

CHAPTER 3

Iron Age Archaeology in Lejja, Nigeria

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This paper is a report on research conducted at the iron smelting site of Lejja, in South Eastern Nigeria. One of the main objectives of the excavations was to recover data that would help to quantify the scale and scope of the remains of an iron smelting industry in the area; establish the kiln or furnace structure and determine the position of the tuyeres in the furnace to ascertain and document as much as possible, the iron working processes in Lejja. New furnace types which have not been reported anywhere else before were uncovered. Charcoal samples from the excavations were dated to 4005 ± 40 BP (over 2000 years BC). Finally, potsherds were also collected from the area around Ootobo Dunoka, Lejja and a reconnaissance of other smelting sites in Lejja was carried out. Finally, some ethnographic research was carried out in order to document various activities of the people of Lejja which may help in our understanding of the past.

Esta pesquisa examina a fundicao de ferro na estacao de Lejja, a Sudeste da Nigeria. Um dos principais objetivos da escavacao era recuperar dados que poderiam ajudar a quantificar a escala dos vestigios industriais da industria de fundicao de ferro na area; estabelecer o kiln da estrutura do furnace e determinar a posicao dos alcaravizes no furnace para ascertain e documentar tanto quanto possivel, o processo do trabalho de ferro em Lejja. Os materiais etnograficos foram recolhidos para documentar o estilo de vida das pessoas de Lejja no passado. Novos tipos de fornos que nao tinham sido relatados nas escavacoes anteriores foram descobertos. Amostras de carvao foram datadas de 4005 ± 40 BP (mais de 2000 anos AC). Fragmentos de ceramica foram tambem coleccionados na area a volta de Ootobo Dunoka, Lejja. Finalmente foi feito um reconhecimento de outras estacoes de fundicao de ferro em Lejja.