tended to continue with a lacuna about Uganda; hence, it continues not to appear in much of the literature. Despite Claasen’s (2023) focus on knowledge generation, the emphasis was on three journals: the *African Archaeology Review*, the *Journal of African History*, and *Azania’s* publication history from 2014-2021, where Uganda sadly appears only once in the 734 papers reviewed. The focus was on disseminating research concerning the authors’ geographical distribution and gender parity. That means tackling the exit stage rather than the entrance of knowledge generation, as in this paper.

In his latest, Ichumbaki (2023) examines how collaboration and training in archaeology have been handled in the last forty years at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). Ichumbaki (2023) examines who trains, who collaborates, the future of archaeology training and collaboration, and the successes and failures of collaboration using UDSM as a case study. While Thondhlana, Lyaya, and Mtetwa (2022) ventured into the politics of knowledge generation, their emphasis was restricted to archaeological science and specifically metallurgy, in which they decried the unequal power relations and frustration that arose out of lack of access to archaeological science laboratories and funding. Therefore, these three current pieces of literature that attempt to historicise archaeology use different approaches to profiling knowledge generation in different geographical contexts, making this paper timely. Therefore, the archaeological research agenda was set and is still based on how archaeology was institutionalised. Can we have a research agenda without funding? Who and what has shaped Uganda's archaeology agenda? Funding seems to be at the centre stage.

Archaeology research Funding

The dynamics of research funding in Uganda have implications for the nature of research. At its inception, archaeology was part and parcel

of the colonial system, with James Wayland as the only researcher in Uganda. As Mehari (2015, pg.99) argues, despite his outstanding contribution to the foundation of archaeology in Uganda, his archaeological research was foreign-funded primarily by the Percy Sladen Trustees based in London. As a result, most material culture remains were exported to European universities and museums, particularly British-based institutions. Scholarly communications were also mainly created with scholars from these institutions. Regarding the influence of foreign funding in archaeology, Mehari (2015, pg.99) emphasises that:

Colonial practice prevented Africans from formally participating in the archaeological enterprise for nearly four decades. This practice created a culture of dependency for future Ugandan archaeologists in the postcolonial period, including funding archaeological projects and knowledge production and dissemination. This dependency valorises Western scholars' work and Western archaeological institutions.

Navigating the funding terrain in Uganda since independence, as presented in Table 1, concurs with Mehari (2015), as noted in the previous citation, that most of the funding has been foreign, with isolated times when Makerere University and Uganda National Museum came into giving support, which was in most cases moral. Table 1 shows that the

fundings ranged from foreign and local academic institutions to government agencies, foreign research bodies, museums, and individuals in 1962-2022 sampled by this paper. (see Table 1). Before independence, African imperialists like Khedive Ismail, who had established the Equatorial province, supported explorers like Sir Samuel Baker in his attempts to stop the slave trade. This explained the initial excavations at Fort Patiko, a renowned slave trade site. Hence, “Patiko was built to help control the northern slave trade” (Posnansky, 2008, pg. 2). It was established in 1862 by Baker, hence the name Baker’s Fort.

From February to April 1968, Dr F. Van Noten and Mr E. Verriest, who were staff of the Tervuren Museum, received support from the *Musée royal de l’Afrique centrale* (Royal Museum of Central Africa) at Tervuren (Belgium) and the *Comité des Fouilles belges en Afrique* to undertake the archaeological excavation of Buvuma and Bugaia

islands (Nenquin, 1971). This also included co-funding from the Uganda Geological Survey Department. It was worth noting that the Royal Museum of Central Africa, established in 1897, was highly connected to Leopold 11’s colonisation of Congo. This suggested that its support of Ugandan archaeology was an attempt to further the colonial agenda, which influenced the research agenda, too. Materials were collected and exhibited through such excavations to attract Belgian investors to further Leopold’s colonial agenda.

Due to the political turmoil in the country in the 1970s-1980s, little research was undertaken. The 1970s were dominated by the BIEA as elaborated in the next section.

Table 1: Post-colonial archaeology funding chronicle in Uganda

Year	Funding Institutions	Project Title
1962	Khedive Ismail of Egypt	Surveyed and excavated Fort Patiko (Amone & Muura, 2014)
1968	Musee royale de L’Afrique Centrale at Tervuren, Belgian & Comite des Foulles belges en Afrique & Uganda Geological Survey Department	Archaeological expedition of Buvuma, Bulgaria and Lake Victoria Nyanza between February and April 1968

1994	National Geographical Society, National Science Foundation of USA, BIEA	Archaeological survey, ceramic analysis, and state formation in western Uganda. African
1995	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (under the direction of social and human sciences), the chair of France, the Museum of Natural History of Paris, and by GDR of the CNRS	Uganda Paleontological Expedition in Toro
1997	Australian Research Council, BIEA, University of New England, Armidale, Australia	Kibiro Salt Gardens 1994 fieldwork
2005	Makerere University College and Wennergren foundation	Makerere University Lolui Island Archaeology Project 1964-65
2005	Trinity College Dublin, Royal Museum of Central Africa in Belgium, Southern Cross University Australia and National Geographical Society	Holocene environmental variability of Munsu
2006	Fulbright	Dufle Archaeological Project, Merrick Posnansky
2007		The Fort of Foweira
2009	BIEA and British Academy, Arts & Humanities Research Council, Sally and Allan Humphris	Buganda Project
2009	Arts and Humanities Research Council, the University of London Central Research Fund, UCL Institute of Archaeology and UCL Graduate school	Iron Technology
2009	SIDA SAREC African Archaeology Network	LSA Occurrences from Open-Air Contexts
2010	University of Witwatersrand Rock Art Institute & BIEA	Rock art of Uganda

2013	An AHRC/NERC ORADS grant supported the Arts & Humanities Research Council, University College London Graduate school, University of London Central Research Fund, and UCL Institute of Archaeology & Radiocarbon dates.	Iron Technology in Toro
2013	SIDA SAREC African Archaeology Network	Cultural interactions in the Upper Nile Catchment areas
2014	US National Science Foundation to Robertshaw; Illes Marie Curie fellowship the University of York and Visiting scholar University of Arizona & BIEA	Munsa excavations as part of the larger project on the evolution of complex societies in Western Uganda
2017	Paleontological Scientific Trust	Technological characteristics of the Sangoan industry
2019	National Institute of Health minority health and health disparities international training programme, Wenner Gren Foundation, The University of Tennessee University of Findlay, American Academy of Forensic Sciences Humanitarian and Humanitarian Resource Centre	Use of archaeology in human rights intervention
2019	Australian National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS), University of Tuscia, Italy and National Museums of Uganda	Chemical and mineral dating of the Nyero pigments
2019	SIDA SAREC African Archaeology Network	Excavation of Lwala Site

2021	University of Pretoria Commonwealth, National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, UCL Grant to Andrew Reid, Kabaale University	An archaeological study of farming communities on the Northern Shores of Lake Victoria
2022	Wenner-Gren Foundation, USA; Washington University in St. Louis, USA; University of Pretoria, South Africa; and The National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences in South Africa (RT).	Namudiri, Eastern Uganda Excavation, by Mica Jones and Ruth Tibesasa
2022	Gherda Henkel Stiftung	Sangoan Techno-Complex”

Source: *Field data*

Archaeological research under the British Institute in Eastern Africa 1960-2014

The Ugandan research arena was greatly influenced by the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), especially in the 1960s; established in 1959, “it changed its name in 1970 to the ‘British Institute in Eastern Africa since it was initially referred to as the British Institute of History and Archaeology in East Africa. Initially, the BIEA had its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, which was established in 1960, while in 1962, it established a sub-branch at the Uganda Museum to encourage up-country research” (www.biea). That implies that its mission was to research history and archaeology within the East African region (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania). The underlying interest of the Institute, as stated on its website suggests that,

East African history, as generally understood and taught in schools, was dominated by the exploits of outsiders: explorers, missionaries, and colonial administrators. Meanwhile, archaeological research in the region (notably that of Louis and Mary Leakey) had primarily been concerned with the Early Stone Age, which was more relevant to human history than the inhabitants of contemporary East Africa. The need to encourage a less Eurocentric historiography of the region and to pursue new directions in research was felt urgently by the late 1950s as the countries of East Africa approached independence.

The above implied that the BIEA set itself an agenda of decolonising research since, as stated above, it was previously under foreigners. There was a need to change from Stone Age

research. That necessitated working closely with the Uganda National Museums in Uganda and the new University of East Africa to promote a better understanding of East Africa's pre-colonial past.

From our sample, as presented in Table 1, the BIEA supported the excavations at Kibiro as far as 1997, undertaken by Connah (1997). In the 2000s, John Sutton, Andrew Reid, and Merrick Posnansky were supported by the BIEA (Uganda National Museum research catalogue). "The support of BIEA was in many forms, including research scholarships and student attachment schemes. The BIEA usually gave logistical support" (Lejju et al., 2005:1059 & Robertshaw, 1994:129; Iles et al., 2014). The latter provided graduates with attachments to gain field research experience (letter of Sutton to the Head of History, Tibenderana dated 8th May 1997). Sutton well elaborated on the emphasis on student attachment as follows,

My inclination towards pedagogical reasons as well as staffing would be to press for provisional archaeology within History rather than making archaeology a separate subject with a full degree course of its own that would ensure ample opportunity and staffing (Correspondence of Sutton, Chair of the History Department dated, February 1999 in response to a letter dated 30th January 1999 interested in starting archaeology at Makerere University).

That means the bid to start teaching archaeology supported knowledge generation since the BIEA attachments entailed archaeological field research. Despite that, this paper does not discuss field schools as Mehari, Schimdt, and Mapunda (2014) did because this topic was briefly discussed by Kyazike and Mehari (2022). An examination of the research supported by the BIEA shows that from 1960 to 1965, they focused on ironworks in Karagwe using history and oral traditions undertaken in 1962. The second research was historically focusing on the precolonial history of Buganda by Ssemakula Kiwanuka. This shows that the BIEA set out from the genesis to support Iron Age research as detailed by Okeny, Kyazike and Gumushabe (2020). Despite the numerous contributions of the BIEA, some of the researchers had to fund themselves, while the colonial government was also crucial from the start, as noted by Robertshaw (2023):

I assume the colonial Ugandan government funded archaeological work in the colonial era. Kenneth Marshall was an archaeologist employed by the Uganda Geological Survey in the early 1950s. People like Eric Lanning may have used his funds as district commissioner to support his archaeology. When Merrick P. was in Kampala, his work was presumably funded by the BIEA and Makerere. Any Americans working in Uganda in the 1960s were probably funded by their universities

and the US National Science Foundation (NSF). My initial work in Uganda and Sutton's was funded by the BIEA, which employed us. After I moved to the US, my work was funded by grants from National Geographic and NSF, with logistical support from the BIEA. Andrew Reid's work was presumably funded by grants he received in the UK and UCL (after being hired) (Robertshaw correspondence, 3rd August 2023).

Several reasons suggest why the BIEA focused on the Iron Age research, which became an acceptable research agenda for Uganda. Three possibilities were raised by Robertshaw's correspondence (2023) that were:

- i) Back in the early days of the BIEA, Louis Leakey gave his blessing for the institute to exist in Nairobi, provided the institute researched on later periods, not the periods (Stone Age) in which the Leakey's were interested in. As far as I know, this was never written. It could have been a conversation between Leakey and Chittick (or Chittick's boss, Sir Laurence Kirwan, president of the BIEA governing board).
- ii) Merrick Posnansky and John Sutton became much more interested in the Iron Age, even without being told to work on it.
- iii) Roland Oliver, the famous Africanist historian at SOAS, became President of the BIEA governing council in the 1980s. He loved Uganda and thought that Ugandan archaeology

could be crucial to some of the research questions that most interested him, namely the Bantu expansion and perhaps the Luo expansion. Roland put much pressure on me to start working in Uganda during the Iron Age as soon as Museveni came to power. Since the BIEA employed me then, I had no choice (other than resigning) (Robertshaw, correspondence 8th August 2023).

Robertshaw's (2023) correspondence suggested that Iron Age research was central to Ugandan archaeology, funded by the BIEA. Most of the lead archaeology researchers to Uganda then were the Directors of the BIEA, such as "John Sutton (1983-1998) and the Assistant Directors, especially Merrick Posnansky (1962-1964), Robert Soper (1965-1972) and Peter Robertshaw (1979-1988)" (www.biea.ac.uk/staff/). This explains Posnansky, Reid, and Ashley's (2005) work on Lolui Island, Soper's (1971) on Chobe and Robertshaw's (1997) works on Munsu in an attempt to explore the Chwezi myth.

Other than the BIEA were other research agencies, such as the Wennergren Foundation that supported Chaplin, a Makerere University student, to research at Lolui Island (Robertshaw et al., 2005). Similarly in 2019, the same foundation supported the use of archaeology in Human Rights Intervention (Kim, et al 2019) and lately in 2022 supported Tibesaasa's PhD research (Jones & Tibesaasa, 2022). Other funders included National Geographic (Lejju

et al., 2005), Fulbright (Posnasny, 2006), British Academy (Saton, 2007), Arts and Humanities Research Council (Iles, 2003), US National Science Foundation and Marie Curie (Iles et al., 2013), Paleontological Scientific Trust (Ssemulende 2017), Humanitarian Resource Centre and Australian National Institute of Humanities (Kim, etal 2019) and Social Sciences and Gherda Henkel (Okeny, 2021 and Ssemulende 2022). The latter is discussed in detail under the role of Makerere University.

The African Archaeology Network and training Ugandan archaeologists

While the BIEA played a crucial role in archaeology knowledge generation, the emphasis was on fieldwork that gave Ugandans formal skills rather than acquiring qualifications. This was the gap addressed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA/SAREC). This is affirmed by Thondhlana, Lyaya, and Mtetwa (2022, Pg.464), who state that,

Foreign funding sustains the training and practice of archaeology in most African countries. For example, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA/SAREC) played a crucial role in building the capacity of archaeologists in Southern and East Africa.

Therefore, it is evident that, to date, almost all Ugandan archaeologists have been supported by SIDA-SAREC at the University of Dar

es Salaam from 2007 to 2013, then referred to as the African Archaeology Network (AAN). This then suggested that “SIDA/SAREC was the golden and exemplary model of the north-south continental cooperation,” Ogundiran (2016), cited by Thondhlana, Lyaya & Mtetwa, and (2022, Pg.464). Since the AAN intended to examine “past urbanisation and human responses to environmental change” (www.udsm.ac.tz), the student research projects had to fit within that research agenda. This means that the agenda was predetermined but had room for geographical diversity.

Among the Ugandans who were trained at the University of Dar es Salaam included two who had funding from other organisations. Nyiracyiza (2013), whose iron working research in western Uganda that culminated in a master of archaeology in 2013 was supported by the government of Uganda to the Uganda National Museum. Secondly, Ssemulende Robert examined the technological characteristics of the Sangoan industry at Sango Bay, Southern Uganda, with support from the Paleontological Scientific Trust (Ssemulende, 2017). Finally, starting in 2021, Asiimwe Raymond’s investigation on public perception and response towards the practice of public archaeology in Ndali, Western Uganda, was possible through funding from Peter Schimdt. The latter depicts the changes that, despite decades of research in Uganda, some foreign archaeologists are starting to plough back. However,

those supported have to fit into their project research agenda. From 2012 to 2020, “the Ndali project entailed environmental and settlement research, community engagement, and participation, funded by the National Geographic Society” (www.anthro.ufl.edu).

Role of Makerere University

Several academic institutions have supported archaeological research in Uganda including Makerere University, University College Dublin (Lejju et al., 2005), University College London (Illes, 2009& Illes, 2013), the University of Witwatersrand (Namono, 2010), University of Tuscia, Italy, and the University of Tennessee (Kim, et al., 2019), the University of Pretoria, and Kabaale University (Tibesaasa, 2021). These universities mainly supported PhD students who were undertaking research in Uganda, and their research followed the funder’s interests. In all this debate, one may wish to single out the role of Uganda’s premier university as the subject of this section.

Makerere University played a significant role in institutionalising archaeology in Uganda (Mehari, 2015). In the 1960s, Merrick Posnansky introduced archaeology informally to Makerere University students, providing exposure to archaeological research projects and higher education training. However, formal archaeological training opportunities were lacking in later years. Makerere University collaborated with the

Uganda Museum in research and outreach activities and provided training in museum studies. The university also played a role in revitalising archaeology in the 1990s and has contributed to the growth and development of the discipline. Overall, Makerere University has been instrumental in providing educational opportunities, fostering collaboration, and contributing to the development of archaeology in Uganda.

The role of Makerere University can be seen in the supportive role given to the researchers as seen in the words of Peter Schmidt, who noted that “Merrick Posnansky and Victor Turner both at Makerere University opened me to the historical anthropology approach” (Schmidt, 1983, pg. 75). Therefore, Posnansky (personal communication, 6th August 2023) suggested that, “Makerere should be noted for teaching archaeology and student participation.” From the above correspondence, it is clear that Makerere University taught courses in archaeology earlier than its introduction as a course in 2013. Besides teaching, Makerere University students and staff were involved in fieldwork whose agenda was not framed by Makerere University. As Thondhlama, Lyaya and Mtetwa (2022, Pg. 461) cite Andah, 1995, Pg. 151) decried, ‘Africa as a breeding ground of PhD students from Europe and North America in all the social sciences and historical sciences’. This did not spare Ugandan archaeology.

Therefore, Ugandans have been involved in archaeological research through their participation in fieldwork at various historical moments. Posnansky, Reid, & Ashley (2005, Pg.73), in the excavation of Cairn 11 following their work at Lolui Island in 1964-65 involved Messrs Baya Nabuguzi, Dick Mwapele, Leban Nyirenda, O. Ojwang and J.H Chaplin, who were by then Makerere University students.

Previously, in 1962, a team of Ugandan and British schoolboys surveyed and excavated Fort Patiko, built in 1862 by Samuel Baker, the first European to plot the position of Lake Albert. In 1963, school boys again dug Wedalai, established around 1876. The favourite fort of Emin Pasha gave an idea of the size of the Egyptian military stations and also revealed Emin Pasha's use of canned food.

In 2004-2005, Dr J.E.G Sutton surveyed the Fort of Foweira (Saton, 2007), where Samuel Baker dug in Bunyoro. The Bakuchi regiment occupied the Fort after the 1897 regiment mutiny. This was followed by the 2006-2007 Dufle archaeological project supported by Fulbright (Posnansky, 2006). The Fulbright Commission award given to Merrick Posnansky to come to Makerere in 2006 contributed to the Dufle fieldwork of 2006-2007. 'Merrick was also requested to revamp the archaeology program we feel is needed and identify one of our staff, give him the training to keep the program after our departure' (email correspondence

between Asimwe and Posnansky dated 24th September 2006). Merrick, who had come under the Fulbright Senior Specialist program, promised to design the kickstart course in archaeology. This suggests that along with the funding for research, there was also support for teaching, as the case above suggested.

The Makerere Geography Department also helped and loaned beds for student use at Bweyorere in Ankole in 1959 and Bigo in 1960. Posnansky, in his own words, has this to say about his work and funding.

I do not know if Lanning was funded, though I do know that he chipped in his money for some of his work. For some joint work by Bill Bishop and myself at Nsongezi (published in a geology monograph), we arranged a little support from the government. However, Bishop received some outside funding for later work in the Semliki valley in the late 1960s (Posnansky, 6th August 2023).

This means that instead of Makerere taking centre stage in guiding the research agenda, it provided a supportive role like any other person outside the ivory tower could do. This calls for balancing the imbalance discussed later in this paper.

African involvement in research 1962-2022

This section explores the involvement of Africans in research in terms of participation in fieldwork and leading research projects and publications. A sample from 1962 to 2022 (Table

2) examined how Africans were involved as researchers and project leads. Before examining how to balance the imbalance, it is interesting to take note of the role of Africans or Ugandans in that matter as far as involvement in fieldwork and the publications that arose were concerned. While Africans have been extensively involved in 21 of the 23 projects sampled (Table 2) regarding project leadership, they future in 9 of the 23 projects. The involvement of Africans came mainly in the 2000s, when the African Archaeology Network started supporting graduate training in archaeology, which had a fieldwork component.

Table 2. African involvement in research 1962-2022

Year	Africans Involved	African researchers	African project leaders
1962	None	No	No
1968	Bulenzi	Yes	No
1994	Thaddayo Otieno as a driver and several staff and Director of BIEA in various ways	Yes	No
1995	Department of Antiquities, National Council of Science and Technology and Geological Survey and Mines department at Entebbe	No	No
1997	Ephraim Kamhunagire and Gilbert Oteyo (deputy director of National Parks; Oketayot identified the site of Paraa and Okwong (deputy chief game warden who arranged boat travels in Murchison	Yes	No

2005	Messrs. Baya Nabaguzi, Dick Mwapele, Laban Nyirenda, O. Ojwanga and J.H. Chaplin, at the time, all students of Makerere University College, took part in excavations	Yes	No
2005	Julius Leju	Yes	Yes
2006	Makerere University Students and Staff	Yes	No
2007	Uganda Journal		
2009	Peter Bisaso and Dismas Ongwen helped in the laboratory and thought about the slag and Shadreck Chirikure	Yes	No
2009	Rose Nkaale, Elijah Kisembo, Paul Kabuye and Dismas Ongwen for field work participation	Yes	No
2009	Muwonge Herman	Yes	Yes
2010	Jimmy Kutosi field support; Micheal Robert Okwi, Dismas Ongwen, and Tamale Alex for survey assistance	Yes	Yes
2013	Rose Nkaale, Dismas Ongwen and Staff of BIEA for field work support & Charlotte Karungi and Elijah Kisembo (interpreters)- Makerere University	Yes	No

2013	Elizabeth Kyazike	Yes	Yes
2014	Uganda National Museum as a collaborator	Yes	No
2017	Ssemulende Robert	Yes	Yes
2019	Wilfred Komakech, Joshua Oballim, Hilary Epes Oballim, Jeffrey Opiyo, and Godfrey Okot	Yes	No
2019	National Museum of Uganda	Yes	No
2019	Kessy, Emmanuel T., Ruth Tibesasa, and Herman Muwonge	Yes	Yes
2021	Tibesasa Ruth	Yes	Yes
2022	Tibesasa Ruth	Yes	Yes
2022	Ssemulende Robert	Yes	Yes

Source: *Field Data*

Glaringly, museum staff such as Bulenzi, Kamuhangire, Nkaale, Bisaso, and Ongwen were involved. This is not surprising since the Uganda National Museum is the country's first contact for archaeological research. The museum would have also guided the researchers to contact academic institutions such as Makerere. Had Makerere been significantly involved, this would have saved the rate of publications about Ugandan archaeology.

The gap in Ugandan archaeology literature is worth noting. An examination of 23 publications from 1962-2022 suggested that while Africans (Ugandans) were involved,

they would only become the first authors of publications that arose from their graduate training. Other than that, their names would only appear in the acknowledgements if they were lucky. The issue of the visibility of Africans in science is not restricted to Uganda, as noted by Rabkin et al., (1979, pg.499),

The question of whether (and, if so, to what extent) science is an artefact of local, national conditions-or, conversely, represents a transnational phenomenon largely devoid of geographically defined properties - has been debated at length in the science studies literature.

That means the problem is more significant than just missing on the authors' list. Even those who labour to write their works are rarely cited based on research undertaken in two African countries, Kenya and Nigeria. Therefore, what impact do even the few Ugandan archaeological publications have on science? This is an area worth investigating before we jubilate the involvement of Africans in archaeological research since the 2000s, as indicated in Table 2 above. How can we balance the imbalance?

Balancing the imbalance

As African archaeologists, we are both satisfied and dissatisfied with how archaeology research is handled on the continent. Uganda is not exceptional. We are satisfied with the opportunities given to Africans to study and practice archaeology. However, it is also observed that national archaeological institutions have inherited colonial research themes and continue to support these research agendas. African personnel have yet to determine the agenda because it is done through external funding. For the most part, international funding institutions and universities have also honoured research themes that emerged during the colonial period.

As part of their mandate, Ugandan universities are supposed to be knowledge creators. For example, Makerere University, as the Ivory Tower, should have guided the research agenda. In the case of

the archaeological research agenda, Makerere University was mainly uninvolved because archaeology was not developed as an academic program until the 2013-2014 academic year (Kyazike & Mehari, 2022). The main reasons highlighted were the lack of personnel and funding, the role of the National Museum and political instability.

Archaeology has proven vital in national identity, history, economic development and more. However, to achieve further relevance to the nation, Ugandan citizens should be decision-makers and active participants in setting the agenda of archaeological practice in the country. Both national institutions and professionals need to critically assess what form of archaeological knowledge production, dissemination, training, and public engagement needs to be done. Both parties and other relevant institutions need to focus on people-centred approaches. Since Ugandans are the main stakeholders, their needs and priorities must be at the centre of the country's archaeological research agenda. The role of Makerere University and its siblings must be to produce scholars who can run these research agendas that focus primarily on national and community development. This argument is not to completely isolate Uganda and its professionals from international scholarship or funding opportunities. However, all endeavours must be directed to benefit the people, the institutions, and the professionals. It

has to be done for the mutual benefit of all participants, considering the needs of the people whose history is being studied.

At the centre of the debate are questions like, why should archaeology be practiced in Uganda? Who should determine its research agenda? What should be the purpose of the research? Moreover, how should Uganda's higher education institutions be involved in these endeavours? While it is clear that funding is the primary mover of the research agenda, the goals of archaeology ought to be taken into account, as well as the needs of the people who are the subject of the research. If this is not addressed, we remain like artefacts that must be studied. Ichumbaki (2023, P.3) suggested that.

The dependence on funding and scientific paradigms flowing from the global north means that many African Archaeologists do not have a research agenda to guide training and collaboration. This will continue if African scholars do not take over knowledge production and initiate projects meaningful to Africa.

The above citation is in line with "The story of how lion hunting has been told up to now by the hunters; it is now time for the lions to tell their own stories. African proverb" (Dufle project, 2006-2007).

The few well-trained African archaeologists become tied to desk posts in museums

and antiquities services or to serving innumerable international bodies which require African participation. Once trained, such archaeologists lose inspiration from working with a larger group of specialists with access to good libraries, comparative collections, availability of funds, and regular publication outlets. Africa is one of the most open areas of the world for foreign archaeologists. It can only remain that way if host countries are brought into the research process at all levels, not only in the field. In planning, African countries' expectations must be considered most closely. Their historians and archaeologists are not necessarily interested in the same problems as the outside scholars (Posnansky, 1982, pg. 355).

That means there is a need for some regulatory institutions, laws, and policies. The laws would be helpful but are also part of the colonial legacy. This is because the research must follow ethical standards, hence the need for regulations. In the case of Uganda, an examination of the history of laws and policies governing archaeological research shows that Uganda is part of the colonial legacy of East Africa. The key questions are: What was the motive behind the institution of laws to protect archaeological research? The initial emphasis was on antiquities. Why? The history of archaeology research laws in East Africa suggests that the first was in Kenya, termed

the Ancient Monuments Preservation Ordinance of 1927, a verbatim copy of India's Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904.

According to Basu and Damodaran (2015, pg.11)

As the significance of East Africa's archaeological and paleontological record became known, there was increasing pressure to safeguard it from reckless excavations that had befallen Great Zimbabwe. This led to the passing of the Preservation of Archaeological Objects Ordinance in 1929 for Tanganyika, amendment of the 1927 Kenya legislation, and introduction of a similar legislation in Uganda in 1934.

The 1934 legislation in Uganda was not driven by scientific interests but rather by international politics and rivalry, mainly arising from the tension between Britain and Italy about Italian fascism spearheaded by Benito Mussolini towards present-day Ethiopia. The animosity led to the expedition by Nino del Grande of the fascist Colonial Institute Rome targeting Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, where anthropological excavations and research would be undertaken.

The proposal for the archaeological expedition to be led by Raymond Dart was opposed and doubted by East Africa's archaeologists like Louis Leakey. The matter was referred to the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Royal Society. All these raised concerns about the credentials of the expedition members, stressing the

need for careful scientific methods in paleontological excavation, drawing attention to the existing research being conducted by British institutions and arguing that paleontological materials collected on British territory should be placed in the national collection for the preservation and study and not allowed in foreign hands.

The responses were forwarded to the Italian *d'Affaires* in London and communicated to the governors of Kenya and Uganda. This set the legal grounds for restricting the excavation of sites other than those declared ancient monuments in Kenya and permitted in heritage legislation. However, Uganda had none before 1934 (Basu & Damodaran, 2015, pg. 242).

Therefore, Uganda's 1934 Ordinance came in to provide for the preservation of objects of archaeological significance. It was passed swiftly as a response to the threats stated above. The Ordinance was enacted due to a dispatch in which permission was needed to engage in archaeological excavations to be withheld following the Nino expedition. The Ugandan law was guided by the Tanganyika Ordinance of 1929. Besides, five of the eight sections with modifications were from Kenya's 1927 Ordinance and another from the Cyprus Antiquities Law of 1905. The Ugandan law had only two pages. Given such a background, could the Ugandan heritage law ably set the archaeology research agenda?

Uganda's heritage statutes entailed formal and traditional heritage

legislation management systems (Mahachi & Kamuhangire, 2008). A case in point are Statutes 7 and 8 of 1993, which provided for restoring important institutions and returning their assets and properties confiscated by Milton Obote in 1967 (Ndoro, 2009, pg. 54). Therefore, in 1993, the Traditional Institutions Restoration Act 'reinstated kingship and returned cultural assets such as the old palaces, tombs, land and restored kingship', especially in Buganda (Ndoro, 2009, p.48). Then, the Local Government Act of 1997 authorised local councils to manage heritage resources such as urban museums, libraries, and public parks.

A law that regulated archaeological research came that required the archaeologists to associate with the Department of Museums and Monuments to get excavation permits before going to the field. Permission was also required to deposit the finds in the museum and export some of the findings for laboratory analyses and study on loan. However, Nyiracyiza (2009, pg.9) noted that "Sections 3(1) and 3(2) state that the minister may declare any object of archaeological, paleontological, tradition or historical interest to be protected' but its enforcement has been problematic.

In 1998, changes in the heritage governing institutions took a toll on the archaeology research agenda. Cultural heritage, including archaeology, was shifted from the Ministry of Culture and Community Development to the Ministry of

Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, which had the Department of Museums and Antiquities. The Ministry of Tourism, wildlife and Antiquities adopted its current name, the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry. The change from a cultural heritage-oriented ministry to tourism-related activities meant a drive to cultural tourism rather than conservation of heritage research. Therefore, having a clear ministry may balance the imbalance.

The 1967 Historical and Monuments Act Cap 46 was repealed by the Museum and Monuments Act of 2023 following the Bill of 2022. This also should be seen as directed at the next phase of our research agenda. Object 3 section (i) intends to "promote research and development of natural and cultural heritage" (Museum Bill, 2022, p.8). The Bill elaborates on the acquisition of research permits and the jurisdiction of its research direction to the heritage, including archaeology. That said, implementation requires specificity of the agenda.

On the issue of research permits, Peterson (2023) suggested that,

The politics of research permits have always been vexed! In colonial times, British officials would not allow researchers access to government archives; even government-sponsored researchers were forbidden from citing archival files. In the 1960s, the Obote government strictly limited archival access. My strong sense is that Uganda's government has always been

nervous about information management: Buganda's well-educated campaigners, lawyers, and scholars were always looking for evidence that they could use to indict the Uganda government, and thus, the government sought to close off access to information of all kinds (Peterson personal communication, August 2023).

In all these research dilemmas, we are expected to have this shaped by the academic institutions. The question is, where is Uganda's premier University in shaping the archaeology research agenda? Archaeology research in Uganda could be promoted through field schools. For instance, in an endeavour to construct the history of Uganda, Reid made visits in 2001, 2002, 2009, 2001, 2013, and 2015 as part of the undergraduate Studies in African Field Archaeology undergraduate students with support from the Uganda Museum by the participation of the likes of Peter Bisaso and Dismas Ongwen. Even then, these mainly supported British students in undertaking graduate research rather than Ugandan ones. Hence, the imbalance continues until we can fund our research.

Conclusion

There has never been any centralised determination of the archaeological agenda in Uganda. Individual archaeologists generally pursued their interests and researched if they successfully persuaded granting agencies to support it. Therefore, practitioners dominate the production

of archaeology knowledge. Even though local institutions are run by local practitioners, knowledge production and dissemination have been heavily dominated by foreigners. An examination of the research from 1962 to 2022 showed that archaeological research was institutionalised in the Uganda National Museum, where it engaged in field works and curatorship and rarely in the publications that arose. Since the Uganda National Museum was once at Makerere, the premier university was indirectly involved in the project from an earlier stage.

The funders of archaeological research included mainly those from Europe, America and, in isolated cases, Australia. These came in through research agencies, research councils, and universities such as the University College London and the Tennessee University. African universities like Witwatersrand, Pretoria, Makerere, and Kabaale also played vital roles. However, while Africans were extensively involved in the field, mainly as research assistants from the museum, they rarely appeared on the authorship list as their foreign counterparts. In instances where Africans published especially works from their graduate training, these have not attracted scientific visibility. On this basis, there is a need to balance the imbalance through proper legislation, government support and further training.

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