SALALE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES | DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK OPPORTUNITIES BULLETIN (AFOB) - PROJECT BROCHURE

Gadaa Ritual Landscapes Archaeological & Ethnoarchaeological Project

Location: Southern and Central Oromia Region, Ethiopia | Geographic Focus: Eastern Africa

1. Project Overview & Academic Standing

This project constitutes an ongoing doctoral research program investigating the materiality, spatial ecology, and site formation processes of ceremonial landscapes within the Gadaa socio-political and ritual system in Ethiopia. Grounded in ethnoarchaeology, spatial landscape analysis, and material culture studies, the research bridges living indigenous ceremonial practices with the formation of the durable archaeological record.

The scientific framework of this project is solidly established through peer-reviewed academic publications and active empirical research:

- **Published Paper 1:** Archaeological Semiotics of Material Cultures of Gadaa Ritual Performances in Borana and Shewa Zones, Ethiopia.
- **Published Paper 2:** The Materiality of Ritual: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Gadaa Ceremonial Landscape and Formation Processes of the Archaeological Record.
- **Ongoing Research (Paper 3 / Final Field Phase):** Human–Environment Interaction in Gadaa Ritual Landscapes: Ethnoarchaeological and Phenomenological Perspectives.

2. Fieldwork Objectives & Methodology

The upcoming field season focuses on high-resolution spatial mapping, site formation analysis, and phenomenological landscape surveys across key ceremonial assemblies (Ardaa Jilaa), sacred groves, stone features, and performative routes. Key methodological components include:

- **High-Resolution Spatial Mapping (GIS/GNSS):** Systematic mapping of ceremonial grounds, spatial boundaries, stone alignments, and performative movement pathways.
- **Ethnoarchaeological & Participatory Observation:** Documenting active ritual practices, material culture utilization, and post-ceremonial spatial abandonment patterns.
- **Phenomenological & Environmental Analysis:** Analyzing human–environment interactions, sacred topography, water sources, and vegetation ecology in structuring sacred landscapes.

3. Participant Information & Eligibility

We welcome undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and field assistants interested in East African archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, and landscape studies.

- **Qualifications Required:** Foundational background in anthropology, archaeology, heritage management, or GIS mapping. Prior field experience is preferred but not required.
- **Physical Expectations:** Fieldwork involves extensive pedestrian survey across varied rural terrains, living in field conditions, and active engagement with local communities.
- **Academic Opportunities:** Participants will gain hands-on training in ethnoarchaeological field mapping, community consultation techniques, and landscape documentation.

4. Field Logistics, Permits, & Safety

Accommodations & Meals:	Local field housing and regional guest facilities. Meals are arranged locally during field survey operations.
Travel & Transportation:	Project vehicle transport provided between study sites in Borana and Shewa zones.
Permits & Governance:	Conducted under active official research permits and institutional approvals in collaboration with regional heritage authorities.
Safety & Health Protocols:	Comprehensive safety orientation, field first-aid equipment, and coordination with regional medical centers.

5. Contact & Application Details

For inquiries, expression of interest, or further details regarding field participation and academic collaboration, please contact:

Project Director / PhD Candidate
Department of History and Heritage Management, College of Social Sciences & Humanities
Salale University, Fitche, Oromia, Ethiopia
Institutional Website: https://slu.edu.et/
Department Portal: https://slu.edu.et/SLU_WEB/colleges/social-science-and-humanities/history-and-heritage-management.php