

THIMLICH OHINGA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE



NOMINATION DOSSIER FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Party:

Republic of Kenya

State, Province or Region

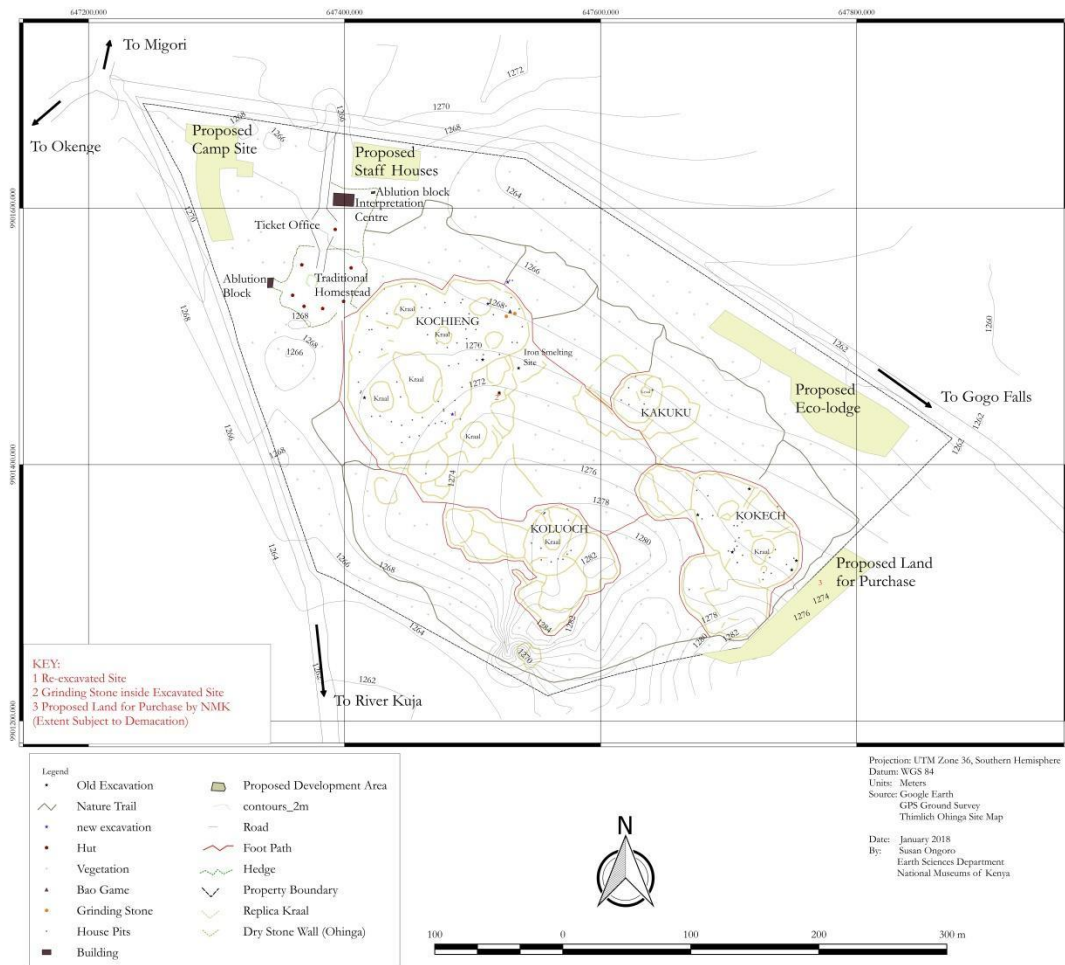
Kenya, Migori County

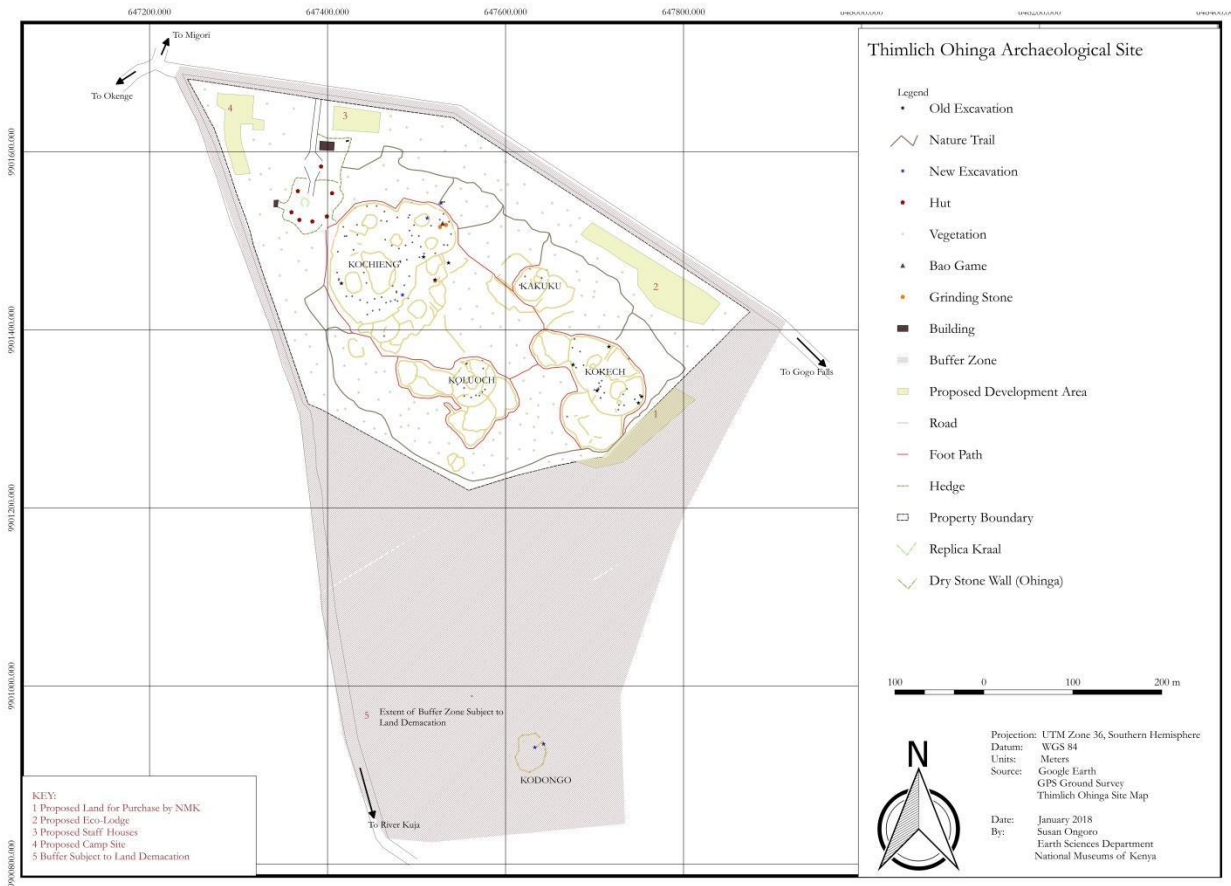
Name of Property

Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second – E 34° 19' 33.9852" and S 0° 53' 28.8168"

Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site





JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site is a fourteenth century stone built complex representing a unique dry stone architectural tradition of massive monumental walls. These constructions characterize the early settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin. The walls exhibit meticulously arranged stones rising to a height of about 3.9 m. They were built without mortar and have many complimenting features that have made them survive for several centuries. Today, they have been preserved in an unchanged character.

Criteria under which the property is nominated

Thimlich Ohinga is proposed to be inscribed in the World Heritage List as a Cultural Site under criteria iii, iv and v.

Criterion (iii)

Thimlich Ohinga is a living testimony to a unique cultural tradition of stone wall fortifications that lasted over a long period of time (1650 AD-1950 AD). This site is the largest and best preserved example of this fortification tradition in the region. The magnificence of the stone walls and layout of the site points to evolution from simple structures to more complex ones at the site. Thimlich Ohinga is located at a landscape of successive occupation and displacement by

different linguistic groups that build upon what their predecessors left. The successive occupation continued up to the early 20th century and left the diverse fortifications with the most prominent being Thimlich Ohinga. The influence of this development went beyond Thimlich to the neighbouring areas within the region, with a wide distribution of similar structures in southwestern Kenya. This tradition was also practised in other forms, even where stone fortification was not possible due to lack of stone. In such cases earthen wall fortifications were constructed prominently in northern Nyanza region. The spatial planning of the interior and associated features of these structures reflect a tradition that was used by different linguistic groups and continues to be used in homestead and houses by the local community.

Each ohinga had its own governance structures but which were ultimately tied to regional structures and became a center from which territorial conquests into neighbouring areas were conducted. The settlement also developed as an administrative center where leadership consultations and labour organizations were carried out. Magic was an important element of leadership at the time and was used to instill fear, command respect and enforce the community norms.

Other important activities also took place in and around the settlement, including exchange of goods, farming, and veneration of the gods. The site therefore functioned as a centre where inhabitants of each of the settlements was the centre of micro social relations in the sense that all the inhabitants were related to one another in some way, either as kin or marriage relatives. The functions continued until the last groups occupying the site broke from the traditions when colonial rule interfered with much of the traditional systems. The abandonment of the site then became inevitable, leaving it as a place for occasional visits to communicate with the ancestral spirits.

At Thimlich Ohinga, traditional conservation practices were embedded within a complex social system of behaviour that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. There were thus taboos regulating behaviour. The whole village complex was considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the walls were masculine, playing the protector role. The whole complex was therefore protected in this way. The elders of the community were charged with the responsibility of enforcing law and order for the well-being of the walls.

Walls within the site were believed to be a link with the ancestral spirits. This knowledge made all the occupants respect the walls and avoid any activity that would destroy them. This respect helped protect the site even after it was completely abandoned during the early twentieth century. As it is today in the region, it is taboo to destroy an old homestead or house on purpose.

There were designated gates around the complex. These were meant to minimize interference that could cause destruction. Entry and exit were mainly through permissible points, such as the gates. Access to the complex through any other point could only be allowed by the elders who also acted as a link between the people and the spirit world. It was believed that disobeying the rules governing the protection of the walls would invite the wrath of the spirits that inhabited the walls from where they protected the people. The belief system therefore played a major role in the protection of the site.

Criterion (iv)

Thimlich Ohinga is an outstanding example of an indigenous traditional settlement of stone fortifications characterized by a three-phase dry stone laying technology which is not known to exist anywhere else in eastern Africa. The site was in existence and occupied at a period characterized by increased human mobility as a result of increased social, economic and environmental pressures that affected human populations in the region. The construction at Thimlich Ohinga marks an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The walls consist of meticulously arranged undressed stones of irregular shapes and sizes but within the irregular shapes patterns emerge. The walls were constructed in three phases that ran concurrently where the outer and inner phases of the walls were joined together using a middle third phase consisting of smaller stones that pressed down the end of the stones of the outer and inner ones. Due to the lack of distinct shapes of the stones used, the walls do not exhibit any course line, as is common in modern architecture but the meticulous nature and craftsmanship of these structures is visible from the way the walls exhibit fine patterned finishing. The stones were simply put together through an interlocking system that enhanced stability and no mortar was used in the building of the walls which ranged in height from 1.2 m to 4.2 m. The average thickness of the walls is approximately 1 m and their thickness increases at the entrances to about 2 m to 3 m. This was a stability technique used to create maximum strength at the gates. The walls had no foundation and this was mitigated by use of buttresses for support of the enclosures from strong winds, effects of slope, human and animal interference. Further, purposely selected elongated slabs were used at the gates as lintels to support the weight of the stones above the entrance. The structures include gates measuring 1m wide and 1.5 m high which was a defensive and technological innovation. One had to stoop when accessing the gates and there were watch-towers adjacent to the gates.

There is evidence of spatial planning within the complex. The cattle kraals, for instance, were strategically distributed within the enclosures. Their entrances faced away from the main gates. This setup was meant for security of the livestock. In addition, the kraals had ducts that were designed at the ground level for drainage vents during the rains. This indicates proper settlement planning at the time.

These developments in the form of stone structures epitomized a higher stage of spatial planning and cultural influence in the sub-Saharan region. It can be traced from simple structures during

the late Iron Age Sirikwa settlement in the East African Rift Valley, and the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

Criterion (v)

Thimlich Ohinga is a representation of an outstanding traditional settlement representing exceptional land use and diversified subsistence system over a long period of time. This tradition is vulnerable and is the only surviving example of a traditional dry stone settlement. The construction of these settlements favoured boundaries between different habitats especially landscape facets located between montane forests, savanna grasslands, lacustrine and riverine settings. The exceptional distribution of enclosures on the landscape is principally characterized by locations near hill-top and upper slope locations close to permanent water sources. The distribution of *ohingni* tends to occur in distinct clusters, with the highest density and well preserved fortifications occurring in Thimlich Ohinga. Thimlich Ohinga not only represents Luo traditional settlement but bears witness to the different linguistic and socio-economic groups that have inhabited the landscape through time and space.

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site is a system of a dry stone traditional settlements exhibiting exceptional indigenous ingenuity that employed predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique to construct structurally stable and extensive stone complexes that have withstood vagaries of nature. Mobilization of labour for the development of the extensive settlements was achieved without centralized system of governance but a rather heterarchical structure based on a lineage system. The spatial organization of the interior of the complexes exhibits communal occupation by successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples. The drystone fortifications are a representation of material expression of permanence and prominence.

Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa. The period between the 14th and 17th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Its archaeology depicts a highly varied socio-economic system characterized by diversified resource exploitation. This is an example of sustainable land use that sustained different socio-economic and linguistic groups through time.

This site is the largest and best preserved dry-stone wall traditional settlement in the region. Different periods of occupation and repair have not interfered with the architecture and preservation of the settlement. Hence the property has retained its original architectural and aesthetic values. Its sustainability is ensured through skills transfer where the maintenance works are carried out by elderly traditional masons with indigenous knowledge who learned the

skill from their fathers who continue to train the youth through apprenticeship. The existing boundary of property contains all the elements of the Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement. Archaeological excavations at the site have used conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property.

The property is managed by the National Museums of Kenya under the National Museums and Heritage Act (Cap 216) of 2006 in collaboration with the local community. Prior to the legal protection, indigenous beliefs and practices ensured that the property remained intact. The National Museums of Kenya has entered into agreement with local landowners neighbouring the nominated property in the sustainable use of land in the buffer zone.

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1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY

1.a State Party:

Republic of Kenya

1.b State, Province or Region

Kenya, Migori County

1.c Name of Property

Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement

1.d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second – E 34⁰ 19' 33.9852" and S 0⁰ 53' 28.8168"

1.e Maps and plans, showing the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

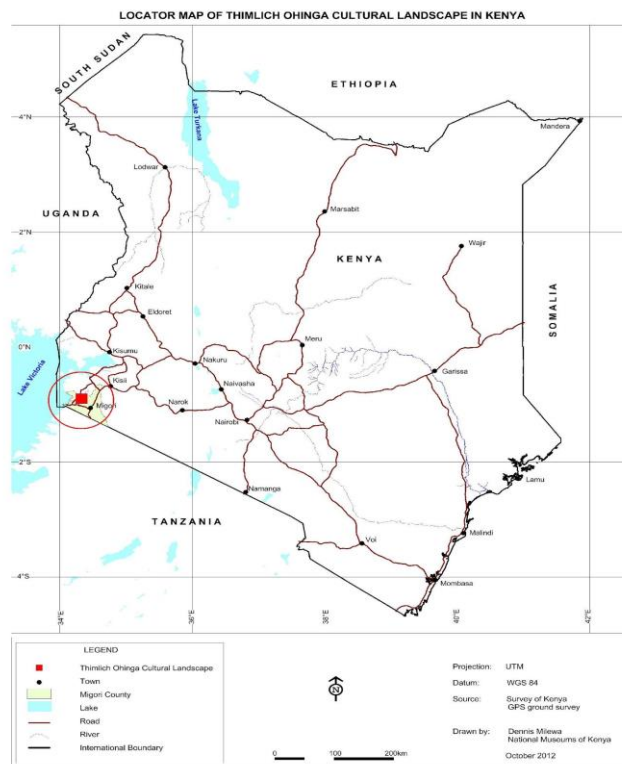


Figure 1 A locator map showing the property within Kenya

Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site

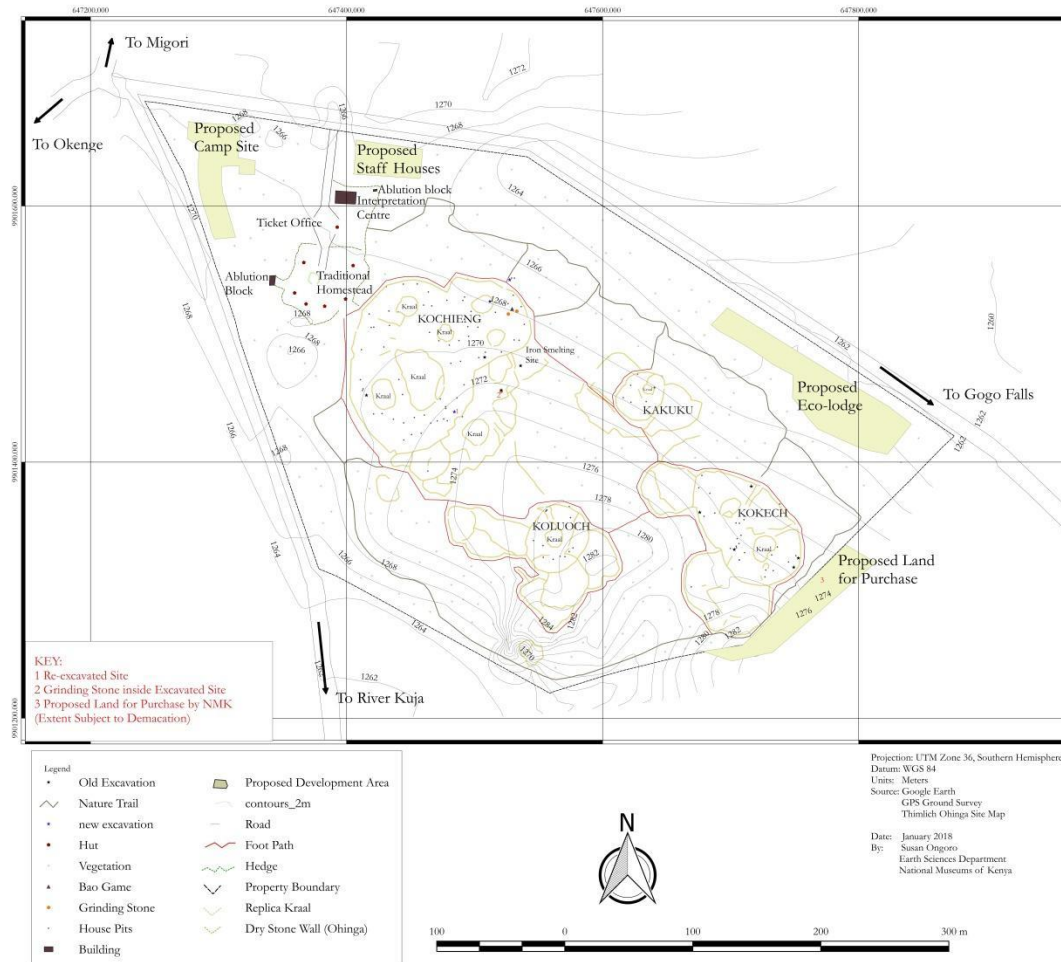


Figure 2 Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site

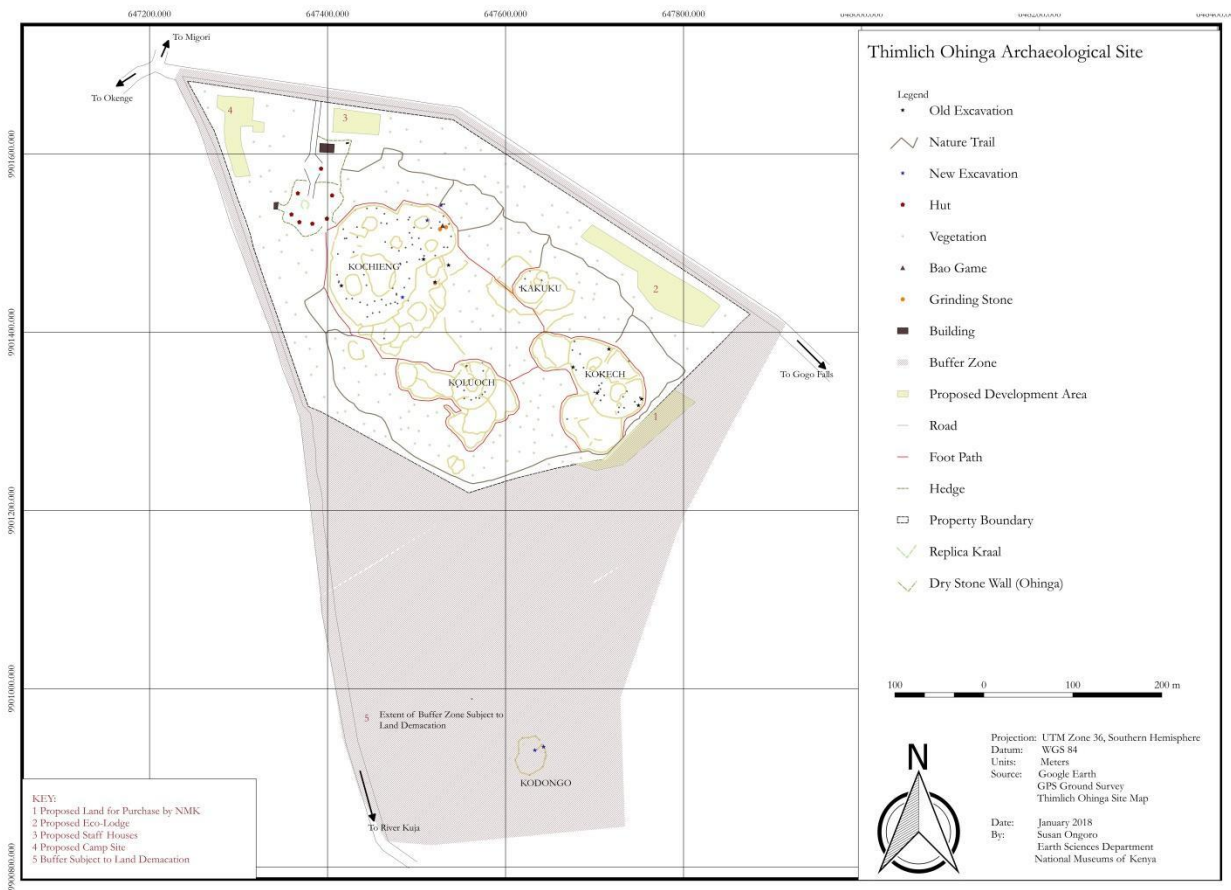


Figure 3 Site plan of Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site and Buffer Zone

1.f Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.)

Area of nominated property: 21 ha

Buffer zone: 33 hectares

Total: 54 hectares

Excavated Ohingni in Kadem Area



Figure 4 Excavated Ohingni in Kadem region

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

2.a Description of property

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site is situated in Migori County in the south western part of the former Nyanza Province of Kenya (Figure 1). It occupies a gently sloping hill located 46 km northwest of Migori town which is the nearest urban centre.

The term *Thimlich* is derived from a local Luo community phrase (*thim lich*) referring to a scary jungle. *Ohinga* (*Ohingni*-plural) on the other hand, is a form of earth/dry stone built settlement enclosure found within the Lake Victoria region. The stone-built complex is a representation of a tradition of dry stone wall construction method that characterized the early settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin. The nominated property covers a total area of 21 hectares.

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site is a complex of *Ohingni* comprising of one main *Ohinga* with adjuncts/extensions, and four other *Ohingni*. The main *Ohinga* is referred to as *K'Ochieng'*, while the others are *K'Akuku*, *K'Oketch* and *K'Olouch*. Each of the *Ohingni* consists of a large enclosure with internal features including smaller enclosures, low walls and house depressions, as well as smaller extensions adjacent to them. There is also an iron working area now referred to as the *Blacksmith* enclosure characterized by a set of neatly arranged stones. Close to the iron working area are other stones characterized by smooth surfaces.



Figure 5 Main entrance to K'Ochieng' enclosure



Figure 6 Close up view of K'Ochieng' main entrance

The main *Ohinga* (K'Ochieng') consists of an outer compound wall approximately 140m in diameter from the north to south, stands at between 2.5 m 4.2 m high and has an average thickness of 1m. Its enclosure wall appears to have undergone modification during the site's occupation. The extant structure is not circular in plan 'as found in an ideal Luo compound'. However, it is possible to identify the joint where an extension has been added to the north-eastern section and one can infer that the original shape was essentially oval. In the first instance the structure seems to have been in keeping with the model of an oval plan, with the main gate on the downhill slope.

Circular depressions in this enclosure measuring an average of 5m in diameter have features identified as cooking places with raised platforms representing house pits. The house pits are domestic areas as indicated by the associated material culture uncovered during excavations at the site. The majority of these house pits are found in the main enclosure, which seems to have been recently occupied. The houses themselves were probably built of mud and thatch and were rather ephemeral in comparison to the site's dry stone walls.

Inside each of the larger enclosures are smaller enclosures which were probably used as cattle kraals, pens for small stock, food processing or food storage areas. The largest of the stone-built cattle kraals is found at the centre of the original oval compound wall. There are also a couple of smaller circular stone walled features in some of the enclosures. Between the internal enclosures and depressions are passageways and corridors lined with low dry stone walls. In addition to the

kraals, the enclosures also have internal and external support ramps and buttresses against the walls.

The area identified as *Blacksmith* enclosure lies just outside the eastern wall of the main enclosure. Here, iron smelting and working took place, as indicated by the presence of a furnace area containing smooth stones that are the result of iron shaping. Pieces of tuyere litter the area and there is also a mound of iron slag, refuse and pottery. An ancient version of the game known today as Bao was also found carved on a rock nearby, and could indicate that the area was also used for leisure activities, (Onjala and Kamaru 2005).



Figure 7 A piece of slug at the blacksmith area



Figure 8 Rock cupules believed to have been a form of bao game

Structures at the Thimlich Ohinga archaeological settlement fall into two categories, namely, simple and complex ones. The simple structures consist of single enclosures which do not share walls with one another. Simple structures are also found in multiple structure sites as single enclosures forming isolated units. Simple structures are joined together by abutting walls or corridors to form complex structures. Complex structures were built by connecting different categories of shared-walls. Attached to the complex structures are smaller extensions which suggest population increase among the original inhabitants.



Figure 9 Twin gate entrance at K'Okech enclosure

Both simple and complex *Ohingni* have interior structures of various kinds. These include small enclosures, depressions and corridors. The small enclosures within either simple or complex structures are grouped into 3 categories: cattle kraals, pens for small stock and garden fence structures. Cattle kraals or pens for small stock depended on the size of a particular structure. The kraals are larger and usually located at the centre of the structures, while the pens are smaller extensions to the outer walls of major structures or the walls of the kraals. Garden fence structures are small enclosures close to outer walls which were thought to have been *orundu* for growing vegetables. *Orundu* is a local name given to small gardens within the homestead on which vegetable or other food crops are grown to supplement what is grown on larger farms. The use of *orundu* was encouraged to allow the crops in larger main farms to mature for harvest without interference.



Figure 10 A Kraal at K'Akuku enclosure

Archaeological excavations at the site have yielded faunal, ceramics and lithic assemblages. Ceramics associated with the site are mainly of cord roulette decoration, which is principally Nilotic while iron working is associated with the Bantu groups. The site therefore represents an early interaction between the two main groups in the region. These materials have been used to explain the dynamics of settlement patterns in the region.

The architectural technique used to build the walls is a three-phased design where the walls have an outer and inner phase of neatly arranged stones of all shapes and sizes and a middle phase consisting of smaller stones. The middle section held together the stones in the inner and outer phases of the walls. Due to lack of distinct shapes of the rocks used, the walls do not exhibit any clear coursing, as is common in modern stone walls or buildings. Stones were placed in an interlocking system that enhanced overall stability, without any bonding mortar or cement. The walls range from 1.5 m to 4.2 m in height, with an average thickness of 1 m. The thickness of the walls increases at the entrances from 2 m to 3 m and rectangular slabs were used at the lintels (Onjala 2003).

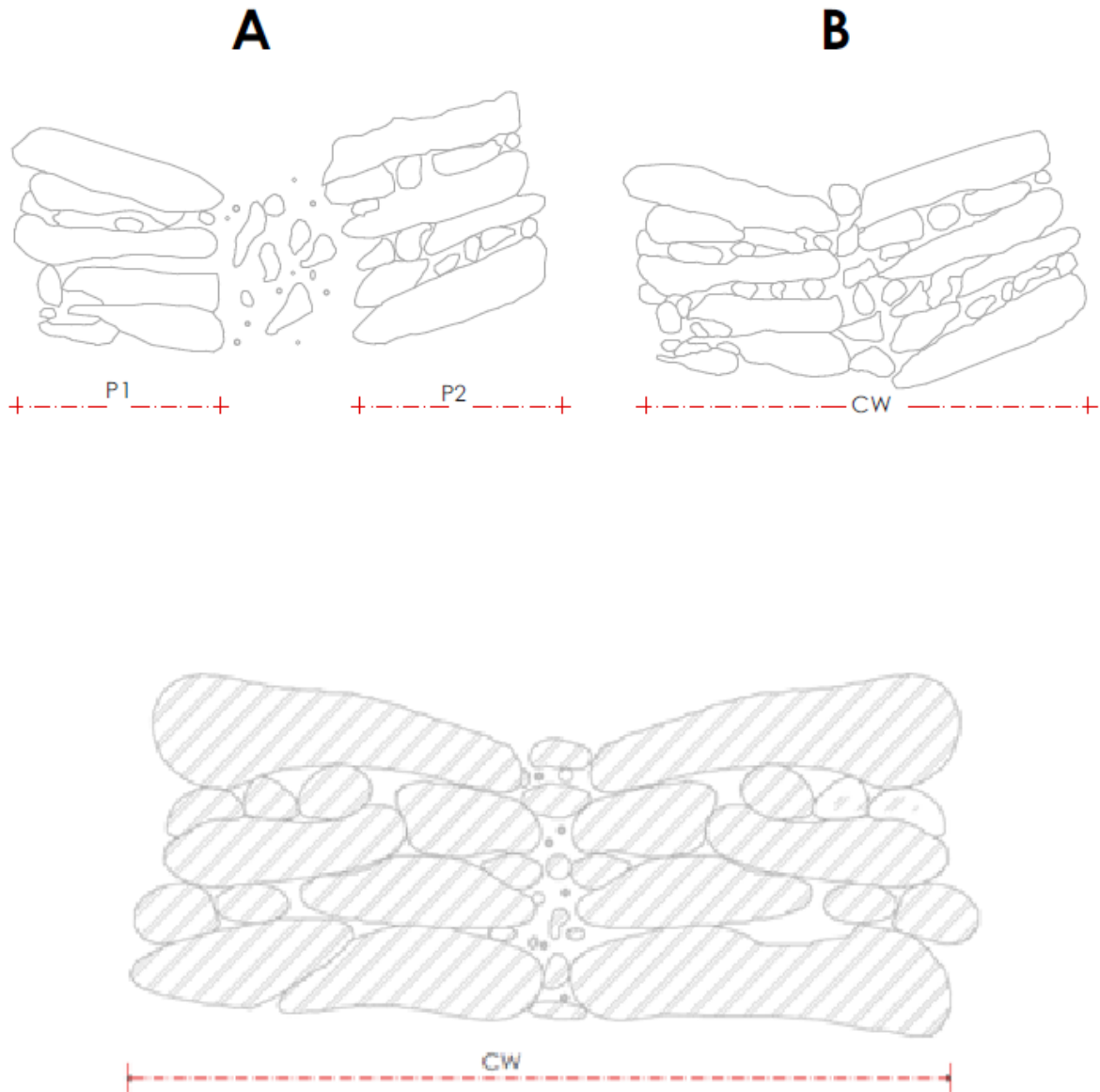


Figure 11 Illustration depicting the three phase stone laying (phase 1 ,2 and the middle section with smaller stones)

Apart from the Thimlich Ohinga, there are other similar dry stone wall structures in the region. These include Osani, Ongito, Kakwach, Kochingo, Masoge, Nyang'oma, Kamala, Nyawiso, Nyagidha, and Nyoniang which are not well preserved due to natural and anthropogenic factors.

Geology

The rocks at Kadem where Thimlich Ohinga is located, are within the Kavirondian geological formation (figure 12). They consist of boulder beds containing huge boulders of granite which are easily recognizable. Granite rocks are igneous rocks which were formed by slowly cooling pockets of magma that were trapped beneath the earth's surface. The granite at Thimlich Ohinga is an igneous intrusive rock which is believed to have been swept down by torrents from scarps and mountain ranges which were being formed at the time. The rocks are grey in colour and are medium to coarse grained. They are hard and tough igneous rocks. At the Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site, a leucocratic granite is predominant. The granite is not foliated or sheared and seems to have some considerable amount of quartz. This granite, commonly referred to as the Migori granite, is generally dated at 2739 ± 111 Ma (Rb:Sr) and at 2.42 ± 0.06 Ga (Rb:Sr). (Ichangi 1990)

The Kavirondian rocks in this area are represented by boulder beds, felspathic grits and andesites, associated with an enormous mass of porphyrite. The extraordinary boulder beds, often contain huge yet well-rounded boulders of granite, porphyrite and many other rocks..

Other rock groups found within the area are Pleistocene rocks formed as a result of faulting and tilting which took place in the area. There are also alluvial rocks formed recently through erosion and deposition. Miocene deposits are visible in the form of clays and sand around the Gwasi area. This area is also associated with the Bukoban system or the Kisii series of the Paleozoic times consisting of basalt and quartz rocks. The final group is the Nyanzan and basement system of the Precambrian time mainly consisting of the quartz and is the oldest in the region. The boulders and rocks that were used in the construction of the walls at the Thimlich archaeological site were mainly igneous intrusive rocks characterized by phonolites and basaltic boulders. These are hard rocks that were ideal for dry stone wall construction.

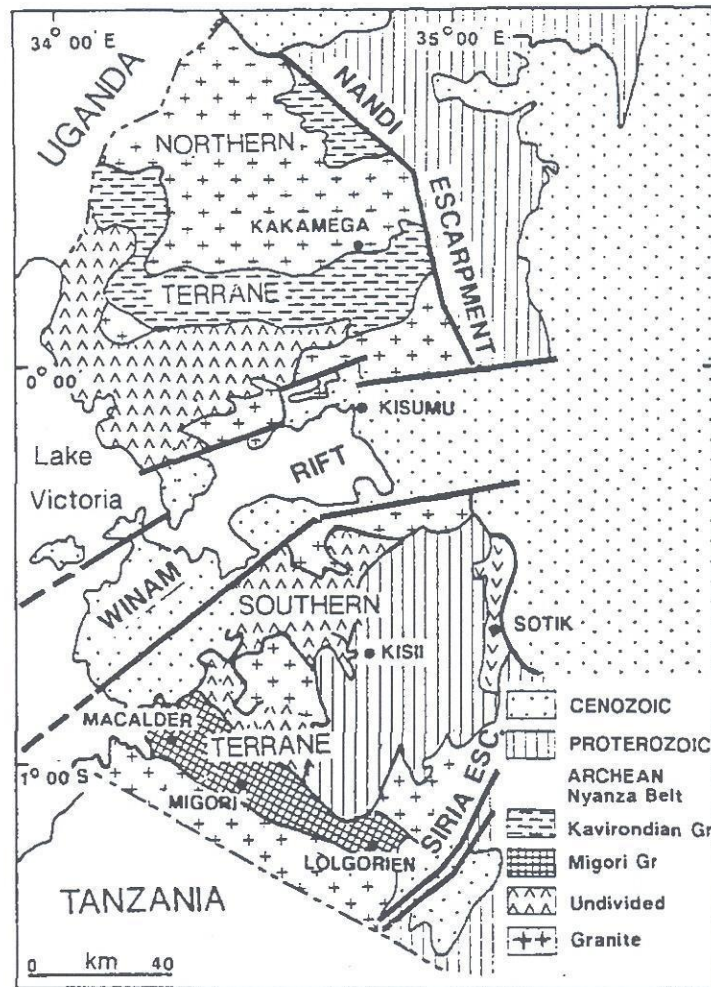


Figure 12 Diagram showing the geology of the Lake Victoria Region (source: Ichangi 1990)

Environmental background

The area falls within the modified equatorial climate characterized by rainfall and temperature variations of 700mm to 1500mm and 14°C to 34°C, respectively. The area experiences bimodal rainfall annually, March-May (long rains) and October-November (short rains). Lake Victoria influences both the temperature and rainfall patterns by providing a cooling effect as well as moisture that translates into rain, falling mainly in the evenings. Another influencing factor on the pattern of rainfall is relief. Land varies in altitude from 1163 m at the lake shore to 2272 m on the inland plateaus and hilly areas. Winds blowing across the lake lead to convectional rainfall (Onjala 1994). Human interference has also influenced the region's climate. Past settlement resulted in forest clearance, with farming and iron smelting practices being introduced. These affected water catchments and other aspects of the local environment (Onjala 2003).

There are also major rivers and streams that form the drainage pattern of the region. These rivers include Kuja and Migori.

Biodiversity

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site is rich in flora and fauna. The region in its entirety exhibits a very high level of biodiversity. The local community occupying the area today has a deeply rooted knowledge of the animals and plants which have a variety of uses. The fauna and flora are a major research data bank for local and international scientists. The local and scientific names are appended (See appendix 1).

2. b History and Development

Fortified settlements were common features during the early periods of occupation in the present day western Kenya and Lake Victoria regions. Pioneer and successive migratory waves of people from other areas necessitated the construction of such settlements. The *Ohingni* were in general built for security reasons. However, each site also served other functions. One, each defined the territorial boundaries of its inhabitants within which issues of governance were discussed and agreed upon. In this regard, each *Ohinga* had its own governance structures but which were ultimately tied to regional structures. Two, each *Ohinga* served as the centre for micro social relations in the sense that all the inhabitants were related to one another in some way, either as kin or marriage relatives. Three, the inhabitants of the *Ohinga* also agreed on social and economic issues such as where to cultivate or graze their animals.

Today, the area around the site is inhabited primarily by self-identifying Luo people, whose language—Dholuo—belongs to the Western Nilotic branch of the Nilo-Saharan language phylum. Partly because of this contemporary association Thimlich Ohinga has often been regarded as a historic Luo site, a perception also reinforced by elements of the available oral histories concerning the site and the Luo. Consequently, much of the discussion that follows explores the evidence relating to Luo settlement in this area of south-western Kenya. At the outset, however, it should be noted that Migori County is ethnically quite diverse and along with its Luo inhabitants also comprises a mix of Abasuba, Abagusii, Abakuria and Abaluyia peoples, as well as smaller groups of people of Asian, Arab, Somali, Nubian and European origin. The latter five had no direct role in the establishment of either Thimlich Ohinga or any of the other Ohingni (stone-walled enclosures) in the area. The oral histories of the Abasuba, Abagusii, Abakuria and Abaluyia, on the other hand, all touch on their settlement activities in what is now Migori County, and consequently the possibility that at least some of the Ohingni located there were associated at some point during their occupation with non-Luo ethnic groups, needs serious consideration (Simiyu 1990).

Moreover, as discussed in more detail below, the available oral historical, historical linguistic, documentary and genetic evidence currently available all attest to considerable population interaction, inter-marriage and mobility in the pre-colonial and colonial eras. This high degree of fluidity coupled with the existing ethnic and linguistic diversity of Migori County and the areas immediately bordering it to the north, east and south, caution against making overly simple

inferences from material traces regarding either the ethnic or linguistic identities of the founders of Thimlich Ohinga, even though it is well attested that the site was inhabited during its final stages of occupation by self-identifying Luo communities (Lofgren 1967: 83; Ayot 1987).

This fluidity was not unique to Migori County, and is well-documented across the former Nyanza Province and adjacent parts of the former Western and Rift Valley provinces to the north and east, respectively (e.g. Ogot 1967; Were 1967; Ochieng' 1974a; Hay 1975; Abuso 1980; Ayot 1987). One obvious consequence of this, as other scholars have pointed out, is that even with regard to the Luo there can be no singular narrative of the history of Dholuo speakers and the rise of Luo hegemony over a large part of the eastern shores of Lake Victoria and their immediate hinterland (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1987; Cohen 1989; Campbell 2006). Neither can the expansion of their linguistic ancestors be reduced simply to a sequence of migrations (Herring 1976, 1979; Wrigley 1981; Cohen 1983), even though migration features as a dominant trope in a great many of the relevant oral histories of speakers of Western Nilotic languages (see, e.g., Crazzola 1950; Ogot 1967).

Through studies by historians and archaeologists, a noticeable pattern was observed where many of the inhabitants had a pastoral tradition where cattle played a key role in the economy (Ogot 1967; Ayot 1979). The value system with its emphasis on large herds demanded therefore that more land be sought to maintain the herds despite the constant threat of mobile and militarily superior enemies. New settlements would be established when a given fortified settlement was overpopulated with both human and livestock. Studies also show that sociopolitical organization also played a crucial role in the establishment of the fortified structures. When conditions were peaceful, small village groups appear to have been the only important political group. Where hostile conditions existed, larger units held together for defense. In the whole of the western Kenya region, there are over one hundred fortified settlements either built of dry stone or earth walling. Most of these fortified settlements have been destroyed over time due to pressure for land and modernization process.

The most recent phase of settlement in the Lake Victoria region started as early as the 15th century. Immigrants invaded the region from all directions and continued to enter as late as the 1940's. Much of this immigration occurred from the north, south and the west (Ogot 1967; Ayot 1979). Separate movements occurred at different periods of time although there is yet no well-established chronology for each entry. Group identities for these immigrants are established on the basis of area of origin and direction of entry into the region. Oral tradition has it that early immigrants were basically of Bantu origin. This distinguished them from a later wave of immigrants who spoke a Nilotic dialect, Dholuo. The latter group consisted mainly of the Luo who entered the region from the north. The period of immigration has been worked out on the basis of oral traditions (Ayot 1981).

Oral tradition has it that the earliest inhabitants of Thimlich Ohinga were of Bantu groups including the Wagire and Kamageta. The Nilotic group that passed through the area consisted of the Kabuoch-Kachieng, Kadem, Kaler, Kanyamwa and Karungu. However, these groups later split and moved in different directions and continued with the practice of stone structure construction in the entire southwestern Kenya region. Both the Bantu and Nilotic groups seem to have adopted similar strategies in establishing their settlements (Onjala 1994). This pushes back the date of construction and occupation of the site to between 1590 and 1680, when such groups are known to have settled in the southwestern Kenya Lake Victoria region (Ayot 1979). These dates (1650 to 1900 AD) also correspond with charcoal samples previously dated by Wandibba (1986) and those from 2017 excavation dated at the Beta Analytic lab (see 2017 archaeological report).

Linguistic Archaeology of Western Nilotic

The Nilotic language speakers of eastern Africa are conventionally placed in three separate groups on the basis of linguistic classification. These are Southern (or Highland), Eastern (Plains) and Western (River-Lake) Nilotes, each of which is comprised of several individual languages and dialects. Historical linguists typically consider these three branches to be subdivisions of the language family known as Eastern Sudanic, which in turn is a subdivision of one of the primary branches of the Nilo-Saharan language phylum (e.g. Ehret 2001; for alternative classifications see Dimmendaal 2001, 2007). Compared with the much larger Niger-Congo and Afroasiatic phyla, Nilo-Saharan is particularly diverse (Bender 2000), which may indicate that it is the second oldest African language phylum after Khoisan. Based on the reconstructed distributions of earlier forms of Nilo-Saharan, this phylum probably first evolved in the area between the Ethiopian Highlands and the White Nile (Ehret 2001). Subsequent splintering and fusion of different groups as well as interaction with speakers of Afroasiatic and Niger-Congo languages led, over several millennia, to the different branches and sub-branches found today.

Linguistic evidence suggests that the earliest Nilo-Saharan speakers were food collectors, and it is conceivable that speakers of these early forms of Nilo-Saharan were the same pottery- and stone-tool-using, hunter-gatherer-fishers (HGFs) whose settlement and burial remains have been found at numerous points along the Middle Nile in central Sudan (Ehret 2001). This material is generally attributed by archaeologists to the ‘Khartoum Mesolithic’, which dates, maximally, from the early ninth millennium cal. BC to the late sixth millennium cal. B.C. (Salvatori 2012). The expansion of Nilo-Saharan languages has also been linked recently to the ‘greening’ of the Sahara during a climatic optimum in the early Holocene, that encouraged rapid repopulation of the southern sectors of the Sahara, via a vast network of interconnected lakes and waterways, by HGF groups oriented towards the exploitation of aquatic resources (Drake et al. 2011). Available historical linguistic evidence also suggests that within the Nilo-Saharan phylum, food production, in the form of cattle keeping and grain cultivation, first took place among proto-

Northern Sudanic speakers, from whom all Nilotic languages were ultimately derived. In this regard, it is interesting that the presence of domesticated cattle and ovicaprids is attested at a number of sites in the Sudanese Nile area, including Kadero and Esh Shaheinab, dated to between *circa* 6000/5000 and 3000 cal. BC (Usai 2005; Garcea 2016), while recent research on archaeobotanical assemblages suggest that domesticated Southwest Asian crops were present in Central Sudan by around 7000 years ago (Out et al. 2016). Proto-Nilo-Saharan speakers may have also had a role in the domestication of African cereals (Stemler et al. 1975; Haaland 1992; Ehret 2000), notably pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) and sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), which took place rather later and possibly in multiple locations, but definitely by *circa* 4500 years ago for pearl millet and by *circa* 500 BC for sorghum based on current archaeological evidence (Fuller and Hildebrand 2013).

Expansion of Western Nilotic Language Speakers

There are about 22 Western Nilotic languages, including Dholuo, and these are spoken across a large area of eastern and central Africa from south-west Ethiopia and South Sudan to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Hammarström et al. 2016). Western Nilotic is comprised of two major branches, namely, Dinka-Nuer and Luo-Burun. The Luo-Burun branch is further divided into four sub-groups: Burun, Mabaan-Jumjum, and Northern and Southern Lwoo. Northern Lwoo includes the Shilluk, Jur, and Anywa(k) languages, while Southern Lwoo includes Acoli, Lango, Alur, Adhola, and Dholuo (Gilley 2004; Hammarström et al. 2016). Southern Lwoo languages are reportedly more closely related to each other than is the case for Northern Lwoo, while some morphological features have been explained as arising from linguistic convergence with neighbouring Bantu-language speakers (Dimmendaal 2001).

Based on the combined evidence of oral histories and historical linguistics, the southward expansion of the Western Nilotes probably took place over a period of 450-500 years, commencing in the 14-15th century and ending in the early 20th century following establishment of colonial rule. Diverse oral traditions suggest that the dispersal of Western Nilotic speakers originated from a series of population movements in the plains around the White Nile and Bahr-el Ghazal rivers, precipitated by an initial expansion of the Nuer at the expense of their neighbours (Crazzola 1950; Ogot 1967; Robertshaw 1987). Among the Lwoo speakers that were displaced some moved north, giving rise to the Shilluk kingdom by the 16th century (Frost 1974; Kleppe 1982). Other groups, such as the Pubungu, moved south along the Nile into the savanna around Lakes Albert and Kyoga. Here they encountered various Central Sudanic and Bantu speakers, and frequently managed to gain political power within these communities, with interesting results. For example, the absorption of a Western Nilotic elite by the Alur, resulted in a language shift from a Central Sudanic base to a Nilotic one (Atkinson 1994). In contrast, the Lwoo clan known as Bito established their hegemony within the emerging Banti Nyoro kingdom, which subsequently became the Bunyoro state (Beattie 1964). Other clans related to the Bito included the Hinda, who formed royal dynasties along the western side of Lake Victoria

and the Hima who rose to political power in Rwanda and Burundi (Cohen 1970). In these contexts, however, despite gaining access to political power, the immigrant Nilotic speakers adopted the Bantu language of their host community. Moreover, not all Lwoo-settled areas developed a royal tradition. The Padhola who settled in the forests west of Mt Elgon, for example, had a lineage-based system of social and political organization (Cohen 1983) as did the Kenya Luo. Despite these variations, cattle were held to be ritually and symbolically, as well as economically important in virtually all these societies, and often had particular associations with leadership and the divinity (Odede 1942; Butt 1952; Evans-Pritchard 1953; Ocholla-Ayayo 1979; Sassoon 1983; Coote 1992).

Luo Settlement and Clan History

Today, the Luo live in the fertile, low-lying areas around Lake Victoria. They are mostly concentrated in the areas known until recently as Central and Southern Nyanza, although pockets of Luo settlement are also found in south-eastern Uganda, northern Tanzania and parts of the former Western Province, Kenya. According to their oral traditions, the first Luo to settle in the Nyanza area arrived towards the end of the 15th century AD, settling initially around Got Ramogi Hill, Yimbo Location, Siaya County, which remains a sacred site to the Luo (Nyamweru 2012; Atieno-Odhiambo and Odede 2012). The original homeland of these early immigrants is stated as having been around Wau at the confluence of the Meridi and Sue rivers in what is now South Sudan (Ogot 1967, 2004). At the time of their arrival in areas north of the Winam Gulf, which Ogot (1967) estimated to have been between AD 1490 and 1600 for the different clans, the eastern side of Lake Victoria was already a well settled landscape, and the early Luo settlers reportedly encountered a number of Bantu language speakers, including the ancestors of modern Gusii (around Got Ramogi) and Logoli (Ochieng' 1974a). These different groups are variously named as the Waswa, Basi, Wakiri and Kakseru (Ndege 2009).

Using available clan histories and genealogies, several historians have argued that Luo settlement of the Nyanza region took place in a number of phases (Ayot 1979; Herring 1979; Ochieng' 1974b; Ogot 1967), of which four principal ones seem well established. These are:

- Initial arrival of the Joka-Jok (also known as Joka-Ramogi) from Acholiland, A.D. 1490-1600; the Joka-Jok are considered to be the first Luo group to settle in the Nyanza area;
- a second group, the Jok'Owiny, which split from the Alur in north-western Uganda, arriving in the region between c. A.D. 1560 and A.D. 1625;
- a third group, the Jok'Omolo, who broke away from the Padhola arriving in the Nyanza area at about the same time as the Jok'Owiny;
- and a fourth, rather more heterogeneous group, known as the Luo-Abasuba, made up of refugees from Buganda and other neighbouring areas who are found mostly in areas south of the

Winam Gulf and on the islands of Mfangano and Rusinga, and who began arriving in the late 18th century A.D.

These different phases of migration and settlement gave rise to the four main clusters of Luo found today. However, subsequent disputes and divisions between different sections of these larger groupings, and also responses to environmental change, led to further movements. The expansion south of the Winam Gulf between c. AD 1730 and 1760, for example, entailed several different phases of migration as small groups split from one or other of maximal lineages established during the initial phases of Luo settlement and colonisation (Ogot 1967; Ndege 2009). In the process, various new clans and other descent groups, each with its own particular understanding of history and claims to a particular territory, were formed.

The reasons behind the successful expansion of Western Nilotic speakers into the Nyanza region, and their displacement and/or absorption of Bantu-speaking populations are not well known. One explanation is that, unlike some areas on the western side of the Lake, the area was relatively sparsely populated, owing to the scarcity of good quality agricultural land. The early Luo settlers, being predominantly cattle-keepers, therefore, may well have been able to colonize less productive areas more suited to livestock grazing. If this was indeed what happened, then this shift in settlement pattern and change in overall settlement density should be clearly visible in the archaeological record. At present, however, there is insufficient evidence on which to assess this hypothesis, and it is quite possible that other factors may have contributed to the establishment of Luo settlements in this area. The following section therefore reviews what is known from archaeological and other sources about the human settlement of the areas now occupied by Luo, prior to their claimed arrival in this area from the late 15th century onwards.

Luoland before the Luo – An Archaeological Perspective

During the terminal Pleistocene, eastern Africa was characterized by cold, dry conditions between ca. 12,700 and 11,800 years Before Present (BP) (Timm et al. 2010). At the start of the Holocene, roughly 11,700 years ago, regional temperatures and rainfall rose quite rapidly, with a corresponding increase in lake levels (including around Lake Victoria), expansion of montane forests into lower altitudes, and a reduction of savannah grasslands in favour of bush and woodland habitats, lasting to ca. 5000 BP (Kiage and Liu 2006). This period is often referred to as the African Humid Period. Regionally, the shift towards more mesic habitats seems to have stimulated demographic and geographical expansion of different groups of Late Stone Age (LSA) hunting-gathering-fishing populations (hereafter HGFs or ‘foragers’), who exploited a variety of different ecological niches, including the coastal plains, savannah grasslands, and tropical and montane forests (Kusimba 2013). Between ca. 7,250 and 5,400 B.P. the isotopic values of lake bed sediments from Lake Victoria, and a range of other proxies (Kendall 1969), point to a change from a closed-basin to an open-basin environment, and high lake levels (Beuning et al. 1997) creating raised beaches at the 18m and 12m levels. More arid conditions

returned after the mid-Holocene starting ca. 4500 BP, with gradual or more punctuated regional drying until ca. 2700 BP, when the climate became more variable. A raised beach horizon at the 3 metre contour above the current lake level on the northern shore dated to ca. 3720 BP (Stuiver et al. 1960), may point to an interlude of increased rainfall.

For the Late Holocene, significant alternating fluctuations between wetter and drier conditions occurred, broadly relating to global trends but with regionally specific characteristics. Overall, the trend appears to have been towards wetter conditions for much of inland East Africa after peak drought conditions ca. 2050-1800 BP (Battistel et al. 2016). There was a further phase of aridity ca. 950-680 BP, roughly corresponding to the northern hemisphere Medieval Climate Anomaly, followed by wetter conditions from ca. 680 to 200 BP, with localised variations and anomalies (Gelorini and Verschuren 2013). High resolution analysis of sediment cores from Pilkington Bay provide greater precision concerning the timing of local temperature and precipitation fluctuations, with periods of aridity occurring from 820-760 BP, 680-660 BP, 640-620 BP, 370-340 BP, and 220-150 BP (when lake levels were at their lowest during the second millennium AD), and wetter periods between c. 600-400 BP and 300-250 BP (Stager et al. 2005).

Archaeological research on the region's Holocene LSA foragers, although uneven, indicates considerable variation in their food procurement strategies, prey choices and settlement dynamics. Ecotones, the boundaries between different habitats, were also favoured locations, especially the boundary between montane forests and savanna. Lacustrine and riverine settings were rich in food resources, and as a consequence were also a focus of HGF activities and settlement, as attested archaeologically around Lake Victoria where a distinctive, pottery-using, HGF tradition emerged around 8300 BP and ending ca. 2600 BP. Known as Kansyore after the type site on the Kagera River, which forms the boundary between modern-day Uganda and Tanzania (Chapman 1967), Kansyore sites include relatively large open-air settlements, commonly located near fast-flowing rapids (e.g. Kansyore Island, Uganda; Gogo Falls and Wadh Lang'o, Kenya), lake-edge shell-middens (Pundo, Usenge 1, Kanam and White Rock, Kenya) and rock-shelters (e.g. Mumba Cave, Tanzania; Rangong, Kenya). The main concentration of Kansyore sites is around the eastern sides of Lake Victoria. Sites here indicate a distinctive focus on lacustrine and riverine resources, with fish (and shellfish at lake-edge sites) dominating faunal assemblages. Early Kansyore HGFs were probably quite residually mobile, shifting towards a semi-sedentary settlement and food procurement system overtime, with seasonal use of lakeshore settlements during the dry season (Dale et al. 2004; Prendergast 2010). Kansyore ceramics have also been found in rock-shelter contexts in the Eyasi basin, northern Tanzania (Prendergast et al. 2007, 2014), although whether their occurrence here reflects an extension of the ceramic tradition or was due to long-distance exchange between culturally distinct HGFs, is unclear.

In regional archaeological terminology, the arrival of early herding groups around Lake Turkana marks the start of the Pastoral Neolithic (PN). As well as being the first groups in the region to integrate domestic livestock into a broad spectrum, riparian economy, PN communities used pottery (although, as noted above, they were not the first to do so in the region), and employed typical Late Stone Age (LSA) technologies for the manufacture of edged tools, often with a preference for obsidian as the main raw material (Wright et al. 2015). Around Lake Victoria, the earliest traces of domestic livestock typically first occur on open-air Kanyore sites South of the Winam Gulf (Robertshaw 1990; Karega-Münene 2002; Lane et al. 2007; Prendergast 2010), after ca. 4400 BP, pointing to contact and interaction with the region's earliest herding communities. As on LSA Eburran V sites, domestic caprines appear on Kanyore sites in low numbers (Prendergast 2010). Diachronic shifts in ceramic style and production are loosely correlated with some of these changes (Ashley and Dale 2010), and to the south of the Winam Gulf, as attested stratigraphically at the sites of Gogo Falls and Wadh Lang'o, Kanyore ceramic and lithic forms are subsequently replaced by diagnostically distinct PN Elementaitan forms.

Unusually for Elementaitan sites further east of Lake Victoria, at both Wadh Lang'o (Lane et al. 2007; Prendergast 2008) and Gogo Falls (Marshall and Stewart 1994) fish comprise a significant part of the faunal assemblages recovered from PN horizons. Moreover, as Gifford-Gonzalez (2000; 2015) has noted, the majority of faunal assemblages from early PN sites in the Lake Victoria Basin and adjacent localities indicate that wild fauna provided a significant contribution to annual diets, while there is an overall predominance of caprines over cattle.

The geographical distribution of various disease vectors, especially tsetse fly, would certainly have constrained initial settlement to certain areas and restricted expansion movement until the development of more disease resistant herds and/or new strategies had been adopted for manipulating habitats so as to limit infection (Gifford-Gonzalez 2000). Marshall and Stewart (1994), hypothesised that the prevalence of tsetse fly could account for why early PN communities at Gogo Falls fished extensively, whereas other, apparently culturally related Elementaitan groups did not, especially given that settlement around the nearby Lambwe Valley is known historically to have been seriously constrained by the prevalence of sleeping-sickness (Muriuki et al. 2005). The results of isotopic analyses on fauna from PN sites in central and southern Kenya complicate this narrative, however. Specifically, the new isotopic data indicates that some of the areas previously thought to have been woody, including areas around Gogo Falls, appear instead to have been dominated by C4 grasslands well suited to a pastoralist economy (Chritz et al. 2015). These results raise the possibility that the inclusion of fish as a significant dietary contribution at PN sites close to Lake Victoria with an Elementaitan material signature was fundamentally for cultural reasons, and may even indicate that the marked change in material culture signatures at both Gogo Falls and Wadh Lang'o associated with increased integration of domestic livestock into the food economies at both sites represents *in situ* adoption

and transformation, rather than population replacement. Certainly, it is clear that across the region that pioneer PN communities interacted with autochthonous LSA hunter-gatherer-fishers in different ways (Lane 2004; Prendergast 2011), and the nature of these relationships are likely to have shaped localized trajectories towards food production.

Further changes in material culture are evident in the archaeological record, commencing sometime around ca. 2500 BP, when a new ceramic tradition begins to appear in the west of the region. This belongs to what is known in archaeological terminology as the Chifumbaze Complex, which is dated to between ca. 2500 BP and 1000 BP (Phillipson 1977). The appearance of this new ceramic tradition is commonly believed to be associated with the introduction of crop agriculture linked to the arrival of Early Farming Communities (EFCs) and the first speakers of Eastern Bantu languages (also referred to as ‘Mashariki’) in the region, having migrated from a proto-Bantu ‘homeland’ in northern Cameroon - southern Nigeria (Ehret 1998). EFC sites are also associated with material evidence for the first use of metals in the region (Mapunda 2013), hence the older designation of these sites as part of the Early Iron Age (EIA). Archaeologists have sought to classify EFC ceramics principally in terms of formal and stylistic variations. The earliest dated sites are those on which Urewe ware occurs, initially to the west of Lake Victoria, concentrated around Buhaya, Tanzania, and the Kivu-Rusizi River region in Rwanda/Burundi (Van Grunderbeek and Roche 2007). From the distribution of Urewe ceramics and iron smelting remains, by ca. 1900-1800 BP EFC communities were present east of Lake Victoria in areas of modern-day western Kenya, and on islands in the Sesse archipelago (Ashley 2005) and the Buvuma Islands (especially Lolui Island) (Posnansky et al. 2005).

It is generally assumed that EFC populations were mixed farmers, who placed rather more emphasis on crop cultivation than on herding. This is suggested by a preference for settlement locations close to better watered areas along the intersection between sub-montane forest and woody savanna (MacLean 1994/5). Actual evidence for subsistence strategies from Urewe sites is quite rare, however. Regarding faunal assemblages, important exceptions include the sites of Gogo Falls, Wadh Lang’o and Usenge 3, from which evidence for the exploitation of both cattle and small-stock has been recovered. In Rwanda, the remains of pearl millet, sorghum and legumes (most probably cowpea) have been found at Kabusanze, and EIA settlement dated to ca. 1550 BP associated with classic Urewe ceramics (Giblin and Fuller 2011). The association of Urewe ceramics with grinding stones and the remains of field boundaries on Lolui Island also suggest an agricultural orientation. Faunal remains from the site of Entebemikusa (Gugala Island, Sesse archipelago), however, also indicate that fishing and the exploitation of wild and domestic animals were practised in some localities (Ashley 2005). Additionally, historical linguistic data attest to a knowledge and practice of yam cultivation among EFC societies (Phillipson and Bahuchet 1994/5), although recovery of direct archaeological evidence for their presence has been elusive.

With the exception of the Uganda side of Lake Victoria, archaeological research on post-1000 BP sites and material traditions remains limited. Drawing on the evidence from Uganda, and to a lesser extent from Siaya, Kenya, the end of the Early Iron Age/EFC phase is marked by changes in the ceramic record, with a widespread shift to the use of various forms of roulette decoration (Stewart 1993; Soper 1985), although a number of ‘devolved’ and ‘transitional’ variants of Urewe ceramics have also been proposed (Posnansky 1967; Ashley 2010). At least five variants of Transitional Urewe (Sanzi, Luotobaka, Lolui, Sozi and Wakiso) have been proposed, based on material from the Sesse and Buvuma Islands and adjacent parts of the northern shoreline (Ashley 2005, 2010). The appearance of an additional ceramic, known as Entebbe Ware, at Hippo Bay Cave on the Entebbe peninsula, is broadly coeval with these transitional wares, and is now known from at least 43 sites around the north-western, northern and north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria and the adjacent islands (Ashley 2010).

The dating of these changes is variable, but typically the transition lies between c. 1200 and 900 BP, and in older periodisation the appearance of roulette decorated ceramics was generally considered to mark the transition from the ‘Early Iron Age’ to the ‘Late Iron Age’ (e.g. Posnansky 1961, 1967; Soper and Golden 1969; Phillipson 1977; Robertshaw 1994). West of Lake Victoria, in the Great Lakes region, the adoption of roulette decoration is typically associated with changes in settlement distribution away from higher rainfall and lake-edge locations to the drier grasslands, and a corresponding shift in economic orientation towards pastoralism (Robertshaw 1994, 2001; Reid 1994/5; Ashley and Reid 2008), and as marking the appearance of the first complex political systems in western Uganda from the 10th to 12th centuries AD (Sutton 1993; Schoenbrun 1998) and the eventual advent of statehood in the region (Reid 2013).

Archaeological data on the Kenya side of the lake for the period from ca. 1000 to 500 BP, i.e. until the first arrival of Luo-speakers as reconstructed from their oral histories, is more limited, making it harder to determine the socio-political and economic landscape these new migrants might have encountered. Surveys in Siaya and along the Yala River in the late 1990s and early 2000s demonstrated the presence of a new ceramic, loosely described as ‘Middle Iron Age’ (MIA), at four locations and also documented for the first time the presence of Entebbe Ware at two sites on the Yimbo coastline (Ashley 2005; Lane et al. 2006). The excavations at Wadh Lang’o on the Sondu Miriu River also recovered similar MIA ceramics immediately above the Urewe horizons (Onjala et al. 1999; Ashley 2005; Lane et al. 2007), although these have not been studied in detail and their association with either Urewe or other ‘transitional’ types is unclear. Surface finds from foot-surveys around the site of Gogo Falls (Robertshaw 1990), and in the Kisii Hills (Bower 1991) indicate an increasing diversity of ceramic types likely occurring after ca. 1000 BP, but in neither case have these changes been studied in any detail. Evidence

from the lake-edge open-air site of Usare on the Uyoma peninsula reveal the presence of a least three shell-mounds in an area associated in oral traditions with early Luo settlement, with an extensive assemblage of twisted string roulette (TGR) decorated ceramics broadly indistinguishable from recent Luo pottery in terms of mode and placement of decoration and range of vessel forms. Faunal remains recovered from the site point to a mixed economy based on herding cattle and small stock, fishing and the exploitation of lacustrine and terrestrial wild animals (Lane *et al.* 2006).

Archaeological Ohingni and Gunda

In contrast to the lack of attention given to sites dated to between *circa.* 1000-500 BP, archaeological surveys in the former Nyanza Province of Kenya over the last fifty years or so have identified a number of earth-banked (*gundni*) and stone-walled enclosures (*ohingni*). The latter are typically found in areas south of the Winam Gulf, while the former are mostly restricted to areas to the north, although there are exceptions on both counts. Gillman (1944), building on a list compiled by Mary Leakey, was probably the first to note the archaeological and historical potential of the enclosures in Nyanza Province in a general review of the evidence for former settlement types known from across East Africa. The next report was by Neville Chittick (1965), who made a provisional survey in January 1962 of some of the stone enclosures in South Nyanza, located some “35-40 miles [c. 56-64 km] south-west of Kisii”, especially on Minyere Hill, overlooking the Kuja River. Chittick (1965) describes these enclosures as “roughly circular in shape” built using flattish, unshaped blocks of local stone, in a fairly simple manner. Some, however, appeared to have been more carefully constructed. The best preserved example of these, designated Enclosure III by Chittick, measured between 29.5m and 32.5m internally. Its main entrance, formed a roofed passageway capped with large stone lintels and around 0.8m wide and 1.30m high, lay at the northern end. Inside the passageway there were slots capable of taking a squared beam and so bar the entrance. A second, unroofed and narrower entrance lay at the southern end of the enclosure. The enclosure wall was around 2.5m high, and rather thicker on the northern side (Chittick 1965). Internal features included two “dry stone hut circles” with internal diameters of 5m and 2.40 m respectively, and traces of a third hut base and the remains of a puddled (*pisé*) clay structure. Local elders stated that these stone features were used for penning calves, and the clay feature was the remains of a goat enclosure. Chittick’s informants also attributed the construction of the enclosures on Minyere Hill to the Kabwoch Luo, and that the better preserved example had been occupied by “one Alila, son of Migot, who died as recently as 1958” (Chittick 1968).

In 1966, Lofgren followed up on Chittick’s earlier work with a three week survey aimed at locating and recording as many sites as possible, and documenting oral traditions concerning “the builders of the *ohingas* and the genealogies of their owners” (Lofgren 1967:). Over fifty-five stone enclosures were recorded at thirty-three separate locations; the precise number is

uncertain as in her Appendix 1 Lofgren (1967) frequently uses terms such as ‘several enclosures’ rather than specifying the precise number, partly because sites were often overgrown. In addition, she documented two “clay-walled” enclosures at Tolu, and another “clay walled village with 5 enclosures” at Kogwach, plus some sites with “massive stone walls” connecting large natural rock outcrops so as to create enclosed spaces (ibid.). She also encountered sites with stone cairns, piled stone field boundaries, with stone-built agricultural terraces (at Maseja and Sidede) and stone piers or breakwaters at Kumoni (Lofgren 1967). The basic plan of the stone walled and clay enclosures was similar: all were roughly circular in shape, upwards of 50m in diameter, typically containing smaller internal enclosures, and where still visible at least one entrance on the downhill side. The outer walls range in height depending on the state of preservation, surviving up to 3-4m high and 1.5m wide at the base. Several sites also contained what Lofgren (1967) described as “house pits”—circular depressions marking the location of a house floor. Of all the sites visited by Lofgren, the largest and best preserved complex, comprising at least six enclosures, and which Lofgren (1967) describes extensively, were in the Liare Valley. This is the site now known as Thimlich Ohinga, and Lofgren’s map of the main enclosure is the first attempt at an archaeological reconstruction of its layout, and like subsequent interpretations drew on ethnographic analogies to the spatial organization of modern Luo homesteads (Lofgren 1967).

Lofgren’s map of the spatial distribution of sites indicated two distinct clusters – around Sindo near the shores of Lake Victoria, and in Kadem, Muhuru and Kanyamkago locations north of Macalder’s Mine, including the Liare Valley. Other enclosures were noted dispersed across the landscape to the west and north of Homa Bay, and also in a roughly linear arrangement following the Kanyamwa Escarpment. Lofgren (1967) further notes that stone-walled enclosures were associated with two distinct environmental settings—along the lake shore and further 1.6-36 km (c. 1-20 miles,) inland—and that differences in their mode of construction roughly correlated with these divisions. Those close to the lake edge overlooked “sheltered beaches suitable for landing fishing canoes”, often incorporated naturally occurring boulders and were somewhat less regular in terms of their layout (ibid.). Those further inland were located on hills with commanding views over the surrounding landscape, and were close to good pasturage.

According to her elderly informants, the enclosures near Sindo (Wadianga, Lwimi and Ekitherengeny) and in Muhuru Location (Kumoni, Mwarachi Hill, and Nyarichora Hill) were built by Basuba people, while most of the others were probably built by Luo (Lofgren 1967: 78). She was also told that the Luo enclosures, and especially those in the Liare Valley were built in response to attacks by the Maasai and other cattle raiders (Lofgren 1967: 83). Lofgren noted the presence of roulette decorated ceramics on the surface, and in a few cases also embedded within enclosure walls, at a number of sites, and regarded this as consistent with their use by Luo, although she described these roulette decorated ceramics as being “indistinguishable from the ceramic wares of the present Luo *and* Bantu inhabitants of South Nyanza” (Lofgren 1967: 84,

emphasis added). A small sample of other ceramic types were also encountered, including “an open bowl sherd with a bevelled rim and rough incised lines running parallel to the rim” at the site of Kisui (ibid.), which perhaps hints at the presence of earlier, possibly Middle Iron Age, deposits. Her finds from around Gogo Falls are not well described, but given the subsequent excavations there by Robertshaw and Karega-Munene, these may have included Kansyore and Elementaitan material.

In terms of more precise dating of the enclosures, Lofgren is fairly circumspect, except to note that they are unlikely to be more than a few hundred years old (Lofgren 1967). She also notes that a sample of sites, including the main enclosure at Thimlich Ohinga, contain structural evidence pointing to different building phases, and that her informants told her that the enclosures at Lwimi were abandoned in AD 1850 (ibid.). In her appendix Lofgren provides some supplementary details regarding the lineage or clan associations of specific enclosures as gleaned from her informants, including a note that Ekitherengeny features in Basuba oral traditions concerning the 19th century; that the complex of enclosures at Maia were associated with a legendary figure called Nyamgondho; and that the enclosures recorded by Chittick at Minyere Hill were built by Basuba.

The early studies by Gillman (1944), Chittick (1965) and Lofgren (1967) were principally concerned with providing general descriptions of this type of monument, their basic characteristics, distribution, date and possible origins. Subsequent surveys by Isaya Onjala (1990) indicate that there were at least 521 enclosures in the areas south of the Winam Gulf. They are mostly found in the Kadem-Kanyamkago, Karungu, Gwasi, Kaksingri Lake headland, Kanyamwa, and Kanyidoto locations (Onjala 1990). *Ohingni* are also known from areas north of the Winam Gulf, including various places within Uyoma and Yimbo in Siaya County (Odede 1998, 2008), although none have been subject to detailed archaeological study.

Studies of the distribution and topographic setting of *ohingni* in south-western Kenya using Nearest Neighbour Analysis and Cluster Analysis, indicate a preference for hill-top and upper slope locations close (typically $\leq 3\text{km}$) to a permanent water source, and that in all of the surveyed areas *ohingni* tend to occur in distinct clusters, with the highest density of such sites occurring in the Macalder sub-region around the site of Thimlich Ohinga (Onjala 2003). This is the largest and best preserved example of its kind, and consists of a complex of four enclosures, the largest of which is ca. 115 m in diameter from north to south, with outer walls surviving to 2.5 to 3.5 m high, and approximately 1.5 metres thick.

Archeological Excavations at Thimlich Ohinga

Archaeological research has been conducted at Thimlich Ohinga site for several decades. Initial test excavations were conducted in the early 80s by Wandibba (1985) with the objective of understanding the nature and character of the assemblages, the spatial and temporal distribution.

Radiocarbon dates from charcoal samples returned a date of between 1650 AD and 1900 AD. The recovered assemblages consisted of beads and ceramics with hardly any significant changes in spatial or temporal distribution. The faunal assemblage on the other was a mixture of both wild and domestic species. There were minimal lithic artefacts that were recovered. In sum therefore Wandibba concluded that Thimlich Ohinga was a settlement reliant on a broad subsistence base consisting of wild terrestrial, aquatic and domestic animals.

Other excavations at this site have uncovered a diversity of finds consisting of pottery, bone fragments, lithic artefacts and beads among others. In the 2017 field research at the site to collect samples for radiocarbon dating (AMS C14), samples yielded more faunal remains, lithic artefacts, pottery shards, bead and iron implements.

Other excavations were conducted by Onjala in the year 2000 on a house pit and three other locations in the main enclosure (K'Ochieng). Additionally, excavations were conducted in the year 2007/2008 as part of condition survey and repair of collapsed sections at K'Ochieng, K'Okech, K'Oluoch and K'Akuku. These excavations focused mainly on the smaller circular internal dry stone wall enclosures to determine their nature, content and function. Findings from these excavations included faunal remains, pottery shards, lithic artefacts, beads and metal implements.

In 2017, excavations were conducted on previously excavated trenches in K'Ochieng', K'Okech enclosures, small enclosures construed to be cattle kraal and stone wall base to recover samples for dating and other analyses to determine the functions of the existing features and the use of space within the fortifications. Excavations were also conducted in other enclosures outside the Thimlich Ohinga prehistoric site including two test excavations at Nyawita (Nyandoro and Nyandoro Maera), and at K'Odongo and two test trenches at Uriri (K'Oloo and K'Olang'). The purpose of these excavations outside the nominated property was to substantiate some of the site interpretations as well as to determine the extent of archaeological evidence of the wider settlement.

Animal bones recovered from these excavations represent large mammal species including wild animals such as Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), black rhino (*Diceros birconi*), heertbeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), indeterminate alcelaphines and cephalophines and other indeterminate small, medium and large sized bovids. Domestic animal remains include those of cow (*Bos taurus*) and ovicaprines (sheep and goats). Together with bird and abundant fish remains, these faunal remains represent the varied food resources (terrestrial and water/wild and domestic animals) exploited for various purposes by the inhabitants of these structures, indicating hunting, fishing and animal husbandry as a way of life of the inhabitants of the region across time and space.

The ceramics on the other hand consist of both brown and red slipping as well as rim profiles. In addition, the fabric is also rather consistent throughout the different enclosures with very slight variation. This could be an indication of exploitation of the same sources of raw materials throughout the occupation of the region.

The lithic artifacts analyzed from Thimlich comprise assemblages from excavations conducted in 2000, 2007, 2008 and 2017. The assemblages from K'Okech comprised a 2 m by 2 m excavation trench that produced 593 flaked stone artefacts, providing an extensive record of an artifact collection from the site. Six raw material types were exploited at Thimlich: The relatively coarse quarts and phonolites available in the vicinity of the enclosures, perhaps in stream contexts of the local sources, and chert, which was probably sourced from somewhere in the local area. Obsidian was also available in the assemblage comprising 0.89%; it is likely to have been sourced from other areas. Studies on obsidian characterization and sourcing would help understand mobility and land use patterns among these ancient stone wall builders. The lithic assemblages exhibit no significant variation in terms of raw material and lithic technology through time and space.

The lithic assemblage excavated from Thimlich provide an important record of the occupation history and cultural sequences in the Southern Kenya region. The uppermost level at K'Ochieng' together with the previously reported (Wandiba 1985) iron smelting sites provide evidence of interaction between pastoral communities and hunter-gatherers and iron using farmers. At all the enclosures, there is broad typo-technological continuity across the enclosures and the surrounding Ohingni. In conjunction with other specialist reports and absolute dates the lithic assemblages excavated from Thimlich provide a record of the major cultural transitions in the broader Kadem area.

Archaeologists studying the spread of food production in East Africa often have difficulty distinguishing pastoralists' sites from other groups with whom they interacted. Our analysis of sediments from three smaller enclosures from different enclosures at Thimlich contributes to the resolution of the problem through identification of sediments distinctive of livestock enclosures, and thus of pastoral settlements. Since the sites were abandoned there is no visible difference between enclosure and surrounding sediments. Micromorphological, mineralogical, and phytolith analyses, of enclosure sediments, allow differentiation of enclosure from regional sediments. Samples did not yield a significant amount of pollen, but were rich in fungal spores. Spores are mainly an indication of herbivore dung (Marshall *et.al.* 2002). The presence of woody plants were more prominent especially in sample level: 15-20cm. These spores include, *Sporominiella* Spore T112, *Valsaria*, *Chaetomium* and *Coneocheata* cf. *Lignaria*. Type 112 is a specific indicator of domesticated animals. Presence of fire is also evidenced by micro-charcoal and burnt phytoliths. Ethnographic studies indicate that pastoral communities occasionally burn

cow dung to eliminate ticks and tick borne diseases from the livestock enclosures (Kioko 2015). Modern inhabitants in the general Kadem area still use such smaller enclosures to hold their livestock.

The effect of livestock on African rangelands and the way livestock affects the distribution and availability of soil nutrients has been a major focus of recent research (Shahack-Gross *et al.* 2004). In East African savannas, overnight containment of livestock in thorn-scrub or stone walled corrals or ‘bomas’ concentrates large quantities of nutrients into small areas, potentially altering the landscape distribution of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) in soils and plants.

At Thimlich Ohinga, characteristics of soils measured across small enclosures that were perceived to be have used as cattle enclosures. The chronosequence indicated glades were indeed used as cattle kraals. Soil N, P and organic matter quality in the surface (0–15 cm) layer were similar for the small enclosures, but were significantly enriched relative to surrounding areas. In contrast, at 40–65 cm depth beneath kraals, the small enclosures and the surrounding areas, soil N was similar. The texture of surface soils from the small enclosures and surrounding bushland was similar, indicating that the sediments in the small enclosures were not derived from a unique parent material.

The Gunda Bur of Central Nyanza

As noted above, a few stone-walled enclosures similar in layout and mode of construction are known from locations north of the Winam Gulf at Kipasi, Got Abiero, Orwa, Rasoti, Oiko, Masala and Ramogo. However, a far more common monument type believed to be broadly contemporary with the stone-walled *Ohingni* further south and associated with Luo settlement, are earthen bank-and-ditch enclosures. These are known in Dholuo as ‘*gunda bur*’. Although documented photographically as early as the 1930s by Evans-Pritchard (see photo below), only in the last two decades have they received archaeological attention.



(Source: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, Photographic Archives, Ref.1998.349.115.1)

Figure 13 Evans-Pritchard's photograph of an abandoned gunda bur near Asembo

A brief mention of their existence is given by Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo (1986), in their book on the making of the Siaya landscape, where they report the presence of at least seven such sites around Lake Gangu. The first archaeological study of these bank-and-ditch enclosures involving preliminary surveys of nine sites containing a total of 18 structures in Bondo and Madiany Divisions was undertaken by Frederick Odede (1998). Analysis of surface collections of pottery from these sites indicated a general preference for the use of knotted strip and composite roulette decorations, mainly executed on the vessel neck and body. On the basis of comparisons with recent and contemporary potting traditions and decorative techniques favoured by Luo (Holmen 1985; Herbich 1987), Kalenjin-speakers (Soper 1985) and various western Kenya Bantu-language speakers such as Avagoli and Bukusu (Barbour 1989; Wandibba 1990), Odede argued that these enclosures were likely of Luo origin. However, since no excavations were conducted at any of these sites and no samples were collected for radiometric dating, the date, origins and functions of these sites remained largely unconfirmed.

Luo oral traditions collected by Odede (2000) stated that the occupation of dry stone walled enclosures in northern Nyanza was mainly by Dholuo speakers and a mixed group of Luo and Bantu clans known locally as Kagwa. These and other documented Luo oral traditions also

provide information about the underlying factors behind the construction of *ohingni*, which typically emphasised their use for defence against humans and wild animals. As Odede (2008) notes, “insecurity is a prominent theme in oral history and it is clearly manifested by the enclosures’ architectural features such as the presence of watchtowers, lock holes, small-sized entrances and high-thickened walls. Large complex enclosures [such as that at Got Abiero] ... are evidence of communal life that enhanced security as competition for land intensified as well as provision of cheap labour during the construction and maintenance of the enclosures.

The broader research by Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo also highlights that the clan and lineage association of these bank-and-ditch enclosures changed overtime. They note, for example that “within the space of the last one hundred and fifty years or so, the present *gunda* Warinda in Liganua, has been occupied, in reverse order, by the Karuoth, Kakeny, Yiro and Abakolwe clans of western Kenya” (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1987: 272-3). However, as they go on to note, the contemporary historical narratives of the clan currently occupying a particular locality where one or more *gunda* is found, tends to downplay these complex histories in favour of more singular narratives. In the case of the Liganua *gunda*, for example, they note that “this reworked history tends toward the suppression of the stories of these former occupants, and the heroic aspect of how Warinda and his patrilineage captured the *gunda* emerges as the most prominent telling of its past” (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1987). Similarly, in their view, “the Alego Karuoth clans have had to retrench their dominance by emphasizing their prior rights to land through the invention of their history. The emphasis on the owner of the land, *won piny*, can be seen to be at odds with our original construct of *gunda bur*. The distillation of one-time usage into permanent occupancy requires a reworking of history” (ibid., p. 272). Such observations caution against simplistic readings and acceptance of the oral histories provided by those who currently reside close to a particular *gunda bur*, and point to the need for critical cross-comparison of multiple settlement histories as recorded by different clans – including neighbouring Luhya as well as different sections of the Luo.

In 1999, a further programme of selective field survey, site mapping and test-excavations was launched under the auspices of the British Institute in Eastern Africa. This was conducted in the former Uyoma, Bondo and Siaya districts of Central Nyanza. The ultimate objective of this fieldwork was to document the surviving archaeology of these areas, so as to improve understanding of the long-term history of this part of Kenya, with particular emphasis being given to the last five thousand years of settlement and landscape change (Lane et al. 2006; Lane et al. 2007; Prendergast and Lane 2010). The more specific objectives with regard to Luo settlement of the area, were to document the distribution and formal characteristics of the surviving bank-and-ditch and dry stone-walled enclosures, to map a sample of these in great detail, to locate other types of sites possibly associated with Luo settlement in the area, and to conduct test-excavations at a sample of sites so as to provide material for developing a basic

settlement chronology. Oral histories of settlement and clan structure were also collected in tandem with this archaeological fieldwork.

The history of these sites is perhaps more complicated than the surface evidence and the colonial archive suggest. Examples of Middle Iron Age ceramics, lacking roulette decoration entirely, have been recovered from some sites, albeit in very low densities. At Lwak, the only *gunda* to have been excavated, the ceramics recovered from the basal ditch deposits are also more akin to MIA traditions than to historically documented Luo styles.

Early Documentary Sources Concerning Luo Settlements

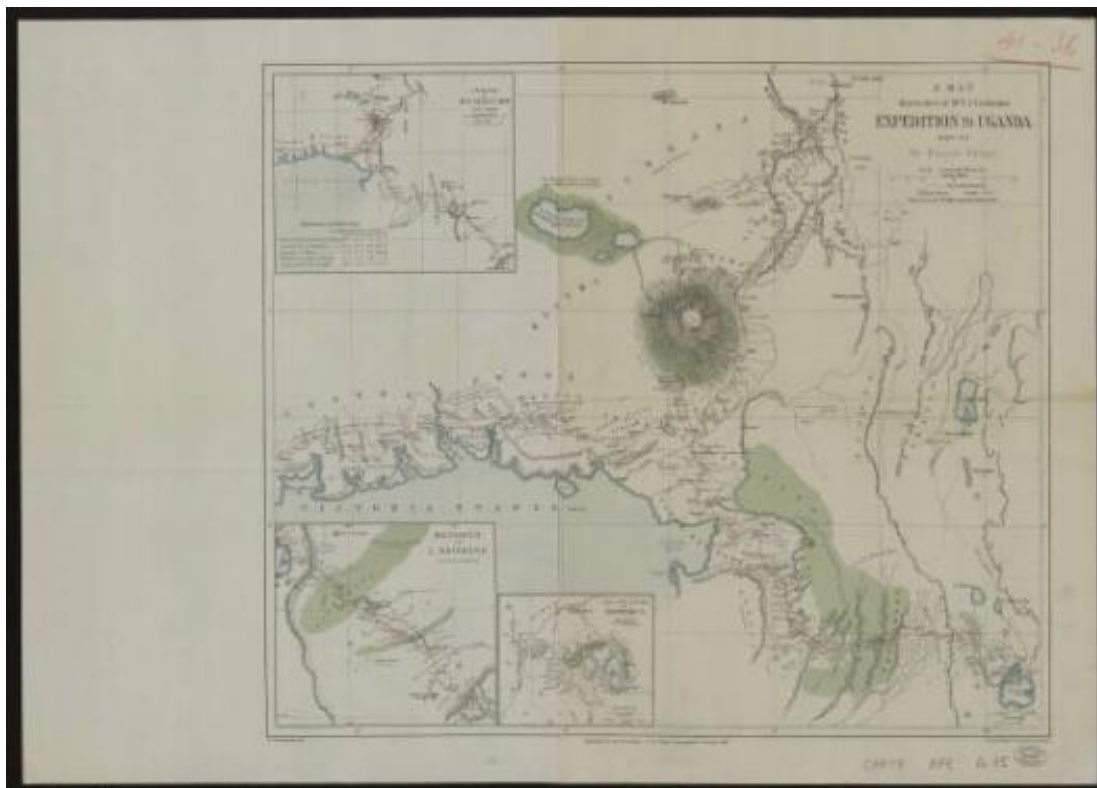
Since the establishment of colonial rule, Luo settlement has tended to be in the form of dispersed homesteads. However, as well as the archaeological evidence described above there is documentary evidence to suggest that more aggregated settlement forms were the norm in earlier centuries. Several of the European explorers and administrators who travelled across the region towards the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decade or so of the twentieth century mention the existence of both stone-walled and bank-and-ditched enclosures. Partly because northern Nyanza lay closer to the main route west to Buganda, more Europeans passed through this area and consequently there are rather more references to settlement forms and house types in this area, than there are for areas south of the Winam Gulf.

Thomson (1885: 282), for example, states that the tradition of using earthen bank-and-ditch enclosures was common in the northern part of Luo territory. A decade later, Portal (1894: 127) noted that the “villages of Kavirondo are all surrounded, for protection, by a deep ditch skirting a mud wall some six feet in height, through which the only entrance is across a very narrow causeway and through a low door, less than four feet in height, easily blocked by heavy beams of timber”. Four years on, Decle (1898: 463-4) likewise described the villages in Kavirondo (close to Mumias) as consisting “of a few huts surrounded by a wall of earth” around which was “a ditch about 15 feet deep”. His account is the first to note that “euphorbus and other trees” were growing outside this ditch. Portal (1894: 126) also noted that at the time of his visit the “population on the outskirts of Kabras and Kavirondo ... [was] very sparse and scattered”, which he attributed to the effects of a period of raids by the Maasai, going on to speculate that “judging from the great number of deserted villages” they “passed at frequent intervals during the march, this district must have been far more densely inhabited and thoroughly cultivated in quite recent times”. Moreover, as the expedition “advanced into Kavirondo, villages became more frequent, and on every side in their immediate vicinity were rich fields of Indian corn, millet, beans of several kinds, and sweet potatoes” (ibid.).

In the early part of the 20th century, Northcote (1907: 60) noted that “in shape the Jaluo village is circular and is fenced round with euphorbia bush, stone or mud walls, or watling (*sic.*), as may be most convenient’, while C.H. Stigand (1913: 291) described Luo settlements in northern

Nyanza as consisting of “circular earthwork walls enclosing a group of huts” outside of which was “a thick ring of ... euphorbia” forming an effective barricade against wild animals and possible attack. By the time Evans-Pritchard undertook his brief phase of anthropological fieldwork in Nyanza in the 1930s, these bank-and-ditch enclosures appear to have been largely abandoned in favour of individual homesteads, typically surrounded by euphorbia, similar to those found across rural Nyanza to this day.

The pattern in southern Nyanza seems to have been similar, although with a greater preference for the use of dry stone walling. Writing about the Imperial British East African Company’s 1889 expedition to Uganda via Maasailand in late 1889 to early 1890, under the leadership of F.J. Jackson, Ravenstein (1891: 198) described the villages found in Kach district, “lower Kavirondo”, as being “without exception protected by a stone or mud wall, with a deep trench in front”, whereas further north villages were “protected by a tall euphorbia hedge”. A decade later, Captain G.H. Gorges of the Uganda Rifles, also passed through Kach while making the journey from Lake Naivasha to Lake Victoria in November-December 1899 (See below).



(Map by Ernest Gedge, in Ravenstein 1891).

Figure 14 Detail of part of the route followed by Messrs. Jackson and Gedge in October 1890 through Lower Kavirondo

In his published account (Gorges 1900: 85) of this journey, Gorges refers to the people here as forming “a small tribe inhabiting the low-lying country on the south-east shores of Ugowe gulf”, who keep cattle, sheep and goats “but do not cultivate the soil”. At the time of his visit “the

Kach”, as he termed the inhabitants of this area, lived “in large fortified villages, surrounded by walls built of stone and mud” owing to the fact that “they are continually raided by the Kosova from the south and the people of South Kavirondo from the north”. He also described each village as consisting of “from fifty to sixty beehive-shaped huts, packed closely together within the circular wall, while the livestock is herded in a paddock in the centre at night” (Gorges 1990: 85-6). His accompanying sketch suggests that the walls were on average higher than the houses (which he depicts as cone-on-cylinder type rather than what today would be regarded as a classic beehive form), and as having a single entrance.

As in northern Nyanza, these structures were apparently rapidly abandoned after the establishment of British rule. Writing in 1915 about his three years spent in southern Nyanza, Oswald (1915: 46) commented that there was “great uniformity about the plan and construction of the homesteads, several of which, at intervals of a hundred yards or so, constitute a village. A typical homestead is just a square enclosure, with a large, round living-hut at each corner, one for each wife, united by a palisade of *candelabra-euphorbia*, and with a single low entrance”.

Oral Histories

Oral information regarding *ohingni* highlights certain issues about their origin and factors behind their construction. The interpretations of oral traditions of the inhabitants around Lake Victoria Basin have not focused on explaining the *ohingni* or *gunda*, but rather, the broader issue of population migration (Ayot 1979; Cohen 1968; Ochieng 1975; Ogot 1967). There is very little association between oral tradition and *ohingni* even in places where enclosures could provide strength to the explanation of settlement and population expansion (Onjala 1994). However, a few interpretive references to the structures are contained in oral traditions.

Ethnographic and ethno-historical approaches to reconstructing the social and political organisation of Thimlich Ohinga

This section of the report reviews a range of ethnographic and ethno-historical data concerning Luo settlements, potting practices, social and political organisation, kinship structure and food-production, so as to highlight the potential value of these strands of evidence for interpreting Thimlich Ohinga in social, economic, symbolic and political terms.

Luo Houses in Ethnographic Perspective

In the early to middle part of the twentieth century, each homestead (*dala*) typically consisted of an enclosed compound surrounded by a euphorbia hedge (*ojuok*), occupied by an extended, polygynous family unit. Within this space, each wife and her dependent children was allocated her own dwelling and associated outbuildings. In addition, the male head of the homestead also had a separate hut (*duol*) that he used for entertaining male guests, and each of his unmarried adult sons would also be provided with their own house.

The older style of Luo house (*ot*) was circular in plan and of cone-on-cylinder design. Houses averaged around 8-10 m in diameter, and were of two broad types – those comprising a single, large circular room with wide eaves and external veranda, and those made up of two concentric rooms. In the latter type, the inner room (*kachiena*), typically 2.5m across, was reserved for sleeping and in certain forms the bed was an integral part of the floor. Running around the inner wall of this chamber was a raised channel, or trough, used for placing and storing pots. The outer area (*agola*) formed a concentric passage, approximately 1.5m wide, around this. This space was sometimes divided into sections by diagonal partition walls. These sections were used variously for penning sheep, goats and calves; washing areas; additional sleeping rooms; and as a place for receiving visitors (Andersen 1977).

The precise number of houses varied according the number of occupants and changes in the residential cycle of the domestic group (Southall 1952; Dietler and Herbich 1998). The largest house, however, was always allocated to the first wife, and was placed at the upper end of the homestead opposite the main entrance gate. The houses of junior wives were placed on either side of the senior wife's house in an alternating fashion, such that the second wife's house was usually to the right of the first wife's, the third wife's house to the left and so on. The granaries (sing. *dere*) were used by different wives for storing crops and other foodstuffs. The cattle kraal (*kul*) was constructed at the center of enclosure, and the houses of unmarried adult sons were grouped at the opposite end of the enclosure, on either side of the main gate (*rangach*) (Andersen 1977; Were et al. 1986).

The spatial layout of the traditional Luo homestead, was thus remarkably similar, but not identical, to the layout found in Central Cattle Pattern societies, which Tom Huffman following Kuper (1980), has associated with Eastern Bantu speakers. For example, houses (which in the past were of the cone-on-cylinder type) are organized in an arc around a central cattle byre, with the senior wife's house immediately opposite the entrance and those of junior wives situated to either side in an alternating sequence based on seniority. In the past granaries were often (although not always) placed to the rear of the houses. Even in terms of the internal spatial organisation of individual houses (Andersen 1977), there are general similarities.

There are differences between Luo and Nguni and Sotho-Tswana homesteads, however. The male head of the Luo homestead, for instance, had a separate house that he used for entertaining male guests and the houses of unmarried adult sons were grouped on either side of the main gate at the opposite end of the enclosure to the houses of the married women. A further obvious difference is that the cattle byre was never used for human burial. Instead, unlike among Eastern Bantu language speakers in southern Africa, in the past the Luo buried both adult males and females either beneath the floor of their house or close by immediately outside. The available early accounts point to a degree of variation in these practices, however. For example, Milkin

(1906: 54-5) noted that for the Luo around Kisumu, that the body of a deceased person is the body “is buried underneath the floor of the hut of the dead person; but should several people have been buried there before and no space left, the body is buried just outside the hut, on the left hand side.” Northcote (1907: 63) concurs, noting that the “corpse is buried in a recumbent position in the deceased’s hut, but the hut continues to be occupied, generally by the deceased man’s heir; it is not at once destroyed or disused”. The account by Hartman (1928), however, of burial practices in southern Nyanza, point to a broader range of practices. Specifically, according to Hartman (1928: 270), if a man was rich “i.e. if he had many wives, the grave ... [was] dug next to the hut in which he died, after a small temporary hut has been built over the spot. If he had only few wives then the grave ... [was] dug inside the hut in which he died”. After burial mourners also “put a broken cooking pot on the grave” which they trampled to pieces. In contrast, all women were buried inside their “own hut; because a woman is called the owner of the hut (*wonjot*); hence at her death the hut has served its purpose (Hartman 1928: 273). Regarding the burial of children, “adult boys” were “buried on the left hand side of the hut a few yards away, smaller boys on the same side but under the roof outside; girls in the same way, but on the right hand side” (Hartman 1928: 274).

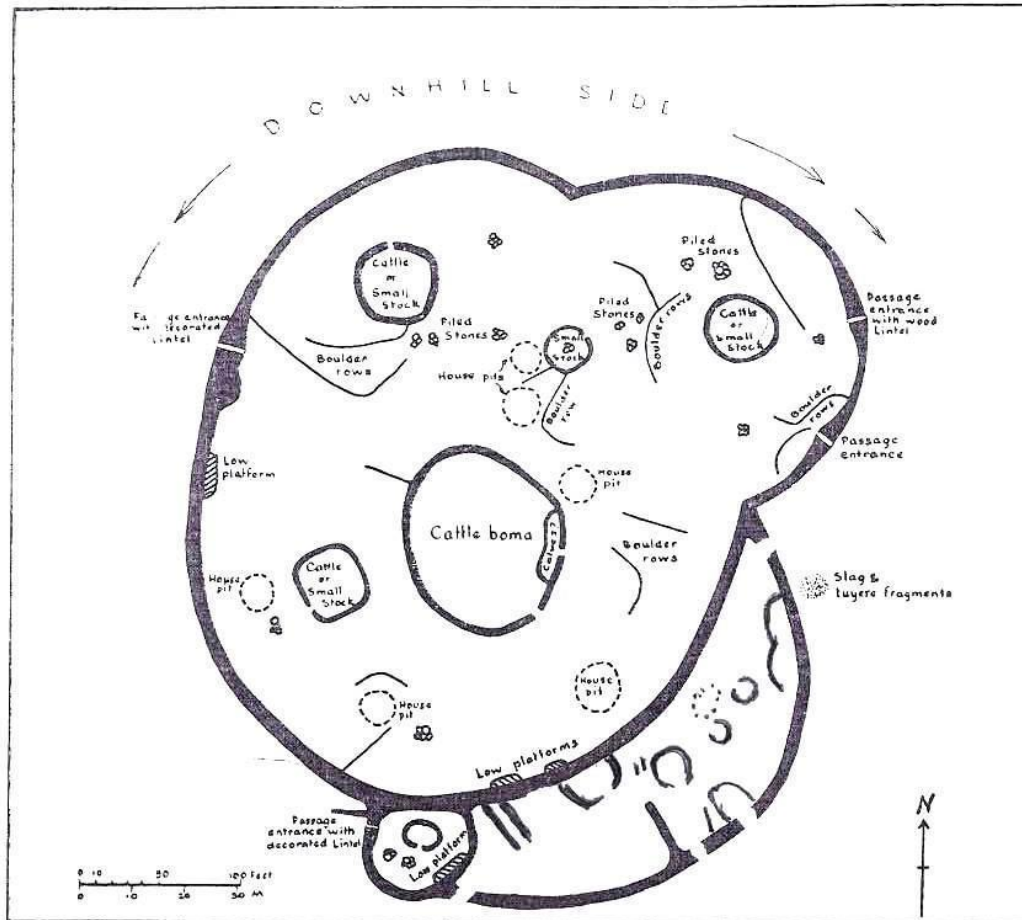
Early Twentieth Century Luo Socio-Political Organization

In the early 20th century, when the first systematic ethnographic studies of Luo society were conducted, their economy was based on small scale agriculture, cattle-herding and fishing. At the time, land was owned by segmentary, exogamous, patrilineal descent groups, there was no central political authority, and political power was mostly vested in the male elders who headed the different patrilineal descent groups (Southall 1952). These often formed alliances with one another, of which there were at least twelve or thirteen such larger associations at the beginning of the colonial period (Evans-Pritchard 1949). Known as *ogendini* (sing. *oganda*), and described by Evans-Pritchard as ‘tribes’, these were composed of several of patrilineal clans or large lineages that varied in size from 10,000 to 70,000 individuals (Evans-Pritchard 1949). Each of these associations was also linked to a particular ‘territory’. It seems likely, however, that the precise composition and spatial distribution of these changed several times over the centuries.

Each *oganda* had its own leader, or *Ruoth*, who, as well as having ultimate juro-political authority, sometimes also acted as a ‘prophet’ (Ogot 1963). He was advised by a Council (*Buch Piny*), comprised of clan elders (*Jodong Dhoot*), the ‘tribal’ peace-maker (*Ogaye*) and the ‘tribal’ war-leader (*Osumba Mirwayi*). The Council’s main duties were to deal with issues, such as war, famine and ‘tribal’ rituals, which had the potential to affect the entire community. It also served as the final court of appeal. Each *Ruoth* was sub-divided into smaller territorial groupings, headed by a ‘sub-chief’, who also had his own council (*Doho*) of advisors, with responsibility for dealing with more local issues and dispute settlements. To implement their decisions, each *Doho* could call on a local police force (*ogulmama*) made up from the young adult male population of the territory (*ibid.*).

According to oral traditions (Ayot 1979, Onjala 1990), successive occupation by different groups has been the norm at the site. Its history is characterized by periodic occupation and out-migration until it was finally abandoned in the early twentieth century. In the 1680s the Nilotic Kabuoch-Kachieng group moved into the area. The newcomers expanded the existing structures and built others further uphill. On hearing of prospects of better land elsewhere, this group later moved away. The site then fell into the hands of the Kanyamkago people led by Chief Ndisio, who was a magician, as they expanded their territory southwards. They eventually established themselves across River Kuja some 20 km away. Here, Ndisio established his headquarters and controlled much of the region that included the Thimlich area. The control of such a wide territory, especially land across the River Kuja, could not be sustained for long and soon the coveted settlement site of Thimlich fell into the hands of the Kadem people, another group that was also expanding southwards from their Raguda settlement in the present-day Karungu region. For reasons that are not clear, the Kadem people later handed over the site to the Kanyamwa people who remained there until the beginning of twentieth century. While not living on the site after this period, they continued to use it for various other purposes, mostly farming and grazing.

Throughout the periods of occupation, the site experienced modification in terms of additional walls, repairs and general maintenance. Additional structures were constructed uphill. These were mainly built by the Kabuoch-Kachieng people. The main enclosure has a demolished wall on the northern side where an extension was built, probably as a response to an increasing population. Enclosures to the main one, especially to the northeast, were also constructed to meet this particular need. (See figure 15).



(source: Lofgren 1967)

Figure 15 Illustration showing the extension of the main enclosure(Kochieng)

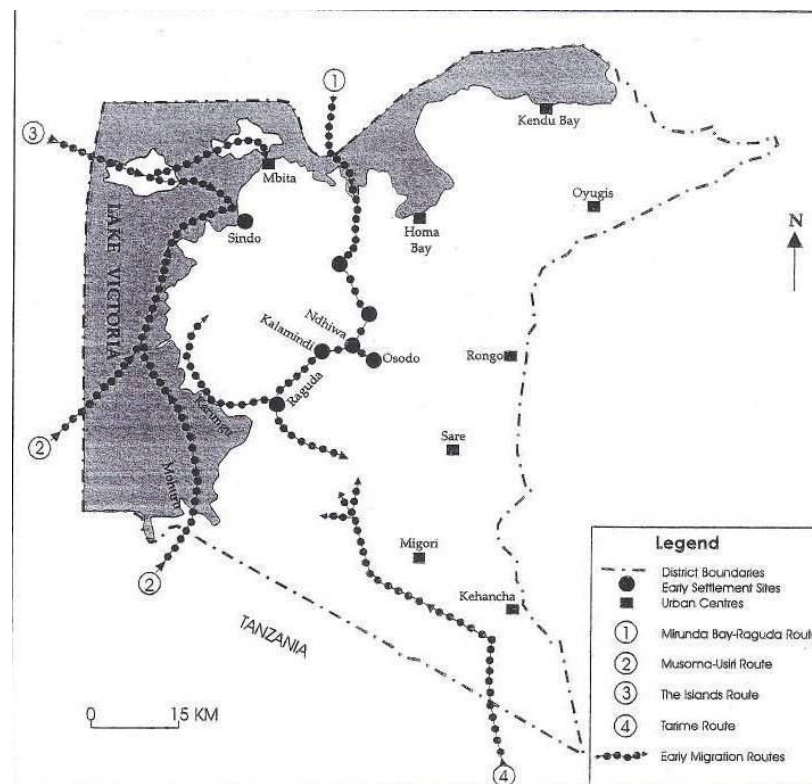
There are several reasons given for construction of the *Ohinga*. The structures are seen as a manifestation of areas of occupation by particular groups of people, a symbol of land ownership possibly evidenced by different engravings on gate lintels. In an area which was experiencing human settlement for the first time there was insecurity posed by the presence of wild animals and rivalry for land by competing immigrants. The structures were defensive forts and therefore have been called Hill Forts which were used for protecting livestock against wild animals and raiders, especially the Maasai people at a later period. They adequately blocked away any attackers who could hardly enter their narrow gates when they were attacked. Another reason for construction of the *Ohinga* is that the practice was more secure than other forms of fencing such as wood or tree fencing. It was therefore easier for the moving populations to construct stone structures where they settled while still scouting for better lands. The structures may therefore be used to establish points and direction of movement of particular people if the people responsible and the chronology of the structures can be established (Onjala 1990).

Interviews conducted with knowledgeable people born between 1898 and 1962 and the result of environmental observations suggests that the *Ohinga* can be interpreted in three basic ways in the

context of oral history. The structures could be said were built for purposes of security in a newly settled region where dangers abounded, the structures were built due to social factors which made it possible for the culture to develop and thrive in this particular geographic region and the structures were built on account of the favourable environmental conditions in the area where they are located (Onjala 1994).

Security is a theme which runs through these interpretations and is indeed, evidenced in the architectural techniques of the *Ohinga*, however given the wide geographical distribution of *Ohinga* in an ecologically diverse setting, it seems likely that several socio-political and environmental factors played a role in their construction, design and distribution.

The enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga acquired Luo names during the latter's occupation from the 17th Century. The pioneer Luo people who settled in the area arrived from Siaya through Mirunda Bay. The Bantu speakers present were with time assimilated or forced to move elsewhere.



(Source: Onjala 1990)

Figure 16 Map showing the migrations in the Western Kenya - Lake Victoria region

Complete abandonment of the site occurred in the early twentieth century. There was no further active occupation within the enclosures. Families that lived nearby continued to use land within the enclosures for livestock grazing and cultivation. This period coincided with the end of inter-clan conflicts and land acquisition demands. There were no major migrations and grand settlements in the region. People opted for smaller or individual open settlements as the area also

became free of dangerous wild animals. The end of the 1st World War and the establishment of British colonial rule led to breakdown of traditional systems and family ties. Yet the maintenance and sustenance of these complexes depended on the very traditional systems. It was no longer possible to construct or maintain such massive stone structures. The site fell into decay and only survived the threats of time because of its unique in-built stability and favouring traditions of the communities living around it. It has survived and become a world recognized cultural heritage site.

Recent Conservation History

Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September 1981 and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act which was repealed and replaced with the National Museums and Heritage Act (Cap 216) of 2006.

In 1999 fencing of the settlement by the National Museums of Kenya began and was completed in 2000. In 2000 a detailed condition survey of the settlement was undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya. In 2001 to 2003, the American Express Company through the World Monuments Watch funded the first major partial restoration of the walls. From 2007 to 2008, the Ministry of State for National Heritage through the National Museums of Kenya funded restoration of the walls and an archaeological excavation in the *K'Okech* enclosure, the *industrial* area and the Blacksmith enclosure.

From 2011 to 2012 funding from the Archaeological Institute of America was used to carry out restoration of *K'Okech* and *K'Oluoch* enclosures as well as restoration of corridors. The funding was also used to put up interpretation panels and to facilitate community involvement in the conservation works.

Until the 1980s, the site was viewed as sacred by the local community who used it as a sacrifice venue in times of calamities. Presently, they use the site as a source of medicinal plants. They also frequently use the site facilities for community meetings. These links make all the communities within the surrounding areas claim ownership and a sense of belonging to the site and its history.

The scientific community contributes to and benefits from the site through research and visits. Many educational institutions both local and international including research organizations have continued to work on the site, for example, schools, universities, the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), the Institute of French Research in Africa (IFRA), and UNESCO, among others.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site is a fourteenth century stone built complex representing a unique dry stone architectural tradition of massive monumental walls. These constructions characterize the early settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin. The walls exhibit meticulously arranged stones rising to a height of about 3.9 m. They were built without mortar and have many complimenting features that have made them survive for several centuries. Today, they have been preserved in an unchanged character.

3 .a Criteria under which the property is nominated

Thimlich Ohinga is proposed to be inscribed in the World Heritage List as a Cultural Site under criteria iii, iv and v.

Criterion (iii)

Thimlich Ohinga is a living testimony to a unique cultural tradition of stone wall fortifications that lasted over a long period of time (1650 AD-1950 AD). This site is the largest and best preserved example of this fortification tradition in the region. The magnificence of the stone walls and layout of the site points to evolution from simple structures to more complex ones at the site. Thimlich Ohinga is located at a landscape of successive occupation and displacement by different linguistic groups that build upon what their predecessors left. The successive occupation continued up to the early 20th century and left the diverse fortifications with the most prominent being Thimlich Ohinga. The influence of this development went beyond Thimlich to the neighbouring areas within the region, with a wide distribution of similar structures in southwestern Kenya. This tradition was also practised in other forms, even where stone fortification was not possible due to lack of stone. In such cases earthen wall fortifications were constructed prominently in northern Nyanza region. The spatial planning of the interior and associated features of these structures reflect a tradition that was used by different linguistic groups and continues to be used in homestead and houses by the local community.

As a settlement complex with a symbol of leadership, where issues of governance were discussed and agreed upon. Each ohinga had its own governance structures but which were ultimately tied to regional structures and became a center from which territorial conquests into neighbouring areas were conducted. The settlement also developed as an administrative center where leadership consultations and labour organizations were carried out. Magic was an important element of leadership at the time and was used to instill fear, command respect and enforce the community norms.

Other important activities also took place in and around the settlement, including exchange of goods, farming, and veneration of the gods. The site therefore functioned as a centre where inhabitants of each of the settlements was the centre of micro social relations in the sense that all

the inhabitants were related to one another in some way, either as kin or marriage relatives. The functions continued until the last groups occupying the site broke from the traditions when colonial rule interfered with much of the traditional systems. The abandonment of the site then became inevitable, leaving it as a place for occasional visits to communicate with the ancestral spirits.

At Thimlich Ohinga, traditional conservation practices were embedded within a complex social system of behaviour that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. There were thus taboos regulating behaviour. The whole village complex was considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the walls were masculine, playing the protector role. The whole complex was therefore protected in this way. The elders of the community were charged with the responsibility of enforcing law and order for the well being of the walls.

Walls within the site were believed to be a link with the ancestral spirits. This knowledge made all the occupants respect the walls and avoid any activity that would destroy them. This respect helped protect the site even after it was completely abandoned during the early twentieth century. As it is today in the region, it is taboo to destroy an old homestead or house on purpose.

There were designated gates around the complex. These were meant to minimize interference that could cause destruction. Entry and exit were mainly through permissible points, such as the gates. Access to the complex through any other point could only be allowed by the elders who also acted as a link between the people and the spirit world. It was believed that disobeying the rules governing the protection of the walls would invite the wrath of the spirits that inhabited the walls from where they protected the people. The belief system therefore played a major role in the protection of the site.

Criterion (iv)

Thimlich Ohinga is an outstanding example of an indigenous traditional settlement of stone fortifications characterized by a three-phase dry stone laying technology which is not known to exist anywhere else in eastern Africa. The site was in existence and occupied at a period characterized by increased human mobility as a result of increased social, economic and environmental pressures that affected human populations in the region. The construction at Thimlich Ohinga marks an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The walls consist of meticulously arranged undressed stones of irregular shapes and sizes but within the irregular shapes patterns emerge. The walls were constructed in three phases that ran concurrently where the outer and inner phases of the walls were joined together using a middle third phase consisting of smaller stones that pressed down the end of the stones of the outer and inner ones. Due to the lack of distinct

shapes of the stones used, the walls do not exhibit any course line, as is common in modern architecture but the meticulous nature and craftsmanship of these structures is visible from the way the walls exhibit fine patterned finishing.

The stones were simply put together through an interlocking system that enhanced stability and no mortar was used in the building of the walls which ranged in height from 1.2 m to 4.2 m. The average thickness of the walls is approximately 1 m and their thickness increases at the entrances to about 2 m to 3 m. This was a stability technique used to create maximum strength at the gates. The walls had no foundation and this was mitigated by use of buttresses for support of the enclosures from strong winds, effects of slope, human and animal interference. Further, purposely selected elongated slabs were used at the gates as lintels to support the weight of the stones above the entrance. The structures include gates measuring 1m wide and 1.5 m high which was a defensive and technological innovation. One had to stoop when accessing the gates and there were watch-towers adjacent to the gates.

There is evidence of spatial planning within the complex. The cattle kraals, for instance, were strategically distributed within the enclosures. Their entrances faced away from the main gates. This setup was meant for security of the livestock. In addition, the kraals had ducts that were designed at the ground level for drainage vents during the rains. This indicates proper settlement planning at the time.

These developments in the form of stone structures epitomized a higher stage of spatial planning and cultural influence in the sub-Saharan region. It can be traced from simple structures during the late Iron Age Sirikwa settlement in the East African Rift Valley, and the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

Criterion (v)

Thimlich Ohinga is a representation of an outstanding traditional settlement representing exceptional land use and diversified subsistence system over a long period of time. This tradition is vulnerable and is the only surviving example of a traditional dry stone settlement. The construction of these settlements favoured boundaries between different habitats especially landscape facets located between montane forests, savanna grasslands, lacustrine and riverine settings. The exceptional distribution of enclosures on the landscape is principally characterized by locations near hill-top and upper slope locations close to permanent water sources. The distribution of *ohingni* tend to occur in distinct clusters, with the highest density and well preserved fortifications occurring in Thimlich Ohinga. Thimlich Ohinga not only represents Luo traditional settlement but bears witness to the different linguistic and socio-economic groups that have inhabited the landscape through time and space.

3. b Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site is a system of a dry stone traditional settlements exhibiting exceptional indigenous ingenuity that employed predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique to construct structurally stable and extensive stone complexes that have withstood vagaries of nature. Mobilization of labour for the development of the extensive settlements was achieved without centralized system of governance but a rather heterarchical structure based on a lineage system. The spatial organization of the interior of the complexes exhibits communal occupation by successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples. The drystone fortifications are a representation of material expression of permanence and prominence.

Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa. The period between the 14th and 17th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Its archaeology depicts a highly varied socio-economic system characterized by diversified resource exploitation. This is an example of sustainable land use that sustained different socio-economic and linguistic groups through time.

This site is the largest and best preserved dry-stone wall traditional settlement in the region. Different periods of occupation and repair have not interfered with the architecture and preservation of the settlement. Hence the property has retained its original architectural and aesthetic values. Its sustainability is ensured through skills transfer where the maintenance works are carried out by elderly traditional masons with indigenous knowledge who learned the skill from their fathers who continue to train the youth through apprenticeship. The existing boundary of property contains all the elements of the Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement.

Archaeological excavations at the site have used conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property.

The property is managed by the National Museums of Kenya under the National Museums and Heritage Act (Cap 216) of 2006 in collaboration with the local community. Prior to the legal protection, indigenous beliefs and practices ensured that the property remained intact. The National Museums of Kenya has entered into agreement with local landowners neighbouring the nominated property to ensure conservation and sustainable use of land in the buffer zone (See annex 2).

3. c Comparative analysis

African comparisons

The use of drystone walling for the construction of enclosures, perimeter walls, houses, agricultural terraces and other structural features is common across Africa. These examples range widely in date, scale, extent and cultural affiliations. While the majority appear to date to the second millennium AD, there are notable exceptions, such as the extensive complex of Tichitt tradition stone-walled settlements found across the Hodh depression in south-central

Mauritania, established by Neolithic agro-pastoral communities in the early second millennium BC, and abandoned around 300 BC (Holl 2012; MacDonald 2015).

Great Zimbabwe

The Great Zimbabwe is undoubtedly the best known site inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1986, where the first phase of stone-walled buildings was initiated around AD 900 at the start of Period II of the site's occupation (Chirikure et al. 2012; Chirikure et al. 2017a). Although occupation of parts of the site continued into the nineteenth century, by c. AD 1450, Great Zimbabwe's prominence as the political centre of a large empire was already in decline as the centres of political power shifted northwards to the site of Khami (Robinson 1959) and elsewhere with the rise of the Mutapa state (Pikirayi 2000; Chirikure and Pikirayi 2008).

Zimbabwe traditional stone-walled sites cover a large area across modern Zimbabwe, extending into adjacent parts of Botswana and Mozambique. The different sizes of settlements points to the existence of a distinct settlement hierarchy, which some scholars associate with the emergence of new forms of social distinction between commoners and elites based on notions of sacred leadership that were first manifest at the site of Mapungubwe in the Shashe-Limpopo confluence around AD 1020 (Huffman 1986, 2005). As the centre of political and economic power shifted north to the Zimbabwe Plateau in the early second millennium AD, a complex 4- or 5-tier settlement hierarchy developed.

In contrast to the Great Zimbabwe, drystone fortifications of Nyanza Region of Kenya are numerous but devoid of social stratification, with Thimlich Ohinga being the best preserved fortification. The settlement patterns of Thimlich Ohinga and the other outlying fortifications are more representative of lineage based system that relied more on heterarchical structures.

Tom Huffman (1986, 1996), notes that a new symbolic system for the structuring of settlement layout came to be associated with these stone-walled sites, although the ubiquity and socio-cultural significance of its various material elements has been challenged on a number of occasions (Pikirayi 2013; Chirikure et al. 2017b). Stone-walled sites associated with Leopard's Kopje tradition ceramics and dated to the 10th – 11th centuries AD were also present around the Tati River, north-eastern Botswana, and upstream from Mapungubwe on the Shashe River at Mapela. These Northern Leopard's Kopje sites pre-date the emergence of Zimbabwe tradition of stone-walling, and it is possible that the social and symbolic divisions of settlement space exhibited at the latter sites may have originated in this area, rather than at Mapungubwe, as has long been argued (Van Waarden 2011; Chirikure et al. 2014).

Molokwane, Marothodi, Tswenyane-Kaditshwene

Elsewhere in Southern Africa, especially across Eastern Botswana, North-Eastern and Eastern South Africa (Gauteng, North West, Free State, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga Provinces), encompassing much of the area currently occupied by Sotho-Tswana speakers, additional distinct stone-walled building traditions emerged in the second millennium AD. These have been the subject of archaeological and ethno-historical study for over seventy years (early studies include, e.g., Breutz 1956; Walton 1958; Mason 1968). In terms of their spatial layout, a great many

exhibit the basic characteristics of the Central Cattle Pattern as defined archaeologically by Huffman (1993, 2001) associated with Moloko ceramic traditions believed to mark the arrival of early Sotho-Tswana speakers in the region (Huffman 2007). The appearance of this ceramic tradition in archaeological contexts is typically held to mark the transition from the Early to Later Iron Age in the region. Like Zimbabwe Tradition sites, these vary widely in scale, extent and monumentality, with former capitals occupied during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Molokwane (Pistorius 1992), Marothodi (Anderson 2009) and Tswenyane-Kaditshwene (Boeyens 2003, 2016) covering vast areas and likely housing 20,000 inhabitants at their peak. Unlike Zimbabwe Tradition stone-walled settlements, the enclosures and settlement areas of the political elite were not as overly differentiated and segregated from those of the commoners, although differences in the size of central cattle byres, the faunal and artefactual composition of household refuse middens and other material traces have been interpreted as appropriate indices of social distinctions (e.g. Pistorius and Steyn 1995; Hall 2000; Boeyens and Plug 2011; Grant 2016). Thimlich Ohinga site can compare to the latter fortifications in that class differentiation was not a key determinant in the settlements. Thimlich Ohinga was also characterized by linguistically different cultural groups occupying the settlements in different times through displacement of the weaker predecessors with successive migratory waves, necessitating expansion of existing fortifications and construction of new drystone structures (Ayot 1979, Onjala 1990).

Various typological studies have also defined the geographical extent of different traditions and their possible cultural affiliations. Among those associated with Late Iron Age Bantu-language speakers, those at the site of Moor Park in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal Province, are perhaps the earliest, and have been dated to the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries AD (Huffman 2007). On the Highveld, Type N sites (Maggs 1976) have been dated to between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries AD, while Type Z enclosures found in areas south of the Vaal River are considered to be associated with south-western Sotho-Tswana, including the Rolong and Tlhaping (Maggs 1976). The use of oral traditions and ethnohistoric data have played a fundamental role in the determination of possible cultural affiliations of different clusters and walling styles, as well as in the reconstruction of the histories of different capitals and the sequences of their relocation (e.g. Loubser 1990; Hall et al. 2008; Boeyens and Hall 2009; Morton 2013).

Recent research, nonetheless, has demonstrated the existence of other sites with drystone walling on the west coast of South Africa associated with Late Stone Age ceramics, such as the site of Simon se Klip, and also in the Seacow River Valley (Samson 2010), that appear to pre-date the appearance of drystone walling complexes in the eastern part of the subcontinent. These structures were probably used to contain and control the movement of livestock, and date between the second half of the first millennium AD to around the eleventh century (Sadr 2012), and it is possible that some of these traditions may have been the inspiration for later use of drystone walling among farming communities.

Nyanga, Bokoni, Engaruka, Konso and Marakwet sites

Drystone walled enclosures and other structural features associated with pastoralist economies are also widely documented in Namibia (Kinahan 1986). The eastern highlands of Zimbabwe centred around Nyanga are also well-known for the existence of well-preserved, stone-built settlement complexes, pit structures, livestock enclosures and agricultural terracing spread, intermittently, across c. 7000 sq km and dating to between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries AD (Summers 1958; Soper 2002; Manyanga and Shenjere 2012). The archaeology of the Nyanga landscape attests to a phase of agricultural intensification in the region, stimulated perhaps in response to, but also facilitating, demographic growth and broadening of regional exchange networks. Several other instances of agricultural intensification, typically associated with widespread use of drystone walling techniques, and all broadly coeval with one another (although on-going research is demonstrating that the timing of their initiation and demise is more variable than once thought) are known elsewhere in southern and eastern Africa. These include the complexes in Bokoni, Mpumalanga Province, north-eastern South Africa (Delius and Schoeman 2008; Delius et al. 2012; Widgren et al. 2016); at Engaruka, northern Tanzania (Sutton 1998; Stump 2006; Westerberg 47 et al. 2010; Land and Stump 2017); Marakwet and Pokot, Kerio Escarpment, Kenya (Davies 2008, 2010; Davies and Moore 2016); and at Konso, Ethiopia (Ambourn 1989; Kimura 2006; Watson 2009; Ferro-Vázquez et al. 2017), all of which have been the focus of integrated archaeological study aimed at understanding their organisation and functioning as agricultural landscapes, and their longer-term historical ecology.

Juba-Nimule, Agoro and Sirikwa sites

Traces of similar fossil landscapes combining settlement remains, grain bins, terracing, and possible livestock enclosures are from other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these, such as the recently documented traces along the Juba-Nimule section of the Nile in South Sudan (Davies 2014), and at Agoro, Kitgum District, northern Uganda (Dismas Ongwen, pers. comm. November 2016), have only been partially mapped and await more extensive investigation. Stone-built house/hut-circles have also been recorded on the Uasin Gishu Plateau in Kenya's Western Highlands, that are probably related to the emergence of the Sirikwa (Sutton 1973). Commenting on these structures Galloway (1935) drew comparisons with the stone-built features of Nyanga, eastern Zimbabwe. As Posnansky (1961b) later pointed out, however, while there may be certain formal similarities between the two areas, there is less evidence for any direct historical or cultural link between the two areas. The same can be said for the claims, often made by journalists, of a direct link between Thimlich Ohinga and Great Zimbabwe.

Sukur landscape of Nigeria and Bandiagara Dogon Settlements

Others complexes in sub-Saharan Africa where drystone-walling was widely used include the settlement systems and agricultural landscapes of the Mandara Mountains in southern Nigeria/northern Cameroon, especially those of Sukur, Adamawa State, Nigeria. These have been intensively studied from both an archaeological and ethnoarchaeological perspective (e.g. Smith and David 1995; MacEachern 2002, 2012; David 2012; MacEachern and David 2013). As

living landscapes, like Konso in Ethiopia (Watson 2009), Kofyar on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria (Stone 1994, 1996), and Dogon settlements and field systems on the Bandiagara Escarpment, Mali (Van Beek 1993; Lane 1994; Widgren 2010), Sukur and other parts of the Mandara Mountains provide unprecedented insights into the cultural values associated with routine landscape practices and their symbolic resonances in everyday life. Similarly, at Thimlich Ohinga, traditional conservation practices were embedded within complex social system of behavior that defined the community since the walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection, thus taboos regulated behaviour. Moreover, while, the whole village complex was considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing, the walls were considered masculine playing the role of the protector (Onjala 1994) The massive stone walled enclosures at Loropeni, southwest Burkina Faso, constructed in the eleventh century, have also been the subject of sustained historical, and to a lesser degree archaeological, study (Somé and Simporé 2014).

The surviving enclosures of Thimlich Ohinga, and its associated landscape setting both in the immediate vicinity of the site, which contains several other similar, although less well-preserved enclosures, field boundaries and traces of agricultural terracing compare very favourably with many of these better documented stone-walled complexes – several of which have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. Compared with other stone-walled complexes in East Africa, apart from the Engaruka landscape which is also relatively well-preserved, the enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga are by far the best-preserved complex, representing considerable investments in and mobilisation of labour. Unlike the large earthwork sites associated with early kingdoms in the Great Lakes region, and most probably also the capital sites of the Zimbabwe empire and Mutapa Kingdom in Southern Africa, there is limited evidence to suggest that the construction of these enclosures relied on a highly centralised system of authority. Instead, the remains are more representative of a lineage based system that relied on more heterarchical structures, although how such systems facilitated the construction of large, monumental architecture remains a topic for future research.

Conclusion

The remains at Thimlich Ohinga site and in the wider landscape are also highly representative of a particular phase in the development of settlement systems in Western Kenya from the sixteenth to early twentieth century. The tradition of building in stone, especially large, multi-component enclosures ended with the establishment of colonial rule, and the dispersal of Luo communities into smaller, family-based homesteads. This change in settlement organisation from larger settlements likely comprised of several family groups sometimes clustered together in a series of stone-walled enclosures, to dispersed settlements is likely related to a reduction of inter-ethnic warfare associated with the *Pax Britannica* that followed the establishment of colonial rule and the associated dismantling of precolonial military structures (e.g. Owino 2011).

The appearance of both stone-walled *ohinga* and earthen bank-and-ditch *gunda* certainly seems to be related, at least in part, to increased regional insecurity arising from inter-ethnic wars of expansion from the seventeenth century onwards, and likely exacerbated by the growth of slave raiding across the region in the nineteenth century and various ecological pressures (Weatherby 1967; Kenny 1979a; Waller 1985; Reid 2001; Kusimba 2004; Doyle and Médard 2007; Lane 2011). Traces of fortified settlements are found quite widely elsewhere in western Kenya, especially in the Bukusu and Bungoma areas. Contrary, to these fortifications, Thimlich Ohinga fortification employed a three-phase stone laying technique where the two outer layers interlock with the middle layer thereby concentrating the strength at the center to increase stability of the walls.

However, defensive concerns may not have been the sole motivation for the construction of large stone-walled enclosures. The choice of stone, for example, may have been partly related to a desire for a material expression of permanence and perhaps prominence in what had previously been a more fluid, dynamic landscape. Practical reasons associated with the clearance of land for agriculture, perhaps associated with the uptake of American crops such as maize and tobacco, may also have played a part, especially in the use of stone for field boundaries.

Archaeological research has demonstrated the quality of preservation at the site and the potential for integrated studies along the lines of some of the examples listed above. The density of historical, anthropological and ethnoarchaeological research on Luo settlement dynamics (Dietler and Herbich 1993; Lang'o 1997; Herbich and Dietler 2009), material culture (Hartmann 1928; Hay 1975, 1996; Ocholla-Ayayo 1980; Dietler and Herbich 1989, 1998; Herbich 1987; economic, kinship, and political systems (Shaw 1932; Evans-Pritchard 1949, 1950; Ominde 1952; Southall 1952; Ogot 1963; Glickman 1974; Shipton 1984a), trade networks (Hartwig 1970; Kenny 1974, 1979b), land use and land tenure (Shipton 1984b, 1992, 2009; Mango 2002) and food production and use (Dobbs 1927; Owen 1932; Odede 1942; Håkansson 1994; Johns and Kokwaro 1991; Dietler and Herbich 2006), similarly provide exceptional opportunities for cross-disciplinary studies of continuities and changes in this landscape, and comparison with the rather different trajectories and agrarian dynamics experienced in areas to the west of Lake Victoria where various kingdoms and more centralised political systems evolved during the second millennium AD (Thibon 1989; Schoenbrun 1998; Chrétien 2000; Cochet 2004; Reid 2013). Transformations in the religious landscapes of the Great Lakes kingdoms, as reconstructed through historical linguistics by Schoenbrun (2006; Reid 2016), may have also posed ontological challenges to Luo communities, especially with the arrival of refugees from the expansion of the Bunyoro and Buganda kingdoms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although how Luo responded to these remains unclear.

3.d Authenticity of the property

The Bantu people built and occupied the Thimlich Ohinga stone structures at around the 14th century. The Nilotes arrived in the Lake Victoria region around the 16th century occupying the

already existing stone structures until the late 20th century. Oral history indicates that the Nilotic occupants carried out maintenance work on the structures using the original materials and traditional conservation technology.

These periods of occupation and repair did not interfere with the architecture and preservation of the structures. The nominated property has therefore retained its original architectural and aesthetic values. After their abandonment, no more stone structures were constructed at Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement . Consequently, landscapes of similar design in the larger Lake Victoria region were reduced to mere traces of circumferences or disappeared altogether. Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement is one of the few stone structures that have survived.

Repairs carried out on the property after the official gazettelement in 1981 used indigenous methods and the work is well documented and archived at the National Museums of Kenya. The original material and design of the structures has remained unchanged. The National Museums of Kenya identified traditional masons for the wall maintenance works and these have continued being used. Skill transfer is enhanced in all repair works with the youth in the area being trained by the traditional masons through apprenticeship.

Integrity of the property

The existing boundary of the property contains all the elements of the Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement. Indigenous beliefs and practices have ensured that the property remain intact. The community reveres the site as they also believe that it is a link between them and their ancestors. During calamities, traditional sacrifices are carried out at the site.

The stone enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga has evolved from originally being homesteads to preserved monuments in the 20th century. Archaeological excavations at the site have used conventional scientific methods.

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) has entered into a land use agreement with the neighbouring land owners for sustainable use of land and related resources. NMK is also in the process of purchasing part of the land on the south-western part of the site to ensure protection of the drystone enclosure near the existing perimeter fence (See enclosed land use agreement)

4. STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

4.a Present state of conservation

As a result of protecting Thimlich Ohinga settlement using the Kenyan law i.e. by having it gazetted, and also working with the local community living in the environs of the site, the critical threats that would have seen to the neglect, deterioration and subsequent destruction of the site have been curbed. Thimlich Ohinga is currently surrounded by a barbed wire perimeter fence. This contributes to its protection and wards off the local community and their livestock who would otherwise use the site as their herding grounds.

Occasional scientific research carried out at the site contributes to monitoring of the site. There is a caretaker and guides permanently stationed at the site who ensure tampering of the walls does not take place. On a daily basis there is clearing of vegetation that would otherwise affect the stability of the walls. This is done in and around the site. Security personnel at the site ensure illegal sourcing of stones is curbed.

The physical condition of the walls is good as they have been well maintained and preserved. The walls are stable and there is periodical monitoring and restoration when the need arises. Access to the site is through one entrance ensuring the control of visitors. The dry stone wall structures have designated entries and there is the presence of a clear path and walk ways ensuring no interference to the walls. The method used for construction of the walls, i.e., the three phase system, is clear for all to see and understand. The unique structures such as the external support ramps, buttresses, surveillance posts, lintel inscriptions at the entrances, *bao* game, grinding stones, house pits, cattle enclosures and drainage ducts are all intact. The archaeological excavation sites are demarcated and well preserved. The traditional settlement has signage giving explanations on the unique features as well as directions on to navigate around the site. This has been due to concerted efforts by the National Museums of Kenya and the local community.

There is a problem of vegetation encroachment. The trees render the walls unsteady and if they remain unchecked, they may cause the deterioration of the walls. However, those that tend to grow nearest to the walls are periodically removed as a conservation measure. There is also a problem of the stones on the walls being loosened and falling due to the activities of monkeys. The staff at the site have been trained to replace them when this occurs.

On certain sections of the walls there is lichen growth which gives the walls a grey hue. However, steps are currently being taken to control this.

The indigenous plants that grow within the site are well taken care of and their growth is monitored as they have many uses to both the local community and researchers and also contribute to the aesthetic value of the site.

4.b Factors affecting the property

(i) Development Pressures

There is occasional illegal grazing, collection of firewood and harvesting of sisal which grows naturally within the site. This takes place when some members of the neighbouring community destroy sections of the fence and gain entrance to the site.

(ii) Environmental pressures

Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement, like any other site within the tropical region is subject to its climate conditions. Water from excessive rain can cause instability to the walls due to flooding as it does not penetrate through the soil easily due to its clayey nature and thus not very porous.

Trees growing near the walls are potential threats to the stability of the walls but these are removed periodically. Some parasitic tree species grow on rock crevices which could be a danger but are promptly removed when noticed. There is also encroachment of wildlife to the site as it is the only dense thicketed area with vegetation in the environs. Animals such as monkeys climb the walls contribute to the instability of the walls.

(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness

Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement is not known to have any major natural disaster in history. However, minor earthquakes which occur in the area destabilize the walls and loosen the rocks.

(iv) Visitor and tourism pressures

Visitors have not caused any pressures as they are guided by National Museums of Kenya staff as they visit and carry out research at the site. The staff duly participates in the research and take note of the researchers' activities. In addition, the number of visitors to the site is negligible and can be controlled.

(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone

Estimated population located within:

Area of nominated property – 9 members of staff

Buffer zone – 6 persons

Total – 15

Year - 2017

5. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

5.a Ownership

The property is owned and managed by the National Museums of Kenya which is a Kenya government corporation and whose headquarters is in Nairobi, Kenya.

5.b Protective designation

The site was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September, 1981 and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May, 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act (CAP 215) which was repealed and replaced by the National Museums and Heritage Act of 2006.

5.c Means of implementing protective measures

The National Museums and Heritage Act of 2006 is an Act of Parliament that consolidate the law relating to national museums and heritage; to provide for the establishment, control, management and development of national museums; and the identification, protection, conservation and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage of Kenya.

A brief description is provided below explaining how the Heritage Act works.

Declaration of Monuments

After consultation with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) the Minister of State for Sports, Culture and the Arts may, by notice in the gazette, declare an open space to be a protected area within the meaning of the Act, a specified place or immovable structure considered to be of historical interest, and a specified area of land under or adjoining it, a site on which a buried monument or object of archaeological or palaeontological interests exists or is believed to exist, or a specified area of land adjoining it required for its maintenance.

Control of Access to protected area

The Act allows the Minister in respect of a protected area by notice in the Kenya Gazette, prohibit or restrict access, development, or for agriculture or livestock use or any other activity which is liable to damage a monument or object of archaeological or palaeontological interest. The Minister may also place the protected areas under the control of the NMK on such terms. The Minister may also direct or authorize the NMK to take such steps necessary or desirable for the maintenance of the protected area. The NMK may make by-laws for controlling access thereto with or without payment, and the enforce laws for conduct of visitors in the protected area.

Guardianship of monuments

The owner(s) of a monument may, by written instrument, constitute the NMK as the guardian of the monument if the latter agrees. When a specific property or national monument is declared a national monument within the meaning National Museums and Heritage Act of 2006 the custodian is the NMK and if restoration, modifications or changes are to be made on the property, the NMK provides expertise enabling the site to retain its authenticity.

Other laws include; the Government Lands Act of 2010 which is an Act of Parliament that makes further provisions for regulating, leasing and disposal of Government Land. The Environmental Management and Coordination Act 1999 provides for the establishment of appropriate legal and institutional frameworks for the management of the environment and for matters connected to it. There is also the Wildlife (Conservation and Management Act) 1985 that handles the protection, conservation and management of wildlife in Kenya. In addition, the Forests Act of 2005 provides for the establishment, development and sustainable management, including conservation and rational utilization of forest resources for socio-economic development of the country.

5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located

Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan

Agency responsible – Ministry of Tourism

Date – 2010-2015

This strategic plan is informed by the Vision 2030 and the National Tourism Policy, the National Policy on Culture and Heritage, Department of Culture, Bomas of Kenya, and the National Museums of Kenya. The strategy acknowledges the challenges faced by the country in the development of cultural and heritage tourism and has thus come with ways that ensure the development of the sector and which provides quality culture and heritage tourism to all visitors.

To implement this strategy the Ministry of Tourism coordinates the implementation of the various programmes and activities proposed in the strategy. The Ministry will forge a close working relationship with the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture which the National Museums of Kenya falls under, bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, communities and other stakeholders in the sector.

The Ministry of Tourism has a Strategic Implementation Plan and preservation, conservation and development is a strategic theme whose main objectives include, identification and safeguarding elements of Kenya's tangible and intangible heritage that are relevant to tourism development in line with UNESCO Convention 2003 and 2005; promotion of the development of intangible and tangible cultural heritage products in tourism to be in tandem with current needs and to work

with line ministries in the development and maintenance of necessary cultural infrastructure for marketing of culture and heritage sector.

The strategic plan seeks to address the issues that have positively or negatively impacted on cultural and heritage tourism. These include climate change, policy governance/legal issues, negative ethnicity, scarce resources, economic recession, global politics, UNESCO world heritage sites, cross-border conflicts on shared resources, training in culture and heritage at university level, government forging partnerships, development in ICT websites and signing of the East Africa Community Treaty.

Nyanza and Western Kenya Tourism Development Plan

Agency responsible – Tourism Trust Fund under the auspices of the Government of Kenya the Ministry of Tourism being the responsible agency and the European Union

Date – 2009

The overall aim of the Nyanza and Western Kenya Tourism Development Plan is to ensure that tourism retains its position as a leading export, and that it becomes a major vehicle for job creation, poverty reduction and wealth creation for Kenyans in the future, and whose practices are closely harmonized with key national policies and laws pertaining to wildlife conservation, land ownership and physical planning. The plan also provides the framework for controlled tourism development that does not generate environmental or socio-cultural problems. The purpose is to promote tourism and at the same time conserve the environment and culture. The plan advocates for maximum participation of local residents in the development process and sharing the benefits that accrue. The plan lists the tourism product development opportunities and proposes a framework within which the development should be undertaken.

In order to create a varied experience and at the same time diversify the tourism product a tourism circuit plan was developed. Local knowledge and insight was helpful in creating this circuit. Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement was incorporated in the circuit as well as nearby attractions such as Gogo Waterfalls. A tour of the museums in the area, other cultural heritage sites, nearby animal sanctuaries and parks and also sites indicating the industrial potential of the area were also included in the circuit.

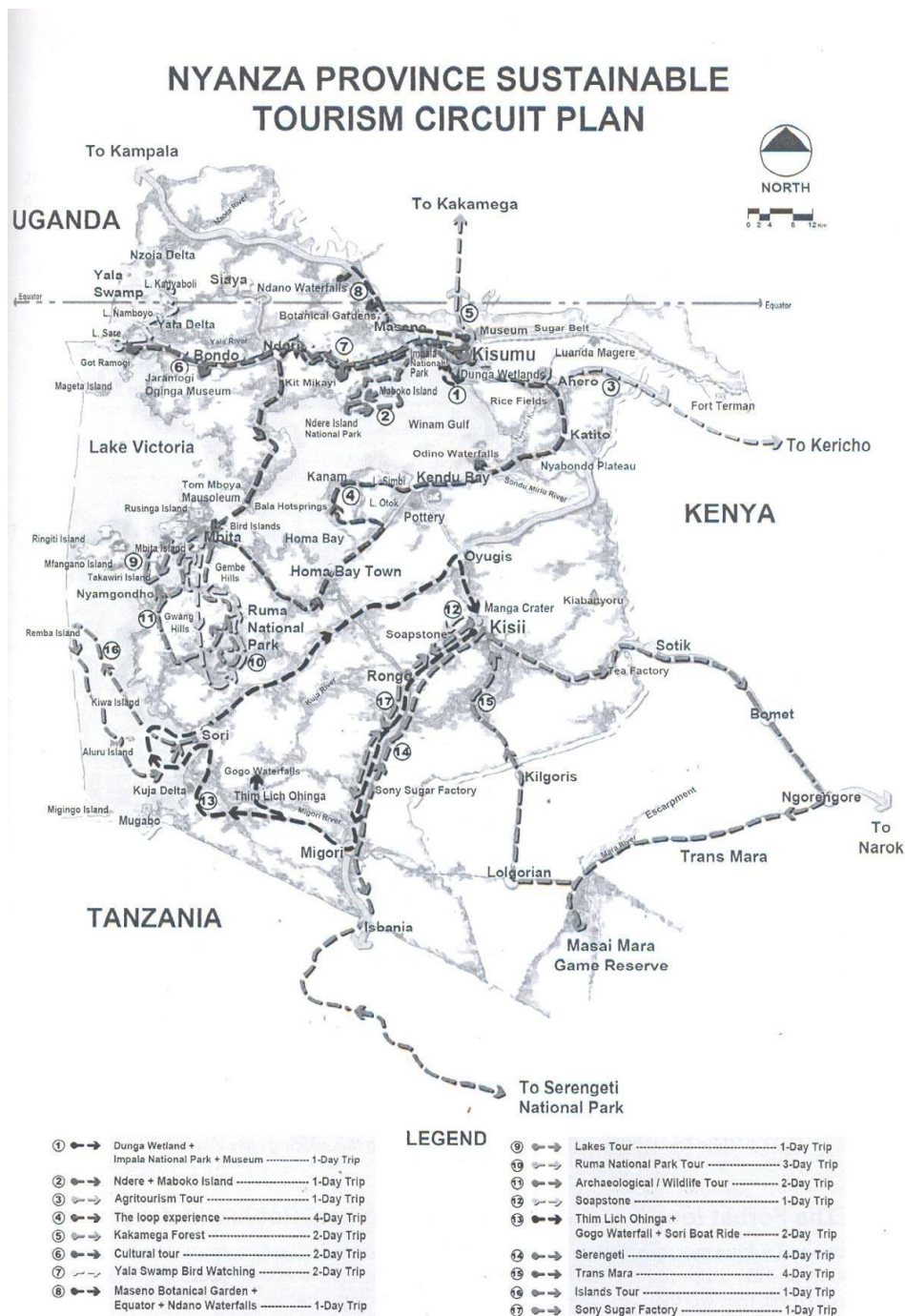


Figure 17 Thimlich Ohinga on the tourist circuit of Nyanza, Kenya

Migori – District Environment Action Plan

Agency responsible – National Environment Management Authority under the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources

Date – 2009 – 2013

The Migori District Environmental Action Plan addresses environmental aspects in trade, industry, tourism and service sectors. The key issues are high pollution levels from industrial activities and weak enforcement of relevant legislations.

Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement is incorporated in the study area. The plan cites Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement, other historical sites and nearby waterfalls developed as viable tourist sites. It goes ahead to list the tourist facilities available in the district. The plan also sites proposed interventions which include: extending the western tourism circuit in Kenya, encouraging sustainable and eco-tourism development, promotion of cultural and sports tourism, development of infrastructure, development of tourism facilities and improvement of information communication technology in order to promote tourism.

5.e Property management plan or management system

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) has a management plan for Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site in place (See annex 1). The plan was prepared in collaboration with the local community. In addition, a land use agreement and sale of land agreement has been formulated and signed respectively by the NMK and land owners (See annex 2). The land in question as indicated in the enclosed map is the land earmarked as the buffer zone together with a section of land proposed to be purchased by NMK to be part of the core area.

Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement Management Plan

Agency responsible – National Museums of Kenya

Validity period – 2017- 2027

The Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement Management Plan has been prepared to harmonize the flow and direction of conservation activities that are taking place and those planned to take place at the landscape. The main objective is to empower the professionals involved to carry out the right actions to realize the goal of preserving the site. The plan also forms a communication tool through which such a goal can be realized. It spells out internationally accepted guidelines and strategies for the management of the heritage.

The management plan was prepared by the National Museums of Kenya professionals consisting of archaeologists, architects, anthropologists and geologists who have been involved in conservation work at the site. The local community surrounding the site also acted as resource persons and provided useful information on the historical setting and establishment of the site as it has been passed down to them in oral history. This oral history consisted on information ranging from the choice of the site through building process, repair, to abandonment of the settlement in the early 20th century.

A copy of the management plan has been annexed to this dossier.

5.f Sources and levels of finance

National Museums of Kenya

The institution has employed both permanent and contractual staffs who take care of the site. Employee remuneration including running of the site per annum is approximately US \$ 13,475.

Archaeological Institute of America

In 2012 the National Museums of Kenya was awarded a grant of US \$ 23,700.

The grant went towards conservation and restoration with emphasis being placed on local community involvement and training the future generation on traditional conservation methods.

United Nations Education and Cultural Organization World Heritage Fund

In 2011 UNESCO funded the National Museums of Kenya US \$29,990 for preparation of a nomination dossier and management plan for Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement for inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage List.

American Express Company

Through the World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites, in 2000 the National Museums of Kenya was awarded a grant of US\$40,000 for the Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement Restoration Project.

Deficiencies – Inadequate funding for site conservation, infrastructure development, marketing and development, research and education. The staff present at Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement are inadequate and those present are in need of further and up to date conservation and management training.

5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

The National Museums of Kenya has staff that are trained at both local and foreign education institutions. These staff members are in possession of various degrees, i.e., Doctorate, Masters and First Degree and in diverse disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, geology, geography, cartography and photography.

These staff members offer in-house training and pass on the skills they have acquired to those members of staff who do not have the opportunity to study.

Occasionally there have been researchers from foreign countries trained in the same or similar fields of study who carry out research studies at Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement. These pass on the findings of their research to the National Museums of Kenya.

Staff members of the National Museums occasionally take up short courses offered by the following institutions:

Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA) - is an international Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) dedicated to the preservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage in Africa through a programme of training and development support services. Its core value is in the preservation of immovable, movable and intangible cultural heritage in Africa.

<http://www.heritageinafrica.org>

International Centre for the Study and Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) – This is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage. By offering training to applicants from the Africa region it emphasizes that the problems facing conservation in Africa must be addressed not only through technical solutions, but also by taking into account the relationship between the immovable cultural heritage and its social, environmental and economical aspects.

<http://www.iccrom.org>

5. h Visitor facilities and statistics

The majority of the visitors are local residents from the nearby community, schools, universities and research organizations within the country. The non-resident visitors are mainly researchers and students from international universities and research centres.

YEAR	RESIDENTS (LOCAL)	NON-RESIDENTS (FOREIGNERS)	TOTAL
2007	137	39	176
2008	206	22	228
2009	205	59	264
2010	284	40	324
2011	199	48	247
2012	230	14	244
2013	261	48	309
2014	181	17	198
2015	288	8	296
2016	139	5	144
2017	345	9	354

Table 1 Visitor statistics 2007 to 2017

The site has a resource documentation centre, a ticket office, washrooms and car park. However, plans are underway for a proposed picnic site, camping site and eco-lodge.

5. i Policies and programmes related to presentation and promotion of the property

5.i. i. Policies

National Policy on Culture and Heritage

Agency responsible – Ministry of State for Sports, Culture and the Arts

Date – 2009

The Kenyan Culture and National Heritage Policy is aimed at ensuring the fullest possible expression of culture and heritage in all their facets including equal access for all cultures to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form. It is also aimed at ensuring the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination.

The Culture and National Heritage Policy shall ensure that national heritage in all their forms are preserved, enhanced and handed over to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among Kenya's diverse cultures.

Culture and Heritage

Tangible Cultural Heritage - Refers to objects, movable and immovable, which men and women use to benefit from their physical environment. It includes archaeological findings, which testify to the high degree of our past civilization.

Policy Statement

The government shall enhance, support and assist in the promotion of the cultural heritage of Kenya by encouraging, preserving, sustaining and disseminating knowledge of traditional and contemporary tangible culture.

The government shall be committed to the protection, preservation and even retrieval of important objects of tangible culture including archaeological findings which bear witness to the antiquity of Kenyan Cultural expression.

The government recognizes the importance of research in the promotion and preservation of tangible culture and shall take all necessary steps to facilitate and encourage research in all aspects of culture.

The government shall endeavour to preserve traditional settlements that testify to the creative genius, social development and imaginative spiritual vitality of humanity, all of which are part of Kenya's cultural identity.

Historical Sites, Monuments and Physical Environment

Sites and Monuments form the nation's immovable heritage. These traditional settlements are a testimony of identities and shared aesthetical values.

Policy Statement

The government will establish and fund institutions at different levels to ensure the conservation and promotion of Kenya's immovable heritage and will further enact laws that provide the appropriate legislative and administrative framework for the protection of sites and monuments.

The government will encourage the participation of local communities in the planning and management of sites and monuments.

Cultural Tourism

Whereas cultural tourism is a vital foreign exchange earner and a major employment sector in our country, it is also an important avenue for local, regional and international understanding and has implications on intercultural relations and reduction of conflicts.

Policy Statement

The government shall encourage public, private individuals and institutions to establish and maintain networks that promote cultural tourism while ensuring that cultural products and services are not unduly exploited and/or corrupted.

The government will actively assist individuals, public and private institutions/organizations and communities in organizing, managing and marketing cultural products, festivals and services.

National Museums of Kenya, Tourism Sites

Agency responsible – National Museums of Kenya

Date – 2011

The National Museums of Kenya through the Department of Regional Museums, Sites and Monuments together with input from the Public Relations and Marketing Department has developed a tourism document for its museums and sites. This document is presented in the form of a map which is divided into three regions, namely, coastal region, central region and western region. Each region has museums and site museums be they of archaeological or palaeontological interest which are important heritage sites to Kenya. There is a short description of the sites in each region, their location and also photographs of the sites. Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement is highlighted in the map and aptly described in the text.

Know Your Country Fact Book

Agency responsible – Public Communication Office, Office of the President

Date – 2011

This is the ultimate guide to history, heritage, themes, traditions, genesis and trends of Kenya. It gives historical, cultural and factual aspects of Kenya. Its publishing came about as a result of Vision 2030 the Kenya national development blueprint that aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrialising, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment.

The book gives information about Kenya which includes a brief history of Kenya. It gives fast facts on Kenya which gives the government type, location, surface area, population, suffrage, language, national colours, time zone, lowest and highest point, terrain, climate, religion, population growth, airports, railways, people of Kenya, provinces, extremities, currency, economy, industry, agriculture, natural resources, exports, communication among others.

The book gives information on the list of parks and reserves, hours of operation and park rules. It gives the name of the park, major attractions in the park, about the park, access to the park, contacts and where to stay i.e. in park accommodation.

The book gives information of museums and gazetted monuments of Kenya. It gives a list of the monuments in Nairobi, Rift Valley, Central, Coast, Eastern and Nyanza provinces. It gives a description of the sites in Kenya and coloured pictures, it also gives the distance of towns from the main city of Nairobi. The Thimlich Ohiinga traditional settlement is well described here.

5.i. ii. Research Programmes

Previous research has focused on regional survey and site based excavations, aimed largely at establishing the date and distribution of stone-walled *ohingni*, especially the enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga, and their inferred association with Luo communities. This work has laid the basis for future studies, but has often been undertaken without sufficient regard to the major transformations that Luo and other societies in western Kenya have undergone since the establishment of British colonial rule and in the post-Independence era. Likewise, there has often been only limited consideration given to wider historical processes and ethnic fluidity that helped shape social formations in western Kenya from the mid-second millennium AD onwards. This has sometimes resulted in a fairly uncritical use of twentieth century Luo ethnography in the interpretation of the archaeology of the area, while at the same time an under-utilisation of the theoretical insights into Luo social dynamics that the detailed ethnographic, historical and ethnoarchaeological studies already available can provide. Future projects should aim at genuine cross-disciplinary research, involving teams composed of researchers drawn from a mix of disciplines, with clearly defined research questions and which take advantage of a wide range of analytical techniques and field mapping technologies now available for undertaking integrated

landscape research on the archaeology and historical ecology of western Kenya. At the same time, efforts must be made to complete post-excavation analyses of previously excavated material from Thimlich Ohinga and other sites that may contribute to understanding long-term settlement histories and material culture traditions (e.g. Wadh Lang'o, given that the stratigraphy of that site – now destroyed – spanned the pre-ceramic Late Stone Age up to the late pre-colonial period). A number of themes, organized as Work Packages, that NMK and its collaborators both in country and abroad, might consider, are given below.

Work Package 1: Completion of post-excavation analyses and publication of reports on previous excavations at Thimlich Ohinga, Wadh Lang'o, Lwak, and Usare, supplemented by GIS-based comparative analyses of the distribution and form of known *gunda* and *ohinga*. The analysis of aerial photographs and satellite imagery, including use of Google Earth along the lines applied by Sadr (2016) in South Africa, to improve the spatial coverage of previous foot surveys is also recommended.

Work Package 2: Food, settlement and environmental contexts. *Main aims:* to conduct high-resolution, multi-proxy analyses of climatic, vegetation and environmental change; undertake landscape archaeology surveys to document settlement distributions and patterns; geoarchaeological mapping to reconstruct land use strategies and environmental effects; Off-site geoarchaeological work (soil micromorphology, soil chemistry) to assess ecological impacts, and relate these to ethnohistoric and ethnobotanical data from the same area.

Work Package 3: Trade, technology and social organisation. *Main aims:* High-resolution area excavations of selected areas of different enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga, to map activity areas and reconstruct internal household space through integrated analyses of micro- and macro-debris distributions, geochemical patterning, discard practices, archaeometric (petrographic and chemical studies) of ceramics and other material culture from excavated sites to determine patterns of resource use and exchange networks; archaeometallurgical studies of iron objects to assess smelting efficiency and technical processes; and to produce a securely dated chronological framework for the changing geographical extent of its exchange networks; and to integrate the archaeological record with available oral and documentary sources and ethnoarchaeological studies.

Work Package 4: Diet, food production and landscape dynamics. *Main aims:* New Excavations at a combination of several *ohinga*, *gunda* and open-air sites such as Usare, with a focus on recovery of plant remains (diet, resource use), large faunal assemblages (diet, herd management, mobility, climate, disease), iron working areas (smelting & smithing technologies), grinding equipment (for starch residue analysis), ceramics (for residue and lipid analysis), and reconstruction of spatial organisation (social organisation, historicising ethnoarchaeological models). Ideally this work package would need to include new systematic foot survey so as to relate the *ohinga* and *gunda* sites to earlier settlement forms, especially those attributable to the Middle Iron Age. The use of geophysical survey equipment to map sub-surface anomalies across

all sites is recommended, coupled with selective use of LiDAR for high resolution mapping of key sites and their settings (covering traces of field boundaries and terraces, for instance).

Work Package 5: Thimlich Ohinga in context. *Main aims:* To undertake, comparative analysis of the available archaeological, historical and ethnographic data sets relating to coeval socio-political in western Kenya and adjacent parts of Uganda and Tanzania; to relate the archaeological data from Thimlich Ohinga and its immediate environs to wider social, political, economic and cultural changes across Eastern Africa from the mid-second millennium AD up to the establishment of British colonial rule and missionary influence and to assess the transformative effects of colonialism and missionisation; to assess the impacts of and responses to climatic changes associated with the Little Ice Age on Thimlich Ohinga's inhabitants and its immediate environment.

Work Package 6: Thimlich Ohinga's future. *Main aims:* To enhance awareness of the site, its significance and potential, the project's activities and results; to engage with local communities and stakeholders to as to enhance stakeholder ownership of the biocultural heritage of Thimlich Ohinga and its landscape setting; to promote community engagement with this heritage and to co-develop with these communities relevant biocultural business opportunities; to engage with policy makers in ways that demonstrate the contributions that time perspectives can make to sustainable development at the local level.

5.j Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

The management of the site is structured in a hierarchical manner with a Site Caretaker based at Thimlich Ohinga, who reports to a Senior Curator, based at Kisumu Museum who in turn reports to Western Region Keeper in charge of Antiquities, Sites and Monuments.

.Keeper Western Region. Responsibility of Keeper, include among other duties, co-ordination and supervision of all NMK museums, sites and monuments within the region, protection of Sites and Monuments against threats including destructive development, verification and ensuring all researchers working in NMK sites and monuments within the regions have valid research / excavation permits and participation in the planning for future development of Museum Sites and Monuments in the region among other responsibilities.

Senior Curator- Kisumu Museum. The Curator has special responsibilities which include: Initiating development projects within the Museum and site museums under his/ her jurisdiction, providing conceptual leadership through special knowledge in Museology by planning, organizing, supervising, and coordinating activities at site museums, in addition to liaising with government departments, community members, caretakers and Western Region Keeper.

Site Caretaker, Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement – The caretaker acts as a curatorial assistant, assist researchers while at the site, assist in the preparation of site reports, act as a

visitor guide and sees to the daily supervision of the site in addition to management of staff working at the site.

Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement has six support staff who see to the maintenance and daily running of the site and ensure that the site is kept clean. Their mandate includes vegetation clearing and restoration works. Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement has also two members of staff who provide security services to the site, its employees and visitors who frequent the site. In addition, more often community members offer voluntary services at the site, ranging from clearing of the fast growing vegetation cover to dry-stone wall repairs among other manual works.

6. MONITORING

Monitoring has been taking place at Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement since construction. Traditionally there were set rules and regulations in the form of prohibitions and taboos that were invisible laws that protected the site and its walls, the flora and fauna.

Since the National Museums of Kenya took over the management of the site, maintenance and accessibility to the site is controlled by its members of staff.

6. a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
Condition survey: Assessment of wall condition Assessment of vegetation growth	Daily routine checks and observation by staff stationed at the site.	Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement , National Museums of Kenya
Photographs	Taken when the need arises for instance documentation and analysis of site condition providing current status of the site before, during and after any restoration activity at the site.	Kisumu Museum, Audio Visual Department and Sites and Monuments Department, National Museums of Kenya
Status of fence: Inspection of barbed wire and poles used to construct fence Breakage points at fence	Daily observation by staff stationed at the site	Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement , National Museums of Kenya

Table 2 Key indicators for state of conservation

6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring property

a) Keeper, Western Region
National Museums of Kenya
P. O. Box 9194 – 40141
Kisumu, Kenya
Telephone: 254 57 20263556
Email: dkmitai@museums.or.ke

b) Senior Curator, Kisumu Museum
National Museums of Kenya
P. O. Box 1779 – 40100
Kisumu, Kenya
Telephone: 254 57 2020332. Email: pawiti@museums.or.ke

6.c Results of previous reporting exercises

i) Archaeological research project on Thimlich Ohinga site and other *Ohingni* in Kadem region and Comparative analysis- 2017.

The National Museums of Kenya in collaboration with, Department of Archaeology & Ancient History, Uppsala University, Sweden, Institute of Anthropology Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi, British Institute for Eastern Africa, Department of Cultural Heritage, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology conducted a survey in 2017 that entailed opening up of old excavation sites at Thimlich Ohinga Site and other Ohingni within the larger Kadem region. Prior to the new excavations, an analysis was done on materials recovered in previous excavations at Thimlich Ohinga.

Goal of the project was,

- ◆ Occasioned by referral of the nomination dossier by the World Heritage Committee, in June 2015 vide Decision: 39 COM 8B.8 to allow Kenya to reconsider the focus of the nomination of Thimlich Ohinga as an archaeological site rather than a cultural landscape which was the initial typology proposed by Kenya.

- ◆ Review of the revised boundaries of the proposed property and its buffer zone on the basis of improved understanding of the scope of the proposed property, its function and context through archaeological and other research and investigation in and around the proposed property in relation to its potential OUV.

The field work conducted in the month of February in 2017 focused on opening two old excavation sites and two other sites within the Thimlich Ohinga site. Additional sites within Kadem region were also excavated for local comparative analysis. Sampling of the excavation sites in the Kadem region were anchored on three ecological gradients namely; from 1000 m-1100 m ASL, 1100 m-1200 m ASL, as well as 1200m ASL and above.

Laboratory analysis of materials recovered during the fieldwork including previous samples was carried at NMK and at Beta Analytic Laboratory in the USA and Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in German.

The project realized

- ◆ Laboratory results which enhanced factual information especially in the placement of a more accurate date of the site and pin pointing the functionality of the stone enclosures from a cultural and an ecological perspective,

- ◆ ICOMOS Mission whose technical report recommendation suggested reconsideration of Thimlich Ohinga as a traditional human settlement rather than as a cultural landscape, proposed augmentation of the comparative analysis from a local level (Lake Victoria region) and the Sub-Saharan Africa region, extension of the boundary on the South Eastern side of Thimlich Ohinga site to protect the enclosure near the fence, extension of the buffer zone on the southern side and plotting of *Ohingni* in the property's vicinity, redrafting of the land use agreement to include national and local administration as signatories and finally designing future research strategies.

This work was funded by UNESCO-World Heritage Fund (WHF)

The table below indicates an abundant representation of domestic stock, bird and fish taxa remains at the Thimlich Ohinga Site

Class	Order	Family	Tribe/genus	Species	Common name
Mammalia	Primate	Homininae	Hominin	<i>Homo sapien</i>	Modern Human
	Artiodactyla	Bovidae	Bovini	<i>Bos taurus</i>	Domestic cow
				<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	African buffalo
			Caprini	<i>Ovicaprid</i>	domestic goat/sheep
			Cephalophini	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	Grey duiker
			Bovid Size Class 1		
			Bovid Size Class 2		
			Bovid Size Class 3		
			Bovid Size Class 4		
			Indeterminate Bovid		
		Suidae		<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	Warthorg
	Perrisodactyla	Rhinocerotidae		<i>Diceros birconis</i>	Black Rhinoceros
		Equidae	Equus	<i>Equus quagga</i>	Plains zebra
	Indeterminate small mammal				
	Indeterminate mammal				
Lagomorpha		Leporidae		<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Cape hare
	Indeterminate lagomorph				
Rodentia	Muridae	Murinae		<i>Rattus rattus</i>	House rat
				<i>Lemniscomys</i> sp.	Multistriped mouse
				<i>Mastomys</i> sp	
Insectivora		Soricidae		<i>Crocidura</i> sp.	White tooth shrew
		Crecitomyinae	Crecitomys	<i>Otomys</i> sp.	
		Indeterminate rodent			

Pisces	Cypriniformes	Cyprinidae	Labeioninae	Labeo sp.	
			Barbinae	Barbus sp.	
			Indeterminate Cyprinids		
	Siluriformes	Bagridae		Bagrus sp.	
		Clariidae		Clarias sp.	Catfish
				Lazera sp.	
	Perciformes	Cichlidae		Cichlid sp	Tilapia sp
		Mormynidae		Mormyrus sp.	Elephant- snout fish
			Indeterminate Clariidae		
	Indeterminate fishes				
Aves	Galliformes	Phasianioidea		<i>Phasianus frocolinus</i>	
				Gallus sp.	Chicken
				Phasianus sp.	
		Numididae		<i>Numida meleagris</i>	Helmeted guinea fowl
		Turdidae	Cf Turdus olivaceus	<i>Cf Turdus olivaceus</i> Olive thrush	Olive thrush
		Ciconidae		Cf Ciconia abdimii	Abdim's stork
	Columbiformes	Columbidae		<i>Stigmatopelia senegalensis</i>	Laughing dove
	Indeterminate medium bird				
	Indeterminate bird				

Table 3 Results of Faunal List from archaeological excavation at Thimlich Ohinga in

Thimlich Phytolithics data from excavated kraal at K'Ochieng Enclosure

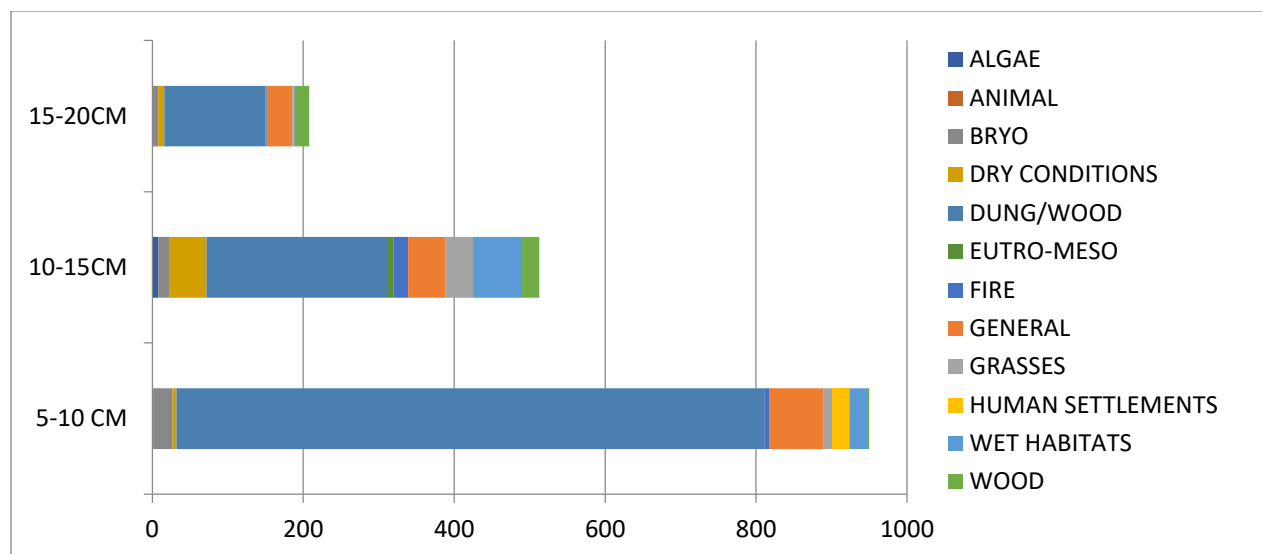


Table 4 Phytoliths data from K'Ochieng Kraal

Archaeologists studying the spread of food production in the East Africa often have difficulty distinguishing pastoralist's sites from other groups with whom they interacted. Our analysis of sediments from Kraals from three different enclosures at Thimlich contributes to the resolution of the problem through identification of sediments distinctive of livestock enclosures, and thus of pastoral settlements. Since the sites were abandoned there is no visible difference between enclosure and surrounding sediments. Micro morphological, mineralogical, and phytolith analyses, of enclosure sediments, has enabled, differentiation of enclosure from regional sediments. Samples didn't yield a significant amount of pollen, but were rich in fungal spores. Spores are mainly an indication of herbivore dung (Marshall *et.al* 2002). The presence of woody plants was more prominent especially in sample level: 15-20cm. These spores include: Sporominiella sp., Spore T112, Valsaria, Chaetomium and Coneocheata cf. Lignaria. Type 112 is a specific indicator of domesticated animals. Presence of fire is also evidenced by micro-charcoal and also burnt phytoliths. From ethnographic studies indicate that pastoral communities occasionally burn cow dung to eliminate ticks and tick borne diseases from the livestock enclosures.

ii) Final project report for the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) community based conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement – August 2012

Thimlich Ohinga AIA Community Based Conservation Project began in July/August 2011. Three major goals were set out, namely, completion of restoration work, development of basic

interpretive material, including, site signage system and lastly, active involvement of local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process.

- ◆ The first goal was fully achieved through a carefully conducted condition survey of the entire Traditional Settlement , a 3-month plus restoration of dilapidated walls, occasional pre-emptive restoration of weakened structures and carefully controlled vegetation management.

- ◆ The second goal was achieved through the development of road signage and site interpretative signage system. A site map was also produced showing the location of major features within the Traditional Settlement .

- ◆ The third and last goal was fully achieved through a series of workshops, including three community workshops, one education workshop and one all stakeholders workshop.

The project realized three distinct outcomes:

- ◆ First, the project achieved a high level of community participation in the conservation and development initiatives. Through workshops and restoration work, the community registered a willingness to preserve the site which they now consider as their own heritage with benefits they can count on.

- ◆ Secondly, the project changed the outlook of the site, significantly improving the condition of the site, and enhanced its beauty.

- ◆ Lastly, the project made the site more beneficial to learners who can now access information about the site by using interpretive panels, documents including photographic CDs, brochures and documentaries that can be viewed using the equipment at the site.

The project was a milestone in the conservation history of Thimlich Ohinga since its gazettelement as a national monument, and represents an important development in community-based site conservation for the National Museums of Kenya.

iii) Community and Site Preservation at Thimlich Ohinga Kenya, National Museums of Kenya and Archaeological Institute of America – April 2012

The Thimlich Ohinga Community-Based conservation Project which has funding from the Archaeological Institute of America had the following goals:

- ◆ Completion of restoration/conservation work:

A condition survey of the structures and the landscape and to complete emergency archaeological conservation work.

Mapping of the site including the Traditional Settlement important features.

Restoration which is community driven.

Preventive conservation in the form of clearing vegetation.

- ◆ Development of basic interpretive material including a signage system:

This involved the development of simplified interpretative materials from prior archeological research with an explicit aim of making such information publicly accessible.

Active involvement of the local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process: Four workshops spread out over a twelve month grant period were held to educate the community on the significance of the heritage and the need to preserve the site. The workshops aimed to seek input from the community on restoration efforts, educational and interpretive activities at the site and the wider impact of activities at the site on tourism, sustainability and economic development.

After the proposed conservation and outreach programs are put in place, a museum gallery will be also constructed to complement the monuments, making the site the only fully fledged museum in that southwestern part of Kenya.

iv) Thimlich Ohinga Heritage Site / Project Exploration Mission 16-18 February 2011, Kenyatta University, French Embassy and French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA)

It was observed that it was possible to undertake two operations running concurrently:

◆ Heritage goal project – conservation of the site

The heritage goal would involve operations meant to protect, promote (tourism), conserve, maintain and restore the site from destruction.

◆ Social and cultural goal project

The social goal will aim to uplift the living conditions of the local population by involving them in community activities.

This will then culminate in the establishment of a comprehensive action plan outlining the major and long term project goals which should be meant to conserve and rehabilitate the site to a major attraction in the area and preserve its heritage.

The French Institute for Research in Africa will then approach the European Union (EU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), British Institute of East Africa (BIEA) to provide assistance which will sustain the project.

v) Report on Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement Development Project 2007/2008, National Museums of Kenya

This is a report written to the Directorate Regional Museums, Sites and Monuments of the National Museums of Kenya resulting from work and activities carried out at Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement in 2007 and 2008. This included the following:

- ◆ Site condition survey and conservation preliminaries
- ◆ Archaeological investigation/recovery of materials
- ◆ Wall restoration, fence stabilization and traditional houses repair
- ◆ Analysis, interpretation and curation of archeological materials
- ◆ Production of Thimlich Traditional Settlement brochure
- ◆ Road and site signage
- ◆ Facility improvement: picnic shelter, toilets, water and storage system, and lighting
- ◆ Publication of reports and scientific papers

This work was funded by the government of Kenya through the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture with the funds being channeled through the National Museums of Kenya. However, this is an ongoing process.

7. DOCUMENTATION

7.a Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual materials (Additional photos)

Id. No.	Format	Caption	Date of Photo	Photographer	Copyright Owner	Non exclusive cession of rights
1	jpg	Earthen wall at God-K'Achola within Kadem Region	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
2	jpg	Mzee Ochiel Kraal	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
3	jpg	Clearance for excavation at K'Okech enclosure	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
4	jpg	Excavation at a house pit at K'Ochieng enclosure	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
5	jpg	Excavation inside a kraal at K'Ochieng enclosure	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
6	jpg	Excavation outside a gate at K'Ochieng enclosure	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
7	jpg	Sieving of excavation material outside a gate at K'Ochieng	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
8	jpg	Excavation at K'Odongo enclosure within Thimlich Ohinga buffer zone	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
9	jpg	Covering up an excavation pit at K'Odongo	February 2017	Wycliffe Oloo	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
10	jpg	Magnificent wall with a low gate entrance	June 2014	Emmanuel Kariuki	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
11	PDF	Three D image of K'Ochieng enclosure	October 2017	Emmanuel Ndiema	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
12	PDF	Three D image of K'Akuku enclosure	October 2017	Emmanuel Ndiema	National Museums of Kenya	Granted

Table 5 Image inventory and authorization table

Contact details of copyright owner:

Name: National Museums of Kenya
 Address: P. O. Box 40658 – 00100
 Nairobi, Kenya.
 Telephone: 254 20 3742161/4 or 254 20 3742131/4
 Email: dgnmk@museums.or.ke
 Website: www.museums.or.ke

7.b Texts relating to protective designation

Legal Notice stating that Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement is protected by law, Kenya Gazette Notice; Number 2966 Date 25th September 1981 and Kenya Gazette Notice; Number 1517 Date 27th May 1982.

Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement Management Plan 2017-2022
 A copy of this management plan has been annexed to this dossier

7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

The following records from work relevant to aspects of Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement are available at the sources shown:

Type of Record	Details	Dates	Where available
Reopening of old excavation sites at Thimlich Ohinga and Excavation of new sites at Site and the larger Kadem Area	Archaeological excavations By Prof. Paul Lane, Dr. Emmanuel Ndiema and Dr. Christine Ogola.	February 2017	National Museums of Kenya
Laboratory analysis of old excavated findings	Descriptive analysis By Gilbert Oteyo and Prof. Simiyu Wandibba	December 2016	National Museums of Kenya
Elder interview Transcripts	Historical, botanical and zoological survey by J. Gitu, H. Wanderi, W. Oloo, I. Onjala	6 th October 2011	National Museums of Kenya.
Restoration and Preservation of Thimlich Ohinga	The current state of the Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site; site protection, restoration work, general landscaping, maintenance work and photographic documentation, recommendations.	September 2002	National Museums of Kenya.
Restoration and Preservation of Thimlich Ohinga	Site preservation and condition survey, site protection, general landscaping, restoration of the walls, signage, architectural and photographic documentation, site management plan.	May 2002	National Museums of Kenya,

Table 6 Form and date of recent records of inventory

7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held

Contact Name: Dr. Purity Kiura
Organization: National Museums of Kenya
Address: P. O. Box 40658 – 00100
Nairobi, Kenya.
Telephone: +254 20 3742161 Extension 2297
Email: pkiura@museums.or.ke
Website: www.museums.or.ke

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Full name and signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a series of smaller, connected strokes that form the letters 'Kibunjia'.

Mzalendo Kibunjia, *PhD EBS*

Title: **Director General, National Museums of Kenya**

Date: 29th January 2018

Annex 1. Thimlich Ohinga Management plan

THIMLICH OHINGA MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-2022

INTRODUCTION

This heritage management plan has been prepared in accordance with the undertakings, among other things, to maintain, repair and preserve Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement and to maintain the heritage land and preserve its character.

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) is a state corporation established by an Act of Parliament, the National Museums and Heritage Act (Chapter 216) of 2006, Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 63 (Act No.6), and is the custodian of site Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement. The National Museums of Kenya is a multidisciplinary institution whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage, for the purposes of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of those resources for the benefits of Kenya and the world for now and posterity.

Its mission is to provide for the establishment, control, management and development of national museums and the identification, protection, conservation and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage of Kenya.

The preparation of this heritage management plan was carried out by Dr. Isaya O. Onjala an archaeologist and currently a Research Fellow at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST), Wycliffe Oloo, Hoseah Wanderi and Josephine Gitu (all research scientists in the Directorate of Antiquities, Sites and Monuments of the National Museums of Kenya), stakeholders and community members.

The preparation of this heritage management plan was funded by the National Museums of Kenya and the United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre.

CHAPTER ONE: SITE BACKGROUND

1.1 History of Thimlich Ohinga Traditional Settlement

When the first Nilotic settlers to the south of Winam Gulf sent out scouts from their initial settlement at Ramba (the present day Kalamindi Secondary School) to survey the land for possible areas for expansion, they received a report of stone structures nestled in the woods of a gently sloping hill, overlooking a vast wooded grassland and valley farther south. A pioneering group consisting of the Kabuoch-Kachieng, inspired by the prospects of finding a ready-made settlement site with suitable grazing and agricultural land, arrived on the hill. As they climbed the slopes of the hill they encountered not only the beautifully constructed stone structures, but also a thick and dense forest inhabited by some wild animals. Most of the hills in the region were covered in thick vegetation. The state of the area prompted them to call this site Thimlich Ohinga, which translates as ‘stone-built structures in a scary jungle’. This name has been passed on through time to the present and is currently used to refer to the whole of the site under the National Museums of Kenya management. The name is now synonymous with the complex stone structures found at the site, and those found elsewhere within south-western Kenya.

The occupation of the site goes back to about 400 years based on radiocarbon dates Wandibba (1986) and recent yet to unpublished study by this team. Oral history mentions early Bantu groups such as the Wagire and Kamageta as some of the site’s early occupants. This implies that the site was constructed and occupied before or between 1590 and 1680, when most of the Bantu groups roamed and settled in the southwestern Lake Victoria region (Ayot 1979). These dates also fall within the same range of dates obtained through radiometric dating methods (Carbon 14) mentioned above.

Successive occupation by different groups has been the norm at the site. Oral history is clear that the site was characterized by periodic occupation and abandonment till the time it was last abandoned in the early twentieth century. By the time the Nilotic Kabuoch-Kachieng group took over the site, Bantu groups had occupied the site. The newcomers expanded the existing structures and built others farther uphill. They were, however, forced to move eastwards on hearing of prospects of a better land. The site then fell into the hands of the Kanyamkago people led by Chief Ndisio (a magician) as they expanded their territory southwards. The group eventually established themselves across River Kuja some 20km from Thimlich. Here, Ndisio established his headquarters and controlled much of the region that included the Thimlich area. The control of such a wide territory could not be sustained and soon Thimlich fell into the hands of the Kadem people who were also expanding southwards from their Raguda settlement in present-day Karungu region. For reasons not clear to us, the Kadem later handed over the site to the Kanyamwa who remained there until the beginning of the open and nucleus family settlement systems in the early twentieth century.

Throughout the period of occupation the site experienced minor modifications in terms of additional walls and repairs. The most conspicuous ones include additional structures constructed farther uphill, mainly by the Kabuoch-Kachieng people. The main enclosure also exhibits a wall that was pulled down at the northern side, which was followed by an expansion to add more room at this side of the enclosure. When it was done and by which group, is not clear to us yet. What is evident, however, is that the occupants were faced with an influx of immigrants or population increase and were forced to tear down and expand the occupied area. The attached enclosures to the main enclosure, especially to the northeast, also portray signs of additions as population growth occurred through time.

Complete abandonment of the site occurred in the 1920s. There was no more active occupation within the enclosure. Families that lived outside the enclosure continued to use land within the enclosures for livestock grazing and crop cultivation. This period coincided with the end of inter-clan conflicts and/or land acquisition demands. There were no major population movements across the land in the region. People opted for smaller or individual open settlements as the area became free of dangerous wild animals. Perhaps more important is the fact that after World War I (1914-1918) and with the establishment of British colonial rule, there was a breakdown of family and lineage ties. There were no longer large groups controlled by powerful chiefs and as a result shortage of labour to construct and maintain the massive stone structures. The site was left to decay and only survived the threats of time because of its unique in-built stability, which is the reason it has become a recognized cultural heritage in the world.

In 1982, the site was put under the custody of the Government of Kenya after the gazettelement process and handed over to the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) as one of the country's national monuments. Currently, NMK has seven members of staff at the site with the responsibility of managing the site. It is only recently that researchers and relevant world organizations have combined forces to assist in the work of conservation.

1.2 Physical Description of the Site

The site is situated in Migori County some 181 km south of the city of Kisumu. The site lies on a gently sloping hill located by road 46 km northwest of Migori town in Kiwiro sub-location, North East Kadem location, in Nyatike Sub-County, in Migori County. It can be accessed through Migori or Homa Bay towns (Figure 1). Some parts of the roads leading to the site are rough and require mostly four-wheel drive vehicles. During dry seasons, however, the 20km stretch off the Homa Bay-Karungu road and the 46km Migori-Thimlich road are both accessible by any form of transportation.

The entire site covers a total of 21 hectares of land. One entrance at the northwest provides the only entry point to the facility. The monument consists of circular dry stone walls spread over the hill as shown in Figure 2. The main enclosure *K'Ochieng'* which measures approximately

140 metres in diameter shares its northeastern wall with the Blacksmith enclosure while *K'Akuku* enclosure is believed to be an extension of the same. These may have been extensions of the main enclosure constructed during the phases of population pressure. They are, however, treated as independent and individual enclosures. Two other enclosures are located farther uphill with *K'Oluoch* found at the southeast having its extensions running to only about 10m from the eastern walls of *K'Akuku* which is adjoined to the main enclosure. The remaining one enclosure (*K'Okech*) occupies the uphill location and extends over a large area towards the eastern part of the hill.

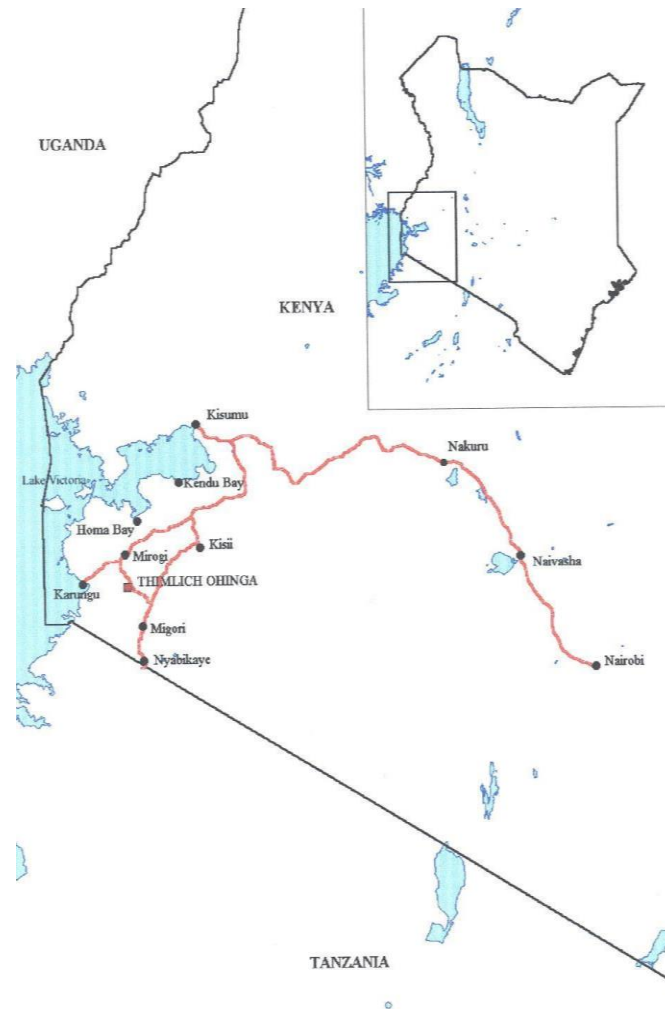


Figure 1 : Map of Kenya showing transportation network and position of Thimlich Ohinga Traditional settlement

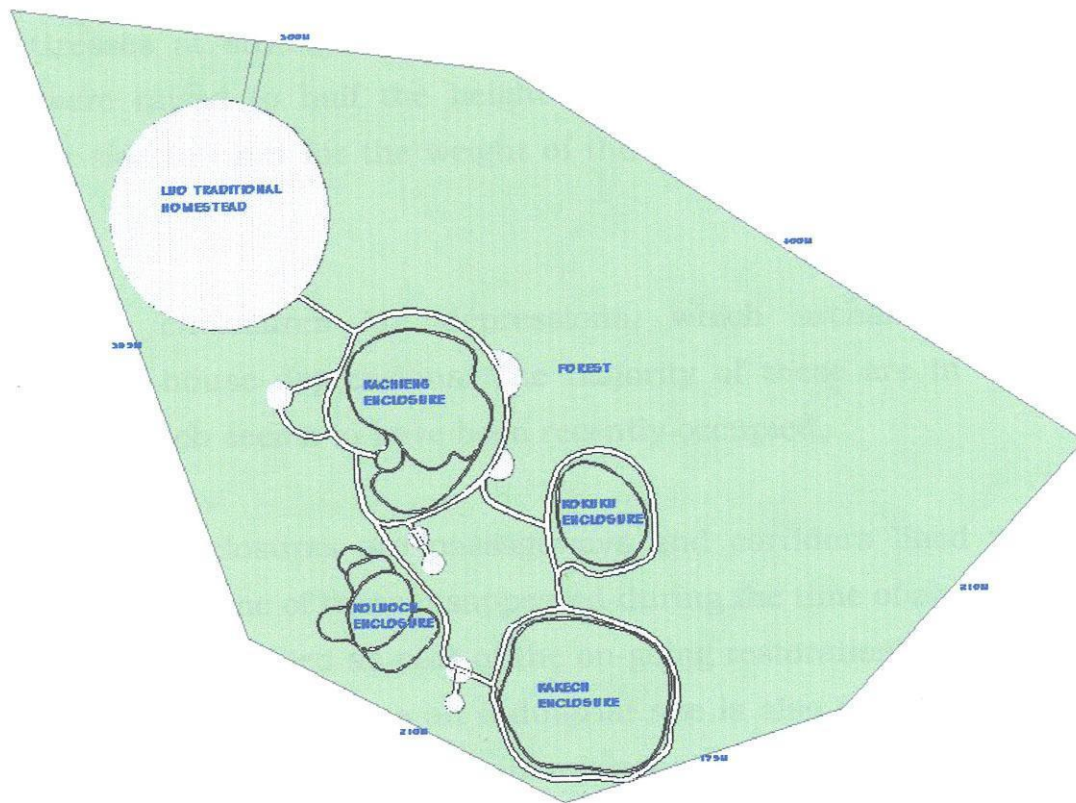


Figure 2 : Site layout showing the distribution of major enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga traditional settlement

Within the main structures smaller enclosures, which were used as cattle kraals, still exist. The main enclosure called K'Ochieng' has six of these while the others have one each except for the uphill complex, which has two. There are also a couple of tiny structures which were food processing areas. Besides the kraals, the enclosures also contain support heaps or buttresses at strategic sloppy positions to ensure stability. Most of these were raised to half the height of the walls, especially along the downhill side to cater for the weight of the walls relative to the effects of the slope.

Within the enclosures are depressions, which archaeologists have identified as house depressions. The majority of these are in the main enclosure, which seems to have been recently occupied.

Between the enclosures are passageways and corridors lined with low walls of stone. Some of these disappeared during the time of abandonment but have been recreated as part of the ongoing restoration work. An area that has been designated as an industrial site is also found just outside the northeastern wall of the main enclosure. Here, iron smelting and working occurred, as indicated by the presence of a furnace area containing smooth stones, which are the result of iron shaping. Pieces of *tuyere* litter this particular area. Also found in this area is a mound

consisting of iron slag and pieces of refuse including broken pottery. An ancient version of the game known today as *Bao* Game, carved on a piece of rock was also found nearby and could indicate that the area was also used as a leisure spot where games were played. The area is large enough and could have easily accommodated both activities especially if the game was to be played during short resting periods in the course of the iron working process.

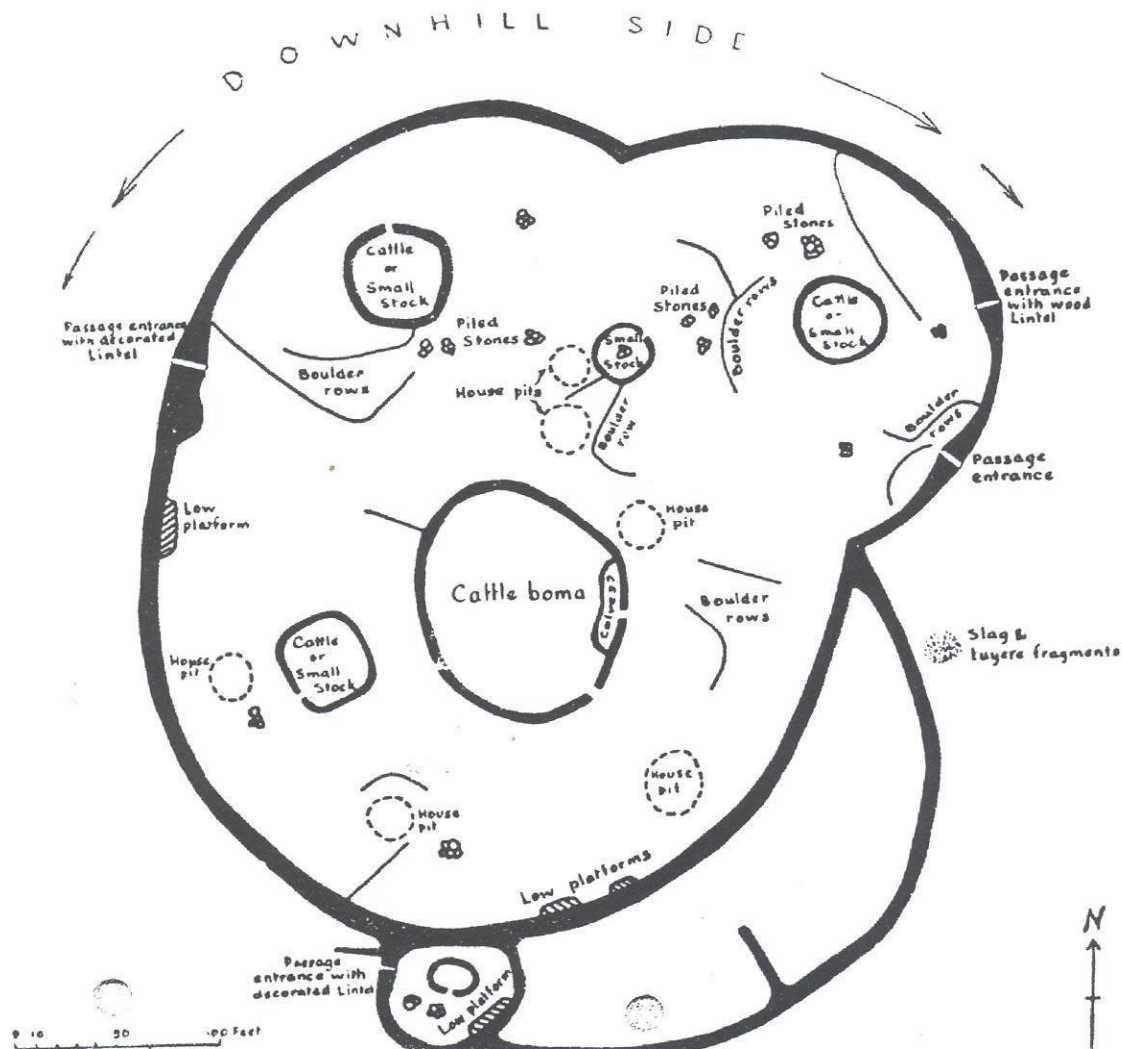


Figure 3 : Plan showing the layout of the features at the main enclosure, *K'Ochieng'*
(Source:Lofgren 1967)

In terms of the nature of the walls, these consist of neatly arranged stones of irregular shapes and sizes. The building was done in three phases that ran concurrently. The outer and inner phases of the walls were joined together using a third phase consisting of smaller stones that pressed down the end of the stones of the outer and inner ones. Due to lack of distinct shapes of the rocks used, the walls do not exhibit any course-line, as is common in modern stonewalls. The stones were

simply put together through an interlocking system that enhanced stability. No mortar was used in the building of the walls, which range in height from 1.2 metres to 4.2 metres. The average thickness of the walls is approximately 1 metre. The thickness of the walls increases at the entrances to about 2-3 metres wide. This was a stability mechanism to create maximum strength at these points, which were constantly in use. Specific slabs or rocks were used at these points.



Plate 1a : An aerial view of three-phase construction system.

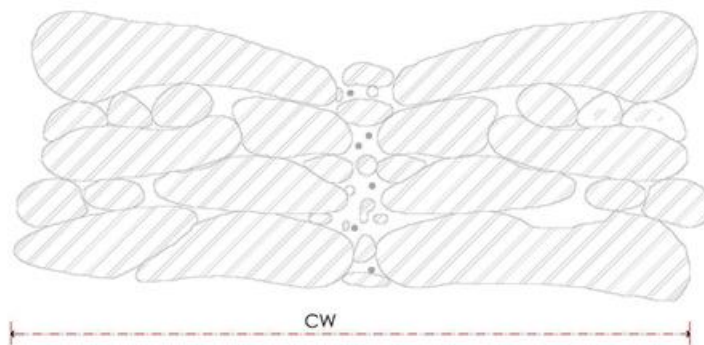


Plate 1b. Cross- section of the wall showing three phase construction system

The structures include gates that measure about 1m wide and 1.5m high. The main enclosure of *K'Ochieng'* has three gates. The third one was blocked during the Kanyamwa period of occupation and had to be re-opened. *K'Akuku*, which adjoins this main enclosure, has one beautifully preserved gate adorned with engravings on the main stone lintel. The adjoining Blacksmith enclosure has two gates facing east. The uphill enclosures had previously blocked gates which have since been opened. Almost all the enclosures have got marks at the gate lintels, that bear a striking resemblance to rock engravings. These have made it possible to establish a behavioural relationship between the marks and actual rock art. The authenticity and whether any

of these marks were of any significance to the occupants of the site need to be investigated farther.

The walls also contain buttresses and features mainly in the inside sections of gates. Extended or notched areas on the walls by the gates have been thought to mark locations for watching out for any unwanted visitors to the enclosures. These watch stations are, however, confined to major entrances. They are only large enough to accommodate a single seated person.

The physical description of the site cannot be complete without a mention of the traditional Luo homestead that was constructed in the early 1980s as an exhibition. This has a replica of the first wife's house facing the main entrance and other replicas for the second and third wives on the sides. Towards the gate are the houses for the sons (*simba*) and a cattle kraal and granary (*dero*) at the centre of the homestead.



(a)



(b)

Plate 2 : Details of the gates; (a) decorated lintel at *K'Akuku* enclosure and (b) arrangement of stone slabs of uniform size to make the lintel of the gate at the *K'Ochieng'* western entrance. Note also engravings.

Additional features within the site include a ticket office located at the entrance site and a documentation building. The ticket office building has two sections The first serves as a ticketing area while the second contains documents where site information is stored. The ticket office also serves as a visitor centre.



Plate 3 : Wall buttress

1.3 Archaeology and Archaeological Research

The archaeology of the site is defined by the fact that the structures are removed from the historical time they occupied in the past and can only be explained through archaeological investigation. The grounds enclosed by the structures contain archaeological materials and patterning that falls within the domain of archaeology. Explanation of these features, however, must involve the use of historical and oral literature in order to bring to light the events of the Late Iron Age period that the site represents. The structures, as archaeological features or occurrence, and the entire site they occupy also form a major source of information in the reconstruction of the proto-history of the Lake Victoria region.

Archaeological research at the site can be traced from early field survey reports (Gillman 1944; Lofgren 1967), calls for studies on the structures (Anthony 1972) and in archaeological work conducted by the National Museums of Kenya (Wandibba 1986). An excavation in 1986 was followed by an examination of the site's architecture, as well as, some profound cultural issues that created and sustained the site's physical nature (Onjala 1990). Throughout the 1990s, the NMK renewed interest in archaeological research at the site. This culminated in the site's listing in September 1999 by the World Monuments Watch (WMW) into the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world for the period 2000/2001. It was listed again in October 2001 for the year 2001/2002.

More work at the site followed with a second excavation in November 2000 (Stephane *et al.* 2001). In 2007 a systematic archaeological study was carried out by the National Museums of Kenya to determine the nature-contents and possible functions of some of the features found within or in association with the large stone-walled enclosures. Excavations were conducted on four of the small circular stone-walled enclosures and two house depressions within two of the four major enclosures. Findings from the excavation confirmed earlier suggestions that the larger dry stone wall structures and the enclosures within them were constructed and/ or remodelled and used as habitations by the local Luo sub-clans immigrating into the region during or after the 16th century some of whom still inhabit the area today.

A major archaeological investigation of the entire cultural site is, however, yet to be realized. Past excavations and other forms of investigation have concentrated on the main enclosure and its adjoining structures only. In 2017, excavations were extended to the other enclosures within the region. More work should take a holistic approach and cover the entire site and other *ohingni*.



Plate 4: Previous excavation area within *K'Ochieng'*

1.4 Conservation History

Taking the Burra Charter which defines conservation as all processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance, the conservation history of the site extends to the period when the site was in use several centuries ago. During this past period, traditional methods of conservation were definitely put into use to keep the site within its cultural significance. From the early twentieth century, however, such conservation methods changed or disappeared as the site was abandoned and not actively utilized in everyday activities. New conservation methods were only introduced after 1982 when the site was placed under the custodianship of the National Museums of Kenya.

Two staff members were posted at the site with the responsibility of clearing portions of the site for public viewing while ensuring that the structures did not suffer any major interference that could lead to collapse. This arrangement remained in place until the close of the 1990s when international support was successively sought to boost the conservation efforts. A new approach to conservation was then adopted with an increased number of workers and the participation of professionals. A series of conservation activities aimed at ensuring the protection and preservation of the site has since been put in place. These measures are discussed in chapter three.

CHAPTER TWO: OBJECTIVE SITE ASSESSMENT

2.1 Historical Value of the Site

The site has been an important area of research for students and researchers of history, especially in the category of fortifications and settlements. Reports on Thimlich Ohinga by renowned researchers (Gillman 1944; Lofgren 1967; Anthony 1972) in the first half of the twentieth century and extending into the first two decades of the second half signify the importance of Thimlich Ohinga. Towards the end of the same century NMK researchers published and wrote extensively about the site (Wandibba 1986; Onjala 1990, 1994). It was also during the same period that the Government saw the uniqueness of the site and declared it a National Monument and handed it over to the NMK which has continued to manage it with limited resources and staff. At the community level, several groups within the region claim a direct historical link to the site. The site was internationally recognized when the World Monuments Watch put it on the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world.

Why would this site attract such recognition and attention? What value or significance do these groups of people and institutions attach to this site? These are some of the questions that were faced when preparing this management plan. It was clear that the significance of the site transcends the local area. What is discussed below is a categorization of the values that have sustained the site to the present.

As defined earlier, values are aspects of a place that make it important to the public or different interested groups. Values also contribute to the survival of a place or a heritage place through time. The Burra Charter of 1983 categorizes heritage values as aesthetic, historic, scientific and social. Lipe (1984) farther introduced four broader categories, namely, informational, associative, economic and aesthetic. This work has followed the latter categories in discussing the values attached to the site.

2.1.1 Informational Value

Informational values of the site are embedded in its scientific and educational reservoir that has been the subject of investigation for several decades. Different groups of researchers have sought an understanding of the site through interpretations of different aspects. The interpretations, mainly archaeological, historical and geological, have been aimed at amassing information for the public and general education. Organized visits to the site by school parties reinforce the educational values attached to this heritage. Information demand is likely to grow with the increase of visitors to the site in the near future. Researchers therefore have to be prepared to provide the information that different members of public will require.

2.1.2 Associative Value

The site has a complex historical value, being an area that many of the community members (clans) occupied in the past. Several clans in the region claim a direct link to the site. There are also leadership links as powerful chiefs and rulers are said to have occupied this site before moving to other parts of the lake region where similar structures were later constructed. Apart from the diverse historical links, the site also played a religious role as a place for prayers, sacrifices and other rituals.

2.1.3 Economic Value

Economically, the site formed a major economic centre for all the clans that occupied it as the enclosure provided safety to the cattle, sheep and goats within. When the site was abandoned, its status changed to that of farmland with the arable parts producing subsistence crops that were sold or exchanged for other goods. This status changed again in 1982, when the government took over management of the site from the community. The community saw a new benefit and started to look at the site as a place for gainful employment. A few members of the community have been permanently employed at the site but many more have benefitted from casual labour in the ongoing conservation.

Economic value also extends beyond the employment opportunities. Research work, conservation and other activities at the site have attracted various people, some of whom are not local to the area. Such people depend on the community for their supplies. This has made the site valuable to the society as market for merchandise and attached a new form of economic status to the site. This status is most likely to become more complex in the future when the site is open to the wider public and attracts tourists. Members of the community will make and sell gift items based on traditional crafts. The site therefore holds great economic potential that will benefit both the community and the NMK, creating a small economic hub in the area.

2.1.4 Aesthetic Value

The very nature of the dry stonewall enclosures situated on a hilltop overlooking a vast green area with mountains in the distance is a real spectacle and forms the basis for the aesthetic value attached to the site. The nature of the architectural work is unique and captivating. The fact that no mortar was used in the construction and that the walls have remained standing for centuries can mainly be perceived aesthetically. The details of the interlocking stones, gate lintels, watch stations in lush environment of trees, succulents and planks are very beautiful images. This value is readily discerned on the visitors' faces and comments.

The values that have been attached to the site are therefore mainly scientific, educational, historical, religious, economic and aesthetic. They transcend from the local to international levels and make the site a heritage for the future.

2.2 Statement of significance

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site was declared a National Monument due to its spectacular dry stone walls that form a massive complex. This Late Iron Age settlement attracts different visitors including groups from learning institutions who come to see the magnificent enclosures, their extensions and interior structures superbly located on the bushy hill.

Archaeological materials and unique features are found within and around the enclosures. The site also is one of the few areas where natural vegetation still survives. It is a source of medicinal herbs that are harvested by the community. The scientific potential attracts researchers from the fields of archaeology, history, geology, conservation, zoology and botany. Inclusion of the site into the World Monuments Watch List of 100 most endangered sites in the world reflects its international recognition.

In summary, the site has historical as well as contemporary significance to the community, which continues to interact with it. It also has research potential that calls for the attention of relevant researchers or scientists. The spectacular dry stonewalls set against the background of the natural landscape consisting of flora and fauna and their preservation through the centuries, is a significant aesthetic feature. All these carry elements of economic value, which is increasingly becoming important as the site undergoes restoration and infrastructural development.

CHAPTER THREE: MANAGEMENT AND USE OF SITE

3.1 Legal Framework

Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site occupies 21 hectares of land belonging to the National Museums of Kenya. It was gazetted in 1982 as a national monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Act (Cap 215) which was repealed and replaced by the National Museums and Heritage Act (CAP 216) of 2006. Previously the land belonged to the members of the community.

3.2 Stakeholders

Thimlich Ohinga has several stakeholders. Their roles in the current management of the site vary considerably but mainly form a consultative body in the management process rather than the executive or decision-making body.

3.2.1 National Museums of Kenya (NMK)

This is a parastatal that acts on behalf of the Government of Kenya by holding the property in trust for both the Government and the community together with the other stakeholders. Maintenance and all forms of conservation, research, marketing and promotion of the site are the responsibility of the NMK. The institution plays host to all other stakeholders and plans to collect revenue that will be pumped back into the management of the site.

3.2.2 Community

The community, consisting of different groups including farmers, landowners, the business community, medicine men and women groups, forms a second category of stakeholders. The community have a sense of belonging to the site. Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site serves as a meeting venue where issues affecting the community are deliberated. The National Museums of Kenya staff and visitors to the site purchase goods and services from the community, thus providing much needed market for their produce.



Plate 5: Stakeholders meeting on site management.

Farm produce such as maize, cassava and other cereals, as well as dairy products, including milk and butter, are sold to the site's workers. Traders in the local markets also use the site as a market for their goods. Staff and occasional guests, particularly researchers, buy most of their daily supplies and consumables from such traders within a radius of about 12km. This, therefore, extends the geographic area that the site serves and increases the number of stakeholders in this category.

The landscape contains some of the natural vegetation that remains within the area. It has been used in the past as a source of medicinal plants, a role it continues to play to the present. In this capacity, the site has attracted the interest of medicine men or traditional herbalists as a subgroup within the category of community stakeholders. This group continues to use the site with permission from NMK as a collection point for medicinal herbs to treat ailments such as malaria. The community also links with the site as a place where they used rituals to consult the spirits during periods of environmental instability or social upheavals. These functions of the site seem to have ended but the community still looks at the site as a link to their ancestral spirits. The NMK recognizes this link and has made it clear that the community can carry out any such rituals whenever there is need.

3.2.3 Schools and Learning Institutions

This category benefits from the site through educational programmes. School visits to the site are usually organized as part of history lessons in which the students or pupils learn about the successive occupants and use of the site through time. They also learn about the unique building technique and compare it theoretically with modern forms of building using stone. Besides using

the site for learning purposes, this category also visits the site for satisfaction and fascination at the monumental work.

3.2.4 Tourism Industry

The tourism industry joins the group of stakeholders due to the interest of tour operators in the potential of the site as a visitor attraction in the region. This attraction can translate into economic benefits if the conditions at the site are improved. Tourists would achieve satisfaction and fascination by visiting the site. An influx of tourists would benefit other stakeholders and help boost the economic status of the region.

3.2.5 Scientific Community

The scientific community, particularly researchers of various kinds, forms another category of stakeholders. This includes archaeologists, historians, architects, botanists, geologists and zoologists. There are various opportunities to carry out research at the site. Not only do the dry stone wall structures provide opportunity for research, but also the flora and fauna present at the site.

3.2.6 Government Institutions

Other stakeholders include government ministries, Migori County Government and national government departments such as the National Environment Management Authority and Kenya Tourist Board, among others.

3.3 Current uses of the site

The site is a gazetted national monument open to the public. The Luo traditional homestead, which is part of the exhibition at the site, is also currently used for accommodation. Both staff and visitors to the site use the houses for this particular need. Other uses of the site and its facilities include research, conservation activities and training, education (especially for the local primary schools) and as a source of medicinal herbs exploited by the local people. The local community occasionally uses it to perform religious ceremonies.

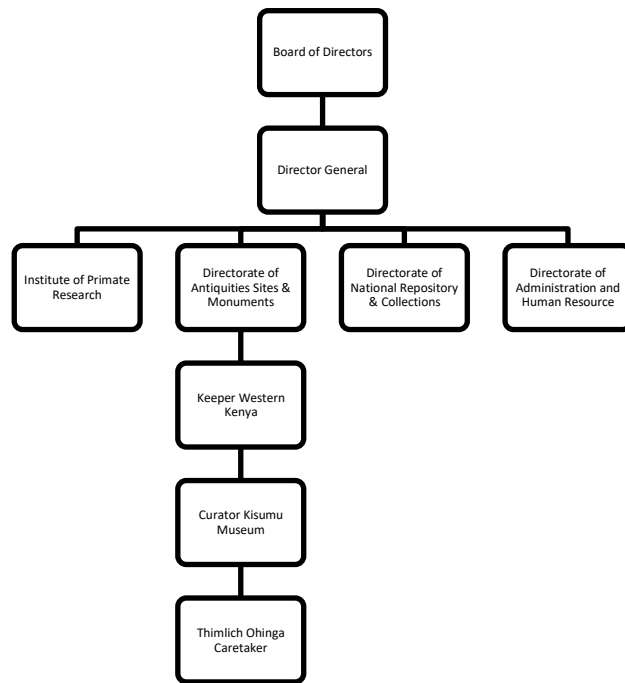
3.4 Management and Resources

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) and development partners are currently the financiers of activities at the site. NMK provides and pays the salaries of the regular staff, provides funds for general maintenance of the site and also provides equipment and other facilities. Funds from the development partners such as the American Express Company and the Archaeology Institute of America have been used to pay those working directly on restoration. Such people include conservation project officers, traditional masons and other casual workers. Apart from wages, funds from development partners have been used to purchase specialized equipment for the conservation work. UNESCO World Heritage Centre has also contributed funds towards the management plan and the writing of the nomination dossier for Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological

Site. The defunct Ministry of Local Government through the Local Authorities Trust Fund, funded the construction of an interpretation centre.

The site currently has nine employees and one of the staff members is the site caretaker. Their work mainly involves site maintenance, security and acting as guides to visitors. Depending on the magnitude of work several casuals are usually employed temporarily to ease the workload. Such workers have been involved in actual wall rebuilding, clearing of bush and grass as well as general maintenance of paths and other facilities. These staff members are answerable to the Curator of Kisumu Museum in the City of Kisumu through the Caretaker of Thimlich Ohinga. The Curator reports to the Keeper, Western Region, on matters relating to the site who reports to the Director Museums, Sites and Monuments who is then answerable to the Director-General who is the overall executive officer (refer to organogram below).

The museum has employed both permanent and contractual staff at the site. Employee remuneration per annum is approximately US\$ 13,000. The allocation per annum towards the site is approximately US\$ 875.



Organogram of NMK management structure at Thimlich Ohinga

CHAPTER FOUR: CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

4.1 Conservation of the Site

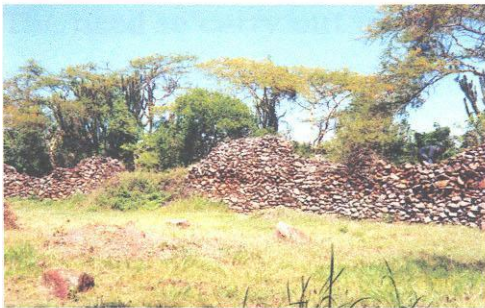
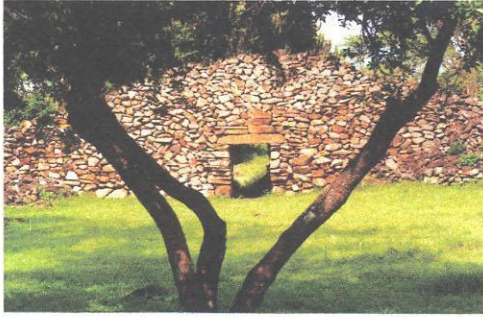
Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September, 1981 and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act which was repealed and replaced by the National Museums and Heritage Act (Cap 216) of 2006.

In 1999, the fencing of Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site by the National Museums of Kenya began and was completed in 2000. This was followed by a detailed condition survey of the Site undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya the same year.

From 2001 to 2003 the American Express Company, through the World Monuments Watch, funded the first major restoration of the walls of the Thimlich Ohinga. However, these funds did not cover the entire site and much of *K'Okech* enclosure was not restored. Thereafter, the Ministry of State for National Heritage through the National Museums of Kenya funded restoration of the walls and excavation works in the *K'Okech* enclosure, the industrial area and the Blacksmith enclosure. from 2007 to 2008. Between 2011 and 2012 funding from the Archaeological Institute of America was used to carry out restoration of *K'Okech* and *K'Oluoch* enclosures as well as restoring corridors. The funding was also used to facilitate community involvement in restoration works and erection of interpretation panels.

4.2 The State of the Walls

There has been a major improvement in restoration of fallen stones occasioned by natural occurrences. Plates 1-8 below show some of these episodes and the progress of the restoration works. The major challenge that now remains is the continued maintenance and other conservation practices to ensure stability of the walls. The walls are currently structurally stable and well maintained by the staff based at the site.



Plates 6-13 : Condition of the walls before (left) and after restoration work (right)

4.3 Factors causing wall deterioration

During the November 2000 condition survey, a number of factors were identified as being responsible for the deterioration of the site's structures. These may be divided into anthropogenic and environmental factors.

Anthropogenic factors include first and foremost the lack of monitoring and maintenance of the structures. Since the last active occupation and abandonment in the early twentieth century, the walls were not maintained. This led to the collapse and dilapidation of several parts. This situation seems to have been worsened by imposed loads such as people and animals climbing on the walls throughout the subsequent years. Such loads result from visitation and grazing of animals at the site. Due to absence of designated visitor paths as they walked through the various parts of the site, people were forced to climb onto sections of the walls. Grazing led to animals, mainly goats, rubbing on and climbing on the structures. This made stones fall off the structures, given that no mortar or cement was used to bind them together. With additional activities such as cultivation within the enclosures and collection of firewood, the above factors led steadily to the falling of stones from various portions of the walls. However, all this has since been taken care of with controlled measures put in place to prevent recurrence of the same.

Environmental factors include the action of wind, lightning, earth tremors and slope action against the exposed walls at the site. For centuries the walls took the impact of these natural factors with the result that some portions collapsed or were seriously affected. The environmental factors contributed about 40% of the damage at the site. Other natural factors have included plant growth on or near the walls, while anthills along the walls act as a wedge that pushes apart the stones on the walls. Tree branches also lean on the walls exerting pressure that occasionally leads to collapse.

4.4 Restoration Work

The need to carry out restoration work has been evident since the time the National Museums of Kenya took over the management of the site. This need was, however, only realized after 1999, when the site was first nominated by the WMW and put in the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world. Subsequent funding led to the start of conservation work in November 2000. A detailed condition survey was carried out to assess the state of the walls and the factors that caused deterioration. This was followed by a period of planning for restoration work. Traditional masons were identified and hired for the work. Materials required, including tools and machinery, were purchased and transported to the site. In June 2001 the main restoration work on the walls started with three traditional masons and six casual workers working together to put back the walls to their original state.

Restoration work used the traditional methodology. The three-phase wall system was applied with other traditional forms being strictly adhered to under the direction and specifications provided by archaeological analysis of the architectural style. The height, thickness and location

of other features such as gates were all established following measurements provided by early studies at the site.

At the time of writing this plan, all enclosures have been restored according to the standards laid down. All gates and associated features have also been restored.

4.5 Additional Activities to Enhance Site Protection

Site protection has become a major priority in the on-going conservation work and plans for future maintenance. The existing barbed wire fence is periodically reinforced whenever there are breakages. This is aimed at controlling unauthorized entry and reducing the anthropogenic factors mentioned in Section 3.3. The fence also helps in the control of visitors who now access the facility from one point at the entrance, where they report at the ticketing office before proceeding on a guided tour of the site. In such tours the visitors will use designated paths and will not be allowed to climb on the walls, as was common in the past.

Apart from the protective fence around the site, restoration work has also involved the removal of encroaching vegetation on, within and near the walls. Periodic strategic clearing has been undertaken to ensure adequate vegetation control. The NMK has the challenge of increasing the number of staff at the site to deal with the fast growing vegetation and tame some species of plants, such as *Lantana camara* that is very destructive. At Thimlich Ohinga, this plant is seriously targeted for destruction and wherever it is seen it is completely uprooted.

The site does not only consist of the walled monuments but also contains archaeological materials, some of which are visible above the ground. While the NMK has regulations that do not allow unauthorized digging/excavation at such sites, it has installed appropriate information signs showing some of the visible archaeological areas and materials. This serves both as an educational and protective purpose.

CHAPTER FIVE: SWOT ANALYSIS

5.1 SWOT Analysis

A strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis was carried out for Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site resulting in the table below.

Table 1 : Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Unique to the East African Region.● International recognition.● Creates employment opportunities.● Creates income generating opportunities i.e. trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lack of adequate funding.● Lack of publicity.● Poor infrastructure and amenities.● Site not prioritized in regional development agenda.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism and foreign exchange earner. ● Contributes towards scientific research. ● Availability of traditional herbs and medicines. ● Environmental attraction. ● Adequate land for development. ● Readily available material for restoration. ● Easily accessible. ● Community goodwill. ● Adequate number of professional personnel. ● Availability of manual labour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of recreation facilities. ● Short of skilled labour at the site ● Poor documentation of the site.
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross border trade and tourism. ● Growth of accommodation facilities. ● Education and research opportunities. ● Development of research station. ● Available road infrastructure to site proximity. ● Goodwill from donors. 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forced entry, i.e., trespass into the site. ● Rapid growth of vegetation. ● Poisonous snakes.

The analysis involved an intense discussion and consultation with various stakeholders. As the table shows, the facility emerges stronger with lots of opportunities the management can exploit.

CHAPTER SIX: CONDITION SURVEY, KEY ISSUES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTION PLAN

6.1 CONDITION SURVEY, JANUARY 2017

6.1.1 Visitor Facilities

- Documentation Centre

The building requires, repairs of the floor. It also, requires gutters, electrical wiring, window panes for eight windows, two coats of paint, vents and ceiling board.

- Ablution Block 1: Next to documentation centre

Requires painting and electrical wiring for lighting.

- Ticketing office

The cracked walls need repair, stabilizing poles need treatment and or replacement, metal grill door at the entrance has broken hinge which needs replacement. The building suffers from bat menace, therefore periodic fumigation is necessary.

- **Camp site**

The site has already been designated, however the path and bushes to the area needs to be cleared regularly to provide for accessibility and landscaping done. There is need for an ablution block, mess and cooking area which are yet to be determined and a water point needs to be put in place.

- **Eco-lodge**

Designs for the Eco-lodge need to be developed.

- .

6.1.2 Exhibition Area

This consists of a traditional Luo homestead

There is need to carry out routine maintenance of the man's first son's house, first wife's house, second wife's house, third wife's house, first wife's house, traditional granary and kraal.

6.1.3 Perimeter Fence and Site Entrance

Main gate at the entrance has been fabricated and fixed., Occasional breakages of fence requires regular checks and mending the fences.

6.1.4 Nature Trail

Loose rocks on the trail should be removed, some parts of the trail on the eastern and southern side need to be cleared of vegetation and rocks. Signage with directions is required along the trails, resting areas are to be demarcated and rock benches erected.

6.1.5 Ohingni

- **K'Ochieng'**

There was evidence of burning of grass and vegetation which was discouraged as a measure to curb fast vegetation growth. Recurring termite moulds need to be checked. The lintel engraving at the entrance to the blacksmith enclosure is covered by lichens, there is an anthill leaning on the wall by the blacksmith enclosure,

- **K'Okech**

Regular check on anthills and periodic clearing of fast growing vegetation. Tree growing in the inner kraal requires uprooting. Excavation pit needs to be clearly defined for interpretation purposes.

K'Oluoch

Routine clearance of vegetation in and around the enclosure is required.

6.1.6 Basic Amenities and Infrastructure

There is need of water, electricity, telephone, internet and proper access road.

6.1.7. Condition survey photographs



Plate 14: Incomplete documentation centre pole and crack repairs



Plate 15: Ticketing office in need of gutters,



Plate 16: House in need of re-thatching smearing



Plate 17: House walls in need of



Plate 18: vegetation and lichen growth on stone walls



Plate 19: Lichen growth on lintels



Plate 20 : Anthill along the enclosure wall



Plate 21 : Fence breakage



Plate 22: Sisal harvesting along fence enclosure entrance



Plate 23 : Charcoal graffiti on



Plate 24 : Toilet door at ablution block in need of repair

6.2 KEY ISSUES

These issues are a result of the condition survey. The activities outlined in the table are measures suggested to enable Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site to be a fully functional site. The activities span a time frame of 2017 to 2022. However, these issues are more clearly explained in the guiding principles and action plan.

Table 2 : Key Issues and Planned Activities

No.	Key Issue	Activities		
		Short Term Nov2017- June 2019	Mid-Term Jul 2019- Feb2021	Long-Term Mar2021– Dec2022
1	Completion of documentation centre	1. Source for funds 2. Finishing	1. Acquire furniture and electronic equipment 2. Repairs	
2	Repair of ablution blocks	1. Electrical Wiring 2. New coat of Paint 3. Install toilets with seats and ramp for disabled		
3	Repair of ticketing office	1. Replace wooden poles as these are termite infested 2. chemical treatment for bat menace 3. Move store to completed documentation centre	1. Repair cracks on wall 2. Paint 3. Routine Repair of ceiling	
4	Camp site	1. Clearing / Landscaping of bushes and paths 2. Clear path to existing ablution block	1. Design of new ablution block 2. design and construction of the mess 3. Install water tank for camp sight	1. Construction of new ablution block 2. Acquire tents and other camping equipment
5	Eco-lodges	1. Clearing of vegetation	1. Design	1. Construction

	(Bandas)	at designated site		
6	Repair of Traditional Houses	1. Routine repairs, the kraal	1. Plastering of 2. Routine repairs	Routine repairs
7	Perimeter Fence	1. Mend broken parts of the fence 2.	Mend broken parts of the fence	1. Routine maintenance
8	Nature Trail	1. Remove loose stones tree stamps along the trail 2. Routine clearance of bushes along the trail.	1. Routine clearance of bushes along the trail.	Routine clearance of bushes along the trail.
9	Rapid vegetation and trees growth on and within the Ohingni	1. Continuous monitoring and physical removal 2. Chemical treatment of vegetation		
10	Burning of grass and vegetation within ohingni	1. Burning of grass and other vegetation in a designated spot away from the stone structures		
11	Lichens on entrance engravings	1. Manual removal of lichens by hand	1. Manual removal by hand	1. Manual removal by hand
12	Anthills close to the walls	1. Dig out the queen from the anthill 2. Chemical treatment		
13	Falling Rocks due to wildlife	1. Monitor and return rocks	1. Purchase tripod light ladder for wall maintenance	
14	Electricity connection			1. Connect to main power grid
15	Disaster preparedness	1. Training of staff in basic first aid and fire fighting techniques	1. Allocate firefighting equipment	Occasional drills by qualified emergency

				personnel
16	Promotion of community participation	1. Awareness campaign	1. Encourage participation of local Community Based Organizations in conservation activities.	1. Host community activities at the site
17	Scientific research	1. Collect more information on the site 2. Document conservation work done	1. Carry out more research	1. Carry out more research
18	Education and Marketing	1. Continuous update of marketing materials	1. Continuous update of marketing materials	1. Posting of education and public programs officers to the site
19	Access Road to the site	1. Approach relevant authority for improvement of access roads (Kalamindi – Thimlich, Migori-Thimlich and Sori Thimlich)		

6.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In reference to the condition survey and outlined key issues affecting the site, guiding principles were defined and were used to set out an action plan detailing the measures to be taken to improve and promote site Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site as a tourist destination, educational and recreational centre whilst respecting its cultural and scientific values.

1. Completion of documentation centre will enable visitors and community members have access to information about the site and host education programmes.
2. The existing ablution block is in poor condition. This will be repaired to expected standard for visitor comfort.

3. The ticket office will be repaired in order to make it welcoming and functional since eventually all visitors will be required to pay for entry and be issued with a receipt.
4. The site is situated in a remote area with no hotel nearby. Thus equipped camp site will be ideal for visitors who wish to spend a few days at the site.
5. In order to attract high end visitors to spend a night at the site, self-contained Eco-Lodges (Bandas) will be constructed in a serene and quiet environment within the site, for those who are ready to pay extra.
6. The traditional homestead exhibition is a depiction of the spatial arrangement of houses within a homestead among the Luos. The houses and kraal will be repaired to their original conservation standard.
7. The perimeter fence must be functional to stop trespasses by mending and blocking broken sections of the fence for security purposes. In order to maintain the authenticity of the site a green edge fence will also be planted along the perimeter fence.
8. The site is massive and ideal for those who wish to walk and commune with nature. Thus a nature trail will take visitors round the property (but within the site) barely coming into contact with the stone enclosures.
9. The main threat to the stone structures is the rapid vegetation growth on and along the walls. If not checked they may lead to collapse of sections of the wall. Thus constant monitoring and removal, both physically and chemically, of the vegetation is paramount.
10. Burning of the vegetation within the ohingni as a control measure must be checked since this practice may lead to cracking of the rocks due to rapid changes in temperature, hence a designated place for burning such vegetation waste once cut should be identified.
11. Lichens on entrance engravings are a threat to rock art since they cover such work of art and they may eventually obliterate the work of art completely. Careful removal of lichens is important as a conservation measure in addition to enabling visitors to see the engravings.
12. Anthills close to the walls are potential threats to the walls since they are ideal areas where vegetation sprouts hence weakening the walls. Removal and extermination of termites is required.
13. Falling rocks which are caused by the many monkeys at the site, while walking along the walls will be picked and returned on the walls.
14. Lack of electricity at the site has hampered provision of a number of essential facilities at the site. With electricity at the site the documentation centre will fully be operational with computers and audio visual equipment for public programs. Cold drinks for visitors will also be available.
15. Disaster preparedness should be enhanced and skills acquired especially those that have to do with containing of fire. All staff must be trained in first aid and equipped with fire-fighting techniques.
16. Promotion of community participation is important for the sustainability of the site. Their participation should be encouraged to blend in the past and present cultural practices to make the site relevant for the present and future society.

17. The property is endowed with scientific data that should be documented, collected, interpreted. This calls for more multidisciplinary scientific research and documentation

18. Documented and interpreted scientific data should be well packaged and used for both educational and marketing programs.

19. The main access roads to Thimlich Ohinga archaeological site i.e Kalamindi – Thimlich and Migori-Thimlich-Sori roads should be upgraded to all-weather standards.

6.4 Action plan

Table 3: Action plan

Guiding Principle	Key Issues	Activities	Indicators	Responsible	Timeframe for Activities
1	Documentation centre	1. Repairs 2. Acquire furniture and electronic equipment	1. Funds acquired 2. Floor repaired 3. Furniture and Electronic equipment installed	Assistant Director, Western Region	1. 32 Months 2. 1 Month 3. 50 Months
2	Repair Ablution blocks	3. Electrical Wiring 4. Painting 5. Install toilet seat and ramp	3. Electricity installed 4. Ablution painted 5. Toilet seat and ramps put up.	Curator Kisumu Museum	32 Months
3	ticketing office	3. Replace wooden poles chemical fumigation to eradicate bats 7. Repair cracks on wall 8. Paint 9. Gutter	3. Wooden poles replaced 5. Bats eradicated 7. Cracks sealed 8. Painting done 9. Tank installed 11. Ceiling	1. Curator Kisumu Museum 2. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	3. 32 Months 5. 32 Months 7. 50 Months 8. 50 Months 9. 50 Months 11. 50 Months 12. 50 Months

		10. Tank 12. Repair ceiling	repaired		
4	Camp site	2. Clearing / Landscaping of bushes and paths 3. Clear path to excising ablution block 4. design of new ablution block 5. design and construction of the mess 6. Water tank for camp sight 7. Construction of new ablution block 8. Acquire tents for hire	2. landscaping done and bush cleared 3. Path to ablution block cleared 4. Ablution block designed 5. Mess designed and constructed 6. Tank in place 7. Block constructed 8. Tents purchased	1. Assistant Director Western Region 2. Architect 3. Curator Kisumu 4. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 50 Months 5. 50 Months 6. 50 Months 7. 74 Months 8. 74 Months
5	Eco-lodges (<i>Bandas</i>)	2. Clearing of vegetation 3. Design 4. Construction	2. Vegetation cleared 3. Banda Architectural plan Designed 4. Bandas constructed	1. Director General. 2. Assistant Director Western Region. 3. Curator Kisumu 5. Architect 6. Caretake r Thimlich	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months 3. 74 Months

				Ohinga	
6	Routine Repair of Traditional Houses	4. Termite treatment 5. Repair fallen rocks in the kraal 6. changing the Thatch of the houses and granary periodically 7. Smearing of walls of 6 houses 8. Plastering of floors for the 6 houses	4. Termites eradicated 5. Kraal repaired 6. Houses thatched 7. Walls repaired 8. Floors re-plastered	1. Curator Kisumu Museum 2. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	Periodic
7	Perimeter Fence	1. Mend broken parts of the fence 3. Plant indigenous plants to reinforce the fence	1. Fence in good condition	1. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months
8	Nature Trail	3. Remove loose stones tree stumps along the trail 4. Clear the bushy sections of the trail 5. Erect direction signage along the	2. Loose stones and stumps removed 3. Bushy section of trail cleared 4. Directional signage erected	1. Assistant Director, Western Region 2. Curator Kisumu Museum 3. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	Routine.

		trail			
9	Rapid vegetation and trees growth on and within the Ohingni	1. Monitoring and Physical removal 2. Chemical treatment	1. Vegetation removed and Reports done 2. Reports	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	Periodic
10	Burning of grass and vegetation within ohingni	1. Collect grass and bur grass in a designated spot outside the stone fortifications .	1. Designated spot identified	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	Periodic
11	Lichens on entrance engravings	2. Manual removal by hand	2. Condition Survey Reports	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	. 1. Periodic.
12	Anthill close to the walls	1. Dig out the queen from the anthill 2. Chemical treatment	1. Ant-hill removed	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months
13	Foot Path passing through excavation site	2. Open up excavation and construct barrier around the site	2. Excavation site opened and barrier constructed	1. Assistant Director Western Region. 2.Caretaker Thimlich	2. 50 Months

				Ohinga	
14	Falling Rocks due to wildlife	1. Monitor and return rocks 2. Purchase tripod light ladder for wall maintenance	1. Condition survey Reports 2. Ladder purchased	1. Curator Kisumu. 2. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months
15	Electricity connection	1. Connect to main power grid	1. Electricity from the national grid at the site	1. Director General 2. Assistant Director Western Region	1. 50 Months
16	Disaster preparedness	1. Training of staff in basic first aid and fire fighting techniques 2. Acquire firefighting equipment	1. Staff trained 2. Firefighting equipment acquired	1. DAHR 2. Curator Kisumu Museum	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months
17	Promotion of community participation	1. Awareness campaign 2. Local management committee 4. Host community activities at the site	1. Reports 2. Committee in place 4. Calendar of activities	1. Assistant Director Western Region. 2. Curator Kisumu 3. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 4. 74 Months

18	Scientific research	1. Collect more information on the site 2. Document conservation work done 3. Carry out more research	1. Scientific Reports 2. Documentation Reports	1. DAHR, 2. Assistant Director Western Region 3. Curator Kisumu Museum 4. Research specialists (Researchers-DMSM & DRC)	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months
19	Education and Marketing	1. Design marketing materials 2. Production and dissemination of marketing material 3. Posting of education and public programs to the site	1. Publicity material designed 2. Publicity material distributed 3. Education /public programs officer posted at site	1. PRO, 2. Public programs & Education officers 3. Researchers, 4. Curator Kisumu 5. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months 3. 74 Months

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Annex 2

LAND USE AGREEMENT

**Memorandum of Understanding for the conservation of Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological
Site**

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA AND THIMLICH OHINGA LAND OWNERS
(COMMUNITY)**

DECEMBER 2017

This Memorandum of Understanding (this "MOU") is made and entered as of the *22nd December*
two thousand and seventeen 2017 between **The National Museums of Kenya** of Post Office
Box Number 40658 - 00100 (*hereafter referred to as NMK*) and **Thimlich Ohinga Land
Owners** of Post Office Box Number 34-40402 Nyatike (*hereafter referred to as The
Community*).

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalise the conservation of the buffer area surrounding the gazetted Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site in Migori County into a controlled development zone. The MOU (*hereafter referred to as Agreement*) seeks to enhance and sustain collaboration between the above-mentioned parties in conservation of the aforementioned site. NMK has entered into a collaborative agreement with the Community for their mutual benefit in the conservation of Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site in economic and social spheres.

2. PARTIES

The parties to this Contract are:

The National Museums of Kenya

P.O. Box 40658 - 00100

NAIROBI, KENYA

www.museums.or.ke

Telephone: +254 20 3742131

The Chief

Kadem Location

P.O. Box 34-40402

Nyatike, KENYA

3. TERM

The term of performance under this MOU shall commence upon signature of the contract by both parties and shall continue through for a **period of 20 years** when a review of the MOU will be made to address emergent issues. The MOU may however be reviewed as and when one of the party gives a (6) six months' notice of intention to review to the other party within which mutual agreement shall be made.

4. CONSERVATION STATUS

NMK shall operate at all times as the lead conservator in the management of the Thimlich Ohinga Site under this MOU. This MOU does not authorize NMK or the Community to act as an agent of the other or to make commitments on behalf of the other party. The parties shall not withhold information pertaining to the well-being of the site.

5. THIS AGREEMENT CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

- 5.1 The Community endorses the MOU with prior informed consent free from any encumbrances whatsoever.
- 5.2 The NMK confirm that it is getting into the MOU satisfied with the land laws in the country and in observance of the Luo traditional land tenure system.
- 5.3 The Community will need to consult the NMK before any physical development bound to affect the vegetation and stones is undertaken.
- 5.4 The NMK will need to be consulted before the community gets into other contracts with other entities affecting the land contiguous to the Thimlich Ohinga Site.

6 CONSERVATION OF THE BUFFER AREA

6.1 The community commits by this MOU:

- 6.1.1 To preserve the buffer area only for cultivation purpose.
- 6.1.2 To promptly surrender to the NMK Site Office, any movable archaeological material found with the buffer area for safe custody.
- 6.1.3 To promptly notify the NMK of any immovable material found within the buffer area.
- 6.1.4 Not to move stone from the buffer area for any form of construction or any other purpose.
- 6.1.5 Entry to the Thimlich Ohinga site shall only be through the designated gate entrance.

6.2 NMK commits by this MOU:

- 6.2.1 To continue allowing free access by Community to procurement of grass and medicinal herbs from the Thimlich Ohinga Site.
- 6.2.2 To give first priority to hiring of casuals and employees from the community for works related to the conservation of Thimlich Ohinga site.

- 6.2.3 To give first priority to the community in capacity building initiatives that may arise or be designed by the NMK.
- 6.2.4 To allow free use of the information centre for use by the community in their social events.

7. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In the event of a dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this agreement or the breach, termination or invalidity thereof (a “dispute”), the Parties will use their best efforts to settle promptly such dispute through direct negotiation. Any dispute that is not settled within thirty (30) days from the date either Party has notified the other Party of the nature of the dispute and of the measures that should be taken to rectify it will be resolved through executive consultation between the Migori County Government and the Ministry of Sports Culture and the Arts or their duly authorized representatives. Each Party will give full and sympathetic consideration to any proposal advanced by the other to settle amicably any matter for which no provision has been made or any controversy as to the interpretation or application of this MOU.

Without limiting the parties’ right to explore other methods of dispute resolution, in the event that any dispute remains unresolved sixty (60) days from the date it arose, either Party may refer the dispute to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of Kenyan courts.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. The agreement shall be governed by the laws of Kenya.
- b. This agreement may be amended or modified as the parties may desire to give effect to their intentions. Such modifications or amendment shall only come into force when duly consented to and executed by all parties.
- c. Neither Party shall be entitled to assign or transfer to a third party all or part of the rights or obligations under this agreement, without the prior written consent of the other Party.
- d. The invalidity in whole or in part of any provision of this agreement shall not void or affect the validity of any other provision hereof, and the Parties hereto agree to substitute

any provision which is or has become invalid by such a provision which is consistent with the original intent of the Parties.

- e. Each Party hereto shall bear all of its own risks and liabilities incurred with the preparation and negotiation of this agreement.
- f. This agreement is not intended to constitute, create, give effect to or otherwise recognize any kind of joint venture, formal business organization of any kind and the rights and obligations of the Parties shall be only those **expressly set forth herein**. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating an exclusive relationship between the Parties nor prohibit or limit the Parties in their own activities in general.

9. NOTICES

All notices or other communications required or permitted hereunder shall be made in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given if delivered by hand or mailed, postage prepaid, by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, and addressed to:

The Chief,

Kadem Location,

P. O. BOX 34 - 40402

NYATIKE, KENYA

**The Director - Antiquities, Sites &
Monuments,**

National Museums of Kenya,

P.O. Box 40658 - 00100

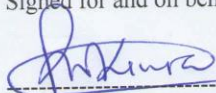
NAIROBI, KENYA

Notice of change of address shall be effective only when done in writing and sent in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

SIGNATURES

The individuals executing this Memorandum of Understanding represent and warrant that they have the legal capacity and authority to do so on behalf of their respective parties. The parties have duly agreed to execute this agreement on the date hereunder:

Signed for and on behalf of **National Museums of Kenya**



22/12/2017

Dr. Purity Kiura,

Director – Antiquities, Sites and Monuments

Signed for and on behalf of

Thimlich Ohinga Land Owners (Community)

Name..... Sign..... ID.....


1st Principal Land Owner

Name..... *Walter Otieno Othman* Sign.....  ID..... *25268227*

2nd Principal Land Owner

Name..... *John Odhiambo Owuok* Sign.....  ID..... *36096650*

3rd Principal Land Owner

Name..... *Teria Atieno Owaga* Sign.....  ID..... *8080947*

4th Principal Land Owner

Name..... *Susan Adhamb Odira* Sign.....  ID..... *12669296*

5th Principal Land Owner

Name..... *Kemari Otieno* Sign.....  ID..... *29A21630*

In the presence of

Name..... *SAMUEL D. MPAWALE* Name..... *Monica Anyango Akoth*

Sign:  Sign: 

Chief, Kadem Location

(National Government Rep)



Nyumba Kumi Elder

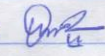
(Local Government Rep)

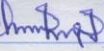
22nd Day of December 2017

I, Mr Kennedy Otieno Owor, ID No 29431630 of Thimlich village, Nyatike, being the landowner next to the Thimlich Ohinga National Monument has been approached by the National Museums of Kenya in regards to acquiring a piece of my land.

I have consulted my grandmother, my family and my siblings. We have agreed to enter into negotiation with the National Museums of Kenya to agree on the amount of piece of land they require, the amount to be paid, Survey to be done, and carry out all necessary documentations.

witnessed by

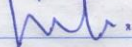
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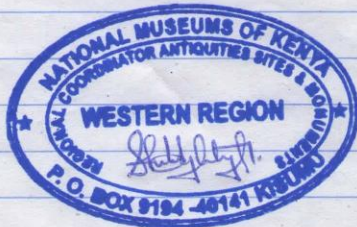
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ID No. 29431630

Name CHARLES OTIENO POLO
ID No 24155678.

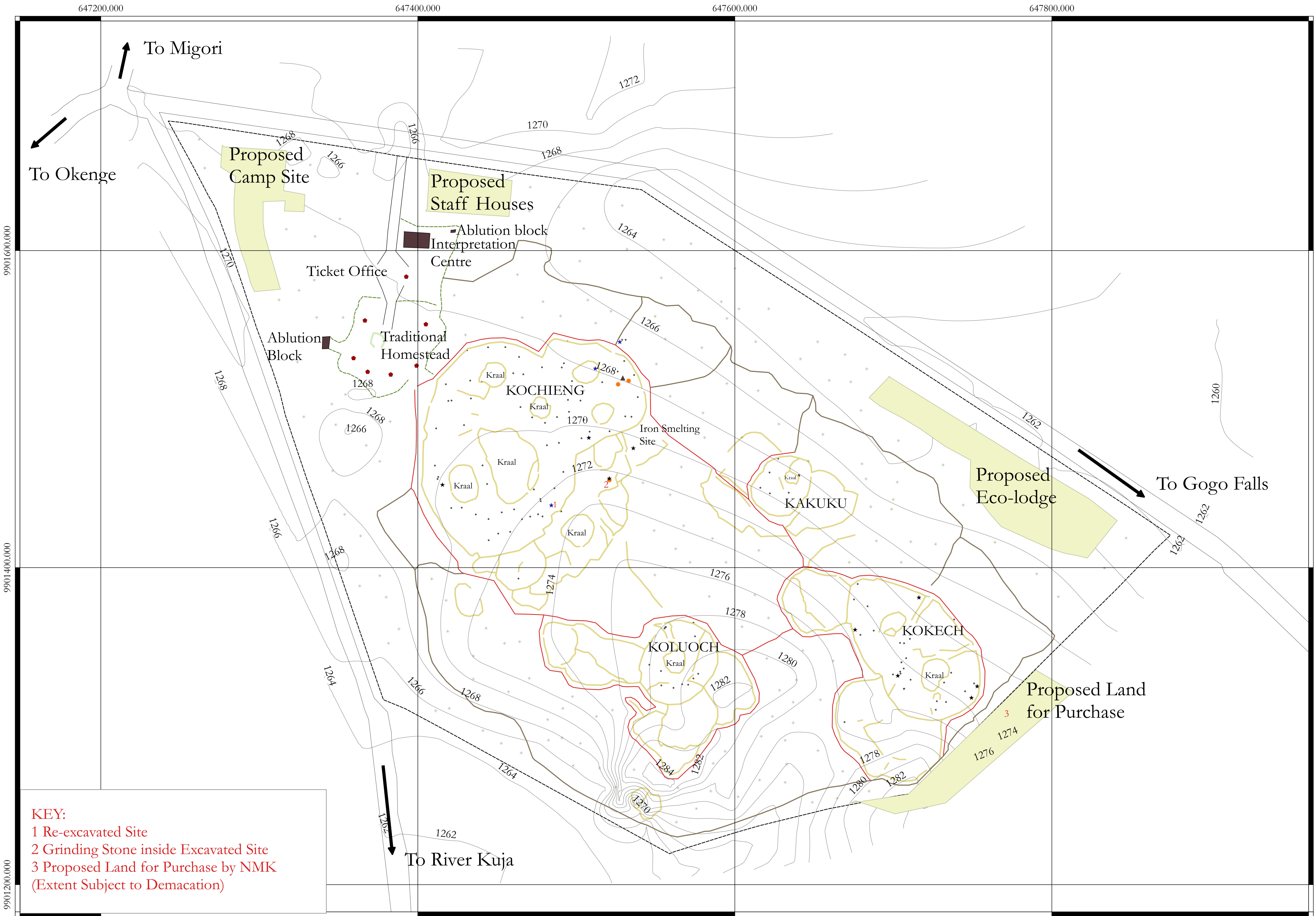
In the presence of

Sign 

Name Dan Ogula Orma
ID No 12594094

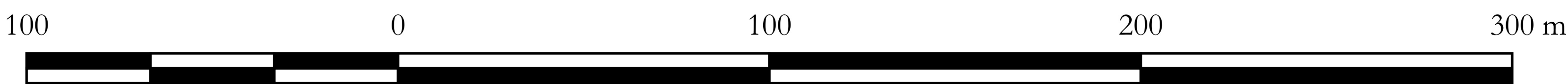
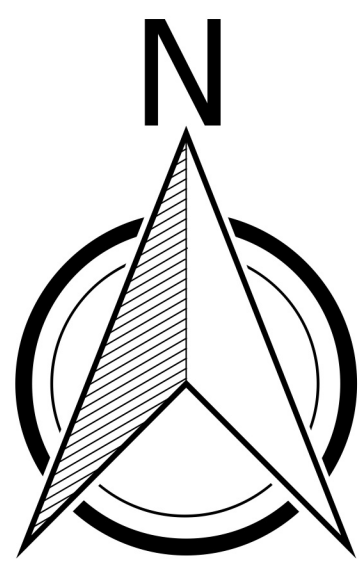


Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site



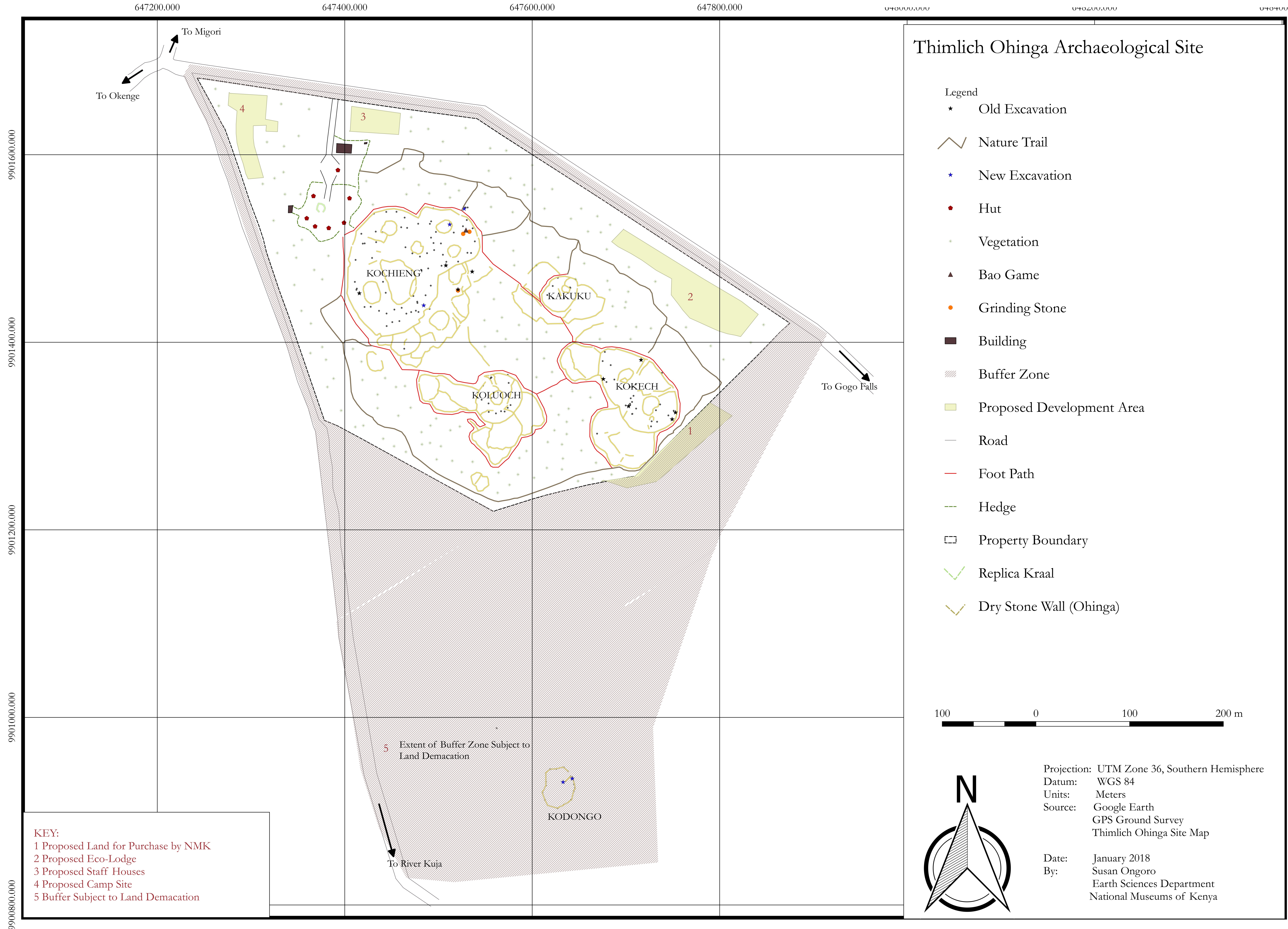
KEY:
1 Re-excavated Site
2 Grinding Stone inside Excavated Site
3 Proposed Land for Purchase by NMG
(Extent Subject to Demarcation)

Legend		
★	Old Excavation	Proposed Development Area
⋈	Nature Trail	contours_2m
★	new excavation	Road
●	Hut	Foot Path
✱	Vegetation	Hedge
▲	Bao Game	Property Boundary
●	Grinding Stone	Replica Kraal
•	House Pits	Dry Stone Wall (Ohinga)
■	Building	



Projection: UTM Zone 36, Southern Hemisphere
Datum: WGS 84
Units: Meters
Source: Google Earth
GPS Ground Survey
Thimlich Ohinga Site Map

Date: January 2018
By: Susan Ongoro
Earth Sciences Department
National Museums of Kenya



Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site

- Legend
- ★ Old Excavation
 - ☆ New Excavation
 - Hut
 - Vegetation
 - ▲ Bao Game
 - Grinding Stone
 - Building
 - ▨ Buffer Zone
 - Proposed Development Area
 - Road
 - Foot Path
 - - - Hedge
 - Property Boundary
 - ✓ Replica Kraal
 - ✓ Dry Stone Wall (Ohinga)

KEY:
1 Proposed Land for Purchase by NMK
2 Proposed Eco-Lodge
3 Proposed Staff Houses
4 Proposed Camp Site
5 Buffer Subject to Land Demarcation

Projection: UTM Zone 36, Southern Hemisphere
Datum: WGS 84
Units: Meters
Source: Google Earth
GPS Ground Survey
Thimlich Ohinga Site Map

Date: January 2018
By: Susan Ongoro
Earth Sciences Department
National Museums of Kenya