A GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS
DOCUMENTATION OF OYO-ILE AND BADAGRY
HERITAGE SITES, SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

BY

OLUKOLE TITILAYO OLUFUNKE

B.A., M.A., MPhil. ARCHAEOLOGY (IBADAN)

A Thesis in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology,
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

JULY 2013
ABSTRACT
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has triggered a revolution in archaeological methods for collecting and keeping inventories of heritages sites and monuments. Specifically, GIS studies have in recent times produced models for site potential or archaeological resource sensitivity. However, in Nigeria, previous archaeological works have focused on excavations, settlement patterns, vegetation history and reconstruction of cultural history, ignoring the aspects of digital documentation of heritage sites, with deleterious implications for data access, preservation and planning. This study, therefore focused on the production of a GIS database of Oyo-Ile and Badagry, two important heritage sites in southwestern Nigeria, with a view to digitally preserving their respective cultural features for research, planning and development, and determining their tourism potential.

The study adopted the GIS, a tool for collection and manipulation of spatially referenced data, as a model for documenting heritage sites and monuments. Fourteen sites, seven each from Oyo-Ile and Badagry – two heritage sites associated with the history of slave trade – were purposively sampled. Qualitative data were at the first instance collected through archaeological reconnaissance, oral tradition, and observation techniques. Spatial locations of cultural resources were thereafter obtained with the aid of topographical maps, aerial photographs, satellite images and handheld global positioning system (GPS). Data were analysed using spreadsheet, while cartographic representation of classified resources was developed with Arc View Software.
The GIS mapping produced a digital database of all the classified resources with their spatial locations within the two heritage sites. The cultural resources of Oyo-Ile were identified and classified as rockshelters, ruins, artefacts and relics of human settlements while those of Badagry were artefacts, museums and monuments, and relics of human settlements. The resources at Badagry, unlike those of Oyo-Ile, were well preserved and packaged to serve tourism purposes. The settlement patterns of Badagry and Oyo-Ile were linear and disperse, respectively. These are indicative of the culture and political structure of each site. Findings at the two heritage sites, as supported by oral traditions are typical of ancient Yoruba settlements. However, the topography of Badagry was plain unlike that of Oyo-Ile being undulating and rocky. Also, the architecture of Badagry comprised burnt bricks while that of Oyo-Ile was mainly of mud. Badagry’s resources and architecture could be traced to its role as a slave port during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade while those of Oyo-Ile supports oral tradition that it was a well fortified empire.

The Geographic Information Systems database of Oyo-Ile and Badagry Heritage sites which were classified as rockshelters, ruins, artefacts, museums and monuments and relics of human settlements, digitally preserves cultural resources of tourism significance within these sites while serving as pointers to history of the Yoruba. Thus, the database serves the purposes of documentation, preservation and research; it also provides data needed in the planning and management of the tourism resources of these sites.

**Key words:** Heritage Sites, Geographic Information Systems, Tourism, Oyo-Ile, and Badagry.

**Word count:** 466
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am full of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor P.A. Oyelaran, for both supervisory and fatherly role he played to bring this research to fruition. Also to Prof. O.B. Olawuyi - Head, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, I say thank you for the encouragement and understanding.

My appreciation goes to Professor Aremu, Drs Aleru, Alabi, Opadeji, Ukpokolo Ololajulo, Ajekigbe, Messrs Mba, and Femi, all of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan for their always being available to give needed assistance. The management and Staff of Old Oyo National Park and the IT students of 2006/2007 at the Old Oyo National Park are highly appreciated for their assistance during the fieldwork. Many thanks to Mr Peter Olaide-Mesewaku and all members of staff of the Badagry Heritage, Mobee and Seriki Faremi Williams Abass Museums for their immense support. Mr Joseph of the Geography Department, University of Ibadan is appreciated for his contributions on the GIS studies.

The Management and Staff of Redeemer’s University, especially those of the Department of Transport and Tourism Studies are well appreciated for their support and encouragement. Noteworthy to mention and appreciate, are the lifestyle and the propelling force from the pulpit that kept me firing the target: Pastor and Mrs Bukki Gbenro, the entire members of The Vineyard Assembly, (TVA), Ibadan. I am proud of you all.
To my friend, confidant and husband, for the push you gave, for unrelenting support in every respect, for the unquantifiable suggestions that gave direction and insight, for those sleepless nights we had together and for your much sacrifices, I cannot but say, a big thank you for being such a bundle of blessings.

Above all, to the Author of life; knowledge and Wisdom personified, for the grace He granted; the light He shed on my path at those dark moments; for touching the hearts of men to render help; for creating what is needed at every point – thank you Lord.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to two important personalities in my life:

First to the sweet memory of my late father, Julius Olutayo Olonade whose dream was to see me complete this programme; second to my heartthrob, Dr S.G. Olukole, who not only successfully took over from my dad but also committed his time, human and intellectual resources to the actualization of the dream of my late father.
CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mrs T.O. Olukole in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan.

Supervisor
P.A. Oyelaran
B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D. (Ibadan)
Professor, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
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