Vol. 1 No. 2
July 1972

ikenga

journal of african studies



institute of african studies
university of nigeria nsukka

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University of Nigeria Press 1972

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AN IGBO SLAVE STORY OF THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

By S. J. S. COOKEY

ONE OF THE major themes of Igbo history which is yet to be written is the development of the slave trade and its political and social impact on the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. Unfortunately the evidence necessary for undertaking this study has not been assembled so that a general over-view can be taken. Most of this evidence would have to be based on oral traditions. Unlike the area west of the Niger where European travellers and missionaries succeeded in penetrating as far inland as the kingdom of Benin in the fifteenth century and left records of the conditions existing there, Igboland remained closed to literate visitors until towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is the paucity of written records to cross-check oral tradition that makes every source relating to the Igbo of special importance. This is why the brief story of an Igbo slave girl from Umoji near Onitsha recorded by Archdeacon D. C. Crowther at Okrika in 1880 merits consideration.

On 13 August 1880, Crowther became the first missionary to visit the inland Delta city state of Okrika. This place is cut off from the mainland by a shallow creek which has always been fordable at low tide. The mainland neighbours of Okrika are the Ogoni-speaking people of Mbolli or Eleme as they prefer to call themselves who separate the Okrika from the Igbo. The pre-occupation of Crowther and the small band of Delta missionaries at this time was to reach the numerous Igbo of the interior and the discovery of Crowther that there were "nearly as many Ibos as Okrikas" living at Okrika island raised the hope that this location could provide the spring-board for missionary enterprise among the Igbo.[1] As Crowther said later, "At Okrika, truly we are within sight of Ibo-land".[2] The problem was to discover the best route to the Igbo heartland; hence Crowther began to collect information relating to the route taken by the Igbo at Okrika.

The problem was virtually solved for him before he had fully embarked on it by a fortuitous encounter with a young girl of fourteen who recognized him and spoke to him in "broken" English. On being asked by Crowther who she was the girl narrated the following astonishing story which was taken down as nearly as possible in her own words:

> My name is M'beke (Mgbeke), me papa's name is Okori, and my mother's M'leafo (Mgbafor), all of us belong to Omoji (Umuoji). There was a war at Omoji, and "me papa" sent us little children to Onitsha for safety. I stayed more than two years there with a convert woman called Awansia-de through whom I attended Sunday School and Church where I used to see you (pointing to me). After the war was over at Omoji, we were taken home. One day four of us went to cut wood in the farm, two men met us in the bush and said that "me papa" owed him, and caught me, the rest of the girls ran away. I was taken to Mkpo-ho (Mkpo), then sold to Umutshuku, then to Bende, then to Oloko, then to Akwete and Igoni (Ogoni), and was lastly bought by Chief George of Okrika.....[3]

On further questioning, Mgbeke revealed that en route to Okrika she and her captors had crossed three streams and that the largest had been only knee-deep.[4]

There are several points of interest in the story which will become evident later. For Crowther, however, the most significant aspect was the information that Bende, the great entrepot of Igboland could be reached from Okrika through Oloko (Umuahia), Akwete and Ogoni without a major impediment and that the route constituted an important commercial highway. Prior to this, the only information about such a route had been the

canoes, carved out of the giant trees of the tropical wet forest. Hence a useful trade relationship developed between the delta people and the mainland from the earliest days of the settlements, probably in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

These Delta settlements must have been small in population at first but began to increase as the economic prospects brightened and the people mastered their environment. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Duarte Pacheco Pereira noted that "At the mouth of the River Real (Bonny and New Calábar Rivers)... there is a very large village, consisting of about 2,000 souls."[17] This number probably would not include the fishing settlements affiliated to the "very large village" which were usually on nearby locations but hidden by the mangrove vegetation and the winding creeks. Another traveller who made a journey to Bonny in 1826 and noted the settlement pattern indicated that the population of Bonny and its environs was 25,000.[18] It is fairly obvious that the need to augment the population of the delta towns was great. Men were required to catch enough fish for sale and to protect the settlement from attack. More important, men were required to ferry the salt and the fish through the hazardous creeks to the mainland, secure a fair exchange for these goods and bring back enough food to sustain the settlements. In order to undertake such journeys it was not sufficient to desptach a handful of men in a small canoe partly because this would be too risky both in terms of the potential hostile elements along the route and partly because the return cargo might be inadequate to meet the dietary needs of the inhabitants. Furthermore, the canoes had a deadline to beat for the Igbo markets on the mainland were held every four or eight days and it was vital to get there on time in order to maintain the rhythm of trade. This required adequate manpower to paddle the large canoes since the use of sails was unknown and in any case the creeks were hardly suitable for them. The size of these canoes and their carrying capacity always impressed visitors to the Delta. Pacheco remarked, in a much quoted passage, that he saw "the largest canoes, made of a single trunk, that are known in the whole of the Ethiopia or Guinea" and that these canoes were "so large that they hold 80 men".[19] James Barbot saw towards the end of the seventeenth century "long and large canoes, some 60 feet long and 7 feet wide rowed by 16, 18 or 20 paddlers".[20]

The solution to the manpower problem was obviously the recruitment of domestic slaves from the mainland Igbo, where that form of labour was already familiar, into the Ijo-speaking communities. This recruitment which ante-dated the opening of the slave trade assumed increasing importance from the sixteenth century once the Portuguese, followed later by the Dutch, French and British, also began to require slaves to purchase. Thus the slave trade of the delta towns became merely an intensification of a labour recruitment drive that had previously existed.

Significantly, there is no evidence that, even with the pressure exerted by the demands of the Atlantic slave trade the delta city states engaged in warfare with the mainland communities in order to capture slaves as happened on the Slave and Gold Coasts. Indeed one of the remarkable features of the delta slave trade was the peaceful relations that existed between the city states and the mainland communities.[21] Rather than secure their slaves by war, the delta city states, perhaps because of their dependence for food on the mainland, relied on relatively peaceful commercial intercourse; such wars as they engaged in being fought among the delta states themselves for the control of the mainland markets and spheres of influence. On the mainland itself, the question of how exactly the slaves were secured in the early periods of the trade is obscured by the paucity of the evidence. However, for the student of the Igbo slave trade, the seventeenth century report by Olfert Dapper that the slaves sold at Bonny and Kalabari were not prisoners of war but were mainly bought from inland neighbours who in turn bought them from other interior people is of great interest.[22] It is the first indication available of some external interest as to how the volume of the slave trade was sustained. The information helps in dispelling the rather superficial speculation about a chaotic condition in the hinterland arising from slave-raiding wars and indicates that there was an organised trading system which fed the trade in the delta. Of course the evidence, scanty again as it is, does not preclude the fact that

the slaves might have originally been the victims of inter-village conflicts in the interior. But it can also be safely deduced from the evidence that there was a regular trade channel by which the slaves, once captured, found their way to the slave marts of the delta by way of a long distance trade route.

This trade was largely under the control of the Aro. The role of these people on the borderline between the Igbo and Ibibio in the slave trade was first highlighted by the English explorer, W. B. Baikie in his book *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue* (London, 1856). Although Baikie did not visit the Igbo hinterland, he was able to accumulate, through careful inquiry among people who had interviewed Igbo slaves in Cuba and Sierra Leone, a remarkably detailed information about the Aro trading system which has since been confirmed by oral evidence. According to Baikie's informants.

> When a man goes to Aro to consult Tshuku, he is received by some of the priests outside of the town, near a small stream. Here he makes an offering, after which a fowl is killed, and, if it appears unpropitious, a quantity of a red dye, probably camwood, is split into the water, which the priests tell the people is blood, and on this the votary is hurried off by the priests and is seen no more, it being given out that Tshuku has been displeased, and has taken him. The result of this preliminary ceremony is determined in general by the amount of the present given to the priests, and those reported to have been carried off by Tshuku are usually sold as slaves.[23]

Baikie added that the "Tshuku" shrine was located near the centre of the town. From the account given by Crowther's informant, Mgbeke, it is evident that the method described by Baikie was far from being the only means through which the Aro acquired their slaves. Apart from the use of the oracle, those Aro who resided in the Aro settlements that dotted the entire area from the Niger to the Cross Rivers also bought slaves from local dealers without apparently asking questions as to the source of the slaves and these they traded at the traditional fairs, the best known being at Bende. Such sources included the kidnapping of youths like Mgbeke by marauders who operated in small groups to attract little attention; insolvent debtors or pawns; and those guilty of certain types of crimes within the village communities.[24] Further light on the ramifications of the Aro trading system awaits the current research on their colonies. It is generally accepted, however, that the Aro were manipulating their oracle, which was held in great awe, in response to the demands of the delta need for slaves. The reputation of the oracle as the home of the High God and therefore the final court of arbitration for the delta as well as the Igbo and Ibibio communities would have made the Aro one of the first hinterland groups to learn about the presence of the European slaving ships on the coast and consequently to realise the full potential of their privileged position as "children of the High God". If one Bonny tradition is accepted that the Aro oracle was consulted before the island was settled, it becomes evident that Aro influence had penetrated to the delta probably by the beginning of the fifteenth century at the latest. Whether the route of Aro–Delta contact was identical with that mapped out by Crowther from the information he received in the 1880's is not certain but since none other has so far been uncovered even by oral traditions there is legitimate ground for presuming that the route might well approximate to the earliest line of communication between the coast and the hinterland.

The foregoing raises the general, if nebulous, issue of the impact of the slave trade on the population of the Igbo and, for that matter, on the city states. Only one aspect is dealt with here. It has already been indicated that the slave traffic ante-dated the Atlantic slave trade and, as the story of Mgbeke reveals, it continued for nearly half a century after the abolition of the latter. The reason for this late nineteenth century slave traffic lay in the development of the so-called legitimate trade, that is, trade in palm oil, which far from eliminating the need to secure slaves may actually have increased the traffic in the short term since the organisation of the trade required far more personnel than had been necessary in the past. Under the old slave trade system, it had been enough for the chiefs of the delta states to send their canoes to the periodic markets on the mainland to secure slaves and produce. The trade in palm oil, on the other hand, necessitated the establishment of depots along the river banks to the south of the mainland and the settling of personnel

there to operate the depots. At these depots, the oil brought down in a motley of containers by the primary producers underwent further processing which entailed boiling and sieving before being transferred into casks obtained from the trading vessels. Thereafter, the casks had to be sealed, rolled down to the creeks and eventually ferried to the waiting trading ships when a full canoe-load had been obtained. All these required that a sufficient labour force should be available at the nodal points and these had to be mostly slaves since the free-born did not relish the idea of abandoning, nor were they expected to abandon, the pleasures of the city-state for dirty and arduous work on the mainland.

Thus in considering the Igbo slave trade to the delta, it has to be understood that while a large number of slaves were shipped overseas from the sixteenth century, the pre-existing practice of integrating them into the Delta communities also played a part in draining Igbo manpower. How many Igbo were ultimately lost in this way well never be known. The significance of their number in the Atlantic slave trade was highlighted by Captain John Adams who actively engaged in the traffic during the last decade and half of the eighteenth century.[25] He computed that Bonny alone supplied 20,000 slaves annually and that 16,000 of these, that is, four-fifths, were Igbo. He believed on the basis of this figure that the total number of Igbo slaves exported during the preceding twenty years was more than 320,000. Taking 50,000 to be an approximate figure of the Igbo traded at Kalabari he reached the conclusion that a total number of 370,000 Igbo had been exported from the two ports. Another indication of the number involved might be seen from the computation of Thomas Clarkson, the abolitionist, that more slaves were exported from the Bonny and Old Calabar Rivers than all the other slave-dealing centres on the West and South West Coasts of Africa combined.[26] According to his calculation, for two hundred years the Eastern Delta ports supplied about 16,000 slaves annually, which is, a total of 3,2000,000. Judging from the evidence of Captain Adams above four-fifths of this number would be Igbo. For Captain Hugh Crow, another slaver whose trading activities overlapped that of Captain Adams, "the number of slaves from the Ibo country which, throughout the existence of the British trade was taken from Bonny, amounted to perhaps three-quarters of the whole export."[27] Contemporary evidence, therefore, seems fairly conclusive that an immense number of the Igbo were shipped across the Atlantic.[28]

No figures of any kind are available for the Igbo that were incorporated into the communities of the Delta. One reason for this is the antiquity of the contact between the Ijo-speaking settlers of the Delta and the Igbo on the mainland already indicated. Another reason is the acculturation process through which the Igbo were fused into Delta society. In order to appreciate the latter, it is necessary to recognise the three categories of slaves that existed in the Eastern Delta during the period of the Atlantic slave trade.[29] First was the amorphous mass of able-bodied men and women who were handed over to the slave ships in exchange for various items of European manufacture which had been brought in the slave ships. These slaves constituted transient cargo in the heartless traffic. The second category comprised able-bodied men usually in their twenties and early thirties who joined the labouring class of canoe-paddlers and also served as warriors in the navy of canoes that each of the delta States employed to protect itself and its trade against rivals. These slaves were the property of individual heads of the canoe-houses and they could be assigned at will to newly-created war-canoe chiefs within the main canoe-house or they could be loaned and pawned to their chiefs according to the dictates of their owners, However, after he had undergone the ritual shaving of head by one of the principal wives of a canoe-house chief whereby he became inducted into her "kitchen" and received a new local name, a slave in this class became relatively immune from the indignities that should normally attach to his status. His security and status were further enhanced if he joined the *Owuogbo* society where he learnt the drum language and culture of the local community. Should he also prove his gallantry in war by bringing back the head of an enemy he was inducted into the *Peri Ogbo*, the association of warriors, which established him as a privileged member of the community.[30]

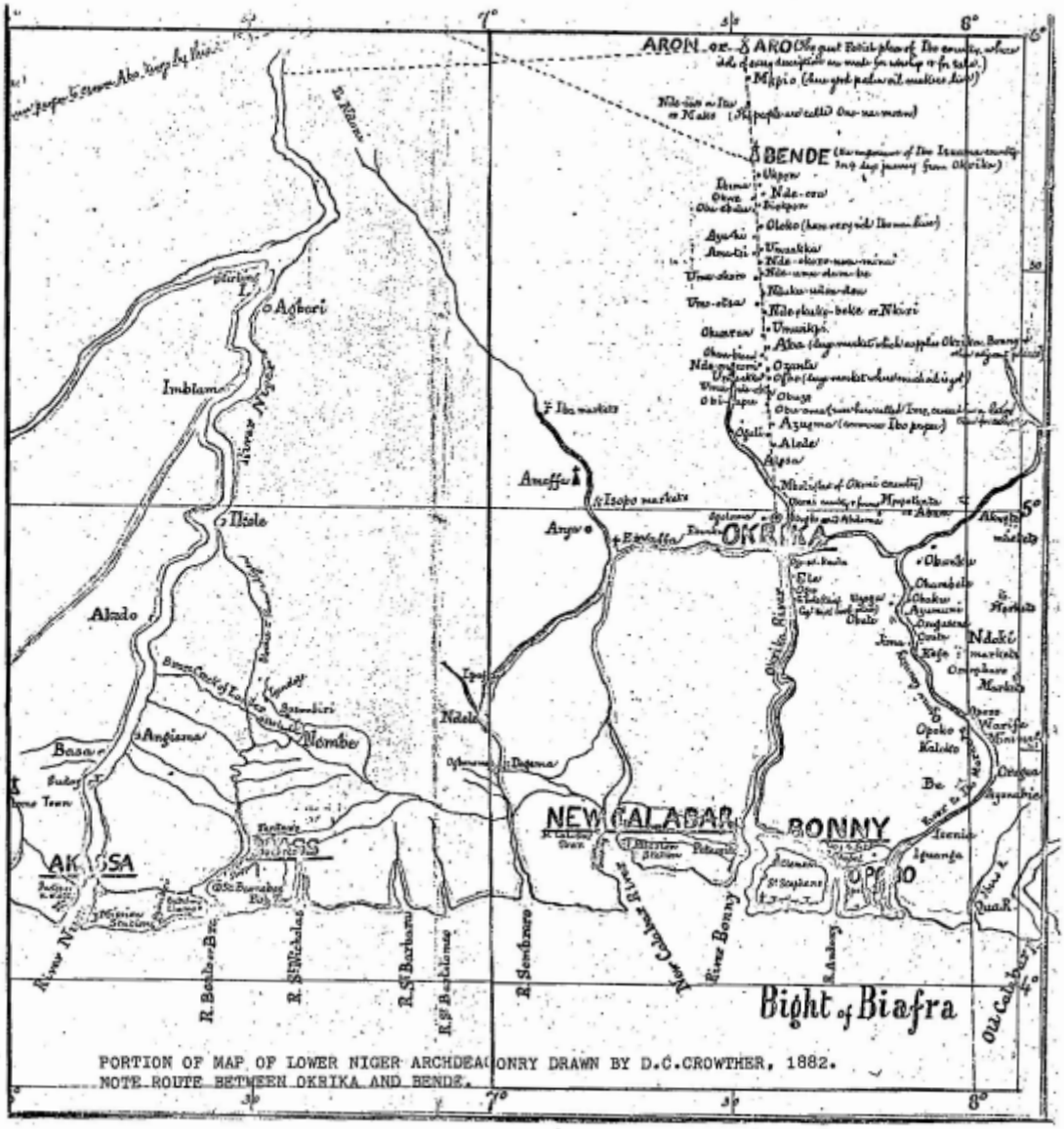
The last category of slaves were young men and women, like Mgbeke, in their teens who were particularly prized either because of their comely appearance or intelligence. The Igbo girl in this group was inducted into a "kitchen" and might hope to become the wife of any member of the canoe-house depending on the wishes of the chief. Such slave girls were valued because their off-springs remained within the canoe-house and increased its manpower without recourse to the expensive big-dowry system of marriage which alone would ensure, under the marriage customs of the delta states, that the children of the marriage would belong to the patrilineage of the father.[30] In the case of the young male, if he attracted the attention of the canoe-house chief, he could be placed on the first rung of the ladder that might lead eventually to his becoming either a chief in his own right, the heir of his master, or a respected trader within the community. The youth also had his head shaved and became a member of a "kitchen". However, rather than be assigned to menial jobs, he might become the silent companion of the chief himself or of one of the successful traders, carrying his umbrella, chair, documents or hat to meetings with other chiefs and European traders. If he proved sufficiently intelligent and discreet, he might gain through these excursions various secrets connected with local politics and trade. Provided he continued to exhibit his intelligence, prudence and some initiative, he might be sent on various errands connected with trade matters. At some stage, the chief could begin to send him out on his own to trade in the hinterland market and this would present the enterprising slave the opportunity to start gradually to trade on his own account and save up his earnings. If he succeeded in demonstrating his business acumen his master might encourage him further by increasing his capital in return for contributions towards the upkeep of the main house. The slave might also in due course establish his own household perhaps by being allowed to marry within the family of his master. By the time he had reached middle age, the Igbo youth who had started as a slave would have been fully absorbed into the community. Answering a local name rather than his former Igbo name, speaking the local Ijo dialect and secure under the patronage of his master and "mother", he became hardly distinguishable in culture and outlook from those who could claim to be of free birth. He might even aspire to become the head of the canoe-house that had bought him when the time came to choose a successor to his master for the choice rested not on birth but on the proven ability of the individual members of the house. Such was the background of most of the leading chiefs in the Eastern Delta by the end of the nineteenth century.

By this time also, so many of the Igbo-speaking people on the mainland had been absorbed in the Eastern delta societies that the base Ijo culture became quite diluted. Most people in the trading city states (especially in Bonny, Kalabari and Okrika) became bilingual in Ijo and Igbo while in the case of Opobo the Ijo dialect was virtually superseded by a new Igbo dialect which grew out of the mixture of Ijo and Igbo. Igbo institutions such as the *Okonko* society existed side by side with the *Ekine* or *Owuogbo* and New Yam festivals were celebrated as in Igboland. Igbo priests, diviners and blacksmiths practised their calling throughout the area. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that some pre-colonial visitors to Bonny and Okrika, in particular, came to believe that the original founders of the towns were Igbo.[31]

The settlement of the Eastern Delta, then, prefaced a major change in Igbo economic history. It marked the beginning of a market-oriented economy whereby the Igbo initially responded to the need for slaves and foodstuffs in the delta which they exchanged for salt and dried fish. Later the scale of the exchange received an increasing boost with the opening and expansion of the Atlantic slave trade. When an end was put to the Atlantic slave trade around the middle of the nineteenth century, the old Igbo-Delta relationship did not change. As the case of Mgbeke shows, Igbo slaves were still being sold through the trade routes established in the dim past and this was to continue well into the colonial period. One obvious consequence of the relationship was the siphoning of a large Igbo element to the New World. Equally significant was the introduction of a virile Igbo element into the Eastern Delta society which undoubtedly enabled the latter to fully exploit the economic opportunities offered by trade with the wider world.

NOTES

1. D. C. Crowther to E. Hutchinson, 1 September 1880, Church Missionary Society (CMS) CA 3/013
2. D. C. Crowther, Report of a visit to Bakana and Ewaffa, 4 December 1885, CMS 93/A3/08.
3. D. C. Crowther to E. Hutchinson, 1 September 1880, CMS CA 3/013.
4. *Ibid.*
5. W. B. Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue in* 1854 (London, 1966), pp. 307 ff.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. D. C. Crowther, "Journal of the Third Visit to Okrika", 1882, CMS G3/A3/36.
9. D. C. Crowther, Memorandum, 4 December 1885, CMS G3/A3/08.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Cf. W. R. G. Horton "The Ohu System of Slavery in a Northern Ibo Village-Group", *Africa*, Vol. 24, pp. 311—336.
13. For the latest of such maps see B. W. Hodder and U. I. Ukwu, *Markets in West Africa*, (Ibadan, 1969) p. 131 See also Simon Ottenberg, "Ibo Oracles and Inter-Group Relations" *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 14 1958, pp. 295—317.
14. The fullest discussion of the traditions so far is in E. J. Alagoa, *The Settlement of the Niger Delta: Ijo Oral Traditions*, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1965) But see also G. I. Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers* (London, 1963), pp. 29—30.
15. E.g. See R. K. Udo, *A Geographical Analysis of Rural Settlements in the Eastern Region of Nigeria*, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1963) pp. 12 and 139, who, however, misquotes K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Oxford, 1956).
16. R. K. Udo, *op.cit.*, p. 97; E. J. Alagoa, "Long-Distance Trade and States in the Niger Delta", *Journal of African History*, XI, 3 (1970), pp. 319—329.
17. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, (London, 1937) translated and edited by G. H. T. Kimble, p. 132.
18. R. M. Jackson, *Journal of a Voyage to Bonny River*, 1826 (London, 1934), p. 144.
19. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *op.cit.*
20. John Barbot, *A Description of the Coast of North and South Guinea* (London, 1732), p. 380.
21. The exception was the occasional raids of Okrika on Eleme. See J. G. Mackenzie, *Intelligence Report on the Eleme Clan*, S. P. 9595A.
22. Quoted in G. I. Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 37.
23. W. B. Baikie, *op.cit.* p. 313.
24. Captain Hugh Crow, *Memoirs*....(Liverpool, 1830) p. 228.
25. Captain John Adams, *Remarks on the Country Extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo* (London, 1829) p. 129.
26. Count C. N. de Cardi "A Short Description of the Natives of the Niger Coast Protectorate..", Appendix 1 in Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies* (London 1899), p. 510.
27. Hugh Crow, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
28. From more recent research, however, it is evident that the estimates are exggerated since the Delta slave traffic did not become important until the 1730's and the total number of slaves exported from the Bight of Biafra by Britain and France together between 1711 and 1810 has been computed to be about 823,700. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, (Madison, 1969), pp. 221 and 226.
29. For a discussion of the acculturation process in Kalabari see Robin Horton "From Fishing Village to City State: A Social History of New Calabar" in Mary Douglas and P. M. Karberry, *Man in Africa*, (New York, 1970) pp. 38—60.
30. For a discussion of the *eya* (big dowry) and *egwa* (small dowry) systems of marriage in the Eastern Delta see G. I. Jones, *op.cit.*, pp. 51—53. Jones errs, however, when he asserts that "*Eya* marriage is equated with wife purchase or slave marriage and no free-born woman is expected to submit to it." Although many chiefs preferred to marry their daughters to successful slaves within the canoe-house, thereby retaining both and their off-spring, the *eya* from of marriage was insisted upon by free-born women who took pride in the social status as well as the personal property they derived from this form of marriage.
31. E.g. see John Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Hugh Crow, *op. cit.*, p. 198.



PORTION OF MAP OF LOWER NIGER ARCHDEACONRY DRAWN BY D.C.CROWTHER, 1882.
NOTE ROUTE BETWEEN OKRIKA AND BENDE.

THE ARO SYSTEM OF TRADE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Part II

By FELICIA IFEOMA EKEJIUBA

AS A RESULT of the harzards and inconvenience involved in commuting between widely-separated markets in a region where beasts of burden did not exist and where road development was very rudimentary, the Aro specialized in carrying highly-priced articles, mostly luxury goods. Besides, the duration of the journey and the means of transportation which necessitated delays limited the goods to non-perishable items. Aro import trade reflected the tastes of the non-Aro people in their areas of influence. For the widely dispersed settlements served among other things as a medium through which the Aro studied the natives among whom they lived to find out their needs, not merely what they wish to have but those that they ought to wish for and when this has been done, to create the demand by stimulating tastes for these goods.[1] Through these settlements also the Aro established trade relations with prominent and influential local headmen and chiefs through pacts, giving of presents and marriage. They thus secured for themselves monopolistic supply both of trade commodities and the produce associated with them to the exclusion of traders outside their group.

The Aro had a wide range of goods to offer at their own price. To detail the wares sold would necessitate a catalogue of transportable goods in the material culture of the people. However, during the 18th century the Aro import trade was closely associated with firearms of all descriptions, ammunition, beads, brass and pewtons basins, discarded sailors and soldiers uniforms, jackets, hats, morning gowns, bed covers, etc.—meretricious articles which were battered for the more valuable produce of the country. In the 19th century, the imports had become more diversified and included such miscellaneous articles as tobacco, natron, various sizes of bells, matchets and sword blades, the main weapon of the Abam and the people in the hinterland, red blankets (*blagidi*), old china, matchets, beads of different sizes and shapes. Cloth was an important item ranking next to firearms and gunpowder. In the 19th century it included a great deal of bleached and unbleached calico which were dyed locally in blue or red and resold; Portuguese blankets, silks and real Indian madras (*jioji*) which, with the local weavers—Akwete, Okereike, Nwega, etc., were used as part of a woman's dowry. The red and blue Portuguese blankets were used in certain parts of the Igbo land, Udi for instance, for initiation into Ozo and was in great demand.

The Aro as settlers commanded their own price in the local markets as the buyers were quite ignorant of the commercial values of the articles. Prices varied with the novelty of goods and the ability of the Aro traders to extort high prices from the buyers. In the 18th century one flint gun and a little keg of ammunition fetched 30 slaves in the interior.[2] By mid-19th century one flintlock fetched only four slaves.[3] In about 1869, a box of safety matches—fairy fire as it was called—was said to have been exchanged for twelve young male slaves[4] but was exchanged for four slaves in 1882. This fluctuation of price according to the novelty of goods also applied to such goods as umbrellas, scissors, razor blades, looking glasses, needles. In the early days a head of tobacco bought for two manillas at the coast fetched six times the price in the hinterland.

Many non-Aro chiefs were particularly happy when they were told that the Aro expedition was aimed at destroying Aro monopoly and at opening the region to free trade. As one Ibeku chief stated "they had been prevented from trading at the waterside towns because of constant threats by the Aro who had held monopoly of trade to the waterside from time immemorial. The Aro trader had enriched himself in the following manner: he would buy cloth by the piece at the waterside, cut it in five pieces and sell each piece to

the natives at more than double the price for which he paid for the whole piece."[5] Since there was no guild or central body to regulate or fix prices, each trader tried to make as much profit as possible. There was thus much disparity between prices paid by the Aro and the coastal villagers and what the Aro received for their purchases in the interior markets. However, when there was a prospect of getting new and more valuable stock, the Aro trader cut down his price to facilitate a quick disposal of his wares: he took care not to over-stock the market.

In addition to luxury goods, the Aro imported boxes of iron, brass and copper rods, manillas and gin, which were widely used as currency.[6] As shown earlier, the iron bars, copper and brass rods were also used by local craftsmen as raw material for their manufacture. Gin and rum (*mai uvie*) were the "most used currency of smaller unit, especially in the Cross River." They were imported in casks or demijhon but were retailed in green bottles. Each cask contained one dozen green bottles sold at 7/6d per dozen. In addition to supplying imported goods, these markets provided venues for the export of locally manufactured goods which were localized according to the skill of the inhabitants and special facilities offered by the districts. These local manufactures include ceremonial objects of wealth, instruments of magical and religious rites, cult objects and articles of domestic and industrial nature. Cloth manufactured from cotton, bark of trees, or raphia ranked with salt as the most imported traditional export. Pottery, plaited fibre work, mats, tobacco pipes, walking sticks, household furniture were also important items of local export.

In return for the imported goods, the Aro demanded and took back traditional merchandise; livestock of all description—hogs, tortoise, sheep, goats, dogs in which form the wealth of the region was invested—were important items. Younger boys first learnt to trade in slaves by trading in tortoise, dogs and other small livestock. The distribution of tortoise was very limited and it was therefore in great demand by several Igbo groups.[7] Yams and plantains were in great demand not only by the coastal traders but also by European slavers for feeding of the chartered slaves while in transit.

Slaves, however, were the most important single commodity exported from Eastern Nigeria before the development of oil trade from 1830 onwards. The Aro were known both to the coastal and inland people of Eastern Nigeria to be the chief purveyors of slaves. During the 18th century, the Aro established themselves as the principal carriers of slaves in Eastern Nigeria. Each Aro compound established a settlement in many non-Aro villages of Eastern Nigeria. Through their representatives in these settlements, they established contact with the principal and influential persons who undertook, in return for commodities like tobacco, firearms, articles of clothing, to assist the Aro traders in collecting slaves. In this way people guilty of infractions of recognised custom were handed over to the Aro by the headmen as punishment. In this category of social undesirables were bankrupt debtors, people guilty of certain categories of adultery, socery, incest, poisoning, theft, and children who were considered abnormal. Various accounts and biographies—those of Olauda Equiano, Eseni, Nsa, Eke, Kalu to name but a few—confirm that there was large-scale kidnapping of children and women by Aro traders as well as by the non-Aro, either through revenge for wrong done or through avarice. According to Moor, kidnapping was at times also due to "a pernicious custom which prevailed throughout the country" of "asserting one's right or avenging an injury not only on the aggressor but on a third person who as often as not had neither participated in nor had the knowledge of the evil deed for which he is made to suffer. He in turn avenges himself on a fourth and this keeps the country in a constant state of reprisal."[8] In areas like Nnewi and the Delta where every unit had a ruling group, enslavement sometimes occurred as an outcome of the struggle for power, for the simplest way to remove opposition was to seize and sell opponents to the Aro traders. Also in the more densely populated areas like Awka, Orlu and Ibibio, parents at times opted to get rid of some of their children so as to be able to feed the others, buy some luxury goods or get initiated into one of the many local wealth and title societies.

Such slaves were particularly abundant during periods of famine. Many Aro informants recall occasions on which traders set traps with food, corn or yam, and the people caught eating them were sold. Such culprits were usually emaciated and had to be fattened before they were sold. In the subsistence economy of the region characterized by demands of immediate need, the relatively low value placed on human beings can be readily appreciated. Even though children provided parents with hope of abundance during the years to come, they had to be fed. The enforced movement of people from the densely populated areas with greater labour and economic opportunities also helped to solve over-population problems.

These various sources contributed by far the greatest percentage of slaves sold in Eastern Nigeria. They were supplemented with war captives and slaves recruited through the Ibinukpabi oracle and other similar oracles in the region. Acquisition of slaves was never one of the prime motives for waging war and war slaves formed only a small percentage of the total slaves exported from Eastern Nigeria. It is difficult to estimate the number of slaves recruited through the Ibinukpabi and many writers have rather exaggerated the role of the oracle in recruiting slaves. It is however, necessary to observe that not all Aro traders were qualified to act as agents of the oracle and even some of those qualified found it economically more rewarding to face their trading in view of the long delay involved in taking litigants to the oracle. Besides, the Ibinukpabi priests were very much aware that it was imprudent to condemn more than a mere fraction of those consulting the oracle. From the various figures supplied by the consular agents, Aro and non-Aro sources, it may not be too wide off the mark to estimate that about 70 per cent of the total slaves exported in the region up till mid-19th century passed through Aro hands.[9] More than 85 per cent of these were acquired through the efforts and exploitations of individual Aros scattered in permanent settlements throughout Igbo, Ibibio and Ekoi territories. Only a few of these were prisoners of war or were obtained through raids conducted for the purpose: and about ten per cent were recruited through the oracle.

By helping to eliminate social undesirables in the community and encouraging trade in an era when there was no universal currency, the slave trade served the economic and judicial needs of the region. The system of enslaving for infractions of recognised customs is as much a commentary on the judicial system of the Igbo and Ibibio groups as their readiness to consult the Ibinukpabi. Because of the weak development of authority figures, as a result of which there were no local specialised authorities with powers to enforce judicial decisions, recourse was made to supernatural agents and many offences against the individual and the society were punishable by death only.

These rather slow methods of acquiring slaves would seem to explain why "trade goes on very slowly, several ships being obliged to stay eight to ten months according to the circumstances of the natives." In 1731, Barbot recorded that "there had not been a cargoe of Ibo slaves sold at New Calabar for a long time and many people were enquiring for them".[10] Also in 1826, Captain Lory's vessels had "on board 326 slaves, the greatest part of which were children. He had been nearly six months collecting these miserable wretches and was sailing without a full cargoe, having fitted out for 50 more."

An analysis of the figures of slaves sold both internally and externally shows that children between the ages of five and eighteen account for over sixty per cent of the slaves sold and would seem to confirm that there was large-scale kidnapping and selling of children by parents. The prevalence of children of this age would also partly explain why the "Aro do not consider it necessary to send a large escort to guard their slaves, about four or five guarding a batch of 30 to 40 who were often allowed freedom of movement." Only war slaves who were prone to commit murder or suicide were guarded, their right hands being chained together to prevent violence. Slaves were very highly valued commodity and all was done to avoid unnecessary death while they were in transit. Slaves for the external market were older men and women, consisting largely of war captives, Ibinukpabi victims and those sold by their society for infractions. Most of the young boys and girls between the ages of one and eighteen were for the internal markets, and were retained as domestic

slaves. Those between eight and fourteen (*asaghmiri*) were in greatest demand and account for over 60 per cent of the slaves sold in the internal markets.[11] This trend continued and among 40 slaves which Morrisey saw displayed in Itu market in 1901, only seven were men and women, ten were children between one and five (*apapa*) and the rest were young boys and girls. The preference for young boys and girls and the higher prices they commanded in the internal markets confirm that domestic slaves were primarily intended for augmenting the existing population as the young ones were more easily integrated into society than the older ones. Women wanting children adopted some and brought them up as their own. The children were brought up as farmers, traders, and carriers.

Every male slave as he came to show promise would receive a gift of so much trading cargo. Initially they were allowed to retain a certain commission on what they sold. They were thus enabled to accumulate property of their own and given an opportunity to enrich themselves and acquire their own slaves. The master gained, for the more trade that was done by those attached to him the more he prospered and the stronger was his chance of holding out against any force antagonistic to him. Generally, the domestic retainees had few handicaps. In many instances where the masters reposed confidence in the slaves, the slaves fared better than the children of the retainer. Although the master ultimately had the control over the life and property of his retainee, the legal control of the slave and the rights of the master to his services were usually accompanied by a very distinct respect for his person. It is hardly surprising that with this generous treatment and the limitless opportunity for self advancement provided by the nature of the Aro economy and its extensive hinterland, slave revolts and insurrections were unknown in the history of Arochukwu up till 1920.

Compared with the volume of traffic in slaves up to 1840, that between 1850 and 1910, the period for which there is copious information in oral tradition on the organisation and mode of trade, was a mere trickle. In the former period of unrestricted slave trade when according to various estimates 20,000 slaves were exported annually from Bonny, 16,000 of which were Igbo, a successful Aro trader brought as many as 100–150 slaves to the fair once in 24 days and had no problems in disposing with all of them. Slaves were also sold along trade routes and not merely at the fairs. Although slave trade was officially abolished in 1807 and 1830, and with the signing of treaties in the 40's and 50's the external markets gradually closed down, there is considerable evidence that it was not followed by a sudden recession of trade in slave but by a gradual worsening of trade which reached its climax in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In the first place, the external markets did not close down completely at first. Dubois estimated that between 1800 and 1850 over two million Negroes were poured into Brazil to work on the plantations. The bulk of these came from the shores of the Bight of Benin and Biafra. They were bought by Spanish and French slavers who braved the British blockade and traded openly and directly with the Delta ports. In July 1852 there were in Calabar "six Spanish slave ships prospecting for slaves with plenty of doubloons and rum".

For a long time, this limited external demand for slaves and the internal demand for domestic slaves which increased rather than decreased with development of trade in oil kept prices high and absorbed the slaves brought down by the Aro. The Aro still found the trade in slaves even after the total collapse of the external market more lucrative than the trade in oil and even in recent years the practice seems to have died hard.[12] Except those near the water-way, most Aro traders did not participate directly in the oil trade till the beginning of the twentieth century; rather they acted as liaison agents for the coastal traders, using their influence and knowledge of the hinterland to organise local producers who would produce oil in exchange for commodities. As we shall see later, a new group of inland middlemen grew up in response to the oil trade which the Aro were at first not eager to participate in as actively as they had done in the slave trade.

It is necessary at this stage to examine the nature and extent of the internal market for slaves after the collapse of the external market. Many of these slaves were brought in to augment towns and villages which may have been depopulated by small pox and

famine.[13] In towns like Arochukwu, Calabar, Bonny, Kalabari and Opobo where mortality was particularly high, influx of these slaves swelled the towns and saved the population from dwindling. The rapid increase of Opobo from about 1,500 in 1869 to about 20,000 in 1911 owed much to the influx of slaves. Jaja urged his chiefs to spend money in buying slaves to increase labour and the military force of existing houses. The present Amanyanabo testified that thousands of slaves were imported into Opobo in those 40 years from Ibo areas to enable it hold out against any attack. Jaja is said to have had over 1,000 slaves and Opobo traditions confirmed that the 'Aros were the principal slave dealers who sold slaves to Jaja and other Opobo chiefs'.

Many of the rich traders in other trading states from 1850 onwards established numerous farm settlements using only slave labour. Among such numerous Efik and Aro farms on both banks of the Enyong and Cross Rivers were Isong Inyang, Henshaw and Duke's farms; Ijomanta and Chief Okoroji's (both of Arochukwu) farms. By 1900 Chief Okoroji had three such farms, two of them ten miles away from Arochukwu and each of the three having a population of over 1,600 people. In 1883 Luke, a Presbyterian missionary, observed that the population of Duke Town plantations were scattered in several farms and was estimated to be about ten times that of Duke Town. Yellow Duke of the Duke family in Calabar was said to possess over 3,000 slaves and had extended his farming and trading operations in all directions from Umon to the Cameroon mountains," an estimate no doubt highly exaggerated. Each farm had a headman, a number of slave families and a market. These slave families work on the master's farm and brought oil and food to the main town. The plantations which were visited from time to time by the masters also provided a place of refuge and safety in times of trouble in the big towns.

Occasional sacrifices, often necessitated by famine, incidence of epidemics of infectious disease, the increasing deterioration in trade, obsequies and funeral, claimed hundreds of slaves; an Aro chief who died in 1898 was said to have been buried with about 700 slaves; in 1900 over 80 people were slaughtered when Chief Okoroji died. Most of these were chartered slaves freshly obtained for the purpose. Increased affluence increased the number of slaves killed for burial for, as Cowan noted, funeral customs called for more human sacrifices than anything else. Slaves were still being sold openly as late as 1901 when they were brought in batches of one to forty by Inokun (Aro) traders. Even in 1910, Dodd records many slaves were bought and sold every market day at Uzuakoli, although they were sold "in private houses and not in the open market for fear of the government officials." By this time, however, even the internal market had dwindled considerably.

In Bende and other inland markets where a great deal of retail trading took place and where all kinds of commodities, small domesticated animals and tools were exchanged, certain normative ranges and values for standard goods served as points of reference in assessing miscellaneous goods. Economic equivalents were not fixed: haggling and bargaining were indulged in since values were unstable and varied not only with demand and supply but with the trading acumen of the traders. Different types of currencies were also used for direct domestic transactions. The earliest recorded form of currency in use at Bende was the "*Anyu*" which was replaced in late eighteenth century by "*Apa*".[14] The latter took the form of flattened strip of iron, shaped like a Y with a long tail while the former was made in the form of a small conventionalized hoe. They were minted locally in Northern Igbo area from local iron deposits. By early nineteenth century these early forms had gone out of use as currency. They were reserved as ritual emblems and for symbolic payments of a ceremonial and religious nature. A client of the Ibinukpabi for instance, was expected to bring, among other things, five of these Y-shaped currency. By this time too, the brass and copper rings (*bochie*) which had been in use at Bonny and Calabar in the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century had become ornamental goods. In Arochukwu the brass rings were used as anklets and armlets by the *Amadi* (freeborn) while the copper rings were worn by the non-*Amadi*. The obsolete iron bars also found their way through the Aro to the hinterland markets and local industrial centres

where they stimulated the smithing industry. The iron bars were in great demand and supplemented the local supply of iron.

From about 1730's onwards, the different types of manillas which were introduced into Bonny and other Delta ports and brass and copper rods which replaced the copper rings in Calabar hinterland had found their way into the inland markets.[15] Up till the end of the 19th century, manillas, brass and copper rods remained the purchasing media for the great bulk of trade and most imports had to be converted into manillas or brass rods. Both bulked large in the list of imports brought up from the coast, especially in the early months of the year, when the oil season opened. The Aro imported these in large quantities as it enabled them to buy some goods directly. As has been noted the value of these currencies not only fluctuated yearly and from place to place often by as much as 50 per cent but the merchants themselves — Africans and Europeans alike — manipulated the system of exchange in such a way as to make a double profit.[16] In 1902, the brass rods for instance, fluctuated from one shilling to three pence along the coast but was worth three shillings in Afikpo. When the Aro trader was buying goods from local producers, the brass rods were computed at a higher rate than when the local producers were buying goods from the Aro traders.

The brass rods were bent over double and wrapped in native cloth to conceal the amount and value from other traders. Being a higher unit of currency than the manilla, they were less cumbersome to carry about and less troublesome to deal in. They were the main currency used in the hinterland of Calabar and by the Aro people: in the interior, official payments for gifts, funeral, titles and other ceremonies were made in brass rods. At the time of the Aro expedition, several caves in Bende and Uzuakoli were discovered with several tons of brass and copper rods buried together with guns and other weapons. A lot more were dug up in several houses in Arochukwu.[17] From mid-nineteenth century, payment for minor purchases at Bende were made in tokens of copper and silver wire, salt cones of various sizes and cowrie shells. Copper wires were worth 12 to 14 to the shilling in 1902 and cowries were of much lower value. Cowrie shells seem to have been introduced into the region from the north and west and were not much used by Aros in the eastern and southern areas of the Aro trading area but by Aros in the northern and western parts. Towards the end of the century a case of gin or rum (*mmai uvie*) had become a much used currency of intermediate unit especially among the Cross River groups as it was easier to transport. By the beginning of the twentieth century the value of manilla had fallen so low that 5–6 standard manillas were exchanged for one bottle of gin.

Various imports like gunpowder, guns, tobacco leaves, umbrellas were also often used directly for the purchase of produce and the rate of exchange depended more directly on the supply and demand of the goods. In 1884, one small barrel of gunpowder and a shipload of print and handkerchief were exchanged for one sword.[18] A leaf of tobacco in the early nineteenth century was accepted as a toll and was also considered enough for a carrier's daily wage. By 1884, two tobacco leaves were not accepted as enough toll and carriers preferred one copper rod to one tobacco leaf. Prices fluctuated regularly, annually and invariably according to the season. Throughout the period of trade under review, up till the end of the nineteenth century, first slaves and later a puncheon of oil and/or slaves were the highest unit of trade currency. As Jones pointed out, flexibility was introduced by providing supplementary units of higher and lower value. The lower units were local currency which though cumbersome and difficult to manipulate were universally accepted as legal tender. Not all trade was done entirely by barter; but manipulation of trade by the traders was such as to make cash transactions a disadvantage to the buyers and increase the opportunities of profit for the traders by barter transaction. For instance, the rate of exchange of oil was fixed at Itu at 22 cases of gin, approximately £10, to the puncheon of oil; if the producer wished to be paid in cash, he received between £6 and £7 in rods. If subsequently he wished to buy gin with the cash, he had to pay 12/- per case. This practice was designed to help the trader dispose of what goods he liked and at great profit to himself.

In view of the intimate link between the trading systems of the hinterland and coastal middlemen, it is hardly surprising that at the creek and river ports, the Delta and Aro employed the credit system which, as has been observed, was characteristic of the coastal trade.[19] Just as goods were given on credit to African agents and entrepreneuers on the coast by European traders, so did these in turn advance goods to their Aro trade partners. Some of these goods were exchanged for the slaves by barter for since the Aro traders at the creek markets were engaged in wholesale and not in retail transactions, there was hardly any need for monetary exchange. Debits for goods taken were cancelled by credits for slaves or oil sold. An informant gave the following vivid account of the trade system between the Aro and the Delta traders. It will be seen that it differs only in small details from that between the coastal traders and the European firms.

"When the Aro traders arrived at the port, the first contact between the buyer and seller was to agree on the number of manillas, (Bonny), brass and copper rods (Calabar) the seller is to receive per slave from the buyer. This settled at 2,000 manillas, say, as the amount payable. The Aro was then allowed into the warehouse to select goods he wanted, that is those in demand in the area in which he operated as these varied from place to place. (The Aro often arrived at the ports with orders for goods from the local people). Part of the slaves were paid for in currency and part in goods. The Aro trader naturally preferred trade commodities to currency as the latter fluctuated very much in value. Besides, since the Aro trader could command his own price in the interior, the goods gave better room for exploitation and profit-making. Immediate payment would be taken for a percentage of the produce. This was used for meeting the buyers' own requirements in provision, wearing apparel, etc., as distinct from market cargo. Further, for every slave bought, the dealer was entitled to a present of about 20-25 per cent which was placed on his account. Presents of assorted goods or gin, tinned fish were also given to regular and prominent customers. The coastal merchant advanced goods on credit only to his Aro trade partner or to those closely associated with him. Any other men wishing to trade with the coastal broker had to be introduced by the Aro customer who acted as his guarantor. The Aro guarantor got both the dash and the extra commission given by the coastal trader — what was known as the topside at the coast — as an extra inducement for continued patronage. The guarantor also got a commission of 15 brass rods per slave from the new trader, as the Aro guarantor was responsible to the coastal broker for the new trader's debts, the dash, commission, etc., acted as surety to the guarantor and helped him to liquidate any outstanding debt.

"As long as the Aro paid for part of the goods he received regularly during each trip, he continued to receive more goods on credit from the Delta partner. In general, they strove to pay off the debt before receiving fresh consignment. Default in payment was unknown in the days when coastal brokers advanced goods only to their trade partners and kept to the terms of partnership .. During the first part of the twentieth century in particular, there were several instances when goods given indiscriminately to young traders in palm oil without the usual precaution were not returned. The Aro chiefs handled several complaints between 1910 and 1916 brought in by Efik traders against the defaulters. In a few cases the culprits were rounded up and handed over to the Efik traders; in other instances, the culprits were unknown to the Aro chiefs."[20]

The supreme importance of trade partnership was given ceremonial form in *Igbandu*, a blood pact. The belief in the efficacy of magic dominated the pact and its obligations bind not only the trade partners but members of their household and trading units. Trade partners exchanged visits and gifts from time to time. Since their economic interests were closely knit they acted as allies and supported each other in disputes involving outside groups. Thus the Efik traders settled the quarrel between Asang, Aro-Ibom on the one hand and Aro Amanagwu on the other. The quarrel between these groups involved Efik trade partners to whom the Efik traders had advanced several hundreds of pounds worth of goods. The Asang were alleged to have seized these goods at the instigation of the Ibom. Jaja's trade partners from Aro Obinkita were also said to have attended his funeral

with the Ekpe club, the highest honour the Aro give to the Aro initiates and, it is claimed, certainly the first time this was done for a non-Aro. Besides, the contact Chief Coco-Bassey established with the Aro, as well as much of the success he had in his negotiations with the Aro chiefs on behalf of the Government of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1896 was, it is clear, through his trade partnership with Ijomanta, one of the prominent Aro Amanagwu traders. Trade partnership was therefore one of the special bonds which united two men into a standing relationship of mutual trust and therefore served as the best guarantee for the goods bought and sold on credit. The coastal partner was an agent and an ally in the time of danger and ensured a constant supply of trade goods to the inland Aro friend.

The blood oath explains the pattern of rigid economic control the middlemen had in the inland trade organisation and why the local groups refused to deal with people other than their trade partners. It ensured that rival traders or interloppers did not obtain a footing where an old customer had entrenched himself. The credit or trust system and the blood oath thus introduced, as Dike noted, an element of monopoly. The credit system also regulated and limited the incursion of interloppers and Europeans into the interior markets. Even as late as 1890, the interior groups still refused to deal directly with the amalgamated traders who resolved to evade the usual trade commission by opening up direct trade with the interior groups. The whites who were blaming Jaja for instigating the interior natives not to deal with the European traders never really understood the basis of the middlemen's economic control of the inland trade. By over-simplifying the character of the economic alliance between the coastal and inland groups, they under-rated the difficulty of revolutionalizing the trade system and did not realize that economic power was not the same as political power. Miller showed a better understanding of the fundamental issues involved when he attributed the failure of the British traders to attract patronage of the inland producers to the "oath of fealty which had been given to the interior tribes by Opobo people not to trade with anybody outside their trade circle, European or Africans".[21] An attempt to absolve the natives of the interior from this oath of fealty at Ohambele town on 7th October, 1887 illustrates their strict adherence to a pledge once given. When the coastal officials expressed their wish that the Ohambele people should trade with the white people in the same way as they did with them, the Ohambele chiefs replied:

"Your grandfathers, King Pepple, Anni Pepple and Zulu Pepple gave us to understand that we should not trade directly with those not in the Pepple house. We have never traded with whitemen and would not do so now".[22]

That the economic influence of the coastal states and Aro traders continued for sometime after they had lost their political influence testify to the firm basis of the trade partnership. It was as a result of this partnership and not out of fear of the political power of Jaja that inland groups at first refused to patronise the small factories established by the British traders at Ohambele, Azumiri, Esene and Akwete markets even after Jaja was deposed. The presence of settlers of any of the trading groups in the local market and the ever constant fear of the supernatural repercussions of breaking the terms of the pact kept the people from violating the obligations of trade pacts existing since the days of their grandfathers. The ability of Bonny, Opobo and Calabar to control their routes and thus the coastal trade was largely due to the close treaty relations maintained with the Aro who had built up a trading system in the interior, the ramifications of which spread through the entire hinterland from the Niger to the Cross River. The Aro had, as lucrative traders, occupied powerful positions in the interior trade as the coastal middlemen had on the coast. The economic power of the Delta chiefs and of the Aro was not easily undermined by the European penetration of the African interior which began in the mid-19th century. Thus, for instance, although the deposition of Jaja brought his political control symbolically to an end, the economic power of his middlemen, though informal, was able to maintain control of the trade a few years longer. It needed a show of force, such as Moor envisaged, the influence of christian civilization and education to break the myth of the supernatural

power of the blood oaths on which the power of Aro traders in the hinterland depended.

The intimate link in the organisation of Aro and the coastal traders throws a good deal of light on the close co-operation between these groups of middlemen especially during the period of unrestricted slave trade. These groups in close collaboration controlled the purchase of produce at the markets and its transportation to the seaboard; commercial exchange went hand in hand with cultural exchange, mutual respect and confidence. The Bonny, Efik and Kalabari people, by virtue of their position near the coast, had direct contact with the European traders and therefore regulated the quantity and character of European manufacturers that entered the country. The Aro on the other hand were strategically placed near the source of trade and were in a position to regulate the supply of export goods. The Efiks, Bonny and Kalabari people did not lose sight of this and strove to maintain good relations with the Aro for the sake of their commerce. Since the Aro were essentially land traders, their commercial activities in Eastern Nigeria complemented, rather than conflicted with that of the coastal traders.

As Rosemary Harris pointed out, there seemed to exist separate trade spheres for Aro traders on the one hand and the coastal riverain traders on the other.[23] The villages away from the rivers and the coastal Creeks lay within the sphere of influence of the Aro and those by the river were in contact with the riverain groups. The division is explained by the forms of transport used by the traders. The riverain traders who travelled up and down the rivers and creeks, did not penetrate beyond the reach of their canoes. They did not establish ashore, but lived in their canoes. According to a local historian, it was not until after the death of Jaja in 1891 that they started making contact with the Igbo producers through their agents and local influential men.[24] The Aro on the other hand were land traders who head-loaded their goods, using both hired and slave labour. Each trading group guarded jealously its territory and prevented interlopers from encroaching on their preserves by imposing tolls and commissions on new comers. There is considerable evidence that until about 1890's there were no clashes of interest between the overland middlemen on the one hand and the riverain and coastal middlemen on the other. Rather, there was a continual flow of trade for, unlike the trading groups in Western Nigeria or in Gold Coast who were engaged in wars in an effort to secure a direct route to the coast and trade directly with the European traders, here none attempt to by-pass the other.

Among the riverain groups, however, competition and rivalry for markets and inland produce was as fierce between segments of one trading community as it was between rival trading communities. Even in this very limited area the clashes between the different trading groups was intensified by the widespread use of firearms by the communities. The Cross River trading groups — Itu, Umon, and Akunakuna were strategically placed to permit or frustrate Efik penetration into the inland markets. Efik trade in the interior was therefore not as extensive as some writers would have us believe, nor was her economic control as effective. True the Efik had a lot of cultural impact on the inland groups: their language was the trade language; they set the pace in fashion which the inland groups aped. But the Efik had little control in the inland markets beyond Itu. They were often unable to keep trade routes open by punishing recalcitrant groups as they often fared very badly when they did not receive military aid from the British officials and traders on the coast.[25] Similarly, the Brass, Abo, Ossomari and Igala people vied for the control of the River Niger waterway while Bonny, Brass, Kalabari, Okirika and Opobo vied for the control of the ports and markets on the rivers and creeks where they met the inland buyers. The colonies which these established waxed and waned with the strength of the coastal houses.

The Aro on the other hand enjoyed an economic power far out of proportion to their size in their vast hinterland which was limited only at the frontiers of the Delta River. In this vast hinterland too the Aro did not face any serious competition from other powers as the Efik, for instance, did. Parties of missionaries and government officials who visited the inland groups during the last three decades of the nineteenth century testified to the influence of the Aro among these groups. For Sir Goldie, the Aro was a thorn in the flesh.

They continually frustrated his attempts to establish a trade monopoly in his company's territories. Commenting on Moor's proposal for an expedition into the Aro country, he wrote:

"The question of the Umuchukwu's power (i.e. the Aro) has been constantly before me for the last twenty years. I believe that Sir Ralph Moor — no doubt to avoid any appearance of exaggeration — understates the extent of their influence. . . . if the Royal Niger Company had had a free hand, they would have made the overthrow of this power their first aim on receiving the charter in 1886 but in view of the Aro country containing the markets of all the principal Oil Rivers (except Benin) any such action was for political reason inadvisable and especially after the formation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate within which the centre of the long juju lies". [6] The accounts of the journey into the inland territory by Roger Casement in 1894 and A. G. Leonard in 1896 also contain evidence of the dominating influence of the Aros inland.[27] In 1897, non-Aro groups in Obegu also admitted to A. B. Harcourt that the Aros have held the monopoly of trade to the interior. Even as late as 1911, Thomas Hart who visited Nkalagu market observed that "Aro is dominant and the power of Aro is tremendous in the markets". Seven years later, Mrs. Arnot recorded that "all the towns up here (Uburu) are more or less under the power of the Aro. In the surrounding district, Aro chiefs all hold sway and govern towns three or four times the size of their place, Aro. I thought them big chiefs in Aro but their actual power and influence is up here".[28]

The influence of the Aro in this vast region was maintained through a close network of trade routes which the Aro founded and controlled. The Aro traders, unlike the coastal traders, were scattered in permanent settlements throughout the greater parts of Igbo and Ibibio territories. There were also considerable Aro settlements in the territory between Uwet, Ikotana and Okonyong. The history of these settlements, their relationship with the headquarters at Arochukwu, and the nature of influence the Aro exerted through them, the local people, will be dealt with elsewhere. It is, however, pertinent to note here that it was through these settlements that the Aro were in contact with the local groups and established themselves as the medium for carrying on business transactions, principally of a slaving nature, for the whole region. There were other inland trading groups and the role of these in the territory trade will be considered elsewhere; but it should be stated here that none of these groups, however, established any large-scale permanent settlements outside their own communities before 1900.

The Aro trading groups minimized competition and clashes which characterized the Delta trading groups and which impeded trade by adhering as strictly as possible to their trading spheres of influence. These were carved out and established through the individual effort of enterprising Aro and their slave lieutenants. In this, the Aro took advantage of their ethnic heterogeneity. The Ibibio families of Aro-Obinkita established several settlements in the Ibibio region as well as at Itu, Opobo and Bonny and controlled the trade route from Itu and Bende to Azumini and Akwette; Umunka-Aro (Worsu Tortis Family and Ndoti Aro) said to have migrated from Ngwa and Olokoro area established settlements in the Ngwa territory around Aba; Uguakuma (a section of Akpa-Aro) established several settlements to the East of the Cross River and controlled the land route via Biakpan, Uwet, Akpankpa to Calabar. Another section of Akpa-Aro families in Ujari, Amasu and Ibom traded with Calabar and Umon through the Enyong and Cross Rivers. Aro families who moved in from Ada and Amasiri of Northern Ibo established settlements among the Northern Ibo, etc. In this way, contact with the local people was facilitated and risks considerably minimized. The settlements can also be looked upon as a backward migration of the Aro family, which formed the nucleus of the trading co-operation, into or near its place of origin and a physical extension of the territory of the family nucleus at Arochukwu in the new area.

Defaulters who intruded into other people's preserves and lured away customers by offering higher prices for slaves to other people's disadvantages were warned and punished by the appropriate authority. One of the functions of the Aro central council was to deal

with such cases. As a result, only few serious cases of clashes resulted from intrusion into other people's trade areas. Unlike the restricted hinterland of the coastal traders prescribed by the limits of canoe navigation, the extensive hinterland offered the Aro traders an unlimited field to exploit: the area of operation of any trading unit was only limited by the ability of the leader to negotiate new commercial contacts and open up new territories. In a number of cases Aro families were said to have been invited to settle by groups of local villages as this would ensure a supply of imported goods for them. Many Aro settlements owed their origin to such invitations. These Aro settlers acted as agents for the local groups and their neighbours. They also profited from the commission they received for disposing of local produce. The Aro went from one quarter to another for the goods which the natives need; for in consequence of the hostility between neighbouring villages, they could not traverse the country nor make many exchanges. An "outsider" coming to buy or sell in the Aro's 'territory' would give a gift to "open the way" and obtain a permission to join the Aro Trade troupe. In this way, Aro controlled the markets though informally.

There is considerable evidence that during the slave trade and before trade in oil replaced trade in slave, the Aro were the "economic dictators of the hinterland". The availability of slaves was limited: the supply depended on a high degree of organisation and co-ordination between coastal communities and their inland agents for which the Aro with their highly organised system of trade were better suited than any other inland groups. With the collapse of the external market in slaves, the penetration inland from the 1880's of British traders culminating after 1902 in the progressive over-running of the Igbo and Ibibio hinterland, the Aro monopoly of the inland markets faced challenges which ultimately led to its elimination. It is sufficient here to note that the decline of the Aro control of the hinterland market was due as much to the rise of other indigenous trading groups, development of arteries of trade other than the former Aro trade routes, activities of British traders as well as to access to markets, by the inland groups at prices less prohibitive than those offered by the Aro. This was made possible as a result of and following the British Expedition to Arochukwu which symbolized the final fall of Aro monopoly of inland trade and the development of roads and railways which made contact between producers and buyers feasible.

FOOT NOTES

1. Evening Standard, February 22, 1902.
2. Olaudah Equiano *op. cit.*
3. UPMR 1873, p. 422.
4. R. O. Igwegbe — *Original History of Aro-Ndizuoge*, (Aba, 1962), p. 75. Safety matches were first manufactured in Sweden in 1844 and imported into Nigeria about mid-century.
5. Morning Post, March 19,1902. African News.
6. A box of 10 dozen rods cost £1. 10s. A ton of copper rod cost £2. The value in the hinterland markets fluctuated from 95/- to 105/- for one cwt of copper rods. See below.
7. Igwegbe *op. cit.*, p. 50 records that a tortoise was sold at 1/- or 400 cowries, i.e. four copper rods each.
8. C. O. 441 Moor to Colonial Office.
9. Chalmley asserted that practically all the slaves brought down by land to the coast passed through Aro hands.
10. Donan — *Documents Illustration of Slave Trade*, (London, 1856). Jackson R. M. Journal of a voyage to Bonny River 1826.
11. Interview Ukpabi Okoroji, Mr. Ikoku, Arochukwu, 1/4/1964. These informants were 65 and 78 years respectively at the time of interview.
12. Even in 1964, the Chief Justice of Eastern Nigeria claimed that for every ten cases of slavery and child stealing judged in Eastern Nigeria, the Aro was behind eight of them. A sample survey of the case book of Eastern Nigeria confirmed this.
13. UPMR 1842—1910 report several instances when hundreds of slaves were brought to replace the population reduced by small pox. In UPMR October 1, 1872 for instance, Luke reports that "Ravages of small pox killed a great many people in Ikorana and their places have lately been filled by hundreds of slaves bought from Inokun (Aro) people.

14. This currency was also used by the Middle-Belt and Ekoi groups, Sven-Olof Johansson: *Nigerian Currencies.* (Sweden 1967), pp. 36—40.
15. Sven-Olof Johansson *op.cit.*, p.12 notes that commercial production of manillas for West African trade started about end of the (18th) century.
16. C. O. 520/8 Moor to C. O. No. 156 12th June, 1901.
    C. O. 520/12 Moor to C. O. 7th July, 1901.
17. C. O. 520/12 Moor to C. O. 7th July, 1901.
18. Johnston *op. cit.*
19. For an account of this credit and trust system see Dike *op. cit.* p. 65.
20. Interview: Chief Okereke Ojiugwo (78 years) 12/2/1965.
21. Blue Book: Africa No. 2 1888. Alex Miller to the Marquis of Salisbury 1890. "The disputes at Opobo."
22. Africa Blue Book No. 2, *op. cit.*
23. Rose-mary Harris — *Political Organisation of the Mbembe Tribe* HM. 50, 1950, p.
24. E. M. T. Epelle. MSS on Jaja's trade with the interior.
25. UPMR October 1893, p. 201.
26. C. O. 444/41 7th November, 1890. Memo by Sir Goldie to the Under Secretray of State. For the "determental effects of the Aro influence on the Trade of Royal Niger Territories." See below. See also C. O. 520/14 1902. Memo from Moor to CO.
27. For the Roger Casements expedition see C. O. 1894. Expedition into the interior, also Leonard 1896, *op. cit.*
28. Mrs. Arnot — "To Uburu and Back". Missionary Record, 1918 p. 141. Mrs. Arnot lived in Arochukwu from 1914 to 1920.

THE MISSIONARY SCRAMBLE FOR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA, 1900—1952

By EDET A. UDO

I.

IN THE PERIOD before European political imperialism gathered momentum in Africa, Christian missions in what later became Eastern Nigeria were founded by clergymen of African descent — Sierra Leonians and Jamaicans — but headed by European missionaries inured to the tropics.[1] For example, in 1846, the Jamaican missionaries headed by Hope Masterton Waddell a European missionary who had worked in Jamaica for many years, founded the Presbyterian Church Mission in the city state of Calabar.[2] In 1857, Samuel Adjai Crowther (later Bishop), a Yoruba ex-slave founded an Anglican Mission at Onitsha and left it in charge of the Rev. J. C. Taylor also a repatriate.[3] In 1864 he founded what later came to be called the Niger Delta Pastorate of the Anglican Church at Bonny on the Niger.[4] The main recruiting grounds were Sierra Leone and Jamaica.

These early missionaries, European and African alike, struggled to understand the minds of the Africans and to palliate the sufferings and injustices they had suffered at the hands of the Europeans during the three and a half centuries of unrestricted slave trade. They came to help end centuries of the slave trade and slavery which had continued in many parts of the African interior including what later became Eastern Nigeria. They also came to give to the Africans the secret of the European power — western education. At that time, white missionaries were very few in Eastern Nigeria.

After the Berlin Conference of 1884—1885 at which European powers laid down certain rules for the partition of Africa many sections of Britain determined to share in British imperial exploits.[5] In 1887, the Qua Iboe Mission arrived in Eastern Nigeria and began work at Ibuno;[6] while the Primitive Methodist Mission arrived in 1893 and began work at Archibong Town.[7] This new breed of missionaries had a policy different from that of their predecessors. As Professor Ajayi has observed, "Secure behind the British imperial lion, the Christain Missions were ready for the great expansion"[8] (after 1900 in Eastern Nigeria). The new missionaries were to help carry out the British imperial scheme. They were to work hand in hand with the political administrators who, as in Owerri,[9] Ikot Ekpene,[10] and Aro Chuku,[11] invited them to come and open new stations under their protections. Even one missionary, Mary Slessor was made a British Vice-Consul in 1892.[12]

The methods used by various missions to carve out their spheres of influence in Eastern Nigeria were similar to those used by the British political officers. Firstly, the missionaries scrambled for spheres of influence; secondly, in a series of delimitation conferences, which began in 1904 and ended in 1932, they partitioned Eastern Nigeria into five denominational districts.

The ecclesiastical boundaries in Eastern Nigeria, like the political ones, ignored ethnic groupings. At the various mission delimitation conferences, the opinions of the Africans were not sought and Africans had no representatives either. Like the partition of Africa, the partition of Eastern Nigeria into mission spheres of influence called districts, was peacefully carried out by these missions — the Anglican (C.M.S.); the Anglican (N.D.P.); the United Free Church of Scotland; the Qua Iboe; and the Primitive Methodist Missions. But the French Holy Ghost Fathers who founded a mission station at Onitsha in 1885 and the Lutheran Church of North America which founded their mission at Obot Idim Ibesikpo in 1936 refused to recognize the mission boundaries and established churches and schools in any town or village that welcomed them.

Administratively, the missions followed the political pattern. Each mission divided its district or sphere into various administrative units. The most important centres were manned by European missionaries and the less important by Africans. Within its sphere each mission carried out its enterprise. These seven main mission bodies in Eastern Nigeria imposed their various systems of religious teachings and beliefs upon the people; established their own schools, hospitals, maternity homes etc. with varying degrees of successes and failures and indirectly carried out commercial enterprise as well. In due course, Eastern Nigeria was dissected into several denomination units which were, in some cases, hostile to one another, and each of which discredited the work of the other. The results were as devastating as those of the other imperialistic agents. As will be seen, it is the process by which the delimitation of the boundaries between the various sects was effected, that is the concern of this paper.

II

When the Rev. Hope Masterton Waddell and his colleagues of the United Free Church of Scotland began work in Calabar town in 1846, they depended upon the Calabar and Cross Rivers for access into the interior mainly because there were no good roads by land into the Ibibio interior. But even on the Cross River the work of the United Free Church of Scotland did not advance very fast. In 1884, however, the Mission opened a station at Ikotana on the right bank of the River, seventy miles north of Calabar. Three years later their northern district pioneer, James Luke, was stationed there. In 1888 Unwana 103 miles north of Calabar and on the western bank was occupied.

By 1890, Luke had explored the river up to a point 240 miles north of Calabar. In 1893, he started to explore the eastern bank of the Cross River, but the unfriendly attitude of the natives who blockaded the rivers and creeks, coupled with insanitary conditions of this area, resulting in many deaths, hindered the work. It is reported that by 1898 there were five deaths and five permanent invalidations.[13] The furthest north reached by the Presbyterian Church was Uburu, about twenty-five miles west of the Cross River. Here they established a hospital under John W. Hitchcock, a medical doctor, who lived and worked there until his death in 1918.

If James Luke and Dr. John W. Hitchcock were great pioneers, Mary Mitchell Slessor was even greater than either. A missionary of no mean calibre and an agent of British imperial rule, she pierced through the then unfriendly Efik-Ibibio ethnic group around modern Itu. She stationed first at Calabar but in 1888 moved to Okoyong where she spent the rest of her life, bringing about far-reaching social revolution. She lived with the people, talked with them, and ate with them and came to be greatly loved by all who knew her. Seeking to exploit her great influence amongst the people, the Government in 1892 made her Vice-Consul. After the Aro Expedition she was invited to Aro Chukwu, and so had the credit of being the first European missionary to reach that famed town. A year after the British occupation of Aro Chuku, Mary Slessor settled there. She extended the work of the United Free Church of Scotland to Amarsu, Ododo Ikpe, Nkanga, and Ikpe; in fact her influence covered the entire Enyong Creek and beyond to Itam and Uyo where in 1909 the United Free Church sphere and that of the Qua Iboe Mission converged. Death ended her career on January 13, 1915, and she was buried in Calabar.[14]

III.

Like the United Presbyterian Church in its area, the Anglican Church depended upon the Niger River farther west for access into the interior. The Anglicans occupied Onitsha (1857), Brass (1868), Okrika (1884), Abonnema or New Calabar (1888); [15] while by 1892 they had settled in Bonny and Opobo.[16] For many years, the Niger Delta Pastorate of the Anglican Church was unable to explore more than a few miles from the banks of the

Niger.[17] But immediately after the conquest of Aro Chuku in 1902, the District Commissioner, Mr Leslie Probyn, invited the Church Missionary Society to Owerri the following year to begin work there. Bishop Tugwell sent Archdeacon T. J. Dennis, who found Owerri thickly populated, with an estimated population of 3,000. But even more populous than Owerri, as he later found, was Egbu, four miles beyond, which had an estimated population of 21,000.

Finding himself in one of the most thickly populated parts of Eastern Nigeria, and knowing also that Aro Chuku together with most of Eastern Nigeria had been conquered, Bishop Tugwell informed the United Free Church of Scotland of his intention to establish a mission under the Niger Delta Pastorate of the Anglican Church in the Ibo country, with stations in Aro Chuku and Bende.

A Conference of the two missions was held at Calabar on September 20, 1904 to discuss the proposal. Besides permitting the Niger Delta Pastorate to have a chaplaincy in the city of Calabar, the United Free Church of Scotland allowed the Niger Delta Pastorate a free hand in Bende and Aro Chukwu districts. The United Free Church recommendation to its Home Mission read, "In reference to the proposed establishment of a mission under the Niger Delta Pastorate in the Ibo country, with the stations at Aro Chuku and Bende, if the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church has withdrawn from the intention of making Itu a base for advance into this great and needy country, the Old Calabar Mission Council wish God-speed to that Church which is in a position to fulfil the duty. The Council regret that it has been necessary to neglect this great country behind their Riverside Stations, but do not feel that it is right to keep others out from the work which they see little hope of fulfilling".[18]

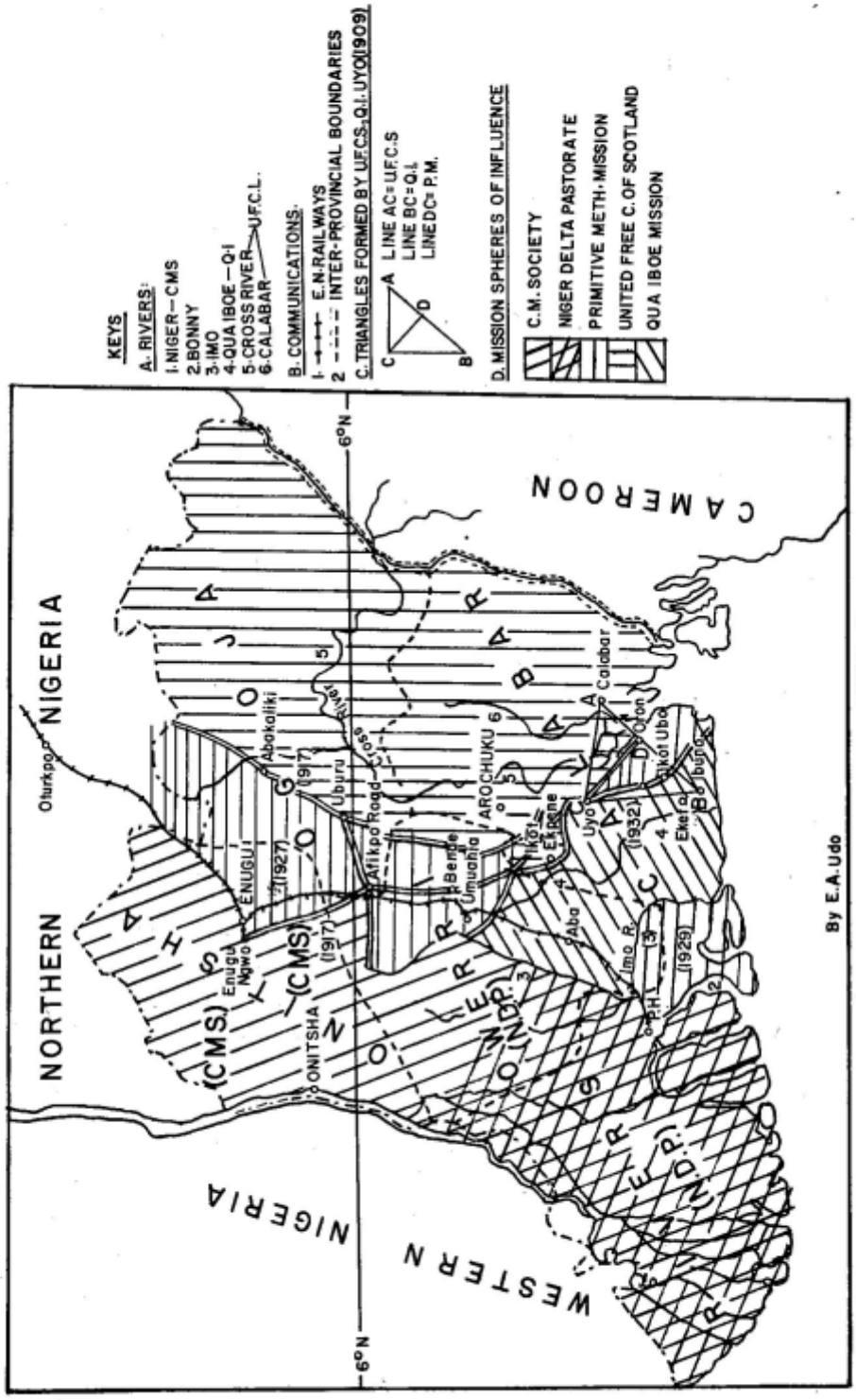
Bishop Tugwell took this decision to mean that the Niger Delta Pastorate was to own the whole area from the Niger River in the west to the Cross River in the east. This plan would perpetually confine both the Qua Iboe and the Primitive Methodist Missions to the coastal strips they then held, because the Niger Delta Pastorate would bar these missions from advancing northwards. It was unfortunate that these two older missions did not care to invite the two younger missions to the above conference. Soon the United Free Church was to reverse its decision. As the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 accelerated the scramble for Africa, so the 1904 inter-mission conference set in motion the scramble for spheres of influence among the missions.

IV

When Mr. Samuel Alexander Bill arrived in South-eastern Nigeria in 1887, he found that to the east the United Free Church of Scotland had occupied the Calabar and the Cross Rivers, and that the lower Niger River to the west had been occupied by the Niger Delta Pastorate of the Anglican Church. When he settled at Ibuno on the bank of the Qua Iboe River between these two areas, a third form of non-denominational[19] Protestant Christian missionary expansion entered the field. From the start, Mr. Bill claimed for his mission the Qua Iboe River with its basin. Having quickly established Ibuno as his centre, Bill moved to Eket, Ubium, Iman, Ibesikpo, Abak, and by 1909, to Uyo and then Itam in Itu District.[20]

Pastor William Usen says that in 1912 the Qua Iboe Mission had only one primary school, but this statement is misleading as the Qua Iboe Mission returns for 1906 showed the following schools: Big Town, Okorotip, Obo, Okpodom, Ukat, and Etinan.[21] In addition to Ibuno centre, occupied by Bill in 1887, the following central stations were occupied: Mr. A. Bailey occupied Ukat central station in 1891; Mr. John Kirk, Etinan in 1898; Mr. E. Heaney and Mr. Eakin, Ikot Ubo in 1898–1903; Mr. R. Smith, Ikot Edong in 1903; and Mr. J. W. Westgarth, Itam in 1909.[22]

It was at the latter station, four miles north-east of Uyo, that a clash of interests first


KEYS
A. RIVERS:
1. NIGER – CMS
2. BONNY
3. IMO
4. QUA IBOE – Q.I
5. CROSS RIVER
6. CALABAR
U.F.C.L.
B. COMMUNICATIONS:
1. E.N. RAILWAYS
2. INTER-PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES
C. TRIANGLES FORMED BY U.F.C.S., Q.I., UYO (1909)
A LINE AC = U.F.C.S
LINE BC = Q.I.
LINE DC = P.M.
D. MISSION SPHERES OF INFLUENCE
C.M. SOCIETY
NIGER DELTA PASTORATE
PRIMITIVE METH. MISSION
UNITED FREE C. OF SCOTLAND
QUA IBOE MISSION
EASTERN NIGERIA SHOWING
1. PROVINCES. 2. COMMUNICATIONS. 3. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY BOUNDARIES, 1900-1952
NORTHERN NIGERIA
CAMEROON
WESTERN NIGERIA
Oturkpo
Abakaliki
ENUGU
Enugu Ngwo
ONITSHA
Afikpo Road
Uburu
Ebonyi R.
Cross R.
AROCHUKU
Umuahia
Aba
Imo R.
Uyo
Calabar
Oron
Ikot Ubo
Eket
Bonny
(CMS) (1917)
(1927)
(1932)
(1929)
6°N
By E.A.Udo

occurred. The Qua Iboe Mission and the United Free Church of Scotland spheres had now converged at Uyo, thereby forming a sort of triangle with points A, B, and C. At "A" was Calabar from where the United Free Church advanced towards Uyo at "C"; while at "B" was Ibuno from where the Qua Iboe Mission advanced towards Uyo at "C".[23] This affected the work of the third mission, the late-coming Primitive Methodist[24] which advanced from Oron at "D" on AB north-ward towards "C".

V

When the Primitive Methodists arrived in South-eastern Nigeria in 1893, they found that all the important rivers and their basins had been taken up by the Anglican (Niger Delta Pastorate), the Qua Iboe, and the United Free Church of Scotland. They had no other choice but to use the land routes.

Anticipating the troubles which the overlapping of spheres of influence could cause, the 1905 Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society held in England sent a deputation to West Africa. One of the terms of reference was: "To survey as far as possible the Mission field occupied or open to us, so as to fix with other societies the sphere which we may expect to occupy in the future, in order to avoid any possible collision with other agencies".[25]

Early in January 1905, the Deputation visited Southern Nigeria, and the Chairman Rev. James Pickett, wrote to the United Free Church of Scotland for permission to establish a Primitive Methodist Church in the city of Calabar.[26] In reply, the United Free Church asked the Primitive Methodist to attend a conference to be held in June of that year between the United Free Church Mission and Bishop Tugwell of the Anglican Church. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the possibility of establishing christianity in Aro Chuku. Another pressing reason was that the United Free Church was dissatisfied with the decision of the 1904 Conference.

The Primitive Methodist Mission did not attend this conference which took place on June 27, 1905, nor did the Qua Iboe Mission, since the latter knew nothing about it. At that Conference the United Free Church turned down the Primitive Methodist Mission's request to establish a mission in the city of Calabar. "In view of how small a bit of Southern Nigeria Christian Missions have as yet touched", it argued, "it would be little less than a crime for another society to begin work in Calabar town. The Council feel very strongly on this point, and would advise extension between the Cross and Qua Iboe Rivers, allowing us to extend between the Cross and Calabar Rivers".[27]

There were, therefore, many conflicting decisions in the 1905 Conference. First, the Niger Delta Pastorate was permitted to establish stations at Aro Chuku and Bende — both towns lying north of the Qua Iboe Mission line of north-ward advance. Sooner or later, they were bound to meet at some point. Secondly, the Primitive Methodist Mission was told to operate between the Cross and Qua Iboe Rivers. This again made it most likely that the two would meet at some point in the future. Thirdly, the United Free Church of Scotland, by extending west-wards from Enyong creek, was sonner or later bound to meet the Primitive Methodists, its immediate neighbours, or, failing to do this, would meet the Qua Iboe missionaries in their east-ward expansion. Moreover, the Primitive Methodists took the Calabar Conference decisions as authorizing their expansion east-wards to the Cross River and west-wards to the Qua Iboe River. At the time of this decision, the United Free Church could not have reckoned with the rapid expansion which soon followed. In retrospect this appears shortsighted.

Because they were late in coming to Eastern Nigeria, the Primitive Methodists decided to extend their sphere more rapidly than the others. By 1907, they had already occupied Jamestown, Urua Eye, Esuk Oron, and Ekeya centres. In the following year, they appointed two deputations, one consisting of Rev. T. W. Hancox and Rev. Nathaniel Boocock to explore the Okobo — Uruan area, and the other of Rev. William Christie, the indefatigable Primitive Methodist pioneer, and Rev. T. W. Hancox to examine the Okobo-

Eastern Nsit area. Immediately after the reports were out, the Primitive Methodists made Iwok Nsit, Odobo, and Adadia temporary centres to which other outstations would be connected later. [28]

Mr. Samuel Alexander Bill of the Qua Iboe Mission disapproved of the Primitive Methodist extension in the Okobo — Nsit area. A meeting was held at Ukat at which the Primitive Methodist Mission suggested "a line north-west from Ikotobo (Ikot Ubo) to meet the Government road from Etinan as the Boundary".[29] At the Primitive Methodist Council of Missionaries Meeting held at Oron, a resolution was passed to confirm this line. This resolution was sent to the Qua Iboe Mission and the Primitive Methodist Home Mission. The Qua Iboe Mission, however, rejected the proposed boundary on the ground that it would bar their expansion and would excluse Etinan and the Qua Iboe River watershed from their sphere. They gave a substitute suggestion that "each advance from our present positions, you from Oron and we from Ikotobo (Ikot Ubo) occupying the points between and that where we meet should be our boundary".[30]

After this Ukat Conference, the Primitive Methodist Mission decided to occupy Mbiabong Etoi, only about twenty miles from Etinan. When Mr. John Kirk, a Qua Iboe missionary at Etinan, came to Oron, he was told by Rev. T. W. Hancox of the intention of the Primitive Methodist.[31] The Qua Iboe Mission accused the Primitive Methodist Mission of planning to open a station a few miles behind Etinan. Mr. Bill, the founder of the Qua Iboe Mission, also said that he had seen a public notice in a British *Weekly* to the effect that their Executive was being pressed to send workers into Eastern Nsit area.

Bill, a hard-working missionary, immediately petitioned the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society in London, "against the unjust plan of the Primitive Methodist Mission to invade the Qua Iboe Mission sphere".[32] But his petition carried no weight with William Christie, as we shall soon see. A few days before the Ukat Conference, the Qua Iboe Missionaries had gone to Uyo and Ikot Ekpene to explore the possibility of opening stations. The District Commissioner there had given Bill assurance of his assistance and co-operation. They had planned that they would advance by the Government road from Etinan to Uyo and thence to Ikot Ekpene. While the United Free Church of Scotland advised the Primitive Methodists to work between the Cross and Qua Iboe Rivers, the Qua Iboe Mission expected the Primitive Methodists to work between the Cross and Calabar Rivers, which area was actually in the United Free Church of Scotland sphere.

There seemed to be no easy solution. William Christie found that at Uyo the Primitive Methodist Mission was enclosed in a sort of triangle formed by the spheres of influence of the United Free Church of Scotland and that of the Qua Iboe Mission. What was he to do? He quickly displayed diplomatic skill. Qua Iboe Mission was a one-man mission and might not be expected to press too strongly for its claim. Since, he argued, the United Free Church had told his mission to work in the area between the Qua Iboe Mission and their own mission in Calabar, it was likely that they would support the Primitive Methodists in their action. Everything weighed, Christie jumped over the triangle at the point "C" and, leaving Uyo, some 19 miles behind, occupied Ikot Ekpene in 1909, a station which was already a District headquarters and therefore safe.[33] He did this without the knowledge of either the Qua Iboe or the United Free Church of Scotland Missions. Both these missions had hoped to make Ikot Ekpene, with its teeming population, their base. The Qua Iboe Mission was particularly hit, as occupation of Ikot Ekpene blocked[34] its north-ward advance. The result was the calling of the Calabar Boundary Conference of 1909.

The 1909 Missionary Delimitation Conference was a tripartite one. The missions present were the United Free Church of Scotland, the Qua Iboe, and the Primitive Methodist. The Anglicans were not invited because the conference did not concern the area in which they worked. It concerned Ibibio country. As Christie had thought, the United Free Church of Scotland did not press its claim to Ikot Ekpene. Although Bill pressed the Qua Iboe Mission claim to Ikot Ekpene, he lost his case since he had no support from the United Free Church of Scotland Mission. Finally, all agreed that Ikot Ekpene should be

the centre for the work of the Primitive Methodist Mission. It was further agreed that in the thickly populated district around Ikot Ekpene centre, and along the line from Ikot Ekpene to Bende, opportunity should be given to the Primitive Methodist Mission for further expansion. The United Free Church of Scotland Mission was to advance from Aro Chuku "through Ihi, Ahofia, and Abiriba" north-wards, linking up with work in the Afikpo District. North of Abiriba the country was imperfectly known at the time.[35]

These decisions opened a new era in the history of Primitive Methodism in Eastern Nigeria. The following year, Christie was relieved at Ikot Ekpene by Rev. William Groves. Christie advanced into Bende District in the Ibo country. Christie established Ndoro and Bende stations. In 1911 he was replaced with Rev. Frederick William Dodds who, more than any other Primitive Methodist, opened up Ibo country for the Primitive Methodist Mission so that by 1919 the following Primitive Methodist circuits or central stations were established: Ndoro, Umuahia, Uzuakoli, Ovim, Ihube, and Agbani seven miles to Enugu. The other societies were alarmed at the rapid advance of the Primitive Methodist. The Primitive Methodist Mission had also occupied Aba[36] in order to control the Eastern Nigerian Railway line from Port Harcourt through Aba, Umuahia, Uzuakoli, Ovim and Agbani to Enugu, where coal had been found in 1908–1909, whereas the Qua Iboe Mission had already claimed Aba as lying within its sphere of influence.

The rapid expansion of the Primitive Methodist sphere, the struggle for denominational supremacy in Aba and its environs by both the Primitive Methodist and Qua Iboe Missions, and the fact that much of the hinterland remained untouched by the missionary influence, necessitated the calling of the Conference of Protestant Missionary Societies which was held at Aba from January 30 to February 1, 1917. Present were the Right Rev. Bishop Tugwell, (in the Chair), and the Venerable Archdeacon Crowther (Niger Delta Pastorate), Messrs S. A. Bill and E. C. E. Eakin (Qua Iboe), the Venerable Archdeacon Dennis, Rev. G. T. Basden (Church Missionary Society), the Revs. Nathaniel Boocock, and A. H. Richardson—(Primitive Methodist Mission) and the Rev. E. E. Richard, a visitor from the Primitive Methodist Mission. Absent were the Rev. J. M. A. Cole (Niger Delta Pastorate), and the two members of the United Free Church of Scotland, Drs. Wood and Hitchcock.[37] It was unfortunate that there was no representative from the United Free Church of Scotland.

Among other things discussed were the claims put forward by the Qua Iboe Mission to Ikot Ekpene and the Primitive Methodist Mission to Aba. The conference recommended the transfer of Ikot Ekpene centre to Qua Iboe Mission, and Aba centre to the Primitive Methodist Mission. It further recommended that on the south and east of Aba the Primitive Methodist Mission should not extend beyond a radius of 10 miles, and that the boundary of that Mission to the west should be the Imo River.[38] As for Aba and north of it, the Primitive Methodist Mission was not to enter any town which the Niger Delta Pastorate had occupied, except by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Conference asked the United Free Church of Scotland to reconsider its boundary agreement with the Primitive Methodist Mission since Ikot Ekpene was to be transferred to the Qua Iboe Mission. The Conference suggested that the Qua Iboe Mission should be granted permission to extend much further to the east than the stipulation of three-mile radius allowed.

Resolutions 10 and 11 of the Conference were very important, as they affected the United Free Church of Scotland, which was not represented at the Conference, and deserve being quoted in full. In them it was agreed:

"10. That the western boundary of the Primitive Methodist Mission from Aba be the Imo River, up to a point where it cuts the Awka Boundary at Eziama, and thence by a line running East to Afikpo Road Station on the (Eastern) Nigerian Railway."

"11. That in extending the spheres of operations of the Church Missionary Society, the primitive Methodist Mission, and the United Free Church of Scotland in a northerly direction, the following directions be observed. (a) The Church Missionary Society in extending northwards from Udi regard the projected railway line as its boundary (eastern)

(b) That the Primitive Methodist Mission in extending northwards from Afikpo Road regard the Railway line as its western boundary, the line of advance running parallel with the railway covering some 40 to 50 miles in width. (c) That the United Free Church of Scotland in extending north-wards move to the North East (northeast) from Uburu, east of a line drawn through Uburu and Abakaliki.[39]

The agreement was to be reviewed after seven years. Each society was asked to communicate these resolutions to its Home Mission for its approval and adoption.

The recommendation that the Primitive Methodist Mission exchange Ikot Ekpene for Aba was not accepted by that Mission,[40] on the grounds that it had been at Ikot Ekpene for eight years and had spent a great deal of money establishing its work there. Ikot Ekpene was thickly populated; it was a connecting link between the Efik-Ibibio and the Ibo fields. To take it away would have meant breaking the link. They stressed that Aba, at that time, was unimportant. The Anglicans (Niger Delta Pastorate) had established many stations at Aba and Owerri. The Methodists sadly concluded that, "It is not so certain that Aba will ultimately be so important as has been said, the more probable event is that either Omo Ohia (Umuahia) or Ozuakoli (Uzuakoli) will be more important as a trading centre."[41] Those who made the prediction that Uzuakoli or Umuahia would out-rank Aba were in time proved wrong by events. Today Aba is the biggest centre of the three, commercially and otherwise.

The Methodist position was opposed by Rev. W. T. Groves, the Primitive Methodist Superintendent Minister at Ikot Ekpene. According to him, the Primitive Methodist Mission should exchange Ikot Ekpene for Aba centre. His reason was that he had found things difficult ever since he was appointed to the station.[42] The Methodist Mission authorities considered Groves's reason unconvincing and retained Ikot Ekpene centre.

The decision of the conference backed by that of the Methodist Mission Superintendent of Ikot Ekpene station to exchange Ikot Ekpene for Aba had hardly been in keeping with the Christian principles of justice. In the first place, the Africans had many political, economic, social and religious sacrifices to make to be able to adjust to the new situations created by the European imperialists. The systems of worship and administration which the Primitive Methodist missionaries brought were quite different from those of the Qua Iboe Mission. After eight years of difficult adjustment to the Methodist systems of worship and administration the conference, without any considerations for the Africans, decided that the Methodist Mission should pull out of Ikot Ekpene centre and that the Qua Iboe Mission, with its own systems, should take its place. Being quite unconcerned about the welfare of the Africans, such problems as unlearning the Methodist systems and starting afresh to learn those of the Qua Iboe Mission, did not enter the minds of the Christian missionaries at that conference.

Although the rejection of the decision of the conference by the Primitive Methodist Mission was partly sound in that the dismantling of the manse at Ikot Ekpene to Aba and vice versa meant a loss of money on their part, nevertheless, from the reasons the Methodist Mission gave, one can conclude that economy and the interests of their missionaries were paramount over those of the flock which they came to feed. Their reasons were mainly that Ikot Ekpene was populous and that they had spent a lot of money there. That Ikot Ekpene was thickly populated meant that they expected a large number of members which meant in turn expectation of large contributions from the members. Thus, economic considerations governed their decision. The second reason that they had spent a great deal of money there was equally economic.

Rev. Groves failed the test of his faith, and to appreciate the political, economic, social, and religious problems which faced his new flock. According to him, he had encountered some difficulties ever since he was stationed at Ikot Ekpene. That his difficulties were many is understandable, but Groves failed to appreciate the problems which the dislocation of the traditional Ikot Ekpene society brought. He hoped that the Africans could swallow his new religion without question and protest.

Again, it should be stressed that it was unfortunate that the United Free Church of Scotland was not represented at the conference. At the 1909 conference, it had been decided that the United Free Church of Scotland advanced north-wards through Ihi, Ohafia, and Abiriba. At the 1917 Conference, this decision was set aside. The new boundary excluded Uburu, then an important United Free Church station, and cut across Ezza. The boundary which granted the Primitive Methodist Mission a sketch of territory 40 to 50 miles in width would also exclude some of the oldest United Free Church stations in Ino district. Also the conference overlooked the need to maintain the integrity of ethnic groups, for example, those around Ezza. On these grounds the United Free Church of Scotland rejected the decision of the Aba Conference of 1917.[43] In July, the Old Calabar Council of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission forwarded to its Foreign Mission in Edinburgh the Minutes of this Aba Conference, stating that it could not recommend acceptance, as the boundary "entirely ignored the distribution of native population in closely related tribal groups."[44]

With respect to the decision on the Methodist-United Free Church boundary, the conference was again in error as it ignored the interests of the Africans in the affected areas. The only group of Christian missionaries who were members of that conference though absent on that day and who placed the interests of the Africans before theirs were those of the United Free Church of Scotland. They saw no reason why mission boundaries should cut across ethnic groups. It was their conviction that as far as possible related peoples should remain under one mission 'sphere' for effective and easy administration. The mission boundary, like the political ones, which cut across ethnic groups had serious consequences for the Africans. The tribes so cut were divided, religiously, educationally, and culturally, thus christianity came to act as one other factor of disunity. The sound decision taken by the Old Calabar Council might have been due to the fact that the majority of members of the United Free Church of Scotland missionaries who worked in Eastern Nigeria were Jamaicans—the descendants of the former African slaves—and so understood the African minds and were against European imperialism which paid no attention to ethnic groupings in Africa.

In compliance with the 1917 Conference decision, the Primitive Methodists handed over, in 1918, Nenu, a Bende station to the Qua Iboe Mission.[45] In the following year, they also handed all their stations on the road from Ikpe (Ikot Nkon) to Bende, as far as Ndewo, to the United Free Church of Scotland.[46]

A conference was held in 1922 between the Church Missionary Society and the Primitive Methodist Mission where it was resolved that the range of hills extending from the 6th degree latitude north to Enugu Ngwo and lying west of the Nigerian Eastern Railway formed the natural boundary between them.[47] The boundary north of Enugu Ngwo was to be the railway line itself; the Church Missionary Society was to have the area to the west and the Primitive Methodist Mission, the region to the east of it.[48]

The 1926 conference had representatives from the Primitive Methodist Mission, the Qua Iboe Mission, the Anglican Mission (Niger Delta Pastorate), and the United Free Church of Scotland. The Qua Iboe Mission had stepped across the Imo River to its western side, a contravention of the 1917 agreement.[49] They were requested to withdraw entirely from the western side of the Imo River. It was moved by Mr. Bennington, a Qua Iboe missionary, and seconded by Rev. W. Groves, a Primitive Missionary, "that all towns now occupied by the Qua Iboe Mission beyond a 10-mile radius, south and east of Aba be retained by them, but that no new stations be occupied outside that radius."[50]

This decision introduced a new element into the mission boundary question in Eastern Nigeria, namely, the retention of churches already established in one another's sphere. Up to that time, a complete withdrawal from one another's sphere was recommended.

We have already seen how in 1918 and 1919 the Primitive Methodists handed some stations over to the Qua Iboe and the United Free Church Missions respectively. We are tempted to draw the conclusion that there might have been many protests from the Africans, who

through these exchanges of missions, were forced to unlearn most of what their former masters had taught them and to learn anew what the new ones had for them. Again, the missionaries themselves might have met with some administrative inconveniences as well as incurred some financial losses through such exchanges. Hence, the decision to retain the stations already established by each mission was taken. This decision was followed in the 1932 conference as we shall later see.

The second to the last conference to define mission boundaries took place in 1927 between the Primitive Methodist and the United Free Church of Scotland Missions. The latter suggested to the former that the western and northern boundaries of Ogoja Province be recognized as their boundaries.

The last of the mission boundary settlements took place in 1932 between the Qua Iboe and the Primitive Methodist Missions. This was the Uyo-Ikot Ubo mission boundary. After 1932, the mission boundaries were fixed in Eastern Nigeria. Other mission boundary conferences which followed were brought about by the Africans who demanded that the mission boundaries, to which they were not a party, be abolished.

Before 1932, there had risen two groups of Africans—the nationalist and the Europeanized African. The former would have nothing to do with the European controlled churches from which they seceded and formed their own African churches. Foremost among these African churches which operated in South-eastern Nigeria were: the United Native African Church, the Garrick Braid, the Christ Army, and the Niger Delta Native Church. By 1926, there were about 49 United Native African Churches in Calabar and 55 in Owerri Provinces; Garrick Braid had 32 churches in Owerri Province; Christ Army had 74 in Owerri and nine in Calabar Provinces; while Niger Delta Native Church had 30 churches in Owerri Province.[51] Like the Catholics before and the Lutherans after them, these African churches paid no attention to the mission boundaries in Eastern Nigeria. Their teachings and administrations ran counter to those of the white controlled churches for these were planned to suit the Africans politically, socially, and economically. For an example, the African churches permitted the marriage of more than one wife by their members. Though these African churches were unable to establish and maintain many efficient schools, hospitals, maternity homes, etc. due to financial difficulties, these nationalists were proud of having their own churches.

The other group of the Africans could be subdivided into two—those who stood to profit by the mission boundaries and those who saw the boundaries as a drawback to their progress (mainly educational). This last group of the Africans bitterly protested against the boundaries and called for their abrogation. Though they were ready to change their white masters to effect mainly educational progress in their towns, they were certainly not ready to invite the African churches to their towns due to the fact that they preferred the leadership of the white man to that of their fellow African. It is therefore clear that because of the split in the African front due partly to the fact that some Africans who stood to profit by the boundaries saw no justifiable reason for opposing them, and due partly to the fact that not many Africans knew that their country had been partitioned among the European missions, the protest movement had to wait for the political one to take the lead in the 1940's.

The African protest against the boundaries was greatly heightened and accelerated by the Qua Iboe Mission—Ibesikpo Controversy. The immediate causes of the controversy were the assigning of the Ibesikpo Clan to the Qua Iboe Mission as that mission's sphere of influence in 1932; and the refusal of the Qua Iboe Mission authorities to build and maintain a central school in Ibesikpo Clan for Ibesikpo youths. The Ibesikpo resented sending their children to the Qua Iboe Mission Institute at Etinan, and to the Qua Iboe Mission central school at Itam in Itu District. There were other grievances against the mission.

The resolution which fixed the 1932 Methodist—Qua Iboe Mission boundary read, "(1) That where churches have been opened in either Mission in the area of the other Mission in Ikotobor (Ikot Ubo) and Uyo Districts, these churches should remain permanently

under the present Mission. (2) That in future the boundaries already settled by Boundary Conference of all Missions be strictly adhered to in both districts."[52] This decision had far-reaching consequences in the history of the Qua Iboe Mission in Eastern Nigeria because four years later, the Ibesikpo people of Uyo District invited the Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America to their clan to replace the Qua Iboe Mission.[53]

Prior to 1932, the Ibesikpo people had had many grievances against the mission. These included, among others, economic exploitation of Ibesikpo by the mission; forced labour; puritanical rules; and inability to build and maintain schools efficiently or to establish institutions of higher learning in the clan.

The Qua Iboe Mission, it must be noted, was founded by one man, Mr. Samuel Alexander Bill from Belfast in Northern Ireland. He was not sent by any church or missionary society and so he was, from the beginning, poor, as one of his missionaries later wrote: "Unlike many missionaries, he was not sent by any Church or Missionary Society, so he was without the support such societies gave and had no means of his own; but trusting in God, he made up his mind to take this arduous work; travelling from Ireland, he arrived in Eastern Nigeria 4,000 miles from Ireland."[54] This means that the Qua Iboe Mission was a one man's mission and consequently was poor. Besides having no home mission in Europe and being poor, Bill had no trained and ordained ministers. His missionaries were laymen, some of whom were businessmen before they offered their services to the mission. All of these factors affected the future polices of the mission. The first problem that faced Bill was the choice of a suitable name for his mission. Having no home mission and consequently no name for his mission, Bill adopted the name of the river along which he operated, namely, Qua Iboe river, hence the name Qua Iboe (River) Mission.

For twenty-one years (1887-1908) Bill and his lay missionaries imposed their rule along the Qua Iboe river and its basin without being interferred with by any other mission. Because the mission was poor, Bill employed business methods and exploited members of his mission economically. The Ibesikpo people tell the story of how the Qua Iboe Mission authorities stored up kerosene at its headquarters in Eastern Nigeria and forced all churches under them to go there and buy for each church seven bottles of kerosene a week for use in it. They banned their churches from buying kerosene elsewhere no matter whether or not kerosene in such places was cheaper than that stored at their headquarters. Qua Iboe Mission churches in Ibesikpo clan were under Itam. Imposition of such order involved travelling long distances from Ibesikpo to Itam to buy the kerosene. Ibesikpo people resented this order and bought kerosene for their churches at any nearby place. The Qua Iboe Mission also forced its members to work free for its missionaries, catechists, and teachers.

The people also complained that the Qua Iboe Mission rules were puritanical. No member was allowed to do any form of work on Sunday. They were expected to attain church services in their respective stations and pay their church dues. The worst kind of rule, by modern standard, was that connected with morals. The Qua Iboe Mission authorities banned their teachers' sisters and female relatives from living with them at the stations. This was done to prevent teachers from having sexual relations with their sisters and female relatives, a strange regulation for Eastern Nigeria where such relations had always been tabooed. Bill and his men failed to find out whether or not such relations existed in Eastern Nigeria before imposing such an uncalled-for rule. The Ibesikpo Qua Iboe Mission teachers resented such inhumane orders.

The choice by Ibesikpo, of an American mission one may say, was political. America was not a colonial power in Africa. Americans were believed to be traditionally hostile to the British and so would not obey the mission boundaries in Ibesikpo or elsewhere in Eastern Nigeria. On the other hand, Ibesikpo feared that if any other mission were invited from Europe, the likelihood was that it could obey the mission boundaries to avoid collision with the other British missions. In the end, the Ibesikpo people were right for after their arrival in Ibesikpo in 1936, the Lutheran Missionaries paid no attention to mission boundaries and established their schools and churches in any village or town

that accepted them. Thus, the Qua Iboe Mission lost a fruitful field of work in Eastern Nigeria.

The Qua Iboe Mission—Ibesikpo controversy had greatly publicised the mission boundary question in Eastern Nigeria, so that by the 1940's the Eastern Nigerians had come to realize that their country had been partitioned among the Christian missions without their consent. In response to the African protest, the 1949 conference which had African representatives was called. At it, the African representatives called for a complete abrogation of all the mission boundaries in Eastern Nigeria. A further conference was called in 1952 and took place at what is today the Maternity Village of Ituk Mbang Hospital. The writer was one of the six representatives of the Methodist Mission. The main purpose of the conference was the demand by the Eastern Nsit people that Uyo-Ikot Ubo mission boundary be abolished in order to enable the Methodist Mission extend their work to Eastern Nsit. Consequently only the Methodist Mission and Qua Iboe Mission representatives attended the conference. While all the Methodists, who hoped to gain African and European alike, spoke in favour of abolishing the boundary, the African representatives of the Qua Iboe Mission teamed up with their European masters and opposed such moves on the grounds that the boundary had been fixed in 1932 and could not be abolished. The attitudes of the African members of the Qua Iboe Mission was understandable. From the beginning, the Qua Iboe Mission recruited its African staff from the members that they could manipulate and gave them impressive positions as elders and pastors. They had no place for highly educated men and women in their service. Thus, both the African and the European members of the Church saw the demand as a threat to their quiet life in the Eastern Nsit area, whereas the Methodists saw it as likely to foster a rapid expansion of their field of work there and a restoration of justice to the Africans. The conference ended in a deadlock.

It should be noted, however, that only five missions—the divided Anglican Church (the white dominated Church Missionary Society with its headquarters at Onitsha); the African dominated (Niger Delta Pastorate) which operated mainly in the modern Rivers State and parts of former Owerri Province; the United Free Church of Scotland (after 1929, the Church of Scotland); the Qua Iboe Mission; and the Primitive Methodist Mission (after 1932, Methodist Mission) were involved in the struggle for these boundaries. From the start, the Roman Catholics refused to join in. The Catholic Church regards all Protestant Churches as heretical bodies and thus, in principle, could not sit at one table to go into agreement with them to divide territories. The Catholics and the Lutherans refused to join the Evangelical Union of Eastern Nigeria, as the Union which grew out of these missionary delimitation conferences was called, and at the same time recognized no boundaries. These two white missions and the African Churches defied the power of the five Protestant missions and established their churches and schools in all towns that accepted them.

Faced with the problems posed by the Catholics and the Africans and after 1936 by the Lutherans and also by inability to establish and maintain higher institutions of learning individually, the Evangelical Union of Eastern Nigeria embarked upon joint ventures. Between 1936 and 1961 they had established Women's Training College, Umuahia;[56] Union Secondary School for Girls, Ibiaku;[57] two secondary schools for boys at Enugu,[58] and Abakaliki;[59] a theological college, Umuahia;[60] and Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Umuahia.[61]

Although the five missions co-operated in founding these institutions, nevertheless, great enmity existed between the various missions which operated in Eastern Nigeria. Each mission discredited the work of the other missions.[62] It was not uncommon to hear, even from those who had never been to school, the remark that all schools, hospitals, and maternity homes, except those run by their mission, were of low quality. For example, even today a visitor to Ituk Mbang (a Methodist town), and Ekpene Ekim (a Catholic town), both lying on the same Uyo-Oron trunk Road, will find it difficult to distinguish

the two towns because they have merged together with Ituk Mbang Hospital in the centre. But because Ituk Mbang is a Methodist town, the majority of Ekpene Ukim Catholics when they go sick pass Ituk Mbang Methodist Hospital and go to the Catholic Hospital at Anua, fourteen miles away. Sometimes on their way to Anua, they die, owing partly to poor means of transportation by bicycle; and partly to the distance involved. Many a Catholic would not go to a Protestant hopsital for treatment because they do not feel very comfortable doing so and have no confidence in either the people or the medicines. In extreme cases, some of them think that they would be poisoned by the workers. Although the doctors and nurses may be their brothers and sisters, socially and religiously they are alien to one another. Only in Catholic Hospitals would Catholics feel secure. The same was the case for the Protestants. The case of hospital is only one among many.

In conclusion, it is clear that before 1884 Christian missionaries in Eastern Nigeria had the well-being of the Africans at heart. They knew that only Africans could evangelize, educate and train their fellow Africans successfully. To this end, the early missionaries trained and sent the Jamaicans and Sierra Leonians who were descendants of ex-African slaves headed by European missionaries to Eastern Nigeria to evangelise and educate the people. This policy, was changed in the time of political imperialism which began in 1884.

Some of the new breed of missionaries were agents of imperialism. They were collaborators of British imperial power. They used methods similar to those used by the British political administrators, except the sword, to divide Eastern Nigeria and consolidate their stay. Firstly, they scrambled for territory, and secondly in various conferences which began in 1904 and ended in 1932, they divided the area into mission spheres of influence without consulting the Africans. Their chief method was indoctrination based on their catechisms and bibles.

By 1930, some Eastern Nigerians had begun to realise the bad effects of the mission boundaries. The people who suffered most were the Ibesikpo. Thus in 1936, they not only rejected the mission boundry and the authority of the Qua Iboe Mission which operated in their clan, but also invited the Lutheran Church of North America to their clan, to replace the Qua Iboe Mission.

One of the most important legacies of mission activities in Eastern Nigeria was religious disunity which aided social and political disunity of Eastern Nigeria, even today. The split of the Anglican Church into the white dominated Church Missionary Society and the African dominated Niger Delta Pastorate could hardly foster unity among members of that church. The establishments of churches, schools, hospitals, maternity homes, and health centres under different denominations whose policies, standard of instruction, administrative systems, ability to build and maintain them varied were divisive rather than bound the people closer together. The division of some villages, towns and ethnic groupings among various religious denominations with differing religious systems of teaching and administrations brought about different views on life and the resultant disunity and mistrust due to the attitudes of some missionaries who discredited the work of their fellow missionaries before their own flock who in turn imbibed and extended these attitudes towards their fellow African members of rival denominations.

FOOT NOTES

1. Hope Masterton Waddell, *Twenty-nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa*, 1829—1858 (London: T. Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1863), p. 665.
2. ....., "Journal of Old Calabar, 1846", p. 1 in National Library of Scotland Archives, Edinburgh, Scotland.
3. K. Onwuka Dike, *Origins of Niger Mission*, 1841—1891 (Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1962), pp. 11—12.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
5. J. C. Anene, *The International Boundaries of Nigeria*, 1885—1960 (London: Longman Group Limited,

1970) pp. 22—24; 27. See also Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa since* 1800 (Cambridge, England, At the University Press, 1967), Chapter 9.
6. "Ecclesiastical Summary", in *Nigeria Blue Book*, 1907 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1908), p. T. 12.
7. W. J. Ward, *In and Around the Oron Country or The Story of Primitive Methodism in Southern Nigeria* (London: W. A. Hammond Co., 1913), p. 54.
8. J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria*, 1841—1891 (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 234.
9. C. P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), Vol. III p. 216.
10. Edet A. Udo, "The Methodist Contribution to Education in Eastern Nigeria, 1893—1960," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts).
11. Groves, *Planting of Christianity, III*, p. 146.
12. Mary Mitchell Slessor, A United Free Church of Scotland missionary, was made a British Vice-Consul in 1892. In 1903, the officer who had commanded the army that had destroyed the Long Juju of Aro Chuku invited her to open a mission station at Aro Chuku.
13. Groves, *Planting of Christianity in Africa*, III, p. 218.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
15. *Proceedings of C.M.S.* 1892—1894, 42, *Annual Report, Niger Mission*, 1893, p. 27.
16. Opobo was under Bonny station, *Ibid.*, p. 91.
17. Groves, *Planting of Christianity, III*, 216 says as late as 1900 its greatest inland penetration was fifteen miles.
18. *Old Calabar Council Minutes*, No. 177, (January 24, 1905).
19. The Qua Iboe Mission was non-sectarian which enlisted its missionaries from many denominations — Anglican, Presbytarian, Baptist, Methodist, and so on. See Dodds to E. A. Udo, October, 1965.
20. Pastor William Usen, "Samuel Alexander Bill," in *the Qua Iboe Church Magazine Special Issue to Mark the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Qua Iboe Church* (Etinan, January, 1963), p. 2.
21. *Nigerian Blue Book* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1908), pp. U 13—14.
22. Pastor William Usen, "The Call for a Missionary," *The Qua Iboe Church Magazine* (January, 1963), p. 4.
23. Study the map enclosed. The United Free Church advanced westwards along the line AC, while the Qua Iboe Mission advanced along line BC, and the Primitive Methodists found no way to pass.
24. The Primitive Methodist Mission was the third, so far as this triangle is concerned.
25. "Deputation to West Africa," *The Herald*, 11 (January, 1906), p. 5.
26. Pickett to Old Calabar Council, January, 1905.
27. "Calabar Conference with Bishop Tugwell." *Old Calabar Council Minute*, No. 284 (June 27, 1905,) p. 167.
28. From Nathaniel Boocock to Rev. A. T. Guttery, London, September 16, 1908, in "Minutes of the Central Council of Missionaries," Oron, (September, 14, 1908 M.M.S.A.L.).
29. S. A. Bill to Secretary, Primitive Methodist Mission, Oron, (January 28, 1909; M.M.S.A.L.).
30. *Ibid.*
31. "Minutes of the Council of Missionaries" to Home Mission, (Jamestown, March 10, 1909; M.M.S.A.L.)
32. Bill to Secretary, Primitive Mission, Oron. (January 28, 1909; M.M.S.A.L.) Also see map, p. 1.
33. Groves *Planting of Christianity*, III, 219.
34. *Old Calabar Council Meeting*, (The Manse, May 4, 1917, and *Minutes* No. 4160, July 17, 1917.
35. United Free Church of Scotland of Primitive Methodist Mission, May 4, 1917.
36. *Ibid.*
37. From Secretary, Council of Missionaries to Rev. S. Horton, Secretary G.M.C. London, March 15, 1917 (M.M.S.A.L.)
38. "Resolutions of a Conference of Protestant Missionary Societies held at Aba, Southern Nigeria," (January 30th to February 1st, 1917) in *Church of Scotland Council Minutes*, May 4, 1917.
39. *Ibid.*
40. From Secretary, Council of Missionaries, to Secretary, General Missionary Committee, Mr. S. Horton, (March 15, 1917) M.M.S.A.L.
41. From Council of Missionaries to General Missionary Committee, London, (March 15, 1917).
42. From W.T. Groves to Secretary, General Missionary Committee, (May 25, 1917) M.M.S.A.L.
43. From United Free Church of Scotland to Primitive Methodist Mission, May, 1917, in *Old Calabar Council Minutes* No. May 4, 1917.
44. *Old Calabar Council Minutes*, No. 4160, (July 17, 1917), p.175.
45. Minutes of the Council of Missionaries, (March 28, 1918), M.M.S.A.L.
46. *Old Calabar Council Minutes* No. 4722, (July 15, 1919), p.445.
47. Minutes: Conference of Representatives from the Church Missionary Society and the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society, Enugu (May 9, 1922), M.M.S.A.L.
48. *Ibid.*
49. "Minutes: Evangelical Union" (Aba, January 1926), M.M.S.A.L.
50. *Ibid.*
51. P. Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* (London: O.U.P., 1926), Vol. IV, Table No. 13, p.120.

52. "Boundaries", in *Eighth Annual Synod of the Primitive Methodist Mission, E. Nigeria* (Uzuakoli, March 8, 1932).
53. Robert Collins and Peter Duignan, *Hoover Institute, Bibliographical Series XII, Americans in Africa, A Preliminary Guide to American Missionary Archives and Library Manuscript Collection on Africa* (Stanford University, 1963), p.17.
    See also, Groves, *Planting of Christianity*, IV, 189.
54. J.W. Westgarth, "The Qua Iboe Mission Makes History", Ibiaku Itam, in Qua Iboe Mission Archives, Etinan, Uyo, p.1
55. *The Aba Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, Appendix III (1), p.12. and pp.123–25.
56. For steps leading to the founding of the W.T.C. Umuahia
    see:
    a) Letter from A.I. Beveridge, Secretary Church of Scotland Mission to Rev. F.W. Dodds (November 27, 1933);
    b) Letter W. Norcross, Methodist to Church of Scotland Mission, Calabar.
    c) Letter from the Church of Scotland Mission to Methodist Mission, May 28, 1934.
    d) Letter from Bishop Basden, Church Missionary Society to Rev. F.W. Dodds Methodist Mission August 9, 1935);
    e) Letter from Bath, Church of Scotland Mission to F.W. Dodds Methodist Mission, November, 1935. All in Methodist Mission Archives Ikot Ekpene.
    f) Letter from Qua Iboe Mission, to Church of Scotland, Calabar, March 4, 1934.
57. Minutes of Board of Governors of Union Secondary School for girls, Ibiaku, November 4, 1952, in Principal's Office Ibiaku.
58. Answer to questionnaire from W.T. Smith General Manager, Methodist Schools, to E.A. Udo July, 1964, in E.A. Udo's file.
59. *Ibid.*
60. E.A. Udo, "The Methodist Contribution to Education in Eastern Nigeria 1893–1960," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis at Boston University, 1965, pp.238–39.
61. *Ibid.*, p.159.
62. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, p.254.

EKPE FESTIVAL AS RELIGIOUS RITUAL AND DANCE DRAMA

By JAS N. AMANKULOR

Introduction

AMONG THE IGBO of Nigeria, there is a wealth of cultural heritage manifested in ceremonies connected with marriages, births, farming and a myriad of other social institutions. These cultural acitivities contain the germs of rich poetry and prose, excellent music and lively drama which have not been raised far above their traditional level, although present-day scholars—sociologists, anthropologists and literary researchers—are showing sufficient interest. The Ekpe festival, an action-packed festival full of song and dance, is one of such cultural events, a deeper investigation of which would reveal its great significance as religious ritual and potentialities as dance-drama.

The Ekpe festival is very popular among the Ngwa of Igboland. It is also widely celebrated in neighbouring areas such as the old Umuahia and Owerri Provinces. As a festival Ekpe is celebrated every year because it is an important cultural event in the life of the people being the culmination of their Year Rites. Its roots are deep in traditional religion and ritual. It is only a tragic event such as the death of a village hero, or a permission from the gods that can stop the staging of Ekpe.

Ekpe, (tone-marked— —, low-low) should not be confused with Ekpe (tone-marked— —, high-low). The latter is a secret society which is exclusive to men, and which is also called Okonko in many parts of Igboland. This Society is equally popular among the Efik and Annang of Nigeria. But Ekpe, the former, enjoys communal patronage and participation with women and children forming part of its choric force.

The Ekpe Ritual Cycle

In order to fully appreciate or understand the importance of Ekpe as a religious ritual, it might be necessary to trace what should rightly be called the "Ekpe Cycle", (fig.1). Ekpe is the seventh and the last of activities and ceremonies within the religious-ritual year.[2] I will go through these activities briefly.

The first of these ceremonies is called Ikpa Unwu (famine ceremony). It is done in April after crops have been planted and nothing is left in the barns. As it were, this ceremony is dedicated to the gods to protect the people from famine till the new yams are ready.

The second ceremony which takes place about June is called Ira Ugu (eating fluted pumpkin vegetable sauce). It is a ceremony of hope because soon, it will be time for the harvest of new yams. On an appointed date, each family cooks large quantities of fluted-pumpkin vegetable sauce which is doled out in large measures to everybody.

The third ceremony, Iwa Ji (yam-slicing ceremony) is done about July by the chief-priest of each compound who dedicates the new yam to Njoku, the yam-god. Only after this ceremony are the people free to eat the new yams. With Iwa Ji, the people are free from famine and hunger. From now on merriments can begin. That is why Igba Ogbom (Ogbom Dancing), the first of the year's popular out-door activity, comes at this stage.

Igba Ogbom continues from July to September or October. It is first done at the Ogbom Shrine before the dancers tour the different village squares. During the Ogbom dance, the people are virtually thrown into uncontrolled ecstasy with rhythmic body jerks and twisting of waists and breasts. Highly-trained chorus leaders lead during Ogbom. It is a time for competition in excellence during which the best dancer-artiste for the year is honoured.

Apart from the religion-ritual level, Ogbom possesses all the basic elements of drama. It has good music, song and dancing. The costuming is gorgeous and the action mimetic. The performance is strictly communal. But Ogbom has not passed through the transition necessary for it to become drama because dialogue and word sequence remain merely repetitive and unelevated beyond the sphere of traditional ritual.

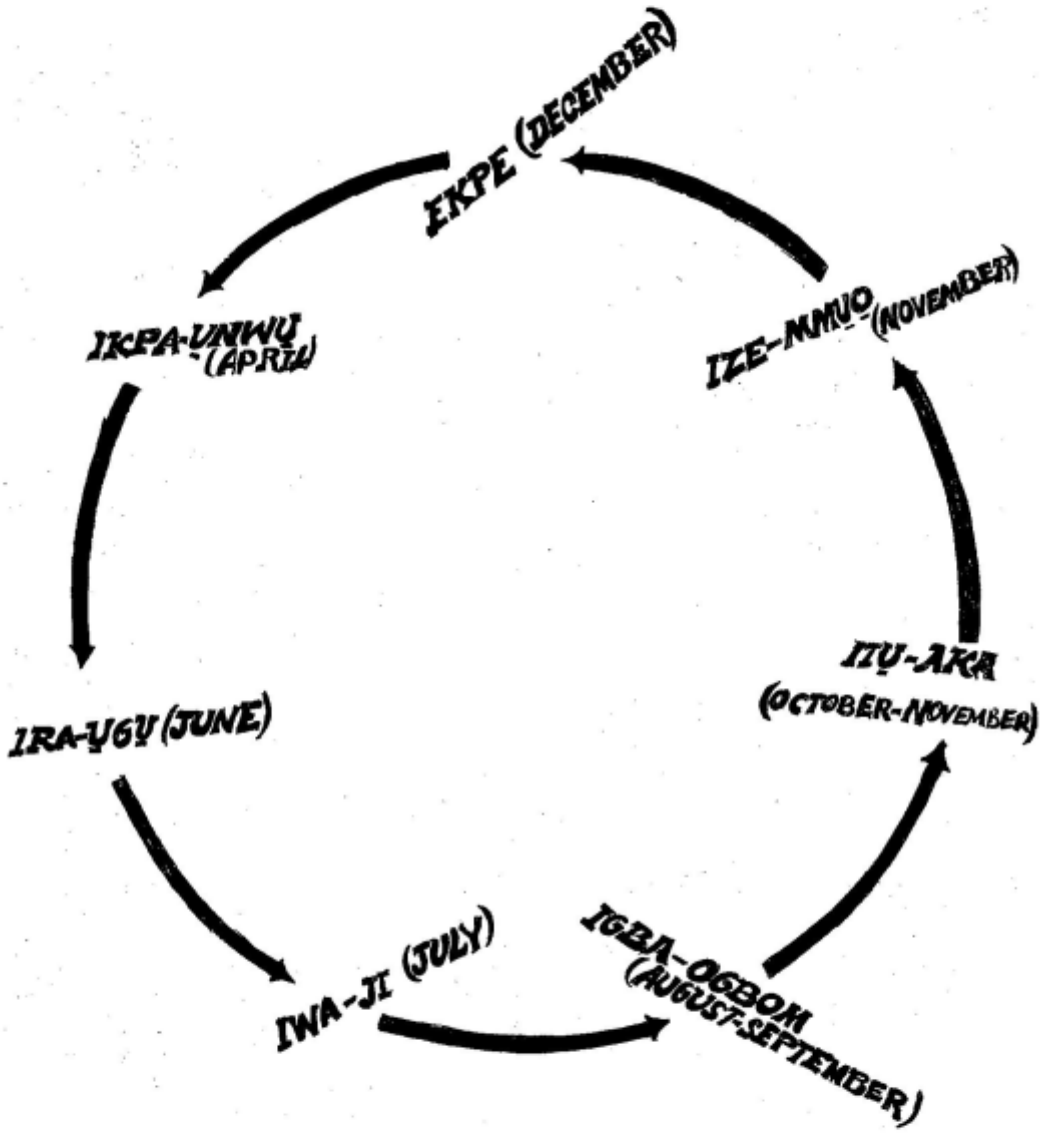


FIG 1. THE EKPE RITUALISTIC CYCLE

The ceremonies of Itu Aka (Thanks-giving Prayer) and Ize Mmuo (Dedication Ceremony) are of very serious ritualistic significance. During Itu Aka each family priest thanks his ancestral gods for protecting his family during the year. He begs favours for the coming year and reprimands the gods for the misfortunes of the passing year. The sacrificial victims are usually he-goats and cocks. The chief priest of each compound co-ordinates and unites all other sacrifices by lesser priests.

Ize Mmuo, the sixt hceremony, has overtones of tragedy. It is a ceremony in which the chief priest for the village goddess, Alumerechi, is chosen. One is not merely chosen by other priests, but Alumerechi herself selects whom she pleases through the oracles. Her choice is unpredictable and never refused once done. It must be accepted. Because this service involves pain and suffering, it is tragic in the true sense of the word. But the "hero-servant" and everybody else must be reconciled with this painful mission. This reconciliation we could regard as temporary suffering which is bound to be resolved into eternal harmony. The spirit of the sacrifice is one of obedience unto a higher authority because the candidates of Alumerechi ceases to have anything physical in common with every one else in the community, but there is 'inexhaustible joy' in the end when the suffering must have been meekly borne. In confrontation with Ize Mmuo the community (audience) is caught by that strange contradiction of pleasure through pain which is the basic element in tragic pleasure.

The servant-hero of Alumerechi although now specially dedicated, represents the entire village. In a sense it is communal service through the physical pain of one man for the spiritual regeneration of the community. Food for this priest is collected by the entire village. Eze Alumerechi appears only at night to deliver messages from Alumerechi. Such messages are shouted from the compound gates of whoever they are meant for. Although Ize Mmuo is celebrated each year, it is not necessary to choose a new Eze Alumerechi every year. The serving one continues till his death which is marked by thunderstorms and heavy down-pour of rain, the signs which mark triumph for Eze Alumerechi and the people.

In the terms of significance as dance-drama the movements for Ize Mmuo are as follows:

(*a*) The consultation of the oracle of Alumerechi by the village priests among whom is the would-be Eze Alumerechi. Alumerechi speaks through the thick and dark wood that is her shrine, answering questions put to her and giving directives:

Eze Dibia:
Alumerechi, anyi abiala!
Onye nwe ala Umuode,
Futa gwa anyi ihe bu uche ghi.
Ura churu anyi l'anyasu,
Anya di anyi l'ama,
Biko, gwa anyi uche ghi.

Alumerechi:
Ekelee m unu umu m
Unu emee-la!
Ije unu abughu ije ojoo
Ama m ihe di unu l'obi, —
Onye yara Alumerechi gi-ibi.

The speeches are made to ogele (gong) accompaniment and when Alumerechi speaks nobody raises his head because She is "invisible".

Translation:

Eze Dibia: Alumerechi we have come!

The owner of Umuode-land,
Come out and divine for us
Sleep forsook us last night
We are very expectant,
Please tell us your mind.

Alumerechi's Voice: Greetings my children!
I owe you thanks
Your visit is not a bad one,
I know the contents of your mind, —
A servant for Alumerechi.

The consultation ends when Alumerechi walks out of his shrine and calls the name of the elect who answers and follows her into the shrine.

(*b*) The second movement comes when the new servant-hero takes farewell of the village never to be seen again. The spiritual conflict comes at this stage—to go or not to go. The elders encourage and he affirms, "what Alumerechi has ordered cannot be changed".

(*c*) At the entrance of the shrine, the chief leaders with the elect move right move left, move forwards and then backwards, then forwards again. They bid the new servant-hero good bye! All the time there is music and movement but not the uncontrolled dancing and merriment as in Ogbom.

When there is no new Eze Alumerechi to choose, the events of the preceding choice are re-enacted and dramatized with plausible impersonation.

The Ekpe Dance-Drama

The successful conclusion of Ize Mmuo means that Ekpe festival, the final of the year's activities can go ahead. In essence, Ekpe combines the tragic and the comic aspects of the proceeding ceremonies. There is ribaldry and great exurberance as in Ogbom but there is also anxiety and spiritual purgation as in Ize Mmuo. Ekpe takes place on Eke day. It is preceded by the Ekpe eve, a free-for-all-night of dancing and rehearsals for drumers, dancers, chorus leaders and their choric groups.

(*a*) *The Choric Groups:* On Ekpe day, many choric groups perform, ranging from groups of elderly men or women to children's groups. But the most important of all these groups is the group comprising men drawn from different quarters of the village who accompany the masquerade dancer and chief actor. Before noon on Ekpe day, this group rouses the village and begins the series of a circular movement designed to take them to the village square and out of it. It is led by a choric leader who in the Greek sense is the "*epheboi*". The *epheboi* sings in praise of the village ancestors, especially those of them who had been chief actors, soliciting their blessings for the current chief actor and the village.

Other choric groups of young men, women and children perform in the village square. They tour the village with the main drummers and not with the chief actor. They move into the village square minutes before the *epheboi* and his group lead in the chief actor. The participation by these minor choric groups goes to add up to the communal significance of Ekpe.

(*b*) *Staging:* The only staging device of Ekpe is the 'Arena Staging' in its most traditional form. There is no raised platform for the chief actor or the drummers.

Everybody is on the same level including the spectators who have to peep over a forest of heads to see what is going on in the innermost circle enclosing the chief actor and masquerade dancer. Nearby tree branches help to form the auditorium.

On the stage, there are four or more concentric circle formations comprising an innermost circle of the *epheboi* and main choric group. This circle encloses the drummers, the sacrificial spot and the main actor. (See fig. 2). Immediately following this group is the circle of men, then the women's circle and the circle of young boys and girls. There is another circle of village stalwarts who act as policemen for the day by watching the behaviour of spectators. The spectators form the outermost circle.

It is significant that the old village shrine forms a background for the stage with the drummers backing it and the chief actor facing it. It reminds one of the traditional Attic theatre thousands of years ago. It is a symbol that the people are engaged in the act of religious celebration even though interest in the dancing might make this significance appear rather remote.

(*c*) *Dance Movements:* The dance movements of Ekpe are the vehicles of plot advancement. In Ekpe there are three main dance movements (*i*) the Entry Dance, (*ii*) the Sacrificial Dance, and (*iii*) the Exit Dance. There is a preliminary dance movement which leads the chief actor to his ancestral shrine where, as it were, he obtains blessings for a successful day's performance. This however takes place outside the arena.

(*i*) In the Entry Dance, the *epheboi* who in essence is a second actor because of his direct communication with the chief actor, sings the entry songs some distance from the main village square where the stage of the day's drama is located:

Alumerechi ndi Umuode ...
Akwuwa nwa Wipi ...
Chigbu nwa Enyia ...
Ndi gbara ekpe la mbu ...
Anyi afuwala ama ...
Duru — nu anyi ga-wa
Alili eleghi Umuode

The choric refrain for each line is
Ehe – e n–ye
Ehe – e n–ye

Translation:
Alumerechi of Umuode people
Akwuwa the son of Wipi
Chigbu the son of Enyia
Chief actors of Ekpe in the past
We are moving to the square
Lead us on to arrive
Shame shall never touch Umuode

Refrain:
Ehe – e n–ye
Ehe – e n–ye

Getting closer to the village square, the chief guide of Ekpe runs forward towards the dancing groups recounting as he moves the fame of the village. He runs back to the chief actor:

Uzo di nma
Ujo atula ghi
Gaa mee ihe nna ghi mere
Alumerechi no ghi l'ukwu.

Translation:

The way is clear
Don't be afraid
Go forward and perform like your father
Alumerechi is your guide.

The chief actor usually hesitates but he is urged onwards till it appears he has passed through the crisis of conscience. He runs forward with full speed into the centre of the square and dances to the "*aja*" music. The choric participants shout joyfully and dance more gracefully.

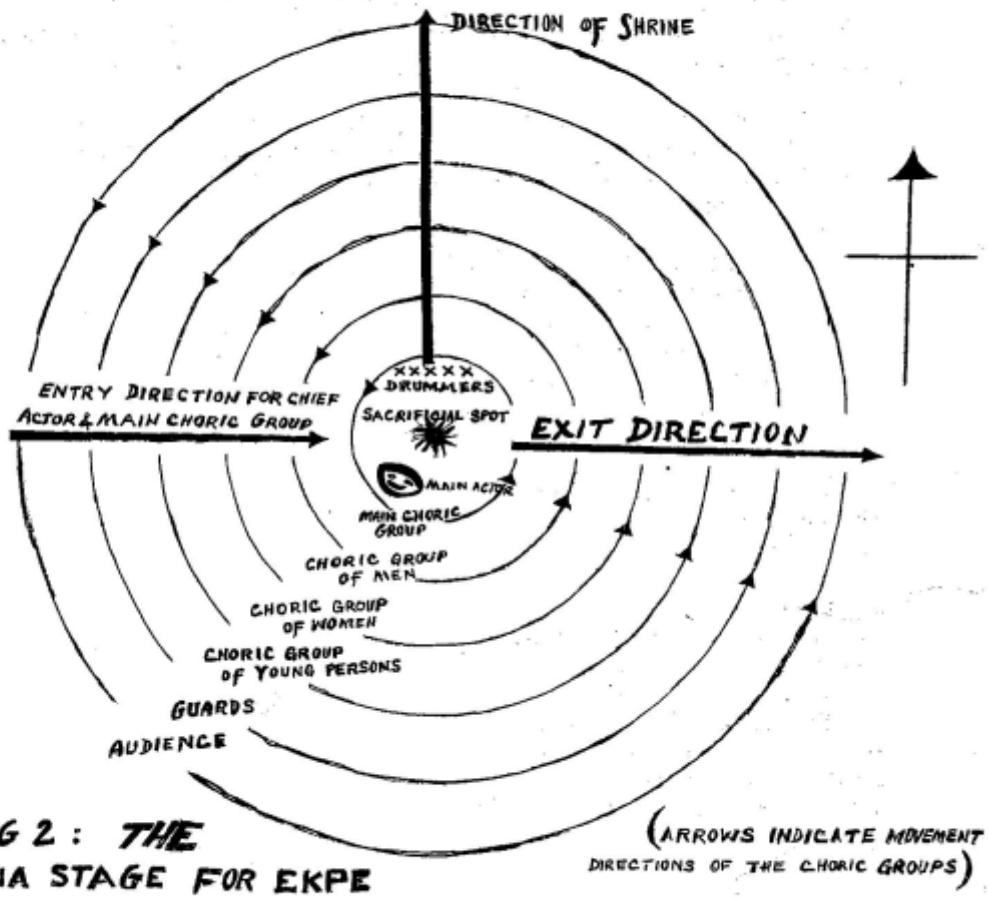


FIG 2: THE ARENA STAGE FOR EKPE

(ARROWS INDICATE MOVEMENT DIRECTIONS OF THE CHORIC GROUPS)

(*ii*) The Second Dance movement is the climax of Ekpe. It marks the critical stage of the performance and it is here that the chief actor's role as a communal representative becomes clear. As the music changes from "*aja*" into a more vigorous type, a sharpened knife is handed over to him. The chief guide admonishes him, "The village looks on you." The chief actor shakes his head as he looks at the knife and although dancing continues it is not with the same gusto as before. This is the time of spiritual and emotional crisis because nobody knows what will be the fate of the village. If the sacrifice is successful, then it is great promise for better things in the coming year. If not, there will be woe!

When the actor takes the knife, he moves round and round the sacrificial goat tied to a peg on the sacrificial spot trying to make a decision. As in all traditional dance-drama, ritual the goings-on in his mind are those of the whole village. That he is re-enacting an ancient sacrifice by which the people recall an adventure by their forbears during which a human being was sacrificed to appease the gods, is known by all. If he succeeds in despatching the goat with one stroke of his knife, there is hope that the village traditoin is in progress. Otherwise, something is wrong somewhere which may need the consultation of the oracles. It is of dramatic significance that the sacrifice must be performed and cannot be shirked but there is the conflict as regards how the stroke is to be administered and the result.

After the chief actor has taken so many tours round the goat, he appears to make up his mind. He waits for the opportunity for the goat to stretch its neck, a propitious moment. All of a sudden he takes a stance, bends and rises — the sacrifice is done! The head of the goat is thrown up to show the audience amid volleys of gun-shots and wild ecstasy. The sacrifice has been successful and the village can expect increases in crops, livestock and children during the coming year".

(*iii*) Finally the chief actor does the "*Okoro-Oji*" after which he exists north from the square. The *Okoro-Oji*, a dance movement supposed to have been borrowed from Ohafia and Aro-Chukwu, spells out the drama just performed. It recalls the ancient past when the village sacrificed a friend for the first time when a conflict arose as regards loyalty to Alumerechi or to the friend. The chorus leader intones it:

I mere enyi–e
I mere enyi–e!

and the group replies:

I mere enyi
L'enyi mere enyi ya,
I mere enyi.

Meaning: You did a friend
A friend did a friend

"did", here standing for a bad turn meted to that unfortunate victim-friend when the villager was confronted with a choice of loyalty. Singing and dancing here assume an ominously suppressed atmosphere.

As the '*epheboi*' leads the chief actor out of the arena, he introduces more satirical or comic lyrics:

Anyi mara ndem ugha o –
Ndem amuta ugha ga – enwe e –
Onye ukwu le – erughu ala e –
Ihe ndi ya l'ukwu e –

while the chorus replies

Owe nye nye
E – hee, E – hee
Owe nye nye.

Translation:

We taught women to tell lies —
Women learnt lies and became experts —
One who cannot bend down,
There's a fault in his waist!

Members of the chorus dance according to indications of their leader. For example, everybody bends as low as possible in "Onye ukwu l'erughu ala" to avoid being accused of waist pain, a sign of impotency.

On the other hand, other choric groups continue to enjoy themselves singing praises for the village:

Ode-ogu bu enyi
Ehe – e
Ode-ogu bu enyi

meaning that Umuode, the great fighters, are great. At this stage women groups satirize men and women who behaved immorally during the year or those found guilty of stealing.

In terms of emotional involvement of both audience and the communal participants of Ekpe, there is traceable an emotional triangle with the sacrificial movement at the peak. The first level marks the merriment and song preceding the sacrifice which forms the climatic level, and the final level, one of resolution which comes after the sacrifice has been successfully or otherwise performed. (*See fig.* 3). If the sacrifice is unsuccessful, the ceremony continues with unwilling participants who go home eventually with sad hearts.

(*d*) *Costuming, Make-up and Props:* As in most traditional African ceremonies, the costumes used for Ekpe are very colourful indeed. The chief actor wears a white net-like mask covering from head to ankles. He carries a wooden figure of Ngwu on his head. Ngwu is one of the deities in the service of Alumerechi. He is the symbol of traditional strength, power or magic. The ufo-bearer carries a magical concoction believed to destroy the power of charms. He guards against any foul deeds or intentions by any member of the audience. His costume consists of tattered rags and he smears his body with charcoal. A real devil incarnate! Some comic asides are provided by the bowman and his wife or mother. The bow-man carries a bow and some arrows and frightens the audience as he pretends to shoot into it. He looks funny with his white and black face and charcoal-smeared body. His female counterpart wears the same make-up in addition to a pair of tattered trousers and a shirt but the bow-man ties a jute bag only around his waist and wears no clothes except for his charms. The pair dances in a truly comic fashion.

The element of disguise or impersonation is very strong in Ekpe. Young boys usually disguise themselves as young girls by wearing ladies' dresses. The trick is so exquisitely done that a spectator cannot find out the truth. Other participants — men, women and children — dress in the traditional fashion by tying large pieces of colourful cloth in addition to singlets or shirts for the men and blouses for the women. Young ladies simply cover their breasts with broad cloth exhibiting the intricate design of the tattoo on their skin. They wear large beads around their waist and their hair-do is strictly cultural. Make-up and

costumes worn in Ekpe prove that these branches of art are no problems for the African traditional artist.

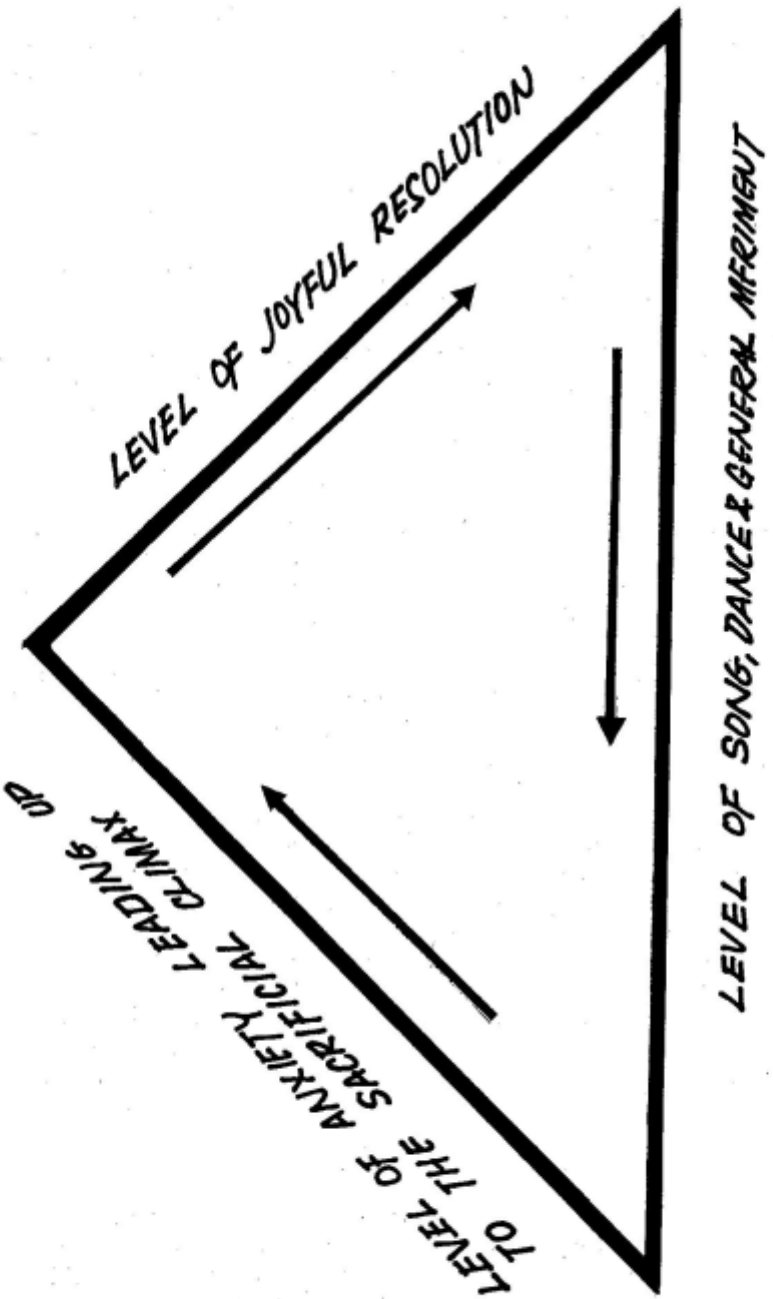


FIG. 3: EMOTIONAL TRIANGLE IN EKPE

The Ekpe Cycle and the Greek Dionysia:

Although comparisons may be misleading, yet there are striking similarities which can be identified between the Ekpe Cycle, and the Attic ceremonies in honour of Dionysius which gave rise to the birth of classical Greek tragedy and comedy. Within the Ekpe cycle there are ceremonies, such as Ogbom Dance, which are comparable to Rural Dionysia, or the Lesser Dionysia, or the Dionysia or the Fields, which were held in many country districts of Attica when the harvests had been completed in December each year, as festival of dedication and thanks-giving to the fertility god for the first fruits of the year.[3] Ogbom also resembles the Lenea festival of fifth-century Greece because the ceremony is a platform for competition in choric verse. The laurel won in Ogbom may be as high as woman given to the choric victor as wife. These festivals do not have any tragic overtones. It is the comic or the satirical that dominate. To be declared the best composer-singer of the year is great honour coveted by everyone.

Ekpe itself is like the Greek City Dionysia during which visitors from all parts of the world visited Athens. Like the City Dionysia, Ekpe enjoys communal participation. Both occasions are dedicated to fertility gods. But whereas Ekpe appears an odd mixture of serious and comic elements, the City Dionysia is performed on one plane only, that of religious—ritual dedication. In movement Ekpe, follows closely the three ritualistic movements of the Greek Chorus. The entry movement of Ekpe could be regarded as the Greek prologos, the sacrificial movement, its stasimon, and the exit movement, the Greek exodos, the three stages in the primary act of religious ritual.

From the drama — theatre development point of view, Ekpe contains the same germs which housed the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. What remains to raise it to the Aeschylean level of drama is a reconstruction of its dialogue to provide for greater communication between the chorus and the chief actor. The Greek idea of the chorus is present in Ekpe and it does the same function of communal representation. In terms of formation, the early Greek dithyramb was also sung in the arena formation which enclosed the officiating chief priest in the middle.

It has to be stressed however that Ekpe, like all 'primitive' African drama, has not followed any clear and known process of development and the absence of records in the past makes any categorical statement on the issue misleading. We cannot however expect any carbon-copy similarity between it and its Attic or any other counterpart, at least because of cultural differences. As T. S. Eliot put it in a broadcast in the year after the first production of *Murder In The Cathedral*, "...There is a good deal about Greek theatre that we do not know and never shall know. But we know that some of its conventions cannot be ours..." And, although I have tried to point out possible similarities, we still cannot regard Ekpe having as developed in the same way as the Greek dithyramb, but one thing is certain and that is that both have their roots in religion and ritual.

The seeming odd mixture of elements of tragedy and comedy in Ekpe, while not borne out in Greek drama, is however vindicated in Shakespeare's tragedies where comedy mixes freely with tragedy. Perhaps such mixtures must have developed in Ekpe as a result of the people's wish to bring the year's events to a climatic peak, and to have the best in the seemingly different worlds of suffering and enjoyment. There is also the strong implication that the people over the years have played down considerably the elements of tragedy and sacrifice in Ekpe because of the introduction of the Christian religion.

Conclusion:

Ekpe as dance-drama stands in dire need of structural reconstruction to lift it above the level of traditional art. Happily enough, it possesses the germs of good drama and the third quarter of the twenth century is fast producing some sense of awareness in Africans who are constantly asking themselves the same question which Oedipus asked himself thousands of years ago "who am I?" The answer to this question for the African is a return to the roots of culture and back to the realm of tradition, ritual and religion. In this sphere,

there are great potentials in African music, drama, art and religion. Like all great developments, in drama especially, the sphere of tradition, religion and ritual housing "ceremonies designed to solve practical problems by putting the worshipper in rapport with the forces that controlled him",[4] are store-houses for the quest. Ekpe provides a possibility for this exercise in reconstruction. Through its media of song and dance great drama could be forged.

FOOT NOTES

1. Among the various communities which perform the Ekpe festival, the people of Umuode-Nsulu, in Ngwa, have retained the traditional and original attributes of Ekpe. I will therefore use this particular Ekpe tradition for my illustrations in this paper.
2. The figure 7 is a magic figure of ancient fame. That Ekpe marks the climax of the year's activities is significant.
3. See Anthony Caputi, *Master works of World Drama; Classical Greece* (D.C. Heath and Coy., Cornell 1968), p.x.
4. Master Works of Drama: *Classical Greece*. p. IX.

INFLUENCE OF MIGRATIONS ON THE CHANGING CULTURAL MAP OF WEST AFRICA

By REUBEN K. UDO

IN A RECENT study of migration in West Africa, Wallerstein (1965) recognised three kinds of migrations on the basis of the periods of occurrence. These are the pre-colonial movements of people which featured colonisation type movements and forced migrations in the form of slavery, colonial period migrations which were prompted by the monitisation of the economy and the resultant radical changes in the social situation, and post-colonial migrations which feature movements into the major urban and industrial centres as well as into areas of intensive cultivation of tree crops and large-scale exploitation of timber and mineral resources. In this study, we are concerned with colonial and post-colonial period migrations which, for practical purposes, are considered to have started during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Rural-urban as well as rural-rural migrations can be looked upon as a process which is similar in some ways to the flow of running water or wind. Like these natural phenomena, such migratory flows bring about marked changes both at the source regions and the destinations of the migrant population. In a developing but predominantly peasant economy such as that of West Africa, the effects of migrations on the society and the cultural landscape are generally more obvious in the receiving areas or destinations than in the source regions. But where the volume of out-migration is considerable, structural changes in the source region as well as the feed-back effects of migrations have also brought about marked cultural changes in the areas which export population. This paper considers some of the cultural changes resulting from migratory movements in West Africa with particular reference to the influence of migrations on the diffusion of innovations, changing food habits and the changing character of the pattern of rural occupance.

Traditional Culture Patterns

To make our discussion more meaningful, we present first a brief survey of relevant aspects of the traditional cultural patterns of West Africa, followed by a review of the general pattern of contemporary migratory movements. In broad terms, there are marked cultural contrasts between north and south, a situation which arises partly from historical antecedents and partly from the location of various areas relative to the sea and the Sahara desert. Historically, the far north has had long trade and cultural contacts with the Mediterranean world and the Middle East and at the beginning of the colonial period, it had better established indigenous administrations and a more developed transport system featuring the use of the horse, the camel and the donkey. Movements and inter-group contacts were much greater in the drier and open grassland country of the north which supported the large ancient empires of Mali, Ghana, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu and more recently, Sokoto-Gwandu. In the south, on the other hand, most people lived in small and spatially-restricted village communities which had rather restricted contacts with their neighbours, excepting perhaps in the territories of the forest kingdoms of Benin, Ife and Ashanti. The north therefore had a relatively more developed society and economy than the south.

Today, the situation has been largely reversed. The West African Sudan now trades with the outside world through the seaports of the coast of Guinea and no longer by caravan across the Sahara desert. Developments in industry, trade and transportation are now concentrated along the coastal areas which have become the main destinations of migrants from the hinterland. The coastal areas are also the scene of large-scale expansion of tree crops by peasants and lately by commercial plantations and are today much more readily accessible and better developed than the grassland north.

Location relative to the sea as well as to the Sahara desert has also influenced the areal predominance of Christianity and Islam, the two religions which have had marked influence on the cultural patterns and pace of development of West Africa. Islam was introduced in pre-colonial days from across the desert and gradually spread southwards until it was checked by Christianity which was introduced during the colonial period from the coast. The rapid spread (diffusion) of Christianity which came to replace the traditional religions of many coastal peoples and the almost complete rejection of Christianity by the northern peoples were to have marked effects on the pace of educational developments in both areas. Since most schools were owned and manned by Christian missions, the vast majority of those who can read and write are in the coastal areas where most of the institutions of higher learning, which also attract populations from the interior, are located.

Crop types and agricultural practices in various areas are largely influenced by the climate, which is in turn largely determined by location relative to the sea and the desert. The significance of crop types and the calender of farming activities will become obvious when we come to consider the seasonal migrations of grassland peoples like the Hausa of Sokoto (Prothero, 1958) and the Mossi of Upper Volta (Skinner, 1965) to the tree crop producing areas of the forest belt. We note, however, at this stage that the greater amount, duration and reliability of rainfall along the coast have combined to produce an environment and agricultural patterns which are basically different from those of the drier and more open landscapes of the north. Thus while the forest peoples subsist largely on root crops (yams, cocoyams and cassava), rice and maize, the grassland peoples cultivate grains (guinea corn, millet and rice). It is climate which has also limited the cultivation of tree crops to the south in much the same way as cattle rearing is a monopoly of the drier north. It is therefore not surprising that farming practices and food habits are different as between north and south.

Traditional ideas about the land are basically similar although details of land tenure systems vary with some groups. With most groups, land is considered to belong to the community and title to land is purpely usufructuary. Every member of the community is entitled to as much land as he requires for cultivation and all aliens are excluded except under special dispensation by the head or elders of the group. Marked changes have, however, occurred and are still taking place in various districts in respect of local attitudes to the land in the densely settled areas of Yorubaland, Iboland, the Mossi country and the Kano district where land is scarce, individual land holding is now common. The introduction of tree crops like cocoa and rubber into the forest belt has also encouraged individual title to land and greater economic independence for young people than in the past, thereby bringing about marked changes in the traditional social order.

To conclude this section on traditional cultural patterns, we note in passing that the slave trade, like the Fulani Jihad, had already started to modify the cultural map of West Africa before the colonial period. The modification of local cultural institutions was particularly marked along the coastal districts, including the Niger delta, where a rather mixed population consisting primarily of slaves was characteristic. The slaves came from various ethnic groups in the hinterland and were essentially migrants who had been forcibly uprooted from their homelands. The mixed society which emerged in the region of the Niger delta and the Cross River estuary has been described by Dike as neither Ibo nor Ijaw, Ibibio nor Efik, but a distinct group with a mixed culture (Dike, 1956, p.30). At Bonny, for example, most people understand and speak the Ibo language largely because this Ijaw town had a predominantly slave population which consisted of Ibos; and it was also this forced migration that brought about the Ibo enclave of Opobo town in an Ibibio-speaking coastal area of the Southeastern State of Nigeria.

The Pattern of Migrations in West Africa

In this section we shall discuss labour migration to the cities, the mining centres and to the tree crop plantations of the forest belt, and migrant tenant farming. Cattle migrations

are excluded since the cattle nomads do not stay long enough at a particular destination to make an impact on the local economy and society, except perhaps in the fly-free uplands of the Guinea Highlands, the Jos Plateau and the Bamenda Highlands where the cattle Fulani may be found all through the year. The essential difference between labour migration and the migration of tenant farmers is that the former involves people who work for wages at their destinations while migrant tenant farmers are self-employed people who pay rent for cultivating the land or for exploiting oil palm groves.

The direction of flow of migrants in West Africa is predominantly from the interior towards the coastal areas which we have seen to be more developed and more accessible. The vast majority of these migrants are wage-earners and since the major cities (which are also industrial centres) as well as the centres of tree crop and timber production are along the coast, labour migration is directed towards these areas. Well-known components of these migratory drifts include the movements of Sokoto Hausa into the cocoa belt of Nigeria and Ghana (Prothero, 1958), Mossi migrations to the Ashanti cocoa fields and the plantations of the Ivory Coast (Skinner, 1965) and the so-called strange farmers who move into Senegambia from Guinea and Mali (Jarrett, 1949, pp.649–57). These are essentially international movements, the future of which has been jeopardised since 1968 following the large-scale expulsion of alien Africans from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana.

In terms of the number involved and the impact on the society and economy, internal migrations within the larger states of Nigeria, Ghana and Senegambia are more significant. A large proportion of those involved in internal migrations move into the cities but there is a growing number of rural-rural migrants in Nigeria (Udo, 1970, pp.616–24), Ghana (Poly Hill, 1963,) and Senegambia (Jarrett, 1949). These groups of rural-rural migrants have introduced an east-west component into the flow map. In Nigeria the migrant farmers who originate from the eastern states and parts of the midwest state move westwards into the cocoa and rubber growing areas of southwestern Nigeria. In Ghana, the Krobo move in a westward direction and so do the strange farmers of Gambia.

It is striking, though not surprising, to observe that the main source regions for migrants are the very densely populated parts of West Africa with rural densities of more than 500 persons per square mile, rising to over 800 persons per square mile in parts of the eastern states of Nigeria. In these areas available farmland is inadequate to meet current demands by the local population, some of whom are obliged to migrate to earn a living in other parts of West Africa. A few sparsely settled rural areas with under 200 persons per square mile such as Okitipupa division of Western Nigeria or the Southern parts of Niger Republic which have very inadequate resource bases also export population to more densely settled but rapidly growing areas as the cocoa belt of Southwestern Nigeria.

Wage-earning migrants invariably go to the cities and tree crop producing areas while self-employed migrant farmers go to districts where they can rent farmland or oil palm groves. But it is not very sparsely settled area with surplus farmland or dense stands of oil palm trees that attract migrant farmers. Rather migrant food farmers are attracted to food deficit rural areas or to the neighbourhood of cities where their food products can be readily marketed.

Migration and the Diffusion of Innovation

According to Barnett (1953, p.7) an innovation is any thought, behaviour, or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms. Fertilizers, new crops or new crop varieties, new religious sects and insecticides, to mention a few examples are all innovations. Diffusion is the process of transfer of habit, idea or a new invention (innovation) from one individual to another within a group or from one group to another (Zaltman, 1965). Since innovations are initiated by individuals or a group of individuals and since culture is the link between individuals or groups, the diffusion and adoption of innovation constitutes the basis of cultural change. Further the adoption or rejection of an innovation depends largely on the existing cultural conditions of the society in which the

individual or group live and for this reason, studies of innovations invariably touch upon the existing cultures of the group.

The migrant through personal contacts at his destination and when he returns to his source region either permanently or for short home visits is an important agent of diffusion of innovations. Returning migrants from cities or from other cultural areas have, as a result of their enhanced status acquired by the mere fact of having travelled to a distant place, often featured as opinion leaders fostering the spatial diffusion of ideas, fashions and other innovations, thereby bringing about social and cultural changes. The challenges of a new environment, physical or cultural, usually pose the problem of adaptation or adjustment to the migrant, who in the process of tackling such problems may come up with an idea (innovation) which need not be entirely original but could be an adaptation to suit his new environment. The migrant is therefore not only an agent of the diffusion process but also one who, because of the peculiar circumstances of his new environment, becomes an innovator.

Empirical evidence abound all over the world on the role of migrants (international as well as internal, i.e. within the same country) as innovators or agents of the diffusion process. We are, however, concerned with the role of migrants in the changing cultural map of West Africa and in the following sections we shall examine specifically their contribution to the diffusion of crops, food habits and other cultural practices as well as their role in the transformation of some cultural landscapes through the spread of farming practices, house types, and the grouping of habitations.

Migration and Crop Diffusion

The case of the introduction and diffusion of cocoa in West Africa is a classic example of the innovation and diffusion of crops by migrants. Cocoa was introduced into Ghana in 1876 by a return-migrant, Tetteh Quashie, who brought the 'golden' pods of the crop that was to dominate the economy of Ghana for almost a century. The diffusion of this crop in Ghana was rapid and amongst others the Krobo migrant cocoa farmer of Southern Ghana (Polly Hill, 1963) contributed a lot to the spread of the crop. In other countries including Nigeria, the introduction and diffusion of cocoa has been largely the work of return-migrants. Cocoa cultivation in such peripheral areas as Ekiti, Afenmai and Offa was introduced by return-migrants who had worked in the belt of Yorubaland for many years as agricultural labourers.

Another tree crop whose spread has been largely through the agency of migrants is the Kola nut tree. Various varieties are grown in the forest belt of West Africa but the kola of commerce, *Kola Nitida* or *'Gbanja'* or *'Goro'* which is exported to northern Nigeria from Yorubaland is not indigenous to Nigeria. Rather this variety grows in the forests of Ashanti, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone and was introduced into Western Nigeria after the first World War. Before *kola nitida* was introduced by return-migrants from Ghana into the Yoruba cocoa belt, the local variety (*kola acuminata* or *'Abata'*) grew wild in the bush and Nigeria depended largely on kola exports from Ghana and Sierra Leone. Today, kola has displaced cocoa as the major cash crop in Ijebu Province and is largely responsible for the rapid growth of the town of Shagamu. Return-migrants from Ghana and internal migrations within Yorubaland have played a major role in the diffusion of this crop which now dominates the agricultural landscape of Ijebu-Remo Division.

Crops like groundnuts and cassava which are not indigenous to West Africa as well as rice and some variety of yams have been diffused largely through the agency of migrants. Groundnut was first introduced into Senegal in the 16th century from where it spread eastwards into Nigeria. The spread of cassava, including the sweet variety brought into parts of eastern Nigeria by return-migrants from Fernando Po has also owed a lot to the activities of migrants. Local examples of the introduction of new crops by migrants abound all over West Africa. Thus migrants of eastern Nigeria origin have introduced various vegetables like the fluted pupkins into Yorubaland where they settle as tenant farmers. The

introduction of rice into parts of Bende Division is credited to migrants from Afikpo and Abakaliki who travel every year to Bende to work as seasonal farm labourers. As part-payment for their services, these migrants are often allocated some area of farmland to cultivate and it was on such land that some migrants first cultivated rice in Bende Division. The crop has since been adopted by a large number of local farmers.

Migration and Changing Food Habits

It is reasonable to infer from the review of crop diffusion presented in the last section that migration has resulted in a greater variety of staple foods in various localities than was the case about fifty years ago. This observation is generally true inspite of the fact that a cultural group may adopt the production of a particular food crop for sale without necessarily adopting it as a staple food. In the middle Niger Valley of Nigeria for example, many ethnic groups who adopted rice cultivation produced the crop for sale but not for local consumption, although the situation is now changing. It is also true that the great majority of market gardners in the immediate outskirits of cities like Lagos and Ibadan produce such crops like carrots, lettuce and cabages for the urban market and not for home consumption. These exceptions notwithstanding, the diffusion of crops has in general meant the adoption of new dishes and the consequent enrichment of the diet of the peoples of West Africa.

Starting first with the situation at the destination of migrants, we find that initially the Mossi migrant to Kumasi, the Ibo migrant to Kano or the Hausa migrant to Ibadan is willing to pay for food items that he is used to, provided they are available. It is this preference for traditional food items that has contributed to the expansion of inter-regional trade in certain staple food crops in West Africa. Southern migrants to the Sudanese cities of Kano, Sokoto and Maiduguri prefer garri, yams and cocoyams to the local staples which consist of guinea corn, millet and acha (hungry rice). Often the prices for non-local food items are rather high and in some cases, such food items are even not avilable. Many migrants have therefore had to adopt the common dishes of the area where they settle. Today, many southern Nigerians living in the northern states take with relish grain dishes which they refused at first just as grain eating, Mossi migrants to Ashanti feed on yams (Skinner, 1965, p.75). Once acquired, food habits tend to persist and many return-migrants are known to have carried home new dishes and menus to their districts of origin. The fact that most source regions for migrants are also food deficit areas (Udo, 1971) which suffer from periodic food shortages has contributed to the ready adoption of 'foreign' food items in such areas.

Often, it is the host community that adopts some of the favourite dishes of the migrant population. *Akara* (bean balls), *moi moi* (from beans) *eko* or *akamu* (from maize) and *dodo* (fried plantain) which are common dishes amongst the Ibos and Ibibios of south-eastern Nigeria are traditional Yoruba dishes introduced into the former Eastern Nigeria by Yoruba migrants. Similarly, Hausa communities all over southern Nigeria have sold the habit of eating *suya* (roasted meat on sticks) to all and sundry. The nomadic cattle Fulani has also done a lot to popularise the drinking of fresh milk amongst various ethnic groups in the middle belt of West Africa.

Diffusion of Skills and Religions sects through migration

The diffusion of urban skills into rural central places is largely through the agency of migrants. In the three eastern states of Nigeria as well as in the northern states, the first motor mechanics were Yorubas who had migrated to settle in other parts of the country. Local people who now dominate this trade were apprenticed to them before qualifying to establish on their own. There were also cases in which apprentices migrated to distant towns to learn some trades before returning to their home districts to establish. The skill thus acquired is later diffused as more and more young people get apprenticed to the original artisan or innovator of the particular trade in the locality. It is through this process that

such skills as tailoring, carpentry, professional photography, to mention a few, have spread to many parts of Nigeria.

Migrants have been largely responsible for introducing new religious sects into various rural areas of West Africa. This is particularly true of the spiritual churches of which there are well over twenty sects in West Africa. The more widely adopted sects include Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of Christ, Mount Zion and Brotherhood of the Cross and Star. The spread of these pseudo-Churches which combine elements of Christianity with rituals formerly associated with traditional religions has been remarkable since the end of the Second World War. A village of about 200 inhabitants may have as many as seven of these separatist churches which have mushroomed all over the southern parts of West Africa. Migrants to cities as well as to rural areas have featured prominently in originating these sects in their destinations in much the same way as return-migrants have been known to start new sects in their villages of origin.

Migrants have also contributed to the spread of Islam during the colonial period. Before this period, the spread of Islam was essentially through conquest and imposition of the faith on the conquered but since about 1920 the spread of Islam has been largely through peaceful means in which migrants have played an important part. In the middle Niger districts of Nigeria, including Nupeland, there has been an increasing number of Hausa migrants who settle permanently to cultivate food crops on land given to them by the indigenous population. Strangely, it is the local people who adopt Hausa, the language of the migrant community and not vice versa, thus making for the southward spread of Hausa culture to areas which lie outside the traditional territory of Hausaland (Adeniji, 1972). The impact of Islam on the culture, including land tenure systems of the people adopting Islam in the middle belt and indeed in southwestern Nigeria has meant a southward spread of elements of Sudanese culture into the forest regions of Guinea.

It is relevant to point out that the political system of indirect rule during the colonial period tended to foster the spread of Sudanese culture (including Islam) to those non-Islamised districts which were in the former Northern Nigeria. The district heads of the northern states were all appointed by the Emir who was a Moslem and who derived authority from the Sokoto caliphate. This fact helped in the free movement and settlement of Hausa peasants (agents of Islamic culture) in non-Islamised areas of the northern states of Nigeria. It is also true that in recent years many educated christians in the middle belt have adopted Islam largely because of social considerations, Islam being the religion of the ruling houses in this part of the country.

Migration, Urbanisation and Pattern of Rural Occupance

Although pre-colonial West Africa had many traditional urban centres, particularly in Yorubaland, Mali and Hausaland, unlike other parts of Africa south of the Sahara, the origin of and the rapid growth of some of the more important urban centres date from the colonial period. The process of urbanisation continues and so do the social changes associated with urbanisation. The rise of many new towns and the growth of some traditional towns have been a product of the changing economy of West Africa, and so far, the greater percentage of urban residents still consist of migrants, that is people born outside these centres.

Amongst other things, these urban centres have accelerated cultural contacts and borrowings. This is easily seen in the diffusion of urban ways of behaving into rual areas as well as in the increasing number urban-type houses in rural areas. Many migrants to the city as well as to other rural areas normally plan to return to their village of origin to spend their old age and therefore aim to build a good house back home. Such a house is in itself an evidence of the material success of the migrant and is a status symbol. The spread of Brazillian house types from the Lagos and Abeokuta districts to other parts of Nigeria is, for instance, largely due to the activities of return-migrants.

Today, most towns and cities in West Africa have large communities of African stran-

gers concentrated in special wards where they sometimes continue to follow traditional patterns of behaviour. Thus in Nigeria, we have large Hausa communities settled in special areas (*Sabo*) in Ibadan, Shagamu and Calabar in much the same way as Southern Nigerians occupy special areas, (Sabongari new towns) in the northern cities of Zaria, Kano and Sokoto. Unfortunately, the residential pattern noted above tends to make some migrant group rather inward looking, thereby impeding the process of cultural diffusion.

Migrations into rural areas have also brought about new settlement forms and house types in certain parts of the forest belt which constitutes the main centre of attraction for rural-rural migrants. In the Ghananian cocoa belt for instance, the method of land division of Krobo migrant cocoa farmers has introduced a novel pattern of land use and settlement into Akwapim and Akim Abuakwa districts. Under the *huza* method of land acquisition and allocation to members of the group, the field pattern consists of long, narrow, rectangular farms, each with its owner's dwelling at one end, giving rise to a linear settlement which according to Boateng may sometimes be as long as three miles (Boateng, 1955, p.160). A huza is defined as a tract of land bought by a group of people, under the leadership of an elected elder, who makes all negotiations with the seller and supervises the sub-division of the land among the subscribers. Individual farms in each huza are separated by boundaries running at right angles to a footpath or stream, giving rise to a rectangular pattern (Field, 1943, p.54).

In the forest belt of southwestern Nigeria which attracts a large number of migrants from various parts of the country, the indigenous Yoruba and Bini peoples live in closely nucleated settlement while those migrants whose main occupation is palm oil production live in isolated camps which house one or two families. These camps, which are usually located near streams are much smaller in size than the indigenous cocoa or distant food farm settlements, some of which have grown up into large villages. The camps are located near to motorable roads and appear to be distributed in such a way as to make for a large enough area of oil palm stands to keep the migrants fully employed for most of the year.

It is also interesting that Isoko and Urhobo migrants into these forests build houses which are similar to those in their home districts but quite distinct from Yoruba and Bini house types. Back home, Isoko and Urhobo people use sticks and bamboos for constructing the walls of their houses while the Binis and Yoruba peoples build walls of mud with or without a wattle framework. The Isoko and Urhobo house type takes less time to construct but the reason for the prevalence of this style of building in their home districts has to do with the character of the soil which is rather sandy and is not therefore suitable for building like the sticky earth of the forest belt.

Conclusion

Prof. Daryll Forde's pioneering paper on the cultural map of West Africa (Forde, 1953) stressed the marked contrasts between forest, open woodland, savanna and scrub in the opportunities they have afforded for human movement and settlement, for cultural elaboration and diffusion. He recognised that basic differences exist between savanna and forest in respect of language, ease of movement of people and ideas (innovations) and staple food crops; differences which we have attributed largely to geographical location but also to the physical environment. The last half century has seen a greater mingling of peoples in West Africa and in this paper we stress the role of migration in the diffusion of innovation, resulting in the extension of cultural boundaries, modification and enrichment of some cultures and the weakening of environmental barriers between north and south.

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FUNCTIONAL CO-OPERATION IN WEST AFRICA: AN INTRODUCTION

By MAZI RAY OFOEGBU

THIS ESSAY IS divided into three parts. The first examines the emergence of new states in West Africa and the choice by these new States of a matrix of association and relationship. Faced with options between national consolidation, political unification and functional co-operation, available evidence indicates that their choice is functional co-operation. The second part discusses generally the obstacles to functionalism in West Africa and pinpoints these as problems associated with boundary functions such as circulation, migration, smuggling, industrial co-ordination, disputed territories, and the economic exploitation of inter-territorial water basins. The final part is a general discussion which identifies and analyses the political and legal foundations so far laid in West Africa for the removal or minimization of the obstacles to, and the promotion of, functional co-operation in West Africa.

The emergence of independent sovereign states in West Africa did not follow any pre-determined policy or pattern of development. Neither British statesmen nor their French and German counterparts envisaged, early in this century, that their West African colonies would, within fifty years, become sovereign states. On the other hand, the resultant international setting defied the anticipation of the Congress for British West Africa. This regional movement for reform and change had expected a united West Africa in the "British" Commonwealth of Nations. What emerged however was a group of four West African Members of the Commonwealth.

In the former Afrique Occidentale Francaise (AOF), the pattern of change was abrupt and more unpredictable. Those who expected the AOF to survive as a single unit either independent of France or within an acceptable French constitutional system competed for power with those who wanted its disintegration. Despite the 'West African' outlook or the inter-territorial leanings and orientation of most 'Ponty graduates'[1] who rose to positions of influence and power in the civil administration of French West Africa and in the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA), it became clear that with the *loi-cadre* which decentralized political power in the federation and with the limited option in the Gaullist referendum of 1958 between territorial autonomy within the French Community and sovereign independence outside the Community, "federation on the AOF level could not be saved."[2] Other subsequent developments destroyed both the Gaullist 'Communaute' arrangement and the Mali Federation.[3]

Liberia, the only independent West Africa State during the colonial period in West Africa was also affected by this rapid change. It found itself in a new and more satisfactory international environment. It was no longer confronted on all frontiers by powerful and well-established European powers (Britain and France) which were ready and eager to exploit its weaknesses and lack of experience. It became, in 1960, the oldest and most experienced independent African state in West Africa.

There was no readily available formula or ready-made system, for regional international relations in West Africa. There was however a willingness, on the part of the new states, to establish a working system by promoting international co-operation. Differences existed on "how best" to bring this about. Some leaders wanted immediate political unification; others wanted to consolidate within the existing state system; while others urged functional co-operation. The question of modalities thus became relevant.

Ghana had in 1957 made the famous declaration that its independence would be meaningless unless it was linked with the total liberation of all Africa. The idea of a union between Ghana, Guinea and Mali was seen as the starting point of this new political realignment in West Africa. Although the Sanniquellie conference[4] in 1959 failed to convert Liberia to the "political unificationist" school of thought, no change oc-

curred in Ghana's primary emphasis on West African Union. At Sanniquellie, Nkrumah lucidly reiterated the Ghana policy position when he pleaded:

> "Let us not postpone this task of laying the foundation of West African Unity. We, the leaders and reprsentatives of Liberia, Guinea and Ghana, the three independent nations in this part of the continent, must make the beginning. We cannot delay. Time passes..

An opposing school of thought was represented by the Ivory Coast. In the territorialist and federalist controversy in French West Africa, the Ivory Coast rejected the federal concept. The *Conseil de l'Entente,* a limited inter-state system of customs co-operation, represented what was acceptable to it. Adherents to this school of thought were ready to use and consolidate, within the present frontiers, that which "presently exists", and were unprepared for "a reconstruction of the political map of Africa".[6] In rejecting political unification, they postulated national consolidation, and made co-operation a secondary objective of policy.

The third framework for regional international relations suggested for West Africa was more liberal and more outward-looking than the model based on national consolidation. It revived, in a modified form, the Russian Plan for Europe at Aix-In-Chapelle in 1815.[7] This programme aimed at a collective guarantee for all "existing forms of government as well as all frontiers and possessions .." It was basically a system of common responsibility for the preservation and perpetuation of the status quo. The Cairo Proposals in 1964 of Sir Albert Margai sought this system of collective guarantees.

Finally, some West African leaders realised the inevitable consequences of many small and unviable states with problematic frontiers but detested any unprepared experimentation with a continental government described by Dr. Azikiwe as the "unknown Leviathan".[8] What they urged were deliberate government measures towards the removal of frontier barriers, and the deliberate pursuit of economic co-operation as policies likely to diminish boundary differences and pave the way for closer future association. Their intellectual source and fount of inspiration was Professor David Mitrany who, in his *Working Peace System,* advocated a modification of the content and working of sovereignty through an "inconspicuous and partial transfer of authority to international functional organs. In this way, functionalism would overlay political divisions with a spreading web of international activities and agencies in which and through which the interests and life of nations would be gradually integrated".[9]

The essentials of this concept of "functionalism" are an inter-dependence which is continuous in-character, and a flexibility which permits adaptation and growth.[10] Applied to the international political system, functionalism would not destroy states, but states, aided by international functional agencies and organs, would deliberately make inter-dependence, reciprocity, adaptation and growth possible. Conscious of this acceptance of "growth", some functionalists claim "ripples" or "spillover" effects which, given some goodwill, could lead to political unification. Hence there are among functionalists those who see the concept of international co-operation as a tool for the gradual erosion of the barriers of sovereignty, and the "conservatives" who see it as an end in itself.

There was evidence of the acceptance of this theory in West Africa. Opponents of political unification, national consolidation and the legalization of existing frontiers, saw functional co-operation as the basis of peace and progress in West Africa. Within the functionalist group, there was a division between those who accept functionalism as a means to an end and those who accept it as an end itself.

The new states thus emerged in West Africa and succeeded to unsatisfactory colonial and administrative boundaries which became their international frontiers. Shielded by the protective walls of state frontiers, many vested political and economic interests grew in influence and importance, and insisted on consolidation within national boundaries. The pulls of national consolidation were great; their attractions were many; and their pressures seemed irresistible. As it is almost always easier to destroy than it is to create

and sustain, steps were taken in former British West Africa and French West Africa to justify features of this old adage. The unequal pace of advance towards independence in British West Africa and the lack of geographical contiguity between its constituent units played into the hands of those who looked inwards for power and influence. In the former French West Africa, as has been aptly illustrated by Prof. S. K. Panter-Brick, much damage was done to pre-independence common service and customs union by the unilateralists.[11] In the words of Dr. Azikiwe:

> "It would appear that whilst European nations may be rightly accused of balkanizing Africa in the nineteenth century, yet they have atoned for it by federating many African territories, which are now been baldanized by Africa nationalists on the attainment of the independence of their countries.

These centrifugal tendencies contended, and are still contending, with some inescapable realities, some newer forces and some understandable pressures. It was appreciated that the new states should not ignore the realities of coast-hinterland relations or overlook the forces for rational interstate economic relations. It was also realized that they require a system of peaceful co-existence. These involved great sacrifices and broader outlook and orientation. The paths chosen aimed not at re-establishing and maintaining earlier colonial channels of inter-territorial collaboration, but at creating links which did not exist before between Francophone and Anglophone West Africa. Impetuous plunges into forging these new networks of co-operation were avoided, but the rate of change and transition in a relatively short period was quick. There were headaches but these were not unexpected since change is often accompanied by teething problems.

The first obstacle to co-operation among the new States came from boundaries. None of the international boundaries of the new States was perfect. None could have been. Each boundary was and has continued to be a source of friction and discontent among frontier peoples. This does not however imply that the boundaries were deliberately arranged to provoke unease, tension and hostility. Such would be far from the truth. There was a strong, though mistaken, belief held by the then colonial decision-makers that normal relations between France and Britain would guarantee peace and co-operation in West Africa. There were provisions in most boundary treaties requiring the utmost of *Good Faith* and trust between the colonial contracting powers and their agents. But there were legal restrictions on the traditional relationship between a boundary chief and some of his people who were separated from him by the new international frontiers. We also find treaty limitations on the right to build and develop one's farmland across the new international boundaries. These unexpected changes caused disaffection. The introduction of customs checks and boundary closures by modern governments worsened the situation. Because the new states of West Africa did not inherit policies establishing tariff harmonisation, it was not easy, immediately at independence, to provide for free circulation of persons, and trans-frontier movements of cattle and goods.

The oldest independent state, Liberia, did not fare better. From its prolonged and arduous boundary negotiations, it emerged defeated, truncated and harassed but happy that it was able to preserve its independence. At its Kissi, Kanre Lahoun, Mano River, Zinta, Trans-Makona, and the Cavally regions, it suffered reverses, conceded territories to Britain and France, and was saddled with frontier communities divided by international boundaries. Its Ports Cape Mount and Monrovia were separated from their former sources of hinterland goods.

The strictly "compromise" nature of the frontier arrangements in West Africa and the "restrictive" and "negative" functions of these frontiers were the direct sources of the human problems of circulation which today characterize international relations in West Africa. They also interfere adversely with the traditional rights of frontier peoples. It became increasingly necessary to grant to migrant nomads of West Africa and to their cattle and goods, rights similar to those which Norway, Sweden, Finland and the U.S.S.R. granted to the Swedish and Finnish Lapps and their reindeer.[13]

The possible domestic political risks involved in over-generous or extremely liberal policies on 'circulation' and 'migration' were real and enormous, and cannot be overlooked. They lead ultimately to irredentism. But irredentism represents only the extreme protest action observable in two or three frontier areas of West Africa. One of the major political risks which seems to the writer to have weighed heavily in the minds of West African decision-makers was the link between intra-party alignments and 'liberal' migration and circulation policies. For example, within the PDCI, the only political party of the Ivory Coast, the boundary peoples (Sanwi-Nzima, Kroo-Grebo, Wa-Sapelinga, and the Mandingo areas of the North West) sought greater power and more effective influence in the party and government. Although they were not formally bound by any alliance of frontier groups determined to resist the hardline attitude of the ultra-nationalist "Ligne des Originaires de la Cote de'Ivoire", they nevertheless shared common sympathies and aspirations as boundary and minority groups within the party. They seemed more outward-looking than the rest, and given political power in the country, they were more disposed towards establishing the closest possible relationships with the Ivory Coast's neighbours (Ghana, the Upper Volta, Guinea and Liberia). 'Circulation' and 'migration' policies which increased the numerical and economic strength of the frontier groups, and in effect increased part of their political effectiveness within the PDCI, constituted threats to the present leadership of Ivory Coast and were risks not worth taking by that leadership. Calculations such as these led to restrictive measures along the frontiers. But the dilemma was that restrictive frontier policies worsened interstate relations between the Ivory Coast and its neighbours.

On the Ghana-Togo frontier, every closure of the boundary, every increase of the powers and instructions of customs officers, and every limitation on re-exports and movements across frontiers, increased friction and caused tension between Ghana and Togo. Similarly in the Bight of Benin, when the Benin-Niger Railway and road link connecting the port of Cotonou (Dahomey) and the Republic of Niger was closed following the Lette Island dispute,[14] both Dahomey and Niger suffered revenue losses and severed normal relations for twelve months.

On migration, it was discovered that if states are guided by political considerations in deciding to limit or prohibit seasonal trans-frontier movements, they antagonise important groups within their states. Palmer, for example, points out that in the Senegambia, the Gambia farmer welcomes the Senegalese migrant farmers and "any attempt by Government or the native authority to control the influx of these 'strange farmers' is viewed by the ordinary Gambian with grave concern."[15]

The resultant problem for the new states was the challenging task of reconciling on the one hand the necessity for making trans-frontier movements and migration easier and quicker and, on the other hand, the pressure for checking the entry of unwanted persons and goods into these states through customs control.

Naturally obstacles to fruitful international relations caused by 'circulation' and 'migration' are inseparable from those associated with customs administration, transport links and frontier trade. Acceptable solutions for the latter group of problems such as customs harmonization, free trade or a Common Market induce increases in trade and bring satisfaction to frontier districts. They also lessen interstate friction and tension.

This in part explains why Eugene Stanley urged strongly that international boundaries should not become "economic barriers (or be allowed) directly or indirectly (to divert) the complex flow of production and distribution out of the channels they would otherwise follow".[16] Since this did not happen before independence in West Africa, basic structural re-arrangements of "flow" became necessary. What existed before the Dakar West African Conference on Customs Administration was a multitude of customs regimes, of duty and tax variations, and of cumbersome administrative regulations enforced by overworked, under-staffed and sometimes misguided and overzealous customs officers. But in the absence of any miraculous achievement of political unification in the foreseeable future, all available evidence indicates that increased intra-West African trade will largely

depend on the simplification and standardization of customs administration as well as on the establishment of rapport and purposive collaboration between officials along each international boundary.

Smuggling was also another obstacle. The menace and irritation caused by smuggling necessitated interstate discussions of tariff questions, duty and tax disparities, and possible harmonization measures enforceable bilaterally or sub-regionally in a free trade system or customs union. The penalty for inaction was shown to be first, disproportionate expenditure on preventive services; secondly, a weakening of the effectiveness of necessary import prohibition measures; and thirdly, a threat to young import-substitution industries.

The related obstacle to co-operation caused by inadequate and high transport costs is equally important. M. Marcell Capet stated in 1958 that

> "the cost of transport between the port of Abidjan on the Ivory Coast and almost any point at Upper Volta (its immediate neighbouring state in the north) would until recently not have been less than that of a shipment from Marseille to Abidjan."[17]

President Nkrumah, in his opening address to the West African Conference on Transport Problems as well as in his *Africa's Finest Hour*, called attention to the unsatisfactory and inadequate state of inter-territorial transport links in West Africa.[18] In certain areas, fundamental structural re-organisations seemed inescapable. Philippe Fromont's *Les Transporte dans Economics Sours-Developees* illustrated how, before the approach of independence, the lower Niger river in Nigeria was abandoned as the natural outlet for exports from parts of Mali, Niger and Cameroun. He also stated that administrators in these territories made strenuous efforts "to direct all traffic towards Dakar". These were not rational decisions. They were also not likely to continue for long after independence.

At the industrial level, there was a dearth of information on national policies and this constituted obstacles to functional co-operation. West African advocates of national consolidation rarely deny that there are limits to what can rationally be done within the confines of the existing states. On the other hand, 'political unificationists' offer no arguments which are based on assessed demand and supply factors in justification of their desire for regional institutional direction. The result, especially in the industrial sectors, has been that spheres for national expansion were not, until comparatively recently, known; spheres for co-ordination were undefined; and the spheres for joint undertakings could not be named. Definitely no rational policy on international specialisation, division of labour, and industrial co-ordination, could be shaped in the regional international setting of exclusiveness, and in the absence of expertly assessed resources and market needs. The need urgently existed for taking regional West African factors into account even in purely national economic plans. It was also necessary to create wider markets in West Africa and aim at the achievement of economies of scale. It was realized that expert studies, planning and creation of larger markets will lead to the avoidance of wasteful expenditures in project duplication and produce advantages of unified requests for scarce investment capital. These were hard facts in favour of industrial co-ordination. But the success of industrial co-ordination in West Africa depended on functional arrangements restraining states from pursuing certain unilateral objectives. It required deliberate and flexible measures, some permanent institutions, and guaranteed political support.

Similarly on inter-territorial river and water basins of West Africa, riparian states faced the type of problems encountered in connection with industrial co-ordination. But they recognised the limitations imposed on unilateral actions by existing frontiers and were aware that the choices open to them were between inaction, unprofitable and unco-ordinated national projects, or inter-state co-operation.

Another serious obstacle to international co-operation in West Africa was caused by political differences over frontier locations and ownership of some frontier territories.

The Cameroun Republic was dissatisfied with the attribution of the Northern Camerouns to Nigeria; and Ghana demanded the reunification of the Agnie-Nzima people of the Ivory Coast with their counterparts in Ghana. Nigeria and the Ivory Coast rejected these demands for territorial transfers. In the Ghana sub-region, normal relations were strained by the use of Togolese territory for political refugee activities against Ghana as well as by the diverse demands for Ewe unification. Casamance in Senegal remained isolated by the Gambia from Upper Senegal which was the seat of power, influence and administration. This situation was unsatisfactory both to Senegal and the Gambia. Each of these territorial and political problems required peaceful solutions.

These were the regional international problems of the new states of West Africa. They were real and urgent. The choices seemed obvious after expert discussions and studies, and the purposes looked precise. Leaders were ready to re-think some of their policies and to examine the possible and empirically established good in international co-operation.

Initial emphasis was laid on the revision of boundary functions so that boundaries can restore greater circulation, improve trade relations, and facilitate co-operation in economic activities in West Africa. Subsequent efforts sought the creation of that atmosphere of mutual trust and reciprocal reliance which is essential to functionalism and which can assist customs administrators in the efficient discharge of their duties. The cumulative consequence of these actions has been an improvement in interstate relations, a lessening of border tensions, increased satisfaction for divided communities, and increased interdependence of units in the West African international system.

The problems of the system were not susceptible to judicial treatment. Fears have been expressed recently about the unwillingness of states, especially the new and emergent ones, to use the International Court of Justice and the facilities of international tribunals in the settlement of their disputes.[19] Though these fears are sincere and genuine and ably documented, the major international problems of West Africa seem unlikely at this stage to benefit from a recourse to judicial settlement. The prolonged and inconclusive result of the Case Concerning the Northern Camerouns bears this out[20] as political rather than judicial action, was relied upon in settling it. Furthermore, the time and resources required in legal actions to establish claims, undertake surveys, and carry out field investigations are unlikely to prove productive unless the political leaders bind themselves beforehand to accept and abide by judicial awards. Because of these uncertainties, greater reliance was placed on political and economic rather than judicial action in international conflict resolution in West Africa. This does not imply that legal or treaty measures embodying such political and economic actions do not contain adjudication clauses involving reference of cases to the International Court of Justice.

There was a naive assumption in the new states of West Africa that each new state could diversify its economy and solve its unemployment problem by adopting a policy of rapid industrialisation. But "to do so it looked first

> at its home market and, if it finds that a certain process of manufacturing is not economic on the basis of the home market alone, it assumed that it should be able to dispose its surplus to its neighbours..[21]

Since other states think likewise, the inevitable result is duplication, waste and uneconomic projects. At West African international conferences in Mamou, Dakar, Niamey, Monrovia, Lagos and Bamako, these issues of industrial co-ordination were studied and appreciated.

Considerable progress along functional lines became evident. It was generally agreed that certain sovereign functions could be shared and could be jointly exercised and internationalized without the surrender of sovereignty or the loss of identity as a state. Hence between 1961 and 1964, Ghana and Upper Volta, Togo and Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Dahomey, concluded bilateral agreements on customs co-operation involving either the abolition of customs duties or the harmonization of tariffs. As a result

of agreements at West Africa's International Conferences, the ECA produced a version of the Brussels nomenclature which meets the needs of West Africa. The English-French Manual of Instructions for Customs Administrators which the Dakar Conference authorised the ECA to prepare was undertaken. Besides these concrete features of a move towards the simplification and standardization of customs procedure, rapport was achieved among customs officials. Before 1957, there were scarcely any opportunities for these officials to meet, discuss customs problems and customs co-operation in West Africa and, as a professional group, advise their governments on how customs barriers and difficulties could be eliminated or reduced. The Dakar Working Party of West African Customs officials which met in 1965 was therefore a welcome departure from the past.

Equally significant was the move by Liberia and its neighbours to break down customs barriers and establish a Free Trade Area among themselves. They established a Ministerial Council which signed the Agreement of the Organisation of West African Economic Co-operation and later created four sub-committees one of which had the task of preparing a Convention on customs and trade.[22] Hence co-operation and collaboration marked the interstate approach to customs problems in West Africa. Much remains to be done; but the initial and preliminary steps have been taken.

West African Public Works and Transit Trade Conferences followed a similar path and tackled the problems of trans-frontier transport links and transit trade. There were in addition bilateral and unilateral activities which aimed at closer communication links within sub-regions of West Africa. The overall objective has been to effect a structural and fundamental re-organisation of industrial and commercial infrastructure in this part of Africa.

Swing credit arrangements were among measures on economic co-operation adopted in the Ghana and Liberian sub-regions. This progressive trend towards a solution of circulation problems is equally noticeable in the abolition of visa requirements between Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea and Sierra Leone, and Nigeria and the Cameroun. There were provisions in the Co-operation Treaties between Ghana, Upper Volta and Togo permitting the abolition of visa requirements, and in the proposals by the Gambia and Senegal on the granting of equal rights of easier movement and domicile to their citizens. While a uniform West African Convention on these and on migration is desirable, further progress depends on the success of diplomacy and statemanship in WestAfrica.

Prior to the West African Conference at Mamou and Segou on the joint development of river basins, the idea of a concerted and institutionalised system of developing the Niger River Basin did not exist. National plans, national initiatives, and limited contacts on flood control-characterised the pre-1960 phase of inter-territorial action on the river Niger. There was therefore a lack of co-ordination and collaboration. The appointment of the Italconsult Commission to undertake a comprehensive study of the basin followed the accord achieved at Mamou and Segou. Between the end of the Segou Conference and the convening of the Niamey West African Conference, the Report of the Italconsult Commission was published and the riparian states of the Basin used the machinery for consultation which they established at Segou to good effect. This was a movement away from *ad hoc* actions to fruitful co-operation. The Niamey Agreement in 1964 created the Niger River Commission and was in fact the legal foundation for international co-operation on the Niger basin. Similarly, the Chad Basin Commission was established by treaty, and it reinforced the legal action on the Basin. Senegal and Gambia have established a Ministerial Council to implement their agreements on the joint development of the Gambia River Basin. The vital distinction between the position of the three basins in 1960 and the position in 1964–1965 is that by 1965 there existed three organs for international co-operation and development of the basins. These organs had powers to decide and enforce certain agreed and assessed measures, co-ordinate other actions, provide consultation at Control Commission level, and help settle interstate differences on measures taken or contemplated.[23]

Sufficient preliminary and necessary studies were under-taken on industrial co-ordi-

nation. Because of the results of these studies, surveys and contacts, it became difficult for either individual states or for West African conferences to act in total ignorance of regional market needs or in ignorance of available as well as potential resources unless they deliberately decide to ignore them. There was also sufficient knowledge of the scope for decentralised expansion and the areas for interstate collaboration. Furthermore, some 'balance' in coast-hinterland relations was accepted as economically rational.

When the idea of modern industries strategic for economic development and "serving more than one country" became the accepted theoretical basis for industrial co-ordination in West Africa, it was anticipated by economic experts that West African States would pool their capital together and undertake joint enterprises.[24] Regrettably, the Bamako Conference on industrial co-ordination in West Africa did not do this but agreed that certain states should initiate, on their own, a series of inter-governmental arrangements on capital, institutions, and the distribution of finished products. These states were in fact advised to establish the new industries and expand existing ones while States which were not so advised and encouraged agreed to restrain themselves from setting up rival industries. These agreements were dependent upon prevailing market conditions in West Africa. The approach was essentially one of limited co-ordination and harmonisation rather than joint action and joint ownership. Surprisingly, the entire regional programme on industrialisation was so arranged that no state was neglected; unnecessary duplication was carefully avoided; and a reasonable and remarkable balance was possible between coastal and hinterland states in industrial location. These were political agreements. They were not formalized into Conventions, Treaties or Agreements comparable to those on West Africa's international river and lake basins. Only the Monrovia Conference on Iron and Steel Industry which met in 1965 moved in the direction of discussing a formal legal agreement on industrial co-ordination. Whenever West African States ratify their decision at that conference to create a West African Iron and Steel Authority and accept the recommendation of the Conference for a permanent inter-governmental machinery which co-ordinates West African based industries and economic development plans, the political foundations so far laid will thus be reinforced by legal measures. Ultimate success depends, however, on improvements in political relations in the regional international system.

On independence bigger foreign policy issues and problems captured the attention and enthusiasm of West African leaders. It was fashionable for them to make important foreign policy speeches at the United Nations: discuss disarmament, apartheid and non-alignment; and shape the new basis of relationship between the new states and their former colonial masters. General postures on African Unity were adopted but hardly any serious thought was given to details of these African policies.

As has been shown in this essay, these details asserted themselves. They were systemic realities which compelled unificationists and functionalists to recognize —

(1) problems of boundary function such as circulation, migration and customs administration;
(2) financial and economic infrastructural problems such as credit, payments and banking policies, transport facilities and once again customs administration; and
(3) industrial and developmental problems associated with the rational exploitation of the massive resources of international river and lake basins, the financing of heavy industries, and the general co-ordination and possible integration of these.

An awareness of these practical and day-to-day problems of their African policies led to the desire to find solutions. Expert studies and technical conferences were organised and these prepared the grounds for diplomatic meetings of political leaders. We see in the outcome of these meetings, the political will and the elite consciousness to interact with other elites beyond the confines of their nation-states. These culminated in agreement

among political leaders to allow some activities and functions to be selected, organized and co-ordinated at the sub-regional level. This was in keeping with the theory of functionalism. It laid the political foundation.

The next major development shown in this essay was a series of legal actions, through treaty-making and treaty ratification, taken with a view of reinforcing the political foundation. These treaties established international control commissions and functional organizations, and equipped these with structures and institutions. The treaties conferred powers of initiative, execution, administration, supervision, advice, research and arbitration, on these commissions. Participating states agreed to support the commissions and organizations established by these treaties.

Future developments should give purpose and direction to these functional actions in West Africa. Diverse and unco-ordinated measures, no matter how laudable they are, will not inspire or generate greater co-operation than measures directed towards the attainment of clear objectives and goals. In this connection, it is appropriate to state that international action in the Senegambia seeks the objectives of customs union and future political association. Between Liberia and its neighbours there is also a stated goal which is the establishment of a Liberia Free Trade Area. But in the Ghana and Nigeria sub-regions of West Africa clear objectives, besides the adoption of good neighbour policies, are not pursued. It is true that Ghana has concluded near similar Agreements on trade, customs and economic co-operation with the Upper Volta, Togo and Ivory Coast.[25] The essential fact remains that these are not co-ordinated. Furthermore, they are not aspects of a sub-regional policy in favour of a customs union, free trade or an economic community. Developments between Nigeria and its neighbours are less advanced than those between Ghana and its neighbours. Much personal diplomacy is currently being used to bring the Cameroun, Chad, Dahomey, Niger and Equatorial Guinea closer to Nigeria. But these diplomatic moves are devoid of an ultimate goal of establishing a free trade area, a custom union or an economic community. At the regional West African level, the same absence of set objectives is evident.

It is true that through functional co-operation the River Niger Commission and Chad Basin Commission were created. It is also true that functional co-operation led to initial measures on the rationalization of customs regimes and administration in West Africa and the adoption of concrete steps in studying and planning industrial co-ordination in the entire area. Laudable as these are, they require to be directed towards a West African Free Trade Area, Custom Union or Economic Community. There is no doubt that such a direction or purpose will affect existing preferences enjoyed by West African States in the EEC and Commonwealth, and perhaps involve a review, expansion or strengthening of the *Conseil de L'Entente*. An awareness of this should not prove disturbing because the experience of East Africa[26] shows that West Africa will not lose either in Europe or in the Commonwealth if it struggles to break down customs and trade barriers between its new states and consciously moves towards close economic union and integration.

NOTES

1. These were students of the "Ecole Normale William Ponty" in Senegal.
2. T. Hodgkin and R. Schachter, "French-Speaking West Africa in Transition", *International Concoliation*, No. 528, May 1960.
3. Guinea chose independence outside the Community. Mali negotiated independence within the Community; the Ivory Coast and others thereafter sought separate territorial independence.
4. Presidents Tubman, Toure and Nkrumah met at Sanniquellie after the two important Accra Conferences of Independent African States (April 1958) and the All African Peoples Conference (December 1958) to discuss West African problems.
5. W. Tubman: *On African Unity*, Monrovia, n.d. p.58.
6. N. J. Padelford and R. Emerson, *Africa and World Order*, N.Y. 1962.
7. See F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, Lond. 1963.
8. N. Azikiwe, *My Plan for Africa*, Anno Press, Enugu, n.d.

9. D. Mitrany, *Working Peace System*, pp.26–39; See also Preface to J. A. Joyce, ed., *World Organization: Federal or Functional*, London, Watts, 1945.
10. Llewellyn Gross (Ed.), *Symposium on Sociological Theory*, Chap. 8.
11. S. K. Panter-Brick, "The Union Africaine et Malgache" in D. Austin and Hans N. Weiler, *Inter-State Relations in Africa*, Freiburg, 1965, pp.76–77.
12. N. Azikiwe, *My Plan for Africa*, Anno Press, Enugu, n.d. text of his London lecture, p.4.
13. Britain and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 107 (pp.1068–1070), 8 April 1913, Norway—Sweden. *League of Nations Treaty Series*, Vol. 169.
14. The ownership of the frontier island of Lette was a source of conflict between Dahomey and Niger in December 1963. 16,000 Dahomeans resident in Niger Republic were expelled from Niger, and Dahomey retaliated by closing the rail and road link which connects the land-locked Niger Republic with the outside world.
15. J. H. Palmer, *Notes on Strange Farmers*, Sessional Paper No.15311946, Bathurst, 1945.
16. E. Stanley, *World Economy*, New York, 1939, pp.35–51.
17. Marcel Capet, *Traite d'Economie Tropical les Economies D'AOF Paris*, 1958, p.103, cited in Transport Problems in Relation to Economic Development In West Africa, see E.C.A. document, E/CN.14/63.
18. *Transport Problems et al.*, op.cit. See also K. Nkrumah *African's Finest Houses*, Accra, 1964.
19. R. Higgins, *Conflict of Interests*, London, 1965, cha.II, pp.90–98.
20. *Case Concerning The Northern Camerouns*, ICJ, 1963.
21. *Industrial Growth In Africa*, E/CN. 14/INR/78, para.368.
22. Sierra Leone *Daily Mail*, 29 and 31 May 1965; *West Africa*, 12 July, 1965.
23. This has been examined in detail in an article by the author entitled "Functional Co-operation In West Africa (3) A Study of the Legal and Political Foundations for the Joint Development of River and Lake Basins in West Africa", published in *Odu: New Series*, No. 6, Oct., 1971, pp. 21–53.
24. E/CN/246, ECA Publication.
25. M.R. Ofoegbu, "Functional Co-operation In West Africa (2) Ghana and Its Neighbours" *Insight And Opinion* Vol. 6, No.1, 1971, pp. 22–36.
26. di, Delupis I. D., *The East African Community and Common Market*, Longman, 1970, Chapter VIII.

MAJOR SCHOOL OFFENCES IN NIGERIA — FOLLOW-UP STUDY

(Being a follow-up study of the incidence of major school offences in Western Nigeria)

By Dr. O. C. NWANA

In 1966, the author studied the incidence and intensity of major school offences committed by secondary school pupils in Western Nigeria. The results of the study were published in June 1971 (see reference). It revealed a certain pattern of incidence as well as intensity for that period. Five years have passed since the 1966 study and in the intervening period a lot of changes have taken place in the educational, social, political and economic life of Nigerians. It was thought that it would be of interest to both educationists and parents to know how far the pattern of school offences has been affected by the intervening period of five years. Such knowledge will be useful in helping to cope with the mounting problem of indiscipline in our educational institutions. This is the motivation behind carrying out this follow-up study in the Western State of Nigeria (geographically more than 70% of what in 1966 used to be the Western Region of Nigeria).

In October 1971, a questionnaire (see Tables 1 and 2) was sent to all secondary schools (Grammar, Technical and Commercial) in Western State. The questionnaire which was the same as the one used in the 1966 study, consisted of nine broad categories of school offences namely: Stealing; Dishonesty; Sex-offences; Disobedience; Truancy; Assault and Insult; Drug Offences; Wickedness; Strikes and Mass Demonstration. Each broad category was sub-divided into a number of more specific offences (42 in all). Each principal was requested to fill in the number of times each of these specific offences was recorded or noted as having been committed in the school between January 1971 and September 1971. In all, 226 questionnaires were distributed by mail being the number of secondary schools in the Western State in 1971 as per the official Ministry of Education List of Secondary Schools. A stamped addressed envelope was enclosed in each questionnaire for the return post. The 1971 questionnaire differed from the 1966 questionnaire only by including a section in which the principals were to indicate

(*a*) Any major school offence that was not listed in the questionnaire;
(*b*) the most serious offence facing school administration today;
(*c*) whether the overall tone of secondary school discipline has been improving, or has remained the same, or has been getting worse over the last few years;
(*d*) the population of the school.

After one reminder sent three weeks after the questionnaire, a total of 97 adequately completed forms were received, that is, 43% returns. A second reminder was not sent out as it was reasonably assumed that in the period of mid-November to early December the principals would be too busy with certificate and school examinations to attend to filling research forms. An examination of the questionnaires returned showed that the schools included both urban and rural; government and voluntary agency; boys, girls and mixed; as well as large and small schools.

Results

Table 1 gives a summary of the number of cases as well as the percentages for each

of the nine major offence categories. Table 2 gives the detailed entries of the sub-divisions of the nine major categories shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Category of Offence	*Number*	*Percentage*
1. Stealing	3,303	15.96
2. Dishonesty	1,342	6.48
3. Sex Offences	156	0.75
4. Disobedience	4,680	22.60
5. Truancy	4,813	23.27
6. Assault and Insult	2,298	11.11
7. Drug Offences	2,014	9.74
8. Wickedness	2,049	9.91
9. Strikes and Mass Demonstrations	28	0.14
	20,683	

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be made from the two tables:—

1. Stealing was common (15.96%). The majority of stealing cases were of the nature of stealing fellow students' property.

2. Dishonesty was infrequent (6.48%). The majority of such cases were withholding school reports sent to parents, and cheating at tests and examinations.

3. Sex offences were very rare (0.75%). The majority of such offences involved certified cases of pregnancy and receiving opposite sex in dormitory against order.

4. Disobedience was frequent (22.60%). The vast majority of such cases involved wearing wrong uniforms, caps, shoes, etc.

5. Truancy was frequent (22.34%). Each of the three sub-divisions were substantially exhibited even though most belong to returning days or weeks after beginning of term.

6. Assault and Insult were common (11.11%). With the exception of 'fighting members of staff' which was rather rare comparatively; the other sub-divisions were relatively frequently exhibited.

7. Drug Offences were infrequent (9.73%). The vast majority of such cases involved keeping or using drugs to cure regular diseases and smoking cigarettes.

8. Wickedness was infrequent (9.90%). With the exception of 'roughness during games' the other sub-divisions were relatively frequently exhibited.

9. Strikes and Mass Demonstrations were very rare (0.14%). The majority of such cases resulted from poor quality and/or quantity of food.

Reliability and Validity of Data

As was the case with the 1966 study, many principals confessed that they did not keep up-to-date records of offences committed and that what they filled in were approximate in nature. Looking at the patterns of entries in the forms, one would suspect that some schools were rather conservative in their entries (for example, a large school entering much fewer cases of offences than a much smaller school). Whether or not such conservatism was consistently applied over the nine major offence categories is difficult to determine. If it was not consistently applied, it would reduce the reliability and validity of the resulting data summaries. A close look at the relative magnitude of

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF REPORTED CASES OF MAJOR SCHOOL OFFENCES IN 97 SCHOOLS IN WESTERN STATE OF NIGERIA OVER THE PERIOD JANUARY 1971 TO SEPTEMBER 1971

Offences	*Number*	*Group Total*	*Group Percentage*
Stealing:			
(*a*) Stealing fellow students property or money	2,234)		67.65
(*b*) Stealing school property e.g. library books	563)	3,303	17.04
(*c*) Withholding school fees sent by parents ..	506)		15.31
Dishonesty:			
(*a*) Withholding School reports sent to parents	561)		41.81
(*b*) Falsifying school reports sent to parents ..	180)		13.42
(*c*) Cheating at Test and Examination ..	357)	1,342	26.58
(*d*) Telling falsehood against staff or school ..	189)		14.06
(*e*) Impersonation	55)		4.13
Sex Offences:			
(*a*) Receiving opposite sex in dormitory ..	38)		22.44
(*b*) Having sex within/around school campus	30)		18.89
(*c*) Certified cases of venereal diseases ..	3)	156	2.22
(*d*) Certified cases of pregnancy	57)		36.67
(*e*) Practicing masturbation	0)		0.00
(*f*) Possession of pornographic literature ..	28)		17.78
Disobedience:			
(*a*) Flouting specific orders of staff	722)		15.43
(*b*) Wearing wrong uniforms, caps, etc. ..	3,861)	4,680	82.49
(*c*) Sitting disapproved external exams ..	97)		2.08

Table 2 (*Continued*)

Offences	*Number*	*Group Total*	*Group Percentage*
Truancy:			
(*a*) Returning days or weeks after term begins	1,968)		40.88
(*b*) Leaving School or town without permission	1,180)	4,814	24.50
(*c*) Dodging specific lessons	1,666)		34.62
Assault and Insult:			
(*a*) Beating-up juniors	862)		37.53
(*b*) Pugnacity	559)		24.34
(*c*) Fighting members of staff	23)	2,298	0.98
(*d*) Use of foul and indecent language ..	601)		26.15
(*e*) Disrespectful behaviour towards authority	253)		11.00
Drug Offences:			
(*a*) Smoking Indian hemp	28)		1.38
(*b*) Keeping/using drugs allergy to aid memory	230)		11.44
(*c*) Keeping/using drugs to cure regular diseases	1,082)	2,014	53.73
(*d*) Smoking cigarettes	397)		19.69
(*e*) Snuffing tobacco	2)		0.09
(*f*) Drinking alcoholic liquor	275)		13.67
Wickedness:			
(*a*) Oppressing of juniors, for example, fagging	906)		44.21
(*b*) Wilful destruction of student's property ..	419)	2,049	20.46
(*c*) Wilful destruction of school property ..	617)		30.09
(*d*) Roughness during games	107)		5.24
Strike or Mass Demonstration due to:			
(*a*) Quality/quantity of food	23)		81.25
(*b*) Quality/quantity of dormitory accommodation	)		
(*c*) Qualifications of teaching staff	2)		6.25
(*d*) Stringent dormitory rules and regulations ..	3)	28	12.50
(*e*) Cost of books from school bookshop ..	)		
(*f*) Weeding examinations in Form 4	)		
(*g*) Non-offering of science subjects by school	)		

entries made under stealing either fellow students' property or stealing school property indicates that some schools entered the total number of cases of theft while others entered the total number of stolen articles. This was suggested by certain very high entries, for example, 200 for the stealing school property. This number most likely would have been the total of library books, plates, cutlery, etc., stolen from the school stock rather than the total number of times theft was committed. Four schools made entries entirely in qualitative descriptive terms like:—few, many, numerous. Their forms were discarded. For those who used a mixture of numbers and qualitative descriptive terms, the qualitative terms were replaced by the mean entries of the offences as given by those forms filled entirely with numbers. Such cases were relatively very few in this study as compared with the 1966 study. The limitations mentioned here will continue to plague similar studies until schools adopt systematic methods of recording events taking place within and around their campus. Until then, similar studies will have to put up with some unspecified amount of reliability/validity of returns.

Principals' Comments

The following are some of the views and explanations given by principals regarding the major school offences as well as interpretations of same.

Stealing: One principal stated that there was "no stealing of a serious nature but 'tapping' of biros has become an everyday occurrence". Certainly many pupils do not regard taking each other's biros and pencils as constituting stealing. Like the principal quoted such would be regarded as pilfering or tapping. One consequence of this is that there is varied handling of such cases depending on the attitude of the principal towards the act.

Dishonesty: Regarding withholding school reports sent to parents, it was commented that some students achieve this through giving wrong addresses of their parents/guardians. The view was also expressed that in the case of illiterate parents/guardians, it was not quite clear whether withholding of school reports could be properly interpreted as constituting an offence.

Insult: One report stated that foul and indecent language was part of the language habit of a certain named sub-ethnic group within which the school was situated and so that the act was so prevalent that no person used to the society would regard it as an offence. This is also true of many Nigerian ethnic groups where insultive phrases involving usually opponents parents or querying opponents mentality or honesty are as common as 'How do you do'? Teaching staff are just as guilty as the students and are known to occassionally abandon English, break into the local language, and shower torrents of a stereotype of abuses.

Drugs: Regarding keeping or using drugs to cure regular diseases many schools reported that students keep drugs given to them by parents/guardians on prescription (with or without a physicians note). A principal noted that he did not consider keeping anti-malarials and aspirin as any offence as many schools do not have a well-stocked dispensary and the hospitals are too few and so over-crowded as to be inaccessible. One report held that dangerous drugs were now being sold in the market by unauthorised pedlars and if students are not checked this may lead to accidents.

Wickedness: One principal pointed out that "asking juniors to fetch and carry is Yoruba custom" and consequently that he would not regard fagging as an offence. There is a tendency amongst school administrators to stop fagging, especially as they are under pressure from well-to-do and high income group parents. This policy must be seen as being

(to a reasonable measure) contrary to the Nigerian custom which encourages juniors to show respect and reverence to seniors through such acts as doing odd jobs for them. Students will naturally prefer the 'no fagging' system and are likely to carry this attitude to their homes and the society at large upon leaving school.

Strikes and Mass Demonstration: A few principals commented that they did not consider mass demonstration an offence as it was a legitimate method of showing student opinion and attitude towards aspects of school administration, so long as it was orderly carried out. A point to make here is that our students as well as our society at present do not see demonstrations, except through violent action, as well as foul, indecent and impolite language.

Omitted Offences: In general, most principals (95%) made no entries in this category. Those who made entries included offences which can be assigned to one or more of the nine major groups studied. For example, the offence "studying and talking after light-out" is a case of "Flouting specific orders of staff" within the major group of "Disobedience". This indicates that the questionnaire was adequately comprehensive in terms of making provision for offences committed by secondary school pupils. Some entries made under this category merit comment namely:—

(*a*) One school listed "Eating at unauthorised places" as an offence. It went on to state that such an act though formally neglected had in recent years become a major school offence since the outbreak of cholera. The seriousness, it would seem, lies much less in the pupil involved contracting the disease than in his starting a deadly epidemic in the school. Such school-rules as this would be difficult to enforce as an increasing number of school pupils are day students (feeding outside the school), and an increasing number of boarders are dissatisfied with dormitory food and so make alternative private feeding arrangements.

(*b*) One school listed "Forming illegal Societies" as an offence. With what one may call the mounting tendency for mass action by students, the tendency to form opinion groups outside those recognised and sponsored by the school authorities must be controlled by school administrators. The possibility of such societies being used for subversive activities against the school have been so recognised by some principals that they discourage such ethnic group societies as "Ekiti Divisional Youth Union, College Branch" or "Old Onitsha Province Boys Improvement League, College Branch".

(*c*) One girls' school listed "Taking contraceptive" as an offence. The statement was as follows:—

I would consider the taking of contraceptives a very serious matter—though perhaps "school offence" is a misnomer. We do not know whether it prevails here but suspect it does—otherwise we cannot explain why we have had no case of pregnancy in the last four years. Previous to that we always had at least one a year.

This is a difficult case to classify. It is complicated by the fact that one's religion (e.g. Roman Catholic) may determine his attitude to contraceptives. Again whether or not the pupil who takes them is married may determine one's attitude to contraceptives. A small but increasing number of Nigerian secondary school pupils are married. This is more so in the war affected areas than the other areas.

(*d*) Another school listed "Posting and receiving letters through unauthorised sources" as an offence. Many years ago, say twenty years, reading of pupils' out-going

and in-coming letters was on the regular schedule of a principal's duties. At present, few principals would have the time for such an exercise. Besides, an increasing proportion of parents and guardians would hold the view that such a censure does amount to violation of personal rights.

Most Serious School Offences: As earlier stated, the principals were requested to indicate and comment upon what offences they considered the most serious facing school administration today. Table 3 shows the number of schools which named each of the nine major categories of offences as being the most serious. The category 'omit' includes those who did not make any response as well as those who named three, four or

TABLE 3

Category of Offence	*Number*	*Percentage*
1. Stealing	19	20.21
2. Dishonesty	7	7.45
3. Sex Offences	0	0.00
4. Disobedience	7	7.45
5. Truancy	29	30.85
6. Assault and Insult	4	4.26
7. Drug Offences	3	3.19
8. Wickedness	4	4.26
9. Strikes and Mass Demonstrations	21	22.34
Omit	3	
Total	97	

more major offence categories instead of naming only one or two most serious offences. It includes therefore an undecided group of opinion. This group was not included for purposes of calculating percentages. The table shows that the most vocal opinion holds that Truancy is most serious offence. This is closely followed by Strikes/Mass Demonstration, and by Stealing. An examination of these percentages in relation to the percentages in Table 1 shows some glaring differences namely:—

(*a*) Disobedience is much more prevalent than it is considered a major threat to school administration.

(*b*) Truancy is less prevalent than it is considered a major threat to school administration.

(*c*) Strikes/Mass Demonstration are much less prevalent than they are considered a major threat to school administration.

In effect therefore, the question of what offences were a major threat to school administration was not necessarily identical with the question of what offences were of highest incidence. This situation is most exemplified by the case of Strikes/Mass Action which though occurring rather sparingly in the schools (0.1%) is causing school administrators and the society at large a great deal of concern (21.6%). It receives so much newspaper and radio space whenever it does occur, and as some people feel, it symbolises that the

fabric of the discipline of a school has broken down. On the whole, the majority opinion is that Truancy constitutes the greatest threat to school administration and as Table 2 shows, the most frequent cases of it are of the nature of leaving the school compound or the town in which the school is situated without permission from the school authorities. As many principals comment, it is encouraged by the fact that many schools are day schools — of 226 secondary schools in Western State, 21 are fully boarding, 201 are both boarding and day (more day than boarding), while 4 are entirely day schools. Equally revealing are the offences which are hardly mentioned as most serious. Sex offences were not listed at all by all schools. It is generally believed that our society is becoming increasingly permissive regarding sex and that the older generation disapprove of this state of affairs. Again the fact that the vast majority of such offences escape detection may account for their not being considered a threat to school administration.

Overall Tone of School Discipline

Table 4 shows the number and percentage of principals who felt that the general tone of discipline in the schools had become *better*, had remained about the *same*, or had become *worse* over the last few years.

TABLE 4

Tone of Discipline	*Number*	*Percentage*
(*a*) Better	17	17.53
(*b*) Same	11	11.34
(*c*) Worse	69	71.13
Total	97	

The table shows that the vast majority of the principals (71.02%) are of the opinion that the general tone of discipline had become worse over the last few years. Some, while explaining the situation, held the view that as a result of the growing civilisation around us (i.e. in Nigeria), the traditional fear and respect which youngsters have for parents and teachers and which have hitherto always buttressed school discipline have disappeared to a great extent. Youngsters have consequently embarked upon physical liberation and mental emancipation. One principal commented that it is now possible for a student to receive a doctor's certificate (often not merited) which exempts students from manual labour and thus makes it possible for misbehaviours not to be punished in the traditionally accepted methods. This state of affairs has encouraged misbehaviour. Some of the other comments regarding why school discipline is on the decline include the fact that the schools have become increasingly bigger and bigger in size and this has increased the problems of effective supervision; and the view that nowadays, teachers are no longer teachers by profession and calling but by chance and financial considerations. Some principals blamed it on the society, arguing that present day Nigerian society is corrupt, criminal and full of broken homes; that the people aspire to position and wealth without regard to the method of acquisition. In other words, they imply that the present day school is a mirror of the society and is no more disciplined than the parent body of which it forms a part. Decision regarding which of the contributory factors is most prominent will await a specially designed study of the situation.

Principals who held the view that school discipline had remained the same or had become better had the following to say. They argue that students are now progressively being given greater positions of responsibility in the administration of the school and that they are now more aware of the whys of formulating school rules and regulations. They

point to the establishment of school councils in some schools and hold that where such councils (chaired by students and attended by staff and students) operate well that there were few disciplinary cases for the school authorities to handle. Some felt that the absence of political fathers from the Nigerian scene has contributed to improving the tone of school discipline arguing that students who had the backing of such political fathers tended to take the laws into their hands. Such a view is counterbalanced by the view that today students with either government or military connections have the same tendency as those with political fathers.

Comparison with the 1966 Study

A major aim of this follow-up study was to determine whether or not any change in the pattern of offences had occurred after a period of five years. Table 5 shows the percentage of the nine major school offence categories for the two periods under study.

TABLE 5

Offences	1966	1971
1. Stealing	8.60	15.97
2. Dishonesty	7.64	6.49
3. Sex Offences	0.79	0.75
4. Disobedience	30.65	22.63
5. Truancy	29.32	23.27
6. Assault and Insult	12.39	11.11
7. Drug Offences	5.04	9.74
8. Wickedness	5.37	9.91
9. Strike and Mass Demonstration	0.21	0.14

For purposes of the comparison, absolute numbers of cases of the offences were not used principally because the two studies did not cover the same period of time (2 years and 9 months for the 1966 and 1971 studies respectively). Secondly, due to the rather unreliable entries made by some of the schools, percentages would be more stable measures of incidence than absolute frequencies. The table shows the following trendency:—

(*a*) The percentages for Stealing, Drug-Offences, and Wickedness have gone up over the period.

(*b*) The percentages for Dishonesty, Sex-Offences, Assault and Insult, and Strikes/Mass Demonstrations have remained more or less the same.

(*c*) The percentages for Disobedience and Truancy have gone down over the period.

Having shown areas where offence percentages have either gone up significantly or gone down significantly, one is faced with the problem of explaining why the changes have taken place. The case of excalation of stealing cases cannot but be better explained in terms of the fact that stealing has gone up quite considerably in the society in recent years to the extent that armed robbery has become the order of the day. The enactment of the fire-arms and armed-robbery decree in 1970 shows the extent to which stealing is a major social problem in Nigeria. Most cases of drug offences belong to using drugs to cure regular diseases and smoking cigarettes. With the increase in the number of chemists and drug pedlars in the towns and villages, pupils are coming more in contact with drugs than used to be the case before. The increasing tendency of many pupils to be day students (especially where they live in privately arranged digs outside homes) has greatly encouraged the habit of smoking cigarettes. The increase in the percentage of cases of wickedness is difficult to explain. The drop in the percentages of cases of disobedience and truancy may

be accounted for by the fact that the increasing tendency of schools to be day-school means that such offences as wearing wrong uniforms and leaving school or town without permission which constitute the majority of such cases may not be recorded as often as they would have taken place if the pupils were boarders.

Extending the Study

The study can be extended through

(*a*) Repeating the exercise in the Western State in five years time to see whether any new patterns will emerge and why;

(*b*) Studying the phenomenon in other states of the Federal Republic to determine whether the trends discovered are national or regional. (Such a study has already been completed in the East Central State by the author);

(*c*) Making case studies of students who in the opinion of the schools and parents constitute disciplinary problems. Such case studies will take into consideration the effect of financial, religious, political, ethnical and health factors upon the pattern of school offences;

(*d*) Making a study of methods adopted by schools in punishing offences. It will investigate the hypothesis that the method of awarding punishments influences the occurrence or non-occurrence of the offences in the schools (i.e. influences school discipline);

(*e*) Studying the attitudes and opinions of secondary school pupils towards offences and punishment. This study will yield invaluable data, particularly as parents and the schools are beginning to consider pupil opinion as a means of establishing good administration, and as training in leadership in a democracy.

The author is indebted to the Western State Ministry of Education for co-operation without which the study would not have been possible.

Reference:—

O. C. Nwana, "Major School Offences in Nigeria—Preliminary Study", *West African Journal of Education*, Vol. XV, No. 2, June 1971, pp. 99–103.

A NOTE ON THE "ABAM" WARRIORS OF IGBO LAND

By N. UKA

ONE WAY OF getting to understand the values and culture of a people is to study their social structure. By social structure is meant the way a people's social system is organised, the hierarchical framework of their scheme of values and the motivational or self-actualising forces which control and regulate both the interpersonal and intergroup relations among the people. In this paper, attention will be focused on the people historically referred to as the Abam. These are the people that inhabit Ohafia, Abam, Abiriba and Nkporo-Edda clans. These clans, with the exception of Edda, which nevertheless, has close historical links with them, constitute what is now known as the Ohafia Division.

This work is the result of a study recently carried out to investigate how the people of Ohafia Division organised and prosecuted the ancient wars which have made them famous as hardy warriors, the logistics and strategy they adopted and the motives which inspired them. Dr. Macfarlan describes these people as head hunters, and adds that among them the people of Ohafia village group were the most notorious. There are also statements in extant literature alluding to these people as "mercenaries". For instance, Basden who refers to all these people as Abam, describes them as "mercenaries of the Aros". An illustrous Nigerian historian, Professor Kenneth O. Dike has said that the Aro hired the services of the famous professional warriors of Igboland—the Abam, Ohafia, Abiriba and Edda—whenever there was fighting to be done and they conquered all the people who resisted their influence, or killed their agents. He went on to state that when the injunctions of the Aro Oracle (the Long Juju), were defied, the Aro would, in the name of the Oracle, turn their fierce "mercenaries" on the offending party. Hence, another reason for undertaking this study is to find out the extent to which the so-called Abam were mercenaries and what was the secret behind their success as warriors.

A questionnaire schedule was developed for the study. With this, interviews were held with individuals who personally took part in some of these wars. It was lucky that some of these people were still alive. They include men such as Nna Ebi and Elder Ukoha both of Amekpu Ohafia; Nna Ogbu Ogwo of Asaga Ohafia, Kalu Igirigiri of Okon Ohafia; Uguru Onum of Nkwebi; Chief Uma Anya of Elu Ohafia and Nna Uma Okoro of Akanu Ohafia.

Discussion sessions were also held with the chiefs and elders of Akanu, Amekpu, Elu and Asaga (all in Ohafia) and chiefs of Ozu Abam, Ndi Oji Abam, Abiriba, Nguzu Edda and Nkporo. The interviews and contacts were successfully carried out through the co-operation of Administrative Officers, who kindly wrote letters of introduction to the chiefs, and solicited their co-operation in advance.

The responses to the questionnaire have been incorporated into the main body of this paper to supply the factual basis for the narrative and promote proximity of ideas. But two significant findings which emerged should be pointed out here and now.

In the first place, it was generally agreed by all the people interviewed that the warriors were motivated not by financial considerations but by the strong desire and the compelling need to bring home the head of a victim. In so doing the individual would win the "Ufiem Title", a socially, highly desirable status of the time.

Secondly, those interviewed were unanimous in their view that the warriors were never the mercenaries of the Aro. In other words, they did not go to the 'wars' as soldiers of fortune and were under nobody's pay or patronage. Each warrior went purely on his own volition and it was solely his own responsibility to fend for himself during the perilous adventure. He made up his mind to participate in the campaign when he became fed up with a social status which gave him the public image of a coward and made him the folk laughing stock, a status that left him without rights and privileges. More will be said about this in the pages which follow. The Aro merely acted as guides and instigators. They chose the

villages to be attacked, especially villages with which they had a grouse. But villages within the matriclans of the Abams, including those within the former and more embracing geographical area known as Bende Division, were exempt from attack. They were all considered to be matriclans.

There were a few references in the local folklore to a people who originally lived in the area under study before the migrations which resulted in the founding of the several communities and clans. The founding fathers of Ohafia, Abam and Nkporo-Edda clans are said to have descended from ancestors who originally lived in Ibeku near Umuahia. Tradition holds that the Abiriba migrated from Ena near the Cross River and first settled among the Ohafia with whom they inter-married and became acculturated before moving on to their present settlement.

This, it is claimed, is why among the people of Ohafia Division, there is marked uniformity in culture, social organisation and language. This obviously derives from a tradition of common origin and affinity. For instance, in all the clans the system of double descent is in vogue. Children are affiliated both to their paternal and maternal lineages. Marriage payments are usually very low; the rule of primogeniture prevails, by which the senior son inherits his father's house and his title; the population is stratified into age-grades, with age-grade promotion ceremonies; there is total absence of allegiance to a hereditary chief and the people are very republican in their outlook; ties of friendship and mutual co-operation exist between village-groups on the basis of affinity and the common descent of their founders, common exploitation of farming and hunting territory and common family names through marriage ties.

The people of the area under review are also hardy farmers and keen traders. The staple crop is the yam. All other crops are merely subsidiary. Much of the social and religious life of the people centres around the cultivation of the yam. There are yam festivals, yam deities and yam titles.

In addition to agricultural pursuits, the people carry on extensive trade both internally and externally with their surrounding neighbours, such as the Aro, the Edda and the Biase people of the Cross River as well as with the Ibibio and the Annang with whom they also inter-marry. They also have trade and marriage ties with their Igbo cousins of Bende Division.

Among the people of Ohafia Division special encouragement is given to the achievement motive. An achieved status is deemed more important than an ascribed one. Right from birth parents regard as a "good child" one who makes steady achievements in the course of growth towards maturity. For instance, at the young age of five or six months when a child cuts the first tooth, he is said to have "cut the first head" (*igbu isi mbu*). The child then is dressed like a hero and taken by the mother on visits to the houses of relatives and friends who shower him with gifts of all sorts. By the age of eight, a boy is expected to have learnt how to use the bow and arrow. To prove his dexterity as a marksman, he is expected to shoot a bird. When this happens, he is proclaimed a hero publicly. The event is marked by the giving of presents to the young hero and by a celebration in which members of his age-grade participate. It is during this bird killing ceremony that the boy's age-grade is for the first time given social recognition. The young hero now wins an ordinal position in the ranks of the heroes of his age-grade.

In several areas, notably in Ohafia, members of young age-grades form themselves into gun shooting groups and practice mock gun battles in the village square. These groups usually include all male youth between the ages of ten and twenty. After some intensive practice, the boys from one ward will challenge the boys from another ward of the same town, and both will engage in vigorous inter-group gun battles, using wooden guns, *egbe tootoo*. In this way they learn from a very young age, how to face the enemy in battle without fear. It is also during such playful pastimes that the youths learn the intricacies and codes of warfare. Youths, in addition, receive training informally in guerrilla warfare through a game called *Ina ope*, in which they learn how to attack and dodge. These and

other forms of sport, such as wrestling and war dance, are engaged in during the period following the end of the planting season and during new yam festivals.

The age-grade organisation is the means by which all male members of the society are classified in groups or companies of approximately the same age. When an age class reaches the age of fifteen to eighteen it may take a name. But before an age-grade is named, it must first perform some deed of prowess, such as raiding a neighbouring town or erecting a community hall. In such raiding exploits, those who bring home heads of the people's enemy are honoured with the *ufiem* title. In this way the age-grade has become the pivot around which competition for an achieved status in the community revolves.

The age-grade organisation is also a convenient means of differentiating seniors from juniors for in the Igbo society, seniority is of great social significance. Respect must be shown to those older than oneself, and it is indecorous, therefore for a person to use joking or familiar language on one of a senior grade.

For an understanding of the strategy for the ancient military campaigns, two important questions must be answered. First, what were the motives which led to these campaigns. Second, who were the Aro and what was their relationship with the people of Ohafia Division?

Among the people of the areas under discussion, there were many forms of social differentiation, which carried different degrees of status symbols. The one which had the most telling effect on the male adult population was the distinction between those who had won heads of victims in battle and others who had failed to make the same achievement. The former were known as "ufiem" (heroes) and the latter as "ujo" (cowards). The *ufiem* or "warriors of renown" are respected and honoured, and happy is the man entitled to don the eagle's plume and the red tail feathers of the parrot in token of his prowess in battle. In life he enjoys special privileges, and in death is accorded the dignity of a warriors' funeral with the special dance known as *Okerenkwa*.

On the other hand, the *ujo* is a status of shame and degradation. The non-ufiem title holder is subjected to all forms of indignities and humiliating insults. He may be denied the privilege to marry, and if he manages to wed at all, the marriage may be short-lived unless he takes speedy measures to end the *ujo* status. His wife is denied many social privileges. She must always dress up as a mourner and wear her hair short. She is not allowed to rub camwood dye on her body. Both the *ujo* and his wife are denied the privilege of putting on the *joji* cloth with red colours. The wife is not permitted to wear bracelets of brass, armlets of elephant tusks, and anklets, which were very fashionable in those days.

The non-*ufiem* title holder is often taunted with name-calling by all and sundry including people of younger age-grades and slaves who are unfiem title holders. The worst teasing group are members of his own age-grade. In season and out of season they will taunt him with the name of *ujonta otula akoro* (coward with the dry buttocks). His property can be looted at will and his wife is often rendered naked in public places should she dare to dress up in pretty clothes. He is denied all forms of yam titles, and if he dare to possess a large stock of yams, members of his age grade can, in one single day, dispossess him of his yam holdings, sharing them with impunity among the heroes of his age grade. Society usually provides him with no avenue for redress and he can only terminate his plight by taking the *ufiem* title.

The chief reason, therefore, for making the ancient wars was the compelling desire for heads in battle in order to rid oneself of the odium of *ujo* status, which was worse than that of a slave. Heads of victims were as a result, in great demand as trophies and as qualification for membership of *ufiem* club. The man-slayer was saluted publicly as *ogbu madu* (he kills man). Living captives were adopted into the warrior's family or otherwise disposed of as slaves or offered as human sacrifices.

Another reason was revenge, and here the Aro come in. The Aro, members of a famous slavocracy near the banks of the Cross River, were noted traders in slaves. They travelled

up and down the length and breadth of Igboland collecting slaves for sale to European traders. They prospered tremendously in their enterprises and added to their incomes by wholesale and retail dealing in slaves. Besides, Arochukwu, as a centre of a famous oracle, the Long Juju, exerted an enormous influence throughout Igbo land. The Aro established themselves in every Igbo community and used the oracle as an easy means of obtaining continuous supplies of slaves.

When the Aro in their travels realised that the people of Ohafia Division had a consuming passion for head hunting, they formed alliances with the village groups of Ohafia and Abam in particular. Under the contract, the Aro were to seek out territories to be attacked and report to Ohafia and Abam people, who themselves were only out for heads. Any town, therefore, having a dispute with another, and wishing to wreak summary vengeance on it, would apply, through the Aro agents,for a force of Ohafia and Abam warriors.

In actual fact, the Ohafia and Abam fighting forces were themselves out and out for heads, and they were intensely insistent on the fulfiment of this part of the contract. They were therefore not "mercenaries" as some earlier writers have suggested. Evidence from people who themselves participated in the ancient wars reveals that they went to the battle field as individuals looking for heads as trophies in order to win glory for themselves and become *ufiem* title holders. It is therefore incorrect to say, as Basden did, that "prior to operations being undertaken a sum of money had to be paid in advance to the Abams and, in addition, the lands of all captives became their property". The fact is that, as the bands ravaged a town for heads, the Aro, with their aid, gained complete control over the territory, established large Aro settlements amongst the people, and became virtual owners of large areas of their land.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that military campaigns were carried out by Ohafia and Abam warriors, not for territorial acquisition, but to display courage and win honours for oneself by bringing home heads as war trophies. Before a war was planned, the Aro, acting as agents to a town bearing a grudge against another town, would consult Ohafia and Abam chiefs. The consultation fees was ten pounds, four war caps, heads of tobacco and a case of drinks. Sometimes, a slave was added to the consultation fee. The fees were paid separately to each of the two village groups, Ohafia and Abam. They would then enter into a covenant, *igba ndu*, with the Aro traders to ensure the safety of the warriors and forestall any treacherous acts. The fee was exclusively for the chiefs, who themselves, took no part in the war itself. Moreover, the warriors had no share in the consultation fee. For how could they enjoy any privileges when they as yet held no *ufiem* title?

After the Aro agents had paid the necessary consultation fees to the chiefs of Ohafia and Abam, and a covenant (*igba ndu*) made with them, a day was set for the battle. These chiefs would then inform their allies at Nkporo, Edda and Abiriba through a process known as *inye* omu (sending a message by code). The planned attack was kept a secret and information filtered only to those desirous of participating through individual friends and relatives.

An interesting feature of a battle is the preparation for a general attack. The day having been fixed, a medicine man of repute was imported, whose business it was to prepare war medicine, provide charms, and offer sacrifices to ensure the success of the venture. Thus, each campaign was preceded by an elaborate ceremony and a sustained period of magical preparations. The battle was led by a hard core of seasoned warriors who already held the *ufiem* title.

Arms were provided by the individual warriors themselves and would include matchets, wooden spears, and guns, both home-made and imported. The imported weapons were supplied by European slave traders to coastal merchants who sold them to the Aro slave dealers who, in turn, sold them to the warriors.

On the day of departure, the head and body of each warrior who desired it were smeared with the medicine prepared by the medicine man. Thus equipped, it was believed the war-

rior would be immuned against flying bullets. Warriors from Ohafia and Abam clans and their allies assembled at a special rendezvous where they displayed their identification symbols. They then built camps within striking distance of the enemy. From there scouts were despatched to survey the town to be attacked, know how prepared the enemy were, when the population generally travelled to the farms or market and when they were generally at home. If the leaders were convinced that the venture was likely to be successful, they would summon the warriors for an assault on the enemy. But if from the look of things it appeared that the enemy had foreknowledge of the impending attack and were prepared and waiting, then the warriors would stage a tactical withdrawal and return home without a fight. But as soon as the warriors considered it opportune they would stage a come back and at once swoop on the enemy.

But often times, the dogged determination of the warriors would urge them on to the attack in the face of enemy preparedness. In that case, the leader would blow a powdered concoction known as *nkuku* on the enemy, which it was believed would at once send them to sleep. The warriors would then launch a severe attack on them in this helpless state. This tactic of surprise attacks was one of the reasons why Ohafia and Abam warriors were very much dreaded by both near and distant neighbours. It was the ability to face the enemy in the teeth of heavy odds, and deal a devastating blow on them that made the people famous warriors.

The warriors were fed by provisions which each warrior himself carried, by tribute wrested from villages along the route and with loot captured in successful attacks. When the warriors encamped for the night, they stayed according to villages and clans. No visits were allowed. The Aro agents and leaders saw to it that proper arrangements were made with villages along the route for the safe conduct of the warriors.

An attack was usually launched at early dawn, when the general enemy population were still asleep, or at high noon when the male adult population were away to the farm. That is why the practice persists till today of assigning to an age-grade the duty of guarding the village, *ino uche,* everyday, except on market days, during the planting season. Battles were fought in a haphazard manner and there was little attempt at co-ordination. Each fighter followed his own devices, advancing, firing, or turning tail exactly as he felt inclined, his main concern being the securing of a human head. Once he obtained the coveted price, he started heading for the war camp. When the warriors finally re-assembled at the war camp, a count was taken of their numbers, village by village. Casualties were carefully noted before the party headed for home. Some communities in Igbo land were founded by warriors who failed to return home after campaigns. After the military operations had been successfully carried out, the Aro would then step in and take over the property of the victims, carrying away helpless women and children into slavery and taking over their lands where necessary.

On return, the warriors who had secured heads of victims were made to undergo vigor ous purification rites before rejoining their families and moving about freely once again in the community. For this purpose the warrior was given a bowl of water in an earthenware vessel, *nja,* to wash his hands and face, after which ritual he would break the vessel into two before entering his house. Then for eight days he fed out of the broken vessel and was not permitted to bathe. At the end of this period of atonement, he washed himself very thoroughly and put on his best clothes. People would then stream into his house to congratulate and shake handswith the budding hero. This purification rite shows the sacredness with which human life was held by the people and goes to prove that the killings were not motivated by sheer blood lust and wickedness but by compelling social pressures at home.

On a market day, all the new heroes would converge at the market place in their best attire, accompanied by their wives or sisters carrying the war trophies (the skulls) behind them. These skulls would be decorated with red (uhie) and yellow (odo) dyes. As the warriors and their retinue approached the market place the sound of the huge tom-tom

drum (ikoro) would rend the air, discussing the traditional hits in praise of the heroes. At the same time, the war dance which led the procession continued to supply music. Then suddenly each warrior would dash out with the skull which was carried for him, cut a caper or two and then lay the trophy in front of the large *ikoro*. After dancing round and round for a short while, he would call the crowd to attention and openly brag of his exploits and heroic deeds. After this he took his seat amidst loud cheers and ovation and the booming of guns.

Finally each warrior was crowned a hero and conferred with the *ufiem* title. His head was donned with a war cap and an eagle feather. A goat was then slaughtered for him while relatives, friends and well-wishers would shower him with presents. Although women did not take part openly in the ancient wars, yet they played very important parts. Most men were inspired and spurred to action by their wives and sisters. Women saw the men off on their way to the campaigns and wished them safe return.

The wars produced outstanding heroes whose names became household words. They were nick-named *Odu umirima eje ogu* (He leads the youth in battle). Among these may be mentioned Digbo Odo, Ogbureke Osu, Uka Ugbaga, Awa Afaka, Okiri Eleazu and Uke Ojo, all of Ohafia; then Okiriko Ituaja and Babali Ofunnunu of Abiriba; and Ogbuka Ngidi, Uka Obu, Akuma Mgbirigba and Agwu Mgbo of Abam. With their slaves, they led the warriors in battle. The group attacked wherever the leaders pitched their staff.

In conclusion, it is proper to point out that one of the qualities possessed by the ancient Ohafia warriors was faithfulness to the cause for which they fought. No amount of money or overtures could make them betray their high command or reveal their war plans to the enemy. They were motivated to participate in the wars not out of love of money but by the sheer desire to win an honoured place among their people. They engaged in the wars to show courage and fortitude and the love of adventure.

One other remarkable characteristic of the so-called "Abam" is their ability to adapt to changing conditions. The Aro Expedition of 1901–1902 culminated in the destruction of the myth of the Long Juju at Aro Chukwu. This dealt a shattering blow to the machinations of the Aro agents. It also in time resulted in putting an end to the head hunting adventures of the ancient warriors of Igbo land. As *Pax Brittanica* spread throughout Southern Nigeria, trade followed the flag and Missionary work soon became established in the area by the Scottish Presbyterians. Wherever the Missionaries settled they established churches which were soon followed by schools.

In the Ohafia village group in particular church attendance was at first organised on an age-group basis on the pattern followed in the prosecution of the ancient wars in accordance with the conditions agreed on between the chiefs and the Missionaries. As members of an age group became converted to Christianity it was made mandatory for them to send their sons to the village Mission School. Sanctions were imposed on those who failed to comply.

Pupils who successfully completed primary education were recruited to the service of the Christian Missions as teachers, evangelists and clerks. Promising pupil teachers were selected for further training at Hope Waddell, Calabar, as school masters or "big teachers", as they were popularly called locally.

The teacher in those days enjoyed a high and enviable status in the community, and those who had attended the white man's school were generally held in high regard. In time the desire to go to school gradually superceded the desire to engage in warfare, and the winning of certificates soon replaced the passion to bring back heads in battle. School products found ready employment and earned regular wages. This idea of regular salaries was something new to the culture and was very fascinating to the people. Salaried employment enabled a youngman to dress, speak and act like the white man, with whom he had now come to identify. In time the idea of schooling became quite popular, and village after village raised large sums of money which they handed over to the white missionary so that he would send them a teacher and establish a school for their children. Consequently, there is today no village in these clans which has no school of its own, and the idea of com-

munal support for education has become a tradition among the Ohafia village group. Ohafia is also one of the few communities in Nigeria that can boast of having produced a large number of university graduates. It is a remarkable transformation that the people have been able to channel their energies from the winning of heads in battle to the pursuit of success in education and commerce.

SOME NOTES ON AFRICA'S DRUG-PLANT HERITAGE

By I. U. W. Osisiogu

Introduction

AFRICA ABOUNDS IN natural resources; both vegetable and mineral. Although already extensively exploited, it may not be easy to predict what the forests in Africa still hold in stock for mankind. In a lecture titled "Botany and Medicine in West Africa" (Irvine, 1955), the speaker concluded by asking, "May we not yet find in medicine as in many other things 'Something new out of Africa?'" In this series of articles it is intended to highlight those of Africa's plants that have been and perhaps are still of medicinal and therefore economic importance. It is essential to note that inspite of the impact of synthetic drugs in medicine in recent years, medicinal plants continue to furnish the basis for a majority of these synthetic materials. Besides, with the intensive research that is being carried out all over the world on the constituents of medicinal plants, it is still possible to isolate entirely new and useful medicinal agents.

Early History

Well aware of the poisonous properties of strophanthus, African hunters have used its extracts in arrow poisons for procuring meat; the criminally minded have used it for homicidal poisoning; native doctors have employed it for curing a variety of ailments, and native magistrates have used it in their ordeal trials of criminals.

In 1861, Dr. David Livingstone, the missionary-explorer in East Africa had observed that the natives used a species of strophanthus as an arrow poison which they called kombe (Kreig, 1965). A similar observation had been made in West Africa by Hendelot (Claus and Tyler, 1965). The first indication as regards the mode of action of strophanthus was accidentally discovered by Kirk in East Africa who found that the poison had the effect of lowering the pulse. This discovery stimulated intensive research into the seeds of the plant, and the result was the isolation of the active principle by Fraser in 1885. Until this time the European drug digitalis was the only cardiotonic drug that was used for the treatment of heart conditions. With the isolation of strophanthin, the active principle of strophanthus, strophanthus became established in European medicine as a substitute for digitalis. It was included in a number of national pharmacopoeias. For example, *Strophanthus kombe* appeared in the pharmacopoeias of Hungary, Japan, The Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, France, etc. *S. gratus* was the only species official in the German Pharmacopoeia; it also appeared in the French, Spanish and Brazillian Pharmacopoeias (Martindale, 1967, Dalziel, 1948). The pharmaceutical firm of Burroughs Wellcome & Co. in London played a key role in the introduction of strophanthus products into medicine.

Sources And Botanical Characters:

Strophanthus is from the Greek meaning "a turn or twist" and "a flower" and refers to the twisted lobes of the corolla. Some forty-five or more species are known to exist, about thirty-six of them in Africa, the rest being found in Southern Asia, Malaya and the Phillipines. They are perennial woody climbers which are frequently found hanging from the trees in festoons. In Africa, *Strophanthus kombe* Oliver occurs around the East African big lakes and the Shire River. The plant can also be found under cultivation in the Cameroons and Nigeria. The seeds are exported from Zomba in Malawi and from the ports of Portuguese East Africa. Two other species of *Strophanthus* of commercial importance are *S. gratus* and *S. hispidus*, both of which are indigenous to Nigeria. The rest of the species may be found in parts of West, East and Southern Africa.

Pharmacognostically, the seeds of the above three species of strophanthus may be roughly distinguished by observing the colour of the seeds and density of trichomes on their testa. For example in *S. kombe* the trichomes are dense, thinner in *S. hispidus* and

appear absent in *S. gratus*. However, short warty hairs are seen on *S. gratus* under the microscope. In colour, *S. kombe* appears greyish-green, *S. hispidus* brownish and *S. gratus* brown. A microscopical examination of the seeds shows cluster or broken crystals of calcium oxalate in the testa of *S. kombe;* a few cluster crystals in the testa and embryo of *S. hispidus* and no calcium oxalate in *S. gratus*. When treated with sulphuric acid, 80 per cent, the endosperm of *S. kombe* gives a green colour due to K-strophanthin, *S. hispidus* also gives a green colour due to H-strophanthin and *S. gratus* gives a red colour due to ouabain. Since some other strophanthus species may show some or more of the above characteristics, caution is necessary in interpreting any obsrevations, particularly when handling unknown seeds.

Some Native Applications of Some Strophanthus species:

The seeds of *S. courmontii* Sacl. have been used in East Africa as an ordeal poison and for making arrow poison. The leaf too is so poisonous that a monkey died within two hours of eating a few leaves (Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk, 1962). The seeds are less bitter and less active than those of *S. kombe*. *S. grandiflora* Gilg, has been used in Zulu herbalism as a charm against evil. The application obviously has no scientific basis. The young leaves of *S. preussi* Engl. and Pax. which occur in Angola and on the East Coast of Africa are cooked and used as a vegetable. This application suggests that the leaves are probably non-poisonous, either because the content of active principles in them is very low or because most of the active principles have been leached out of them in the process of cooking, or lastly because the active principles have been destroyed by some of the added ingredients during the cooking. The seeds of *S. welwitschii* K. Schum. occurring in Zambia show little or no evidence of an active principle, whereas the same seed obtained in Angola has a pronounced bitter taste indicating the presence of an active principle. Such a geographical variation in the content of active principles in the same plant is significant because if the product from Zambia is mistakenly used in an arrow poison it will fail the hunters; and if used in an ordeal trial, the suspect, guilty or not guilty will "go free". It is thus important that the plant should be accurately identified before being used. Strophanthus is also employed in native medicine for curing venearal diseases. The powdered stem is put on guinea-warm sores, and a decoction of the stem is taken to cure weakness after severe illness. These claims are worthy of some investigation. In the Ivory Coast, the Fantis believe that by fermenting the powdered seeds and leaves with banana flowers, the toxicity of the product is ensured. One effect of fermentation will be to cause the splitting off of some of the sugar moieties in the polyglycosides of strophanthus. The residual glycosides will show reduced water-solubility and therefore decreased mobility and onset of action in the body. The basis of the above claim is not clear. The mode of action of strophanthus on the human or animal body not being known, it is not surprising that strophanthus was not deliberately directed at the treatment of heart troubles in native curative medicine. Probably the same can be said for digitalis which was used in Europe as a domestic medicine for external application long before Withering recognised and recommended its cardiotonic properties in 1776.

Constituents And Pharmacology:

Strophanthus kombe contains up to 10 per cent of k-strophanthin. This substance is a mixture of glycosides which include k-strophanthoside, k-strophanthin-B and cymarin. All these component glycosides are based on the steroidal aglycone, strophanthidin. K-strophanthoside is the largest molecule of them all with three sugar moieties (1 cymarose – 2 glucose) attached to the aglycone. K-strophanthin-B is derived from K-strophanthoside by splitting off a molecule of glucose from the latter. K-strophanthin-B in its turn yields cymarin by losing a molecule of glucose. *Strophanthus gratus* contains ouabain made up of the steroidal aglycone ouabagenin with an attached molecule of rhamnose. Whereas

k-strophanthin is a mixture, ouabain is a pure crystalline substance. Strophanthin-k has about half the activity of ouabain. S. hispidus contains h-strophanthin and incidentally was the species used by Fraser in his classical studies. There are quite a numbr of cardiac glycosides of minor importance medicinally found in other strophanthus species.

The structures of strophanthus glycosides and indeed of all cardiac glycosides are basically similar to those of digitalis glycosides in that they are all built upon the steroidal aglycones to which are attached different numbers and types of sugars. The aglycones may differ in the nature and position of substituents in the steroid nucleus.

Digitalis, strophanthus and allied drugs are cardiotonics. They increase the contractility and improve the tone of the cardiac muscle, both reactions resulting in a lower but much stronger heart beat. Digitalis is cumulative because it takes effect after several hours, its full effect being observed after several days. However, the strophanthus glycoside strophanthin-k is absorbed more rapidly, is less cumultive and is the drug of choice where a quick action is required, for example in cardiac emergencies. The other strophanthus glycoside, ouabain, shows a nearly instantaneous action and is also valuable in emergencies. It is to be noted that whereas digitoxin, the chief active glycoside of digitalis is insoluble in water, ouabain is soluble (1 gm. dissolves in about 75–100 ml of water), and that the solubility of ouabain enhances the rapidity of its onset of action. Compared with digitalis preparations, strophanthus is more readily broken down in the digestive system if given by mouth. Strophanthus glycosides are therefore preferably given by intravenos injection. It follows from this that strophanthus is more reliable as an arrow poison which acts immediately on the vascular system of the animal, than as an ordeal poison which is invariably administered to the human suspect by mouth.

Allied Drugus:

In addition to strophanthus there are a few other drugs growing in Africa which are cardiotonic in their properties. An example is *Thevetia* which although exotic, is now firmly established as an ornamental plant in tropical Africa. It furnishes the cardiac glycoside thevetin which is sometimes used in medicine. Thevetin has a potency of about of that of ouabain and can be used instead of digitalis in cases of intolerance towards digitalis. Species of *Acokanthera* (*A. ouabaio* and *A. schimperi*) produce ouabain which is the same as the glycoside produced by *Strophanthus gratus*. Other drugs of lesser imprtance medicinally are *Adenium, Nerium, Calotropis* etc. These drugs, however, feature as arrow poisons.

S. Sarmentosus and Sarmentogenin:

In the late 1940's, strophanthus was much in the news because it was found that *S. Sarmentosus* de Candolle could provide the chemical intermediate for the commercial production of cortisone — a drug that is highly valued for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and rheumatic fever. S. sarmentosus occurs mainly in Senegambia, Sierra Leone and the lower Congo. The seeds of this plant yield the cardiac glycoside sarmentocymarin whose aglycone is sarmentogenin. Sarmentogenin is a trihydroxygenin and its possesion of a hydroxyl group at carbon atom number eleven in the steriod nucleus makes it particularly useful as a chemical precursor for cortisone. The importance of *S. sarmentosus* as a source of cortisone lies in the fact that the other natural (animal) source is very expensive. For example, cortisone can be derived from bile acids obtained from ox-bile, and a day's treatment for one patient is estimated at requiring about forty head of slaughtered cattle. With strophanthus, however, the seed can be grown quite extensively and one ton of seed could yield as much cortisone as about 12,000 tons of cattle. Moreover the plant precursor is nearer by seventeen chemical steps to cortisone than the animal precursor. Towards the end of 1949 the American pharmaceutical companies of Upjohn and Penick sent an expedition to Africa with the object of securing a large supply of *S. sarmentosus* seeds. The main problem attendant upon the search for *S. sarmentosus* is that of botanical

identity. The plant forms a large number of varieties which are morphologically indistinguishable. These varieties in their turn show considerable chemical variation. The American expedition was therefore unable to achieve its objective. It seems, however, that S. *sarmentosus* may not after all be an economically suitable source of sarmentogenin, because the seeds of genuine *S. sarmentosus* contain this substance only in traces (0.0045%) (Shoppee, 1964). The most suitable source of sarmentocymarin or sarmentogenin is yet to be determined. In this connection it is interesting to note that sarmentocymarin has been isolated from the seeds of a number of other strophanthus species, namely *S. gerrardii* (0.134%), *S. courmontii* (0.26%), *S. petersianus* (0.1%) and *S. grandiflorus* (0.1%). The presence of sarmentogenin in *S. intermedius* has also been confirmed chromatographically. From the seeds of various strophanthus species can be isolated, the following sarmentogenin-yielding glycosides:— sarnovide, kwangoside, divaricoside, divostroside and sargenoside. These glycosides or the plants containing them are possible sources of sarmentogenin. Judging from their content of sarmentocymarin it would appear that *S. courmontii* is more suitable as a source of sarmentogenin than *S. sarmentosus*. Moreover, *S. courmontii* may not possess the multiplicity of botanical and chemical varieties both of which factors have made the indentification and collection of genuine *S. sarmentosus* difficult.

Since the possession of oxygen at the No. 11 position in the steroid nucleus of any cortisone precursor is advantageous, it becomes useful to examine some materials other than sarmentogenin which fulfil that requirement. Examples of such other materials are sarmutogenin, sarverogenin and caudogenin. These are aglycones of glycosides found in a number of strophanthus species. The most abudant glycoside so far reported in *S. amboensis* is intermedioside (2.59%); and its aglycone is sarverogenin. Thus *S. amboensis* can be a good source of sarverogenin.

It is of interest to note that a pharmacist, by name Boquet, after carrying out some studies among the Ashanti, Abron and Agni tribes showed that decoctions and plasters of the root barks of *S. sarmentosus* and *S. hispidus* are useful in the treatment of arthritis and rheumatism. Now on the one hand, *S. hispidus* belongs to the chemical group of strophanthus species which contain glycosides of sarmentogenin, sarmutogenin, sarverogenin, etc. The implications of the results of Boquet's investigations is that although *S. sarmentosus* and *S. hispidus* belong to two different chemical groups, their root extracts or preparations contain anti-arthritic and anti-rheumatic principles and that these principles can exert their effects without any further modification of their structures. Boquet's work is worth exploitation, particularly with respect to *S. hispidus* which is both botanically more easily identifiable and more abundantly available than *S. sarmentosus*.

At the present time, because of the difficulty in obtaining the right species of strophanthus in sufficient quantity, attention has been turned away from strophanthus to other plant sources of cortisone material. Apart from sarmentogenin, the other important plant steroids for cortisone production are sarsasapogenin and smilagenin from the genus *Smilax;* diosgenin and botogenin from the genus *Dioscorea;* hecogenin, manogenin and gitogenin from species of *Agave;* and sitosterol from crude vegetable oils. Diosgenin is a sapogenin which had been discovered in 1937 in the species of *Dioscorea tokoro,* a plant native to Japan. Other *Dioscorea* species yielding reasonable quantities of the cortisone material are *D. composita, D. floribunda, D. macrostachya, D. sylvatica* (from Transvaal and Natal), etc. Diosgenin also occurs as a glycoside in the root of *Trillium erectum.* Hecogenin is obtained from *Agave sisalana* found in sub-tropical America and cultivated in Kenya for the fibre. The saponin which yields hecogenin is extracted from the waste juice. The fungus, ergot which is produced principally in Spain, Portugal and Eastern Europe contains about 40% of fixed oil which on saponification yields about 1% of sterols from which ergosterol — another cortisone precursor can eventually be prepared. Dried yeast also contains ergosterol. Stigmasterol, which is obtained from soya bean oil has been used for synthesising cortisone.

From the standpoint of chemical structure, the relevant strophanthus steroids are superior for synthesis of cortisone to the steroids obtained from these other plant sources. This is because the strophanthus steroids are nearer cortisone by the possession of oxygen at the No. 11 carbon atom in the steroid nucleus — a characteristic which these other plant steroids under discussion do not possess; and to introduce oxygen into that position in the steriod nucleus proves to be one of the most difficult problems known to chemists. However, if strophanthus is to compete fairly well with the other plant sources of cortisone material, the right species must be produced in reasonably large amounts.

Attempts are being made at cultivating strophanthus in the open field away from the forests. The experiment is not without its problems. Pollination of the flowers is not easy, possibly because the right type of insects do not leave the forests for the open fields. There is also the difficulty of supporting the vines which attain great heights. These difficulties can be circumvented by cultivating the plants in forested areas. By hybridization and careful breeding, it will be possible to produce seeds yielding high amounts of sarmentogenin or other cortisone precursor. If this is achieved, the dream of "picking cortisone off trees" shall have come true to the relief and delight of the many thousands suffering from arthristis and rheumatism.

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Printed by Midwest Newspapers Corporation, Benin City, Nigeria