

# Further Excavation of Amaovoko, Lejja, Nsukka, Nigeria.

*Felix Chami, Pamela Eze-Uzomaka, Joseph Mangut and Clement Bakinde*

## **Introduction**

This is an archaeological report of the work done at the site of Amaovoko in the ancient iron smelting center of Lejja, in the region of Nsukka, Nigeria. The geographical setting of the site and the Lejja area has already been published by Eze-Uzomaka (2009, 2010). The excavations were an extension of the trench excavated by Eze-Uzomaka (see 2010) identified as Trench 4. The work lasted for 2 weeks of August 2009 and it was also part of field school, training students from Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, who, most of them are undertaking Masters studies in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, The University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, both in Nigeria. The main purpose of the work was to establish cultural sequence for the region of Nsukka.

## **The Problem**

Two previous researches in Lejja area excavated two parts with major concentration of iron smelting materials, mainly large cylindrical slags with concentric rings suggesting repeated smelting with the unbroken furnace (Fig. 4:1). Controversial dates were obtained, suggesting that there were two periods of iron smelting, the earliest one dating back to between 1500 and 2000 BC; and another period dating between 400 BC and about AD 300. These results provide a long gap or missing link of about 1000 to about 1500 years. Such a gap could only be explained by a careful excavation of a site with undisturbed cultural sequence.



*Fig.4. 1: Cylindrical slag with concentric rings attached to the road cutting at Amaovoko.*