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OLD OYO POTTERY: FROM THE FIELD TO EXHIBITION

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This report describes how excavation at Old Oyo was organized to meet the needs for student training in the field and laboratory, and to provide materials for exhibition to increase public awareness of archaeology.

Le présent rapport décrit quelques-unes des fouilles et autres activités associées telles que la formation et la conscientisation du public. Le rapport relate ainsi comment la recherche a été organisée pour satisfaire aux besoins de formation aussi bien sur le terrain qu'en laboratoire, et comment ces deux champs d'activités ont été menés afin d'obtenir des matériaux pour une conscientisation du public. La stratégie adoptée pour répondre à l'objectif du programme de conscientisation, l'a été avec une exposition d'autant plus que le site n'a pas été ré-occupé après sa désertion au 19^e siècle. C'est maintenant une réserve forestière localisée loin de tout habitat important. Des matériaux du vieux projet Oyo ont été utilisés pour le montage de l'exposition afin d'informer le public sur ce que fait l'archéologie et comment l'archéologie est menée.

INTRODUCTION

This report is complementary to our earlier report on the ongoing archaeological research work on the site of Old Oyo (Sowunmi et al. 2004). The report describes a few of our excavations and other activities such as training and public awareness that are linked to our field research. Research, training and public awareness in our project are inseparably linked because of how we have organized our work, which we shall try to capture in the present report. The report therefore narrates how the decisions taken in the field were conditioned by the needs for training in both the field and laboratory, and how both field and laboratory activities were made to provide materials for public awareness.

Our current research at Old Oyo has provided another opportunity for us to face the problem of public perception of the discipline of archaeology in our society. If archaeology is to survive as a profession and as an academic discipline in our society, there is an urgent need to engage the public in a dialogue to explain the results of archaeological research. We can no longer afford the practice of ending our researches with academic publications which are limited to an audience of archaeologists and practitioners of related disciplines, and are not accessible to the general public.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

It would not be the first time that we engaged the public in archaeological research in Nigeria (see Folorunso 2001). In the earlier case at Ijaye Orile, an