

**Kings, Queens, Commoners, and Captives: What Can Archaeology Tell Us
About Dahomean Society in the Era of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?**

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Abstract: The Kingdom of Dahomey, in the modern Republic of Benin, stands as one of the most comprehensively researched kingdoms in precolonial West Africa. Decades of historical, anthropological, and art historical research have cast important light on the origins of the precolonial polity, and its rise, expansion, and transformation through its participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Since the year 2000, Professor J. Cameron Monroe has led archaeological surveys and excavations at palace sites, urban centers, and rural villages across the Abomey Plateau, the political heartland of the kingdom. In this presentation, he will discuss how archaeological research is reshaping our understanding of the nature and extent of Dahomey political power in the Atlantic era, and its impact on local communities across the region.