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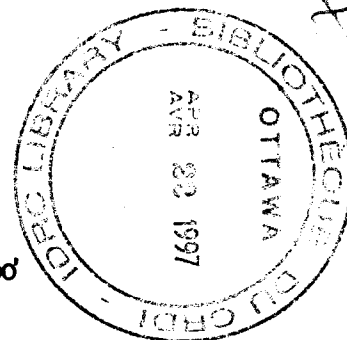
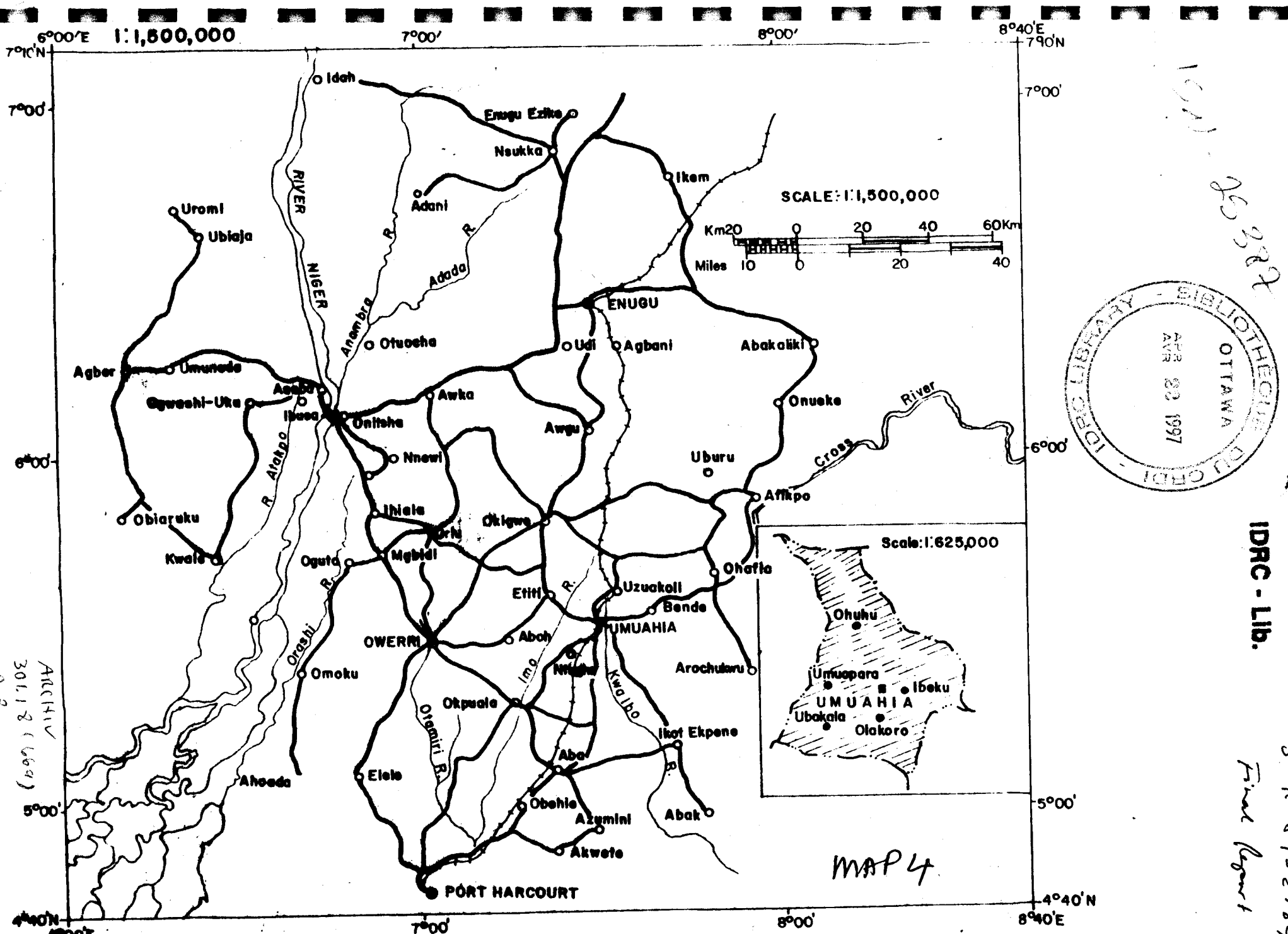
Traditional African Societies and
Indigenous Technology:

A Case Study of the Umuhia-Igbo Communities of
South Eastern Nigeria

by

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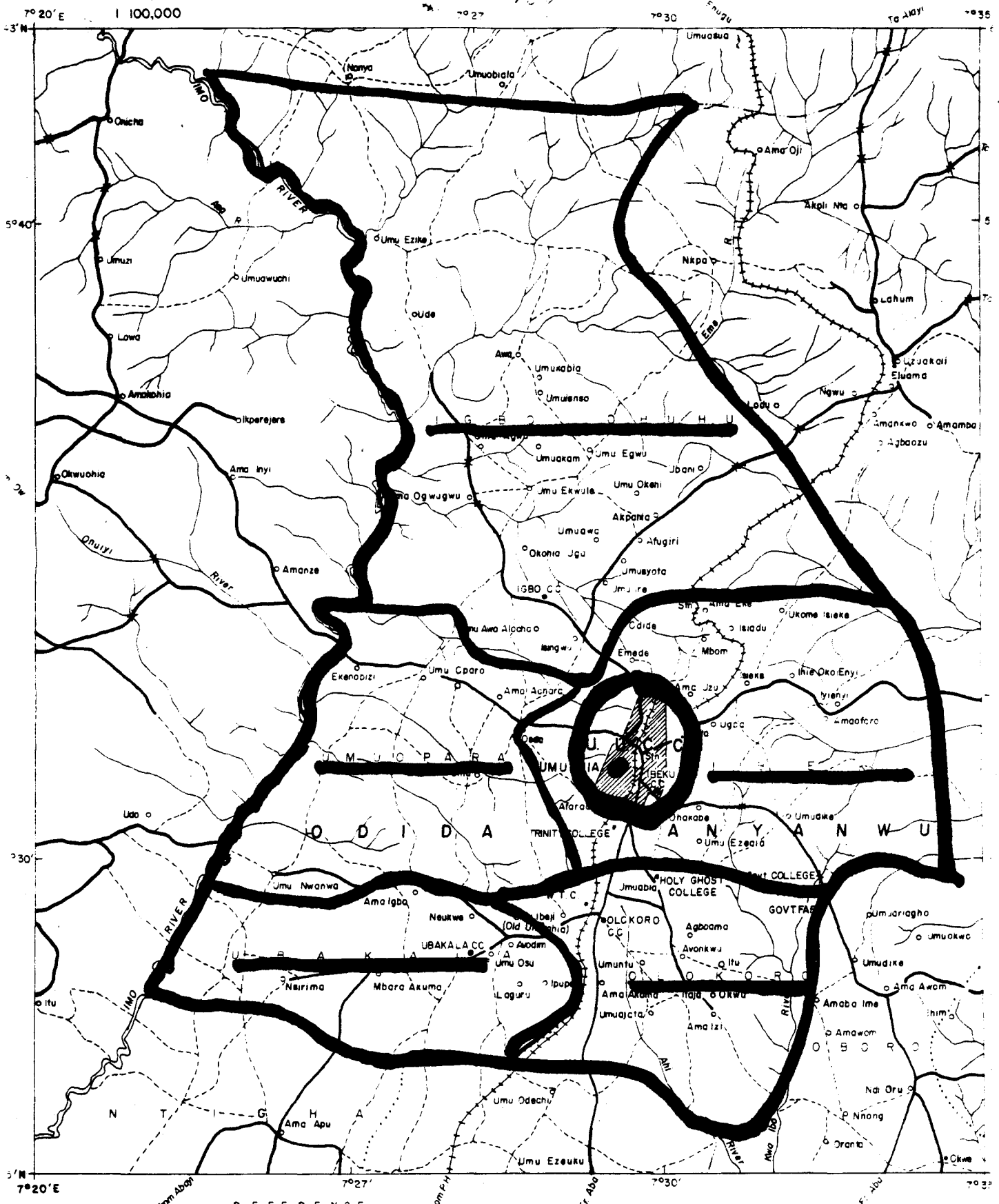
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Final Report

REFERENCE

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UMUAHIA IN RELATION TO SOME MAJOR TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES IN IGBO LAND OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA TO C. 1920.



MAP 5

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At Dalhousie University

November, 1985

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Acknowledgements and Preface

The ideas which led to this research project originated over two years ago, in the course of my field work among the Umuahia communities for the completion of a research project sponsored by the Nigerian Army. When, after completing the Army project, I turned my attention to the new one, I found the constraints of time and lack of research funds a severe handicap which dictated a rather slow rate of progress.

A chance meeting and discussion with Prof. Tim Shaw and his wife Dr. Jane Parpart, when both unexpectedly arrived at the University of Portharcourt about May 1984, marked a happy turning point in the search for research funds for this project. How viable and relevant to current problems and issues, of drought and famine for example, was this project anyway? Many times I had asked myself this searching question; and I found my friends' visit to Portharcourt a very good opportunity for informed exchange of ideas on the matter:

Yes, in the very recent past there has been so much talk and discussion on similar topics and other

related themes, with perhaps a proliferation of conferences and workshops, academic view points in seminars and scholarly papers, reports and recommendations etc.

Yet the foregoing points seemed in many ways to make more relevant and viable rather than otherwise, the present study; especially so, given our strong conviction of the need to combine a historical approach, archival and library and documentary studies, with practical data and information obtained through the closest possible interaction with those at the grassroots. After all, is it not at these levels that we find Franz Fanon's 'wretched of the earth', those who almost always bear, vicariously the worst brunts and burdens of those very problems and difficulties which we study, the problems often visited by man and nature, on man and his environment?

This research effort on the history of the Umuahia communities derived not a small encouragement from the sudden realisation that a great majority of the Umuahia communities themselves, including even the Lagos-based Umuahia Union, had for long

been anxious to see this kind of inquiry conducted into their local community history. The Lagos Union, for example, had expressed to this writer its disappointment and concern that 'as a geographical location Umuahia has no written history'.

In a study such as this one concerning the traditional history of so-called 'acephalous' societies, the problem of chronology or historical sequence of events, remains an important one; yet, unfortunately, it has not been possible to satisfactorily resolve such a problem in this study. It will most probably still require the pick axe and shovel of the archaeologist, as well as the professionalism of linguistics experts, before we can obtain more of the chronological information and facts which we still lack.¹

¹The envisaged publication of this work in book form, soon after the presentation of this report, will involve some revisional exercise by me to incorporate a new chronological data still being worked out with the commoner genealogy technique. Non-inclusion of this data at the moment does not in any way adversely affect the sense or logic of this presentation, especially Part Two of it dealing with the real key issue of indigenous technology. Those whose only or main interest may be on technology, rather than on the ethno-history of traditional pre-literate societies, could skip some of the presentation in Part one, and go on to Part Two instead.

This introductory study aims mainly to tackle, in Part One, chapters One to Six, one of the most perplexing, and often very hotly debated, problems in Umuahia traditional history; it is that of the traditions of origin, and the complicated migration legends and myths surrounding them in the oral traditions of the different constituent communities of present day Umuahia. Part two of the study, Chapter Seven, concentrates on the origins and development of indigenous African technology throughout the ages or 'a long time ago'! It uses the socio-environmental foundations provided by the Umuahia and other kindred communities in South Eastern Nigeria, for a purely preliminary examination of the current dimensions of the indigenous technology development problem, in a wider, pan African, context. I am aware of some of the current or more popular theories on development strategies. But at this stage I deliberately wish to argue and present only the data or case of this research report, without seeking to join issues yet on the more debatable issues.

I owe a lot of gratitude to more people than can be conveniently enumerated here. I must thank collectively the elders who granted me and my research assistants series of oral and tape-recorded interviews in the different communities of Umuahia and the neighbourhood. My special thanks must go to my research assistants, especially Mr. Emeka Ogazi and his group, for the marvellous work they did. Others from whom I received various kinds of assistance included Titus Anyanwu; Sonny L.C. Arukwe; Robert Emelike and Mrs. Florence Emelike; U.K. Igiri; Miss Queen Emerole; Mr. M.C. Ekwuribe; Charles Okoko; Abi Derefaka; Dr. Mac Dixon-Fyle; and my secretarial assistants, Messrs A. Buguma and Paulinus A.O. Bassey; to all of these people I express my sincere gratitude.

I must sincerely thank Prof. Tim Shaw and Dr. Jane Parpart, for kindly and enthusiastically initiating the I.D.R.C. connection with this project.

My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Eva Rathgeber, who showed such keen interest in picking up the research proposal once it got to her desk at the I.D.R.C. in Ottawa. It was her real interest in

this project which made further modifications of the original perspective of the research possible, and the I.D.R.C. funding available. In various parts of this report I have acknowledged the admirable commitment and effort of my research assistants, other informants and field workers at the village levels. I only wish to re-emphasise the importance to me of that 'will-to-survive' feeling which I acquired through the active interest, support and other fine gestures shown by the above mentioned persons: While this research project itself appeared for several months seriously endangered by my long hospitalisation at the Aba General Hospital, following a ghastly motor accident which I had while on a research trip to Umuahia in March 1985, letters of encouragement and support continued to come from the above-mentioned sources here in Canada; and my local research assistants, with only instructions which I gave from my sick bed, continued their field trips with unabated zeal and commitment, in search of data and information. Without the benefit of this infectious zeal and assistance coming from all directions, I might not have been able to cope and complete this work on schedule.

In my every endeavour and effort my wife, 'Nwunye' Rosemary, has been a tower of support and encouragement to me; indeed I cannot thank her enough. While I was in hospital my brother, Mba, and his wife Grace, ensured, as always, that I lacked nothing for my comfort and quick recovery. To all of the foregoing, and to the many others whom it has not been possible to mention individually here, I am indeed very grateful.

In conclusion, I must, however, mention here how deeply touched I was by the shocked reaction of the entire Ekenobizi village community, at the sudden news of my motor accident and hospitalisation at the Aba General hospital early in March. In the village church, and even by my hospital bed at Aba, members of the church from all denominations came regularly to say prayers for my quick recovery; I shall never forget the happy impact of these wonderful gestures of concern and sympathy; to every body concerned, I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for these spontaneous demonstrations of goodwill.

Finally, I must also thank Mrs. Rosamond David Luke, for the great secretarial expertise which she

so cheerfully and pleasantly brought into the final preparation of this report during my stay at Dalhousie University.

Objectives and Format/Framework of the Study

The I.D.R.C.* contract agreement had envisaged this as a pilot project, an 'exploratory' study on 'precolonial', indigenous or traditional African technology. In view of the complexity of the problems involved in the African crisis--problems of food supply, of appropriate technology, of general scarcity of goods and services etc--and considering the multiplicity of possible options in fighting these problems, this study may indeed be seen as just a window, perhaps an important one, introducing us through the historical corridor of the Umuahia-Igbo of Nigeria into the multifaceted crisis hall of African indigenous technology and development.

The two factors which determined both the objectives and the two-part format or framework of this study were:

*International Development Research Center of Canada based in Ottawa.

- a) the long-expressed desire or need of the Umuahia people for an investigation of their oral traditional history, and
- b) the long-term interests of the project sponsors in the area of traditional, indigenous technology in Nigeria, the rest of Africa and the Third World generally.

Let us further state that, among other points, the study aims to establish a firm basis for future work or study on technology and social development in Nigeria. More specifically it aims:

- ai) To provide a definition of the word 'technology' in a wider sense which will admit problem-solving traditional skills or practical knowledge--outside that of metal/iron working or blacksmithing--as technology indigenous to the society originating and practising such skills.
- b) To give some illustration of how the application of such local skills and knowledge in various fields and enterprises in the pre-colonial past, had sustained the local peoples and enabled them to cope with the problems of living and surviving in their environment. 9
- c) To attempt an analysis of the fate of indigenous African technology since colonial times, and offer some suggestions or remedies to some of the existing problems, given the present crises of food and general scarcity in most parts of Africa, and the imperatives for human survival. f
- d) To use the Umuahia-Igbo communities of South Eastern Nigeria for an ethno-historical case study, thus providing a socio-locational survey and foundation for the attainment of objectives ai- c above.

- e) To indicate the potential for future cooperative research on the subject.

Research Methodology

In addition to archival and library study, the procedure was adopted of organising oral interviews and group discussions in the five Umuahia clan communities, comprising over 200 village-kindred groups, chosen for this case study. It was particularly aimed to avoid as much as possible the usual pit-falls of excessive theorising in abstraction. In some of the villages practical experiments were conducted with good results in the actual processing and production ('manufacturing') of goods from local raw materials. Both the analysis and conclusions reached in this study have therefore been largely based, perhaps more than has been done by other similar studies in the past, on the practical field work interview discussions, experiments and experiences gained at the village grassroots level.

The research could not have been validly carried out, nor a proper analysis and report produced, based on a sociogeographical vacuum. For the attainment of the research objectives, it was however neither necessary nor logistically possible to

visit or cover all the regions, nooks and corners of the whole continent. The selection or choice of a sizeable geographical area or community for a case study, in this case the Umuahia-Igbo communities of South Eastern Nigeria, was consequently made on the above stated considerations, added to that of locational convenience of these communities within easy reach from the writer's normal place of work in Port Harcourt, some one hundred and fifty kilometers away from the Umuahia groups of communities. Perhaps it needs to be emphasised that, a major reason for looking at the technological history of the African traditional past, is so as to be better able to address some of the technological and developmental issues and problems of the present.

***A Summary Assessment of the Possible Value of Research Findings for Future Policy-Making**

Informed policy making could profitably rely or be based upon such researched findings and opinions as follows:

- i) The phenomenon of national development plans without real growth exists in many independent African nations, as a result of bad leadership examples of the African political and public service elite, most of whose unconscionable greed, fraud and dishonesty are a carry-over of

*For more definitive recommendations or suggested approaches to the problem of research, technological and social development, in Nigeria, for example, please read more closely pages 165-180.

the styles and standards set by European imperialism.

- ii) The suffering silent majority of African masses and rural dwellers, are most often only vicarious victims of problems created by the evil forces of bad governments and natural calamities, as successors to the forces of imperialism; consequently the amelioration of these problems makes demands on the moral and humanitarian consciences of the developed world.
- iii) Many groups in the Western world deserve at least some commendation for their care and concern about the African condition and current crisis. In order, however, for foreign aid or assistance to begin to have any real meaning or impact on the African situation, it needs to get beyond its present adhoc character, or its palliative measures of food relief and charity donations made pro hac vice. Something much more permanent, in the form of productive infrastructures able to teach or help the local communities to help themselves, seems, in short, imperative.
- iv) It is on record that during the European scramble for Africa in the 19th century, exploitable local communities were carved out into 'protected' villages--e.g. there were British owned, and French owned, 'protected' villages on the Niger (Northern Nigeria) between 1890-1900. To effectively and meaningfully grapple with the African crisis, a new idea of scrambling in reverse should now seriously be considered, by individual governments of the Western World adopting local African communities (Community Adoption Scheme--C.A.S.) for the construction and establishment of worthwhile, productive, help yourselves, projects.
- v) Nothing could be more helpful to African nations, or more confirmatory of the genuineness of the sympathy of the developed world, than a new policy which offers no accommodation or a haven of refuge to looters of treasuries

from African nations, and no banking facilities for stolen wealth, or one whose nature and volume renders it suspect or suspicious.

Some eight weeks of stay at Dalhousie University provided an excellent opportunity to discuss some of the above points and issues while the compilation of this report was in progress.

Our seminars, lectures, and group discussions both at the Centre for African Studies, and the History Department, Dalhousie University, have been very lively, exciting and most rewarding. Indeed one could not have wished for a better or more rewarding exchange of ideas, or for more positive encouragement, than one has had in this research effort here.

I wish to thank the organisers of the seminar series and the history lectures, Prof. John Flint and Dr. Jane Parpart, both of the History Department; also Dr. David Fasholé Luke of Political Science, Associate Director of the African Studies Centre; Prof. Bertin Webster; Mr. Onwuka Njoku; Mr. Yonah Seleti, Miss Joey Power; Dr. and Mrs Amon Nikoi of the Pearson Institute; and others who have in various ways made my visit and work here at

Dalhousie both enjoyable and memorable. Those whose interests may lie more in the area of traditional or indigenous technology--the topic discussed in Part Two of this report--should please read the whole preface to the report, the epilogue to Part One starting on page 118, and then Chapter Seven, not forgetting the relevant illustrative materials, maps, pictures etc., included in the body of the work or in the appendices.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: UMUAHIA THE NAME AND THE PEOPLE

The first Europeans ever to visit Umuahia probably did so in 1896, when a group passed through parts of Olokoru and Ibeku on a reconnaissance mission to Bende, before the British military expedition against Arochukwu in 1901-1902. Soon after the fall of Arochukwu to the British in 1902, the Umuahia communities, led by the Olokoru and Ibeku people, collectively resisted the British invaders in a military encounter which ended later in that same year 1902, with the British conquest and occupation of the entire Umuahia area. The Olokoru and the Ibeku had borne the major burden and brunt of the armed resistance.

Who are these Umuahia people? What forms of political and social organisations, economic, commercial and other activities existed among them before the advent of the British? Unfortunately up to now no detailed or systematic study of Umuahia history has ever been published, even though the history of many of their immediate neighbours, and counterparts within and outside Igboland, have continued to receive adequate historical attention. According to their oral traditions, the Umuahia communities of South Eastern Nigeria have for centuries remained one of the most heavily populated in this area; they also claim to be among the most active historically in the vast Igbo heart-land, which has been famous for its enterprise since pre-colonial times. Along with their more popularised Aro, Ohafia, Abam and Abiriba

neighbours, the Umuahia people had provided, as long distance traders themselves, much of the commercial logistics upon which the economic greatness of the Aro middlemen and the coastal Niger traders of the Delta region was built between the 17th and the late 19th centuries. What a sad irony then that whilst adequate historical attention continues to be given to the Abam, Abiriba, Ohafia and the Aro for example, and to the economic and political history of the Niger Delta, virtually no proper mention or systematic study has ever been attempted or published on the Umuahia communities, as an important section of the commercially important and productive Igbo hinterland at that time.

The Umuahia-Igbo communities were strategically and advantageously situated in relation to some of the important trade routes connecting not only the major trade centres in pre-colonial Igbo land, but also linking important hinterland trading areas with those in the coastal Niger Delta area. As their oral traditions fully reveal, the Umuahia people were pace-setters in the Ife, Uzuakoli, Bende, Uburu and Ntigha markets; they effectively participated as well in the other 'long distance' trading enterprises to the famous trade centres at Ahia Ukwu and Ahia Igweocha. These were major markets which served as meeting points of trade goods and traders from other parts of the Igbo heartland and from the coastal Delta.

In other aspects of social intercourse, the Umuahia communities also exerted influences on their neighbours especially through inter marriage: In pre-colonial times as at now, a sizeable percentage of Igbo women to be found as house-wives in any Riverine or Niger Delta,

non-Igbo, locality or community, may be found to be from one part of Umuahia or the other. 'Along with their Owerri and Mbaise neighbours, the Umuahia-Igbo people may be regarded as among the best of 'good mixers' in Nigeria.

While Umuahia has unfortunately lacked the luck of attracting proper historical attention up till now, it is significant to note how it is often mentioned in the history of other communities. For example, historians discussing the origins or migrations, and other activities of other neighbouring communities such as the Item, Ohafia, Abam and Abiriba, have often had to connect the Umuahia communities in one respect or the other.¹ The importance and relevance of the pre-colonial history of the Umuahia-Igbo people, therefore, cannot be over emphasised. Indeed to obtain a more balanced understanding of the history of these comparatively neglected parts of Igbo land and of the varieties and patterns of their social organisations, a study of Umuahia community history seems vital. Studies of these individual communities and their roles in pre-colonial times, may also be seen as an important contribution towards a better knowledge and understanding of both Igbo and Nigerian history as a whole. Such 'regional' or 'area' approach to the study of Igbo or Nigerian history, as is here attempted in this study of the Umuahia-Igbo communities, may indeed provide a more practical and realistic answer to existing

1. Nsugbe, P.O., Ohafia: A Matrilineal Ibo People (Oxford 1974).
 Ekeghe Ogbonna, O., A short History of Abiriba (Aba n.d).
 Okoko, Charles, The Abam and their Neighbours (1983 Uniport History Long Essay).

Ukwu I. Ukwu, The Development of Trade and Marketing in Iboland, JHSN, Vol.111.4.1967.

problems: Attempts by scholars to provide a general framework which would be valid in all respects either for Nigeria as a whole, or for Igboland and all its peoples, have not been quite successful or valid in their results. In the area of a general Igbo history, for example, such attempts have so far achieved conclusions which must be qualified often and again in respect of the history of individual, or groups of, Igbo communities.

Students of Igbo history have, in short, been constantly obliged to recognise that Igbo history and culture, outside the relative unity of its language, is in many other respects so diverse and heterogenous as to compel cautious statements and qualifications to almost every important conclusion reached by the historian. To give a simple illustration: in studying Igbo marriage customs, socio-political organisations, religious ceremonies or festivals, even in the ordinary and most common Igbo custom or practice of kola-nut presentation, what a writer may say of any one Igbo community or group - whether the Awka, the Nri or the Nsukka peoples, or whether the Umuahia, the Owerri, or the Ngwa peoples, can hardly be fully applicable to all the other Igbo communities. The political systems of authority in the traditional societies of Awka or Nri or Onitsha for example, were hardly applicable in many other contemporaneous Igbo communities at the time. Hence some of the general conclusions often made about Igbo histories and customs, must at best be regarded as relative truths; relevant to some Igbo groups and yet not quite so relevant to others.

Cultural diversity or heterogeneity and the necessity to constantly qualify many general pronouncements on Igbo history, constitute only part of the historian's problems. The absence of an established literary tradition among the pre-colonial Igbo people, and the consequent reliance on oral tradition or remembered history with all its numerous shortcomings, have also contributed to compound the problems of Igbo historiography.

Oral traditions, however, still permit sensible reconstructions of the histories of many ancient and preliterate societies. In this way oral tradition has proved its possibilities beyond doubt, and thus has established its claim to recognition as a valid or valuable source of history. To yield reliable information it must however be used by the historian with proper caution, adequate safe guards, checks and balances.

Polybius, a great historian of the Hellenistic age, had many centuries ago prescribed for practising historians the highest standards of factuality or exactitude to be attained in handling historical issues which involve such questions as where, how, or when things happened or occurred.

The student of preliterate societies, because of the non-documentary nature of his source material, may appear sometimes to be revisionist in these matters of factual exactitude or precision; but he could still attain respectable and valid results, by applying the proper safeguards, checks and balances in the use of oral traditions, and by posing the relevant questions which naturally suggest themselves consisting, in the dialogues between the researcher and his sources, in this case, of

the oral traditions, the myths and legends, the proverbs, songs and folk-lore of a preliterate society.

Such questions as: exactly when or how long ago? exactly how? exactly who? or exactly where? have often puzzled or handicapped scholars investigating the histories of preliterate societies. These same questions may continue to baffle historians investigating Igbo origins, migrations and settlements. In short, they are questions which may remain unsatisfactorily answered or resolved, until and unless archaeology comes more to our aid in many areas of Igboland. These admittedly serious chronological or factual gaps in our knowledge of Igbo general history, or of the history of particular Igbo communities such as the Umuahia group, should however not detract from other solid facts of Igbo history generally, nor from those of groups of Igbo communities, such as the Umuahia communities, which have experiences of common existence and of living together over the centuries. This study of the Umuahia communities, then, is predicated on the foregoing premises and assumptions.

One of the major issues to be investigated concerns the origin of the constituent communities of the present day Umuahia peoples. Their legends of origin, migrations and settlements will need to be examined within the context of the existing or current theories of origin and migration of the Igbo people as a whole.

Students of Nigerian history have become increasingly sceptical about earlier theories which tended to derive the ancestors and the ancestral home of the Igbo people or other Nigerian groups from such far way places as Egypt, Mecca, Israel, or any other places outside

Nigeria. This is because fairly recent excavations carried out by archaeologists at Nok and around the Niger Confluence area in Northern Nigeria, have yielded surprising evidences of human existence and activity (e.g. pottery, stone and iron-tools some dating back to about 500 B.C), which have been reckoned to be probably even older than those discovered at Meroe, an ancient, iron-working, city on the Nile.¹

Since the 1960s historians have gone further to postulate the Nok area around the Niger Confluence region, as probably the melting-pot of the initial outward migrations of the original, proto-Igbo, groups. These original migrant groups, it is suggested, must have moved South and South-Eastwards into the Nsukka, Nri, Awka, Igboukwu and adjacent territories. From these areas secondary and subsidiary migrations by sections of the original groups took place, and led to the peopling of, firstly, the 'heartland' areas of Owerri, Okigwi, Orlu; and, eventually, of the Obowo-Mbaise, the Aba-Ngwa, the Umuahia-Bende, and the Arochukwu-Cross River groups of territories and communities. These theories of origin and migration thus make the Nok-Niger Confluence region the first-stage 'ancestral home' of the Igbo people, and the Nsukka-Awka-Nri-Igboukwu areas, as more or less their second-stage 'ancestral home'. From this area groups of these migrants moved further out, in waves of subsidiary migrations, to the Owerri-Okigwi-Orlu 'heartland' and to other locations South-Eastwards. Archaeological evidences so far obtained have suggested the

1. Hartle, Donald D, Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria in Nigeria Magazine, 93 (June 1967) p.136-7; 'The Prehistory of Nigeria', p.65.

Bernard Fagg, 'The Nok Culture, Excavations at Taruga in West African Archaeological' Newsletter vol.X (1968)

date of about 5000 B.C as the beginning of the earliest human habitation of Igboland, and the date of 5000-3000 B.C as the period marking the beginning of agriculture in Igboland.¹

Reasonable or logical as they sound, these theories of North-Southern origin and migration seem however to deviate from the well observed patterns the world over, of human origins and the development of neolithic cultures beginning usually in well-watered, forested, fertile, river-valleys, rather than in dessicated, infertile, uplands such as are still found in these Northern Nigeria zones. Explanations so far, adduced for a deviant pattern in this case appear far-fetched and unconvincing.² Perhaps the truth may be that some 20,000 years ago, the soil and vegetation in these now dessicated Northern Zones was far different from what it is today, and permitted the development of agriculture.

While some scholars seem to accept the North-South migration theory,³ others seem not to accept it. Professors Alagoa and Williamson, for instance, have employed linguistic evidence or other related data to arrive at a different interpretation. Both ^{scholars} claim that at least a 5000 years gap existed between the Igbo, Yoruba and Edo languages. Contradicting Professor Dike's theory of Bonny origins from the Igbo hinterland communities, these two scholars further suggest that the

1. Isichei, E. A History of the Igbo People (London 1976) p.3-15

2. Isichei, E., A History of the Igbo People (MacMillian London 1976) p.3-11.

Such explanations, for example, as that the Igbo dread living near water, and aimed to avoid threats of sea borne attack.

3. Dike, K.O., Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta Oxford 1956 chapters 1-2.

Anene, T.C., Southern Nigeria in Transition Cambridge 1966 p.5-10.

Niger Delta region itself was rather the ancestral home of origin of the Niger Delta groups of communities, including even parts of Ukwa (Ndoki) in the Igbo upland.¹

At best, in short, it is claimed or implied that communities of the Niger Delta developed or originated some 5000 years ago independently or even contemporaneously with those of the Igbo upland. This account however appears to give no proper consideration to the great importance of the development of such technological skills as pottery and iron-working, of which development there seems no evidence yet in the mangrove swamp region. Yet in all other known civilisations, the development of such technological skills usually preceded the development of trade. The development of the neolithic culture, or food producing technological skills, (but evidences of which are still lacking within the mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta itself), would have seemed of crucial priority in the order of development, if a terrain as difficult as that of the mangrove swamp was to be at all mastered and made habitable by any groups of dwellers originating there. Before the alleged development of a language 5000 years ago, and of commercial and other social links and intercourse between the Niger Delta dwellers and the upland groups living up the Niger, no other evidences whatsoever seem to exist of human origins or activity within the mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta. What other evidences of human origin and activity over such a long period - other than the alleged development of a separate language - are there in this region? How, or from where in this swampy and almost impossible zone, could the 'early man' in this area have got or fashioned the first stone or iron tools which were absolutely necessary for the mastery of this peculiar environment? Would it be logical to argue or reason that, in the face of the elemental and environmental problems which existed for the original group in this swampy

1. Kay Williamson, "Languages of the Niger Delta" Nigeria Magazine No.97 (1968) p.14-30. Alagca, E.J., A History of the Niger Delta (I.U.P. 1972) P.16-17

and otherwise uninhabitable zone, language development was the first or only concern of the group which have been alleged or implied to have originated from no whereelse but from this zone? It is only logical to suggest that only migrants coming from outside, and armed with the necessary tools and the where withall to tame the mangrove wild, could have been the first dwellers or settlers in this zone.

It is against the background of these interesting but somewhat conflicting accounts¹ of origin and migration of the larger groups of communities, that the Umuahia oral traditions and legends of origin, migration and settlement history, must be examined. Perhaps more useful information may be gained in future by archaeological investigations of the many centres now revealed by oral tradition to have been important locations of pottery manufacture, iron-working or black smithing industries in various parts of pre-colonial Umuahia.

The history of Umuahia poses other questions and problems: The name 'Umuahia', concerning the origin and meaning of which name or word many theories still exist, how did it really come to be applied, firstly to the one community of Ndi Nwe Ahia Afor-Ibeji, and, later, to all the constituent communities which today make up Umuahia? Also among the Ibeku people particularly, and the rest of the Umuahia communities generally, what was the origin and meaning of 'Ogurube' or 'Igurube', around which there now exists an Ibeku theory of origin? These are some of the many questions which this study examines and attempts to answer.

As already remarked, if this study is able to contribute something towards a better understanding of the history of the Umuahia-Igbo communities, then it would have achieved equally useful objectives in our better knowledge and understanding of Igbo and Nigerian history as a whole.

1. e.g. Professors Dike's and Anene's versus Alagoo's and Williamson's.

The Umuahia communities are among the major Igbo groups to be found in South Eastern Nigeria. These communities lie between $5^{\circ}.25$ and $5^{\circ}.43$ in the North latitudes, and between longitudes $7^{\circ}.20'$ and $7^{\circ}.35'$ of the East meridian. From the seacoast at Port Harcourt in the Rivers State the direct distance to Umuahia is about 120 kilometres. Umuahia therefore lies within the 'Rain Forest' climatic zone, characterized by wooded, green vegetation, and the two, well-known, seasons - the Rainy (May to October) and the Dry (November to April) seasons. Between January and February there is the dry and misty harmattan winds whose cold effects are very noticeable in Umuahia.

The average annual rainfall in Umuahia ranges between 80"-100"; and the total land area occupied by the communities is about 406 square kilometres. The population density in this area is now reckoned to be among the largest compared with those of many other communities in Nigeria; it ranges over 1000 per square mile.

The migration and settlement legends and theories of the different Umuahia groups are sometimes as diverse and conflicting as those of many other Igbo groups; and these diverse accounts suggest to the researcher anything but the common ethnic origins which appears to be, infact, the truth about some of the village communities. Some of these conflicting and contradictory accounts may have arisen out of genuine ignorance on the part of the people, or otherwise from a natural reluctance to concede superiority in whatever sense or form to other community units. Even over half a century ago, the earliest attempts

by British political officers, the District officers and Provincial commissioners, to elicit from our local elders and people some of these facts of local history, had equally experienced such difficulties and contradictions¹ as are unfortunately still encountered

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1. Notice, for example, the observations of some of the District Officers who worked in various localities including the Umuahia area:

"Attempts to ascertain the order of seniority of these villages had to be abandoned owing to violent disputes which ensued when this subject was mentioned....."

"Intelligence Report on the Ibeku Clan" (1933)
- C.J. Pleass
(District Officer)

'....The people are extremely distrustful of the objects of Government, and are reluctant to tell their ancient customs lest these be thought either illegal or foolish; and there are many self-seekers, hoping for some recognition by Government who distort information to support their claims....'

- Intelligence Report on the Ezinihitte Clan
File No. 52/1932 OWDIST 9/18/43

/of 'Just as the question as to which village was the head village had bid fair to wreck all chances of clan unity, so the question as to which Ama [Kindred] was the senior Ama [kindred] in a particular village was likely to wreck any chance/village unity. So long as the relative seniority of quarters or of individuals was not raised all villages were prepared to say that they were one unit; some people even stated openly that the word [or idea of] 'Onyenweala' was responsible for much of the intra village disputes..... This question is dealt with in detail lest anyone should ask in any village who is the village head. To do so will cause trouble. It may be thought that the matter can easily be decided by asking who takes the first share of anything killed in the village, but this is an equally dangerous question because the people fully realise its significance.....'¹

1. E.R. Chadwick, (A District Officer)
Intelligence Report on Olokoro Clan NA1/File No. 30829

today in discussing some of these topics with the local people. Practical experience in the field indicates that the modern researcher into any aspects of local Nigerian history today, especially in these days of extreme politicisation of men and matters, has much to do. He can hardly exercise too much of patience, nor ask enough of searching, carefully thought-out, questions of the men and the non-documentary material with which he has to work. If he is to arrive at any objective truths in his enquiry, the researcher can not but be extremely cautious and painstaking with his oral interviews, and in the handling of the oral traditions which he collects.

Early in the present century, in the 1930s, the people who today make up the Umuahia communities were grouped by the British Administration into five clan units. The local, ethnic-group names of Ohuhu, Umuopara¹ Ubakala, Olokoro and Ibeku, were all retained. This new arrangement was for the purpose of facilitating and operating a 'better' and 'more civilised', administrative and judicial system under the British. Before the arrival of the new administrators these ethnic communities had of course lived in their present locations and governed themselves as independent entities for many generations, perhaps even for centuries. Each of these different clans comprised a number of villages or towns; each village was made up of a number of lineages, compounds or kindreds; we may here represent these in local language as Onu-Ama or Okporo-Ama.

1. Until 1947 when it became a separate clan, Umuopara was part of Ohuhu clan.

These latter comprised groups of extended families or Onu-Ezi, Ezi-na-Ulo; which themselves were made up of Nuclear Families, Onu-Usekwu, or individual House-hold units comprising the Husband, wife/wives and children. For want of a better expression, we will here approximate the words Clan and village, to what the Umuahia people generally refer to as 'Mba'.

In the olden days a 'foreigner' ('Onye-Mba' or 'Onye Mbiarambia') was anyone who came more or less from outside one's own village or clan. He was 'Onye-Mba-Ozo', and lacked ethnic affinity within the village, or did not come under the rights and obligations of the village and its socio-political organisations, as ordained by the gods/deities, and, practised by the members, of the particular village community. To try to discover the ethnic origins and identity of these clan communities, it is perhaps best for us to focus as much as possible on the constituent villages of each clan; because in precolonial times the village, rather than the Clan Unit, was generally the highest unit of the traditional government of ethnically homogenous units. In its matrimonial practices, for example, the typical Igbo village community was often more exogamous (because ethnically more homogenous) than the clan unit; the village usually held together groups of people acknowledging closer blood ties, or bonds of oneness and affinity, than might be found at the wider level of the Clan Unit.

Although some other forms of inter-group or Clan relations and interactions still existed, the present five Umuahia clans ('Mbas'), and their constituent villages, did not answer or exist under the common name of Umuahia; let alone come under one socio-political organisation in pre-colonial times. This fact has led or at least greatly contributed

to the conflicting and erroneous speculations still lingering in people's minds as to the origin of the name itself, Umuahia. Many current accounts maintain that it was a corruption by the British of the Igbo word for market square, 'Oma-ahia'. Oral traditions which are still popular even amongst elders in various parts of Umuahia state that, on their very first visit to Umuahia towards the end of the 19th century (1896), the British travellers had landed at the Afor-Ibeji Market Square. There at the market square, they enquired to know the name of the place. They were then told that it was a market square, 'Oma-ahia'. From this word, as the story further goes, the British eventually derived the name 'Umuahia', first applying it to the entire village of Afor-Ibeji and, subsequently, using it to designate the whole of the present day Umuahia people which is made up of the five clans or Mbas.

The truth, however, is quite different from the above version. When the first two British officers (Major A.G. Leonard and F.S. James travelling from Aba) ever to visit Umuahia arrived there on their way to Bende in 1896, they were not travelling alone or as travellers who were either lost or missing their way, as might be inferred or implied by the question they were alleged to have asked from the local people at the market square: Infact among the many local and knowledgeable escorts and guides travelling with them through Umuahia were Albert Jaja of Opobo, some Aba-Ngwa chiefs, and also chief Nwakpuda of Old Umuahia who, together with one Ukandu from Ubakala, escorted them up to Bende. But even more important is the fact that, long before the arrival

1. C.O. 520/18, Major W.C.G. Heneker, O.C. 'Ibeku-Olokoru Expedition,
to High Commissioner, Southern Nigeria, 26th December 1902.
Major Leonard, A.G. 'Notes of a Journey to Bende'
(J.M.G.S. Vol.14 (1898))

of the British there, the village of Umuahia (present day 'Old Umuahia') had infact existed under that name, and as one of the fourteen Olokoro villages. The subsequent application or extention of this already existing village name, Umuahia, to designate the whole of the peoples and clans of Umuahia, resulted from the expansion programme of the local British administration based at Bende. After its acquisition of a new site or piece of land from some Ibeku villages in order to establish the present Umuahia Township and market, the establishment at Umuahia, Afor-Ibeji, moved out to the new area now designated the Umuahia Township and Market:

'The Umuahia Township was originally established during the construction of the Nigerian Eastern Railway at mile 67 near the Olokoro village of Umuahia, from which it the new township took its name. After its transfer in 1917 to its present Ibeku site the name Umuahia remained unchanged, a fact which has led to considerable resentment among local Ibeku inhabitants, who object to the name of an Olokoro village being applied to what is now regarded as an Ibeku institution township....¹

From the foregoing evidence, it should be quite clear that over the years oral traditions even among the elders and various local communities in Umuahia, had confused the application (by extension in and after 1917) of the name Umuahia to the newly created township and market at the Ibeku site and its neighbourhood, with the very origin of the name itself. In the subsequent chapters dealing with the Olokoro villages and communities, more will be said on the origin of the name and village of Umuahia.

1. J.G.C. Allen, District Officer, Intelligence Report on the Umuahia (Ibeku) Township
EP 15565A Milgov. 12/1/131 (1938).

Suffice it here to state that, contrary to popular stories and accounts, the name Umuahia did not originate from, much less was it given to the village by, the British. The village originally bearing this name had, infact, been in existence as part of the Olokoro Community, long before the British first arrived there in 1896.

THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF 'OHUHU'....

One difficulty from which most local histories including those of the Ohuhu people and other Umuahia communities suffer, is the absence of written records in the past. Historians who study the past of such communities have therefore to grapple with many problems including the complex ones of conflicting oral traditions, as in the cases of the Ohuhu people and their other Umuahia neighbours.

Although the word 'Ohuhu' first appeared in print about 1906 in Major Leonard's The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, its origin would seem to date back to those earlier centuries of long distance trade in Igboland. Today the Ohuhu clan comprises the Umuhu and Okaiuga village communities, about which communities we shall learn more in this chapter; but in earlier times the people of Ngwaland (from whom the word 'Ohuhu' is supposed to have originated) used it to designate all non-Ngwa, particularly all Umuahia, peoples.

One version of the oral tradition traces the origin of the word 'Ohuhu' to the period (about the 15th century) of the mass migration movement of the peoples from Okigwe-Orlu-Owerri zone in the North West, across the Imo River East of the area, into the present areas of Umuahia and Ngwaland. This version states that many centuries ago the ancestors of the Ngwa and Ohuhu (Ezinihitte) peoples were travelling together on a migration or trading journey; they arrived at a temporary resting place on the banks of the Imo River. While at the Imo River bank, one section of the people (the 'Omengwangwa' or 'Ngwa' group) hurriedly boiled their food (yams), ate them, and quickly crossed the Imo River. They then moved on until they finally settled in the area

today known as Ngwaland. This version of the oral tradition thus states that it was from their *imengwa-ngwa*, hurrying-traits, and their quick-crossing of the Imo River, that the Ngwa people came to acquire what was apparently a nick-name, first given to them by the other group which stayed behind to 'roast' their own food. According to the same oral tradition, this second group which delayed their crossing from the Western bank of the Imo River until they had finished roasting their yams, were derisively called 'Ohuhu' (Omuohuhu) by the 'Omengwangwa' or 'Ngwa' group which had earlier crossed the River. This episode, according to the oral tradition, marked the separation of the two groups (the 'Ngwa' and the 'Ohuhu') which had before moved together as one and the same kindred group of people.

An equally remarkable part of this oral tradition is the story which even some British officers the, District officers and Commissioners and their assistants, recorded in the early 1930s.¹ It suggests that both the Ngwa people and the Ezinihitte and the Ohuhu communities, were originally from one common ethnic group. This suggestion is given greater credence by existing migration legends among the Ngwa and the Ohuhu peoples, many of whom today trace their migration histories back to various centres in the Mbaise and Etiti divisions across the Imo River. The existence of many common place-names of villages and towns between the Ngwa, Mbaise and Etiti clans today seems also to point to something much more than mere accident or coincidence.

1. E.N. Dickinson (A.D.O.) Intelligence Report on the Ezinihitte 52/1932 OWDIST 9/18/43; see also Jackson (D.O.) Intelligence Report on the Ngwa Clan. Esobe, N. E., A Precolonial History of Ohuhu Clan (History Long Essay at U.N.N. 1973)

Although the other Umuahia towns or groups of village communities (outside those of Umuhu and Okaiuga) never regarded themselves, or no longer regard themselves, as part of the 'Ohuhu' people, it is very clear that the Ngwa people regard the whole of the Umuahia clans and communities generally as 'Ohuhu' or 'Umuohuhu'. It is implied in this story that the name 'Ohuhu' was coined by the Ngwas to describe all their fellow migrants who either delayed (as the Umuahia group allegedly did) in crossing the Imo River, or who did not cross at all, as those left behind today in the Ezinihitte and Etiti divisions did not, at the time the Ngwas themselves were crossing the Imo River. But it is not quite clear today that the Ngwa use of the name 'Ohuhu' applies also to those who stayed permanently behind in the Etiti and Ezinihitte areas.

However, a closer analysis of the oral traditions and migration legends of the Ezinihitte, Ngwa and Ohuhu groups may yet come to reveal some truths of their common ethnic affinity. But ^{if,} as now applied by the Ngwa people, 'Ohuhu' refers exclusively to the Umuahia group, then the time and circumstance, of the origin of that word may be different from that suggested by this particular oral tradition on the historic crossing of the Imo River by the two groups.

The word 'Ohuhu' was first coined and used by the Ngwas, perhaps not in the 14th-15th centuries when their first crossing of the Imo River probably took place. It was probably coined between the 18th and 19th centuries, in the hey-day of the long distance trade between the Umuahia and Aba-Ngwa and Ukwa-Ndoki groups. The present writer has a collection of tape-recorded oral traditions on the precolonial long distance trade between the 'Ohuhu' groups and their Ngwa and Ukwa-Ndoki

neighbours. From the Umuahia ('Ohuhu') communities at that time, the long distance traders not only travelled regularly to the famous Bende and Uzuokoli markets; they also travelled regularly across Ngwaland to the other famous markets at Igweocha, Ukwa-Ndoki, and Ikwerre land. These traders also travelled to Ife in Mbaise, and to Uburu in the Afikpo area.

This writer recorded from his late father in the 1960s, the following refrain which formed part of the traders' songs as they marched in long 'caravans' across Ngwaland to the Igweocha and Ukwa-Ndoki markets during the 19th century: Either way, on both the outward and the return journeys, there were the severe hardships of about thirty days round-trip march; the trade goods parcelled into heavy loads to be carried on the head. These traders starved most of the time on their journey, living all the time only on roasted food; indeed, as the traders' refrain put ^{it,} / 'Man was born to suffer'.

- (1) Omutara nwoke chewe uwaya!
If you have a male child, stop awhile and brood
over his hard fate.
Ihe anyihuru Ligwe-ocha!
Oh! the hardships enroute to Igwe-ocha market.
- (2) Miri oñuñu, ihe oriri, ihuru ngole?
Drinking water, food to eat, where do you see?
Nani nkwu aruru loku;
Only roasted palm fruits;
Oh! the hardships enroute to Igweocha market;
Ihe anyi huru ligwe ocha!
- (3) Nani ji ahuru ahu, ede ahuruahu,
Only roasted yams, roasted cocoyam.
Ihe anyihuru ligwe-ocha!
Oh! What we suffered enroute to Igwe-ocha.
- (4) Nani ukwa eghereghe, aku etiri eti
Only roasted breadfruits, with dry palm kernels.
Ihe anyihuru ligwe-ocha!
Oh! what we suffered enroute to Igwe-ocha.

- (5) Nani Ukworu aruru l'oku, aku etiri eti,
 Only roasted maize, with dry palm kernels.
 Oh! what we suffered enroute to Igwe-ocha!
 The anyihuru ligwe-ocha!

One may here make a mental picture of the scenario of a particular group of food-roasting travellers or ^{traders,} who were always in the habit of roast-preparing their meals, as they travelled along the same trade route year after year! The Ngwa people witnessed and watched the Umuahia traders roast their meals regularly in this manner, as they traded regularly to and from Ukwu-Ndoki and Igwe-ocha, across Ngwaland.

For fear of falling victims to the ever-present dread of treachery and cannibalism in Ngwaland, these traders very rarely struck real friendships with their Ngwa neighbours. Occasionally of course real friendships between the groups could develop through inter-marriages. But the general insecurity of those times bred such mutual fears and suspicions of treachery, of capture and enslavement, or even of cannibalism, as rendered the development of mutual confidence and genuine friendships between individuals or groups almost impossible. For these reasons, and for their collective security while on these trade missions to Ukwu and Igweocha across Ngwaland, these long distance traders from 'Ohuhu' land always moved in groups along the trade routes. As much as possible they avoided stopping over in Ngwa land for over-night rest, food and lodging. The traders instead preferred making periodic road-stops, to rest themselves along the trade routes, and to roast their food, which always included such easily-roastable items as yams, cocoyams, breadfruit, corn, and palm fruits. Practised regularly over many decades or centuries by the traders along the trade routes which passed through Ngwaland to Ukwu and Igwe-ocha, the food roasting habits

of these traders were well observed by the Ngwa people.

It is therefore not at all difficult to imagine or understand how these 'habitual food roasters' must have acquired, from the Ngwa people, the nick-name of 'Umuohuhu' or 'Ohuhu' people - during a time, and under circumstances, which greatly differed from that described by the oral traditions relating to the alleged historic crossing of the Imo River by the 'Ngwa' and the 'Ohuhu' groups.

The present-day Ohuhu clan in Umuahia comprises the UMUHU and the OKAIUGA groups of village communities. The UMUHU group of villages is made up of Ubaha, Isingwu, Umuagu, Ude, Umuezike, Onhia, Umuda Ofeme, Umuhu Etiti, Anaogwugwu, Umudiawa, Umuogba, Uhuokwu; while the OKAIUGA group comprises Umuosu, Mgboko, Umuagu-Ngolori, Umuegwu-Okpuala, Umuekwule, Umukabia, Umuawa, Umule, Umuokehi.¹

As so often happens in the histories of local communities, there are many conflicting versions of oral traditions on the original home of these Ohuhu village groups. While some of the Ohuhu elders insist that their people or ancestors came from nowhere but have always lived in their present area, others have variously mentioned Orlu, Akaokwa, Okigwe, Nekede, Awgu, Ahiara, Owerri, Isuikwato, or Obowo, as the areas from which the Ohuhu ancestors had migrated many centuries ago to their present home.

It may well be that most of the village communities in Ohuhu today were peopled, over the centuries, by immigrant family units coming in from different places outside Ohuhu. But of all the places already suggested in the oral traditions, the Obowo clan in Etiti Division, is

1. Reuben Unegbu (aged 75 years) oral interview with Queen Emerole at Isingwu 10th November 1983.

the most favoured as the place which provided Ohuhu with its first, epical, ancestors. The identity of many place and village names in both Obowo and Ohuhu, as well as the worship in both clans of a common deity, the Ajana, are all facts which strengthen this view of Obowo-Ohuhu ethnic relationship. Perhaps the most concrete evidence of this relationship is the still extant ruins of abandoned settlements at Okwu-Oji land; oral tradition has it that this was the last place of settlement in Obowo of the Ohuhu migrants, before they finally crossed the Imo River into the present day Ohuhu land in Umuahia. Even till today the two sister-villages of Uhuala and Umukanwoke are two Ohuhu villages which still live with their Obowo neighbours on the Obowo side of the Imo River.

Two settlements (Okpulo-Isingwu and Nkwoegwu) have also been mentioned as the first arrival points of the Ohuhu migrants after leaving Obowo and crossing the Imo River into their present home-land. From these two temporary settlements the Ohuhu villages began gradually to separate and expand, always motivated by the need to secure more fertile agricultural land, adequate drinking water, and other basic needs such as that of corporate defences and security of the village groups. A suggestion has been made that the present Nkwoegwu market centre was originally inhabited by the Ubani-Ibeku, before Ohuhu people arrived there to forcibly push them out.¹ Oral traditions further state that these same Ohuhu people also further expanded their territory at the expense of the Emede-Ibeku.² If the Ibeku preceded the Ohuhu at Ubani or parts of present-day Ohuhu, there is then the quite logical possibility that the Ibeku people preceded the

1. Esobe, N.E., 'A Precolonial History of Ohuhu Clan' pp.8-18. Place names like Ikenga, Ihite exist in both Obowo and Ohuhu Clans; as also village names like Umukabi, Umuekwule, Umuagu, Umuhu, amongst many others.

2. Esobe, N.E., op.cit. p.23; 2. ibid p.29

Ohuhu in Umuahia and in the peopling of the present-day Umuahia area.

Some agricultural lands or territory perhaps also subsequently changed hands between the Ohuhu villages and their neighbours. But whether such changes involved actual wars as has been suggested,¹ seems doubtful. It would seem very illogical and hence most unlikely that a people who were escaping or running away from their strife and conflict chequered experiences in Obowo, would embark upon an avoidable policy of territorial aggression, soon after landing in their new home. Accounts of wars, military exploits and territorial gains, of the Ohuhu against the Ibeku people, have been totally rejected by the Ibeku as false.² However the possibility may not be ruled out that occasional border clashes, disputes and frictions, occurred in the past between the Ohuhu villages and some of their Isuikwato-village neighbours to the North of the Ohuhu clan; or in the North-East of the clan with some of the Ibeku villages sharing common boundaries with the Ohuhu people; such intra-community disputes over territory, agricultural land, markets, hunting rights, were as much a feature of Ohuhu local history as of the histories of any of the other Umuahia communities in precolonial times, say before 1900. Oral traditions of other Umuahia communities have recorded occasional minor incidents of disputes or conflicts, but not actual wars in the real sense of the word.³

The Ohuhu people were enterprising not only in the field of land acquisition for agriculture; in local crafts and industries they were equally resourceful and productive to the point of becoming almost a

1. Esobe, N.E., *ibid.*

2. Oral interview on 11th July 1983 with Chief J. Onuoha (aged 68 years), the 'Ogurube' 1 of Ibeku.

3. *ibid.*

self-sufficient community. Some of the village communities in Ohuhu became noted for the manufacture or production of certain local crafts and products, which were widely sought after beyond the clan. The Umukabi village, for example, became famous both for its cloth-making industry and for blacksmithing; another village, Nkata, was also noted for its cloth-weaving industry which, like that at Umukabi, produced from the threads (esebere) of locally grown cotton, a certain kind of local cloth which became popular for its durability.

The Ohuhu cloth weavers also developed two other kinds of weaving technology: The Nkpuruocha (raffia cloth) was a kind of white cloth woven by the Nkata and Umukabi textile technologists with material produced from the raffia palm. The Ubu weaving art or industry was monopolised by the people of Umuegwu Okpuala village; with raw material from Udo plant, the weavers produced masquerade gowns and outfit called Ubu, which was used in masquerade festivals throughout Igbo land. The village of Umuekwule, another Ohuhu village community, was well-known in precolonial times for its excellent wood works, kitchen utensils such as stools, ladles, pestles and mortars; these wood workers also carved dolls, doors, tom-toms (ekere) and Ikoro (a giant-sized tom-tom which was always housed at a corner of the village civic centre and was usually sounded to summon the Amala only on very special occasions). The blacksmithing technology in precolonial Ohuhu was associated with the village of Umukabi. The question as to whether this knowledge was developed independently by the Umukabi people, or learned by them from the Awka, the Abiriba or Nkwerre people, is one which only archaeological evidence in future may perhaps help to resolve. But suffice it to state that the black smiths of Umukabi, with iron raw

materials bought mostly from the Ukwu markets, produced crafts which were highly sought after by people within and outside Ohuhu land: spears and arrows, metal gongs, cooking tripods (Ekwu-igwe), knives, matchets, hoes, door-hinges, and other metal products. It must not be imagined however that these local crafts and industries (cloth-weaving, woodcrafts, blacksmithing etc) were for all comers to freely and easily engage in. The practice of some of these crafts and enterprises as we shall see later,¹ was hedged about with various taboos, rules and regulations amongst the practitioners: Indeed sometimes one is reminded of the monopolistic organisations of the medieval craft guilds of the western world. In precolonial Ohuhu as in other Umuahia communities, it was generally believed that only the gods taught individuals, families,^{or} kindreds, the knowledge of crafts such as woodcraft, the special knowledge of herbal medicine, weaving, blacksmithing or other special arts and crafts. The belief explains some of the dos and donts and the special taboos with which craftsmen in precolonial Umuahia generally hedged or protected their knowledge from the acquisitive curiosity of others 'outside' their craft.

It can hardly be surprising that a people as enterprising and productive as the Ohuhu people proved themselves to be in the fields of agriculture and local industrial technology, played very active roles in the long distance trades of the 18th and 19th centuries. Within Ohuhu itself there were at least two major weekly markets - Nkwoegwu and Afor Umuda which always attracted traders from outside the clan;

1. See the chapter on Ubakala.

just as the Ohuhu people themselves traded their agricultural goods, technological wares and crafts in other markets outside the Ohuhu and other Umuahia markets, such as the Uzuakoli, Bende, Uburu, Ife, Eke Ikpa, Orie Ntigha, and Ndoki (Ukwa) and Ubani (Egwenga) markets. To these long distance markets traders from the Ohuhu and other Umuahia communities would carry various goods for sale: yams, palm oil, clay pots, Uburu salt (nnu anyim), woodcrafts such as kitchen utensils, camwood dye-stuff (Uhie and Odo) ropes (Udo), etc. A very special commercial enterprise in which all the Umuahia communities actively participated was the slave trade, of which more later.

In exchange for the various trade goods they carried to the long distance markets at Egwenga-Opobo (Ubani) and Ukwa (Ndoki, Azumiri, Abala, Ikwerre) the Ohuhu and other Umuahia traders would return with the (Manilla or Nkpola) cash, or with other trade goods such as tobacco, gin, knives, mirror, cloth, soaps, and other imported European articles, for resale in the Igbo hinterland markets. When they travelled with their trade goods including slaves to the Uburu markets at Afikpo or to Agbagwu Uzuakoli or Ugbo Bende, they would return with such goods as pepper, cows, goats, fowls, camwood dye stuff (Uhie and Odo) and, most important, Uburu salt (Nnu Anyim or Nnu-Uburu). From the Ife market at Mbaise the traders also got tobacco and other imported European goods usually brought to the Ife market by coastal middlemen from Okrika, Oguta, and Kalabari, sometimes through their Aro associates.

A Brief Note On The Umuahia Indigenous Political System,
Traditional Occupations, and Cosmic View.

As in most other traditional Igbo societies, in precolonial Umuahia the unit of political organisation was the Village with its village Assembly, the Amala. The usual meeting ground of the Amala assembly was the open market square as the village civic - centre.

Male adulthood in Igbo traditional custom generally, and among the Umuahia communities in particular, was not just a measurement or a matter of age; it involved the fulfilment or performance of certain ceremonies (e.g. itu anya, iwa-akwa etc), signifying the social attainment of manhood and maturity. The attainment of this status brought with it the enjoyment of certain civic rights, as well as the discharge of civic duties or responsibilities.

The pattern of headship of the Amala Assembly varied slightly from village to village: headship may devolve on the oldest age set in the village; on the other hand the head of the Amala may be the most powerful individual in the village in terms of wealth, powers of oratory, and wisdom, irrespective of age. Sometimes in some Igbo village (Amala) assemblies, power or political authority was controlled or shared between these two groups - the oldest age set and the most powerful individual/s.

In precolonial Ohuhu as in all precolonial Igbo communities, the functions of the Amala were administrative, legislative and judicial. For example, it decided what local or community roads should be cleared and when; what contributions to village/town funds were required; it made laws for the regulation of the village/town markets; it settled disputes, punished offenders. In their judicial functions the typical Amala assembly lacked the distinction between criminal and civil matters. Except in the most

serious offences of murder, most offences could be settled by the payment of some form of compensation to the injured party, or by oath-swearing.

In precolonial times, if a person had a dispute with another over farm land or boundaries, over cash or fruit crops, or needed assistance to recover a debt, such a person would normally make a complaint in the first instance to the Head or most senior member of his family (the 'Opara-nne' of the family or the 'Opara-nna' of the lineage, kindred/extended family).

If the disputants were of one family or of one kindred, the matter would be settled by members of the family or kindred. If they belonged to two different kindreds in the village, members of the two kindreds would get together to settle the dispute; otherwise the matter would go before the village Assembly, the Amala. If the disputants belonged to different villages/towns, then the two Amalas of the two villages would meet in the civic centre of the Amala of the defendant. The parties to the dispute would bring presents of palm-wine, a goat or fowls to be shared among the Amala, and the loser had to pay the cost of these to the successful party.

In precolonial times, verdicts of the Amala were final in all cases, including even the most serious ones of murder or manslaughter:¹ In a case of murder, the Amala usually required the offender to hang himself; or it may hand the culprit over to be killed by shooting or clubbing by the relatives of the murdered person. The killing of a thief in the act of stealing was considered justifiable homicide, and no penalty was demanded. In some cases of murder, especially if the culprit or offender

1. No distinctions were made between murder and manslaughter (Igbu-ochu).

was an influential person in the community, the Amala might be influenced to commute the death penalty into a heavy compensation payable to the family of the victim. In a case of debt, a creditor could sell his debtor into slavery; if the debtor ran away, the creditor could seize and sell into slavery any other member of the debtor's family.

The Amala punished stealing (regarded as a serious social stigma) by sale into slavery; or by public disgrace involving the total immersion of the offender into a public, open-air, latrine; sometimes an alternative punishment by public disgrace would compel the offender to submit himself to Igba-akuko, a dance of shame, in which the culprit was clothed in rags and rubbish and forced to dance around the village and the market square of the village.

The crime of incest was not just often punished by sale into slavery of both the male and the female parties to the offence; it was also generally viewed throughout Igboland as a serious abomination which always required ritual sacrifices (Ikwa-Ala) to the Ala deity, the goddess of morality. Without performing such cleansing sacrifices to the Ala deity, the entire community felt itself endangered with the threat of some 'national' calamity or pestilence, arising from the culprit's abomination and the consequent wrath of the Ala-deity. But other classes of sexual offences, such as adultery, love-making in the bush, or love-making in the afternoon, attracted punishments which varied from sale into slavery to imposition of fines ^{in kind} (igbuku-eghu or okuko), according as the Amala of the particular village viewed the seriousness of each of these offences.

The Age Sets and the Okonko Society were two important institutions which greatly aided the Amala in the good ordering of the society, the maintenance of law and order, and the entire socio-political administration of the community.

The Age Sets:

Apart from functioning as an executive arm of the Amala, the age grades or sets maintained internal cohesion, and helped to keep law and order generally by enforcing strict discipline among their membership. A member of an age grade or Set who committed any offence or crime against the entire village, was generally regarded as bringing shame both 'on his family and members of his Age grade. Such a person often faced not just the severe sanctions of the village Amala, but also those of his Age Set, which might even expel him from their company or group.

The Okonko (Ekpe) Society was another body which also enforced the orders or decisions of the Amala. In traditional Ohuhu society as in other parts of precolonial Umuahia, in Ngwaland, and indeed throughout most parts of Igboland, the Okonko society enjoyed and exercised such immense power and prestige that could not be challenged, certainly by no 'OKPO' or non-Okonko member. At that time it was indeed rare to find any responsible, respectable and well-to-do member of the village/town who was not a member of the Okonko society. Comprising the most respectable and important members of the town/village, the Okonko society was in a sense the government-in-council of the Amala.

In all matters relating to road-clearing or construction, bridge making or collection of tolls on the community roads, and in the task

of market clearing, debt collection, land and boundary disputes and other issues coming before the Amala Assembly, the Okonko society was a most powerful body to execute the final orders of the Amala. Members usually carried with them their long walking sticks with copper rings on them as symbols of membership, and as safeguards against any molestation whenever a member travelled outside his own town on trading or any other business. But the surest guarantee of safety and freedom from molestation outside his own town/village was the individual members's possession and mastery of the secret signs and symbols of the society. Once he had satisfactorily proved his membership of the Okonko society by giving the correct signs and symbols anywhere he was challenged by an Okonko Society outside his home town or village, such member's welcome, freedom and safety in that 'foreign' territory, were automatically guaranteed as long as he remained in that host territory.

In its debt-recovering functions, the Okonko society usually besieged or quartered itself at the home of the bankrupt debtor, forcing the entire household to stay indoors. Members of the society would then loot and feed on any yams, fowls and goats found in the compound. This siege lasted till the debtor or his relatives fully paid the debt or concluded satisfactory arrangements to pay the debt, sometimes by mortgaging a piece of the debtor's land or property, or that of his close relatives.

Precolonial Occupations Among The Umuahia People

Agriculture, arable farming, in precolonial Umuahia of which the Ohuhu clan formed a part, was a major economic activity.

Each of the Ohuhu villages practised, in precolonial times as even now they still do, the shifting cultivation type of farming.

Every year each village would decide which portion or area of the total available farming land would be cultivated. Around mid-January the farming season sets in with bush-clearing; each family or kindred starts clearing its own portion of the farm land in the area where the village would be concentrating its farming activities for that year. The bush-clearing is followed a few weeks afterwards by bush-burning, which itself is succeeded by the actual planting of crops, lasting between late February and April ending.

Of all agricultural crops, Yam remains the most important farm crop throughout Igboland; and the Ohuhu people were particularly noted for the many different species of yams they planted, among them Ji-igwe; Ji-oko, Ji-abali or Ji-nvula; Ji-Akakpo, Ji-ocha, Ji-opani.

The women planted the cocoyam specie called Ngburuchi; later the Aro people introduced another specie locally known as Ede-aru. Varieties of vegetables were planted, especially Ugu. The now famous staple food, cassava, was a late-comer, introduced by the missionaries or the Aro people around the 1920s.

A Note On The Umuahia-Igbo Cosmic View Of Nature

The general Igbo world view of nature, and religious beliefs, held as true for the Ohuhu and other Umuahia communities as indeed for other Igbo people. The names of the gods and deities and the special functions ascribed to them may differ according to localities; but in general the essential principles of belief seem to be the same every where throughout Igbo land.

Among the Ohuhu and other Umuahia communities, there was the general belief in one Supreme Being, Chileke, Chineke, or Obashi-Bilelu. All knowing and all powerful, this Supreme Being created all human beings, as He also did a pantheon of other gods and deities: As His messengers all the deities and spirits were subject and subservient to Him; but these messengers were however much more powerful than human beings; hence the latter dread, fear, and worship them. Between human beings and this Supreme Being, the lesser deities and spirits acted as intermediaries or messengers, and so through this means exerted great influences in the affairs and destinies of men and their societies.

In the Umuahia and general Igbo cosmic view, at birth every human being had his/her Chi, the guardian angel or spirit which exercised a protective, supervisory, role over the destiny of the individual from birth to death.

At the community level, the Ohuhu possessed a 'national' deity, the AJANA which was worshipped throughout Ohuhuland as the general overseer and representative of the Supreme Being in Ohuhu land; the Umuopara had a similar 'national' deity, the OJAM, with similar functions.

Each of the other Umuahia clans had its own major deity and also other smaller deities, all subject to the universal and all powerful Supreme Being, Chileke or Chukwu or Obasi-Bilelu. Obashi-Bilelu's other spirit-messengers had specific roles and functions: The Ala deity, in each of the Umuahia clans, as in all other Igbo communities, was the goddess of morality and fertility; just as, in all Igbo land, Kanu or Kamanu was the god of thunderstorm and rain; and Njoku was the god of yam.

Apart from the major deities to whom the Supreme Being had assigned moral and judicial functions and magistracies covering the entire Igbo world, there were the lesser spirit - 'magistrates' (e.g. water gods and goddesses and spirit-oracles) whose jurisdictions over moral and judicial questions were localised or limited to the individual village communities. In Ohuhu land there were the minor water-gods and goddesses, among which were Iyi Eke, Iyi-Afo, Ogwugwu, there were also the oracles, for example, the Anyim-Ohuhu at Amaogwugwa, and the Ike-Agbala at Isingwu; all these minor deities exercised localised jurisdictions and moral sanctions within the village communities which recognised and harboured them, fed or sacrificed to them.

These brief observations on the traditional political system, occupations, and the cosmic view, also hold true generally for each of the other Umuahia village groups or clan communities, as already stated: Apart from the Supreme Being, Chileke or Obasi Bilelu, there were myriads of other lesser gods, deities or spirits with different names or features in the different places; each of the Umuahia groups sacrificed to the gods; they also worshipped these deities as powerful intermediaries between man and God. Since these religious and cultural aspects of Umuahia traditional society may form the subject of another study, they are only discussed or mentioned very briefly in the present work, which deals mainly with the complex issue of oral traditions and legends of origin of the Umuahia peoples. The next chapter looks at those of UMUOPARA.

THE MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF THE
UMUOPARA PEOPLE....

With the introduction of the machinery of British colonial rule in the Bende Division of which the Umuahia communities formed a part soon after 1900, the Umuopara village units were grouped together with those of the Umuhu and Okaiuga, under the one name of Ohuhu Clan. This new arrangement by the colonial administration lasted from about the mid 1920s up to 1949. During this period the various groups which made up the Ohuhu Clan attended one clan court (the Igbo Court) based at Nkwoegwu. The growth of a sense of ethnic identity and political consciousness among the people, led in the 1940s to the agitation by the Umuopara group for a separate Umuopara clan unit, which request was granted them after 1949 but without a separate court.

On the whole Umuopara is made up of seven village communities (Ama-Asaa) viz: Ezeleke, Umunwanwa, Ogbodiukwu, Ekenobizi, Ehume, Ogbodinaibe, Umuhihi. Each of these seven villages (Ama) is made up of kindred units (onu-ama); each kindred (onu-oma) in turn comprises a number of family units (onu-obu). The village (Ama) of Ezeleke, for instance, is made up of six kindreds (onu-ama) which themselves are groups of families.

The village-kindred composition of the Umuopara clan may be illustrated thus:

| Village or 'Mba' or 'Ama' | Kindreds (Onu-ama) or Groups of Onu-obu or extended family units. |
|---------------------------|---|
| Ezeleke | Umujaneze, Umubah, Umuabali, Amachara, Umuekwule, Amankwo |
| Umunwanwa | Ozu, Ngodo, Umuawoli |
| Ogbodiukwu | Umuchime, Umudimeari, Ofeiyi, Umuorilaoku, Umuanya |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Ekenobizi | Dikenkwu, Dikenta, Azumiri, Umuzam, Umuneobiukwu |
| Ehume | Ngodo, Umuonnara, Umuoma, Umuoyima, Umuchoko, Umuoleoke, Umuofeke |
| Ogbodinaibe | Ogbodiohu, Ogbodiochie, Ibee, Umuodo |
| Umuhihi | Umuhihi |

Questions concerning the origin of the Umuopara group in Umuahia, have elicited many conflicting responses from different groups and elders within Umuopara. However all the accounts agree on one important point; namely, that the place called Omaegwu, a portion of territory near the Ahi river and lying between the village communities of Ehume and Ekenobizi, was the place which once quartered all the Umuopara and the Ibeku groups, before they began to disperse in different directions within and outside the Umuopara clan. The Umuopara traditions of 'origin' are, like most others elsewhere, not much more than recounts of folk migrations and settlements in the past.

Two main versions of these legends of origin are examined here: The first version given by a group of Umuopara elders, maintains that the Umuopara people originated at Omaegwu the ancestral home of all Umuopara people and, allegedly of their Ibeku brothers who now form a separate clan.

According to Dick Egwu of Ekenobizi, 'our fathers told us that as 'Opapa' we could not have come from anywhere. This means that we must have been here [in Umuopara] since the beginning of creation....'¹ In an interview with a student-researcher another respondent, Uwaga Okeanya,

1. Interviews with Dick Egwu and other Ekenobizi elders on 6th December 1978, and also on 25th June and 10th July 1983. Also see records of interviews by Atulomah A.I., with Dick Egwu and Uwaga Okeanya, August 1972, in Atulomah, A.I., *The Establishment of British Rule in Umuopara 1901 - 1929*. (History Long Essay at UNN 1974). p.75-83.

from Ogbodiukwu village in Umuopara, also subscribes to this view:

'Our fathers did not come from anywhere but
rather our own god created us where we are
now living...'¹

Some of the people's sense of chronology appears really too short to comprehend events occurring too far back in time, perhaps beyond a mere century. Apart from its confirmation of Omaegwu as an important melting-pot and dispersal centre in Umuopara history, this version of the oral tradition seems to lack that chronology or time sequence which is so vital for a proper reconstruction of Umuopara history.

Some oral traditions have even led, in the Umuopara clan as indeed virtually in all the other clans in present day Umuahia, to rather amateuristic attempts to derive all component village units of each clan from one epical ancestor; that is, one epical ancestor for each clan.

In the case of Umuopara, for instance, some versions of the oral tradition have suggested that all the seven villages (Ama-asaa) of Umuopara derived from the seven sons of one epical ancestor or father, Opara.² Opara, according to this tradition, lived with his seven sons, and, it is also believed, with some of his brothers at Omaegwu, until his children grew up and started expanding in the different directions and areas of Umuopara clan; just as some of Opara's brothers also moved out of the Omaegwu territory to settle elsewhere outside Umuopara.

Intensive field work carried out in many villages throughout the five clans in Umuahia, have yielded lots of information which seem to contradict this tradition of one epical ancestor fathering each of the

1. ibid.

2. Atulomah, A.I., op.cit; preface p.viii-ix.

present clan units. The picture emerging from all the information gathered so far, is one of mixed migrations and of settlements of mixed groups of people from different directions in small family units, which later developed into groups of village communities; and which groups of village communities subsequently formed the clan units.

We may discount the idea of the epical ancestor 'Opara', and his children 'Umuopara', being created, originating, or residing, 'since the beginning of creation', at Omaegwu.¹ But if we accept that version of the oral tradition which points to 'folkerwanderung' or the mixed migrations and settlements of different groups of folks or peoples from different directions, it is important to have some idea of the possible directions or sources from which these folks could have come into the Omaegwu or Umuopara area to settle. Just as the oral traditions of the Umuopara people suggest that their Omaegwu territory was the centre of initial settlement, before it later became a dispersal centre out of which other groups subsequently migrated into other areas within Umuahia, so also other evidences suggest that the Umuopara groups were themselves originally immigrants into the Omaegwu territory.

The first group of British colonial officials to collect oral information in the 1930s on the traditional histories of the Ngwa, Ezinnihite and Ohuhu communities, had received information from various community groups, including those in the Bende Division on the eastern side of the Imo River. Part of the information obtained states that

... 'Obizi in the Ezennihite area is recognised as the town of the original ancestors of the Ovoku /Tbeku? group in Bende Division....'²

1. ibid. pp.75-83.

2. Intelligence Report on Ezinnihitte Clan No.52/1932 Owdist 9/18/43 pp.17.

Although the Obizi people of Ezinihitte appeared themselves to be uncertain of the relationship between them and the other groups in the Bende Division, they however admitted that in the past the 'Ovukus' [Ibeku?] and others from the Bende Division in the Eastern side of the Imo River, sometimes came over 'to sacrifice to the Ala Juju' at Obizi in Ezinihitte. From those early reports it appeared that whilst the Obizi-Ezinihitte groups seemed uncertain about some of the facts, those in the Bende Division on the Eastern side of the Imo River, 'who could have no reason for inventing such a story'¹, were more reliable informants, and more certain of the facts of their own ancestral origins at Obizi-Ezinihitte,² or from other areas across the Imo River.

Information obtained during recent interviews with elders in different sections of Umuahia, have varied widely on the issue of the origins of the Umuahia communities; but an analysis of a great bulk of the oral traditions supports the theory of 'migration from across the Imo River'. One of the earliest products of the whiteman's education system in Umuopara, the late Chief Gilbert Nwaubani of Umuojameze village, gave a very useful and reliable account of the origin of the Umuopara and the other Umuahia village communities:

....'In the very olden days our grand grand fathers crossed the Imo from the Owerri side and settled where we are now [in Umuopara]. They told me that we moved in with a number of people which today include Okaiuga and Umuhu, Ngwa, Olokoru, Ubakala, Ibeku and Ossah.... Our people [Umuopara] and the present Ibeku people lived together as blood

1. ibid.

2. ibid.

relations until the ridding of the area of the menace of gorillas.... It was after this that the Ibeku and Ossah migrated to their present location in search of more fertile ground.'¹

Of the various versions of oral traditions which exist in different parts of Umuopara today, the most consistent and reliable appears to be the one which points to the West of the Imo River as the direction from which the ancestors of both the Umuopara, and some of the other Umuahia groups, had originally migrated into Umuahia.² The information obtained on this subject from one of the oldest men in Umuopara, an important elder and leader of Okonko society at Amachara village, has almost the weight of a cumulative and corroborative evidence, and therefore bears full quotation here:

'Our grand-fathers told us that sometime in the very olden days, our people lived on the other side of the Imo, probably amongst the present Mbaise or Owerri people. Because of the thick population there land became scarce for cultivation purposes. Groups of people [consequently] decided to move eastwards and southwards. The group which included our grandfathers moved eastwards and crossed the Imo River. These migrations founded settlements which today include Umuopara, Okaiuga, Umuhu, Ibeku, Olokoro, Oboro and even the present people that make up the Ngwa Division.... There are many sections of Umuopara who today /live/ elsewhere like the 'Umuopara Odu' in Obowo, and the Umuopara in Ngwaland. These have kinship relationship with our own Umuopara.'³

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1. The late Chief Gilbert Nwaubani (75 years) in interview with Atuloma A.I., on 7th September 1972; see Atulomah, op cit. p.89
 2. Series of Interviews held between June-October 1983 with various groups of elders in Ekenobizi Village including Solomon Ucheagwu (74 yrs); Ezekiel Egwu (68 yrs); Godwin 'Iron Bar' Egwu (55 yrs), Bestman Obia (65 yrs); Stephen Ekwuribe (70 yrs); Chief P.O. IHEME, (60 yrs); Peter Ucheagwu (70 yrs).
 3. Information given during interview by Onwubiko Onyekwere (aged 90 yrs) in August 1972 transcribed by Atulomah, A.I., in Atulomah op cit p.60-61.

This version of the oral tradition which derives the original ancestors of the Umuopara people from communities living westwards across the Imo River is remarkable at least for two reasons: although many respondents, for the same reasons which may be noticed later in the cases of Ibeku and the other clan groups, appeared either somewhat reluctant, unwilling, or unable to give fuller information on this point, it was still easily seen to be the more popular or more truthful version in Umuopara oral traditions of origin; secondly, this version is also remarkably identical with those on the origins of the Umuhu and Okaiuga or Ohuhu people, also the people of Ngwaland, all of which groups have always been historically and ethnically linked with the Umuopara people. The Ohuhu and Ngwa groups, it is important to observe, still trace the original homes of their own ancestors to communities living across the Imo River to the West in the Mbaise, Owerri, Obowo or other areas in the Etiti Division.

About what time then, did the peopling of the Umuopara territory begin, and what number of persons migrated originally with the legendary epical ancestor, 'Opara' into the Omaegwu area? These are some of the important questions adequate answers to which may have to await full archaeological investigation of the Omaegwu territory and other areas in Umuahia or parts of the old Bende division. Already a brief, preliminary, archaeological investigation carried out at Bende some years ago had yielded artefacts suggesting that parts of the old Bende division were

already inhabited by about the 9th century A.D.¹

On the basis of such archaeological evidence, we may perhaps date the earliest migrations from the South-West directions of Owerri, Mbaise and Etiti across the Imo River into the south-eastern zones of the Ngwa and Umuahia areas to about the 9th century A.D.; the intermittent migrations and free movements of peoples (in search of security and land space, agricultural and hunting grounds) probably continued in these areas until well into the 16th century. In the hey-day of the slave trade, between the 16th and 18 centuries, these migration movements and resettlements would be affected to a greater or a lesser degree, increasing or decreasing in volume, according as people regularly assessed their personal or group security and well-being in their places of abode.

Some of the major interests which usually obliged people in those early centuries to migrate, were those interests or activities best achieved by people working as a group: For instance the quest for personal or group security, the search for land space for hunting and agriculture, forest clearing and farming activities, were among such basic interests and activities best achieved by people operating as a group. We may therefore reason that the earliest ancestors and founders of Umuopara, did not move rashly from their old homes into a new area at Umuopara. They must have initially spotted and at least briefly surveyed the thickly forested, beast-infested, Omaegwu territory, before eventually coming over the Imo River in large groups; the existing

1. Prof. Hartle, *Archaeology of Eastern Nigeria* p.138; cited in Isichei E, *A History of the Igbo People* (London 1976) p.15.

conditions at the gorilla-infested territory and the reasons of collective security would indeed oblige the first batch of immigrants into the Omaegwu area not to come individually but as a group. The theory of one common ancestor, the legendary ancestor 'Opara', as the sole or individual immigrant into, and founder of, Umuopara at Omaegwu seems improbable; that is, if we assume, and we must so assume, that Opara was a reasonable person, a wiseman conscious of his own security which, at the gorilla-infested and thickly forested, Omaegwu territory, he could only best achieve by coming in, and living with, a group of people. Perhaps the best one can say about the 'Opara' individual or group, is that, if an individual, he was by his age or wisdom the most senior and powerful among a fairly sizeable number coming in as the first group of immigrants from across the Imo River. Perhaps the 'Opara' group was the largest in number, of all the different groups that migrated or travelled as a first batch into Omaegwu. Subsequently this first batch was followed by other groups, into Omaegwu territory. These groups settling initially at Omaegwu continued to grow and expand, each group eventually establishing a new village community in its new home at Umuopara. Omaegwu and other Umuahia areas, and naming this village after the one across the Imo River from which it had migrated. This perhaps is the real explanation for the observed fact that virtually all the village or place names found in Mbaise, for instance, are duplicated throughout Ngwa land; just as virtually all the village and place names in each of the five Umuahia clans today are duplicates of what also exist in the Owerri, Etiti, Okigwe, and Mbaise village communities.

Mere coincidence, in short, seems rather an insufficient explanation of this very common phenomenon of duplication of names of village communities on both sides of the Imo River.

What happened between the communities located on the south west and the south east of the Imo River in terms of inter-group migrations, the establishment of new village communities, and the duplications in the nomenclature of the village communities, may be briefly noticed between the Umuopara at Omaegwu and the other Umuahia village communities located to the north west and east of Umuopara. For instance, Umuopara oral tradition states, and Olokoro oral traditions with those of Ubakála and Old Umuahia admit, inter alia, that the Obizi kindred in Amakama Olokoro migrated to their present home from Ekenobizi Umuopara;¹ that the Umuoparaozara in Olokoro was probably partly peopled by migrants from Umuopara at Omaegwu; that the Obizi kindred in Amaibo-Ubakala certainly got to their present home via Ekenobizi Umuopara via Obizi Amakama in Olokoro;² that part of the present day Umuihi-Abam in Ubakala, were definitely from Umuihi-Umuopara; that the Umuobutu kindred of Old-Umuahia which was in the olden days a part of Olokoro, came from Ehume-Umuopara; that the Ibeku and the Umuopara groups in the present day Umuahia Division, were originally one kindred group which had lived together around the Omaegwu-Umuopara area; that the ancestors of the Umuezeala kindred in Old Umuahia came from the Umuezeala kindred which

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1. Interviews with Ubakala elders on the 8th, 11th and 19th Dec., 1983, held with the assistance of Mr. Titus Anyanwu at the residence of Mr. S. Arukwe, President General of Ubakala Improvement Union, Umuahia.
 2. Recorded interviews with Ekenobizi elders on the 25th June 1983. But Chief J. Onuoha the Ogurube I of Ibeku had admitted, during interviews held at his Ossah residence with the present writer on the 11th July 1983, close ethnic relationship between Ibeku and Umuopara; but he did not agree to the suggestion of these two close (blood) relations ever having lived together at Omaegwu.

had migrated from Umuezeala Nsu in Mbano and settled at Ndume-Ibeku, from which latter area the founders of the Umuezeala in Old Umuahia took off;¹ that part of the people of Mgbarakuma-Ubakala came originally from Ahiara-Mbaise;² while sections of Umuosu-Ubakala claim strong ethnic affinity with those in Umuosu-Ngwa.³ Just as the Ngwa oral traditions of origin also do, the Umuahia oral traditions generally point to such mixed migrations and such mixed settlements of different kindreds and village groups as would make the theory of 'one epical-ancestor-founder' possible perhaps only in the case of the founding of the smaller family groups or kindred units, but untenable in the case of the founding of the large village community or a whole clan. It is argued, in short, that probably none of the present day clans in Umuahia was founded by a single individual migrant or settler as epical ancestor of the whole clan; but rather that each of the clans as we know them today, was peopled by migrants coming in from different directions within and outside Umuahia.

One acid test of ethnic affinity or common ancestral origins, lies in the rules of matrimony. Among the clans and within the village-communities, the families or kindred groups which have blood kinship ties customarily do not intermarry. In the village of Ekenobizi-Umuopara, for example, there are five kindreds which make up the village; while some of these kindreds intermarry, others do not; for example while the Dikeukwu kindred intermarries with the kindreds of Umuzam and Umuneobiukwu

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1. Chiabuotu, S.O., 'Precolonial Old Umuahia: A Socio-political history'. (History Long Essay at Uniport June 1981) p.7.
 2. Interviews with Ubakala elders especially Chief Mark Ogbuehi Uchegbue, (aged over 106 years) at Eziana Ubakala December 1983.
 3. ibid.

which live in close proximity to Dikeukwu as its (Dikeukwu's) next door neighbours, the Dikeukwu, Dikenta and Azumuri kindreds which live comparatively much farther apart, do not intermarry. At another level of traditional marriage custom, the fact of socio-ethnic-cultural relationship or link (not blood link!) between kindred groups can be revealed by the way in which this kind of socio-ethnic link confers privileges or advantages on the man seeking a wife from within the socio-ethnic group or kindred: For instance, when an Ekenobizi man goes to marry from the relatively very far-away Obizi-Amakama kindred in the Olokoro clan, the Ekenobizi man is more likely to receive, in terms of customary marriage rights and privileges, more of a 'son-of-the-soil' treatment than an 'outsider' or 'foreigner', another man from another part of Umuopara.¹

The same advantages of cheaper charges and payments in customary or traditional marriage will hold true for an Obizi-Amakama man taking a wife from any part of Ekenobizi, especially the Azumiri kindred, from which the founders of Obizi-Amakama migrated. Though now living farther apart in two different clans, the villages of Azumiri-Ekenobizi in Umuopara and Obizi-Amakama in Olokoro, still recognise through reciprocal marriage customs the fact of their socio-ethnic-cultural affinity or common ancestry.

In the Umuahia village communities as elsewhere, perhaps throughout Igboland, the measure of affinity or kinship relationship is not territory or how close to each other the kindreds live; rather it is either blood affinity, or socio-ethnic-cultural affinity. Matrimonially some traditional societies always recognise these kinds of links,

1. Mr. Godwin, 'Iron-Bar', Egwu, interviewed on 25th June, 1983 at Ekenobizi.

although in different ways. From this observed practice we may go on to say that groups or kindreds which while living together within the same village or the same clan, still practise intermarriage amongst themselves, as the seven constituent Umuopara villages still do, are not very likely to have originated from one common blood ancestor. Whilst close blood affinity between kindred groups prevents intermarriage, socio-ethnic-cultural-affinity permits and even encourages it in the manner described above between the Ekenobizi and the Obizi-Amakama villages.

Although the individual Umuahia clans or villages may not have originated from one common stock or blood ancestor, time-honoured traditions of socio-ethnic and cultural, neighbourly, existence within a common territory over the centuries had however forged among the groups a sense of common destiny and ancestry. In the case of Umuopara, the migrant groups which initially arrived together at the Omaegwu territory, and later founded the seven constituent villages of Umuopara clan, may be said (in a territorial sense and in the sense of a common socio-ethnic, or good neighbourly and cultural co-existence and experience,) to have a common ancestry: All of them had come over from one geographical location or direction across the Imo River, into a new territory at Omaegwu where the common experiences of living and working and fending for themselves together had forged among them a greater sense of a common identity, a common ancestry or destiny.

Contributing to and underpinning this sense among the Umuopara group of a common identity or common ancestry, were the numerous activities in which the people commonly took part: commercial and trading activities in the same markets, and the observance of certain social ceremonies and

practices in common. After the concerted and successful armed efforts of the Umuopara to rid their Omaegwu territory of the menace of gorillas, the Ojam religious festival developed and became perhaps the greatest symbol of the common destiny, common heritage and common ancestry of the Umuopara people. Apart from the Ojam festival, there were many other festivities, of religious or social importance, which the Umuopara people observed in common or usually celebrated in their individual homes or at their common civic centre at Omaegwu.¹

Umuopara oral tradition relates how and why the small Omaegwu territory, which lies between the two village communities of Ekenobizi and Ehume, had remained, perhaps for very long after the initial settlements, a concentration point for most of the migrant groups crossing over the Imo River from the western side: Outside the small Omaegwu area, the greater part of the then Umuopara land was covered with thick forests and infested with gorillas and other beasts whose presence in the area made people's lives generally insecure. The oral traditions recall how these peoples of Omaegwu had teamed up together in prolonged armed campaigns to rid their land of these beasts. It was only after the successful campaigns that some of the people, according to this version of the oral tradition, were able to move out of the congested Omaegwu area to settle in other parts of Umuopara such as Umuabali, Amachara and Amankwo; or to settle in outside Umuopara territory such as at Ibeku, Ubakala, Olokoru. This version of the oral tradition has, however, been rejected by some of the informants from communities outside Umuopara - especially Ibeku. This writer's subsequent interviews and discussions with various elders and informants in the Ubakala clan during the months of November - December 1983 and January 1984, led to contacts at Ezicama-Ubakala with one of the most remarkable elders that may be

1. Examples of such festivals would be Ime Nzu; Irio Agwu, Ihio Egwu; Iri-Ji; Igba Ekpo; Igba Ekwe Mgba; Ime Ala Ubi; Itu-Anyia; Igba-ese; These festivals and other features of the traditional life and society of the Umuahia people generally may form the theme of another work in future.

met in the whole of Umuahia today.

Chief Mark Ogbuehi Uchegbue of the Umuaroko kindred in Eziana Ubakala, was one of the first few products of the earliest Christian Mission Educational efforts in Umuahia. Born in April 1878 at Umuaroko in Eziana Ubakala, Chief Uchegbue had part of his early education at the mission schools at Ohafia in 1911, returning to Ubakala-Umuahia soon afterwards to become a primary school teacher by 1924. Today at the age of over 106 years, and long retired from the public service, Chief Mark Uchegbue still enjoys an incredibly excellent physical and mental health. He is still active as a farmer. As a sage and local 'barrister' or 'magistrate', he still regularly travels out, sometimes on foot or on bicycle, from his Eziana home in Ubakala up to Ibeku and 'Umuopara, to participate in adjudications of local land disputes or other village matters or cases to which he is usually always invited outside his own village and clan, on account of his extraordinary experience, oratory and wisdom.¹

When we met some six weeks ago early this February, 1984 at Avodim Ubakala, it was at a traditional memorial festival featuring traditional dances, in honour of a late Ubakala elder. Chief Uchegbue quietly finished drinking his bottle of beer and, to everybody's delight at the ceremony, easily won his 'excuse-me-dance' with an eighteen year old girl dancing vigorously at the arena of the festival! Later, at the end of the ceremony,

1. To Chief Uchegbu I owe my recent knowledge of another dimension of the life and achievements of 'Okeannunu', meaning a great bird or a high class Bird! According to Chief Uchegbue, this was "a praise-name among many others" given to his great friend, and this writer's father, Jonah Asiegbu Okezie, by his many friends and admirers throughout the Bende, Uzuakoli, Ukwu-Ndoki and Umuahia, Ohafia and Abiriba communities; where Uchegbue and his friend often travelled together, to trade or to judge local cases or to represent the Okonko Society. "The extraordinary powers of oratory and proverb-making, native wisdom and probity in handling community affairs, established the late Jonah Asiegbu Okezie of Ekenobizi as a highly talented community leader in his own right, and as a leader and president of the Okonko Society in this part of Igboland".

I took the opportunity to exchange more ideas on the past interview meetings and discussions we had had with him some two months before at his home village in Eziana on aspects of Umuahia history: After greeting him and re-introducing myself, I asked him a question:

Since our previous discussions on aspects of Umuahia local history, have you had any new information on the subject generally, or on the geographical location and the meaning of 'Omaegwu', as well as on the past or precolonial relationship between the Umuahia clans?

'My son don't you still remember what I told you last time when you came to my house at Eziana?' The old man then went on and rehearsed most of what he had earlier stated during the interviews we had with him at his home in Eziana Ubakala:

'In those old days, before the white man arrived in Umuahia, Omaegwu was the central meeting place for the people of Umuopara, Ibeku, Ubakala and Olokoru. The most serious cases of murder, poisoning, stealing, and other serious crimes were tried and punished there by the whole Amala. Some sacrifices used to be made at that place. I was a youngboy then, but I used to pass through that place with my father to the Nkwokwereze market at Ekenobizi. From Ubakala the old bush route passing through Umunwanwa and Ehume to that place was different from, and shorter than, the present route to it. The Omaegwu area lies between the Ahi river near Ehume and the present Umuopara College near Ekenobizi Umuopara. This is the place where the people used to stage their Egwu festival, before the groups separated and each group decided to establish their own Omaegwu in its place. The Ubakala people established their own Omaegwu at Amibo'¹

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1. Interviews by the writer and Mr. Eneka Ogazi with Chief Mark Ogbuehi Uchegbue (aged 106 years) of Eziana-Ubakala in November - December 1983 and January and February, 1984.

Chief Uchegbue strongly supports the view that the present clans that make up Umuahia were each of them originally made up of peoples who had migrated in groups or as individuals from different directions to settle in villages within these clans. To further illustrate this point of the dispersal within the Umuahia clans, of blood-related families and kindreds, or of peoples sharing some other kinds of common links, Chief Uchegbue stated:

'We of Umuaroko kindred in Ezianya Ubakala do not intermarry with Laguru village in Ubakala; nor with the people from Ndume Ibeku'¹.

Many other examples exist of non-intermarriage between kindred groups now living in different Umuahia clans: Information gathered during interviews with Chief Ekwueme of Abam-Ubakala also strengthens this view of intergroup links (blood or socio-ethnic-cultural links) among the Umuahia peoples: for instance, some of the kindreds or family groups in Abam-Ubakala today (notably Okwuike, Onyekwere, Onyema, Chokoloma) cannot marry from Ehume village in Umuopara clan, from which place they had separated, according to oral tradition, from their blood relations and migrated to Abam in Ubakala clan many centuries ago.²

Despite the existence of other opposing versions of oral traditions which will be further examined shortly, the available evidences so far strongly suggest that the peoples of Ibeku, Ubakala and Olokoru had perhaps much more in common (as kindreds who probably once lived

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1. Interview with Chief Mark Uchegbue recorded by Eneka Ogazi at Ezianya Ubakala, November, 1983
 2. Interview with Chief M.I. Ekwueme of Abam Ubakala recorded by Eneka Ogazi, November, 1983.

together and interacted at the melting-pot of Omaegwu-Umuopara or some other common territory), than many people are now either willing to accept, or able to recollect. Now erased or blurred by the passage of time, the criss-crossing footsteps of migrants between Omaegwu-Umuopara and the other Umuahia villages and clan communities, are sometimes accidentally revealed to us by some of the existing marriage customs, the do's and don'ts governing exogamous and endogamous marriages among the different Umuahia kindred groups and village communities.

In the next chapter, on the Ibeku Egwu Asaa, these themes will be further examined.

THEORIES OF ORIGIN OF IBEKU EGWU-ASSA:....

The first attempt ever made to record the history of the Ibeku people of Umuahia occurred over half a century ago. A British political or District officer, C.J. Pleass, was visiting among the Ibeku people in 1933 to collect at first hand Ibeku oral traditions of origin and settlement history. The violence of the disagreements and arguments among the people over their local history virtually forced this attempt to be given up: As the British officer later reported,

'attempts to ascertain [even] the order of seniority of these [Ibeku] villages had to be abandoned owing to violent disputes which ensued when this subject was mentioned... so violent is the dispute that when all the villages of the clan except those founded from Isieke wished to meet at NKWO UNE the people of Isieke said that if the clan would not meet at Isieke they would not meet the remainder of the clan....'¹

More than half a century afterwards, similar difficulties still exist in trying to track down the essential facts of Ibeku history. The historian in the field still faces, in short, a distressing multiplicity of contradictory accounts; the kind of situation which led to the conclusion in 1933 that,

'The [Ibeku] clan have no knowledge whence they came but most of them agree that the earliest seat of the clan of which they have any knowledge was Ahia Eke Ndume. Isieke maintain that whilst a portion of the clan settled around Ahia Eke Ndume the greater part of the clan went on to Isieke....'²

1. District Officer (D.O.) Pleass, C.J. Intelligence Report on Ibeku EP 10696A CSE1/85/5428 (1933).

2. ibid.

In the olden days, the ability of a community to organise and stage its own Egwu, a festival featuring cultural dances or masquerade shows, was a mark of its autonomy, and of its independent existence as a culturally and politically homogenous entity either as a village or as groups of villages within a clan.

The Ibeku elders who a little over half a century ago had given the first ever recorded information on their history, had agreed that the Ibeku clan originally comprised seven Egwus or kindred groups of villages: As these seven original (parent) villages of Ibeku grew in numbers, extended families began to split away from the parent villages, and to establish their own settlements adjacent to the parent ones. The growth and expansion of Ibeku clan from the seven (parent) original villages, may be represented thus:¹

| The Parent/Original Villages | The Satelite Villages/Lineages |
|------------------------------|--|
| ISIEKE | Okwita, Okwenyi, Okoma, Umuajiyi |
| NDUME | Umuana, Lodu, Ihie, Umuohu, Ohokobe, Ndume, Umuafai, Umuezeala, Ofeke, Umuaroko, Umuhunta. |
| AFARATA | Amuzukwu, Ugbankata, Mbom, Ameke, Isiadu. |
| AFARA | Ohokobe, Agata, Isiama |
| OSSAH (Ossa) | Umuchime, Eziam, Mgbaja |
| EMEDE | Agbo, Ata, Emede, Mkporo, Umuagu, Umueze, Umuodudu, Udide. |
| AMAOFORO | Avonkwu, Amuzuoruo, Iyienyi, Ajata, Okwuoturu. |

1. ibid.

The field work carried out in Ibeku clan between June 1983 and January 1984, took this writer and his field assistant to virtually all the different kindred-groups in Ibeku. The picture which seems to emerge very clearly from the various oral interviews and the recordings, is that Isieke and Ndume are acknowledged by all the constituent village groups in Ibeku, as the two most senior, oldest, villages in the clan.

Mr. Odoemenam Nwosu, aged about 94 years, was on the 30th December 1983 interviewed at Umuajiyi Isieke Ibeku. On the tradition of origin, migration and settlement history of the Ibeku people, he states that all Ibeku people had originally settled and lived together at Ahiaeke (Ndume), 'before the entire Ibeku began dispersing in various directions after the Obegu War.'¹ The name 'Ogwurube' or 'Igurube', a most important and crucial issue to which we must return later in this discussion, also featured in the interview discussion; and on this point, the interviewee informs us that 'Igwurube is a nick-name', or etutuaha; 'no person answered such name'.²

Many of the thirty-odd questionnaires drawn up for the local interviews at Ibeku were aimed, among other points, to elicit information on the traditions of origin, the migration and settlement legends of the Ibeku clan as a whole, as well as those of the individual villages which constitute the clan.

1. Interviews recorded by Emeka Ogazi at Ibeku on 30/12/83

2. ibid.

Whilst a version of these traditions maintains, in effect, that the Ibeku people originated within Ibeku and never came from anywhere outside the clan, ironically each of the constituent villages traces its own origins to some other area outside the clan!

'Ibeku did not migrate from any place. We are the original owners of the land. But if we came from anywhere, that is beyond any recognition or identification....'.¹

Closely similar to this first version, but expressed somewhat differently by various other groups in Ibeku, was a forth-right statement by one of the elders at Ajata Ibeku:

'We don't know where we came from'.²

Also in agreement with the views of elder Odoemenam Nwosu of Umuajiyi Isieke Ibeku, was that of elder Ihuwaeze, who stated in reply to a question during the interview:

'Ogurube is a nick name popularly called Ogurube Onyeukwu Ifeukwu Ibeku'.

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1. Interview with Mr. Ikoro Eleonu (aged 90 years) at Iyi-Enyi in Amaoforo Ibeku 29th December 1983; this is also the view of Chief John Onuoha of Ossah, the Ogurube 1 of Ibeku, interviewed in his home at Ossah by this writer on the 11th July, 1983.
 2. Mr. Ugweje Ezeocha (aged 75 years) at Ajata Ibeku 29th December 1983. Many others who expressed more or less the same views include the following: Chief J.N.Nwakodo of Umuobuba in Umuana Ndume Ibeku (aged 80 years); elder Onyenwuaku Uwechi (aged 115 years) of Umudo Umuaroko Ibeku; elder Ekpo Oleforo (aged 110 years) of Umueleazu Ofeke Ndume Ibeku; Elder Rufus Nwakaire (aged 72 years) of Umuokpo Umuohuazueke Ibeku; elder Eborgu Ihuwaeze (aged 65 years) of Umuchoko Uminute; elder Kwubiri Ogbenna (aged 100 years) of Umuokoro Lodu Ibeku; elder Godwin Nwaubani (aged 90 years) of Umungwei Umuafai; elder Godwin Ndudim (aged 71 years) of Ezerighiji Umueke Umuezedu; elder Isaiah Nwokere (aged 84 years) of Umuokwume Ohokobe Ndume; elder David Efumibe (aged 84 years) of Umuakpu Umuakpu Ndume; elder Eluwa Oriaku (aged 79 years) of Umuekete Ukome Isieke Ibeku; Anyanwu (aged 83 years) and elder Ogu Odoemelam (aged 80 years, and many others.
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What can we make out of this Ibeku-came-from-no-where version, which a sizeable number of Ibeku elders have presented? It probably means that those Ibeku people who had failed in their own time to ask of their parents or elders the relevant questions on the history of Ibeku origins, migration and settlement, never gained any useful information on the subject. As elder Nkeritaru Oriaku of Okwuta Isieke Ibeku put it during our interviews with him in his village,

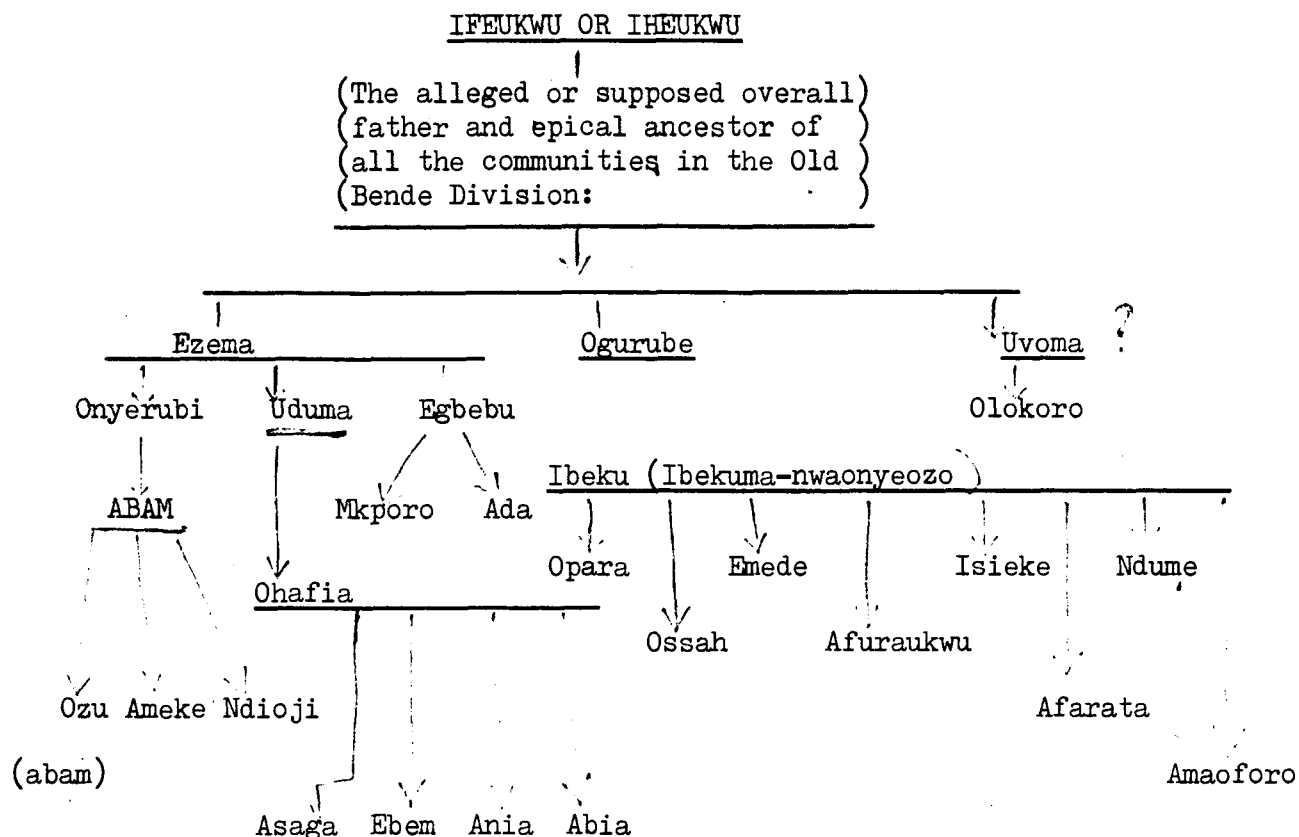
'we were not told if Ibeku came from anywhere'.

And on the name of 'Igurube' or 'Ogurube' or 'Ogwurube', around which name a highly romantic version of Ibeku origins still exists, elder Oriaku's statement seems further to corroborate the statements of other elders in different parts of Ibeku:

'Ogwurube is a nick name meaning "comprising all Ibekus"; it is no person's name.'¹

Let us now consider what may perhaps be regarded as the most popular version of Ibeku oral tradition of origin. This version was elaborated upon in great detail by the 'Ogurube 1' of Ibeku, John Igbokwe Onuoha (aged 72 years), during a marathon interview lasting ten hours at his Ossah village-home on the 11th July 1983. The following genealogical table, as given by Chief Onuoha, will perhaps best illustrate this popular version among many Ibeku people:

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1. Interview with elder Nkeritaru Oriaku (aged 97 years) of Umundere Mbasa in Okwuta Isieke Ibeku, 29th December 1983. Incidentally, in most parts of Umuahia Ogurube or Igurube describes or connotes great numbers e.g. of locusts; just as, in some context, Umuahia (weaver-birds) connotes large, noisy, numbers.



So many unanswered questions and problems have arisen from this version of the origins of Ibeku and other communities in the old Bende Division: First, however, an important fact must be noticed here : At least one or two of the communities within the Old Bende Division (namely the Ohafia and Abam peoples), trace their own settlement and migration histories or origins back to Ibeku.¹ But other than this fact, none of the other communities make any mention of Ibeku as their ancestral home at any point in their migration and settlement histories. Secondly, this version which in effect represents Ibeku as the ancestral home of all the other communities in the Old Bende Division, is not only different from

1. Nsugbe, P.O. Ohafia: A Matrilineal Ibo People (oup 1974)

Okoko Charles, The Abam And Their Aro Neighbours
(UNIPORT HISTORY LONG ESSAY 1983)

the original, first-ever recorded, version of Ibeku traditional history as obtained by Pleass in 1933; it is even more seriously rejected as false by the other constituent Umuahia communities today. Not only is this version unable to give any meaningful information on the origin or any other antecedents of the alleged epical ancestor, Ifeukwu or Iheukwu; even the authenticity of the name 'Ogurube', the alleged father or ancestor of the Ibeku and Umuopara clans, remains, to say the very least from the nature of the internal evidences available, very doubtful. The rejection by the Umuopara clan, for example, of this very version which makes them the 'first son of Ibeku', seems to gain a lot of weight not only because of the contradictory evidences in Ibeku oral tradition itself,¹ but also by the fact that the legendary 'Opara', who according to this tradition or version was the alleged first son of Ibeku, appears nowhere in the first-ever recorded version given by the Ibeku elders some half a century ago.² Further more, this version of Ibeku history is almost totally invalidated both by the corroborative evidences of oral traditions of the other sister-clans in Umuahia, and even more so by those of the constituent villages that make up the Ibeku clan itself; put differently, some of these contradictions are that:

While the most popular version of Ibeku oral tradition seems to be vast in its purported knowledge of the origins of virtually every other

1. Vide the evidences of elder Nwokenukwu Nwakamma and Mr. Anosike (aged respectively 120 years and 110 years) at Umuobasi Isiana Afara on 26th December 1983: 'Umuopara is not the first son of Ibeku; in short, they are not part of Ibeku'; and elder Oribo Oji (aged 110 years) of Okwulaga Afaraukwu Ibeku: 'Umuopara is ordinary name but does not mean that they are the first son of Ibeku'; there were many other such testimonies from various other parts of Ibeku during the series of interviews.

2. Pleass, C.J. op. cit. (1933).

community in the Old Bende Division, it is not even sure on the vital points of its own origin. Also whilst almost every other constituent village of Ibeku seems to know the history of its origins and migrations from, or ethnic connections with, other neighbouring communities, the Ibeku clan itself seems to know, from the oral evidences before us, virtually nothing about how or where its founding ancestors originated!

Whatever may be the cause of this apparent or genuine uncertainty concerning this aspect of Ibeku traditional history, its effect obliges the researcher to seek fresh angles of approach to the issue. Hence the attempt is made here to compare the internal evidences of oral traditions in Ibeku clan with those of their other immediate neighbours within Umuahia.

First, is the fact that many of the Ibeku villages today trace their own origins to various places either outside Umuahia or outside the Ibeku clan:

'We originated from Umuopara in Ozuitem, while some originated from Isiama Afara Ibeku.....'¹

We will here try to list the various responses obtained from different respondents in the Ibeku/ clan on the question of Ibeku origin:

'Agata [Ibeku] came from Elugwu in Nsukwe-Ubakala and some came from Ndume Ibeku.... We don't marry from any part of Nsukwe-Ubakala.'

Mazi Oribo Oji aged 110 years of Agata
Okwulaga Afaraukwu.

'Most people in Ibeku came from Ohafia, Bende, Uzuakoli....'

Mazi Onuamaghiuwa Otegwu (aged 110 years)
of Umuokeiyi Ohokobe Afara Ibeku.

1. Mazi Nwokeukwu Nwakanma and Mr. Anosike of Umuopasi Isiama Afara (aged respectively 120 years and 110 years) interview 26th December 1983.

'Some of the people of Ibeku came originally from Ihie Nkwerre in Orlu while others are sons of Ibeku; some came from Ohafia, Abiriba, Nkwerre.....'

Mazi R.N. Ndukwe (aged 86 years) from Umuchieze Ihie Ndume Ibeku, interviewed 27th December 1983.

'Ogwurube Ibeku is the origin of Ibeku..... No person came to stay in [migrated into] Ibeku; rather people now called Uzuakoli, Ohafia, Amaba in Oboro migrated out of Ibeku to settle in those places.... Umuopara is not Opara Ibeku.....'.

Mazi Amaju Oji (aged 100 years) of Umuama Umuana Ndume Ibeku.

'People left Ibeku for Ohafia, Abam, Idima [Ndume] Abam, Ubakala, Olokoru [Okwu in Olokoru], Mbaise Ibeku, Uzuakoli.....'

Chief J.N. Nwakodo (aged 80 years) from Umuobuba Umuana Ndume-Ibeku.

'We have no real idea about the origin of the clan..... People did not come into or go out of Ibeku.....'

Mazi Onyenweaku Uwechi (aged 115 years) of Umudo Umuaroko Ndume Ibeku.

'Ohokobe Ndume is where we [Ofeke Ndume] originated from..... We have no idea of the origin of the [Ibeku] clan.... Some people living in Umuokeyi in Ohokobe Afara came from Ogbodi in Umuopara; Agbama Olokoru migrated out of Ibeku.....'

Mazi Ekpo Oleforo (aged 110 years) from Umueleazu Ofeke Ndume Ibeku.

'We people of Umuhute village came from Bende so many centuries ago; what attracted or made us to live here was that Ahiaeke Ndume is nearer to this place where we now live. We have a common boundary with Bende.....'

Mazi Eboru Ihuwaeze (aged 65 years) from Umuchoko Umuhute Ndume Ibeku.

'We have no real idea if we came from any where else to settle in Ibeku; but we were told that part of Ohafia and Abam migrated out of Ibeku to settle in those places..... We have serious link with Olokoro, in particular with Umuezeala in Old Umuahia..... with whom, as with the Ohokobe village, we don't inter marry because we are all brothers.....'

Mazi Godwin Ndudim (aged 71 years) from
Umueke Umuezeala Ndume Ibeku.

'We have no real idea about the origin of the clan; but speculation is that we came from Aro according to our forefathers; we have links with Bende, Aro, Igberre, Ohafia; we marry from all parts of Ibeku and Olokoro; we don't marry from Amuzu Olokoro in the olden days..... until after series of sacrifices called "Odu"; we also don't marry from Ugba Nkata in the olden days, until it was approved after performing series of sacrifices called "Odu"... We hold our Egwu in our place at Mbaraukwu.... Umuopara is not the first son of Ibeku and they did not even migrate out of Ibeku.....'

Mazi Nnorom Ekwuruke (aged 100 years)
from Umuwaya Amuzukwu Itoku.

'We originated from Amuzuta Olokoro'.....
Ibeku, Utakala, Olokoro are brothers; but they separated after Agha Nturu - meaning, Kidnapping War?.....'

Mazi Onyebuchi Nwoko (aged 86 years)
from Amuzuoro Amaoforo (interviewed
29th December 1983).

'No person came into Ibeku; Ibeku people left for Ohafia, Umuopara, Ohuhu; people in Ibeku scattered after Aghanturu [the kidnapping war] with Abam people. Before then, the Itokus were leaving together at Isieke. The war [Agha Nturu] came via Oboro area.....'

Mazi Onyebuchi Iroegbu (aged 102 years)
from Ndagbo Avonkwo in Amaoforo Ibeku.

These various excerpts or quotations from interview notes obtained

from all sections of Ibeku have been deliberately inserted here if only to illustrate the multiplicity of conflicting oral traditions and versions with which the historian has to contend. Despite the apparent unhelpfulness of these conflicting accounts, there lie in them clear pointers to some historical probabilities: In the situation in which virtually every kindred or constituent village in Ibeku is able to trace its original, ancestral home to some other place within or outside Umuahia, the Ibeku-clan-came-from-no-where version, cannot stand. It is probable therefore that, like in the history of all its other sister-clans in Umuahia, the original ancestors of the Ibeku people had come from different directions: some from the same Owerri-Mbaise-Etiti sources, which seem to have also produced the original ancestors of the Ngwa, the Umuopara, the Ubakala, Olokoro and the Ohuhu peoples; consequently, once the initial settlements had been successfully established, the second stage inter-clan and intra-clan or inter-village migrations and settlements of people in these areas continued for a long time.

We may reasonably assume that such movements of peoples took place between Ibeku on the one hand, and the Uzuakoli, Ohafia, Nkwerre, Orlu, Bende and even the Aro groups of communities on the other hand. Inter-clan migrations and settlements within Umuahia as a whole, seem also quite clear from the oral evidences, including the available facts of exogamy as still practised both within and between the clans and the village units.

The problems of confused or contradictory oral traditions, or of even deliberate attempts to distort or conceal facts, so frequently encountered these days by field historians, were probably not so serious a problem in the past as they are today. The common incidence of such problems today may be due to what some people describe as political

consciousness or sophistication, with its telling imprints on every facet of peoples' lives. A possible explanation therefore of the numerous contradictions in Ibeku oral tradition, is the politicising tendency, often inherent in the outlook of some people once they develop political consciousness or sophistication. In such a situation people tend to resent the suggestion of 'inferiority' emanating from open admission or acknowledgement that one's ancestors or community owed some kind of subordinate allegiance to another, older, and therefore superior or senior, community or persons. However, against such possible tendency in Ibeku oral tradition, some important points still stick out almost irrepressibly, as we have already observed.

The Ibeku clan, as also its legendary epical ancestors Ifeukwu and Ogurube, can not possibly have come 'from nowhere', when in fact every other constituent Ibeku village is able to trace its own ancestral origins within or outside the clan; and when much of the oral tradition of every other clan in Umuahia points to the peopling of Umuahia through mixed migrations, both from outside Umuahia and from within it. An observed exception to this kind of negative attitude to facts or accounts of origin relates to the two historically famous or well known communities of ancient Benin and Arochukwu. The well known fame or importance of these two particular communities in precolonial times has made it rather fashionable or prestigious for people to connect or relate their ancestral origins to either precolonial Benin or Arochukwu.

Approached from the perspective of common place names, the place names both of Ibeku itself and of its many constituent villages, coincide with many similar or identical place names across the Imo River, and

even in Ngwaland, rather too closely and too frequently for these to be glossed over as just sheer accident, or just mere coincidence. On a more factual note, some points deserve emphasis here: The Umuezeala kindred in Old Umuahia, with which kindred-group the people of Umuezeala Ndume Ibeku already acknowledges the closest ethnic affinity forbidding inter marriage, itself as a group based today in Old Umuahia still traces the original home of its ancestors to Umuezeala in Mbanjo across the Imo River.¹ And Ndume Ibeku ranks only with Isieke Ibeku, as the very first place where the original ancestors of Ibeku settled! Could 'Ifeukwu' or 'Ogurube', if they were real persons, or whoever were the original ancestors of Ibeku, have come, like the ancestors of the Umuezeala kindred in present day Old Umuahia, from the Mbanjo area across the Imo River? Most, if not indeed all, of the village communities in the Umuopara Clan today also trace the original homes of their ancestors to areas across the Imo River in the Owerri, Mbaise and Etiti divisions. Ogbodi Umuanya is one of such villages in Umuopara, and part of its history also connects, in a most illuminating way, both parts of Ubakala and parts of Ibeku. In an interview at Eziana Ubakala with one of the most remarkable elders to be found anywhere in Umuahia today, we obtained a rather interesting information from Chief Mark Uchegbue.

'We of Umuaroko kindred in Eziana Ubakala do not intermarry with Laguru village in Ubakala; nor with the people of Ogbodi Umuanya in Umuopara; we also do not intermarry with people from Ndume Ibeku, because we are all closely related.....'²

1. Chiabuotu, S.O. Precolonial Old Umuahia (History Long Essay UNIPORT 1981) p.7

2. Interview with Chief Mark Uchegbue Ogbuehi of Umuaroko Eziana Ubakala, November 1983.

This statement clearly establishes a very close ethnic relationship or affinity between sections of Ubakala, Umuopara and Ndume Ibeku, itself one of the first, or earliest, settlements in Ibeku. If, according to popular oral traditions in Umuopara, the ancestors of Umuopara came from across the Imo River; also if the Umuezeala group of Old Umuahia equally traces the origin of its ancestors to the same area, and then groups of the same Umuopara people and of the Umuezeala kindred of Old Umuahia, both acknowledge, as Ndume Ibeku oral tradition also accepts, this kind of close blood affinity or inter group relationship, what other possible conclusions, outside that of common ancestral origins, can we draw from this web of history?

One other significant point: Although they differ in the matter of detail, both the Umuopara group and the Ibeku group acknowledge a common ethnic relationship. What nature of ethnic relationship was this? The version of Ibeku oral tradition which claims Umuopara as the first son of Ibeku, may perhaps now be ignored and dismissed; for not only has a substantial part of Ibeku oral traditions already rejected this version; even the name 'Ogurube', without whose factual human existence there could of course be no Ibeku as son, and no Opara or Umuopara as grandson, appears to be only a mythical, legendary figure, having no known original, ancestral, home, nor any other historical antecedents that we know about. But the counter claim of Umuopara oral traditions that the ancestors of present day Umuopara clan, and those of present day Ibeku clan, had once lived together in socio-cultural

harmony and homogeneity at Omaegwu, will be further examined later. To do this however we have to first of all look at other oral traditions among other Umuahia groups and the historical possibilities which they suggest; we will also need to examine the linguistic and other possible links between the Ibeku, the Olokoro, and the Ubakala groups. In short, the possibility of further elucidation of the Ibeku story, lies in the histories of its two sister-clans of Olokoro and Ubakala. To these, therefore, we must now turn.

THE OLOKORO PEOPLE AND THEIR TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN:...

The Olokoro Clan is one of the five major clans in the Umuahia Division. Occupying an area of about ten square miles the clan in 1935 had a population density of about 972 persons to the square mile. Today the clan is still bounded on the North by the Ibeku clan; on the East by Oboro territory, on the South by Ngwaland, and on the West by the Ubakala clan. During the series of visits made by British political officers to the clan in the early 1930s, a nominal roll of adult males, representing perhaps the first population statistics to be had from any of the Umuahia clans, was obtained from the fourteen villages which make up the clan. Historically these fourteen villages fall into three groups: The Umutowe Group, The Epe Group and the Azuiyi Group. The following population statistics of adult males recorded in 1935 for these groups of villages included their adult males residing away from home.

| Village Group | Village Unit | 1935 Adult Male Population | Group Total |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| UMUTOWE | Umuopara Ozara | 166 | 1,002 |
| | Itaja | 165 | |
| | Agbo Ama | 138 | |
| | Itu | 149 | |
| | Avonkwu | 52 | |
| | Okwu | 332 | |
| EPE | Umudere | 88 | 940 |
| | Umuajata | 295 | |
| | Am'izi | 390 | |
| | Ama Ngwu | 73 | |
| | Umu Ntu | 94 | |
| AZUIYI | Amakama | 274 | 852 |
| | Umuahia | 504 | |
| | Umu Obia | 74 | |

1. 1963 Census figures.....

Part of the major problem in the investigation of Olokoro clan history has been the generally difficult one of how best to resolve and reconcile contradictions and distortions in the oral traditions of community histories, in the legends of origin, migration and settlement histories of ethnic groups, and the determining of the order of seniority of the legendary ancestors and founding fathers of the village groups within any given community.

In the olden days as at now, the people of Olokoro like most other Igbo groups elsewhere, were irrevocably republican in their political outlook; as ethnic groups or individual villagers they valued their freedom more than anything else and almost pathologically dreaded autocracy in any shape or form. Even where the truth about their order of seniority would seem very clear, village units were often unwilling or reluctant to acknowledge or concede even age or chronological priority to another ethnic or village unit; to the native mind such concession had a ring or connotation of an acceptance of inferior status, inviting the possible tyranny or arrogance of the senior entity.

Such extreme sense or notions of individuality among the Olokoro, as among most Umuahia and other Igbo groups generally, have sometimes had unpleasant consequences in the search for historical truth and for general progress. During the early 1930s, for example, the colonial administration in Southern Nigeria had great difficulty in obtaining from the people truthful answers to questions owing to the self-seeking and over-ambition of individuals or groups. These people had thought that Government was looking for a new class of warrant chiefs from whichever group was acknowledged to be the most senior. In the face

of such difficulties in obtaining correct information on the traditional social and political organisation of Olokoro,¹ the Southern Nigeria Colonial Administration in 1934-35 sent another Intelligence officer, Assistant District Officer E.R. Chadwick, to the Olokoro clan for the same purpose. This young officer was particularly noted by his superiors for his 'characteristic thoroughness'; it was apparently therefore hoped that his habitual diligence would help in obtaining an Intelligence report on the Olokoro clan which would overcome some of the uncertainties and contradictions caused by the conflicting and confused accounts which appeared to be deliberately given before, between 1931-32, by the various elders and groups in the clan. But the nature of Chadwick's visit to Olokoro in 1934-35 put it in difficulty almost from the start: As Chadwick himself even observed, the Olokoro people from their own experiences and from their own observations of affairs in other clans, knew that changes in the organisations usually followed the compilation of Intelligence reports. The people therefore clearly suspected that the third visit from another Intelligence Officer in 1934-35 to the clan which had already been visited by two Intelligence officers in 1931 and 1932, was bound to bring about further changes in the system: those individuals or village units in some positions of authority or seniority therefore expected or feared to lose their positions, and those not in such positions hoped to push their own

1. In 1931 Mr. Hawkesworth as D.O. visited the Olokoro clan and prepared an Intelligence Report; in 1932 Mr. Chubb as D.O. also wrote an Intelligence Report on the Clan.

claims having nothing to lose and power to gain: The effect is best described in Chadwick's own words:

'Almost every single village claimed to be the head of the clan... no sooner had one false rumour [claim] been stamped out than another had to be dealt with, and all rumours [and claims] arose from the same cause i.e. the personal ambitions of selfish individuals.....'¹

A truly meticulous and thorough-going investigator, the Intelligence Officer discovered that,

'The self-styled Ezealas and Onyenwealas were under the impression that they were the people to whom Government was about to hand over the coveted prize of Native Court Membership.....'²

As already stated and revealed in the preceding chapters, these observations about individual ambitions or village-group interests, and their impact in the tracing of community histories through oral traditions, were by no means unique with the Olokoro Clan. The investigator who has to handle such materials and such information as are obtained from oral sources, has therefore to realise the impossibility of being over-cautious, just as the general reader has to be aware of the great difficulty confronting the researcher. We must here attempt some analyses of the various versions or theories of origin of the Olokoro Clan.

The most popular version seems to be the one which states that the Clan is descended from Olokoro Uvoma, son of Chukwu Uvoma, a native of Arochukwu. According to this version, Olokoro had come to the present site of the clan through Ohuhu territory. The legend

1. Chadwick, E.R. (A.D.O.) Intelligence Report on the Olokoro Clan (1935).

2. ibid.

further states that he later had three sons, Umntowe, Epe, and Azuiyi. Each of these three sons is now represented by a group of descendant villages grouped under the names of the three founder-fathers or ancestors. A variant version recorded in Chubb's 1931 Intelligence report stated that 'Chukwu Uvoma came from Onitsha'; but in 1934-35 one elder from Itaja village who repeated this version to Mr. Chadwick at the public gathering in Olokoro 'was immediately shouted down'.

Another interesting version recorded by Chadwick states that Chukwu Uvoma (Beautiful Chukwu or Chukwu Oma) was the powerful god at Arochukwu to whom childless Olokoro prayed for children. When his prayer was granted it was said that his children were the sons of Chukwu Uvoma, the Arochukwu god. If, as we now must think or believe, Olokoro was the epical ancestor, original founder or first settler of Olokoro land, from where then did he come into the territory which now bears his name? Did he migrate from Arochukwu, to become the first settler of Olokoro Clan as the popular Olokoro oral tradition claims? The fact that he looked up to Beautiful Chukwu at Arochukwu for child, could suggest this. But we know from many other incidents of local history that most other Igbos who as individuals or groups in precolonial times had at one time or the other in their history looked up to Arochukwu-based gods for some kind of assistance, had no ethnic relationship with the Aro. It is important to note that in this version Uvoma is used not as the name of a person, but only as an adjective describing the kind-hearted, child-giving, Arochukwu-based, god, Chukwu; hence Chukwu Oma or Chukwu Uvoma. During his discussion with the various groups both at Itaja village and elsewhere in Olokoro, Chadwick recorded his strong impression that:

'all villages by prearrangement had decided to claim an Aro origin because it carries greater distinction than any other origin...¹

/Ibinukpabi

Ofcourse, as subjects of the famed and dreaded Oracular deity Chukwu, or / the Aros (as Umuchukwu), and any groups which could claim Aro origins, enjoyed general immunity and freedom from any molestation or illtreatment wherever they travelled or lived within or outside Igboland in those precolonial times of slavery, kidnapping, and not uncommon situation of insecurity.

After several weeks of public interviews and discussions at Olokoro, Chadwick was still of the view that:

'The legendary explanation of the origin and growth of the clan is probably incorrect in many respects... Olokoro did not actually come from Aro...'²

An acknowledged meticulous investigator that he was, Chadwick had spent most of the time visiting individual villages and collecting information from each of the fourteen villages in the clan. At the end of the exercise it was very clear that a great deal of the oral tradition from the individual villages contradicted the original, popular, version of Aro origins of the Olokoro people.

Each of the fourteen villages visited by Chadwick had traced the origin of the village, or had given the name of its founder where possible. The original theory or version which had high-lighted Umutowe, Epe, and Azuiyi as the children of one founding father Olokoro, virtually collapsed in the face of other information, especially those obtained at the Azuiyi quarter of the clan:

1. ibid.

2. ibid.

'It was also stated in [the] Epe [quarter of the clan] that [Chukwu's] Uvoma's son Olokoro had other sons who founded the Azuiyi group but this was not agreed to in Azuiyi. The word means "beyond the IYI" - a stream dividing Azuiyi from the other two groups...'

To have a chance of being believed, the popular version favouring Aro-origin must at least be accepted by Olokoro's supposed three sons, including Azuiyi. But we now know that this is not the case, with Azuiyi rejecting that version. When we begin to examine and analyse more closely the various data obtained by Intelligence officers from the fourteen individual villages between 1931 - 1935, and by the present writer from these same village sources between 1980 - 1984, the popular, 'Aro-origin', version runs into more serious problems of credibility.

In 1931 the crucial question of the order of seniority of the fourteen constituent Olokoro villages was fully discussed at a public meeting held in the presence of one of the British Intelligence Officers.¹ Two Olokoro elders, Abara of Umuajatta, and Mbaruko of Amakama, were both generally acknowledged to be, respectively, 'the oldest man in Olokoro' and the 'clan Head.' These two important elders independently narrated an identical order of seniority, which the clan followed in taking shares at the then common civic centre at Ahiaukwu Olokoro:

1. Amakama and Umuahia take the first and one share; then followed by:
2. Umuajatta
3. Agboama
4. Umuobia
5. Umuntu
6. Avonkwu
7. Itaja
8. Am'izi

1. District Officer, E.G. Hawkesworth.

9. Umu Dere
10. Okwu
11. Itu
12. Umu Opara Ozara
13. Ama Ngwu.

Such evidences on the order of seniority, obtained in the 1930s from some of the respectable elders, as well as other corroborative information from some of the most senior villages at that time, ought to be considered as vital. It is necessary also to try to contrast such data obtained and recorded over half a century ago, with those recently obtained by this writer between 1980 and 1984.

From Amakama as the most senior village in Olokoro clan, the oral tradition states that the village was founded by 'a man from Obizi who came from the direction of Owerri'. Also included among the Azuiyi group of villages is (old) Umuahia, the village also known by the rest of the local people throughout the whole Umuahia area as Ndi nwe Afor Ibeji. During the earliest investigations between 1931 and 1935, a serious dispute existed among the people themselves as to who founded the village of old Umuahia; the villagers themselves came to agree that there was no common founder; two of the kindred compounds, Okwu and Ama Umu Nta, had apparently come into their present home 'from the Okpuala area in the Owerri Division', while the Umuobutu group claimed affinity with Ibeku, having been founded by a man from that clan. Umuobia, another village in the Azuiyi group, claimed to have been founded by another man named Uzegbu, whose place of origin was however not mentioned.

In the other senior Olokoro village of Umajatta, two elders gave conflicting oral traditions on the origin and establishment of the village: According to the first elder, Onuoha, Umajatta village

was founded by a man called Uguta Ozuzu, ancestor of the Umu Uguta family. The other elder, named Eluwa, claimed that Ajatta was the founder of the village, and was succeeded by Opara Uku Eze, who was said to have founded the Umu Okorota family. One crucial question which remained unanswered in this and in many of the other villages, was that of the original homes of these founders or epical ancestors of the villages. From where did these ancestors migrate into Olokoro?

In the village of Umuopara Ozara, the most senior among the Umutewe group, the elders still refused to, or could not, mention the original home of their ancestor. But it was claimed by elder Nwamaghoke Ekeke, village headman and priest of the Ala deity, that Olokoro Uvoma, the legendary founder of the clan, first settled at or near Umuopara Ozara; but that the actual founder of the village of Umuopara Ozara was called Ogele, one of the sons of Olokoro. Informants in this village were particularly afraid in the 1930s to give further information either about their own village or about the other villages because, according to them, 'they would be poisoned if they revealed the true order of seniority in Itaja and [Old] Umuahia...'¹ For most individuals in Olokoro, as also for each of the constituent groups of villages, the things at stake especially between 1931 and 1935, were the privileges of being appointed to the court membership, or to the posts of tax collectors; each of the villages therefore tried its utmost to enhance its seniority position, in order to attract the establishment of the new native or clan courts, as well as perhaps the individual membership appointments, within their own territory.

1. ibid.

More than half a century afterwards, difficulties still exist today in efforts at obtaining straightforward information on the various issues of local community-history. More detailed field work recently, and a much closer examination and analyses of the oral traditions obtained from the various places and peoples visited within and outside the clan between 1980 and 1984, help to throw some more light on the subject of Olokoro oral traditions of origin. The senior Olokoro village of Amakama comprises, for example, some eight kindreds or compounds (Qnu Ama comprising many Qnu obu or Qnu Ezi) viz: Obizi, Umubioko, Nkpuke, Umuigwe, Umuokoroukwu, Umuelem, Umuanga and Ihie.

During most of the local interviews, we found in Amakama village as elsewhere in Olokoro, that most of the informants very easily gave the popular version, upholding the old theory of Aro origin. But in answers to subsequent questions during the interviews, many of the informants appeared to contradict themselves without perhaps being aware of it: At the Obizi compound (Ama Obizi) in Amakama, our informant had stated that:

'Amakama (Atani) is the son of Olokoro
Uvoma. Uvoma is from Arochukwu...'¹

But in a subsequent reply to another question as to the origin of the village of Amakama, he stated that migrants had come in from different places, and that the first group ever to settle and establish in Amakama came from Ekenobizi in Umuopara, and had marked the occasion by planting a tree which grew into a giant size in the village.

1. Interview with elder Ogbonna Ogazi (aged 110 years), 23rd December, 1983.

'Some people in Amakama migrated from areas such as Ekenobizi, Elemohia in Ngwa, Umuagu in Ohuhu, Ihie Ngwa, and Ihie Ndume Ibeku, Ngwa, Bende, Ubakala, Arochukwu Obizi does not marry from Umuopara Ozara in Olokoro... nor from the Elendu family of Azumiri in Ekenobizi; some people in Amakama do not marry from Amaumo in Amizi Olokoro.'¹

This account of migrants and founding fathers coming from Ekenobizi or Obizi agrees with the 1935 account obtained by Chadwick and which stated that Amakama village was founded by 'a man from Obizi who came from the direction of Owerri.'² This migrant from the Obizi-Owerri area could not have been coming into Olokoro from Arochukwu, nor could he have been a son of either Chukwu, Uvoma, or Olokoro; because this latter, Olokoro, started having children long after he had settled at the home bearing his name; and from which home, according to the original story, he was offering prayers or sacrifices to Chukwu (Uvoma), or beautiful Chukwu, at Arochukwu, to bless him (Olokoro) with children.

It is perhaps rather revealing of the very legendary nature of this particular oral tradition, that in tracing the origins of their real founders, none of the individual villages really dwells on, or explains anything further about, the supposed first three sons of Olokoro - Umutowe, Epe, or Azuiyi; except we take Epe for Ekpo who is mentioned in Am'izi oral traditions as the son of Epe and claimed to be (i.e. Ekpo) the founder who had come from Am'izi Isuorgu, situated 'a few miles to the south.' But if, as one of the first three sons of Olokoro, Epe was already born and resident in Olokoro, how could his own son Ekpo be migrating into the Olokoro clan from Isuorgu, which is situated to the south a few miles outside the clan?

1. Elder Ogbonna Ogazi interview ibid.

2. E.R. Chadwick, ibid.

These are some of the many unresolved puzzles in the oral traditions.

It is tempting to attach onomatopoeic origins to the names of Amakama and (old) Umuahia, two of the most senior villages in the clan. These two villages existed for very long virtually as one entity. Before every other village in Olokoru, they always received the first but one common share of anything commonly shared in the clan at the then clan civic centre and common market square at Ahiaukwu Olokoru.

Among all the fourteen villages, these two-in-one villages (Amakama and Old Umuahia) commanded numerical superiority in adult males. In the precolonial age of constant inter-ethnic or inter-village warfare and rivalry, superiority of numbers among villages or ethnic groups often induced airs or feelings of superiority, arrogance or invincibility. It was quite natural for numerically superior villages or ethnic groups to give themselves such egoistic nick-names or praise-names, or to receive and welcome such nick-names from admirers, as would give expressions to such egoistic airs, or group feelings of superiority and invincibility. Viewed in this way, the name, 'Amakama' or 'Ama-Ka-Ama', perhaps signified the 'Super-Ama' or 'Super-Village', feelings of a community whose population was rapidly growing through the constant migrations of people from different directions into the village.

It has also been speculated, on the other hand, that perhaps the name of the epical founder of the Amakama village was Kamanu, a very popular and quite familiar name in Igboland. Although representing the name of the god of Thunder, individuals also answer the name Kamanu or Kanu throughout Igboland. If this speculation is right, then Kamanu or Kanu as the first settler in Amakama probably grew into

a powerful and wealthy individual in material terms as well as in the numbers of his wives, children and the entire household of the extended-family. Such a large family or compound would usually be referred to or called after the name of its founder, Kanu or Kamanu, prefixed by 'Ama'. In this context the name Amakamanu or Amakanu, or Amakama for short, would be suggestive of the idea that Kanu's or Kamanu's compound was large enough to be the size of a whole Ama, or kindred families, all deriving from one common ancestor. But whether in fact Kanu or Kamanu was the actual name of the founder whom Amakama oral traditions have strongly suggested as having migrated from Obizi or Ekenobizi, in the Owerri-Obizi direction, cannot be fully ascertained. What the oral traditions have left us with, as in this case, is a lot of intelligent guess work or reasoned speculation: Perhaps the name 'Amakama' was originally applied to this group as a praise-name, in recognition of the group's superior power and strength among its neighbours or rivals; or perhaps the name was a derivation from the name of the original founder-ancestor whose name, Kamanu or Kanu, the children were proud to retain with the prefix, Ama. If the first speculation is correct, that the name grew from a praise-name, then perhaps the Amakama kindred or extended family group, must have been a powerful one among its neighbours at the time; either because this kindred group had a superiority of numbers, or because its members were a strong and brave people able to withstand or outshine other Amas or kindred-families, in inter-group rivalries and contests. If the second speculation is the correct one, that the name Amakama was a derivation from the name of its original founder, it is perhaps also valid to reason that this ancestor was a powerful and prosperous man, whose

exploits and successes endeared his name to his children, and gave them a feeling of pride to retain the memory of their ancestor in the name of the village, Amakama.

The origin and meaning of the name 'Umuahia', has equally taxed the imaginations of all and sundry among elders, as among even scholars and writers within and outside Igboland.

Most people believe in the erroneous theory that it was the British who coined the name of 'Umuahia' from 'Oma-ahia' (meaning market arena). One solid fact however which emerges from this study, is that this Olokoro village and its name 'Umuahia', had existed long before the first whitemen arrived there on their way to Bende in 1896. If this village did not owe its origin to the British, what then was its origin, and the meaning of its name?

One of the earliest British reporters, Chadwick, gives us some important clue:

'[Old] Umuahia... is the largest town in Olokoro. There are seven compounds. At the advent of [colonial] Government [about 1905] the man who was most prominent by reason of his wealth and hostility was [the elder] Wogu, of the Umuobutu compound. He was captured by the [British] troops and publicly flogged in the market place after which he became regarded as the head of the town [of Old Umuahia]. Under the protection of the Government his wealth increased and he was made a member of the Native Court, which he dominated till his death in 1925... It was [subsequently] established that the senior compound is Umu Iledi in which the Umu Agbo Uku family takes the first share. This was at that time agreed to by all but the Umuobutu Compound... Careful enquiries were made in Olokoro towns regarding seniority in [Old] Umuahia and in almost every case I was informed that Umu Iledi takes the first share of anything killed and Umu Ezeala the second....'¹

1. E.R. Chadwick, ibid.

A community history Essay project supervised by this writer a few years ago, has however collected information which, although agreeing on many points with Chadwick's earlier findings on Old Umuahia origins or settlement history, differs on some points, especially on the order of seniority of the lineages or constituent compounds; while, for example, Umueledi places first and Umuezeala second in the Chadwick report, the positions are reversed in the information obtained by Chiabuotu¹, but only to be restored again to the Chadwick version by an important elder recently interviewed at Old Umuahia.² As in the cases of the Amakama and Umujata villages, Old Umuahia oral traditions of origin and settlement history point to the establishment and peopling of the village by immigrants from different directions. Elder Awazie Madika's evidence during an interview with him confirms this:

'We were told that many in Old Umuahia migrated from Abam, Umuihi, Bende, Ngwa, Ohuhu, Ozu Umuopara, etc.'³

On the ties between Old Umuahia and some of its neighbours, the evidence of another very reliable informant from Amuzu Olokoru reveals that Amuzu Ibeku and Amuzu Old Umuahia have blood relations: 'We Amuzu Olokoru do not marry from Amuzu Ibeku and Amuzu Old Umuahia'.⁴

1. See Chiabuotu, S.O., 'Precolonial Old Umuahia...', an Undergraduate History Project (Uniport, JUNE 1981) pages 6-7.

'... Each of the lineages that make up Old Umuahia migrated to their present place from different places and at different times... These different lineages settled in the following order: Umuezeala, Umueledi, Umuecheokwu, Umubutu, Umovo, Okwu, Amuzunta'.

2. Awazie Madika, aged c. 118 years, interviewed by Emeka Ogazi at Umueledi Compound, Old Umuahia, December 29, 1983.

3. Awazie Madika, *ibid.*

4. Interview with Ifeanchio Ekekwe of Amuzu Olokoru, aged c. 75 years.

Other informants persist, however, in the erroneous theory that it was from the British that the name, Umuahia, first appeared as a corruption of the word, Oma-ahia. But some of the elders maintain, on the other hand and no one has seriously denied or contested this claim, that the village of (Old) Umuahia was already in existence as part of the Olokoro clan long before the arrival of the whiteman:

'It [Umuahia] has been their name even before the emergence of the whiteman...'¹

Elder Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi in Amakama village also gave a corroborative evidence on the origin of the name 'Umuahia':

'Their name from time immemorial has been Umuahia. They collect their share at Ahiaukwu Olokoro whenever something is shared with the name Umuahia, long ago before the arrival of the whiteman. 'The 'Old' was attached to differentiate between Umuahia I and II which the whites were labelling 'Old' Umuahia and [Umuahia] Township then respectively...'²

Further corroborative evidence came from Elder Awazie Madika, himself from Old Umuahia village:

'Right from the ancient days we have been Umuahia. The 'Old' was added to Umuahia when the whitemen left Afor Ibeji market square where they resided for a long time with their soldiers to Umuahia Township, i.e. Ibeku, after they [the whitemen] had bought the place from one Otuonye Agunwa at a cost of one horse...'³

We now know or must agree, from these various evidences here analysed, that this Olokoro village, with its name Umuahia, was clearly

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1. Muonwu Ekeke of Umuajata Olokoro, aged c. 105 years; interviewed December, 1983.
 2. Elder Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi Amakama Village, interviewed December 1983.
 3. Elder Awazie Madika, of Umueledi Old Umuahia, interview December 1983.

in existence long before the arrival of the British. The name 'Umuahia' therefore cannot have been originated or coined by the whiteman, as most of the oral traditions have erroneously suggested. Yet the name 'Umuahia', like that of its twin-sister 'Amakama', still taxes our imagination for its actual meaning. One of the elders who attempted an explanation of both the origin and meaning of the name, stated that the word 'Umuahia' referred to the Aro trader-settlers in that village and meant something like 'ndi-ozuahia', 'trade-addicts' or 'professional traders'.¹ This, in the Igbo language, would translate into something like, 'Umu-Ozu-ahia' - 'a trading people'.

Indeed Old Umuahia village (Ndi nwe Ahia Afor Ibeji) was clearly one of the communities in the Old Bende Division that attracted a sizeable population of Aro settlers and traders. In precolonial times the Afor Ibeji market had ranked in popularity with those at Uzuakoli, Uturu-Okigwe, Ife (in Mbaise) Bende and Uburu, as slave, and other commodity, markets for the Aro dealers and their local agents, of which there were at that time an influential number at Old Umuahia village.

It is therefore quite possible that such a name, 'Umugzuahia' or 'Umuahia', was applied in deference and admiration for these trader-settler elements and peoples at Afor Ibeji and the surrounding areas. The undoubted social and political power and influence of these traders and their local agents derived mainly from their commercial enterprise and acumen, and was felt by the entire community. There is, however, as yet very scanty corroboration of this evidence or new interpretation,

1. Interview with Ifeanacho Ekekwe at Amuzu Olokoru, December 1983.

and our acceptance of it must consequently remain rather tentative for now. There is yet another possible interpretation of the origin and meaning of 'Umuahia'. It brings into focus the significance of, and the possible impressions created in the people's minds by, the relative populations of the various village units at that time. With a population of some 504 adult males in the early 1930s, the community of Ndinwe Ahia Afor Ibeji, or (Old) Umuahia, was the largest village in the whole clan from the precolonial times up to the early decades of the colonial administration.

The Afor Ibeji market was one of the many attractions to immigrant Aro, Abriba and Ubani (Bonny and Opobo) traders, and other settlers from different directions. As a very popular market, it created the picture of a giant tree towering above others within the locality, and attracting numerous birds of the air which came regularly in their hundreds to perch and settle. Perhaps in their inter-village relations (Old) Umuahia village, or Ndi Nwe Afor Ibeji market community, was remarked for the numerical superiority of its commercially active population. This population appeared to be ever on the increase at that time, as fresh settlers from various areas constantly came in to settle. With its comparatively large population of 504 adult males in 1935, this trading community would indeed have looked - especially to the smaller Olokoros whose populations then had numbered a mere 88, for Umudere; 73 for Ama Ngwu; 74 for Umuobia; and 52 for Avonkwu, - like a sea of humanity, a beehive of people, a swam of bees or locusts, or a chorus of weaver birds! It is already well known that in Igboland names are generally meant to convey some kind of idea or message, or to carry a meaning. Place-names as well as names given to individuals,

always carry a message or a meaning. Viewed in this way, it is quite conceivable that the ~~name~~ 'Umuahia' might have originated as a nick-name given by the smaller Olokoro villages to the only village in the clan whose comparatively much large-population always conjured up the picture or image of large numbers or multitudes, like that of any gregarious insects or animals, or birds such as weaver birds.

From our close examination and analyses of Olokoro oral traditions, the picture which now emerges is that in which the individual accounts of origin and settlement histories of the fourteen constituent villages seriously contradict the popular and commonly held theory of Aro origins: In the cases of the two premier or most senior villages, Amakama and (Old) Umuahia, the evidences clearly point to mixed migrations, with migrants coming in from different directions other than Arochukwu to establish and settle. The Oral traditions of all the other villages also point to the same trend of mixed migrations and settlement of the various Olokoro villages by immigrants from areas either within or outside the larger Umuahia territory today inhabited by the five clans. The following table, constructed from Olokoro oral traditions, helps to illustrate the foregoing points more clearly.

| S/No. | Olokoro Village Of: | Oral Tradition of Migration and Settlement Of The Village | Information/ Source | Occupation Of Informant | Remarks |
|-------|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| 1. | Amakama | Immigrants/ settlers from Ekenobizi, Elemohia-Ngwa, Umuagu-Ohuhu, Ihie Ngwa, Ihie Ndume-Ibeku, Bende, Ubakala, Arochukwu, Umuopara Ozara, Clokoro. | Elder Ogbanna Ogazi, aged c. 110 years | Farmer | Interview at Obizi Amakama, December 1983. |

| S/NO. | Olokoro Village Of: | Oral Tradition Of Migration And Settlement Of The Village | Information/ Source | Occupation Of Informant | Remarks |
|-------|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. | (Old) Umuahia | Immigrants from various places: Abam, Umuhi, Bende, Ngwa, Umuopara (Ozu and Ehume)Mbano, <u>Ibeku</u> , Ubakala, Ohuhu. | Elder Awazie Madike of Umueledi Compound Old Umuahia aged <u>c.</u> 118 years. | Farmer | Interview, December 1983. |
| 3. | Umuajatta | Immigrants from mainly Iyienyi Ajata <u>Ibeku</u> . | Elder Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi Amakama; and elder Muonwu Ekeke of Ekelufeze Umuajotta aged <u>c.</u> 105 years. | Farmer | Interview at Olokoro |
| 4. | Amuzu | Immigrants from Anuzu Ubakala <u>Ibeku</u> | Elder Ogbonna Ogazi Elder Ifeanacho Ekekwe of Umuoshiro Amuzu, aged <u>c.</u> 75 years. | Farmer Black Smith | Interview at Olokoro |
| 5. | Itu | Immigrants mainly from Itu Mbanuzo in Arochukwu and Itu Abam. | Elder Daniel Nduko of Umuomacha Itu aged <u>c.</u> 90 years. | Farmer | Interview at Olokoro |
| 6. | Okwu | Mainly from <u>Ibeku</u> . | Elder John Nwohu of Umuoji Okwu aged <u>c.</u> 85 years and Elder Ogbonna Ogazi. | Farmer Farmer | Interview at Olokoro |
| 7. | Avonkwu | Immigrants from Avonkwu <u>Ibeku</u> and Umuaroko in Okwu Olokoro. | Elders Jeremiah Uzuegbu, John Chinaka both of Umuede and aged <u>c.</u> 72 and 93 years respectively. | (Civil Servant Retired) Farmer | Interview at Olokoro |

| S/No. | Olokoro Village Of: | Oral Tradition Of Migration and Settlement Of The Village: | Information/ Source | Occupation Of Informant | Remarks |
|-------|---------------------|---|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 8. | Agbama | Immigrants mainly from <u>Ibeku</u> . | Elder Solomon Ukandu of Umuwara Compound aged <u>c.</u> 70 years; Elder Ogbonna Ogazi. | Farmer/s | Interview at Olokoro |
| 9. | Umuopara-Ozara | Immigrants mainly from Umuajatta Olokoro | Felix Nwohu of Ogbuama Compound aged <u>c.</u> 65 years. | Farmer | Ditto |
| 10. | Itaja | Some immigrants from Ukwa, Arochukwu, Amangwo Olokoro, Ikputu Ngwa, Onichamiri. | Michael, Onosike Ezebuiro of Itaja-Obuohia aged <u>c.</u> 98 yrs. | Farmer/s | Ditto |
| 11. | Umuobia | Immigrants from Ubakala and Arochukwu; many people came from <u>Ibeku</u> , Ozu or Umunwanwa (Umuopara) Ngwa. | Mark Nwaukwu of Umuokorie, aged <u>c.</u> 65 years | Farmer | Ditto |
| 12. | Umudere | Immigrants from Amafor in Ohuhu, Arochukwu. | Ibeawuchi Emeaguwa of Eluama aged <u>c.</u> 75 years | Farmer | Ditto |
| 13. | Amizi | Immigrants mainly from Amizi Oloko, Ihie, Amakama, Amangwo, Umuobutu Old Umuahia, some from Arochukwu. | George Uwagbokwu of Umuogba 1 Amizi aged <u>c.</u> 90 years. | Farmer | Ditto |
| 14. | Amangwo | Close ties between Itaja, and Ikputu-Ngwa | Elder Offor Ekwelonu of Elugwu Compound, aged <u>c.</u> 105 years; and Michael Onosike Ezebuiro of Itaja. | Farmer/s | Ditto |
| 15. | Umuntu | Mostly from Umudiawa in Ohuhu? and from within Olokoro? | Chief M. A. Onuzurike of Elugwu Umuntu aged <u>c.</u> 75 years. | Farmer | Ditto |

The nature of the various evidences now before us permits the statement that, in the distant precolonial past, the different Umuahia clan communities, especially the Ibeku, Olokororo and the Ubakala, all located in close proximity to the famous Afor Ibeji market, had attracted groups of immigrant traders coming from different directions, including those from Arochukwu, to settle amongst them. But none of these clans could be said to have been founded or established originally by the Aro. The history of Aro settlements throughout and beyond Igboland in precolonial times, has so far not high-lighted any instances of Aro colonisation or settlement of virgin forests, or of uninhabited vacant lands outside Arochukwu.

In precolonial times the Aro preoccupation was always trade in human beings and other related commodities; this required not virgin forests or vacant territories to be cleared and settled by the Aro; rather their kind of business enterprise required their settling in already inhabited lands teeming with markets and populations of people.

The determination of the correct position of Amakama village in the Olokororo clan is very important; because it should provide a vital clue in the whole story about the origin of the clan. The earliest information obtained from Olokororo people in 1931, had established that elder Mbaruko, the 'Onyenweala' of Amakama, was the clan head.¹ It was also further established that in the past all matters of interest or importance to the whole clan were always discussed at a general meeting at Ahiaukwu Olokororo.² It was apparently at one of such meetings in 1935 that the acknowledged clan head, Mbaruko of Amakama, gave an order of seniority of the fourteen Olokororo villages, without any opposition or contradiction,

1. R. Chadwick, ibid.

2. ibid.

at least as far as the premier status and position of Amakama and (Old) Umuahia villages was concerned.¹

Most significantly, as Chadwick had also noted,

'Abara of Umuajata, said to be the oldest man in Olokoro, gave an order [of seniority] in which the first five [villages which also included Amakama with Old Umuahia in the first position] were the same as that given by Mbaruko...'²

This fact, coupled with that of Amakama village being the holder of the most important guardian deity of the clan, the Alaukwu Olokoro with its sacred Ofo, was further conclusive evidence of the seniority of Amakama village. Indeed it was not for nothing that Amakama (with Old Umuahia) always took the first portion of anything shared at the clan civic centre of Ahia-Ukwu Olokoro. It was very remarkable that, with all their habitual disputatiousness in such matters, none of the other villages, not even Umuajata village with elder Abara its oldest man throughout the entire Olokoro, disputed these claims of seniority by the Amakama village. What, we may now ask, was the basis of Amakama's undisputed seniority in the clan?

Just as in all traditional societies the order of seniority of individuals is based on age, so the order of seniority of village communities is based on the chronological or age priority of their establishment. In the case of the Olokoro villages, the evidences before us lead to the conclusion that, in the distant past of precolonial times, Amakama village was the first to be established, followed closely by (Old) Umuahia.

1. ibid.

2. ibid.

In consonance with the notion or common practice of these times, it would have been more prestigious for Amakama, as the most senior village, to stick to the claim of Aro origins. Yet although it claims to have also received immigrant settlers from Arochukwu, Amakama oral tradition clearly states that the 'founder [of the village] was Obizi [or a man] who came from [Obizi in] the direction of Owerri...' This was an account freely and voluntarily given by the people themselves over half a century ago,¹ and still being maintained and corroborated by their posterity even now.² The oral tradition is regrettably silent on the fortunes of Obizi, after his arrival in Amakama. Who were his children? Was it from them that the extended families grew to such large numbers of kindred families as to dispose them to collectively adopt the ostentatious praise-name or title of 'kindred-pass-kindred' (Ama-Ka-Ama)? Our inclination is to believe the story of the founder coming from the direction of Owerri, but to doubt that his real name was Obizi:

In Umuopara, Ekenobizi oral traditions have claimed firstly, that the ancestors of the village came from Obizi in Mbaise³; and secondly, that some of these ancestors subsequently migrated out of Ekenobizi to Ogbodi in Umuopara, to Obizi Amakama in Olokoro, and to Obizi Amibo in Ubakala. Some of these Ekenobizi oral traditions have also been corroborated by Amakama⁴, and Ubakala⁵, oral traditions.

1. Chadwick, *Ibid.*

2. *Supra*, interview with elder Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi Amakama, in December 1983.

3. Interview at Ekenobizi with Solomon Ucheagwu, aged c. 80 years; Peter Ucheagwu, aged c. 70 years; 'Iron-bar' Godwin Egwu, aged 57 years; et-al, 25 June 1983.

4. See *Supra*, Interview with Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi Amakama;

5. See chapters 2,4 and 6, Interviews with Mark Uchegbue Ogbuehi of Eziana Ubakala.

From the direction of Amakama, the Obizi village in Mbaise, and Ekenobizi village in Umuopara, are both in the direction of Owerri. The name of this founder who had migrated from the direction of Owerri, either out of Obizi or from Ekenobizi, to establish and settle in Amakama, was probably not Obizi, but Olekorom (what do I lack?) later corrupted to Olokoro.¹ It is only across the Imo River, in the areas of Mbaise and Owerri, that such names as Olekorom or Olokoro, or Olokoro, all representing either the names of individuals or of places, have been more easily found to exist.

Because of the need to examine the possible significance of the linguistic-dialectical affinities existing between the three contiguously located clan communities of Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala, it is necessary to defer final or further conclusions, until some analysis of Ubakala oral traditions has been attempted in the next, and final, chapter of this study.

1. Mark Uchegbu Ogbuehi of Eziana Ubakala has suggested that the real name, to make any sense at all in Igbo, would be Olekorom; later shortened or corrupted to Olokoro. Ngwaland is another possible area to find such place/personal name.

CHAPTER SIX

UBAKALA TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN:...

This final chapter deals with the Ubakala clan or groups of villages, their oral tradition of origin or settlement history. Comprising some thirteen village units, the Ubakala clan is situated to the South-West of Umuahia ll or the Umuahia township. On the West and North-West, the Clan is bounded by the Umuopara and Ohuhu Clans; on the East by the Olokoro and the Ibeku clans, and on the South by the Ngwa clan.

The first intelligence report on the clan by British political officers was prepared between 1931-32; but, like that on the Ibeku clan and unlike that on the Olokoro clan, it is very shallow and lacking in depth and details of information. The adult male population of the whole Ubakala at that time was estimated at about 3104 males, while the total population was put at 11,060 people. The clan occupies a geographical area of some 24 square miles, and its population density in the 1930s was estimated at 460 persons by square mile.

There is some point of interest in the listing of the constituent villages in the 1930s and in recent times.

The Order In The List Of The Ubakala Villages:

| In The 1930s ¹ | Presently ² |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Amaibo | 1. Amaibo |
| 2. Abam | 2. Umuogo |
| 3. Amauzu | 3. Nsukwe |
| 4. Avodim | 4. Eziana |
| 5. Eziana | 5. Amuzu |
| 6. Ipupe | 6. Mgbarakuma |
| 7. Laguru | 7. Laguru |
| 8. Mgbarakuma | 8. Umuosu |
| 9. Nsidimo | 9. Avodim |
| 10. Nsukwe | 10. Ipupe |
| 11. Umuego | 11. Abam |
| 12. Umuosu | 12. Nsirimo |
| 13. Ubani | 13. Umuako |

1. Intelligence Report on the Ubakala Clan, EP/10622^A Minloc 6/1/218(1932).
2. Report of Ubakala Improvement Union (U.I.U.) Commission of Inquiry into village chieftaincy in Ubakala (December 1975) p.16.

The relationship between Ubani village in the 1930 list, and Umuako village in the 1975 list, is not yet clear. The oral tradition so far obtained says nothing about Ubani, nor is there today any Ubakala village with that name. The list obtained by British political officers in the early 1930s lacked the order of seniority, although the position of Amaibo as the most senior village seemed then generally acknowledged; but the listing by the U.I.U. Commission of Inquiry in 1975-6 seems to be based on what the people have since accepted as the order of seniority among the villages.

Field work and oral interviews conducted in the five Umuahia clans, reveal that much greater local effort at the recording of oral traditions of origin or community history seems to have been made by the Ubakala group, more than any other group.¹

The great pity, however, is that despite the existence of these many earlier 'researches' into Ubakala history, our state of knowledge on the local history or the origins of Ubakala clan, is still rather poor;

1. Between 25th June 1983 and January 1984, this writer collected from various individuals in Ubakala bits and scraps of papers, some printed, some hand written, which people had earlier produced out of self-effort, on the subject of Ubakala history and legends of origin: Some of these 'documents' carry such titles as: 'History in the making: The Origin of Ubakala'; this is a one-page, weather-beaten, partly torn, brownish scrap of paper; it was printed probably in the 1950s in the Ubakala Improvement Union's Newsletter, and bears no date or the name of the author. This paper was collected from one of my interviewees at Umuosu village on the 25th June 1983. Another scrap of 'document', in three pages, and also written probably in the 1950s, was collected on the 16th November 1983 at Eziamu village; it bears the title 'Draft of outline of Ubakala local History'. Yet another, hand written, 'document' was obtained during another interview on 26th November 1983 with many Ubakala elders assembled at the residence of Mr. Sonny Arukwe, a young and very successful businessman and for seven years the President-General of Ubakala Improvement Union (U.I.U.) This 'document' is titled 'An outline Local History of Ubakala'. It was written and signed by Chief S.M.Uche. Another unsigned and undated 'document' obtained at Ubakala during one of these many interviews there in 1983 may, for easy identification, be titled 'Uturu, Ogurube, and Uvoma'. Another relevant document was the Report of the Commission of Inquiry set up in December 1975 by the Ubakala Improvement Union (U.I.U.)

indeed in many cases the existing ignorance has been confounded through the repetition, by successive writers in the past, of one erroneous theory after another.

A portion of Ubakala oral tradition of origin compares with that of Olokoro in pointing to the same Arochukwu as the original home of the founder: A man called Ibom, as the popular legend has it, had migrated from Arochukwu many centuries ago to found the Ubakala clan.¹ This version of the oral tradition however offers no explanation as to why the alleged founder of the clan had migrated and come to settle so far away from his original home.

This version further states that Ibom had been accompanied to Amaibo Ubakala by his wife, whose name nobody now remembers. At Amaibo, Ibom and his wife had many sons who in time left Amaibo and founded all the other villages of the clan; except that the village of Nsidimo (sometimes spelt Nsirimo) was said to be related to Mgbarakuma, having been founded by people from the village of Mgbarakuma. In consequence of this relationship these two villages today do not intermarry.

Each of the various versions of the traditions of origin of the clan, lacks depth, and none of these stands upto any rigorous analysis. In sum these versions represent, apparently, very poor attempts at myth-making; and the accounts of how the names of the different villages originated seem a rather amateuristic exercise in etymology or word-building.

One of these versions makes a man called Uturu, and not Ibom, the founder of Ubakala:

'The man Uturu came to settle at a place called Apumiri with his wife. They later started to bear

1. Intelligence Reports on the Ubakala Clan, Ref.EP/10622^A Minloc 6/1/218.

children, the most senior of whom was called Ibom. Later, in his old age, Uturu left his home at the more central territory at Apumiri to live between the homes of his younger sons called Nkobu and Nloji... This was the origin of the common proverb in Ubakala today which states, 'Uturu nwe ala jeburu n'ikwa'...¹

Part of this version also claims a common ancestry for the founders of the three clans - Ubakala, Ibeku and Olokoro:

'Uturu, Ogurube and Uvoma are from one father and one mother. Three of them were living together - till trouble burst among them caused by the hostility of Ogurube towards his two brothers...²

But this version tells us nothing as to where these three brothers were supposed to have come from; nor the actual place where they first settled, before their separation. Before examining this second version more closely, it is necessary at this stage to note the other variants in Ubakala oral traditions. In what we may here designate as the third version, Chief S.M. Uche in his four-page statement narrated a variant oral tradition: It claims that at the beginning

'Ubakala was on its own, and later had two elder sons, Aloji and Alocha. Aloji was the eldest son headed by Ibom, [sic] and Alocha was headed by Akuma [sic]. When they came they settled at a place called Onodu Qha...³

If Aloji and Alocha were individual persons and sons of Ubakala, then they could not be 'headed' by Ibom and Akuma, respectively. The account here appears clearly confused.

What we will here regard as the fourth version, is contained in a one-page printed paper, probably part of a periodical Journal or Newsletter published by the U.I.U. in the 1950s. This version has it that:

'The founder of Ubakala had eleven sons - Ibom, Ogo, Ukwe, Ama, Uzu, Akuma, Aguru, Nwaosu, Avo, Ipupe and Abam. Akuma, the sixth, gave birth to Ako; — thus during his life time Ubakala had a grandson [Ako?]

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1. Interview with some elders at Eziana village, Ubakala, 16th October 1983. See also the typed 'document' titled 'Uturu, Ogurube and Uvoma...'
 2. ibid.; also interviews with Jonathan Ogbuehi, aged 60 years, technician; and Benjamin O. Iroka, retired civil servant.
 3. A written narrative by Chief S.M. Uche presented during an interview discussion with many Ubakala Chiefs and elders. This interview-discussion was specially arranged by Mr. Titus Anyanwu and the President-General of U.I.U., Mr. Sonny Arukwe, at the latter's residence on the 11th, 18th and 26th October 1983.

Nsudimo — The thirteen villages of Ubakala were believed to have derived their names in this way: Amaibo from Ibom; Umuogo from Ogo; Nsukwe from Ukwe; Eziana from Ama; Amauzu from Uzu; Mgbarakuma from Akuma; Laguru from Aguru; Umunwaosu from Nwaosu; Avodim from Avo; Ipupe from Ipupe; Abam from Abam; Nsudimo from Nsidimo; and Umuako from Ako.....¹

This version went further to explain how before his death, Ubakala shared both his land and all his 'juju' to all his children, but leaving out, 'for unexplained reasons', both Nsudimo and Ako from a share of the inheritance!

On the 16th November 1983, while on a field work in company of Mr. Titus Anyanwu interviewing people in various parts of Ubakala, one of the elders at Eziana dug out from his old files an undated, printed, 'document'.² Part of this document contains its own version on the origin of Ubakala:

'The place now called Ubakala was founded by a group of people whose eldest was Ibom. Nothing is known of the time when they came. They settled at a place called Onodu Oha. Nothing is known about where they came from. [Apart] from the first [original] founders, Ibom, Nsukwe, Eziana, Amuzu, Mgbarakuma, Laguru, Umuosu, Avodim, Ipupe, only two more new settlers — Abam from Umuihi Umuopara [and] Nsirimo from Nsulu-Ngwa—have come...³

The research worker on Ubakala oral traditions of origin and settlement history has, in short, no less than five or six different versions to contend with, with wider areas of contradictions, indeed confusing details, to analyse or reconcile. While many of these versions have, in the absence of any real knowledge on the subject, simply resorted to what may amount to mere myth-making, the last version quoted above

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1. 'History in the making: The origin of Ubakala' (in U.I.U. Newsletter, no date).
 2. Draft of outline of Ubakala local history (no date).
 3. *ibid.*; interview with Benjamin O. Irokanulo, retired civil servant.

contains what seems probably to be the true position on this issue:

Nothing real seems yet to be known by the people themselves, about where their earliest ancestors came from, or as to how the clan originated.

As already observed in the previous chapter on the Olokoro Clan, historical precedents are still lacking of the Aro in precolonial times traversing very long distances, across hills and dales, to establish themselves on virgin soil and uninhabited forests, outside their Arochukwu home land. It is therefore improbable that Ibom, a lone traveller with his wife, would have come all the way from Arochukwu to settle at Amaibo and to become the ancestor-founder of the Ubakala clan. The settlement or colonising character of the Aro was always dictated by the needs of their profession as habitual traffickers or traders - dealing either on the human commodity or other produce by man, or both. The nature of Aro trade obliged the Aro to establish and live with, or among, already established communities where people and markets abound.

The version in the oral tradition which claims common ancestry or parentage for Uturu, Ogurube and Uvoma needs very close examination. Versions of Ibeku oral tradition have already rejected the idea that Ogurube was a real person, regarding the name as 'etutu-aha', something like a praise-name for the Ibeku group.¹ In the same manner, it has also been strongly suggested in Olokoro oral traditions, that Uvoma was not the name of a real person, but rather an adjective or word descriptive of the goodness or kind-heartedness of (beautiful) Chukwu (Oma), who had heard Olokoro's prayers and blessed him with the object of his prayers or sacrifices - children.²

1. See the chapter on Ibeku Clan.

2. See the chapter on Olokoro Clan.

Perhaps this version of a common ancestry for the three clans, is an attempt to underscore some historical fact in the distant past: The founding ancestors of the three clans of Ibeku, Olokoru and Ubakala, may have lived together at some common territory, before their eventual separation and moving apart into the respective territories which they occupy today. Indeed, according to elder Onyebuchi Nwoko of Amuzuoro in Amaoforo Ibeku, 'Ibeku and Ubakala and Olokoru are brothers; but they separated after Agha-nturu [kidnapping war]',¹

The fact of very closely-related, almost identical, dialects spoken by the Ubakala, Ibeku and Olokoru groups would seem to strengthen the probability of some kind of ethnic affinity, if not indeed a common ancestry of the three clan groups.

During one of our interviews at Eziana, one of the informants had drawn attention to the significance of an important difference in some of the social customs of the five Umuahia clans:

'One reason I believe strongly that we came from Arochukwu and are therefore not related to the Umuopara or the Ohuhu people, is the practical absence among us in Ubakala, and also among the Ibeku and Olokoru, as equally among the Aro people, of the Osu caste system, which the Umuopara and the Ohuhu peoples, like their neighbouring Obowu and Owerri peoples and other groups across the Imo River, practise or used to practise among them in their own communities...'²

These important differences, in dialect and social custom, between the Umuopara and Ohuhu groups on the one hand, and their Ibeku, Olokoru and Ubakala sister-clans on the other hand, need some explanation; just as the close similarities between the Ibeku, Olokoru and Ubakala social customs and dialects also need to be explained.

At this point, we must digress a little in order to discuss briefly the Osu system, and to consider how or why it hit some of the Umuahia

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1. Interview with elder Onyebuchi Nwoko at Ibeku, 29th Dec. 1983.
 2. Ogbuehi, jnr. interview at Eziana Ubakala, 16th October, 1983.

communities, while the other Umuahia and Ngwa groups rejected it. Following earlier works in this field by other scholars, Professor Uchendu's excellent study on the Igbo of South East Nigeria discusses aspects of the Igbo traditional Society and culture. The Osu System which forms part of this culture in many parts of Igboland is traced to its earliest origin in the Awka-Owerri-Okigwe zone. Uchendu points out the essentially superstitious basis of this system, and discusses its linkage with the traditional religion and the ancient oracles, especially the Igweka-Ala of Umunoha in Owerri, the Amadioha (Kamahu-Ozuzu) at Etche in Ikwerreland; and the Agbara, in Awka; all of which oracles were believed by their devotees to possess great power and influence.

In the precolonial days, people came from far and near throughout Igboland to consult these oracles, which were held in great awe, feared and worshipped. Families or individuals who were afflicted by illnesses or dogged by constant misfortunes usually came to consult these idols or oracles for advice and relief. The priests of these oracles might then prescribe one form of sacrifice or the other to the gods or deities which were thought to be responsible for inflicting the misfortunes on their devotees or subject-victims, as punishment for one reason or the other. Sometimes the prescribed sacrifice might require the dedication of a human being as a priest-servitor (Osu), to the deity being appeased.

By such an act of human sacrifice or dedication to the deity, it was believed the sins and misfortunes of the dedicator(s) were permanently transferred to the human being(s) so dedicated to the deity.

The various forms of disabilities which the dedicator(s) and the priests of the deities and oracles inflicted on their 'Osu', included the physical mutilation of any of the limbs or organs of the body;

such deliberate mutilation was aimed to help (together with the appearance of the Osu's hair which must remain bushy and unkempt) distinguish the 'Omu' from other 'normal human beings in the society.

The practitioners of this aspect of Igbo traditional custom or religion, were, in short, themselves subjects of the deities and idols which they dreaded and worshipped, and from whose wrath and punishments they wished to escape by substituting 'Osu' scapegoats as subject-devotees of the deity.

The existence of such a barbaric system, especially in a society that had been noted since its origin for its love of freedom, for its progressive and libertarian outlook, and for its achievement-oriented philosophy, has remained a puzzle for many scholars and observers. Professor Uchendu, has aptly described it as constituting 'the greatest contradiction to Igbo equalitarian ideology...'¹

It is speculated that the development of the Osu system in its Awka-Owerri-Okigwe zone or home base, may have post dated the legendary exit from this zone of the ancestors and founding fathers of both the Ngwa and some of the Umuahia groups, especially those parts of Umuahia where the practice of this system is virtually unknown;² that is to say, the migration movements which brought the founding fathers of some of these Ngwa and Umuahia groups out of the Awka-Owerri-Okigwe zone, and across the Imo River into their present homelands, had predated the development of the Osu system during the late 19th century. What is also worthy of note, is that even after the legendary historic crossing of the Imo River by the migrant groups into Ngwaland and into parts of Umuahia,

1. Uchendu, V.C. The Igbo of South East Nigeria (1965) p.89-90

2. ibid: Uchendu describes these parts as 'North-eastern Igbo or Umuahia-Ngwa in the South-East'; In particular these would include Iocku, Olokoro and Ubakala.

inter-group contacts and social relations between these groups on both sides of the Imo River did not come to an end; rather inter-group relations and contacts had continued; yet, significantly, this particular social system, although its existence was widely known throughout Igboland, still found no fertile soil on which to grow and thrive among some of the 'North Eastern Igbo or the Umuahia-Ngwa in the South East'.¹ Its rejection, or opposition to it on principle, probably therefore existed in some Igbo communities. Indeed, some of the oral traditions have already reliably revealed that, on account of its dehumanising and barbaric features, and because of its divisive impact on society, the Osu system was never tolerated by some enlightened local sages,² who opposed its intrusion or spread from its Etiti-Owerri-Okigwe home base, into parts of Ohuhu and Umuopara in Umuahia. The arrival of the Christian religion with the new colonial administration into these areas of Igboland at the beginning of the present century, eventually dealt a death blow to this system: Its further spread into those parts of Igboland not yet touched by it, was arrested; while in those areas where it had already started to grow or spread, its further development into its worst features of social dichotomy, hatred, spite and discrimination, was checked.

One may perhaps agree in the view already expressed by a well known authority on Igbo traditional institutions and customs, that this social system 'has now vanished' in Igboland.³ However, practical realities of life in those Igbo communities that saw the full development of the system, would seem to require some qualification to this assertion: For, within the original homes of this system, especially in the Awka-Owerri-Orlu-Okigwe and Etiti zones of Igbo land, even among the Christianised and 'converted', or

1. Uchendu, *ibid.*

2. In the Umuopara-Omaegwu area, for example, the people of Umuabali village in Ezeleke rejected its introduction.

3. Ogbalu, F.C., *Igbo Institutions and Customs*, p.72

among the highly educated and 'civilised' in those communities, occasionally there still manifest, in regard to the Osu system, those irrational or unnatural habits of thought, expression and attitude, which represent the sad hang-overs or survivals of what Professor Uchendu has aptly described as evidences of a 'barbaric past'.¹

1. Uchendu, ibid. Some oral traditions have infact associated the introduction of the Osu system into parts of the Umuopara-Omaegwu area, and its total rejection by some of the then constituent communities of Omaegwu, with the further exodus of people from this area which slowly but steadily depopulated the once melting-pot of the Omaegwu territory. Rather significantly, popular oral traditions among the Umuopara group today have always described the Omaegwu territory in the olden times as formerly a heavily populated territory teaming with communities possessing a common civic centre; but many of these communities, according to oral traditions, now no longer form part of Umuopara. It may be that such traditions of social conflicts and population losses in the past help to provide explanations, inter-alia, for the relatively small population of the Umuopara group today, compared with those of the other clan groups in Umuahia. However, there were some enlightened local sages and philosophers within the Umuopara community who, out of their own humane principles and beliefs in Natural justice, aided by the new influences of Christianity, remained opposed to the Osu system when with its disruptive and divisive force it began spreading very fast from across the Imo River into parts of Umuopara. Among such local sages may be mentioned, first of all, those in Umuabali village in Ezeleke who had collectively rejected the system from the start; others included Chief Nwaononaiwu Emezue of Umuojameze; Nwaubani Ucheagwu of Ekenobizi and his brothers, Agbanyim, Abraham, and others; Chief Ihiewuadinachi and others from Amachara Ezeleke; elder Odimba Osuachara of Azumiri-Ekenobizi; Okezie Nwachukwu-Nwoko (Itigwe uncle) and his sons Ojimadu, Osuagwu and Jonah Asiegbu; David Ukairo and Johnson Agbara - all of Ekenobizi. In Ekenobizi village in particular, the stiff opposition of Okezie and his group to the introduction of the Osu system was a unique event which later became, after his death, a cause-célèbre when, between 1934-36, Okezie's party under the leadership of his son Jonah Asiegbu, finally won the contest in court at Bende. Although unlettered, Okezie and his supporters may infact be regarded as enlightened local sages or philosophers, who were 'conscientious objectors' to the introduction into their community of social evils or acts of injustice in any shape or form.

Successful as a farmer, and even much more successful in the precolonial long distance trade of his time, Okezie defiantly ignored the social custom of isolating or discriminating against these underprivileged elements in the society: In his farm work he employed them gainfully as aids; in his commercial enterprises many of them were also engaged as head-porters handling his trade goods to and from the markets at Ukwa-Ndoki, Uburu, Ife-Mbaise, Uturu, Bende and Uzuakoli. Okezie's achievements as owner of vast areas of farmland, as a humane and successful farmer and trader, earned him the jealousy and bitter opposition of his rivals within the small village community.

The low-down subservience to, and worship of, idols and oracles form the very basis and roots of the Osu system. Belief in this system remains, therefore, not only as an evidence of a 'barbaric past'; it is indeed one clear example of how the human mind can remain, through its thought and belief system, and despite the impact of modern education and Christianity, warped and fettered by superstitious fear of pagan idols and oracles, and emasculated by the tyranny of evil tradition.

Okezie's stout challenge to his opponents on the caste issue has been preserved in some of the family and village oral traditions of the community; indeed the soundness of his ethical and philosophical arguments against the principles and practice of the caste system, predate those of the humanists and other civilised minds who, led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in the Eastern House of Assembly in the 1950s, were to condemn and legislate against the Osu system in Eastern Nigeria in and after 1956. Oral traditions recall Okezie's total condemnation and rejection of the caste system and its supporters in this part of the community: "In what way does your introduction of this system into our community make our community a better or happier one than those communities which do not recognise or practice it? In what way are individuals who oppress or dehumanise their fellow human-beings better or happier people than those who do not do so? Let anyone of you give one valid reason for attempting to create into beasts or sub-human beings, those whom the Creator has already created in the way He has equally created you as fellow human beings, and I will give you any number of reasons why we must not support or tolerate such evil domination in our community!" After Okezie's death, his able sons adopted the commercial and social policies of their father, and consequently faced the same jealousy, opposition and intrigues of their rivals. At the death of his elder brother Ojimadu, Asiegbu, Okezie's third son, took effective control of the situation. The long distance trade which had brought prosperity to Okezie and his children, had developed, after Okezie's death, into a bitter and protracted personality clash and struggle between his sons (Ojimadu, Osuagwu and Asiegbu) on the one hand, and some of their equally powerful rivals within the village on the other hand. The intrigues and reprisals which ensued between the two rival parties, took many different forms and patterns in the protracted conflict. Outside the village and within Umuopara, Asiegbu and his party were supported by such powerful personalities as Chief Nwaonanaizu Emezue of Umuojameze, Chief Nwogwugwu Omerua and Chief Ihiewadinachi both of Amachara and many others; and, within the village, by Chief Nwaubani Ucheagwu, his brothers, and many others including Johnson Agbara and David Ukairo. In the end, Asiegbu's party gained the upper hand, and won the victory in 'support of social peace, justice and harmony', against Chief Mibehekwa's party addicted to 'Idol worshipping, human sacrifice, and social injustice'. With the victory won by Asiegbu and his supporters over the pagan party of Idol and Oracle worshippers, the practices of human sacrifice, the killing of twin babies and their mothers, and the Osu system were all thrown into disrepute and decay; the supporters or adherents of these evil practices were consequently put to shame or disgrace within the community, and hence they could no longer support or preach these evils boldly or publicly. In his life time, Asiegbu achieved wide fame and popularity for his powers of oratory, uprightness, outspokenness and wisdom. Among his many praise-names within Umuopara and even beyond Umuahia and the Old Bende Division were 'Oke-nnunu' (Rare Bird or Great Bird!), Okuikporoto (Bush fire!), 'Eze-Okonko' of Bende; Ogele! 'Agbawo Dike Izuzu!' I am deeply grateful to Chief Mark Uchegbue of Ezianya-Ubakala, and to elder Solomon Ucheagwu of Ekenobizi, for some of these information on their great friend, late Jonah Asiegbu Okezie. Among his many other achievements was the founding of the first Christian Church in Ekenobizi together with David Ukairo, Johnson Agbara, Abraham Ucheagwu, and Alfred Nwosu.

Perhaps more clues to some of these important socio-cultural issues and distinctions in Umuahia ethno-history, will come, if a closer examination of Ubakala oral traditions is able to yield us better information on the origins and settlement history of the Ubakala group itself. If, for reasons already considered, we now discount Ibom as an Aro migrant and founder of Ubakala clan, we still have to examine the other version, that a man called Uturu, some say Uturu-Anambe, was the epical ancestor-founder of the Ubakala clan.

This version recognises nine out of the thirteen constituent villages as aboriginal or autochthonous, (Nsukwe, Umuogo, Eziana, Amauzu, Laguru, Umuosu, Avodim, Ipupe, Mgbarakuma); while the last four are the migrated or 'immigrant' villages - Amaibo, Abam, Nsudimo and Umuako. In other words Uturu, who was said to have come to settle at Ubakala after leaving his brothers (Uvoma and Ibeku and others) following a quarrel at their original common home (around Ibeku?), had nine sons and some daughters; from these nine sons grew the nine autochthonous, aboriginal, villages of Ubakala as indicated above.

Through diligent harnessing of the wealth in his new environment, Uturu grew in wealth and children. This prosperity led him one day to exclaim, 'Uba-akariala!' That is, there is so much wealth! This exclamation, according to this version of the oral tradition, is the origin of the clan name, Ubakala.¹

None of the versions which have Uturu (Anambe) as the epical ancestor of Ubakala however suggests that Uturu originated anywhere else outside Ubakala, or outside the territory today occupied by the five Umuahia

1. I am very grateful to Professor Ikenna Nzimiro of the University of Port Harcourt, for kindly letting me see his unpublished manuscript on 'Ethno-History' containing this brief information on the Ubakala Clan.

clans; by implication, then, Uturu must have, with his other brothers, originated within Umuahia territory or at any rate at the very place, around Ibeku perhaps, where all the three brothers are said to have lived together at first. But as we already know, substantial portions of the oral traditions from both Ibeku and Olokoro (who were allegedly Uturu's immediate brothers) strongly suggest that the Ibeku and Olokoro clans were founded and peopled by migrants from various places outside Ibeku and Olokoro; in other words, the Ibeku and Olokoro territories were at no time inhabited by 'mfunala'; that is, people who 'came from nowhere else' but only just sprang up and grew out of the soil! The idea of autochthony, of people 'springing up or growing out of the soil' to become the true aboriginals of the territory they inhabit, had 'originated, historically, with the old 'autochthonous' Athenians of ancient Greece. This ancient Athenian idea or theory seems to be re-enacted from time to time in the various parts of Igboland where, in the tracing of their histories, some claim to be 'mfu-na-ala'. However, what seems to be true of Ibeku 'Ogurube', and Olokoro 'Uvoma', would appear to be also true of 'Uturu-Anambe' of Ubakala, in terms of being mere legends; for, as the close study and analysis of the oral traditions strongly indicate, the founding and peopling of the respective Umuahia communities appear to have taken place in the far distant past through the mixed migrations and settlements of peoples, ^{not any} and through 'mfunala' springing up from the ground!

Even though largely blurred by the passage of time, the footprints of these early human movements and migrations, are, occasionally, still clearly traceable on the sands of oral traditions and time-honoured customs. In the case of the Ubakala villages, as in those of its sister-clans already investigated, the oral traditions regarding folk migrations in the long distant past, involve the so-called 'mfunala' or 'non-immigrant', 'aboriginal', villages, as much as the other clearly migrated or 'immigrant' villages.

In short, a closer examination of the oral traditions and settlement legends of some of the constituent villages in Ubakala clan, tends to contradict the posture of 'mfunala' or autochthony which many of these villages have either directly or indirectly claimed.

We will here try to examine a little more closely the claims of some of these villages to have come 'from no where' or to have been established in Ubakala as miu-na-ala 'from the beginning of time'. Many of these claims lack, in fact, credibility. Take the Amuzu village, for example. Part of the oral tradition had claimed that Uzu, who allegedly founded Amuzu village, was one of the sons of the legendary epical ancestor of Ubakala; let us call him either Ibom or Uturu or Uba (Ubakala or Ubakariala) according to the various oral traditions. But evidences from our interview discussions with some of the elders in Amuzu village reveal the facts of the founding and peopling of that village through inter-clan, intra-village, or intra-clan movements and migrations of people: For example, the Umuohu and Alamiri kindreds of Amuzu village, migrated from Ibeku.¹ It is this kind of close ethnic relationships which explain the other facts of non-inter marriage between different groups of families or kindreds even though they live in different villages or even in different clans:

'Umuelem does not marry from Umuokochi; Umuekpe /kindred/ does not marry from Umuda /Isingwu in Ohuhu Clan/; and Umudosa does not marry from Umualika and also Alamiri does not marry from Umuohu and vice-versa; Also Umuokochi can not marry from Amuzuta in Old Umuahia /in Olokoru/...'2

Many such examples exist of non-inter-marriages between families, kindreds and villages, both within and between the clans throughout Umuahia. And they illustrate nothing if not the close ethnic relationships between the

1. Interview with elder Nwanjoku Ahaiwe, farmer, aged c.93 years of Amuzu-Ubakala, December 1983.
2. Interview with elder Alex O. Umunnakwem, aged 69 years, retired Civil Servant, December 1983.

Umuahia groups in the past.

Eziama, another 'aboriginal' village in Ubakala, includes the Uturu kindred around which a lot of legend still exists: Perhaps the Uturu quarter or compound in Eziama today, was the 'out-of-way' place to which Uturu, the epical ancestor, had retired in his ripe old age, after leaving his former abode at the more centrally located Apumiri. This is the possible meaning of the common Ubakala saying: 'Uturu ~~nke~~ ala, jeburu n'ikwa'. Today the little quarter of Uturu, almost on the border with the Ozu-Umunwanwa people of Umuopara clan, is being over-shadowed by its immediate sister-compounds in Eziama village. The village of Eziama itself claims primacy over all the other Ubakala villages, including even Amaibo. Why?

'Because when the epical ancestor of Ubakala [named Uturu, Ngwobi or Uba] left his brothers Olokoru and Ibeku, he came to settle briefly at Apumiri before eventually moving to settle permanently at Uturu in Eziama....'¹

How is it then that Eziama village claims Ama as its founder, instead of the real epical ancestor Uturu or Uba or Ngwobi — whichever one of the three persons it was — who had allegedly first lived in that village as its founding-father? In short, should not Eziama village have derived its name, according to custom, from the name of the very first person ever to have established and lived at Uturu and other part^s of Eziama village and territory, in this case not Ama, but Uturu or Uba or Nwobi, according to the oral tradition? Unfortunately, Eziama oral traditions seem unable to answer these questions.

But still the oral traditions could be blazing for us quite new trails in going further to state, that some parts of the Eziama villages:

1. Interview with elder Mark Uchegbue Ogbuehi (aged 106 years) and his sons, at Eziama, 11th October, 16th October and 26th October 1983.

'do not marry from Laguru, from Ogbodi-Umuanya
in Umuopara, and from Ndume-Ibeku....¹

Ogbodi-Umuanya is truly in Umuopara, where the oral traditions have strongly suggested immigration of people from across the Imo into that clan; and the Umuezeala kindred of Old Umuahia (formerly in Olokoru clan) admits close ethnic affinity with Ndume-Ibeku, just as Umuopara also admits close affinity with all Ibeku. The Umuezeala-kindred in Old Umuahia also traces the original home of its ancestors, through Ndume-Ibeku, to the Mbano-Etiti area across the Imo River. The close affinity which part of the Eziana village thus claims with Ndume-Ibeku, and with Ogbodi-Umuanya in Umuopara, leads us to a certain conclusion: namely, that part of the Eziana people in Ubakala probably share a common blood ancestry or close affinity with Ndume-Ibeku, and with Umuopara through Ogbodi-Umuanya, as also with the Umuezeala kindred in Old Umuahia, through Ndume-Ibeku. The theory of the founding of Eziana village by Ama seems now to sound more mythical than ever; because these trends of ethnic connections clearly point to the peopling of Eziana through the settlement of immigrants from outside the village and outside Ubakala clan.

Nsukwe is another village which ranks high on the order of seniority of the thirteen Ubakala villages. According to Ubakala oral tradition Ukwé, one of the sons of the epical ancestor of the clan, had founded the village. But according to a version of the oral traditions within Nsukwe village itself, the founders of the village, as distinct from the epical ancestor and founder of the clan, had migrated from Arochukwu'.²

1. See chapter IV, ~~para 16~~.

2. Interview with elder John Okorie Onyemaizu of Nsukwe, (aged c.100 years) 26th December 1983.

The tell-tale evidence begins however to surface through time-honoured marriage taboos connecting Nsukwe village with other villages:

'We [in Nsukwe] don't marry from Nkpuke Amakama, and Umuaworo in Afara Ibeku.....¹

This, in short, could only be so because of blood relationship between Nsukwe and parts of Ibeku and Olokoru.

Oral traditions in both Ekenobizi Umuopara and Amakama Olokoru have ethnically linked Nkpuke and Obizi in Amakama with Nkpuke-Azumiri in Ekenobizi; just as ethnically too, Umuopara and Ibeku have some kind of link as we have tried to establish in the earlier chapters. There is therefore at least the possibility that Ukwé of Nsukwe is a mere myth and not a person's name, and that Nsukwe village was probably founded by people from Afara Ibeku, Amakama Olokoru, with perhaps other migrants from outside the clan joining later.

Attention has also been drawn to the fact that Nsukwe holds the priesthood of the most important deity, Ala-Ubakala, and might not have held such an important office if she were not the most senior or the oldest of all the villages in Ubakala. However, the other view is that the criterion for holding such a position is not uniform but rather changes from community to community: in some, it is stated, age is the decisive factor, the priesthood being decided by old age; while in some other communities the gods just choose their own men as priests, or the particular custodian-village within the community, and not necessarily on the basis of old age of the individual or of the village-community, but rather just as the god(s) please.

The oral tradition alleging the founding of Ipupe village by Ipupe,

1. ibid.

one of the nine legendary sons of the epical ancestor, also crumbles in the face of other internal evidence revealed by Ipupe legends of origin or settlement history: Whilst on the one hand we are told that: 'Ipupe is the eighth son of Ubakala.....'¹, on the other hand we have another account of the founding of the village, thus:

'Umuala /kindred in Ipupe/ came from Itu Olokoru;
Umuguru came from Mbawsi in Ngwaland; Umuguruobowo
came from Obowo; Umuokrika in Azuokata came from
Okrika in Rivers State; Also Umuogba in Azuokata
came from Umugama in Avodim Ubakala.....²

From the evidence of a highly educated informant in respect of the village of Avodim Ubakala, it is clear that, to explain the origin of Avodim Ubakala we should not look for a legendary Avo, the son of a legendary clan ancestor Uturu, or Ibom or Ubakala or whatever; because whilst the popular tradition of the whole clan clings fast to the old legend of an epical ancestor and his nine sons, of which Avo was one, the real truth appears to surface in the internal oral traditions of Avodim village itself:

'Amawom /kindred of Avodim/ originated from Amawom
Oboro; also people speculate that Avodim came from
Mgbarakuma.....³

Mgbarakuma is another village unit with a high rating on the seniority list of 'aboriginal', or 'autochthonous' villages. It is placed highly on the seniority list because its alleged founder Akuma, was one of the nine children born at Ubakala by the epical ancestor, whatever his real name. Both Mgbarakuma and Nsirimo mutually acknowledge, and recognise through non-intermarriage, their blood relationship; Nsirimo oral traditions agree that Nsirimo was founded by migrants from Mgbarakuma, but that the ancestors or

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1. Interview with Isaac Metu Ahaiwe of Umuobinola Ipupe, (aged about 58 years) 28th December 1983.
 2. *ibid.* 'We don't marry from Itu Olokoru; Umuogba people don't marry from Umugama in Avodim Ubakala...' interview by Isaac Metu Ahaiwe.
 3. Interview with Barrister Marcus Mbagwu of Umudinkwa in Avodim, (aged c.54 years), December 1983.

founding fathers of the latter migrated into Ubakala from Ogbe Ahiara in Mbaise.¹

The settlement history of the so-called 'immigrant' villages, is a more straight forward account of how these villages were founded by people migrating from other areas into Ubakala clan - into Abam Ubakala from Umuihi Umuopara; or into Nsirimo from Mgbarakuma (Ogbu Ahiara) and from parts of Ngwaland.

But by far the most complicated account of these legends of origin and of migrations, seems to be that in regard to Amaibo. Its premier place or top position on the seniority list of the Ubakala villages, derives from the now time-honoured tradition, that it was founded by IBOM, the Aro migrant and first settler on Ubakala soil.

In the earlier pages of this work, it was pointed out why this tradition is unlikely to be a true account: Amaibo may indeed have been the first and most senior village to establish itself in the Ubakala clan; but it is unlikely to have been so on account of Ibom's alleged migration from Arochukwu and settlement at Amaibo. This theory runs counter to the well known character and nature of Aro settlements in the past, among established communities teeming with populations and markets in order to make possible the progress of trade and commerce, the most primary enterprise of the Aro.

Amaibo is perhaps the most controversial village in the Ubakala clan, because of its leadership or seniority position amongst the other villages. This village is made up of the four kindreds of Umuevo, Mgbedeala, Umuoka and Obizi. In the course of our field work there we interviewed several

1. Interview with elder Ewulonu Ezenwa of Umuerim Nsirimo, (aged c.100 years and reputed to be the oldest man in Nsirimo, or Nsudimo, 28th December, 1983.

people, including elder Adaeme Nwaubani of the Amangwa Ukwu-Eleugwu family in the Umuevo kindred or quarter, and reputed to be the oldest man at Amaibo.

Amaibo's claim to seniority and leadership in Ubakala, although now recognised at least defacto, has often been questioned, or even^{been} challenged directly or otherwise, by some of the other villages, especially Nsukwe, and also by Eziana which includes the Uturu kindred: The most important deity throughout Igboland is the Ala-deity, the goddess of fertility, of law and order, and of morality: It is argued by some people that, in the Ubakala clan, the Ala-Ubakala deity resides in Nsukwe, while each of the thirteen Ubakala villages has only a chapter of the shrine of this all-important Ala deity. Nsukwe's claim or pretention to being the most senior village rests on its being the custodian in Ubakala of the Ala-deity. In most communities in Igboland, it is argued, only the most senior village or the oldest individual in the community can hold the position of custodian or priest-servitor to the Ala-deity. If Amaibo was truly the most senior in Ubakala, should it not have been the custodian of this all-important deity of the land? Many have asked.

Whilst the oral traditions in some of the villages hold Uba (Ubakariala or Ubakala) as the name of the epical ancestor of the clan, some others, especially Eziana village which comprises the Uturu kindred, uphold the oral tradition making Uturu the father of many children (of which Ibom was said to be the most senior), and the founder of the clan through his many children, each of whom allegedly founded a village.

The argument, by implication, is this: Amaibo, which was allegedly

founded by Ibom, one of Uturu's sons, could not possibly be the most senior village, over and above the village or villages directly founded and resided in by Uturu, (the epical ancestor himself and father of Ibom) such as Uturu-Eziama or Onodu Oha around Apumiri. Ibom, one of the first sons of Uturu, could not, in short, be the founder of the territory where his father Uturu was already living when Ibom was born to him.

Whilst still maintaining the old popular theory that Ibom founded Ubakala and was the son of, or had originally come from, Arochukwu, our informant however gave other very interesting information on the origin of some of the Ubakala villages:

'Our fathers said that some people from Amuzu village came from Ossah* Ibeku; some in Eziama village came down from Ntigha in Ngwa land; some people in Nsukwe came from Ikwe-Ngwa Umuogu; some from Umuosu** village came from Umuosu Ngwa....'1

Questioned further on the relationship which existed in the past between Amaibo village and the other communities within or outside the clan, elder Nwaubani gave what seems to us to be a most important clue:

'We do not marry from Obizi Amakama...; Umuopara is not the head of Umuahia; the name came from what the Obowo people call all of us especially Ozu-Umunwanwa...2

The evidence or revelation that Obizi Amaibo has such close ethnic links with Obizi Amakama in the Olokoro clan, is perhaps a further pointer to the ethnic links between some of the villages in Ubakala and those in Ekenobizi in Umuopara clan located on the Imo River border

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1. Interview with elder Adaeme Nwaubani, aged c.115 years; reported to be the oldest man in the whole of Amaibo, Adaeme Nwaubani who is of the kindred of Amangwaukwu-Eleugwu in Umuevo Amaibo was interviewed on 26th December 1983.
 - * This Ibeku village of Ossah is also supposed to have migrated, according to some oral tradition, from some part of Ngwa into their present home in Ibeku, see Esobe, N.E., op.cit. page 26. However Umuosu oral tradition reverses this story, and makes Umuosu Ngwa rather the migrant out of Umuosu-Ubakala.
 2. ibid.

If Obizi and Nkpuke Amakama and their counterparts in Ekenobizi Umuopara have mutually recognised such close ethnic links, and if similar links also exist between Obizi Amaibo in Ubakala and Obizi Amakama in Olokoro, then logically there must exist some links, hitherto unknown, between Obizi Amaibo and its 'Obizi' counterpart in Ekenobizi Umuopara, for it was from this latter place, according to Amakama oral traditions, that Obizi Amakama had migrated.

Among the many questions and other puzzles which the oral traditions seem unfortunately unable yet to resolve, are the order, and the time sequence, of some of these mixed migrations: Did the migrants out of Ekenobizi, for example, go straight to Obizi Amakama, and then from there to Obizi Amaibo? or did Amaibo receive its own share of immigrants direct from Ekenobizi Umuopara, or from the Obizi-Mbaise across the Imo River?

Igbo history, and perhaps indeed Nigerian history as a whole, will probably gain more by the enrichment of our knowledge through increased studies of more of these local communities in future.

Epilogue to Part One

What does each of these Umuahia groups really know about its origin? What, infact, is it possible for us to establish about the Umuahia peoples generally, basing our case on these analyses of the various strands and versions of the oral traditions, the myths and legends of origin, the migrations and the settlement histories?

First of all, an observation on the new trends in Igbo Studies concerning theories of Igbo origin: The existing Niger-Benue confluence theory of Igbo origins, is now coming under increasing attack. According to some critics,¹ the reasons or evidences of ecology, of paleo-botany, of linguistics or of agriculture, favour the Niger-Benue confluence as much as they also do most other parts of Igboland!

More detailed archaeological work, or detailed linguistic studies in the future, may, however, come out with more concrete and conclusive proofs

¹I am indebted to Prof. C.C. Ifemesia, now Provost of Awka College of Education in Anambra State, for the very lively discussion and exchange of ideas which we had on August 9, 1984 on this subject, and for his hand-written brief notes with the title: 'Remote Origins and Early Beginnings of Igbo Society'.

one way or the other concerning the early history and origins of the Igbo people generally. However, available evidence and data from the various oral traditions here analysed, permit some logical conclusions to be made regarding the origin, early migrations, and the settlement history of the Umuahia-Igbo communities which form the subject of this work.

The groups of territories and the geographical land mass which today go by the name of Umuahia, appear to have received their first groups of 'aboriginal' settlers through the migrations which started many centuries ago from the Igbo heartland in the Awka-Nri-Igboukwu zones, spreading south-
- Etit
south-eastwards towards the Orlu-Owerri-Okigwe/areas, and across the Imo River basin into Umuahia.¹

The oral traditions also strongly suggest that, after this first wave of migrations from across the Imo River which initially peopled the Umuahia area, subsequent migrations into Umuahia occurred. This time, however, the immigrants appear to have come in from the opposite directions of Ohaozara and Bende-Arochukwu in the North and the South-East of Umuahia respectively; they appear to have come in also from Ngwaland and Ukwa-Ndoki areas to the South of Umuahia. These subsequent immigrations into the Umuahia area appear to have affected mainly, if not only, the Ibeku-Olokoro and Ubakala groups, and perhaps also the small community of Umuabali in the Ezeleke village of Umuopara.

It is further suggested that the pattern of these subsequent immigrations into the Umuahia area which largely missed the Umuopara and Ohuhu groups, probably account for some of the noticeable socio-cultural differences, in dialect and partly in the social system for example, between these Ohuhu-Umuopara clan groups on the one hand, and the Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala clan groups on the other.

1. Vide the Old Umuahia-Mbano Etit-Umuezeala-Ndume Ibeku story and also the Obizi-Mbaise-Ekenobizi Umuopara-Obizi Amakama-Obizi Amaibo account.

From all the different accounts of oral traditions here assembled and examined, it would appear that the earliest ancestors of the present day Umuahia peoples and of the Ngwa group, were involved in the migration movements which originated in the Igbo heartland many centuries ago. After reaching and probably spending sometime in the Orlu-Owerri-Okigwe-Etiti zones, many of the migrants later continued until they crossed the Imo River; some then went to establish in Ngwaland; others came into what became Umuahia territory. For the Ngwa group, Isiala-Ngwa was probably the first point of settlement, and the melting pot from which further dispersals continued deeper into other parts of Ngwaland. For the present day Ohuhu clan, the Umuhu groups of villages nearest to the Imo River were probably the first settlement centre of the immigrants immediately after crossing the Imo River from the Obowo-Etiti side into Ohuhu-Umuahia. It is also possible that the Omaegwu territory in Umuopara and the adjacent areas nearest to the Imo River, served as a first settlement spot and, later, a melting-pot and dispersal centre for the founding ancestors of the different Umuopara village groups, and for those of their Ibeku-Olokoru-Ubakala neighbours.

The last or final migration movement into Umuahia, seems to have come from the North-East and the South-East in the opposite directions of the Imo River basin to the West of Umuahia. This latter immigration into Umuahia probably post-dated the Ngwa-Ohuhu migratory-crossing of the Imo River from the Owerri-Okigwe-Etiti zone: Movements of peoples from the Arochukwu-Cross River basin may have taken place into those parts of Ngwaland located to the South-West; and into Ibeku, Olokoru and Ubakala in the North-West of the same Cross River basin. And from Ngwaland proper, there were clearly movements into these same areas of Umuahia—Ubakala, Olokoru and Ibeku.¹ This whereas the Ohuhu and Umuopara clans on the Imo River basin

1. Vide especially the Ibeku-Olokoru-Ubakala oral traditions.

appeared to have received their populations, and cultural influences, mainly from across the Imo River to the West of Umuahia, the other three Umuahia clans, Ibeku-Olokoru-Ubakala, in addition to the initial influences which they received from the same area of the Imo River basin, were later almost uniquely exposed to contacts and influences coming from at least two other directions: From Arochukwu in the South East, and from Ngwaland, South of Umuahia. Indeed, various evidences so far obtained from each of the three contiguously located clans (Ibeku, Olokoru and Ubakala) have consistently pointed to Arochukwu and Ngwaland as among the areas or directions from which these clans were peopled by immigrant-settlers in the distant past.

It is this difference in the degree and diversity of influences to which the two groups of Umuahia clans were exposed, which perhaps explains some of the differences, and the similarities, in their dialects as well as in their social customs: The Egwu festivals, and the creation of community cultural centres called Omaegwu, were probably cultural-carry-overs, many centuries ago, from across the Imo River into the different parts of Umuahia. Elder Mark Uchegbue Ogbuehi, our highly reliable and knowledgeable informant at Eziana Ubakala, had described the old Omaegwu centre, located between Ekenobizi and Ehume: At this Omaegwu centre many of the community groups in precolonial Umuahia used to assemble for major trials of cases, for major discussions and decisions; but eventually, probably because of conflicts and quarrels or quests for more land, these groups went apart, each community establishing its own Omaegwu in its own area.¹ This account corroborates what some of the elders in Ekenobizi and other parts of Umuopara say on this point.²

1. See chapter 3, p.18

2. See chapter 2.

In one of the old scraps of printed documents already earlier referred to in this chapter, we further find at least partial corroboration of elder Ogbuehi's evidence on the subject of Omaegwu civic centres and cultural festivals in Ubakala. Perhaps after the split from the common Omaegwu centre near Ehume and Ekenobizi in Umuopara, the Ubakala group established their own Omaegwu at Amaibo:

'... Amaibo got the privilege of announcing Egwu, feast of the last planting of yams, and Nzu, feast which marked the beginning of famine. ... Nsukwe announced Ala Okochi, feast which followed two weeks after Nzu and, jointly with Umuosu, announced Ala Udumiri and Ekwensu Udumiri.... In other respects some of the villages concentrated their efforts. ... At certain times of the year the priests of the different juju went to Omaegwu in Amaibo, the centre of Ubakala, to celebrate Nkpata festivals....'¹

Our analysis of Ibeku oral traditions indicates that the Ibeku group probably established their own central Omaegwu either at Isieke or Ndume Ibeku, although most of the Ibeku villages claimed to have had their own village Omaegwu; at Olokororo a central meeting point seemed to have been created around Obizi-Amakama, before the later development of Ahiaukwu Olokororo as a more centralised civic centre.

Whilst the Ohuhu group and some of the Umuopara group continued with the caste system or aspects of it as one of the socio-cultural transplants from across the Imo River, the other three Umuahia clans of Ibeku, Olokororo and Ubakala, had probably rejected this institution right from the beginning;

1. in: 'History in The Making: The Origin of Ubakala' p.20 (no date; author not named).

or they were already abandoning it along with other socio-cultural traits which had culturally identified them, both with the Ohuhu-Umuopara groups and with the communities across the Imo river, from whence the earliest immigrant-settlers in Umuahia had most probably come centuries before.

The language-dialect differences are another case in point. While the Umuopara-Ohuhu groups continued to receive socio-cultural, and language, influences from their immediate neighbours across the Imo River basin, their Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala brothers living to the South-West and South-East, farther away from the Imo River, were already becoming hospitable to new kinds of influences coming from other directions--from Ngwaland to the South and from the Arochukwu--Cross River basin area to the South East of Umuahia. These new influences on the Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala groups eventually began to show, not only in their rejection, or the absence on their own soil, of the social force of the caste system, but also in the:

- a) dialectical differences developing between the Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala group on the one hand, and the Umuopara-Ohuhu group on the other,
- b) similarity of the Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala dialect.

Another new development of great importance was a new socio-political institution which the Aro immigrants into the Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala areas had brought with them--The Ekpe Society or Okonko Fraternity. Its actual name, 'Ekpe Aro', fully explains its true Aro origin.

Just as the Egwu and Omaegwu festivals, and the caste system transplanted from the Orlu-Owerri-Okigwe zones across the Imo River basin, had developed fully or partially on the new soil at Ohuhu and Umuopara, so also the Ekpe Aro Fraternity had developed more fully among the Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala communities.¹ In these latter areas the Aro immi-

¹The Ekpe or Okonko fraternity or cult, also spread to all other parts of Umuahia, including Ohuhu and Umuopara; but it probably did so, subsequently, from Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala; or it was introduced into the Ohuhu and Umuopara areas by the handful of Aro immigrants who came to settle in such villages as Amachara in Umuopara, and Mgboko in Okaiuga, Ohuhu.

grants and their Ngwa and Ukwa-Ndoki agents were increasing in numbers as residents and traders; and eventually they appear to have become active participants, or even pace-setters, in the social life of their host communities. With its main base probably at Ibeku, the Ekpe-Aro Fraternity appeared to have quickly displaced many other socio-cultural practices in the three allied clans of Ibeku-Olokoro and Ubakala. At Ubakala, for example, the Nkpata deity was probably introduced by the Aro settlers and based at Amaibo. It was quickly transformed into the most powerful deity in the clan. Feared and worshipped by the whole Ubakala people, the Nkpata deity came to be regarded as the bringer of fortunes and wealth to its adherents, and as more powerful than the myriads of other spirits, gods or deities which the Ubakala people had in earlier times worshipped and held in the highest esteem. . .

Behind the complexities and twists of the Umuahia peoples' oral traditions of origin, there clearly seem to lie the realities of a people

belonging to a common ethnic stock, and coming originally from a common geographical area into the Umuahia territory.¹ Some of the differences which later developed among these groups, in dialect and in aspects of social culture and practice as already noted, probably arose from the character and the impact of the latter-day immigration of the Aro and Ngwa peoples into the Ibeku-Ubakala-Olokoru parts of Umuahia. At best the oral traditions seem to support the view of the Aro as influential immigrant settlers, but not as founding fathers of whole villages or clans, in any parts of Umuahia.

How the Umuahia clan communities actually lived, worked, and governed themselves, and interacted among themselves in their traditional

¹The much later migration of the ancestors of the present Amankwo people in Umuopara, from their original home in Umuekwule village, quite close to the ancient location of the old Omaegwu melting pot, may be very significant as indicating the directions of some of the earlier migration movements in the peopling of Umuahia. I am very grateful to Dr. Chibiko Onwumere, for this information on the origin of Amankwo village, as well as on the Aro migration into some parts of Umuopara.

societies, could form the subject of a separate study. But it is quite valid to imagine that, in respect of the work ethic and the traditional institutions and patterns of government and the maintenance of social peace and harmony, precolonial Umuahia did not differ much from most other parts of Igboland at that time: As in most other parts of precolonial Igboland, the family (Ezin'ulo) remained the unit of social organisation; the extended family, (Onu Ama; Onu Obu; Mbara Ezi;) comprising a number of nuclear families with one ancestral father, was the next higher stage of authority. The oldest man in the extended family held the family ofo (symbol of authority); he prayed and sacrificed to the family deity (or Chi), and to the family's ancestors, on behalf of the whole family; he solicited all kinds of favours from the gods on behalf of himself and the rest of the members of the extended family. In times of family quarrels, difficulties, conflicts or disagreements, the family elder (Opara Nna Anyi, or Onye Okii) performed the

duties and mediatory roles of the most senior member of the family; and for such varied duties and roles, he usually received from all other members of the family various kinds of respect, marks of high regard in recognition of his seniority and his roles as head of the extended family.

Many such extended families, which trace their origins to a common great grand-father or otherwise common ancestors, form the village-compound (Mbara Ama or Okpora Ama). A number of such village compounds constitute or form a village community; while many of such village communities form, in turn, the clan units. The business of government is carried on at the meetings or Assemblies of either the Village-Compound or the Village-Community. Influential elders usually good orators, and also young men of intellectual or material substance, always wield a lot of authority in the reaching of all important decisions. But always, it is the voice of the majority which determines in these People's Assemblies (Nzuko Amala) the kind of decisions which may

be reached in virtually every aspect of the community life--in work or play, in establishment of laws or rules and regulations by which the community is governed, and in the sanctions against all kinds of crimes and anti-social behaviour.

This research inquiry found out that the different communities of precolonial Umuahia had identical socio-political institutions of government, the same rules and regulations for the maintenance of social peace and harmony; and the same identical sanctions for the punishment of such crimes as laziness and idleness, habitual falsehood, theft, murder, witchcraft, poisoning, adultery, incest, love-making in the daytime, or in the bush, etc.

Very keen traders and farmers, the Umuahia people in precolonial times equally developed many-sided practical, functional, skills in blacksmithing and fabrication of all kinds of household goods and agricultural tools. Their agro-based technology was highly developed in the methods of palm wine tapp-

ing; of harvesting fruits from palm trees; in the methods of processing these fruits to obtain edible palm oil and many other by-products, including soap detergent (Ncha-Ogbe). In clay works, especially pottery, the women achieved a technical skill and mastery which made precolonial Umuahia famous in this technology. To view this indigenous technology issue in a wider context, however, we must start the discussion afresh, in the next chapter.

Some of the facts or findings already highlighted or revealed in this analysis of Umuahia ethno-history, should, it is hoped, facilitate or permit future work, observations or suggestions on the social and culture history of the people. Some important points should, however, have become quite clear by now: For instance, that the hot, red-eyed, arguments which frequently arise during 'Kola-nut' presentations among the Umuahia people, is an unnecessary exercise in 'hair-splitting' among brothers. On this and other kindred issues, useful deductions seem now quite possible, based on the more or less

asertained earliest migrational routes into the whole area today known as Umuahia. But let 'kola-nut' quarrels and other related angry debates, ensue only when brothers all have lost their finger nails! But there is something else which is by far much more important for our deep reflection:

The old 'Egwu' or 'Omaegwu' festivals--above all others which usually brought the precolonial Umuahia communities together in moods of ethnic solidarity and festive unity at least once annually--were great cultural events which today put to shame our own dull sense of cultural history, and of ethnic solidarity!

PART TWO: Traditional Technologies

Chapter 7

Indigenous African Technology: A Case Study of the Umuahia-Igbo....

(i)

Indigenous Technology: what does it mean?

Out on a field research for a different report between 1979 and 1982, I had visited the Umuahia and other neighbouring communities. Our interview discussions centred on traditional warfare,¹ and other skills known and practised by the people in their various efforts and activities for human survival, before and since the advent of the white man in Igboland and Nigeria.

The present research project provided a new opportunity to revisit the Umuahia communities, for more detailed discussion and examination of some of the questions and issues raised, or some of the claims made by the people and touching on indigenous technology: For example, how and with what weapons, did the local people resist the European invaders in

¹See Asiegbu, J.U.J. Nigeria and its British Invaders, (New York: NOK Publishers, 1984).

Igboland and other parts of Nigeria? And what was the origin or source of those weapons?

The discussions seemed conclusively to reveal, that long before the advent of the Europeans into Nigeria, the knowledge of metal or iron technology was already established in many parts of the country. In warfare, as in Agriculture, the use of iron or metal tools and implements fabricated by local blacksmiths was very common: hoes, matchets, metal gongs, cooking pots and iron tripods, for example, were all familiar tools of agriculture and household use; while such weapons as guns and gun powder, swords and spears, featured in hunting and in local warfare.

In agriculture, warfare, activities of everyday life, as well as in the maintenance of law and order, peace and harmony in the society, the people strongly believed in the capacity of their gods, spirits and deities to intervene for weal or for woe. It was not for nothing therefore that these local gods, spirits and deities were worshipped, with supplicatory or propitiatory sacrifices often offered to them. Yet in matters of human activity

and struggle for survival, no Igbo family or community easily surrendered to fate or to any other external force or agency; rather there was a strong belief in the philosophy of sweat and labour; the use of the head and the hands, in the satisfaction of human want, the attainment of happiness, through the development and application of skills.

The Umuahia elders with whom, for several weeks, I was engaged in a discourse on the meaning and origin of 'technology', had gone further, after the foregoing discussions, to expatiate in parables and other remarks: The general philosophy throughout Igboland, one Umuahia elder reminded me, is embedded in the common parable:

'Onye n'arugh oru, orighi'; meaning, 'he who shall not work, shall not eat'. The following excerpt from my interview/field notes may perhaps help in clinching the Igbo philosophy of labour and the development of skills:

'Although our ancestors held their gods and deities in great awe and esteem, worshipped and sacrificed to them for all kinds of help and favours in return, they were never foolish enough to fold their hands waiting for gifts of the where-withals for human survival. The

family or community or individual foolish enough to remain in idleness in the olden days, was doomed to a life of slavery and enslavement..."

The Igbo people, clearly, understood that human development and societal change can only come through man's ability to respond actively with new ideas designed to meet human needs, the challenges and the problems of his environment. Our discussion further tried to identify the basic elements or factors involved in the rise or generation of human skills:

- a) The element not only of human need or necessity, but of desire or ambition, which generates in the mind a creative aim or purpose.
- b) The attainment or possession (accidentally or otherwise) of factual consciousness, or objective knowledge of facts of the nature or composition of things [Igbo--'imata otu ihie siri di']; which knowledge or consciousness stamps the mind with the creative-systemic or creative-methodic idea/drive.
- c) The inputs into both a) and b) above, of factors of the environment, societal or geographical or both; i.e. the effects or impacts on man of his environment.

From the foregoing interview discussions at Umuahia, we realised that a generally acceptable, faultless, definition of indigenous technology may be difficult or impossible to obtain; we therefore,

unanimously agreed to rest our inquiry on one definition agreeable to our ideas and belief that, inventiveness may not, after all, always rest on sheer necessity; because human desire or want, or ambition, are often also motive forces of invention or inventiveness. Hence we agreed that:

'Indigenous technology is a demonstration or application of creative or practical skill/s or knowledge, aimed at effectively solving a perceived problem, or supplying the particular wants or needs of the individual/s or group/s of people originating and using such practical skill/s or knowledge.'

(ii)

The Neolithic 'Revolution'--The Earliest Application of Technical Skill in Agriculture

In world history the 'neolithic revolution' refers to man's earliest, conscious, entry into agriculture and farming for food production; he had learned to use tools and equipment of stone, sticks or bones which he polished or fabricated for that purpose; aiming, as he did, on performance rather than on quality or sophistication of this tools.

The earliest invention and application of technology or practical and productive skill, was therefore made in the field of agriculture. Discoveries of neolithic farming cultures in different parts of Africa, coupled with other archaeological artefacts of early metal/iron technology located in the West African region, including South Eastern Nigeria and the Nok area in Northern Nigeria, all appear to be incontrovertible evidences of agro-based skills and metal-working technology being indigenous to Africa, or at least predating the colonial era by many centuries in most parts of the continent.¹ Also a pointer to this fact, is the existence and use till this day, of some of the proto-type agricultural implements and ideas in many rural African villages and communities. But after what seemed to be a very

¹Iron technology artefacts unearthed in various parts of South Eastern Nigeria, for example, have been dated by the radiocarbon method, some reading, in age, between eighth to ninth (8th-9th) century A.D.: See Archaeological works by Shaw; Anozie, Tylecote, Shinnie, etc. For fuller details on relevant publications, see Bibliography Pt. Two. Dates of 500 BC from such artefacts have also been obtained at Nok, for example. An important new contribution by a very knowledgeable Ph.D. candidate at Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S., is nearing completion: See O.N. Njoku, "A History of Iron Technology in Igboland, 1542-1900".

early start in the field of technology, why has Africa fallen behind, and for so long?

We will return to this question with some answers later. In order, however, to link up the framework and sequence of the whole discussion, whose main objective is the future of indigenous technology and development in Nigeria and Africa generally, some of the major findings on skills and enterprise among the traditional Umuahia-Igbo communities need to be concisely summarised here to provide a necessary foothold for stepping into the discussion which will follow after this summary below.

(iii)

**A Résumé-critique of the Resilience,
Promise and Problems of Indigenous
Technology Among the Igbo of Nigeria**

Outside agricultural pursuits in traditional Umuahia, and Igboland generally, other activities which involved the display of various kinds of technical skills, resourcefulness and productive

energy were Trading, (local and regional) Agro-based processing or manufacturing, Pottery, Weaving, Metallurgy, Wood work and crafts. Some of the crucial details in the organisational strategies of labour, productivity, distributive and exchange systems, and of capital formation or accumulation, have been carefully examined, charted and reproduced in the chart and maps included in this section.

The existence or development in Umuahia-Igbo traditional society and the Old Bende area generally, of a wider spread of indigenous skills than existed in most other local communities at the time, tempts further speculation in other angles. This is in regard to some aspects of the ethno-history earlier discussed in Part One of this study. What factors provided the original impulses or attractions for many a wandering, migrant, foot at Umuahia? Was it the locational or geographical character of the place? Or a social atmosphere and environment found more congenial by those who arrived and settled, to originate, acquire or develop the resources or talents which they had either brought

with them or found already existent on arrival at the spot?

We may not have fool-proof answers to these speculations and questions, until perhaps further work, helped by archaeology and other related disciplines, is done. Be that as it may, substantial active populations had settled the entire Old Bende area including Umuahia. Their development and practice of a wider variety of technological skills and enterprises than existed in many other local areas, conjure in our minds certain images about the territory as a beehive of activity, and about the people themselves as soldier ants of human activity and enterprise. The toil and sweat which existed in the various forms of labour, sometimes organised according to occupation or gender of the sexes, was in many cases also sweetened by the reward of capital accumulation in material and social terms, as the chart also tries to indicate. What was the effect on traditional labour and productivity, with the beginning of the Anglo-Nigerian colonial encounter?

Between 1861 and 1960, British colonial policy in Nigeria profited as much as possible from its

observation, in some cases careful documentation, of the productive capacities and psychology of the people. Hence the insistence of government officials in Whitehall that every colony must strive to be self-supporting, was not made in a vacuum of information and data about the productive capacities of the local people. Nigerian communities, for example, had given good account of their productivity and usefulness during the two world wars.

In the late 1940s British imperialism contrived or planned to 'modernize' and 'improve' local Nigerian productive capabilities, by dreaming of large European owned plantation estates in Nigeria. The late Herbert Macaulay, eloquent father of Nigerian nationalism, was quick to remind both the British government and their colonial officials, of the historic resilience already demonstrated by traditional African productive skills. What was needed in order to achieve desired improvements, Herbert Macaulay seriously warned and advised, was not to neglect or ignore the skills and potentials already existing in the village-communities, in favour of new ideas and ideals imposed from the top

by the 'mother country' for its own economic benefits. The route which a baby had taken to root itself in the 'restricted village' of its mother's womb, is the route it must follow to burst out and blossom into the 'urban centre' outside its mother's womb! Macaulay's views approximated to the famous Igbo proverb, about learning, developmentally, to 'village-walk' before 'city-running' Herbert Macaulay also had incontrovertible reasons for seeing the village-communities as the natural and best base for any developmental strategy, if it is to be meaningful or more result oriented. Since Nigeria entered the British colonial grid or orbit in 1861, not one cargo boat or vessel had arrived from Europe on the Nigerian water front, without fully and promptly loading whatever cargo was required; and all cargo so far obtained and loaded had been happily produced by the local people, as and when required by the imperial master. What was lacking, and still needed proper remedy, was proper care and attention to the centres of productive activity, the local people and the village communities.

Until the end of the colonial era in Nigeria, the imperial master or the 'mother country' had continued, without proper attention to the village-communities, to secure whatever local goods were needed to maintain self-sufficiency in the colony, as well as to supply whatever was needed in Europe. Since the past quarter century, the succession to political power in Africa by carefully groomed African elites, has hardly brought about any great improvements, particularly to the very same productive centres at the village-community levels.¹ The urban centres, seats of former colonial governors and officials but now of the African elites, still retain priority in terms of government development programmes. And productivity has continued, as in the colonial days, to be determined and influenced by what we must sell quickly at any price in Europe, in order to secure what we want to consume, wear or otherwise use, in order to look or appear modern in our adopted urban homes!

¹Poor pricing policy for local products, and heavy import consumption, had been major root causes of decline in productivity since the 1940s. See O.N. Njoku, "Export Production Drive in Nigeria During World War Two" in TransAfrican Journal of History, Vol. 10, 1981.

The confusion and developmental decay arising from a long-lived misinterpretation between African wants and African needs, had grown so bad and become so serious as to constitute the main subject of much continuing debate and discussion at many levels in our own time. What is to be done? What is the best or most practical or most realistic strategy to adopt in order to remedy Africa's problems of developmental and technological decline?

He who must venture into a discussion that has already created 'experts' in their hundreds, and produced lofty and seemingly faultless theories in workshops, academic seminars and bureaucratic conferences, must be very bold, or be ware! Existing theories of inter-dependent arrangements and structures through inter-governmental, regional and continental agreements etc., have not only become virtually sacrosanct doctrines on African development; they have created not just bureaucrats and experts, but very powerful and influential ones world-wide. But if out of fear or other considerations we allow these situations to remain so, even when or where they need to be modified or challenged, we do so not

only against the dictates and lessons of history, but also to the great detriment of the final objectives whose non attainment ^{vi}uptill now have kept Africa, and world conscience, still uncomfortable and ill-at ease.

We need at every stage to ask questions of past history, in order to cross-check our future bearing. In regard to already existing doctrines of interdependent, regional, intergovernmental, development strategies, it would be folly to see them as sacrosanct. The origins of the scientific ideas and technological inventions which transformed European agriculture and industry from about the 18th century, may have quite instructive lessons for us regarding these current ideas and doctrines.

Except for patronages received more from individual princes, benevolent despots and men of means at the time, the earliest scientific ideas and technological skills were originated and demonstrated, not by governments, but by creative thinkers and pioneers. The development and growth of craft guilds in medieval European village communities and towns, from which the bourgs and modern cities grew

and expanded, had not to wait for inter-governmental initiatives. Christopher Columbus, Galileo, Copernicus, Michael Faraday and Graham Bell, among many other pioneers in various fields, had originated and experimented ideas which have today revolutionised world history and our scientific and technological knowledge. Most of these cases, Galileo and Copernicus, for example, far from receiving official/governmental encouragement, had had to contend with hostility and even official threats to their lives, whilst they still laboured in their rudimentary, home or village-based, scientific 'laboratories'. Just as today in many of our village-communities, great potentials are lavishing in decay for want of the proper support and attention, already being misdirected or diverted to 'development' by the fiat only of interdependent, inter-governmental, regionalism!

How much of such intergovernmental or regional initiative had given actual birth to the earliest ideas of science and technology, the ultimate maturity and expansion of whose great benefits and advantages the whole world enjoys today? The interminable

conferences, discussions and debates on development strategies may continue at the international or regional levels, for possible limited validity and applicability which they may, at best, have in Africa. Is it impossible or improper, however, for aid and patronage, of whatever kind and from whatever source, to be given in the meantime in support of localities, institutions, and even individuals, whose creative ideas or skills, if possessing national potential, may thus be enabled to fructify in order to spread their benefits beyond the village-communities where such talents may have originated? Would such a strategy of support and patronage for 'mini' ideas and skills on development, be any different from what had happened before at various local levels in history to produce great results for the rest of the world? While such 'mini' strategies even hold greater promises of quicker and more relevant results, any amount of imaginable implementational difficulties arising therefrom, may be multiplied a thousand fold for the 'macro' strategies of regional, interdependent and intergovernmental arrangements and structures, such

as have been under elaborate plan and discussion^S in recent times.

On this and other related issues, let African political elites and the Western world think seriously, and very hard and fast too; for the bleeding sore of African developmental decline[/] has had its origin in official policies taken or omitted in the past; just as the proper solution to it now or in the future, depends largely on the actions which may be realistically taken, or otherwise omitted.

Now to summarise this brief resumé or critique of Igbo traditional technology, using our information and data on metallurgy or iron technology. From the Igala and Idoma areas of the present day Benue state, the knowledge of iron technology is said to have been first introduced into the Northern Igbo areas around Nsukka, Udi and Awka between the 14th and 16th centuries. Igbo drive, industry and resourcefulness developed this technology to new heights, spreading the advantages throughout Igboland and even beyond.

To Benin in the West, to even Igala and Idoma in the Benue region from whence the technology was allegedly first introduced in Igboland, Igbo blacksmiths were later being invited by the royal courts of those kingdoms, and by the ordinary people, to come and settle and practice their skills. Igbo blacksmiths operated even in the remotest, geographically most difficult, parts of Southern Nigeria, among the mangrove swamp village-communities in the Niger delta. It was also on special invitation that Igbo blacksmiths travelled, on foot, with their working tools and wares, their professional carriers, security agents and welfare arrangement systems, into far away Cameroons, outside Nigeria, about the late 19th or early 20th centuries.¹

Perhaps one great lesson to learn from all this development and the survival of Igbo traditional enterprise and technology in some form today, is not that the Atlantic slave trade or Western imperialism did no harm or damage, after all; but rather that

¹O.N. Njoku, "A History of Iron Technology in Igboland, 1542-1900. (A forthcoming doctoral thesis in History, Dalhousie University).

the resilience of Igbo traditional technology and enterprise would probably have achieved world standards by now, without the four centuries of disturbances and distractions arising from Atlantic slavery and Western imperialism.

Let us now return to an earlier question, by examining very briefly some of the past actions or situations which had contributed to Africa's lingering problems.

An Illustrative Chart on Some Labour and Economic/Occupational Operations in Traditional Umuahia-Igbo Society

| | Occupation/ Enterprise | Nature of Occupation/ Enterprise | | | Dominant Organisational/ Productive Pattern | | | | Periodicity | Nature of Labour | | | | LGD | Labour/ Gender Participation | | | | Some Key Goods or Products | System of Dis- tribution and Exchange | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------------|-----------------|--|--------|-------|--|---------------------|---------------------|------------|------|------------|--------|------------------------------------|---|-------|---|---|---|-------------|---|-----|-----------------------|----|----|
| | | Profess- ional | Semi-Prof- essional | General Type | Individual | Family | Group | | | | Apprentice | Hire | Individual | | Domestic/ Family Hands | | Adult | | | Child | | | VCM | RM (Long Distance) | Bt | Cs |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | M | F | | m | f | | | | | |
| 1 | Agriclture/ Farming/ Animal Husbandry | N | N | Y | Y | Y | N | | S A/ S Yr. | N | Y | Y | Y | M F | M | F | m | f | Yam Cassava Cocoyam Fruits Vegetables Goat Sheep Poultry Cows | Y FM | Y M | Y | Y | | | |
| 2 | Commerce: Local & Regional Trading | Y | N | Y | Y | N | N | | A/S | Y | Y | Y | N | M F | M | F | m | f | All marketable goods (AMG) | Y FM | Y M m | Y | Y | | | |

In this Chart, which gender/classes of labour dominate (ref. LGD)) what occupations/skills?
And which classes rarely participate in what enterprises/occupations?

An Illustrative Chart on Some Labour and Economic/Occupational Operations in Traditional Umuahia-Igbo Society
(continued)

| | Occupation/ Enterprise | Nature of Occupation/ Enterprise | | | Dominant Organisational/ Productive Pattern | | | Periodicity | Nature of Labour | | | | LGD | Labour/ Gender Participation | | | | Some Key Goods or Products | System of Dis- tribution and Exchange | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|--|--------|-------|-------------|---------------------|------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|---|-------|---|---|---|----------------------|----|----|
| | | Profess- ional | Semi-Prof- essional | General Type | Individual | Family | Group | | Apprentice | Hire | Individual | Domestic/ Family Hands | | Adult | | Child | | | VCM | RM (Long Distance | Bt | Cs |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | M | F | m | f | | | | | |
| 3 | Pottery | Y | N | N | Y | N | Y | S | N | N | Y | Y | F f | N | F | m | f | Pots and Various Types of Clay Pro- ducts | Y F | N | Y | Y |
| 4 | Weaving | Y | N | N | Y | N | N | A/ S | N | N | Y | Y | F f | M | F | m | f | Cloth | Y FM | Y M | Y | Y |
| 5 | Wood Work, Carving/ Crafts | Y | N | N | Y | N | N | A/ S | Y | N | Y | Y | M m | M | N | m | N | All Wood Works, Tools Furniture | Y M | Y M | Y | Y |

An Illustrative Chart on Some Labour and Economic/Occupational Operations in Traditional Umuahia-Igbo Society
(continued)

| | Occupation/ Enterprise | Nature of Occupation/ Enterprise | | | Dominant Organisational/ Productive Pattern | | | Periodicity | Nature of Labour | | | | LGD | Labour/ Gender Participation | | | | Some Key Goods or Products | System of Dis- tribution and Exchange | | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------------|-----------------|--|--------|-------|-------------|---------------------|---|--------------------|------------|-----|------------------------------------|---|-------|---|----------------------------------|--|----|--------|-----------------------|----|----|
| | | Profess- ional | Semi-Prof. essional | General Type | Individual | Family | Group | | | | Apprentice Hire | Individual | | Domestic/ Family Hands | | Adult | | | Child | | VCM | RM (Long Distance) | Bt | Cs |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | M | F | | m | f | | | | |
| 6 | Agro-based Processing and Manu- factures e.g. Palm Produce (over 75% of the national out- put from S.E. Nigeria) | N | Y | N | Y | Y | N | | A/ S | N | Y | Y | Y | M F m f | M | F | m | f | Palm Oil Palm Kernel Palm Wine Distilled Liquor Soap, Brooms Baskets | Y | Y M | Y | Y | |
| 7 | Metallurgy Blacksmith- ing | Y | N | N | Y | N | N | | A/ S | Y | N | Y | Y | M m | M | N | m | N | All Metal/ Iron Goods and Products (see appendices) | YM | Y M | Y | Y | |

An Illustrative Chart on Some Labour and Economic/Occupational Operations in Traditional Umuahia-Igbo Society
(continued)

Key to Legend

- a) Periodicity of Occupation and Labour: Mx = Mixed Season, Sn = Seasonal, A/s = All Seasons;, Yr = Yearly
- b) Sex or Gender of Labour Engaging in Occupation/Enterprise: M = Male; F = Female; m = male child; f = female child
- c) Marketing Distribution/Exchange System: Vcm = Village-community market
Rm = Regional long-distance market
Bt = Barter
Cs = Cash
AMG = All marketable goods
- d) Nature of Occupation/Enterprise Whether Professional, Semi-professional or a General Type of Occupation: Y = Yes; N = No
- e) Gender of Labour Participating or Dominating in the Particular Occupation (LGD): M = Adult Male
F = Adult Female
f = female child
m = male child

An Illustrative Chart on Some Labour and Economic/Occupational Operations in Traditional Umuahia-Igbo Society
(continued)

Major Signs or Evidences/Results of Capital

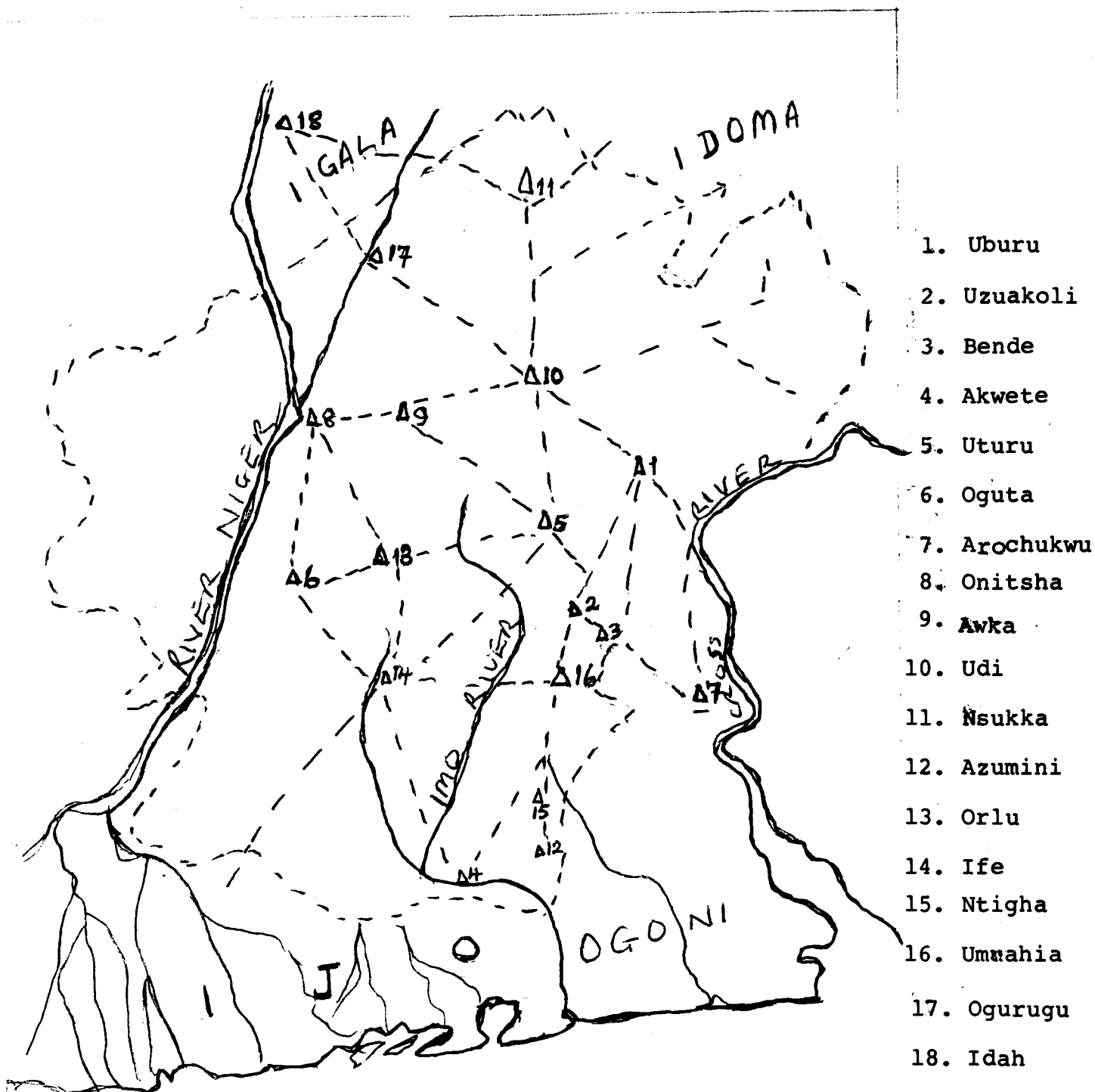
Accumulation as Rewards for Successful Labour:

a) For the Male:

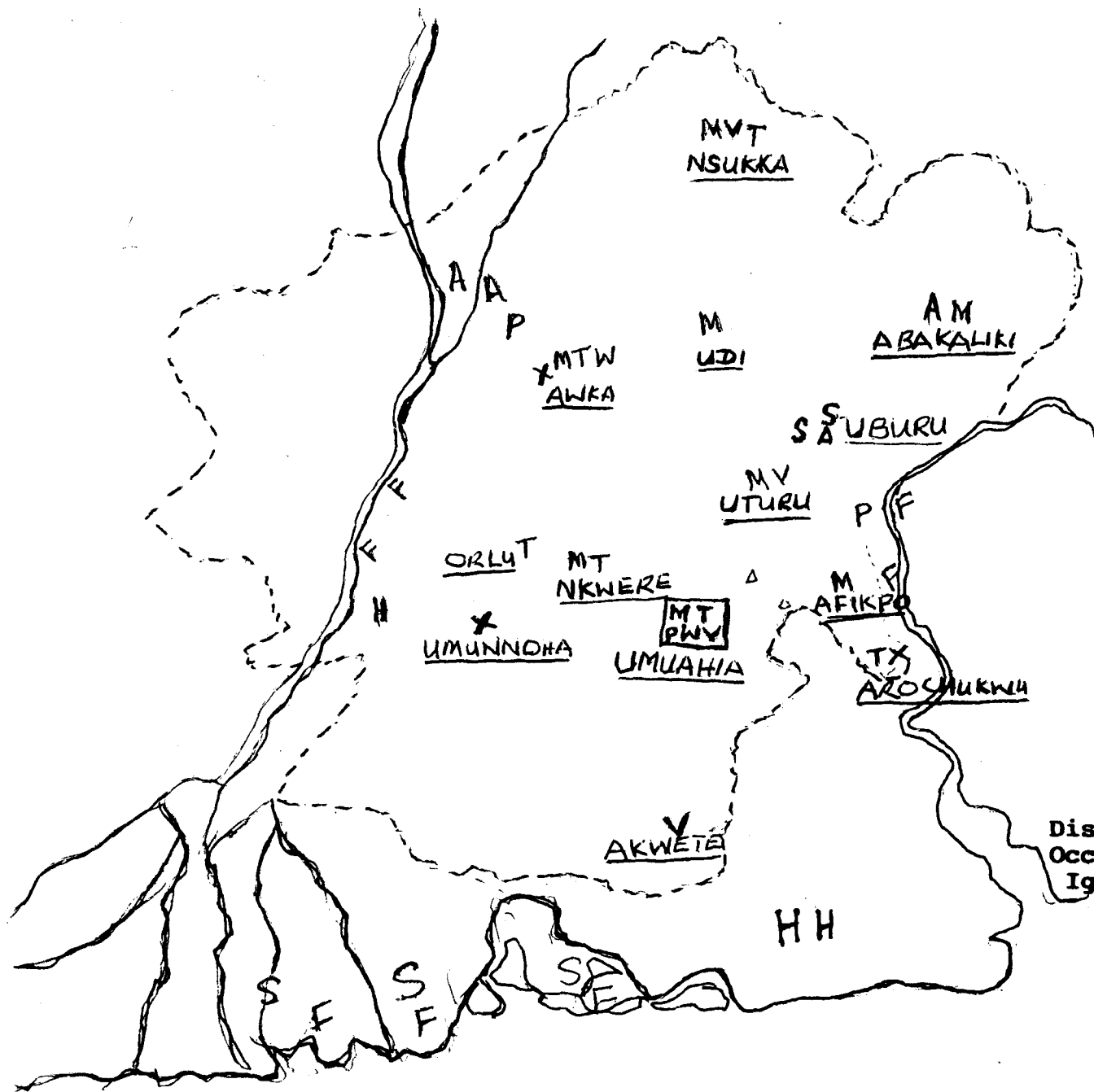
1. Married i.e. marrying a wife/wives
2. Having many wives and children
3. Many domestic hands ('slaves')
4. Many parcels of forest/
farm lands
5. Estates/forests of palm trees and
other cash crops
6. Membership of Ekpe/Okonko Society or
Fraternity
7. Title taking for self or members of
Family
8. Marrying wives for sons
9. Plenty of yams or other agro-based crops and
goods; domestic animals, sheep, goats and cows.
10. Owning a large mud house in a
compound
11. Owning a gun/s; or swords, etc.
12. Owning a canoe/s; large number of
farming/hunting tools and equipments
13. Cash accumulation (local currency)

b) Female:

1. Married i.e. marrying a husband
2. Marrying wives for husband or children
3. Purchase/ Possession of (4) and (5) above
through husband or other male relation
4. Plenty of cocoyams
5. Plenty of domestic animals--goats, fowls etc.
6. Jewelry and wearing apparels
7. Plenty of kitchen utensils
8. Title acquisition through husband



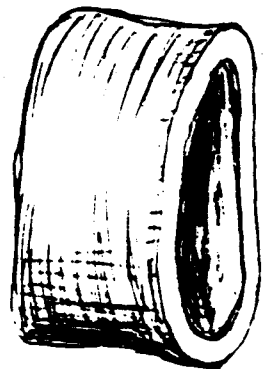
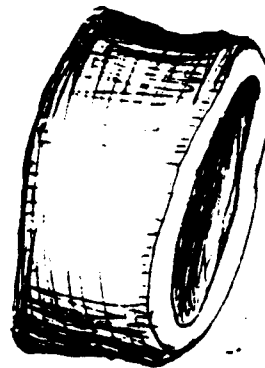
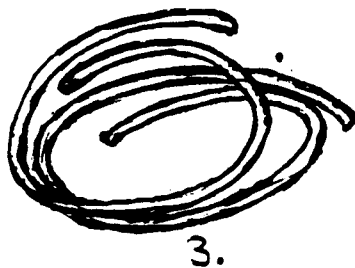
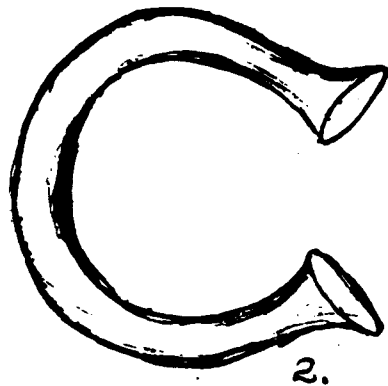
**Major Market Centres and Trade Routes in Igboland
(19th Century)**



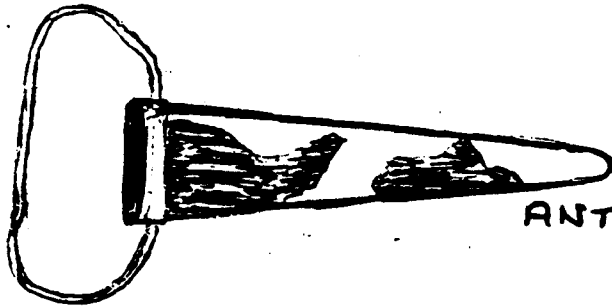
- A = Agriculture
- P = Pottery
- M = Metallurgy
- V = Weaving
- W = Woodwork
- H = Hunting
- T = Trade
- X = Medicine
- F = Fishing
- S = Salt

Distribution of Technological and Occupational Skills in Precolonial Igboland

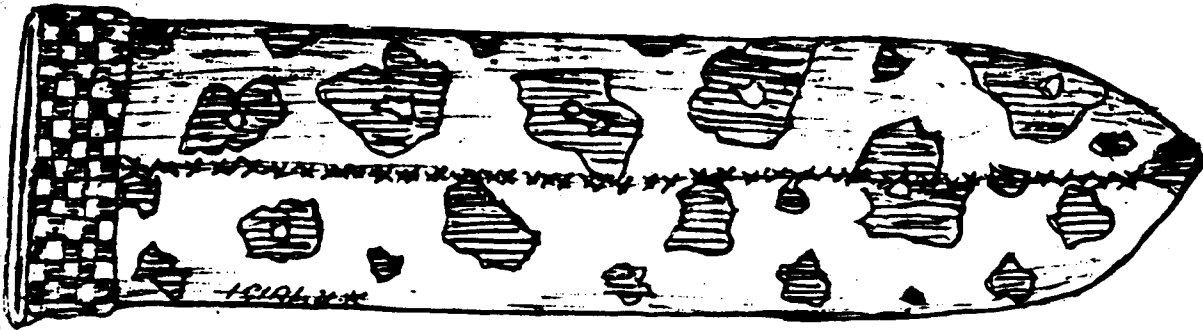
SOME OF THE EARLIEST MEANS
OF EXCHANGE IN BENDELAND.



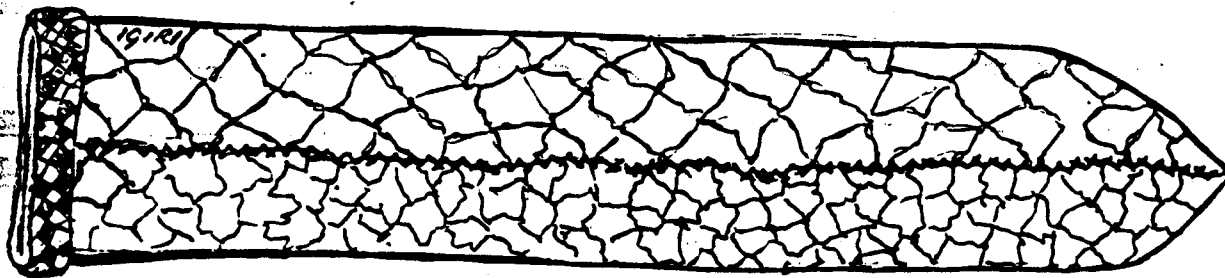
1. Cowries 2. Manilla 3. Brass rings 4. Ivory rings.
5. Brass rods.



ANTELOPE SKIN

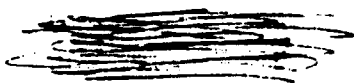


LEOPARD SKIN

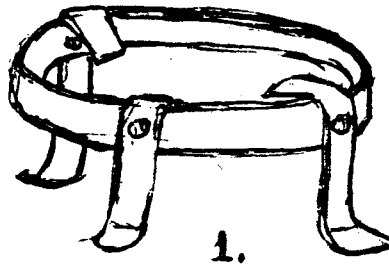


CROCODILE (IDAH)
SKIN

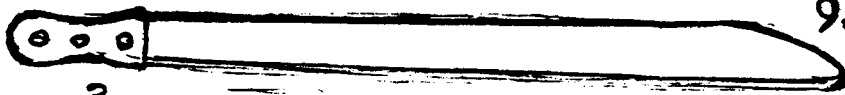
ABIRIBA MADE
SCABBARDS



ABIRIBA BLACKSMITHS' METAL
PRODUCTS.



1.



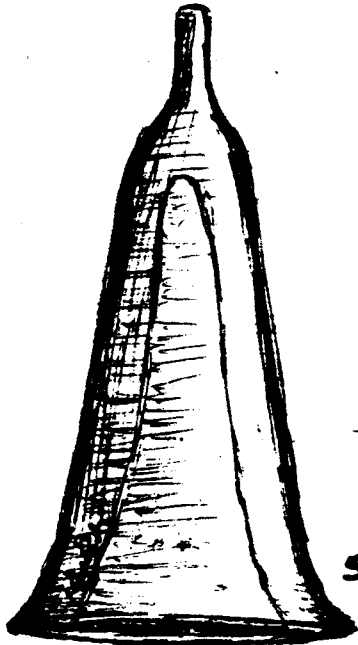
2.



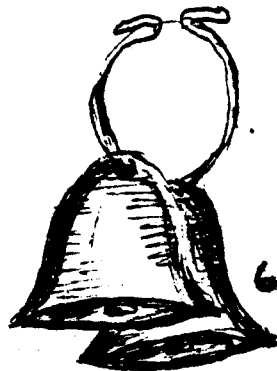
3.



4.



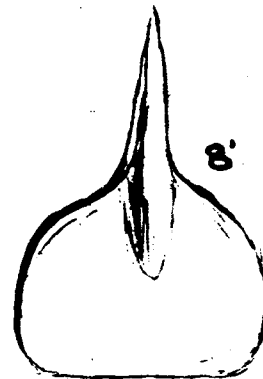
5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



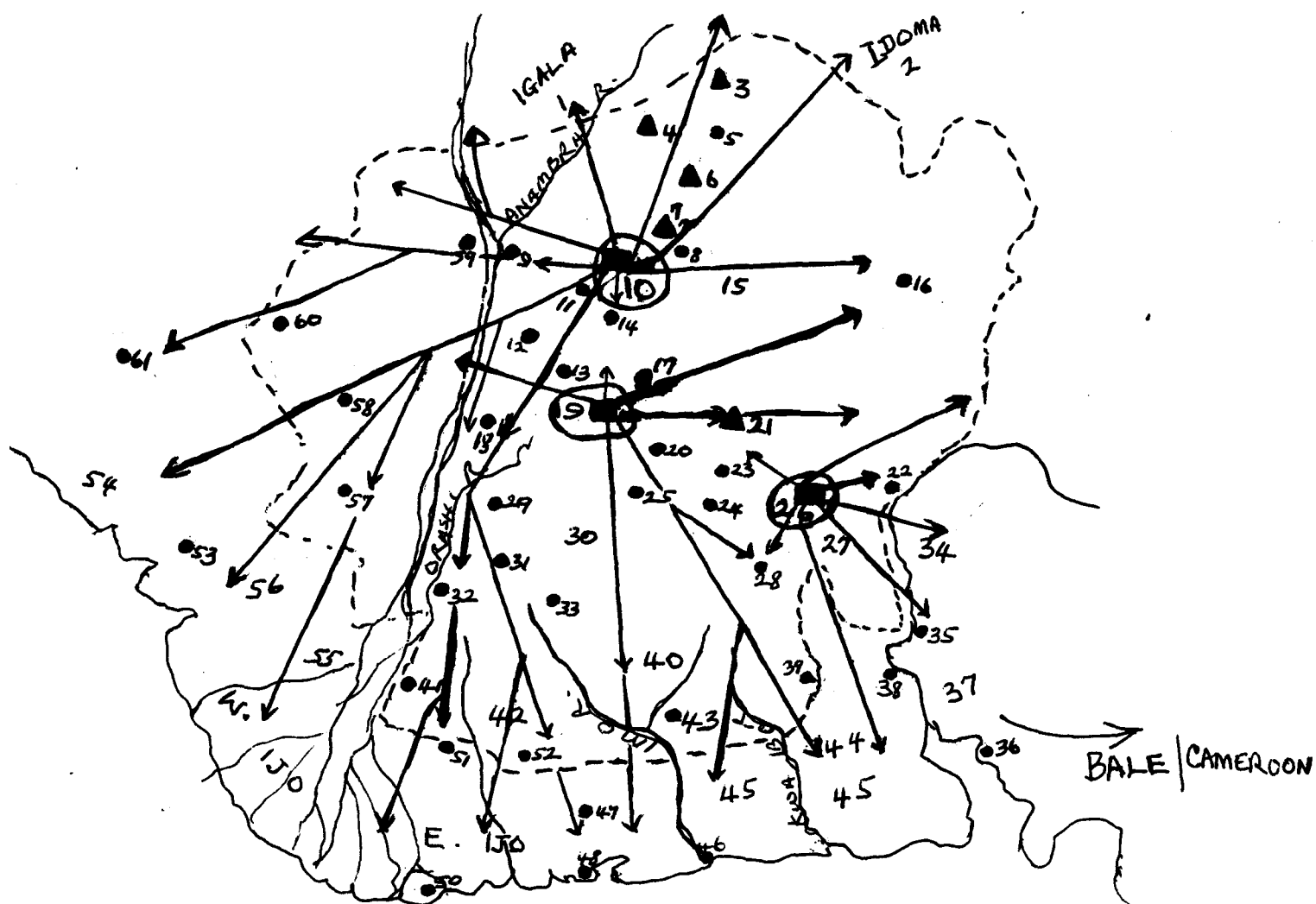
8.

1. Cooking Tripod.
2. Farming machete.
3. Single-pronged fork.
4. Kitchen knife.
5. Town Criers Gong.
6. Hunting-dog-gongs.
7. Small Ceremonial brass bells.
8. Hoe blades.
9. Spear-head.

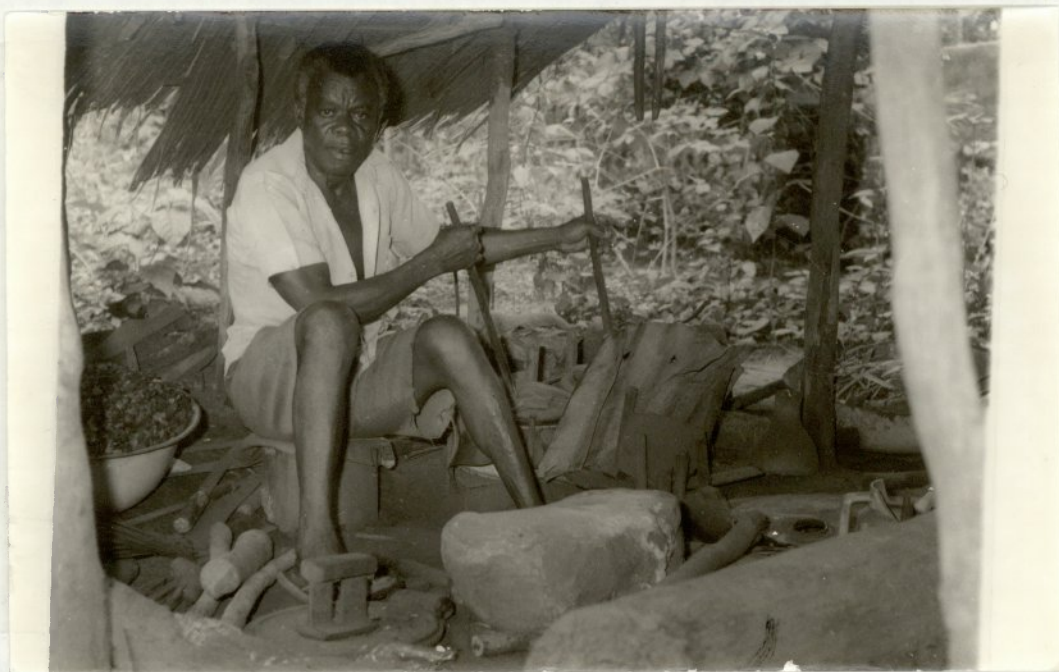
Iron/Metal (Blacksmith) Products

Iron Technology in Igboland: its development
and spread c. 1542-1900

WORK ORBITS OF AWKA, NKWERE AND ABIRIBA SMITHS



- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Igala | 19. <u>Nkwere</u> | 37. Efik | 55. Isoko |
| 2. Idoma | 20. Ihube | 38. Itu | 56. Urhobo |
| 3. Umundu | 21. Uturu | 39. Arochukwu | 57. Kwale |
| 4. Lejja | 22. Afikpo | 40. Ngwa | 48. Ogwashi-ukwu |
| 5. Nsukka | 23. Igbere | 41. Ahoada | 59. Asaba |
| 6. Aku | 24. Uzuakoli | 42. Ikwere | 60. Agbor |
| 7. Agulu Umana | 25. Okigwe | 43. Azumiri | 61. Benin |
| 8. Udi | 26. <u>Abiriba</u> | 44. Ibibio | |
| 9. Onitsha | 27. Abam | 45. Ogoni | |
| 10. <u>Awka</u> | 28. Bende | 46. Opobo | |
| 11. Nri | 29. Mbano | 47. Bori | |
| 12. Nnewi | 30. <u>Umuahia</u> | 48. Bonny | |
| 13. Orlu | 31. Obowo | 49. Ijo | |
| 14. Igbo-ukwu | 32. Oru | 50. Brass | |
| 15. Agbaja | 33. Owerri | 51. <u>Degema</u> | |
| 16. Abakaliki | 34. Okoyong | 52. Urata | |
| 17. Arondizuogu | 35. Umon | 53. Warri | |
| 18. Oguta | 36. Calabar | 54. Itsekiri | |



A Local Blacksmith at Olokoro-Umuahia





A Local Gin Distillery



A Local Gin Distillery



Author (with Walking Stick) and Friend
at an Experimental Farm



Author (with Walking Stick) and Friend
at an Experimental Farm

The Raffia Palm Growing in Clusters



The Palm Tree. What Future?



(iv)

Africa and the Western World

Those who seek to patronize, and others who seek to defend Africa, sometimes argue that, as the supposed cradle of civilisation Africa had already made its own contribution to history. Those who seek to disparage Africa allege the 'inferiority' of the black race¹; much in the same derisive tone or manner as the proud 'Hellenes' of antiquity had found all non-Greeks to be 'bushmen'; or as the ancient Romans had condemned all non-Romans as 'barbarians'; the Roman General and conqueror himself Julius Caesar, having also described his earliest Anglo-Saxon subjects in Roman Britain, as too backward and wretched , even to be enslaved! Like all these earlier xenophobic or racist theories of 'bushmen' and 'barbarians' in the old

¹See references in Erim, E.O. and Uya, O.E., (eds.) Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1984), pp. 1-32.

Graeco-Roman worlds, the theory of African 'inferiority' so dear to the hearts of earlier European writers, may here simply be ignored as a false, racist, explanation of the African problem of under development.

The misfortunes of Atlantic slavery, followed by the imperialist conquest and exploitation of the African continent, constituted perhaps the greatest causative factors of misery and underdevelopment; for certain, these were misfortunes which delayed, for over four centuries, the dawn of that intellectual light and consciousness, on which alone all home-based, indigenous, and immanent skills and technologies must grow.

In most societies but the African, the development of an indigenous literacy tradition and culture had preceded, and made possible, the indestructible recording, and multiplier-effect type growth, of the intellectualism, as well as the technological traditions and memories, of the society. This normal process of development was, in many an African society,¹ nipped in the bud by the upsurge of

¹E. Isichei, A History of the Igbo People, (Macmillan, 1976), p. 35-39.

Western imperialism. Thus interrupted in the process of evolving its own literary tools of general development, Africa strayed into the long darkness of slavery and underdevelopment; and Africa only woke up, alas!, when it was already forenoon in the era of technological progress and competition throughout the world. Other factors which have contributed to developmental decay or decline in Africa, are, unfortunately, rather internal; and concern the so-called elites, and the environment, in Africa.

(v)

Africa: its elites and its environment

The African elite class comprises mainly those who wield political or economic power in post-independent African states; the professional groups, such as bankers and accountants; lawyers, engineers and doctors; teachers and professors; public servants, etc. In many African states these groups may constitute perhaps between five and ten per cent of the total population in the country. By far the

greatest amount of professional dishonesty, fraud, embezzlement of public funds and looting of national treasures, are the handiwork of people who fall within these elite classes or groups; and it is also found that most often individuals or groups of them work in close collaboration with foreign nationals or multi-national corporations in wrecking the national economies of their countries.

When Mary Kingsley, the celebrated English woman and prolific writer on West African Affairs, undertook to admonish rapacious European imperialists operating in West Africa in about 1911, she was particularly bitter and critical of those who engaged in 'robbery and stealing just for the sake of it'.

'If you must steal, for God's sake
steal something which you need.'

In Nigeria, at that time, probably some British traders, merchants and government officials must have heeded Mary Kingsley's advice. Today, in Nigeria and in most other African nations, very few if any members of the all powerful elite class, have paid any heed to that kind of advice: What we consequently have, unfortunately, is fraud and robbery

and official corruption on a massive scale; the theft of what may be deemed necessary, as well as what cannot possibly be imagined as necessary for the happiness of any single individual. The common style is official theft and looting of national treasures, not in hundreds of thousands of dollars or pounds sterling, but in thousands of millions! And the net effect of this? A sad phenomenon in which the private pockets and foreign bank accounts of a few individuals may be swollen with much more stolen wealth and treasure, than what the government or state itself may possess in its coffers for national development projects. It is quite instructive that, within the past twenty months, the Nigerian Federal Military Government which ousted the Kleptocratic Shagari administration at the end of December 1983, had already recovered such stolen or ill-gotten wealth up to the tune of around N100 million, from a handful of highly placed individuals, Nigerian nationals and former holders of public office.

Part of the tragedy is that, many of those whose actions and misdeeds are often largely respon-

sible for bringing the troubles of scarcity and developmental decay on the nation, often go relatively safe and unhurt. To the foregoing survey of the factors of poverty and backwardness, may be added the effects of natural disasters which regularly afflict vast areas of the continent: in the northern part of the continent, desert and drought; and, in the south, excessive rainfall and erosion, both forms of natural disasters wearing away the soil and making agricultural pursuits and human habitation practically impossible; while pests and diseases occasionally move in to augment or perpetuate the general misery and suffering at the grassroots levels.

(vi)

**Past Governmental Efforts at
Technological Development in Nigeria:
a critique**

'We buy what we want, but borrow
or forget what we need'.

Among most African nations, there can be no doubt about the acute awareness of the nature of the

problems which now need to be tackled in their different countries: the regularity of ministerial conferences and official communiques, as well as regional cooperation agreements, all at least point to the existence of this awareness at government levels. In recent times there have been, for example, the Lagos Plan of Action, which also formed the subject or agenda of discussions and proceedings at the last meeting of African Heads of States in Ethiopia only about three or four months ago.

Both at the African regional, and at the individual national levels, experiences, however, fully show that real technological development and growth all require, in any region or nation, much more than fine talk or official declarations of intention: The political and the moral will, all must be there right; so also the right sense of priorities; a right combination of all these factors giving creative form and content to developmental projects and strategies, which would otherwise remain sound and proper only in theory and on paper.

The failure so far of most development strategies in various parts of the continent, may be

explained by the lack or absence of those major factors--political and moral will, and right priorities--which are crucial to success. In terms of national priority, or given existing conditions in Nigeria, for example, high cost Giant Breweries spread all over the country, or Motor Vehicle Assembly Plants, 'producing' or 'manufacturing' cars at impossible prices, are by far less relevant to over 70% of the population, who are rural dwellers, and who presently helplessly bear the greater burden of agriculture and farm work to feed the whole nation. The absence of political and moral will provides, perhaps, the real explanation for the failure, between 1973 and 1983, of many other costly projects, the successes of which would probably have meant major technological advancements for the country, and much relief to the overburdened masses of the people:

Among the collapsed projects within the decade ending in 1983 may be listed, The Universal primary Education Scheme (UPE); the Agricultural Schemes of Operation Feed the nation (OFN); and Green Revolution (G.R); the Moral Regeneration Scheme or Ethical

Revolution (E.R); the technical cooperation schemes between the Nigerian Railways and the Airways with their foreign counterparts in India, and Holland respectively; and the Nigerian Telecommunications modernisation contract agreements with Siemens and the I.T.T. International Corporations.

By the end of the development decade in December 1983, the country had not only spent huge, staggering sums of money running into several billions in foreign exchange, it had also totally recorded, virtually nil or very negligible results in all these projects! On the other hand, a new class of individual Nigerian elite billionaires and millionaires, was already made. In October 1980, Nigeria had no individual owners of private jet aeroplanes; but in December 1983, there were about 51 such jet planes privately owned! Apparently bent on strategies of economic and technological development heavily dependent on imported ideas and methods of operations, successive Nigerian Federal governments since 1960 have yet to fully recognise, and profit by, the great potentials of those skills and strategies which have been originated locally.

(vii)

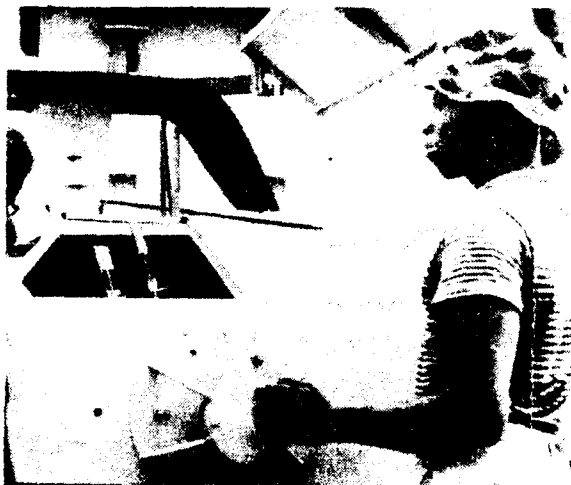
Nigeria and its Indigenous Technology Potentials**1) The Lesson of 'Biafra':**

Exactly fifteen years ago, from July 1967 to January 1970, Nigeria experienced a civil crisis which developed into a thirty months old civil war, perhaps one of the bloodiest in contemporary African history. Fighting on the secessionist 'Biafran' side along with other groups of Igbo communities, were the groups of communities which comprise Umuahia, itself also the seat and headquarters of the Biafran administration and its war machine.

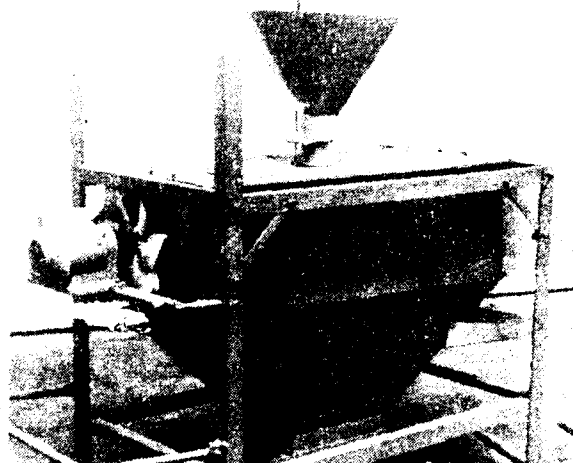
Umuahia traditional history, with those of its kindred neighbours in the Old Bende Division, tells the story of a people noted in precolonial times, for their bravery, resourcefulness, hard work and dedication to duty, whether at peace or at war. The civil war clearly demonstrated these generally acknowledged character traits in the Igbo people. Embattled and sabotaged on all fronts, Biafra's choice of Umuahia for its headquarters was perhaps a recognition of the specially reliable character of the place and its people, at least in relative

terms. The political and economic scars of the war may still be noticeable in many places; but in January 1985 Umuahia attracted the special attention of the whole nation and that of the Federal Government, perhaps for the first time since the end of the civil war in 1970.

The occasion was the launching and opening by the Federal Government of a National War Museum in Umuahia. For the first time, national publicity was given to the 'miracles of indigenous technology' performed by a group of Igbo scientists and technologists who formed and worked under a new organisation which they called Research and Production (R.A.P.), from which the idea of PRODA, now based in Enugu, was to spring after 1970. The National War Museum at Umuahia (now threatened by Erosion Disaster!) is a repository of the technological ingenuities produced by the needs of the civil war: Bombs, Rockets, Landmines and various other kinds of explosives. In the areas of food processing and productions of different kinds, the 'R.A.P. boys' fabricated machines of different kinds which served different purposes in Biafra: manufacture/refining



Gari fryer designed and built by the Project Development Agency
(R. L. U. F.) Enugu.



• Grain clearer designed by two Nigerians, Messrs Uche
• Anazodo and Akubuo.

of petrol and kerosene fuel from crude oil; production of edible salt; revitalising of disused old car batteries, old disused, generating plants, etc. And the lesson of the Biafran technology? The confirmed existence of local technological talent, the need to locate or identify, motivate and utilize such abundant creative talents, remain, unfortunately, all important lessons yet to be fully learned in the Nigerian national political setting.

2) Untapped, or Partially Tapped, Indigenous Technological Potentials in Nigeria:

Outside the Biafran example, there still exist, both within Igboland and around other localities in Nigeria, indigenous technological potentials demonstrated either by individuals, by communities, educational institutions, or other creative local establishments: A full list of these would probably be as lengthy as it would be perhaps unnecessary--hence only a few select examples of such local sources of indigenous technology will be listed here;

- a) At Umuahia: Farming and Agro-based village/ community enterprises based in palm oil and palm kernel oil processing and extracting; in maize and melon products; plantains, vegetables, cassava, yams, bannana and pineapples, etc.
- b) At Umudike-Umuahia: A National Crops Research Institute (N.C.R.I.), which has already made some remarkable discoveries in new seedlings, cassava pests and pesticides etc., in close collaboration with another Agricultural body or organisation, ISADAP.
- c) At Aba, Umuahia, Nkwerre, Abiriba, Awka, Nsukka, Metal and Iron Works, Black Smithing and various metal and Iron products and fabrications.
- d) At Akwete-Ndokie: Weaving and Dyeing Cottage industries and products.
- e) Ditto: Local Distilleries and Liquor products from the fluids/juices of the palm tree and the raffia plam.
- f) At Uburu and Abakaliki: Farming and Agro-based enterprises; Edible Salt production technology.
- g) At Ibadan, Yorubaland: The research Institute for Tropical Agriculture and the production of simple technical agricultural tools and implements.
- h) Universities and Technical Colleges/Institutes (e.g. Ife, Nsukka etc.): production of various machine prototypes and other mechanised tools for use in cassava planting, harvesting processing, and 'Garrification', etc.
- i) At Mbaise, near Umuahia: Radio and electronic devises and equipment manufacture, e.g. 'Radio Mbaise' by Damien Anyanwu.
- j) At Olokoru/Umuahia and at Ikot Ekpene (Cross River State): Remarkable efforts by individuals engaged in machines and tools manufacture for soap boiling, gari frying, cement blocks

- k) At Benin (Bendel State), Rtd General Samuel Ogbemudia's Machine Manufacture Company, Sogalson Nigeria Ltd., engaged in manufacturing simple processing machines, e.g. pepper grinder, corn shelling machines, etc.
- l) At Enugu, PRODA (Products Development Agency, successor to the Biafran R.A.P. discussed earlier). Involved in manufacture of all kinds of machines and tools.
- m) At Oshodi, Lagos: F.I.I.R.O. (Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi) involved as PRODA mentioned above. For some of the machine products already made by PRODA and F.I.I.R.O., see Appendix V.
- n) Federal Industrial Development Centres (I.D.C.) established by the Federal government at Zaria (for leather works and other products), at Owerri and Oshogbo for training in other kinds of crafts and skills.
- o) At Benin (Bendel State): The Federal Government's National Institute for Oil Palm Research (N.I.F.O.R).

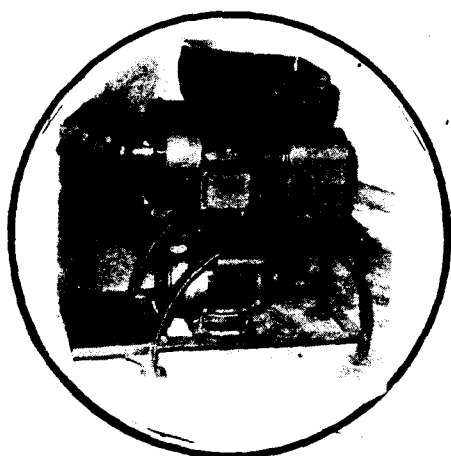
With the foregoing illustrations, it could therefore be rightly said that, both at the village community levels, as well as in some institutions and establishments, the human resources and the creative talents exist, for a more meaningful, practical result oriented, development of indigenous skills and technology. As the best or major strategy for national economic growth and progress, such a policy could not easily be faulted. The present upsurge in India, of technological creativity and

massive production in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, is as a result of the official governmental adoption of a strategy, which makes home-based or home-created skills, and the supply of the basic needs of the people, the foundation of national technological development and progress.¹

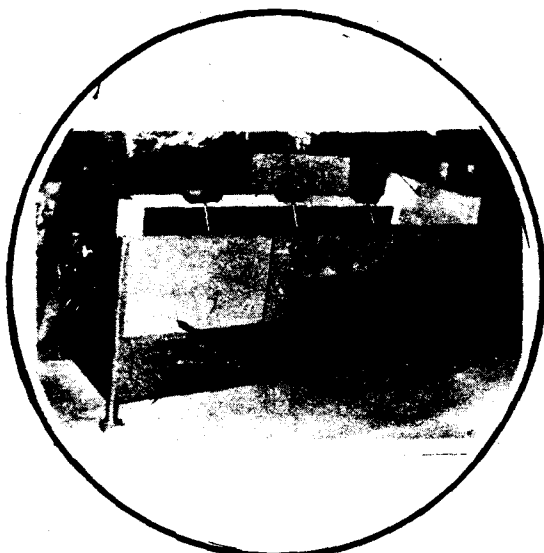
3) Existing Technologies/Technological Bodies and Factors Limiting Progress

Although the Nigerian Governments have done well to establish, or to encourage the establishment of research institutes and the other bodies whose efforts are geared towards technology and production, the facts still remain, that for want of proper motivation and adequate funding, virtually everyone of these bodies is far from realising their full potentials and objectives. Factors limiting better technological achievement or progress in many of these existing establishments, may be summarised as follows:

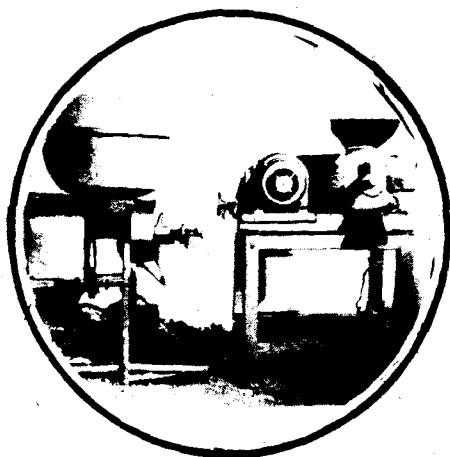
¹For more of the information which I obtained on the Indian strategy of technological development, I am very grateful to my friend, Dr. Uju Anusionwu, who studied and lived many years in India. For further information, see also Tony Masha's very interesting article, in the Nigerian Sunday Times of 11th August 1985, titled 'In Search of Third World Technologies'.



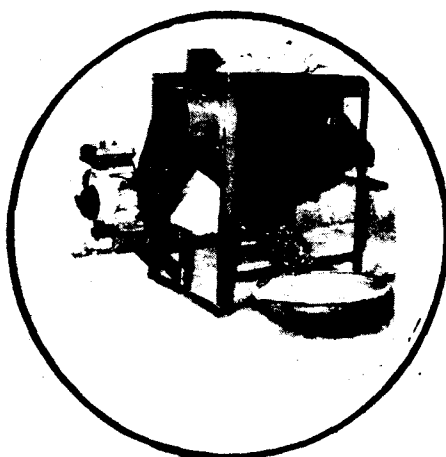
Garri Finisher



Garri Fryer



Commercial Pepper Mills



Corn Sheller



Cassava Press Dry

Sogalson's Agro-based Machine Manufactures
(see also the PRODA and FIIRO Lists at the Appendix)

- a) A battered national economy (sometimes a factor of a global phenomenon) which limits government's capacity for financial support to these bodies.
- b) Poor planning, with misplacement of priorities and objectives, through politicized or inefficient management of available resources.
- c) A long-lived governmental neglect of the rural village communities, the nerve centre of the nation's vital agriculture.
- d) Climatic and environmental disasters--Drought and Erosion
- e) The absence, or the adhoc, temporary, character, of foreign aid and assistance, sometimes caused by the absence or inadequacy of information to possible sources of external help.

(viii)

Local Processing and Manufacturing at Umuahia:
The problems of Agriculture and Agro-based
Skills and Enterprises Among the Umuahia
Communities and their Neighbours

In this trip to Canada, I brought with me, for illustration, some of the samples of agro-based, and other locally processed or 'manufactured' goods, which we watched some local women produce during our interview sessions in Umuahia and at Akwete:

- a) At Akwete, we watched the cloth or thread dyeing technics used in preparing the weaving threads; and we also watched the women operate the looms in the making of the wooven cloths. The women claimed, and demonstrated, that they can copy and reproduce any textile pattern, no matter how complicated; this is, of course, apart from originating their own textile designs on the cloths they weave.
- b) Distillery of Local Gins: At Umuahia and Akwete.
- c) Vegetable and Edible Oil Extraction: palm oil, kernel oil, melon oil;--at Umuahia, and Aba/Ngwa towns.
- d) Soap/detergent manufacture from palm oil raw materials--at Umuahia.

From watching the local women at work in these villages, we went on to consider in great detail, some of the major constraints which limit local enterprises and skills, and spread the scourges of poverty, scarcity of goods and the general inflation in the prices of food and other essential commodities. Our research discussions and experiences in these villages led to further investigations of these problems at the wider, national, level.

Both within and beyond the Umuahia groups of village communities, the general poverty and hardship which are now writ large everywhere, are the unhappy results of:

- a) Many years of governmental neglect of, or inadequate attention to, agriculture.
- b) The scourge of drought, or of sheet and gully erosion, which has become a disaster in these areas.

In agriculture, even the new research findings and inputs, of improved seedlings and new farming methods introduced by the existing research institutes in the country, are still not available to the rural farmers. Why? As recently reported in NewsWatch, one of Nigeria's investigative and most reliable news magazines, the absence or inadequacy of agricultural extension services has:

'widened the gap between research findings and application by farmers....; the effort has been too insignificant to make any appreciable impact on agricultureFarmers need to be brought closer and more quickly to research findings and made to realise the advantages they could derive from¹ modern methods of farming....'

¹'Looking for Food', article and report published in NewsWatch magazine 29th July, 1985, p. 11-16.

If there be general scarcity of goods and services, a decline or decay in Africa's or Nigeria's technological and developmental strategy, it is not because the ordinary working-class people are not able or willing to work hard; it is rather because:

- a) the fight against environmental and climatic odds such as erosion or drought, is far beyond the scope and technical capabilities of the local people;
- b) the governments in charge have either ignored/^{or} neglected the need for early preventive/^{or} curative action, or even misused the available resources with which such problems should have been effectively fought.

In Nigeria, for example, ^aAgriculture is one such vital area, where available resources and opportunities, had been grossly neglected, and past development programmes fraudulently politicized and abused: This explains why rural farmers today accuse past Nigerian governments of making 'false and empty promises for many years', and why the rural farmers still know no other better methods of farming, except 'using the crude, old ways'. As the Newswatch magazine brilliantly reported it:

'The country's agricultural potentials remain huge on paper and have hardly been intensively exploited. Estimated total cultivable land available in the country [Nigeria] is 71.2 million hectares. But only 6,372,000 hectares were cultivated in the last cropping season. It represents a fair increase on the 5,804,222 hectares cultivated in the 1981/82 season which comprised about 9.4 million farms operated by 5,294,493 farming households. The typical Nigerian farmer is illiterate. His life is still very much bucolic....He is deeply rooted to the land for which he has a spiritual affinity. Successive governments have paid lip service to the plight of rural Nigerians, and designed development programmes which have hardly had any appreciable impact on their major occupation--farming. Yet, the much desired revolution in agriculture can never be achieved without the active involvement¹ of the rural farmers....'

¹Newswatch Weekly Magazine, Lagos, Nigeria, July 19, 1985, p. 13. See also the opinion and advice of Gilbert Heys, expatriate Manager of Texaco Agro-Industrial Nigeria Ltd. To increase food production the local Nigerian farmers must be encouraged and provided incentives and infrastructures. See ibid.

(ix)

Climatic or Environmental Impediments to
Development: The Ravages of Erosion in Umuahia and
other areas of Imo State

The problem of sheet and gully erosion, arising from excessive rainfall, has now reached a dimension far beyond the coping abilities of the proverbially resourceful and hardworking Umuahia communities, and their other equally and similarly affected neighbours in Imo State. When he was brought to the scene of the erosion disaster in Imo State in 1980, soon after being 'elected' President of the country, Alhaji Shehu Shagari promised immediate federal government relief and assistance, to the tune of N2 million. But, not unusually, nothing came out of that promise. Meanwhile, the erosion continued in its dangerous progress in Umuahia, Ohafia, Bende, Abiriba, Owerri and many other areas in Imo State and even beyond. By this year, June 1985, the then military governor of Imo State, had alerted the nation and the Federal government with an 'S.O.S.' message: The threat and danger posed by erosion in many parts of Imo State, is now far beyond the ability of the local people and the state government to cope, and should therefore attract immediate and



★Erosion at Itumbuzo in Bende LGA.



★Erosion at Amaforo in front of National War Museum. Un

the outline. The Erosion have opened up nice

RAVAGES OF EROSION IN IMO STATE (I)

effective remedial attention, devoid of the well-known politics of ethnicity in the country.

In one particular village community, the erosion has, within a few years, already washed away some 11 square kilometres of farm lands, and destroyed over 500 houses, with over 2000 people already evacuated from that area. The erosion gullies in some places measure about three kilometres in length, 50 metres deep and 100 metres wide at the top; in some affected areas up to 24 million cubic metres of soil have been washed away; Damages to property, animal and plant lives, have been estimated at over N100 million, excluding the cost of resettlement of displaced victims: Concluded a press reporter, 'inspite of efforts by the people to check the menace of erosion on their own, the problems remain unsolved'.¹ The same reporter went on:

'The scenario is the same from year to year....The agony of the people, who have been at the mercy of the elements for years, increases. Imo State...is in the grip of a devastating erosion.

¹See Newswatch magazine, September 16, 1985, p. 26 and the article titled: 'Ravages of Landslides: thousands of houses and whole communities in Imo may disappear'.

ravaging the land with ferocious intensity....The unusually heavy rains...have worsened the situation as deep gullies, carved out of the landscape by ceaseless erosion triggered by large volumes of run off water, continue to advance menacingly, devouring everything in their paths, including houses, farm lands, roads and public buildings....'¹

Conservative estimates have put the cost of controlling the Amucha erosion, one of the worst-hit communities, at N15 million. Recently, the government of Italy promised, in addition to its commitment of other technical inputs, a grant of N2 million to the Nigerian Federal Government in fighting the Amucha erosion disaster. The rehabilitation of another badly affected community at Oko Osondu, would cost about N130 million.

A government panel on the erosion disaster in Imo State recently submitted its report. It has estimated that about N1.4 billion would be required to achieve effective solution to the menace of erosion in the 285 communities affected in Imo State; and the cost of rehabilitation of the affected

¹Ibid.

Umuahia communities was put at some N525 million.¹ When an official in the Imo State Ministry of Agriculture said, in anticipation of sympathy and help from other sources outside Imo State and Igboland, 'we have tried our possible best...'², he spoke the minds of the ordinary people throughout Igboland, including Umuahia.

This brief analysis of the Nigerian erosion disaster in Umuahia and other parts of Imo State, helps, we believe, to place in proper focus the present unhappy phenomenon of food scarcity and high prices in agricultural and other commodities, the ever-worsening inflationary trends and high cost of living everywhere.

Local Pottery, Traditional Herbal Medicine and Erosion:

The disaster of erosion in Umuahia and other parts of Imo State, has not only almost totally destroyed agriculture, rural farming and other agro-based enterprises dependent on the growth of the all-purpose palm tree; other indigenous techni-

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

cal skills dependent on a healthy soil and botanical growth, are also vanishing through the effects of erosion: Like blacksmithing (metal iron technology), Pottery was another indigenous technical skill for which the Umuahia communities were particularly famous in precolonial times. The establishment by the government many years ago, of a ceramic industry at Umuahia, was perhaps in recognition of the precolonial ceramic tradition in Umuahia. Today, the local sources of clay as raw material for village pottery and other allied skills, are almost totally washed and devoured by erosion. The remarkable skills which the Umuahia and other local communities successfully practised in Traditional Medicine and Medicine and Pharmacology, and in Traditional Cosmetics, all depended on their vast traditional knowledge of botany, and their culture of plants, shrubs and trees, whose roots, tubers, leaves, barks, seeds and various other parts, were greatly

valued for medicinal or cosmetics purposes.¹ Today the menace of erosion, joining in with many years of neglect of useful or even superior traditional skills threatened by modernity and new tastes for foreign goods, also endangers many of those plant-based indigenous skills in African traditional medicine, pharmacology and cosmetics.

(x)

**The Village Community of Ekenobizi-Umuahia:
an on-going experiment in research and Local
development using self-help concepts:**

The possibility of future cooperative research and practical action on this subject, is perhaps a sufficient and valid reason for mentioning here the Ekenobizi village community, in whose case this writer shares very deep participatory involvement and interest. The story of the Ekenobizi village community may briefly be summarised as follows:

¹See Dr. Maurice M. Iwu, "Studies on Igbo Pharmacology and Therapy", a paper presented in a workshop on The State of Igbo Studies, at U.N.N. July 1982; see also other papers by: C.E. Akujor, "A Perspective of Igbo Technological Development; C. Oyolu, "The Evolution of Agriculture in Igboland"; and O.C. Okunji, "Cosmetic Plants of Igboland"--all in the custody of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

- a) One of the smallest village communities in Umuahia, Ekenobizi village survived the ravages of the Biafran civil war with more women than men alive. The female superiority in numbers, coupled with their more cool-headed organisation and self-help union, is perhaps a major secret of survival of the village up till now.
- b) Whilst the scars of civil war, with its bombs and explosives, still remain writ large in many places, the village women fully voted with their men folk in the church, for rebuilding the old village church which suffered severe damage during the war. The communal self-help effort is still on and the village church building, a seven year project, is now in its third year of construction.
- c) Meanwhile, the danger of erosion had unfortunately kept gathering force and now threatens to sweep away the whole village, together with its communal owned palm trees and farm lands on which the village livelihood and cash economy depends; and together with the only Secondary School (also community built); already the small and only village market (rebuilt after the war) as well as the 2½ kilometre road, the only entry into and exit from the village, are now at great risk; the water pipes, bought by the villagers themselves in order to bring potable pipe borne water into the village, have already been exhumed and swept away by erosion in the 1983-84 rainy season.
- d) Whilst by individual donations from a handful of wage earners, the village church effort inches along slowly, the erosion problem poses terrible threats far beyond the scope of the village
- e) Through this writer's active involvement,
 - i) The village had unsuccessfully put up financial claims (about N3 million) on the Federal Government, for damages done to the village property, farmland etc., by soldiers who remained in physical occupation

of the village even after the civil war in 1970, and for about six years after

- ii) An application had been made to the Ministry of Works at Umuahia, for assistance and direction in rebuilding the eroded access road to the village; but despite the village's offer of contribution of their own labour and some of the materials (concrete culvert rings, stones etc.), the Ministry is unable to help, because the village is unable to pay for the cost of hired road construction equipment!
- f) For the 'Action Committee' which I helped form in the village some eighteen months ago, the on-coming dry season (Nov. 1985--May 1986) is yet another period for the continuing community effort and labour against terrible environmental odds, erosion of a disastrous magnitude on the village access road, the market square, the school and church premises, the farm lands, etc.
- g) A further evaluative research on the problems, with some physical project development assistance in this village, may perhaps be found worthy of serious sympathetic consideration by the I.D.R.C.

(xi)

General Conclusions

- a) There can be no doubt that the Umuahia-Igbo communities, their neighbours and other kindred groups in South Eastern Nigeria, had, in precolonial times, developed and used traditional skills and technics in many different fields--e.g. agriculture, pottery, iron smithing, food processing etc., as examined in this report.

- b) The failure of further advancement in those indigenous skills, had stemmed from those various external and internal factors already highlighted in this study; factors which impeded or rendered impossible subsequent inputs of innovative and adaptative improvements so necessary for the further development and progress of any kind of idea or skill, once first originated in any society or community.
- c) If the new idea of Community Adoption Scheme (C.A.S.) as advanced here bears fruit at the policy-making level, its physical project orientation is bound to produce results and effects more lasting and permanent in the recipient local communities, whilst at the same time not significantly more costly to the donor, than the present aid and relief policy which mainly gives food charity on a basis necessarily adhoc and temporary in its character, as in its objective results.
- d) Effective supportive assistance to the agro-based effort of the Umuahia village communities as suggested above, will be sure to produce the effects of a composite development strategy: it will enhance self sufficiency in food production, as well as aid the improved or adapted revival of the indigenous technologies for the commerical processing, manufacturing and preserving, of food crops and other raw materials obtained from agro-based sources, e.g. from the new 'Tenera' breed of the palm tree.
- e) For needy communities such as those of the Umuahia-Igbo, whose traditional culture lionises hard work and self-effort, but totally taboos idleness, habitual begging and dependence on charity, the best and most effective form of aid and assistance, is that which helps them to overcome environmental and circumstantial impediments to rewarding self-effort and hardwork, or the use of appropriate skills in the attainment of self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of human needs.

- (f) It is important here to draw IDRC's attention to the existence, in many urban or semi-urban centres in Nigeria today and since after the Nigerian Civil War, of many uninvestigated and untapped technological potentials--at Aba, Onitsha, Ikot Ekpene (Cross River State), and other areas outside Umuahia. Some of these operations (neither wholly traditional nor totally modern) may be described as trembling, as it were, on the brink of traditionalism and modernity. One of such creative individuals, for example, one Damien Anyanwu of 'Radio Mbaize' fame, was recently awarded a national honour (OFR!) by the Nigerian Federal Government, after government officials had been forced by public opinion to visit Damien's Workshop right in his home village of Mbaize near Umuahia, some one thousand kilometers away from the seat of bureaucracy in Lagos. Beyond this official visit and the medal of honour, we know nothing more about this potential revolutionary talent which seems now to be rusting away in the village. At Aba, Ikot/Ekpene, Onitsha, and elsewhere, there are many similar cases of remarkable talents known and recognised by the local people, but not yet known or recognised by the bureaucracy in Nigeria, not to talk of beyond Nigeria. A proper study and documentation on this subject of prospective, would-be, or evolving, 'appropriate' technology in Nigeria, would seem urgent and necessary.

It is against all the foregoing background that one would like to see soon, a development on the theme, 'Evolving Appropriate Technology for Economic and Social Development in Nigeria'. This would be a logical follow-up and further advancement on the exploratory study and report, here presented on indigenous technology and development in this part of the developing world.

Epilogue to Part Two (Chapter 7)

In this exploratory investigation using the Umuahia communities as a micro study, an attempt has been made to answer a few basic but major questions (about African traditional societies) on which further questions may hang, or future studies/policies be based. It may be taken as established here that: a) Far from being communities with 'no arts, no sciences' among them, according to some early European writers, most African traditional societies developed a remarkable range of precolonial skills or indigenous technology, ranging from pottery, ironsmithing or metallurgy, to agro-based or food processing technology, cloth weaving, etc. b) The practice of these skills involved, as shown in the chart, maps and illustrations on page 150 et al, some kind of division of labour, in the production processes for various goods and commodities, c) A vast organisation existed in the exchange system, marketing and distribution and d) Impediments, of both external and internal origins, existed, and still exist to militate against the growth, expansion/modernisation of indigenous technology.

The study automatically raises many more significant questions than it has set out to tackle fully at this stage: For example:

1. What provided the stimulus to indigenous technology and what were the actual techniques or methods of local production in the palm oil and other oil extracting 'industries'?

2. How did the women-folk obtain and prepare the (clay) raw materials for pot making, and what processes were involved in the actual production and firing of clay products?
3. What 'scientific' ideas or philosophy controlled or determined the productive skills or techniques of a) the local blacksmiths or metallurgy workers? b) The local soap boilers who derived their major raw materials from the burnt ashes of the palm fruit husks? c) How was technical knowledge or skills in these enterprises transferred from one person or one group to another in traditional society?
4. What impact had the colonial period on traditional technology and productivity? Did the colonial period (c1900-1960), for instance, evolve any definite theory, policy or philosophy on indigenous technological development for or in the African colonies?
5. What has been the condition/character of indigenous technology, in post independent Nigeria for example, in the period from c1960 up to the 'Biafran' era (1967-70)?
6. What new trends, if any, have developed or are developing in indigenous technology in Nigeria after Biafra, or since the decline of the Nigerian oil boom, c1980-to date?
7. What historical parallels, if any, may be drawn between the Nigerian/African experiences and those of other countries, such as India and China, in the evolving/ evolution of 'appropriate' technology?

These are some of the crucial questions (crucial at least for future official policy on development) arising and now outstanding from a preliminary investigation of this vast topic on indigenous technology.

The intended future title, 'Evolving Appropriate Technology for Economic and Social Development in Nigeria', will aim to address and up-date the data on these above-listed

questions and key issues, with a view to relating them to what indigenous or appropriate technology in our time may need to learn or adapt, in productive or other techniques, in order to achieve or retain relevance for the societies they serve.

Appendices

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1963 CENSUS FIGURES FOR THE UMUAHIA COMMUNITIESOHUHU LOCAL COUNCIL (GRAND TOTAL = 24,319)

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Isingwu | 3,623 |
| Onhia | 1,181 |
| Umuawa | 3,794 |
| Umuogba | 612 |
| Umuezwamai Etc. | 440 |
| Uhuokwu | 395 |
| Ubeha | 492 |
| Umuegwu Alaocha | 3,516 |
| Okaiuga | 2,965 |
| Ude Ofeme | 1,225 |
| Isingwu Ofeme | 455 |
| Utali | 274 |
| Umuezike Umuda Etc. | 1,329 |
| Umuagu | 1,163 |
| Umudiawa | 534 |
| Anaogwugwu | 876 |
| Umuekweule | 1,043 |
| Umuohuru | 402 |

OLOKORO LOCAL COUNCIL (GRAND TOTAL = 14,385)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Itu | 1,229 |
| Agbama | 616 |
| Umuoparaozara | 446 |
| Amuzu | 249 |
| Avonkwu | 400 |
| Amakama | 1,839 |
| Old Umuahia Railway Station | 2,464 |
| Umuobia | 437 |
| Umujata | 1,593 |
| Amizi | 1,715 |
| Amangwo | 406 |
| Okwu | 1,301 |
| Itaja | 955 |
| Umudere | 365 |
| Umuntu | 370 |

UBAKALA LOCAL COUNCIL (GRAND TOTAL = 15,426)

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Laguru | 1,654 |
| Umuosu | 1,671 |
| Avodin | 918 |
| Mgbarakuma | 1,280 |
| Amuzu | 1,129 |
| Eziana | 1,020 |
| Anaibo | 1,202 |
| Nsukere | 1,009 |
| Umuogo | 586 |
| Ipape | 1,213 |
| Nsirimo | 3,220 |
| Abam | 524 |

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Afara Ukwu | 3,150 |
| Osah | 2,071 |
| Ndume | 5,509 |
| Umuhute | 357 |
| Isieke | 1,849 |
| Okwuta | 991 |
| Ajata | 439 |
| Avonkwu | 596 |
| Iyienyi | 314 |
| Amuzure | 270 |
| Emede | 1,225 |
| Ubani | 361 |
| Amuzu Ukwu | 1,175 |
| Nkata | 859 |
| Ugba | 797 |
| Amaeke | 827 |
| Azuiyi | 689 |
| Isiadu | 592 |

UMUOPARA LOCAL COUNCIL (GRAND TOTAL = 12,971)

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Ezeleke | 2,742 |
| Umunwanwa | 2,744 |
| Ogbodi - Ukwu | 2,376 |
| Ehume | 1,880 |
| Ogbodi - Umuanya | 1,697 |
| Ekenobizi | 1,532 |

SOME OF THE MAJOR DEITIES AMONG THE UMUAHIA COMMUNITIES

ALA

KAMANU

AHANJOKU

AJANA (RECOGNISED IN OHUHU CLAN)

OJAM (RECOGNISED IN UMUOPARA CLAN)

AGWU

IMO

MKPATA (RECOGNISED IN UBAKALA CLAN)

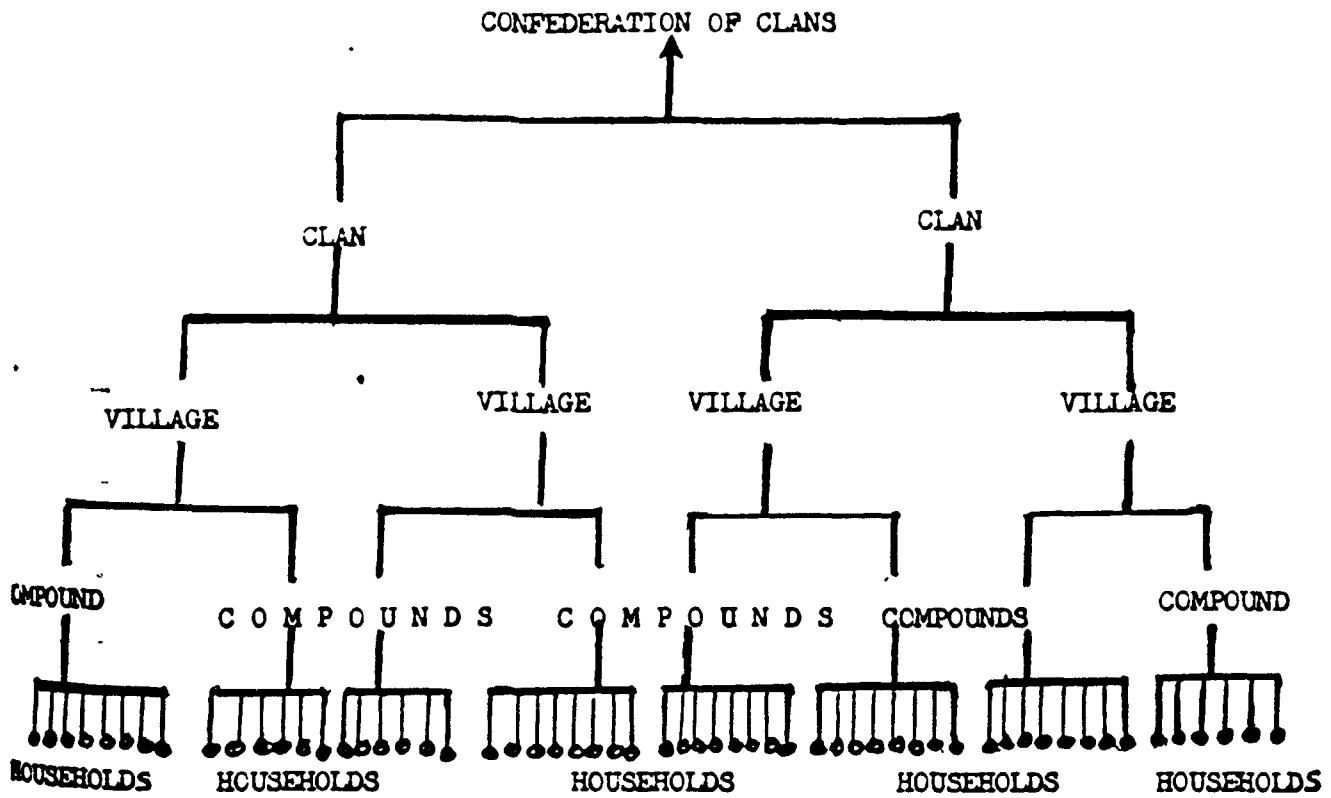
EKWENSU-UBAKALA (RECOGNISED IN UBAKALA CLAN)

SOME MAJOR FESTIVALS IN PRECOLONIAL UMUAHIA

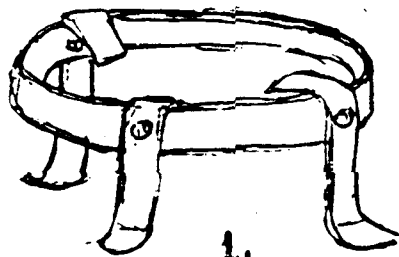
| S/NO. | MONTH | FESTIVAL | OBJECT |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. | January | Ime Oba | To announce the beginning of the farming period. |
| 2. | January-February | Ekpo/Ekpe | Merry-making. |
| 3. | May | Ime Egwu | To announce the beginning of famine. |
| 4. | June | Ikeghoha | To announce end of famine period. |
| 5. | June-July | Irio-Agwu | To arrest ill-fortune . |
| 6. | July-August | New-Yam Festival | To celebrate the harvesting and eating of new yam, and the harvest season. |
| 7. | July-August-September | Ime Nzu | To introduce new-borne babes before the Ala Deity. |
| 8. | November-December | "Wrestling | Sports and fun; marriage-match-making. |
| 9. | November-December | Ikpirikpe | To herald Imo-Oba period. |
| 10. | November-December | Ila-Cwerre | The priests visit all the shrines as they denounce the thieves, rogues, and other ant-social elements in the society. |
| 11. | Occasional | Ekpa-Dance | Merry-making occasions. |

12. The Okonko Society or Fraternity, also known as Ekpe-Aro, was, in most precolonial Igbo Societies including Umuahia, the legislative and Executive authority of government. From time to time this powerful fraternity also organised its own festivals or plays featuring masquerades and dances.

Hand-drawn map of the Umuahia region showing migration directions. The map includes labels for various locations: NKWERRE, OKIGWE, OHAOZARA, BENDE-DHAFIA, ABAM, OBUWO, ETITI, OWEKRI, MBAISE, IMOKPARA, IBEKU, OLOKORO, LIBAKALA, and NGWA LAND. A compass rose indicates North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W). A key explains that arrows show migration directions into and out of Umuahia. The map also shows the AROCHUKWU CROSS RIVER ZONE and the MOI RIVER.

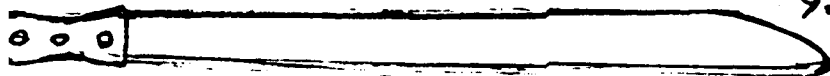
STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY in Igboland

Courtesy: U.K. Igiri

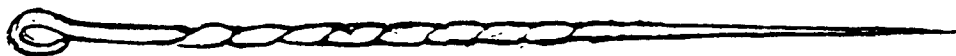
RIBA BLACKSMITHS' METALPRODUCTS.

1.

1. Cooking Tripod.
2. Farming machete.
3. Single-pronged fork.
4. Kitchen knife.
5. Town Criers Gong.
6. Hunting-dog-gongs.
7. Small Ceremonial brass bells.
8. Hoe blades.
9. Spear-head.



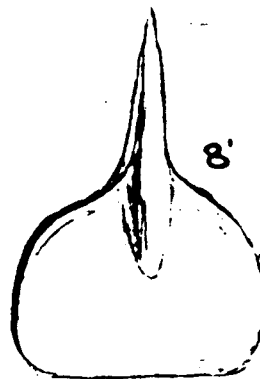
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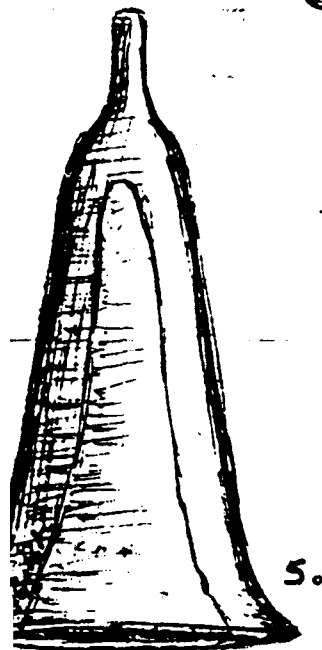
3.



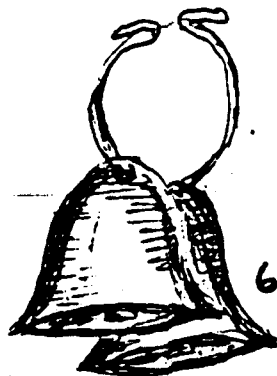
4.



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5.



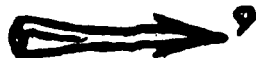
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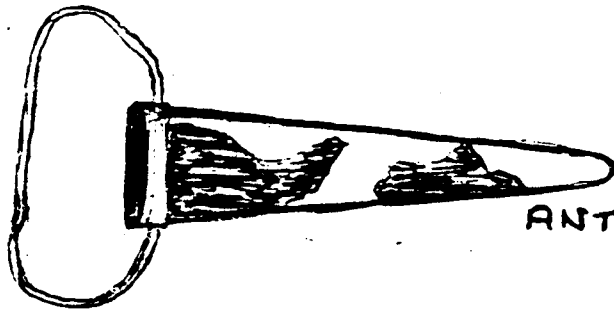
7.



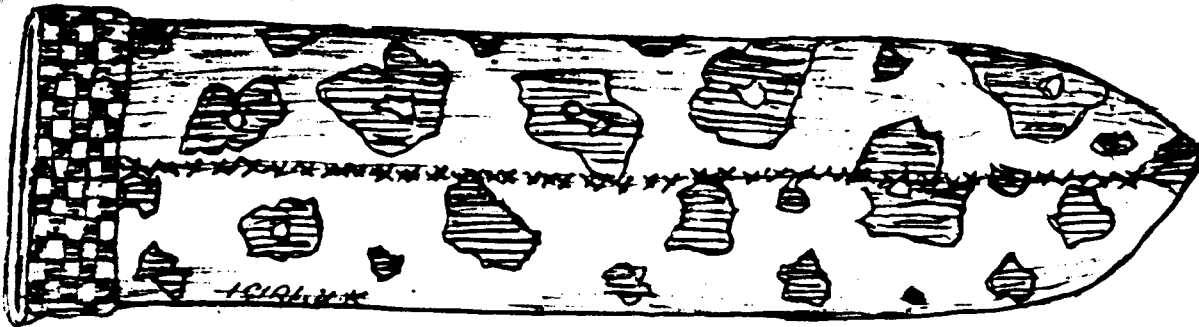
8'



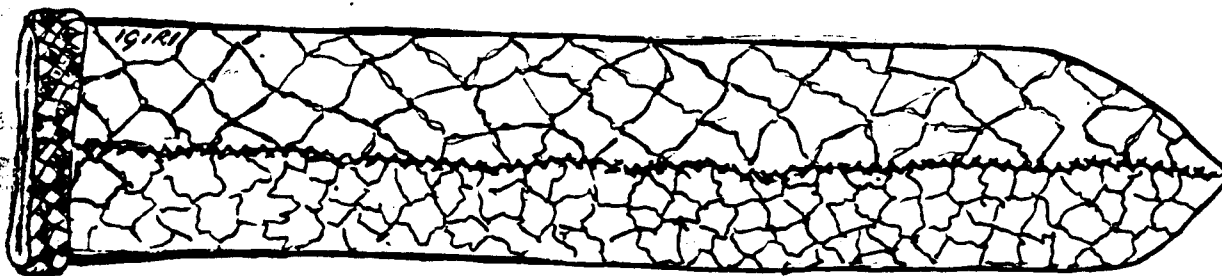
9



ANTELOPE SKIN

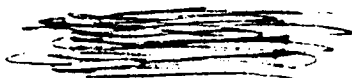


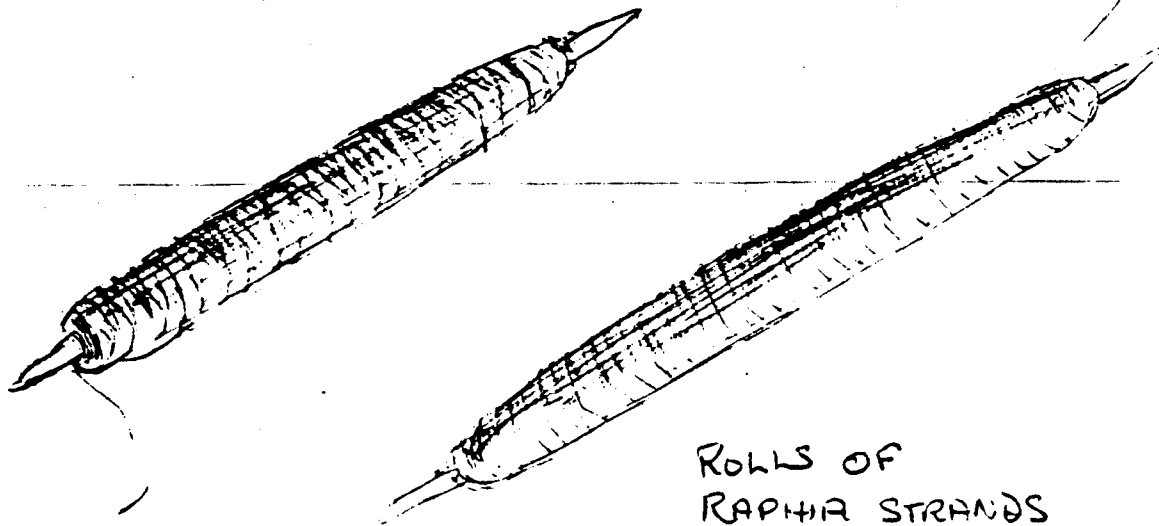
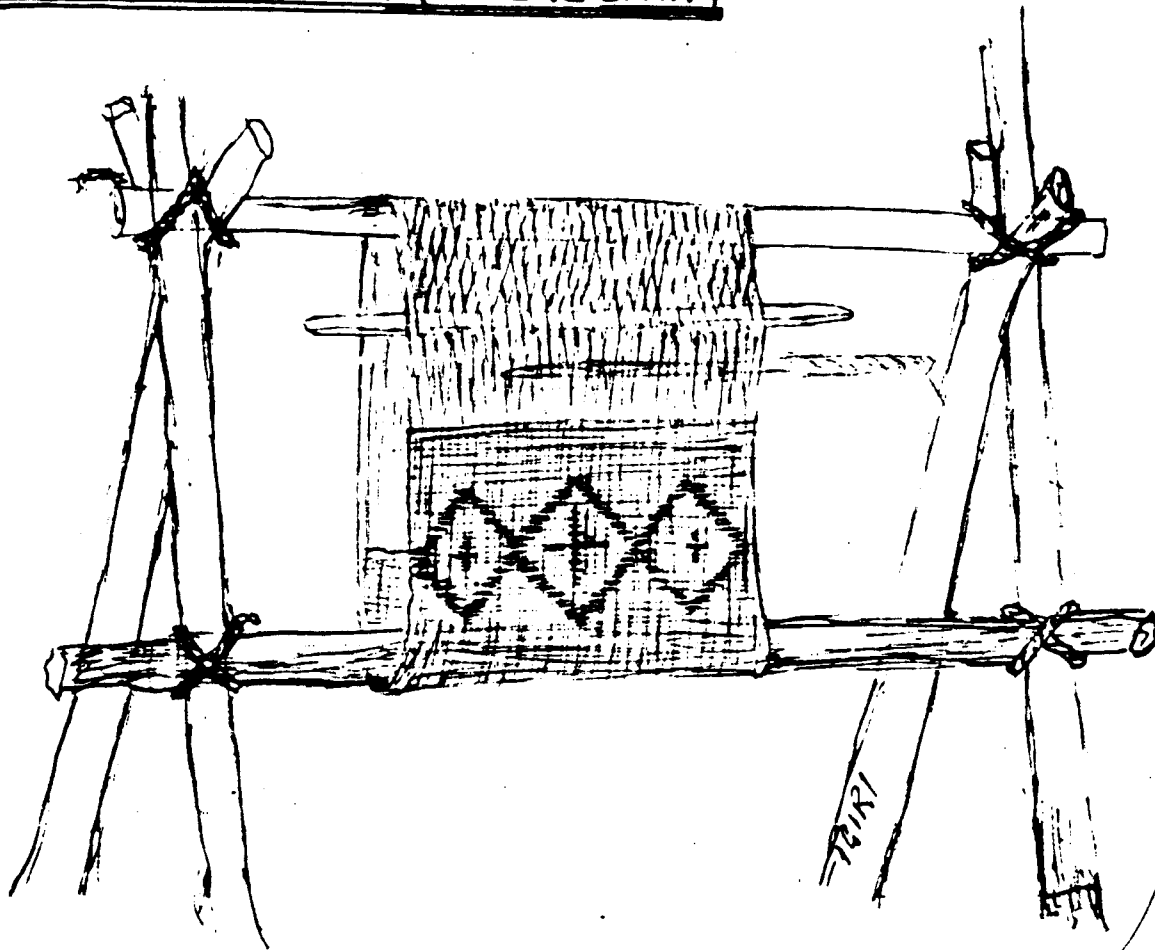
LEOPARD SKIN

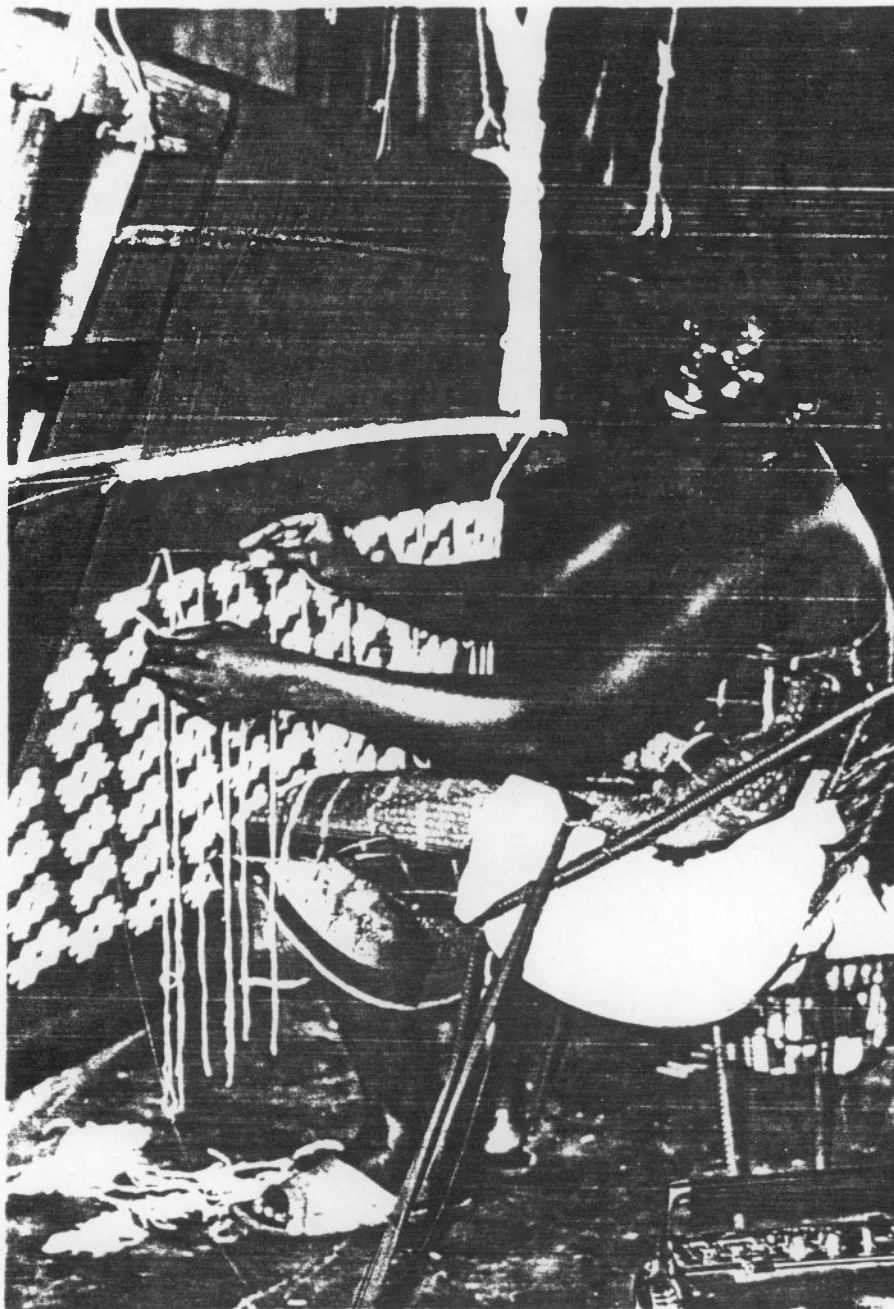


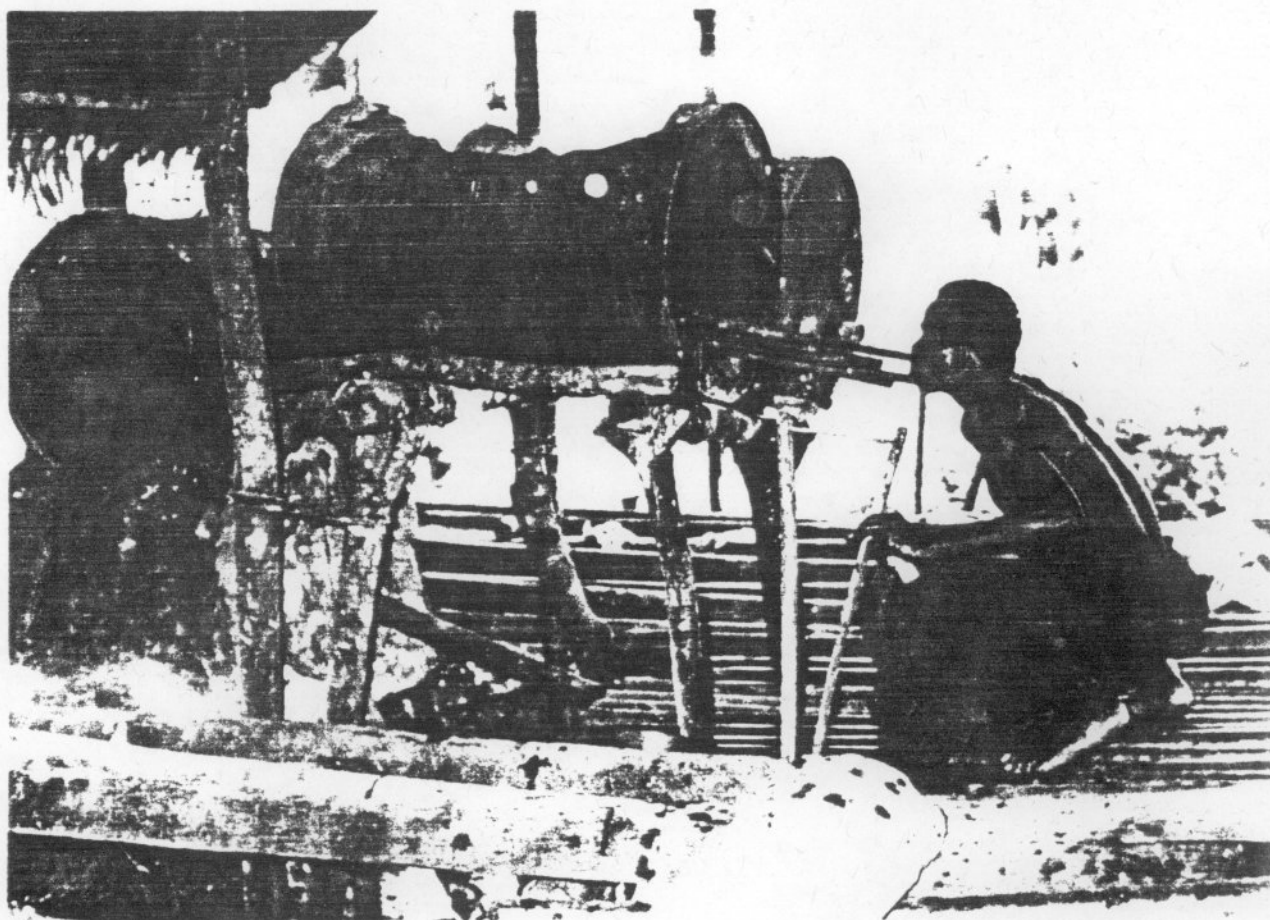
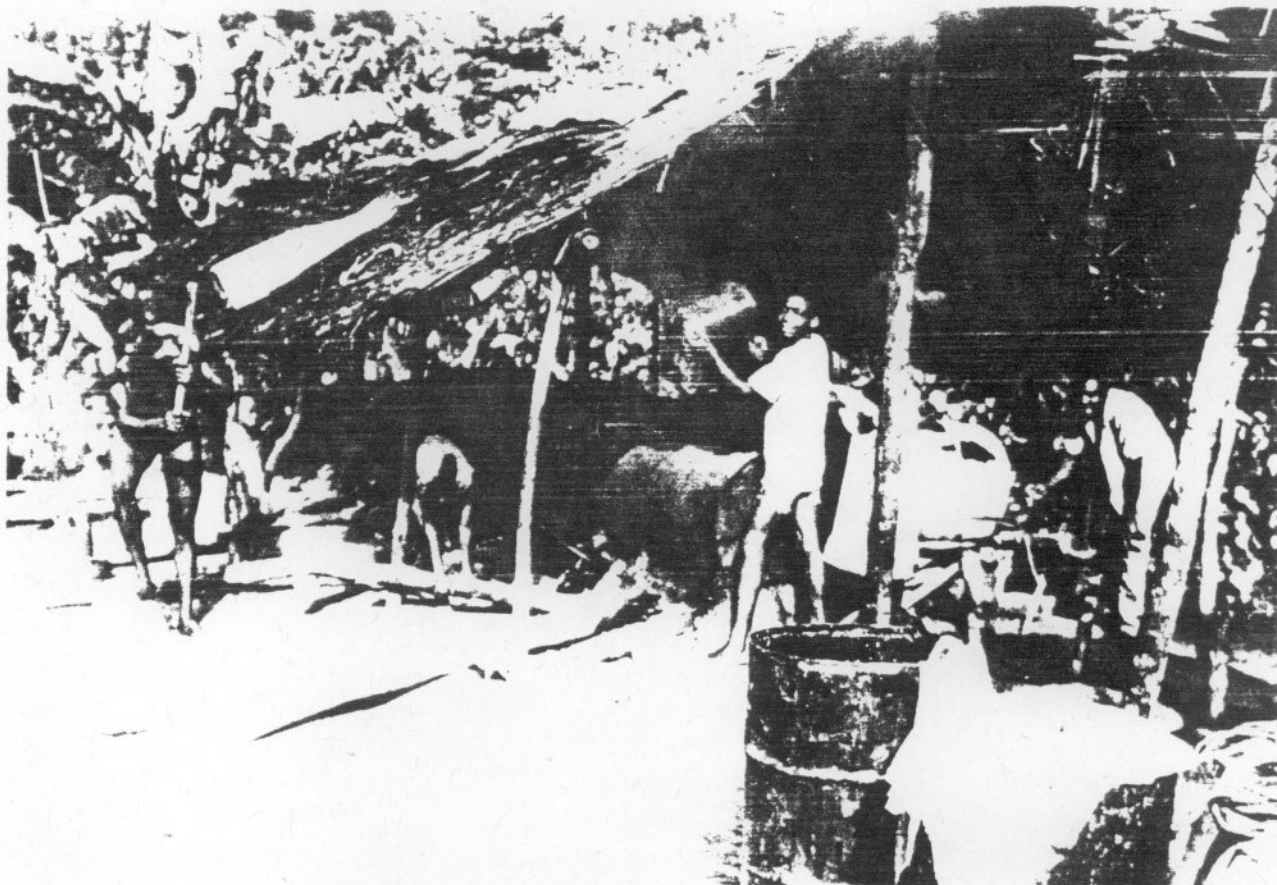
CROCODILE (IDAH)
SKIN

ABIRIBA MADE
SCABBARDS



Appendix Vb(iii)WOODEN LOOM FOR WEAVING
RAPHIA CLOTH. (IGBERE CLAN)ROLLS OF
RAPHIA STRANDS

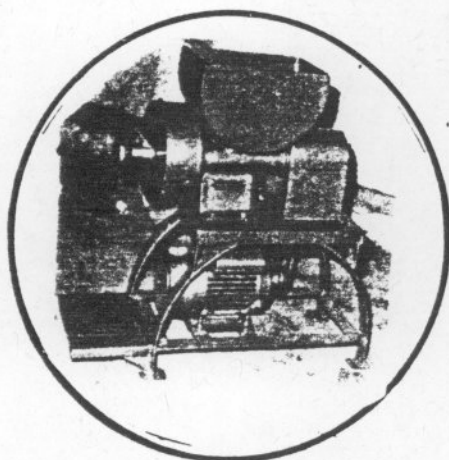




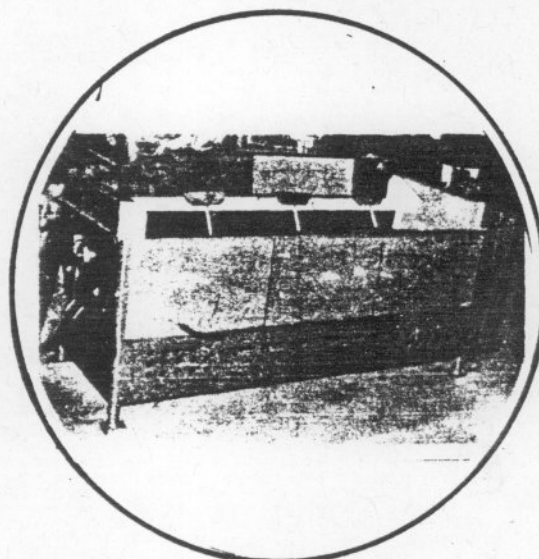
Local Gin Distillery

Appendix V(v)

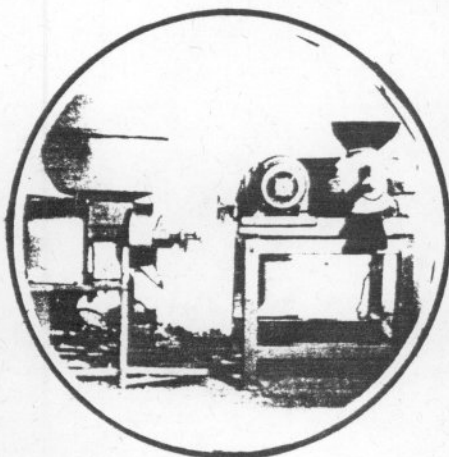
Sogalson Nig. Ltd Benin City



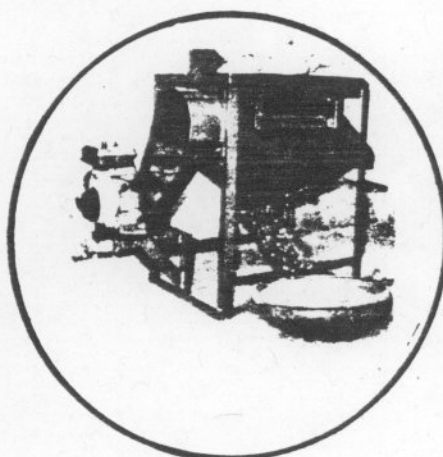
Garri Finisher



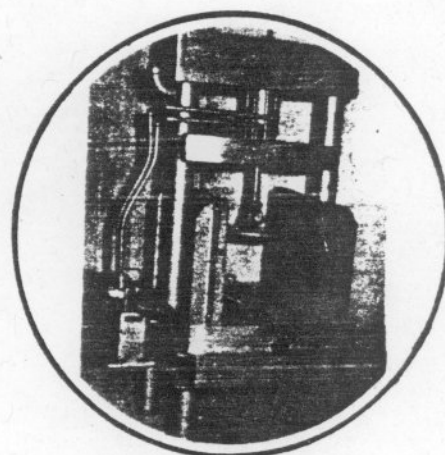
Garri Fryer



Commercial Pepper Mills



Corn Sheller



Cassava Press Dry

Appendix VI(b)

Some PRODA Fabricated Equipment

| EQUIPMENT | PRICE # | PRODUCTION CAPACITY |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| 1 Cassava peeling machine | 4,250.00 | 1½ tons garri/day using one frying only |
| 2 Cassava grating machine | 1,550.00 | |
| 3 Pulp dewatering screw press | 1,700.00 | |
| 4 Depulping machine | 1,550.00 | |
| 5 Garri frying machine | 15,000.00 | |
| 6 Garri screening machine (shaker) | 2,250.00 | |
| 7 Garri screening machine (rotary) | 3,000.00 | |
| 8 Village garri frying stand | 950.00 | 60 kilo/day |
| 9 Bread oven | 12,500.00 | 400 loaves/batch |

Appendix VI(b) (continued)

Some PRODA Fabricated Equipment

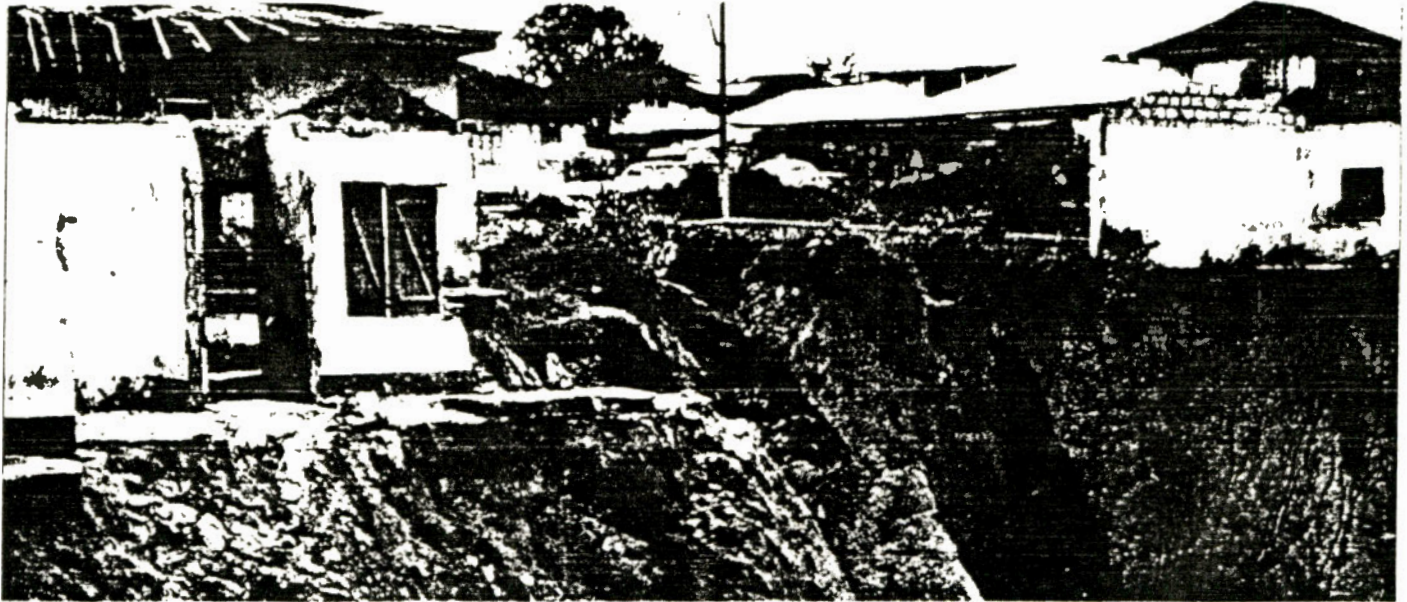
| EQUIPMENT | PRICE # | PRODUCTION CAPACITY |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 10 Steam cooker | 7,500.00 | 800 portions/hr |
| 11 Distilled water plant | 28,900.00 | 50 liters hr |
| 12 Palm nut cracking machine | 2,150.00 | $\frac{1}{2}$ ton/hr |
| 13 Maize shelling machine | 2,250.00 | 100 kilo/hr |
| 14 Seed planter | 250.00 | manual driven |
| 15 Kero-heated dryer | 4,750.00 | 8m ² drying area (16) trays |
| 16 (Shelf) Continous grain dryer | 14,450.00 including conveyor | $\frac{1}{2}$ ton/hr |
| 17 Industrial washing machine | 4,650.00 | 12 kilo/batch |

Some PRODA Fabricated Equipment

| EQUIPMENT | PRICE ₦ | PRODUCTION CAPACITY |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 18 Spin dryer | 1,050.00 | 12 kilo/ batch |
| 19 Kero-heated bread oven | 2,500.00 | 30 loaves/ hr |
| 20 Alcohol distila- tion column | 37,000.00 | 75 liters/ hr |
| 21 Grain dryer | | |

Some FIIRO Fabricated Equipment

| EQUIPMENT | PRICE |
|---|------------|
| FIIRO Still (Stainless Steel) | N10,000.00 |
| FIIRO Still (Mild Steel) | 3,300.00 |
| EMU Pasteurizer | 16,335.00 |
| Crown Working Machine | 2,310.00 |
| EMU Mixing Machine | 4,950.00 |
| Fish Smoke Dryer | 8,000.00 |
| Solar Dryer | 2,000.00 |
| Cassava Grater | 2,000.00 |
| Weighing Machine | 1,000.00 |
| Soap Machinery (From N3,000 - N25,000 depending on size) | |
| Garri Frier (From N10,000 - N20,000) | |

Appendix VII(a)

Gullies on Ulasi Road, Aba: It looks like an open strip-mine

Nigeria

Ravages of Landslides

Thousands of houses and whole communities in Imo may disappear

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in Bende LGA.

★ Erosion at Amafor in front of National War Museum. Umuahia

the oulles. The Erosion have opened up pits on

RAVAGES OF EROSION IN IMO STATE (I)



Umuahia-Bende Road: "The situation has become critical"

Appendix Vii (d)



The Economic Palm Tree



Select Bibliography and Further Reading (Part One)A: ORIGINAL SOURCES1. Intelligence Reports On The:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Ezinihitte Clan | |
| Olokororo | " |
| Ibeku | " |
| Ubakala | " |
| Ngwa | " |
| Abam | " |
| Obowo | " |
| Aro | " |

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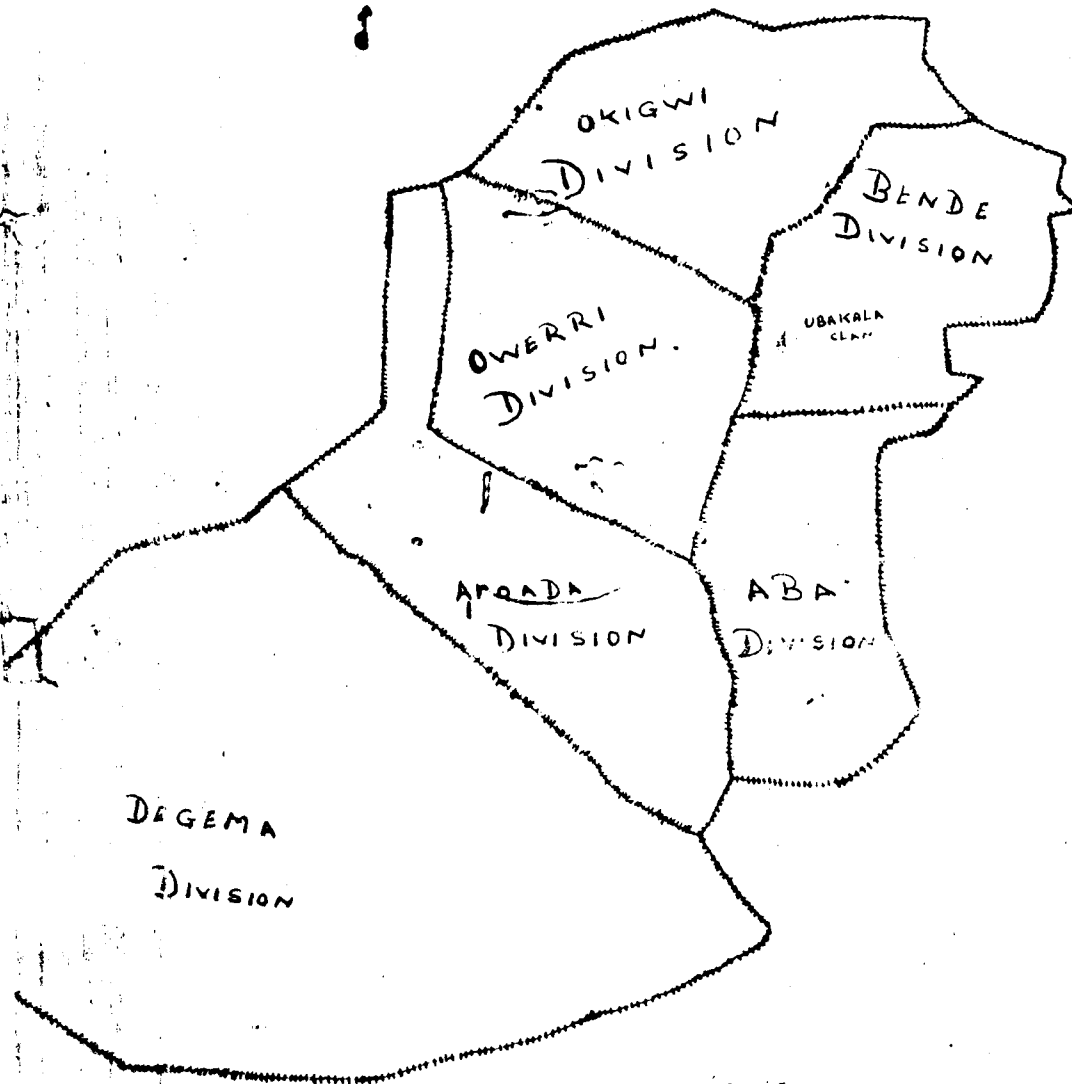
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— THE UBAKALA CLAN —
 — IN RELATION —
 — TO —
 — THE OWERRI PROVINCE —

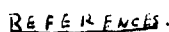


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- = APPROXIMATE DIVISIONAL BOUNDARY

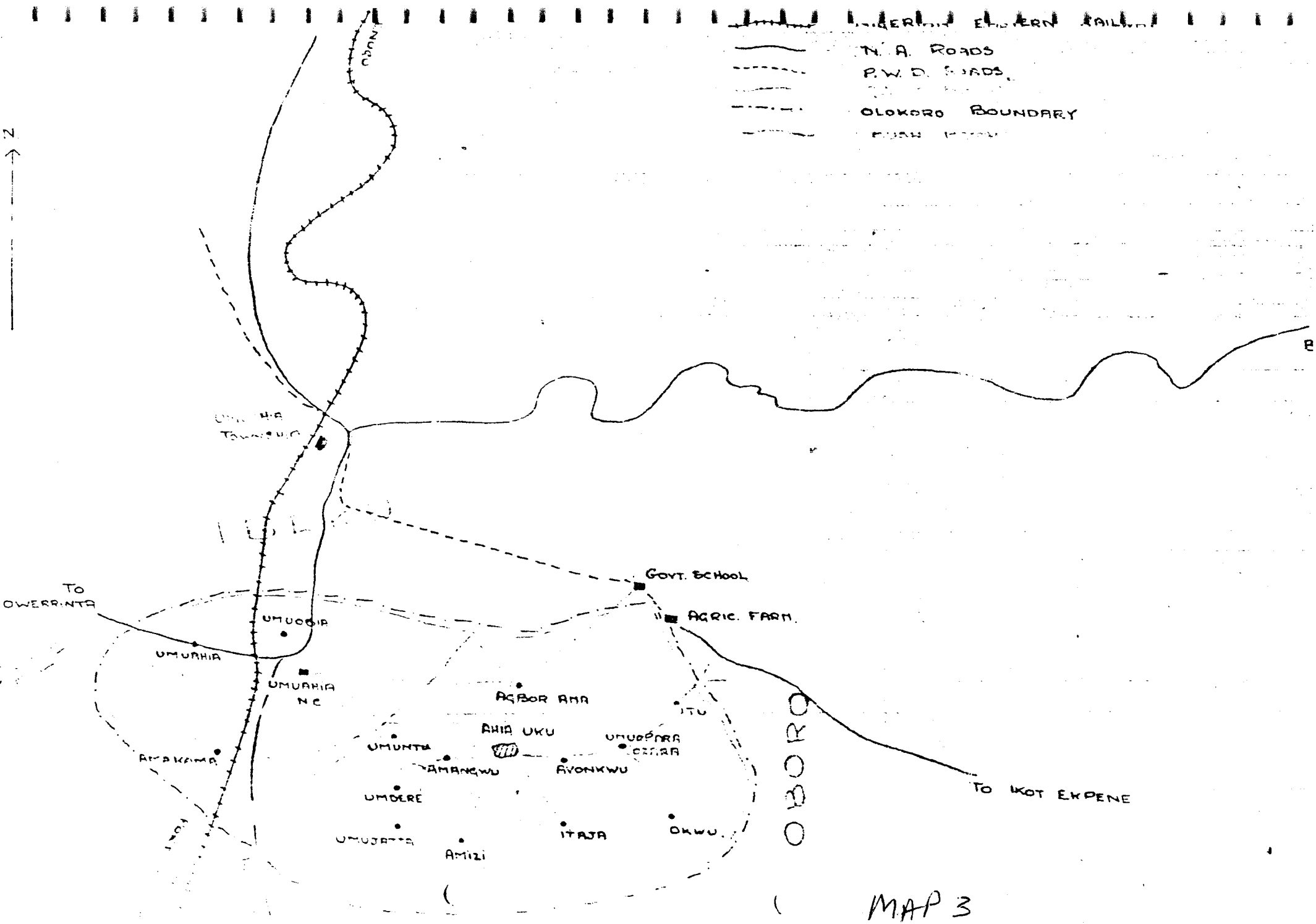
□ = UBAKALA CLAN

Scale 2 inches to 1 mile



1. APPROXIMATE CLAN BOUNDARIES.
 2. MOTOR ROADS.
 3. VILLAGE UNITS.

2
↑



MAP 3

