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Igbo Ukwu Altar Stand: *A Possible Eri Link*

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE
IMAGE

The Igbo Ukwu Altar Stand, dated 11th Century.

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According to Umunri, their great father Nri, the first son of Eri, was told by Chineke to sacrifice and bury his first son and daughter and out of their graves grew cocoyam (daughter) and yam (son).

There is a possibility that this altar stand found at Igbo Ukwu (in lands that were once part of Oraeri) which features a male and female figure (pictured), dated to no later than the 11th century CE, may point to that origin story. The marks on the face of the figures bear resemblance to ichi marks which were given to first sons and daughters among Umunri.

Ichi marks were related to the sun and the moon and the groove marks were likened to ogba ubi, farm furrows, emphasising the role of agriculture in Nri legend as the first son and daughters faces were also marked with ichi. There are also similar grooves found on the side of the object.

Umunri Oral traditions and archeological at Igbo Ukwu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuka Odike

I'm a dedicated civil engineer with a passion for infrastructure development and community empowerment. With a strong background in engineering, my work focuses on creating sustainable solutions for urban and rural development projects. Outside of my professional career, I'm deeply interested in Igbo history and culture. I actively explores ways to impact society by using historical lessons to inspire and educate others about the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, aiming to bridge tradition and modern development.



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