

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE  
RESOURCES OF KOLON-YIRI, UPPER WEST REGION, GHANA.

BY

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research work, carried out in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana, under the supervision of Dr. Samuel Nilirmi Nkumbaan. This work is not presented in full or in part to any other institution for examination. I remain solely responsible for any shortcomings in this study.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my father, Mr. Paul Edward Acquah, my mother, Mrs. Josephine Acquah of blessed memory, my siblings, Rev. Fr. Douglas Amoako Acquah and Mrs. Gladys Oforiwaa Boateng, and to all those who have been with me through this thick and thin not forgetting, Prof, Benjamin Kankpeyeng, Dr. Samuel Nilirmi Nkumbaan, Hon. Augustus Nana Kwasi Andrews, Hon. Jude Atuahene, Mr. Ernest Acquah, Mr. Kwabena Boateng, and Linda Boateng. I am highly grateful for your encouragement and support. God richly bless you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research examined the cultural heritage and settlement history of an ancient settlement called Kolon-Yiri in the Nadolwli-Kaleo District in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The objectives of the study were to identify and document the cultural resources of the people of Kolon-Yiri as a means of safeguarding their cultural heritage in the light of socio-cultural and economic transformations. It has also examined some aspects of their indigenous religious belief systems and practices, including their worldview. Drawing on information gathered from oral traditions, documentary records, ethnography and archaeology, the study provided adequate information regarding the settlement history of Kolon-Yiri, and how the indigenes interact with their cultural heritage resources. The study has also highlighted the archaeological and tourism potentials of Kolon-Yiri, and recommends a major archaeological project in the area particularly in the ancient Pizaga rockshelter. Finally, the study has provided a date for the settlement of Kolon-Yiri which places it within a temporal context in relation to other archaeological sites researched in the region. A multi-disciplinary approach, combining archaeological survey and ethnographic research techniques, aided the collection and analyses of data.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the background to the study, including basic information of the study area particularly its geographical location, ecology and climate as well as its geological features and soil nature. It also outlines in brief, statement of the research problem, aims and objectives of the research, methods of research, conceptual and theoretical bases, significance of the research and ends with how the research is organised. The chapter generally situates the context of the research and a summary of the focus and scope of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Just as archaeological research helps in reconstructing the past through cultural material evidence, heritage as a field of study functions similarly. Many scholars have made noteworthy efforts in conceptualizing and describing what heritage entails. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:7) argues that heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past as a specific way of interpreting and utilizing bygone times that link individuals within a larger collective. Heritage scholars support the assertion that heritage can be created by current generation within an ethnic set-up. However, “it is formed on the basis of its historical roots, identity and essence of place and belonging” (Hoelscher, 2011). Thus, heritage depicts one’s identity and sense of belonging to a community. In his view, Trask (2008) summarises heritage to include both tangible and intangible aspects of culture by defining heritage as everything that defines our distinct identities as peoples, and bestowed on us by our ancestors and endowed to us by nature. Heritage includes “our socio-political, cultural and economic systems and institutions;

or worldview, belief systems, ethics and moral values; our customary laws and norms” (Trask, 2008).

All of such arguments made by these heritage scholars seek to address both physical and non-physical phenomena acquired (from a previous generation), accepted and honoured by a current generation. These two phenomena have been described in the heritage industry as tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage (Trask, 2008; Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 1972).

Though emerged quite recently in the 1980s, heritage as a field of study is widely practiced in the quest of reconstructing or reinventing the past. It also plays significant role in understanding the present and the future. It is imperative therefore, to note the relationship between archaeology and heritage as fields of study in reconstructing past lifeways and understanding contemporary communities. A community’s ‘identity, its value and civilisation resides in its heritage’ (Hoelscher, 2011), and some of these are embedded in archaeological cultural remains. Therefore, the intangible aspect of cultural heritage can be identified through these remains ‘even though such essentialisation of ethnic and cultural identity is problematic’ (Kankpeyeng, 2003:29). Undoubtedly, there is a great link between archaeology and heritage as disciplines in reconstructing past lifeways of indigenous communities.

However, the archaeology of northern Ghana, particularly Upper West Region is poorly known. For instance, basic information on the presence and extent of archaeological resources are unavailable for much of the region (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). This is because archaeological data are unavailable, and cultural or environmental impact assessments have not been conducted in conjunction with development work (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). As a result of this, there is a slow pace of development in the region than other parts of the country.

Generally, a lot of anthropological research has been conducted in north-western part of Ghana (now Upper West Region) with very few archaeological works. For instance, Carola Lentz's work entitled "*Ethnicity and Making of History in Northern Ghana*" published in 2006, extensively focuses on the social and political history of North-Western Ghana. Lentz (2006) traces the creation of new ethnic and territorial boundaries, categories and forms of self-understanding, and outlines major contribution to debates on ethnicity, colonisation, and the production of history. Bodomo (1997) also in his article "*The Structure of Dagaare*" focuses on the linguistic group of the Dagaaba (speakers of the Dagaare language in north-western Ghana). In his article, he emphasises the major role played by this linguistic group most especially during the advent of the missionaries in the colonisation of North-Western Ghana.

Few archaeologists including Kankpeyeng (2003), Nkumbaan (2003), Boachie-Ansah(2003, 2005) and Bredwa-Mensah (2004), Swanepoel (2004), Saako (2009) and Diku (2014) have researched in Kpaliworgu, Sankana and Kasana, Kasana, Lipolo, Birifoh-Sila, and Lawra-Yikpee respectively all within the Upper West Region of Ghana. These are insufficient and a lot needs to be done in the region as it has quite a number of significant sites of archaeological and tourism potentials.

In particular, through reconnaissance survey conducted in Kolon-Yiri (my study area), the discovery of surface configurations or features comprising potsherds, figurine, shrines, polished stone axe, iron slag and quartz are suggestive elements of archaeological potentials in the area. The manner in which archaeological surface materials are destroyed with large farm implements coupled with the destruction of cultural heritage resources of the area informed my decision to conduct this research, as a medium to rescue an irreplaceable heritage that could lead to a complete loss of identity.

In furtherance to the archaeology of Upper West Region of Ghana, the focus of the research was on Kolon-Yiri which is believed to be the indigenous home of the first occupants of the area. This research mainly identifies and documents the cultural resources of Kolon-Yiri as a means of safeguarding its cultural heritage in the light of modern socio-cultural and economic transformations. This research, as a medium to rescue an irreplaceable heritage, will serve as a working guide or document for a large archaeological project in the area to help add a major weight on the need for the conservation of these cultural resources for the socio-cultural and economic benefits for the area and Ghana at large. Thus, the study helps to identify and promote the archaeological and tourism potentials of Kolon-Yiri, and contribute to knowledge.

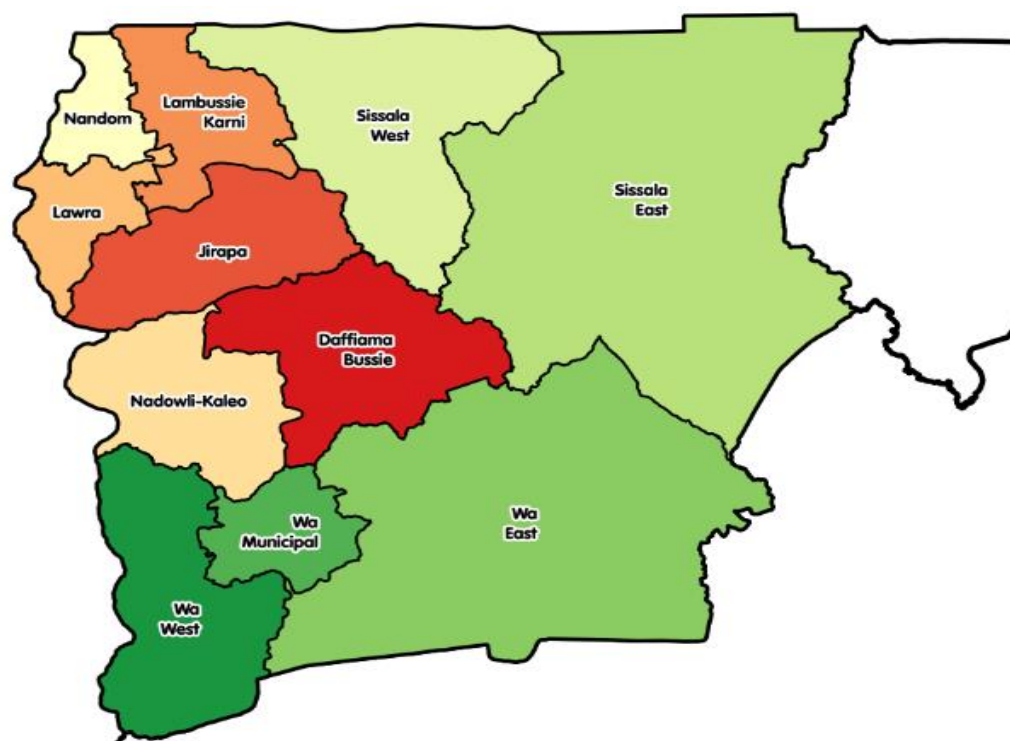
This research employed a multi-disciplinary approach to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The specific approaches adopted in this research included, archaeological surveys and test excavations, collection of oral accounts and the use of other ethnographic research tools and techniques including photography.

## **1.2 The Study Area**

Kolon-Yiri is an ancient settlement located in the Nadowli-Kaleo district in the Upper West Region of Ghana (Map 1). The Upper West Region, with Wa as the regional capital, was formally part of the then Upper Region which was itself carved out of the Northern Region in July 1960 (Population and Housing Census 2005-edited version of 2000). In pursuance of the decentralisation policy, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government in 1983 divided the Upper Region into Upper West and Upper East (Population and Housing Census 2005-edited version of 2000). The region is bordered by Upper East Region to the east, Northern Region to the south, and Burkina Faso to the west and north. The region lies between latitudes 9°N and 11°N and longitudes 1°25'W and 2°50'W, and covers a geographical area of 18,476

square kilometres which constitutes 12.7% of the total land area of Ghana (Population and Housing Census 2010).

The Upper West Region has a population of 702,110 with a population structure of 341,182 males and 360,928 females (Population and Housing Census 2010). However, it had a projected population of 849,123 recorded on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (Ghana Statistical Service). The Dagaaba, Lobi, Sisala, Vagla and the Wala, all of who speak distinct languages, inhabit this region. Some key attractions in the region include, Gbelle Game Reserve located in Tumu, Wa Naa's Palace, Gbolu Defense Wall, George Ferguson's Tomb in Wa, and it has several cultural festivals and events like the Gologo/Golib and Fao festivals (<http://touringhana.com>).



Map 1: Districts Map of Upper West Region including Nadowli-Kaleo District (GhanaDistricts.com)

Geographically, Kolon-Yiri lies between latitudes N 10°20'53.8" and longitudes W 002°23'31.0", and located 304 metres above sea level and about 40km northwest of Wa.



It is located in the Nadowli-Kaleo District in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The district covers a geographical area of 1,132 square kilometres and, has altitudes ranging between 150m to 300m above sea level though some parts average 550m. The district has a population of 61,561 with a population structure of 28,753 males and 32,808 females (Population and Housing Census 2010). However, the district had a projected population of 74,498 recorded on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2019(Ghana Statistical Service).

Kolon-Yiri (Fig.1) is believed to be an ancient and the earliest settlement of the Guomo clan of the linguistic group of the Dagaaba. The clan itself, currently has descendants in eight (8) communities including Kolon-Yiri. All indigenes of these communities trace their ancestry or lineage to Kolon-Yiri. Literally, Kolon-Yiri means “*Home of Water*” by the local dialect. Through oral account, the village, is believed to have been named after the abundant supply of freshwater to the earliest ancestors. Hence, source of water could have been one of the motivating factors for the permanent settlement of the earliest ancestors of the area.



Fig. 1: A section of Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### 1.2.1. Ecology and Climate

Ecologically, Kolon-Yiri is located in the guinea savannah vegetation belt. The vegetation consists of grass with scattered drought resistant trees. Predominant trees of the area are acacias (*Acacia greggi*), baobab (*Adansonia digitate*), tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), ebony (*Diospyros spp*), kapok (*Ceiba pentandra*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), shea (*Butyrospermum parkii*) and African Locust bean (*Parkia biglobosa*). The heterogeneous collections of these trees provide all domestic needs for fuel wood and charcoal, construction of houses, cattle kraals as well as fencing of gardens. Almost all of these tree species are also used for medicinal purposes by the locals. For instance, the unrefined raw shea butter from the shea tree aids in numerous skin conditions such as blemishes and wrinkles, stretch marks prevention mostly during pregnancy, muscle fatigue, dermatitis and radiation treatments for certain medical problems. The bark of the African locust tree also helps in the treatment of hypertension.

Apart from the medicinal and economic benefits, many of these trees also have food value. For instance, the African Locust bean (*Parkia biglobosa*) tree seeds when removed from the pulp, and boiled, covered in ash, and pounded, dried in the sun, and then sent through another cleansing process by hand where they are cooked again to produce a sticky fermented mixture (popularly known as *dawadawa* among the Hausa people, and *dúɔ* by the Dagaaba) has a great food value. Dawadawa is a food source that is rich in fat and protein, and one that further enables protein uptake from cereals, and takes on primary value as a nutritional source rather than flavouring base, and this illustrates how ecological and economic knowledge is a foundation of health and well-being (Campbell-Platt, 1980). In most communities particularly in northern Ghana, it is mostly used in seasoning traditional foods including soups, stew and rice dashes.

Also, the dry pulp of the baobab tree is taken as a delicacy or dissolved in milk or water and enjoyed as a local beverage.

Climatically, Kolon-Yiri has the dry and wet seasons. The wet season commences from April and ends in October. The dry season characterised by the cold and hazy harmattan weather, starts from early November and ends in the latter part of March when the hot weather begins; with intensity and ends only with the onset of the early rainfall in April. The temperature of Kolon-Yiri is between a low of 17°C at night during harmattan and a high of 38°C in the day during the hot season. This unfavourable climatic condition has been a major underlying factor for the chronic problem of food insecurity of most communities in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

### **1.2.2 Geology and Soil**

Geologically, Kolon-Yiri falls within an escarpment of Pizaga caves characterised by sandstone, shales, mudstones and conglomerates and surrounded with birimian granite rocks and basement complex. These rocks hold a considerable quantity of water which is a good potential for the drilling of boreholes and the sinking of wells in the area. The source of water in the area played a significant role on the historical settlement of the indigenous peoples of Kolon-Yiri.

The soil types are laterite, sandy, red and brown, and, sandy loamy or savannah ochrosols ([statsghana.gov.gh](http://statsghana.gov.gh)). This is also evident from the stratigraphy of the two test pits excavated (pages 70-72).

### **1.3 The Research Problem**

Several factors including warfare and total neglect have accounted for complete loss of rich cultural heritage of many communities in most countries all over the world. This worrying situation has led to a number of looting and destruction of antiquities of several indigenous communities in Africa of which the Upper West Region of Ghana is no exception. To minimise

such canker, if not preventing it entirely, it is important to identify, document and preserve the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) of indigenous communities. Until this is addressed, a chunk of communities would completely lose their heritage or sense of belonging and will have nothing to memorialise and pass on to subsequent generations. Indeed, their uniqueness will completely be forgotten.

Kolon-Yiri is an ancient settlement in the Upper West Region of Ghana with significant history yet mention is hardly made of it in Ghana's history. It was not surprising to notice through oral tradition, the toponymical error with respect to the name of the community as *Korin-Yiri* and used by most institutions in Ghana including the Ghana Statistical Service (as mentioned in the Population and Housing Census 2010) due to lack of historical documentation. Toponymically, *Korin-Yiri* in the local dialect means '*Home of francolins*' which according to the oral tradition of the village, completely has no correlation with regards to the historical meaning of this ancient settlement. This research addresses this and spells out some recommendations. The research also provides archaeological data in relation to the historical settlement and cultural heritage of Kolon-Yiri as a means of complementing the oral tradition and adding to existing knowledge on the history and archaeology of the Upper West Region.

#### **1.4 Conceptual Framework**

For a holistic documentation of the heritage of any given society, a multi-disciplinary approach is essential. It embodies drawing information from varied sources, eclectically sifting the sources, and ensuring feedback or cross-checking to arrive at scientific or close to scientific conclusions. In principle, "if we assume that past societies possessed all the anthropological richness visible in the present, then a more rounded approach becomes essential" (Roger, 2007) in reconstructing past societies and this may include heritage as a discipline. In order to identify

and preserve the cultural heritage of an identifiable group of people, it is important to understand both tangible and intangible cultural elements considered rigorously valuable by these owners or keepers of such heritage. However, the dark side of heritage in most African indigenous societies is the complete loss of cultural identities amid the challenges of modernisation and globalisation (Hoelscher, 2011).

In line with this, the concept of material culture is adopted by the researcher to deal extensively with the reconstruction of tangible and intangible ancient culture embedded in archaeological cultural materials. These material cultures represent “objects used by humans to survive, and also represent facets of identity, state of mind, social or economic standing” (Prown, 1982). Many of these cultural materials have significant religious values and continue to play major roles in many contemporary communities.

Also, “heritage is for people; not just for a small minority of specialists and experts, but for everyone” (Howard, 2003: 33). Hence, the conservation of the cultural heritage must be a primary concern not only to scholars within the heritage industry or keepers of heritage, but to all individuals living with them (heritage) particularly within the communities. To enhance this, the research stresses on the eco-museum concept as a means of safeguarding the cultural elements of Kolon-Yiri through community engagement and participation. The eco-museum concept “reflects a concern with reinforcing the connection between the museum and its social surroundings and environment” (Hugues, 1978). This concept, if well executed, will enhance the tourism potentials of the study area.

### **1.5 Research Aims and Objectives**

This research aimed at identifying and documenting the tangible and intangible cultural resources of the indigenous people of Kolon-Yiri as a means of safeguarding their cultural

heritage in the light of modern socio-cultural and economic transformations. It also sought to highlight the archaeological and tourism potentials of Kolon-Yiri towards national development.

The research objectives are stated below:

- collecting and documenting the oral accounts of the indigenous people of Kolon-Yiri,
- identifying and documenting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Kolon-Yiri,
- identifying change and continuity in culture of the people of Kolon-Yiri,
- conducting archaeological survey and test excavations to uncover past material cultural remains as a means of instituting comparisons.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The following questions guided my research:

- What is the migration and settlement history of Kolon-Yiri?
- What are the Cultural and Archaeological Resources of Kolon-Yiri, and how could these assets be conserved and managed?

### **1.7 Research Methods and Sources of Information**

It is prudent to identify procedures and processes through which cultural and heritage aspects of a community can be recognised, acknowledged and fully incorporated within sustainability initiatives (Keitumetse, 2014). Therefore, this research is guided by an eclectic approach. Thus, a multi-disciplinary approach was adopted to elicit data for this research. This included a review of documentary sources, oral sources, ethnographic studies and archaeological survey and test excavations as well as the use of internet sources.

### **1.7.1 Documentary Sources**

Written documents including published books and unpublished works, maps, journals, articles, and thesis were sourced for information for this research. The libraries of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Balme, African Studies, Department of Geography and Earth Science, Department of Statistics, Department of Sociology and the Department of History all of the University of Ghana, Legon, as well as the library of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Norway were consulted for a thorough review of written sources for information related to the research. Topographical maps of Upper West Region of Ghana and Nadowli-Kaleo district, which Kolon-Yiri is a part, as well as internet sources were sourced.

### **1.7.2 Oral data or oral accounts and Ethnographic Study**

Oral accounts refer to “eloquent testimonies of the way of life of some African societies, passed on from generation to generation for many centuries in preliterate societies” (Henige, 1982; Vansina, 1985). Thus, it is a medium of human communication through which knowledge and preserved cultural meanings are received, and continuously preserved and transmitted from a specific generation to another identifiable generation, hence, considered as heritage. Oral accounts “as first-hand methodological element in research have played instrumental role in the quest of investigating the past lifeways of most communities” (Kankpeyeng 2003:10). There is no doubt that oral accounts, over the years, have provided historians and anthropologists with useful links to the past (Kankpeyeng 2003:10). Oral accounts may be distorted of facts; however, they aid in locating historical sites of archaeological interests and provides information on the histories and functions of these sites (Atherton, 1983; Schmidt, 1990, cf. Diku, 2014).

In most part of Africa, indigenous communities resort to folktale as a means of communicating the past to subsequent generations. Thus, knowledge about most things including, customs,

traditions, social relations, kinship, craftsmanship, history, art of living are passed by word of mouth (Sawyer and Peter, 1996; Okyere, 1998). It helps to identify our sense of belonging and serves as guide for human morals. In adopting this research method, the researcher relied on the traditional leaders and other key stakeholders of Kolon-Yiri in documenting the history of the people of Kolon-Yiri.

The diversity of African societies is complemented by the existence of a large number of cultural elements which are similar across wide areas, ranging from material culture to abstract ideas and symbols (Roger, 2007). In view of this, an ethnographic study was also conducted as a means of obtaining the emic views of the people of Kolon-Yiri to better understand and interpret the intangible aspects of cultural heritage through the tangibles (physical cultural materials). The methods used in conducting the ethnographic study of this research included personal and participant observations.

Personal interviews were based on judgmental or purposive sampling. Thus, the researcher selected people with historical knowledge and knowledge of the traditions of Kolon-Yiri. This process involved selecting specific individuals from a larger population based on information available to the researcher. Data collected were recorded in a field notebook. Interviews (one-on-one interviews, semi-formal and informal) across age, gender and social status were conducted for a better understanding of the settlement history of Kolon-Yiri. Respondents to the interviews included three (3) heads of the three individual gates or families, three (3) traditional leaders of Kolon-Yiri, three (3) opinion leaders from the community, one (1) interpreter (an indigene) and two (2) youths.

Focus group discussions and participant observations were also employed to observe and document current lifeways and the emic view of the people on the cultural heritage of Kolon-



Yiri. This method which was adopted at the beginning of the research with separate groups of individuals, helped to identify key individuals with requisite knowledge about the study area. The interviews (one-on-one, semi-formal and informal) as well the observations (personal and participant) aided in gathering oral accounts and ethnographic data of Kolon-Yiri (Fig 2).



Fig. 2: Conducting oral interview with traditional leaders of Kolon-Yiri including the Tindana  
(Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### **1.7.3 Archaeological Survey and Test Excavations**

An archaeological survey was conducted to provide evidence of material culture of past human activities of the indigenous people of Kolon-Yiri. Before this, a feasibility study through a visit to the community was undertaken. The visit provided an opportunity to source the requisite permission from the custodians of the land, and local government authorities for this research. A reconnaissance survey conducted in the area during the visit, revealed information and helped to identify sites where the earliest settlers were believed to have lived. The survey also helped to discover archaeological features such as scattered potsherds, figurine, shrines, polished stone axe, iron slag and quartz in the area. To complement the oral traditions of Kolon-Yiri as far as

the exact location of their earliest settlement was concerned, the researcher excavated two test pits on selected sites within the study area (Kolon-Yiri). These selected sites were based on the surface configurations and where oral accounts pointed as the exact place of the first settlers of Kolon-Yiri.

The test excavations were done arbitrarily at 20cm per level to expose the arrangements of the artifacts beneath the earth. The archaeological materials retrieved were transported to the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon, for further analysis. The archaeological investigations also included photography, sketches and measurements of artefacts recovered within the test excavated units.

Other historical sites of archaeological and tourism potentials were surveyed, and, the Global Positioning System (GPS) was used to record their exact locations for further research in the area. These historical sites are mentioned in chapter four (4) of this work.

### **1.8 Significance of the Research**

This research being the first to be conducted in Kolon-Yiri in the Nadowli-Kaleo District of the Upper West Region of Ghana, highlights the archaeological and tourism potentials of the area in the hope of attracting policy makers and development agencies into formulating policies and undertaking projects respectively that would be of socio-cultural and economic benefit to the people. It is a contribution to knowledge of the history, archaeology and cultural developments in the area. The outcome of this research is also expected to serve as a preliminary tool needed for further archaeological research and, socio-cultural and economic developments of the community. The radiocarbon date expected from a sample submitted to the National Laboratory for Age Determination in Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in

Trondheim (Norway) for analysis would help in placing the settlement history of Kolon-Yiri in a temporal context within the region.

### **1.9 Challenges of the Research**

Some of the challenges encountered on the field included the following:

- There was limited funding for the research.
- Contested heritage within the Pizaga escarpment created discomfort to the researcher. Hence, the need to concentrate only on sites in Kolon-Yiri township.
- One of the selected sites for the excavation was a sacred grove, and the research team was prevented from wearing footwear during the fieldwork and had to work bare-footed even though the entire area were full of thorns.
- Added to the above, was the difficulty faced by the research team to access some of the sites within the study area. The team had to rely on the services of motorbikes and bicycles to access some of these sites. At a point in time, the team had to trek for many kilometers within the rocks around Pizaga in the scorching sun.

### **1.10 Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one introduces the dissertation by giving a general background to the study area. Its geographical location, vegetation, climatic condition, geological features, soil types, economic characteristics, religions of the study area as well as the research problem, conceptual framework, aims, objectives, research methods, research questions and the significance of the research. Chapter two evaluates relevant literature on the concept of heritage, and on the relationship between heritage and archaeology as fields of study in the quest of reconstructing past lifeways of indigenous communities. Chapter three documents the oral accounts of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri emphasizing their settlement

history. It also touches on some aspects of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Kolon-Yiri. Chapter four reports the preliminary archaeological works conducted, and highlights the archaeological and tourism potentials of the study area. The last chapter (chapter five) focuses on the discussions, conclusions and recommendations in relation to the findings of this research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONCEPTUALISING HERITAGE

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the relevant literature on the conceptualisation of heritage. It as well, spells out what cultural heritage entails and indicates the key phenomena considered and widely accepted as cultural heritage, and reviews key conservation measures of cultural heritage. It further explores the relationship between Heritage and Archaeology as fields of study and their relevance to the quest for reconstructing past lifeways of indigenous communities.

#### 2.1 The Concept of Heritage

Conceptualising heritage has indeed attracted various views from scholars and other stakeholders within the heritage industry. What lies at the heart of the uneasy relationship between communities in general and the community of heritage professionals is the idea of heritage (Smith and Waterton, 2009). Smith and Waterton (2009) asserts that:

“How heritage is conceptualised, “what is done with it, and the uses it is put to, are the pivotal points from which tensions, misunderstandings and conflicts arise, and to have a meaningful definition and understanding of heritage, it is important to incorporate the links between material culture, memory and identity” (Smith and Waterton, 2009).

Howard (2003:6) states firmly that, heritage as a word “has a clear and relatively simple relationship with the concept of inheritance”. Thus, heritage is considered as heirloom passed on, or, that may be passed on, to an identifiable generation from a known larger lineage. Howard (2003) further posits that heritage can be “something you want”, that could be “knowable or non-knowable” (Smith and Waterton, 2009) which is “transferable or transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor” (Hoelscher, 2011). The importance attached to the said knowable or non-knowable *thing* makes that *thing* to be considered heritage. Consequently, heritage can be

regarded as anything that someone wishes to conserve or to collect, and pass on, to future generations (Howard, 2003:6). Many people collect heritage for their own benefit or for the benefit of others, although the nature of those benefits is very various (Howard, 2003:7). However, not everything collected can be considered as heritage unless it has some level of recognition. Thus, not everything is heritage but anything can be measured as such based on ownership, memories and recognition (Howard, 2003:7).

Pearce (1998) argues that any individual's heritage is likely to be a mixture of things that define a group's identity, often a national group, and those which define a personal and familial one (cf. Howard, 2003). This "mixture of things" could be natural, and man-made features or objects created by an individual or group of people, as a representation of cultural and social values.

As indicated above, heritage may generally be accepted as anything of certain level of value(s) that is collected, preserved or conserved, and passed on to future generation(s). However, some heritage scholars, and keepers or owners of heritage consider the monetary value of heritage, particularly, when a community's heritage resource becomes a most valuable asset for tourism.

Obviously:

"some individuals are slowly beginning to see heritage patrimony as moneymaking sources that can benefit local communities rather than as financial burdens that detract resources from programs that alleviate poverty" (Bugarin, 2009:208).

Wanda (2010) also argues in his article *"Intangible cultural heritage, ownership, copyrights, and tourism"* that:

"the fundamental re-conceptualisation and reconfiguration of modern social, political, and economic boundaries are on the greatest transformations impacting our society, and, to these, include the reconfiguration of cultural boundaries, particularly in the crossing of societal boundaries to commodify a community's intangible cultural heritage for tourist consumption".

Thus, commodifying the community's heritage directly contributes to the monetary value of such heritage. In such instance, "the use of heritage becomes controversial by the context of commercialisation of spirituality" (Timothy and Covonor, 2006:15, cf. Singh, 2008), and the commodification of heritage leads to issue of authenticity. For instance:

"the Buddhist shrines in Myanmar were taken over by the reigning government, which in turn interprets the shrines for tourists in a sanitized manner, focusing more on reinforcing political and economic claims than on presenting the Buddhist views of site sacrality" (Philip and Mercer, 1999, cf. Singh, 2008).

Many scholars although acknowledge the fact that monetary value of heritage motivates collectors and conservators, "simply buying things for no purpose other than to make profit on resale does not seem to be a heritage activity" (Howard, 2003:9). Hence, anything collected, conserved, and passed on to a known generation for monetary purpose cannot be considered heritage.

It is vitally important not to restrict the concept of heritage merely to material culture or physical features, because people feel more strongly about the things they do, rather than the things they own (Howard, 2003; Pearce, 1998), and, their emotional attachment to what they own can be described heritage, because such emotions depict their real identity, and essence of place, and belonging. Hence, "heritage could not only be physical thing, but also a non-physical thing" (Smith, 2006).

Indeed, heritage depicts a real identity and essence of place and belonging, however, it must gain a high level of recognition by its owner(s) or keeper(s). Thus, not everything that "provides identity can be regarded as heritage" (Howard, 2003). As earlier indicated, "heritage, as what an individual or community will want to save, collect, conserve (or preserve), must be recognised and self-conscious by definition" (Howard, 2003). What may be disregarded today, may highly be regarded tomorrow and recognised as such by same or other individual (or community).

Based on such recognition, that disregarded “thing” then, becomes heritage. Therefore, there is a large “proportion of identity, inevitably, the portion that dominates the agenda, which we have identified as part of our makeup and which we want to save” (Howard, 2003) as an individual, family, community or nation, and that is heritage.

In spite of the above conceptualisation of heritage, other scholars including, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), also argue that heritage “is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past as a specific way of interpreting and utilizing bygone times that link individuals within a larger collective” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998:7). The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), also affirms this position as indicated in Article (1) of the convention that:

“intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity” ( UNESCO, 2003).

Heritage, far from being fatally predetermined or God-giving, is in large measure our own marvelously malleable creation (Lowenthal, 1998: 226, cf. Singh, 2008), and, “heritage is not an innate or primordial phenomenon; people created or converted it into symbolic form; and in many cases associated it with religion” (Singh, 2008). Thus, heritage can be created or recreated by current generation or contemporary linguistic group within an ethnic set-up, and may imply inheritance and transferable possessions, however, such created or recreated heritage must be “formed on the basis of its historical roots, identity and essence of place and belonging” (Hoelscher, 2011).



There is limited works on heritage as “it is concerned with the details of those objects that are the subject of collection and conservation” (Howard, 2003:9) as compared to other fields of study including History, Archaeology, Geography and Architecture. However, materials that broadly deal with concepts of heritage come from “a wide range of authors, including geographers, cultural scholars, town planners and art historians, as well as departments of museum studies” (Howard, 2003). The concern of heritage especially religious built forms, had played an active role in the past, but attention for value, use and conservation are said to have emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from the rubrics of modernity (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; cf. Singh, 2008). Therefore, it is important not only to heritage scholars, but to all, to as a matter of urgency, place much attention on heritage, as it really depicts our identity or essence of place and belonging.

## **2.2 Natural Heritage Resources**

In most part of the world, there have been several efforts in the conservation of natural resources through the solicitation of cultural resource management, and, this “is the wise use of the earth’s resources by humanity” (Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013). Most of these natural resources, including reptiles, birds, animals, rivers, streams, groves, plants or trees are considered consecrated due to the cultural significance attached to them by their respective surrounding communities. Hence, these natural resources are considered heritage in their respective commune, and, are well preserved or conserved. Mostly in Africa, many of such natural resources, for centuries, have been traditionally conserved by the community’s set rules and regulations. This is discussed thoroughly in the subsequent sub-topics of this chapter.

Rim-Rukel et al (2013), in their article *Traditional beliefs and conservation of natural resources: Evidence from selected communities in Delta State, Nigeria*, cited the python observed as a totem

at Useifrum and Ujevuwu communities in Ughelli South and Udu Local Government areas, all in Nigeria respectively. In such communities, the python, is considered heritage, hence, given much reverence. They also cited the origin of River Ethiope at Umuaja in the Ukwani Local Government area in Nigeria, where water is seen to come out from underground through roots of a very big tree. The tree with its natural environment is revered as a sacred grove, and an abode of the gods (Rim-Rukeh et al, 2013). Spiritual activities there are controlled by a chief priest who is in charge of the abode of such god, and also the messenger of the god in human form (Rim-Rukeh, et al, 2013). The source of water of the river, is also esteemed and protected because it is regarded as the source of life and fertility, such that, barren women go to bath in this water in the hope of being fertile (Rim-Rukeh et al, 2013). The river and its immediate surroundings, especially forest, are protected on the basis that the spirit of the river resided in the area (Rim-Rukel et al, 2003).

In addition to the above examples, the striking sandstone rock formations within the Tano Sacred Grove, in Tanoboase in the Bono Region of Ghana, is given much reverence by both the Akans and the Bono people. Taakora, the highest of the Akan gods on earth is believed to dwell at the source of the Tano River within the grove (Ghana Tourism Authority).

Clearly, these resources (the python, the groves and the rivers), irrespective of their natural forms, “have survived all these while purely because of the strong religious cultural beliefs held by the local people and the spiritual, religious and cultural attachments to them” (Rim-Rukel et al, 2013). They are indeed, recognised and considered heritage in the light of their cultural significance (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004) by their respective owners or keepers.

In reference to the above views, it is absolutely clear to avow the position that a natural resource can be considered heritage based on its cultural significance. Thus, the cultural values embedded

in the natural resource make the said resource recognised and observed as such, hence, considered a cultural heritage. Cultural heritage, in itself, is considered a dual phenomenon, even though, some scholars view these phenomena as two separate cultural variables. This assertion is discussed thoroughly in my subsequent sub-title of this chapter.

### **2.3 Cultural Heritage as a Dual Phenomenon**

Scholars and other stakeholders in the heritage industry have proposed two aspects of cultural heritage as tangible and intangible. For several decades, some scholars explicitly argued that there were two separate cultural variables with different meanings and functions, hence, could not be fused into a single cultural entity (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). However, such assertions have been re-theorised by contemporary heritage scholars and stakeholders clearly positing that one cultural variable is embedded in the other to form a single cultural entity (Smith and Waterton, 2009; Trask, 2008; UNESCO, 2003). These individual assertions are discussed subsequently.

Submitting their argument from an archaeological perspective, Smith and Waterton (2009) view heritage as material culture of the past and structures produced by humans that make up the archaeological record and are used to explain, or to help explain, the past. The materiality of archaeological data makes the concept of heritage inherently knowable (Smith and Waterton, 2009). Thus, it is this material culture (the physical object or feature) that represents the identity or essence of place and belonging of their users, and cannot be viewed as two separate cultural variables fused into a single cultural entity.

However, some scholars argue that heritage cannot be a known thing, rather, it “is a cultural process or performance of meaning making” (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). Smith further argues that heritage therefore “becomes not a thing or a place, but an intangible process in which social

and cultural values are identified, negotiated, rejected or affirmed” (Smith, 2006; cf. Smith and Waterton, 2009) within a larger lineage. Thus, “heritage is a chain of cultural activities including; remembering, commemorating, communicating and passing on knowledge and memories, asserting and expressing identity and social and cultural values and meanings” (Smith and Waterton, 2009). Heritage in itself, is an experience, social and cultural performance that people actively often self-consciously, and critically engage in (Smith, 2006).

The memories and experiences created, and re-enacted through the performance of heritage help bind communities, and other social and cultural groups through the creation of shared experiences, values and memories, all of which work to help cement or recreate social networks and ties (Smith, and Waterton, 2009). With such an assertion, ‘place’ becomes a focal point for performing, mediating and negotiating the meaning of the past for the present (Samuel, 1994). This is because, heritage sites are points at which our sense of place becomes anchored and emotionally manageable, and, experiences of memory-making, remembering and other forms of emotional identity expression, are made manageable by taking them out of the ‘everyday’ and concentrating them in specific performances in which heritage places are identified, looked after and visited (Smith, and Waterton, 2009).

Heritage is something which is fully incorporated, recognised, and memorialised through memorials (including rituals and festivals). Thus, heritage is seen as a “memory” (and not just a mere “thing” that is passed on to future generation) as a means of recognising one’s identity and essence of place and belonging (Smith and Waterton, 2009; Howard, 2003). Indeed, no form of memory, collective or otherwise, will cease to be contingent and unstable despite international appeals to intractability and performance (Huyssen, 1995; cf. Smith and Waterton, 2009).

However, memories are recast and recreated in the minds of each generation to help make sense of the present and, in this process, come to understand themselves (Huyssen, 1995).

Trask (2008) in his view, propounds that the two cultural variables of heritage are fused into a single cultural entity by summarily defining heritage as:

“everything that defines our distinct identities as people. It is bestowed on us by our ancestors and endowed to us by nature. It includes our socio-political, cultural and economic systems and institutions; or worldview, belief systems, ethics and moral values; our customary laws and norms” (Trask, 2008).

Heritage further includes:

“traditional knowledge, which is the creative production of human thought and craftsmanship, language, cultural expressions which are created, acquired and inspired, such as songs, dances, stories, ceremonies, symbols and designs, poetry, artworks; scientific, agricultural, technical and ecological knowledge and the skills required to implement this knowledge and technologies” (Trask, 2008).

From the above scholarly narratives, heritage scholars address both physical and non-physical phenomena of cultural heritage acquired (from a previous generation), accepted and honoured by a current or future generation. These two phenomena are posited in the heritage industry as tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in particular, at its General Conference held in Paris from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2003, at its 32<sup>nd</sup> session in Article 2 of its General Provisions unanimously defines intangible cultural heritage as:

“practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage”(UNESCO, 2003).

The intangible cultural heritage as defined by the convention includes “oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts;

social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship” (UNESCO, 2003).

It is clear that heritage establishes a symbiotic relationship between the tangible and intangible, and one cultural variable (the intangible) is partly embedded in the other (tangible) to form a single cultural entity commonly accepted by scholars and stakeholders in the heritage industry as *cultural heritage*. Thus, cultural heritage becomes a memory or transferable possession of a generation that is passed on to another generation, and this is embedded in the tangible.

#### **2.4 The Relevance of Cultural Heritage**

Gradually, many individuals are “acknowledging the fact that we live in an era of unprecedented concern with preserving and restoring the past” (Rowlands, 2002). Indeed, terms like “heritage, tradition and cultural memory have been common in our everyday life making it possible to make us feel that we belong somewhere” (Bugarin, 2009; Rowlands, 2002). A new politics of recognition has arisen since the early 1990s that links a politics of identity with a need to belong (Stolcke, 1995:4). Maintaining such cultural identity and associating a linkage of belongingness amid the challenges of modernisation and an increasing global flow have become an obsession (Friedman, 1992; cf. Rowlands, 2002). In all of such challenges however, the search for one’s identity or essence of place, and belonging continues to rise at a faster pace considering the numerous impacts associated with such right of identity. The right to an identity has become the foundation for making claims to intellectual and cultural property (Strathern, 1999).

Lowenthal (1985) submits that, the origination of cultural heritage was inevitable to powerful mythologies which sought to reclaim and possess lost pasts, return to imagined homelands and redeem the wisdom of ancient Golden ages. Thus, heritage helps in re-claiming the past of indigenous communities from complete loss of their respective identities. Lowenthal (1996: 6)

asserts that “beleaguered by a sense of loss and change, we keep our bearings only by clinging to the past as remnants of stability, and that heritage is infused by a sense of melancholia and grief for lost objects and loss of sense of identity”.

The interest in understanding heritage led to its study as a discipline as well as leading to enactment of laws to preserve cultural heritage. Heritage has become very relevant in our contemporary world as it refers to present-day uses of the past for wide array of strategic goals including economics and matter of identity (Hoelscher, 2011). A community’s wealth of historic and cultural resource is especially significant given that a growing number of economic impact studies have provided solid evidence that historic preservation, the arts, and cultural heritage produce substantial economic benefits for their communities (Facca and Aldrich, 2011). Thus, heritage is greatly relevant to the economic, political and socio-cultural transformations of indigenous communities and nations at large, even though, “the heritage industry has ironically been accused of commodifying authentic pasts for purposes of tourism” (Phillips and Steiner, 1999).

Lastly, heritage as a “mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), “becomes a contemporaneous phenomenon” (Rowlands, 2002). The line between heritage (which, more generally can be said to belong to the past, represent past culture, or exist as a source of historical knowledge) and contemporary culture becomes blurred (Rowlands, 2002). Heritage essentially becomes present, thus, an instrument for contemporary culture, education, the entertainment industry, social identity construction, political communication, and personal inspiration among other things (Harvey, 2000; cf. Rowlands, 2002).

## **2.5 Heritage Conservation: A means of safeguarding Cultural Heritage**

Obviously, “cultural heritage like other forms of landscape is a subject of instability and transformation with respect to historical and cultural representations” (Singh, 2008:8).

Representation is defined as:

“a subject of people’s engagement to cultural heritage, re-working for it, maintaining it, continuing it, and also contesting to appropriate it, using religion as a tool, and oral history is one of the commonly used approaches for maintaining continuity of cultural heritage” (Singh, 2008:8).

Some argue that the maintenance of the intangible heritage is sufficient (Singh, 2008), however, “others insist that people’s history is written on the ground that cultural traditions are reflected in the built environments people have created for themselves, and that, because of this, heritage areas and buildings merit protection” (Howe and Logan, 2002:247; cf. Singh, 2008). Therefore, the conservation of cultural heritage for most communities and nations at large must be a primary concern to all, but, not only to heritage scholars and keepers or owners of heritage. Environmental conservation by various parties seem to only be focusing on environmental sustainability of natural resources at the passive value or mention of cultural and heritage resources (Keitumetse, 2014). As acknowledging the impact of present social and political relations on the presentation of history, it goes beyond this passive stance to actively seek ways to negotiate opposing interests regarding heritage resources and their competing histories (Bugarin, 2009).

For successful archaeological heritage conservation plans, community involvement remains paramount. Therefore, heritage scholars and “archaeologists are encouraged to initiate collaborative and community engagement projects (Sillitoe, 2008; cf. Swanepoel, 2010; Gblerkpor and Nkumbaan, 2014).



“Community involvement and community participation, particularly in heritage management, critical discussions and negotiation of the politics of representation, and innovative ways is the best tool to bridge the gaps between various keepers of the past, and one of the ways of getting them involved is to be able to identify what their local needs are” (Bugarin, 2009: 193).

This is most especially in the light of socio-cultural and economic transformations. It is imperative therefore to note, that if the needs of heritage sites and local communities surrounding them are ignored, management strategies to preserve or conserve them will surely fail (Bugarin, 2009:4).

The omission of community involvement and participation continues to make natural heritage conservation efforts vulnerable at rural, remote and most pristine areas of the world, where grassroots communities are the custodians of the disposal of natural environment (Keitumeste, 2014). Hence, getting the community involved particularly in the search of history, prevents limiting legitimate voices (Bugarin, 2009).

It is significant to realise, “however, that communities are not easily defined entities with reference to the heritage landscape that they inhabit and their past, is by no means homogenous” (Swanepoel, 2010). Rather, there are varieties of interest groups within various communities consigned differently in the preservation of the physical and cultural fragments of their past, and “there are tremendous differences in epistemologies and systems of heritage conservation or preservation by individual communities” (Bugarin, 2009).

Grassroots communities, who have since being the keepers of the resources, can be motivated to translate their understanding and regard for cultural and heritage resources into conservation strategies for the overall environment (Keitumetse, 2014). However, to achieve this, it is significant to first identify these cultural resources regarded as heritage by these individual

communities, and their identification will further underscore their cultural significance or values attached to them (Keitumetse, 2014).

To substantially safeguard cultural heritage resources at the community level, conservation model must be developed. Conservation is defined as the maintenance of genetic, species, and eco-system diversity in the natural abundance in which they occur (Usher, 2000; cf. Rim-Rukeh et. al., 2013).

For several centuries, most indigenous communities have developed methods of conserving the cultural resources around them. The age-old approach is the use of traditional methods that have helped to regulate interactions with their natural environment (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004; Rim-Rukeh et. al., 2013). In most parts of Africa, Ghana not an exception, the major tenet of Africa's indigenous belief systems and practices lies on the basis that, the gods and goddesses are located on rocks, streams, ponds, trees, lands or anywhere they so desire to live within the community ( Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013).

In Africa, the conservation of heritage is regulated by indigenous African belief systems through local rules and regulations commonly known as social taboos, and enforced by prohibition (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004; Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013). These set rules and regulations have no legal backing, but have been strong enough in the past to make people obey them (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). The “traditional conservation ethics are capable of protecting biodiversity species in particular, and the environment in general as long as the local communities have a stake in it” (Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013).

The “traditional views and concepts have really helped to prevent the disposal and destruction of inherited material possessions and cultural valued landscapes” (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004), and “the role of these traditional beliefs or approaches dates back to creation” (Berkes et

al, 2000; cf. Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013). In most indigenous communities particularly in Africa, an essential feature in the conservation of natural resources is totemism. Totemism is defined as:

“an intimate relation which is supposed to exist between a group of kindred people on the one side and a species of natural or artificial objects on the other side, which objects are called the totem of the human group, and the species of things which constitutes a totem is far oftener natural than artificial, and that amongst the natural species which are reckoned totems the great majority are either animals or plants” (Frazer, 1910).

Most communities which observe these totemic plants or animals as a result of their cultural or mystical significance to do not eat or kill them. Invariably, social taboos exist in most cultures of the world, and remain the essential tools for protecting the natural resources in the communities. Undoubtedly, “the singular role played by these informal systems of taboo in conservation of biodiversity has not been given its due importance” (Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013). Hence, an effective collaboration between indigenous heritage management practices and modern heritage management practices are very helpful in the conservation of cultural heritage resources (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004; Keitumeste, 2014), and this has been practically beneficial in Ghana’s situation.

Modern heritage practices come with more strict measures or legislations that give more stringent laws on the need to protect the cultural heritage resources within the natural environment (Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013; Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). In Ghana for instance, the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) is the legal custodian of Ghana’s material cultural heritage (movable or immovable heritage). The Board was established on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1957, on the eve of Ghana’s independence as a result of the merger of the then interim Council of the National Museum of the Gold Coast and the Monuments and Relics Commission. The GMMB is governed by the National Liberation Council Decree (NLCD) 387 of 1969, now

known as Act 387 of 1969, which was further strengthened by the Executive Instrument (E.I) 29 of 1973 ( [www.ghanamuseums.org](http://www.ghanamuseums.org)). In pursuing the agenda of the GMMB, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana, in buttressing his ideology of a unitary state centred on the motto ‘Unity in Diversity’ stressed on the need to have a nationalistic approach towards the management of cultural resources (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004).

Since its inception the GMMB has contributed immensely towards the management of Ghana’s cultural and heritage resources. The GMMB law encourages local communities to participate in conservation of resources through measures such as education on the cultural relics, returning discovered relics to the state with a possible reward system to those that return the items ([www.ghanamuseums.org](http://www.ghanamuseums.org)). Like most national legal instruments, the law focuses on punitive measures toward the destructions rather than on identifying and outlining participatory approaches towards cultural conservation.

In other parts of Africa, particularly in Botswana, a working model coined Community-Based Cultural Heritage Resources Management(COBACHREM) aims to build a practical framework that starts by first identifying these cultural and heritage resources at community level on one end, and at the national level on the other extreme to account for variations in cultural affiliation and use (Keitumeste, 2014).

There are other international agencies like the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) that also seek to conserve and manage cultural resources of state parties. For instance, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), founded in 1948, is the world’s first global environmental organisation, becoming today the largest professional global conservation network. The mission of the Union is focused on conserving biodiversity, which is demonstrated by addressing some of the world’s greatest challenges such

as climate change, sustainable development and food security. It also aims at conveying the urgency of conservation issues to the public and policy makers, as well as help the international community to try to reduce species (The Fondation Segré Annual Report, 2018). Also, Article 13 of the Australia's ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999 emphasises that:

“co-existence of cultural values should be recognised, respected and encouraged especially in cases where they conflict, and also emphasises that the conservation policy should identify a use or combination of uses, or constraints on use, that are compatible with the retention of the cultural significance of the place that feasible” ( Burra Charter, 1999).

Clearly, a very strong collaboration between indigenous heritage conservation practices and modern heritage conservation practices, if fully adopted, are very practical in the conservation of cultural heritage resources. A majority of states or countries sign international conventions after thorough legal assessment on how compatible these are with specific country's internal laws and national systems (Keitumeste, 2014).

In conclusion, it must be noted that the duty of countries in particular, to protect their heritage properties does not completely depend on inclusion in the World Heritage List, but must come from the duty to identify a nation's heritage (Gruber, 2007:263; cf. Keitumetse, 2014). Hence, the proper identification, definition, and documentation of cultural heritage resources will lead to a more proper collaborative approach in conserving them. There is the need therefore, for cultural heritage resources to be recognised and enlisted on the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 1972) so as to lead initiatives on sustainable management of cultural and heritage resources conservation.

## **2.6 Contestation of Heritage**

The contestation of heritage continues to be a critical issue among indigenous communities that consider heritage as a more prestigious creature whether given naturally, created or recreated by

them. Religious belief systems and practices have shaped the local geographies through the built forms and associated rituals and performances as symbols of political control, identity, hegemony and social security (Harvey, 1979; cf. Singh, 2008).

Although, “all heritage sites are contestable, the interpretation and representation of human suffering, and past injustices can create significance dissonance or disagreement” (Singh, 2008). This is evident in most consecrated places all over the world. This is especially “with reference to contesting religious identities” (Singh, 2008). Obviously, this disagreement “derives first from remembering historical truths within a process of making religious identity, and determining how the meaning of the religious identity will be represented and communicated to the public” (Singh, 2008).

The understanding of natural heritage as an expression of culture is largely a local understanding (Singh, 2008). In most cases, such understanding promotes conflicts and contestation mainly resulting into clash among individual groups demanding for the same control over a heritage (Olwig, 2005; cf. Singh, 2008). Such conflict is more ubiquitous in case of built religious heritage landscapes, which is historically old and culturally, and visually rich, especially in its architectural and associated symbols and legends (Singh, 2008). The conflicts between natural and cultural landscapes are noticeable in different areas, associated mostly with a particular sect or religious group that turns to promote contestation (Singh, 2008). However, issues of heritage contestation can be transmuted in harmonious integrity under ethical and rational sense of sustainable planning (Slaiby and Mitchel, 2003; cf, Singh, 2008). Development planners should understand the need to conserve the cultural heritage resources of affected communities of their proposed projects. In most cases, there is the need to commission environmental and social impact assessments of the project. This will help result in recommendations that would mitigate

the project's impact on natural and cultural resources including resettlement of affected individual persons whose communities would be inundated by the project (Apoah and Gavua, 2016).

## **2.7 Relationship between Heritage and Archaeology**

One of the first underlining principles to expound is that Heritage or Heritage Management, can be best regarded as a discipline in its own right, and studied as a whole (Howard, 2003). It must be noted that, heritage is not a branch of Archaeology, History, Art History, Geography nor Ecology, rather, emerged quite recently in the 1980s as an independent discipline, as a means of identifying, understanding, documenting and preserving cultural resources of both indigenous and contemporary communities (Howard, 2003). The most obvious relationship between heritage and archaeology are purely centred on the many things that people wish to collect and conserve which include; animals, rocks, plants, objects, culture and the physical aspects of scenery (Howard, 2003) with cultural significance or great value.

This concept of heritage, was necessitated and emerged at the interface of international law and concerns about the loss of traditions and cultural practices (Marilena, 2011) as well as “the looting of archaeological sites for objects of artistic worth, the antiquities trade, and issues of cultural patrimony (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). These traditions, cultural practices and cultural objects or features really “embody the spirit and creativity of the African past” (Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996), and depict the real identity and essence of place and belonging. Thus, a community's civilisation or history is embedded in them and must be preserved as such. They are seen as heritage and “a source of vital economic revenue and a foundation of personal and collective identity” (Hoelscher, 2011).

There is clearly a great link between Heritage and Archaeology as fields of study. These two disciplines, however, with different approaches, help in the quest of reconstructing the past lifeways of indigenous communities. Just as archaeology depends on “material culture of the past, or all those artifacts and structures produced by humans that make up the archaeological record and are used to explain, or to help explain, the past” (Smith and Waterton, 2009), heritage as a field of study functions similarly. Heritage, as a discipline, helps to “understand the present through inherited material possessions and cultural valued landscapes ranging from artistic treasures(materials), shrines, regalia, sacred groves, and natural features with spiritual significance” (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). These cultural valued landscapes are termed as “tangible cultural heritage” by heritage scholars and are termed archaeologically as “material culture” or “archaeological cultural materials”.

Archaeological and material cultural heritage enjoys a particular status as a form of heritage that capturing the public imagination, has become the locus for the expression and negotiation of regional, national and intra-national cultural identities (Lahdesmaki, 2014), for public policy regarding the preservation and management of cultural resources, and for education, tourism, leisure and wellbeing (Cleere, 2005; Smith and Waterton, 2009).

Undoubtedly, there is a great link between archaeology and heritage as fields of study as they both seek to reconstruct past lifeways of both indigenous and contemporary communities eventhough “they may both use different types of evidence, they are concerned with discovering and explaining the past” (Howard, 2003). Orser and Fagan (1995:40) define modern archaeology as “the systematic study of humanity in the past including not only ancient technology and human behavior, but social organization, religious beliefs, and every aspect of human culture” ( cf. Nkumbaan, 2003) and this clearly links up with heritage as a field of study.



As earlier indicated, a community's "identity, its value and civilisation resides in its heritage" (Hoelscher, 2011) and these are partly embedded in the archaeological cultural remains. Therefore, the intangible aspect of cultural heritage of a community or a linguistic group can be identified through these remains 'eventhough such essentialisation of ethnic and cultural identity is problematic' (Kankpeyeng 2003:29). These "are objects created in the past that continue to exist in the present, and provide an opportunity by which we encounter the past at first hand, and have direct sensory experience of surviving historical events" (Prown, 1982: 3). Archaeological cultural materials may not be important historical events, but they are, to the extent that they can be experienced and interpreted as significant evidence (Prown, 1982: 3). Noticeably, heritage and archaeology are applied disciplines as "they are both interested in how the past might be conserved and interpreted for the present and the future" (Howard, 2003).

Howard (2003) further posits that unlike history that may focus on who erected a monument and when, heritage and archaeology may further be interested in how many visitors visit the current monument and their motivations and how the monument is preserved and managed for continuous use.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **KOLON-YIRI: ITS PEOPLES, HISTORY AND CULTURE**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter documents aspects of the history of Kolon-Yiri as obtained through oral accounts and ethnographic studies conducted in the community. It gives a brief background of the linguistic group of Dagaaba of which the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri is a part. It examines the migration history of the Guomo people and what necessitated the permanent settlement of the earliest indigenes at Kolon-Yiri. The three individual families or gates of Kolon-Yiri were interviewed through their respective heads to authenticate the story of the village. The heritage of the people that depicts their identity and essence of place and belonging is also discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.1 Kolon-Yiri People and the Daggaba Polity**

The migration history of the Dagaaba is most uncertain (Tuurey, 1982; Herbert, 1976; cf. Bodomo, 1997). This is due to the fact that oral and written accounts of this linguistic group are not sufficiently adequate since there are several variations in the documented histories of early scholars who worked within the catchment area. Some early scholars have concluded that they were primitive, acephalous people or group of relatives formed from the interaction and movements in the northern territories during the second millennium, hence, have no history (Yelpaala, 1983; cf. Diku, 2014).

However, recent historical accounts suggest that, in the pre-colonial period, “the dominant reality of the Black Volta Region was the existence of small, relatively mobile groups of relatives overlapping networks and flexible boundaries” (Lentz, 2006), and these mobile groups may have

included the linguistic group of the Dagaaba. According to oral accounts, during this period, individual mobile groups of relatives were moving in search of permanent settlement and were on “piecemeal migration in search of farmlands” (Hart, 1982). Oral accounts further suggest that the “Dagaaba are an outgrowth of the Mole-Dagbani group of people who migrated to semi-arid Sahel region in the fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) century” (Kpieta and Bonye 2012:14; cf. Diku, 2014) “and believed to have further migrated to the lower northern part of the region in the seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) century” (Diku, 2014).

In the “colonial period, these individual groups of relatives occupied an area that constituted the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and were administered by a Chief Commissioner who was responsible to the Governor of the Gold Coast for its administration” (Awedoba, 2006).

Very dissimilar to a highly centralised systems of government where a king in most ethnic groups in Ghana appoints sub-kings to various towns and villages, and exercise his control from a central administration, “Dagaaba communities are virtually independent as far as day to day administration of natural and cultural resources are concerned” (Bodomo, 1997). Thus, in consultation with the various heads of families within a Dagaaba community, the *Tindaana* (usually the overall head of the families) “promulgates and administers law and order affecting cultural, religious, economic and all forms of social practices in the area under his jurisdiction” (Bodomo, 1997). However, the Dagaaba, after the introduction of the British policy of Indirect Rule introduced in Ghana between 1890 and 1957, their communities are now organised into numerous independent chiefdoms. Many “of them can be found in Burkina Faso, and in northeastern Cote D’Ivoire” (Awedoba, 2006).

The Dagaaba have been described as “a host of related villages, lineages, and clans which do not think of themselves as a ‘tribe’ or call themselves by one name such as Dagaaba” (Barker, 1986:

71; cf. Awedoba, 2006). However, this assertion may not be true today because there are several Dagaaba associations functioning in most parts of the country, and beyond. There are several non-natives who “refer to them as “Dagarti” but it is certainly an anglo-misnomer and not favoured by most Dagaaba, therefore, the terminology “Dagarti” may be an ethnographic designation and not linguistic” (Bodomo, 1997).

The Dagaaba are said to have played significant role during the arrival of the missionaries in the colonial era, thus, during the evangelisation of northwestern Ghana (Bodomo, 1997). Most Dagaaba communities, particularly those around Jirapa, and Nandom are mainly Catholics. Clearly:

“the mass conversion of Dagaaba to Catholicism in the 1930s proceed alongside their spousal of formal education in the area, that, consequently, today, Dagaaba boast of many highly educated people and professionals” (Awedoba, 2006).

The various ethnic groups of the Dagaaba speak Dagaare, “which the language policy of Ghana positions as one of the official languages” (Awedoba, 2006). The language is currently taught in most Ghanaian educational institutions including, the University of Ghana and the University of Education, Winneba. The Dagaare is predominantly spoken in the northwestern parts of Ghana and in other parts of Burkina Faso. Geographically, this area lies “between latitudes 9°N and 11°N and longitudes 2°W and 3°W” (Bodomo, 1997). The Dagaare is closely related to other languages known as Waale and Birifor. The “Dagaare-Waale-Birifor linguistic continuum is sometimes lumped as one language around the communities” (Bodomo, 1997).

The linguistic group of the Dagaaba are “bordered to the east by the Sisala language, and to the north by the Gonja, Vagla, and Safaliba” (Bodomo, 1997). It extends to the west and north, “where variants of this linguistic group are spoken in and around towns like Dano, Diebongou,

Dissin, and Gaoua” (Bodomo, 1997). Some of the major towns in Ghana, inhabited by the Dagaaba include, Wa, Lawra, Jirapa, Nandom, Hamile, and Daffiama. An individual member of this linguistic group is called *Dagao*.

Majority of the Dagaaba “cultivate grains including maize, millet, sorghum and legumes, and depend on cereals as staples” (Awedoba, 2006). Many of them are also into livestock rearing and hunting, and “grow yams where the soil and the climate conditions permit this” (Awedoba, 2006). Undoubtedly, agricultural activities are “so central to the economy of the Dagaaba that, more and more, they migrate southwards in search of better lands to farm” (Bodomo, 1997).

Amid “the Dagaaba, resources are classified into “movable” and “immovable” and transmitted matrilineally and patrilineally respectively, such that, women inherit female property from female kin and men from their male kin” (Awedoba, 2006). Among some of the philosophy of “Dagaaba communities has been that certain property may be inherited from parents, paternal uncles, and siblings while for certain others devolution is from maternal uncles, and full siblings”(Awedoba, 2006).

Some cultural appearances of the Dagaaba are the eating of their traditional staple food called *saabo* (known as *tuo-zaafi* among the Hausas), the brewing and drinking of their traditional sweet, mildly alcoholic beverage called *daaze* (or pito) derived from sorghum (*Sorghum spp*), the wearing of *dagakparoo* (smock), drumming and dancing of the *bawa* dance (Bodomo, 1997) and, “their musical traditions assign a role to the xylophone in the ensemble” (Awedoba, 2006). Majority of the Dagaaba spend most of their leisure hours in drinking pito as a source of entertainment.

The ancestors of the Dagaaba are said:

“to be a splinter group from Mossi or the Dagomba or both, who moved into the present area, and assimilated (or got assimilated by) earlier settlers and/or new arrivals, however, it is also more conceivable to say that the Dagaaba, the Mossi, the Dagomba, the Kusaasi, and the Frafra are all directly descendants of a common ancestor ethnolinguistic group called the *Mabia*” (Bodomo, 1997).

### **3.2 The Guomo of Kolon-Yiri**

Oral accounts about the origin of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri collected by the researcher assert that, this organised group of relatives were warriors, who emigrated from Southern Africa in search of permanent settlement, and had a traditional slogan “*Akobia-adibia* which means “*the ability to kill dangerous animals through their ritual powers*”. They, however, could not tell where exactly in Southern Africa they lived before the migration.

It is believed that, they first settled at Tuna (which is now one of the major towns in the Upper West Region of Ghana) with some linguistic group of the Konkombas. They (including the Konkombas) left Tuna and migrated farther north-west and settled at Ga. According to oral accounts, even though, Ga had been occupied by the time they (the Guomo and Konkombas) arrived, they manoeuvred and got themselves some portion of land, and lived there for couple of years.

While in Ga, some misunderstandings erupted between the Guomos and Konkombas, and, these were believed to have accounted for the separation of these two ethnic groups. Oral tradition gives two factors that led to these misunderstandings as; inter-marital conflicts (that was a disagreement by the Konkombas to inter-marry the Guomo) and, leadership crisis. As a result of such misunderstandings, the Guomos were compelled to relocate to Tafele (a virgin land). However, some relatives of the Guomo remained at Ga. Those relatives who remained at Ga called themselves *Zayoulo*, and have since lived there.

After few days in Tafele, the Guomos relocated and settled at Pizaga (an escarpment encompassing recreation areas, sweeping scenic views characterised by sandstone, shales, mudstones and conglomerates and surrounded with granite rocks and basement complex). Pizaga is an ancient rockshelter (Fig. 3) believed to have adequately inhabited all the relatives of the Guomo who settled there. According to oral tradition, for a very long time, the Pizaga enclaves provided adequate shelter for these earliest group of relatives, and provided enough protection against their enemies during wars.

It is also believed that, this group of relatives encountered several colonies of bees upon arrival at Pizaga. Nevertheless, the bees did not sting or attack them. The bees became their totemic insects because of their mystical relationship, and played very significant role in the lives of these earliest people. In times of wars, the bees could sting or attack the enemies of the Guomos as they (Guomos) laid ambush.

Oral accounts posit that water from the rocks at Pizaga was adequate to quench the thirst of these earliest migrants. But as populations increased and climatic conditions changed, the water source now dries up during the dry season. At the time of this research, the source of water for these earliest settlers of Kolon-Yiri had dried up (Fig. 4) as the research was conducted during the dry season. This group of relatives were said to be agrarians as well as hunters.

Guakuu, the leader of the group, on a hunting expedition, came across several streams of water and many cucumber trees (*Magnolia acuminata*) close to Pizaga. He hurriedly returned to inform the group. It is believed that, after the discovery, water from the streams served other domestic purposes, and the cucumber fruits became their main source of food.

The Guomo people are believed to have migrated upon the direction of their deity, whose spirit dwelled in a stone axe called *Guomolari* in their local dialect. It is believed that *Guomolari* vanished, and for several days, was nowhere to be found. Guakuu (leader of the group) then launched a search for it, and was finally found resting in between two caves very close to where Guakuu had earlier discovered the water bodies. This situation informed the group of the possible indirect communication and directives from their deity (*the Guomolari*) to relocate. Hence, their relocation to their present-day settlement (Kolon-Yiri).



Fig 3: The researcher at Pizaga Rockshelter (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)





Fig. 4: Ancient source of water (dried up) at Pizaga Rockshelter (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### 3.3 The Name of the settlement

For several decades, the name of this ancient settlement was called *Korin-Yiri*. According to the local dialect of the occupants of this settlement, *korin* means *francolins*, and *yiri* means *home* or *family*. Francolins are birds traditionally placed in the genus *Francolinus*, and their closest relatives are the junglefowl, long-billed partridge, *alectoris* and *coturnix*, and they belong to the family *Phasianidae*, order *Galliformes* and the *animalia* kingdom (Bloomer and Crowe, 1998). Thus, literally, *Korin-Yiri* means *Home of francolins* or *Family of francolins*. However, the oral accounts of this ancient settlement suggest otherwise, hence, the name, *Korin-Yiri* may have undergone linguistic metamorphosis resulting from encounters with other settlers or foreigners. Oral accounts assert that *Korin-Yiri*, as the community is officially known, has no correlation as far as the migration and settlement history of the earliest settlers were concerned, and submit that the present-day settlement was originally named by the earliest settlers as *Kolon-Yiri* as a result of the water bodies in the area.

In the local dialect, *Kolon* means *water*, and *Yiri* means *home or family*. Thus, literally, *Kolon-Yiri* means *Home of water or family of water*. Although, the oral tradition posits that, their deity, *Guomolari*, may have indirectly suggested their relocation after vanishing, and been found in between two caves close to this earliest discovered land, the plentiful supply of water as a result of several streams (Fig. 5) in the area, may have additionally informed their decision to relocate to the discovered land. To buttress their assertion, the interviewees rhetorically questioned why they have had no connection or encounter with the francolins since their arrival, neither do they consider them as their totem. This, according to them, the francolins had played no role as far as their migration and settlement history were concerned.



Fig. 5: A stream in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)

As earlier indicated, not all members of the Guomo relatives relocated to the new settlement though some settled later. Others left Pizaga and permanently settled elsewhere. Among such

groups of relatives included those at present-day Tabease, also located in the Nadowli-Kaleo district of the Upper West Region of Ghana.

The first group to arrive at Kolon-Yiri called themselves *boleeyiri*, literally meaning *family of cucumber*. This was as a result of their high dependency on the cucumber trees as their source of food for their livelihood. This group was led by Guakuu, who subsequently became the first *Tindaana* of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri. Upon reaching their new discovered land, they erected mud and thatched buildings. The first house (*víri*) built by Guakuu, accommodated a large number of the people. His house (*víri*), which has gone through series of renovations, was built very close to a baobab tree (Fig. 6). The tree itself, served the people medicinally, and, as source of food.

Currently, the Guomo people have descendants in seven other communities in the Upper West Region of Ghana. These communities include, Kyebaa, Owlo, Bussie, Kpazie, Gani, Laowlo and Lambussie. Indigenes from these communities continue to pay allegiance to the people of Kolon-Yiri. Other ethnic groups who have currently settled in Kolon-Yiri include, the Hausas, the Fulanis, and the Akans. These ethnic groups have co-existed and intermarried as a result of farming, introduction of western religion, and trade contacts. The vast land of the area also paved for the Fulanis to find their way into the community through cattle grazing. The audience of all these ethnic groups and the cultural contacts between them has brought about tremendous socio-economic and cultural transformation in the community.

Upon the arrival of other relatives, Dabien-Naanie was enskinned as the first chief of the Guomo of Kolon-Yiri, nonetheless, Guakuu continued been valued as the landowner of the community. Presently, the *Tindaana* has since the death of their immediate chief (Nyooanaani Babafaari, a

male member from the Kyooneeyiri) being acting as the chief of Kolon-Yiri. At the time of publishing this work, Kolon-Yiri was yet to enskin a chief.



Fig. 6: The baobab tree in front of the earliest house of the Boleeyiri of Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### 3.4 The Three Divisional Gates of Kolon-Yiri

The three divisional gates represent the evolution of the extended families of Kolon-Yiri into broad lineages. The emergence of the gates is as result of other groups of Guomo relatives who subsequently joined the first settlers in Kolon-Yiri. Members of these individual gates or families built structures in and around their respective family houses as a means to settle down with their respective nuclear families. Each of these extended families was allocated some plots of land to farm. Individual members of each gate were allowed to cultivate and rear livestock of their choice, however, there were other specific crops that each of these gates were assigned to cultivate. The leadership of these individual gates ensured that their respective members conformed to their specific roles. These gates include, the *Boleeyiri*, *Kyooneeyiri* and

*Naamaleyiri*. However, the contemporary indigenes of Kolon-Yiri no longer conform to such practices. According to the traditional leaders interviewed, they claimed several socio-cultural and economic factors may have affected such practices.

#### **3.4.1 The Boleeyiri Gate**

This group of relatives is believed to be the first to settle at present-day Kolon-Yiri. According to their local dialect, *bole* means cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*), and *yiri* means home or family (as earlier stated). Thus, literally, the group called themselves “*family or home of cucumber*”, and its members were in charge of the cultivation of cucumber. As earlier indicated, the first leader of this group, Guakuu, subsequently became the first *Tindaana* of Kolon-Yiri. As the *Tindaana* of the village, he was recognised as the landowner of Kolon-Yiri, as well as the overall head of the three gates in Kolon-Yiri. Leaders of this family are automatically the *Tindaana* of the community, and are in charge of the enskinment of a chief in Kolon-Yiri. However, no member of this family can ascend the throne as a chief. Chiefs are rather chosen from within the other two gates. This family is the custodian of the three community shrines in Kolon-Yiri. Currently, Kago Kantatondaari is the *Tindaana* of the community as well as the head of this gate.

#### **3.4.2 The Kyooneeyiri Gate**

According to the local dialect, *kyoonee* means shea (*Butyrospermum parkii*). Hence, this family named themselves after the shea plant (thus, *family or home of shea*). This family was first led by Bakyee. It is currently led by Braimah Yindor. A male member of this family can be enskinned as a chief in Kolon-Yiri.

#### **3.4.3 The Naamaleyiri Gate**

In their local dialect, *naamale* means fresh okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*). Therefore, this family was named after fresh okra (thus, *family of okra*), and its members were assigned to the

cultivation of fresh okra. The first leader of this family was Dabien-Naanie, who subsequently became the first chief of the community. This group is currently led by Tengan. A male member of this family can also be enskinned as a chief in Kolon-Yiri.

### **3.5 The Indigenous Religious Belief Systems and Practices of Kolon-Yiri**

The indigenous religious belief systems and practices continue to play fundamental roles in most rural communities in Africa. However, for centuries, Christianity and Islamic religions have since been dominating as local individuals within these communities are gradually converting into such religious belief systems. This has been as a result of various encounters with other westernized individuals through trade contacts and intermarriages. In Ghana for instance, the arrival of the Europeans in the fifteenth century into the Gold Coast brought Christianity to the land, and as the Europeans explored and took control of various parts of the country during the colonial era so did their religion (Hans, 1967).

The Islamic faith also made a momentous entry into the Northern Territories of Ghana at the beginning of the eighteenth century mainly due to commercial trading activities of Sahelian tribes of West Africa. The introduction of Islam into Ghana was mainly as a result of the commercial activities of Mande and Hausa speaking traders (Ryan, 1996).

Statistically, Christianity has since been the largest religion in Ghana with 71.2% followed by Islam with 17.6%, Traditional with 5.2%, other religions with 0.8% and none with 5.2% (Population and Housing Census, 2010). In the Upper West Region of Ghana, available records indicate that 13.9% (of 702,110) of the entire population of the region are traditionalists (Population and Housing Census 2010: 63). This is an indication of a few traditionalists in the region. However, the indigenous religion continues to be predominantly practiced by the local indigenes of Kolon-Yiri and plays very significant roles in their lives.



The indigenous belief systems among the Guomo “holds the ascription of supernatural powers to objects” (Rim-Rukeh et. al, 2013) or natural features like rocks, rivers, groves, and animals called gods and goddesses. They hold the view that, the gods or goddesses communicate their will to them through an initiated chief priest. The indigenes of Kolon-Yiri believe that these gods or goddesses protect them from harm, bareness, drought, epidemics and all other forms of misfortune. They also hold the view that the gods or goddesses punish whoever commits any prohibited offence.

The belief systems and practices of the Guomo are hereditary, hence, passed on to whoever is initiated into adulthood in the community. The men are mostly initiated into the community’s cults or sects which are treasured in their religious or cultural beliefs and superstitions. The community has two patches of natural landscapes designated as sacred groves under customary laws, and protected from any product extraction or any form of human interference by the community. These two sacred places are very rich in biodiversity and harbour many endangered plant species including rare herbs and medicinal plants, which are very beneficial to the indigenes as well as the wider scope of the Guomo people. The social taboos and belief systems of Kolon-Yiri remain the prime factors that guide the conducts of the indigenes of the community.

### **3.5.1 *Guomolari*: The Prestigious Heritage of the Guomo**

Guomolari has since been the prestigious heritage of the entire Guomo relatives, and hence, highly revered. According to the local dialect of the Guomo, *lari* means “*stone axe*” or “*Nyame akuma*”. Therefore, *Guomolari* literally means “*Axe of the Guomo*”. It is believed that the spirit of a supernatural power dwelled in it, hence, regarded as the earth god of the Guomo, and believed to have led them throughout their migration before finally settling in Kolon-Yiri. Oral

accounts indicates that *Guomolari* after vanishing and finding enlightenment in between the two caves (Fig. 7) had since remained there, and only resurfaces during their annual festivals. Geographically, *Guomolari* lies between latitude N 10°21'09.3" and longitude W 002°24'11.0".

The entire residential area of *Guomolari* is regarded as a sacred grove, and spiritual activities in the grove are controlled and handled by a chief priest who doubles as the intermediary between the deity and the people of Guomo.

The protection of the sacred grove has always been the responsibility of the entire community, but *Boleeyiri* family is responsible for the enforcement of all rules and regulations regarding the grove's protection. The methods adopted in protecting and preserving the grove are enshrined in the established social taboos, and maintained through devotion to the gods and ancestral spirits. Intruder to the grove or anyone who violates any of the set local rules and regulations governing the protection of the grove is summoned by the chief priest for the appropriate severe customary punishments. These sanctions serve as a means to pacify and purify the gods of the land, however, they differ depending on the severity of the offense, and, they are usually in the form of cash fine, or the supply of pots of local beverages, goats, sheep, kola nut and chicken for sacrifice to the gods.





Fig. 7: An indigene of Kolon-Yiri viewing *Guomolari* within the caves (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### 3.5.2 The *Guomolari* Festival

*Guomolari* is the representation of this annual festival where every member of each of the eight communities (Kolon-Yiri, Kyebaa, Owlo, Bussie, Kpazie, Gani, Laowlo and Lambussie), far and near, is allowed to take part in the revelry. To the Guomo, *Guomolari* is the god of wisdom, earthly bliss and benefaction. It is believed to be the main object of ancestral admiration, and resurfaces during rituals, and in particular during this festival. This annual festival is celebrated in the third month of every year (thus, March) which marks the beginning of their traditional calendar (commencement of the farming season).

The festival is celebrated in honour of *Guomolari*, and to demonstrate their appreciation for the peace, and stability they have enjoyed during the previous years as well as, granting them a bountiful harvest. They further ask for protection in the subsequent years. It is also celebrated in memory of their earliest ancestors, and to strengthen their loyalty to traditional political authorities of their wider lineage. The indigenes also use the occasion to settle family and individual disputes for peace co-existence. The festival also serves as a memory for the

preservation and maintenance of their cultural and traditional heritage. Also, the indigenes take the opportunity to contribute to the political, socio-cultural and economic developments of the communities.

The festival is regarded as a moment of prayers, memorialisation and merry-making. The chiefs and the heads of the various clans in all the eight communities are the organisers of this festival, and it is open to everyone who wishes to witness its celebration.

### **3.5.3 The Leopard and the Bee as Totemic Species of the Guomo**

The leopard and the bee are revered and worshipped by the Guomo. Oral accounts have it that, during inter-tribal wars in the course of their migration, a colony of bees stung or attacked their enemies as they (the Guomo) laid ambush. The leopard also went after the people and erased their footprints so that their enemies could not identify their pathway. Clearly, from their oral tradition, the two totemic species were directly associated to their successes.

It is therefore, a taboo in all the eight communities of the Guomo kill these totemic species, likewise such species attacking the people. However, if they are killed or they attack a Guomo, the chief priest would have to intervene through divination and ritual/sacrificial offerings.

All the eight communities of the Guomo believe that the leopard and the bee are not worshiped, rather their indwelling spirits. Among the Guomo, the two totemic species are regarded as their “gods of protection”. Contemporarily, the people further assert that, the leopard appears in the community whenever an elderly member of the community is about to die. According to their oral accounts, whenever it appears in the community, it makes some strange sounds for a couple of minutes, and goes back to the forest. This experience, according to them, has since been a

signal of the death of an elderly person in all Guomo communities; hence, they prepare themselves for such misfortune.

#### 3.5.4 The *Pogdograa-Kunkpe* Shrine

The *Pogdograa-Kunkpe*, located (N 10°21'27.6", W 002°23'38.5") under an ebony tree (*Diospyros spp*) within a sacred grove is one of the shrines in the community. *Pogdograa-Kunkpe* is considered by the people as deity that protects the community from evil and their enemies, gives them goodluck and health, and ensures prosperity for the community. The shrine is composed of three laterite stones, two limestones and earthenware pots (Fig. 8). The sacred grove and its surroundings are preserved by taboos that do not allow hunting and cutting of the trees in the area. The groves (Fig. 9) stand on a mound with other surface configurations, including burnt daub, potsherds, laterite stones, and a hearth (Fig. 10).



Fig. 8: *Pogdograa-Kunkpe* Shrine (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)





Fig. 9: The Pogdograa-Kunkpe Sacred Grove (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)



Fig. 10: A hearth near Pogdograa-Kunkpe Shrine (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019).

### 3.5.5 The *Baalaboi* Shrine

This shrine is also located under an ebony tree (Fig. 11) within Kolon-Yiri (N 10°20'59.4", W 002°24'05.9). It is a community shrine particularly for the youth of Kolon-Yiri. The shrine is mostly consulted for the purification of any youth in times of misfortune. However, any youth

that visits the community, and needs its assistance can consult the chief priest, and provide the required customary materials.



Fig. 11: *Baalaboi Shrine* (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

### 3.5.6 Worldview

To fully understand the cultural history of Kolon-Yiri, it is important to trace the worldview of the indigenes. Worldview is defined as;

“a set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that grounds and influences one’s perceiving thinking, knowing and doing, thus, one’s philosophy, philosophy of life, mindset, outlook on life, formular for life, ideology, faith or even religion” (Ken, 2001).

In the case of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri, their worldview is embedded in their indigenous belief systems and practices. Even though, the introductions of other world religions such as Christianity and Islam have been welcomed by many indigenous communities including Kolon-Yiri, most of the converts into such religions continue to conform to the indigenous religious practices of their ancestors. Thus, majority of the indigenes of Kolon-Yiri are polytheistic. For



instance, individual family shrines were found in almost every compound visited by the researcher including households of Christians and Muslims. Also, the community shrines (*Pogdograa-Kunkpe*, *Guomalari*, *Baalaboi*) are consulted by majority of these converts particularly for healing purposes.

### **3.5.7 Rites of Passage**

The journey of life are in various stages, and “a passage occurs when an individual leaves one group to enter another” (Van Gennep, 1909). After outlining his three stages of rites of passage as: “*separation, liminality, and incorporation*” (Van Gennep, 1909). Van Gennep (1909) states:

“I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminary rites, those executed during the transitional stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world postliminal rites”.

He further explains that:

“at the first phase, people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another, and the transition phase is the period between states during which one has left one place or state but, has not yet entered or joined the next, and in the final phase, the passage is consummated by ritual subject, and having completed the rite and assumed their identity, one re-enters society with one’s new status” (Van Gennep, 1909).

In the case of Kolon-Yiri that predominantly practices the indigenous religious belief systems, the rites of passage are considered fundamental to human growth and development, and become functional by ritually marking the transition of someone to full group membership. These rites link individuals to the community, and link the community to the broader and more potent spiritual world.

In most Africa’s indigenous communities, these rites of passage are identified and grouped into five stages. They include; rite to birth, rite to adulthood, rite to marriage, rite to eldership, and

rite to ancestorship (thus, the journey in an immortal world). This is highly affirmed in the religious belief systems and practices among the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri.

### **3.5.8 Outdooring and Naming Ceremony**

In most parts of Africa, a child is considered as a gift from God, and outdooring a new baby is a ceremony typical amongst most tribes in Ghana. This ceremony involves the practice of formally offering the baby to the gods, ancestors and society. This is usually done within the first eight days after birth, when the baby is believed to have proven enough strength that it can survive. In Kolon-Yiri, as in the case of most indigenous societies, custom demands that the new born baby should not be brought out within the stipulated period. Oral tradition puts it that, evil spirits, ghosts or other negative influences in the elements such as wind, earth, firmament, and all unseen living things may adversely affect the health of the baby.

During the festivity, the leader of the child's father's gate (family) performs all rituals. Prayers are offered through libations to thank their god for its protection and benevolence towards the baby. An animal (usually a goat) or chicken is offered for sacrifice. During the rituals, a piece of the child's hair is cut, and offered to the earth god. This is to seek its protection for the child. As part of the rituals, the mother of the child is ushered back to the community and celebrated through ritual performances for a successful delivery. After all rituals have been made, the child is then carried into the open for the first time and officially introduced to all elements.

Another significant aspect of this ceremony is the naming of the child. In Kolon-Yiri, the baby is given a second name in addition to the day name. The second name given to the child, mostly that of a respected relative of the family helps to trace the child's lineage. The child's family is also permitted to name the child after a respected non-relative of great standing in Kolon-Yiri as a sign of reverence.

The outdooring and naming ceremony are usually short occasions, but some families consider them as moments of merry-making where sumptuous food and drinks are served.

### **3.5.9 Marriage**

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and this is very important among the Guomo. In Kolon-Yiri, the male indigenes are free to marry more than one. As soon as a man marries an additional wife, the younger woman is given a new household to live. The husband will occasionally visit her. The first wife will continue to live in the same household with her husband. Usually, the names of the women or their individual children tend to be used to call their respective households. Thus, the households are usually named after the family they both belong. For instance, when the woman is from the Boleeyiri (or Bolee family/home), her household is referred as such.

The indigenes of Kolon-Yiri entertain intermarriages among other ethnic groups. Nonetheless, no member of Guomo can marry from within any of the eight communities or from within their individual gates. This is because they belong to the same lineage or ancestry. Also, it is a taboo for any family member of a deceased to marry the widow or widower, though, any of them can re-marry outside the deceased's family.

Traditionally, before a woman is married to a man, the man is committed to pay the bride price to the woman's family, and this vary from society to society. Among the Guomo, before an appropriate bride price is fixed as well as the quantities of other customary items needed, both family consider the lineage of both the suitor and the woman.

The first stage of the marriage process begins when the family of the groom seeks the agreement of the bride by making their intention known to the family of the female. A commitment fee of



three hundred cowries is paid to the family of the female. This fee prevents the father of the woman from accepting any other man's offer. This is then followed by the second stage where the main or actual bride price is paid by the man. This is paid to the parents of the woman before she is allowed to move to the husband's house. A token of five thousand cowries, a goat, three fowls, kolanuts, and local drinks (usually, pito) are provided at this stage. The final stage requires the provision of a cattle by the husband to his wife's family, but, this is negotiable such that, the man is given enough or appropriate time to organise himself as the wife can live with him. However, the husband must take appropriate steps to provide the cattle on time else the wife's family can demand for the return of their daughter.

### **3.5.10 Puberty Rites**

The shift from childhood to adulthood is exceptional. This is because it happens once in a life time. In most African societies, much attention is placed on the girl child but in the case of Kolon-Yiri both boys and girls undergo these puberty rites. During this period, a female adolescent is trained on personal hygiene and how to keep a home, bring up children, and taught all other roles of a wife to a prospective husband. The boy child is also trained on how to be a good father, husband, and breadwinner of both extended and nuclear family, and finally taught to be a responsible adult as well as trained on personal hygiene.

Until an adolescent undergoes these rites, he or she is not regarded an elderly, and not allowed to sit among elders. Traditionally, all adolescents are required to pass through the puberty rites before getting married and since traditional societies detest premarital sex, the puberty rites are adopted as a medium of ensuring sanity in the community. Puberty rites are very significant as it ensures proper upbringing of children in most communities that practice such.

### 3.6 Economic Activities in Kolon-Yiri

The main economic activity of the locals of Kolon-Yiri is peasant farming. Thus, they are heavily agrarian such that “each family deals with at least some sort of subsistence farming” (Bodomo, 1997). This is supported by the fact that majority of the economically active groups are engaged in agriculture or related activities. They cultivate maize (*Zea mays*), yam (*Dioscorea spp*), guinea corn (*Sorghum bicolor*), millet pearl (*Pennisetum americanum*) cotton (*Gossypium spp*), soyabean (*Glycine max*) and rice (*Oryza sativa*; *Oryza glaberrima*). Others are also engaged in hunting, cattle rearing (Fig.12), goat and sheep farming, as well as sheabutter extraction, pito brewing and petty trading (Fig.14).



Fig. 12: Cattle grazing in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)



Fig. 13: Local beverage (pito) on sale in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)



Fig. 14: Trading activities in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN KOLON-YIRI**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Primarily, Kolon-Yiri is the repository of Guomo's customs and traditions with significant historical and heritage sites. However, Kolon-Yiri's cultural heritage landscape including the archaeology of the village is endangered by a number of different environmental, cultural and socio-economic forces. Hence, the need to identify, and document its cultural heritage resources as a manual guide for further archaeological research in the light of socio-cultural and economic development of the area.

Identifying and documenting these cultural resources of an area require their spatial locations, and these can be obtained through archaeological research (Keitumetse, 2014). Therefore, this chapter reports some preliminary archaeological works conducted in Kolon-Yiri, to help locate, and identify these cultural heritage resources as a means of complementing the oral accounts in relation to the research.

The main purpose for the preliminary archaeological investigations conducted as part of this research is to highlight the archaeological potentials of the area. In-depth analysis of the findings were not carried out by the researcher, although, the cultural materials recovered have been assembled and classified, and will require further analysis for future work. Nonetheless, some charcoal samples recovered were sent for a chronometric dating analysis to provide an idea of the age of the site investigated.



The preliminary archaeological investigations carried out included reconnaissance survey and two test excavations at separate locations which were carried out between 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019.

#### **4.1 Reconnaissance Survey**

A four-day reconnaissance survey (Fig. 15) was carried out in the study area between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 to provide evidence of material culture of past human activities, to identify and locate the cultural and heritage resources as well as other historical sites in the study area. This was done by traversing the area with the aid of local guides to observe and photograph some of these cultural resources and features. The involvement of the local indigenes throughout the survey was greatly beneficial as posited that “ground reconnaissance can be greatly aided by the cooperation and assistance of local inhabitants, who may serve as guides and indicate the location of sites” (Sharer and Ashmore; cf. Nkumbaan, 2003).



Fig. 15: Conducting reconnaissance survey near Pizaga rockshelter (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

## **4.2 Test Excavations**

Documenting the settlement history and cultural heritage of Kolon-Yiri presents “an opportunity to glean historical information through the archaeology of the area” (Abrampah, 2009). Thus, the cultural resources that speak to the cultural heritage of a community can be fully identified through excavation. Hence, two test pits were excavated. These test excavations were carried out to complement the oral accounts by investigating the possibility of uncovering archaeological cultural materials, and to examine the chronological cultural interactions of the sites excavated as far as the settlement history of the study area was concerned.

The loci for the test excavations were selected based on oral tradition and surface configurations/features as observed through the reconnaissance survey. Hence, the study resorted to the judgmental sampling technique in the selections of spots for the test excavations. The strip and vertical excavation methods were adopted to carefully and systematically take off the layers to expose contextual arrangements in each unit, as well as establish the depths of cultural layers. The test excavations were conducted using arbitrary level of 20cm to a context throughout the test excavations.

The archaeological cultural materials uncovered were counted, cleaned, classified, bagged according to their respective units and levels, and labelled appropriately stating the name of the site, year of the excavation, the artefact type, the location, the unit number, the name of the excavator(s), the bag number, depth of the unit/trench, name of the recorder as well as stating the significant find (if any). Records on archaeological concepts were taken through photography, sketches and measurements of artifacts uncovered within the test excavated units.

The soil profiles of each unit were described and drawn. All archaeological cultural materials retrieved from the test excavated units were transported to the Department of Archaeology and

Heritage Studies of the University of Ghana for future analysis by the researcher. The test excavations were carried out between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019.

#### **4.2.1 Test Excavation at Pogdograa-Kunkpe Sacred Grove**

The site (N 10°21'07.6" and W 002°23'38.5") is also referred to as *Soladon* (Fig 16) meaning a sacred place in the local dialect. This is a community shrine where ritual activities take place, and all human activities are prohibited within the boundaries of the grove. Indeed, reconnaissance survey conducted on this site could not give evidence of human habitation nor other forms of human use except for loci very close to the shrine which had been used for ritual purposes.

The researcher was made to provide three chickens and a cash equivalent of goat (*bodaa*) for rituals before allowed to conduct the test excavation in the grove. The entire research team took part in the ritual performance led by the chief priest to the shrine. After acceptance of the sacrifice by the gods, the research team conducted the test excavation; but without wearing footwear as the place is considered a sacred ground.

A 2 x 1m pit was excavated (Fig. 17). The pit was divided into two units of 1m x 1m. The test excavation was done arbitrarily using a depth of 20cm per level. The depth of the unit was quite shallow, reaching sterile level at about 40cm. Soils from each level were screened and artifacts collected. Artifacts retrieved and collected from this test excavation were solely potsherds. The pit was then backfilled with the same soils after the soil profiles had been drawn, and was identified as Test Pit 1.

#### **4.2.2 Test Excavation at an Old settlement**

This site (N 10°20'57.8" and W 002°23'34.0") is believed to be one of the earliest habitation sites of the ancestors of Kolon-Yiri. Indeed, "old settlements are particularly attractive, however, as old compounds contain stratigraphic layers of clay floors and ceilings that were compacted through pounding at the time of building, as well as through subsequent use" (Swanepoel, 2010). According to oral accounts, other human activities are believed to have taken place on this site by earliest occupants of Kolon-Yiri. Currently, the site is being used for farming activities by the locals. This site is characterised by several mounds, an indication of collapsed ancient structures and burial mounds as intimidated by local guides.

A 1 x 1m unit was excavated (Fig 18). The test excavation was done using arbitrary levels of 20cm per level. A sterile level was reached at 120cm at level 6. Soils from each level were screened and artifacts collected. Artifacts retrieved from the excavation were potsherds, bone fragments, charcoal samples, quartz, and a full pot (Fig. 19). As earlier indicated, the archaeological data was to juxtapose the oral accounts and ethnographic data of Kolon-Yiri as far as their settlement history was concerned, though, no thorough laboratory analysis had been conducted on them. However, a charcoal sample collected (Fig. 20) from 95cm was prepared and sent for radiocarbon dating to have an understanding of the chronology of the site. This test pit was identified as Test Pit 2.





Fig. 16: Mapping Pogdograa-Kunkpe Sacred Grove (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)



Fig. 17: Test Pit 1 (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)





Fig. 18: Test Pit 2 (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)



Fig. 19: A discovered pot from Test Pit 2 (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)



Fig. 20: A discovery of charcoal samples from Test Pit 2 (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)

#### **4.3 Stratigraphy of Units Excavated**

The stratigraphy of the two units excavated were described and drawn (Fig. 21). This is a necessary requirement since archaeological excavations destroy the soils profiles, and documenting them before backfilling (Fig. 22) is crucial. The various arbitrary levels were converted into natural layers. Tools used by the researcher when drawing the soil profiles included, graph books, pencils, rulers, stadia rod, twine, measuring tape and a soil chart.





Fig. 21: The researcher drawing soil profile of Test Pit 1 (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)



Fig. 22: Local field assistants backfilling an excavated unit (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)

#### **4.3.1 Stratigraphy of Test Pit 1 (Soladon)**

The various cultural layers were identified and indicated by drawing the north and east walls.

The two walls had similar characteristics in terms of the soil colour and texture. The pit had two

cultural layers (Fig 23). The first layer of the two walls were characterised by a dark loose humus soil with rootlets and specks of charcoal ending at a deepest depth of 22cm. A bulk of potsherds were found within this cultural layer.

The second cultural layer consisted of a more compact brown soil starting from the depth of 22cm ending at a depth of 42cm. This layer constituted the sterile point of the pit at which no artifacts were found.

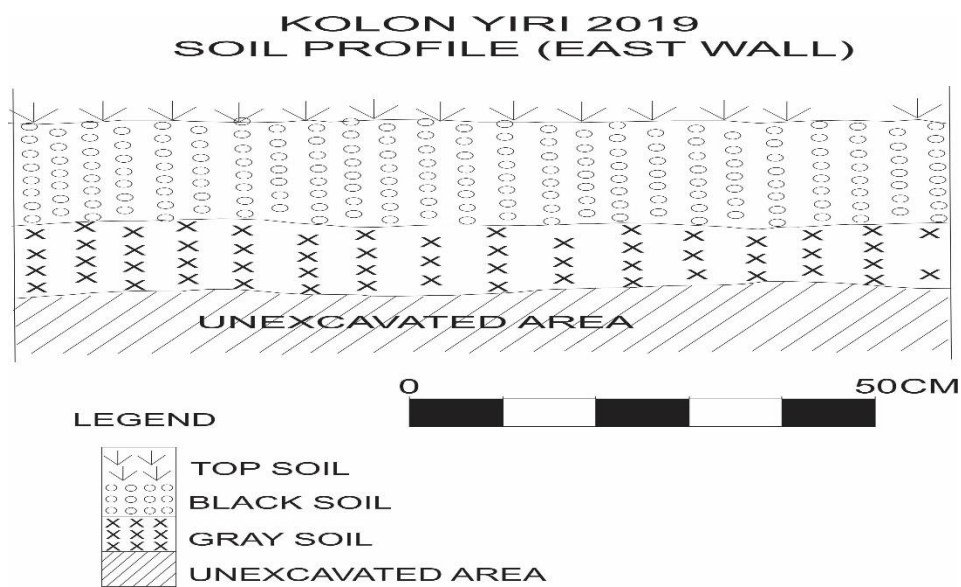


Fig. 23: Soil Profile of Test Pit 1

#### 4.3.1 Stratigraphy of Test Pit 2 (Old Settlement)

This unit had six (6) arbitrary levels at 20cm per level, and a sterile level was reached at 120cm deep. The pit was characterized by five (5) cultural layers as well as some ashes, roots and pavement platforms (Fig. 24). The various cultural layers were identified and indicated by drawing the north and east walls. The two walls had similar characteristics in terms of the soil colour and texture.

The first layer of the two walls were characterised by a dark loose humus soil, and some roots ending at a deepest depth at 42cm. The first layer was followed by the second cultural layer which consisted of a dark brown soil beginning from the 42cm to a depth of 68cm.

The third layer consisted of light brown soil starting from about 65cm to a depth of 98cm. This cultural layer was characterised with ashes and pavement platform with a thickness of 4cm between 82cm and 86cm vertically.

The third cultural layer was followed by two cultural layers from about 96cm to the sterile level at a depth of 122cm. The fourth cultural layer was characterised by reddish yellow soil starting horizontally from 52cm joining and running through the layer at the east wall. The fifth cultural layer was characterised by strong brown soil and some ashes found between 102cm and 108cm deep.

Most of the cultural materials were recovered in the first three layers of the pit, and these included fragments of local ceramics, daub and quartz. Level 4 consisted of potsherds, bone fragments, charcoal samples and a pot. A few number of potsherds were recovered at level 5. At an arbitrary level of six (6), was the sterile point, hence, recorded no finds.

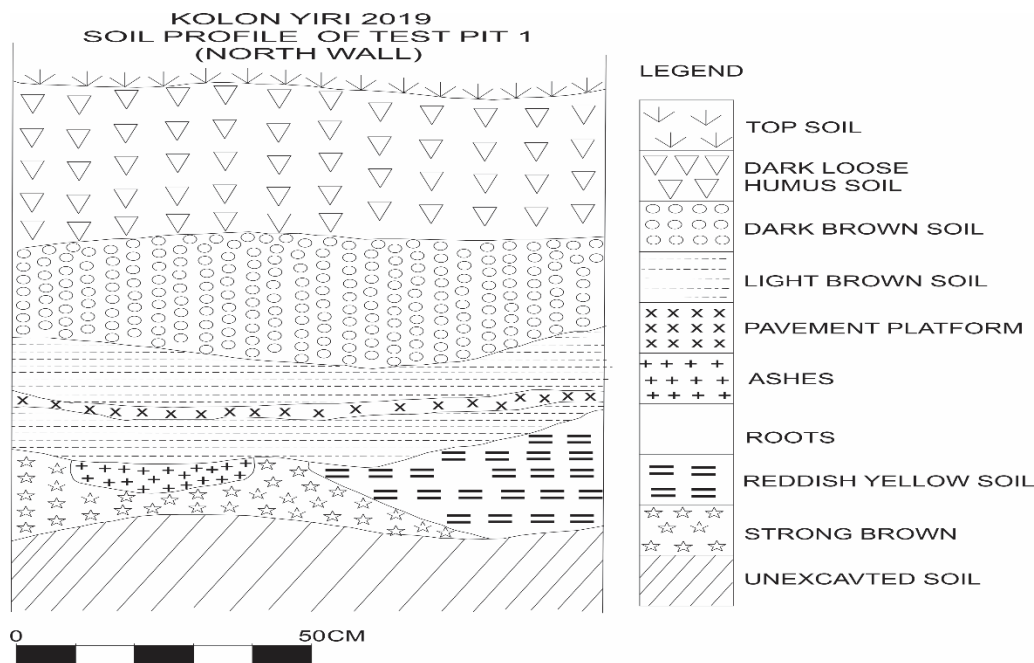


Fig. 24: Soil Profile of the Old Settlement

#### 4.4. An Assemblage of the Archaeological data

For purposes of future analysis, cultural materials recovered during the preliminary archaeological investigations were assembled, classified and documented. These materials comprised local ceramic fragments (potsherds), terracotta figurine, iron slags, remnants of ancient walls, and ancient source of water, house mounds, slag mound, daub, pot, charcoal samples, quartz and bone fragments. In all, a total of five hundred and fifteen (515) cultural materials were recovered. Out of this figure, seventy-nine (79) finds representing 15.34% were recovered through reconnaissance survey, whereas four hundred and thirty-six (436) representing 84.66% were obtained from the test excavations. The local ceramic recorded the highest proportion of artifacts with a total of four hundred and eighty-nine (489) representing 94.95% of the total number of finds. The distributions of these cultural materials are illustrated in table 1 below.

| Artifact Category        | Surface      | Excavation   | Total         | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Potsherds                | 64           | 425          | 489           | 94.95          |
| Charcoal sample          | -            | 4            | 4             | 0.78           |
| Bone fragments           | -            | 3            | 3             | 0.58           |
| Pot                      | -            | 1            | 1             | 0.19           |
| Terracotta figurine      | 1            | -            | 1             | 0.19           |
| Daub                     | 3            | 1            | 4             | 0.78           |
| Quartz                   | -            | 2            | 2             | 0.38           |
| Ancient source of water  | 1            | -            | 1             | 0.19           |
| Iron Slags               | 5            | -            | 5             | 0.97           |
| Slag mounds              | 1            |              | 1             | 0.19           |
| Remnants of ancient wall | 2            | -            | 2             | 0.38           |
| House mounds             | 2            | -            | 2             | 0.38           |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>79</b>    | <b>436</b>   | <b>515</b>    | <b>100</b>     |
| <b>Percentage (%)</b>    | <b>15.34</b> | <b>84.66</b> | <b>100.00</b> |                |

**Table 1: Summary of finds recovered from the preliminary archaeological investigations**

#### **4.4.1 Archaeological data from reconnaissance survey**

Cultural materials found through reconnaissance survey included fragments of local ceramics, a terracotta figurine, iron slag, remnants of ancient walls, ancient source of water, house mounds. Slag mound and daub. Statistically, a total of seventy-nine (79) cultural materials were obtained through reconnaissance survey. Out of this figure, fragments of local ceramics (potsherds) recorded the highest number with sixty-four (64) representing 81.11% of the total finds (Table 2).



| Artifact/Feature          | Surface   | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Potsherds                 | 64        | 81.01          |
| Terracotta Figurine       | 1         | 1.27           |
| Iron Slag                 | 5         | 6.33           |
| Remnants of ancient walls | 2         | 2.53           |
| Ancient source of water   | 1         | 1.27           |
| House mounds              | 2         | 2.53           |
| Slag mounds               | 1         | 1.27           |
| Daub                      | 3         | 3.80           |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>79</b> | <b>100</b>     |

**Table 2: Summary of finds obtained through reconnaissance survey**

| Artifact Category     | Test Pit 1   | Test Pit 2   | Total      | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Potsherds             | 102          | 323          | 425        | 97.48          |
| Charcoal sample       | -            | 4            | 4          | 0.92           |
| Bone fragments        | -            | 3            | 3          | 0.69           |
| Pot                   | -            | 1            | 1          | 0.23           |
| Terracotta figurine   | -            | -            | -          | -              |
| Daub                  | -            | 1            | 1          | 0.23           |
| Quartz                | -            | 2            | 2          | 0.46           |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>102</b>   | <b>334</b>   | <b>436</b> | <b>100</b>     |
| <b>Percentage (%)</b> | <b>23.39</b> | <b>76.60</b> | <b>100</b> |                |

**Table 3: Summary of finds from test excavations**

The pottery fragments recovered from the archaeological investigations showed a wide variety of decorations on the vessels. Nonetheless, focus was placed much on the diagnostic fragments. This was to inform what they really represent in terms of rims, necks, body sherds and bases. These fragments were examined, and information retrieved is represented in table 6 below.

| <b>Unit</b>       | <b>Rim</b>   | <b>Neck</b>  | <b>Body</b>  | <b>Base</b>  | <b>Total</b>  |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Surface           | 23           | 21           | 11           | 9            | 64            |
| Test Pit          | 47           | 23           | 25           | 7            | 102           |
| Test Pit 2        | 98           | 103          | 67           | 55           | 323           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>168</b>   | <b>147</b>   | <b>103</b>   | <b>71</b>    | <b>489</b>    |
| <b>Percentage</b> | <b>34.36</b> | <b>30.06</b> | <b>21.06</b> | <b>14.52</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

**Table 4: Distribution of the vessel parts of the potsherds**

As shown in table 6 above, vessel parts found were rim, neck, body and base of the potsherds. A total of one hundred and sixty-eight (168) constituting thirty-four (34%) of the total pottery assemblage were pieces of rims. Others included; one and forty-seven (147) parts of necks, one hundred and three pieces of body, and seventy-one (71) pieces of base representing 30.36%, 21.06% and 14.52% respectively.

#### **4.5 The Archaeological and Tourism Potentials of Kolon-Yiri**

Kolon-Yiri is a major point of attraction to the Guomo people from other places in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Over the last few years, the Upper West Region of Ghana is speedily experiencing some level of socio-economic transformation. One of the reasons for this transformation is linked archaeological investigations in the region that have led to the documentation of communities with significant history and heritage, and the dissemination of such information through different media.

Kolon-Yiri's heritage and archaeological landscape, just as other communities that lack historical documentation, is "a living landscape subject to numerous pressures and processes of community life and development" (Swanepoel, 2010). Kolon-Yiri and its surrounding communities provide several unique, and significant historical and heritage sites for not only archaeological research potentials but for tourism development.

Clearly, from the preliminary archaeological investigations conducted in the study area, there is no doubt that Kolon-Yiri and its environs are endowed with several archaeological cultural resources that can further be investigated archaeologically or developed into tourism destinations. Some of these cultural heritage resources are highlighted below.

#### **4.5.1. The Pizaga Rockshelter**

The Pizaga rockshelter lies between latitudes N10°18'14.3" and longitudes W 002°21'52.4". It is characterised by Birimian granite rocks and basement complex. These rocks hold a considerable quantity of water, which is a good potential for the drilling of boreholes and the sinking of wells in the area. The source of water in the rockshelter played a significant role in the historical settlement there. The entire region of the rockshelter is revered, and considered as a sacred place.

The earliest source of water behind the rockshelter is regarded as an abode of the "god of thirst". Through oral accounts, it is said that this deity helped them survive the wrath of their enemies; hence, Pizaga became the first independent settlement of the earliest Guomo people.

The site is characterised by interesting rock formations within which are a series of rock shelters (Fig. 15), surface configurations of scattered pottery (Fig.25), ancient source of water (Fig. 4), several house mounds, and some remains of abandoned houses still standing and, characterised by laterite stones (Fig. 26). A unique figurine was found on the surface (Fig. 27).



Fig. 25: A discovered pottery in Pizaga rockshelter (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019).



Fig. 26: Remains of an abandoned house at Pizaga (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)



Fig. 27: A figurine discovered at Pizaga (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

#### 4.5.2. An Iron Smelting Site

This site lies approximately between latitudes N 10°20'58.2" and longitudes W 002°23'42.8".

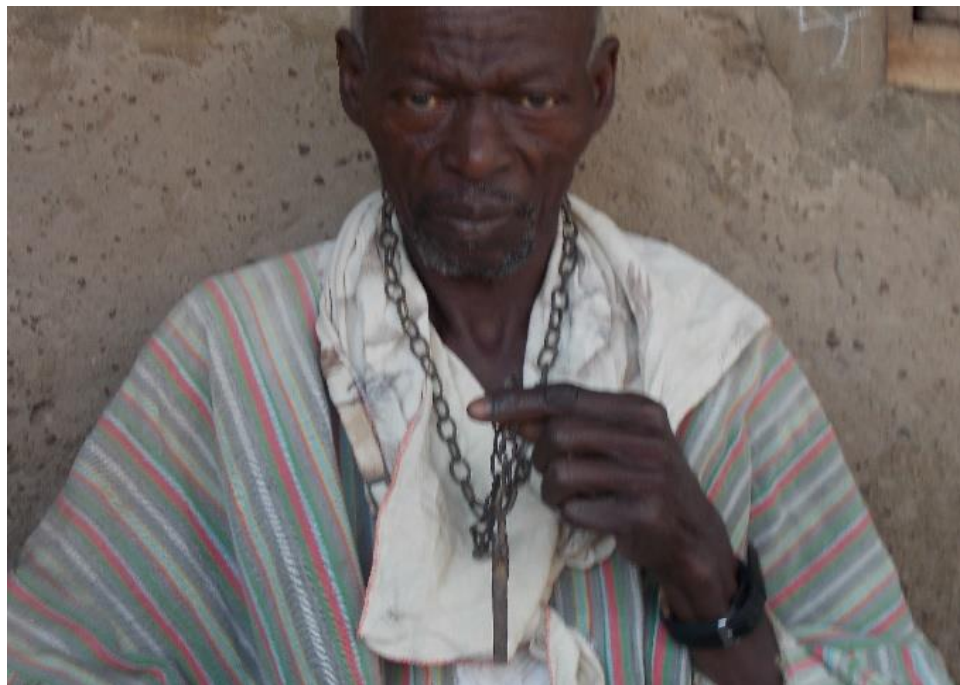
This site is generally characterised by slag mounds with several tuyere fragments on the surface (Fig. 28); suggestive of the possibility of an iron smelting industry in the community.

Iron smelting tradition or technology is reflected in a replica of a metal-like polished stone axe made as pendant, and worn by the *Tindaana* (the traditional or family head), and few traditional leaders believed to wield supernatural powers of the *Guomo* ( Fig. 29).





Fig. 28: Iron slags with tuyere fragments found in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)



Fig, 29: A metallic replica of *Guomolari* worn by a traditional leader in Kolon-Yiri (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu, 2019)

#### 4.5.3. *Guomolari* Sacred Grove

This sacred grove is located approximately between latitudes N10°21'09.3" and longitudes W002°24' 11.0", and believed to be the residential place for the *Guomolari* earth shrine of the Guomo. It is composed of a thicket and stone formation, within which lies the polished stone axe Guomolari (Fig. 30). This site is not disturbed by human activities and has since not been inhabited. It is during the Guomolari festival that the people go there to perform sacrifices and rituals in honour of *Guomolari*.



Fig. 30: The *Guomolari* Sacred Grove (Photo by J. Ampofo Manu)

In conclusion, these resources; the Pizaga caves and the rock formation, the surface evidence of house remains and artifact scatters, the Guomolari and Pogdograa-Kunkpe sacred groves, the living community and the current lifeways of the indigenes of Kolon-Yiri including the Guomolari festival, would constitute a prestige location for study, education, and enjoyment. The



table (Table 5) below gives a summary of the archaeological and cultural heritage resources Kolon-Yiri with their respective coordinates.

| Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Resources | Coordinates (GPS) |                |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                                                | Latitude          | Longitude      |
| Guomolari Shrine                               | N 10°21'09.3"     | W 002°24'11.0" |
| Pogdograa-Kunkpe Shrine                        | N 10°21'27.6"     | W 002°23'38.5" |
| Baalaboi Shrine                                | N 10°20'59.4"     | W 002°24'05.9" |
| Pogdograa-Kunkpe Sacred Grove                  | N 10°21'07.6"     | W 002°23'38.5" |
| Kolon-Yiri Old Settlement                      | N 10°20'57.8"     | W 002°23'34.0" |
| Pizaga Rockshelter                             | N10°18'14.3"      | W 002°21'52.4" |
| Iron Smelting Site                             | N 10°20'58.2"     | W 002°23'42.8" |

**Table 5: Summary of archaeological and heritage resources of Kolon-Yiri**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the work done in this research. It gives a summary and a conclusion of the issues discussed in the previous chapters in relation to the objectives and aims of the study. It also recommends areas that require further archaeological research and tourism potentials of the study area. It further recommends future in-depth analysis of archaeological cultural materials recovered from the test excavations.

#### **5.1 Summary**

Heritage has been defined as everything of value that is related to our distinct identities as people (Trask, 2008). It is a transferable possession or heirloom bequeathed to us by our ancestors and gifted to us by nature, and includes our socio-political, cultural and economic systems and institutions; or worldview, belief systems, ethics and moral values; our customary laws and norms (Trask, 2008).

Several natural resources, including reptiles, birds, animals, rivers, streams, groves, plants or trees consecrated due to the religious or cultural significance attached to them by their respective surrounding communities are considered heritage, and therefore given much reverence (Rim-Rukeh et. al, 2013), and conserved traditionally through social taboos (Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004). There is a mutual relationship between the tangible and intangible, and the intangible is partly embedded in the tangible to form a single cultural entity called cultural heritage (Trask, 2008).

Obviously, heritage depicts our real identity, and the search for one's identity or essence of place and belonging continues to rise at a faster pace considering the numerous impacts associated with such right of identity. Heritage produces considerable economic benefits for communities endowed with such, and has become an essential tool for modern culture, education, entertainment industry, social identity construction, political communication, and personal inspiration among other things.

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is a primary concern to all, hence, communities' involvement, and participation through collaborative conservation model of both indigenous and modern methods will help in the conservation of cultural heritage resources (Rim-Rukeh et. al, 2013; Kankpeyeng and DeCorse, 2004).

Identifying and documenting the cultural heritage resources of a community also help in safeguarding the cultural heritage of such community from complete loss or destruction. However, these require the understanding of both tangible and intangible cultural variables. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted in collecting data through oral accounts, written documents, ethnographic studies, and preliminary archaeological investigations to identify and document the cultural heritage resources of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri.

The Guomo people are descendants of the linguistic group of the Dagaaba. The migration history of the Dagaaba is most uncertain as a result of insufficient literature on this linguistic group. However, recent historical accounts suggest that, they were part of some small relatively mobile groups of relatives who dominated the Black Volta Region during the pre-colonial period (Lentz, 2006). Other anthropologists suggest that they are an outgrowth of the Mole-Dagbani group of people who migrated to semi-arid Sahel region in the fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) century (Kpieta and Bonye, 2012; cf. Diku, 2014), and believed to have further migrated to the lower northern part of

the region in the seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) century (Diku, 2014). Some scholars also assert that the Dagaaba, the Mossi, the Dagomba, the Kusaasi, and the Frafra directly descended from a common ancestor ethnolinguistic group known as the *Mabia* (Bodomo, 1997).

Legends have it that the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri migrated from South Africa (a narrative that is questionable, as no specific details are available to substantiate this claim), and finally settled at the present-day Kolon-Yiri after transiting through various settlements. The availability of water in the area, coupled with the claims of the directives of the earth god (*Guomolari*) of the Guomo people were said to be the fundamental factors that necessitated their permanent settlement. The tale reflects the reason for the name of the community; Kolon-Yiri (home of water).

Available records suggest that a greater percentage of the Dagaaba are Christians followed by the Muslims. However, the indigenous religious belief systems and practices are still dominant among the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri, as they continue to worship their earth gods through their individual families and community shrines. The cultural heritage resources are protected and conserved by the local custodians of these resources through the community's set rules and regulations in the form of social taboos. Offenders or deviants are punished through customary laws. Annually, the Guomolari festival is celebrated in honour of the earth gods of the Guomo, and to memorialise and venerate their past ancestors. The festival serves as a moment of prayers and merry-making, and a forum not only to reunite, but to discuss their common development needs.

In order to effectively identify and document the cultural heritage resources of Kolon-Yiri, an archaeological reconnaissance survey was necessary, as it aided the determination of spatial locations or distribution of these resources across the archaeological landscape. The preliminary

conducted archaeological investigations in Kolon-Yiri helped to ascertain the archaeological and tourism potentials of the study area in relation to some of the set objectives of this research.

The archaeological investigations exposed several cultural materials and features including, a rockshelter, remnants of an ancient structures , shrines, daub, figurine, iron slag mounds, a full pot, potsherds, bones, quartz, ancient source of water, charcoal samples, and trees of medicinal and nutritional values. An assemblage of the archaeological cultural materials recovered have been recorded, and kept in storage in the museum of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies of the University of Ghana, for future detailed studies. However, some charcoal samples were sent for radiometric dating to help provide the chronology of the study area as far as the settlement history of Kolon-Yiri was concerned. This provided a date range of 1298 AD and 1371 AD for Kolon-Yiri's occupation (Appendix 3). Aside these, the documentation of the contemporary society, its norms and values, social structures, religious and subsistence strategies, all contributed towards the realization of the aims and objectives set forth for this research.

An amalgamation of the research findings from the various historical sites in Kolon-Yiri is a clear indication of the archaeological and tourism potentials in the area. The Pizaga escarpment and rock formation, and the associated house remains and scatter of cultural materials on the surface would make a good eco-museum site. The two test pits excavated at two separate sites also complemented the story gathered from oral accounts and ethnography with regards to the chronology of the settlement history of the Guomo people of Kolon-Yiri. Cultural materials found in all the heritage sites obviously speak to the cultural heritage of the Guomo. The results of the research clearly show a high degree of cultural consistency in the area, and these are reflected in the cultural materials recovered in Pogdograa-Kunkpe sacred grove.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

As earlier indicated by Hoelscher (2011), a community's "identity, its value and civilisation resides in its heritage". It is therefore prudent, to as a matter of urgency recognise the relevance of one's heritage. The cultural heritage resources of Kolon-Yiri in the Upper West Region of Ghana are threatened by socio-political, cultural and economic transformations and such developments could possibly lead to a complete loss of cultural identity when not documented. Therefore, it is important to identify and document the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage, and history of Kolon-Yiri as a means to safeguard their cultural heritage in the light of socio-political, cultural and economic developments.

Based on the outcome of the research, it is worth concluding that, there are sufficient cultural heritage materials and sites that directly support the story of the settlement history of the Guomo of Kolon-Yiri. The surface configurations of archaeological cultural materials in the area, and material remains from test excavations are clear indications of archaeological potentials of the area. In addition to these, are indigenous festivals and associated rituals, pristine landscapes at Pizaga and the Iron smelting site which could make good tourism attractions, should stakeholders consider a tourism development project in the area.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the outcomes of this research, it is worth recommending the following;

- A larger archaeological project should be carried out in the area to further our understanding of the culture history and heritage of Kolon-Yiri.
- There is urgent need for community and stakeholder education on the relevance of the heritage resources and historic landscapes for possible tourism development; and thus an improvement in the socio-economic life of the people.



- There must be full community involvement and participation in the conservation and management of the cultural heritage resources of the study area. In such cases, the community members are trained to collaborate with modern methods of conservation which could lead to a successful implementation of the eco-museum concept, especially at Pizaga.
- There should be an archaeological investigation at the Pizaga escarpment to ascertain the original owners of the heritage. This will help solve the contestation of the heritage between the indigenes of Kolon-Yiri and those of Tabease.
- Also, the Pizaga escarpment with its rich archaeological cultural remains must be given much attention as it is subject to environmental and other impacts that could cause its destruction.
- A shortcoming of this research is the researcher's inability to analyse all the archaeological cultural materials as a means of instituting comparisons. This is a gap that future researchers can breach to enrich the settlement history of Kolon-Yiri.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **Personal Details**

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your position in the community

#### **Oral Accounts and Ethnographic Questions**

4. Have you been told how you arrived in Kolon-Yiri?
5. Was Kolon-Yiri your first permanent settlement?
6. Where did you migrate from?
7. What necessitated your migration?
8. Who were the first leader(s) of your ancestors?
9. What accounted for your arrival in Kolon-Yiri?
10. What is the meaning of Kolon-Yiri and Korin-Yiri?
11. Who is a Guomo?
12. How many communities form the Guomo?
13. How many gates or extended families do you have in Kolon-Yiri?
14. What are your religious belief systems and practices?
15. Are there any sacred places in Kolon-Yiri?
16. Do you have any cultural heritage resource(s)?
17. If yes, how are they conserved and managed?
18. Who is/are keeper(s) of your cultural heritage resource(s)?
19. Do you perform rituals around these cultural heritage resources or how do you give reverence to these cultural heritage resources?
20. Do you have any memorial feast or festival celebrated by the Guomo?
21. Are there other ethnic groups in Kolon-Yiri?
22. If yes, who are they, and what accounted for their presence in Kolon-Yiri?
23. Do you accept inter-marriage from other ethnic groups?
24. What is your main source of income?
25. What is/are your main occupation(s)?

## APPENDIX 2

List of respondents interviewed at Kolon-Yiri.

| <i>Name</i>          | <i>Age</i> | <i>Position</i>                                                      |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kabo Kontondaabo     | 93         | Head of Boleeyiri, <i>Tindaana</i> , and acting chief of Kolon-Yiri. |
| Braimah Yindor       | 89         | Head of Kyooneeyiri Gate                                             |
| Tengen               | 73         | Head of Naameleyiri Gate                                             |
| Bachir Tabeasenya    | 88         | Traditional Leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                    |
| Nyiri-Kabon Baturio  | 82         | Traditional Leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                    |
| David Basuom         | 89         | Traditional Leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                    |
| Sylvester Kuunsana   | 64         | Opinion leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                        |
| Kandidoma Andita     | 75         | Opinion leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                        |
| Baba Ziora-Banoigona | 79         | Opinion leader in Kolon-Yiri.                                        |
| Kandababong Malik    | 24         | Interpreter for the respondents(Indigene)                            |
| Amin Kandababan      | 35         | Indigene                                                             |
| Abdul Iddi Ibrahim   | 32         | Indigene                                                             |

## APPENDIX 3

| National Laboratory for Age Determination |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 14C Result Report                         |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
| Heidrun Steberglokken                     | heidrun.steberglokken@ntnu.no              |     |                  |                   |                     | Calibration references:                        |                  |  |
| NTNU Vitenskapsmuseet, IAK                |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | OxCal v4.2.4 Bronk Ramsey (2013); r:5          |                  |  |
| Erling Skakkes gate 47A                   |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | IntCal13 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2013) |                  |  |
| 7012 Trondheim                            |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |
| Sample Name                               | Fraction                                   | % C | 13C content (pM) | 14C Age (rounded) | 13C (from AMS syste | Calibrated Age Ranges                          | 14C Age (not row |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 68.2% probability                              |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 1305AD (28.3%) 1324AD                          |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 1345AD (27.7%) 1364AD                          |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 1384AD (12.2%) 1393AD                          |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 95.4% probability                              |                  |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     | 1298AD (76.2%) 1371AD                          |                  |  |
| TRa-14475 Sample nr I                     | Trekull, 1 bit Dicotyledon, Alkali residue | 57  | 92.67 ± 0.18     | 610 ± 15          | -24.0 ± 0.5 ‰       | 1379AD (19.2%) 1399AD                          | 611 +16/-16      |  |
|                                           |                                            |     |                  |                   |                     |                                                |                  |  |