OLA LASISI

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Positions

- Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, The Ohio State University, 2024-2026.
- 2023-2024: Mellon Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Architectural History, School of Architecture, University of Virginia.
- 2022-2024: Fellow, Spatial Archaeology Residential and Online Institute, University of Arkansas.
- 2021-2022: Junior Fellow, Garden and Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University.

Education

- Ph.D., Anthropology (Historical Archaeology),
  William & Mary, Virginia, USA (May 2023)
  Distinguished Dissertation Award "*Landscapes of Power: A Historical Archaeology and Cultural Astronomy of Ijebu-Yoruba Palatial Urbanscapes, AD1000-1900"*

- M.A., Anthropology (Historical Archaeology)
  William & Mary, Virginia, USA (April 2018)
  With Distinctions

- B.Sc., Archaeology & Anthropology
  University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
  Best Graduating Student

Research Interests

- Archaeology of Rituals, Fortifications, and Sacred Groves
- Archaeology of Africa and the African Diaspora
- Historical Archaeology of the Black Atlantic
- Indigenous Hermeneutics and Symbolism
- Archaeology of Complex Societies
- Architecture of the Sacred
- Body, Power, and Landscape
- Ancient Cartography
- Ancient Civilizations
- Archaeoastronomy
- Ethnoastronomy

Publications

Books and Collaborative Projects

- Yoruba Archaeoastronomy (Olanrewaju Lasisi), University Press of Colorado. Published.
- Architecture of Ritual Movement: Reimagining Architecture through Ritual Movement (Olanrewaju Lasisi), Harvard University Press. Published.
- Archaeoastronomy and History (John Henderson, Olanrewaju Lasisi, & Steven Gullberg), Springer Nature. Collaborative project.

Articles Published and Forthcoming

- On the Architecture of Ritual Movement and the Cartosemiosis of Yoruba Potsherd Pavements. In *Art and Architecture of Mapping*, Eds. Emily Mann & Stephen Whiteman., University of Chicago Press. (Forthcoming, 2024)
- Architecture, Ritual, and Astronomy in the Making and Unmaking of the Ijebu. In *Afrique* (2023)
- Corporal Evidence of Northern Enslavement throughout the 18th Century and its Tested Theory (Co-author with Michael Blakey, Christopher Crain, Warren Perry, Jean Howson, Rankin-Hill, and Edna Medford) in *American Antiquity*. (2023)
- Archaeology Comes of Age: On the Annals of World Archaeology and the Reimaginations of Nigerian Archaeology. In *Routledge Handbook of Nigerian History* EDS, Saheed Aderinto (2024)
- Archaeology of the Kingdom of Benin. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Forthcoming, 2024)
- The Making of the Ijebu Cultural Landscape through Ritual-spatial Practices. In Landscapes in the Making, eds. Stephen Daniels and Dell Upton. Dumbarton Oaks, 2025.

- A Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Ijebu-Ode Royal Palace Complex (Nigeria). International Journal of African Historical Studies, 54(1), 2021
- Promoting the Nigerian Museums: a case for Ijebu "National" Museum and others. Academia Letters, Article 699. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL699, 2021
- Akinwumi Ogundiran: The Yoruba: A New History. African Archaeology Review 38, 383–385 https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1007/s10437-021-09436-8, 2021
- Crisis and Transformation in 'Bight of Benin' at the Dawn of the Atlantic Trade. In *Power, Political Economy, and Historical Landscapes of the Modern World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 285 (Co-author with Gerard Chouin, Ph.D), 2019
- History of Archaeological Research in the Yoruba-Edo Region of Nigeria: New Directions for Urban Earthworks. *West African Journal of Archaeology,* Vol 47, 2019
- New Lights on the Archaeology of Sungbo Eredo. *Dig it, Journal of Flinders Archaeological Society*, 3:54-63 (Co-author with David Aremu, Ph.D.), 2016

Selected Grants, Honors, and Awards

- UVA Global Program of Distinction ($100,000), 2024
- Field Discovery Award, 2023 (Declined)
- Wenner-Gren Post-PhD Research Grant ($24,915), 2023
- Distinguished Dissertation Award, 2023 ($1500)
- GSAB Award for Excellence in Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences ($1000), 2023
- Winner, 3-Minute Thesis Competition, William & Mary, 2023
- People's Choice Award, 3-Minutes Thesis Competition, William & Mary, 2023
- Halleran Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Declined ($25,000), 2022
- Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship, American Council of Learned Societies/ Mellon Foundation ($43,000), 2022
- National Endowment for the Humanities and Spatial Archaeology Residential and Online Institute Fellowship ($13,000), 2022
- Junior Research Fellowship, Garden & Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University ($21,000), 2021
- U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (With Gerard Chouin & Neil Norman) ($12,000), 2021
- Wenner-Gren Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant ($19,960), 2020
- Dean's Research Grant ($2000), 2020
- Exploration & Field Research Grant, Explorers Club Washington Group ($3,000), 2019
- Hixon Family Award ($1500), 2018
- Society for Africanist Archaeologists Travel Grant, 2018
- ASA-Royal Air Maroc Research Travel Grant ($4,000), 2017
- William & Mary Honorable Mention for Excellence in Research and Scholarship, 2017
- Graduate Recruitment Award ($8,000), 2016
- Nwanna Nzewunna Prize for the Best Graduating Student, 2015
- Departmental Prize for the Best Graduating Student in Archaeology and Anthropology, 2015
- Liman Ciroma Award for Best Archaeology Student, 2015
- Bassey Andah Scholarship, 2012
- Dean's Role of Honor, 2011
- Class Encyclopedia Award, 2011

Teaching

- ARH 5500/8500: Cities of the Sky
- HIST717-02 Atlantic West Africa (14th -19th century)
- ANTH460, Independent Research-Ijebu Archaeology
- ANTH225, Archaeological Field Methods
- ANTH202, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- ANTH200, Contemporary Problems in Anthropology
- ANTH371, Idea of Race
- ANTH323, Indians of North America

Recent Speaking Events

Invited Guest Speaker

- 2023: Yoruba Hermeneutics and the Paradigm shift in African Archaeology. Department of Anthropology Colloquium Series, **Cornell University**, Ithaca.
- 2023: On the Architecture of Ritual Movement and the Cartosemiotic Properties of Potsherd Pavement. The Courtauld Institute, **University of London**, June 20 – June 21, 2023
- 2023: "On the Hermeneutics of Yoruba Material Culture: Towards a new direction in West African Archaeology." Department of Anthropology, **The Ohio State University**, January 31, 2023
- 2023: "Mnemonic by Design: On the Ontology of Stanley Milburn's 'Household Altar' and its Implication for the Cosmographic Interpretation of Yoruba Potsherd Pavements." Department of Art History, **George Washington University,** February 9, 2023

- 2022: "Mnemonic by Design: Interpreting the cosmographic functions of Yoruba Potsherd Pavements." Department of History of Art, **The Ohio State University**, December 9th, 2022
- 2022: "Aroya Odu and the Yoruba's Representation of Heaven on Earth." (Re)thinking Landscape: Ways of Knowing / Ways of Being, a conference organized by the Yale Environmental Humanities, **Yale University**, October 1st, 2022
- 2022: "Seen in the Sky, Marked on the Ground: Interpreting the Materiality of Ancient Yoruba Cosmogony." Global Studies Program, Department of History, **Carnegie Mellon University**, October 5th, 2022
- 2022: "Aroko Symbolic Communication Message of the Yoruba." **African History Club**, February 27th, 2022
- 2022: "Common Space, Different Places: Interpreting the Dynamics and Fluidity of Ijebu Palatial Urbanscapes." A Symposium organized by the Garden and Landscape Studies program, Dumbarton Oaks, and the Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies, **Dumbarton Oaks**, **Harvard University**, May 6th-May 7th, 2022.

Conferences

- 2023: Archaeology and Indigenous Hermeneutics: Interpreting the Multiplex Functions of Pavements. 26th Biennial Meeting of the Society for Africanist Archaeologists, June 1 - 6.
- 2023: "Indigenous Hermeneutics and the Contribution of Africa to Skyscape Archaeology." 88th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Portland, Oregon, March 29-April 2, 2023
- 2023: "Written in Sherds, Carved by Pavements: Interpreting the Multiplex Functions of Pavements." GHRS, William & Mary, March 31, 2023
- 2023: "Travel accounts relating to the cultural astronomy of the Yoruba." Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Philadelphia, January 5-8, 2023
- 2022: "Doing Research in Nigeria: Reflections on Archaeological Fieldwork." 6th Annual Lagos Studies Association Conference, June 21st-June 25th, 2022
- 2022: "Written in Sherds, Carved by Pavements: The Semiosis and Practice of Ancient Yoruba Cartography." 6th Annual Lagos Studies Association Conference, June 21st-June 25th, 2022
- 2022: "Landscapes of Power: Architecture, Ritual, and Astronomy." A Research Report presented at Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University, April 11th, 2022
- 2021: "Author Meets Critics: Discussing Akinwumi Ogundiran's The Yoruba." 64th Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, November 16th-20th, 2021
- 2021: "Political and Religious Landscapes of Conversion: Movements and Ritual Dramas among the Ijebus' of Southwestern Nigeria." Annual Conference of Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory, November 20th, 2021
- 2021: "Archaeology and Indigenous Hermeneutics: The Use of Toponyms and Performance Genre in Contextualizing Material Culture." 64th Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, November 16th-20th, 2021
- 2021: "Ijebu Cultural Astronomy: New Lights on the Architecture of Ritual on the Landscape of Valor." 5th Lagos Studies Association Conference, June 22-26, 2021
- 2021: "Our Ancestors were Astronomers and Skywatchers": Exploring New Evidence for Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy in Nigerian Archaeology. Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Ibadan at 59, September 21-23, 2021
- 2020: "Lines that Divide: Power and Landscape in the Ijebu Kingdom, AD1300–1900." Ijebu-Ode Local Government Historical Forum, December 8th, 2020
- 2019: "Landscapes of Valor: Investigating Power and Social Space of a pre-Atlantic aged kingdom in the shaping of the Global commercial circuit, AD 1300-1900." Garden and Landscape Studies Workshop, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University
- 2019: "The Corporal remains of Northern enslavement and its challenges." 10th Biennial Conference of the Association for the Study of Worldwide African Diaspora (with Michael Blakey and Jessica Bitner)
- 2018: "Preliminary Observations on the Defensive Walls of Ijebu Ode." 24th Biannual Meeting of the Society for Africanist Archaeologists. Building Bridges to the African Past, June 17-22, 2018, Toronto, Canada
- 2018: "An Archaeological Approach to Dating Polities and Architectural Ingenuity in Ijebu, South-Western Nigeria." Conference of the World Academy of Science, Engineering, and Technology, January 20th, 2018
- 2018: "Archaeology of Sungbo's Eredo." A Colloquium organized by the French Institute for Research in Africa, Institute of African Studies
- 2017: "A Stratigraphic look at the History of Ile-Ife: Perspectives from Recent Investigations at Yemoo Grove." Graduate Research Symposium, College of William and Mary, March 18th, 2017
- 2017: "Locating and Dating the Rise of Kinship in Ijebu, South-Western Nigeria." 60th Annual Conference of African Studies Association, November 16th-November 18th, 2017 (with Gerard Chouin)

- 2016: "A Stratigraphic look at the History of Medieval Ile-Ife: Perspectives from Recent Investigations at Yemoo Grove." 59th Annual Conference of African Studies Association, December 1st-December 3rd, 2016, Washington, DC

Service as a Peer-Reviewer

- Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology
- International Journal of Archaeology
- National Geography

Membership in Professional Organizations

- Australian Astronomy Association
- International Astronomy Union
- African Studies Association
- Society for American Archaeology
- American Historical Association
- Society for Africanist Archaeologists
- Associations for the Studies of the Worldwide African Diaspora
- World Archaeology Congress
- Archaeological Association of Nigeria

Recent Journal Articles (2025)

Lasisi, Olanrewaju. 2025. The History and Archaeology of the Kingdom of Benin. Annals of Archaeology 7(1): 28-34. DOI: 10.22259/2639-3662.0701004.

Lasisi, Olanrewaju, and Christina Jorden. 2025. Power of Tussles and the Tussle of Powers: Ritual Drama, Political Cosmology, and Spatial Authority in Ijebu Festivals. African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research 8(3): 15-26. DOI: 10.52589/AJSSHR-K52ISPWN.

Lasisi, Olanrewaju, and Robin Garcia. 2025. Ceramics of Power and Identity: The Ìjèbú Palace Assemblage in the Context of Yoruba Regional Networks. Lakhomi Journal: Scientific Journal of Culture 6(2): 141-154. DOI: 10.33258/lakhomi.v6i2.1332.

Teaching Materials Available Online

Introduction to Archaeology

Anthropology and Human Diversity: Lessons from the Past

Cities of the Sky (Spring 2024)

Indians of North America (Fall 2017)

The Idea of Race (Fall 2018)

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Fall 2019)

Contemporary Problems in Anthropological Perspective (Spring 2019; teaching assistant syllabus)

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