*Written sources*: A wealth of literature has been written about Nigeria. Although much of what we read has been written recently in European languages, there are many writings which date back further and use indigenous African languages and Arabic. An example that would be useful to learning about the history of northern Nigeria in the 16th century CE is Imam Ibn Furtuwa's writing on the wars of the Mai of Bornu, Idris Alaoma.

*Oral sources*: Even amongst people who have not written down their history, often a rich oral history has been passed from generation to generation. An example of a historian who drew heavily on oral traditions of West Africa, including north-central Nigeria, was A. Hampate Ba who wrote the *History of the Fulani Empire of Macina in the Eighteenth Century*. Like him, other historians have talked to Nigerians about their oral history to learn about the past.

*Material culture and artifacts*: Archeologists and historians learn a great deal about the way people lived by studying remains of their towns, villages, houses, tools, household items, art, musical instruments, etc. These remains can help historians understand what the people in a place produced and traded, how they organized themselves, and even some things about their beliefs. Because of artifacts found in the region around Jos, historians have come to know about what is now called **Nok culture**. Nok culture refers to a group of people inhabiting central Nigeria from approximately 900 BCE to 200 CE. Remains that have been found from this time period include terracotta figurines, iron tools, and stone tools. From these remains, archeologists and historians have interpreted such things as the dates people were living in this region, the extent to which they had contact with the people around them, and some of the foods and tools that the people used on a regular basis.

*Study of language*: Studying the language(s) of a place and the relationship of that language(s) to others around it can help historians know something about the history of a group of language speakers. For example, linguists have found relationships between languages spoken in Nigeria and many languages spoken in central and southern Africa. This large group of related languages is often called the **Niger-Congo (or "Bantu") languages**. Because of this relationship in language, many historians have suggested that a large migration took place from the region of present day Nigeria to central and southern Africa around 1000 BC.