

# 10 years

Editors:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez and Elena Papagiannopoulou



[www.arqueologiapublica.es](http://www.arqueologiapublica.es)

*Online Journal in Public Archaeology*

# INDEX

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Editorial</b>  | 1  |
| Jaime Almansa-Sánchez and Elena Papagiannopoulou  |    |
| <b>An interview with Tim Schadla-Hall</b>   | 3  |
| Tim Schadla-Hall and Jaime Almansa-Sánchez  |    |
| <b>Points of You:<br/>Is archaeology becoming a bullshit job?</b>   | 19 |
| Jaime Almansa-Sánchez   |    |
| <b>FORUM:<br/>Chatting about the future of public archaeology</b>   | 29 |
| <b>Indigenous views on the future of public archaeology<br/>in Australia</b>  | 31 |
| Kellie Pollard, Claire Smith, Jasmine Willika, Vince Copley<br>senior, Vincent Copley junior, Christopher Wilson, Emily<br>Poelina-Hunter and Julie Ah Quee |    |
| <b>Dealing with a hangover of Public Archaeology:<br/>Scattered thoughts on the Italian 'Archeologia<br/>Pubblica'</b>                                      | 53 |
| Francesca Benetti   |    |
| <b>For a solidary and activist [public] archaeology in the<br/>Amazon</b>   | 59 |
| Marcia Bezerra  |    |
| <b>From present to future. An academic perspective of<br/>Public Archaeology in Spain</b>   | 65 |
| Alicia Castillo Mena  |    |
| <b>Public Archaeology in Nepal: Now and in the next 10<br/>years</b>  | 73 |
| Neel Kamal Chapagain  |    |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Public Archaeology in 10 years? We will hopefully learn to share more, and better</b>                | 75  |
| Sarah De Nardi  |     |
| <b>When divulgation reaches us</b>  | 81  |
| Jaime Delgado Rubio   |     |
| <b>Archaeology in the public space in Nigeria</b>   | 87  |
| Caleb A. Folorunso  |     |
| <b>Toward a Decolonial and Denationalized Public Archaeology</b>  | 97  |
| Rafael Greenberg  |     |
| <b>Public Archaeology: the loss of innocence</b>  | 101 |
| Reuben Grima  |     |
| <b>Archaeology for the public in Greece minus/plus ten</b>  | 105 |
| Stelios Lekakis   |     |
| <b>“Let’s send millions of qualified public archaeology cadres to the new museums and field units!”</b> | 109 |
| Gabriel Moshenska   |     |
| <b>After the Pandemic: Reflections from an uncertain present on the futures of public archaeology</b>   | 117 |
| Alejandra Saladino and Leonardo Faryluk   |     |
| <b>How do I see Public Archaeology in ten years in Peru</b>   | 123 |
| Daniel Saucedo Segami   |     |

## **FORUM:**

### **CHATTING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY**

With the tenth anniversary of the journal we wanted to take a deep breath and look into the future.

This forum consists of short pieces from colleagues around the world that discuss general and specific issues regarding public archaeology in the coming years. We asked for an open format, trying to grasp a fresher approach than the one usual academic writing permits.

As with other forums in the journal, we will keep it open from now on in case any of you want to participate too. It is a good occasion to debate the current and coming role of public archaeology and we hope this selection of papers helps to foster it.

We originally invited 50 people to participate. However, these difficult times made it difficult for some to do so. Nevertheless, we have a good set of contributions that will be of interest to you all.

Enjoy it (and participate if you feel you have something else to say).



Laugh now,  
but one day  
we'll be  
in charge.

BONESY

## FORUM: Chatting about the future of public archaeology ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC SPACE IN NIGERIA

Caleb A. FOLORUNSO

### Introduction

Nigeria, with over 200 million people, covers an area of 923,768 km<sup>2</sup> and it occupies the eastern section of the West African region (Figure 1). The regions of Nigeria have prehistoric sites spanning from the Early Stone Age through the Middle Stone Age, the Late Stone Age/Neolithic to the Iron Age and the beginning of urbanization. Several historic empires, states and polities developed within the geographical area now occupied by Nigeria and had left archaeological relics.



Figure 1: Map of Nigeria (Wikimedia Commons)

Archaeology as it is known today, "arose from a peculiarly western curiosity about the past that was largely alien to Africans" (Kense 1990: 135), however, the past was not alien to Africans but it was not approached in the way of the Europeans. The peoples of sub-Saharan Africa had "interest in the ancestors and the material relics of their existence" while "oral traditions provide numerous examples of a relationship between material relics of the past and the history of the people" (de Maret 1990: 111). The intent of this paper is to elaborate on how archaeology had intervened in some Nigerian communities.

### **Archaeology in Nigeria**

The German anthropologist Leo Frobenius visited the Yoruba city of Ife in 1910 and dug up several terracotta figurines and he was the first person to do anything seemingly archaeological digging in Nigeria (Frobenius 1913). In 1939 Bernard Fagg, an archaeologist was posted to Jos as an administrative officer in the colonial service and he started archaeological explorations at his leisure time. The first scientific archaeological excavation in Nigeria was conducted at Ile Ife by John Goodwin of University of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1943 the year that the Department of Antiquities was established.

A university was established by the colonial administration in 1948 at Ibadan and following independence in 1960, four more universities were established, three of which were regional universities. The three regional universities and the university at Ibadan established Institutes of African Studies which started research in cultural studies with archaeology being an important component. Archaeology then started assuming the character of a purely academic discipline with expatriates taking up research positions. However, it was not until the 1970s when teaching of Archaeology started in the Nigerian universities.

The museums established by the colonial authorities were located in the urban centres and they were not conceived or designed to serve the local public but to meet the desires of the expatriates. With few exceptions, the post-colonial established museums followed the same concepts and designs of the colonial era museums

with exhibits from far and wide making them not adequately relevant to the museums' host communities. Effectively, the museums continue to be centres of amusement rather than centres where the host communities could connect and learn about their past.

### **Archaeology and the public**

Archaeologists had recognized the role public accessibility to archaeology could play in enriching the practice of archaeology. For example, public awareness programmes are part of the archaeological stewardship responsibilities of the US Departments of Interior, Agriculture and Defence making communities to learn about their archaeological heritage and preserve it (Haas 1999).

#### *Archaeology and the Nigerian public*

The public's consciousness and perception of archaeology in Nigeria are still low despite archaeology's sufficiently long history in the country. A recent study (Ajomale and Folorunso, forthcoming) shows that 31% of 200 students sampled from selected secondary schools in Ibadan could not describe what archaeology and archaeologists do. Access to cable television channels such as Discovery, National Geographic and History had created awareness among a section of the populace that has interest in watching programmes of archaeological discoveries. However, their understanding of archaeology is limited to sensational discoveries about the ancient worlds which made them to ask if similar discoveries were being made in Nigeria. Such question showed that they knew little or nothing about archaeology in Nigeria.

As stated above, archaeology in Nigeria had its roots in the colonial era. The excavations at Ile-Ife, Benin and Igbo Ukwu during the colonial era followed discoveries made while digging drainages and house foundations. While the local populations took interest and reported archaeological findings to the appropriate authorities, they were hardly sensitized to take interest in archaeology and heritage issues by providing them with the research results as feedback. Therefore, from inception, barriers were unconsciously erected between the local people and the archaeologists. The barrier between the public and the archaeologists created unresolvable



problems for the protection of archaeological resources. The continued exposure of archaeological sites through the exploitation of mineral resources and the construction of roads, water reservoirs and housing by the colonial administration without sufficient public awareness about archaeology put the archaeological heritage in danger of looting and destruction by the local communities in concert with the international art dealers. Interestingly, the nationalists in their quest for political independence of the country used the rich archaeological heritage to counter the colonial narratives that the Africans were incapable of self-governance. On the attainment of independence, the politicians failed to protect and promote the archaeological heritage.

### **Archaeology and communities**

In Nigeria, the agency charged with archaeology is the National Commission for Museums and Monuments but it has no outreach programmes to engage the public. The programmes of its Education Unit target only school children who are engaged in art and craft works. Public engagement in archaeology in Nigeria is therefore seen only in very limited individual efforts to create awareness in communities where archaeological sites had been identified. The attitudes of the communities toward the archaeological heritage had been judged to be varied; positive, indifference or negative depending on the cultural and/or historical sentiments and/or links the communities express toward specific heritage properties.

#### *Archaeology and the communities in the Nok and Kwatarkwashi areas*

The situation of archaeology in the Nok and Kwatarkwashi areas is very precarious as the two communities are involved in the looting of Iron Age sites laden with terracotta figurines for which they do not have cultural or historical links. Sites bearing the Nok type figurines cover an area of 78,000 square kilometres in the middle belt region of the country. The first piece was found in 1928 in tin mines close to Nok village near the Jos plateau. Since the first discovery more pieces were found and the communities in the general area had been willing tools in the hands of international art dealers to loot and destroy sites. Kwatarkwashi, located in Zamfara State in northwest

Nigeria consists of rocky hills on which archaeological sites bearing terracotta figurines believed to be contemporary to the Nok figurines had been looted and destroyed by the community.

### *The Benue Valley*

In the Benue Valley of Nigeria, the oral traditions of the Tiv people recognized all the historic hilltop settlement sites associated with early Tiv settlement history in the valley. The communities collaborated with archaeologists to identify and study the sites and also identified and provided useful ethnographic information on archaeological features and artifacts from extant Tiv material culture. Access to, and survey of the sites considered as sacred were permitted but excavations at such sites were not allowed. Non sacred sites did not enjoy any form of protection and they were being encroached upon for farming activities. The communities therefore support archaeology and archaeologists but they would not protect archaeological sites not considered as sacred.

### *Esie in Yorubaland*

Esie, a Yoruba town south of Ilorin in Kwara State presents an example of a community having interest in archaeology in a very supportive manner. Esie is noted for the over one thousand soap stone human figurines originally in a grove and discovered by hunters who had migrated from Oyo-Ile in about 1775. The first museum in Nigeria was opened in Esie in 1945 to hold the soap stone figurines. Though the contemporary community of Esie had no cultural or historical links with the figurines and the associated archaeological sites, the community invited and supported archaeologists to conduct research in the community. The collaborations of the community with archaeologists had involved the provision of funds and other material supports for research and organising public lectures for archaeologists to present their findings in the community.

### *Community archaeology at Igbo Ukwu*

Igbo Ukwu in Anambra State in Eastern Nigeria was brought to world archaeological limelight by the excavations of Thurstan Charles Shaw in 1959-60 and 1964. Artifacts recovered include

bronze, copper and iron objects and thousands of glass beads dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Pamela Jane Smith (widow of Thurstan Shaw) of University of Cambridge organized visits to Cambridge for Igbo Ukwu residents in 2015, 2016 and 2019. The delegates were initiated into rudimentary archaeological practice and participated in Cambridge-run classes and excavations. She had also facilitated the provision of funds from Cambridge to the Igbo Ukwu community for Igbo-Ukwu descendants of the original 1960 excavation team (figures 2 & 3), compounds owners, local officials and secondary school students. The programme conceived and initiated by Pamela Jane Smith is the first of its kind in Nigerian archaeology and should serve as a model for public archaeology in Nigeria.



Figure 2: 1959-60 Excavation team at Igbo-Ukwu (Courtesy: Pamela Jane Smith)



Figure 3: Excavation training at Igbo Ukwu, 2019 (Courtesy Pamela Jane Smith)

### **Archaeology and community conflicts**

Archaeological sites had been source of suspicion, apprehension and conflict for some communities for diverse reasons. The Iwo Eleru rockshelter near Akure, the capital city of Ondo State, excavated by Thurstan Shaw in 1965, was a source of a subtle conflict between two communities that laid claim to the land. Thurstan Shaw minimized the conflict by engaging persons from the two communities in the excavation exercise. However, when some researchers went back to the same rockshelter in 2019, one of the communities claimed that they were not consulted and therefore stopped the research work. The rockshelter is now being seen as a potential for tourism development therefore heightening the conflict.

Benin, being a renowned cultural landscape important for the presence of ancient moats present us with different attitude to archaeology by a community when the community's lands were to be acquired for the construction of a gas plant. There was contention between two communities for the lands because of the compen-

sation to be paid for the lands. When archaeological survey and impact studies were to be conducted before construction works began, the community claiming land wanted archaeologists to accept that sections of the moat were recent creations to control water runoff and that the real moats were further away. The moats in Benin traditions were boundary markers between communities and the fear of the community was that archaeology was going to deny them their land by establishing a wrong boundary. The community was however assured that that was not the purpose of the archaeological survey and that in any case boundaries in the past were not fixed but kept moving. It was obvious that the community was apprehensive of archaeology serving as an arbiter on land dispute.

## **Conclusion**

In the absence of established public archaeology programmes, individual researchers should feel obligated to incorporate the local communities. It is no longer sufficient to hire community members as labour force and also provide assistance to them. Archaeologists should start building capacities in their host communities for some capable individuals in the communities to have some understanding of the cultural landscapes, understand the kind of information archaeologists would derive from the various activities they undertake in field exercises and also go back to the communities to present their findings in simple language.

## **References**

- Ajomale, Oluwafemi O. & Folorunso, C.A. (forthcoming) Public Perceptions of Archaeology in Nigeria: The Case of Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibadan.
- de Maret, P. 1990. Phases & Facies in the Archaeology of Central Africa. In P. Robertshaw (ed.) *A History of African Archaeology*, pp. 109-134. James Currey Ltd. London.
- Frobenius L. 1913. *The Voice of Africa*. Vol. 1. London: Hutchinson
- Haas, D, 1999. Reaching out to the public. Report to Congress 1996-97. *The Federal Archeology Program*. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, p. 45.

Kense, F.J. 1990. Archaeology in Anglophone West Africa. In Robertshaw, P. (ed.) *A History of African Archaeology*, pp. 135-154. James Currey Ltd. London.

# *AP: Online Journal in Public Archaeology*

Editors:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez & Elena Papagiannopoulou  
Email: [almansasanchez@gmail.com](mailto:almansasanchez@gmail.com)

Assistant production editor:

Alejandra Galmés Alba

Edited by:

Asociación JAS Arqueología  
Website: [www.jasarqueologia.es](http://www.jasarqueologia.es)  
Email: [jasarqueologia@gmail.com](mailto:jasarqueologia@gmail.com)  
Address: Plaza de Mondariz, 6, 28029 - Madrid (Spain)

--

## **Tenth Anniversary Edition**

Copyright 2020 Asociación JAS Arqueología (edition) & Authors (content)

ISSN: 2171-6315

AP Journal is a peer-reviewed journal devoted exclusively to Public Archaeology. It is freely distributed online on the Website:

[www.arqueologiapublica.es](http://www.arqueologiapublica.es)

You can also follow us on:

Blogger:



<http://arqueologiapublica.blogspot.com/>

Twitter:



<http://twitter.com/APjournal>

Facebook:



<http://www.facebook.com/APJournal>