

WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND WAR PLANS IN EBIRALAND

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ABSTRACT

Wars among the Ebira were not fought with the aim of taking human life but to prove a symbolic victory. Their traditional weapon of war, the arrow, as used against human beings had a different design from the one used in hunting animals. Though the arrows were poisoned, arrow neutralising specialists were always available to offer services of applying antidotes and treating the injured in battle irrespective of which side they may belong. The Ebira had the privilege of manufacturing their own weapons by both indigenous and migrant blacksmiths who were later assimilated into the society. Though there was no standing army, a system of military training that had up to four stages however existed among the people. Traditional humanitarian rules among the Ebira pre-dates the current humanitarian norms which Francis Dunant and the rest started propagating in the second half of the 19th century. The traditional humanitarian rules of the Ebira cover areas like care for the wounded, treatment of combatants, prohibition of treachery, humane treatment of women, non-combatants and medical personnel among others.

Keywords: War, ebira, weapon, nigeria, ebiraland.