

WEST AFRICAN Journal of ARCHAEOLOGY

CONTENTS

Editorial Board iii

Note to Contributors iv

List of Contributors v

ADANDE, A B. Alexis. Thurstan Shaw: archeologue exemplaire et vertueux 1

OBARE, Bagodo The Legacy of Thurstan Shaw in Archaeology of West Africa: Professional and Ethical Issues (1937-2014) 9

FLOUCA, Martin. Dynamics of Domestic Architectural production in Southern Cameroon: Spatial Structuring, Social Representations and functions of works of Art in the Beti Cultural Area 37

AGBELUSI, Odunayemi Oluseyi. Afro-Brazilian Influences on Indigenous Yoruba Architecture: The Ibadan example 61

OSENUK, Mero. J.O. and Alabi R.A. Coastal Adaptations and European Activities and Trading in the Southwest coast of Nigeria: Insights from Recent Archaeological work at Ilekki 79

ARUMI, David Mamu, OSUZU, C. Oghoadena, and OWOLABI, Oladowa. African Rock Art, Engravings and Carvings as Script and Communication: A contribution from Nigeria 111



44 (1 and 2) 2014

Revue
QUEST AFRICAINE
d' ARCHEOLOGIE

CONTENTS 44 (No.2) 2014

FRITZ, Biveridge. An archaeological perspective of the traditional iron smelting and metalworking industries at ancient Dixcove, Western Region of Ghana..... 1

OTUKOKO, Ismail. Ilorin Potsherd Pavemennts and the Reconstruction of the Culture..... 21

AMIRIKPA, Oyigbenu. Museum, History and the Institutionalization of National Identity: Lokoja and the Nigerian situation..... 53

ONSURU, Muritala. Desires, Designs and Nationalist Visions: Understanding the Igbo-Yoruba Nationalist Divide..... 65

AJALA, S. Aderemi and ADEJUMO, P. Olabisi. Moral Panic and HIV/AIDS in Southwestern Nigeria..... 83

WEST AFRICAN JOURNAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY

REVEU OUEST AFRICAINE d'ARCHEOLOGIE

ISSN 0331-3158

EDITED BY

ALEX I. OKPOKO

ASSISTED BY

Oyelaran P.A. and Adande Alexis

Special Issue in Honour of Late Thurstan Shaw

Volume 44 (1 and 2) 2014

Published on behalf of West African Archaeological Association by the Editorial Board of WAJA.

2014

Editorial board

Ballouche, A.	-	Université de Caen. France
Camara, A.	-	FAN, Ch, A. Diop, Dakar
Derefaka, A.	-	University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Jemkur, J.	-	University of Jos, Nigeria
Okafor, E.	-	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Bagodo, O.	-	Université d' Abomey, Calavi, Benin Republic
Angéle, D. Aguigah	-	President, W.A.A.A (Ex-officio)
Kouassi, S. K.	-	Treasurer, W.A.A.A (Ex-officio)
Advisory Board:	-	Professor Tim Champion Professor M. Posnansky Professor J. Aquandah Professor J.P. Kithega Abdallah Yusuf Usman
Editor-in-chief	-	Alex I.Okpoko, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Associate Editors:		P.A.Oyelaran (Anglophone) University of Ibadan, Nigeria Alexis Adande (Francophone) Université du Benin
Business Manager:		R.A. Alabi, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Asst. Business Managers:		A. Ibeanu University of Nigeria, Nsukka Z. A. Gundu, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

ADANDE, B.A. Alexis, Senior Lecturer, Department of History and Archaeology, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin Republic.

ADEREMI, S. Ajala. Reader, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

ADEJUMO P. Olabisi, Senior Lecturer, Department of Nursing, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

AGBELUSI, Odunyemi Oluseyi, Natural History Museum, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife.

ALABI, R.A. Reader, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

ALERU J.O. Professor, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

AMIRIKPA, Oyigbenu, Senior Lecturer, Department of English, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

AREMU, David A. Professor, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

BAGODO, Obare, Reader, Archaeology-Prehistory, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin Republic.

ELOUGA, Martin. Professor, Department of History, University of Yaoundel, Cameroon

FRITZ, Biveridge. Lecturer II, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Ghana.

MONSURU, Muritala, Lecturer II, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

OSENI.K. Assistant Director, Ministry of Home Affairs and Culture, Lagos State, Nigeria.

OSEZUA. C.Oghoadena, Senior Lecturer, Cultural Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Obafemi Awolowo Univeristy, Ile Ife.

OTUKOKO, Ismail, Assistant Lecturer, Department of History and Heritage Management, Kwara State University, Malete

OWOEYE,O..Idowu, Lecturer II, Cultural Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife.

Contents 44 (No.2) 2014

FRITZ, Biveridge. An Archaeological Perspective of the Traditional Iron Smelting and Metalworking Industries at Ancient Dixcove, Western Region of Ghana..... 1

OTUKOKO, Ismail. Ilorin Potsherd Pavemennts and the Reconstruction of the Culture..... 21

AMIRIKPA, Oyigbenu. Museum, History and the Institutionalization of National Identity: Lokoja and the Nigerian situation..... 53

ONSURU, Muritala. Desires, Designs and Nationalist Visions: Understanding the Igbo-Yoruba Nationalist Divide..... 65

AJALA, S. Aderemi and ADEJUMO, P. Olabisi. Moral Panic and HIV/AIDS in Southwestern Nigeria..... 83

Ilorin Potsherd Pavements and the Reconstruction of the Culture History of a Frontier City: The Historical Significance of Some Neglected Artifacts

By
Ismail S. Otukoko
Department of History and Heritage Studies,
College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences,
Kwara State University, Malete
E-mail: salisma2004@yahoo.co.uk
(08055658512; 07033177489)

Abstract

Ilorin history, including its cultural history, has relied primarily on oral and written accounts, which are limited in exploring the history of Ilorin before the mid-18th century. Yet, Ilorin is believed to have been founded between the 15th and 16th centuries and to have developed into 'a very important centre in northern Yoruba land many centuries before 1800'. In view of the limitations of oral and written sources in providing information on pre-19th century Ilorin, series of archaeological reconnaissance surveys were carried out in the city over the last ten years. These efforts have yielded a lot of cultural entities including potsherd pavements, pottery, grinding hollows, and bones in some parts of Ilorin. The potsherd pavements in particular are stylistically in herringbone pattern. These bear striking resemblance to the potsherd pavements of Daima, Lake Chad area, Kabrais districts in Togo, Nupe, Ikeja, Ile-Ife, Wushishi in the Kaduna Valley, and Ibadan among others. Based on the range of potsherds and potsherd pavements recently discovered, this paper, therefore, examines the historical significance of the artifacts with a view to throwing light on the material culture history of Ilorin. The paper argues that the material finds are capable of shedding more light on pre-18th century cultural history of Ilorin, and thus calls for the protection of these materials as they are endangered by human activities and other natural phenomena.

> *Artefacts are the physical products or traces of human activity. Like objects, they have importance because of their materiality or correctness, and become the subject of retrospective interpretation and ordering. Artefacts are generally regarded as symbolic of some prior aspect of cultural or social activity.* (Gronenborn 1996)

West afr.Journ. Vol 44(No.2), 2014 Pp. 21-52

Introduction

There is no doubt that Ilorin has received scholarly attention as attested to by the wide range of available literature on its history. The historiography of Ilorin, however, shows that there has been little effort in the employment of archaeology as sources of its history. Thus, there has been much reliance on oral and written sources, which do not provide reliable information for the period before the late 18th century and are full of a number of yet to be reconciled contradictions. While information provided in oral and written sources may be disputed as they have always been, archaeological artifacts such as potsherd pavements and pottery objects remain undisputable concrete evidence that have the potential of shedding abundant light on the obscure and contested aspects of the past of a people and place.

To start with, it must be admitted that this paper is not an attempt at a scientific examination or analysis of the Ilorin artifacts. Rather, it is an exploration of the historical significance of the archaeological artifacts discovered in Ilorin for possible reconstruction of the history of early settlements in the Ilorin area as well as Ilorin's cultural history. "Culture" as used in the title of this paper refers to "material culture", which "consists of any physical manifestation or product of culture" and the study of which is based mainly on collection and examination of material objects (artifacts) made\procured, used and left behind by past peoples. Professionals such as archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians, and ethnographers study artifacts to draw inferences and make interpretations about past developments. Historians make use of reports by these specialists so as to reconstruct or to shed some light on obscure aspects of the past, particularly where and when oral and written sources of information are scanty or unavailable.

The impetus for this paper is derived from the immense contributions, which studies on material culture have made to our knowledge and understanding of pre-historic period and peoples. In the Nigerian area, for instance, information about the widely acknowledged culture and civilizations of Nok, Daima, Benin, Ile-Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, etc. has been made possible largely from the study of their artifacts. Thus, given the undisputable nature of archaeological evidence in historical reconstruction of pre-literate societies, a systematic archaeological, historical and ethnographic research in Ilorin area would greatly add to our knowledge of the city and its material culture. We are also concerned about the fact that Ilorin potsherd pavements and other artifacts possibly buried underneath

may be threatened and consequently exposed to unmitigated destruction, if effort is not made to preserve them.

Ilorin: Geographical and Historical Background

Ilorin, the focus of this paper, is located in the west-central part of what is today described as the "Middle Belt" of Nigeria. It is also part of what has been described as "Yoruba Frontier" (Usman, 2012) and, since c.1823, has been the southernmost frontier of the Sokoto Caliphate. Situated on latitude 8^0 24'North and 8^0 36' North and longitude 4^0 10'East and 4^0 36^0 East, the ancient city of Ilorin originally occupies an area of about 16 to 20 square miles. Presently occupying an area of about 100km^2 (Ajadi *et al* 2011: 24-30), it is built on low hills in the transitional zone between the open Savanna to the north and the forest region to the south. Both the rainy and dry seasons are experienced at intervals in the area. Rainfall usually starts in March, although it may begin at times in April or May and continues till October. The wettest months are July, September and October while the hottest period is usually from January to March (Kolawole *et al* 2011: 17-24. The months of November and December are usually dominated by harmattan.

The vegetation is the thickly wooded savanna. In the past, much of Ilorin landscape was dominated by thick bushes adorned with several trees including Shea Butter (*Butyrospermum parkii*), Locust Bean (*Parkia Biglobosa*), Mango (*Magnifera indica*), Silk cotton tree or "Igi Gbewu Egun" (*Typha australis*), palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*), "Igi Ipin" (*Ficus exasperata*), "Igi Isin" (*Blighia sapida*), Igi Tesuba (a type of tree, now said to be extinct, from which rosaries were made) and *Igi Eke Ebo* (used for roofing purposes), Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) and Bamboo (*Oxytennanthera abyssinica*). Today, the vegetation is made up of tall grasses including the spear grass and elephant grass as well as such trees as the *Blighia sapida*, acacia, Shea butter and locust bean among others (Ajadi *et al* 2011).

The geological features of Ilorin include undulating land, the Precambrian basement complex rock, loamy soil with sodium and low fertility. Lateritic soil, according to Ajadi *et al*, 'tends to constitute the major soil types due to the leaching of minerals nutrients of the soil' as a result of the high seasonal rainfall and high temperature (Ajadi *et al*, 2011). The city is abundantly blessed with reserve of clay, which is widely located in different parts of the city. In the western part of the city, the elevation of the land ranges from 273m to 333m (that is 900 feet to 1,100 feet) above sea level while the elevation in the eastern part

varies from 273m to 364m (that is 900 feet to 1,200 feet) with the highest point being the Sobi hill with an elevation of 394m (1,300 feet) above sea level (Oyegun 1985: 3-5; Balogun, 1978: 17-25; Ajadi *et al*, 2011). In terms of drainage, the city is drained by the Asa River and its tributary streams including Odo-Aluko, Odo-Okun, Amule, Alalubosa, Osere and Foma streams (Ajadi *et al*, 2011; Kolawole *et al*, 2011).

The above features provide for an environment and conditions that are suitable for various occupational activities including farming, hunting, animal husbandry as well as pottery making. Ilorin's location between two ecological and economic zones made the area attractive to various groups of people and hence benefit from the steady flow of migrants, trade and traders from both the Savanna and forest zones, that is Hausa land and Borno to the north and Yoruba land to the south. Ilorin's emergence as a major political, military and economic centre that played important roles in the socio-economic, political and cultural exchanges between peoples of the different zones has not been in doubt. Its central position in the socio-economic and political relations between the north and south of the Nigeria antedate the emirate period. Two of the three major trade routes that connected the Old Oyo, Eastern Yoruba land and the coast passed through Ilorin from Katunga (Faluyi 1999: 45-65). Given its strategic location close to major crossings of the Niger River, the Ilorin area served as an entrêpot in the Trans-Saharan Trade between the northern/Savanna region and the Old Oyo Empire. In addition to the centrality of its location in north-central Nigeria, the convergence of different ethnic groups in Ilorin was further enhanced by the relative security it enjoyed during the turbulent period in Old Oyo and the socio-economic opportunities it afforded settlers.

Historically, until the late 18th century, Ilorin is reckoned to be in the Ekun Osi (metropolitan) provinces of the Old Oyo Empire. The date\period of its founding, the identities of its founder(s), circumstance of its founding and much of its early history have, however, continued to be subjects of claims and counter-claims until very recent times. For instance, the "earliest settlers" or "founders" of Ilorin are given as 'Yoruba hunter(s)' variously indentified as Ojo Isekuse, Eminla and Asaju. There is also a claim that a "Baruba" family, whose identity and circumstances of settlement are yet to be provided, antedated Yoruba presence in Ilorin. Laderin, another Yoruba personality identified as the "founder and first ruler of Ilorin" is described as 'a farmer from Oyo who came to Idi-Ape in Ilorin in search of farmland' (Johnson 1976; Jimoh 1994; Onikoko 1992; Hasan and Jawondo 2006; Omoiya 2011; ADU: 1997). Though very little

is known about these individuals and their periods in Ilorin, what is fairly certain is that they were probably attracted to Ilorin area because of some of its geo-economic and industrial potentials including opportunities for hunting wild animals, availability of resource(s) for farming and iron working activities among others.

Between the late 18th century and c. 1824, Ilorin became enmeshed in the turbulent politics of Oyo-Ile as Afonja, the rebel Commander-in-Chief of Old Oyo army, made the settlement his military stronghold and attracted other people whose ambitions and activities shaped the course of Ilorin history. With particular reference to the theme of this paper, Afonja's era (c.1796-c.1824) is explained to have witnessed the influx of people as well as the transfer of such industries as pottery making and bead making from Old Oyo to Ilorin (O'Hear, 1986; 1993). Afonja's era is also associated with the advent of Sholagberu and his political leadership of Oke Suna, "a predominantly Muslim trading settlement" (Reichmuth 2010: 213-239) originally located on the outskirts of ancient Ilorin (Lloyd 1971: 40-47; Johnson, 1976: 194, 201; Jimoh, 1994; Hermon-Hodge 1929: 67). Most of the artifacts reported in this paper are located within Oke Suna. However, the conclusion that Oke Suna was essentially a Yoruba settlement and that its leader, Sholagberu, was of Yoruba origin have been contested and refuted in Ilorin traditions, which maintain that Sholagberu was of Kanuri origin while the population of Oke Suna was an admixture of Yoruba, Kanuri, Nupe, Gwari, Baruba among others (*Cf.* Johnson, 1971; Hogben and Kirk-Green, 1993: 286, 289; Jimoh, 1994: 10-11, 52; Onikoko, 1992: 2; Reichmuth, 1995: 35-54).

The transformation of Ilorin into an emirate in the third decade of the 19th century, following a Fulani-led Islamic movement, led to the destruction of Oke Suna and the dispersal of its inhabitants to different parts of the emergent Ilorin city and possibly other settlements outside Ilorin (Jimba 1990: 83; Jimoh 1994: 70-75; Herman-Hodge 1929: 67). One of the major developments in Ilorin area from the late 18th century when Old Oyo started to disintegrate until its final sack by Ilorin in c.1836 was the steady influx, settlement and integration of various groups of people. Today, it is acknowledged that the people and non-material culture of Ilorin are products of an admixture of such linguistic and culture groups as the Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, Nupe, Baruba, Sudanese, Malians and Dendi among others. However, a similar conclusion on the material culture, itself a product of social activity among the people and the indigenous crafts and industries of Ilorin, has not been made.

Available works on indigenous arts and crafts of Ilorin tend to support an overwhelming connection between Ilorin pottery, weaving, bead-making traditions and those of the Old Oyo Kingdom (Olaoye, 1990; O'Hear, 1986, 1993). These sources have underpinned the advent of these industries in Ilorin to the period of the collapse of Old Oyo and the presence of Afonja in Ilorin. One of the implications of such submission is that prior to the disintegration of Old Oyo Empire, the Ilorin region was either sparsely populated or did not share in the wider current of civilization or cultural development by peoples in places around it. In other words, in terms of material culture, the implications are that the Ilorin region had no culture history at least before 1800 and did not receive from or contribute to ancient culture and civilization in the Nigerian area. The recently discovered potsherd pavements and other artifacts in parts of Ilorin suggest that the city had long traditions of pottery and other crafts (including iron working) than has been widely acknowledged. Although, there are as yet no adequate oral or written information on the period before late 18th century in Ilorin, the archaeological finds tend to corroborate the submission recently made that "without doubt, the summation of various interpretation of Ilorin history is that the town had been a very important centre in northern Yorubaland for many centuries before the beginning of the 19th century" (Danmole 2012). What then could have made Ilorin **"very important"** in northern Yorubaland, **"centuries"** prior to 1800? Was it its iron production, which Samuel Johnson says gave Ilorin its name? Was it the weapons of war and other iron tools which were very crucial to economic and military activities in the region? Was it the well decorated pottery production or the architectural attributes as well as the utilitarian functions of its pottery products? Was it its strategically central location for trading or was it the role Ilorin played in socio-cultural and economic exchanges between peoples from the savannah and forest zones long before 1800 that made it popular? It is these and other germane questions we must respond to, applying the historical and material sources, in order to unravel the considerations that were responsible for placing Ilorin on the pinnacle of the famous before the beginning of the 19th c.

Methods and Data Collection

The data for this paper was derived from a series of archaeological reconnaissance surveys carried out within Ilorin metropolis between 2002 and 2012. The author was privileged to have observed potsherd pavements ((Plate 1a; Located 04^0 30' 21'') at the premises of Ilorin Comprehensive High School (ICOHS) as a History teacher in that school in the year 2002. Rock hollows in lateritic outcrops (Plate 3c: located 04^0 32' 04'') were also observed at the

premises of Sheikh Alimi Primary School, near ICOHS. Subsequently, oral information from informants indicates the presence of similar potsherd pavements in other locations although no clues were given for their origin and functional purposes. Based on this oral evidence, more reconnaissance were carried out between 2005 and September 2012 to document the potsherd pavements before they are totally destroyed. During the conduct of investigation by the author, traces and actual remains of the herringbone potsherd pavement were observed in three other locations within Ilorin. These include the premises of Government Day Secondary School, Odo-Okun, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin (with at least three different locations) and along Ogaminana Street, Adewole Estate, Ilorin. The remains of the potsherd pavements are still visible in their locations in the premises of College of Education, Ilorin (Located 04^0 31' 04''; 04^0 32' 29'') and at Adewole Estate (04^0 31' 35'') as of January 2013.

Of the four areas where potsherd pavements have been documented in Ilorin, one of the sites (ICOHS premises) would appear not to have been among the areas (hamlets or villages) usually given as having made up the pre-emirate Ilorin conglomerate. However, an account suggests that it was probably part of Oke Suna settlement (Onikoko 1992: 2). The other three sites (Kwara State College of Education, Odo-Okun and Adewole Estate) are believed to be part of Oke Suna and are very close to the two rock hollow centres that are now being identified as "Oke Suna". Prior to the arrival of Shaikh Alimi in c.1817, Oke Suna is acknowledged to have been an autonomous settlement located on the outskirts of what was then Ilorin although there seems to have been considerable interaction between Oke Suna and other quarters in Ilorin particularly Afonja's side (Lloyd 1971: 40-47; Johnson 1976: 193-4, 200; Jimoh 1994: 52; Agbabiaka 2004). Sequel to Shaikh Alimi's settlement and religious activities in Ilorin, Oke Suna became part of the emergent Ilorin Muslim community under the religious and spiritual leadership of Alimi though Sholagberu still remained the undisputed political and military leader of Oke Suna.



Plate 1a



Plate 1b



Plate 1c



Plate 1d

Plates 1a, b, c and d: Potsherd Pavements at ICOHS, Adewole Estate and KWACOED, Ilorin

According to some traditional accounts, Oke Suna settlement was located around the site of rock hollows in the premises of Institute of Technology (IOT) of Kwara State Polytechnic, near University of Ilorin's former Mini-Campus. Today, the site is considered 'sacred' and venerated by some Muslim worshippers who visit it for various spiritual and religious purposes. Other traditional accounts, however, suggest that the settlement was much more extensive than usually thought to be (Onikoko 1992: 2; Jimoh 1994: 52; Agbabiaka 2004). This submission is corroborated by other accounts, which identify another site with rock hollows located off Olorunsogo\Western Reservoir Road as "Oke" or "Apata Suna" (As-Sayouti, 2012). Onikoko (1992: 2) also indicates that the settlement probably extended to areas off Asa Dam and Umaru Saro Roads. Unlike the widely known Oke Suna rock in the IOT premises, the "Apata Suna" rock in Olorunsogo area is more elevated and is also becoming a

centre of religious veneration and activities following the construction of a modern mosque right on top of the rock.

The ancient Oke Suna settlement, which is reported to have been founded in the 17th century AD, was destroyed and evacuated in the early 19th century after a protracted struggle between Sholagberu, its leader, and the nascent Ilorin emirate authority. Following its destruction and forced evacuation, about 188 years ago, the material remains abandoned by the inhabitants of the settlement have either been destroyed during the final sacking of the settlement or gradually buried with the passage of time. The Ilorin potsherd pavements would therefore appear to belong to either the earliest inhabitants of the location or those associated with the famous Oke Suna community probably in the period between the 17th and early 19th centuries. An examination of the artifacts and their historical significance becomes more pertinent and imperative in view of the absence of reports of similar artifacts in core areas such as Idi-Ape (believed to have been the nucleus of Ilorin) and Okelele-Dada axis (explained to be 'the main centre of pottery production' in Ilorin). There is also the controversial nature of "Okuta-Ilorin" vis-à-vis the myths of origin and founding of Ilorin. To get a fair understanding of the archaeological and historical significance of the artifacts observed and collected in the course of our investigation, a number of reports and studies on similar finds across Nigeria and beyond were examined. Among the preliminary inferences one can draw from these studies vis-à-vis the Ilorin potsherd pavements and other surface pottery collected is that Oke Suna was an earlier centre of human habitation and cultural development in Ilorin.

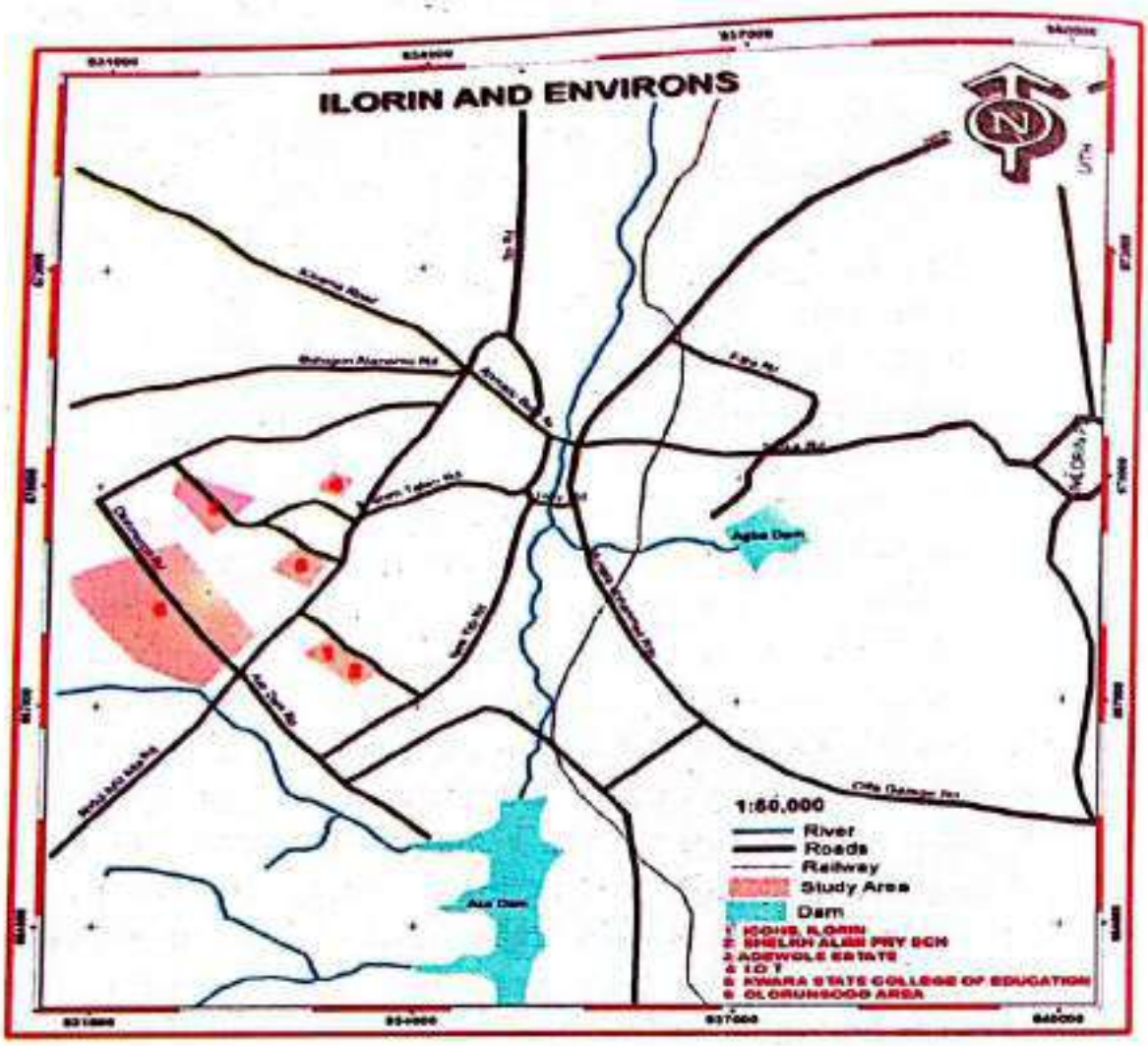


Fig. 1: Ilorin and environs and the locations of the potsherd pavements (1, 3 and 5) and the rock hollows (2, 4 and 6).

Results and Discussion: Significance of Artifacts with particular reference to Ilorin Potsherd Pavements and Pottery Materials

Potsherds, the main materials for this paper, are pieces of broken pottery, which would ordinarily appear (to the lay man) to be waste products from pottery making activities, accidental or willful destruction of earthenware. In actual fact, potsherds were broken pieces from vessels that had once performed different functions in the people's ways of life. Potsherd pavements, on the other hand, may be described as paved ways, floors, courtyards, etc. made from the ingenious use of pottery sherds to make various patterns on the earth. Such fascinating patterns were made by the laying of sherds (sometimes with quartz stones, cobbles and pebbles) flat or by pressing them in edgeways on the earth floors. Sherds were also at times set side by side to make straight rows (Shaw 1979: 145-

155). Such pattern of columns that emerged when sherds were pressed in edgeways and slanting parallel lines is known as the 'herringbone' design of potsherd pavement.

Ilorin Potsherd Pavements (Plates 1a, b, c, and d) are of the herringbone variety that has been described as "extremely durable and can stand up to a lot of wear" (Shaw 1979). Though this type of potsherd pavement is described as a prominent and distinctive feature of the ancient Ife culture, it is particularly acknowledged to have been widespread in the West African sub-region. Apart from Ile-Ife, other places where the stylistic variety of the herringbone potsherd pavement has also been discovered in West Africa include Daima and Kursakata (in Borno), the Sao mounds and Amkunchu (in the Chad Republic), Kabrais District (in Togoland) as well as in Nupe, Wushishi (in the Kaduna Valley), Ila Orangun, Iresi, Esie, Oro (in north-central Nigeria), Yelwa (Kebbi State), Ikeja (Lagos State) and in Ibadan (Oyo State) among others (Agbaje-Willems 1987: 23-31; Shaw 1980: 23-53; Aiyedun 1984; Gronenborn 1996, 1998; Adekola 2012; Usman 2012). The size of the Ilorin potsherd pavements ranges from 3.05 metres by 1.8 metres to 4.5 by 5 metres. They seem to have been exposed by erosion and reduced to their present small size by human activities such as construction works, farming, trampling, movement, etc.

Potsherd pavements have been subjects of extensive archaeological studies in various parts of the world. In Nigeria, various potsherd pavement sites have been excavated and studied and the results have been very astonishing and informative. Being archaeological artifacts and concrete historical and cultural evidence, the significance of the potsherd pavements lies in various clues they could offer, especially when other artifacts are recovered, for historical reconstruction. Generally, the potsherd pavements are strong indications of the existence of human settlement and particularly of a group of skilled craftsmen and women who made the artifacts. As evidence of human habitation, careful study of potsherd pavements and other related artifacts including charcoal samples have been used to obtain radiocarbon dates for settlements and cultural activities.

The earliest evidence of potsherd pavement in West Africa is suggested to be those at Daima, which have been dated to 650 AD (Gronenborn 1996: 449-460). The sites of the herringbone design of potsherd pavements in Ile-Ife are reported to have yielded radio-carbon dates ranging from the 11th century (Lafogido), 11th\12th c. (Ita Yemoo) to early 14th c. (Obalara) (Shaw 1980: 23-53; Agbaje

1978: 23-31; Usman 2003). Thus, it is now established that Ife potsherd pavements were among the material culture that represented the "Classical Period" of Ife art and culture, which lasted from 11th to the 16th centuries (Usman 2012: 54, 92). Radiocarbon dates from other potsherd pavement sites include 13th to 14th centuries for the Old Oyo; 14th century for Itagumodi in Ijesaland and Benin in the Edo region, (Shaw, 1980; Usman, 2012). Although these dates show a difference of between 200 and 500 years prior to some of the supposed dates of the founding of Ilorin, it is hoped that further excavation and study of Ilorin potsherd pavements are likely to help clarify some of the controversies around the dates and perhaps circumstances of the founding of Ilorin and the industrial pre-occupation of 'earliest settlers' in the area. In other words, archaeological study of Ilorin potsherd pavements could provide a temporal context for the pavements, which may either be earlier or later than some of the presumed date(s) of the founding of Ilorin, which range from the 15 the century ("1450") through 16th and 17th to the late 18th centuries. (Onikoko 1992: 1; Jimoh 1994: 25; Na-Allah 1994: 29-50; Wikipedia 2011; Osogbue 2011; Omoiya, 2012)

At present, the latter date (i.e. "late 18th century") re-echoes the erroneous assumption made by a colonial officer that 'Ilorin is not an old settlement' (NAK ILORINPROF 4 900/1912: para. 17) and must have been informed by the absence of archaeological and historical researches\reports about Ilorin's 'early history' at least in the period before late 18th century. For instance, more studies seem to have been carried out on Ilorin's indigenous handicrafts since the 1800s (Alabi 1983; O'Hear 1986: 175-192; Anifowose 1984; Olaoye 2005: 114-127; 2002) than actual archaeological study of possible remains of its earlier indigenous industries including the pottery and metal industries and by extension the accompanying material culture. This is in spite of the fact that other settlements around Ilorin such as Old Oyo, Esie, Ibara, Igbaja, and Ajase to mention just a few have continued to receive the attention of archaeologists up to recent times (Soper 1975; Steven 1978; Willett 1960: 59-77; Usman 2003: 149-169; 2005:141-168; 2012; Aremu 2006: 55-63; Aleru, 2006; Aleru and Adekola 2008: 1-16; Aleru, 2010). One of the major conclusions from some of these studies is that the 'Yoruba Frontier', within which Ilorin is located, had been inhabited prior to the arrival of immigrant populations from various parts of Yoruba-speaking areas. Usman's study also confirms the 'presence of autochthonous population in the region at a date earlier than (or at least contemporary with) any so far known in Ife or Old Oyo' (Usman 2012: 11, 14). These conclusions were, of course, arrived at after archaeological studies of similar finds as potsherd pavements and other ceramics in those areas.

Furthermore, potsherd pavements had various functional and aesthetic purposes for which they were made. Hence, they are strong indications of what a particular site might have been used for although this depends on what other materials are discovered in the course of excavation, inferences drawn from such associated objects and other information available on them. Generally, potsherd pavements have been described as 'architectural features' associated with temples, shrines, roads, courtyards and residences (Ogundiran 2000: 35-41; Usman 2012: 95; Gronenborn 1998: 225-259). For instance, it has been inferred that the Ife sites cited above might have variously been a shrine, an altar or a courtyard while a particular site is indeed identified with the burial site of an Ooni of Ife called Lafogido (Eluwa 1988: 8, 82; Agbaje-Willems 1987:23-31). Other functions of potsherd pavements are identified to include "to prevent compounds from being washed away by erosion or overgrown by bushes, as architectural decoration of yards, and for protecting the family "first-aid box", called *egiri* usually a pot of medicine embedded in the center of the compound" (Usman, 2012: 35).

In addition to their functional uses, it has also been suggested that potsherd pavements are indicators of a stable way of life and an urban culture. Hence, those already identified and excavated in various parts of Yoruba land and Benin, for instance, have been suggested to be material indicator of urbanization in the Yoruba and Edo region between the 11th and 15th centuries (Agbaje-Williams 1998; Usman 2012: 90, 95-96). This significance of potsherd pavements is related to some of their functional uses particularly their architectural use to decorate palaces, chiefs houses, roads, courtyard floors, temples, shrines, etc. There are indications that the potsherd pavements observed in Ilorin must have been constructed to serve similar functions in an urban culture area. The potsherd pavement at ICOHS, for instance, had a pottery vessel embedded in it before they were eventually destroyed. The pavements found at Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, had large number of broken sherds of pottery, traces of human remains and pottery vessels with incisions and other decoration styles (Plates 4 A-P) located a few yards around them. Thus, like other settlements in and outside Yorubaland such as Daima, Kursakata, Amkunchu, Ife, Benin, Oba-Isin, Okegi, Ila, Ajaba, Ahun and Oro where potsherd pavements have been documented, the Ilorin area would appear to have been connected with or to have been part and parcel of early centres and process of urbanization not only in Yoruba land but in other parts of West African region where potsherd pavements have been identified as distinctive feature of early civilization.

Furthermore, potsherd pavements indicate a culture of clay technology or pottery making and some skills in decorative art such as the ingenuous use of tiles of ceramics to make the designs. It is already known that Ilorin was a renowned center of indigenous industrial activities though the period from the 1800s has been most accounted for. Prominent among these industries were pottery making, cloth-weaving, dyeing and bead-making. Leatherworking and blacksmithing were also practiced in Ilorin. The more prominent among these industries were pottery-making and bead-making and are, however, usually suggested to have been 'introduced' or 'transferred' from Old Oyo, especially after its collapse in the early 19th century and dispersal of its inhabitants to various parts of Yorubaland including Ilorin (NAK ILORINPROF 4 900/1912: para. 23; Willett 1987: 111-139; O'Hear 1986: 175-192; Olaoye 1990: 32-49). Thus, modern Ilorin potters, bead makers, cloth weavers, etc. are usually said to be 'descendants' of Old Oyo craftsmen who took refuge or were enslaved in Ilorin during the turbulent period in Oyo-Ile between late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The above submission has been cited in a number of sources. According to a colonial record, the Ilorin pottery industry, for instance, predated the establishment of the emirate in the early 1820s (Hermon-Hodge 1929). With about 500 pottery-makers estimated in Ilorin in the early 1900s, Hermon-Hodge reported that, "this industry was active before the Fulani conquest, and the first potters are said to have come from Shao....The People of Shao....taught their art to some people from Old Oyo, and the latter carried it to Ilorin" (Hermon-Hodge, 1929: 281). It is important to note that until now the centre of pottery production in Ilorin is identified as Okelele, located in the northwestern section of modern Ilorin while the craft (like other industries) and earliest potters are traced to Old Oyo and associated with Afonja's era in Ilorin (c.1796-c.1823) (O'Hear 1986). This submission is based on the evidence of similarities between modern Ilorin pottery and those of Old Oyo such as the red and black wares including the black cooking pots with concave-centred lid and central knob (isasun) as well as the makers' marks added to distinguish individual potter's products (O'Hear 1986).

The Ilorin potsherd pavements and the large quantities of surface pottery with decoration techniques other than burnishing from one of the sites seem to suggest not only an earlier occupation of parts of the Ilorin area but also a long tradition of pottery making and craftsmanship—most likely earlier than the 17th century when Oke Suna is sometimes reported to have been founded, or even from late 18th to early 19th centuries when Old Oyo was evacuated and some of its inhabitants relocated to Ilorin. Unlike Okelele, the site of Oke Suna is located in

the southwestern section of Ilorin with its inhabitants, at least by early 19th century, drawn from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds including Kanuri, Nupe, Baruba, Yoruba, etc.

Finally, potsherd pavements are indisputable material evidence of 'ancient' civilization as attested to by the discoveries from various parts of Nigeria and West Africa. The Ilorin potsherd pavements are therefore strong and concrete indications of the possibility of an early civilization in the Ilorin region,—a civilization that belonged not only to a remote past but also to a wider geographical and cultural space. Generally, external inspiration and influence from North Africa and the Mediterranean World has been suggested for the introduction and spread of potsherd pavements in the region south of the Sahara (Shaw, 1980; Adesanya 2005: 161-184). Gronenborn (1998), however, considers West African potsherd pavements as "elaborate modes of house decoration which evolved independently in several locations at various points in time." In the Yoruba frontier, Ife and Oyo have been identified as major sources of the spread of potsherd pavement among the Yoruba people although the possibility of the involvement of non-Yoruba groups such as the Nupe is not ruled out (Usman, 2012: 95).

For Ilorin potsherd pavements, Old Oyo, with its typical flat potsherd pavements, could not be said to have been the source of inspiration since the ancient capital had no evidence of the herringbone pattern of potsherd pavement. At present, there is yet to be any tradition of origin or relations linking ancient Ilorin with ancient Ile-Ife where the herringbone potsherd pavements were among the distinctive characteristics of its "Classical civilization." Given its location in the transitional zone between the northern and southern regions of modern Nigeria and its reported role as an entrêpot of the Trans-Saharan Trade, the Ilorin pottery industry and indeed the inspiration for the construction of potsherd pavements stood a chance of having been from or influenced by people from any of the other aforementioned early centres of pottery-making and potsherd pavements. Of course, Ilorin has always been known to have been a melting pot of peoples (including the Yoruba, Nupe, Baruba, Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Sudanese Arabs, Malians, etc.) and their cultures. Though the 19th century had witnessed the phenomenal influx and integration of various groups of settlers especially after the Muslim movement led by Sheikh Alimi (Danmole 1990: 25-42), the possibility of an early settlement and integration of people of diverse origins in the Ilorin area is provided by Oke Suna.

One of the interesting points about the Ilorin potsherd pavements (Plates 1a, b, c and d) is that the stylistic herringbone pattern is a common feature shared with potsherd pavements in other areas in the northeastern, north-central, and southwestern Nigeria. This implies that the producers of the Ilorin potsherd pavements probably belonged to a tradition of indigenous clay technology, architectural and decorative arts that cut across various regions and peoples. As noted earlier, Ilorin's location on one of the main trade routes from Hausa land and Borno to Old Oyo and southwards attracted influx of people to the city well before the decline of Old Oyo Empire. Both Aole (as a prince) and Afonja (before his appointment as Aare Ona Kakanfo) traded in the Ilorin area in the period prior to 1789 (Hithersett 1911; Akinjogbin 1965: 24-46; Balogun 1978: 17-25). Sholagberu, a chief (initially at Kuho) and a wealthy trader was already at Oke Suna, a trading Muslim settlement, prior to the advent of Afonja in Ilorin in the late 18th century. There are, therefore, indications that Ilorin was already a centre of plural socio-cultural and economic interaction prior to the 19th century.

In addition to the potsherd pavements, other cultural materials uncovered during the reconnaissance surveys and which are suggestive of early civilization were pottery types and designs that are quite different from decorations from modern Ilorin pottery. Generally described as "an important craft industry of considerable antiquity in Africa" (Paul 2005: 86-113) and "the most valuable cultural indicators for the latter periods of prehistory" (Soper 1983: 28-35), the significance of pottery for historical reconstruction cannot be overemphasized. In different cultural regions, the study of pottery, including their designs or decoration techniques, distribution, provenance and level of similarity among other features, has been used to address various issues on different aspects of life in pre-historic times. These uses include serving as the "main sources of evidence of settlement history", source of data to "establish chronological sequence" as well as to measure "social interaction" (Kasper *et al* 2004; Usman 2012).

The Kwara State College of Education site is particularly significant because of the presence of large quantities of pottery of various sizes and designs (Plates 2 A-P) scattered all over the site. Many of these pottery that had long been buried were recently exposed by heavy rainfall and accompanying erosion. Drawing from the analysis of prehistoric ceramic decoration types from different parts of Nigeria and elsewhere (Soper 1983; Usman (2003), Usman *et al* (2005) and Aleru (2000, 2012; Julio *et al* 2006; Norman 2009) the decorative attributes of the surface pottery from one of the Ilorin potsherd pavements sites include, among others, the *twisted-string roulette*, *carved wooden roulette*, *maize cob*

roulette, *incisions* (including *wavy*, *zigzag*, *brush or broom-markings*), *scallops*, *punctation*, *groove*, *snail shell markings*, *double twisted cord* and *wiping or striation* (Plate 2). Unlike pottery styles from other parts of the Yoruba Frontier like Old Oyo and Igbomina, these pottery decorative styles from Ilorin area are yet to be examined in their archaeological contexts. However, various studies of ceramic types of Old Oyo and Igbomina (Willett 1960; Soper 1978; Usman 2003; 2005) indicate that while some of the decorative styles resemble those of the "Diogun" or "early" period and ceramic types of Old Oyo dated to AD 1100 ± 110, others are representative of the "Mejiro" or "later" period and types dated to AD 1300 ± 800.

As abundantly demonstrated by Usman *et al* (2005) with evidence from North-Central Yorubaland, detailed archaeological, ethnographic and historical study of these prehistoric ceramic types from Ilorin will definitely contribute immensely to Ilorin's and Yoruba culture history. Thus, potteries including their styles, design distribution, level of similarities etc. have been evidentially used as the most important materials for addressing the issue of cultural boundaries relative to level and intensity of social interaction (Usman 2003; Usman *et al* 2005). With particular reference to the Southern Libyan Desert, Kasper *et al* note that "pottery is of great importance, as it has turned out to be the most informative source concerning questions of cultural evolution" (Kasper *et al* (2004).

Plates 2 A-Q: Some of the Decorative Attributes of Pottery from Ilorin



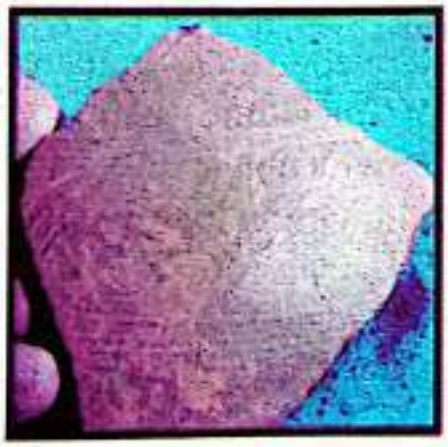
2A: Broom\Brush Incision



2B: Broom\Brush incision



2C: Zigzag Incisions



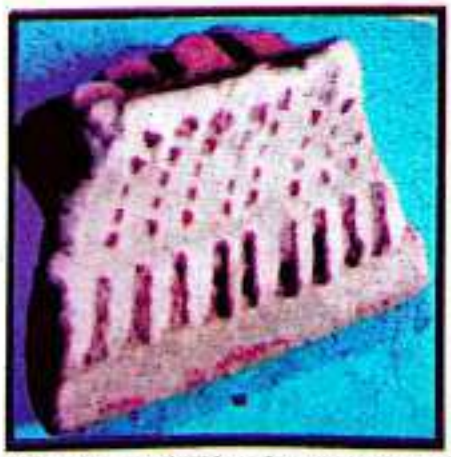
2D: Impressed Arc (Scallop)



2E: Impressed Arc (Scallop)



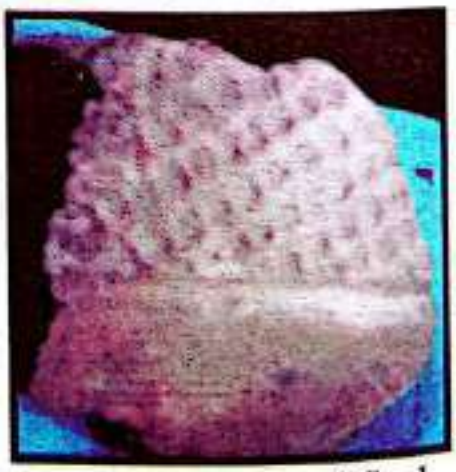
2F: Wavy Incisions



2G: Carved Wooden Roulette



2H: Carved Wooden Roulette



2I: Double Twisted Cord



2J: Single Twisted Cord



2K: Single Twisted Cord & Incision



2L: Double String Roulette



2M: Groove decoration

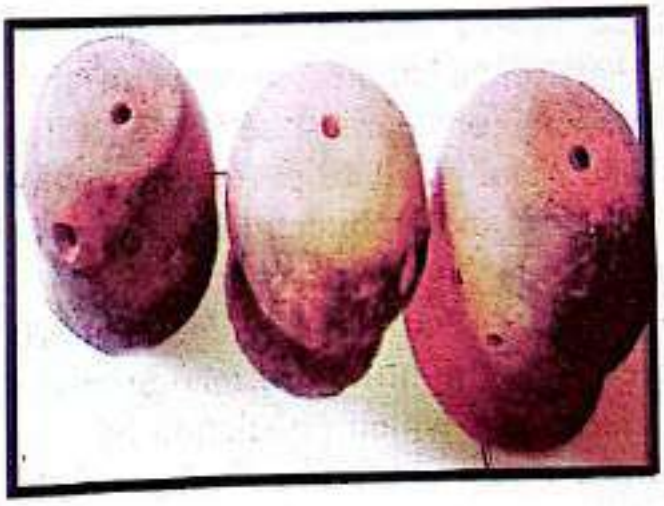


2N



2O





2N, 2O, 2P and 2Q: Perforated Pottery Vessels with Incisions and Punctuation.

While the Ilorin potsherd pavements share similar patterns with those from various parts of Nigeria and West Africa, the decorative styles and attributes of pottery from Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, site of the Ilorin potsherd pavements and those from other parts of northern Yorubaland, the Old Oyo, Ife and Daima, among others (Soper 1983; Usman 2005; Aleru 2006; Julio *et al*

2006; Ogunfolakan 2012;) also indicate that the pottery tradition in early Ilorin area shared some striking similarities with those from a wider geographical and cultural space. In addition, the pottery decorations tend to confirm high level of interaction and exchange between the makers of early Ilorin pottery and those of other areas in the sub-region, particularly in northern Yorubaland. As shown in studies of Igbomina pottery for instance (Usman 2003, 2005; Usman et al: 2009), Ilorin appears to have been a major centre of production and distribution of earthenware to other areas in the Yoruba Frontier prior to the 19th century. For instance, in his analysis of the production and distribution of pottery vessels in Northern Yoruba, Usman *et al* (2005) report that "at Esisa, pottery from Ilorin was consumed in higher quantities (8%) than pottery from Ipo-Erese (4%), a much closer locality."

Furthermore, Usman *et al* (2005) also report that out of the 28% of nonlocal pottery obtained from Ilere, 10% was imported from Ilorin sources while minor amounts were also imported into Ipo-Erese. In view of this evidence of regional interaction and exchanges, the authors are of the view that Ilorin city, *prior to the 19th century*, 'may have been part of the territory and the general culture area that is today called Igbomina' and seem to re-echo another unsubstantiated claim that "Ilorin was originally an [insignificant] Igbomina village under Oyo" prior to Afonja's revolt and Fulani take over in the early 19th century (Usman 2005; Funso 1998:77-90). These submissions, however, require further archaeological and historical studies in view of the contestations over the identities of the "founders" or "earliest settlers" in Ilorin and the possibility that Ilorin pottery industry and potsherd pavements could have been influenced by pottery making, decoration and architectural traditions from different sources. The possibility of an external "northern factor" in the cultural history of the Yoruba has been suggested (Aderonke 2005; Usman 2012). For the sites of the Ilorin potsherd pavements, the little information available strongly indicates that they belonged to Oke Suna, which population by early 19th century included Yoruba and non-Yoruba groups including the Kanuri, Baruba, etc. Borno, the home of the Kanuri is also associated with the Daima and Kursakata potsherd pavements as well as a long tradition of pottery making.

Other physical features of the potsherds vis-à-vis modern Ilorin pottery are their weight and thickness. For instance, some of the sherds are up to one inch or more in thickness. In terms of production, this probably suggests abundant clay resource at the time of manufacture while functionally such pottery is explained to be an indication of their having been manufactured and used for other

economic purposes such as in industrial activities such as dyeing (Aleru 2012, Usman, 2012: Personal communication). This and other features of the potsherds call for further investigations into their manufacture and functional uses. Other possible areas where further study of the ceramic styles could contribute to knowledge include specialization in pottery production, distribution of pottery vessels, social relations of production and cultural transmission through marriage or migration. (Usman *et al*, 2005).

In spite of the tremendous contributions which the study of potsherd pavements and ceramics from other areas have made to advance knowledge, archaeology and related disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography have been largely neglected in previous attempts at reconstructing Ilorin's early history. Nevertheless, archaeological artifacts such as those reported in this paper and others yet uncovered have huge potentials for helping to unlock some obscure, neglected and controversial aspects of Ilorin history including the antiquity of its pottery-making and ironworking industries, economic and intergroup relations and socio-cultural exchanges. The investigations could also shed light on such phenomenon as the approximate or exact date of the earliest human settlement in the Ilorin area. For instance, the name "Ilorin" and various postulations given for its derivation including "Ilo Irin" ('the object for' or 'the act of sharpening iron'), "Ilu irin" (the Town or Land of iron), and "Ilu Erin" (the 'Land or Forest of Elephants') (*Cf.* Ahmad, 1912; Sulu, 1953; Onikoko, 1992: 1; Jimoh 1994: 18; Omoiya, 2012: 20-35) all indicate possibility of very early human settlement and continuous occupation of Ilorin area since pre-historic times. They also suggest the presence of various occupational activities that must have contributed to the material culture of Ilorin area.

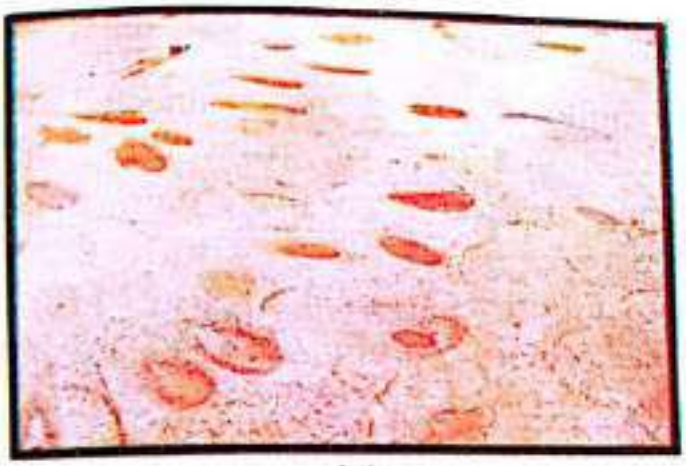
The name "Ilorin" (like that of Iponrin, some 36 kilometres away), as Samuel Johnson asserts, suggests that the town was an early iron-bearing and iron-working center. According to Johnson, "certain districts are rich in iron ores, **its iron production gave its name to the city of Ilorin, from *ilo* irin, iron grinding**, also to Eleta, a district of Ibadan, "*Eta*" being the term for iron ore" (Johnson 1921: 119-120; *Cf.* Ahmad 1912; emphasis mine). In spite of this information by Johnson, which Ahmad (1912) also refers to in his *Ta'lif*, traditional accounts and interpretations of the myths of origin of Ilorin have always favoured the association of Ojo Isekuse and his "sharpening" of yet to be named iron weapon on a rock now located at Ile Ilorin near Bamidele Compound, with the founding and naming of Ilorin. Apart from the fact that the said "Okuta-Ilorin" (Plate 3E) might not have been very suitable for "sharpening" iron

implements, ancient Ilorin could not have been a "stoneless area" (to use Shaw's words) to have compelled its early settler(s) to rely solely on a stone for sharpening iron tools.

The various grinding rock hollows reported in this paper (Plates 3A, B, C & D) are located in four sites that are not too far from the sites of the potsherd pavement (Fig. 1). These include the premises of Institute of Technology (IOT: usually identified as the site from which ancient Oke Suna got its name; hence described here as "Oke Suna I: Plate 3a: located 04^0 32' 16''), 'the premises of "Je Temi Odara Mosque" near Olorungogo (also identified as Oke Suna and described here as "Oke Suna II": Plate 3B: located 04^0 31' 20''); Olona Compound, Kuntu area (Plate 2C) and Sheikh Alimi Primary School (Plate 3D: located 04^0 32' 04''). These rock hollows suggest various activities ranging from food preparation, bead making, iron working, sharpening of weapons and other domestic chores. Like in most other places where rock hollows have been documented including northern Yorubaland (Usman, 2003), rock hollows in three out of the four locations (Oke Suna I and II, and Olona Compound) are, as usual, made on granitic outcrops. Curiously, however, the rock hollows in the fourth location (Sheikh Alimi Primary School, behind ICOHS, Ilorin) are made on lateritic (iron pan) outcrops. Because of the textual and structural attributes of the iron pans, it is doubtful whether the hollows would have been suitable for grinding food items or other domestic usages. It is possible they might have been used for other purposes. In spite of these suggestions, the functional attributes of the rock hollows at Sheikh Alimi Primary School are not known for certain.

According to oral accounts, the rock hollows at Olona Compound, in the Kuntu area, were used for bead making in the past. The type of beads produced there by the women folk is described as "Lagidigba" made from shells (*epicarp*) of Coconut [*Cocos nucifera*] and Palm Kernels [*Elais guinensis*]. As indicated by the number and proximity of the rock hollows (Plate 3C) and corroborated by oral sources (Amori, 2012; Zainab 2012), the rock hollows at Olona Compound served as a centre of massive bead making (industrial) activities with more than fifty women working at the same time. Unlike the hollows at Olona Compound, the functional attributes of the rock hollows at Oke Suna I and II are not yet known since the site had been abandoned in the early 1820s. Though further archaeological and historical research is required in this regard, available data from other areas suggests that, in addition to the reported use of one of the sites for bead making, the Ilorin rock hollows are quite more suitable for 'grinding

iron' (as reported by Johnson) and sharpening iron tools than the singular lateritic Okuta-Ilorin (Plate 3E).



3A



3B



3C



3D



3E

Plates 3a-d:Rock Hollows at IOT, Je te mi odara Mosque, Olorunsogo; Olona Comp., Kuntu; Shaikh Alimi Primary Schoo and (E) the Legendary "Okuta-Ilorin" at Ile Ilorin, near Bamidele Compound.

It has been explained that "bedrock hollows could be connected with ironworking, especially when found in the vicinities of ironworking or at settlements with a tradition of ironworking" reason been that "blooms from smelting furnace were brought to these bedrocks by ironworkers to be crushed into small pieces in order to remove the impurities" (Usman 2012: 122). In addition, archaeological research in parts of northern Yorubaland has shown that the region had evidence of ironworking activities such as smelting and smithing in pre-colonial period. Such evidence included iron ore deposits, iron quarries, slag mounds, smelting furnaces, tuyères, metal pieces as well as crushing or grinding hollows among others (Aleru 1993; Usman 2012: 58, 121-124). During a reconnaissance of the potsherd pavement sites in Ilorin in 2012, Aleru observed that there were traces of iron-working activities in the area. These included a broken piece of tuyère and chunks of iron pan or Laterite, one of the raw materials (rocks) from which the Yoruba obtained iron in the past. Other such raw materials are said to include Magnetite and Haematite, a dark red rock (Aleru, 2012, 2013: Personal communication). When juxtaposed with Johnson's information that Ilorin got its name from 'rich iron ore deposits' and ironworking activities like 'grinding', some of the sites of rock hollows reported here suggest that the name "Ilorin" was derived from the activities of a group of specialist ironworkers rather than that of one-man, Ojo-Isekuse. It should also be emphasized that, linguistically, the act of "grinding" (*lilọ* in Yoruba as in "Ilọrin") is quite different from that of "sharpening" (*pipọn* as in "Ipọnrin"). Though both activities have to do with ironworking, the word "*irin*" (iron) in both does not suggest any particular iron weapon or tool usually ascribed to it in available interpretations of the myths of origin of both settlements (Jimoh 1994; Mahmud 1996; Omoiya 2012). Of course, the Yoruba could not have been expected to use the same word, *irin* (pig iron? obtained from heating and melting of ores) for various metal products (including weapons and tools) made from it such as *ada* (cutlass), *ida* (sword), *ọbe* (knife or dagger), etc. There is, thus, a need for further archaeological and linguistic study of the origin of Ilorin.

In addition to pottery materials and the rock hollows, traces of human and animal remains (Plate 5a, b, and c) have been noticed particularly at Kwara State College of Education (Ilorin) site in recent times. Like the potsherd pavements and other pottery materials, these have suffered deterioration and are continuously exposed

to further destruction and eventual loss. Apart from recent destruction through human activities like construction, movement, cultivation, etc., both the surface pottery collected from the site and the human remains noticeable there suggest destruction by other means possibly warfare. The only war known in history to have taken place there was in c.1824\5 when the Fulani-led Ilorin forces besieged the settlement for about seven months and as Jimoh reports, "Oke Suna was completely destroyed; nothing that was erected was spared" (Jimoh, 1994: 73). Perhaps, an examination of the human and other remains from the site would shed more light on the circumstances of the destruction of the settlement or any other previous occupation and destruction.

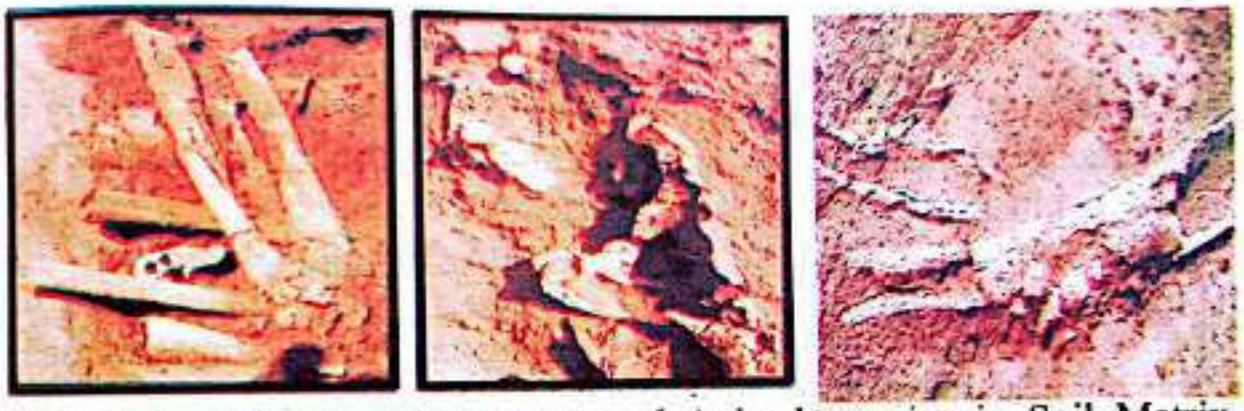


Plate 4 A, 4B, and 4C: Human and Animal remains in Soil Matrix, KWACOED, Ilorin

Conclusion

The Ilorin potsherd pavements and other surface pottery collected from different parts of what was originally Oke Suna raises a number of pertinent questions, which only archaeological, ethnographic and historical studies could provide insights and answers to. At present, the indisputable fact remains that someone, sometime and for some purpose(s) created these neglected artifacts. And neglected artifacts, like neglected sources, have been known to shed new light on the past however little it might be. Abdullahi Smith has demonstrated this using the previously unknown Arabic history of Ilorin by Ahmad Abu Bakr Ikokoro (Smith 1983: 42-71). Drawing from existing studies of similar artifacts from far and near, it is safe to conclude this paper by noting that Ilorin potsherd pavements in particular are a reflection of reality—reality not only of the possible existence of human settlements in ancient times in Ilorin area but also of a rich and remarkable cultural achievements; the reality of Ilorin's share in and contributions to the ancient cultures and civilization in the Nigerian area and the reality of innovations in local manufacture, decorative art and architectural

designs. As cultural elements that belonged to a wider geographical and cultural space, Ilorin potsherd pavements and pottery of various decoration techniques are also a reflection of the reality of possible peaceful coexistence of people of diverse cultural backgrounds united by a common bond of Islamic brotherhood and hence of early cultural diffusion in the Ilorin region. Indeed, Ilorin potsherd pavements and pottery are a reflection of the reality of Ilorin area as 'a melting pot of cultures' since ancient times.

References

Abdullahi, Smith, 1983. A Little New Light on the Collapse of the Alafinate of Yoruba, in Olusanya G. O. (ed.) *Studies in Yoruba History and Culture,* Ibadan: University Press, Ibadan

Adekola, Kola 2012. Challenges of Protecting Nigeria's cultural Identity and Patrimony in the 21st Century. Paper presented at the IFRA-NIGERIA 2012 International Conference on *Patrimony,Memory and Identity in West Africa,* University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, July 3-5, 2012.

Adesanya, A. A. 2005. The North African Art Nexus: Cross-Cultural Influences and Implication for Nigerian Art Traditions, in Ajayi S. A. (ed.) *African Culture and Civilization.* Ibadan: Atlantis Books.

Afolayan, Funso, 1998. "War and Change in 19th Century Igbomina" in Adeagbo Akinjogbin (ed.). *War and Peace in Yorubaland.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Plc.

Afonja Descendants Union (ADU) 1997. *Memorandum Presented by Afonja Descendants' Unionin Ilorin to the Kwara State Committee on Review of Grading of Chiefs 1997, Seeking Recognition for the Magaji Are & Baba Isale as First Class Chiefs,* 29th September, 1997, reproduced in Oladoyin A. M. 2000. "Indigenous Governance and the Management of Conflict and Stability in the Multi-Ethnic Community of Ilorin". Ph.D. thesis, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Agbaje-Williams, B. 1998. Potsherd Pavements, early urban sites in Nigeria Central Yoruba land: a consideration. Paper abstracts from the 14th biennial meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, Syracuse, New York, May 20-24, 1998, *NYAME AKUMA 50,* December 1998

Agbaje-Williams, B. 1987. Ife, Old Oyo and Benin: A Chronological Consideration in the Light of Recent Archaeological Work at Old Oyo. The *Nigerian Magazine*, Vol. 55, No 4, October-December pp 23-31.

Ahmad, Ibn Abu Bakr (Ikokoro), 1912. Ta'lif Akhbar al-Qurun min Umara Bilad Ilurin.

Aiyedun, D. K. 1984. Archaeological Investigation in the Wushishi Area. *Nigerian Magazine*, No. 151

Ajadi, B. S., Adeniyi A. & Afolabi M. T. 2011. Impact of Climate on Urban Agriculture: Case Study of Ilorin City, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, Volume 11, Issue 1, Version 1.0.

Aleru, J. O. and Adekola K. 2008. Exploring Frontiers of Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management: Untold Stories of the Esie Stone Figurines. *The African Diaspora Archaeology Network, December 2008 Newsletter*, retrieved from http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news1208/news1208.html

Aleru ,J. O. 1993. Archaeological sites in Igbominaland North Central Nigeria: The need for Systematic Archaeological Research. *West African Journal of Archaeology* 23: 37-50

Aleru, J. O. 2006. *Old Oyo and the Hinterland: History and Culture in Northern Yorubaland*. Textflow, Ibadan

Aleru, J. O. and Alabi R. A. 2010. Towards the Reconstruction of Yoruba Culture History: Toponymic Perspective. *African Study Monograph* 31 (4) 149-162

Anifowose M. 1984. An Ethnoarcheological Study of Pottery in Ilorin. Unpublished B. A. Project, Department of Archaeology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria Archeology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Aremu D. A. 2006. The Archaeology of Esie: From an industrial archaeological development perspective. *NYAME AKUME*, 66

Balogun, S. A. 1978. Historical Significance of Ilorin: A Preliminary Survey. *Confluence: An Academic Journal of the Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture,* Vol. 1, No 1.

Danmole, H. O. 2012. Religion, Politics and the Economy in Nineteenth Century Ilorin: Some Reflections. Paper presented at the First Centre for Ilorin Studies Lecture Series, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, December 12, 2012.

Danmole, H. O. Integration in a Nigerian Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Ilorin Emirate

Eluwa, G. I. C. 1988. *A History of Nigeria for Schools and Colleges.* Ibadan: Africana-FEP Publishers Ltd.

Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2012, Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., Example. *Africa Revista do Cento de Estudos Africanos,* USP Sao Paulo, 12-13 (1)

Faluyi, E. K. 1999. Economic and Social Relations between Eastern Yoruba Land and the Coast before 1900. *ODU, New Series*, No. 39, JanuaryUuly 1999

Gronenborn, D. 1996. Kundiye: archaeology and ethnoarchaeology in the Kala-Balge area of Borno State, Nigeria. In: *Aspects of African Archaeology. Papers from the 10th Congress of the PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies,* University of Zimbabwe, Harare.

Gronenborn, D. 1998. Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Investigations along the Southern Fringes of Lake Chad, 1993-1996. *African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 15, No 4.

Hasan, A. Saliu and Ibrahim, A. Jawondo 2006. Ilorin Emirate: Its People and Politics. Jimoh, S. A. (ed.) *Ilorin: Centre of Learning*. Ilorin: Jimson Publishers.

Herman-Hodge, H. B. 1929. *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London.

Hithersett, A. L. 1911. *Iwe Kika Ekerin Li Ede Yoruba.* Lagos. Cited in Akinjogbin I. A. 1965. Prelude to the Yoruba Civil Wars of the Nineteenth Century. *ODU* 1 (2), Ibadan: OxfordUniversity Press.

Hogben, S. J. and Kirk-Greene A. H. M. 1993. The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of Their Historical Traditions. Oxford University Press, Reprint. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/283188/Ilorin *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. 2008. "Material Culture". Encyclopedia.com. 21 Mar. 2013< http://www.encyclopedia.com>

Jimba, S. 1990. *Iwe Itan Ilorin.* Ilorin: Jimba Books Productions.

Jimoh, L.A. K. 1994. *Ilorin: The Journey So Far.* Ilorin: Atoto Press,

Johnson, S. 1976. *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of British Protectorate.* Lagos: C. S. S. Bookshop (Reprint)

Julio, M. Raquel M., Jayne W. and Kent D. F. 2006. The Eastern Periphery of the Yoruba Cultural Sphere: Ceramics from the Lowland Rain Forest of South-Western Cameroon. *Current Anthropology* Vol. 47, No. 1, February 2006.

Klein, M., Jesse F., Kasper H. U. and Golden A. 2004. Chemical Characterization of Ancient Pottery from Sudan by X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF), Electron Microprobe Analyses (EMPA) and Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS). *Archaeometry* 46, 3 (2004), University of Oxford, Great Britain

Kolawole, O. M., Olayemi A. B. and Ajayi K. T. 2011. Managing Flood in Nigerian Cities: Risk Analysis and Adaptation Options—Ilorin City as a Case Study. Archives of Applied Science Research, 2011, 3 (1) retrieved from http://scholarsresearchlibrary.com/archives.html

Lloyd, P. C. 1971. *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.* London: Royal Anthropological Institute.

Na-allah, Abdul-Rasheed, 1994. Dadakuada As One of the Oral Art Forms of Ilorin. *African Notes*, Vol. xviii, Nos. 1 & 2

NAK ILORINPROF 4 1900/1912. Re-Assessment Report by Asst. Resident Lethem, Progress

Norman, N. L. 2009. Powerful Pots, Humbling Holes, and Regional Ritual Processes: Towards an Archaeology of Huedan Vodun, ca. 1650-1727. *African Archaeological Review*, Volume 26.

O'Hear, Ann 1986. Pottery Making in Ilorin: A Study of the Decorated Water Cooler. *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 56, No. 2

O'Hear, Ann 1993. Lantana Beads: Trade and Regalia in Yorubaland and Benin. *African Studies Association Meeting*, Boston.

Ogundiran, Akinwumi 2000. Potsherd pavements in Ilare-Ijesa, Yorubaland: a regional perspective. *NYAME AKUMA 53*.

Ogunfolakan, B. A. 2012. Conflict, War, Displacement and Archaeology in Parts of Osun State, Southwestern Nigeria. An unpublished Ph. D. Thesis submitted in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Olaoye, R. A. 2005. Ilorin Textile Industry in the 19th Century. In: Idrees A, and Ochefu Y. (eds.) *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area,* Vol. 1. Lagos. C.S.S.

Olaoye, R. A. 1990. Indigenous Technology in Nigeria: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century Ilorin Handicrafts. *Alore, Ilorin Journal of Humanities,* Nos 6-8, 1990-1992, University of Ilorin, Faculty of Arts

Omoiya, Y. S., 2012. Challenges for Scholars in Locating Historical Origin of Frontier Settlements: The Ilorin Example. *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies,* Vol. 2 No. 1

Onikoko, S. A. A. 1992. *A History of Ilorin Emirate,* Ilorin, Sat Adis Press

Osogbue, Emeka 2011. A Critique on Femi Kayode's "Who Are The Yorubas, Where Did They Come From and What is Their History". Part Two, March 24, retrieved from http://emekaesogbue.nigeriablogspot.com/2011/03/24/a-critique-on-femi-fani_kayode%E2%80%99s%E2%80%9Cwho-are-the-yorubas-where-did-they-come-from-and-what-is-their-history%E2%80%9D-_part-two/

Oyegun, R. O. 1985. Water Resources Development in Kwara State, Ilorin: Matanmi Press

Paul, K. N. 2005. Ugboajah, "Traditional African Economic System", Ajayi S. A. (ed.) 2005. *African Culture and Civilization*. Ibadan: Atlantis Books.)

Reichmuth, Stefan, 1995. A Sacred Community: Scholars, Saints and Emirs in a Prayer Text from Ilorin. *Sudanic Africa*, 6.

Reichmuth, Stefan, 2010. Literary Culture and Arabic Manuscripts in 19th-Century Ilorin. *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa, 3*, 213. Report.

Shaw, T. 1980. Prehistory. Ikime, O. (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books (Nigerian) Plc.

Shaw, T. 1979. *Nigeria: Its Archaeology and Early History*, London, Thames and Hudson.

Soper, R. C. 1983. Roulette Decoration on African Pottery: Some Technical Distinctions and Misconceptions and its Significance in Culture-Historical Reconstruction. In Andah B., De Maret, P., and Soper R. (eds). *Proceedings of the 9th Congress of the Pan-African Association of Prehistory and Related Studies* (Jos, Nigeria), Ibadan: Rex Charles.

Soper, R. C. C. 1978. The Chronology of Oyo Ile. *The Archaeologist* 5: 10-15.

Soper, R. C. 1975. *Archaeological Work at Old Oyo.* Unpublished Report, Department of Stevens, P. 1978. The Stone Images of Esie. *Africana*, New York

Sulu, M., 1953. "History of Ilorin", Typescript, Rhodes House, Oxford

Usman, A. A. 2003. Ceramic Seriation, Sites Chronology, and Old Oyo Factor in North central Yorubaland, Nigeria. *African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, September 2003

Usman, A. A. 2005. An Initial Assessment of Prehistoric Ceramic Production and Exchange in Northern Yoruba, North Central Nigeria: Results of Ceramic Compositional Analysis. *African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3, September 2005

Usman, A. A. 2012. *The Yoruba Frontier: A Regional History of Community Formation, Experience and Changes in West Africa*. North Carolina, Carolina Academic Press.

Usman, A. A., Aleru, J. O. and Alabi, R. 2009. Socio-political Formation in Northern Yoruba Frontier: A Report of Recent Work in Ila-Iyara, North Central Nigeria. *Journal of African Archaeology*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 139-154

Willett, F. 1987. Archaeology. In Biobaku S. O. 1987 (ed.) *Sources of Yoruba History*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd.

Willett, F. 1960. Investigation at Old Oyo: A Preliminary Report. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (*JHSN*), 2 (1).

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all those who contributed in one way or another to facilitate the collection and analysis of data for this paper. I am particularly grateful to the following for their invaluable encouragement and suggestions made for the improvement of the draft of this paper: Mr. Oladimeji Sholagberu, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin; Dr. Jawando A. I., Department of History, University of Ilorin; Professor Jonathan Aleru and Mr. P. G. Ajekigbe, of Department of History & Heritage Studies, Kwara State University, Malete, and Professor Usman Aribidesi, Arizona State University, United States of America.

I acknowledge the support of the following individual during my field research in Ilorin with sincererity - (1) Agbabiaka, Muhammad Alhaji (2004) Emir's Palace, Ilorin; (2) Amori, Olona Alhaji, (2012) Olona Compound, Kuntu, Ilorin; and (3) Zainab A. Otukoko, Alhaja, (2012) Otukoko Compound, Adeta, Ilorin.