

Museum Archaeologist: Concept Role and Responsibility in a Museum Development System

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Abstract

This paper looks at the role of museum archaeologist and their responsibility in managing their collections and exhibition of same for public view. A major advantage of Archaeologist taking the responsibility of developing and managing his exhibition is discussed as a necessity for adequate interpretation and representation of his exhibits for public view and appreciation. The aim of this is paper is to examine the role of the museum archaeologist. There is the need to recognize the role of the museum archaeologist, his dedication to increasing knowledge of history of man's past activities while engaging and developing interdisciplinary methods within the museums system towards resources preservation, conservation, exhibition, research and promotion.

Keywords: museum archaeologist, primary function, resource management, practitioner's accomplishment, new deal era.

INTRODUCTION

Museum archaeologist in a general term is used to describe a system of museum practice by archaeologists in which the ultimate utilization and management of archaeological collections rest with the archaeologist after recovery and/or excavation, analysis and interpretation. It is expected that good collection management after excavation should define a good museum archaeologist. However, archaeological collection management in Nigeria museum has not brought the desired improvement to the quality and value of archaeological collections in Nigeria museum, including university museum in Nigeria. It is in the light of this that this paper discusses the roles and responsibilities of a museum archaeologist.

This paper has been assigned into four sections. Firstly, it examines the concept of a museum archaeologist. It then proceeds to examine the historical underpinnings of a museum archaeologist including the pioneers of early museum archaeological practice and the main responsibility. In the search for new breaking ground, focus is shifted to the issues of theory and practice in museum system as it affects a museum archaeologist.

The development of museum Archaeologist requires, first, a full understanding and appreciation of archaeology as a discipline, what makes an archaeologist and what constitute the specific development goals of an archaeologist. To examine the elements of, and the concepts associated with a museum archaeologist we must also define the expectation concerning what a museum archaeologist can accomplish for an organisation such as museum. The professionalism in museum archaeology warrants that a trained museum archaeologist must have the passion for the preservation of collections identified, evaluated and accepted as a museum piece. He must fully understand the relevance of the past. He must develop the approaches between archaeological, oral history, ethnography and other ethno-archaeological approaches in the study of the past. Museum

Archaeologist must develop clear agenda for archaeological practice in the museum system. The commitment of a museum archaeologist is to preserve the cultural heritage belonging to mankind, to promote cultural exchanges through exhibitions and public education which strengthen ties between nations and continents.

Judging from the multi-faceted involvement of a Museum Archaeologist in museum practice, it becomes necessary to clearly define a Museum Archaeologist as one whose career is to curate the museum through the management of its collections, to exhibit and educate society, promote further research and interpretation and maintain the collections through preservation and conservation practices. His progress through working life is based on the museum practice and his museum experience.

The history of museum development in Nigeria has shown that the museum archaeologist played major role of top management in museum curatorial activities. The diaries of the working life of those archaeologists who engaged in museum services portrayed them as emissaries who spent time dealing with the public on issues of museum, as public relation officers, and as museum managers, educating and enlightening the public on issues of cultural heritage; the diaries also portrayed them as researchers and writers who spent a good deal of their time in research and writing, reading, dictating notes or memos and doing figure works. They spent a lot of time coping with issues such as building museums, developing themes and exhibitions, guidebooks to exhibitions and education materials and staff matters. They also spent a lot of their time attending meetings at ministerial level, local committee and contacts at international levels with organization concerned with heritage development, and as national representative to regional and or international museum organizations. The evident works and reports, and subordinate's eyewitness account about the life and times of pioneer museum archaeologists in the museum system revealed that they provided

guidance in all museum activities that translates into the fact that they know what needed to be done and had the ability to do it and do it well. They offer good examples by encouraging other museum professionals that came after them to follow their professional behaviours. The just reward they were able to give their subordinates was advance training and retraining locally and overseas through government or individual scholarship and assistance from international organisations.

Historically, much can be said about these doyens curatorial and managerial characteristics which include their great power of judgement and the ability to look critically at museum issues and be able to make the most acceptable decision with little or no query for their activities. This justified a lot of their actions. They had the ability and foresight to initiate new areas of investigation in museum services, they had the ability to analyse issues concerning museum development, collection acquisition and management. They could all be described as the indefatigable because they developed the ability to work enthusiastically with unflinching vitality even tirelessly under great pressure.

The museum archaeologists are clear about their responsibilities in trying to conduct systematic excavations of finds such as organised scientific excavations, quick responds rescue excavations and forensic archaeology which involves principles, techniques and methodologies in a legal context, sometimes to assist in crime cases. With the establishment of museums by pioneer archaeologist in Nigeria, museum archaeologist began to have better and greater dimension in their activities. They did not have to write for a license or authority to excavate except to do a letter seeking permission from the museum Director General to conduct excavations. Unlike any other agency or university who must obtain official written permission from the museum Director General, to conduct excavations, following the authority bestowed on the Director General by the acts that established the museum commission. A museum archaeologist encompasses

all the aspect of preservation and promotion of cultural resources in his position for public need. Museum Archaeologist has important functions to perform in the overall management of a museum system, and some of the major functions are:

1. Research

A museum archaeologist works with its collections, facts, figures and data retrieved from museum collections. Its overall effectiveness will depend on how well a museum archaeologist conducts research into the collections and/or data retrieved from the field. The museum archaeologist engages in both primary and secondary research. For example, before objects are exhibited facts are needed on the selected collections for exhibition. There must be a reason why they collect data, where and how they collected data. It is either through field primary sources, the museum collections and/or or library research based on secondary sources of other peoples works.

2. Exhibition Planning, Design and Execution

Many archaeologists cannot put up museum exhibition without an exhibitionist. They therefore depend on exhibitionist to provide them with conservation-grade design and construction of exhibits cases. In planning, it is the duty of the museum Archaeologist to select objects to be displayed and develops the story line, exhibition texts and labels, and the guidebook.

3. Exhibition Layout

It is the duty and function of the museum archaeologist to decide on the object to be exhibited, the mode and technique of exhibition. They make the layout and visuals to be used.

4. Exhibition Production

The selected objects for exhibition must be interpreted and represented in the exhibition. It is the function of the museum Archaeologist to do this.

5. Promotion

In the advertising world, the function of promotion is growing up in many diversifications. By this museum archaeologist directs the promotion of public education and enlightenment on the business of the museum. Museum promotions include display of objects, participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars, conferences and workshop, sales of gift items. The tasks of promotion are to educate and communicate with the public and provide them with information which will ginger them to see the exhibition or use the museum facilities or services. Provide enough incentive that would induce the public to repeatedly visit the museum.

PIONEER MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGIST

Early museum archaeologists were respected with special regards and exalted as if there will be no one else like them. They were loved with great passion. That explains the special regards that a museum archaeologist is always resourceful in management of museum collections in his possession and the heritage in the fields. The fruits of his passion are the museum objects which are the things to serve him. The museum archaeologist is always linked to his collection storage like a bank staff to the strong room. Throughout his career his thoughts are always with his collections on how best they could be preserved and used. Those who planned early Nigerian museums, particularly the exhibition display of collections wanted it to have archaeological dimensions. They succeeded in developing early museum exhibition with a lot of emphasis to archaeological collections displayed in National Museum Lagos, Jos and those museums that European archaeologists were made curators, whose understanding was to promote the ancient history of Nigeria and in solving contemporary issues of Nigeria's history. We would like to think that this line of activities gave birth partly to archaeology as a division under the then Department of Antiquities while ethnography and conservation were also created as separate divisions under the same department. One of the main reason Archaeology was established as a

division in the then Department of Antiquity, was to (create a special make) give archaeology the professional outlook and the relevance to pursue museum services with the required expertise relevant to the development needs and aspiration of the museum. Archaeologists diversify into the various sub-areas of museum archaeology which include the development of fiscal framework for strategy research programmes that befits museum career archaeologists with policy prescriptions and direction intended to improve the museum archaeological services. That made room for valuation dating of museum masterpieces which constitute the ancient treasures of Nigeria, comprising of Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, Benin, Owo, Cross River Monoliths and many other early archaeology discoveries that were dated and through valuation were recognised as museum masterpieces. Today Nigerian Museum stands as the major custodian of Nigerian masterpieces of which over 50% are archaeological objects.

OTHER TOOLS USE BY THE MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGIST

The museum archaeologist relates with other museographers such as the museum ethnographer using ethnographic collections in the interpretation process of his excavated finds. His proximity to the ethnographers is the use of ethnographic collections, ethnographic library and research data in attempt to derive answers to the interpretation of some of his archaeological collections and their contexts. For example, how the artefacts were used by living people in the past. The museum archaeologist knows the problem with using ethnography in archaeology. They know that with time and space people change the ways they use things and therefore cannot depend solely on ethnography for answers. Ethnography only helps archaeologist to ask questions about the artefacts and make assumptions.

OLD DEAL ERA

Every Nigerian archaeologist trained during the past fifty years has heard stories and/or participated in the vast field projects undertaken during the old deal. many

archaeologists, museum technicians were put to work, in some cases excavating and analysing the content of their excavations. The works were completed under the direction of few trained pioneer senior archaeologists available at that time, and the crop of harried professionals that arose and met the challenges of the era. Today as we can note many truly remarkable archaeologists worked in Nigeria, whose names are legendary in Nigerian archaeology. Until quite recently, many of these figures could be seen occupying principal roles at national archaeological meetings and conferences. Some create museums to handle communications about new archaeological discoveries that were fast disappearing due to theft and destruction of sites and monuments around Nigeria and to fast infrastructural development in Nigeria from the oil boom period of the early seventies to the present. Their numbers keep dwindling and many are now gone. Stories of the old era excavations have entered the realm of myth. Its practitioners viewed as giants who once walked amongst us are now no more. The present and future generations will no longer have the opportunity to learn from them firsthand what life was like during the old era.

NEW DEAL ERA

Today we are experiencing the new deal archaeological era in Nigeria where the Germans are dominating the scene and creating great research of the 21st century in Nigeria. It is not surprising and indeed appropriate, that this is happening to revolutionise our understanding of Nigerian archaeology, in ways that people now entering or interested in the field could have great hope of studying new methods and techniques in archaeology. We have heard as well, some of the trials and tribulations and the field archaeology occupational hazards the Germans have passed through in Nigeria. Books and articles have been published by them giving detail accounting of what was accomplished and importantly how these works were done.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility of the Museum Archaeologist is how to collect research information and translate it into immediate and comprehensive public enlightenment and education, by way of exhibition as the standard means of information dissemination and public education programmes. Archaeologist is one engaged in the studies and research of objects belonging to the ancient times, for example artefacts found beneath the earth and/or standing ruin such as a building or a structure. The Museum Archaeologist responsibility is to use museum archaeological materials for the interpretation and representation of valuable information in the exhibition context for public view and education. The exhibition context is a weave together of facts and information derived from finds, together with the finds are displayed to educate on the historic significance of such finds. Essentially this makes the difference between a professional museum archaeologist and a career archaeologist who is not involved with museum programmes and services and therefore lacks the museum experience.

The Museum Archaeologist is experiential because he weaves his academic knowledge in archaeology with skills that are peculiar to the museum system through specialized training, observation, participation passion and the desire towards innovative challenges in the museum system. This conscious event that makes up the individual archaeologist turn him into being museum archaeologist with specialised experience in the preservation, conservation, education and promotion of museum cultural properties and practices, with close applications of the laws and policies of museum practices as set down by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The museum experience is the badge of authority for the museum professional archaeologist. Fig.1. shows a diagrammatic view of the concept, role and responsibility of a museum archaeologist.

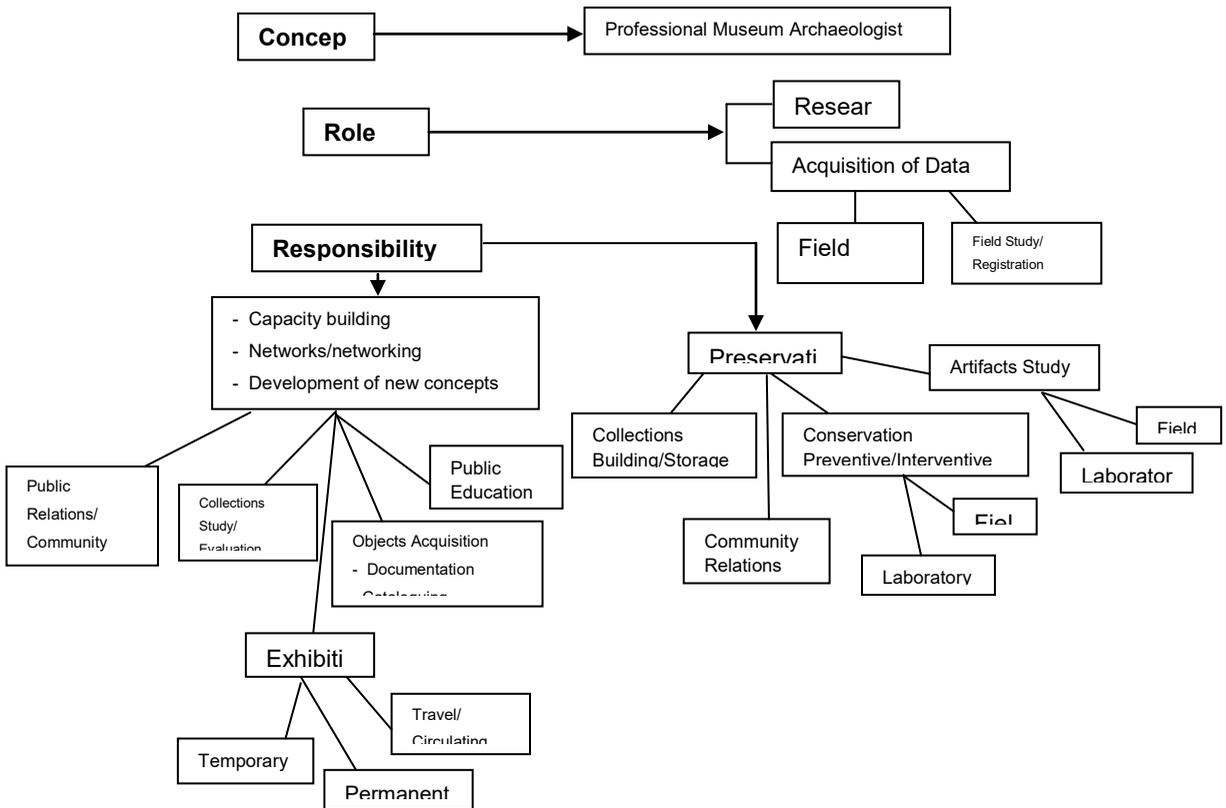


Fig. 1: A Diagram of a Museum Archaeologist with Professional Responsibilities of Creating, Exhibiting, Educating and Researching on Museum Collections.

Following the discussion above, we can try to arrange the role and responsibility of an archaeologist on a professional tree. The following is a tentative idea about this.

THEORY AND PRACTICE: CHANGING CONCEPTS OF MUSEUM EXHIBITION

The exhibition tradition of wall and table showcases display of objects which has been passed down over fifty years proved to be effective and satisfactory at that time. In recent years however, museums have witnessed the emergence of changing concepts in museum exhibition display of objects, particularly on the archaeological exhibition display of finds.

Use of Original Source Materials

To support the important trend in a diorama exhibition display of actual source materials for example, in the case of the proposed exhibition of Dufuna Canoe. It is important to include the historical facts that led to the discovery of the canoe by original display of the site prior to excavation, during excavation, exposure and recovery of the canoe. This is exclusively the responsibility of the archaeologists. The surest way to accomplish this is through the display of source materials through panoramic or dioramic exhibition displays. This approach allows the archaeologist to recapture the past from the raw evidence of history of the site. This method of exhibition goes far beyond excavation process and recovery to other aspects of the past environment for example, the excavator's activities, and the state of the canoe when it was exhumed. It therefore goes to show that still dramatizations in a dioramic exhibition are a powerful way of presenting materials from excavation. A site that is being lost in weathering, human and animal encouragements or destruction can be lifted and displayed in a dioramic exhibition for example, the ancient iron processing sites in Abuja federal capital, which is now almost completely lost to denudation, cattle grazing, theft of artifacts and farm cultivation. Dioramic exhibition can perform the important services of showing archaeological evident as it were in its natural environment and the potential of past human experiences.

A dioramic exhibition goes far beyond what a single object display can show on other environmental details. Dioramic exhibition is a powerful way of presenting material in a wider historical context. A dioramic view brings the past to life. A dioramic exhibition if well executed can have a special impact if they transport the viewer into the historical period he is viewing. A single object display cannot take the viewer right into the past as compared with a dioramic view. A dioramic exhibition can be an exciting learning experience especially where a single object display tends toward dullness and not showing its resourcefulness and inventiveness. Dioramic exhibition display can produce incidents that demonstrate historic events that can motivate viewers to exciting discussions and debates. Archaeologists who wish to offer dioramic displays themes will find it more interesting than single object display method. Panorama is a comprehensive presentation of a subject – the display of a series of images or events. A diorama display case is a three-dimensional representation of a scene in which objects or models are arranged in a natural setting against a realistic background, e.g. in a museum. (Internet Encarta Dictionaries) A diorama could be a life-size exhibit (as of a wildlife specimen or scene) with realistic natural surroundings and a painted sculpted figures and life like details are displayed. (Merriam websites collegiate dictionary – 11th edition)

NATURE OF MUSEOGRAPHY

The museum as a repository for the collection and preservation of human cultural properties has its divisions of labour and work-related activities tied to museographers from different disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, ethnography, history, education, botany, zoology, religion etc. Those museum professionals from the disciplines aforementioned involve in the museum activities are known here as museographers. The term museography signify the sum of the activities of all professional groups involved in museum services. The conduct of these professional activities generates a network of professional

relationship which is called museography. The development of this professional structure or arrangements emerges during museum professional interaction with one another in their contribution towards developing a museum system. That makes the difference from museology which is strictly the study of museum management and curatorship. Archaeo-museography indicates the specificity of archaeology work that is tied to museum activities or a type of study that form part of the whole museum activities. In archeo-museography, the museum archaeologist uses research and excavated artifacts to make rich history for education and public programmes. Museum archaeologists not only excavate and record objects prior to storage, but also conduct the exhibition of artifacts excavated by him for a wide and diverse audience, particularly the community where he conducted his research and excavation.

MUSEUM LANGUAGE

Museum language was developed in the process of building the various aspects peculiar to museum services. Phrases were developed to have certain characteristics that make them especially suitable for a particular type of work commonly understood by museum staff and allied staff collectively known here as museographers. There is a number of museum work language that has to describe in great detail the procedures that the museum documentation officers or so-called museum documentalist must follow to process museum collections, for example accessioning and de-accessioning, cataloguing and indexing collections. Such procedural language must be understood by every museographer as they all share a common practice in documentation, maintenance and management of the museum collections. Conservation language is another deterioration, preventive and curative treatments that must be understood by all museographers. Other procedural languages are taken from other sisterly professional languages such as in ethnography, exhibition, museology, curatorial and other related subjects. Together they form the interactive languages for dialogue between the museum

professionals. All these added together, establishes museum peculiarities and specialties that constitute what is treasured as museum experience.

The museum has some key-tasks that must be managed extremely well for it to succeed in accomplishing its services to the public. Most of the key tasks are even functional in nature, in that information pertaining to several functional areas of the museum is essential for the overall success of the museum system. And these must be understood by every museographer working for the museum.

COMMON OBSTACLES

Finance and Logistics

The museum archaeologists suffered much from financial and a logistics difficulty since that division was scrapped in the late 1970s. The divisional structure and administrative set up as at that time provided the enablement for museum archaeologists to conduct local field research throughout the museums all over Nigeria. I recollect very well when many museums were supplied with field survey equipment and funds for local field work and research.

Achievement and Professional Resilience

Although the early archaeologists have played significant role in the history of museum development, many of their initial contributions were destroyed or ignored for example by recent museum generation staff that conducted replacement of old exhibitions with new ones without adequate documentation of early archaeological exhibitions that made up many museums permanent display in the 1950s. The educative information on early archaeological exhibition in National museums of Lagos, Jos and others is not common knowledge largely because they were not documented before removal for new exhibitions. They therefore lack the correct portrayal of early archaeological activities in the museum system in Nigeria. This paper is also to acknowledge and encourage a proper framework for the professional archaeologists in the museum scheme of work and to appreciate archaeological contribution to the museum system. The

history of museums in Nigeria has shown that archaeology is of course the key factor in the success of museums. The knowledge of this discipline and the practitioners were recorded early in the promotion of museum activities. This is certainly true about the use of archaeological materials to promote the history of Nigeria. The ancient treasures of Nigeria are a great testimony of museum activities on archaeology and history to society.

NEW APPROACH

There are ever increasing exhibitions both permanent and temporary that are making use of dioramas and life-size structural exhibition to educate the public on archaeological and ethnographic displays of tailored storyline exhibitions. These approaches induce and generate emotions and give the public the feel for the past. While showcase display promote immediate and short public attention to every object displayed, a diorama display presents a much different picture. The author of this paper recalled a visit to Vienna exhibition in Austria where several Benin artefacts were on loan from the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments and from the palace of the Oba of Benin for an exhibition of Benin culture. A simulation of a life-size traditional building structure of the Oba's Palace and all the exhibits display in their respective locations inside the simulated palace structure gave a comprehensive portrayal of a traditional home and life of the Oba. I joined the Director of the exhibition on a stroll through the exhibition and felt the wonders of Africa in a foreign land and a grip of my home country where the culture of Benin and their traditional practice flourish. Several factors account for the high quality of the diorama exhibition simulation including ample sunshine lightings and spacing of the exhibition and the natural red laterite colour of Benin physiography used in the finishing of the wall of the place traditional building, to portray the natural and spiritual environment of the palace. Inside the exhibition you may think you are already in Benin.

The life-size exhibition portrays numerous insights about Benin traditions, the people, their lives, and the world view of the Edo culture, providing impressive public view and education about the Edo people and their culture. The situation is indeed quite different from a single showcase display: The life-size exhibition provides facts and information easily discernible from the exhibits on display and the combine effects of every item incorporated in the display. The life-size exhibitions not only represent the palace of the Oba but also the beliefs of the Edo people. One of the great effects of life-size exhibition is that the unforgettable segments of the history of Oba's palace remains embedded in the minds of visitors to the exhibition. Many people are familiar with the story of British punitive expeditions to Benin but know little about Oba's palace setup, where traditional objects are designed to serve a specific function inside and round the palace. The key for developing dioramic exhibition lies in developing interesting and accurate storyline to promote a traversing story that is authenticated in fact-filled documented objects, to produce the images of history in one unit display. This is much more than what a single object can represent. From my observation of that exhibition in Vienna, panoramic or dioramic exhibition is to add context and to create a wider 360-degree view. The emphasis on this is that history needs to teach as well as entertain.

NIGERIAN TRADITIONAL LIFE SIZE BUILDING DISPLAY

The life-size architectural exhibition of traditional Nigerian buildings at Jos Museum ground, commonly known as Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA) simple described here as Nigerian Revival Architecture (NRA) portray ancient styles of Nigerian traditional built environment. This natural built site located at National Museum Jos, further requires archaeology and ethnographic display of the use of these structures. It requires skilful use of sculpted human figures, related objects and animals as added strands of life-activities to the main building patterns as they serve to represent life as it were at

that time. Until that is done, the revived traditional architectures will not be given that link of living environment to the standing structures. The structures cannot express its usefulness, until they are linked to their traditions of use. That must be done to provide both variations and intensification of the use of the structures in the cultural life of the people that built them for comfort and security.

IMAGING THE FUTURE

As we all evolve towards the best in our professional fields it must be borne in our mind that the twenty first century is a different period from other centuries, that our habitual way of doing things will ultimately destroy Nigerian archaeology. Since the pioneers of museum archaeology discovery of what constitute the ancient treasures of Nigeria is there any hope that we will be better than them? in new discoveries and advanced management of the museum resources or are we going to resign ourselves to the apocalyptic scenario of the future and retreat further into thinking only of our short-term self-interest or will we consciously embrace and co-create a future of all hands-on-deck to great achievements that will complement the achievement of our predecessors. My own sense is that we are approaching the great divide because we lack the sense of cooperation which was to back the success and achievements of our predecessors. The pioneer museum archaeologists explored the history of the past through persistence archaeological excavations and research that always ended in permanent and temporary exhibitions in and outside Nigeria. They engaged in the most imaginative and articulate speculative way in order to arrive at the best archaeology can give Nigeria.

RESEARCH

The museum archaeologists have contributed largely to museum publication and scholarship. Their impact as creators, educators, theorists, synthesists and general museum administrators created great impact through research excavations and

publications. Ancient treasures of Nigeria received much attention during the different periods of the circulating exhibition with different publications on the excavation discoveries including reports, interpretations, exhibitions and guidebooks, lectures, paper presentations and related activities geared toward celebrating the discoveries of ancient treasure of Nigeria inside and out of Nigeria. It is interesting to note that the museum archaeologists produce more publications than museographers within the museum system.

MULTI-MEDIA CONCEPT IN EXHIBITION

Audio and visual aids can be vital to the presentation of many exhibition concepts. Photographs taken during field research and excavations are inevitable resources for exhibition interpretation and representation. Photographs can perform the important service of showing aspects in an exhibition. Film strips or video can be vital to the presentation of many concepts. Other materials such as charts, maps, sketches describing people and events are very useful and creative. Exhibition research on the display of archaeological materials has long been a useful way to enrich the study of archaeology. By exposing archaeological materials through exhibition display the archaeologist will open new avenues of knowledge to his excavated materials. Abundant materials are stored indefinitely in collection storages and subject to theft, loss of information; mix-up of materials and lost context due to bad preservation practice, deterioration of collections and misplacement of objects due to unrecorded movements. Many archaeological collection storages in National and university museums are presently having the aforementioned problems. Archaeological storage without maintenance and care of its collections is like rubbish dumps. From the moment the calico cotton bags deteriorate and torn apart, and the storage boxes broken, the contents spill over, the inutility of the collections begins, and the collections turn out not worth using, and deserving sever censure because the mixed-up collections develop the quality of having no practical use in the very eyes and

hands of their custodians. They become reprehensible waste of museum efforts and taxpayer's money.

CONCLUSION

The main and recusant failure of archaeology development in Nigeria is in the lack of organic relationship with our cultural heritage and the lack of disciplinary and professional collaboration among the cultural heritage organisation and archaeology institutions. Websites Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary describes organic relation as forming and integral element of a whole, having systematic coordination of point. Putting collaborative professionalism at the heart of development will constitute an eventual and inevitable investment in the future of archaeology in Nigeria and as a pre-condition to successful national processes that will consider the principles of institutional and disciplinary collaboration between institutions and organizations. The lack of disciplinary and professional collaboration amongst colleagues and in between institutions and professional associations is the bane of our problems. Archaeology and other studies under arts and humanities suffered when foreign staff were ejected out of the university system, creating a huge gap between little trained Nigerian staff and experienced foreign staff. Nationalisation of Nigerian universities in the 1970s was a harbinger of under-utilisation of our cultural resources in promoting Nigeria's culture and her economy. The implication here was that no indigenous Nigerian university lecturers were seen to be in the forefront of building the national economy from the point of being a team player in the promotion of Nigeria's cultural resources.

If we want to seek a model of professionalism and curatorship that define a museum archaeologist, I think we can consider the pioneer archaeologists that developed professional and productive thinking to produce the past by means of analysing data and representing information for museums' exhibitions around Nigeria in the persons of Thurstan Shaw, Bernard Fagg, William Fagg, Frank

Willet, Bassey Andah, Ekpo Eyo and Z.R. Dmochowski the expert in Nigerian traditional architect. They should be honoured by defining museum archaeology as that which takes archaeological research finds and artifacts to the platform for public viewing and showcasing tours all over the world, conferences and public enlightenment programmes and local community participation.

We would like to reiterate our admiration for the early museum archaeologists for their gallant and indomitable services to archaeology and museum in Nigeria and for the selflessness which they demonstrated throughout the period of their active services and even when they retired. And their long and historic fight for Nigeria to be recognised at national, regional and world archaeology level. The inspiration which their struggle gave to us should never die or abate in our time. Interceptive of the fact that archaeologists continue to be the butt of all manner of unprofessional treatment and deterioration right from when archaeology as a division was squashed and replaced with administrative organogram that hardly prove anything to go by at the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, the motherly employer of museum archaeologists in the face of all these disabilities, even which university museums equally in varying degrees suffer, which are by no means incurable, we need among other things, that strong single minded unity, solidarity, fraternity among archaeologists to avoid losing that zeal and vision, which animated the doyens and pioneers of archaeologist in Nigeria. In addition there is the set-down principle of the Nigeria archaeological association that serves as a sacred article of faith which is binding to every archaeologist in Nigeria. The problem is that we need to recognize the set down-principle. Many problems will be solve if archaeologists recognize the principles to uphold the profession and the treasures of ancient Nigeria, those discovered and those yet to be discovered.

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