



# National Commission for Museums and Monuments

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**(OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL)**

**AF.286/VOL.T6/638**

**13<sup>th</sup> August, 2018**

**The Director**

World Heritage Center  
UNESCO  
7, Place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris,  
07 SP, France

**STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT ON OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE,  
WORLD HERITAGE SITE – C1118**

Kindly find attached the state of conservation report for Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove, World Heritage Site. This report is in response to decision **41 Com 73.70** adopted by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO at its 41<sup>st</sup> Session at Krakow in 2017.

The report addresses the concerns revised by the 2015 Reactive Monitoring Mission and its recommendations.

Please accept as usual the assurance of our highest esteem.

**BARR. EMEKA ONUGBU**

*Acting Director-General*

# STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT ON OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE

**NAME OF PROPERTY:** OSUN-OSOGBO SACRED GROVE

**STATE PARTY:** NIGERIA

**IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:** C1118

**DATE OF INSCRIPTION:** JULY 15, 2005

**CRITERIA:** II, III, VI

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove is Nigeria's second property inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005 under criteria II, III and IV.

The revised Conservation Management Plan 2015-2019 which incorporated Cultural Tourism Management and Risk Preparedness Plans has been distributed to all stakeholders. It was submitted to the World Heritage Centre and is now published on their website. This document remains the current management instrument for the site.

In its decision 41 COM 7B.70, The UNESCO World Heritage Committee addressed the concerns raised by the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission and its recommendations with regard to development of defined conservation methodology, analysis of polluted river water; over-commercialization of the Festival; support of the Festival for on-going conservation work; community engagement; lack of resources for professional staff; fencing the buffer zone and plans for a proposed new road and bridge. Some specific actions have been taken with regard to these recommendations with details outlined in this report.

A stakeholders meeting was held in Osogbo from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The mission recommendations were discussed and decisions regarding responsibilities of each stakeholder as specified in the management plan and relating to the recommendations were taken towards addressing these issues concerning the grove. This report explains the following key issues:-

- a. Conservation methodology: Methodology using traditional craftsmen who were involved in the original construction and creation followed the original pattern in the restoration of sculptures and structures of the grove under the supervision of the elderly masters.

- b. Analysis of polluted river water: Tests conducted revealed no significant pollution of water but there is need for campaigns against disposal of waste in or around river course.
- c. Over commercialization of Festival: The festival committee which depends on its funding from individuals and corporate organizations has agreed to impress on supporting commercial interest to regulate their advertisements. The festival committee has ploughed back funds with the establishment of Artist village in the grove.
- d. Community Engagement: Ongoing.
- e. Resources for staff development: Although there is scarcity of resources, staff training is on going on the job using the natural and cultural resources of the site.
- f. Fencing the Buffer Zone: Critical areas in the buffer zone are fenced and process is ongoing.
- g. Proposed new road and bridge: The project is capital intensive but is captured in the long term plan of the state government. The intersecting road is regulated for only few specified vehicles of communities living around the grove.

In addition, routine maintenance/conservation works have been going on to ensure preservation of site integrity and authenticity.

## **2. RESPONSES TO THE DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

The State Party wishes to update the committee on the actions taken to improve on the state of conservation of the property with regard to concerns raised by the 2015 Reactive Monitoring Mission:-

### **A) Development of a defined conservation methodology -**

A stakeholder's meeting was held in October 2017 involving the Site Manager, Heritage Officers, the AdunniOlorisa Trust (AOT), Artists of the New Sacred Art Movement of Osogbo, Traditional Bricklayers and all craftsmen who work on the site where it was agreed that all conservation works on sites on site be put on hold. The request from UNESCO to develop a defined conservation method which would eventually be adopted for all restoration work was deliberated upon. The AOT who mobilized funds and undertake the recent restoration project made a comprehensive presentation on the methodology adopted in conducting the exercise. All the stakeholders were satisfied that the method of restoration work adopted by AOT is genuinely in consonance with the original method of construction used by the original artist and

sculpturalists. It was agreed that such methods should continue to be used for restorations in the grove and UNESCO should be informed about the authenticity of the methodology for approval. (See attachment 1).

**B) Analysis of the polluted river water-**

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) sent a team of their environmental experts to carry out the analysis of River Osun. Water sampling were done at five (5) selected spots which include Wèré areas (before the entrance to the grove), inside the grove, under the suspension bridge, after the Heritage Education building and outside the grove (*Elewure*). The conclusion of the investigation reveals that the water content is not significantly polluted and the water still possess properties that supports aquatic bio-diversity. The report however acknowledges the increase introduction of organic materials into the water body which may render the water unsuitable for consumption. The study also recommends further examination for more information on the composition of the water. A detailed report of the water analysis by NESREA is hereby attached. (*See attachment 2*)

**C) Over-commercialization of the festival, the support of the festival for the ongoing conservation work and community engagement -**

The site manager met with the Festival coordinator, Chief Jimoh Buraimoh who is a member of the site management committee and a chief on the Council of the traditional king of Osogbo, Kabiyesi, Oba Jimoh Olanipekun, Laroyell, The Ataoja of Osogbo land.

In a formal letter responding to this issue, Chief Jimoh explained that the Festival which actually spans through the traditional calendar year and with numerous un-publicized sacrifices and traditional activities (rites) are carried out as part of the living tradition and customary heritage of the Osogbo people. All these activities and events require a lot of financial commitment for which the traditional palace alone cannot wholly finance. For this reason, the palace has to practically seek for financial assistance from corporate organizations to be able to finance all the activities of festival including many aspects of traditional rites and customs that are performed behind the scene.

On the issue of over-commercialization of the festival and support of the festival for the on-going conservation work in the grove, he explained that the palace has taken note of this and plans to increase waste collection bins and instruct participating corporate organizations to minimize the number of banners displayed during festival. They will also ensure that all banners used for the festival are removed immediately after the event. Efforts would be made to reduce negative impact of corporate organizations involvement in sponsoring the festival while environmental protection and preservation would be key consideration in planning the festival activities.

It is noteworthy that the festival committee initiated the establishment of the Artists Village which has provided opportunity for skills acquisition and economic empowerment for the youths of the community while showcasing its rich art tradition in various works of arts. At present about 77 local artists from the community including Osun devotees have been so empowered.

The traditional authority under the king (Ataoja) has promised that the palace would make financial contributions to support any required conservation work in the grove. The palace has always been actively involved in the monitoring of conservation works so as to ensure that there is no alteration or distortion of cultural features of the site which embody a significant aspect of the sites outstanding universal value.

*(See attachment 3)*

**D) Lack of resources for professional staff -**

This remains a major challenge for the National Commission for Museums and Monuments which relies on federal government budgetary allocation to fund the activities of the Site through its Osogbo office. While there are budgetary provisions annually, in practice there is often very little funding to facilitate staff training and equipment procurement. There are expectations that this would improve soon and that there would be a more active involvement from private sector stakeholders in cultural heritage conservation as well as looking out for training opportunities through international assistance.

**E) Fencing the buffer zone -**

Some parts of the buffer zone had been fenced by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in the past while Completion of the fence works is subject to the availability of funds from budgetary allocation even though there are at present no threats of encroachment on this zone.

**F) Plans for a proposed new road and bridge -**

The site manager and his team paid a courtesy visit on the Special Adviser to the Governor on Culture and Tourism and the issue of the diversion of the road was extensively deliberated since it is part of their documented responsibilities in the Conservation Management Plan. The site manager emphasized the importance of executing this project based on its impact on site's integrity and reminded him of the earlier promise by the Osun State Government to Ms. Deborah Whelan, the ICOMOS expert for the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission during her visit to the site.

The Special Adviser informed the team that she was meeting with the Governor and the issue would be discussed. A week later, some engineers came to the site to take the measurement of the existing road, the proposed road and the bridge with a promise that work will soon commence.

In addition to this, a letter was received from the Office of the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism on the above issue, stating that an inter-ministerial committee had been constituted and that the technical inputs and recommendation of the committee on the completion of outstanding works are being proposed for government approval and for commencement of work at the site. *(See attachment 4)*

**3. CONSERVATION WORKS ON THE GROVE**

Most of the significant conservation activities in Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove are the restoration works carried out by the traditional craftsmen through the Aduni Olorisha Trust Fund (AOT) since February 2016 till



date. Conservation works have been put on hold pending the approval of a defined conservation methodology which would be adopted. The restoration work was done in phases starting at the *Aiyedakun Yipada* courtyards. So far, majority of the statues, sculptures, traditional fence, shrines, motifs, etc have been restored by Adunni Olorisa Trust traditional restorers using mainly traditional materials together with local materials which were used in the original construction such as red cement, iron rods, gravels and wire mesh to ensure that the cultural values of the properties are sustained. *(See attachment 5)*

Site staff routinely carries out simple cleaning, fumigation and bush clearing around shrines and sculptures.

#### **4. IN CONFORMITY WITH OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES, POTENTIAL MAJOR RESTORATIONS AND CONSTRUCTIONS/NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CORE AREA OR BUFFER ZONE THAT MAY LIKELY AFFECT THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE INCLUDING AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY**

There is no major construction or development underway within the core area or buffer zone which may have negative impact on the attributes conveying outstanding universal value of the site.

#### **5. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT**

The State Party has no objections for public access to the state of conservation report.

#### **6. SIGNATURE OF THE AUTHORITY**

**Name:** Barr. Emeka Onuegbu  
**Designation:** Acting Director-General,  
**Organization:** National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Abuja

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

10/05/2018

No. 41, Ibokun Road,  
Osogbo'  
23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL,  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS,  
ABUJA.

THROUGH:  
The Curator,  
National Museum,  
Osogbo.

**RE-OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE NIGERIA (C1188)**

Reference to your letter OGS/AF.4/Vol.6/630 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2018. Am directed to submit thus:

**PROPOSED GENERAL METHODOLOGY FOR THE RESTORATION WORK  
TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE ADUNNI OLORISA TRUST (A.O.T)**

This restoration work shall be done in stages namely:

- a. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: Objects/structures/Sculpture shall be photographed before, during and after restoration. The following shall be examined: cracks, broken parts, mould growth, general body weakness especially the base, effect of weathering and location.
- b. DETERMINATION OF RESTORATION PROCESS APPLICABLE: After the evaluation of the result, consideration shall be made for digging, scrapping, drilling cutting, reinforcement etc.
- c. ACTUAL RESTORATION ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT The condition or state of the object/sculpture/structure determines the nature of restoration works as follow:
  - Where cracks are observed. There shall be gradual or intensive scrapping of the affected parts, refilling and remolding



- Where broken parts are observed. There shall be restructuring and replacement of the affected parties.
- Where general body weakness is noticeable. There shall be digging of the weak portion from the base, refilling shall be carried out and necessary reinforcement with specified materials used.
- Where mould growth is observed as a result of the dense vegetation forming canopy-like structure covering the structure. There shall be need for scrapping, filling with cement mixture and hedges of trees casting shade trimmed.
- Where sculpture/structure has completely fallen off its stand but not completely destroyed. It shall be raised, stronger base will be created with adequate support and damaged part restored.
- Where the sculpture/structure is completely destroyed. There shall be need for creating a new one looking exactly as the original since the photograph/picture of the original is available (Replica).
- Where structure/sculpture is of great height. The use of scaffold will be necessary for ease of access.
- Where sculpture/structure are threatened by the effect of erosion. Their location/objects shall be reinforced and restructure using applicable designs to create necessary drainage.

#### FILLING

Where parts are Scrapped, dunged out or drilled, such parts will now be refilled with material of required strength. Such as hardcore, stone iron-rods of varied sizes, granites, wire mesh, metal sheet, mixture of sand and cement.

The degree of filling depends on the extent of scrapping/digging to effect equal proportion and ensure strength.

After the filling, a period of waiting will be observed for the solidification of the structure/sculpture. (setting). The waiting period depends on the thickness, the depth, the height and the environment (Some objects are more exposed to sunlight while others are under shade).

Usually the duration is 3 – 4 weeks.

**SHAPING/DESIGNING**

During the process of filling, the structure shall be brought back to their original shape by using some or all of the following materials (foam, Stones, iron-rod, wire mesh, metal sheets, bones etc) depending on the parts to be shaped such as flappy ears, heads, bulging eyes, teeth, outstretched hands, long neck, mouth, clenched fist etc.

**PLASTERING**

This shall be done using the mixture of elephant cement, sand and red pigment cement in the right proportion. The red pigment cement in addition to its strength portrays the natural clay colour background desirable at the site.

This restoration work shall be carried out by the New Sacred Art Group formed by the Late Madam Suzanne Wenger (Adunni Olorisa).

The utmost aim of this restoration work in addition to conservation is to train and empower the youth who will replace the ageing members of the New Sacred Art group. This entrepreneurial scheme is also targeted at bringing up from among the Community Youth with Cultural mindset that will fully take up this vocation as their means of livelihood.

Thanks.

  
**Chief Sangodare Ajala**  
Group-Co-ordinator



**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND  
REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**

*...ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment for Nigerians  
All correspondences to: Director General / Chief Executive Officer*

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**OSUN STATE FIELD OFFICE**

NESREA/OS/84/I/04

Wednesday, 23 May, 2018.

The Curator,  
National Museums & Monuments  
Osun State

Sir,  
**FORWARDING OF REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION OF OSUN GROVE WATER QUALITY**

The above refers.

2. Please find attached herein, report on the investigation of Osun Grove Water Quality conducted by National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Osun State field office, 27 April – 2 May 2018.
3. Thank you.

  
Maikel Shukwunweizu Muhammad.  
State Coordinator, (0817 463 4764; 0705 354 5015)  
FOR: DG/CEO.

**REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION OF OSUN GROVE WATER QUALITY CONDUCTED BY NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (NESREA) OSUN STATE FIELD OFFICE, 27 APRIL – 2 MAY 2018.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

Sequel to the courtesy visit to NESREA Osun by the Head and officers of National Commission for Museums and Monuments (CNMM) Osun Chapter, and fallout from the past CNMM Stakeholders' Meeting which the Agency participated, the need to conduct a scientific analysis to investigate the quality of water of the Osun River within the Osun Sacred Grove, Osogbo was brought to the fore as the 'sacred Grove water' is consumed as "agbo" through drinking, bathing, and several other purposes by Osun devotees, tourists (local and foreign) particularly during the annual Osun-Osogbo Festival associated with the Osun goddess of fertility, celebrated every August. NESREA Osun State Field Office being one of the stakeholders was saddled with the task of analyses of the water. The study was carried out from 27 April to 2 May, 2018.

**1.1 PROJECT SITE (STUDY AREA): OSUN SACRED GROVE**

The Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, a special ecosystem, is a UNESCO's World Heritage Site (listed in 2005) located along the banks of Osun River in Osogbo Local Government of Osun State, South-West Nigeria. It covers an area 75 hectares and is encircled by a buffer zone of 75ha. It is situated on a raised parcel of land which is about 350m above sea level. The grove is an organically evolved cultural and landscape site associated with Yoruba traditional religion and culture with exceptionally rich flora and fauna life. It contains 40 shrines, 2 ancient palaces, various sculptures and artworks, a flora population of 400 species belonging to 63 families (largely found to be of medicinal value) and a broad diversity of small animals, birds, reptiles and associated insects (NCMM, 2010).

**2.0 PROJECT TEAM:**

The investigation involved most senior staff of the Field Office, however, the following officers formed the core of the study team:

- |      |                               |  |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| i.   | Maike, S. Muhammad            | State Coordinator/Team Leader                  |
| ii.  | Nwabuisiakū, Chukwudi E.      | Assist. Chief Engr./Head, Conservation Unit    |
| iii. | Chukwuka, Azubuike A. (Ph.D.) | Principal Scientific Officer (Ecotoxicologist) |
| iv.  | Caleb Taiye                   | Senior Technical Officer/Lab. Technologist     |
| v.   | Nkanta, Isijaan A.            | Scientific Officer I/Analytical Chemist        |

**3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

The primary objectives of the study include:

- i. To investigate the water quality of the River within the grove in order to ascertain its potability and usage; and
- ii. To determine the pollution level (if any) with a view to making useful recommendations for improvement.

**4.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

A hand held multi-meter, Consort C933 Model (PLATE 5) was used for in-situ analyses of the water at various points. Another hand held meter, ExStik EC-Sal-TDS Model (PLATE 4), was also used for confirmatory test.

Data collection through in-situ analysis was conducted at five (5) different points



(secondary water source which channels water into the Osun River) was also considered as a control test. Reading were taken twice on two different days in the morning hours and mean value recorded. Eleven (11) physical and chemical parameters were measured.

#### 4.1 SAMPLING POINTS:

Table 1: Sampling points and geolocation of points

	Sampling Point	Description	Geo-Location	Elevation
-1	Point U1	Upstream 1 (Wéré)	N 07° 45' 28.7" E004° 33' 08.6"	335m
0		Oguba-Groove	N 07° 45' 20.7" E004° 33' 05.1"	311m
1	Point D1	Downstream 1 (Suspended Bridge)	N 07° 45' 15.4" E004° 33' 09.7"	338m
2	Point D2	Downstream 2 (Elewure)	N 07° 45' 00.7" E004° 32' 52.8"	371m
3	Point D3	Downstream 3 (Elewure)	N 07° 45' 02.0" E004° 32' 51.4"	336m



#### 4.2 RESULTS:

##### Physical observations across sampling sites

**Upstream:** This portion of the stream was characterized by a rocky substratum. No anthropogenic activities were observed at this portion of the stream. Water showed high clarity and high transparency.

**Grove shrine:** This portion of the stream was characterized by a muddy substratum. Anthropogenic activities were highly evident at this portion of Osun river. The water was highly turbid and the river bank was strewn with remnant of cooked food offered by worshippers to the river deity. Inquiries from the managers of the grove confirmed that most of these sacrificial elements end up in the water.

**Downstream 1:** It was also characterized by a rocky substratum, and the river bank was strewn with heaps of single use plastic waste (PET bottles, plates, etc. see plate 1).



## ATTACHMENT 2: PAGE 4

**Downstream 2:** this area is characterized by a muddy substratum. Anthropogenic activity includes ritual bathing by either worshippers or farmers.

**Downstream 3:** this area was characterized by rocky substratum. Anthropogenic activity like ritual bathing and defecation were more evident in this area. *stop*

### Physico-chemical properties

From the Oxidation Reduction Potential (ORP) values (table 2), higher values (166.2 mV) were recorded upstream from the Ogubo grove (main grove), while lower values (< 50) were recorded downstream along the stretch of the river. A higher value of ion content was recorded upstream compared to values recorded within the grove and other downstream sites. Extreme values were also recorded at the furthest site downstream.

Conductivity (13.9-164.2  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ), resistivity (6.1-6.6  $\text{k}\Omega/\text{cm}$ ) and total dissolved solids (81.2 – 87.4  $\text{mg}/\text{l}$ ) showed similar range across the stretch of the river sampled. Salinity was consistent across sites, while oxygen showed a higher value (10.8 $\text{mg}/\text{l}$ ) upstream compared to other sites downstream from the grove. Oxygen saturation was highest upstream (220 % $\text{O}_2$ ), showed a significant drop within the groove (91.5), and later showed a progressive rise from D1 to D3 downstream. While pressure (hpa) and temperature were consistent across sites, pH of surface water downstream showed a greater tendency towards acidity compared to surface water at the upstream site.

**Table 2: Physico-chemical properties of water across sites**

Parameter (unit)	U1	Grove	D1	D2	D3	NESREA's Standard *	WHO's Standard
ORP (mV)	166.2	79.9	50.0	93.6	138		
Ion Content (g/l)	96.2	16.5	10.7	12.2	96.2		
Conductivity ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ )	164.2	160.0	158.2	139.9	160.8	1000	
Resistivity ( $\text{k}\Omega/\text{cm}$ )	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.2		
Total Dis. Solid (TDS) $\text{mg}/\text{l}$	87.4	85.1	83.9	81.2	85.4	1200	
Salinity	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		
Oxygen Content ( $\text{mg}/\text{l}$ )	10.8	8.4	8.8	8.9	8.6	>6.0 $\text{mg}/\text{l}$	
Oxygen Saturation (% $\text{O}_2$ )	220.0	91.5	183.5	200.0	207.0		
Gas Pressure (hPa)	973.0	973.5	973.0	973.0	973.0		
pH	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.0	5.7	6.5-8.5	6.5-9.2
Temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	25.1	26.6	25.1	25.1	25.1		

\*Schedule 2: Quality Standards for Domestic Water, (National Environmental (Sanitation and Waste Control) Regulations, 2009)

**DISCUSSION:**

Studies on water quality have demonstrated a direct link between ORP level and Coliform count in water (McEgan et al., 2013). As such ORP level can also be viewed as the level of bacterial activity of the water. In other words, within the groove and the sites downstream are vulnerable to higher coliform counts and could be attributed to input of organic matter from food sacrifices and open defecation.

The higher dissolved ion content recorded upstream compared to the other downstream sites could be attributed to direct or indirect input of effluent from domestic settlements upstream from the groove. The similar values recorded for conductivity, resistivity, and total dissolved solids across the length of the river studied indicate that the river is not under significant pressure from industrial activity. Its significantly lower value compared to the value recommended by NESREA (table 2) supports this fact.

The consistent salinity values across sites indicates that the river is freshwater and does not experience salt water intrusion of any form. The higher saturation of oxygen upstream compared to the downstream sites also gives credence to the fact that the input of organic matter within the groove was impacting the surface water quality.

The stronger acidic values of surface water within the groove and downstream sites compared to the upstream site may be attributed to the adjacent farmlands and loose top soil which easily run-off into the river during the rains, and contribute to humic acid formation within the river, thus lowering the pH.

**5.0 CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the stretch of river Osun within the groove is not significantly impacted and possess chemical and physical properties necessary to support aquatic biodiversity, however, the introduction of organic matter into the river within the groove and downstream may increase coliform count, thus rendering the water unsafe for drinking. Further and more extensive studies are recommended to provide information on suitability for human and ecological risks, if any.

**PICTURESQUE OF IN-SITU WATER SAMPLING AND ANALYSES AT OSUN RIVER WITHIN THE OSUN GROVE BOUNDARY**



PLATE 1: View of plastic pollution at the river bank



PLATE 2: In-situ analyses of river Osun





PLATE 4: Analyses using hand held meter, ExStik EC-Sal-TDS Model for confirmatory purposes.

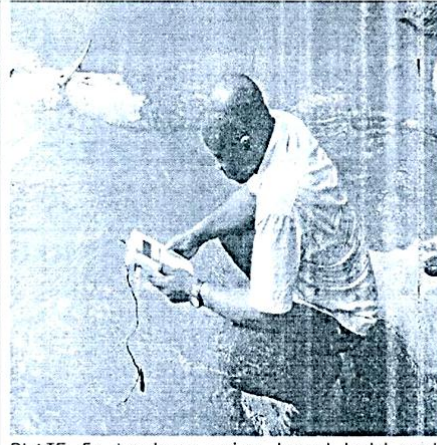


PLATE 5: Analyses using hand held multi-meter, Consort C933 Model.

#### References

- McEgan, R., G. Mootian, L. D. Goodridge, D. W. Schaffner, and M. D. Danyluk. 2013. Predicting *Salmonella* populations from biological, chemical, and physical indicators in Florida surface waters. *Applied and environmental microbiology* 79: 4094-4105.
- National Environmental (Sanitation and Waste Control) Regulations, 2009



*Chief Jimoh Buraimoh*  
*Asoju-Oba of Gbodofofon, Osogbo*

1, Buraimoh Street, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria.  
Tel: 0805 023-2388 or 0806-797-9333 Email: [jibheritage@aol.com](mailto:jibheritage@aol.com) Web: buraimoh.com

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL,  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS,  
ABUJA.

THROUGH:  
The Curator,  
National Museum,  
Osogbo.

**RE OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE NIGERIA C1188**

With reference to your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> April. 2018 on the above subject matter was delivered and understood.

However, as the Festival Coordinator Osun Osogbo International Festival is an annual event that span through the traditional calendar year of which many unseen sacrifices and traditional activities (rites) were being carried out.

All these activities and events require a lot of financial commitment of which the palace is the only source. For this reason. The palace has to practically seek for financial assistance from corporate organizations to be able to finance the Osun Festival.

On your observation relating to over-commercialisation of the festival and support of the festival for the on-going conservation work in the grove. The palace has taken note and plans to increase waste bins and inform all corporate organizations to minimize the number of banners display during festival. Equally any banner found the second day of the festival will be confiscated.

It is note worthy that the festival committee is the brain behind the commissioning and co-ordination of the Artists village which has provided opportunity for training, show casing of cultural and artistic works and promotion of culture in general. This has culminated in capacity building of the youth and empowerment for about 77 local artists from among the community and the devotees.

Moreso, as the finances improve, the palace will see to how to support the on-going conservation work in the grove. But as of now, we have been involved in the monitoring of the on going conservation work so as to ensure that the outstanding universal value is protected and maintained.

Thanks.

  
CHIEF JIMOH BURIMOH  
Asoju-Oba of Gbodofofon,  
Osogbo.



# OFFICE OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

## OSOGBO, STATE OF OSUN, NIGERIA.

Your Ref No.....

All communications should be addressed to the Permanent Secretary, quoting.



Office Address:  
New Secretariat,  
P.M.B. 4497  
Gbongan Road, Osogbo,  
State of Osun, Nigeria.  
Tel:.....

Our Ref No OCT/ADM/639/113

25<sup>th</sup> May, 2018

The Curator/Site Manager,  
National Commission for Museums & Monuments,  
National Museum Ataoja's Palace,  
Osogbo.

### **RE: WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION 41COM 7B.70 ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE**

I wish to refer to your letter Reference No TFT28/C:38/VIII/1113 of 28<sup>TH</sup> March, 2018 and your subsequent visit to the Office and to inform you that Mr. Governor is particularly concerned about the non completion of the Ceremonial Pavilion, Alternate service road and Car park as promised, and has approved the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee comprises of the under-listed: to include

- (i) The Secretary to the State Government;
- (ii) Chief of Staff;
- (iii) The Honourble Commissioner, Ministry of Works and Transport;
- (iv) The Honourble Commissioner, Ministry of Environment;
- (v) The Special Adviser, Culture and Tourism;
- (vi) The Honourble Commissioner, Bureau of Land and Physical Planning; and
- (vii) The General Manager, Tourism Board

2. I wish also to inform you that the Committee met on the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 to deliberate on the issues relating to development of the Osun Osogbo Groove site. The request/recommendation of UNESCO for a refined conservative methodology analysis of the polluted rural water was also considered.

3. I am to inform you that the technical inputs and recommendations of the Committee on the completion of outstanding works are being processed for Government's approval and commencement of work at the Grove site.

4. I thank you.

  
Eng. Clawale O. Ajayi  
Coordinating Director.



**Report to the National Commission for Museums and  
Monuments (NCMM) Stakeholders' Meeting  
October 12/13 2017**

**By  
The Adunni Olorisha Trust**

**1. Introduction**

The Adunni Olorisha Trust (AOT) and the artists of the New Sacred Art Movement have been working together since 2007 restoring the works of art in the Osun Osogbo Grove. This report will cover the areas restored from February 2016 to the present. The work undertaken during this period is part of a comprehensive Restoration/Conservation Program. A summary of the methodology underpinning the restoration/conservation approach is outlined below.

Prior to 2016, the AOT completed the following priority areas: The Obatala Complex (Orisa Aajagemo Shrine and the Alajere Shrine); some of the decorative wall structures and decoration opposite the Obatala Complex; the Chameleon Gate complex; Iya Moopo; the Second Palace (Iledi Ontotoo), the Market Place and the reconstruction of the Arch of the Flying Tortoise.

**2. Approach and Methodology Underpinning the Restoration/Conservation Program**

**1. Survey and Audit of the all Works of Art in the Groves**

Routine visual assessments are conducted and photographic surveys are been taken of all of the works of art in the Groves. These serve two purposes: 1) the photographs serve as a record to guide the restoration of the works of art, and 2) the visual assessments identify restoration and maintenance requirements.

**2. Artistic Integrity**

All restoration must reflect the original quality of the works of art and be consistent with their spiritual intent. This is achieved through the artistic guidance of 1) Priest and artist Sangodare Ajala, the son of Susanne Wenger; 2) Adebisi Akanjii who was the artist who worked most closely with Susanne over more than 40 decades and was responsible for restoring works of art while Susanne was still alive; 3) We draw upon photographic images from publications by Susanne Wenger, Ulli Beier, the AOT and the Susanne Wenger Foundation in Austria.

**3. High Quality Materials and Technical Expertise**

When Susanne Wenger was living, her team used mud (laterite) with only small amount of cement due to cost constraints. When the sculptures fell down, they would be rebuilt. The one exception to this is the sculpture "Soponna" which was made with no laterite—using only reinforced cement. This work of art has lasted for decades

demonstrating that if quality materials are used only maintenance will be required to sustain the art.

All the materials we use are top quality: cement, red oxide, iron rods, netting, granite, large granite stone, plaster sand, solignum etc. Either minimal or no laterite is used, instead we use high concentrations of cement.

NOTE: Julius Berger's material experts have inspected the technical workmanship and materials. According to these industry experts who work in cement, the team's workmanship is excellent. Their advice is to continue with our current methods and materials. They did not recommend using chemical compounds which would be both extremely expensive and not in keeping with the protection of the natural environment. They do not recommend removing moss. They do recommend regular patching of the works of art as required.

#### **4. Drainage**

Water penetration and erosion are the main reasons for the deterioration of the works of art, especially of the decorative walls. Extensive excavation, trenching, drainage and foundation systems are built into every restoration.

#### **5. Damage from Tree Roots**

Great care is taken not to disturb the forest while at the same time ensuring that root systems do not penetrate the works of art.

#### **6. Recruitment and Deployment of Resources**

A key objective of the Restoration/Conservation Program since 2016 has been the development of new, skilled, talented people who are capable of restoring and maintaining the works of art. The team was expanded and is now composed of 17 people including 8 apprentices. In selecting the works of art to be restored in 2016/2017 we chose areas that were both in high need of restoration and which would provide a good training ground for the new apprentices. The experienced artists, Adebisi Akanjii, Nurudeen Akanjii and Odeyemi Oseni assume responsibility for the most artistically and technically complex restoration work. They also train and guide the Apprentices.

The Apprentice Program began in May 2016. Over the past eighteen months the development of the skills of the team have been tremendous thanks to the keen determination of the Apprentices to learn and do the best work possible, their talent and the excellent supervision by Sangodare Ajala and the senior artists.



The members of the team are:

- 1) Sangodare Ajala: Artist and Project Manager
- 2) Toyin Ajayi; Administrator

Artists and Apprentices:

- 3) Adebisi Akanji
- 4) Adeyemi Oseni
- 5) Adebisi Akanji
- 6) Raimi Taofeek
- 7) Afada Musibau
- 8) Ojewale Tunrayo
- 9) Ajayi Adeyemi
- 10) Oguntoye Lekan
- 11) Wasiu Oyebanji
- 12) Adebisi Toheeb
- 13) Lamidi Bintu
- 14) Ladunni Keshinro
- 15) Abimbola Kehinde

In addition Traditional Carpenters, Lamidi Fatai and Ajanaku Olatunji have been hired on an "as needed" basis to complete roofing work and to build scaffolding.

#### **7. Restoration of Works of Art**

The following works of art have been restored from February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 to the present:

- 1) Rebuilt 6 Alajere sculptures in the area around and behind the Obatala Complex  
These unique sculptures depicting traditional elements of the Alajere mythology had deteriorated so seriously that they had to be completely rebuilt.
- 2) Restoration of 4 major sculptures within the Obatala Complex;
- 3) Restoration of 4 major sculptures on the rear pathway: Obatala, the Two Pythons, Alajere dancing for Osun and Alajere Jumping Over the Cliff;
- 4) Restoration and rebuild of all of the decorative walls and archway leading to the Osun Shrine, around the Olomoyoyo sculpture and beyond the entry to the Osun Shrine towards the suspension bridge. This involved excavating and creating drainage trenches, stone foundations in addition to the construction of the stone and cement walls. The walls are then plastered and moulded, followed by the addition of decorative sculptural elements using metal rods, chicken netting, etc. They are then replastered with cement and finished with red oxide plus additional decorative elements (e.g. cowry shells, pebbles). Where required, iron rods are used to reinforce the foundations.
- 5) Restoration of the Olomoyoyo Sculpture and its surrounding walls;
- 6) Restoration of the decorative arches leading to the Ifa Grove including the freestanding sculptures in front of the Archway;
- 7) Rebuilt the decorative wall structures along the roadside leading to the entry to the Groves. This is approximately 300 meters in length. The walls required major structural work to control the extensive soil erosion in the cliff area beneath the

Obatala Complex. As we can see from archival photos, over the decades the distance between the roadbed and the top of hill where the Obatala Complex is located has increased from a few meters to over 20 meters. This developed as a result of the excavation work on the road bed over more than a 40 year period. An ingenious solution was achieved which both protects the hillside from further erosion and provides a walkway for the traditionalists.

- 8) Restoration of the Arugba Entrance and its adjoining walls. This involved an extensive rebuild plus replacement of the roof and its traditional inside covering.

#### **8. Ongoing Conservation and Maintenance**

Over the long term the works of art will need to be patched and repaired from time to time. We are in the process of doing our 2017 audit of the works of art in the Grove, identifying the works that require repair and will undertake the necessary conservation work once the current wall projects have been completed.

#### **Thank you for Your Support**

The Adunni Olorisha Trust and the artists and apprentices of the New Sacred Art Movement thank all stakeholders involved in this important work and in particular Mr. Makinde, NCMC Curator Osogbo.

It has been difficult to raise the funds to keep the team working but the AOT is committed to continuing this work.

I apologize that I am not able to give this report in person and look forward to the report back from this meeting.

**Robin and Hugh Campbell**

**On behalf of the Adunni Olorisha Trust**

**RE-STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT ON OSUN OSOGBO SACRED GROVE:-**  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE OSUN OSOGBO FESTIVAL**

Osun Osogbo festival is regarded as important Socio-cultural means of supplication to the Supreme Being through his intermediaries. The month of August every year has become unique month among the people of *Osogboland*. It is the month of Celebration, traditional cleansing of the city and cultural reunion of the people with their great ancestors and founders of the *Osogbo* kingdom. It is also the period of stocktaking and assemblage of all sons and daughters of *Osogboland* and most especially Yoruba speaking people both in Nigeria and Diaspora. According to historical tradition, the festival can be described as an account of the legendary encounter between the early settlers/founders of Osogbo led by *Gbadewolu Laroye* with the *Osun Osogbo* deity.

The festival has a two week Programme of events starting with the traditional cleansing of the town called *Iwopopo* followed by the lightening of about 641 years old 16 point lamps, called *Olojumerindilogun*. This is followed by *Iboriade* which is the assemblage of all the crowns of past rulers (*Ataojas*), for blessing's. However, the festival is generally known by its grand finale which attracts the general public with participants from all over Yorubaland. The *Ataoja* in company with his wives receives salutations from his High Chiefs while other cultural processions including, the processions of traditional devotees and ritualists and the grand appearance of the *Orugbo Osun*, the Virgin Votary Maid.

The 2018 edition of the festival witnessed a massive turn out as usual but very low patronage from sponsors due to economic downturn in the country so there was very limited commercial activities compared to previous years. In cognizance to the concerns raised by the monitoring mission, the festival committee took steps to ameliorate the adverse effects of the conduct of the festival on the grove.

The festival committee limited the indiscriminate placement of posters and banners and erection of billboards until the last day to the grand finale and was removed same day after the festival as the general cleanup exercise was embarked immediately after the grand finale.

The festival committee also engaged two hundred and fifty youths as crowd control marshals to guide the traffic of visitors and tourist to strictly flow through the designated entry and exit routes so that the chaos normally experienced during the festival was drastically minimized.



There was also a provision of ten mobile toilets to replace old ones that suffered termite attacks. They were strategically placed for the convenience of the visitor, throughout the public event spaces of within the grove.

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