AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ATABA-APIPA HILL-TOP SETTLEMENT SITE IN OKAITO, OKEHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA.

BY

'HARUNA SULEIMAN IDRIS, B.A HONS ARCHAEOLOGY (A.B.U) 2010
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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA,
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Declaration

I declare that the work in this Dissertation entitled ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ATABA-APIPA HILL-TOP SITE IN OKAITO, OKEHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE NIGERIAhas been carried out by me in the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of Dr. K.T. Odofin and Prof. M.K. Aliyu. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this work was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any institution.

‘Haruna Suleiman IDRIS _____ _____

Signature Date

Certification

This Dissertation entitled ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ATABA-APIPA HILL-TOP IN OKAITO, OKEHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA by ‘Haruna Suleiman IDRIS meets the regulations governing the award of the Degree of Master of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Dr, K.T. Odofin	_____	_____
First Reader	Signature	Date
Prof. M.K. Aliyu	_____	_____
Second Reader	Signature	Date
Dr. A.R. Alabi	_____	_____
External Examiner	Signature	Date
Prof. M.K. Aliyu	_____	_____
Head of Department	Signature	Date
Prof. Kabir Bala	_____	_____
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	Signature	Date

Dedication

This research work is dedicated to my Aunt, Khadijat Muhammed Barkuonu.

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Firstly, my profound gratitude goes to the Almighty Allah for His continued mercy on me and for the good health that I have enjoyed so far in life, I say 'Alhamdulillah'.

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Abstract

Ataba-apipa is an abandoned hill-top settlement site in Okaito, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. The site was occupied in the past by the clan known as Egiri. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no archaeological research has been carried out on this site prior to this research despite the historical significance of the hill to the entireEbira people and the abundance of cultural materials on the site. Oral information has it that the hill was extensively used during wars as it served as the place where external aggression was prevented.

This research is therefore, a survey of the abandoned hill-top that is characterized by several site indicators such as house foundations, graves, granary foundations, potsherds, mounds, shrine, and grinding stones among others. This is done in order to document the surface finds and features which are very important and can provide useful information about the former inhabitants of the area.

Methods such as oral tradition, archaeological survey, consultation of written documents, classification/analyses and ethnographic survey were all employed to reconstruct the culture history of the past inhabitants of the place under study. Oral tradition gave insights on the migration of the people, the extent of the site, the usage of the cultural materials found on the site as well as the religious belief of the extinct people of Ataba-apipa. Archaeological survey helped in showing the spatial distribution of finds and features on the site as well as their relationship with one another. It also aided in the production of the site map. Classification and analyses of the find (potsherds) were carried out. This revealed the various pots and bowls of different sizes and shapes that were made and used by the people. Ethnographic survey was also employed to explain the occurrence of cultural materials on the site as well as knowing aspects of cultural continuity.

The theoretical frame work adopted in this research is 'Ethnoarchaeology' which is an understanding of the past through the study of the present. This is done on the tenet that some relationship exist between the two cultures under study through analogical analysis for a proper interpretation of such cultures. This model helped in the interpretation of the cultural materials found on the site especially in the aspect of pottery making which showed a considerable cultural continuity between the extinct and extant societies

This research has established through the oral information and the interpretation of the finds and features that, Ataba-apipa was inhabited in the past. It also showed through the establishment of cultural continuity that the present inhabitants of Okaito are the direct descendants of the extinct people of Ataba-apipa.

The people had a belief system which has to do with worship of gods (*ori)* as evident in the shrine that is situated at the northern part of the site. Offerings were said to have been offered either in appreciation haven achieved the desired or in anticipation.

The research concludes with some recommendations that would enhance any further research in this area, especially in the aspect of age determination and test pit excavation on the mounds on the site.

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