ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AT UBURU AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN IGBOEZE SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
This paper describes an archaeological investigation conducted in 2023 at Uburu in Ibagwa Aka as part of a field training program for undergraduate students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka's Department of Archaeology and Tourism. During the fieldwork, students were taught the fundamentals of archaeology surveying, archaeological site discovery and excavation, ethnography of cultural practices, and community engagement in research. In line with those above, the field exercise used reconnaissance, in-depth interviews and excavation to prosecute the study. The findings revealed that the people of Uburu smelted iron when their counterparts engaged in the practice, while smithing is still practiced and has survived over time. The paper argues that if the cultural resources (like honey bee farming, wood carving, etc.) and their traditional religion are harnessed for tourism development, it will improve the living standard of the host community, create job opportunities, and help conserve the sites. The paper further discusses the significance of Uburu heritage to the archaeology and history of the people of Igbo-Eze South and how best to harness it for tourism development.
Keywords: Archaeology, indigenous practices, excavation, reconnaissance, tourism development, ethnography, community engagement.

Introduction
Archaeology studies people's past human lives and activities through their material remains. This study enables us to understand where and how people in past societies lived and their activities. Archaeological sites bear evidence of human activities and are investigated by archaeologists to retrieve information about their past through the human and material remains found there. Trained archaeologists conduct archaeological investigations of a place or site to retrieve, record, and preserve archaeological artefacts and other materials found on the site. Archaeologists explore sites to retrieve information concerning past human ways. This is made possible after a proper

site investigation has been carried out. Archaeological investigation is a physical investigation of a place carried out by an appropriately qualified person to investigate, record, or conserve archaeological artefacts on the place (Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Science. 2019).

Archaeological fieldwork is part of the investigation in which an excavation is done to unearth cultural and historical material that systematically remains and possesses valuable information about past human activities in society. It can be likened to detective work through gathering information about past societies. Such activity is vital to provide students with various skills in archaeological practices.

Most of the previous Archaeological field exercises like Okafor (1992, 1993), Itanyi (1985), Ekechukwu (1989), Anozie (1976), Itanyi and Okonkwo (2006/2007), Itanyi and Okonkwo (2009), Itanyi and Okonkwo (2009/2010) Daraojimba, Uzuegbu, Halilu, and Yunusa (2021) and Daniel, Anyanwu, Oji, and Itanyi, (2021) centered on iron working, archaeology and early history of old Nsukka division and its environs. We have not been aware of any archaeological work at Uburu, Ibagwa-Aka, at least within this study's scope of literature review. The absence of literature on Ibeagwa-Aka archaeology has necessitated the field school's choice of study area, which lasted for five days (25th-29th May 2023) with the final year (batch B) undergraduate students. The team comprised some academic staff, a curator and a cartographer.

It is instructive to note that archaeological sites have massive potential for tourism because they hold relics of past civilisations, which interest tourists. Consequently, the relationship between Archaeology and Tourism is rising in the twenty-first century, where tourism has emerged as a critical socio-economic force. The driving force behind travels made by tourists is to experience tangible and intangible aspects of cultures; interestingly, archaeology offers a significant percentage of material cultural resources for tourism purposes. This field exercise contributes to knowledge by investigating and raising the need for conserving the historical and cultural materials of the Uburu people of Ibagwa-Aka. Gathering such information creates more awareness of the need to preserve the almost extinct cultural heritage of the people for several purposes, including tourism development.

Objectives of the Field School

1. The field school to Uburu, tagged 'Ibagwa-Aka 2023', is a pre-requisite for the course Field Archaeology III in the Department of Archaeology and Tourism of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This exercise is a field school training program that gives the student a practical experience of archaeological fieldwork, including archaeological site discovery and excavation, ethnographic study of indigenous practices and community engagements in carrying out research.
2. The study seeks to ascertain how the artefacts recovered from the sites can help reconstruct the cultural history of the inhabitants of our areas of study, particularly Igboland in general.

3. Explore how the material culture of the Uburu people can be harnessed for tourism development.

The Study Area

Uburu is a village in Ibagwa-Aka in the Eastern part of Nigeria, in the Igboeze South local government area of Enugu State. It is a few kilometers North of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and bordered by the communities of Itchi and Nkalagu Obukpa to the North, Ibagwa Ani to the East, Obukpa to the South, Ovoko and Iheakpu Awka to the West. Ibagwa-Aka has quarters represented by three semi-autonomous villages: Echara, Amebo and Ezema. Each quarter comprises several villages, headed by the eldest man in the village called Onyishi (Ndubusi, 2018).

The people of Ibagwa Aka have traditions guiding their behaviours and even festivals. The community frowns strongly at infidelity, especially for women, so it can cause defaulters to run mad or even die prematurely. The Agbaeze is an affirmative festival that exposes women's infidelity in the town and is celebrated by both *Agu* (forest) and *Ulo* (home) settlers.

The major road that cuts through Ibagwa-Aka divides the town into two major communities known as Ummu Agiri and Uburu Ibagwa. In ancient times, the people of Ummu Agri thrived in ironworking, from where they got the name Ummu Agri (agri is a term associated with ironworking). At present, there are quite several blacksmiths in that part of the town. The other part of the town, Uburu Ibagwa-Aka, where this work was based, basically relies on farming for their sustenance. They cultivate food crops like yam (*ji*)- *Discorea sp*, cassava (*akpu*)- *Manihot esculanta*, maize (*oka*)-*Zea mays*, among others. There abound a lot of economic trees within the environment, and these include; palm oil tree (*ukwu nkwu*)-*Elaesis guineensis*, mango (*mangoro*)-*Magnifera indica*, African bush mango (*ogbono*)-*Irvingia gabonensis*. They also engage in other indigenous crafts and knowledge systems, including palm wine (*ngwu enu*), honey production, wood carving, maternal health care and basketry.

The traditional Igbo market days of *Eke, Orie, Afor*, and *Nkwo* are used by the people of Ibagwa Aka for their commercial activities. Ibagwa-Aka has developed over time into the Igbo-Eze region's commercial hub. The oldest men chosen from each of the villages that make up the three distinct quarters of Ibagwa-Aka comprise the sociopolitical system headed by the Eze and assisted by the council of elders. The inhabitants of Ibagwa-Aka were traditional worshipers and were aware of the existence of a supreme being (*Chukwu*).

Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) are accepted and practised in the town. Through their commercial endeavours, the northern horse traders who came to trade in the renowned *Nkwo* Ibagwa market introduced Islam to the populace. On the other hand, the Christian faith was spread by the well-known Fr. J. Millet, also known as the "apostle of Nsukka." When the first church was built along the Ibagwa-Aka Ichi road, it

was home to a small number of indigenous converts. This church is now known as St. Mary's Catholic Church. The late warrant Chief Ezanwa Asadu gave them the site as a gift. Although many churches are in the area, ATR is still well-regarded and practised. It is physically visible in the environment by the presence of Shrines, grooves, and other ritual materials like pots and other stone arrangements that can be seen around some residences. This is evident in their cultural practices (Omabe and Akatapa masquerade festival and body scarification).

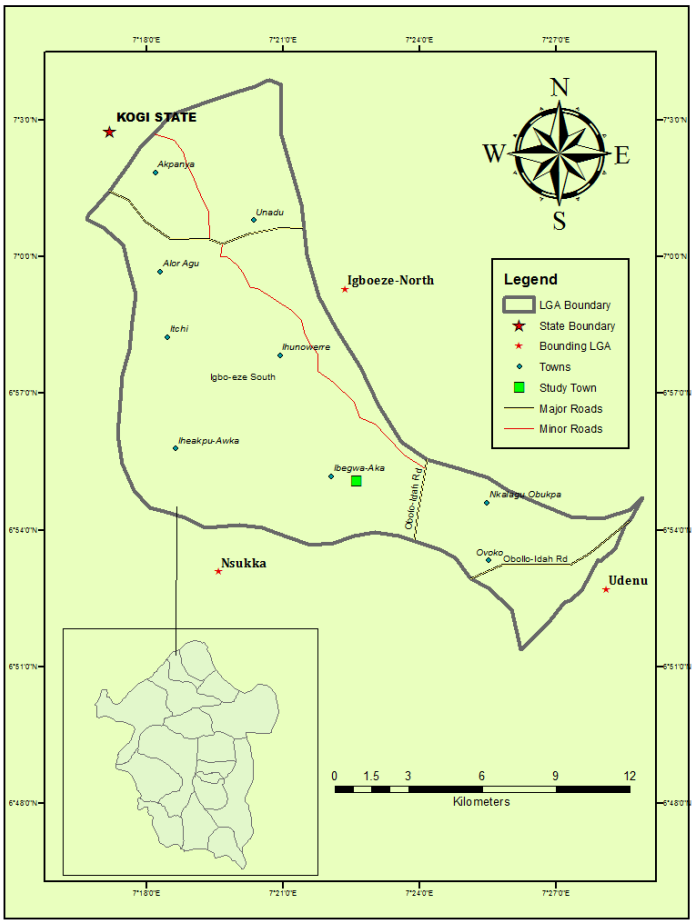


Figure 1: Map of Igbo-Eze South LGA showing Ibagwa-Aka
Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Methodology

Three basic methods were employed during the fieldwork. They are archaeological reconnaissance, excavation and ethnographic research. Students and staff conducted archaeological reconnaissance, traversing the length and breadth of a section of the Uburu village in search of evidence of past human activities and sites. This was carried out on the first day of

fieldwork and took four hours. The goal is to find areas with a high concentration of artefacts for possible excavation.

The excavation was carried out systematically, beginning with selecting a site, clearing and griding the site, and then the excavation proper, with an arbitrary spit of 20cm. It took three days to reach sterile status. The fourth day was dedicated to an intensive ethnographic survey with key informants believed to be knowledgeable about the excavated materials. These informants also provided information about their history, culture, socio-economic, and political activities. The ethnographic information we gathered allowed us to reconcile the material remains and, as a result, informed our analysis.

Reconnaissance

Identifying and documenting the locations of sites and features is generally one of the primary duties of archaeologists (Renfrew & Bahn, 1991). No one method can be used to complete this task. While some locations and features can be found and observed with the eyes, others buried beneath the soil can be found through scientific investigation. In archaeology, there are primarily two methods for finding sites. One is by a strictly technical and scientific search, whereas the other is by chance or accident (Itanyi & Okonkwo, 2009). Any excavation or fieldwork requires extensive and indispensable archaeological survey and reconnaissance. Ogundele (2000) asserts that surface research, which enables the archaeologist to have some insight into how man has broadly used space at one time or another or the relationships between man and terrestrial space, should receive greater attention.

During the reconnaissance at Uburu, Ibeagwa-Aka, we moved around with the direction of oral information to identify and investigate archaeological sites. The site's content was identified, and discoveries and features were documented and measured. Numerous potsherds were discovered throughout the village as a result of this exercise. Additionally, it revealed the area's abundance of numerous economic trees. The people's farming techniques were also observed, and other archaeological features were located and recorded.

An abandoned compound with many materials *in situ* was an exciting sight. Materials found at the abandoned settlement include water pots, grinding stones, empty kegs of palm wine, money saving box, and a shrine. Earthen wares were deposited around the compound. Some appeared to be water pots, ritual pots and pots used for bee farming (see Plates 1 and 2).



Plate 1: Abandoned compound at Uburu Village, Ibagwa-Aka.



(a) **(b)** **(c)**

Plate 2a-c: Abandoned Clay Pot, Morta and Shrine

Archaeological Excavation and Findings

Archaeological excavation dates back to the 18th century AD, when it first became an essential tool for researching human history (Ogundele 1995; Fagan 1975). Archaeological excavation is an integral part of any archaeological work or research. It entails digging carefully and scientifically for material remains while providing information about an excavated site's chronological framework (strata). It is also how the dependability of surface data can be validated using various methods and techniques.

The excavation tagged 'Ibagwa-Aka 2022' was carried out in a site located in a shallow bush, previously a dump site and owned by George Asogwa, an indigene of Uburu, Ibagwa-Aka. The site's excavation lasted for three days, starting with the mapping, clearing and griding of the site. Using the Pythagoras theorem, a trench measuring 4m long and 3m wide was established and was further divided into twelve (12) grids of 1 x 1m each. After that, four (4) grids were earmarked for excavation, measuring a 2 x 2m trench (see Figure 2). The site was excavated using a 20cm arbitrary spit and at the end, we dug down to 100cm (sterile layer).

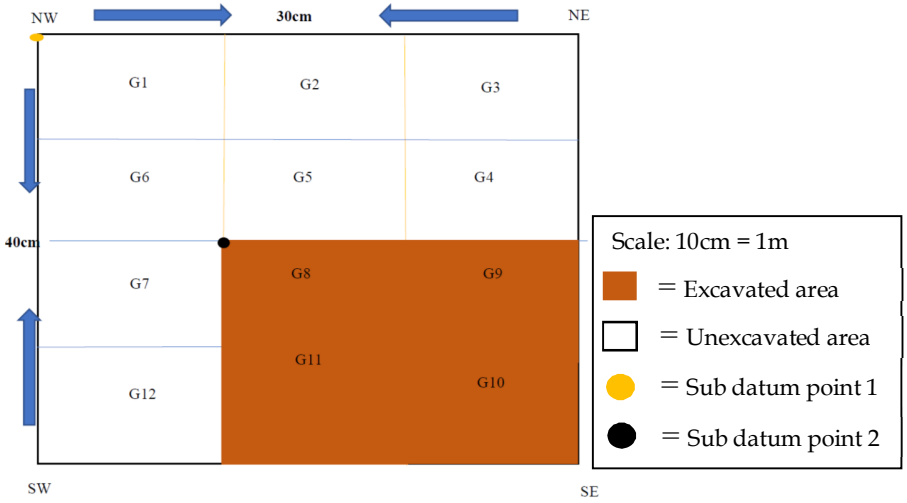


Figure 2: The Gridded Site Plan with Earmarked Area for Excavation
Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Excavation Details from 0 – 100cm

Spit 1 (0-20cm): is composed of loose, dark brown sand, with 20cm in thickness. This spit embodies materials such as potsherds, palm kernels, jaw fragments of an animal, iron segments, pieces of snail shells, pieces of coconut shells, charcoal, and native pear seed.

Spit 2 (20-40cm): is composed of loose coarse sand, reddish brown at grids 8 and 9, and dark brown at the other grids. The cultural remains are potsherds, palm kernels, black beans, iron objects, snail shells, charcoal, and beads.

Spit 3 (40-60cm): is made up of loose coarse soil below 40cm down to 50cm, dark brown in grids 10 and 11, and reddish brown in grids 8 and 9. From 50cm to a depth of 60cm was made of compact soil. At grid 8, there was a lump of reddish and dark compact soil. The cultural materials uncovered from this spit are potsherds, pieces of a snail shell, palm kernel, animal teeth, rust iron pieces, and charcoal.

Spit 4 (60-80cm): is composed of compact soil at grid 11 and loosely coarse soil at grids 8, 9 and 10. Though the reddish brown of grids 9 and 10 is lighter in colour. Unlike the rootlets in spit 3 that were thick and tall, they were few, thin and short. The cultural remains recovered from spit 4 are iron pieces, palm kernels, snail shell pieces, and charcoal.

Spit 5 (80-100cm): is composed of reddish-brown soil, comprising compact soil from 80-88cm and loose soil from 89cm to 100cm. This spit is considered the sterile layer, as no remains were uncovered (see Plates 3-4 and Table 1).



(a) (b) (c)

Plates 3a-c: Spit 1 (0-20cm), 2 (20-40cm) and 3 (40-60cm)



(a) (b)

Plates 4a-b: Spit 4 (60-80cm) and 5 (80-100cm)

Table 1: Bag Inventory of Excavated Materials

S/N	Bag no.	Charcoal	Rusted Iron	Potsherd	Slag	Beans	Palm Kernel	Glass Bottle	Snail Shell	Animal Jawbone	Coconut Shell	Beads	Stone
1	SC	1	1	13	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2	SPIT 1	30	18	4	-	-	97	-	6	1	3	-	-
3	SPIT 2	18	1	2	-	2	19	-	1	-	-	20	-
4	SPIT 3	4	17	1	-	-	25	-	1	4	-	-	-
5	SPIT 4	33	19	-	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	-	-
6	SPIT 5	3	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total		**89**	**60**	**20**	**8**	**2**	**149**	**1**	**8**	**5**	**3**	**20**	**2**
%		**24.3**	**16.3**	**5.4**	**2.1**	**0.5**	**40.5**	**0.2**	**2.2**	**1.3**	**0.8**	**5.4**	**0.5**

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Stratigraphy

Stratigraphy refers to the archaeological evaluation of the temporal and positional meaning of the observed strata. Encarta (2004) states, "Although the term comes from geology, stratigraphy theory is a basic tool in archaeology, without which chronologies and sequences of events could not

be constructed." This refers to the observed layering of matrices and features. These layers or strata may be thick or thin (Okpoko & Andah, 1994).

The stratigraphy was drawn on the eastern wall. This was achieved by closely observing the soil colour changes and using pins to mark out points of these changes. Six distinct layers of colour change were identified. Using a Munsell colour char, the different colours of the layers were observed (see Figure 3 and Table 2).

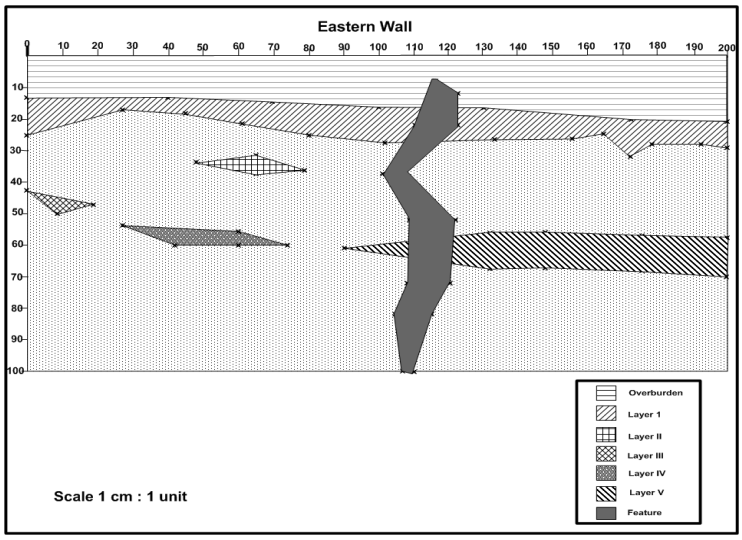


Figure 3: The Stratigraphy of the Eastern Wall. **Source:** Fieldwork (2023)

Table 2: Soil Colour Changes at Different Layers

LAYERS	COLOUR	REFERENCES
1	Very Dark Brown (2.5/3)	Chroma 13
2	Dark Yellowish Brown ¾	7.5YR
3	Redish/Dark Red	10 YR
4	Dark Brown (3/4)	7.5 YR Chroma 94
5	Brown 4/4	Chroma 4 7.5 YR
6	3/4 Dark Brown	Chroma 4

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Ethnographic Survey

The ethnographic study in this fieldwork was vital because we sought useful information on the excavated materials during the interviews. Our informants were key players in the Uburu village, including the oldest man (*Onyishi*), a women's leader, the village's chief security officer, titled men, and

some youths. The excavated materials were shown to our informants, who had gathered in a house adjacent to the previously mentioned abandoned house. The reason for showing them the excavated objects was, in part, to increase transparency and thus dispel any lingering notion that we were digging for gold, crude oil, or lost treasure, as had been suggested by the locals upon our arrival. On the other hand, to gain more information about the artefacts that will aid in determining cultural continuity or change over time, reconstruct the recovered materials such as pottery wares, and aid in our analysis and chronology of the site. Our informants generously shared helpful information that serves as background on the study area. Slag and pottery information was also gathered during the interviews. The people also told us information on wood carving and traditional belief systems. These were incorporated into our interpretation and discussion of the findings.

Interpretation of Findings

Other archaeological evidence was identified, collected and observed, which depicts different human activities from reconnaissance of the site to the excavation. Finds like the palm kernel nut and other food crops around the environment, like African bush mango and oil bean trees, depict that the society had used indigenous trees and domesticated crops. This further tells the story of a people who live in an organised society following the oral traditions and interviews, which showed in practice how they had utilised the resources in the environment to enhance their living by making tools that aided their sustenance. Excavated materials consisted of iron slag (see Table 3), potsherds (see Table 4), charcoals, metallic objects, and baked clay, and they tell a desirable story about man's past activities in Uburu.

The people do not know what the slag signifies; however, they refer to it as '*ehuru*' (strong black stone) created by the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*). Slag is used in the contemporary Uburu to support building foundations, checkmate erosion and hunting missiles, among other things. In places like Lejja and Opi, slag is used as seats in village squares, while gravel-like slag is used for other purposes as may be deemed fit by the host community.

The excavation yielded 39 potsherds, which were analysed. Some potsherds were rim and neck types with various decoration techniques and motifs. Tempering materials were also examined. The discovery of pottery/potsherds on an archaeological site is essential; hence, a wealth of information can be gained from its study. Potsherds are cultural materials that can be used to date archaeological sites using the thermoluminescence dating method. This also demonstrates the people's level of indigenous technology through the motifs and techniques, allowing archaeologists to follow the gradual complexity that resulted from many years of pot making and usage. The decorative motifs (net, wavy lines, maize comb, zigzag, smooth, diagonal lines, curved lines, horizontal and vertical lines) on the excavated potsherds and the decorative motifs of the pottery in use among the Uburu people reveal a historical continuity; thus, it could be argued that there is a historical

connection between the living culture of the area and the past cultures being investigated. Clay pots are purchased in Uburu from *the Nkwo* Ibagwa market. Urobo women are well-known for their pottery-making skills and are significant pottery sellers of wares at *Nkwo* Ibagwa.

Charcoal was also discovered. This was the residue of combustible or fuelling materials (like wood) from smelting. This is a valuable material when discovered in an archaeological excavation because radiocarbon dating can be used to determine the site's age. The collected charcoal could not be dated due to the need for a well-equipped laboratory for chronometric dating of materials in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 3: Quantitative Representation of Slag

S/N	Bag no.	Length (cm)	Width (cm)	Thickness (cm)	Volume(cc)	Weight (g)	Density(g/cc)	Morphology	Thermal Cond.	Luster	Porosity	Magnetism	Colour	Impression	Fragmentation	Weathering	Raw material	Surface collection	Quantity
1	SC	4.4	3.5	0.8	12.32	35	2.84	FG	F	M	L	N	DB	F	3	X_1	M	P	1
2	SC	5.6	3.8	0.4	8.51	63	7.40	FG	F	M	L	L	DB	F	4	X_2	M	P	1
3	SC	4	3.8	1.1	16.72	88	5.26	G	F	M	L	N	DG	M	2	X_1	M	P	1
4	SC	2.2	0.6	0.3	0.4	10	25	G	F	M	N	N	DB	F	1	X_1	M	P	1
5	SC	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.11	6	54.55	D	M	M	N	N	LBG	M	N	X_1	M	R	1
6	SC	1.	0.9	0.1	0.14	7	50	FG	F	M	L	N	D	F	2	X_2	M	P	1
7	SC	2.8	1.3	0.5	1.82	19	10.44	K	C	M	L	N	DB	M	1	X_2	M	R	1
8	SC	1.7	0.6	0.2	0.20	8	40	GA	F	M	N	N	DB	M	1	X_1	M	P	1

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 4: Quantitative Representation of Potsherds and their Characteristics

S/N	Bag no.	Rim	Body	Neck	Temper	Technique	Motif	Rim types	Motif placement
1	SC	-	1	-	Sand & silt	Impression	Net	-	Body
2	SC	-	1	-	Sand & grounded kernel	Stamping	Net	-	Body
3	SC	-	1	-	Grog and sand	Incision	Wavy lines	-	Body
4	SC	-	-	1	Sand & grounded shell	-	-	-	-
5	SC	-	1	-	Grog	Incision	Maize comb	-	Body
6	SC	-	1	-	Sandstone	Excision	Zigzag	-	Body

7	SC	1	-	-	Sand and stone	Burnishing	Smooth	Everted	Rim
8	SC	1	-	-	Silt & sand	Burnishing	Smooth	Everted	Rim
9	SC	-	1	-	Sand & grog	Excision	Diagonal lines	-	Body
10	SC	-	1	-	Stone	Excision and stamp	Wavy lines	-	Body
11	SC	1	-	-	Stone & grog	Incision	Diagonal lines	Everted	Body
12	SC	1	-	-	Grog	Excision	Curved lines	Everted	Rim
13	SC	-	1	-	Stone and sand	Impression	Net	-	Body
Total		4	8	1					
14	SPIT 1	-	-	1	Sand, stone & grounded shell	Groove	Horizontal and vertical lines	-	Neck
15	SPIT 1	-	1	-	Sand & grass	Incision	Wavy lines	-	Body
16	SPIT 1	-	1	-	Sand & silt	Incision	Diagonal lines	-	Body
17	SPIT 1	-	1	-	stone	-	-	-	-
Total		-	3	1					
18	SPIT 2	-	1	-	Sand, stone & grounded shell	Stamping and incision	Wavy and diagonal lines	-	Body
19	SPIT 2	-	1	-	Stone	Stamping	-	-	Body
Total		-	2	-					
20	SPIT 3	-	1	-	Sand & stone	-	-	-	-

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Discussion

Craft is the artistic practice of using hand and simple tools to make objects through skilfully manipulating resources such as clay, wood, glass, textiles, metals and leather. On the other hand, craftsmanship is a form of production, social organisation, and material basis for symbolism (Andrea Rusu, 2011).

In Nigeria, several cultural groups had well-established traditional craft practices before coming intact with Western civilisation. Oloidi (2014), for instance, refers to the Ekiti people of southwestern Nigeria, who had well-developed smelting, smithing, pottery and weaving technologies before colonialism. Okpoko and Okpoko (2002, pp. 63-64) remark that Awka and Nkwerre people in south-east and south-south Nigeria, respectively, are acknowledged masters in black smithery, the Annangs in Akwa-Ibom State are noted for producing a fantastic variety of cane and raffia crafts while in Kano, Sokoto and Borno states, high-quality leather goods are produced.

The people of Uburu Ibagwa-aka in Enugu state are noted for wood carving, honey farming and various religious belief systems. Though the Uburu people do not produce pottery, they are great consumers of earthenware. This is evident in the potsherds excavated and pottery observed in the backyards of every household used for storing water (water coolers) or food items. However, imported metal pots used for cooking, enamel plates, plastic containers for storage, and other gadgets for preserving and storing food items are more prevalent in other parts of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Uburu people have continued to preserve their pottery usage. The few plastic

or enamel objects found among the people are probably a show of affluence and not because of the functions they perform.

On the other hand, wood carving is even more appreciated within socio-cultural contexts because it allows one to interact and learn from persons directly or indirectly involved in its production. This is where Uburu wood carving traditions become very relevant. Wood carving workshops are also attraction sites and, as such, are grouped under cultural tourism sites. Portable carved objects can serve as souvenirs for tourists. The archaeological sites are themselves valuable attractions for tourists. Today, cultural tourism is a fast-growing form of tourism internationally, including in Nigeria. Uburu material culture can be harnessed for its preservation and conservation as a valuable heritage resource and sustainable tourist product. When combined with other landmark features (shrines, honey farms, and festivals) of the area, wood carving will hopefully contribute to making Uburu, Ibeagwa-Aka, a site to behold if appropriately harnessed.

In tourism business development, Richards (1999a), cited in Rogerson and Rogerson (2011), observes that "culture, crafts and tourism are rapidly becoming inseparable partners; local crafts (such as wood carving and pottery) are important elements of culture and people travel to see and experience other cultures, traditions and ways of living". Timothy (2005) noted that crafts are often crucial in tourist shopping. If these native crafts of the people of Uburu, Ibagwa-Aka, are given serious attention, they can be used as a driver for tourism development in the area; however, there are other considerations, like putting in place tourism infrastructure for this to be a success.

Conclusion

The archaeological exercise aimed to give students an essential firsthand experience of archaeological investigations. The students showed high comportment and willingness to learn during the fieldwork. The exercise was based on reconnaissance, ethnography and excavation. Put together, the exercise was expository as it revealed the numerous activities embedded in a habitation site. Moreover, how human relations and activities can bring significant changes in the makeup of society; looking at how the bond of the people with the northern traders started and where it is today with the introduction of Islam to the community, it is also clear that the people still hold the ATR dearly. Though many potsherds were visible in the environment and evidence of ongoing use of earthen wares, especially in bee farming, the people claim not to be pottery producers.

This exercise in Ibagwa-Aka has unveiled quite a lot about the people. It showed they have successfully interacted deeply with their immediate environment hence the evidence we see and hear today. On entrance into the environment, agriculture must be noticed with the ongoing cultivation of different crops around the community. Fruit trees are thriving in every compound. Cash crops are also scattered around as evidence of the high engagement of the people in commercial activity, which makes the *Nkwo*

Ibagwa a very viable market to date. Though technological advancement has defaced indigenous wares in many communities, earthen wares are still used though not heavily in Ibagwa-Aka, especially in ATR, which some people still practice. Earthen pots are still used in bee farming in the community. Though the people use iron implements, they claim not to have been involved in iron smelting. This suggests a very organised society with professionalism and division of labour as they ascribe iron smelting to the Umu-Agri, the Ibagwa clan responsible for iron works. However, more studies on iron smelting can be done on both Uburu, Ibagwa-Aka and Umu-Agri sites.

Acknowledgement

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