

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE OVERHANGS IN NSUKKA AREA SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

### Abstract

*Overhangs furnish man with shelter, safety, water and raw materials for making tools. They present desert conditions that are very good for the preservation of materials of past cultures. There is a preponderance of both rock and sand overhangs in Nsukka areas that beckon for archaeological investigation. This paper, which is a preliminary report on an on-going work, attempts to identify, document and project the overhang wonders in Nsukka area to the public. It also tries to characterize them and explain their values both in the past and in the present in order to place them in their proper socio-cultural milieu.*

### Introduction

Overhangs have long attracted the attention of archaeologists. This deep interest arises as a result of a number of factors: early men who could not build houses used overhangs as a source of meeting the need for shelter; and the overhangs, particularly the dry ones, preserve the human activities therein and could provide rich data for the reconstruction of cultures as well as the environment that supported such activities. As Wikipedia (2009) puts it, rock shelters are often important archaeologically. Because rock shelters form natural shelters from the weather, prehistoric humans often used them as living spaces, and left behind trash, tools and other artifacts. In a related manner, rock shelters were very easy for early prehistorians to locate and identify (Hayden 1993; 69), hence the concentration of research efforts on rock shelters.

Moreover, the places where these overhangs are located provide good raw materials which earlier inhabitants exploited to their advantages. Examples include rocks, water and grazing spots. In well preserved situations, they provide clues for the ways of lives of the occupants and immediate vicinity. Rock shelters often preserve archaeological evidence of long sequences of human occupations. This is because these settings were frequently used by prehistoric populations, and because these geological contexts protected deposits from erosion and scattering (Wikipedia 2009).

In addition, other activities on overhangs such as paintings, arts and engravings could be sifted, collected and studied by archaeologists, and recently could provide good materials for chronometric dating. No wonder overhangs have proved a good feature for archaeological investigations. The rock paintings for instance, provide valuable information on the kinds of animals hunted for food as well as on the methods of hunting them with spears, bows and arrows, and various types of traps (Sutton 1981:455). And in Nigeria the rock shelters at Rop, on the Bauchi Plateau, and Iwo Eleru in the Western State, have provided microlithic levels without pottery and ground stone axes stratified below microlithic levels which do have them. At Iwo Eleru a radio-carbon date of 9200 before our era has been obtained from near the base of the lower level, and the transition to the upper seems to be a little after 3000 before our era (Shaw 1981:624). Hayden (1993:69) rightly observed that it was not caves but rock shelters (rock overhangs) that were preferred for living places and then usually only during the most inclement weather. He maintains that overhangs act to concentrate artifactual remains in a very confined area and even more important, in the same confined area over hundreds and

thousands of years. The small areas provided by overhangs and the prolonged usage also provide excellent assemblage of sequences for monitoring the changes that occurred in cultures and cultural groups throughout the Paleolithic (Hayden 1993:96).

People tend to ascribe mystical powers, awesomeness to locations with overhangs. Some believe that they have powers that can heal, enhance farming activities, give children among others, and therefore reverence the places with taboos and sanctions put in place to avoid desecration of the gods. These have some social and cultural implications, which guide human behaviours in such areas and constitute important norms in the affected societies. This calls for proper study particularly in the relationship between these hallowed grounds and the people. Some of them also have shrines and deities attached to them. If the area is further studied, they could provide vital information on religion and spirituality.

Furthermore, overhangs especially archaeologically investigated ones have the magical power of drawing people to places where they are located. In this respect, they could be harnessed and packaged for tourism. In other words, they are considered easy money generators and could contribute immensely to the economic development of an area if given the desired attention.

In West Africa particularly Nigeria, a number of overhangs, especially rock overhangs, have been investigated. Prominent among them are: Rop, Aseye, and Birnin Kudu. Information from these rock shelters have increased our knowledge and understanding of the early history of Nigeria. Such information is vital to our country, Nigeria, if we shall see any tangible progress now and in the future. However, Southeastern Nigeria provides a good example of an area where overhangs flourish. Some of these have been identified, mapped and studied. Yet a great many of them are still to be identified, mapped and studied. Among those studied are the Ugwuagu, Isi Ugwu Obukpa and Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa rock shelters. Incidentally, all are rock overhangs or shelters.

In Nsukka area, except intermittent students' reports on the existence of some overhangs, only Isi Ugwu Obukpa rock shelter to the best of my knowledge, had been archaeologically identified, surveyed, mapped, excavated, studied and published (Hartle 1967). Even at that, information from the area remains scanty as it became a victim of the Nigeria- Biafra War. But there exist in the area countless number of overhangs. This work seeks to concertedly identify, survey, map, document and excavate some of these overhangs. However this paper aims at reporting the preliminary efforts towards that direction particularly inventorying them.

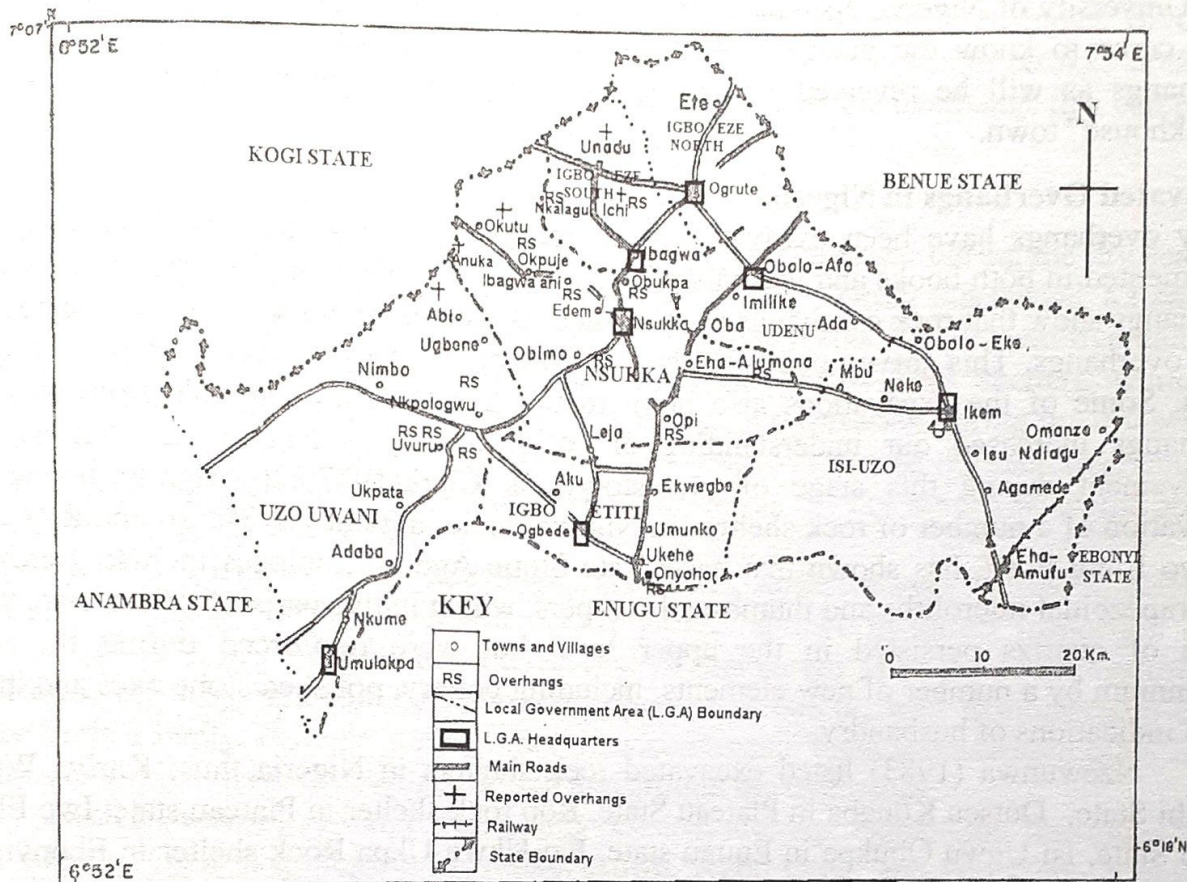


FIG 1: Local Government Areas, Towns and Villages, and Overhangs in Nsukka Area  
Source: Adapted with modification from Nwafor (1978:200)

## THE STUDY AREA

Nsukka area is situated in Enugu state, southeastern Nigeria. Southeastern Nigeria is presently called the southeast geopolitical zone courtesy of dividing Nigeria into six political zones in 1999. Nsukka area also constitutes one of the components of the cultural zones into which Enugu State is divided, the other being Enugu zone. The area comprises seven local government areas, namely: Nsukka; Igbo Etiti; Igbo-Eze South; Igbo-Eze North; Isi-Uzo; Udenu and Uzo-Uwani (fig1.)

The name Nsukka could refer to a town, a local government area, a senatorial zone, a district, a province, a division, a cultural zone, or group, a university community, and a proposed capital of Adada State. Presently, it is the mother-home and administrative headquarter of the seven local governments in the area.

Ofomata (1978:1) holds that the land surface of the Nsukka environment lies between Latitudes  $6^{\circ}18''$  and  $7^{\circ}06''$  North and Longitude  $6^{\circ}52''$  and  $7^{\circ}53''$  East, and covers a total surface area of approximately 3,961 Square Kilometers. Nsukka area shares common boundaries with Kogi and Benue States to the North, Enugu zone and Anambra state to the South, Ebonyi State and Enugu Zone to the East, and Kogi and Anambra states to the West. Geographically, they have been contiguous and settled in now derived savannah of Nigeria for thousands of years (Opata, 1997:63).

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka cited in Nsukka area, has popularized the area and many have come to know the place as the "University town". But because of the ubiquity of overhangs as will be revealed by this survey, the area might add to its acronyms, the "Rockhouse" town.

### **Excavated Overhangs in Nigeria**

Many overhangs have been excavated in several parts of Nigeria. These have been well documented in both books and journals within and outside Nigeria. The reports on excavated overhangs show that rock overhangs or rock shelters were better investigated to the neglect of sand overhangs. This survey points to the fact that other types of overhang exist other than rocks. Some of the excavations also point to the fact that the materials from these rock overhangs increased our understanding of early history of Nigeria as well as man's achievement during this stage of prehistory. As Clark(1977:226) rightly pointed out, excavation of a number of rock shelters in Nigeria, including ones at Mejiro and Rop as well as Iwo Eleru itself, has shown that basic Late Stone Age assemblages including crescentic and trapezoidal microliths and thumb-nail scrapers, which in this parts of Africa were usually made of quartzs persisted in the upper level but were reinforced during the second millennium by a number of new elements, including pottery, polished stone axes and in some cases indications of husbandry.

Nzewunwa (1983) listed excavated rock shelters in Nigeria thus: Kariya Wuro in Bauchi State, Dutsen Kongba in Plateau State, Rop rock shelter in Plateau state, Iwo Eleru in Ondo State, Isi Ugwu Obukpa in Enugu state, Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa Rock shelter in Ebonyi State, and Ugwuagu Rock shelter in Ebonyi state. Of these seven reported excavations, only one is located at Nsukka area. This portrays a lack of adequate inventory of our cultural heritage let alone a complete register in the country. This survey attempts to provide a record of every possible overhang existing in Nsukka area. Though this is a tall order, an acceptable account shall be achieved at the end of the exercise. Among the celebrated overhangs mostly reported archaeologically are the Rop rock shelter and Iwo-Eleru sites. According to Fagg (1972:1), remains of human skeleton were found in the fourth level, radio-carbon-dated to 25B.C.±120; it was overlain by microlithic materials. Subsequent reports show that large quantity of pottery was recorded in the site.

At Iwo- Eleru, Nzewunwa (1983:74) noted that a human skeleton in a bad state of preservation was found lying almost on the rock floor of the platform in a cavity between two boulders. Only the skull and long bones survived. These examples confirm that man occupied both the savannah and forest regions during the Stone Age period. In other words, early humans utilized different ecotones for sustenance. As this paper will illustrate, overhangs were located in both the forest and derived savannah area within Nsukka area.

A variety of rock shelters have been surveyed and test pit excavations conducted in southeastern Nigeria. It would seem that overhangs are common characteristics of the area. While writing on Okigwe and its environs, Okpoko and Ekechukwu (1993:55) cited Chigbu(1986) to remark that another important feature that has been located and studied is the Uhu-Nnem-chukwu rock shelter. This rock shelter is situated at Amune village in Ovim. Similarly, in Nsukka area, Hartle (1967:137) wrote that finally, the Isi Ugwu Obukpa rock

shelter was excavated which yielded among other things fourteen examples of crudely worked stone at some depth. Could this be a case of an isolated site in Nsukka area? This survey attempts to provide clues to the puzzle and report possible overhangs that can provide us with data relevant to the period under study.

### **Survey of Overhangs in Nsukka Area**

The archaeological survey of overhangs in Nsukka area commenced during the dry season of 2007 and intensified by December 2008 through April 2009. During this period, a total of 14 overhangs were located. Out of this, 10 were rock shelters, and 4 were sand overhangs. Of these rock shelters, one had been excavated- Isi-Ugwu Obukpa Rock shelters; while three have so far been located, mapped and studied, waiting for excavation during the dry season. I have visited the rest and taken photographs of them. I equally visited the sand overhangs and photographed them. I hope to visit all of them again during the dry season when the absolute locations are designed to take place.

In the words of Ashmore and Sharer (2006:91), surface survey is used to detect and record archaeological evidence present on the ground surface by direct inspection of the terrain at ground level. Accordingly, the essence of this survey is to locate the features and characterize them by determining their sizes, faces, soil colour, wall paintings and collect surface finds. Finally, I sought for oral traditions concerning them and assessed other human activities that might have taken place within and around the overhangs.

The 14 overhangs located during this research are: Api Ogba, Obu Ivu, Ogba Akuu, Okpu Amegu, Ogba Nkpologwu, Ori-Idike, Anwu, Agbo Orba, and Ishi Ugwu Obukpa or Ugwu Ogba. These constitute rock overhangs. Itete, Ugwu Ogba, Ogene Owu and Ntere comprise the sand overhangs. Other overhangs have been reported at the boundary between Itchi and Unadu, Abi, Onyoho, Anuka and Okwutu. This researcher is yet to visit them (see fig 1).

### **Description of Some of the Overhangs**

A detailed description of some of these overhangs will enhance a better understanding of their locations and appreciate their values in the social/cultural context of the people in particular and Nigeria in general. Some of them include:

**Api Ogba:** This is a massive rock overhang as well as a cave. It is located at the boundary communities of “Obodo Agu” in Nguru Nsukka and Isienu/Akpotoro in Obimo, all in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State (see fig 1). Its absolute location is  $06^{\circ}48' 27$  North and  $007^{\circ}22' 19$  East. The rock overhang faces west and has a capacity of sheltering up to 50-100 people at a time.

The thickness of the mass of lateritic materials within the overhang measures 30metres; the width is 8metres and the height is 10.2metres. The overhang has three visible layers. The first is reddish in colour, the second layer is yellowish while the third layer is darkish in colour. The colours are most of the time mixed as a result of water percolation. Within the overhang is a circular section of lining arranged with stones. It could be a sort of theatre.



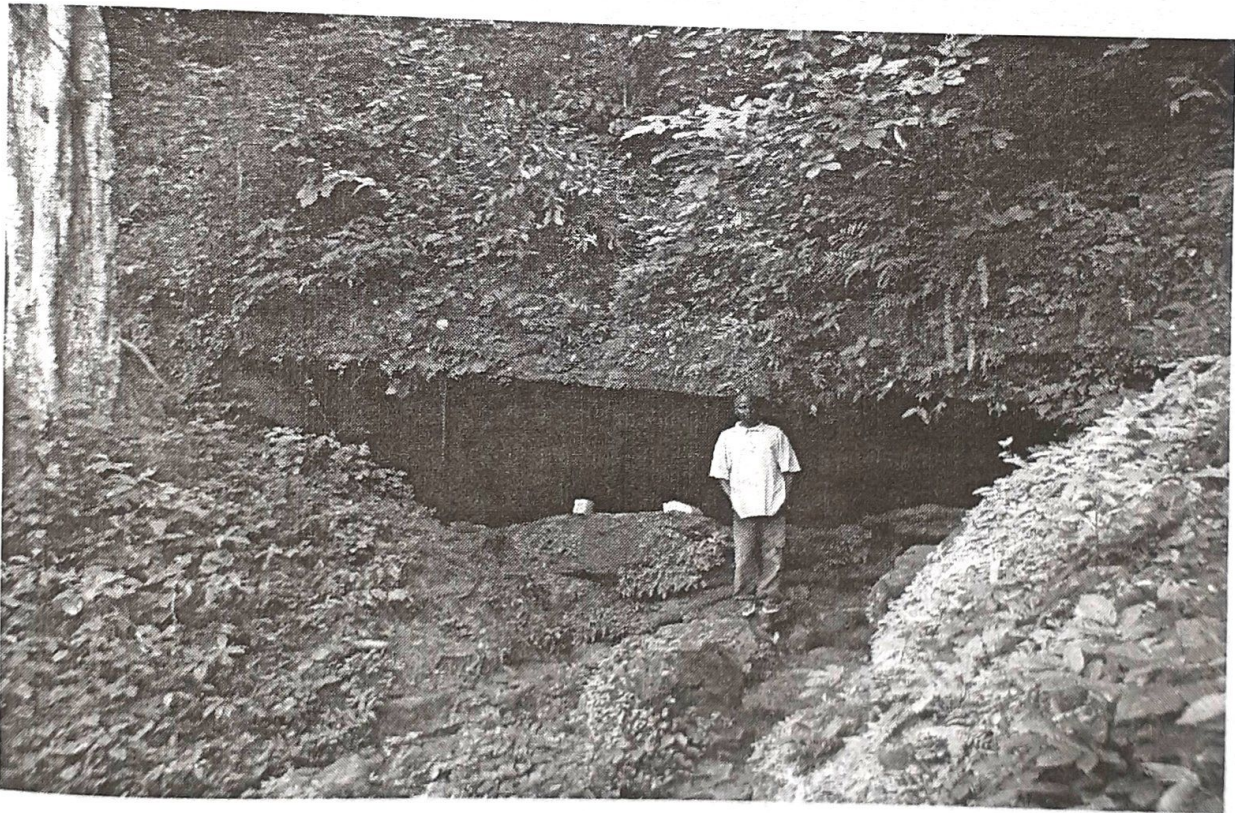
**PLATE 1: A VIEW OF API OGBA**

The overhang might have been used mainly for performances and masquerade rehearsals, religious purposes/hunting activities. There were evidences of contemporary human interaction which were shown by signs of hunting equipment and some bottles of undisclosed spirits. The vicinity of the rock shelter wears a derived savannah environment character. This is exemplified by a mixture of “Aji” tree and “Ube Okpoko” *Dacryodes edulis* with other stunted trees and grasses. There were also evidence of agriculture as wild yams- *D. cayensis* and *D. rotundata* were observed in large quantities there. Some deciduous plants like “Okpete” and “Aboshi”, Ukpaka etc. were seen. All these indicate that the valley created by the overhang had a stream. Erosion has created a gully on top of the overhang which is visible today.

This overhang has accumulated sufficient deposits or sediments that are good for archaeological study. A lot of surface finds were observed; some collected during the survey. This overhang has been selected for future archaeological investigation.

**Okpu Amegu:** The cap-shaped big rock overhang located at Amadimba, Akpa Edem in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state is owned generally by Amegu north. It has an estimated breadth of 5metres and a width of 8.2metres and faces north. It has an estimated breadth of 5metres based on the cavity covered by the water inside it. It has a roof thickness of 64cm. It trends from west to east where the rock extends further afield.

The overhang which has water inside it is situated right inside a forest at the foot of a hill. The water serves as a source of drinking water to the community and for farmers who tend their farmlands around the hilly environment. The soil colour of the place is dark with patches of light reddish soil at the western end where water rarely percolates. A narrow rugged rocky path way leads to the place.



**PLATE 2: OKPU AMEGU**

Economic crops such as Kola nut, bamboo trees etc. abound in the vicinity of the rock overhang. In the past, people worshipped within the overhang with whatever it demanded but presently such practice has been abandoned due to Christianity.

**Obu Ivu:** This semi-conical shaped rock shelter is located at Agu Ivu in Itchi, Igbo- Eze South Local Government Area (see fig 1). The name of the overhang in local parlance is Nkpuru Agu Ivu. It is found on top of a hill in a forest with the adjoining areas showing signs of derived savannah environment. Story had it that “Agu”- Leopard used its tongue to create the hollow on the rock in the hill by licking the stone to that extent. As a result, Agu used to live there, and the entire place was forested areas before.

The mouth of the enclosure was measured though it was not uniform but the height of the peak is 2.5metres while the width was 3.8metres. Inside the enclosure, other measurements were taken. The height at the centre was 1.57metres and the breadth was 2.6metres. It is reasonable to state that these were not absolute measurement.

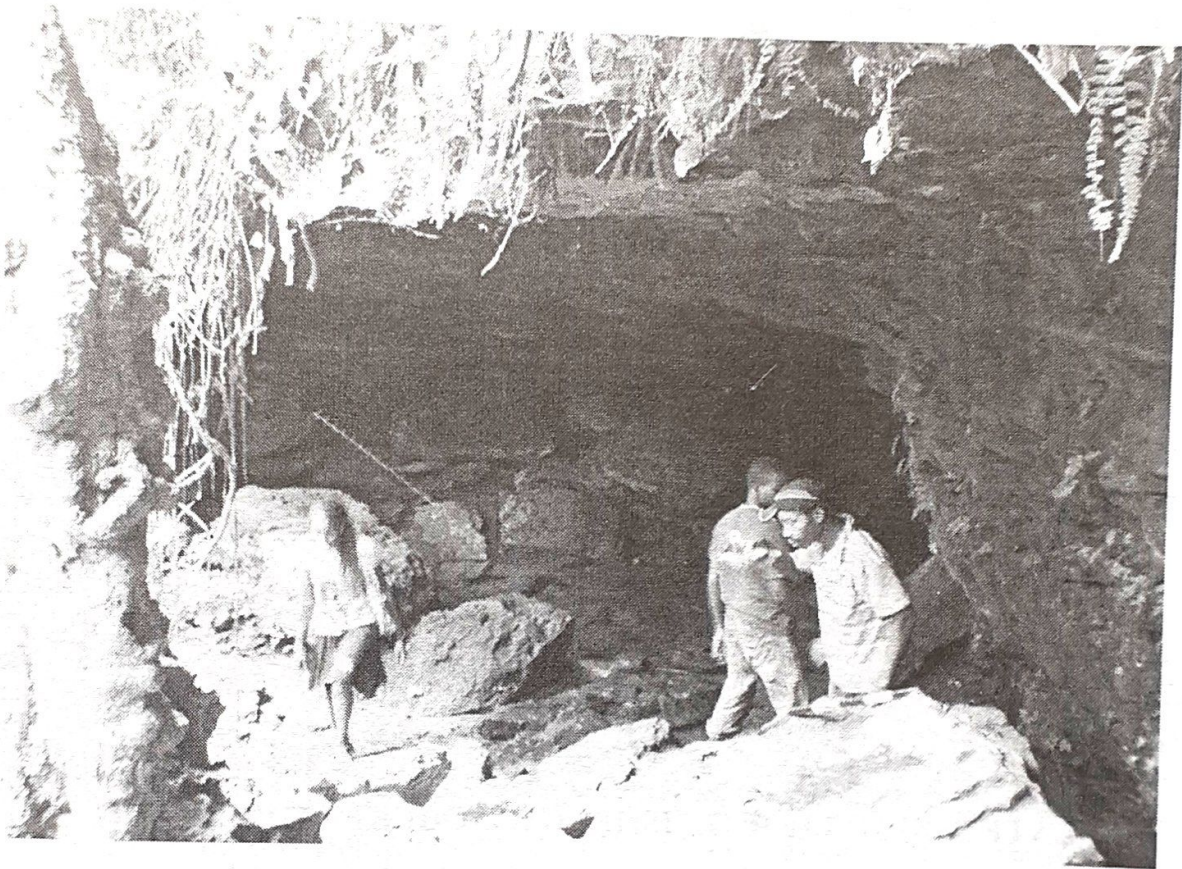


**PLATE 3: THE ENTRANCE OF OBU IVU**

The Overhang and its vicinity had received the attention of the colonial masters who around the 1940s constructed pipes on the top of the hills, laid them down to the base of the hill and constructed reservoir for the Ivu community which serves them as source of water up to this period. Presently, the Obu Ivu is used for fetching water and during excessive dryness, the inhabitants sleep there. This is because the place is very cool. The place is equally damp. Though it was reported to have contained paintings in the past, human beings have long defaced and destroyed such important activity. It might have been overgrown by whitish encrustation which seems to be ochre. The base of the chamber is covered by clayey, muddy growth or sand.



**Ogba Akuu:** This rock shelter is located on the hills of Nkalagu Obukpa in Igbo-Eze South local government area (see fig 1). It has an exceptionally shallow hollow with constant water washing out from both the base and top of the massive rocks that created the entire overhang. The problem with this rock shelter is that it could have been used for water but not a place of habitation. Though it has been estimated to be capable of containing three families, the chamber is muddy and contains insufficient deposit of sand to encourage any meaningful archaeological investigation .



**PLATE 4: ENTRANCE OF OGBA AKUU**

However, there are plenty of stones, few sherds and recent materials. Towards the eastern side, there are three potholes which the natives call “Akere” and some shrines which the community members hardly disclose to others. Because the overhang contains water/stream- “Iyi Akuu”, a number of taboos such as cursing or abusing people there, bringing red oil, planting or harvesting cocoyam, fighting; and killing of snakes there; are observed. Moreover, there is a stone at the entrance of the overhang that people are not allowed to wash their feet on to show peoples attachment to the feature. The overhang and its environs are communally cleared every year and it forbids any type of charm.

Within the environment, people fetch water; make timber, farm and worship/sacrifice. The hills bearing the overhang have two environmental characteristics: a forest zone towards the western side and derived savannah on the eastern side. The major road that leads to Nkalagu separates the two sides.

**Ishi-Ugwu Obukpa:** Located on top of the hill at Ishi Ugwu Obukpa in Nsukka local government area, this massive rock overhang has been excavated by Donald Hartle in 1967 and a number of papers published on it (see fig 1). The inhabitants of the place where the rock shelter is found call it Ugwu Ogba or Ishi Ugwu Ogba. It has a protruding cliff overhanging the base of the rock while around it are other collections of rocks some of which have tunnels which can contain a teenager.



**PLATE 5: SIDE VIEW OF ISHI UGWU OBUKPA OVERHANG**

At the bottom of the hill- Ishi ugwu - within the slope there, the vegetation of the area is a typical tropical forest while the environment of the overhang depicts a savannah belt with constant bush fire consuming the grasses yearly. There are no rituals, taboos and norms associated with the rock shelter. The overhang served as a refuge camp to people during the Nigeria-Biafra war.

**Ori-Idike:** This is a rock overhang that is situated at "Ogbo Okasibi" (farm) in Uvuru Uzo-Uwani local government area (see fig 1). It faces west and has an enclosure that can contain up to five families. It is a very good rock shelter because it is dry and has some deposits of sand that can be archaeologically investigated. But there is a very big gully created by erosion that passes on top of it which rubbishes its potential during the rainy season.



**PLATE 6: ORI-IDIKE OVERHANG**

As the overhang is found in the farm area of "Uvuru" community, it serves the people for processing certain food such as bread fruit (Ukwa), cassava and melon. The environment is still derived savannah and the entire area rocky. The name Ori-Idike was in honor of a great swimmer who got drowned by water erosion that rushes at the spot of the rock shelter.

**Ogene Owu:** This is an overhang that is made of solidified sand and for want of what to call it I choose sand overhang. It is located at "Umu-utu" village in their farm settlement between the boundary towns of Uvuru and Ukpata, all in Uzo-Uwani local government area (see fig 1). It has a shrine at the entrance to the hollow and the entire place is regarded as a dangerous zone. It is also reputed for its power of Oracle as one can hear voices calling somebody's name yet you will not see anybody. It has a priest who doubles as the eldest male in the farm.

Ogene Owu has two sections: the eastern and the western. While the eastern section contains clean water which the people fetch and drink; the western section contains dirty water where people take their bath and wash their cloths. The water then drains out through the valley created by the overhang. The mystery behind these water bodies is that they never mixed together despite no visible separating mark. The water could rise very high during the rainy season but at the time of this survey, the western section had dried.



**PLATE 7: A NATIVE FETCHING WATER FROM OGENE OWU**

The overhang faces north and there are few patches of stone mixed with sand as seen from the fallen boulders on the chamber of the shelter. A pathway that passes on the top of the overhang was also observed. If one is inside the rock shelter, the person would not know when it is raining heavily. The overhang is used for worship and rituals, preserving food items and seedlings particularly cocoyam, palm fronds yarn for making barns, coconut heads for future planting and other precious items. It also serves as a source of water for the people. Though the people of Uvuru, do process and eat cassava fufu, it is a taboo to ferment cassava within the overhang. The vegetation of the area where it is located is derived savannah though initially it could have been a forest area as patches of forest are seen within the valley adjacent to the overhang.

Other overhangs at various stages of survey include: Ntere, Itete, and Ugwu Ogba. They are explained briefly but it would be pointed out that these descriptions and names cannot be exhaustive as these wonders of nature in Nsukka area are discovered on daily basis. **Ntere:** This is a massive overhang created by hardened sand. It has several shallow hollows and of a magnificent height trending west to east. It faces east and has a difficult terrain. There is a stream within the area and the entire valley is wet all the year round. There the people cultivate crops and fruits yearly. It is located at "Idi-Opi" in Nsukka local government area (see fig 1). The shelter provided safety to people during the Biafra war with Nigeria.

**Itete:** It is located at the heart of "Uvuru" town in Uzo Uwani local government area (see fig 1). It is situated at "Inema" in Uvuru Ugwu quarters and has a shrine which is worshiped at "Ifu Iduome". It has a difficult terrain and contains water which serves the community.



**PLATE 8: ONE OF THE CAVITIES IN ITETE**

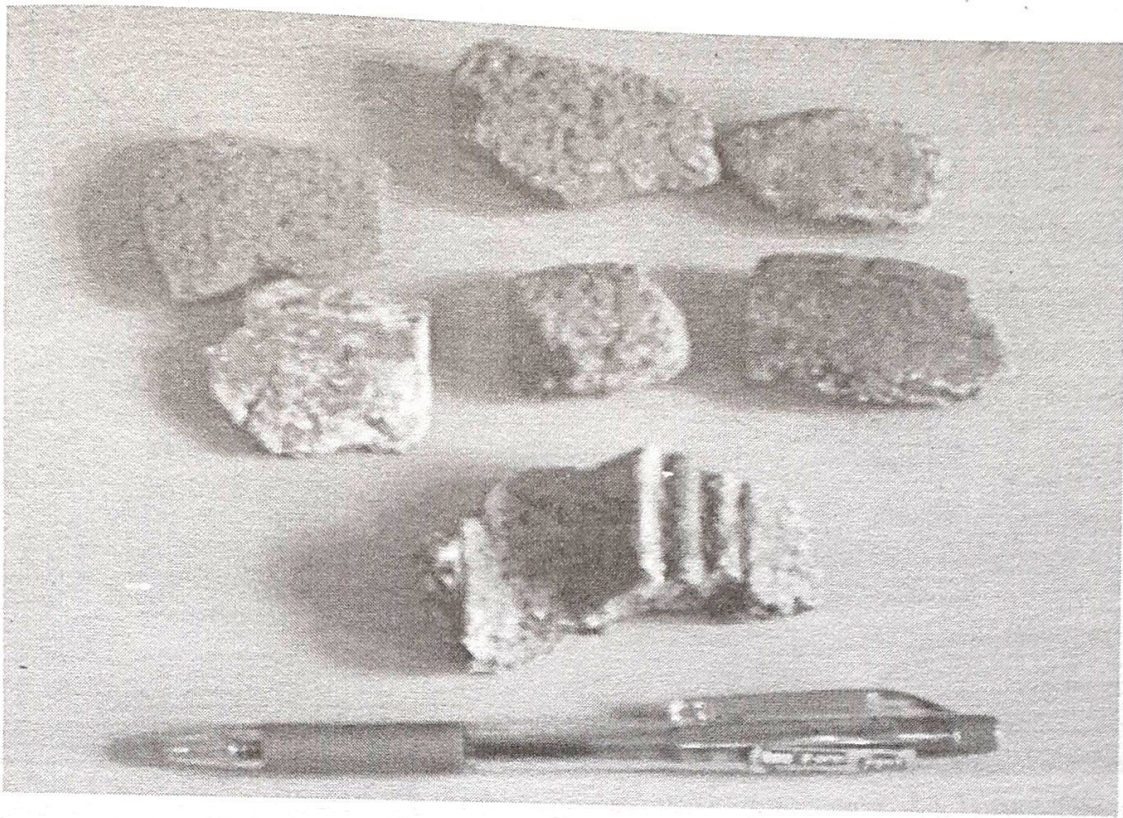
**Ugwu Ogba:** This is another extensive and massive sand overhang located at “Umabor Agu” in Nsukka local government area (see fig 1). It has two layers, the upper and lower layers. A large bamboo tree shields the lower part that has a cave also. Bee hunting and farming are extensively practised within the overhang. This is shown by the bamboo ladder displayed there which was used to harvest bees. “Agu”- Leopard, lived there in those days. It equally has a difficult terrain and no clear access to the place. It faces south but elongates eastwards for over two kilometers. It has a cool atmosphere and possesses derived savannah vegetation.



**PLATE 9 THE LADDER USED IN CLIMBING UGWU OGBA**

### **Surface Collection**

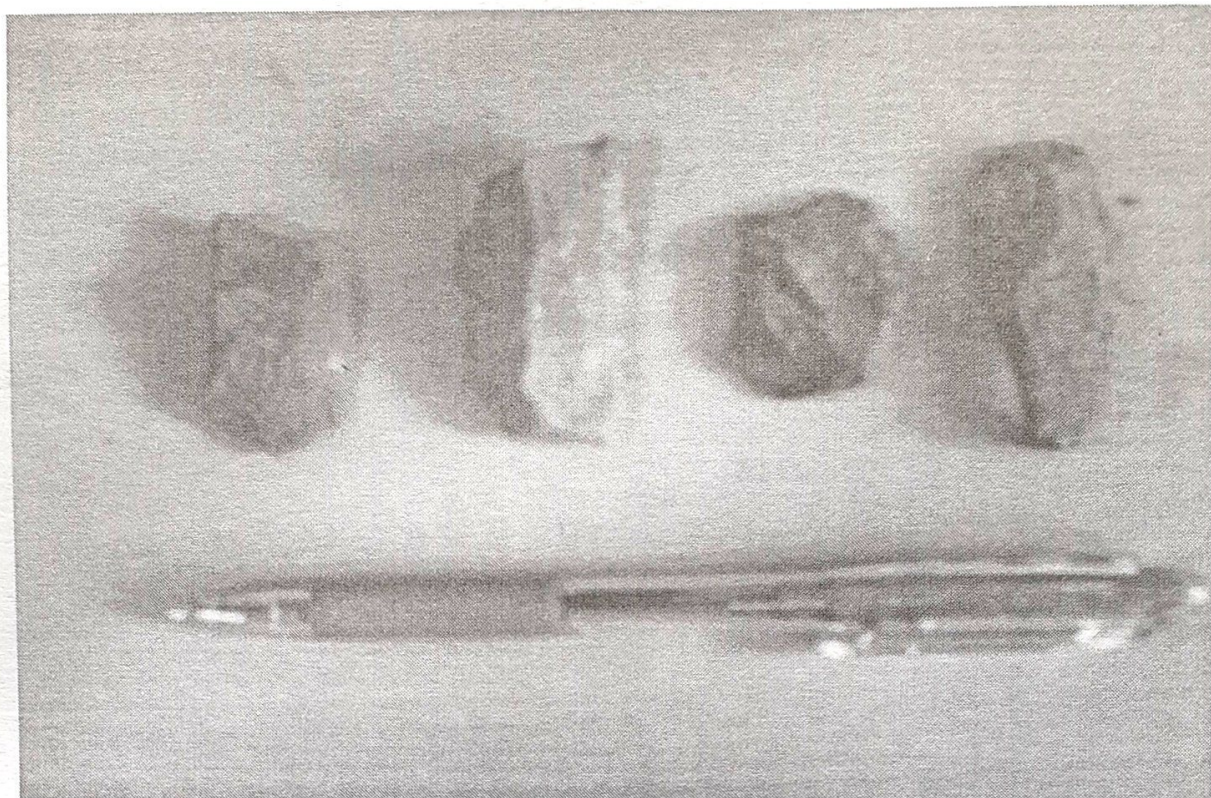
Sutton (1981:457) asserts that even a small surface collection is likely to contain clues in the form of certain types and sizes of tools or of manufacturing methods, relating to the period of the Stone Age to which it belongs and of its cultural relationship to other known sites. This will help in determining whether a more detailed investigation and full-scale excavation would be worthwhile. In line with this, a total of thirty-one materials of archaeological importance consisting mainly of artifacts were sampled and collected during the surface survey. These include seven rims of pots, six body sherds, four scrapers and one bottle of spirit collected at Api Ogba; at Okpu Amegu, eight objects were seen. These were palm kernel shell, toad, sponge, bones, and discarded slippers, an empty tin of Gino tomato, pieces of plastic rubbers and cement fragment used in covering pots. At Ogba Akuu, three pottery sherds were collected. At Umabor Agu and Ogene Owu, sample each of the silt or basalt sand were collected.



**PLATE 10: POTTERY RIMS AT API OGBA**

Ashmore and Sharer (2006:92) equally remarked that many sites, however, lack obvious surface traces and require more than surface observations for their discovery. This could account for the rest of the overhangs which yielded no immediate materials of archaeological value. Possibly, if remote sensing tools are used, more of them will yield artifacts.

An examination of the surface collections shows that most of the pottery sherds were decorated with net impression. Few contain some incisions particularly around the neck and majority of them were very thick. The pot sherds were mainly collected from Api Ogba. This agitated my interest in the site. This interest was heightened with the observation and collection of microlithic objects especially scrapers.



**PLATE 11: SCRAPERS FROM API OGBA**

Most of these were side scrapers. Ashmore and Sharer (2006:92) have also pointed out that many sites are identified by concentrations of surface artifacts such as pottery sherds and stone tools. Could it be we are dealing with a Late Stone Age site? The other surveyed sites yielded material objects quite alright but none is as rich as the ones from Api Ogba. The rest contains material objects of recent origin and lack the depth of deposit seen at Api Ogba. The site has been earmarked for full archaeological investigation and excavation in the future.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is generally accepted that overhangs were among the earliest human shelters and were provided by nature. A preliminary examination of overhangs in Nsukka area points to the fact that they are natural shelters. Such rockhouses provided excellent protective and defensive locations (Chikwendu 2002:16). Early people go to overhangs to run away from rain, wind and wild animals. The survey has also shown that there is a wide spread of overhang throughout Nsukka area. Nsukka local government area has five of them: Api Ogba, Ishi Ugwu Ogba, Ntere, Okpu Amegu, and Ugwu Ogba; Igbo-Eze South local government area has two also- Ogba Akuu and Obu Ivu; while Uzo-Uwani has four as at the time of this survey - Ogene-Owu, Itete, Ori Odike, and Ogba Nkpologwu . One each has been reported at Igbo-Etiti local government area and Igbo-Eze North local government area. Two local government areas - Isi-Uzo and Udenu are yet to be represented as the areas have no known appreciable overhang (see fig 1).



Okpoko (2009: Personal Communication) stated that depending on the nature of rocks that formed rock shelters, they lie within the same zone. That is, they get aligned because the rock that formed them is similar. Wikipedia (2009) has equally noted that rock shelters are created when rocks with different resistance to weathering are exposed along a cliff. The non-resistance rocks are removed, permitting continuous development of the shallow grown back into the cliff face, the roof becomes unstable; periodically, parts of the roof collapse. The survey reveals that parts of the overhangs were seen lying in similar zones with a greater concentration of them in the central, northern and western sides of Nsukka area. The solidified sand shelters were seen at the eastern and southern sides. At the face of most of the surveyed overhangs Api Ogba, Okpu Amegu, Ogba Akuu, Ogene Owu and Itete, there are boulders of rocks/sand that collapsed from their roofs.

It is important to mention that because they are shallow, the shelters' interior walls and roof are also exposed to weather conditions such as temperature and humidity (Wikipedia, 2009). And Chami (2009: Personal Communication) observed that overhangs are cool and one can get inspiration from being there. This could explain why people rush to Ogba Akuu and Obu Ivu during excessive dry periods as well as Api Ogba where music rehearsals are conducted even by some Reverend Fathers. In addition, a good overhang should have accumulation of sand and materials one can excavate and should be dry. Api Ogba has these qualities. One can deduce from the surface collections that it is a Late Stone Age site.

Previous excavations in Nsukka area unearthed worked stones at Isi Ugwu Obukpa Rock shelter and pottery at the University Farm site and dated to 25,000 B.C. It is clear that human activity was already present at about 3,000 B.C. in this area (Chikwendu 2002:29). The four scrapers collected from the surrounding surface of Api Ogba and the recovered sherds during the survey affirm the validity of earlier works done, the cultural continuity and diversification in the area during the stone age. A planned excavation in the area may confirm the existence of early men that made use of scrapers and if a sequence is seen, we may see the early history of the area thrown back to the Late Stone Age period.

Finally, it appears that overhangs must have been used for religious ceremonies, habitation and protection. People can run to the place to take cover. They could also demonstrate how communities utilized their landscapes. They thus, form parts of our patrimony and should be preserved and cared for. Today as it is, they stand as important tourism resources though drawing people now in trickle. They could be harnessed and money paid as entrance fees to watch them thereby yielding revenue for their preservation and general development.

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