

# Two Thousand Years in Dendi, Northern Benin

*Archaeology, History and Memory*

*Edited by*

Anne Haour



BRILL

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## Kwara zeno (KAZ-14-SI & II)

*Pascal Gnankpo Amoussou, Inès Corolin Amoussou, Nicolas Nikis, Olivier Gosselain and Alexandre Livingstone Smith*

### 1 Location

Kwara zeno is a former settlement of Bogo Bogo (GOG-14-SI) and Gorouberi (GOB-14-SI). It is located slightly to the east of Bogo Bogo away from the Niger river on a plateau northwest of Gorouberi. According to informants, the settlement was created following the dispersal of people from Torouwey (TRO).

### 2 Geographical Coordinates

LAT: 12,1053230110555 LONG: 3,11230600811541 (WGS84)

### 3 Discovery

KAZ-14-SI and SII were identified and excavated by Pascal Gnankpo Amoussou, Inès Corolin Amoussou and Alexandre Livingstone Smith on 30 January 2014.

### 4 Destruction Risks

The site is a former settlement and is ploughed for cultivation. It is not under any specific threat and mitigation measures are not urgent.

### 5 Site

The initial survey yielded abundant potsherds (including very large fragments). The extent of the site is unknown. It is very close to its supposed modern day counterpart, as Bogo Bogo is only a few hundred metres to the west.

### 6 Excavation

Kwara zeno had never been excavated before. Two test pits were made in the centre of the area. The test pit was

1 × 1 m and excavated by spits of 10 cm (except for the superficial layer which was excavated in one spit of 20 cm). Within each spit, archaeological contexts (i.e. distinct units) were separated, sieved and bagged separately. All the spits were sieved down to 5 mm. Test pit S1 and SII were completed at 50 cm, 10 to 20 cm into sterile soil (compact yellow sand).

### 7 Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of KAZ-14-SI & II are simple and shallow. S1 displays 4 contexts, which could be related to two horizons. The first consists of a compact brown grey sand (top disturbed by ploughing). The second consist of an accumulation of loose grey sand and ash mixed with burnt earth and pottery overlaying a unit of charcoal-rich brown sand. The natural substrate consists of compact yellow sand.

SII consists of a charcoal-rich grey brown unit (top disturbed by ploughing), overlying a shallow depression dug into the natural soil. The filling of this depression consists of mixed brown and grey sand. Sandy laminations are apparent at the bottom.

### 8 Finds

The site is clean of modern pollution such as cloth or plastic. Various types of pottery were found but the striking feature is the abundance of undecorated potsherds and the presence of *blepharis* roulette-decorated pottery. Also, some potsherds collected during the survey and the excavations exhibit tamper marks on their internal surface. Excavations at Kwara zeno yielded a large glass bead (SF 2014-77) at 30–40 in S1 and two pipe fragments (SF 2014-05 and -06, both at 20–30, one in each trench). Also recovered were an iron rod with worked extremities (SF 2014-89) which can be likened to a tool, and a metal ring belonging to the hardware category (SF 2014-88) (see Filippini, Figure 19.1).



FIGURE 1.1  
Site under excavation

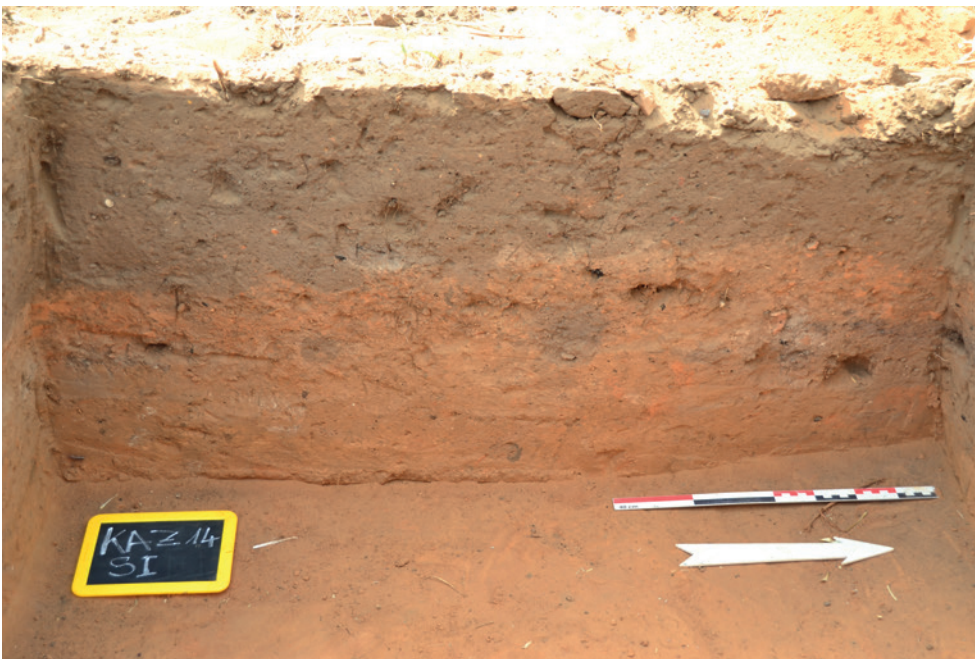


FIGURE 1.2  
KAZ-14-SI, West section at completion

## 9 Interpretation and Cultural Attribution

Informants explained that this site was the first occupation of Bogo Bogo and is also related to the history of Gorouberi. The rather shallow deposits indicate a short span occupation (a few generations?) in both S1 and S11. The presence of *blepharis*-decorated pottery and possibly of pounding on a concave mould connects this site with other shallow occupation sites of the area – such as Torouwey (TRO), Boyeri (BOY) and Toutokayeri (TTO).

Considering the absence of sub-present items on the site and oral testimonies attributing the site to an early settlement phase of Bogo Bogo, this occupation can reasonably be attributed to pre-colonial times. Folded strip rouletted sherds occurred consistently though the S1 sequence whereas loose folded strip-rouletted predominated in S11. Yet considering the radiocarbon dates and the presence of the pipe fragments this site on the whole argues for a post-medieval date. The links made by oral histories between Kwara zeno and Bogo Bogo, and, indirectly, to Torouwey, Gorouberi, Boyeri and Kompanti must be factored in.





FIGURE I.3 KAZ-14-SII, West section at completion

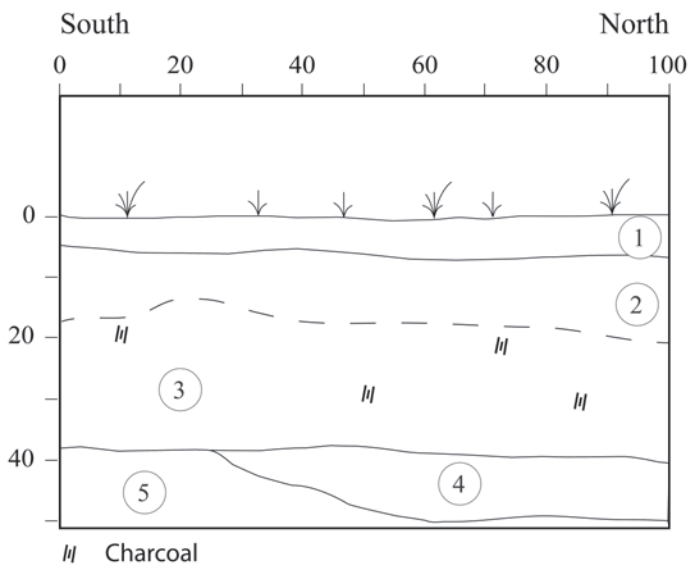


FIGURE I.4  
KAZ-14-SII, West section

- 1 loose brown grey sand partially disturbed by ploughing
- 2 loose grey ashy sand with burnt earth, charcoal and pottery
- 3 brown sand
- 4 Depression filled with brown to light grey sand (with possible very fine humid stabilization layers)
- 5 Compact yellow sand (natural substratum)

## 10 Radiocarbon Dates

Beta-416119	120	30	KAZ SI, 30–40	Phase 5
Beta-416120	280	30	KAZ SII, 40–50. Within small pit feature	Phase 5

## 11 KAZ SI

TABLE 1.1 Desampling

Level	Number
0–20	56
20–30	8
30–40	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

Analysis in the field by Alexandre Livingstone Smith and Amoussou Inès Corolin

TABLE 1.2 Category 4

Context	Undecorated	Illegible
0–20	106	23
20–30	16	
30–40	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>26</b>

Analysis by Ali Livingstone Smith, Amoussou Inès Corolin and David Kay

TABLE 1.3 Category 3

Context	#	Burn	Dec1	Dec2	Dec3	Dec4	
0–20	5	ext					
	1		rbt				
	1		undec	rbt			
	1	int	rfp-4				
	2		roul				
	1		undec	rc-1a			
	1		rc-1a				
	1		rfp-1b				
	2	int	undec	rfp-1b			
	3		undec	rfp-1b			
	1		rfp-1a				
	2	ext/int					
	3	int					
20–30	1	ext					
	1	ext/int	sl-1	undec	indis		
	1	ext/int	undec	sl-2	rc-1a		
	1	ext/int	undec	sl-2	rc-1a	st	
	1		rfp-1b				
	1	int	rfp-1b	indis			
	1	ext	undec	rfp-1c			
	1		undec	rfp-1b	indis		
	30–40	5	ext				
		1	ext	undec	rfp-1b		
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>						

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE 1.4 Rims

Context	#	R. Type	Brn	Dec1	L1	Dec2	L2	Dec3	L3	Ang.	Diam.	Mx. thick
0–20	1	S1								3	16	1.0
	1	S1	ext/int							3	17	0.5
	1	S1								4		1.0
	1	S1	ext/int	undec	u	sl-3	u			3	15	0.7
	1	S1	ext/int							4		0.6

TABLE 1.4 Rims (*cont.*)

Context	#	R. Type	Brn	Dec1	L1	Dec2	L2	Dec3	L3	Ang.	Diam.	Mx. thick
	1	S6		undec	u	sl-1	l			4		0.8
	1	S4		undec	u	rc-1a	u	indis	u	3	12	0.6
	1	S4								4		0.7
	2	T13								4		0.9
	2	T13	ext/int							4		0.7
	1	E4								4		0.8
20-30	1	T13								4	14	0.9
	1	E4	ext							4		0.8
	1	S1	ext/int							5		0.7
	1	E26								5		0.7
30-40	1	T111	ext/int							3	11	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>											

Analysis by David Kay

12 KAZ SII

TABLE 1.5 Desampling

Context	#
0-20	61
20-30	36
30-40	16
40-50	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>

Analysis in the field by Alexandre Livingstone Smith, Carolin Amoussou, Alidou Abdou Dramane, Xavier Grégoire Olesegun, Franck N'Po Takpara and at UEA by David Kay

TABLE 1.6 Category 4

Context	Undecorated	Illegible
0-20	49	1
20-30	26	1
30-40	4	1
40-50	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>4</b>

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE 1.7 Category 3

Context	#	Burn	Dec 1	Dec 2
0-20	6	ext		
	4	ext/int		
	1		rce-8	
	1		rfp-5	
	1		undec	rfp-5
	1	ext	sl-4	
	1		undec	rbt
20-30	6	ext		
	3	int		
	3	ext/int		
	2		undec	rfp-5
	2		rfp-5	
30-40	4	ext/int		
40-50	1	ext	st-1	sl-1
	1	ext	sc-1	
	1	ext	sl-2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>			

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE 1.8 Rims

Context	#	R. type	Brn	Dec 1	L1	Ang	Diam	Mx. Thick
0-20	1	S6				2	17	0.8
	1	S4				3		0.6
	1	E1				4		0.7
	1	E4		Sl-1	U	4		0.8
	1	E4						0.7
	1	E10				4		0.6
	1	E21				4		0.9
	1	E26				4		0.9
	1	E14	int			4		0.8
20-30	1	S1				4		0.7
	1	S4						0.8
	1	S1				4	20	0.6
	1	S1	ext/int			3	16	0.5
	1	E1				4		0.5
	1	E4	ext			4	27	0.9
	1	E1				4	13	0.8
	1	E26				5		0.8
30-40	1	E10						0.9
	1	S1				3	14	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>							

Analysis by David Kay