



# The Nok Smoking Gun

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## Introduction

The Nok culture arose in Nigeria in the first millennium BC and vanished in the first millennium AD. It is remembered for terracotta figures that bear an uncanny resemblance to the brass and bronze Ife Yoruba art that arose centuries later. "The Yoruba were the creators of remarkable bronze and terracotta sculptures that flourished from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and that were possibly associated with the more ancient Nok culture (end of the first millennium BC)" [1]. "West African Nok culture. Terracotta heads characterized black Africa's first known sculpture. Civilization from c.a. 500 BC. Nok culture. Well organized economy and administrative system in northern and central Nigeria; first people in sub Saharan Africa to make iron tools and weapons. Influenced neighbors in region" [2]. "The Yoruba are a people of great antiquity and have a record of impressive achievements in many fields of human activity. The Yoruba trace royal genealogies as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century but higher forms of political and social organizations have existed among the Yoruba for much longer: it is thought that they may have developed as early as the first millennium BC, and archaeological discoveries in the Nok valley and on the island of Jebba on the Niger substantiate this" [3].

"The discovery of the widespread Nok culture and the recognition it was ancestral to the later highly developed art of Ife..." [4]. "The supreme examples of this are found among the works from Katsina Ala especially. The mouth is usually shown with thick lips, sometimes open, but only rarely showing teeth. There are two both found at Nok. The first was possibly a headdress mask, strangely like the bronze headdress masks of the Oduduwa cult." [5]. "The Yoruba communities clustered around Ife, the religious centre and centre of dispersion. These were probably extant by the 13th century, a period which may tentatively be associated with the emergence of the marvellous brass art of Ife, itself probably a development of the earlier Nok culture" [6]. "It is natural to consider the possibility of a genetic connexion between the art of Nok and that of Ife and indeed, a terracotta fragment of a face found

at the north Yoruba town of Ire, seems to approximate more closely to the Nok than to the Ife style" [7].

"We do not know what political and ritual systems the Nok adopted. But perhaps we shall extrapolate our information of Ife to Nok" [8]. "Many of the distinctive features of Nok art can also be traced in later developments of Nigerian art produced in such places as Ife" [9]. "As far as the origins of the Yoruba are concerned, all that archaeology can point to is some stylistic similarities between pottery in Ife and in Northern Nigeria, dating to a period between 900 BC and AD 200. This indicates that they probably migrated southward from the savanna into the tropical forest area after that time" [10]. In today's ultra-politically correct world will I be vilified and crucified if I dared theorize that Proto Yoruba people once lived in northern Nigeria and were the brains behind Nok? Will I be called an ethnocentrist if I dare use my intelligence, common sense and God given powers of deduction to infer and suggest that hostile non-Yoruba tribes migrated into northern Nigeria and displaced The Yoruba via warfare, massacre and marginalization and that when these Yoruba vanished their Nok culture vanished with them?

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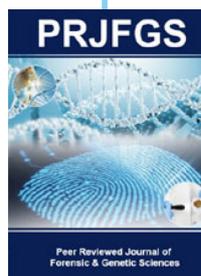
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