

Imprints of Human Past on Mangila and Getuwa Sites, Miya, Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Essentially, the clue to the present largely relies on our understanding of the past. The light we seek in the present can only be accessed through a critical study, understanding, and documentation of remains of human workmanship surviving from the past. In light of this, this article presents an archaeological investigation of Mangila and Getuwa hilltop settlements situated in the present-day Miya, Bauchi State. Miya is known for its unique West Chadic language and a tradition of mass circumcision, but very little is known about its archaeology. This research adopts a historical archaeology framework, which involves using oral tradition and written records to study and document the imprints of past human activities on Mangila and Getuwa sites. This research has therefore contributed to what is known about the culture history of southern Bauchi and Bauchi people in general through a thorough survey and documentation of archaeological remains on both Mangila and Getuwa sites. It has also been able to document the rich tradition of the mass circumcision of boys among the Miya people.

Keywords: *Human past; Archaeological investigation; Hilltop settlements; Miya; Bauchi State.*

Introduction

Miya town is located in the vicinage of the Late Stone Age site of Kariya Wuro. It presents a people who, despite influences of foreign religions and contacts with other cultural groups, have preserved their traditional religious practices (Schuh, 1998). Yet, its early mention in literature was rather brief and uninformative (Temple, 1922; Schuh, 1998). Abubakar (1974), while discussing the Chadic-speaking people of the Ningi group, stated that there is only very meager information in available records of the earlier traditions of the Miya people. The archaeology of Miya has not been explored within the context of sites in the region, such as in Yankari (Aremu, 1999), Kariya Wuro (Allsworth-Jones, 2015) 6km northwest of Miya, Shira (Giade, 2011; 2016) north of the study area, and Kirfi (Sule, 2013) to the east, which have been studied. Early research in Miya

was on the Miya language by Schuh (1998), who stated that the collection of historical and cultural texts is not systematic research into Miya history and culture. These include written and subsequently voice recordings, about the oral traditions and aspects of people's culture, especially their festivals and accompanying ritual practices.

The Miya area has not been explored in terms of its archaeology. Very few documents that might inform the history and culture of Miya are available, limited either to recent history, such as the rise of the Bauchi Emirate, or documents of colonial administrators. The few available works in Miya are field research on Linguistics, such as Schuh (1998), and missionary activities such as the Joshua Project (2021). Archaeological researches derived from the area (Aremu, 1999; Allsworth-Jones, 2015; Giade, 2011; 2016; Sule, 2013) are limited in scope. This, coupled with the relative paucity of written sources on Miya, creates a lack of synergy in understanding its history. This research, therefore, attempted to study and document the Mangila and Getuwa sites as an effort to contribute to archaeological knowledge of the area.

Geographical and Historical Background

Mangila and Getuwa hills are located between Latitude $10^{\circ}53'30'' - 10^{\circ}53'48''$ N and Longitude $009^{\circ}48'00'' - 009^{\circ}50'00''$ E in Miya, Ganjuwa Local Government Area, Bauchi State, Nigeria (See Fig. 1). Miya is bordered by Warji to the North, Zara to the East, Kafin Madaki to the South, and Kariya to the West (See Fig. 1).

According to Abubakar's (1974) geographical division of the vast Bauchi region, Miya falls under the Ningi plateau, within Burra and Warji hills, with hills marked by steep cliffs around which most of the villages were situated in the 19th Century. The hilly environment might have been the obvious attraction to the inhabitants, as defense was pivotal in informing preference for settlement (Smith, 1972; Usman, 1981; Abubakar, 1974; Schuh, 1998). Environmental data is drawn from areas with similar geographical conditions in Bauchi and Northern Nigeria at large, as there are no specific climate records for the area.

The study area has semi-desert vegetation comprising short grasses and thorny shrubs. *Adansonia digitata* (Baobab), *Azadiracta indica* (Neem) and *Parkia biglabosa* (Locust Bean) are the most common trees found growing in the area. Large trees of *Hyphaenethebaica* (Doom Palm) are also frequent on the hills (Temple, 1922). Plant uses range from food, medicine, feed, to wood fuel. Some plants have multiple uses. The fruits of the doom palm, for instance, are eaten

while the stems were used for building as it is not susceptible to ant attacks (Temple, 1922). Much of the natural vegetation has been tampered with due to agricultural practices and habitation.

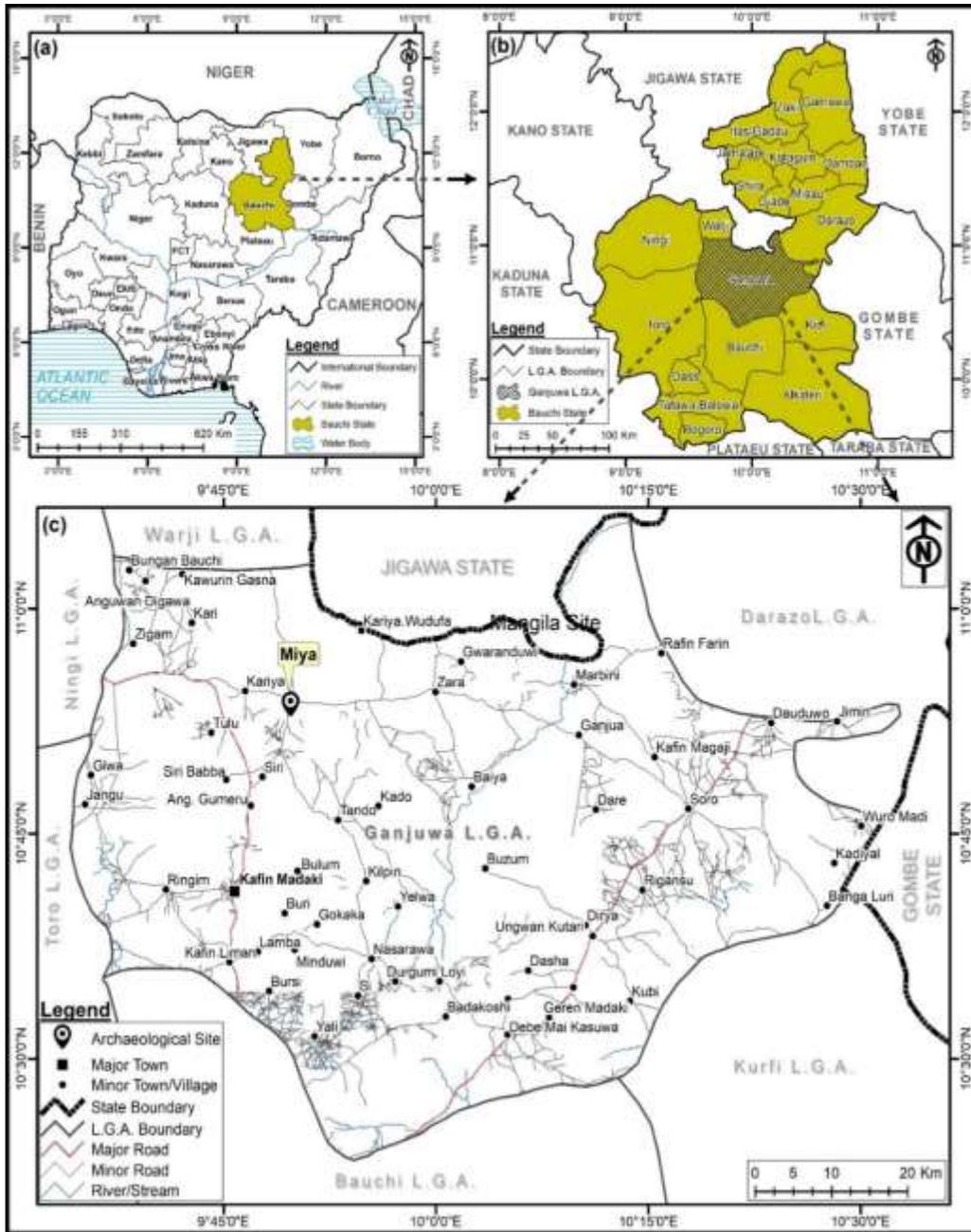


Fig. 1: (a) Map of Nigeria indicating Bauchi State; (b) Map of Bauchi State indicating Ganjuwa LGA; (c) Map of Miya area in Ganjuwa LGA

Source: Wulga, (2021)

Except for recent archaeological researches, ethnological studies of certain groups and unpublished accounts of colonial administrators, the history of Miya people is meager (Temple, 1922; Abubakar, 1974). The history of early inhabitants of the area exists largely in oral traditions. The challenge with colonial records is that it is history recorded from the perception of the ‘stranger’, sometimes not reflecting indigenous aspects. Oral tradition is not without its limitations; however, this does not render both sources irrelevant. The research explores oral traditions and available written sources to complement each other.

Most groups in the Gongola Basin, whose tributaries drain the study area, have oral traditions that seek to explain their origin through migration into the area. These traditions sometimes provide reasons, routes and intergroup interactions. The reliability of such traditions is mostly debated, as traditions of origin mostly claim origin either from the south (such as the Jukun) or, in this context, the ‘Eastern origin syndrome’, tracing descent from the Middle East through Lake Chad and Kanem Bornu. While this is probable for many settlements in Yobe and Bauchi, caution needs to be exercised as people always trace origins to more prominent political establishments or influence. Thus, it is better to focus on the migration process and cultural interaction resulting from them.

According to oral tradition, Mangila and Getuwa hills were first inhabited by Mangila and Getuwa, two migrants from the Chad area who moved to Gazargamo, and while fleeing incursions of Sokoto jihadists, moved to Fika in present-day Yobe State to join other traditional worshippers. Finally, they arrived at Miya individually, where they settled on the hilltops. Both Mangila and Getuwa were unaware of each other’s presence in Miya until they eventually crossed paths while roaming the hills. They united on finding they both were from the same place and agreed to appoint a leader between them based on the first to arrive in the area, which was based on their refuse middens. The man who first settled Mangila did not dispose-off his refuse properly so it was assumed that the one at Getuwa was the earliest to arrive and thus, became the leader. Archaeologically, Mangila appears to be the oldest and most settled of the two hills. They have, since then, lived and carried out their cultural activities as a single entity. Getuwa continued to rule until the influence of the jihadists around 1804 interfered (Gilde and Maikala Pers. Com., 2020). Today, the people are dispersed around the hills and other parts of Miya. It is not clear when, but descent from the hilltops began due to population increase, as arable lands and resources could no longer sustain

them. It is suggested by Abubakar (1974) that the physical features of the region may impose limits to the size of settlement, intensifying competition for land and political power, although the latter is not captured in the traditions.

The Afawa, however, were said to have been driven into the Ningi hills from pressure from Bauchi, making their headquarters in the infertile land of Ari, in the vicinity of Mangila and Getuwa. Mangila and Getuwa may have been offshoots of the Afawa with whom they exhibit cultural affinity. Mangila and Getuwa may have been clans who lived independently and came together only during rituals, festivals, or other social interactions such as marriage and exchange of commodities. The tradition, like others from the area, is significant in indicating not just migration but possible routes and the nature of cultural contacts binding groups. The founder–leader tradition may also be regarded as a genealogical expression of sociopolitical organization. It also reflects cultural influence on the environment, indicated by the idea of middens as a yardstick for selecting a leader.

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

The research adopted both archaeological and historical methods for the identification, collection, and documentation of archaeological data. The archaeological method focused on survey, which affords the researchers the ability to traverse the sites for the identification and mapping of the spatial distribution of material cultures on the landscape of the sites. While the historical methods include: the collection of oral tradition through structured and unstructured interviews of different categories of informants (teenagers, young adults, adults, and aged people). These methods helped in the understanding and documentation of the tradition of origin, festivals, marriage practices, and other traditional practices of the people. The paper adopted historical archaeology as a concept for interpretation. Historical archaeology, which involves the collection and use of oral tradition, written documents, and archaeological data, has helped greatly in the aspect of drawing inferences and interpretation of material evidence retrieved from the Ohura Plain Site. Lastly, relevant literatures regarding the history and culture of the people were reviewed to aid in putting the research in perspective.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork exercise was carried out between 15th -18th November, 2017. The survey employed the services of four field guides, including a staff of the National

Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), Bauchi, and local guides with knowledge of the sites, and whose efforts helped in the identification of features on the site. These sites are situated on the tops of Getuwa and Mangila inselbergs, respectively, and are about 200m apart within present-day Miya. They are located between Latitude $10^{\circ}53'30'' - 10^{\circ}53'48''$ N and Longitude $009^{\circ}48'00'' - 009^{\circ}50'00''$ E. The extents of the sites are defined by the remains of the defensive walls, where, in some parts are only traces. This research adopted an archaeological survey that involved traversing the site on foot and walking across the landscape, making an inventory of features while avoiding features or obstacles, the rocky terrain, and the natural extent of the hills. This exercise was also helpful in measuring dimensions as well as collecting finds for classification and analysis. Measurements were taken using measuring tapes (5m and 50m), ranging pole and for photographic scale were used to determine the height of features and for photographic documentation, while *Garmin Etrex 76* Global Positioning System (GPS) was used to determine the positions of finds and features on the site (Price 2007; Renfrew and Bahn 2012).

Archaeological evidence includes defensive walls, circular and rectangular stone foundations, ruins of a shrine, a courtyard, rock hollows, lower grinding stones, granary foundations, and potsherds. A total of 222 potsherds were collected from the four cardinal points of both sites for analysis.

Archaeological Remains from Mangila and Getuwa Sites

Finds

Potsherds

The broken pieces of vessels, which must have been used by past inhabitants on the hills, were seen scattered all over the surface of the site. They were found in different proportions at different parts of the sites. Many of the sherds have varied and elaborate decorations. As the researcher moved around the surface of the site, samples were hand-picked from four regions of the two sites as representative samples for analysis and they were collected in a polythene bag. A total number of 222 potsherds were collected, which serve as data for visual and thin section analysis, and a platform on which interpretation was made. The concentration of the potsherds was found compacted in the form of potsherd pavement.



Plate I: Concentration of Potsherds

Lower Grinding Stone (Plate II)

A lower grinding stone was identified in the Mangala site within Latitude 10°53'44.2"N and Longitude 009° 49' 59.3"E, with a length of 0.76m and a width of 0.55m. It has a deep concave surface, which could have resulted from prolonged grinding. The grinding stone was made from granite, which is easily obtained from the area. The diameter of the grinding stone is 10 cm.



Plate II: Lower Grinding Stone Features

Relics of Defensive Walls (Plate III)

The unit of study is the defensive wall built with broken rocks cemented with mud. These are stone arrangements with an irregular shape that run around, enclosing cultural materials within them on the hills. The defensive wall is identified on both Mangila and Getuwa. These stone walls indicate a defensive structure for the past inhabitants against enemies. Parts of the walls have been eroded. Waypoints designated A, B, C, etc., were indicated by GPS along visible parts of the defensive walls or their traces to determine the extent of the sites.



Plate III: Relics of Defensive Wall

Relics of House Foundations (Plate IV & V)

These are the most prominent features identified within the defensive walls. These are stone foundations upon which building structures for shelter were erected in the past. There are two categories of house foundations on the Getuwa site: circular and rectangular-shaped foundations, while only circular foundations are found on the Mangila site. The foundations are dispersed on different parts of both sites, but are located close to each other. 13 house foundations were identified on Getuwa; 7 circular and 6 rectangular foundations. On Mangila, only 3 circular foundations were identified, one of which is of a ruin of a building. The diameters of these house foundations range between 6.5 – 10m



Plate IV: Relics of the Circular House Foundation



Plate V: Relics of Rectangular House Foundation

Relics of the Shrine (Plate VI)

Within a rock enclosure on Getuwa hill, an inverted complete pot and a broken one are identified in what is said to be a shrine. The pots and two boulders at the entrance of the shrine are smeared with a red substance suggested to be the blood of sacrificial animals. A remnant of twine from a masquerade costume is seen on the floor of the shrine. Soil in the shrine is dark grey. Coordinates of the shrine are Latitude $10^{\circ} 53' 35.8''$ N and Longitude $009^{\circ} 49' 56.9''$ E. It has a diameter of 6.8m. The nature of the pots suggests that they are more recent, attesting to the tradition still being in practice (Saaje, 2019, Pers. Com).



Plate VI: Getuwa Shrine

Relics of the Circumcision House (Plate VII)

These are relics of circular house foundations said to house teenage boys to heal after the mass circumcision ritual, where they are taught about adulthood and the secret of the clan. Five of these have been identified at Mangila and three at the Getuwa sites. Their diameters range between 5.6 – 9m. It is said that the circumcision healing houses are built every four years, as the ritual is still in practice.



Plate VII: Relics of the Circumcision House

Relics of the Courtyard (Plate VIII)

Relics of the courtyard have been identified at the southern border of the Getuwa hill site, on Latitude $10^{\circ} 53' 35.6''N$ and Longitude $009^{\circ} 49'56.8'' E$ with a

diameter of 4.6m. This is in close association with two relics of circumcision houses and the shrine.



Plate VIII: Relics of the Courtyard

Relics Granary Foundations (Plate IX)

Granary foundations are circular arrangements of broken stones that were used as foundations for building granaries – storage structures. These are used for storing surplus food to compensate for dry season when extensive farming is not practiced. Three granary foundations were identified in Mangila with a diameter range from 2.1 – 1.8m.



Plate IX: Granary Foundation

Rock Shelter (Plate X)

This is a natural enclosure of rock boulders with two openings by the sides which grant access into the shelter. It has a diameter of 2m and a height of 2m. This was said to have been used as a hideout in the past.



Plate X: Rock Shelter

Rock Hollows (Plate XI)

On the surface of a rock outcrop very close to the house foundations, clusters of rock hollows were identified. Two categories of rock hollows were identified: circular ones with rough curvature and oval hollows with smooth curvature, designated A and B, respectively. Two single and one cluster of hollows were recorded on Getuwa. Five single and two clusters of rock hollows were recorded at Mangila, some as large as 11m wide and 5m deep. This is said to have been used in the past to brew a local drink. The rock hollows appear to be naturally occurring but have been transformed due to activities such as grinding.



Plate XI: Rock Hollows

Summary of finds and features.

S/N	FEATURES	QUANTITY
1.	Relics of Defensive Wall	1
2.	Relics of Circumcision healing house	5
3.	Lower Grinding Stone	1
4.	Relics of House foundations	3

Table 1: Catalog of Archaeological Remains on Mangila

Summary of Finds at Mangila.

S/N	FEATURES	120 QUANTITY
1.	Relics of Defensive Wall	1
2.	Relics of Shrine	1
3.	Relics of Circumcision healing house	2
4.	Relics of Courtyard	1
5.	Relics of House foundations	13

Table 2: Catalog of Archaeological Remains on Getuwa

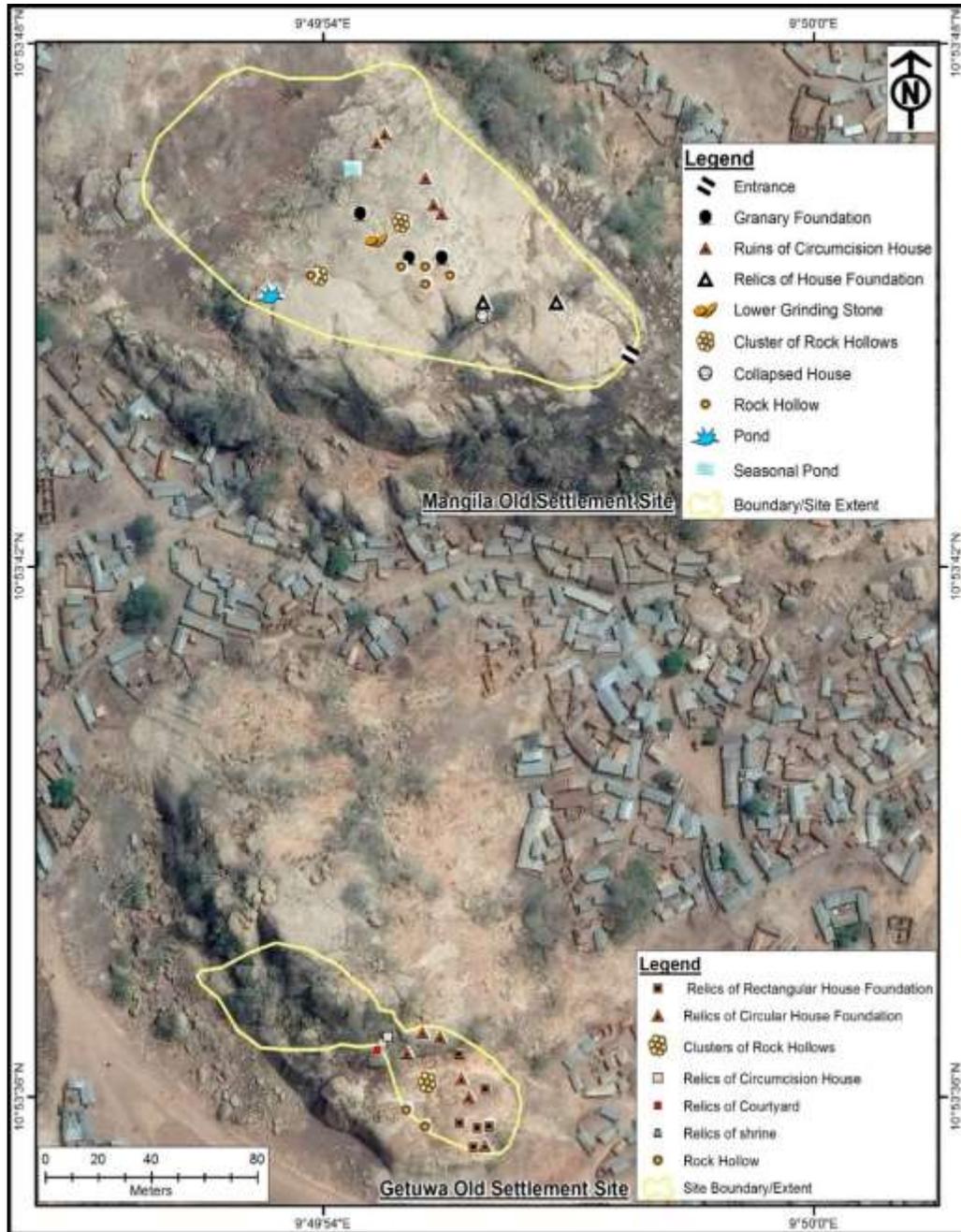


Fig. 2: Site map of Mangila and Getuwa
Source: Sulaiman and Wulga 2021

Discussion and Conclusion

A number of past and present human activities are recorded on the hills, including the spatial character of past human occupation. Thus, the aim of the survey has, to a large extent, been achieved. The hills are an integral aspect of the history, culture, and settlement of Miya. Mangila appears to be used for religious activities rather than for habitation. Whether the hills were settled by the same people or at the same time is to be verified by excavation and dating.

The research was undertaken to supplement the inadequacy of oral histories and written sources in recording the history of the Mangila and Getuwa sites in Bauchi. The aim is to study and document archaeological evidence on Mangila and Getuwa sites as a means of contributing to the settlement history of the Miya area.

Miya's history has not been well documented (Abubakar, 1974). Very few documents that might inform the history and culture of Miya are available, limited either to recent history, such as the rise of the Bauchi Emirate, or documents of colonial administrators. For instance, Ningi has been a focus for historians, while very little is known about the culture and history of the small autochthonous groups that shaped the history and development of Ningi. Previously held information on the Miya area is contained in 19th and 20th-century European sources. Among these were colonial officers' accounts, such as that of Temple (1922). An American linguist wrote on the history, language, and ethnography of the people inhabiting this area (Schuh 1998). A major shortcoming of these studies is that they were not from an archaeological context. Also, the accounts are often vague and lacking much spatial or temporal dimension of historical events. For example, Temple's (1922) account was more concerned with the administration of the colonial rule in the 19th century. This research thus, fills an important gap, generating archaeological evidence from Mangila and Getuwa to shed light on the nature of the past society.

Alongside conventional archaeological methods such as survey, the historical accounts relating to the area were also relevant to the study. Thus, the defined sets of knowledge from each of these sources allow for a broader multi-faceted interpretation of the cultural landscape. One of the major contributions of this research, therefore, is bringing all these data together into a framework for understanding human activities in Mangila and Getuwa hilltop sites.

Oral traditions have proven to be valuable on the traditions of origin of the Mangila and Getuwa people. The traditions traced migratory routes from Borno (Suleiman and Danmasani, Pers. Com., 2020). Although there is a Hausa cultural contact, and although the Borno contact is more plausible than a Hausa one, one cannot rule out the tendency of associating roots with prestigious ones, as such is the practice with many West African societies. Nevertheless, no oral tradition collected in Miya indicates that the sites relate to any of the Hausa states, at least until the 19th century with the new political power in the region. However, there was influence of the Kano malamai with the larger Ningi area in the past, from historical records. Although the walls have not been established as a Hausa influence, or dated to ascertain if it predates Hausa influence in the area, Adeleye (1971 in Giade, 2016) noted that the political situation during the 15th and 16th century in *kasar* Hausa forced people to migrate, to inhabit hills and rock shelters, and to fortify their settlements against external aggression (Ozigi and Ocho, 1981 cf. Giade, 2016).

Relating to settlement, it is not clear when the hills were first occupied. However, the rapid movement of groups along the Gongola valley seems to be the working hypothesis for the region west of Lake Chad. As indicated by many scholars, the hills/plains pattern of settlement is typical for many parts of Hausaland (Usman, 1981; Effah-Gyamfi, 1986). According to Andah (2002 cf. Giade, 2016) the origin of settlements among the Hausa appear to have commenced from hill tops and hill bases, which were favored for fertile lands together with offering security advantages especially against slave raiders. It can be said that the Mangila and Getuwa traditions agree with, at least, the latter observation. The final descent from the hilltops can most likely be placed as relatively a chronology as the 19th Century, based on oral tradition and written literature. A disruption in the occupation of hilltop settlements, as it happened generally in other parts of northern Nigeria, is attributed to the integration of a new political system. With the traditional systems facilitated by the jihad of Uthman bn Fodio and the subsequent creation of a caliphate administered in Sokoto, a new city-capital emerged in Bauchi. Early date for the Miya area still comes from the site of Kariya Wuro in central Bauchi, although poorly dated and without an established relationship with Miya through archaeological evidence, oral tradition or written sources.

Generally, there is no variety of recoverable archaeological materials on the hilltop sites, as potsherds account for the only artifacts retrieved. It is thus,

suggested that these sites may have been short lived, probably owing to their use occasionally as ritual sites.

Following the survey, 222 potsherds were collected from both sites: 102 from Getuwa and 120 from Mangila. Surface finishing and decorative style were recorded, and rim forms were classed into three major forms. Decorated potsherds are not much, perhaps due to preferences, and the designs are grooves and incisions peculiar to sites in northern Nigeria. Analyses of pottery give insights into their use as pots and bowls and the aesthetic value of the makers.

Analysis of the finds shows no marked difference in the nature of both sites. The two sites show shared cultural relationships, indicating shared values among the population that inhabited them. The differences can be attributed to the relative functional specializations or hierarchical organization that existed among them.

In terms of relative chronology between the hills, it is noteworthy that Getuwa attributed antiquity by oral tradition. However, based on archaeological evidence, Mangila is perceived to be the oldest. Mangila, with the highest number of house foundations, is suggested to be a habitation and ritual site, while Getuwa may have been used as the seat of authority, as suggested by the relics of the courtyard. Mangila's use mainly as a ritual site may be much more recent as the circumcision tradition is still in practice. However, defense was paramount for both sites as walls were constructed around them (Yusuf and Dyamau, Pers. Com., 2020).

The ground stone and numerous rock hollows suggest that the people were involved in food processing and preparation. The presence of granary foundations is also indicative of agricultural activities. The settlement pattern of the Miya area is rather simple. The survey and mapping have also demonstrated changes in settlement patterns, evident from the remains of circular house foundations, rock shelters, and defensive enclosures.

There is still limited knowledge about the nature of these sites due to the low nature of finds. Pottery is the only artifact identified on the landscape during the survey. This could be an indication that no form of craft was practiced, and trade was not undertaken for such other goods, as suggested by their absence in the archaeological record, but this is highly unlikely. Though the acidic nature of the soil could be detrimental to metals, for instance, artifacts such as a spindle whorl take a bit longer to deteriorate completely; the sites are not as remote. This attests

to the contemporary use of the sites for ritual purposes, although it may have been used as both habitation and ritual in the past. Excavation may reveal materials that cannot readily be found on the surface. Local and/or regional trade may have existed in items not archaeologically visible but attested historically. Bauchi is strategically located for important centers such as Kano and Borno, and slaves found in Bauchi are exchanged for other commodities. Hill settlement attests to this idea. Also, the material culture and narratives of the Miya people depict a cultural continuum. It should be recollected that very little was known about these sites before this research. This archaeological investigation thus gives a new perspective on the nature of the cultural materials in the study area. Various features have been identified, and pottery quantified and analyzed. Some historical events have been elucidated from the literatures. This investigation, thus, not only makes new substantive contributions to our understanding of the Miya sites, it provides the first insight into the material culture of documented autochthonous sites that lie on the vicinage of a Late Stone Age site.

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Appendix I

List of oral informants

S/N	NAME OF INFORMANTS	AGE	OCCUPATION	NATURE OF INFORMATION
1.	Yakubu Suleiman	66	Sarki/Farming	Tradition of Origin
2.	Rilwanu Gilde	58	Ciroma/Farming	Tradition of Origin
3.	Pastor Yusuf Dyamau	75	Sarkin Fada/Teaching/Pastor	Genealogy
4.	Ladi Yusuf	54	Politician/Farming	Subsistence
5.	Muhammed Danmasani	54	Building/Farming	Field Guide
6.	Ali Saje MaiKala	49	NCMM Bauchi Staff	Field Guide