

Archaeological Investigations: Impacts and Community Expectations in Dunoka, Lejja

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Abstract

Do communities have expectations from archaeologists carrying out archaeological investigations in their communities? What is the nature of these expectations? This study centred on archaeological investigations in Dunoka, Lejja, which have been on since the past four decades. Many of these investigations had not documented their impact on the study area, or considered what the host community expectations were before embarking on such investigations. In-depth interview with relevant stakeholders and focus-group discussion were used to generate data, and the results presented in emerging themes. The study showed archaeological investigations in Dunoka raised cultural awareness, sparked more interest about archaeology in the area and other benefits. Also, the study showed that the core expectations of the community from archaeological investigations border on three things: respect for local customs and norms; adequate information on the archaeological investigation; and socio-economic benefits. This study contributes to the increasing conversations on community/public archaeology, and its findings are likely to change the way archaeological investigations are carried out in host communities. Lessons from this study can improve the relationship between field archaeologists and host-communities.

Key words: *Public Archaeology, Community Archaeology, Archaeology Investigations, Lejja.*

1.0 Introduction

Archaeological inquiry in south-eastern Nigeria have gained prominence since Thurstan Shaw's famous excavation of Igbo Isaiah and Igbo Richard in Igbo-Ukwu, Anambra State (Anozie, 2002). The presence of giant slag debris in parts of Nsukka of Enugu State have also attracted several archaeological inquiries in communities like Opi, Umundu, Obimo and Lejja, among others. Lejja, a large community in the southern part of Nsukka local government area of Enugu state is the focus of this study because it has attracted many archaeological investigations for over four decades from archaeologists and other scholars. The community is also home to a prehistoric archaeological iron working site dated 2000 BC (Eze-Uzomaka, 2009) – a date that makes it probably one of the earliest iron working sites in Africa. In Lejja is a certain village square called *Otobo Dunoka*, which contains more than 800 blocks of slag weighing between 34kg and 57kg on the average (Eze-Uzomaka, 2009).

Several archaeological investigations in Lejja anchored on iron working, the technology associated with it and the impact of iron working on the people (Anozie, 1979; Eze-

Uzomaka, 2009; Eze-Uzomaka, 2010 and Ogah, Eze-Uzomaka, & Opata, 2014). The department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka have also carried out intensive ethno-archaeological field-school visits in Lejja over the years and recently in 2016. There are more archaeological investigations going on in Lejja and so far, none have actually addressed the issue of host-community benefits cum expectations from archaeological investigations. Hence, a study on host-communities' expectations from archaeological investigations in the popular Lejja community is germane to have a glimpse of the nature of archaeological investigations in south-eastern Nigeria. This will help reveal how host-community expectations (often always reserved for 'community' or 'public' archaeology) may have not been properly incorporated in the objectives and planning of archaeological investigations.

Archaeological inquiry into communities in south-eastern Nigeria is often credited to a retired coalminer who, in 1939, stumbled upon hundreds of beads and some bronze objects while digging a ditch in his compound in Igbo-Ukwu, Anambra state (Anozie, 2002). Twenty years later, Thurstan Shaw carried out excavations in Igbo-Ukwu between 1959 and 1960, where he unearthed many cultural materials, including the famous bronze roped pot. This was also the first organized archaeological excavation in eastern Nigeria. Anozie (2002) noted that between 1959 and 1964 was when Shaw excavated three sites in Igbo-Ukwu – Igbo-Isaiah, Igbo-Richard, and Igbo-Jonah.

Another contributor to the commencement of archaeological investigations in region is Donald Dean Hartle. In 1964, Hartle mapped and worked on a lot of archaeological sites in eastern Nigeria, like the Isi-Ugwu Obukpa rock shelter (Hartle, 1965; 1967). Chikwendu Vincent of Archaeology and Tourism Department, University of Nigeria, carried out extensive excavations in Ugwuagu Rock shelter in Ehugbo and Ogwugwu valley, present-day Ebonyi state, in the company of other colleagues from the same department (Chikwendu, 1979). Archaeological excavations have also been carried out in Anambra State by Anozie (1977) in Umukete and Aguleri; and by Okpoko (1980/81) in the Omambala valley. In Enugu State, Anozie (1979) carried out excavations in Umundu and Ogbodu-Aba. While excavations and reports on iron workings across the Nsukka area have been carried out by Okafor (1995, 1998), other archaeological investigations in Nsukka communities like Onyohor, Ekwegbe and Obimo have also been documented (Itanyi, 2013).

In Lejja, archaeological investigations include: a comparison of early iron technology in Umundu and Lejja by Anozie (1979); a study on Iron Age archaeology in Lejja by Eze-Uzomaka (2009); followed by 'a new date for iron smelting in Lejja' by Eze-Uzomaka (2008); and a detailed study with excavations at Amaovoko, Lejja by Eze-Uzomaka (2010). There is also a study on the influence of iron on the life of Lejja people by Eze-Uzomaka (2009). And most recently, Ngonadi (2017) carried out several excavations with the aim of identifying early agricultural communities using Archaeo-botanical methods. These studies contributed immensely to the Igbo archaeology scholarship, but it seems little or no study had been done to interrogate the impact on and expectations of communities from archaeological investigations, albeit immaterial. Hence, the timing of this study could not be more urgent.

This study sets out to present the expectations of community members from archaeological investigations in Lejja. The study then presents the reality on ground; the impacts of archaeological investigations in Lejja. Findings from this study shall contribute answers to these significant questions which are currently missing in literature: do communities have expectations from archaeologists carrying out archaeological investigations in their communities? What is the nature of these expectations? Are these expectations being met? If yes, how? And if no, why? Finally, how can the expectations of host communities be managed by archaeologists during the field investigation planning process? These questions border so much on 'community archaeology' or 'public archaeology' – an area of archaeology that is only now gaining much-needed scholarly attention theoretically and practically (Atalay, 2012; Schmidt & Pikirayi, 2016), especially in developing nations like Nigeria, where archaeology is not given due attention.

According to Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez (2015), public archaeology is both a disciplinary practice and a theoretical position that can be expressed through the democratization of archaeological investigations, through communication with and involvement of the public. Many models for practicing public or community archaeology have been postulated by many scholars in recent past. Notably, Merriman (2004) offered the 'deficit model' and the 'multiple perspectives model'; the former encourages expert archaeologists to educate the wider public on how to properly appreciate archaeology, and the latter encourages archaeological practices to add value to people's lives, while stimulating their thought, emotion and creativity. Quite similar to Merriman's models are those postulated by Holtorf (2007, 109): the 'education model', the 'public relations model' and the 'democratic model'. The 'education model', like Merriman's 'deficit model', seeks that archaeologists inform the public about the importance of their past and the value the archaeologist's occupation adds to it. The 'public relations model' advocates that archaeologists improve their public image in order to attract socio-political and economic support. Holtorf's third model, the 'democratic model' proposes that every member of the public be supported to "develop their own enthusiasm and 'grassroots' interest in archaeology" (Holtorf, 2007, 119).

Reflecting on the works of Merriman and Holtorf, Matsuda and Okamura (2011, 6) also proposed four different theoretical approaches to public archaeology: 'educational', 'public relations', 'critical' and 'multi-vocal'. All these various models and approaches to the practice of public archaeology converge on one basic point – how archaeological investigations can benefit the public, particularly host communities, and gain more support from them. That is, the archaeology discipline needs to be welcomed, understood and appreciated by non-experts and other members of the public in order for its investigations to run smoothly and yield better results for all. And so, through the lens of the people of Lejja community, we juxtapose the expectations of host communities from archaeological investigations with the impacts of those investigations.

Archaeological investigations in Nigeria have concentrated much on prehistoric technological innovations of man. Such enquiries have ranged from iron working (smithing and smelting) and settlement patterns, to indigenous knowledge systems and

technologies. In south-eastern Nigeria, archaeological enquiries mostly revolve around the Nsukka axis because of the large deposits of evidence of early iron working. For example, several archaeological investigations in Lejja have concentrated on iron smelting and its impact on the lives of the people and their environment (Anozie, 1979; Eze-Uzomaka, 2008, 2009 & 2010; Ngonadi, 2017). Most of these studies have aimed at reconstructing the history of these communities, whereas little or no effort has been dedicated towards assessing the impact of such archaeological investigations on host communities. Due to poor perception of archaeological inquiries or investigations, people in these communities rarely appreciate the archaeological resource(s) in their lands. This poor perception has also led to cases of hostilities from host communities towards archaeological field investigations. As noted in a report from the University of Nigeria's Archaeology and Tourism Students' Field school at Obimo in 2014, some youths from Obimo chased the students away after demanding exorbitant monetary compensation before the commencement of any form of archaeological investigation in their community, despite earlier discussions and consultations.

Against this backdrop, the need to evaluate communities' perception of archaeological investigations and its impact becomes imperative. In this case, what are the impacts of archaeological inquiries or investigations on Lejja? What expectations do the people of Lejja have for the archaeological investigations in their community? How can archaeologists meet these expectations? These questions form the core motivations for this study.

2.0 Dunoka-Lejja

Dunoka is one of the thirty-three (33) villages that make up Lejja. The popular *Otobo Dunoka* is the location of the iconic square, where giant slag blocks numbering over 800 are located. These slag blocks weigh between 34-57kg, measure up to 50cm in diameter, and are above 40cm in height (Eze-Uzomaka, 2009; Okafor, 1999). Lejja is located 14 kilometres from Nsukka and the people are predominately Igbos. It is a community in Nsukka Local Government area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Lejja is home to over 80,000 people, an estimate from Nigeria's last National census in 2006 (Opata and Apeh, 2016). Figure 1 below shows the location of Dunoka in Lejja.

This study is limited to Dunoka village in Lejja. The village was selected because it is the epicentre of archaeological investigations in Lejja, due to high presence of slag blocks in the village square, locally called *Otobo Dunoka*. Moreover, Dunoka village has attracted enormous scholarly attention, particularly archaeological investigations, from different individuals and groups.

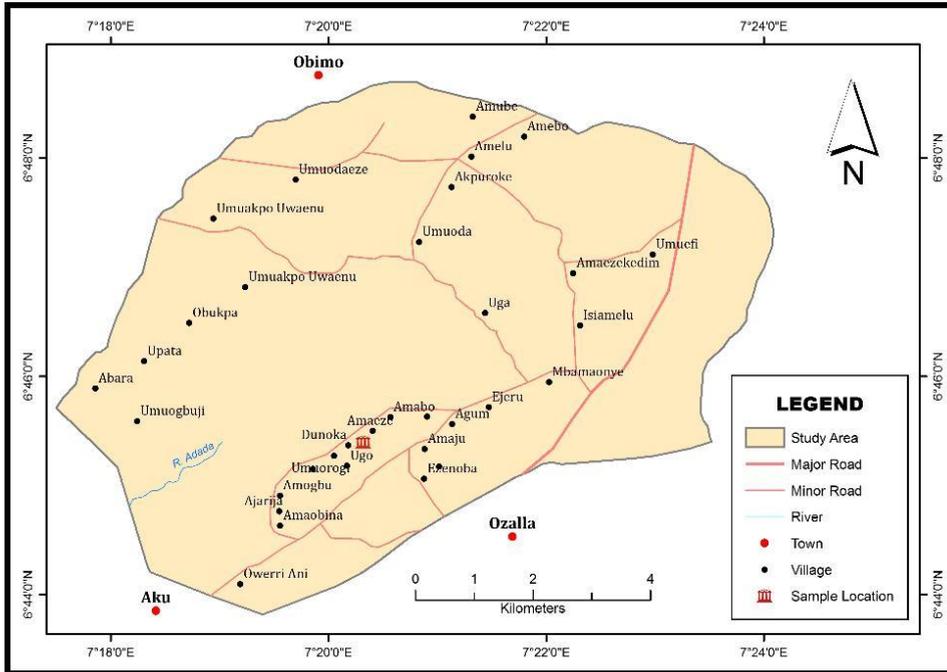


Fig. 1: Map showing the study area. (Source: Google Earth)

3.0 Research method

Qualitative approach was used in this study, comprising key informant interviews and Focus-Group Discussions (FGD) as methods of data collection. In the former, the key informants included the village chiefs and the elderly. And the latter comprised of the village elders (men and women), and the youth. The FGD was held in the village square, *Otobo Dunoka*; this traditional setting meant a disaggregated sitting arrangement, where the women sat different from the men – according to custom. The FGD had one panel with two sessions divided by a 20-minute refreshment break. There were 14 participants in the panel, including four women and 10 men. The four women were all elderly (between 50 and 80 years of age), but the men included four young persons (between 22 and 35 years of age) and six elderly persons (between 50 and 85 years of age). The interviews examined the opinions of key informants who are very knowledgeable on the subject based on recommendations by community members, and due to their age (>50) and status (i.e. village chief). The interview process had a total number of five respondents – four men and one woman. The respondents were identified at or in the immediate vicinity of their households. The interview questions included demographic questions to determine age and occupation (excluding questions regarding level of education because these were deemed irrelevant). This was followed by interactive open-ended questions stemming from the study’s objectives.

Both the FGD and the interviews were conducted in the language most preferred by the respondents, which was also within the linguistic range of the researchers, including Igbo, Nigerian pidgin English and English. A good number of the interviews were recorded, and those not in English were translated during the transcription. The number of respondents only reflect those that were available during, and willing to partake in, the research process. These two principal methods were used to elicit information and were considered best in order to triangulate and validate data gathered from literature. Equally, the results were presented and analysed thematically, a common way of data presentation and analysis in qualitative studies (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Community Expectations from Archaeological Investigations in Lejja

Unsurprisingly, host-communities have numerous expectations from visitors, let alone archaeologists who intend to ‘dig’ on their land. For mere visitors, these expectations usually border on respect for local norms and customs, as well as peaceful coexistence. But these expectations move up a notch when it comes to archaeological investigations. As found in this study, the expectations of the people of Dunoka from various archaeological investigations, past and present, border on three core things; respect for local laws and customs, adequate information/updates on the archaeological investigation and socio-economic benefits. We have taken the liberty to divide these expectations into three categories – ‘before’, ‘during’, and ‘after’ the archaeological investigation.

4.1.1 Before the Archaeological Investigation (Pre-field)

Before any archaeological investigations begin, we found that the community expect one key thing; adequate information. The community expects to be notified and adequately informed on the nature, objective, and scope of any impending archaeological research. According to the informants, the people are not usually informed of archaeologists’ visit to their community. And even when they are informed, they do not know the purpose in details of such visits, nor how long they will be seeing the ‘strangers’ (mainly archaeologists) for. An informant narrated an instance where, “one day, I woke up to go and farm and I found some people with fancy tools digging my neighbour’s land. I looked at them suspiciously and my suspicion was only cleared when I saw my neighbour, who told me that he had given them the go-ahead to be on his farmland” (Ugwu, personal communication, 17/09/2018). The informant went on to say that her neighbour could not actually explain to her the exact purpose of the “digging” going on, only mentioning that she was duly compensated.



Plate 1: The respondents and the researchers (Source: Authors)

4.1.2 During the Archaeological Investigation

During the archaeological investigation proper, there are different expectations from the community. In this case, the people of Lejja said they expect certain socio-economic benefits from archaeological investigations. This was by far the most re-occurring expectation that was recorded from the interviews and the FGD. The informants explained such socio-economic benefits to include: sourcing of food, accommodation (where necessary) and other basic commodities from within the village; temporary paid employment as field assistants; and special admission quotas for their indigenes who may decide to study archaeology at the University of Nigeria. The informants believe that because of the unique role their community plays in the reconstruction of Igbo history and world archaeology, special consideration should be given to Lejja indigenes during the admission process of the University of Nigeria, especially in the department of Archaeology and Tourism or History. According to Mr. Eze Hyacinth, “training indigenes of Dunoka village to become archaeologists in the near future means that they would one day lead a team for more archaeological investigations in our community and it will be a thing of pride for us” (pers. comm., 17/09/2018). Another informant added that “there are some secrets held by, and shared only to, members of the community that such a person can benefit from, when they visit to ask all these your questions” (Mammah, pers. comm., 17/09/2018). It is not difficult for one to see how such special considerations will contribute to the overall social status and reputation of the community.

The informants opined that when archaeologists source their foods and basic commodities from within Lejja, instead of the current practice of ferrying these items along with them from elsewhere, there will be direct impact on the economic and financial lives of the people. One informant said that meeting this expectation will make their traders particularly happy “when they hear that those archaeologists are coming again to spend some time in our community” (Eze, pres. Comm., 17/09/2018). In the

same vein, the informants expect that archaeologists employ their youths to carry out temporary and basic duties that require minimal skills (e.g. digging, clearing of bushy areas and washing of materials). This can be done with supervision from the professionals and “will help add money to our pockets during the period, so we can never forget you or the job you did” (Ejike, pers. comm., 17/09/2018). Another informant, veering away from the financial angle, gave an educational benefit that such practice could bring: “many atimes, we do not understand what you guys are doing there, and even when you explain it to us, we still don’t get it. But when we join you in doing the small small things here and there, we will be able to understand you better and faster” (Okoh, pers. comm., 17/09/2018). This educational point made here is very vital because the leading cause of squabbles or hostilities between archaeologists and host-communities stem from a fundamental lack of understanding of the archaeologists’ intentions. So, engaging members of the community and involving them in the entire process quickens their understanding and they are able to better communicate to the others what is going on. This means that the investigation will go on smoothly without any fear of being misconstrued or of mischievous misrepresentations.

4.1.3 After the Archaeological Investigation (Post-field)

After an archaeological investigation has been concluded, the expectation of the community changes. Many archaeologists may be aware of the two previous categories of expectation, but certainly not all of them act to meet them. In the same vein, not many archaeologists are aware that the people still have expectations from them after they conclude their investigations. In this case, the people have a spectrum of expectations from concluded archaeological investigations. The informants expect: a public seminar on the archaeological relics gotten from the community; the setting up of a structure where physical or pictorial displays of archaeological recoveries from Lejja can be housed and exhibited for tourism and research purposes; and updating community members on further findings (such as C14 dates) from any excavations or archaeological inquiry carried out in their community.

At the end of the archaeological investigation in the community, the informants expect that they will be informed on the outcome of the exercise. They expect that they are given the same level of adequate information that they received prior to the commencement of the investigation. In such a meeting, they expect that the objectives of the researchers prior to the investigation are revisited and then, the results gathered are shared in the very basic terms. According to the informants, the reason for this is to gain the basic knowledge about whether or not the exercise was a success and to learn if there were hindrances to the researchers achieving their set objectives. An informant, Mr Eze Hyacinth, stressed that “these will help us to be able to explain to anyone who asks us ‘what did those people find from your land?’ or ‘what are those stones that those people are taking away?’ We can say to them ‘that’s not gold, that is slags’” (pers. comm., 17/09/2018).

In the same vein, the people also added that they expect that they be informed whenever in the future there are new findings or updates on a past archaeological investigation. As one informant puts it, “even if it’s a simple bulletin, or A4 paper, we will appreciate it.

We will translate it and read it out loud for our people to hear and be proud” (Onyishi, pers. comm., 17/09/2018). Another informant added that she wished her family’s name can be mentioned one day like those of Igbo-Isaiah or Igbo-Jonah from Thurstan Shaw’s excavations in Igbo-Ukwu, Anambra state (see Shaw, 1975).

A final expectation gathered from the study is the setting up of a structure where physical or pictorial displays of archaeological recoveries from Lejja can be housed and exhibited for tourism and research purposes. The informants complained that, except for the lumps of cylindrical slag that adorned their village square (*Otobo Dunoka*), other little artefacts that have been discovered during past archaeological investigations have not been presented to them. They add that when their children ask certain questions or when other tourists visit the community, they are only able to point to a few things that tries yet fails to adequately support their “tales”. Meanwhile, many of such materials that could support the narration of their cultural history have been unearthed during previous archaeological investigations but none have been given back to the community. They averred that items like potsherds, tuyere debris, furnace wall fragments and other such evidences of iron working can be displayed in a small structure set up to act as a mini-museum for their children, tourists and other visitors. When asked who they expect to provide funds for setting up such structure, one informant said “let them first agree to what we are asking and the issue will solve itself from there. I am sure we can source the funds elsewhere if the archaeologists cannot attract such funds by themselves” (Ugwu, pers. comm., 17/09/2018).

The above opinions make one to ponder how these expectations can be met, and how these expectations criss-cross with the ethics and objectives of many archaeological investigations. Many scholars have explored these questions, drawing instances from various contexts around the world (Schmidt and Pikirayi, 2016; Baker, 2016; Humphris & Bradshaw, 2017). Particularly, it has been noted that conflicting expectations, funding and sustainability remain as issues mitigating community participation in archaeology, which is becoming increasingly popular (Baker, O’Carroll, Duffy, Shine, Mandal & Mongey, 2019). The scenario is similar in Nigeria, where archaeological investigations are poorly funded. Nevertheless, understanding the afore written expectations will guide future archaeological exercise in study communities and beyond.

4.2 The Reality: Impacts of Archaeological Investigations in Lejja

This study went further to understand how archaeological investigations in Lejja have benefited the community or otherwise ever since. The reality on ground, when reconciled with the expectations of the community stated earlier, will then enable one to make definite plans towards bridging any observed gaps, especially in the context of community or public archaeology. As stated above, the expectations of the Lejja community border on three core things – respect for local customs and norms, adequate information/knowledge on archaeological investigations and socio-economic benefits.

According to data gathered, the respondents claim to have had no knowledge of what archaeology meant until archaeologists started coming into their community over four decades ago. That is, archaeological investigations since the late1960s have benefited

them with basic knowledge about archaeology. They referred to late archaeologists like Fred Anozie and Ben Ozommadu as the foremost archaeologists that came into the community. Ben Ozommadu, an archaeological technician at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was said to have been the one who first saw the giant slag blocks and reported to Mr. Anozie. An informant claimed that, “they were among the first set of archaeologists that set foot here in Lejja community, in the company of other white-men. And they dig around some places in Dunoka village”. The informants could not vividly remember the years these excavations took place. They only made the point that such archaeological investigations afforded them the opportunity to learn basic things about archaeology. However, there were claims that their knowledge of archaeology remains insufficient, especially when it comes to knowledge of the archaeological investigations and excavations proper. An informant added that “although I know the people are archaeologists, I usually cannot explain to another person what they have come to do or why they are doing the things they are doing”. This exposes a gap in communication of research objectives and inadequate information on research activities by archaeologists – a prominent feature in the expectation of the people before and after archaeological investigations as discussed above.

The respondents were of the view that they were yet to receive any socio-economic benefits from the archaeological investigations carried out so far in Lejja community. They complained that archaeologists always come with their own foods, drinks and other basic commodities, and buy almost nothing from within the community. Truly, this rare opportunity to mix with the locals and appreciate their culture, especially through food, is often not utilised. The respondents were quick to attribute this to a possible variation in taste and appeal of those archaeologists, with one of them saying “they may not be familiar with our food and so they may be afraid to taste it” (Obodo, pers. comm., 17/09/2018). The issue of accommodation via room rentals, as a way of contributing to the overall economy of the people, also came up. The respondents claimed that archaeologists seldom sleep in their community during excavation, instead “they prefer to come to the excavation sites in the morning and go in the evening” (Ugwu T., pers. comm. 17/09/2018). Also, some were quick to remind us of an exception, where in 2016 and 2017, some archaeologists were accommodated in the house of Mr. Boniface Ugwoke Nwani (*Eze-Lejja*) in Dunoka village, but these archaeologists did not carry out their excavation within the village.

The study found that on occasions, indigenes of the community were hired as laborers to assist during excavations. All the respondents were of the opinion that archaeological investigations in their community was yet to attract any concrete project to them. When reminded that such was the duty of governments and not archaeologists, they quickly dropped the opinion. When pressed, the respondents gave inconclusive and diverse opinions on the possibility that the numerous archaeological investigations in their community may have indirectly stirred the attention of the government. The respondents were showed an April 2018 news report from Vanguard Newspaper, where efforts by Dr. Eze-Uzomaka Pamela, a prominent archaeologist with many works in the community, whose presentation had led the Enugu state government to take steps towards developing the community. The news report read in part:

“The Culture and Tourism Commissioner announced that the council had in a quick response to the presentation, set up a 3-man committee that would visit the site and devise the best means of protecting it “as a world heritage centre”. She added that the state government intended to construct the road leading to the site to be able to exploit its natural contents as ‘a tourism site and money-spinning venture’, stressing that a lot of other benefits were accruable from it” (Nwafor, Vanguard Newspaper [Online], 2018).

All the respondents were both surprised and excited to learn of the news report. However, some acknowledged that those were the usual promises by government that end up not being fulfilled. The point being made here, however, was to demonstrate to the respondents that through such little advocacy efforts, archaeological investigations could put many communities like Lejja in the limelight, and can influence government development plans. The study also found that archaeological investigations in Lejja have attracted the attention of different secondary schools to embark on excursions to the community. Scholars too from various other disciplines, especially Anthropology, History and Geology have also taken trips to the community. Such visits, stemming from increasing attention brought about by archaeological investigations, have led to recent conservation efforts targeted at the *Otobo-Dunoka*, its surroundings and other sites in the community where important archaeological resources have been discovered.

Interestingly, the respondents opined that archaeological investigations in the community have yielded various cultural benefits, especially by stimulating their cultural pride in the ingenuity displayed by their ancestors through iron working technology. The respondents claimed to be aware that they are home to one of the earliest evidences of iron smelting around Africa but they were uncertain of the dates – another indictment on the information gap created by archaeological investigations. It is evident from their responses that published archaeological investigations and discoveries have instilled cultural consciousness in the people. This consciousness has in turn stimulated an unprecedented appreciation for cultural relics, culminating in efforts to conserve and preserve archaeological resources wherever and whenever they are found. This is not to say that the people had no cultural affinity to these archaeological resources prior to archaeological investigations. In fact, the famous village square, *Otobo-Dunoka*, continues to play socio-political and cultural functions in Lejja (Eze-Uzomaka, 2009; Agu & Opata, 2012).

4.3 Bridging the Gap through Community Archaeology.

The data gathered and discussed above show certain gaps between the expectations of the host-community and the reality of the archaeological investigations themselves. One finds that while some expectations are met, many others are not. This observed gap is a matter of approach rather than intentions. That is, the archaeological investigations that have been carried out in Lejja had little or no objective dedicated to learning of and meeting the expectations of the people. And this is no fault of the archaeologists themselves but that of the discipline, archaeology, and the way it is particularly practiced in the south-eastern region and Nigeria at large. Community expectations in an

archaeological investigation can principally be adequately managed under ‘community’ or ‘public’ archaeology. But studies and researches in archaeology have only recently begun to give a much-needed attention to ‘community archaeology’, ‘public archaeology’ or ‘applied archaeology’ (Marshall, 2002; Matsuda & Okamura, 2011; Monshenska & Dhanjal, 2011; Atalay, 2012; Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015; Schmidt & Pikirayi, 2016). These terms may differ in their theoretical underpinnings but they share the same concern for a smooth archaeologist-community relationship. Also, their approaches may differ slightly but their objectives and outcomes always culminate in creating a successful archaeological investigation with adequate community engagement from start to finish.

Community archaeology’s most important distinctive characteristic is the relinquishing of at least partial control of an archaeological investigation to the local community. This also involves allowing them to make critical decisions on research directions, priorities and objectives (Marshall, 2000: 212). Community archaeology enriches the archaeology discipline because it encourages archaeologists to study the past through the lens of the present community themselves. Marshall further notes that, certainly, taking this approach may alter already-set objectives and research designs, but that is a small price to pay for the salvation of the future of archaeology. Community engagement in archaeological investigations can also be “frustrating, time consuming and challenging in unanticipated ways – but it is also rewarding in ways that transcend narrow academic accolades” (2002, 217). Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez (2015) advocated that archaeologists should be more interested in considering and accommodating the values and needs of host-communities than they are in fulfilling the requirements of funding bodies. By implication, it seems that archaeologists may be aware of some of these expectations, but they are limited by budget, especially when the archaeological investigations are funded externally.

Atalay (2012: 2) noted that one area that have raised ethical dilemmas, evoked tensions as well as opened up opportunities is archaeologists’ engagement with “indigenous, descendant, and local communities”. This engagement is also changing the way archaeologists relate with the public at large, with issues like heritage management and community collaboration now getting serious scholarly attention. Atalay (2012: 56) went further to suggest a Community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach, with the primary principle being collaboration between archaeologists and community members. Atalay’s CBPR approach is based off of Wondolleck and Yaffee’s (2000, xiii) description of collaborative relationship using Barbara Grey’s three defining criteria: the pooling of appreciative tangible resources, e.g., money, labour or information; the collaboration of two or more stakeholders; and the ability to “solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually.” Atalay’s CBPR framework is not necessarily the only collaborative approach that exists. There are other options that have also been successful, which archaeologists can explore in their sincere quest to manage community expectations.

Suzie (2017: 16) echoes this, noting that the term “community archaeology” can be applied in various ways to different scenarios and projects, especially when considering the diversity of different communities and individuals that can become involved in the

entire process. Suzie (2017: 14) explored some of the definitional challenges of pinning down what community archaeology is, and then discussed examples of types of engagement from three different countries. In her submission, she notes that in the end, no matter what approach one adopts, there still are segments of communities who “remain less engaged, sometimes because they are hard to reach, and sometimes because they are simply not interested” (2017: 22). This study, however, found that the people of Lejja were interested in learning and were not “difficult to reach”, yet they were not engaged properly before, during or after archaeological investigations in their community. In salvaging such a situation and having better engagement with the community in the future, Suzie (2017: 26) suggests that archaeologists “support genuine community empowerment and to avoid superficial involvements that are only driven by a need for obtaining impressive-sounding, but tokenistic, outcomes or statistics”.

Humphris and Bradshaw (2017: 204) presented initial analyses of anonymous questionnaires conducted as part of a diverse programme by UCL Qatar of community engagement in an archaeometallurgical research project at the Royal City of Meroe, Sudan. Their questionnaires qualitatively evaluated “residents’ knowledge about, outlook on, and experience with local archaeological sites, to generate an understanding of the social fabric within which archaeology is situated”. Statistical analyses of their questionnaire highlighted the diverse nature of local communities, and how numerous economic, social, political and historical factors influence their outlooks on, experiences with and often-divergent knowledge of archaeology. A key takeaway from Humphris and Bradshaw’s research, for archaeologists hoping to achieve a successful community engagement during their next archaeological investigation, is that “an idealized audience for ‘community archaeology’ does not exist... Nevertheless, community engagement, leading to community archaeology, should form an integral part of an archaeological research programme from inception to completion” (2017: 213).

Series of archaeological investigations in Lejja has increased the people’s knowledge of archaeology. Even with evidence of inadequate community-based archaeology in Lejja, the people have benefitted from it in various ways, including the attraction of government’s attention to the community. This means that when archaeologists begin to integrate community collaborations in their research designs, many more feats can be achieved. Schmidt and Pikirayi (2016) put it succinctly when they noted that in an ideal ‘community archaeology’ or ‘public archaeology’, where the archaeologists are co-producers rather than leaders, contribute greatly to the protection and revitalization of local heritage. They opine that only a good community archaeology practice shall determine how Africa’s future generations learn about archaeology – a broader, more accessible, and more inclusive field. Schmidt and Pikirayi (2016) add that community-based archaeological investigations can yield shared resources and local knowledge; and that by democratizing the entire process, archaeological investigations can ameliorate any concerns, enhance host-communities’ way of life and help them build better futures. It is on this note that this study then makes the recommendations below.

Recommendations

In order to bridge the gap between host-community expectations and actual archaeological investigations, this study recommends the following:

1. A review of the practice of archaeological investigations in Lejja and other such local communities, to reflect adequate community engagement. This will involve learning of and integrating the host-community's expectations in the objectives and overall research designs/budget of future archaeological investigations. Sending a mini-report after each archaeological inquiry back to host communities is a key step in this process.
2. A collaboration between the Archaeological Association of Nigeria (AAN), Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) towards funding and erecting a small library or exhibition centre in Dunoka, Lejja. This can be supported with an online platform dedicated to discussions about Lejja and neighbouring iron working sites.
3. A further study to look into other communities where archaeological investigations have taken place and examine the impact of such archaeological investigations in relation to the expectations of the host-community. This will create a comparison of host-communities' expectations versus the actual impacts of archaeological investigations on various communities.

Conclusion

Otobo Dunoka has attracted a lot of archaeological investigations in Lejja. The people of Lejja expect three core things from archaeological investigations: respect for local customs and laws; adequate information on the entire process; and socioeconomic benefits. The various archaeological investigations conducted in Lejja over the years have done little or nothing to support or meet these expectations. Nevertheless, archaeological investigations in Lejja have raised the cultural consciousness of the people, and have drawn the attention of the government to the community. These investigations have also led to increasing pride and appreciation of their progenitors' ingenuity, showcased through the huge evidences of iron working technology. It is opined here that when archaeological investigations impact on or benefit the host communities, the requisite collaboration between locals and archaeologists everywhere will be further strengthened. Additionally, it is necessary that African archaeologists ensure a smooth collaboration between them and the host communities. This will enhance the practice of archaeology on the continent and further reposition it to solve African problems, rather than its current state of exclusion and elitist approach

It is pertinent to note that this study does not in any way encourage that host communities insist on making demands (usually money) before permitting archaeological investigations. It also does not imply that where demands have been made, that they all must be fulfilled. The intent of this study is to create a consciousness among field archaeologists to look out for avenues to measure and manage host-community expectations before, during and after archaeological investigations. It encourages archaeologists to look beyond 'fieldwork for publication', to 'fieldwork for posterity and

sociocultural betterment'. Archaeological investigations and inquires do not necessarily lead to financial or monetary gains but little gestures like buying food and 'essential needs' from the locals, and educating them on the discoveries made, can go a long way to sustain the necessary bond between host-communities and archaeologists. Also, where possible, keeping some of the discoveries, even if it is pictorial – which indeed belong to them and make up their heritage – with the host community is one very good way for them to 'benefit' from archaeological investigations. This will create a scenario where other communities are keen to call the attention of archaeologists to the interesting aspects of cultural heritage in their communities. And they will give all the required support during the resulting archaeological investigations.

Finally, archaeology can be inclusive and mutually beneficial to both host-communities and archaeologists when the community is adequately carried along. Also, community-based archaeological investigations (such as is advocated for here) can help archaeological projects run smoothly, therefore reaching their potential within the diverse contexts of host communities. It is hoped that archaeologists, especially those who still face challenges in their host communities, will work alongside other relevant cultural organizations to embrace this opportunity.

Declaration of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of this article.

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