Archaeology, Heritage and Tourism in West Africa

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A Crossroads of Knowledge

By

Samuel Oluwole Ogundele

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This book is dedicated to:
Olajumoke Ayodeji (my wife), my children and
my parents – Chief and Mrs Oladunjoye OGUNDELE
(of blessed memory)

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology, heritage, tourism and museums belong to the same ancestry otherwise known as Cultural Resource Management. However, archaeology in West Africa is yet to demonstrate or develop sufficient awareness in this regard. Consequently, the stakeholders demarket archaeology in the face of the ever-changing local and global historico-environmental conditions, as well as sensitivities. The current pedagogy and curriculum are overtly demarketing and inhibiting archaeology's potential vibrancy and glories. Therefore, this book is a modest attempt to enlarge and enrich the box that houses the definitional, conceptual and methodological perspectives of archaeology within the broad framework of Cultural Resource Management entailing a trio of heritage, museum and tourism. This is an intellectual construction as if society coupled with job opportunities matters in the West African sub-region.

Although, during my undergraduate studies, I was always asking my European teachers about the usefulness of archaeology on life beyond the museum, no satisfactory answers were given. The gap in pedagogy and curriculum could be tolerated because, during this period, unemployment was generally alien to Nigeria as with other parts of West Africa. Today, the scenario has drastically changed. But many years later, I got a fresh impetus to my quest as a result of some interactions with one of my colleagues at the University of Ghana, Legon. This colleague is Professor Kodzo Gavua who has a huge interest in situating the archaeology of West Africa within the context of heritage management including tourism.

As a Visiting Professor at Legon between 2006 and 2007 as well as from 2014 to 2015, I had some robust discussions almost on a weekly basis with Prof. Gavua. Although these discussions were informal, they actually encouraged me later to do thoroughgoing research on West African archaeology as a crossroads of heritage, museum and tourism. It is against this background that my gratitude to him (Professor K. Gavua) gains its relevance. Sincere thanks also go to Professor Tim Stapleton of the Department of History, University of Calgary, Canada for a fruitful chat on this manuscript during his short visit to the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria in 2018. I offer particular gratitude to Mrs Mercy Ezomo of the

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Oyo Office for providing some photographs of the colonial cars at Jos, Nigeria. My deep appreciation goes to Mrs S. B. Aregbesola of the Department of Mathematics, University of Ibadan for typing the manuscript with extra-ordinary rapidity and unthinkable accuracy.

Last but not least, I am very grateful to all my children (Toyin, Olumide, Laolu and Sanmi) and wife (Ayodeji Olajumoke, nee Omilabu) for their kind words and general support while writing the manuscript and for proof-reading the typed work with a strong feeling of love and enthusiasm.

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FOREWORD

IN SEARCH OF THE ANCESTORS

I thank Professor Samuel Oluwole Ogundele of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria for giving me the privilege to write the Foreword of this important book, *Archaeology, Heritage and Tourism in West Africa: A Crossroads of Knowledge*. Archaeology gives us the opportunity to open the veil of time and peer at the mysteries of the past. We dig through ancient tells and look at the layers of old civilisations, old struggles and old victories and we could see the footprints of the ancestors. Despite its romance with fossils and ancient remains, Archaeology is a living subject that fuels our imagination and humbles us. It yells at us with loud a whisper: "Tread softly; some people were here before you!"

It is interesting that this book is being released at a pivotal time. As the Western World is going through a catharsis of repentance and is considering returning looted artifacts and treasures taken from Africa during the eras of Trans-Atlantic Slavery, European mercantilism, colonial conquest, and neo-colonialism. Timeless works of art stolen from the palaces and temples of Africa have been stored in European museums and the custodies of private collectors for many generations. Now, we know that some of them may return home. There is a growing debate in academic circles and the power loops of Africa and the Western world whether Africa has the wherewithal to properly store these priceless treasures. Many old African states, nonetheless, are ready to receive their lost treasures. The Kingdom of Benin, which lost many priceless treasures in the aftermath of the Benin invasion by British forces in the 19th Century, is getting prepared to receive more of these looted items. We are all waiting with expectations.

Whether we have the capacity or the science to store these priceless items is beside the point, for those treasures belonged here in the first instance and they would have remained here if they were not stolen. The Oranmiyan Obelisk (*Opa Oranmiyan)* is still standing in Ile-Ife till today after hundreds of harmattan and rainy seasons. The Pyramids of Egypt

would have disappeared too if the British had devised a method of stealing them.

The author has explained to us in this useful and readable book that there is a nexus between Archaeology, our past heritage and the future of tourism in Africa. He states plainly: "Archaeology is a material science capable of producing facets of the surface culture of a group or groups of people within a given terrestrial space or spaces and at different time periods. The elements of these surface cultures include stone tools, potsherds, bronzes, stone carvings and food remains."

The author casts his gaze across the West African sub-region and he explains that our ancestors were as productive and civilised as any other groups in the ancient world. He follows the works of archaeologists in various sites across West Africa. These include Ita Yemoo in Ile-Ife, Rop rock shelter and Old Oyo, all in Nigeria; Jenne-Jeno in Mali and Bono Manso, Begho and Krobo Mountain in Ghana. The archaeologists have been busy on many sites in West Africa and their works have revealed the labour and lifestyles of our ancestors. When Professor Graham Connah, an archaeologist with the University of Ibadan in the mid-seventies, led his team to Dikwa, the old capital of Bornu kingdom, it was discovered through carbon dating that humanity had been occupying that locality at least 1000 years before Christ. Therefore, Africa is not new. Indeed, from archaeological evidence, Africa is the mother of all humanity and human civilisations.

Every tell or settlement mound, excavated by the archaeologist, tells a story. "Archaeology as a material science is an unbiased witness", says the author. "However, the unbiased data resulting from archaeological excavations can be wrongly analysed and interpreted from the perspective of politics and racism".

The archaeologist however is not immune from politics. One of the issues raised in this book is the attempt by Western scholars to use archaeological findings to reinforce their racial prejudices. Nigerian academics and leaders are also not immune from this error. The National Museum for Unity in Ibadan, built by the Federal Government of Nigeria, is a case in point. In that museum, there is a stark attempt to lionise Chief Ladoke Akintola, the second and last Premier of the defunct Western Region who was assassinated in the coup of January 15, 1966. There, in the museum, were many artefacts, including Akintola's official car, linked to the late Premier. Yet in the same museum, there is a desperate attempt to

downplay the importance of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Akintola's predecessor as Premier, who was the Leader of Opposition in the Federal Parliament. Those who built the museum were most likely partisan of the ruling Fulani/Hausa oligarchy of the North, who regarded Akintola as their ally compared to the fiery opposition of Awolowo, seen as the hero of the Yoruba people.

The author has demonstrated in this excellent work that with proper understanding of our riches of the past, West Africa is a gold mine for tourism. There is a lot for the rest of the world to learn, who should come and explore the tourism potential of Africa. Africans and their leaders need to develop these potentials and allow the rest of the world to find Africa attractive for tourism economy. Our leaders need to make our land safe, not only for Africans but also for foreigners who may want to savour from all those good things Africa has to offer. It is time we went beyond the bleak news that dominates international media about our continent and our people.

It is great to have a book like this hitting the market at a time when Africa is often in the news for the wrong reasons. In the 15 lucid chapters, the author opens us up to a world that is mostly unknown to many people. What a rich world. Our soil, teeming with the remains of ancient ancestors, is also filled with the echoes of departed princes and paupers. We are led to witness the works of ancient artists and feel the rhythm of old poets and musicians. We can tell the emotions of artists as he tries to carve the stone or paint the rocks. This was the era when the discovery of fire was new and the roads were only footpaths across the forests. When the tells are uncovered, they tell stories of ancient struggles and survivals. We are debtors to those who left those artefacts and we owe them a duty to treat their works with religious reverence. On these pages, Ogundele has helped to pay part of the debt we owed those we never met, but without whom we would never have existed. No one can come forth without the unbroken cord from the ancestors.

What Ogundele has done is breathe life into the sometimes-esoteric subject of archaeology and its twin elements of museum and monuments. He has presented to us, the readers, a moving tapestry that would serve the interest of the common man and ignite his interest in the subject. His kaleidoscope covers the whole of West Africa from Futa Jalon to the Cameroonian mountains. It is important to note that he has shown us that Archaeology reminds us of our common humanity, our common heritage, and our common progeny. Thank you, Professor Ogundele, for reminding

us that there is actually one race in the world: the human race. This is a great work that should be read by all and sundry, especially those who are seeking an understanding of Africa's journey through the ages. It has my highest recommendations.

Dare Babarinsa,
Chairman & Editor-in-Chief,
Gaskia Media Ltd, Lagos, NIGERIA. October 16, 2022.

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF HISTORY

It is an irony of monumental proportions that, despite the centrality of history to human existence on a robust scale, the age-long subject remains largely obscure to the contemporary West African world, with a special emphasis on its Western educated elites. They are victims of Western intellectualism. However, the sub-region is not utterly at a loss, especially when a critical examination of African epistemologies is carried out. History is an encyclopaedic subject that entails a wide range of fields like written records, archaeology, oral traditions, oral histories, cultural anthropology, art history, linguistics and classics. Anybody, no matter his professional, ethnic, racial, cultural and educational background, who ignores history does so at his own peril. This is because it is the cornerstone of self-consciousness including pride and/or self-esteem. A deep knowledge of history keeps ignorance at bay but a historically ignorant mind is most likely going to repeat the mistakes of the past.

This subject necessarily evokes intense emotional reactions from a wide range of people with different interests. In other words, history can be seriously abused. These interests may be due to religious and political inclinations, among other factors. The implication of this scenario is that history can be used to build a family, a nation or a region. Conversely, this all-important subject can be misused, thus leading to a chain of reactions. History is everybody's business or engagement. It does not begin or end with the ivory towers despite its supreme intellectual character and scope. In the African context in general, history, through the lens of orality, is an important component of daily life. For example, performers of *domeisia*, traditional narrative of the Mende ethnicity of Sierra Leone, craft words, songs and gesture for evening entertainment of members of a given community (Stone, 1986). Similarly, in such places as Senegal, Mali and Nigeria, itinerant praise singers, criticism singers and general social commentators engage in this form of historical discourse without tears. They often use a wide range of musical instruments like a three-stringed

lute, lyre, talking drum, slit drum and beaded calabash to enhance their storytelling exercise including general education and entertainment.

Each West African community has its own indigenous epistemologies which are yet to be squarely appreciated and appropriated by most scholars due largely to their colonial and neo-colonial education. There are local gurus (with little or no Western form of education and training) in every community. But aside from this, almost every member knows one or two things about a given settlement, in terms of its historical origins, trajectories and, of course, development in several senses. Historical scholarship in West Africa should not be reduced to the four walls of a classroom. African educational system is holistic in a myriad of ways. Historical discourse can take place in a palace with official historians, often during special festivals and/or events such as new yam celebrations. In addition, every family has experts who narrate or disseminate historical information whenever the need to do so arises (see Fig. 1).

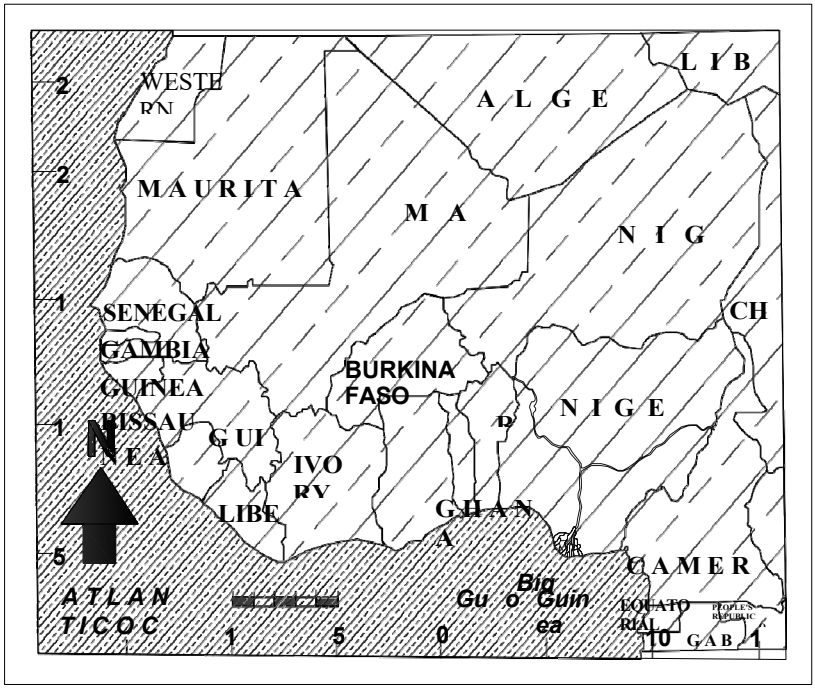

Fig. 1: Map of West Africa

Definition and Scope of History

Edginton et al. (2002) claim that history is the record of important activities that have occurred in relation to an individual concept, person, institution or geographical location like a nation. On the other hand, Sibanda et al. (1989) argue that history is the study of what happened in the past—a record of people's lives, behaviours and activities, their glories, successes, failures, kindnesses and cruelties. However, we define history here as a body of knowledge concerning some realities of events and phenomena (living or non-living) in the past. Put differently, history is an encapsulation of events and their processes either in the remote past or relatively recent times. In this regard, the past refers to any phenomenon or event that takes place before the present.

The past can be seen as a group of strata or time-periods. In other words, the past is ontologically not fixed once and for all. It is in a state of flux, thus making the present highly dynamic. Given this reality, the present stands for the moving instant of time. It is against this backdrop that history gains its relevance as a tentacular subject embedded in continuous movement and/or transformation. No human being can capture history in its entirety because it started from the period mankind emerged – that is, palaeontological and palaeo-anthropological eras – some 4 million years ago or thereabouts in Africa. Afar Depression or Lake in Ethiopia as well as Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and Drimolen in South Africa are some of the most prominent early hominin sites in the continent (Hilton-Barber and Berger, 2002).

The broadness of the scope of history accounts for the many specialisations or specialisms in history from the perspectives of chronology and theme. For example, there is pre-written history (ambiguously labelled "pre-history"). This has to do with human history before the advent of writing. In this connection, writing is the defining characteristic of history. Such a conceptualisation of history is misleading as it fails to capture the subject in a realistic fashion. Archaeologists are eminently in charge of prehistory and, of course, other historical epochs as well as themes. The other broad historical category is written history which is narrowly defined as "conventional" historical science. The categorisation suffers from an uncritical adoption of reductionism as a model.

Written history is traditionally limited to the time that witnessed writing as a form of life among human beings in West Africa – an integral

part of the global village or civilisation. This recent phase of the West African history started with the actions and activities of the trans-Saharan/trans-Atlantic slave traders and later European colonisers vis-à-vis the local peoples. The trans-Saharanisation agenda began in the 8th century A.D. while Europeanisation started from the mid-15th century A.D. in most parts of West Africa. These developments were followed by colonisation during the second half of the 19th century (August 6, 1861) in the case of Nigeria. But there was history before and after the above entanglements/encounters. History is unending in all its ramifications, depending on which aspect or aspects the investigator is focusing on. Consequently, historical research is defined by its orderly and systematic reconstruction of human actions and activities in the past. Here, the past is not fixity - that is, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Even within these broad chronological divisions, there are mini time periods.

The above scenario underscores the reason why a conspicuous space is given to the phenomenon of cause and effect, in historical discourse, as a form of science on its own right. The rules of operationalism and verifiability can be minimally applied despite the fact that history is basically about the human mind with all its immeasurability and non-replicability in a neat way. It is possible to some degree to test historical reconstructions by a critical engagement with such areas of life as official records, personal diaries, oral traditions, oral histories, photographs, newspapers and other forms of materiality (Edginton et al., 2002; Ogundele, 2000) including ethnographic resources. The above scenario is aimed at reducing subjectivity in historical scholarship to the barest minimum.

However, it is misleading to assume that conventional historians of the written past, and archaeologists, are the only groups engaging in historical knowledge productions. There are other specialists like geologists, geographers, palaeontologists, palaeo-anthropologists, astronomers and astrologists who are involved in historical reconstructions, from several perspectives, that are tangentially or otherwise connected with human life in the long run. Therefore, historians and archaeologists do need them from time to time to fine-tune their strategies, concepts and methods in order to engender robust historical knowledge productions. This multifaceted approach appears to be the best way forward with regard to the task of reducing the wide gap between knowable and unknowable history to the barest minimum. Again, every human endeavour has its own history. This leads to things such as History of Science, History of Mathematics, History of Physics, History of Medicine, History of Chemistry, History of

Archaeology, History of Colonialism in Africa, History of Museums in West Africa, History of Churches, History of Christianity, History of Islamic Studies, History of Gold Mining in West Africa and History of Tourism. This reality is a testament to the robustness and broadness of history and historical engagements at all times and locations. It is the foundation of a healthy society in all its ramifications.

History of Archaeology

Archaeology has several definitions. For example, Holl (1990) claims that archaeology is the study of material evidence surviving from the past, thus reflecting an analysis of the tangible and visible products and achievements of extinct communities. These tangible elements are located firmly in the sphere of surface culture. On the other hand, Renfrew (1991) argues that archaeology is partly the meticulous work of scientific analyst, partly the exercise of the creative imagination. It is about toiling in the sun on an excavation in the deserts of Iraq and working with living Eskimos in the snows of Alaska. It is diving down to Spanish wrecks off the coast of Florida, and it is investigating the sewers of Roman York. But it is also the painstaking task of interpretation so that we come to understand what these things mean for the human story. Ogundele (2014) claims that archaeology is a scientific story-telling exercise based on the material remains of the behaviours of past human population(s) within the framework of spatiality and temporality.

However, Clark (1968) says that archaeology is simply what archaeologists do and, like all dynamic fields of study, this is changing all the time. In our own opinion, archaeology is basically the scientific study of the past behavioural patterns of a given human population or populations through time and space, using the available tangible remains. These elements (technofacts, sociofacts and ideofacts) include food remains, ruins of shelters, potsherds, cowries, stone figurines, iron bracelets, necklaces, finger rings and basketry within stratigraphically controlled contexts that necessarily involve ecofacts – charcoal pieces, fossil remains of plants and so on. Depending on the quality and quantity of the retrieved material remains and the degree of meticulousness of their analyses, archaeologists can also capture salient facets of the intangibility of the cultural expressions of a people across spatio-temporal scales. This latter dimension includes world-views, belief systems, morals, ideologies, kingship systems and music (Bahn, 2001; Cochrane, 1974; Staeck, 2002; Woodall, 1972).

Therefore, archaeology is primarily interested in developing an understanding, knowledge and appreciation of human history and culture, specifically during the pre-written or pre-colonial period. This all-important intellectual engagement embraces the concepts of time, space and society although often within the confines of probability, understandably because the data available to the archaeologist are inadequate in number and quality to tell the story in a complete or near-complete fashion (Andah, 1981; Bentley and Ziegler, 2003; Knapett, 2011; Ogundiran, 2012).

Preservation of artefacts, especially organic ones in the West African soils (highly acidic in nature), remains a devil to wrestle with. Archaeology is, indeed, an important branch of anthropology – a broader discipline with such areas of knowledge as historical linguistics, physical anthropology and socio-cultural anthropology. Given the above analysis, an archaeologist also doubles as an anthropologist. He uses a lot of anthropological concepts and methods. This approach enables him to bring the past of a people as close to life as possible. As a matter of fact, the archaeologist is a scientific story teller. He should not be afraid to be called a scientific story teller because socio-cultural consciousness including historical education occupies centre stage in the scheme of things. The archaeologist uses a wide range/array of scientific techniques at different stages of work in order to empower/enable the data at his disposal to speak (Devine, 1999; Fagan, 2000; Sheets, 1999; Wobst, 2010).

Such subjects as mathematics, statistics, geography, geology, botany, chemistry and physics are needed for developing appropriate concepts, methods and strategies in order to make a given archaeological site come alive. The archaeologist also fraternises with history, psychology and sociology so that he can have a deeper knowledge of yesterday as a basis for understanding today and, of course, tomorrow. As a result of the scope of archaeology involving history and culture, its operations are necessarily encyclopaedic. According to Edginton et al. (2002), “culture is everything that people do, think and feel. The concept of culture includes the values, traditions, norms, customs, rituals and ways of viewing the world of a group of people who are tied together by common factors – common history, geographic location, language, food, music and religion”.

Indeed, a serious archaeologist is a multi-disciplinarian. West African historical re-enactment should be holistic, shunning reductionism in all its ramifications. The multi-scalar nature of archaeological artefacts must not be glossed over, as we examine the archaeological record of the sub-

region. Indigenous epistemologies like toponyms, art forms, monarchical/ chieftaincy systems, oral traditions and cultural festivals have to be critically explored. However, jettisoning unbridled reductionism does not mean that the Western thought embedded in dichotomies is totally useless. In other words, historical/archaeological vision can be significantly widened or enlarged by conceptual and methodological integration of both African and Western modes of thought.

The above situation underscores the reason why archaeology as a teaching subject can be located either in the science or arts faculty. The subject is also eminently qualified to be either in the faculty of social sciences or in the faculty of technology. For example, archaeology is both in science and arts faculties at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. On the other hand, it is located in arts at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. At the University of Ghana, Legon, the faculty of social sciences houses archaeology programmes. This picture reflects vividly the nature of archaeology. But whether we like it or not, the archaeologist is a scientific story teller in the final analysis.

After spending good time on sedimentological or particle-size analyses of soil samples obtained from excavated trenches, he comes up with the picture of palaeo-climate in a given locality. This is with a view to engendering an understanding of how this influenced or determined a given set of cultural sub-systems represented by the retrieved artefacts — technofacts, sociofacts, ideofacts and ecofacts. The same thing applies to all advanced physico-chemical analyses of ceramics among other artefact categories. All the above techniques at the cutting edge of sophisticated technology are a means to an end (Ogundele, 2000)—a scientific story without which robust humanity becomes a mirage. But archaeologists do specialise after all. For example, we have sedimentologists, ethnoarchaeologists, early Stone Age specialists and settlement archaeologists, among others. No single archaeologist can successfully address all the salient issues concerning ancient human behavioural patterns and patterning as he moves from surface culture (visible, tangible elements of culture) to the domain of deep culture (non-tangible)—belief systems, cosmology and conflict resolution strategies.

The authors and users of these visible cultural traits can never be seen for interrogation or direct observation. In addition, the set/sets of data is/are few and far between. Therefore, he has to learn to use all available but legitimate means to reduce fallacies to the barest minimum so that archaeology does not become an exercise of mere speculation. Cultural

anthropology has a big role to play in this connection, largely because it examines human culture and cultural dynamics from a synchronic (present-day) perspective. Ethnoarchaeology derives its legitimacy from cultural anthropology and this is very critical to an understanding of the non-physical dimension of human culture which can only be gleaned from archaeological artefacts. This deep culture cannot be measured or quantified contrary to the situation in the natural sciences like physics and chemistry which can reasonably capture the material world. But despite all these efforts, some elements of the past will remain buried in obscurity. Even in the contemporary context, which is in the domain of sociology and cultural anthropology, the minds of the makers and users of a wide range of ethnographic artefacts within their contexts cannot be successfully measured. This is because the mind of man and, by extension, his behaviour are unreachable and, therefore, not measurable. In the human world, two plus two may be equal to five or seven instead of four. This is one of the problematics of social sciences.

Suffice it to say that the historian, whatever his specialisation, can only reconstruct the past that is meaningful to him and not exactly what happened before the present. The historian, including the archaeologist, has biases for or against certain facets of the past. This is with respect to selection, analysis and interpretation of data. These challenges and/or problems lead to a lot of historical distortions capable of generating social conflicts. Social conflicts (if not speedily addressed) can become a major hinderance or encumbrance to human progress in several senses. Jaundiced historical reconstructions, arising from the historian's inability to curb emotions and/or cultural/racial superiority or inferiority complex, may end up promoting disharmony instead of fostering local or national unity and understanding. It is too easily forgotten that one of the major goals of historical enterprise is the promotion of social, political and economic integration on a sustainable scale.

Attempts must always be made to see that we graduate from historical engagements on a parochial scale to regional and/or transoceanic level (Clarke, 1968; Ogundele, 2014) in order to engender robust humanity. This is because every human society must necessarily forego certain aspects of its sovereignty so as to promote world historical order since, in the final analysis, humanity is fundamentally a web despite the often-overblown narrative of cultural or racial diversities. No country or region, no matter how culturally sophisticated, can adequately address all the myriads of issues, challenges and problems confronting it within the framework of total isolationism. The world as a big web, from the earliest decipherable

time-period to the ethnographic present, has always been a phenomenon in cultural flows and interconnections. Modern archaeologists and historians of the written past have to focus more than hitherto on constructing a global history without necessarily undermining the local or indigenous authenticity or originality. This is due to the fact that every society is, by and large, a part of the world historical environment at different temporal levels (Aremu, 2009; Austen, 1995; Emeagwali, 2005; Posnansky, 1973; Webster et al., 1969).

Applied Archaeology

Despite the relatively ugly image of archaeology in Africa, particularly the West African sub-region, the discipline (if carefully repackaged in terms of conceptualisation, pedagogy and methodology) remains the cornerstone of profound historical consciousness and sustainable peace as well as material progress. Archaeology's origins are intricately linked with Europe and its exploration of Africa. This was also a by-product of colonial proselytism arising from the stereotypical thinking that Africa was/is backward in a number of ways with a special emphasis on materialism. Therefore, archaeology was introduced to West Africa to justify colonial rule. The European masters argued that colonialism as an ideology was aimed at getting Africans out of the woods (Holl, 1990).

Research findings in archaeology were published as early as 1870 in parts of West Africa. For example, about 12 archaeological papers were published between 1877 and 1907 by a medical doctor known as T. Hamy in West Africa. Most (if not all) of these pioneers were dabblers or amateurs in the field of archaeology of Africa. They included soldiers, naval officers, school teachers, priests and civil servants, all in the colonial government. This colonial period lasted in the sub-region from about 1850 to 1960 or thereabouts (Holl, 1990). The mission was to spread the falsehood that the region was ideologically, spiritually and materially backward and therefore it (West Africa) has become a burden for the European world that was on top of the ladder of civilisation. One implication of this scenario is that the world and Africa in particular should accept or even celebrate colonialism – an instrument of light and material abundance on a scale never known before.

This conceptualisation of West African archaeology continued to gain in popularity years after colonial rule ended (albeit on paper). Colonial and neo-colonial archaeologists and their sympathisers coded this reactionary

historical enterprise in a theory called diffusionism. Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius were two of the most prominent diffusionists the archaeological world has ever known. They belonged to the German cultural-historical school of anthropology during the earlier period (from about 1870 to 1950). These scholars were later followed by Raymond Mauny, Delafosse and Desmond Clark, among others. The beauty of archaeology is that it is a material science and the archaeological record is innocent despite the numerous challenges or problems bordering on preservation and recovery. The West African archaeological record speaks the truth concerning the remote ancestors of the various groups of people living in this broad region but it is left to the investigator to be political or even racial or objective. This is with regard to how he analyses and interprets the available data (Andah, 1990; De Barros, 1988).

If he allows emotional reactions to dominate his heart, then he runs the risk of historical or anthropological naivety capable of leading to social conflicts in the long run. The idea that all outstanding cultural achievements gleaned from the West African archaeological record are traceable to outside sources (due to human migrations) was initially thought to be the solution to the dilemma of colonial/neo-colonial archaeology. This theoretical construct by the German School of Anthropology was short-lived in the face of superior arguments rooted in the West African archaeological record. But indigenous West African archaeologists and the few fair- minded, Africanist scholars should not assume that this matter has been finally settled. The struggle for the soul of Africa continues unabated. All Africanist scholars, both within and without, must be a part of the revolution aimed at crushing the age-long Western intellectual hegemony that remains a big monster to peoples of good conscience throughout the world.

Both archaeological and ethnographic records continue to show that groups of white people were not the shapers of the directions of spiritual and material progress in antiquity. Contrary to the position of diffusionist scholars, food production in the sub-region did not start because of contacts with outsiders. The beginnings of food production pre-dated the desiccation of the Sahara about 3000 B.C. (5000 years ago). African ancestors had begun cultivating such crops as white yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*), yellow yam (*Dioscorea cayenensis*) and oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) long before contacts with some South East Asians. New crops like cocoyam (*Colocasia esculenta*) and water yam (*Dioscorea alata*) diffused from South East Asia and were successfully incorporated into the West African agricultural and culinary landscape (Sowunmi, 1987).

Aside from the subject of the origins of food production, the beginnings of iron metallurgy suffered the same fate. In this connection, iron metallurgy (smelting of ore and blacksmithing) diffused from the Charthaginians in North Africa through contacts with some proto-Berbers (Holl, 1990). The importance of iron smelting activities in the Nok Valley region of Nigeria was reduced to an exercise in diffusionism. This unfettered colonial proselytism affects the discourse on the beginnings of urbanisation and state formation in West Africa. Indeed, early textbooks such as "Prehistory of Africa" published by Desmond Clark in 1970 never discussed African urbanism. Such scholars, despite their monumental contributions to African archaeology and prehistory, never believed that urbanism was due to Africanisation. This is one of the stereotypes that must be corrected as the clock ticks. But paternalism remains a devil to wrestle with. If they get good quality training, certainly parts of their freedom of choice will disappear. This is food for thought (Andah, 1990; Ogundele, 2014).

Political domination and economic exploitation of West Africa and, indeed, all of Africa continue up to now, although in a coded or subtle manner. It is this scenario that has encouraged the use of archaeology for promoting national unity and civic pride by the few top indigenous archaeologists/historians who were, of course, trained in the Euro-American milieu heavily saturated by racism even in scholarship. Three prominent names in this regard were Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal, Bassey Andah of Nigeria and Onyango Abuje of Kenya. Therefore, it is a big mistake or deceit to claim that archaeology is innocent. As a matter of fact, archaeology of West Africa began as a tool to enforce colonial and later neo-colonial dominance including intellectual hegemony and imperialism. The attitude of the white pioneers led to the emergence of these radically inclined Africanists of African extraction (Holl, 1990).

One of the challenges confronting indigenous West African archaeologists working or studying in Europe or North America is that they cannot clearly fight the dominant colonial/neo-colonial paradigm or paternalism. Liberating themselves from this bondage may lead to the loss of some of the privileges currently being enjoyed. It can also lead to the loss of their jobs or imposition of subtle sanctions. This scenario is likely to remain so for a long time to come given the gross lack of funding from the various West African governments. The West African government is not yet convinced that archaeology can be used to improve the living standards of the people. Most West Africans feel that archaeology is a triviality or luxury. What can a group of archaeologists digging graves and

romancing with potsherds, cowries, beads and other artefacts from the archaeological record do to justify spending huge funds on their researches? Consequently, some of the best students struggle to get scholarships to further their studies in Europe and North America where there are world-class facilities for training (Holl, 1990; Schmidt, 1996). However, he who pays the piper dictates the tune.

The above situation shows that archaeology in West Africa is useful beyond the sphere of knowledge, for knowledge's sake, that is to say, relevance and/or applications cannot be glossed over in the scheme of things. Archaeology in this sub-region has some political values. It can be used to promote social integration and understanding on a borderless scale. The subject reveals the importance of continuous transfers and exchanges among a wide range of cultures and societies from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. One segment of the global village is indebted to the other in a complex and, sometimes, complicated manner. The world has always been a phenomenon in giving and taking (Ehret, 2002).

In our contemporary world characterised by a lot of problems, archaeology is capable of teaching greater understanding, harmony and peace. Greater confidence and self-esteem are provided by fine-grained archaeological knowledge of West Africa. These two qualities are the cornerstone of creativity and intellectual productions on a profound scale, particularly in West Africa, which once suffered from European slave trade and colonialism. The two traumatic experiences led to the loss of local initiative and capacity to create new ideas and develop sustainably from within.

Archaeology and the knowledge derived from it can successfully fight ignorance – the number one enemy of human progress. Contemporary West Africans and Africans in general should know that their remote ancestors were great scientists and technologists who fabricated iron implements of various types after smelting iron ore in combustion chambers (furnaces). They should also appreciate the fact that the progressive development of West Africa was crippled by the ugly encounters with Europe, and that they are yet to recover from the trauma several decades after political independence. This historical consciousness is pivotal to West Africa's recovery from an abyss of ignorance and despair (Andah, 1990; Fair, 1982; Ogundele, 2004).

Given the fact that archaeology can be used to design robust visions for the future of a country, experts in the field should be allowed to occupy a

much more conspicuous space in public administration in the sub-region. It is too easily forgotten that the present society has been shaped or crafted by decisions and happenings which have now become history (Sibanda et al., 1989). Archaeologists can also flex muscles in the area of tourism. This is known as archaeo-tourism. Archaeo-tourism basically has to do with archaeological sites both at the pre-excavation and post-excavation levels of engagement. In this regard, archaeological enterprise goes beyond the level of mere academic exercise or historical knowledge productions to that of poverty alleviation.

Local and national economies can significantly improve as tourists visit archaeological sites that are tourism-driven. After all the rigorous training involving field courses at different levels in the university, education including knowledge applications is what is left for the archaeology graduate. In this connection, archaeological knowledge gained through meticulous training in the university can be applied to engender robust peace and economic prosperity/development, among others. For example, archaeologists can work in the National Boundary Commissions or related bodies in West Africa focusing on peace and conflict resolution or management. This is possible by carrying out excavations in the two warring communities in order to concretely verify the claims of the people on both sides of the divide by examining their material culture. Such an engagement must also necessarily involve detailed ethnographic investigations. Suffice it to say that archaeology is principally about material science and, to a reasonable degree, scientific truth as the professional dives into the archaeological record. This underscores the reason why the archaeologist must follow, as much as possible, a given set of operational guidelines in order to reduce subjectivity to the barest minimum. However, social conflicts can be easily created and promoted whenever archaeologists allow their investigations to be based on or ruled by unbridled emotions. As a matter of fact, professional integrity, meticulousness, commitment of time and energy are sacrosanct.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND METHODS OF DISCOVERY

Introduction

Human beings should be interested in knowing the ways of life of their ancestors because humans are, among other things, thinking animals with a myriad of socio-cultural and environmental challenges and opportunities. As a matter of fact, we cannot creatively peep into the tomorrows without a deep understanding, knowledge and appreciation of our todays, which are intricately connected to the yesterdays. Simply put, the past of man has to be critically studied, using a wide range of techniques and concepts. Archaeology occupies a conspicuous space in this regard largely because the long history of mankind, in the context of environment, lies in the belly of the earth.

The study of the past of man is done through the lens of material remains of the behaviours of the settlers of a given region or site. From the material expressions of past cultures, archaeologists can engage the deep culture (intangible cultural traits – religious beliefs, kinship systems, cosmology and music, among others). But in capturing the past lifeways of a human group, from the perspectives of particularity and generality, contemporary archaeologists have to begin the process of enlarging the definitional and conceptual fabric of the discipline (Ogundele, 2014). There is the need to expand away from the age-long archaeological orthodoxy that keeps us down as professionals. At the centre of this relatively new philosophy, which is yet to gain in popularity in West Africa, is the public or larger society which must hear, understand our stories, evaluate and use them very critically to address a plethora of issues bordering on spiritual and material progress. This is archaeology as if people matter. Therefore, several specialities in archaeology have necessarily emerged in an attempt to capture this reality. These include Prehistoric Archaeology, Historic Archaeology, Industrial Archaeology, Settlement Archaeology, Marine Archaeology, Biblical Archaeology,