

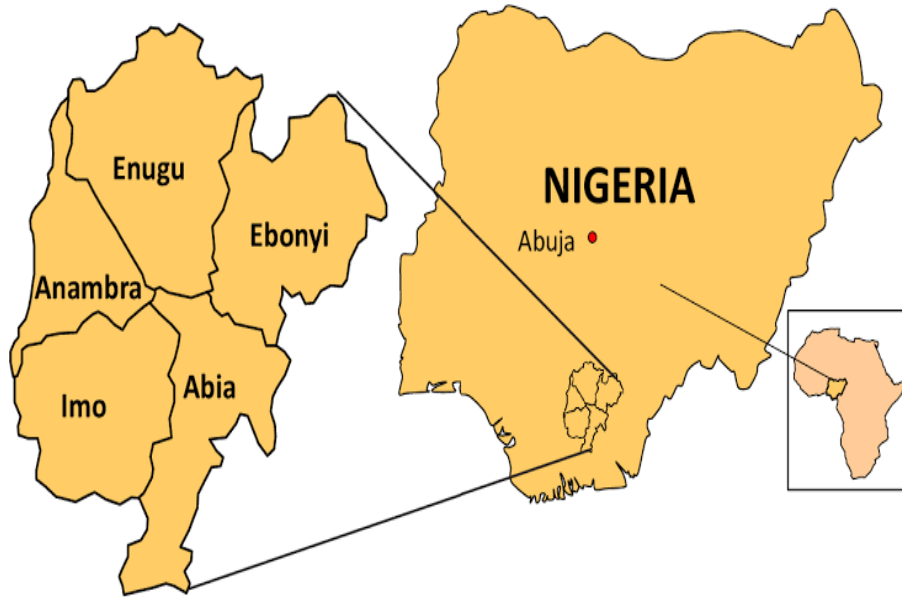
THE IGBO-UKWU PEOPLE

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LOCATION OF IGBO-UKWU ON THE MAP OF NIGERIA



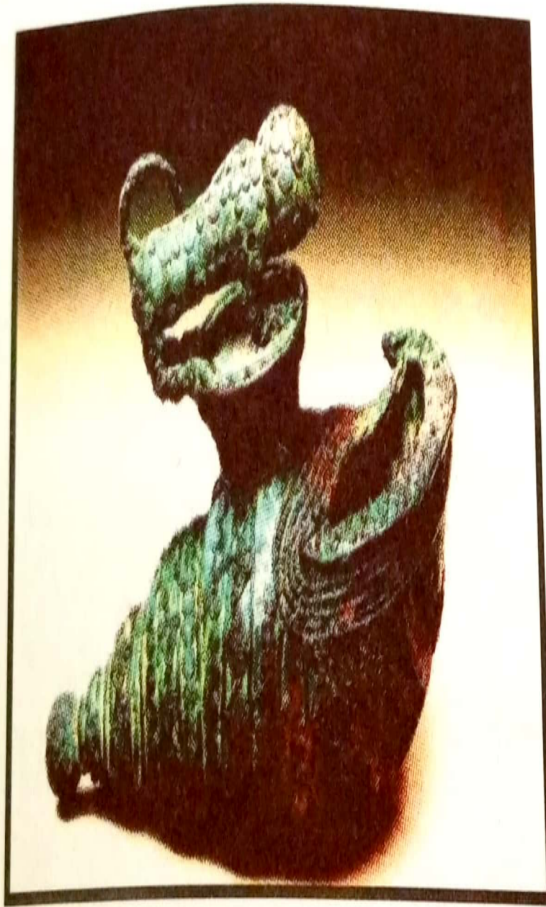
A map of Anambra State showing Igbo-Ukwu



THE IGBO-UKWU CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

Igbo-Ukwu is located in Anambra State of the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Thurstan Shaw, an archaeologist, conducted archaeological excavations at three sites in Igbo-Ukwu between 1959 and 1964. They are:

1. **Igbo Isaiah:** it was a storehouse of regalia, In the first site Shaw found bronze objects of various shapes and sizes. They included bronze shells bronze chain, decorated anklets and bracelets, large quantity of beads and other ornament.
2. **Igbo Richard:** It was a burial chamber or shrine and cister. This site contained a bronze leopard skull set of copper rod, a bronze hit made of a horse and three ivory tusks. A burial chamber was discovered at this site.
3. **Igbo Jonah:** It was a pit. In this site, omamental pots were discovered. The pots were decorated with deep small balls of clay. Other bronze objects discovered in this site included bells, ornaments, chains, wristlets, and iron blades.



Some Igbo-Ukwu artworks

IGBO-UKWU OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The inhabitants of Igbo-Ukwu had a metalworking art that flourished as early as the ninth century. Three sites have been excavated, revealing hundreds of ritual vessels and regalia castings of bronze or leaded bronze that are among the most inventive and technically accomplished bronzes ever made. The people of Igbo-Ukwu (originally known as Igbo-Nkwo), ancestors of present-day Igbo, were the earliest smithers of copper and its alloys in West Africa, working the metal through hammering, bending, twisting, and incising. They are likely among the earliest groups of West Africans to employ the lost-wax casting techniques in the production of bronze sculptures. Oddly, evidence suggests that their metalworking repertory was limited and Igbo smiths were not familiar with techniques

such as raising, soldering, riveting, and wire making, though these techniques were used elsewhere on the continent.

SIGNIFICANCE OF IGBO-UKWU CULTURE IN NIGERIA HISTORY

1. The Igbo-Ukwu finds helped to show the existence of wealth in the area
2. The Igbo-Ukwu produced artistic styles different from those of Ife and Benin that might have been imported from the Islamic world.
3. The Igbo-Ukwu finds equally gave an insight into the social and economic organisation of the area.
4. The Igbo-Ukwu brought to light a cultural complex which dates to the 9th century.