



Ozi Ikòrò

AFRICAN HISTORY · CULTURE · INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Ngodo:

The Oldest Settlement in Nigeria Before Nok Civilisation

By Idenze Ezeme

Ozikoro.com · Anthropology and Ethnography · 3 min read

FEATURE
IMAGE

**Figure 1. Map of Abia State showing
the location of the study area in the
green circle.**

Article image · caption retained from the published Ozikoro article



Ozi Ikòrò
NGODO

Ngodo: The Oldest Settlement in Nigeria Before Nok Civilisation

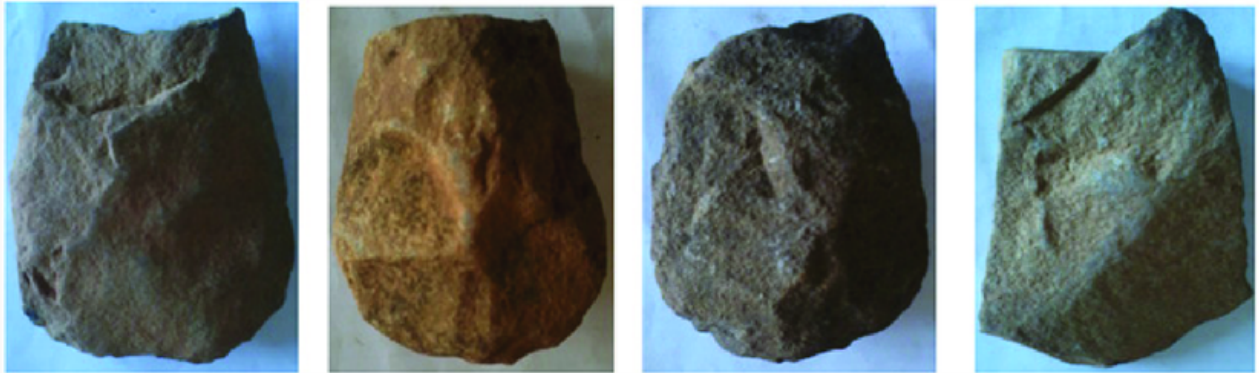
By Idenze Ezeme · Anthropology and Ethnography · Ozikoro.com

Ngodo, also known as the Ngodo Ancient Kingdom, is an important archaeological and historical site in Uturu, in the Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria.

The site is famous for Stone Age tools and provides much information about how early humans lived in West Africa, where evidence shows that people lived up to 250,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence indicates that Ngodo was an important place. It was also the largest handaxe factory in Nigeria and possibly the world.

Ngodo is among the most vital archaeological discoveries in Nigeria. It is a cultural and historical treasure for the Igbo people and, indeed, for the entirety of West Africa. Its significance is comparable to that of the Nok civilization, making it one of the oldest known kingdoms in the country.

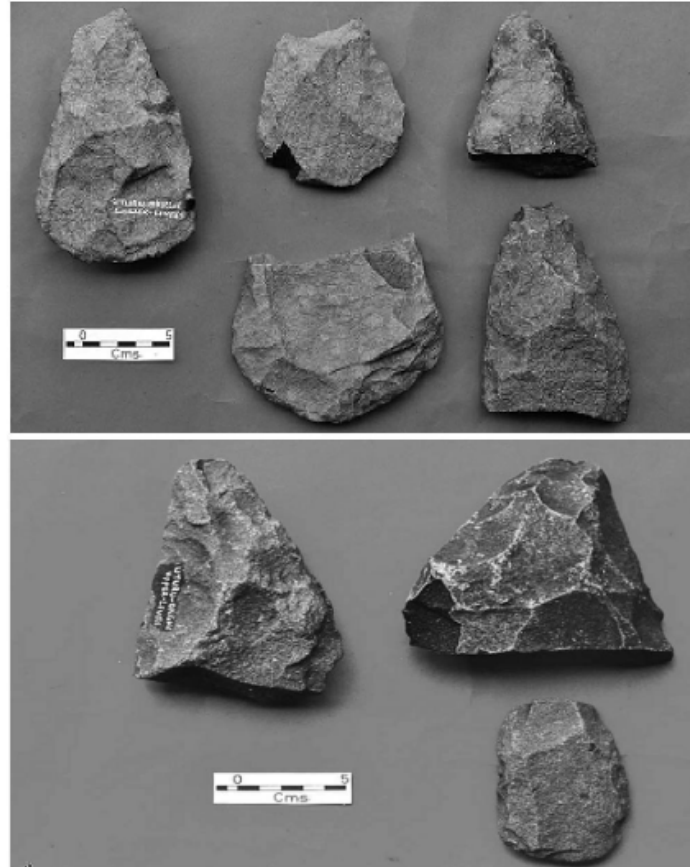
The Ngodo site is on a dolerite ridge and was excavated between 1977 and 1981. Local inhabitants informed archaeologists of the site for many years, knowing about the unique artefacts scattered across the area. This collaboration between local knowledge and scientific research proved the importance of including the community in discovering their archaeology.



Samples of broken Hand axes were found at the Ugwuele Industrial Site on the 20th of May, 2014.

The northern section of the site contained numerous stone tools related to the Acheulean industry. Tools recovered include:

- Handaxes: These accounted for over 80% of the tools recovered. Although most were broken, their large number and diversity indicate that the place was a significant tool factory.
- Cleavers, Picks, and Sidescrapers: These tools were used for cutting, shaping, and working with materials.
- Triangular Preforms, Flakes, and Cores: The large number of these unfinished tools shows that Ngodo was mainly a place for making tools. Finished tools were probably taken to other locations for refinement or usage.



Artefacts from Uturu (Ibadan 1978).

The site's classification as Acheulean is paramount to understanding early human technology. Its tools are amongst the longest-lasting cultural traditions in human history. The site is famous because of its role in making big cutting tools.

Stratigraphic Layers of Human Activity

Archaeological studies identified three distinct layers of occupation. The evolution of human activities at the site over millennia can be understood as follows:

The oldest layer contains quartz flakes, small stone tools, and sharp points. These artefacts represent the initial phases of human occupation, with tools for basic survival tasks such as hunting and food processing.

This stratum showcases advanced craftsmanship, with polished stone axes, hoe-like tools, bored stones, and red ochre. The presence of red

pottery suggests early symbolic practices and potential agricultural advancements.

This layer contains grey pottery wares dating from 2935 BC to 15 AD. These artefacts indicate further societal development, including settled lifestyles, advanced food storage, and cultural diversification.

Cultural and Historical Relevance

The archaeological findings at Ngodo provide a distinct insight into the early history of the Igbo people and West Africa. Others argue that these discoveries challenge theories of external migration, supporting the idea that the Igbo people have an indigenous origin in Nigeria. This perception highlights just how vital Ngodo is as a cultural hub of Igbo civilization

Isiume Cave and Extended Human Activity.

Isiume Cave is located in Uturu and ranks among the oldest natural monuments in Nigeria. Its proximity to Ngodo shows that people regularly habited this area, and the cave might have sheltered the first settlers.

Comparisons with the Nok Civilization

The Nok civilization is celebrated for its high level of terracotta art and early iron smelting technology. However, Ngodo predates the Nok in terms of human habitation and tool-making.

Ngodo provides evidence of a booming Acheulean culture long before the rise of the Nok civilization, highlighting its position as one of the earliest cradles of human civilization in Nigeria.

- Shaw, T. (1978). *A Dictionary of Archaeology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cleere, H. (Ed.). (1984). *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Iweadighi, S. (n.d.). *Origin or Genealogy of the Igbo people of Nigeria*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Idenze Ezeme

Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



Ozi Ikòrò

History worth reading.

African history · culture · indigenous knowledge
