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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RÉCU.
A PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY OF THE IDOMA OF CENTRAL NIGERIA

by

Erim Odey Erim

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. (History) at Dalhousie University, April, 1977.

Supervisor
External Examiner
Internal Examiner
Internal Examiner

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to use oral sources to reconstruct the pre-colonial history of the Idoma of central Nigeria. Totemic symbols were extensively used as a methodological device in history to supplement and cross-check oral sources with what little data there is from documentary sources.

A chronological framework for dating the Idoma early history is constructed. Extensive use of numerous royal and commoner genealogies has provided dates with realistic margins of error. The resultant chronology is examined against both regional and internal sources and appears to be coherent.

The thesis attempts to answer the question 'who are the Idoma?' The origin of the various ethnic groups in Idoma Division is examined, and it is argued that most of the ancestors of the various ethnic groups which make up the Idoma lived within the ancient Kwararafa confederacy before 1600. Thereafter, with the rise of the Jukun in that confederacy, many ethnic groups left and established new homelands within modern Tiv and Igala countries. Some of these were the ancestors of the proto-Idoma groups. Those groups that came from Kwararafa and Igalaland between c. 1535-1775 and later settled in modern Idoma-land claim either 'eastern' or 'western' origins in their historical traditions. By 1800, the ancestors of these had mingled together to build modern Idoma society. Idoma ethnicity is a slow historical development in which diverse ethnic groups come together to form a unique Idoma culture.
The thesis concludes by examining the origin of the state among certain Idoma groups. This study examines theories of state formation in many parts of the world and attempts to show that kingship among the Idoma had its roots in the society; that it grew out of the biological idea of the father, through the family, lineage, kindred and the general structure of the society. Furthermore, this study also shows that kingship is deeply influenced by religion and that once the kingship principle is established, it becomes exposed to different historical processes which either strengthen or weaken it to a point of crisis.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this thesis has depended on the assistance of many persons to whom I owe debt of profound gratitude. Dalhousie University awarded me a Graduate Fellowship which made it possible for me to undertake this study both in Canada and in Nigeria. I am particularly grateful to Professor J.B. Webster, currently seconded as Head of the History Department at the University of Malawi, who patiently supervised this work and helped me in many other ways. I also wish to express my profound gratitude to Professor J.E. Flint who, in Professor Webster's absence, saw me through the writing stages of this work. I wish to thank him specially for being so patient with me and for his perceptive insights which helped shape this study.

During the period of fieldwork in Nigeria, I discussed many problems of early Idoma history with Professor R.G. Armstrong of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Dr. A.C. Unomah of the same University, Professor R. Gavin of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and Professor E.J. Alagoa of Lagos University, Lagos. I thank all these scholars for their valuable suggestions.

I retain vivid memory of all my informants in Idoma Division, rulers and chiefs of the numerous places that I visited, sometimes without adequate notice. These people offered me hospitality in their homes and gave so much help to my work. It is impossible for me to enumerate all their names here, but some I must mention. I would like
to thank in particular Joe A. Omakwu and Paul A. Anyebe whose co-operation I will always remember. I would also like to thank the following Idoma District Heads: Suleman Etuka and his cousin Ahmadu Ogwola of Agatu District; Odangla Ogbo of Ochekwu District; Egri Oko of Adoko; Michael Akpa of Oglewu; Ahmadu Ogwu of Ugbeju and the Head Master of St. Mary's Primary School, Mr. Clement Oba; Mr. D.E. Enenche of Olokam; Mr. Daniel Adulugba of Edumoga; and the late Ocheibi Okplefu of Otukpo.

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Most of all, my debt of gratitude goes to my wife Patience, who assisted me at every point and without whose devotion and understanding this work would never have been completed. However, the responsibility for all the weaknesses contained in this thesis remains mine.
GLOSSARY

Achadu,  Prime Minister
Adaalekwu  The most senior elder of the lineage; chief-priest of the lineage ancestral cult.
Agba  A type of fish.
Ai  Descendants of a designation for lineages that trace descent through the male line to a common male ancestor.
Ai-Anyá  People of female attachments to ruling lineages.
Ai-Igabo  Graded titles.
Ai-Uta  Constabulary.
Aje/Agya  Earth; another name for lineages in Idomaland.
Akpa  Royal Stool
Akpalewo  A hat.
Akika  An ancient iron rod currency within Kwararafa confederacy.
Alekwu  Spirits of the ancestor.
Alichaba  Royal robe.
Anakpo  Buffalo
Anwu  Civet Cat
Egba  Tribute
Eje  Leopard
Eka  Black Monkey
Ekwuafla  Ancestral mask
Iho  Forbiddances; totems
Inalegwu  Solemn prayer to the ancestor
GLOSSARY (cont'd)

Ipooma Sub-lineage.
Ipoopu Lineage.
Oba Defensive wall.
Obonoko Strong wind.
Obueshe Transformation ritual.
Ofuila Red cap.
Ogogbo A tall pointed hat.
Ogonopo A type of fish.
Ojira Kindred meeting ground; the highest political authority of the kindred group.
Oka A bracelet of coral beads; royal insignia of office.
Okpoju Market master.
Okpochuma A period of ignorance; a stage in ekwuafia ritual purification.
Okwute Royal staff.
Ole Family.
Ominyi Elephant killer.
Opa Locally manufactured cloth used mostly in ekwuafia rituals.
Otrefu Head man.
Owoich Supreme God.
Owuna A type of bird.
Uloko A type of bird.
Utsabo Head of the granary.
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INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In recent years African historians have evolved an excellent academic practice whereby each scholar sets before the reader the methodology employed in collecting and analysing oral traditions of those societies whose past he is seeking to reconstruct. This practice is commendable for a number of reasons. Given the phenomenal development in the field of African historiography in the last two decades, each scholar's contribution to the ever-increasing store of field techniques within what is rapidly becoming a specialised field may serve as an index of progress within the discipline. Furthermore, a full disclosure of the field procedure and the research techniques adopted should indicate the full range of problems and how these were solved (or not) and so serve as a guide to future field researchers. This academic tradition, it is hoped, should help assess the ultimate value of each scholar's contribution in both methodology and historiography. What is attempted in this introduction is to demonstrate the procedure the writer employed during a fourteen-month period of fieldwork from April, 1975 to June, 1976. A critical analysis of the previous literature on the Idoma is also attempted.

Government authorization for the fieldwork

Although the issue of obtaining government approval may seem awkward, yet it solved a number of problems for the writer during the period of fieldwork among the Idoma of central Nigeria. Without such an approval an impression might be created within the Idoma community that the writer was an 'agent' of a foreign government sent to gather reports which could be used in overthrowing the Federal Military Government of Nigeria. Secondly, without an official authorization from both the Federal and the State governments of Nigeria, the legitimacy of the Idoma research project might be challenged by the 'local politician.' It is possible for 'these enemies of progress' to create the impression within the community that the writer was sent by the local government in Idoma Division to formulate reports which would be used in the reconstruction of the local government institutions, chieftaincy, and land rights which might be prejudicial to their interests.

Fortunately, a number of incidents took place which made the writer's entry into the Idoma society relatively easy. In the first place, this research project is an integral part of the Benue Valley Project launched by Professor Webster of the Department of History, Dalhousie University, in the summer of 1974. Its aim, among other things, is to give practical training in field techniques and the methodology of collecting oral traditions of disparate groups which characterise the Benue Valley of Nigeria. Since field operations started in the summer of 1974, an official government authorization was obtained by the director that year for all the members of the
project. When the present fieldwork was undertaken in 1975, all
that was necessary was to inform the Federal Military Government of
Nigeria through the State Government (the then Benue Plateau State)
that the previous scheme was still in operation and obtain a letter
of introduction from the latter to the Divisional Office at Otukpo.
Until July 1976, Otukpo was the administrative headquarters of the
former Idoma Division. 2 It was from the Divisional Office, Otukpo
that the writer was issued with another set of introductory letters
to the various local government authorities in Idomaland. These
authorities took upon themselves to provide the writer with the
necessary accommodation and guidance during field operations.

Secondly, the Idoma like most African groups take a good deal of
interest in their past. They are also aware of the complexity of
their history. According to some Idoma elders, their history has
been 'crying' for a professional historian for years. There was,
therefore, welcome relief almost everywhere in Idomaland that an
attempt was at last being made to document their past. This explains
why everywhere a crowd of elders and others interested in their past
would willingly congregate to discuss their history with the writer.
Furthermore, he was lavishly entertained by practically every com-

---

2. By July 1976, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria carved
out another state from the former Benue-Plateau/State. With the new
changes came a new administrative structure which split former Idoma
Division into three new divisions: Otukpo, Oju, and Okpokwu. However,
for reasons of convenience, the term Idoma Division will be retained
in this work.
Thirdly, the writer belongs to the Yala ethnic group which separated from the main Idoma groups between c.1625-1655 and since that time have lived at a great distance from the Idoma. However, the Idoma are still conscious of their Yala relations. The writer was therefore looked upon as a returning 'son of the soil.' That status conferred several advantages and he was treated like a relative with a difference. Since he came from outside Idomaland, he was not connected or tainted with the turmoil of recent Idoma politics. Thus he could count on the advantages which fall to an alien researcher as well as those which accrue to a member of the ethnic group, with few of the disadvantages of either. All these advantages made the writer's fieldwork a very rewarding one.

The Idoma pre-colonial political institutions

In pre-colonial Idomaland, there were about ninety political institutions. These consisted of about eighty-five chieflets, three chiefdoms and two states. There was little difference except in size between the first two political structures as both possessed identifiable tracts of land whose members were related to one another on the male line, claimed descent from a common ancestor, and practised endogamy within the 'core' members. In both chieflets and chiefdoms, members were quite literally referred to as ai- (sons of) after the

3. The dating system used in this study is based on the generational length of thirty years among the Idoma. How the estimate of generation length was achieved is fully discussed in chapter II of this work. For more details on the Yala-Idoma pre-colonial relations, see E.O. Erim, "Yala Migration and Settlement," M.A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1974.
founder of the political unit in question. Politics, decision-making, and law enforcement in both units were dominated by the pervasive kinship system. However, there were two basic differences between the two units. Chiefdoms had larger populations and occupied larger territories of land than the chieflets, but some members of the chiefdoms had different ethnic origins. Some of them went there through marrying into the families of the ruling kindred groups. Constitutionally speaking, they were referred to as ai-anṣa (those of female attachments to the ruling lineages). In other words, they became members of the chiefdoms because of their female attachments to the ruling groups within each chiefdom. In time, a select number of the ai-anṣa became the king-makers in the chiefdom while as a group, they constituted the non-ruling kindred or commoner groups.

On the other hand, the difference between chiefdoms and the states was as much qualitative as quantitative. People within the states were aware of their unique origins and history as in the chiefdoms, but were culturally heterogenous and this was not so in the chiefdoms. Crucial to the maintenance of the state was the centralization of political power within a single group, 'the royal family' which in turn delegated political powers to accommodate culturally diverse ethnic groups within the state.

The understanding of the above political structures is crucial to any successful fieldwork among the Idoma. Each of the above structures is the repository of its oral traditions which were and still are perpetuated within the political unit concerned. If the historian is to collect and analyse the Idoma pre-colonial history.
competently, he must be aware of these structures and the social
relations that occur at several levels of the Idoma society.
Experience elsewhere has suggested that rich and detailed history
exists in societies which were later centralized into states. Because
of this, historians and others have collected royal chronicles, check-
ing them out and amplifying them with informants within "royal
courts." 4 Although Vansina worked largely in centralised states, he
rightly suspected that "societies without state organisation might
reveal more of their history than has been commonly supposed to be
possible." 5

The Idoma case has shown that what Vansina suspected is correct
but this 'discovery' was only possible by travelling one thousand miles
within a relatively small geographical area. Ninety political units
imply ninety interviews to secure ninety skeletal royal chronicles.
Add this to the numerous commoner kindred groups and the reader can
see the immensity of the task even to record only one interview with
each kindred group in Idoma society. Nevertheless, the richness of
the resulting data far surpasses that of the most elaborate royal
chronicle.

4. For example see, J. Vansina, Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical

5. Ibid., p. 173.
The collection of oral traditions

The actual fieldwork which started in April 1975 was divided into two distinct phases: the survey and the area of concentration phases. The survey phase lasted from April 1975 to September of the same year. The first aim of this phase was to carry out at least one interview with every kindred group in Idomalnd. The second was to discover through the above interviews the time-depth of the various historical traditions of the various kindred groups, their origins, and the directions of migrations. Since the basic aim was to obtain an historical overview of the Idoma past, questions were more or less standardized. The range of questioning covered the names of the informants who were the representatives of their kindred groups within any given political structure, their ages, their ancestors as far back as they could remember, in genealogical order, the kindred migratory stories, totems and the kindred ancestor spirits. This pattern of interview was repeated in ninety pre-colonial political units. It was only after the survey phase had been completed that the pre-colonial units were identified as against the colonial structure of twenty-two administrative districts.

Since the writer's initial knowledge of Idoma society was minimal, he adopted the individual interview technique. Here, notable individuals were interviewed privately on aspects of the society with which they were familiar. The technique was advantageous and the interview easy to control. Idomalnd is a society where every elder is supposed to be the custodian of the kindred history. Indeed,
several informants took the writer to their homes where they preferred to discuss their kindred history. However, the disadvantages of this technique far outweighed the advantages, at least during this phase of the research project. In Idomaland, there are no designated historical specialists in the strict sense of the word, responsible for the preservation and transmission of the epic traditions of the society. On the contrary, historical, as well as other genres of traditions are broadcast at every level of the society, diffused in ole (families), ipooma (sub-lineage), ipoopi (lineages), and aje (kindred group). Each unit treasures its own heritage. Therefore, to carry out interviews in depth during this phase would have become a life-time occupation. Recourse was therefore had to the group interview technique.

Government in traditional Idoma society was both gerontocratic and conciliar. Consequently, every major decision affecting the life of the community was taken through a consensus of elders in an ojira (kindred group meeting). Therefore, the group interview technique conformed to the traditional form of government. Since the local government introductory letter from the Otukpo Divisional Office insisted on the active co-operation of all elders in the present project, it is not surprising that in nearly every political unit, elders gathered in an ojira waiting to be interviewed. In the course of the interview, especially when collecting kindred genealogies, informants reminded one another of the details of the kindred history. When conflicts arose, the writer made it clear to the ojira that all points of view and the variations were of paramount interest to the
present project. Sometimes, strong personalities dominated the debates but since there was obviously no previously agreed version of the kindred history, there was little to fear that what was said was an 'official history' of the group. In such debates, sometimes a consensus was achieved, and sometimes not. What was important was that every interview was taken down in long hand and in English.6

Perhaps the method of tape recording traditions needs some elaboration. Most fieldworkers prefer to use tapes in the belief that every detail of the interview should be documented. According to one such fieldworker, "the modern portable recorder has opened up a whole new dimension...and one can now seek out and record oral traditions as it is performed in its full form."7 Indeed, by habit and training, the historian is an archival animal. This explains why the writer combined tape recorders with note taking. The tape recorder was used to tape specialised and more 'fixed' traditions such as songs,

6. The 295 formal interviews held among the Idoma constitute the "Idoma Historical Texts." These interviews have been typed and bound into three separate volumes which run from 6-9, all within the Benue Valley Oral Text Series held by the Killam Library, Dalhousie University. Copies of these series are also available in the Africana Collections of the University of Ibadan. Such details as citation of these texts are fully described under "Oral Evidence" attached to the bibliography at the end of this study.

epic stories rendered in chants. It was employed for 'fixed texts' while careful note taking was resorted to when unstructured traditions involving many questions were being discussed.

Use was also made of a research assistant in the course of this work. The standing practice among many fieldworkers had been to engage the services of an indigene who is fairly literate in the English language. For the Idoma this procedure remained an ideal. Initial attempts to work with the Idoma assistants met with complications at several levels. For instance, nearly every kindred group was suspicious of the fact that assistants, taken from another kindred group, would not represent their interest properly. This attitude on the part of the Idoma elders therefore implied that research assistants had to be chosen on an ad hoc basis. Secondly, the commoner kindred groups were equally suspicious that assistants from the royal kindred groups would be inimical to their historical interest. It therefore became necessary for the writer to recruit assistants from among the commoners when interviewing these groups. However, it must be stressed here that the variation notwithstanding, little was lost as the writer spoke a dialect of the Idoma language and therefore understood most of what was being discussed in the interview sessions.

Chart I indicates the full details of interviews conducted during the survey phase of the Idoma research project. The chart, like the fieldwork, is organised by the administrative districts and includes

8. For example, see Lamphear, The Traditional History, 263–264, where he discussed the background of his assistants.
## CHART I

Number of Interviews Conducted in Phase I of the Project

### AGATU DISTRICT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pre-colonial Chieflets</th>
<th>Commoner Kindreds</th>
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<th>No. of Interviews</th>
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<td>16. Atakpa</td>
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<td>19. Oguifu</td>
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### OTUKPA DISTRICT

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<tr>
<td>1. Ai-Ono</td>
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### OCHEWKU DISTRICT

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<td>2. Ooba</td>
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<td>3. Adija</td>
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<td>4. Ugbokpo</td>
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<td>5. Iga</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Ojantelle</td>
</tr>
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<td>7. Edikwu</td>
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<td>8. Ataganyi</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Akpete</td>
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<td>Pre-colonial Chieflets</td>
<td>Commoner Kindreds</td>
<td>No. of Informants</td>
<td>No. of Interviews</td>
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<td>11. Ikobi</td>
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<td>12. Ugbobi</td>
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<td>13. Auke</td>
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<td>14. Opho</td>
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<td>16. Ochimekwu</td>
<td>1. Iko</td>
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<td>17. Odogbo</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
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WUKPA DISTRICT
Pre-colonial Chieflets

| 1. Etabonq | 9       | 1       | 3       |
| 2. Eheje    | 9       | 1       | 3       |
| Total       | 18      | 2       | 6       |

OGLEWU DISTRICT
Pre-colonial Chieflets

| 1. Ijami    | 15      | 4       | 11      |
| 2. Eboya    | 2       | 2       | 3       |
| 3. Idabi     | 2       | 2       | 2       |
| 4. Anwule    | 22      | 4       | 16      |
| 5. Ijaha     | 18      | 2       | 21      |
| 6. Ochobe    | 14      | 2       | 12      |
| 7. Af-Aghoke | 18      | 2       | 10      |
| 8. Af-Oga    | 14      | 2       | 9       |
| Total        | 111     | 20      | 92      |

ONYAGITE DISTRICT
Pre-colonial Chieflets

| 1. Onyagede             | 13      | 2       |
| 2. Okpike               | 5       | 3       | 4       |
| 3. Awume                | 13      | 2       | 4       |
| 4. Agadagba             | 5       | 2       | 6       |
| Total                   | 38      | 10      | 21      |
### Chart I (cont'd)

#### Edumoga District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-colonial Chieflets</th>
<th>Commoner Kindred</th>
<th>No. of Informants</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
<th>No. of Genealogies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ojigo</td>
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<td>1. Okpaele</td>
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<td>2. Ingle</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Amuda</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Eke Nowa</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3. Ugbokolo</td>
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<td>4. Amejo-Okonobo</td>
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#### Agila District

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<th>Commoner Families</th>
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<td>3. Onwa</td>
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<td>4. Osudu</td>
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<td>2. Angbeta</td>
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<td>6. Efoha</td>
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<td>7. Okpotobo</td>
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#### Igwumale District

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<td>2. Osuken</td>
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<td>3. Uturuukpo</td>
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<td>4. Ogbe</td>
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<td>5. Olokwu</td>
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<td>6. Abakpa</td>
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#### Ito District

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### Chart I (cont'd)

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<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Genealogies</th>
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<td>2. Atuolo</td>
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<td>3. Rijo</td>
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<td>4. Igba</td>
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<td>5. Okari</td>
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<table>
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<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Genealogies</th>
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### OKPOGA DISTRICT

<table>
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### AKPA DISTRICT

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Ijaha</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Adogbe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
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### OJU DISTRICT

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</table>

**TOTAL**
at least one interview in each kindred group. Initial survey inter-
views were also conducted with the three chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju,
and Otukpo but the details of these interviews have not been included
here for some obvious reasons. As the chart indicates, an average of
two interviews was conducted in each chieftet in Agatu district. In
Agatu, as elsewhere, usually the name of the chieftet was the name of
the founder of that group. In some chieftets, the commoner kindreds
locally referred to as ai-anya were also interviewed. At the end of
six months of fieldwork, about 178 interviews were conducted in this
phase of fieldwork. During the same period, 464 genealogies were also
collected from 718 informants living in eighty-five Idoma chieflets.
It must be stressed once more that the above interviews were intro-
ductive and limited in scope. There is no pretence that they were

carried out in depth.

As already indicated, this project has two phases. The second
phase included another three months of interviews in depth in the
three chiefdoms of Ugboju, Adoka, and Otukpo, respectively. The choice
of this area of concentration was guided by three basic considerations.

As the three coherent Idoma groups, they provided a focus for a more
intensive study of the Idoma pre-colonial history. In their political
developments, the three chiefdoms appear to lie somewhere between the

9. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. For instance,
the people of Egba chieftet in Agatu district informed the writer
that their name was derived from 'loud noise' which their ancestors
made to attract the attention of their enemies, slave raiders from
Northern Nigeria.
'typical' Idoma chieftet and the 'untypical' Idoma states. In other words, the chiefdoms partook of the elements of both the chieftets and the states. While it is not the role of the historian to predict, it would seem nevertheless, that had British colonial administration not appeared on the Idoma political scene when it did, these chiefdoms might have become states given certain circumstances, or given other circumstances, they might have fragmented into chieftets.

Secondly, these chiefdoms possessed the greatest time-depth of the three political structures in pre-colonial Idomaland. They were the earliest Idoma groups to occupy their present homeland. Therefore, they can be viewed as the 'core' of the present Idoma people. Thirdly, it was from one of these chiefdoms, Adoka, that the Yala scion separated between c. 1626-1655. The Yala is the ethnic group to which the writer belongs. He has already reconstructed the pre-colonial history of the Yala at the M.A. level in 1974. It is therefore hoped that in the future a coherent history of both the Yala and the Idoma will emerge from the present researches.

Between October and December 1975, about 115 interviews were conducted within the three chiefdoms. About 347 informants were interviewed, from whom 276 genealogies were collected during the same period of fieldwork. Chart II indicates the number of these interviews and with whom they were conducted. For example, twenty interviews were carried out with the royal kindreds of Adoka and two each

10. For more discussion the political system of several African countries, see M. Fortes, & E.E. Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems, (Oxford University Press, London, 1940).
| CHART II |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Number of Interviews Conducted in Phase II of the Project |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADOKA DISTRICT</th>
<th>Pre-colonial</th>
<th>Commoner</th>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Genealogies</th>
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<th>Informants</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Genealogies</th>
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<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Genealogies</th>
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<td>1. Ugboju</td>
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<td>1. Akpachi</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ochumóche</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4. Okudu</td>
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<td>6. Ajobe</td>
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<td>7. Okoto</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>8. Jericho</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>91</td>
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### CHART II (cont'd)

#### SUMMARY OF WORK IN THE TWO PHASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>No. of Informants</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
<th>No. of Genealogies</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Phase I</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>464</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>295</td>
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with the commoner kindreds in that district; thirty with the royal kindreds of Otukpo and eleven with the six commoner kindred groups; twenty-two with the royal kindreds of Ugboju and with eight commoner kindreds within that district.

Within the three chiefdoms, there was unmistakeably an attempt by the royal kindred groups to monopolise this research. They were reluctant even to identify the location of the commoner kindreds or their informants and it would have been easy for the writer to become a victim of royal hospitality and manipulation. On the other hand, commoner kindred groups were reluctant to come forward to be interviewed in the presence of the royal informants or via the royal interpreter. It would have been easy for the writer to have become a royal chronicler, even in chiefdoms as loosely structured as these.

Each of the chiefdoms possessed three ruling lineages. Each lineage owned a clearly defined geographical territory. Commoner kindred groups were attached to one or the other of the royal lineages and lived within the geographical area of the ruling lineage to which they were attached. This interspersed geographical distribution of both the commoner and the royal kindred groups made it relatively easy for the writer to locate the former for interviewing. While commoner kindred groups held a somewhat second class status within Idomaland, many of them are among the modern Nigerian elite and a common phenomenon of modern Idoma politics is an attempt by these commoner kindred groups 'to turn tables' against the royals. From the writer's point of view, this means that commoner informants were
willing to come forward with their historical traditions and to look upon these traditions as the history of their respective chiefdoms.

**New techniques for collecting oral traditions: Totems**

It is now axiomatic that historians interested in pre-colonial Africa need not rely solely on a study of oral traditions as the source of history. It is this realization that has forced historians to seek help from other disciplines, primarily archaeology, linguistics, biology, written dates from Arab or European chroniclers who left records of their visits to some African societies and above all, ethnographic data. Admittedly, the above data, with the exception of the written documents, are specialised areas which require a great deal of expertise which the average historian does not possess. The lack of expertise and the lack of work done in these disciplines often lead the historian to fall back on his own resources. In Idomaland, no archaeological excavations had been carried out; nor do European or Arab sources exist for the time period under study. Fortunately for the writer, the Idoma society possesses a wide range of totems which can be used against the claims of oral traditions.

In recent years historians have begun to use totems as a methodological device in history. Totemic symbols have been used a great deal by the East African historians in their total effort to reconstruct the early history of the modern disparate groups of that region of Africa. Even within East Africa itself, this technique has been more developed in those areas where no early documents exist, such as Rwanda, Uganda, and the west of central Kenya, than
along the coast and the Arab Swahili trade routes where documentation was more abundant. More important, however, is the fact that unlike their West African counterparts, the East African historians have embarked upon a large-scale reconstruction of their past. To handle a complex mixing of ethnic groups and to try to thread their various histories together is exacting. Faced with this arduous task, East African historians have resorted to the use of totemic symbols as a methodological device in reconstructing the early history of several East African groups. David Cohen, through the skilful use of totems, was able to reconstruct the past of the Busoga of Uganda. Since his pioneering efforts, others have followed his lead with varying degrees of success. In West Africa, historical researches have been concentrated upon the coast or the savanna, those areas, in fact, where documents could be found most abundantly. The middle belt of Nigeria, and particularly the Idoma are areas analogous to Uganda and western Kenya where alien travellers came late.

In pre-colonial Idomaliland, there were a variety of totems. The Idoma refer to them as Iho (forbiddances) which are in almost all


cases animals, birds or fish. Every kindred group in Idoma has one or more totems. One kindred group can be differentiated from another on the basis of totems. If the view that totems remain a constant feature of any kindred group is accepted, then one can suggest that kinship relationships existed in the past among the various segments of the group concerned. For example, in Ochekwu district, the Iga kindred group reveres an agba (a type of fish) as its totem; so also Ochumekwu and Ikobi kindred groups all within the same district. Within Agatu, a neighbouring district to the north of Ochekwu is another kindred group also called Iga, which reveres agba as its totem. It seems possible that the four kindred groups were once of one kinship group and that agba was the kindred identification mark. This is even more likely if all the four kindred groups report a similar point of origin, migration routes and occasionally a similar ancestral name far back in their genealogical lines. Totems are another corroborative source of evidence but when all the available evidence coincides it seems logical to look upon a totem such as the agba as a kinship totem.

Several instances were noted of kindred groups which have become split over time and space. For example, one kindred group, which refers to itself as the ai-Ode (descendants of Ode, their founding ancestor), has segments located in several Idoma districts: Adana in Agatu, Ugbokpo in Ochekwu, Umogidi in Adoka, and Ijami, Idabi, Alaglanu, all in Oglewu district. It is of interest to discover that each of the above kindred groups is at least a considerable distance from the others. Yet, each has the ogonopo (a type of fish) as its
totem. In spite of their present wide geographical spread, the ogonopo remains the constant feature of what might be called the ai-Ode totemic kinship group.

Care must be taken to distinguish between kinship totems and the other kinds of totems. Some members of the ai-Ode have picked up one or two additional totems. The Umogidi, in addition to ogonopo, also revere the anwu (civet cat), and the owuna (a type of bird). Elders from Umogidi chieftet are firm on the order in which totems were acquired; first the ogonopo, then the anwu and finally the owuna. In other words, ogonopo represents the primary totem, while the anwu and owuna may be called secondary and tertiary totems.

Secondary and tertiary totems may be acquired in a number of ways. A kindred group may fragment over time and the various segments may migrate into new geographical regions controlled by a politically dominant kindred group of another totemic observance. The migrant group, wishing to please the dominant kindred group in their new locale, may add or adopt the totems of their host. Thus the ogonopo group noted above may have at one time sought to ingratiate themselves with first the civet cat and later the owuna hosts, thus explaining the three totems. Naturally, such deductions cannot be made on totemic evidence alone, but totemic observances are major clues to an interpretation of the past of any kindred group. While most kindred groups pick up their totems one after another, occasionally they drop one totem and pick up an entirely new one. In some cases they also remember when and how this occurred. For example, the Ojope kindred group in Ochekwu district revered the gie (the leopard), at an early date.
After several generations of migrations they established a new homeland in a new region dominated by the eka (black monkey) totem. This is a difficult case to interpret. Leopard kindred groups are very numerous in Idomalnd. Most of them came out of Idah at a time when it seemed that the royal leopard kindred group was being displaced from the throne. In other words, leopard kindred groups in Idoma may be the kin groups of the overthrown Idah dynasty; the leopard may have been a political totem, a symbol of collaboration and support for the leopard dynasty. Idah was a highly centralized state where pressures to conform and suppress 'newcomers' may have been much greater than in Idomalnd. If the leopard totem had been adopted in Idah because of political expediency, it could be easily dropped and the black monkey adopted because of political expediency once again.

Secondary and tertiary totems might be acquired for economic and social reasons. Several Idoma kindred groups with primary or kinship totems became splintered and migrated into areas where they remained numerically small even though politically independent of the majority of the kindred groups of the area. The new comers wanted land and the majority groups did not demand that the immigrants should surrender their autonomy in return. In the words of Horton, "the landowners gave land to the newcomers." The latter had to maintain close social 

15. Details of that story will be fully discussed in chapter IV of this study.

relations with the former in order to control their economic future and security of land firmly. The result was that the latecomers, for purely economic and social reasons, adopted the totems of the landowners. A typical example was the case of several Idoma kindred groups who have the civet cat and the bird as their secondary and tertiary totems. They picked up these totems from the Ugboju chiefdom who revered them as their primary totems. This will be elaborated upon later. But suffice it to say that the multi-totemism among the Idoma kindred groups does not derive only from "changing political allegiance," but from social and economic necessity as well.

The last category of totems among the Idoma concerns their political affiliations. There are nearly forty-five kindred groups in modern Idomaland who claim origins in Idah, a neighbouring kingdom to the west. All the available evidence on the political history of that ancient kingdom indicates that the totem of the ousted dynasty was the leopard. The new ruling dynasty adopted it ostensibly to placate the vast majority of its subject people who showed continued loyalty to the old regime. The leopard was to Idah what the crocodile was to Kwararafa, a national totem although it seems likely that the commoner kindred groups revered other totems as well. The new dynasty in Idah was not totally successful in making itself acceptable to the people and the forty-five kindred groups noted above came to Idoma as

17. See chapter III for more details on this aspect of Idoma history.
refugees. Since most of them look upon the leopard as their primary totem, we must assume (until researches in Idah are complete) that most of the refugee kindred groups were lineages related to the overthrown dynasty in Idah. Some, of course, may have been commoner lineages who, under the pressure of that time, preferred to emphasize their political, rather than kinship affiliations and so dropped their kinship totems and adopted the national totem as their primary totem. (A chart showing a complete list of totems may be found in chapters III and IV of the present work.)

As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the Idoma are not a 'tribe' to be looked upon as the widest kinship network of people, in other words, a family writ large. The Idoma were a complex mixing of ethnic and linguistic groups over the past four hundred years. One meaningful approach to the reconstruction of their past is through a large-scale use of totems. However, it must be emphasized here that totems, though of crucial importance, are only one of the numerous methodological devices in pre-colonial historiography.

**Ancestor reverence**

The Idoma, like most African groups, believe in a number of spirit manifestations. *Alekwu* (spirit of the ancestor) is one among many. Like other human beings, the Idoma share in the belief of *Owoicho* (a supreme God). However, in their opinion, he is considered too removed physically to cater for their immediate interests and needs. As a result, they employ such intermediaries as *aje* (the spirit of the kindred group) and alekwu. That they should propitiate
the aje periodically is understandable, for they are agriculturalists. However, for their practical and social needs, there is a continuing dialogue between the Idoma elders and their departed relatives. In Idoma cosmology, death in the physical sense does not deny the 'dead' participation in the affairs of the community. In the words of one Idoma student.

The death of the corporeal man does not mean the end of his existence. All who cease to exist in the world of the living are believed to have 'passed' into the world of the 'living dead' [who] keep [a] keen interest in the activities of the living and protecting the society from external aggression.

It was in the recognition of the powers of alekwu over the living that every Idoma kindred group maintained almost daily contact with the ancestors through constant libations and ritual ceremonies. However, the Idoma would seem to categorize the dead into two broad classes. The first consists of all the dead which include children, women and some men. In their belief, these are not considered dead ancestors (alekwu) probably because they are not qualified by age and sex factors. The second category includes "only those men who have attained the age of fifty years or more and who have children (and therefore living descendants)." It is this category of spirits which the writer found very useful as a historical device. These men, though dead, are considered potent forces in the affairs of the


21. Ibid.
erstwhile community and so "through transformation ritual obu ece, join the ancestral cult in the world of the living dead." This cult is symbolized by a masquerade, ekwuafia, and it is this ritual that can be used as a historical source.

Ekwuafia as a ritual takes many forms. One such form takes place during the funeral of the dead chief within any political unit. On such an occasion, all the dead chiefs are 'resurrected' in masked forms and in their correct genealogical order. Elaborate chants accompany the ritual and these not only indicate the genealogical order of the chiefly succession, but also the father of each dead chief. The chants form 'fixed texts' which can hardly be tampered with or influenced by later political factors. This gives the historian firmly transmitted reignal lists. Collateral succession is the norm among the Idoma with up to four lineages supplying chiefs to the stool. Henige contends that collateral succession often reverted into father/son succession in the minds of informants. This is not so among the Idoma.

The ekwuafia ceremony is so attractive among the Idoma that the ritual has been 'copied' throughout Idomaland. The initial and subsequent distribution of ekwuafia will be fully treated in chapter...

22. Ibid.


24. Collateralism will be fully discussed in chapter II of this work.
III. of this work. Suffice it to say that whatever group may have originated it, that group had the bird as its primary totem and may have picked up the civet cat as its secondary totem as well. Later, it would appear that the two totems became identified with the ekwuafrica rituals as secondary and tertiary totems. The children of Ugboju chiefdom look upon the bird and the civet cat as their primary totems. The ritual may have begun in Ugboju and spread from that chiefdom to the others. On the other hand, widespread distribution of ekwuafrica suggests many useful historical aids as to the date and the routes along which it spread and the groups which adopted this cultural item. In summary, this ritual, when analysed, points to several historical clues in the Idoma past.

A review of the previous historiography

As yet, no systematic documentation of the Idoma past exists. Largely because of its inland geographical position, this area escaped the notice of all European travellers who passed through the Benue Valley in the nineteenth century. However, with the advent of the British colonial administration by the second decade of this century, there followed a spate of literature on nearly every aspect of Idoma society. The bulk of both the published and the unpublished literature is largely the work of colonial administrators in the field and of social anthropologists. These reports are available at the National Archives at Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu, respectively.25 For purposes

25. Copies of some of these reports were made by the writer and a full list is attached to the end of this study.
of clarity as well as review, this unpublished literature has been divided into two categories: the first from 1900 to the end of the 1930's, and the second from the 1930's to the end of the Second World War.

Colonial administrators who compiled the field reports from 1900 onwards to 1930 were not professional historians, neither were they concerned with the preservation of these reports as historical materials for others to use. Furthermore, it would appear that these colonial administrators had no specific aim in view other than to please a particular audience. For example, after what one field officer regarded as a thorough investigation of the past of one Idoma district (Oglewu) one reads generalised statements such as:

"The Oglewu know little and seem to care little about their past." 26

As chart I clearly indicates, Oglewu district consists of eight chieflets, each with its unique past. If the officer was expecting his Oglewu informants to produce a common ancestor or a regnal list acceptable to all, he was destined to fail. On the other hand, he may have known that his superiors wanted a free hand to pick 'the chief' as they pleased. Reports compiled by such officers are often little more than superficial impressions of Idoma society in general.

To say all this is not intended to denigrate the contribution of these early reports. Colonial officers faced many difficulties in try-

ing to understand the people. Language was one of these, for Hausa
interpreters from Northern Nigeria were recruited in the belief that
their language was the lingua franca throughout Northern Nigeria.
Far from solving the language problem, the Hausa interpreters
obfuscated the situation, as they too were 'strangers' in Idomaland.
The resultant confusion is aptly described by Anyebe:

In the twenties the government had become very
anthropological minded and administrators ambitious
to make a reputation had thrown themselves into
investigation of the lineage, kith and kin,
marriage and the burial customs of the people,
in their division. The man in Idoma,... had spoken
no Idoma and the Idoma were in any case not com-
municative about their domestic details. However,
the [Division Officer] had had an excellent Hausa
interpreter with an inventive turn of mind. Seeing
how desperately anxious his master was to record
every custom, the garrulous old man filled in the
many gaps left by the obstinate Idoma with his
imagination. Everyone was happy. The Idoma kept
their secrets to themselves and the D.O. made pages
upon pages of notes and the interpreter was praised
for his ardent help...So bits by bits such was the
awe...the invention of the Hausa interpreter became
accepted as the genuine customs of the people.27

A second problem arose from British colonial attitudes towards the
Idoma as a people. On the one hand, Idoma Division was regarded as
the most difficult administrative area in Northern Nigeria, more dif-
ficult, in fact, than their immediate Tiv neighbours who had resisted
the entry of the colonial administration. The Tiv were occasionally
admired for their "intelligence, industry and congeniality."28

27. Quoted in A.P. Anyebe, Otukpo, (The Society for Liberty, Makurdi,

28. Quoted in A. Magid, "Political Traditionalism in Nigeria: A case
study of secret Societies and Dance Groups in Local Government,"
Africa' X, II, no. IV, 1972, p. 296.
Idomá were regarded as "primitive and inferior politically and intellectually..." Consequently, Idomaland was not one of the areas favoured by the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria. Indeed, it was considered a difficult area where officers could be sent as a subtle form of punishment. Ambitious junior officers stationed in Idomaland would hope for promotion to more favoured areas in the Emirates further north. The early colonial reports also lacked a firm base which might have been supplied by Idoma informants. A large part of the Idoma people looked upon the colonial occupation with considerable dislike and dismay. The "pacification of Idomaland was characterised by ... savage brutality which produced on the part of the Idomá bitterness and aloofness towards the colonial administration..." Thus the information collected by early administrators tended to be thin and sketchy and, though occasionally useful, needs to be assessed with a critical eye.

However, during the inter-war years, there came new orientations in colonial thinking. British colonial policy in Africa in general became subjected to more critical assessment. Dame Margery Perham for instance, lamented the faulty assumption that indirect rule as


30. One typical example was W.R. Crocker, who later published some of his field experiences in Nigeria as *Nigeria, A Critique of British Colonial Administration.* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1936).

practised in most African colonies implied 'autocratic chieftaincy.' She argued instead that indirect rule encouraged a system of government based upon conciliar democracy. In practice, this meant that a good deal of research work among African polities such as the Idoma needed to be done to discover the broader bases of indigenous government. On the official level, the administrative officers in Idomalnd went out to the people:

to organise (but not to over-organise and reduce to the lifeless formality of the average parliament or conference) the mass meeting of the clan (where in the past only the leaders and men of influence had any real say) into district ojira of village heads and leading men, who in turn chose the oche or chief which became the district head.

Conciliar democracy and the choice of a district head were not necessarily compatible ideas; nevertheless, for the first time, colonial administrative officers descended on rural Idomalnd to compile 're-organisation reports' and so restore traditional government to its pristine form. That these officers failed ultimately in their objectives had been inferred earlier, but the systematic documentation of some aspects of the Idoma past and ethnographic present created reputable reports on the early history of several Idoma kindred groups. For example, Elliot's reports on nearly all the kindred groups in modern Agatu district, Ugboju, and Adoka deserve attention; so also


33. Ibid.
do Money's reports on Otukpo and Otukpa; Abraham's on Otukpo, Ugumale, Akpa and Agila; Meek's on Otukpo, Ugboju, and Akpa; and Frampton's reports on the Igede people. 34

Though these reports were more sophisticated, they still had immense weaknesses. The English chronicler lacked any training in methodology and was often weaker on analysis. Most of these reports were for their use alone; therefore, sources were not revealed. Collection was not systematic; Agatu and Otukpo received more attention while Ijigbam, Ichama, Utonkon were ignored. One can imagine a group of ten informants representing ten different chieftains, all of different origins confusing Captain Smith when he wrote:

As it is expected among a community of scattered independent groups of primitive agriculturalists with little history and less to be proud of, tradition is very vague, but I think that it is even more vague and more contradictory than among any other people I have yet met. In some places the elders express entire ignorance of their origin, though they might say that they have been told that their ancestor was called so and so and that he came from a place called so and so though where that was they have no idea. In some places the story of the elders will be flatly contradicted by another... 35

In recent years three classes of people have indicated renewed interest in the Idoma past. They include amateur and professional historians, Ahmadu Bello University undergraduates, and a group working with Professor Armstrong based at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. All the three groups have become

34. For example, see "Anthropological Investigation in Boju District," NAK, AR/ANT/I/7.

35. "Re-organisation Reports, Okwoga District," NAK, 267/s.I.
influential among the growing English-speaking Idoma elite. None of them has had any widespread influence among the masses because their writings have not been widely circulated in the vernacular. The writer of this work had access to almost all the written materials of the three interested groups and found no case of feedback among the masses in course of the 295 formal interviews in Idomaland.

The Idoma do not have a Johnson like the Yoruba, a Nyakatura like the Banyoro or a Kaggwa like the Baganda. Two men, Odumu Ocheibi, a man in his middle years from Otukpo district and an energetic lawyer, and Paul Anyebe from Og Lewu district, have produced manuscripts on Idoma history, both having consulted certain elders for source materials. Both are well known to the elite and the most English-speaking Idoma will direct inquirers to them as experts. At Ahmadu Bello University, history students must write an honours essay as part of the degree programme. The Idoma students have largely been supervised by a professional, V.G. O'kwu. Each student invariably consults the experts, such as those noted above and confines whatever interviews he does to a small area around his home. Lack of finance makes this inevitable. In addition, the students appear to lack training in interviewing or methodological techniques. Given the reliable chiefly lists, the lengthy genealogies which most Idoma can recite and the relative dating which has been carried out elsewhere in Africa using genealogies, it is surprising that the main supervisor of these students can write, "it is difficult to ascertain for how long the Idoma have been in their present location." 36 Chronology, in fact, is one of the least difficult problems of the Idoma past.

Armstrong and his assistants have since the 1950's sought to document Idoma social structure systematically with particular emphasis upon language, linguistics being the concern of the Professor. He has utilized most of the written materials to write the best summaries in print of Idoma history, district by district. Nevertheless, the section of their "Traditions of Origins and History" is usually the smallest in his ethnographic survey, often not more than a six to ten line paragraph. His main contribution has been in his attempt to relate the Yoruba, the Igala and the Idoma languages and suggest dates, by the method of glottochronology, for when the three groups eventually separated from one another.

He and his assistants have made a massive collection of Idoma chants, especially those related to the ekwuafia festival. Almost all these have been transcribed into English and were generously made available to this writer through the courtesy of Professor Armstrong. These transcribed chants are in a manuscript form and are located at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. The ekwuafia chants are the main device by which the Idoma recall their history. These chants did not, however, reveal much information additional to that which had already been collected in the field. However, the chants are important sources of verification and confirmation and, as noted earlier, represent 'fixed texts' which cannot be tampered with by political considerations of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER I
IDOMA ORIGINS

The Idoma, who number nearly half a million people, occupy an area of land which lies entirely within the broad valley of the Benue River. The area is an elongated belt of territory from the Benue River to the northern fringes of Igboland. Averaging about one hundred and thirty miles from north to south and slightly over thirty miles from east to west, the area is flanked by the Tiv and the Igede to the east and the Igala to the west; all of whom are citizens of the modern Benue State of Nigeria. The bulk of the territory is inland, south of the Benue, some forty-five miles east of its confluence with the Niger. Until modern times, the Idoma were one of the least known peoples of this region. They were remote from the point of view of European contact in the early years of the British colonial administration in Nigeria. The greater part of Idomaland remained largely unknown until the second decade of this century. This chapter will explore the background which is important in understanding the Idoma people.

Who are the Idoma?

Recent investigations into the early history of the Idoma have shown that Idoma ethnicity is a modern phenomenon. In other words, the heterogeneous groups which today answer to Idoma did not have a common ethnic identity prior to British rule in this part of Nigeria. This may explain in part why several attempts have been made by various

authors to interpret this aspect of the Idoma past. The first and somewhat racial view was that put forward by the alien nineteenth century travellers to this region. It refers to the Idoma as "Akpoto." In 1854, Crowther published an account in which we are told that the entire region south and east of the confluence originally belonged to the Akpoto and that the first king of Idah on the Niger, a Yoruba, came from Nupe and negotiated for a settlement with the Akpoto who were later dispossessed of their land. Crowther put the story thus:

In the old time the king of Yoruba...desired the Attah to look out for a suitable locality for his future settlement. The Attah took a canoe and dropped down the river till he came to Idah... There he met the inhabitants who were called Akpoto, and their headman Igara from whom they begged for a plate to settle in, which was granted... [the Attah] being more influential than the Akpoto they gave him precedence. In course of time the language of the settlers gradually disappeared before that of the Akpoto.

According to this view, a people known as the Akpoto once inhabited most of the area now occupied by the Igala, the Tiv, as well as the Idoma. The Akpoto were thus regarded as the progenitors of the Idoma over whom the Yoruba king imposed his rule. It was also believed

2. This word has other variants, such as: Okpoto, Okwoto, and so forth.


4. This view was further elaborated upon by Armstrong in the "Idoma Speaking Peoples," p. 96. However, the writer finds the evidence on which Armstrong based his conclusion rather inadequate for our present study.
that probably because of the arrival of the Yoruba king, the Akpoto were driven further east of Idah into the area of modern Ankpa Division from where some of them later found their way into modern Idoma land. This may explain why people in Idah town refer to people east and west of Ankpa Division as Akpoto. This view was further perpetuated during the colonial era when the field officers who pacified areas west and east of Ankpa and referred to this exercise as "Akpoto Expeditions." For example, the late Colonel Trenchard, in his "Niger Cross River Expeditions in 1900 visited parts of modern Idoma and Igalá Division and labelled them "Akpoto." Indeed, there is an area within modern Ankpa Division called Akpoto. Today it borders on Idoma Division and the people here are largely bilingual, speaking Idoma as well as Igala languages. It may be that this was either the heartland of Akpoto country or a remnant of a settlement of that name. It is possible that, for reasons that are still obscure, the name of this settlement was extended to other non-Akpoto groups which today speak dialects of the same language. This

5. 0kwu, "Early history of Idomaland." p. 3.


7. Ibid.

8. D. Forde, The Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence (Ethnographic Survey of Africa, International African Institute, London, 1955), p. xiii. Furthermore, on p. 78, Armstrong mentioned the establishment in the 1930's of what was known as the "Akpoto Bible Mission" at Ankpa by Rev. Mr. Hewstone. This confirms the existence of an Akpoto settlement in this area from very early days.
may have been the situation before 1600. After that date, as more and more non-Akpoto groups arrived, the Akpoto as a unique ethnic group may have been either assimilated or driven out of their land. Whatever the original situation may have been, modern Idoma reject the term as being derogatory and refer to themselves and their language as Idoma. For the moment, it would seem wise to connect the word Akpoto to the indigenes of the area around modern Ankpa Division. Evidence about them might be found around the settlement of that name which is outside the area covered by this study.

There is no question that the identity of the Akpoto is important in understanding the Idoma. They may have provided the basis of modern Idoma language. One author has argued that an early dispersal centre of the Yoruba people was the west of Idah in the modern Kabba region because, according to him, that area contains the largest concentration of Yoruba dialects in close proximity. The linguistic evidence towards the understanding of the Idoma ethnic identity will be elaborated upon later. The Akpoto may have been one of the Yoruba dialectical groups and the 'king' or Òttah, who imposed himself over the Akpoto, as reported by Crowther, may have been of the same or another Yoruba dialectical group.

From all that has been said so far, it is difficult not to conclude that an early sub-stratum of modern Igala, Idoma and the neighbouring Igede to the east, were Akpoto. This is supported in part by the

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linguistic similarity among these peoples. Furthermore, the derogatory connotations surrounding the name Akpoto today and the stress that they were backward and primitive are the types of traditions which one expects from dominant immigrants.

In another context, the Idoma were referred as the Igara. If Baikie and others are to be believed, the Igara were another sub-group of the Yoruba as were the Akpoto. Before 1500 the Akpoto, according to this view, lived east of the Niger and the Igara west of it. But within the first decade of the sixteenth century, the Igara were reported driven east of the Niger, and settled among the Akpoto. It was the fusion of the two groups, according to this view, which produced the Idoma. This would mean that the first and second strata of modern Igala were the two Yoruba dialect groups. Since linguists place the Yoruba and the Igala as well as the Idoma within one sub-family of Kwa, which is itself a sub-unit of the Niger-Congo family of African languages, it seems logical that there was a strong Yoruba element within both Igala and Idomaland.

10. In a recent linguistic classification of the languages of Nigeria by Professor Hoffmann, the Idoma, Igala and the Igede were grouped together under the sub-family Kwa. A copy of this paper is in the writer's possession.


Another variant of that view is associated with Palmer. He postulated that in the remote past, the area of modern Gongola and south of Borno was formerly inhabited by a group of people he called "Ahel Gara." It was this group which was later conquered by rulers from the "Orient." He referred to them as "Ahel Dirk" or the "nobles." However, between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries the Aher Dirk had completely subjugated the Gara. Later, by the end of the sixteenth century, the nobles, from their base at areas within modern Wukari, were dislodged by unknown forces and they, and their subject Gara, moved further south into modern Igala. In Palmer's view, it was the Gara, who later emerged and took on the new name Idoma for themselves.13

There has been a modern tendency by some scholars to sneer at Palmer because of his 'Hamitic hypnosis' and there has been a suggestion that he selected his evidence and even twisted it somewhat to show Hamitic origins for certain Nigerian groups.14 Nevertheless, ignoring this bias, his work is still a valuable source of information. Furthermore, recent scholars have begun seriously to question the idea that Kwarara or Atagara in the upper Gongola valley were ruled by the Jukun as is generally believed. The Jukun rule of that confederacy would seem to be a post 1600 phenomenon, when the Kwarara capital


14. For example, see O'Kwu, "Early history of Idoma," p. 2.
was shifted south of the Benue valley. Kwararafa was a confederacy of many ethnic groups, migrations from Kwararafa at any time before 1820 (when the confederacy had virtually shrunk to a Jukun State), do not necessarily imply relationships to the Jukun.15

However, if the 'Hamitosis' of Palmer is ignored and his reference to Ata-Gara detached from Jukun associations, a quite different interpretation is possible. It would then be possible to postulate that the Igara were those groups who came out of Kwararafa in the seventeenth century, one of which provided a dynasty at Idah and that the words 'Igara and Igala' derived from the new dynasty. Later, Igala became the name of the people of Igala kingdom with its capital at Idah, as it emerged after the mid-seventeenth century. After that point, Igalaland experienced no large-scale immigration of peoples. By 1700, the majority of the ancestors of modern population were present in that Division.

Clearly, the 'Igara' of the above school had little to do with how the Idoma groups later emerged and therefore fall outside the strict confines of this study. Current researches among the Igala should be able to clarify the origins, and location of, the Igara people.


16. Mr. R.A. Sargent of the Department of History, University of Ibadan is currently engaged in the pre-colonial history of the ancient Igala kingdom, at the Ph.D. level.
The third explanation of the Idoma ethnicity relies heavily on the linguistic data. According to Armstrong, the proponent of this view, the Idoma, the Igala and the Yoruba belong to the Kwa sub-family of the Benue-Congo complex of languages. It is believed that the ancestors of the above groups once belonged to one social complex which broke up six thousand years ago. In other words, the proto-group spoke a common language but with the split, its members went into various regions where they today speak dialects of the proto-language. Explaining the nature of the present linguistic relations between the various members of the original group, we are told that "the various groups have been derived from a single social group, parts of which have at various times become separated. The spatial distribution of the people concerned seems to correspond to the length of the period of separate developments."  

The above postulate has been undermined by two basic considerations. In the first place, there is the unproven assumption that the modern inhabitants of Idoma Division are by origin Idoma. The available evidence on the early history of almost all the groups in modern Idoma does not support the linguistic postulate being proposed here for the Idoma. On the contrary, evidence strongly indicates that the ancestors of these groups have come from various sources and directions. Therefore, to lump every ethnic group in Idomaland as deriving from 'the Idoma tribe' represents an effort to synthesize

fragmentary evidence covering an enormous complexity of historical developments which took nearly four hundred years to produce the present Idoma culture. Secondly, assuming that the 'Idoma tribe' existed, is that language not as divergent as that spoken by both the Igala and the Yoruba, both of whom have been classified as belonging to one sub-family, Kwa? Indeed, the divergence is so obvious that it is difficult to believe that these groups originated from one proto-group or social complex. A good deal of archaeological, as well as historical, data may be required before the linguistic contribution to the understanding of the Idoma can be taken seriously.

There can be no doubt that linguists have an important role to play in clarifying the emergence of an ethnic identity called Idoma. However, little has been done in that direction. We are therefore left to our own resources to explore possible sources that may have led to the emergence of the Idoma language. One suggestion has been made that linked the Idoma language to the Akpoto from whom a few modern Idoma claim descent. Given the multi-ethnic nature of the present Idoma society and its segmentation in the absence of powerful centralizing and assimilating policies, can that language be said to have split off from the Akpoto and who can date the rate of change unless it is correlated with the multi-ethnic history of the various groups concerned? Another possibility is that the Idoma language expanded over time by adoption. It seems possible that the original native speakers of that language once lived within the ancient Kwararaba.

19. Ibid., p. 92.
confederacy before 1500. During the third decade of the next century, those speakers, for reasons we shall examine later, abandoned that homeland. It is possible that the proto-Idoma group that left Kwararafa at this time are those who today speak the "central dialect" in Idoma Division. The other eight dialectical groups may well represent the non-Idoma people who, for one reason or another, adopted the Idoma language and certain cultural traits. Possibly, this explains the present dialectical differences between the "Idoma Speaking Peoples" better than separation and distance, as the linguists would have us believe.

The view of language adoption receives additional support from the way some Idoma informants explain their past. Informants from Ugboju and Adoka districts trace their genealogies back to a certain Idu. According to them Idu was their putative founder and the 'father' of the different groups in Idomeland. Indeed, the royal genealogies of both Adoka and Ugboju go back to a personage called either Idom or Idym. He was therefore a historical figure. Furthermore, the Adoka and Ugboju groups that followed Idu from Kwararafa ancestral homeland before 1600 were the earliest immigrants to arrive from the east. It is only logical that informants from these areas should prefer a name associated with their own history than one from the other

20. Ibid.
21. See footnote 17.
23. Ibid.
non-related groups. Finally, both Adoka and Ugboju, and to some extent, Otukpo, had by 1900 become the largest and the most sophisticated of the Idoma political units. These were the only units which could, with full justification, be called chiefdoms on the basis that each consisted of a royal kindred with numerous commoner kindred groups. Almost all other political units were composed of only one kindred group and would, in the East African tradition, be classified as chieflets to distinguish them from the chiefdoms. Given the primacy of Adoka and Ugboju within the modern Idoma system, it becomes logical therefore that their leader should ultimately give his name to the entire people.

Such an interpretation, although a synthesis of a long historical development, is based on solid historical data which will be examined fully in chapter III of this work. Some other sections of the Idoma community also trace their descent to Idu and back this up with an embracing genealogy. In their view, Idu was the 'father' of the different groups including Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo, as the expression "Idu the father of Idoma" denotes. According to them, it was

Idu who begot all the Idoma.
He also begot the following children:
Ananawoogene who begot the people of Igwumale;
Olinaogwu who begot the people of Ugboju;
Idum who begot the people of Adoka;
Agabi who begot the people of Otukpo;
Eje who begot the people of Oglewu;
Ebeibi who begot the people of Umogidi in Adoka, and
Ode who begot the people of Yala...25

24. The Idoma expression is 'ace kidoma doodu eduma le kidoma.'

It is not difficult to explain why the myth of unitary origins for the Idoma groups has persisted for so long. Indications are that this view gained its orthodoxy during the colonial days when both the administrators and scholars, probably for their own convenience, thought that modern African nations are 'pure tribes,' that is the largest kinship group of people. According to one colonial administrator in Idoma Division, "there can be no doubt that the people of Agatu to the north, and Adoka, Boju and Okwoga belong to the Idoma tribe." Later in the 1930's, when both Meek and Temple published their works on the early history of the various groups that live within the lower Benue valley, the view that there was an 'Idoma tribe' became the official history to the educated Idoma people. This explains, albeit partially, why the above informants produce the above genealogy to demonstrate that nearly every group in the division came from a putative founder called Idu.

The second view which derives all the modern Idoma groups from the putative founder, Idu, is untenable for the following reasons. The available genealogical data, collected from most, if not all, modern groups in Idoma Division, indicate strongly that there are several ethnic groups, each with a different historical origin. While not casting doubt on the historicity of Idu, he was certainly a migration leader, he was not the 'father' of the Idoma in the sense implied in the above traditions. Furthermore, the available genealogies indicate

the existence of diverse ethnic groups who descended from ancestors other than Idu. In several of these cases, the claim of common descent among some groups is backed by both extensive genealogical connections and the possession of common kinship totems. 28 These two considerations make it difficult to accept the view that every group in Idoma Division is descended from Idu.

From what has been said so far on the ethnic identity of the Idoma, a synthesis may now be attempted. Before 1500, there was no ethnic group called Idoma within the lower Benue valley. Rather it existed in areas east of modern Wukari Division. The region today, occupied by the Igala, Idoma and the Tiv, began with a sub-stratum of the Akpoto (a Yoruba dialect). Towards the middle of the sixteenth century that layer was further overlaid by another group, the Gara from the east and by an Igala invasion from the west of the Niger; these being a mixture of Akpoto, Bini and possibly Gara as well. However, towards the end of the same century, other ethnic groups – the Bassa, Izibira, Igbo, and the Jukun – further complicated the already complicated picture. It is possible that some Igbo groups settled with the earliest Akpoto groups. By the seventeenth century, some sections of these groups began to absorb a large number of Tiv and a few Abakwariga at least. Finally, by the 1800, emerged the Idoma.

Thus far, two things are certain. The first is that the various groups in Idoma Division did not have a common ethnic identity prior

to British rule, in this part of Nigeria. The British in developing
the indirect rule system among the Idoma, showed more concern for
administrative tidiness and efficiency than for cultural identity.
Idomalnd was parcelled into twenty-two tiny administrative districts
which ignored all pre-colonial political units and thus helped to
confuse the picture for subsequent historians. In several areas where
the pre-colonial units were considered too small to form a modern
administrative unit, an amalgamation took place. These units became
"federated," such as Agatu, Ochekwu, Onyagede, and Oglewu. In a few
exceptional cases, some of the new administrative units were based on
the territories which were inhabited by kindred groups, which inci-
didentally trace their descent to Idu. This process of fragmentation
of Idomalnd is fully illustrated in map 2, which also shows both the
colonial and the pre-colonial units of modern Idomalnd. Under a
different style of colonial administration, a common ethnic identity
for all the groups could have evolved during the colonial period, but
with the British system those groups without either an ethnic
identity or centralised system of government were at a disadvantage.

However, for reasons that are still unclear, the various groups
in modern Idomalnd began by the 1950's to apply the name Idoma to
themselves. How this came about may never be known. It is possible
that during the early days of colonial rule, the administration may
have referred to every group in Idomalnd as Akpoto. However, as
their knowledge of the society increased, especially during the 1940's
when officers went out to the people and carried out fieldwork on their
past, it was soon discovered that several "districts explicitly reject the name Akpoto." 29 It was also discovered that the name "Idoma," which had then applied to such districts as Adoka, Ugboju, and Otukpo, was more popular. 30 This discovery may have led to the extension of that name to the rest of the districts for, by 1950, we, are told that "the name is accepted by all the districts and has the sanction of the Nigerian Government." 31 This may explain, in part, how the name of a certain migration leader, Idu, later anglicised in the twentieth century into Idoma, was extended to cover other ethnic groups in modern Idoma Division.

This chapter has attempted to explore the background necessary to our understanding of the story of the amalgamation of the disparate groups which "have mingled in the crucible of history," 32 to form the present Idoma ethnicity. That story, as we shall see shortly, has its beginnings in the remote past, long before the colonial era. The full examination of that long historical development belongs to chapters III and IV of this study. For the moment, it is important to stress that because of the multi-ethnic composition, Idomaland is divided into hundreds of kindreds. Given this fact, larger and more manageable groups among them must be identified and placed within a chronological framework which is "the backbone of history." 33 The following chapter turns its attention to the problem of dating Idoma history.

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
CHAPTER II

CHRONOLOGY

This chapter seeks to create a chronological framework for the Idoma and relate it as far as possible to major events in neighboring societies. Dating pre-colonial history has moved from concern to get events within one society in the correct sequence, with little concern for the European calendar, to relative dating by the European calendar to varying degrees of accuracy. At the moment pre-colonial historians are deeply divided on how far this process can go and how much accuracy can ultimately be achieved. The 'high priest' of scepticism is David Henige of the University of Wisconsin and the great enthusiast for the possibility of increasing accuracy of dating is J.B. Webster of Dalhousie University. There is no intention in this work to review the intricacies of the debate between what is rapidly developing into two distinct schools of thought on this problem. That issue has been exhaustively gone into elsewhere. Extensive fieldwork has convinced this writer that optimism is justified, and that accurate dates within realistic margins of error can be achieved, in the case of the Idoma.

1. D. Henige, The Chronology, p. 1, in which he stated his view as follows "It is quixotic to anticipate the possibility of arriving at any...exact date for most of sub-Saharan Africa..."; the contrary view was put forward by J.B. Webster (ed.), A History of Uganda: Migration and Settlement c. 900–1900, Vol I, (in press) footnote 1 where he came out strongly with his views on a regional approach which "...would produce a more precise date" than has been thought possible.

The most intensive and extensive work on relative dating has been carried out in East Africa. The devices most extensively used include archaeological evidence, age and generation sets, royal and commoner genealogies and cross-references between one society and its neighbours with as wide a regional approach as possible. Royal chroniclers who claim to recall reign lengths, and records left behind by alien travellers are also used. In east Africa, the most sophisticated techniques have been developed in relation to the centralized states such as Bunyoro and Rwanda or in societies with age and generation sets such as the Kikuyu, Jie and the Massai.

Pre-colonial Idoma society resembles none of these categories. It was a segmented society like the Acholi and Basoga but both were segmented units with well-defined states like the exceptional Idoma states of Agila and Igwumale. In Acholi, Webster worked with about sixty regnal lists to create an overall chronology for the Acholi which he tied into the chronological structure of the Bantu states to the south. Busoga also comprised about sixty states or pre-colonial units but David Cohen, the major historian of the Busoga, has not yet produced an overall and dated chronology for that society. From the point of view of this study this is unfortunate because the Basoga system like that of Idoma tends towards collateral succession.

3. For the most recent work in this direction, see Lamphear, *The Traditional History* pp. 32–55 where he discussed the techniques for dating the Jie past.


Furthermore, Cohen possessed in Busoga a wealth of tie-in references to neighbouring centralised states which have been firmly and accurately dated. This cannot be said for the Idoma. Tie-in references to neighbouring societies are fewer among the Idoma than among the Basoga and the neighbouring societies of the Idoma have not yet been accurately dated. The major neighbours include the centralised state of Idah whose chronology since 1650 is fairly clear, the Kwararafa confederacy to the east, less firmly dated, and the Tiv and the Igbo where the process of dating has hardly begun.

The Idoma have neither generation sets nor eclipse references in their traditions. As for the famines the elders recount only those of the nineteenth century. Royal chroniclers like those in East Africa are non-existent. As well, literate aliens did not visit or write about the Idoma until the twentieth century. The process of creating a regional chronology in Nigeria is still in its infancy. Unlike the interlacustrine region of East Africa, no archaeological work has been carried out in Idomalnd. What the Idoma do have is a wealth of royal and commoner genealogies with numerous cross-references from one to the other and a few outstanding and well spaced tie-in references to neighbouring societies.

6. For 'Nigeria, Jacob U. Egharevba is highly regarded as the royal historian of Benin. This view became more articulate after the publication of his A Short History of Benin, (Ibadan, 1960), a work which was based almost entirely on oral sources.

7. See footnote 2 above.
Devices for dating Idoma history

In Idoma society the chant of ekwafia is the closest thing to the 'fixed' royal chronicle of some other African societies. Ekwafia is an institutionalised source of Idoma tradition. It is a school with an elaborate initiation rite. Its admission policy, among other things, places a high premium on a good and retentive memory, sound voice and noble ancestry. The training which lasts throughout a life-time is divided into three periods. The okpochum (the 'period of ignorance'), the first period which after a rigorous selection of candidates begins training in a special place reserved for the purpose. This phase continues until the 'master' in charge of the school is satisfied with the performance of the student whom he then allows to proceed to stage two: inalegwu. This is the solemn period, the experts are introduced to the students and contests are organised between the experts and the students to test the latter's skill in reciting the traditions of the land without mistakes. However, mistakes made at this stage will then be corrected by the experts in attendance. The last stage takes place during public occasions as for example at the death of the past chief or the installation of a new one in which all the experts would be engaged in a prolonged historical debate among themselves. These debates provide public education for the audience assembled for the occasion. The intrinsic value of the institution to the Idoma has been aptly described by Anyebe who said

8. Otukpo Historical Text (hereafter OHT) no. 30, pp. 179-180; Abechi Ogbu (28) 27-11-75.
...[it helps] a child to learn the genealogies of his kindreds...[it is] a means whereby a sense of deep historical belonging and a feeling and a sense of sacred obligation to extend the genealogical line is embedded in him...a study in genealogies answer for him the burning question: who is your neighbour.?

Ekwuafia chants lead one to believe that many of the regnal lists collected throughout Idomalnd by this writer are accurate both as to the order in which chiefs ruled and their genealogical relationships one to another.

During the 'historical' debate, an ekwuafia would chant the story of the past of every given kindred group, trace its history from their ancestral homeland, the routes taken in migrations and, above all, the past chiefs in their genealogical order as well as their genealogical relationship. The writer attended such a debate in Otukpo when an ekwuafia expert chanted the genealogy of that pre-colonial chiefdom, noting the past chiefs in their correct order and associating major events with the reign of each of them. What is produced here is a record of that chant in Idoma with an English translation. The names of the past chiefs as well as their praise names are underlined for purposes of clarity. Lack of space prevents a reproduction of the entire chant; only six verses are used for illustrative purposes.

The Genealogy of the First Six Chiefs of Otukpo

Idoma*

Adaada

1. Akunte ne la ole Ipagwu
   No o oce ole Odu

2. Ohukwo, Ochumokwu, ma do oglich
   Efa i nmo ogbo n no i ogbo unu

3. Oheowo, Adinya
   Owa ne bi ipu
   Ma egwa alewa

4. Ogabo, ana okpo ki-a je egba
   Ana i yo eje i tee le n
   Oodo kwu egwa hi ewo
   O kwu ebe l'ewo to apuaji

5. Ogwu, efulu
   Ogwu nu ebe ce ebe le
   Ogwu debe inya ce ebeuklo
   Ogwu efulu, ada Oko

6. Oko, ajode, ajega joowugwu
   O nmo ebe i le ikpokwu
   Ajode anyu mala
   Oko le ela efu po
   O le aje he igbande

*Translated by Mr. O.I. Ikwe

10. Ekwuafia chants, taped and dated May 10, 1975; in my possession.

English*

Genealogy

1. Akunte who once lived at Ipagwu
   Ruled in Odu settlement, the father of

2. Ohukwo, great, great, great grandfather
   The poison which does not kill the elephant
   but depresses it, the father of

3. Oheowo, also called Adinya, the runner, the
   Puff adder that is pregnant
   And begot many snakes, and the father of

4. Ogabo, who eats oil beans
   If there is no beans, no oil, too
   The snake poison which later died
   And the snake dressed in camwood for joy

5. Ogwu, the poison for killing snakes
   Ogwu the chaser and eater of animals
   Ogwu pursues animals and breaks their bones
   Ogwu, the animal poison, father of Oko

6. Oko, who kills bony animals
   The killer of animals but prefers bones
   One who hunts animals with bones only
   One who bears the news of battle
   And cannot sleep.
Although the ekwuafia 'experts' are unlike the arokin (a praise singer) who performs functions similar to the griots among the Mande, they remain historical sources on the Idoma past; a reliable guide to their genealogies. Clearly Idoma informants rely upon the ekwuafia chants when being interviewed by an historian. Collecting the chants makes this quite clear, they provide a skeletal structure of history which is 'fixed' at a point in time like an early document. Given the widespread public knowledge of the chant, it would be very difficult for later political considerations to be influential in altering them.

Another device which reminds the Idoma of both the past and their genealogical relationships in the society is their land rights. In relation to their population the land on which the Idoma are settled is a scarce commodity. Yet it is their only basic means of livelihood. There is no evidence that land was either bought or sold in pre-colonial Idomalnd. According to one author who has done enough researches into their social systems, "In Idoma...all land is held by the Governor and no land is bought or sold...Land-tenure is therefore a set of rights of use, development and enjoyment." With no option to buy land, inheritance would seem to be the only channel for an orderly access to this essential means of livelihood. This would imply a strong

11. For more discussion on the role of the griots, see P. Yves, "Chronology and Oral Traditions" reprinted in Klein et al Perspectives on the African Past (Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1972), pp. 3-16.

tendency for the younger generation of men to settle down close to their paternal seniors in a patrilineal society such as the Idoma's. As this 'settling down' takes place consistently over several years or generations, and taking account of population increase, there developed a fairly precise pattern of genealogical ties to land. As each generation came to be identified with a definite tract of land, this tendency soon developed a force of its own which the anthropologists refer to as the genealogical idiom. In the words of one of them

'[it] provides men with a social calculus which is probably unique in its exactness, neatness and fineness of discrimination. Armed with an all-embracing genealogy a man can read off the degrees and kinds of his obligations to his fellows with an unrivalled ease and precision. A society that has once known the consequences of genealogical reckoning does not lightly drop them...13

It is obvious that both the institution of ekwufa and the Idoma attitude to land engendered in the people a definite sense of a generation. This will become clearer in relation to their modes of succession to a chieftaincy stool to be considered shortly. Suffice it to say that it is mainly out of the multitude of genealogies collected throughout Idomalnd that a chronology for the Idoma must be established. Thus the first essential is to establish the length of a generation in this society.

Generation length among the Idoma

There are several factors which must be considered when deciding on the generational length in any given society. One of these is the mode of succession. This varies from one society to another. In Bunyoro, for instance, Oliver found that succession to the throne of that ancient African kingdom was primarily father to son. He then estimated twenty-seven years for each generation and suggested a basic margin of error, counting back from 1895, of twenty years added to each generation. 14 When Kiwanuka worked on the neighbouring Buganda kingdom where mode of succession was different he employed a thirty year generation because of a multiplicity of brother succession. 15 Among the Acholi states, Webster used twenty-seven years per generation plus twelve years for a regent or brother succession. 16 In other words, the length of a generation for any society must be determined against the prevailing mode of succession in that society.

Among the Idoma succession is collateral. However, a distinction must be made between a regnal list and a commoner genealogy. The regnal


list refers to the royal genealogies in collateral lines and also indicates the order in which chiefs reigned. Thus the regnal list for the chiefdom of Adoka consists of three genealogies of the three lineages among which the chieftaincy stool rotated. On the other hand, a commoner's genealogy consists of father/son succession. A commoner's genealogy will always be of this type as will a genealogy of a non-ruling lineage.

The average Idoma dynastic generation has been calculated at thirty years. Collateral succession among three lineages in any of three chiefdoms - Adoka, Ugboju, and Otukpo - where the pattern was in vogue was likely to give a somewhat longer generation than a father/son pattern which was practised largely among the chieftain-polities. Nevertheless, collateralism among the Idoma is unique in the sense that chiefs normally came to the stool at advanced age and because of the principle of seniority and rotation whereby the eldest man in the lineage, whose turn it was to rule, was normally appointed chief. This principle virtually "ensured that the head would be too old and infirm to participate actively in the political life of the clan." 17 Henige, who has also worked with large samples of genealogies taken from polities where the principle of seniority and rotation prevailed, observed that "if seniority is highly prized... the chief will probably be elderly and his period of rule will be relatively brief..." 18 Indeed, in Idoma experience, this is the case.

Thus the Idoma exhibit what at first glance seems to appear as an anomaly. Their dynastic generation was longer than the norm in East Africa but reigns were usually shorter. Using the three lineages of Adoka as an example once again, it meant that three chiefs of one generation but of different lineages reigned before the next generation was allowed to have its turn. If the average generation was thirty years, the average reign for the three chiefs of one generation would be ten years. Given the norms of the Idoma people, it was impossible or highly improbable that any chiefly candidate would die childless. This was true for many pre-colonial African societies so much so that any tradition which claims that a lineage had been eliminated from the succession because an incumbent chief died childless should be viewed with suspicion by the historian. The advanced age of the chief upon installation and the rigid mechanical principle combined with the isolation of the chief from politics accounted for the absence of succession disputes and politically motivated murders.

The Idoma pattern of succession implies several things. Since it is based on the concept of one generation succeeding the other, it implies that there was a sense of continuity on the male line after the birth of the first surviving son. This also means that a generation would be reckoned from the time that elapses between the birth of a man and that of his first surviving child in Idoma society.

It was with this consideration in mind that the writer undertook intensive interviews of those elders who claimed they were born about 1895.

19. Quoted in Ogot, History of the Southern Luo, p. 27.
to discover, in each case, when their first surviving child was born. During this exercise, nearly one hundred elders were interviewed throughout Idomalnd, about fifty of whom claimed that their first surviving sons were born after 1925. The significance of this date will be elaborated upon shortly. However, the average length of a generation of those born about 1895 was thirty years.

In pre-colonial Idoma society, probably because of the operative barter system, bride-price was paid in terms of prolonged agricultural service by a prospective in-law to his would-be father-in-law. This implies that the would-be husband entered into the services of his future in-laws when he had become an adolescent. Therefore late marriages were regarded as normal; thirty years would reasonably be looked upon as an accepted age. However, with the coming of the railway line about 1925 and the spread of the cash economy, young men armed with cash had no patience with prolonged agricultural services and began marrying earlier. This development may well represent the transition from the pre-colonial to colonial Idoma society.

Tie-in references between Idoma and Borno and Kwararafa states

The thirty year generation among the Idoma when tested shows remarkable consistency with events outside Idomalnd. For instance, it ties events in Idoma to areas as far away as Borno in the east. It shows a large influx of emigres coming into Idomalnd, pouring out of Kwararafa, Borno and Idah during generations of serious upheavals in these areas. The available evidence on the early Borno history indicates that from about 1500 Borno experienced a series of severe famines which dislocated the entire population, setting them on the move towards
the area of the Gongola valley. It would seem that this migration came to a head between c. 1539-1600. During this time, Idris Alooma was intent "to subdue entirely or even exterminate the heterogenous elements" in the area south west of Borno, subjecting the people of Gongola state to prolonged invasion. He ravaged the area and carried off a large number of the inhabitants as captives. His success in these raids or wars had been attributed largely to the use of modern arms such as muskets. The significance of these invasions lies on the fact that it coincided with the eventual disintegration of the capital of Kwararafa confederacy which was then situated within the Gongola valley. This shift of capital in turn provoked a chain of events which pushed one group after another towards the south. As the new capital shifted from Gongola to Biepi or Apa within the upper Benue Valley, the earliest inhabitants in this area in turn became subject to new pressures to assimilate or migrate. Abubakar captures the ultimate confusion which characterised this era as the new rulers

...resuscitated and established their political institution exercising over non-Jukun peoples which included the ancestors of modern Idomaland. This gave rise to the migration of the latter as they increasingly came under pressure or dominance...

21. loc cit.
About 1600, a new ruler identified in the Jukun traditions as Agba Kenjo came to the throne in Biepi. It would appear that his succession touched off unrest which led several rival groups to move out of that area further westwards into Idomalnd. These migrations out of Kwararafa are clearly indicated in the genealogies of numerous Idoma kindred groups and fall into the Kenjo period if dated thirty years to the generation. In sum, thirty year generation has shown a high degree of correlation with events in both Borno and Kwararafa to the east.

Tie-in references between Idoma and the Kingdom of Idah to the west

If the Idoma genealogies are dated at thirty years per generation, their traditions of migration out of Idah correlate closely with major upheavals in that kingdom. Evidence available on the early history of that kingdom indicates that from the middle of the seventeenth century a new dynasty from Apa displaced the ruling Bini dynasty from the throne. Thereafter, Idah passed through a period of unrest which ultimately forced about sixty-five kindred groups to leave that area towards modern Idomalnd. Some of these immigrants claimed descent from the new ruling group in Idah. From every indication, these groups that moved out of Idah did so when that kingdom witnessed major political upheavals in its history. Furthermore, once the new dynasty was established, major developments there affected the succession pattern in Idomalnd.


Before the seventeenth century succession among the proto-Idoma groups followed the pattern of the first son succeeding his father to the stool. There is every indication that this may have been the common practice in Apa, the ancestral homeland of most Idoma groups. Almost every ethnic group from that ancient polity shared the father/son pattern of succession. Circumstances may have dictated this pattern. It is axiomatic that a migratory period in the life of any people is an emergency situation which above all calls for 'special' leadership qualities. These might include bravery, fortitude and abundance of energy given the high record of hostility that most Idoma experienced from the intrusive Tiv. As long as the emergency situation persisted so long would energetic sons succeed their father as rulers of their groups. In Idah to the west, the available evidence also indicated that the father/son pattern prevailed during the migratory period of their history.26 Boston has demonstrated (although with some misgivings)27 that for at least five consecutive generations in Idah, the new ruling group followed the rule of the first son succeeding to the throne after the death of his father.

26. Ibid., p. 5.

27. J.S. Boston, "Oral Traditions and the History of Igala," JAH, IV, 1969, p. 34; Boston, The Igala Kingdom, in both works he cast considerable doubt on the historicity of the early Igala rulers, before 1650.
However, once the groups were settled in their present homelands in both Idaho and Idomalnd, succession in each group switched from father/son to a pattern in which cousin succeeded cousin to the throne. Furthermore, among the Idoma, succession rests on the principle of seniority and rotation. In chiefdoms, the royal lineages would be divided into three ruling lines each of which would be expected to provide a chief to the stool in turn. In other words, succession among the three lineages would be completely mechanical, subject to the principle of seniority and rotation. Given this system, it implies that, if the head of lineage "A" was the ruling chief, the head of lineage "B" was expected to succeed to the stool in the event of either death or exit of the ruling chief from "A"; then the head of lineage "C" would succeed "B" before the stool reverted back to lineage "A" and so on. Seniority suggests that "A" goes back furthest in time than lineage "B" and "C" was probably the last to emerge or the youngest son of the founding ancestor of the kindred group concerned.

Finally, the seniority principle also meant that the oldest surviving child of the former chief would be chosen once the new generation came to have its turn. The oldest surviving child might mean the middle son or even a younger son; it would certainly not imply the first son. In cases where no son survived, the oldest male of the lineage might be chosen regardless of his biological relationship with the lineage.

28. Sargent, "Dating Collateral Succession: The Igala Kingdom in the Middle Belt."
Both the seniority-rotation principles are aptly illustrated from a section of Adoka genealogy in chart III. It can be seen that the past chiefs of that chiefdom are numbered from one to fourteen. The first six chiefs followed the father/son principle while numbers seven to fourteen followed cousin to cousin succession. The numbers of the extreme right hand corner represent the number of generations from 1895 to the founder, with three chiefs per generation. It can also be seen that after the sixth chief, Okalekwo ruled, after which the principle of collateral succession became operative with number seven, Adoka, who was the son of the last chief. After that, it went to another son Enyikwola and then to Ode, before reverting to the senior lineage founded by Adoka.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the origins of collateralism in both Idah and Idoma politics. However, there is a clear indication that collateral succession among the Idoma came from the region of Idah. Firstly, this pattern of succession would seem to have started in Idah about eight generations ago, (c. 1685-1715) during which time (as was indicated in chart III) the Adoka like several Idoma groups were still following the father/son pattern of succession. Evidence from Idah indicates that about this time a new dynasty had ousted the Bini dynasty in Idah from power.\(^29\) Boston also indicates that the new dynasty entered into a political compromise in which the indigenous Akpoto groups acted as kingmakers for the new dynasty. In

\(^{29}\) Ibid.
### Chart III

**Royal and Commoner Genealogy in Adoka**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Dates on 30 years per Generation</th>
<th>The Royal Lineage</th>
<th>The Commoner Lineage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1535-1565</td>
<td>1 Idom</td>
<td>10 Ochagabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565-1595</td>
<td>2 Owası</td>
<td>11 Ogwu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1595-1625</td>
<td>3 Olubí</td>
<td>12 Agama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625-1655</td>
<td>4 Oga</td>
<td>13 Enyikwola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>5 Adoka</td>
<td>14 Ogagbano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>6 Okalekwo</td>
<td>Ötleboda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 Adoka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Enyikwola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Ode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>6 Ochagabi</td>
<td>11 Ogwu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775-1805</td>
<td>5 Obole</td>
<td>12 Agama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805-1835</td>
<td>4 Ogbudu</td>
<td>13 Enyikwola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1865</td>
<td>3 Onmadehu</td>
<td>14 Ogagbano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-1895</td>
<td>2 Oko</td>
<td>Ötleboda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1925</td>
<td>1 Egrí</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ochadoka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ogili</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idegwu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note: The diagram represents a genealogical chart showing the lineage of kings and commoners in the town of Adoka.*
addition, another group, probably the early-Igbo-settlers, was represented by a strong personality, the Achadu. "The Achadu is the effective head of the kingmakers as a corporate body, representing them politically and also performing most of the ritual duties in central government."30

Although Boston does not comment further on the intricacies of that political compromise between the new dynasty and the indigenous Akpoto, it would appear that the Achadu wielded more political power than is generally realised. This was achieved by insisting upon elderly men who were easy to control being made chiefs. Collateral succession provided a wider choice than the strict father/son succession allowed. Whatever the details of that compromise may have been, it is clear from the existing list that collateral succession among the Idoma started after that political compromise in Idah had been entered into by the new dynasty from the east.

Shortly after collateral succession had started in Idah Idoma chiefs began to go to Idah for the investiture ceremony. Chiefs in both Adoka and Ugboju went to Idah for what has been described as "proper installation"31 by the King of Idah. The chiefs of Ugboju began visiting Idah seven generations ago, c. 1715-1745.32 The Royal


32. UHT-24, pp. 130-134, Anyabe Ujo (75), 3-12-75.
insignia which these chiefs brought from Idah was **oka** (a bracelet of coral beads). Among the Adoka chiefs who visited Idah was Ogagbano who ruled between c. 1805–1835. Several informants are firm on the view that once the 'pilgrimage' to Idah started, many Idoma chiefs found it more convenient to visit either Ugboju or Adoka, instead of travelling the long distance to and from Idah. It is reported that chiefs from many Idoma polities including Otukpo and Oglewu went to Ugboju which was close to them for the 'blessings' from those chiefs, one of whom was Ogwu who ruled Ugboju c. 1745–1775. While the Idoma informants make it appear as if the choice of 'blessing' was according to their own whim, the Attah of Idah may have refused to invest petty Idoma chiefs and preferred that this be done secondhand by the Ugboju and Adoka chiefdoms.

In addition to being confirmed as chiefs in Idah, there also developed among several Idoma chiefs the practice of returning from Idah with a royal drummer, probably to ensure 'proper court etiquette.' Later events showed that these royal drummers exercised great influence among the Idoma chiefs. For example, in Adoka, chief Ogagbano after his investiture ceremony in Idah (c. 1805–1835) returned from there with three royal drummers one of whom was called Abloda. It was reported that Abloda's other two companions were killed by Ogagbano

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33. Adoka Historical Text; (henceafter AHT), no. 29, pp. 130–134, Agbahi Ogiri, (100), 16-11-75.

34. UHT-24, pp. 130–134, Anyebe Ujo, (75), 16-11-75.

35. AHT-29, pp. 130–134, Agbahi Ogiri, (100), 16-11-75.
because the latter "supported rival candidate to the Adoka stool." This was Òglagwu. 36 It is highly probably that this interference pre-dated the arrival of Abloda in Adoka. Other Adoka chiefs like Enyikwola (c. 1715-1745) and Agama (c. 1775-1805) also returned with royal drummers from Idah. It is possible that the political influence of these royal drummers was extended from both Ugboju and Adoka to the other Idoma political units. The interesting thing about Abloda is that his genealogy fits into the same generation with chief Ogagbano, the Adoka chief who brought the latter to Adoka (see chart III). Thus a father/son genealogy confirms that the collateral regnal list has five generations from 1925 back to 1805. This was the period in which informants identify a certain Attah of Idah as Idoko. This king ruled in Idah, according to Sargent, about 1760-1803. 37 This example demonstrates clearly that relative dates may be achieved by comparing events in Idomalalnd with those in Idah.

Researches in progress on the early history of Idah kingdom have convinced this writer that the thirty year generation in Idomalalnd is sound. Sargent has shown that before c. 1685-1715 succession to the Idah throne followed the father/son pattern. He calculated this at thirty years per generation. However, as soon as succession there

36. Ibid.

37. Sargent, "Dating Collateral Succession..." p. 5.
reverted to collateralism, Sargent calculated a forty-five year
dynastic generation on the grounds that cousin succeeded cousin to the
throne at a relatively early age, both in Idah and in Ankpa kingdoms,
where the new dynasty from the east had established itself. 38 Idah,
as is well known, is documented by European travellers to that kingdom
from the nineteenth century onwards. Consequently, Sargent possesses
reliable dates from 1835 to the present. Overall, his forty-five
year generation in Idah shows a complete correlation with major politi-
cal developments in Idomalad based on a thirty year generation.

Chart IV shows the regnal list of the royal dynasty at Idah and
Ankpa where a new dynasty from Apa took over power in the seventeenth
century. The dating of this chart correlates with those dates which
are corroborated by European travellers to Idah from 1835 onwards.
These documentary dates which appear in brackets in the chart start
from the third generation c. 1835–1940. Although no documentary dates
exist for the Ankpa regnal list, yet, there is a remarkable degree of
consistency between the Idah and Ankpa lists. It is against these
royal genealogies that we shall examine the claims of several Idoma
kindred groups which relate that they were blood relatives of the two
royal houses in both Ankpa and Idah kingdoms.

There are several outstanding and well spaced tie-in references
between Idomaland and the Kingdom of Idah to the west. We have
already noted the fact that informants in Adoka maintain that one of

38. Ibid.
their chiefs, Ogagbando (c. 1775-1805), was a contemporary of the Idah king, Idoko, who reigned c. 1760-1805. Informants in Ugboju also associate Ogwu (c. 1715-1745) with the coming of a certain royal drummer, Ochomeche. It is reported that this drummer left Idah when king Ame was on the throne. Also from Ugboju there is a case of a royal emigré, Aba, who came from Idah and founded a commoner kindred group in Ugboju, c. 1685-1715. There are other instances from several Idoma kindred groups whose founding fathers were said to be contemporaries of certain Idah kings. In Agatu for instance, the founding fathers of Adogoi Oje and Iga chieflets were said to be contemporaries of Ayagba om-Idoko who ruled Idah c. 1685-1715. In Olokam district, Agbo, the founder of one of the kindred groups was said to be contemporary of King Agenopuje who ruled parts of Idah c. 1625-1655.

A far more interesting correlation between important figures in both Idomaland and the kingdom of Idah shows how the genealogies of several kindred groups, which were royal emigrés in Idoma fit into those of the royal dynasties of Idah and Ankpa. Informants give several reasons for the large scale migration of these royal emigrés into their present homeland. It is, for example, claimed in Adoka district that the fourth king of Idah who informants identify as king Idoko (c. 1635-

40. UHT-17, pp. 106-7, Aanya Onche et al., 1-12-75.
41. Olokam Historical Text (hereafter O1HT), no. 2, p. 5, 29-9-75.
1685), had several brothers who included Aba and Eja, both of whom having lost their bids for the throne of Idah fled eastwards into their modern location in Idoma Division. This is the reason informants advance for the establishment of Ogudumuekwo in Adoka founded by Aba and the ai-Odo settlement in Otukpa district founded by Eja who with Aba had lost the throne to Ayagba-om-Idoko (c. 1685-1715). It would also appear that Ayagba's brother, Akumbi and his cousin, Akogwu also had problems with their new homelands such that their sons left eastwards in search of another settlement. 42

Chart V shows the genealogical connections between all such royal emigrés which left Idah c. 1685-1715 for Idomaland. These kindred groups included Ogudumuekwo founded by Aba; ai-Odo founded by Eja; Adija founded by Akumbi; Igume Ojonowa founded by Akogwu to name but four of the sons of king Idoko who reigned c. 1655-1685. Chart VI shows the genealogical connections between the royal house at Ankpa and several Idoma emigrés who fled that kingdom between c. 1715-1775. What emerges from these charts is a total correlation, with a high degree of consistency, in the genealogical relation between these emigrés and the royal dynasties both in Idah and Ankpa.

Cross-references in Idomaland

In addition to the well-spaced tie-in references between important figures in Idomaland and those in the neighbouring kingdom of Idah, there are also numerous cross-references within Idomaland all of which 42. The details of the genealogical connections between Idah and Ankpa will be shown in chart VI.
CHART V

TIE-IN REFERENCES BETWEEN IDOMA KINDREDS AND THE IDAH AND ANKPA REGNAL LISTS

1395-1625
   Abutu Eje

1625-1655
   Abenopujo
   Ebele

1655-1685
   Idoko

1685-1715
   Aba
   Eja
   Akumabi
   Ayaga-om-Idoko

1715-1745
   Adoga
   Odo
   Ayegba
   Akogvu

1745-1775
   Okwoli
   Ago
   Aba
   Omoja
   Ejiga

1775-1805
   Idongwu
   Okwoli
   Otache
   Itodoboyi
   Oche
   Ame
   Oguche
   Ode
   Enerola

1805-1835
   Akida
   Ogbola
   Idoko
   Adaobonu
   Otamwa
   Onyilo
   Anaji
   Ekle

1835-1865
   Otajie
   Ochi
   Ihe
   Ogbe
   Ame
   Ako
   Anyabe
   Ohifu
   Oko
   Oguche

1865-1895
   Aboja
   No Issue
   Oniija
   Eje
   Acho
   Ogiri
   Eje
   Ogbe
   Itodo

1895-1925
   No Issue
   No Issue
   Obekpa
   Utajie
   Ebute
   Onuminya
   Uje
   Emaiku
   Amuchoko
   (Ai-Odo)
   (Adija in Ochekwu)
   (Igume & Ojonowa)
   (Ai-Akogwu)
   (Adoka)
   Onysagede
CHART VI
ANKPA REGNAL LIST AND THE IDOMA EMIGRES

1595-1625
1625-1655
1655-1685
1685-1715
1715-1745
1745-1775
1775-1805
1805-1835
1835-1865
1865-1895
1895-1925

Abutuaje
Agenopuje
Ebele
Idoko
Atisele

Oguche
Oganga
Oguchekwo
Okoriko
Edikwu
Agala
Okoriko
Ichakwu
Enoja
Anawo
Ajinwa
Ohemu
Oguche
Ode
Ajegbala Usaje
Ugbaneo

Onjia
Akpabana
Akpo
Okpe
Oguche
Ogbaguary
Ahemu
Anku
Achada
Aghane
Oche
Ugbobiri
Uja

Enyeke
Anawo
Oche
Ogbatoби
Ediche
Gnaini
Obanje
Agwu
Atah
Ekwo
Akpabana
Okoriko

Ogbe
Oluma
Oluma
Omaje
Eduno
Ogweche
Ohemu
Ogboke
Aze
Akubu
Icha
Enoja
Idigbahi

Ogbonoko
Ananyi
Ugbaha
Agaben
Ondoma
Ogbol
Ondoma
Oyikwu
Awodi
Apochi
Efu
Ekaimu
Ekpehogo

Anakpa
Ijike
Oteikwu
Sule
Onu
Aboga
Agbada
Ajeibi
Edikwu
Uji
Akogwu
Okede
Okoko

(adj-Okoro
(adj-Anaga
(adj-Cock
(adj-Onyagede)
(adj-Onyagede)
(adj-Okoro
(adj-Ugbujo)
(adj-Tribe
(adj-Cock
(adj-Onyagede)
(adj-Okoro
(adj-Ugbujo)
(adj-Tribe
(adj-Cock
(adj-Onyagede)
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(adj-Ugbujo)
(adj-Tribe
(adj-Cock
(adj-Onyagede)
(adj-Okoro
(adj-Ugbujo)
make a chronology for the Idoma both reliable and valid. These include cross-references between important rulers in different polities, inter-connections between specific rulers in one chiefdom and unidentified figures in other chiefdoms. Cross-references between the various segments of the original kindred groups which later fragmented, and inter-connections between rulers in one chiefdom and commoners in another polity. Indeed, there are large numbers of these inter-connections throughout Idomaland. They include those groups which collectively refer to themselves as ai-Iga whose segments are found in both Agatu and Ochekwu districts, the ai-Agbo whose members refer to themselves today as Ijaha and are located in Oglewu, Ochekwu, Agatu, Onyagede, and Akpa districts; the ai-Ojogo whose members are today located within Ochekwu, Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo districts; and lastly the ai-Ode. This last may be used to illustrate the process of dating.

Politically, the members of the ai-Ode group are found in four major administrative districts in Idoma Division: The Adana are found in Agatu, Umogidi in Adoka, and the four kindred groups of Ijami, Alaglanu, Eboya and lbadi are located in Oglewu district. It is significant to note that each is geographically separate from the others. Adana in Agatu in the north is nearly sixty miles from Alaglanu in the south. Secondly, it is important to stress that the genealogies collected from each of these kindred groups were collected.

43. For the ai-Agbo early history; see Oglewu Historical Text (hereafter OgHT), no. 2, pp. 5-6, Abogonya et al., 19/5/75.
independently of one another. More important still, another member of the ai-Ode group, the Yala of the Cross River State of Nigeria, is a considerable distance from the other ai-Ode members. Their early history shows close genealogical connections with the rest of the group. 44

In spite of their present geographical spread, however, the members of this kindred group refer to themselves collectively as ai-Ode after the illustrious founder of that group. Their early history showed that about 1600, that is ten generations before 1925, their ancestor Ode lived in a multi-ethnic region called Apa. Informants mention that this complex split up c. 1600-1625 and that their father fled westwards for safety. It is further reported that after a brief settlement near River Mu in present day Titiland, Ode moved to Ugba settlement where he died leaving behind four sons: Eje, Ona, Oguche and Ala. According to informants, Eje later founded the modern Umogidi chieflet in Adoka district, Ona established his new homeland called Ugbokpo; and his son Ayidu went north in Agatu where he later founded Adana while Oguche went south to founded Ijami from which Idabi, Eboya and Alaglahu later sprang. Ala, according to these informants, went southwards of Ugba and established a new homeland within the upper Cross River basin. 45

While reserving the details of the above traditions for thorough analysis in chapter III of this work, it is enough to mention here that

45. Ibid.
the major outline of the above historical traditions has been validated by other types of evidence, one of which is a common kinship totem, called the ogonopo. Although several segments of the ai-Ode have since adopted secondary and tertiary totems such as owuna and anwu respectively, the ogonopo remains the oldest identification mark of this kindred group. It was a thorough examination of this totem that led this writer to the discovery that all the ai-Ode descended from a common ancestor, Ode, after whom the group derived its name. The available evidence further indicates that today there is a strong pan-ai-Ode union whose aim, among other things, in the words of its founder, "is to know ourselves better."

Chart VII shows the genealogical ties between the various segments of the ai-Ode groups. Their genealogies were collected separately and independently of one another. These genealogies confirm in a convincing manner that they all descended from a common founder, Ode, ten generations ago. In other words, about 1625-1655, Ode had left Apa for the Mu River settlement and later moved to Ugba settlement where after his death his sons Eje, Ona, Oguche, and Ala separated and migrated to various directions to found their modern homelands, most of which are located in Idomaland. The ai-Ode genealogies remain a classic example of cross-references within Idoma and they inspire confidence in the kind of chronology which is being constructed in this chapter.


47. The writer is in possession of a copy of the written constitution of the ai-Ode given to them by their General Secretary, Mr. Ududu Oko of Umigidi in Adoka District.
CHART VII
A GENEALOGY OF THE ÁI-ODE-TOTEMIC KINDREDS IN IDOMALAND

1565-1595
1625-1655
1655-1685
1685-1715
1715-1745
1745-1775
1775-1805
1805-1835
1835-1865
1865-1895
1895-1925

Ode

Agatu-Adana scion

Ugbokpo-Ochekwu scion

Umogidi Adoka scion

Eje

Ogidi

Adogbe Ouna

Ayidu

Apochi

Itodo

Oguche

Oglewu

Ala

(Cross River)
As indicated earlier, a chronology for the Idoma must be established out of a multitude of genealogies collected among the Idoma. A total of seven hundred and forty genealogies from both the ruling and the non-ruling kindred groups have been collected. It is with this data that a chronology of migration calculated on the basis of thirty years per generation was constructed as shown on chart VIII. On the basis of the evidence, it would appear that the evolution of modern Idoma society took about four hundred years. For convenience of analysis, this period has been divided into five major phases which will now be outlined with a series of maps to show the pattern of migrations of the various groups into their modern homeland in Idoma Division.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Genealogies collected</th>
<th>Standard Generation</th>
<th>Relative Dates</th>
<th>Major Phases of Migration</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>135 stretch back to</td>
<td>13th</td>
<td>c. 1535-1565</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 stretch back to</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>c. 1565-1595</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 stretch back to</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>c. 1595-1625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 stretch back to</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>c. 1625-1655</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190 stretch back to</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>c. 1655-1685</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
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<td>98 stretch back to</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>c. 1685-1715</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
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<td>7th</td>
<td>c. 1715-1745</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 stretch back to</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>c. 1745-1775</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>c. 1805-1835</td>
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<td>3rd</td>
<td>c. 1835-1865</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>c. 1865-1895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>c. 1895-1925</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAJOR MIGRATION PHASES

Phase I 1535-1625

From the thirteenth to the eleventh generation or form c. 1535-1625 is the earliest recorded migration period. Idoma informants recall their ancestors back to their migration leaders who left Apa during this century. As a consequence map 3 indicates that the thirteenth generation (c. 1535-1565) was the peak of the exodus because the ancestors of 135 informants left Apa during those years. Thereafter, in the twelfth and eleventh generations (c. 1565-1625) the migration dropped off dramatically, only eighty-nine informants claiming that ancestors left Apa during that period. Thus the first exodus from Apa can be dated to c. 1535-1565. It formed a wave of migrants followed by a quieter period when emigrés from Apa came in small groups. There is ample evidence here for some historians who would prefer to see greatly accelerated periods of migration and for those who prefer to think of migrations as a slow but often continuous process over a lengthy period. While the largest intrusion of newcomers came from Apa, a few hundred groups claim to have arrived at the same time from other directions.

The historical traditions of Onyagede kindred group in Onyagede district suggest that their ancestors moved out of Apa, and went westwards as far as the area of modern Idah before turning back eastwards to their present homeland in Idoma Division. Also at about this time

48. Onyagede Historical Text, (hereafter OnyHT), no. 2, pp. 8-10, Ude Agbane, Okpabi Amer, etc., 19-8-75.
the ancestors of modern Alekwu kindred group in Okpoga district found their way from Nsukka district to the south into Idomaland. Similarly, the founders of some sections of modern Ito and Oju districts claim that it was during this period that their modern homelands were founded. It is significant to add here that these early migrant groups each revered a distinct kinship totem. The migration of this period is shown in map 3.

Phase II 1625-1655

The tenth generation (c. 1625-1655) was noted for an unprecedented migration of different ethnic groups from Idah, most of whom revered the leopard totem. As map 4 shows, during this phase of migration a small number of migrant groups came out of Apa suggesting that Apa migrations were over, at least temporarily. Twelve kindred groups claim that their ancestors moved out of Idah in this generation. Most of them were of the leopard totem. They include Adogoji Oje, Adagbo, and Abogbe; all are today located within modern Agatu district. Adija and Ooba are in modern Ochekwu district, Ito and Oju are in modern Oju Division, Osirkoko in Agila district; Idogodo in Okpokwu Division; ai-Agbo of Ichama district; and Onyagede in Onyagede district.

49. Okpoga Historical Text (hereafter OkpHT), no. I, pp. 2-8, Koko Oche (50) Ejembli Okpe (65) et al, 1-10-75. On the one hand informants claim origin in Idah, on the other hand we are told that "we were brought to our present settlement by our mother called Ogwa Okoko. She is from Eha in Nsukka Division. It seems plausible therefore to associate the ai-Alekwu with the southern migrations from Igboland Nsukka area in particular.

50. This statement only refers to a small section of the present Oju and Ito populations in that part of Idomaland.

51. Erim, "Leopards; Civet cats" pp. 21-22.
Both Ugboju and Adoka also received their share of these emigrés from Idah.

**Phase III 1655-1685**

The ninth generation (c. 1655-1685) was characterised by migrations out of areas of modern Ankpa Division in the west and away from the expansion of the Tiv to the east. Many informants still refer to people coming out of Idah in this generation but Ankpa seems another likely source because some kindred groups at least were fleeing Ankpa from what some other informants refer to as the wrath of a reigning Ankpa king, Oguchekwo, who expelled all rival claimants to the throne. There is every indication that several kindred groups left Ankpa at this period for areas in modern Idomaland. Those who left from different locations around Idah were probably more in number. The number of migrants from the east was six at this period. 52 Although informants continue to claim Apa origins, another powerful factor, which was the Tiv presence, not only deflected the migratory trend of the Apa group but it also totally disorganised or dismembered several Idoma kindred groups sending various segments in different directions. One good example is the group that refers to itself as either ai-Agbo or the Ajaha. Some members of this kindred group are still located near the town of modern Markudi, now a pre-dominantly Tiv region. They claimed in their historical traditions that the "Tiv push" was one strong influence in their early history. 53

52. Ibid.

53. OgHT-3, pp. 17-27, Anwule-Ogbe (80) et al., 20-5-75.
The Ojogo kindred group, some of whom are still located in areas in modern Tivland, were also affected by the Tiv presence. A good number of them were forced to scatter and search for new homelands within several modern Idoma districts. For example, the Ajobe went to Ugboju and Otukpo while the Entekpa went to Adoka. Others such as Adagbo went to Agatu; while Ataganyi, Auke and Ikobi found new homelands in modern Ochekwu district. The Ojogo informants all claim that ten generations ago, 1625-1655, their founding ancestor, called either Adagbo or simply Agbo, first settled in the area of modern Makurdi town but because of the Tiv presence, Adagbo and his sons took various directions into their modern homelands in Idoma Division. About this time, too, the Alago confederacy to the north bank of the Benue was expanding southwards towards the northern banks where some proto-Idoma groups had settled as refugees from Apa. Iga kindred group is one of these groups. Their ancestors were one of those ejected from their temporary homelands on the north bank of the Benue by the expanding Alago frontier.

Phase IV 1685-1715

During this phase ninety-eight informants claim that about thirty-six kindred groups came into modern Idomaland from both the region of Idah and 'Apa'. From the available evidence on the Idah migration during this period, twenty-one kindred groups came out of Idah for

54. Agatu Historical Text (hereafter AgHT), no. 9, pp. 36-9, Anyebe Adogboyi (70) et al., 20-6-75.

55. E.O. Erim, "The Growth of Keana Confederacy," BVPP, no. 5, 1975; for the Iga kindred group see Ochekwu Historical Text (hereafter OchHT) no. 15, pp. 47-52, Odangla Ogbu (80), et al., 12-6-75.
safety in the east. The bulk of these immigrants went largely to
Ugboju, Agila, Ochekwu, Edumoga and Oglewu districts. From the
eastern fronts, the Tiv pressure seemed to be mounting with the result
that several kindred groups which had lingered either along the south-
ern banks of the Benue or settled in the marshes which characterise
the Tiv country, were 'flushed' west and southwards into areas in
present day Idomaland. It could be said that the outline of modern
Idomaland took a definite shape during this generation. The Tiv seemed
to have been well settled by 1700 in their present homeland and both
the Idah and Ankpa kingdoms seem to have established their frontiers
in this period. The outline of this migration is indicated in map 6.

Phase V 1715-1775.

As map 6 shows, migrations during this phase which spanned two
generations (1715-1775) were no longer as intense as they had been in
the previous generations. In fact, migrations had totally ceased from
the direction of Apa. Kindred that came into Idomaland at this time
were largely those who were being displaced by both the Tiv and Alago
people. About this time, a new factor, the depredatory activities of
slave raiders most of whom came from Hausaland to the north, began to
influence migrations from the Benue. In spite of the considerable
distance involved, those kindred groups which settled on the north
banks of the Benue were made forcibly aware of the destructive aspects
of these raids. As many as twenty-five kindred groups were involved

in the migrations from the north to the south banks of the Benue at this time; besides this, there were also those groups coming out of Idah in this period. It might also be mentioned that although major migrations seem to be coming from either 'east' or west' into modern Idomalalnd, yet some kindred groups also moved in from the northern fringes of Igboland particularly in areas of Nsukka and Abakaliki to make their homes among Idoma.

It seems clear from the above discussions that the evolution of modern Idoma society took almost four hundred years to complete; a period in which a myriad of inter-connected events contributed ultimately to the emergence of a unique Idoma culture. The Idoma were a complex of people who subjected their modern homeland to a three-pronged invasion from about the thirteenth generation ago to the sixth generation, c. 1535-1775. They came from the east, west and south, groups under various leaders. The details of these movements are further illustrated in a series of charts which call for further discussion.

The accompanying charts numbered IX - XII are divided into two groups: those which, irrespective of their provenance, fall within the central chiefdoms; those groups which fall outside that area. Chart IX, for example, shows kindred groups moving away from Apa and settling down in one of the three chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju, and Otukpo. For example, the ai-Oko kindred in Ugboju chiefdom, thirteen generations ago (c. 1535-1565) left Apa and settled at Okpalumu in c. 1565-1595. However, two generations later, c. 1655-1685, the
### Chart IX

**Relative Chronology of the Idoma Area of Concentration**

Adoka, Ugboju-Otukpo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After</th>
<th>Kindreds Moving Away for Kwararafa Expansion</th>
<th>Kindreds Moving Away for Tiv Expansion</th>
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<tr>
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<th>Kindreds Moving Away for Tiv Expansion</th>
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<td>Kindred Moving</td>
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<td>Modern Location</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kindreds Moving Away for Kwararafa Expansion**

- **12th**
  - Umugidi
  - Apa I
  - 1625-1655
  - Iwe/Ogbade/ Ooji
  - 1745-1775 Adoka
  - 1805-1835
  - 1835-1865

**Kindreds Moving Away for Kwararafa Expansion**

- **11th**
  - ai-Odaji
  - Apa I
  - 1625-1655
  - Okongo/Obana
  - Ifagwu/Odu
  - Ojuwo
  - Abiche/Otiya
  - Okutachi/
  - Ogbaya
  - 1745-1775
  - 1775-1805
  - 1835-1865

**Kindreds Moving Away for Tiv Expansion**

- **12th**
  - Umugidi
  - Apa I
  - 1625-1655
  - Iwe/Ogbade/
  - 1745-1775 Adoka
  - 1805-1835
  - 1835-1865
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Adoka</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
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<td>Ai-Ode</td>
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Kindreds moving away for Tiv expansion

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
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<td>7th</td>
<td>Akpachi</td>
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<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Ugboju</td>
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<td>Otokpo</td>
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<td>Ugba/Iwe</td>
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</table>
the ai-Oko kindred group was forced to move from Okpalumu first to Oganga and later to Ombi by the intrusive Tiv groups. Later still, about 1685-1715, further Tiv expansion pushed the ai-Oko into their modern locations in Ugboju district. As is clearly indicated in chart IX, the people of almost all the great Apa exodus ultimately settled in one or the other of the central chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju, and Otukpo.

Chart X indicates all those kindred groups who originated in Idah or its environs and who ultimately settled in one or the other of the three central chiefdoms, from the tenth generation to the sixth. For example, in the tenth generation (1625-1655) the ancestors of Ooba in modern Ochekwu district in Idoma left Idah and first settled in modern Agatu district in the same generation before moving into their present homeland in Ochekwu district six generations ago (c. 1745-1775). This chart also indicates that although some of the kindred groups originating in Idah eventually settled within one of the three central chiefdoms, the vast majority found their way into northern, western and south-western Idomaland where they made their modern homes.

Chart XI shows only those kindred groups from Apa in the twelfth generation c. 1565-1595. Two of these kindreds did not settle in any of the central chiefdoms. Ojigo, for example, left Apa twelve generations ago and made their first settlement in some areas of modern Agatu, later moved from them to Okokolo settlement near Otukpo town in c. 1625-1655. During the next generation, that group wandered through the southern areas of Otukpo chiefdom before finally moving southwards to their present homeland in c. 1655-1885.
# Chart X

## Relative Chronology of the Idoma Outside the Area of Concentration

### Kindreds Originating in Idah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
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<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
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<td>Ankpa</td>
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*These kindred claim origination in Apa. However the weight of the evidence available tends to suggest that they originate in northern Igboland.*
### Chart XI

**Relative Chronology of the Idoma Outside the Area of Concentrations**

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<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ugbokepo</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikobbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ataganyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijaja</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijaja</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijaha</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ochekwu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
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<tr>
<td>1775-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805-1835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart XII also indicates those kindred groups which moved away from both the Tiv and Alago expansion. For example, about nine generations ago, 1655-1685, the Agbaduma kindred group left their Okari homeland in Kwararafa and first settled at Iwe a generation later, but soon came under heavy pressure from the Tiv who further pushed this kindred group stage by stage to their modern settlement in Agatu district. The historical tradition of the Agbaduma kindred group clearly indicates that their ancestors arrived at their present homeland about six generations ago (1745-1775). Those groups which had clung to either side of the Benue particularly on the northern banks were further forced to migrate by the expanding Alago confederacy.

Thus far, charts IX-XII concentrate on those kindred groups which ultimately settled in modern Idomaland from either Apa or Idah. However, the invasion of Idomaland was far from being a mere two-directional affair; rather, it was three-pronged attack. As chart XIII shows the invaders came from the southern fringes of Idoma, the region of both Nsukka and Abakaliki. From the twelfth generation to the fifth (c. 1565-1805), groups from that direction had made their way into Idoma. For example, the ai-Alekwu left Nsukka area about 1565-1595 and arrived in their present homeland in Okpoga about c. 1625-1655. It should also be observed that, probably because of the distance involved, none of the kindred groups of Igbo origins settled in any of the central chiefdoms.
### Kindreds moving away from Tiv and Alago Expansions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Tjaha</td>
<td>Apa I</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Agatu</td>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Onyagede</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>Ologba</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Agatu</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Egba</td>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1805-1835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ilongo</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Kindreds moving away from Alago Expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Iga</td>
<td>North of Benue</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>South of Benue</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Agatu</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>Ochumekwu</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ochekwu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ogbaulu</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atakpa</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ogwule Kaduna</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ugbọju ai-Omaga</td>
<td>Igume/Ombi</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>Ogbọju</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Ologwu</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Akpachi</td>
<td>Agatu</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ombi</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Olokam</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ai-Okoko</td>
<td>Ombi</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ogbọju</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
<td>Ogbọju</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anwule</td>
<td>Ochekwu</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Ogbọju</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
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8th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ogun Epe</td>
<td>North of Benue</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ochobo</td>
<td>Agatu</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ochekwu</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ugbọju</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Ikpele</td>
<td>North of Benue</td>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ogam</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

6th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>Settlement After Apa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Later Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Akpeko</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
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### RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE IDOMA

**CHART XII**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Kindred</th>
<th>1st Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Other Settlements</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modern Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Ai-Alekwu</td>
<td>Nsukka</td>
<td>1595-1625</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Okpuga</td>
<td>1625-1655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565-1595</td>
<td>Owukpa</td>
<td>Olokam</td>
<td>1625-1635</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Owuga</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Ai-onyilo</td>
<td>Ichi/Nsukka</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>Nkalegwu</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ichama</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Adochi</td>
<td>Ukele/Ogoja</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Tkpaokpo</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Utonkon/Ufia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Atulo</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ulayi</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ezza</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ulayi</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ai-Ona</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ai-Okepe</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Ekpe</td>
<td>Olufu</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Ulayi</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Ai-Ajibo</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Otoji</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Ai-Agborogwu</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Otukpo</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1745</td>
<td>Olukwu</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Ai-Ebege</td>
<td>Ichi/Nsukka</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td>Nkalegwu</td>
<td>1685-1715</td>
<td>Ijigbam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Iga</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Abakpa</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Ogbe</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1775-1805</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Aleke</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745-1775</td>
<td>Izzi</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart XIV attempts a relative chronology for the three Idoma chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo. It also sets out in outline the major historical developments which took place in and outside these chiefdoms. It will be observed that there are a few well-spaced tie-in references between these chiefdoms on the one hand and Kwararafa to the east and the kingdoms of Idah to the west on the other. Furthermore, it will also be observed that in the thirteenth generation on the ancestors of the three chiefdoms had already left Apa westwards before the disruptive political tumult which characterised the rise of Agba Kanjo to power in the eleventh generation, c. 1595-1625. However, after the ninth generation, c. 1655-1685, events in Apa were no longer dominant as the cause of migrations. In fact, by 1700, Kwararafa and the proto-Idoma groups had been separated by a wide span of country dominated by the Tiv. Following Kwararafa's loss of influence upon migrations, most migrants to Idoma were from the kingdom of Idah and Ankpa.

The kingdom of Idah exerted heavy political and military pressures on Idomalnd from the tenth generation, c. 1625-1655, onwards. For example, it was during this period or a generation earlier that Agba Kenjo, a Jukun king in Biepi or Apa went to war with a rival claimant to the throne, Abutu Eje. The latter failed and so fled westwards to the environs of modern Agatu district. It was here that a major battle between the two forces took place. Abutu Eje died in this battle. His supporters and sons fled southwards towards Idah where they later took over power in that kingdom. Thereafter, Idah continued to influence political developments in Idomalnd. For example, Ayagba-
# CHART XIV

**RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY FOR THE THREE CENTRAL IDOMA CHIEFDOMS:**

**ADOKA, UGBOJU & OKPO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation back from 1925</th>
<th>Approximate Dates</th>
<th>Major Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>c. 1535-1565</td>
<td>Ancestors left Apa homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>c. 1565-1595</td>
<td>Ancestors left Apa homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>c. 1595-1625</td>
<td>Arrived New Apa homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>c. 1625-1655</td>
<td>Development of Chiefdom; More refugees arrived from Apa Kwararafa invaded Idah and refugees began to leave towards Idomalnd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>c. 1655-1685</td>
<td>Tiv invasion of New Apa; secondary migration from Ne Apa, refugees continued to leave Idah kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>c. 1685-1715</td>
<td>Ancestors of Ugboju and Adoka established modern homeland; first groups of Idah refugees arrived their modern homeland as political pressure on Idah mounted; Ayegba-om-Ideko, new king in Idah; collateral succession set in Idah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>c. 1715-1745</td>
<td>Adoka and Ugboju chiefs went to Idah for investiture ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>c. 1745-1775</td>
<td>Other chiefs in Idomalnd came to Ugboju and Adoka for investiture ceremony. Collateralism in the chiefdoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>c. 1775-1805</td>
<td>More chiefs visited the central chiefdoms for investiture ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>c. 1805-1835</td>
<td>Otukpo visited Ugboju for investiture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>c. 1835-1865</td>
<td>Era of political crisis in the chiefdoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>c. 1865-1895</td>
<td>Crisis continued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>c. 1895-1925</td>
<td>European era.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
om-Idoko came to throne eight generations ago (c. 1685-1715) and after his death the collateral succession system was adopted. Both Adoká and Ugboju, who began to send their chiefs there for installation, adopted collateral succession a generation later (c. 1715-1745). Otukpo for a variety of reasons imitated the system only four generations ago (c. 1805-1835). Until the arrival of the Europeans in recent times, the major outside influence upon Idoma came from Idah.

This chapter has sought to date Idoma history with as little a margin of error as possible. The absence of archaeological evidence, records left behind by alien travellers, eclipse and famine references forced the writer to record and utilize a large collection of royal and commoner genealogies as well as a good number of reported die-in references to two neighbouring societies to construct a reliable chronological framework for the Idoma. This chapter has also attempted to show that with intensive fieldwork and a multitude of genealogies, relative dating by generation within a reasonable margin is possible.

In the course of this chapter, however, the writer refrained from going into any details of both the causes and the course of migrations of any kindred group; royal or commoner. That story will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

MIGRATIONS: EASTERN ORIGINS (c. 1535-1745)

Recent investigations into the early history of almost all the modern ethnic groups that live in modern Idoma Division indicate strongly that before 1500 A.D. some of these groups lived within the ancient Kwararafa confederacy. These were the ancestors of those Idoma informants who claim 'eastern origins' in their historical traditions. This aspect of the Idoma early history has been dominated by the view that the ancestors of these informants were Jukun or Jukun-related in origin. This chapter seeks to examine this view as well as the early history of those groups which claim 'eastern origins'.

The Apa ancestral homelands

Several informants trace their cradleland to the east within the area identified in some historical traditions as Apa, the Jukun homeland. In most traditions, this locality is also known as Okali or Okolofo. The voice of tradition is unanimous that this was the ancestral homeland of many Idoma people. There are some suggestions, too, that Idoma ancestors lived in Apa side by side with other ethnic groups and that the term 'Apa' was a blanket one covering a wide collection of peoples. According to one informant

Apa was the name of our settlement. It was also the name given to an assemblage of diverse people who lived with us in our ancestral homeland. Another name for Apa was Okolofo...1

1. UHT-8, p. 58; Uja Agokpa (100); et al, 28-5-75.
The above tradition calls for some comment. The term Apa as used in the above tradition stood for three separate entities. Firstly, Apa referred to a region of Kwararafa when the capital and heartland of that confederacy lay to the north, possibly in the Gongola valley. Secondly, it was the name of the new town established (c. 1600) as the capital of Kwararafa and located further to the south. Thirdly, the term 'Apa' came to mean Kwararafa or Okolofa when the confederacy had shrunk virtually to the Apa region within the lower Benue region. However, by the time Apa was being used as synonymous with 'Kwararafa' the town of Apa was no longer the capital of the confederacy. A new capital called Kororofa had been established. Thus Meek in 1930 wrote, "Kororofa... is situated between longitude 10 and 11, and latitude 8 and 9. The remains of the city and the fosse could still be seen, though the wall was almost level to the ground." By the early nineteenth century the capital had been moved again to Wukari (or Okali) on the south western edge of the Apa region. Thus depending on the time period, 'Apa' could mean 1) a province of Kwararafa; 2) the capital of Kwararafa; and 3) Kwararafa itself. While the name of the entity changed over time the geographical region remained the same.


3. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 44.

4. Ibid.

5. Webster, "Animals," p. 16.
Various sources have now made it abundantly clear that by the fifteenth century, or much earlier, there once existed within the Benue Valley a confederacy called Kwararafa. Palmer suggested that Kwararafa existed in the thirteenth century. Meek would date the meteoric rise of Kwararafa to the fourteenth century. He based his evidence on the popular tradition among the present-day Jukun population in Wukari which related that "during the reign of Yaji (1349-85) all the pagan tribes (sic) from Biyri to Fanda were subject to him. The Kwararafa alone refused to follow him, so he went to their country." Another tradition drawn largely from the Kano Chronicle refers to Kwararafa in the fifteenth century. It is stated that during the reign of Daudu (1421-38), Zaria, under Queen Amina, conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafa and Nupe. The researches of Webster among the Jukun colonies on the north bank of the Benue within modern Lafia and Awe districts confirm the theory that in the pre-1500 period the Kwararafa confederacy stretched south of the Benue even though the capital was probably north of the river. On the strength of the above evidence one can conclude with the Idoma informants that a confederacy once existed within the Benue Valley in remote times. That confederacy was called Kwararafa and its southern region was known as Apa.

6. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, Introduction, pp. XII-XXXI.

7. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

8. Ibid., p. 25.

Opinion is still divided on the exact extent of Kwarafa.

According to one source:

Kwarafa [was] one of the seven greatest kingdoms of the Sudan, the territory of which included all the lower and part of the middle portion of Hausaland. To the south, it has been said, their sovereignty extended beyond the Cross River as far as the Atlantic.  

Clapperton was given a fuller description of Kwarafa by Sultan Bello in 1827:

Among the provinces of Bow-Sher (i.e. Bauchi) the following are the most considerable... and the ninth is Kornorfa which embraces about twenty divisions, ruled by one king, who often sallied forth upon Kanoo and Barnoo... Near to the province there is an anchorage or harbour for the ships of the Christians...  

That its citizens traded as far south as the port of Calabar within modern Cross River State is an open question. Perhaps early slave traders to West Africa did procure their slaves from areas raided by Kwarafa. Indeed, slaves later recaptured off the coast of Sierra Leone in the nineteenth century reported to Koelle that they came from "Kurorofa" country.  

The above sources suggest that Kwarafa in the past occupied vast areas of land in the Benue Valley. Its northern fringes probably extended into the southern portions of some Hausa states. Its


11. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 28.

western as well as the southern limits may have included such modern areas as Idah to the west, part of Igboland to the south around Nsukka Division, and the areas north of the former Ogoja Province. Its capitals shifted from place to place depending upon the 'political climate' of the time. Webster has so far identified four such capitals, Wukari being the latest built around the 1840s.\(^\text{13}\) 

The reference to "the Cross River as far as the Atlantic" and the "harbour for the ships of the Christians" certainly seems to refer to the area later known as Calabar. This may be combined with the fact that in Calabar there is an area known as Abakpa, the name used for Abakwariga in the Benue Valley. Unfortunately, historians working on the pre-1600 history of Calabar have not sought to investigate the connection between Kwararafa and that sea port.\(^\text{14}\) However, by the nineteenth century Kwararafa was only a shadow of the power it had once been. But before 1600 Kwararafa was probably a major supplier of slaves down both the Cross River and the Niger River. Access to the Niger explains the importance of Idah to the confederacy. The collapse of Kwararafa c. 1600 north of the Benue Valley, after military attacks and defeat by Borno, may be compared to the collapse and retreat of the Oyo Empire. The latter was also caused by northern pressure by an Islamic State, and its northern capitals like Oyo, were sacked and the rulers forced to re-locate another capital in a truncated form further

\(^{13}\) Webster, "Animals," p. 16.

\(^{14}\) A.J.H. Latham, Old Calabar 1600-1891, (Oxford; 1973), was hardly able to see any connections between the Abakpa of Calabar and the Abakwariga of the ancient Kwararafa confederacy.
to the south. Furthermore, both Oyo and Kwararafa originally depended upon cavalry for defence and after re-location both lost their horses and had to depend upon foot soldiers.

Finally two points should be noted. The first is that traditions of the Efik show that their migration to the estuary of the Cross River occurred just before or around 1600. This date is significantly close to the decade when Kwararafa was passing through the cataclysmic experience of refugees pouring south over the Benue and the founding of Apa, the 'New Oyo' of Kwararafa. 15 Secondly, it seems possible that it was also around this time that the Jukun may have been moving out of the Cross River area in large numbers and that Kenjo, the "builder of Apa" 16 was able to capitalize on the confusion among the refugees to seize political control and bring a degree of stability to what must have been a situation of extreme confusion.

There are positive indications that Kwararafa embraced a multi-ethnic society and while today the name has been principally associated with the Jukun, it seems unlikely that they were either the founders of the confederacy or its rulers until relatively recent times. From the available, if admittedly slim, evidence, Kwararafa was probably founded by the Abakwariga, 17 a name usually associated with the non-Hausa. It has occasionally been referred to as one of the Hausa


17. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 44.
states and researches have tended to support this tradition. The Kisra legend normally associated with the origin of the Hausa is a part of Kwararafa tradition. It would seem that Kwararafa was a refuge zone for non-Islamic Hausa and others, who were driven out by, or resisted the imposition of, various islamising rulers in the Hausa cities. Kwararafa represented the protest of urban Hausa against the islamisation of their society and culture. The existence of Kwararafa as a strong military power south of Borno probably explains why Islam spread so late in this region. It began to spread after the collapse and retreat of the confederacy south of the Benue River after 1600.

The Abakwariga either founded Kwararafa or dominated its political life before 1600. One source has it that the ancient city of Apa mentioned earlier "was essentially a city of Abakwariga." It has been suggested that the former kings of Kwararafa before the seventeenth century were Abakwariga who have been traced as Hausa in origin.

Webster's work on some aspects of the early Jukun history has clearly identified them with such settlements as Puje and Wukari, the latter of which under the Abakwariga was called Chika. It is possible that these settlements became states before they were later converted into capitals by the rulers of Kwararafa after 1600.

Another ethnic group that also lived within the ancient Kwararafa confederacy was the Jukun. Meek in his book on the Jukun has left us

18. Ibid.
with extensive documentation of the early history of the Jukun. According to Palmer's theory, these people came from the 'Orient' into the Benue Valley in pre-colonial times. However, linguistic evidence is firm that the Jukun are ancestral to this region of Nigeria. Until quite recently, Palmer's theory of "eastern origin" of the Jukun has been the dominant theme in explaining Kwararafa early history.

More must be said about the Jukun because after 1600 they engaged in a long struggle for supremacy and ultimately emerged as the ruling group of Kwararafa. Jukun history and origins have been confused because Palmer powerfully insisted, with a mass of proof ingeniously put together, that the Jukun came from the east, through Wadai and south of Lake Chad to found the Kwararafa state. When he published his work, the Jukun were the rulers of Wukari, a truncated new Kwararafa. He found fragments of Kisra legend and eastern origins within the Jukun royal story. These probably represented efforts by the new Jukun dynasty to legitimize itself and claim continuity with the former Abakwariga ruling house. Palmer saw some kind of link between them and the royal house of Borno and there is a Hausa tradition which records this connection for the young immigrants who rode into Daura, killed the snake, married the 'Queen' and so became the forebears of a number of Hausa dynasties.

21. See footnote 6 above.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
Meek was so overwhelmed by Palmer's sophisticated historical reconstruction, that he did not collect Abakwariga tradition and pushed aside the claim of the Juku clan that it belonged to the original Jukun which had migrated into the Benue region from the Cross River. However, Greenberg classifies the Jukun language among the Benue-Congo sub-family of the larger Niger-Congo family of African languages. According to this classification, the Jukun language forms a part of a continuous band of languages which are spoken from the Niger-Delta through the Cross River along the Cameroons mountains via Ogoja, Mambil, and to the Benue Valley. The distribution of related languages supports the claim of the Jukun clan that the Jukun came from the Cross River area. Unfortunately, the traditions and the genealogy of the Juku have not been collected by historians.

It seems possible that the Jukun speakers had begun to migrate into the southern reaches of Kwararafa before the collapse of the northern capital. But Kenjo's assumption of political power possibly had the effect of quickly accelerating that movement. There are several dialectical sub-groups of the Jukun. The largest sub-group were the Wapa who now inhabit the Wuakri area and Dampar region. It seems possible that it was not until the southern capital had been established at Puje in the heart of Wapa country that the Jukun hegemony over the new Kwararafa had been firmly established. Other Jukun colonies spread out from this southern base thrusting north of the Benue. One such sub-group was the Kwana whose dynasty possibly was

an off-shoot of the earlier Abakwariga ruling house. These other
dialectical sub-groups possibly represent non-Jukun peoples who adopted
the Jukun language and certain cultural traits. Probably this explains
the dialectical differences more than the separation in distance and
time as the linguist would argue. Even after Kwararafa had re-located
its capital south of the Benue, some of its outstanding kings still
held control of large regions north of the Benue River. This expan-
sion of the Jukun language by adoption, rather than by outspread of
native speakers, certainly resembles the Idoma example as noted earlier
in chapter I. However, this does not discount the fact that small
native-speaking Jukun communities primarily concerned with trade were
established in selected areas north of the Benue. They helped spread
the language but the assembly of people in this area today who speak
Jukun probably were not original Jukun speakers. Jukun political
hegemony and Jukun trade were probably the main factors in the spread
of the Jukun language north of the Benue.

In summary, one can argue that Kwararafa was probably founded by
Abakwariga as a traditional religious bastion of defence against the
spread of Islam. The Abakwariga were never in a majority, the main
population being a multiplicity of ethnic groups. With the collapse
of the northern marches of the confederacy and the establishment of
the new capital at Apa, the Jukun and the Abakwariga struggled for
power and this was reflected in the transfer of the capital first to
Kororofa, then to Fuje and finally to Wukari. Possibly at Fuje Jukun
hegemony was assured and this is why all kings are still confirmed
there and why the place holds a special, almost sacred, position in
Jukun thinking. But it must be remembered that until in the nineteenth century, the Jukun did not form a majority of Kwararafa population. By the take-over of Wukari in the nineteenth century, the confederacy of Kwararafa had shrunk to a Jukun state.

The political upheavals were almost constant as a result of the infiltration of the Jukun prior to 1600, the collapse of the northern empire c. 1600, the abandonment of Apa c. 1630, of Kororo in 1660, and of Puje in 1690. This series of events indicates the shrinking of the protective umbrella of Kwararafa which in turn provoked the southward migration away from the troubled areas. This chapter is finally concerned with linking the movements of the proto-Idoma to the generations of confusion in Kwararafa.

Migrations: the background

According to some Idoma informants, thirteen generations ago around c. 1535-1565, the area east of modern Wukari was their ancestral homeland. In the words of one of them, "our ancestors settled east of Okali where they lived together with the Igbirra and the Igala ancestors." 26 This tradition would seem to suggest that the Jukun intrusion had not begun. If, indeed, this tradition is correct, the proto-Idoma groups may have been referred to as Apa by their immediate neighbours. Since this is the present Jukun homeland scholars and some informants have assumed that they also lived there c. 1500, thus engaging in the futile effort to prove a relationship between the

26. OHT-1, pp. 5-14, Oogu Oche (45) et al, 13-5-75.
Idoma and the Jukun. Armstrong, the Idoma linguist, after giving serious consideration to the claim that the Idoma are ethnically related to the Jukun rejects it outright:

... it must be realized that the Idoma are not Jukun... the two languages are related to each other only in the sense that the rest of the languages of southern and central Nigeria are distantly related...  

As indicated earlier, both the Idoma and the Jukun languages are classified within the Benue-Congo sub-family. What the Idoma informants and others mean by referring to Apa as their ancestral homeland is a geographical location and not even a close settlement with the Jukun. What is certain is that some early Idoma groups settled around Okali, the region near modern Wukari Division. From every indication, Okali was by no means the only settlement of these early Idoma groups. In fact, some informants from Agbaduma kindred group in modern Agatu district recall that their cradleland lay further east of Wukari. According to one informant, "our ancestors settled on a fertile plain between two mighty rivers, close to Borno." This suggests that some of these early groups extended as far east as the Gongolla valley. This would locate some of them close by where Palmer identified some groups he called Dama which he suspected were the ancestors of modern Idoma people. In summary, it may be concluded that the ancestors of

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29. AgHT-36, pp. 120-128, Enumola Olegbahu (60) et al., 24-6-75.
the Idoma settled at different locations within the ancient Kwararafa confederacy and that they were not Jukun in origin. As members of a multi-ethnic society, they certainly exchanged many cultural traits with their immediate neighbours.

From the available evidence one can say that before 1500 the proto-Idoma groups lived east of modern Wukari. Furthermore, as some historical traditions indicate, these proto-Idoma groups lived as an undifferentiated group, its members may have spoken one language, which in all probability was the original form or the ancestor of the modern Idoma language. Both the name of the proto-group and the language may have been Dama as suggested by Palmer. Or, as has been suggested by some informants, the founder of the original group may have been one Idu whose descendants derived the name Idu-ma, later anglicised in the twentieth century into Idoma. The present high degree of endogamy among the modern Idoma population seems to suggest that, at a very early date in their history, the members of the original group intermarried freely.

As the groups moved out into separate and often distant settlements, contact between them became more difficult. The result was that the proto-Idoma language began to split into separate dialects. Unfortunately the Idoma linguist has not yet dated this aspect of Idoma early history. It is quite likely that the split of that language into its various dialects ante-dates 1500 A.D. In spite

of this, however, there are positive indications that every kindred group endeavored to maintain, as much as possible, its original identity. Over time, one effective way of differentiating one kindred group from the other was for each group to observe an ite10. In time, totemic symbols came to be definite identification marks between the different kindred groups among the proto-Idoma people.

Among the totemic symbols which have been identified, the Owuna Bird, Ogonopo Fish, Agba Fish, Obagwu Red Monkey, and Eka Black Monkey may be considered as the most important. The indications are that some of these early totems signify kinship ties. In other words, the members of the Ogonopo Fish observe that totem because their ancestors had done so before them. For the various members of the Ogonopo Fish, common descent is implied. However, there are other totemic symbols, which some Idoma informants insist were adopted within Kwararafa by their ancestors. These include Crocodiles, Civet Cats, Snakes and Snails. So far, there is no evidence to support the view that those who observe the above totems are derived from a common ancestor. 31

It is quite possible that these totems were adopted by their ancestors for purely economic and social reasons. Whatever the original situation may have been, it is now clear that before 1500 the various Idoma groups lived in scattered settlements within Kwararafa. However, by the 1530s, the situation had changed drastically, leading to the emigration of some of them from Kwararafa.

31. For more details of totemic developments among these early Idoma groups, see Erim, "Leopards, Civet Cats," p. 13.
Phase I (The Royal Emigration) 1535-1625

During the middle of the sixteenth century, some Idoma groups began to leave their Apa cradleland in Kwararafa. So far, four different phases of that movement have been identified; Phase I c. 1535-1625, Phase II c. 1625-1655, Phase III 1655-1685, and Phase IV 1685-1745.

According to some Idoma historical traditions, this period (c. 1535-1625) is the earliest recorded migration in their history. Several informants recall events back to the migration leaders who left Apa about thirteen generations ago. Five totemic groups, three of which became royal kindreds in their new homeland, were involved. These were the Owuna Bird, The Black and Red Monkey and two Crocodiles. The voice of tradition is unanimous that this early phase was provoked by the endless unrest generated there by constant raids in which a large number of horses were used against them. The unanimity on this view is evident from the tradition which is typical of those recorded in many parts of Idomeland:

Our ancestors came from Apa, near Okali [Wukari]. They were later expelled from this homeland by the frequent warfare fought by the Abakpa people [Hausa]. We refer to these wars as Ef'onya (horse war). These warriors raided their homes and took away their wives and children. Our ancestors fought to the best of their ability but could not beat the enemy back. Our ancestors were therefore forced to flee their homeland...32

32. AHT-12, pp. 52-59, Igwu Aba (75) et al. 5-6-75.
Another informant gives basically the same tradition but adds more details on the provenance of the cavalry. In his own words, "our ancestors left Apa because of a war called Okankanda. The Hausa were raiding their homes for slaves. They used horses and swords..." 33

The suggestion from the above informants is that by the sixteenth century Kwararafa had organised cavalry troops, which operated rapidly over long distances in raiding parties. Indeed, the Benue Valley region belongs to what has been called the 'derived savannah.' This is an area which was once forest but because of insufficient rainfall and occasional clearing for agriculture as well as burning had gradually become deforested. Grass is dominant with patches of woodland scattered here and there. The increasing open nature of the country and the absence of the tse-tse fly enabled rulers of Kwararafa to employ horses in the services of the state. This became more urgent in Kwararafa given the vast territory it occupied and the multi-ethnic composition of its citizens. Kwararafa rulers used horses to enforce their political power over great distances, thereby expanding the territorial extent of the empire.

There is overwhelming evidence in support of the view that Kwararafa possessed cavalry forces as early as the fourteenth century. Indications are that these horses came into Kwararafa from Kano to the north. In one tradition recorded by Meek we are told that Kwararafa

33. Ibid.
by the fourteenth century was tributary to Kano, paying its tributes in slaves while the latter sent down horses in exchange. Meek further related that tradition as follows: "Kanajeji, son of Yaji, king of Kano c. 1390-1410, is said to have demanded tribute from Kororofa and to have received two hundred slaves... Kanajeji sent horses to the king of Kororofa, while the latter continued to send slaves to Kano."

This tradition corroborates what some Idoma informants imply by referring to modern northern Nigeria as the direction from which these raiders came. It is now certain that Kwararafa traded horses with Kano. We also know that at this early date Kwararafa was not organized well enough to withstand the military might of its immediate neighbours to the north.

However, by the sixteenth century that position had changed drastically. Zaria then became tributary to Kwararafa. Similarly, Kano was taken, its population fleeing to Daura. According to one source, Kwararafa forces during the raid on Kano "ate up the whole country." Palmer also indicated that about this time, during the reign of Yana Hzaa Bakki of Katsina (1618-46) "all the Hausa countries were overrun by the Kwararafa..." In other words, during the sixteenth and the first decade of the seventeenth century, Kwararafa dominated the greater part of modern Hausaland. What is not clear, however

34. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 25.
35. Ibid.
is from where Kwararafa drew its fighting men. Could it be from the
subject peoples such as the Idoma ancestors? It is quite possible that
this was the case and there are hints in the traditions quoted earlier
in which we are told that "our men were captured." Whatever the case,
some Idoma groups began to abandon their Apa homeland at this time and
it is tempting to conclude that these foreign military victories may
have had adverse effects on them on the home fronts.

The adverse effects became alarming during the series of military
defeats which Kwararafa suffered at the hands of Borno armies as from
the sixteenth century onwards. Borno, from the first decade of the
sixteenth century, was expanding towards the Gongola valley area. It
is reported that during the reign of Mai Ali Gaji (1462-1518) his
soldiers defeated Kwararafa forces and Ali was reported to have cap-
tured seventeen thousand slaves, including the king himself. 37 Where
did all these slaves come from? Some Idoma groups were enslaved
according to the historical traditions of some Idoma informants. If
it is true (and there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of these
traditions) then we can safely attribute the first phase of Idoma
migrations to the endless unrest generated by horse raiders in
Kwararafa in the sixteenth century. These raiders may have come from
Borno, Kano or even from some ethnic groups within Kwararafa itself.
More important for Idoma history was the ultimate result of these
raids:

The Mai of Borno's defeat of Kwararafa in this period is very significant. In one account we are told that Mai Ali went away with 1700 captives from Kwararafa; in another he took away the Kwararafa king prisoner to Borno. These two traditions seem to suggest that thenceforth Borno probably exercised a strong degree of control over Kwararafa, at least for a time.\(^{38}\) If this is so, then Palmer was on solid ground when he attributed the shift of Kwararafa capital at this period from the Gongola valley "to the site known as Kororofa on the southern banks of the Benue."\(^{39}\)

All these events are related to the causes of the first phase of Idoma migration c. 1535–1625. Although it is not clear where the chief who was taken prisoner by Borno came from in Kwararafa, yet there are indications that he might have come from some Idoma ruling groups. This is supported by the fact that phase I was dominated by royal emigrants. All the five groups who moved out of Kwararafa at this time were royal. These were two Crocodiles, an Owuna Bird, a Red and a Black Monkey. From the available evidence, the ancestors of these groups were rulers of several colonies in Kwararafa confederacy. Thus the defeat of the Kwararafa king by the Borno forces strongly affected the Idoma royal kindred groups. With the political crisis within Kwararafa, five royal kindred groups that were affected left Kwararafa homeland c. 1535–1625 and moved further west to establish another settlement.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., Introduction.
Chart XV outlines the four different phases of migrations from Kwararafa between 1535-1745. It will be seen that each migratory group left the homeland with its totems, which on the insistence of informants have been retained as primary or kingship totems although some of them are political. For reasons of convenience, we shall, throughout this work, refer to each migratory group by its totemic symbol instead of its present name. For example, reference to Ugboju would be 'the Owuna Bird' and to Otukpo as 'the Red Monkey' and so forth.

One interesting aspect of this chart is the way the migration was carried out. The first phase involved a small number of immigrants most of whom were the original Idoma native speakers. Then there was a pause which as we shall see reflected the new political developments in Kwararafa, after which there was an influx of Civet Cat groups. This was followed a generation later by the largest number of refugees coming out of Apa. It is clear that Idoma migrations from their ancestral cradleland to their new homeland involved the movement of a number of groups, both large and small, moving at intervals of one to two generations to another homeland.

40. This view is supported by the fact that Yala, although geographically separate from the present groups whose ancestors formed this core, yet their dialect is closer to the dialect spoken by these groups in Idoma Division. As indicated earlier on, the Yala are genealogically related to the Umogidi of modern Adoja district. For more details see Erín, "Leopards, Civet Cats," pp. 9-10.
# CHART XV

**TOTEMIC KINDREDS FLEEING FROM KWARARAPA BETWEEN c. 1535-1745**

### Phase I 1535-1655

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Modern Location</th>
<th>Primary or Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ugboju Royal Kindreds (Ugboju)</td>
<td>Bird (Owuna)</td>
<td>Apa</td>
<td>1535-1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adoka Royal Kindreds (Adoka)</td>
<td>Black Monkey (Eka)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ojigo (Edumoga)</td>
<td>Crocodile (Ikwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1565-1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Amejo &amp; Okonobo (Edumoga)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Otukpo Royal Kindreds (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Red Monkey (Obagwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1595-1625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Phase II 1625-1655

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Modern Location</th>
<th>Primary or Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Umogidi (Adoka)</td>
<td>Fish (Ogonopo)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1625-1655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ijami (Oglewu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eboya (Oglewu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Alaglanu (Oglewu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ugbokpo (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Odugbo (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>Snake (Owa)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Idada (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Entekpa (Adoka)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Agodagba (Onyagede)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Phase III 1655-1685

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Modern Location</th>
<th>Primary or Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Auke (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ojantelle (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ijaha (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ataganyi (Ochekwu)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ugboju ai-OMaga (Agatu)</td>
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</table>
Phase III (continued)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Kindred &amp; Modern Location</th>
<th>Primary or Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ijahal (Oglewu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
<td>Apa</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ijahal (Akps)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ajboe (Ugboju)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Iga (Agatu)</td>
<td>Fish (Agba)</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Iga (Ochekwu)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adija (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ugbobi (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ologba (Agatu)</td>
<td>Black Monkey (Eka)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Aku (Agatu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Ooji (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Agbaduma/Okokolo (Agatu)</td>
<td>Crocodile (Ikwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ai-Egaji (Oglewu)</td>
<td>Red Monkey (Obagwu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Okpiko (Onyagede)</td>
<td>Snake (Owa)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Akpachi (Ugboju)</td>
<td>Bird (Owuna)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>20. Egba (Agatu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
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<td>21. Okpagabi (Agatu)</td>
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<td>22. Ogwule Ogbawulu (Agatu)</td>
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<td>23. Abogbe (Agatu)</td>
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<td>24. Ejema (Adoka)</td>
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<td>25. Ijahal (Onyagede)</td>
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<td>26. Ai-Agbo (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>27. Ai-Onyilo (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>28. Ai-Agabi (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>29. Ai-Ogebeneche (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>30. Ai-Ede</td>
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<td>31. Ai-Ona (Olokam)</td>
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<td>32. Opligu (Ugboju)</td>
<td>Black Monkey (Eka)</td>
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<td>33. Ai-Agboke (Oglewu)</td>
<td>Snake (Idilli)</td>
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<td>34. Ai-Oga (Oglewu)</td>
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### Phase IV 1685-1745

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Modern Location</th>
<th>Primary or Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ikpele (Agatu)</td>
<td>Bird (Okolopa)</td>
<td>Apa</td>
<td>1685-1745</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Adana (Agatu)</td>
<td>Fish (Ogonopo)</td>
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<td>3. Akpete (Ochekwu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
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<td>4. Otada (Otukpo)</td>
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<td>5. Akpachi (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Crocodile (Ikwu)</td>
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<td>6. Adogbe (Akpe)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
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<td>7. Ajobe (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Snake (Idiri)</td>
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<td>8. Anwule (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>9. Ai-Ajibo (Igwumale)</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
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<td>10. Ai-Agboidogwu (Igwumale)</td>
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The New Homeland, Apa I

This new homeland for reasons of uniformity will be referred to simply as Apa I to differentiate it from Apa 2 which was also established north of Idaho by refugees leaving Kwararafa between c. 1595-1625. From every indication, Apa I was not 'empty' when the first Kwararafa immigrants arrived there c. 1565-1625. It was inhabited by several ethnic groups all of whom once belonged to the Kwararafa confederacy. Geographically, it covered most of the area occupied by the present-day Tiv. Some of the original inhabitants of this area were called by the Jukun 'Banu.' This term, according to one source, means "people of the river." These groups settled at Abiche (modern Abinsi) on the southern bank of the Benue River. Originally, they were not Jukun but were later assimilated into the Jukun culture and speak a distinct Jukun dialect today. According to Meek, "they claim Igbirra origin." Indeed, many Idoma informants recall that when their ancestors moved out of Kwararafa twelve generations ago c. 1565-1595, the area around modern Abinsi was then inhabited by the Igbirra people. This confirms Meek's tradition on the Igbirra, origin noted above. In addition to the Igbirra, there were other settlements along the two banks of the Benue between Abinsi to the east and the area of modern Agatu district to the west. These settlements were largely fishing and trading communities some of which belonged to the Alago people. Immediate to the north of Apa I, on the

41. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 43.
42. Ibid.
43. OHT-1, pp. 5-14, Oogu Oche (45) et al., 13-5-75.
north bank of the Benue River, lay the southern frontiers of the Alago confederacy.\footnote{Erim, "The Growth of Kanna Confederacy," pp. 6-28.} On the south bank, further west of modern Agatu district, this area lay within the 'sphere of influence' of the Bini dynasty based on Idah on the Niger, south of the confluence. This was the area into which the first Idoma immigrants from Kwararafa poured in an increasing number between c. 1535-1745.

It will be seen that Apa I lay within the western marches of Kwararafa and was therefore affected by the deteriorating political situation in that confederacy. However, the new power in Apa I was the Igbirra chief, also called Apa in some Idoma historical traditions.\footnote{Ibid.} It is further reported that it was Apa who gave land for settlement to the first Idoma immigrants, the Owuna Bird, Red and Black Monkey, and the Crocodiles.\footnote{Ibid.} Informants from the Black Monkey group recall how their ancestor Idom was received on arrival from Kwararafa by the Abiche chief Apa and was allowed freedom to hunt extensively as he had been able to do in Abichelandon. He was also reported to have demanded and been given extensive farming lands for his supporters and followers. However, Idom was so successful in hunting expeditions, continued one informant, that he soon incurred the displeasure of his Igbirra host. War resulted in which Idom lost his life and his group fled west of Abinsi and sought the protection of Owuna Bird.\footnote{Ibid.}
Informants from the Red Monkey recall that their ancestor, Akunte, ten generations ago, c. 1625-1655, was given a place to settle on arrival from Kwararafa but soon became involved in Igirra politics. In fact, it was reported that Akunte contested the Igirra throne with Apa, the Igirra chief. The Red and Black Monkey traditions have no doubt over-simplified many historical developments during this period of their history.

It may be suggested as an explanation that as the flow of refugees from Kwararafa continued into the western marches of the confederacy, most groups that went south and westwards came to meet other settlers in Apa I. The largest of these were the Igirra peoples, sometimes called Akpach in some traditions. Initially, the chief of Igirra was kindly disposed towards the early groups and settled them on portions of his land. However, with the apparently endless influx of immigrants from Kwararafa, their chief may have decided to tighten his land policy against further incursions by the Kwararafa immigrants. Both the leaders of the Red and Black Monkey groups may have fallen foul of this new land policy, thereby leading to the civil war in which the leader of the Black Monkey died and that of the Red Monkey fled to the north bank of the Benue to establish the Otia chiefdom. The separation between the Red Monkey and the Igirra at this time is reported thus in Otukpo traditions, "Akunte moved to Ifagwu settlement leaving Apa in his Ochonu chiefdom."

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.
On the other hand, informants from the Black Monkey group explain the escape of their group from Igbirra chieftainy by attributing it to the work of Obonoko (strong wind) which came and carried the entire group to Efoje settlement. Whatever the Obonoko may represent, it is now known that, shortly after the death of their leader, the Black Monkey fled west and took shelter with the Owuna Bird chieftainy which, from every indication was undergoing some internal reorganisation in this period.

Between c. 1595-1625, Owuna Bird maintained cordial relations with the Igbirra chieftainy. This situation is not difficult to explain. Although the early history of the Igbirra is still obscure, yet there are indications that in the seventeenth century, its peoples monopolised trade in salt, fish and a locally manufactured cloth called opa. Even in recent times, we are informed that "Igbira (sic) cotton and spinning and weaving are among the best in Nigeria...Cotton was spun by everyone, from the king downwards, the thread being rough but strong." Cotton manufacturing was an old-established industry among the Igbirra.

The mention of opa in Igbirra tradition is important for many reasons. In the first place, since the Igbirra were the only source of supply, this commodity must have been scarce (relative to the demand by the Kwararafa immigrants) for it was closely connected with the ekwuafia ritual which almost every group soon adopted. Ekwuafia

50. AHT-12, pp. 52-59, Igwu Aba (75) et al., 5-6-75; AHT-8, pp. 57-68, Uja Agogbe (100) et al., 27-5-75.
was borrowed either from the Igirra people or from the Owuna Bird chiefdom, which seemed to have adopted it first. Evidence suggests that the Igirra were once famous as ekwufia experts within the Benue Valley. It was an institution which the chief of Igirra used in strengthening his chiefdom, later it became an ideology of the chiefdom. During installatons, or upon the death of their chief, it was the ekwufia ritual which formed special rites on these occasions. Evidence on this ritual indicates that opa figured very prominently in either the installation or the 'resurrection' of the chief of Igirra. It was used as wearing apparel on each occasion and in time opa became a necessary part of ekwufia ritual.

According to the traditions of Owuna Bird, the latter specialised in the trade on opa. Informants indicate that Owuna Bird chief at this time was located west of Abinsi, along the eastern bank of Ogori River, a tributary of the Benue. Incidentally, this was, according to some informants, the trade route of the Igirra and Alago people on their way south to Idah. The importance to Owuna Bird of this trade in opa lies in the fact that from 1625 onwards, the chief of Owuna Bird, called Oga, took over the political leadership of Apa by first adopting the ekwufia ritual from the Igirra people, and subsequently using it to achieve many ends.


Ogha, the chief of Owuna, staged ekwuaifa ritual in strengthening his chiefdom against invasions from the east. Events from that direction, particularly from the nearby Abinsi, must have convinced him that he needed to put his chiefdom on a sound footing. It will be recalled that during this time, a major civil war erupted and shook the foundation of Ikpe chiefdom at Abinsi, leaving the chief of the Black Monkey, Idom, dead. It was his successor, Enyikwola, who took the remnants of the group to Owuna Bird chiefdom to seek protection. It would also appear that the Owuna Bird also gave protection or provided a temporary shelter to a large influx of Alago refugees who came from Idah c. 1595-1625, shortly after the Crocodile and Leopard war, north of Idah. According to one source, after the defeat of the Alago, their ancestors moved into Apa I and settled at Ikpasu settlement, on the southern banks of the Benue. Keana informants are specific that it was during this period of their history that their ancestors ran into the Red Monkey group, then settled on their Otiya settlement on the northern bank of the Benue. This series of upheavals must have convinced the Owuna Bird group that it was necessary to keep a watchful eye on the new immigrants in their chiefdom.

54. UNT-8, pp. 57-68, Uja Agogbe (100), et al., 28-5-75.
56. Ibid.
There was a major disagreement at this time between Oga, the Owuna Bird chief, and the leader of the Black Monkey group. Informants from the Black Monkey group explain this disagreement by saying that their leader simply refused "to give the animals he killed in his hunting expeditions to the chief of the place." According to them, the Owuna Bird leader thereafter decided to expel the Black Monkey group from his chiefdom. It may be assumed that the 'animal' of the tradition noted above was a tribute required by the Owuna Bird chief. The expulsion seems to have been followed by a period of relative peace in Owuna Bird chiefdom. However, in the next generation (c. 1625-1655) events in Kwararafo to the east sent more refugees fleeing westwards into Apa I. This was the second phase of Idoma migrations.

Phase II (The Fish Totem Exodus) c. 1625-1655

Several informants recall the migrations of their ancestors who left Kwararafo ten generations ago, c. 1625-1655. According to one of them, his ancestor left Kwararafo because of continuous dynastic disputes among the Jukun ruling houses within their ancestral homeland. He recalled that about eleven generations ago, c. 1595-1625, his ancestor lost in a bid for the chieftaincy title of their settlement and so left in anger towards the west to set up another independent chiefdom. Another informant recalled that his ancestor left Apa c. 1625-1655 as a result of a dispute about alichaba (royal gown).

57. AHT-8, pp. 27-33, Ichapi Adua (55) et al., 20-5-75.
58. Ibid., AgHT-19, pp. 64-68, Oloje Ocheipu (85) et al., 21-6-75.
This informant claimed that his ancestor bought this culture item from an undisclosed source, but lost it. However, it was soon discovered that another chief of a neighbouring settlement 'stole' it. This 'thief' according to the informant, was a Hausa and so in their attempt to recover it, war ensued between the two parties. In that war,

The Hausa recruited mercenaries from far and wide. They raided the homes of our ancestor and their neighbours catching the young ones and selling them into slavery while the adults were used as mercenaries to fight other wars in Apa. Our people fought back and lost in each attempt they made and fled westwards in panic... 59

The above traditions suggest that dynastic disputes were endemic in some parts of Kwararafa between c. 1625-1655. Most of those who fled westwards to establish second homelands were the losers in these conflicts. These traditions also suggest that these movements were provoked by other features such as the endless unrest generated by frequent slave raids on the settlements, particularly among the non-Jukun peoples after 1600. The bulk of these non-Jukun peoples was the Idoma ancestors, most of whom revered the Ogonopo Fish totem.

That this phase of the migration was dominated by the Ogonopo Fish is important. That totemic symbol correlates them with the political developments in Kwararafa c. 1600-1630. Between 1600 and 1630 a new capital was established at Biepi, following the collapse of an earlier one which was situated within the Gongola valley.

That shift occasioned a large scale dislocation of population to the new capital towards the south. It was Kenjo (1600-1630) who emerged as the organiser of a new Kwarara. However, the manner in which he climbed to political power in the new Kwarara raised doubts in some quarters. One source suggests that Kenjo was not related to the former ruling dynasty which had ruled Kwarara in the Gongola valley area. Meek further suggested that, in fact, Kenjo was not related to the former dynasty but from the female line and, therefore, by the Jukun political tradition he should have been excluded from succession. These debates generated such endless political unrest that some ethnic groups, including some Idoma ancestors, left Kwarara. The height of that unrest culminated in the assassination of Kenjo by his political rivals, the most important of whom was Katakpa who came to the throne in c. 1630-1660. It is reported that Katakpa's coup d'état resulted in a major civil war in which there was an exodus of groups of people (both the Jukun and non-Jukun). Subsequently, he and his supporters moved further south and established a new capital at Puje. Another consequence of Katakpa's coup d'état was the split in Kenjo's ruling house into Ate, Abe, and Ajonwude houses. In other words, Katakpa had several political rivals. However, it must be emphasized here that Meek believed that after Kenjo, the ruling dynasty in the new Kwarara continued to

60. Webster, "Spirits of the Kingdoms," p. 11.
61. Ibid.
62. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 43.
rule without a break. This myth has been shattered by current researches on the Jukun. What probably happened was that the descendants of Kenjo called the Ba-Nando and those of Katakpa referred to as the Ba-Pi ultimately compromised their political differences and continued to live peacefully within the new capital at Puje. The details of that compromise have been analysed elsewhere and need not detain us here. 64

Other groups which did not compromise their political stand may have included those ethnic groups which later moved out to the north bank of the Benue and founded new chiefdoms. Furthermore, it would also appear that the groups had their supporters back in Kwararafa. 65 These supporters may have included the Ogonopo Fish groups which left Kwararafa c. 1625-1655. Katakpa seemed to displace the Jukun hegemony of Kenjo. Most Jukun totems are a type of fish. 66 Chart XV indicates that this phase of migration out of Kwararafa was dominated by the fish totems. The Agba Fish left in the next generation c. 1655-1685. Once these 'enemies' left Kwararafa, Katakpa was then free to carry his military invasions into Borno 1645-84, and Kano 1652-60. 67 Presumably, these distant military successes meant that Kwararafa itself was relatively free of civil strife.

64. Ibid., p. 9.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., pp. 9-14.
67. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 50.
Within the same period, those immigrants from Kwararafa invaded Apa I to the south of Puje, now dominated by the Owuna Bird group. Indications are that when these refugees arrived, they first clung to the two sides of River Mu, south of Abinsi. Perhaps, this was where the Igbirra chief allowed them to settle. However, in the next generation c. 1655-1685, the Ogonopo Fish were ejected from their Mu River settlement, probably by the Igbirra chief (although some Ogonopo informants identify the Tiv as being responsible for this displacement). 68 Indeed some intrusive Tiv groups were already finding their way towards the southern banks of the Benue by the first decade of the seventeenth century. 69 However, the Tiv influence was not significant enough by this time to explain the exodus of the Ogonopo Fish group, two Snakes and two Civet Cats from their Mu River homeland. It is more likely that they were being pushed westwards by the ever increasing numbers of refugees from the east (chart XV).

The westward push brought these immigrants into Apa I which was under the political authority of the Owuna Bird chiefdom. There are indications that these new arrivals owed some obligations to their new host. These obligations were both economic and social. Though no one was required to pay tribute, yet each was required to maintain cordial relations with the Owuna Bird group. This explains why, at this time, almost all except the Black Monkey group took on the

68. AHT-20, pp. 88-92, Omakwu Aiebe (65) et al, 7-6-75.
69. Ibid.
ekwuafia ritual from the Owuna Bird. In other words, to be socially acceptable to their landlord, it became necessary for these groups to adopt the most popular social ceremony in the Owuna Bird chiefdom which was their new homeland. This desire may have been further prompted by the economic need to maintain their use of the land which was being made scarce by the arrival of more refugees from the east. It is important to emphasize here that several informants stress that it was during this period in their history that their ancestors adopted their secondary totem. 70

Between c. 1535-1655 three centres of political power, all dominated by immigrants from Kwararafa, emerged in Apa I. This implied that the Igbirra who originally controlled this region was now displaced. 71 On the southern bank of the Benue was the Owuna Bird chiefdom based on the eastern bank of Ogori River. A little to the west was the Black Monkey chiefdom. On the northern bank was the Red Monkey chiefdom as well as some petty Alago chiefdoms. It was within the Owuna Bird chiefdom that refugees from the east took shelter. The locations of the three chiefdoms as well as other chieflets are indicated in map 8. The northern and southern limits of the Owuna Bird chiefdom were flanked by a plethora of chieflets established by the Civet Cats. Some Crocodile groups were located to the northern and eastern areas of the Owuna Bird chiefdom and these were probably a remnant of the Alago people who abandoned that

71. AgHT-8, pp. 32-36; Eloyi Enekola (45) et al, 20-6-75.
settlement c. 1595-1625. About nine generations ago, c. 1655-1685, the demographic pattern of that homeland once more changed drastically. More and more refugees poured west as Kwararafa witnessed more dynastic disputes among its ruling groups.

Phase III (The Exodus of the Civet Cat Totems) c. 1655-1715

Evidence on this phase of the migration indicates that it was an absolutely massive exodus of Civet Cat totems, all claiming to have left Kwararafa during this period of their history. This phase spanned three generations. Most historical traditions of the groups involved attribute this massive exodus to a series of dynastic disputes in several parts of Kwararafa. According to some of them, Puje, the new Kwararafa capital, was the centre of political intrigue and struggles between rival claimants to the throne. In their view, it was the endemic political unrest which forced their leaders to leave their ancestral homeland in the east for places in the west.

Current researches among the Jukun give considerable support to the above views. Shortly after the death of Agba Kenjo (1600-1630), who belonged to the Ba-Nando-Vi clan, a new ruler, Katakpa (from another Jukun sub-clan, Ba-Pi), took power and shifted his seat of government to Puje. This shift, as noted earlier on, involved a considerable population movement of both the Jukun and the non-Jukun

73. OchT-18, pp. 59-63, Adamu Ukpokwu (65), 12-6-75.
supporters of Katakpa. According to Webster, those Jukun who supported Agba Kenjo revolted by moving to the north bank of the Benue and founded new homelands within areas of modern Lafia and Awe districts.  

Furthermore, Jukun political traditions suggest that Katakpa ruled for a fairly long time about 1630-1680 "without challenge from any other group."  

This should not imply that Katakpa had no political problems to contend with. Rather, they were not of the magnitude that would lead some of the groups to move away in protest. Later, the situation changed after the 1680s.

Webster's work clearly indicates that there was a split within the Ba-Pi clan, Katakpa's dynasty. For example, one of the factions was the Ate House. About this period, two rival houses also sprang up among the defeated Kenjo faction; these were the Davi and Agyi Houses.  

Given the fact that informants associate the migrations of their ancestors (most of whom were rival claimants or supporters of one or the other dominant), it is reasonable to expect that those who lost should find other settlements where they could rule themselves. We have already referred to some Jukun colonies which were founded at this time by sections of Jukun rival claimants who lost in the succession disputes at Fuje.

Agwabi (1660-1690), who succeeded Katakpa, was a great warrior-king who expanded the limits of the Kwararafa confederacy and probably tried to centralise his administration.  

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75. Webster, "Chiefs and Chronology," p. 15-16.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
west of Puje may have created further tension in this area, and have been part of the cause of the large scale exodus of groups out of Kwararafa c. 1685-1715. Furthermore, Jukun historical traditions suggest that upon Agwabi’s death royal succession in Puje began to alternate between two houses, which probably represent different ethnic groups. Agwabi and his son Davi (1690-1720) were from Katakpa House while Agwigwi was said to have come from Ate House; Ate was the supposed son of Kenjo. Thus it seems that the generation 1690-1720 was one of struggle between royal claimants to the Kwararafa throne. 79 Those who lost, left for other areas.

These immigrants included twenty-one Civet Cat groups. In some traditions, informants recall that their ancestors, after abandoning their Kwararafa homeland, clung to the banks of the Rivers Mu and the Benue. This would place them right across the path of the Kwararafa army which invaded the kingdom of Idah between 1655-1685, as Kwararafa rulers tried in vain to bring Idah back to submission. 80 This was also the period in which the Alago migration leaders Andoma and Akeana migrated out of this area and crossed to the north bank of the Benue River (c. 1652-1672). 81 All these events correlate to explain the massive exodus from Kwararafa between 1655-1715.

79. Ibid.
80. This theme will be fully developed in the next chapter.
The arrival of this massive influx of refugees from Kwararafa into Apa I created endless political and social unrest. The first wave of immigrants seems to have poured into both banks of River Mu which was at this time already crowded, so also was the land south of the modern town of Makurdi. Apa I could no longer absorb more refugees. Therefore, something drastic had to be done quickly in order to arrest the mounting unrest created by the influx of more refugees from the east. The existing political arrangement within the Owuna Bird chiefdom appeared grossly inadequate to cope with the new situation. Apa I, between 1655-1715, also came to the verge of collapse.

As more and more Civet Cats arrived, the banks of River Mu became crowded. As a result, some groups had to move further west towards the Owuna Bird chiefdom, which was located in Apa I. This new factor also created more unrest in that chiefdom as land became scarce with each passing day. Unrest became endemic in Apa I. Reports such as these were heard in several parts of that homeland: "our crops were stolen," "thieves raided out settlements," "our settlement became too small for everyone," 82 and so forth. It is obvious that these series of events were ultimately related to the arrival of the numerous Civet Cat groups at Apa I between 1655-1715.

82. AgNT-25, pp. 82-86, Ajenu Uji (90) et al, 22-6-75.
Is it surprising that the Owuna Bird chief should collapse at this time? Informants from that chiefdom attribute the fall of their chiefdom to the Tiv groups which were making a vigorous push into the lower Benue valley by the first decade of the eighteenth century. With the arrival of several Civet Cat groups pouring into the Owuna Bird chiefdom, it is logical to assume that this invasion led to the ultimate collapse of the Owuna Bird Chiefdom. Whatever happened, Oga, who was their chief, died during these troubled times in his chiefdom. It was his son Edo, who led the group first from Ogori to Okpalumu but later to Mahaba settlement. This settlement was soon disrupted, and Edo died. He was succeeded by his son Ijeba Idede who then took the group to Alobainyang settlement. This last move, according to one source, was caused by the arrival of more Tiv groups from their south-eastern base, north of Ogoja country.

Between c. 1685-1745, three different factors led to the final collapse of Apa I and further emigration of nearly all the refugees from Kwaraafa southward into another homeland, the modern Idomaland. This was the last and the fourth phase of migrations out of Kwaraafa.

83. UHT-2, pp. 9-20, Theophil Agida (50) et al., 26-5-75.
Phase IV (The last phase of the migration) c. 1685-1745

This migratory period involved only a small number of emigrants from Kwararafa: one Bird, one Fish, two Crocodiles, Civet Cats, Snakes and Leopards. Informants attribute this migration to "severe famine" in their ancestral homeland. In one account, it is narrated that a certain leader Ale as a result of famine established an extensive corn farm, igu, to which many refugees flocked. Not long afterwards these refugees began referring to the owner of the igu as igumale, Ale's corn farm later anglicised to Igwumale, a modern district in Idomalnd. In the view of these informants, as soon as the Ale ran short of corn from his farm refugees from Kwararafa went further south looking for protection and safety.

It is quite possible that the "severe famine" of the above tradition may be related to the series of famines which occurred further north in Borno and the Gongola valley in the late 1750s. This was when Mai Dunam, otherwise called Ghana, reigned (1752-1760). According to one source, "under his short reign, [there was] a very severe famine." Lack of sufficient information on that event makes it difficult to relate this migration to the famine in Borno at this time. However, one can speculate here that since the migrant groups that left Kwararafa at this period are few and mixed in their totemic observance, it is highly probable that they were the relatives

84. Igwumale Historical Text, (hereafter IHT) no. 3, pp. 12-29, Okpokwu Ome, (60) at 31, 7-10-75.
85. Ibid.
86. Barth, Travels and Discoveries, p. 599.
of the previous groups that left Kwararafa, a generation or so before
them. This migration was therefore a re-union with the latter.

As these groups poured further south, probably into Apa I,
that move was apparently thwarted by the large Tiv incursion into the
lower Benue valley. There was a general confusion as the Tiv push
was perhaps too vigorous for the politically fragmented Idoma groups
to withstand. The ultimate confusion that erupted has been preserved
for us in the following passage:

The rear of the migration came increasing
under pressure from the Tiv when they began their
vigorous push into the Benue valley sometime dur-
ing the second half of the 17th century. Politic-
ally fragmented and thinly spread over fairly
extensive territory, the Idoma put up but poor
resistance to the Tiv encroachment.

One direct consequence of the Tiv invasion was to cut off some proto-
Idoma groups from those that had settled within Apa I. Some of these
groups included the ancestors of

...the Utur [who] followed the Katsina-ALA upstream
and were overtaken by the Tiv migrations. Isolated
from the mainbody of the Idoma, they remained on
the banks of the river in the vicinity of Katsina
ALA to form a small enclave of Idoma... in the heart
of the Tiv country...

In summary, the Tiv presence cut off the Idoma from Kwararafa. The
ubiquitous Tiv presence within the lower Benue Valley from the second
decade of the seventeenth century formed a buffer zone and events in
Kwararafa no longer affected the Idoma.

87. O'kwo, "The Early Idoma History," p. 3.
88. Ibid.
The Collapse of Apa I and Further Southward Migrations 1685-1805

Several factors help to explain the collapse of this homeland. One was the arrival of more refugees from Kwararafa already noted. The second was the Tiv presence. Indeed, by c. 1715-1745, the Tiv had appeared in several areas of the south bank of the Benue River. This was a culmination of a gradual process which probably started about c. 1655-1685 or even earlier. Informants insist that the first Tiv groups were seen c. 1625-1655. According to one elder from Ugboju district, it was at this period that their leader Oga died; it was under him that his chiefdom fought a war with the Tiv over land ownership. It may be recalled that c. 1625-1655 Oga was then re-organising his chiefdom in Apa I. According to genealogical calculation, this period can be estimated to c. 1625-1655. This therefore confirms the view that some intrusive groups were already present in some parts of Apa I by this early date.

The invasion increased in intensity between c. 1685-1715. The reason for this development is far from clear. However, the various Idoma settlements in Apa I were made aware of the Tiv presence as can be seen from the following passages taken from the historical traditions of several kindred groups whose ancestors were affected by the Tiv presence. According to one informant from modern Agbaduma group in Agatu district, when their ancestors first arrived at Apa I, they settled at Iwe but later moved to the banks of River M\u where they

89. UHT-2, pp. 9-20, Theho Agida (50) et al, 24-5-75.
were met by the Tiv who arrived after our ancestors had done so; Soon, the Tiv started menacing us [our ancestors] destroying their crops and domestic animals. This menace started at Iwe. It lasted three years. The Tiv killed several of our people. When the Tiv 'overpowered us, we fled to another settlement called Ajila. 90

In another tradition recorded in Ochekwu district, the Tiv menace continued in intensity. It eventually led to the fission of some kindred groups. Explaining that process, one informant said,

After Apa, our ancestors settled at Iwe. Here, the Tiv stole our crops and domestic animals. Soon they forced our ancestors to leave Iwe. However, the Tiv kept following them whenever our ancestors went. The Tiv pursuit continued from Iwe in the east to Opagbada stream in the west. Consequently, the Tiv forced them out here after which the groups split with one section going to form the modern Anwule of Oglewu district, and another to Edumoga while the main group remained in modern Ochekwu district where they are known as Ooji. 91

In yet another tradition, one informant traced the ultimate disintegration of their original Ijaha kindred group to the Tiv menace. In his own words:

After Apa, we [our ancestors] met with Ogo, the father of Ojogo people. He was then settled somewhere south of modern Makurdi. We settled here for sometime with him but soon the Tiv arrived and embarked upon serious raids on our settlement. We left in utter panic because of these endless raids ... In consequence, a section of the group left, led by a certain Ibele to Ochijaha settlement in modern Ochekwu district; another section led by Oguche left for Enabe in Ankpa Division; some groups left for the northern banks of the Benue... 92

90. AgHT-36, pp. 120-128, Enuhuala Olegbalu (60) et al, 24-6-75.
91. OchHT-6, pp. 17-20, Achagblu Igboke (75), 11-6-75.
92. OchHT-42, pp. 129-130, Obaje Ado (45) et al, 24-6-75.
These and other acts of aggression were directed against several Idoma groups by the ubiquitous Tiv whose demand for land and food as reflected in the above traditions remained insatiable at this period of their history. It is thus clear that it was the Tiv invasion which forced several Idoma groups to abandon their Apa I homeland and migrate to the south.

Again, it was the Tiv presence which deflected the general course of the Idoma migration westwards. Since the collapse of their Kwararafa homeland, the Benue River seemed to have been the direction of migration to the west. However, the Tiv presence created an impassable barrier between those in the east and those in the west. Some groups finding their political situation in Apa I intolerable, decided to go back towards Kwararafa. One example is the Black Monkey which, because of the Tiv presence, was prevented from returning to Kwararafa in the east.

Chart XVI indicates the different phases of the emigration from Apa I, the first of which started c. 1685-1715 and continued to c. 1805. It can be seen that during the first phase, only four groups emigrated out of Kwararafa and moved westwards to Apa I homeland. However, between c. 1715-1805, the southward move had gained momentum: seven totemic groups left between c. 1715-1745; eighteen between c. 1745-1775 and finally seven between c. 1775-1805. One of the reasons for this upsurge in the number of emigrants to the south was the Tiv pressure already noted. Another factor was the Alago expansion towards...
## CHART XVI

### TOTEMIC KINDREDS FLEEING FROM APA I 1685–1805

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Kindred &amp; Location</th>
<th>Primary Totem</th>
<th>Secondary &amp; Tertiary Totems</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Ugboju Royal Kindreds (Ugboju)</td>
<td>Bird (Owuna)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
<td>Tivland</td>
<td>1685–1715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Adoka Royal Kindreds (Adoka)</td>
<td>Black Monkey (Eka)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1715–1745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ologba (Agatu)</td>
<td>Monkey (red &amp; black)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Ojigo (Edumoga)</td>
<td>Crocodile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Amejo &amp; Okonobo (Edumoga)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Five Utonkon groups</td>
<td>Red. Monkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abakaliki</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Kindred &amp; Location</th>
<th>Primary Totem</th>
<th>Secondary &amp; Tertiary Totems</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Aku (Agatu)</td>
<td>Black Monkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Ooji (Ochekwu)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1715–1745</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Agbaduma (Agatu)</td>
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<td>4. Ai–Egaji (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>5. Ojantelle (Ochekwu)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Ugboju Ai–Omaga</td>
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<td>7. Ai–Oko (Olokam)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Egba (Agatu)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Ai–Ede (Onyagede)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Ajobe (Ugboj)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Agadagba (Onyagede)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. Ai–Agbo (Ochobo)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>South of Alagoland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13. Ai–Onyilo (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>14. Ai–Agabi (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>15. Ai–Ogbebeche (Ochobo)</td>
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<td>16. Ai–Ajibo (Igwumale)</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Wukari</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17. Ai–Agboi dogwu (Igwumale)</td>
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/Phases III & IV...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Location</th>
<th>Primary Totem</th>
<th>Secondary &amp; Tertiary Totems</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entekpa (Adoka)</td>
<td>Civet Cat (Anwu)</td>
<td>Bird (Owuna)</td>
<td>Tivland</td>
<td>1745-1775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Auke (Ochekwu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Okpagabi (Agatu)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;, Leopard</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ijaha (Ochekwu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Umogidi (Adoka)</td>
<td>Fish (Ogonopo)</td>
<td>&quot;, Civet Cat</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ugbokpo (Ochekwu)</td>
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<td>7. Ijami (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>8. Idabi (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>9. Alaglanu (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>10. Eboya (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>11. Adana (Agatu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Akpeko(Agatu)</td>
<td>Fish (Agba)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ikpele (Agatu)</td>
<td>Bird (Okohokpa)</td>
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<td>15. Ifu (Akpa)</td>
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<td>16. Mbo (Akpa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Ijaha (Oglewu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>Bird (Owuna)</td>
<td>Southern Alagoland</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ijaha (Akpa)</td>
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/Phase IV...
Phase IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred &amp; Location</th>
<th>Primary Totem</th>
<th>Secondary &amp; Tertiary Totems</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iga (Agatu)</td>
<td>Fish (Agba)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Alagoland 1775-1805</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iga (Ochekwu)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black Monkey</td>
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<td>Adija (Ochekwu)</td>
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<td>Ugboju (Ochekwu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ochumekwu (Ochekwu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otukpo Royal Kindreds (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Red Monkey</td>
<td>Civet Cat, Bird</td>
<td>Modern Tivland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otada (Olutpo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ataganyi (Ochakwu)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akpachi (Ugboju)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akpachi (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Crocodile</td>
<td>Civet Cat, Bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ijaha (Onyagede)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>Bird (Owuma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ai-Agboke (Oglewu)</td>
<td>Snake (Idili)</td>
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<td>Ai-Oga (Oglewu)</td>
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<td>Asuwa (Oglewu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otada (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>Bird (Owuma)</td>
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<td>Okpailo (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Bird (Iwele)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ajobi (Otukpo)</td>
<td>Snake (Idiri)</td>
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the southern banks of the lower Benue where some Idoma groups had made their homes.

The Alago historical traditions suggest that c. 1679-1706 there was unrest within what later became the Keaña confederacy. This unrest was closely connected with the emergence of a new dynasty in Keana politics. This was the Oguu House. It seems that he was the political agent of Kwadarafo, probably sent there to protect the economic interest of his political overlords. Whatever the original situation may have been, his coming marked an era of imperial expansion of the southern frontiers of the Alago confederacy. That expansion forced several Idoma groups on the north bank of the Benue to abandon that homeland for the south. For example, the Red Monkey was forced to abandon its Otiya chiefdom and find safety within the southern banks. Furthermore, those Civet Cat and Agba Fish groups that had made their homes on the northern banks were ejected by the Alago expansionist tendencies.

About the same period, there was unrest within the northern border of modern Abakaliki division. Informants attribute that unrest to 'fights for land' between the various inhabitants of that country. One of the groups affected was the ancestors of modern Utomkon people in modern Idoma Division. Evidence indicates that the Utomkon lost or were overpowered by their aggressive Izzi-Ezza neighbours and so fled northwards into their present homeland in Utomkon district.

94. OHT-6, pp. 21-41, Omakwu Ikwe (60, et al, 15-5-75).
There are several interesting features of this latter migration from both Apa I and Abakaliki Division. One of them is the impressive array of totems which these migrant groups brought into their present homeland. In other words, in spite of the endless unrest and uncertainty in their previous homeland, each group preserved its ethnic identity, almost in the order in which they were adopted. The details of the various totemic symbols are charted in maps 9 - 10.

From every indication, by the middle of the eighteenth century, those proto-Idoma groups which claimed 'eastern origins' had been pushed by a variety of factors into their second and third homelands. Some of these groups started migrating out of their Kwararafa homeland thirteen generations ago, c. 1535-1565. By 1800, the outline of what later became the northern, eastern, and south-eastern portions of modern Idomaland had already emerged. However, the western, southern and south-western portions were either yet to be filled or were being filled by those groups which claim 'western origins' in their historical traditions. That story will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

MIGRATIONS: WESTERN ORIGINE c. 1625-1775

Igalaland, which lies south of the confluence of the Niger-Benue Rivers and west of modern Idoma Division, was under varying degrees of alien political and military pressure by the second decade of the seventeenth century. The continuing political instability within the ancient Kwararafa confederacy to the east had forced a section of the ruling house at Apa, 1 to leave their cradleland to the west. When these 'rebels' eventually reached the northern fringes of Igalaland about eleven generations ago, c. 1595-1625, that area was by no means empty. Igalaland at that time was under the rule of the Bini dynasty which was based at Idah on the east bank of the Niger. 2 Both the attempts by the Kwararafa rulers to bring their 'rebels' to submission and the political pressures of the Bini dynasty at Idah stirred up a series of political and military upheavals in Igalaland. Several groups began to leave that kingdom and seek security elsewhere. Those that went eastwards and established new homelands in present-day Idoma Division are those kindred groups which today claim 'western origins' in their historical traditions. This chapter seeks to examine the antecedents of these movements and to look critically at the claim of those kindred groups who insist on their 'western origins.'

The story of the peopling of Igalaland over the centuries is by


no means clear, and much research is still needed before the major outlines of that story can be settled. Indications are that, largely because of its strategic location, Igalaland in pre-colonial times became "a focal area of migrations, commerce and conquests, which have set up cultural and cross currents of many kinds."3 This complex mixing of diverse ethnic groups in Igalaland has been described by another author as a "melting pot."4 Chapter I tries to place the various strata of the Igalaland population: the Akọto, Yoruba, Bini, Igbo, and Igbarra in historical perspective.

Boston's work on the political history of the various peoples within the "melting pot" shows that over the years four major ethnic groups dominated the political life of that kingdom. According to his classification, the largest of these was the Igalaland, which consisted of nine clans all of whom represented the descendants of the indigenous population. Politically, it was this group which, according to Boston, was forced to hand over their political power to the Kwararafa rebels in the seventeenth century. Politically, the Igalaland was soon overshadowed by yet another group, which it is believed was of Igbo extraction, under the authority of an official called Achara in Igalaland political traditions. In Boston's words, "he was responsible for relations with the Ibo (sic) living in the neighbourhood of Nsukka, who used to come within the Igalaland sphere of

political influence. A third group was those who settled to the north-east of Idah, identified variously as the Akpoto or Okpoto. A fourth group settled within the northern fringes of Igalaland. Though neither of the last two groups was politically significant enough to warrant detailed consideration here, their presence shows that Igalaland was indeed one of the natural crossroads in pre-colonial west African history.

By approximately 1400 Igalaland was ruled by a Bini dynasty. It is not yet clear how this rule came about. According to one respected Bini traditional historian, "the first Atah (king) of Idah was a Bini prince who had been sent out to Idah as a chief by the former Oba." In another tradition collected by Baikie in 1854 it was reported that:

When [a certain] stranger arrived from Ado He lived as a hunter, and sent most of the fruits of the chase to Igarra. But after a time followers from Ado joined him, growing powerful, he refused to acknowledge Igarra, or to give him any share of his spoils; this led to a quarrel, which ended by the Igarra being driven into the interior, leaving only his name behind, on which the first Atah ascended the throne...

The Bini dynasty imposed its royal totem, oj (leopard) on the citizens of Igalaland. How this was done is still obscure, but during the first generation of Bini rule nearly every subject came to regard the royal leopard totem as one of his own. As the royal totems were adopted, the former totems in the kingdom were relegated.

7. Baikie, Narratives of an Exploring Voyage, pp. 296-7. In some traditions, Baikie was informed that Ado was another name for Benin.
to secondary and tertiary positions. This policy may be connected with the Bini-Igala war which has been described as "a war of survival for the Benin Kingdom." The Bini dynasty in Igalaland, in order to secure the total loyalty of its subjects, may well have forced everyone to adopt the royal totem. Whatever the precise cause, the absence of any genealogical connection between the indigenous population and the Bini royal family leads to the conclusion that the adoption of the royal totem by all and sundry implied a high degree of political centralization.

Eleven generations ago (c. 1595-1625) unrest developed among the ruling circles in Kwararafa. That confederacy was shaken severely its retreat south of the Benue in its re-establishment by the usurper Agba Kenjo, c. 1600. Another major war resulted from a succession dispute in which Kenjo died c. 1630. One source relates that Abutu Eje, the leader of the 'rebel' group, was an unsuccessful candidate for the kingship, but having lost fled westwards in disgust. Others maintain in their historical traditions that Abutu Eje was banished from the Kwararafa royal court for undisclosed misconduct; yet another source has it that Abutu Eje was a loyal citizen who by the first decade of the seventeenth century was sent to Igalaland by the King of Kwararafa to rule as a semi-autonomous governor on behalf of the confederacy.

7. (cont'd) This tradition brings it in line with the current usage of that name to stand for both the name and language of Bini people.
11. Ibid.
The available evidence strongly supports the view that Abutu Eje was indeed an unsuccessful candidate for the Kwararafa throne. In chapter III reference was made to the traditions of some groups which claimed to have left Kwararafa c. 1595-1625 together with Abutu Eje. The reason behind their departure from their ancestral homeland in Kwararafa, it will be recalled, was the manner in which Agha Kanjo (c. 1600-1630) came to the throne, barring the way against his rivals, one of whom was Abutu Eje. This correlation therefore supports the view that he rebelled and left Kwararafa to found an independent chiefdom elsewhere.

This may explain, in part, why his move from his ancestral homeland in Kwararafa was attended by continuous armed conflict between his followers and the subsequent Kwararafa rulers. Abutu Eje and his followers established a second homeland within the northern fringes of Iga Island. For reasons of convenience, this second homeland will be simply referred to as Apa 2, to differentiate it from Apa I which was established by those Idoma groups which claimed 'eastern origins.' It was in Apa 2 that a series of wars took place between the Kwararafa forces and the 'rebels.' In one of these, Abutu Eje and his closest supporters lost their lives. It is reported that Abutu was buried in a grove identified by some informants as Otutubatu, whose meaning is unknown, suggesting that the Kwararafa rebels spoke a different language than their descendants today.

In another war, referred to as the Leopard-Crocodile war, the Alago were defeated by the Kwararafa forces and so fled north across the Benue to their modern homeland in Keana and Doma districts.\textsuperscript{14} The military defeat of Abutu Eje (in particular) induced his followers to move further west and south of Apa 2 towards Idah. The continuing turmoil in Kwararafa foretold further aggression as Katakpa staged a coup d'\textit{etat} against Kenjo and created a new capital in Puje.\textsuperscript{15}

From every indication, the westward and southern migrations of Abutu Eje's followers into the Igalaland heartland triggered off a series of upheavals which forced several groups to leave that kingdom towards areas in modern Idomaland. So far three major phases of that migration have been identified: in phase I the earliest groups left between 1625-1685; phase two was a movement from the north of Igalaland between 1655-1745; and the last phase was a large-scale emigration from Ankpa kingdom, north east of Idah, between c. 1685-1745.

\textbf{Phase I c. 1625-1685}

The earliest recorded migrations out of Igalaland took place about ten generations ago (c. 1625-1655). This movement involved many groups which left their various homelands in the north and south of Igalaland, and seven which moved out of areas within modern Ankpa Division into parts of Idoma Division. In the next generation, c. 1655-1685, about three totemic groups left various settlements

\textsuperscript{14} Erim, "The Growth of the Keana Confederacy," p. 5.

\textsuperscript{15} Webster, "Animals," p. 9.
south of Idaho and nine left areas in Ankpa Divisions to make new homelands in the east. These early emigrants are too mixed in composition to give them a common name. What is clear, however, is that these migrations were brought about by a series of foreign wars. That these wars were significantly different one from the other is reflected in the following traditions collected from the groups whose ancestors were involved in this early migration.

According to the historical traditions of the ai-Agbo kindred in modern Olokam district, their ancestor originated in Kwararafa. He came under a variety of pressures which ultimately forced him by the end of the sixteenth century to abandon that homeland and go to west Igalaland. Since he died on route, informants maintained, the leadership of the group fell to his son, Agbo, who led his kinsmen to a certain chieftain identified in these traditions as Idoko. Informants insist in their traditions that on arrival Agbo found his host Idoko engaged in a bitter war with Kwararafa. Agbo subsequently left Igalaland because of the unsettled state of affairs in that part of the country. There are several claims in the above traditions which demand a critical analysis later in this chapter. But first it is necessary to examine other traditions which also relate to these early migrations.

16. Olokam Historical Text (hereafter OLHT) no. 3, pp. 4-9, D.E. Enenche (40); 9-9-75.
Informants from the modern Agila district in Idomal and recall that their ancestor Ago, who moved out from areas south of Idah c. 1625-1655, was of Bini extraction. They refer to him as the son of an unnamed Oba of Benin. It is also claimed that Ago left Benin to escape unending dynastic disputes in that ancient empire only to run into another war in Idah. It was this Idah war in which, according to informants, horses were used, which forced Ago to move further east of Idah, a move which finally brought him or his descendants into the present-day Agila homeland. Ago is not the only group which left the area south of Idah at this time. The ancestor of modern Oju in Igedeland, east of Idomal and, also left. Evidence available indicates that their ancestor, Ocheche, originally made his home on the west bank of the Niger, opposite Idah. However, informants relate that he was forced by an imminent defeat there to move thrice within one generation, first from the west to the east bank of the Niger, then from Idah to areas in modern Ugboju district in Idoma, and finally towards the east where he made his final settlement at Igede. The following passage relates the background to these movements:

Our ancestor, Ocheche, originally lived on the bank of a big River Ifu. His immediate neighbours were the Ora people. For sometime relations between Ocheche and the Ora were cordial. One day, however, a certain Ora lady broke a drinking water pot which belonged to our kinsman. Since our people insisted on the reproduction of the same pot this soon led to ...

17. Agila Historical Text (henceforth AgHT) no. 3, pp. 53-63, Ochoga Ogbo (50) et al., 9-10-75.
a protracted war between the two groups. As soon as Ocheche sensed defeat and the humiliation that would follow, he led his groups across the Ifu and tried to settle first at Idah but could not. He therefore made up his mind to keep moving till he next settled at the bank of a certain river which he named Oju. It was here that after his death, Ada, his son and successor, led the group finally to modern Igiedeland. 18

About the same time that northern groups were moving away from Apa 2 probably to avoid the unending menace from Kwarara, other groups south of Idah were also leaving that region to avoid the military exactions of the Bini dynasty there. It is probable that Ago’s ancestors of the Agila traditions were some of the Bini settlers who came with the first Bini ruler of Igalaland. If this is so, then either Ago or his descendants must have taken part in the Benin-Igala war which was fought in the sixteenth century. Igala traditions are firm that those who took part in that war (which Igala lost) did not return to Idah, the capital, "because of the shame of defeat." 19

It is further reported that these soldiers settled south of Idah. 20

This was the area which, according to Agila informants, the leader of Osiroko group was leaving at this time. Although Osiroko traditions also mention the fact that Ago left because of the civil war to the north of Idah, it is more reasonable to associate that migration with events within Idah itself, while admitting also that the war to the north might have played a part in this movement. At any rate, by genealogical calculations, Ago left the south of Idah ten gener-

18. Ito Historical Text, (hereafter IHTT) no. 1, pp. 30-36; George Agi (45) et al 14-10-75; also Oju Historical Text, (hereafter OHTT), no. 2, pp. 67-73, Michael Ode (45), et al 15-10-75.
20. Ibid.
ations ago (c. 1625-1655) to found a new homeland in modern Agila district after a brief stay at Odega settlement. As a Bini, Ago probably felt it necessary to adopt the culture of his new host. For "At Odega he [and his followers] settled for sixty years and adopted the Okpoto language and customs such as were not already his own being originally from Idah... his ancestor was of the Attah's family."21

Ago's group was being reinforced by another migratory group led by Ada, Ocheche's son and successor, the founding father of modern Oju. According to the traditions noted earlier, Ocheche, his father, settled on the west bank close to the Ora people.22 He was later forced to abandon that homeland for the east bank, "because of imminent defeat by their Ora neighbours." This tradition receives further support from another tradition which Baikie recorded in that area in 1854. According to his account, the Ora of Ocheche tradition turned out to be a Yoruba warrior who attacked and defeated several ethnic groups on the west bank of the Niger about the time that Ocheche was supposed to be leaving that homeland. The result of that attack, according to Baikie, was that the dispossessed group first left for the east bank and tried to settle around the area of modern Agbedama, a small village some twenty miles north of Idah. However, the situation at Idah at that time was such that some groups


decided to move further east. Informants claim that as soon as the group moved east of Idah, the leadership passed over to Ada following the death of his father, and that it was Ada who took the group and made a temporary camp at the bank of River Ogori to which he gave the name Oju. It was from this settlement that another powerful group led by Ijeba Ideede forced the Ada group to move further east between c. 1685-1715 or slightly later. After that move, Ada came upon another group, the Ito, led by Iguma who then settled on the banks of Okokolo stream in modern Otukpo township. Together, the two groups left to lay the foundation of modern Igedeland c. 1685-1715 after a brief civil war with Oga', the leader of modern Ojigo people in Edumoga district.

While these groups moved out of both the north and south of Igalaland between c. 1625-1656, another batch of emigrants were leaving their various settlements within modern Ankpa Division. Evidence indicates that one of these groups formed the ancestors of modern Idogodo in Okpoga as well as the ancestors of Okoto in Ugboju district. Informants from these groups tend to emphasize issues such as 'acute' shortage of land as the principal reason behind these migrations. Land shortage is pervasive in the historical traditions of these groups and there are numerous variants of that tradition.

24. UHT-4, pp. 23-29, Agbo Ogbidu (50) et al., 27-5-75.
26. For example, see OkHT-3, pp. 13-16, Obagw Okpe (55) et al., 1-10-75.
To take the Onyegede kindred group, as but one example, their ancestor was ejected from Ankpa nine generations ago (c. 1655-1685) by a group called the Ejeigbo who started to be hostile to our people over the piece of land that was given to our leader for both farming as well as hunting purposes. The Ejeigbo claimed that our leader Apa and his men had exceeded the limit of the land that was given to him. He was ejected and so he left to search for a settlement elsewhere...27

Indeed, Ankpa by c. 1625-1685 had become a 'resting place' for refugees coming in from north and south of Igalaland in search of new homeland in the east. It was these refugees who caused over-crowding and further exodus eastwards.

Certain conclusions emerge from the preceding analysis of phase I of the migrations from Igalaland. The claim of western origins should be treated with caution. Only the settlers from Ankpa Division were leaving their original homeland, other western immigrants had come originally from either the east or west and were using Igalaland as a migratory corridor into modern Idomaland. The claim of western origins may reflect a tendency among some informants to choose a powerful and prestigious place of origin. Benin associations were attractive claims for those migrants who later moved through Igalaland into modern Idoma Division.

Chart XVII attempts to represent the full story of the impressive array of totems that each migratory group took with it to its new home-

27. OnyHT-2, pp. 8-10, Ude Agbame (78) et al., 19-8-75.
# CHART XVII
THE Earliest Western Immigrants FROM IGALALAND c. 1625-1685

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred Location</th>
<th>Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Political Totem First</th>
<th>Political Totem Second</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Adogooj’ Oje (Agatu)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>North of Idah</td>
<td>1625-1655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Adagba (Agatu)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Abogba (Agatu)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Ai-Agbo (Olokam)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Oju (Oju)</td>
<td>Hawk</td>
<td>Bat</td>
<td>South of Idah</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Ito (Ito)</td>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Osiroko (Agila)</td>
<td>Snail</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  Onwa (Agila)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  Añgbetta (Agila)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ogbo-Okpo (Agila)</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Lizard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Idogbodo (Agila)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Ankpa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Onyagedé (Onyagede)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ai-Agbo (Ichama)</td>
<td>Snail</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Lizard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Okoto (Okoja)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ai-Oche (Okpoja)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>1655-1685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ingle (Edumoga)</td>
<td>Crocodile</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Amuda (Edumoga)</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Emigration from APA 2 c. 1655-1745

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindred Location</th>
<th>Kinship Totem</th>
<th>Political Totem</th>
<th>Point of Departure</th>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Ojonowa (Adoka)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Apa 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Igume (Adoka)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Okpiko (Onyagede)</td>
<td>Civet Cat</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Ogodomokwo (Adoka)</td>
<td>Snail</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Atakpa (Agatu)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Akpete (Agatu)  Oivet Cat  Leopard  Bird  *Apa 2*  1655-1685
7. Usha (Agatu)  Rabbit  "  "  "  "
8. Opha (Ochekwu)  "  "  "  "
9. Weto (Agatu)  Rabbit  "  "  "  1685-1715
10. Ai-Ihamu (Olokam)  Oivet Cat  Bird  "  "
11. Ai-Oko (Olokam)  "  "  "
12. Oguja (Agatu)  Gorilla  "  "  "
13. Ai-Ocheghaha (Otukpa)  "  "  "
14. Adiija (Ochekwu)  "  "
15. Ai-Ona (Olokam)  "  "  Bird  "
16. Igejobakpotu (Adoka)  "  "  "
17. Ai-Odo (Otukpa)  "  "
18. Ojakpema (Adoka)  "  "
19. Ogam (Agatu)  Rabbit  "  "  2

**EMIGRATION FROM ANKPA REGION c. 1655-1745**

1. Ai-Oche (Okpoja)  Oivet Cat  Leopard  Bird  Ankpa  1655-1685
2. Ugboekolo (Edumoga)  Bird  "  "
3. Ai-Ote (Onyagede)  Oivet Cat  Leopard  "  "  1685-1715
4. Okpaela (Edumoga)  Crocodile  "  "
5. Ikobi-Upu (Adoka)  "  "  "
6. Ochumoche (Ugbouju)  Head of sheep  Fox  "
7. Ai-Onyalo (Ichama)  Snail  Dog  Lizard  "
8. Bmchi (Ugbouju)  Oivet Cat  Leopard  "  "  1715-1745
9. Bmchi (Otukpo)  "  "  "
10. Ajobe (Otukpo)  "  "  "
11. Ai-Ode (Ogloewu)  "  "
12. Ibili (Adoka)  "  "
13. Edikwu (Ochekwu)  "  "
14. Ogope (Ochekwu)  "  "  "  Black Monkey  "
15. Ofilo (Ugbouju)  "  "
16. Ooba (Ochekwu)  "  "
17. Iko (Ochekwu)  Gorilla  "
18. Enogaji (Agatu)  "  "
19. Abakpa (Onyagede)  "  "
20. Abakpa (Otukpo)  "  "

- Black Monkey
land in Idoma. As the chart clearly indicates, there were in phase I of the migration, seven Snail groups, four of which originate south of Idah which presumably was their homeland. The other three Snail groups came from Ankpa but presumably before that they came from their kith and kin south of Idah. Four out of seven places heavy weight on the idea that their homeland was north of Nsukka and south of Idah. Those Snail groups which later adopted the royal totem, the leopard, presumably were under Bini political influence. Those which did not, may be presumed never to have lived under the Bini influence.

Some of the Snail groups recall earlier totems, Dogs and Lizards. Granted that the evidence is slim, it is nevertheless possible to speculate that the original homeland of the Snail groups lay mid-way south of Idah and north of Nsukka. It is significant that some of the Snail groups also have Dogs and Lizards as totems, but did not adopt the leopard, c. 1625-1655. Some later adopted the Leopard, but these seemed to have retained the Snail but dropped earlier totems. Thus one might further speculate that the Snail political grouping — some of whom may have been Snail by kinship, others Snail by political affiliation, came under pressure by refusing to adopt the Leopard and moved away. Such groups that moved did so by c. 1685. The majority adopted the Leopard and retained the Snail either because it was their only kinship totem, or dropped the original kinship totem, because the Snail had become the major totem. Most of this group, 'the Snail-Leopard' moved away after c. 1655 when the pressure of the Kwararafa rebels was being felt in their area. Given the location of the Snail
group, the fact that the Igbo were being pushed south or being absorbed by the southward expansion of Idah towards Nsukka, and that one Snail group claimed Nsukka origin, it seems logical to postulate that the Snail grouping of kindreds was of Igbo origin prior to c. 1625. Chart XVII also shows phases II and III of the western migration from c. 1685-1745.

Phase II: Emigration from Apa 2 1655-1745

This phase of migrations spanned three generations, c. 1655-1745. So far, about seventeen ethnic groups have been identified as being involved in these movements. Since all of them came out of Apa 2, this suggests that that homeland was being subjected to intensive political as well as military pressures both from the Kwararafa confederacy to the east and from the rebels to the south. Indeed, the peak of these migrations took place when one of the rebel leaders, Ayagba-om-Jdoko, had taken over political power from the Bini dynasty in Idah around c. 1685-1715.

The historical traditions of most of these migrant groups clearly indicate a series of political developments initiated by the rebel groups from Kwararafa. It would appear that Abutu Ejia's daughter, Ebele, had emerged as the successor and leader of Apa 2. It will be recalled that when her father arrived there he found such groups as the Ighirra, Epa, and the Bassa already settled; "into these layers he added his "contingent of misfits, friends and malcontents" (as Clifford called

them). There is enough evidence now to show that a large number of immigrants from Kwararafa did follow Abutu to Apa 2.

It seems that once news got back to Kwararafa that Abutu had established a new settlement, several groups moved southwards from Kwararafa to join forces with him or his descendants. What is still not clear is the degree of relationship between Abutu and these later immigrants. Some claim a genealogical relationship. This is not supported by the available evidence. For example, Adogoji Oje, Ogwułe Ogbawulu and Atakpa, all kindred groups in modern Abutu district, claimed genealogical relationship with the Abutu family and insist in their historical traditions that their ancestors followed Abutu Eje as his relations. In all probability, these groups formed 'part of the rebellion' from Kwararafa. Temple has other traditions in which "certain groups [which] once lived in Kwararafa near Ibi later fled in canoes down the Benue."  

It is possible that on his arrival Abutu later decided to set up an independent homeland from Kwararafa. It was probably the news of this development which encouraged his supporters to flee from Kwararafa to that settlement. His daughter, Ebele, arrived during the first Kwararafa war and therefore took a number of steps to safeguard the defence of her new homeland. First she made her followers politically and socially acceptable to their new hosts, by forcing or persuading nearly every member of the rebel group to adopt the royal leopard totem.

29. AgHT-6, pp. 22-28, Suleman Etuka (75) et al, 19-6-75.

of the ruling Bini dynasty. The manner of that adoption has continued
to baffle many students of early Igala history, as reflected in the
multiplicity of accounts of that event. We are told that

The first rulers had a daughter who went daily...
to collect firewood in the grove... As she was
visiting the grove she met a leopard there that
took the form of a young man. He made advances to
her and was accepted, so the young girl was going
daily to meet her husband in the bush. He killed
game for her and made presents of bushcow and other
animals to her parents who began to be curious about
the mysterious husband and asked repeatedly to see him.
When the girl told him this, the leopard promised to
appear and fixed a time at which he would show himself
to his in-laws. But when the leopard came out of the
bush the girl's parents ran away in terror. His wife later delivered a child, Abutu Eje...\(^{31}\)

This is one of those allegorical stories of oral tradition from
which many historians shy away. 'Eje' is the Igala word for leopard,
and Abutu Eje could be 'Abutu the son of the leopard.' It would be
quite possible for a man of qualities associated with the leopard to
be called Eje without being of the leopard totem. However, once the
Kwararafa leadership had taken over power in Idah they had to find means
of claiming legitimacy. One of the most common methods was to adopt the
totem of the previous dynasty, thereby suggesting a kinship relation-
ship before the eyes of the subject people. Mockler-Ferryman reported
the tradition that the royal baby was exposed by its mother, then found
and fostered by a leopard until it was old enough to re-enter human
society.\(^{32}\) Abutu son of the leopard was, according to the above tra-
dition, a contestant to the throne of Kwararafa in the generation when

\(^{31}\) Boston, _The Igala Kingdom_, pp. 13–14.

Kenjo successfully seized the throne (c. 1600-1630). At Kenjo's death one of the unsuccessful contestants for the throne was a man called Ate who left the capital and founded the chiefdom of Dapmar. A major totem of the royal house at Dapmar is the leopard. This is the only reference to a leopard totem in Kwararafa. However, it may not be too far-fetched to argue that Bini settlers from Idah had penetrated up the Benue River when the capital of Kwararafa was located in the Gongola valley. When the capital fell, in subsequent chaos and confusion, Jukun, Bini, Abakwariga and perhaps other groups contended for the supremacy won by Kenjo. After his death there were four contenders, possibly each again representing different ethnic groups. This time the contest was won by Katakpa, the Abakwariga. It may well be that Abutu's father had the leopard totem and the tradition can be taken more literally than first appearances suggest.

The decision by the immigrant groups to adopt the leopard totem was conditioned by three major considerations. Socially, the new immigrants were now more acceptable and could therefore gain entry into nearly all corners of their new homeland. Politically, it was a lever for Ebele. She was reported to have struck a political compromise with the leaders of both the Igbo and the indigenous population of Igalaland. With Achadu, the leader of both the Igbo settlers and the indigenes, she agreed that in the event of a successful coup d'état against the Bini dynasty at Idah, he would be made the Prime Minister of the new government. Finally it was agreed that the Achadu would co-ordinate

political activities between herself and the heads of the indigenes, the Igala Mela. In other words, while the Igala Mela would serve as members of the state advisory council of the new administration as king-makers, it was the Achadu who would act as the intermediary between the two parties. It is perhaps this compromise that Monsell tried to recapture in the following account in which "Ebele who became the first Attah... was grinding corn one day when a handsome youth came out of the bush. She asked him to come and help her, and afterwards took him to her house, bathed and fed him, and ultimately married him... he became the first Achadu..." Although Ebele did not herself rule Idah as implied in the above account, the compromise worked out in her favour.

While the Achadu was on his way south to Idah to effect a coup d'état against the Bini rulers, Kwararafa forces struck again at the defences of Apa 2. This attack has not been emphasised but it did produce several results. One of these was the death on the battle field of both Ebele and her brother and possible successor, Agenopuje. It was the latter's son, Idoko, who took over the administration of Apa 2. He too, later died under circumstances which are still not clear. With the death of Idoko, his son, Ayagba-om-Idoko, became the new ruler of Apa 2. However, with the defeat of the 'rebel' forces a large number of people in that homeland decided to leave and settle in

34. See Boston, The Igala Kingdom for further details of that coup d'état.
35. Quoted in Boston, The Igala Kingdom, p. 13.
areas to the east of that settlement.

It is not difficult to explain why several migratory groups decided to move further east, instead of either west or south, from Apa 2. In the first place having found that there was little peace in their new homeland, it was probably considered safer to move further eastwards where life might be safer. Both to the west and south of Apa 2 conditions were dangerous. According to Temple, "Kwararafa forces took their canoes and fought the fleeing refugees who made temporary settlements along the banks of the Benue." He also reported that the Kwararafa forces killed several refugees including their chief, close to the little modern village of Amegidi, east of Bagama. The persistence with which these forces pursued these refugees is reflected in the number of times the migrants made and abandoned settlements and went off in search of new ones.

Informants from several kindred groups in modern Agatu district of Idoma Division recall how their ancestors fled in panic as they were being pursued by Kwararafa forces between c. 1655-1685, nine generations ago. According to an elder from Adogoji Oje kindred group, their ancestor Apa was forced to abandon his second homeland north of Igala-land for a new settlement on the west bank of the Niger, opposite Idah. This settlement was later abandoned because of lack of peace. Apa was thus forced to move across the confluence to the

38. Ibid.
northern bank of the Benue, but there he was close to the western limits of the expanding Alago confederacy. This forced Apa to cross to the southern banks of the Benue again and made a temporary homeland at Utugoolu but constant flooding forced his successor, Adogoji Oje to move to their present settlement where he later erected oba (defensive walls) fearing future attacks from Kwararafa forces. It is this oba settlement that has been anglicized in this century to obagidi, the new capital of modern Agatu district. 39

Informants from another Agatu kindred group, Ogwule Ogawul, recall how their ancestors "fled in a canoe from the south of the Benue across to the north bank and settled at Umsah but were forced out from there by the Jukun forces." 40 They relate how their group was forced out again to the southern bank of the Benue where, perhaps on the invitation of the Adogoji Oje kindred group, they then moved further east to settle close to the latter in what became Agatu district. The historical traditions of Atakpa, Ophah, and Akpata in modern Ochekwu district indicate similar experiences of endless wanderings by their ancestors in an effort to escape the conquering arms of the Kwararafa forces. 41

Three other kindred groups the ai-Ona, the ai-Oko and the ai-Inamu, all of modern Olokam district also took part in these migrations away from Igalaland towards the east. Unlike the rest however,

39. AgHT-6, pp. 22-28, Suleman Etuka (75) et al, 19-6-75.
40. For example see AgHT-8, pp. 32-36, Eloyi Enekola (45) et al 20-6-75.
41. Ibid.
their ancestors made their way southward, probably because the influx of more refugees pouring out of Kwararafa between c. 1655-1715 blocked their passage to the east. The historical traditions of these groups emphasize one common theme, insecurity in Apa 2. This insecurity was created by what informants refer to as 'Ewu Wukari' (the Wukari war)\(^\text{42}\) an indirect reference to Kwararafa where the invaders fought the rebels c. 1655-1715.

There are indications from the traditions of the ai-Oko group that it was about this time (c. 1655-1685) that Oko, the leader of this group, broke off from his two brothers, Ogwu and Agbaja, after a brief quarrel.\(^\text{43}\) What lay behind the dispute is not clear. However it is evident that Oko moved away slightly towards the west of modern Ugboju district where both the ai-Oko and ai-Ona had settled at this time and there met the leaders of ai-Inamu and ai-Ona who were at this time moving south from their Apa 2 homeland. Together, the three leaders moved further south and were later invited by the ai-Agbo kindred group to settle with them in their Olokam homeland within the modern district of that name.\(^\text{44}\) Informants from the ai-Ona claim that before their ancestor finally settled in their present homeland in Olokam district, O na their leader first settled with the Red Monkey group where they picked up their Civet Cat totem, and that the leader of the Red Monkey was Ogwu who had moved that group from the north

\(^{42}\) OLHT-3, pp. 4-9, D.E. Enenche (40), et al 29-9-75.

\(^{43}\) UHT-1, pp. 2-8, Anyebe Ujo (75), 26-5-75.

\(^{44}\) OLHT-2, pp. 3-4, Aka Agbaja (45) et al, 29-9-75.
bank settlement to another homeland, Ijiwo, on the south bank. This reference ties in neatly with the Red Monkey tradition which says that between c. 1685-1715 their leader Ogwu led them away from Otiya settlement on the north bank to Ijiwo on the south bank.

The ai-Oko informants, on the other hand, explain their migration and separation from the Owuna Bird kindred group between c. 1685-1715 in a slightly different manner. It is claimed that Oko came originally from Kwararafa and settled in areas within Apa 2 but left this settlement 'because of war in Idah' to the south. However, in his hurry to avoid being caught in that war, informants recall, Oko missed his 'brothers,' the ai-Inamu and ai-Ona. It was much later that fortune re-united them in their present Olokam homeland. This is clearly a modern myth created by the ai-Oko to foster historical connections between themselves and their new host. This view is supported by the clear genealogical connections between the ai-Oko of Olokam and the ruling groups in modern Ugboju district. Evidence suggests that following the death of the founding father of that kindred group, Ijeba Idede, his three sons, Oko, Ogwu and Agbaaja in order of seniority, contested the throne. Okp, according to the evidence, employed 'unconstitutional means' by using medicine to weaken the influence of his other two brothers. When this foul play was discovered, he fled south in shame. Whatever the precise situation may have been, this

46. Ibid.
47. OIHT-2, pp. 2-8, Anyebe Ujo (75) et al, 26-5-75.
was the time the ai-Ona and Inamu were finding their way south of 
Apa 2. It is quite possible that Oko then joined forces with them 
and together they all established a new homeland where the ai-Agbo 
had already settled. It is possible that it is, this development that 
the ai-Oko informants are rationalizing in their oral tradition. 
There is no shred of genealogical evidence to connect the ai-Oko to 
the ancestors of either ai-Ona or ai-Inamu.

During this emigration from Apa 2 between c. 1655-1745, several 
kindred groups moved east into areas that were later unified into 
Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo chiefdoms. These groups included the 
ancestors of modern Ojonowa, Igume, Igojobapot and Ojakpama in 
Adoka, and of Emichi in both Otukpo and Ugboju. Informants attribute 
the migration of their ancestors to endless dynastic wars in their 
previous homeland.

Indeed, between c. 1655-1685, one of Abutu Eje's supporters 
emerged as the head of a new dynasty at Idah. In other words, the 
Bini dynasty there had been overthrown in a bloodless coup d'état. 
Evidence reveals that it was the Achadu who carried out that coup in 
a manner which did not involve violent upheaval. With the death 
of Idoko, Achadu came close to Idah and established a settlement 
which subsequently became his 'listening post.' From there, he began 
to send spies to "his kinsman within Idah who kept him informed of the 
day to day situation in the capital." 48 Once it became clear to the 

Achadu that the situation within was ripe for a major move, he immediately "sent words to Ayagba and persuaded him to come to Idah." In the words of Clifford, "so began the regime of the Attah of Idah." The above is but a variant of several traditions which attempt to explain how the immigrant Kwarara group eventually established a new dynasty in Idah. In another variant given by Mockler-Ferryman, Ayagba took the form of a child who was fostered by a leopard in the bush. The child grew up and later found his way into Idah and once there "... took upon himself the duties of arbiter, rebuking the one and commanding the other. So astonished were the people who had during the incident crowded around him that they immediately proclaimed him their king, and refused to permit him to leave the town. This was the first Attah." The leopard of this tradition may well represent the royal Bini totem which, as indicated earlier, the Kwarara immigrant group had adopted for political and military reasons. The two quarreling factions which Ayagba was supposed to be reconciling may well be the indigenes and the Bini dynasty, and the dispute may refer to the growing hostility between the two groups. At any rate, there is sufficient evidence to justify the view that Ayagba was the first Kwarara king in Idah and that he came to power in the wake of intense hostility between the Bini rulers and the indigenes of Idah. Boston has provided sufficient documentation of that event that further elucidation here is hardly warranted.

49. Ibid.
In the new administration under Ayagba-om-Idoko (c. 1685-1715) adequate representation was given to those groups which supported the coup d'état, particularly the local population, which in Clifford's words, "appreciated the strategic and material advantages which would accrue" in their tacit acceptance of the new regime. The Achadu, who represented the dominant Igbo community, was made the leader of the state advisory council whose members were the Igala Mela. The king or Attah conferred a number of honorific titles upon those groups who accompanied Ayagba's father from Kwararafa or later settled in Apa 2, which Boston has extensively documented in his recent work of the Igala. In this way, Ayagba established a firm link with the subjects of his new kingdom.

Ayagba's new administrative system provoked a number of responses from within and without the royal dynasty. In the royal house all was not well. It would seem that Ayagba the king was neither the first son nor the only son of Idoko. Evidence reveals that Idoko had several sons of whom Ayagba was the most junior and therefore not likely to succeed his father, according to the prevailing rule of succession. Atiele, Aba and Eja were Ayagba's elder brothers and one of these should have succeeded his father, Idoko, to the Idah throne. However, they did not, rather they left eastwards to establish independent kingdoms.

52. Ibid.
It is quite likely that Idoko married several wives by whom he fathered these children. This situation certainly posed succession problems. It will be recalled that before c. 1685-1715 succession had followed the pattern of father to son. Abufu was succeeded by Ebele who was succeeded by Agenopufe after whom Idoko ruled. It was therefore logical for Atiele who was the senior son to rule after Idoko. That Ayagba eventually displaced Atiele may be explained by the simple fact that Achadu selected and supported Ayagba, who also gained the support of the large Igbo community which was vital to the success of the new dynasty.

His brothers resorted thereafter to migration out of Idah, thereby starting a tradition of royal emigrés from Idah who established new homelands in areas of modern Idomaland. The traditions of all these groups are replete with accounts of the endless dynastic disputes that marked the rise to power of the Kwararafa group in Idah. Eja and Aba, to name but two, left Idah at this time to found the ai-Odo settlement of modern Otukpa district. Aba, who later founded his Ogodumokwo homeland in modern Adoká district, were two of these royal emigrés.

The three passages below represent various historical traditions of these events. In the first which comes from the ai-Odo in modern Otukpa it is reported that:

In those days there was a scuffle between the sons of Attah of Idah over the killing of a prohibited animal. One of the sons of the Attah who was a hunter killed a sacred animal and he was to be killed as the law of the land demanded. Over the issue, the sons of Attah split into two. Some against and others for. The climax of the rift or division brought fierce fighting which resulted in total dismemberment.
of many of the sons of Attah from the royal family. There was a wide-spread massacre and the only way left open for the survivors was to flee into safety. Many fled to found new homes...as far as the present soil of Otukpa...

The sacred animal in the above tradition may mean several things. Could this be the leopard, the new totem which was not yet completely acceptable to all the groups? Perhaps, Eja and his brother lost the throne to Ayagba, the junior brother, and later on took the field against the new regime, an event which the local population which brought Ayagba to power would have regarded with horror. The situation may have been such that together with Ayagba, they joined hands in physically expelling the defeated candidates from the capital at Idah. Or perhaps Eja and his brothers actually did commit a grievous offence against the laws of the land, an offence which led the citizens of Idah to expel them from that kingdom. Whatever the details, it is now clear that Eja is genealogically related to Ayagba and that his migration from Idah has been dated to c. 1685-1715, when Ayagba was made king. It seems reasonable to associate that migration with the series of dynastic disputes that characterised the rise of Ayagba to political power in Idah.

This view receives additional support from two historical traditions which are more explicit on the political climate at Idah c. 1685-1715. The first tradition again connects the emigration of Eja with Ayagba's rise to power, at Eja's expense. According to one

informant, their ancestor

Eja left Idah at the time when that place was undergoing an intense political struggle over the Idah throne. Eja was the son of the former king, Idoko. On the death of his father, he wanted to succeed his father but his junior brother Ayagba did so; in consequence, there erupted a civil war in that kingdom such that the losing side began to leave Idah. Eja was one because he saw a clear defeat before him and so fled towards the south where he later met the leader of the ai-Ono within whom they jointly established a new homeland called Otukpa. 55

The second tradition reports the same event but informants claim that the war was between Idoko and Aba (who was the founding father of modern Ogodumokwo settlement in Adoka district) and not between Eja and Ayagba. In the words of an Adoka informant:

Aba left Idah because there was a disputed succession in that place. The reigning Ata was Idoko. While Idoko was being made king, Aba contested on the grounds that he was Idoko's senior in age. Both Idoko and Aba were brothers of the same father. Because of Aba's insistence that he should be made king instead of Idoko civil war erupted. This war lasted about three years. The Aba faction fled the capital Idah eastwards. 56

In spite of the variations in the reporting by the various informants, it is now clear from both the genealogical as well as other data that Eja and Aba were brothers of Ayagba and that both of them left Idah when the latter was made king.

Apparently, all the protest movements at this time in Idah kingdom appeared minor matters to Ayagba. His major consideration was how to consolidate his political independence without further interference

56. AHT-24, pp. 103-109, Aboje Otaje (75) et al, 14-11-75.
from his Kwararafa mentors. It should be recalled that his predecessors as Kings of Idah had tried in vain to achieve that objective. Ayagba proved more astute in many ways. He watched and timed political developments within Kwararafa with some precision. As soon as he sensed that there was a new government and a further shift of capital towards the south, much closer to the Apa 2 homeland, he accordingly moved his base of operation from Apa 2 to Idah in the south. From here he maintained minimum contact with Kwararafa with the payment of nominal tributes to the rulers of that confederacy. While doing so, he set about recruiting mercenaries as far afield as Idube and the Kukuřuku country on the west bank of the Niger. 57

Meanwhile, his rulers in Kwararafa watched these developments with grave concern. They may have been rightly incensed with the continued recalcitrance of Abutu's descendants and their subsequent usurpation of another sphere of Kwararafa influence. This was the mood of Kwararafa when, according to one account, Ayagba, instead of sending his regular tribute impudently took dried excrement and put it into nine calabashes. Then he brought tobacco wrapped up in the ancient manner and got that ready. He travelled with these loads, accompanied by palace servants and on arriving in the Jukun court said that he would rest and present the tribute the following morning. 58

Subsequently, it appears that Ayagba poisoned the ruling king, whereupon the courtiers rose and pursued Ayagba, but to no avail. Later


58. Boston, The Igala Kingdom, p. 22.
it was reported that the Jukun rulers

sent a messenger to Idah, who returned to say that
Ayagba had not returned, but that the old king,
Idoko was dead. The Jukun asked about the succession
and were enraged when they heard that Ayagba was
the heir. They said that war should reach there
first and they would destroy the city of Idah. 59

Two sides were prepared for battle...

The Kwararafo punitive expedition against Idah (c. 1685-1715)
is reported in several interesting versions. In one account, the
Kwararafo forces marched as close as the River Inachallo, a mile
north of Idah, and these forces faced "little opposition." 60 Idah
was theirs for the asking. In another account, it is related that
Ayagba employed a Nupe magician and together they consulted an ifa
oracle. The oracle advised them to sacrifice Ayagba's most beautiful
daughter, Inikpi, in order to avert the impending military disaster.
Accordingly she was buried alive and "after her death, the Mallam
magician supplied the Attah with some charms, which were thrown into
the River Nassallu (near Idah). The Jukun, who were camped on the
other bank, ate the fish taken from the river, and many of them died.
The remainder were later scattered by Ayagba and his followers 61
Much research is still needed before the full story of Ayagba's
ultimate military victory over the superior Kwararafo forces can be
told. The above tradition may be hinting at the sudden but terrible
outbreak of an epidemic which subsequently decimated the Kwararafo

59. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
forces so that Ayagba and his soldiers found themselves chasing the remnants away from his kingdom.

Indeed, several Kwararafa in Idah kingdom fled as Ayagba's forces chased them whenever they could be found. Some of the groups that fought on the Kwararafa side ran "as far east as the River Ochekwu where a truce was signed by Ojogo, the leader of the Kwararafa forces. The reference to Ojogo in the above account is very revealing. It will be recalled that c. 1655-1685, groups came from Kwararafa to Apa I. Ojogo was one of them. He was the leader of the 'Civet Cat' group that invaded Apa I nine generations ago. A generation later, it was reported that he gave settlement to groups fleeing from IgalaLand. In other words, Ojogo had established a new homeland close to the eastern bank of River Ochekwu in modern Ochekwu district. Furthermore, a point was also made that Ojogo took part in some of the wars that were going on in Idah about this time. It is therefore conclusive that the Igala-Kwararafa war took place some eight generations ago (c. 1685-1715) and we can safely date the migration of those groups involved to this war.

Several informants from modern Agatu date the migration of their ancestors, the founders of Ogufa, Weto and a score of others to that period. They also recall the fact that their ancestors were by origin Abakwariaga, who took part in the expeditionary force sent to quell a rebellion in Idah. Having lost in the war that ensued between them

62. Ibid.
64. AgHT-18, pp. 61-63, Agani Ogwole (80) et al, 21-6-75.
and Ayagba's forces, their ancestors fled first to the northern bank of the Benue but Ayagba's forces forced them to cross to the southern bank and make a new homeland called Ombi. This settlement was later abandoned because of constant flooding, hence the next move to another and final settlement where they made defensive walls, probably to ward off Ayagba's forces. Intelligence Reports on Agatu district rightly refer to that part of Idomaland as a 'refugee zone' for those who fought for Kwararafa against Idah in the seventeenth century.65

During this time the ancestors of modern ai-Onyilo and ai-Ocheghaha in Otukpa and Ichama districts respectively were making their way south of Apa 2 into their present homeland. Their traditions make the point that this was when the Kwararafa-Igala war was on. It is not quite clear on whose side they fought. Informants indicate that their ancestors were caught in the cross fire of the two hostile parties. The situation was such that their ancestors left their previous homeland towards the south. The first move would seem to have taken their leaders towards areas in modern Nsukka land from where the ai-Ocheghaha leader moved towards the ai-Odo and ai-Ono settlements. Later all the groups decided to found modern Otukpa district.

Meanwhile evidence suggests that Onu, the leader of the ai-Onyilo, found Nsukkaland a convenient place to settle, because "it was his mother's birth place."67

65. "Intelligence Reports, Agatu District, Idoma Division," NAK, SNP 17/3/20801.
66. OtHT-3, pp. 10-12, Aba Oganwu (65), et al. 28-9-75.
67. Ichama Historical Text (hereafter IchT) 1, pp. 2-8, Christopher Eje (50) et al. 30-9-75.
However, Onu became involved in a series of local wars which he lost. It is reported that his enemies were the Leke, who may have been an Igbo group who first settled in this area. The Leke soon resorted to indiscriminate killing of Onu's followers at night. In one account, it was reported that during these wars, "there was blood everywhere in the land, including our farms and sources of drinking water." 68

Informants claim that Onu leftNsukka because of these hard times and founded the present settlement called Ichima, reminding him of his mother's name Ichi which was later anglicised. From this evidence it seems quite likely that Onu originated in Nsukka and having lost in a bloody civil war moved to the present homeland in Ichima district.

It is clear that between c. 1655-1685 several groups emigrated out of Apa 2 to areas in modern Idomalnd. About a generation later, (c. 1685-1715) a new dynasty emerged in Idah. The way and manner of the rise of that dynasty provoked further emigration of the royal emigrés and their supporters to leave Idah and establish independent chiefdoms elsewhere. Furthermore, the new administration seemed to favour some at the expense of others and those who lost either territory or political influence left between 1715-1745. They included the ancestors of Ogam and the Epes in modern Agatu district. 69

68. Ibid.

69. AgHT-17, pp. 59-60, Sule Ogbe (55) et al, 21-6-75.
Phase III: The Emigration from Ankpa c. 1685-1745

Evidence concerning this movement shows that about twenty ethnic groups took part. They included both royal emigrés who lost their bids to Ankpa throne and non-royals ejected by the new rulers. Indications are that two royal emigrés, Atiele and Akumbi, left Idah after Ayagba had defeated them in a dynastic dispute. They later came to Ankpa east of Idah and established an independent kingdom there.

When Atiele founded his independent kingdom in Ankpa c. 1685-1715, Ankpa already consisted of several ethnic groups, the largest being the Ejeigbo, and the Ubelle, who resisted Atiele's arrival. 70

Atiele won the ensuing war, perhaps because he employed Hausa mercenaries as some informants assert. In Atiele's subsequent administration he took the earlier settlement under his protection. His new capital was at Onoja, across the River Marboro. 71

Atiele's rule in Ankpa dispossessed several local chieftains of their lands. Evidence indicates that the ancestors of ai-Ote of modern Onyagede district, the ai-Oche of modern Okpoga district, Okpaele of Edumoga, and Ochimoche of Ugboju were among the many chieftains so displaced. 72

The historical traditions of one of these, Ochimoche in Ugboju, relate how their ancestor eight generations ago (c. 1685-1715) was the chief of Ochinibi settlement, west of Ankpa, but was forced to abandon that chieftdom by Atiele, a new ruler.

70. AgHT-17, pp. 59-60, Sule Ogbe (55) et al, 21-6-75.
72. Ibid.
from Idah.  

It would also appear from the administrative set-up that Atiele did not include or give high posts to those Hausa groups who aided and abetted the take-over. He likewise neglected to give his senior brother any adequate political compensation in the new kingdom. All these events may explain why those immediately affected by the new order of things left Ankpa for the east.  

A second reaction to Atiele's take-over government came from the ruling house itself. Having established his new capital at Onoja, across the River Marboro, Atiele turned his attention to areas closer to Ankpa. In Ejeigbo and Ubele chiefdoms he sent his sons or supporters as chiefs. According to one source, he sent his son Okokoriko to rule over Okeyne chiefdom while his other sons founded such new chiefdoms as Ojoko, Odugwu, Imani, Iga, Atabaka and Inyele, all to the south of River Marboro.  

It is, however, doubtful if the above chiefdoms were founded during Atiele's lifetime. It seems more logical to argue that these were ancient chiefdoms which were being overthrown and new chiefs, who were Atiele's supporters, were being appointed by the new administration.

This view receives further support from the traditions of those kindred groups whose ancestors left Ankpa c. 1685-1715. Evidence reveals that the ancestors of ai-Ode and Emichi in both Otukpo and Ugboju districts were involved in this migration. Informants from

73. UHT-16, pp. 101-105, Egbo Egberikuni (45) et al 29-11-75.  
74. For example, OchHT-30, pp. 108-109, Alpha Aika (45) et al 14-6-75.  
75. For example, see OchHT-8, pp. 25-28, Sule Agbani (80) et al 14-6-75.  
Emichi in Ugboju, for example, recall their ancestor back to a period when he lost his bid to retain his throne, an obvious reference to the series of local coup which Atiele's agents were organising at this time in Ankpa against local chieftains. Yet informants from another segment of Emichi in Otukpo district attribute the emigration of their ancestor Oguche to 'leaving Ankpa in search of a wife.' He may have started from his chiefdom for that search before Atiele's arrival.

However, that 'search' may have taken him further east into Otukpo settlement, where he later found a wife, but meanwhile lost his chiefdom to the new rulers. Thereafter, his ai-Oguche in-laws persuaded him to remain. Whatever the precise situation may have been, it is clear from the evidence that the political events around Ankpa c. 1685-1715 were largely instrumental in triggering the series of migrations.

While the local chieftains were being displaced by Atiele's agents in and around Ankpa, the royal House itself like Idah was undergoing an intense political crisis. Atiele had numerous sons each of whom was keen on succeeding his father to the Ankpa throne. This situation created enormous political tension immediately it became known that Atiele was dead. It is likely that Atiele himself anticipated this problem of succession. This may explain why shortly before his death he established some of his sons as chiefs in several parts...

77. UHT-17, pp. 106-107, Aanya Onche (50) et al 1-12-75.
78. OHT-12, pp. 58-82, Odawudu Ode, (50) et al 25-5-75
of his kingdom. Ebr example, Aba, Onawo and Onoja were sent to rule different areas north of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{79} However, that move was only palliative. Furthermore, there is evidence which suggests that Atiele's successor was younger in age than his other brothers. An elder from Iwili kindred group in Adoka district is firm that his ancestor, Okoriko, was not only the first son of Atiele but was thought by nearly everyone in the kingdom except Oguchekwo, the new king, as the rightful successor to his father. When this did not happen Okoriko left in protest to settle elsewhere.\textsuperscript{80}

Okoriko was followed by his other brothers, who probably supported him in his bid for the Ankpa throne. According to the historical traditions of Edikwu, Ooba and Ojope, all in modern Ochekwu district, their founding fathers, Ajunwa and Agala, supported Okoriko, who after the defeat felt it necessary to leave Ankpa, probably to avoid political repercussions from the new king Oguchekwo.\textsuperscript{81} Evidence further indicates that the ancestors of modern Ofiloko in Ugboju left at this time, after a brief stay at Emele chiefdom, and moved to their present homeland in Ugboju district. Informants claim that they were attracted to their modern settlement by the ai-Agbaja kindred groups who later gave the leader a wife.\textsuperscript{82}

There are positive indications too that the various Kwararafa wars taking place within Apa 2 to the north had repercussions further south in Ankpa kingdom.

\textsuperscript{79} "Notes on the Gala, Ndoma and Akpoto," NAK, K2013.
\textsuperscript{80} AHT-39, pp. 181-190, Adoga Ogbole (45) et al 18-11-75.
\textsuperscript{81} OcHT-29, pp. 103-107, Otene Adikwu (80) et al 14-6-75.
\textsuperscript{82} UHT-12, pp. 86-91, Edo Ojigo (45) et al 28-11-75.
The area was close to Ankpa. One of the groups affected was the ancestor of modern Ugbokolo in Edumoga district. Informants from that group relate how their ancestor, Ogbâ, was in the habit of making long hunting trips to the areas east and south of Ankpa. During one such trip, informants say that Ogbâ found his way back to his chiefdom blocked by refugees pouring south from Apa 2 bringing with them the bad news of horrible atrocities committed by the Kwararafa forces against civilians. In other words, Ogbâ could not return to his Igume chiefdom in Ankpa because of the "war to the north" of his homeland. 83

Thus between c. 1625-1775 about sixty totemic groups had been forced by a variety of factors to abandon their different homelands in Apa 2, Idah and Ankpa kingdoms in search of new and independent homelands in areas that later became Idoma Division. As chart XVII already indicated, some of these totemic groups were Dogs, Lizards, Snails, Birds, Leopard only, and Leopard combinations. Each of these categories calls for some brief comment.

Earlier on we discussed the background relevant to the adoption of Snail, Dog and Lizard totems by the different immigrant groups from Idah and Ankpa. Among the Bird group, of the eight kindred groups seven emigrated c. 1655-1715. Indications are that the Bird totem was a kinship totem. Secondly, it can be seen that all the Bird totems revere the Civet Cat which was the group totem of the Igala Mela who

83. EHT-12, pp. 77-79, Umoro Agbane (55) et al 26-9-75.
ruled Idah area before the coming of the Bini dynasty, c. 1500. Evidence suggests that the Bird kindred groups lived within the political sphere of influence of the Civet Cat Igalan Mela. Furthermore, all the Bird totems, except one, also revere the Leopard totem and there is no record of any of them having migrated away during the period of the Bini dynasty. The location of the Bird totem north of Idah and their ultimate acceptance of the Bini-Yoruba dynasty suggests that they may have originally been of Akpoto-Yoruba stock. In effect, the Bird, Civet Cat and Leopard kindred group moved out of Idah during the take-over of Idah government by Kwararafa exiles c. 1655-1685. However, one exception should be noted. Only one kindred group claims the Civet Cat as its only totem and this was the Okoto. They did not adopt the leopard as they left Ankpa c. 1625-1655. It seems possible that they were a splinter from the original Igalan Mela. Since the history of Ankpa is poorly documented, it is difficult to interpret this case. One is not sure which clans were indigenous to Ankpa and which used that region as a stop-over on a longer journey. One is not even sure that the Bini dynasty ever controlled Ankpa.

Among those who revere the Leopard, evidence suggests that they were either those kindred groups which migrated from Benin together with the founder of the Bini monarchy in Idah or supported that monarchy during the period of Bini political ascendancy between c. 1400 and 1600. It seems unlikely that the Leopard was a kinship totem to all the
groups, but it became a badge within Idah of identification as a Bini settler, presumably a prestigious status before the fall of that monarchy. Previous kinship totems might be ignored or ultimately forgotten in the rush to be identified as Bini settlers. Furthermore, many of the migrating groups may have been led by junior or distant relatives of the Bini royal clan to adopt the leader's totem.

In the earliest period of migration only six such Bini kindred groups moved away from Idah. These may have been junior members or royals dissatisfied with the succession in Idah who left to establish their own independence within areas in southern Idomalnd. However, the great exodus of leopard occurs, as might be expected, in the period of the take-over by the Kwararafa exiles in Idah. In all, between c. 1625-1745, twenty-seven Bini settler groups left Idah and Ankpa kingdoms and went into Idoma society.

CHART XVII THE LEOPARD TOTEM

The Total Number of Emigrants From Idah-Ankpa c. 1625-1775

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods of emigration</th>
<th>Total No. Leopard in</th>
<th>Involved</th>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>Leopard alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Earliest western Immigrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1625-1685</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emigrants from Apa 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1655-1775</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emigrants from Ankpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1685-1745</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those kindred groups with the Leopard in combination with other totems may represent those groups which had adopted the Leopard as a show of loyalty and collaboration with the Bini monarchy or settlers. A significant number of them seem to have followed the Bini dissidents in the early period. Furthermore, before the take-over some Bini groups probably followed relatives who had moved earlier and may have sent back good reports of plentiful land and game in their new environment. But when the Kwararasa exiles took over in Idah, the exodus of collaborators was much less, apparently they more easily swung their loyalty to the new rulers. In the large exodus of Bini settlers from Ankpa region there were twelve groups, yet only one of these carried the Leopard totem. The pattern of emigration would suggest that Kwararasa invaders had considerable support among the indigenous population and that the Bini monarchy and its settlers had been unpopular.

From the identification of the immigrant groups by their totems, the conclusion can be safely made that in spite of the persistent claims of western origins, these groups (except those from Ankpa) were not specifically of Igala origin. They came from different sources and directions and mostly used Igala land as a migratory corridor to establish new homelands in modern Idoma Division. 84

84. The subsequent settlement pattern of the various totemic groups is indicated in the two accompanying maps.
DISTRIBUTION OF FOX, GORILLA, DOG RABBIT AND SNAIL TOWERS IN IDOMA LAND 1935-1960

Key:
- Fox
- Gorilla
- Dog
- Rabbit/Bush Rat
- Snails

Map 12
IDOMA DIVISION

REFERENCE

IDOMA DIVISION
IDAH DIVISION
NSUKKA DIVISION
OBOJA DIVISION
AGATU
OCHERWU
ADOKA
USSOJI
ONYADEE
OSLEWU
OTUKPO
OTUKPA
EDUMOSA
AKPA
ITO
OLOKAM
OWUKPA ICHEMA
GWUAME
ULATI
IGUZAM
WORKU
OJU
JOHA
CHAPTER V

STATE FORMATION IN PRE-COLONIAL IDOMALAND c. 1600-1900

The origin of the state is a world-wide historical problem. In Europe both classical and modern scholars have put forward explicit theories on the formation of the state. So far, none of these is entirely satisfactory. In Africa, the origin of the state is still very imperfectly understood. At first, analysts of state formation in Africa relied excessively on the unspoken assumption that nothing of interest could have been originated by the Negro peoples. When it was later discovered that states and empires once existed in pre-colonial Africa, scholars set out to discover forces outside Africa which would have imported state institutions, and one theory after another was put forward in an effort to explain how human societies in this part of the world first evolved from single hunting and gathering bands into large political units. While these theories have been extremely useful in understanding the rise of states, however, they have not altogether succeeded in clarifying the complex process of state-formation particularly in Africa. This chapter will attempt to use the Idoma example as an important case study, against the background of state formation theories which have been offered by other scholars.

1. There is an excellent summary of both the traditional and current theories concerning the origins of the state by R.S. Elman, Origins of the State and Civilization, (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1975), pp. 21-46.
Traditional theories of state origins

Classical writers like Aristotle, probably because they were familiar with few forms of political organisation outside their own societies, tended to think of the state as 'natural' (i.e. God-given). In their view, the state had existed long enough in history and therefore did not require an explanation. This view was challenged by modern scholars who argued that the origin of the state was neither metaphysical nor adventitious, and not to be placed beyond scientific understanding. Instead, they contend that the state was the outcome of an agreement between individuals who decided to unite and form a larger political organisation called the state. Thus was born the Social Contract theory. Proponents of this view believe that certain individuals spontaneously and rationally gave up their individual liberties and sovereignties and thereafter united with other groups to form a larger political unit. The chief priests of this theory were John Locke and Rousseau. Critics of this view point out, however, that throughout human history few human groups have ever formally subscribed to such a contract. In their view, this theory was merely philosophical speculation and therefore has failed to clarify our understanding of the historical origin of the state.

Of the current theories, that of Gordon Childe is widely accepted. According to him, the invention of agriculture automatically brought

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
about surplus food which enabled groups of people to divorce themselves from food production and devote attention to other occupations. This situation created extensive division of labour. It was from this occupational specialization that political integration emerged. It was the state which united under one umbrella a number of previously independent communities.\(^5\) Elegant as this theory is, it contains many weaknesses. One of them is the assumption that agriculture automatically creates a food surplus. Carneiro's study among the Amazonian Indians has proved conclusively that "agriculture does not automatically create a food surplus."\(^6\)

The Coercive theory attributes state formation to force or war, as the process by which states grow from villages to larger political organisations. This theory was first put forward by Heraclitus but has found modern adherents in Herbert Spencer, Franz Oppenheimer, Edward Jenks and the historian of Africa, Jan Vansina. For these scholars "war is the father of all things,"\(^7\) and warfare is the prime mover in the origin of the state. Thus with the Germanic kingdoms in mind, Edward Jenks observed that "historically speaking, there is not the slightest difficulty in proving that all political communities of modern type (that is states) owe their existence to successful warfare."\(^8\) Vansina's work in central Africa also makes

\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 734.
the point that state after state in that part of Africa was brought about through warfare. Critics of this view were quick to point to the numerous examples of Maya states which have arisen entirely without war. These critics accept the view that war plays a role in bringing about the rise of states but argue that it is not the only factor. In the words of one "while we can identify war as a mechanism of state formation, we need also to specify the conditions under which it gave rise to the state." Thus there are wide divergences of opinion among both classical and modern scholars on the origin of the state. The problem is complex and controversial.

Early analysts of state formation in Africa assumed that pre-colonial Africa created "conquered states." This means that states came into existence as a result of some "civilised" invaders who came from outside Africa and conquered the indigenous inhabitants and imposed on them the system of centralised political organisation. For example, it was assumed that the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai, which rose within the western Sudan, were created by invading "Hamitic" nomads from north Africa. In their view, these invaders came into that area of Africa, defeated the indigenous Negro population and imposed their rule on the latter. This school of thought received explicit formulation in the so-called 'Hamitic Hypothesis' which Seligman states succinctly as follows:

It would not be very wide of the mark to say that the history of Africa south of the Sahara is no more than the story of the permeation through the ages, in different degrees and at various times, of the Negro and Bushman aborigines by Hamitic blood and culture. The Hamites were, in fact, the great civilising force of Black Africa from a relatively early period...

Furthermore, it was the view of this school that state organisations spread from the Sudanese kingdoms into the forest region and from there to the rest of Africa. In their view, such kingdoms as the Yoruba, Igal or Bini in west Africa, were also conquered states.

This racial theory drew vigorous attacks from many quarters. Anthropologists replied cautiously that "all known human groups are so inherently alike in their innate mental endowment that our best test can not detect any originally conditioned differences... that various peoples on earth certainly have enormously different ways of life, but this heterogeneity is cultural and not racial or biological."

As far as they are concerned, any group of people on earth is capable of making cultural innovations and states could originate independently in different places and at different times. In this way the anthropologists refuted the racist overtones of Seligman's theory.

The first generations of African historians surprisingly accepted the Seligman theory with only slight modifications. The only difference between their view and that of Seligman's was that the 'invaders' were no longer considered as white skinned. Shorn of its most objec-


tionable-racist qualities, the old 'Hamic myth' achieved renewed respectability at the end of the 1950s in the form of "Sudanic State hypothesis." According to both Oliver and Fage, a 'civilisation of vaguely Egypto-Meroe centre' (sic) armed with the ideas of divine kingship and iron weapons overspread much of sub-Saharan Africa at an early date and brought with it the first large-scale centralized kingdoms to appear in most of Africa. Both scholars see state formation in west Africa as being:

... a parasitic growth, fastening itself upon the economic base of pre-existing agricultural societies. To these societies it contributed certain new ideas of political organisation, and certain new techniques, notably in the field of mining, metallurgy, and trade. Its earliest propagators seem to have moved south-west from the Nile Valley, and to have established themselves, probably with the aid of the horse and of cavalry warfare among the agricultural peoples immediately to the south of the Sahara...13

A generation later, some African historians attacked this 'Sudanic state hypothesis' and moved to demonstrate its inadequacy by arguing that state formation in Africa owes its origin to the existence of lucrative economic activity, whatever the region of Africa. They doubted whether divine kingship diffused throughout Africa from a single source and pointed out that states emerged in the area of the Niger bend and around Lake Chad earlier than elsewhere in the Sudan, not because of the "arrival of ideas of kingship and iron technology... but because of the presence of lucrative economic activity"14 in these

areas. In their view, the existence of local trade, markets and long distance trade explain the genesis of the state. The greatest weakness of this theory lies in the prominence given to economic factors as prime movers in the origin of the state. Admittedly, these factors play a significant role in state formation but to argue that they originate states is to put the cart before the horse.

This brief review of the current theories on the origin of the state has shown that no single origin theory is entirely satisfactory in explaining the process of state formation in any part of the world; they are too simple to provide a convincing total explanation of how states began. As this chapter hopes to demonstrate, the Idoma system is an important case in several ways. In the first place, although the people were not united politically throughout their pre-colonial history, yet they exhibit several types of state formation. While in some areas full kingship emerged, in others there were less than fully politicised chieftaincies. Secondly, the Idoma have been classified as 'stateless' 15 yet within their system there was the law-giving tradition; a system in which the various sections of the society performed different functions for the well-being of the society. It is the antecedents of this complex process that we shall now examine.

Political Developments in Ancestral Idomaland

The Kwararafa homeland, from whence came most Idoma people, was a very broad plain. It is surrounded by the complex relief of both the Jos and Bauchi plateaux to the north and northeast; the Udi plateau to the south, and the Obudu-Cameroon mountain ranges to the east and southeast. Flanked by these heights is the broad plain of 'Idomalnd', covered by 'orchard bush' and intersected by numerous rivers, the biggest of which is the Benue. Here and there, flat hills punctuate the monotonous landscape.

There is every indication that this plain has been a fertile area from a very early date. For example, in the 1890s, the geographer Moseley left the following description of the agricultural potentiality of this area. According to him, "the country is flat and open and especially fertile, little more than actual planting being required to bring forth the most luxuriant crops of cereals. Guinea corn, maize, rice, sweet potatoes, millet, and groundnuts are cultivated to a very great extent, and form the chief articles of food..." 16 It is therefore logical to conclude that this plain must have had abundant food supply from a very early date.

Evidence from early Kwararafa history reveals that there were different ethnic groups living in this plain in pre-colonial times. 17 What is not clear is whether or not it was the existence of food in this plain that led to the multi-ethnic society that characterised

17. See chapter III of this work for further details.
Kwararafa confederacy during the pre-colonial era. What is clear is the fact that groups of people did not cluster together into states, rather they lived in a dispersed pattern all over the plain. In other words, the population density of this region was low in early times. Mason has argued convincingly against the accepted theory that the Benue plain has always been characterised by a high population density which was greatly reduced in the nineteenth century by extensive slave raiding activities. He shows instead that such raiding as took place affected only limited areas, and that despite the long habitation of this area, population densities have never been high.

The Kwararafa ecology influenced the emergence of early Idoma political organisation in a number of ways. In the first place, the existence of food in their ancestral homeland may have led to an increase of population. Over time, some sections of the community may have decided to devote their attention to such occupations as hunting, weaving and long distance trade. This may be the genesis of early occupational specialization such as Childe's suggests. Several Idoma informants recall that their ancestors were expert hunters of leopards and elephants in their ancestral homeland. In other traditions one hears of leaders travelling south of Kwararafa into Ogoja-country for trading purposes. Evidently, if some sections of the society engaged in trade, agricultural production or other occupations was producing surpluses.

19. In chapter II we saw clearly how most of Otokpo ancestors took several praise-names which further suggest the nature of their early activities in their Kwararafa homeland.
Evidence is conclusive that it was in their ancestral homeland that groups that were hitherto politically autonomous began to come together and form larger political organisations. Politically, each kindred group was ruled by an ojira (council of elders). The membership of that council was drawn mainly from the heads of the various lineages within the kindred group. It must be stressed here that each ojira was politically autonomous of the other. It was in the context of a small group that the gerontocratic and conciliatory form of government took roots. The idea of the ojira may have stemmed from the basic assumption among several African groups which do not have a centrally accepted 'tribal' authority that government was changeless and custom sovereign and that it was the elders who were the 'true' custodian of these institutions. This may explain in part why the ojira among the early Idoma groups devoted its time to purely judicial matters. Evidence is clear that the ojira judged outstanding disputes between one social unit and another. Whenever new laws were introduced, it was under the fiction that the new laws were not 'new' as such. The decision taken by the ojira was governed by a "consensual democratic principle... rendering it difficult for any individual or groups to control that assembly." That this government by elders continued to be effective at this early period of Idoma history may be due to the fact that the society was an essentially simple one. Later, as the society grew more complex, the ojira began to use non-political bodies such as secret societies and age

20. For example, see Magid, "Political Traditionalism" p. 292.
21. Ibid.
grades to carry out some of its policies. In summary, we can conclude with the proponents of the 'automatic theory' that it was from occupational specialization that there developed the ojira which united a number of previously independent kindred groups into one political organisation.

Evidence shows that ojira was only one form of political organisation among the early Idoma groups in Kwara. Another was the oche (head of the kindred ojira). Politically the oche was the most senior elder of the kindred group. In other words, several elders within a kindred group would meet to nominate one of their number as oche. This explains why that office in time came to be rotatory between the constituent lineages in a kindred. His constitutional position, according to one author, has been likened to a "microphone which is suspended by strings or rubber band from a rigid frame, to which it is equally connected in all directions."\(^{22}\)

The origin of this office has never been satisfactorily explained. Is it not curious that in a segmented and egalitarian society such as the Idoma there should emerge an institutionalised leadership? Indeed, several explanations have been put forward to trace the origin of this development. Some sources attribute the emergence of 'a father-figure' to the fact that certain individuals have attractive qualities and charisma which make others choose them as leaders in the society. It is believed that it is these individuals 'who

\(^{22}\) Armstrong, "The Idoma Kings," a typescript in my possession.
attract followers and wield influence because, in the first instance, they possess qualities which their followers admire." According to Read, who is strongly identified with this school of thought, charisma wins because in a tradition-oriented society, it is the autonomous individuals, superior as leaders, who usually win out. Read further believes that once such an individual has been selected as a leader in the society, there follows the expectation that his son will succeed his father as the 'leader' of the community. In his words, "people believe that the character of the parent is transmitted to his offspring, and a man of eminence may be likely to seek and encourage his son the qualities which inspire confidence and dependence..." In his view, this is how a segmented society acquires and institutionalises leadership. In other words, the emergence of the Oche among the Idoma should be traced to the existence of a charismatic leader who over the years attracted a number of followers who later recognised him as their leader.

Another view has it that the prevalence of warfare in any society leads to the emergence of military leaders as well as military institutions. According to Spencer, if warfare is endemic in any society the otherwise disparate groups would unite against the common foe and if the threat to the existence of the group is continuous, a war leader or his

24. Quoted in Elman; p. 73.
"governing centre" would emerge. This is clearly a classic combination of the conflict theory with that of the social contract. Thus Spencer sees successful warfare as a major factor in state formation. He puts his views thus: "Headship of a conquering chief has been a normal accompaniment of that political integration without which a high degree of social evolution would have been impossible. Only by imperative need for combination in war were primitive men led into co-operation. Only by subjection to imperative command was such cooperation made efficient..."  

Indeed, there are numerous instances in Kwararafa which support the view that both charisma and the prevalence of warfare played significant roles in the emergence of political institutions among the early Idoma groups. Such leaders as Abutu Eje, Akunte and Idu possessed outstanding qualities. Abutu Eje (otherwise called Abutu the son of a leopard) was a famous hunter in Kwararafa. At one time he was to be made chief in Apa but another candidate displaced him. Subsequently he left and established another chiefdom west of Kwararafa. It is quite possible that the numerous groups who followed him from Kwararafa were attracted by his ability in leading the rebellion in Kwararafa c. 1595-1625. One of the ancestors of modern Otukpo people, Ohukwo, was also known as omiri (killer of elephants) suggesting that he distinguished himself...  

25. Ibid., p. 74.  
26. Ibid.  
27. AgHT-6, pp. 22-28, Suleman Etuka (75), et al, 19-6-75.
himself as a successful hunter in their Kwararafa homeland. These and other examples support Read's view that charisma plays a role in the emergence of political leaders, even among a segmented people like the Idoma. Furthermore, warfare played a decisive role in the lives of many groups that lived in ancient Kwararafa confederacy. Between c. 1595 and 1630 invasions from Borno and the Hausa states to the north converged on the Benue plain first causing the collapse of the northern capital within the Gongola valley. Thereafter, group after group fought against each other trying to dominate the political life of Kwararafa in Biepi, the new capital. In these wars, some Idoma groups were affected; several lost their lands and settlements, fleeing westwards in search of new homelands. According to the historical traditions of modern Ugboju and Adoka, such outstanding leaders as Oga and Adoka emerged as war leaders of their communities. In some of these wars, unrelated groups combined against an outside foe as happened in Apa I. This is perhaps the type of situation that Herbert Spencer had in mind when he put forward his views on the emergence of 'the conquering chief' in a tradition-oriented society. However, general theory does not provide a detailed explanation of this specific case, the emergence of an oche among the Idoma.

Evidence suggests that among the Idoma the institution of oche-ship is rooted in their society and that it goes back into the mists of time. It originated from the biological idea of the father of the

28. OHT-5, pp. 33-41, Adakole Akor (45 et al., 15-5-75.
29. See chapter III for further details on these wars.
family writ large on a political page. Among the Idoma, the oche was
and still is the highest officer within the kindred group and although
the lineage elders in ojira were and still are collectively higher
than he, yet they are not so individually. This is probably what Weber
had in mind when he said that in some parts of the world authority
is traditional. In his view, traditional leadership is founded on the
sanction of immemorial custom. It must be stressed here that the
idea of kingship as rooted in every society is by no means unique to
Idoma or to Africa. In Europe, the king was regarded as the father
of the nation. In European thinking, whether Aristotelian, royalist
or Freudian, there is a strong connection between the idea of the king
and that of the father of a family. The king is the father figure
writ large just as the father in many European societies is the king
figure writ small.

Among the Idoma evidence further shows that the oche-ship is
deeply rooted in religion. Thus the oche is both the king and the
religious head of the community. In the Idoma view, the oche reigns
but does not rule. He assumed office by an act of symbolic death.
This was probably a fiction that by dying the oche severed his connec-
tions with his immediate family and lineage and became impartial
father to all. By the ritual death, the oche was supposed to lose
his personal identity and all the obligations that he might have owed
to others in the society.

The process of the symbolic death of an oche is well recorded by Armstrong:

He assumes office by an act of symbolic death to his family and lineage attachments. He is hidden for fourteen days... During this time many ceremonies are performed on his behalf, in his absence. Finally his compound is sacked. He loses all his belongings to the society as a whole. An ancestral mask performs the 'opening Path to the Grave' ceremony for him. Alekwo Iowe he kilo... He becomes the general son of the land. He becomes king owning no property of his own; but as a king he owns the whole land and its citizens...31

In the words of another Idoma informant, the climax of the installation of the oche "is the symbolic burial of the new monarch. He is dressed like a corpse, laid in a state, and undergoes all the rigorous ritual preceding the burial. He is then resurrected, a spirit among mortals... endowed with all the wisdom and attributes of the ancestors, no longer subject to hunger, thirst, or greed..."32

These ceremonies, which could be compared to religious overtones in the coronation of a king of England, describe how the oche as a father writ large, became imbued with the divine godlike qualities. He came out of the ceremony resurrected like Christ (Christ, the King). Thereafter, like the King of England, the oche lived for ever. "The King is dead; long live the King." The Idoma oche is thus hedged with divinity as were the kings of William Shakespeare's imagery.

Among the Ashanti of modern Ghana we see the same religious mystique around their king, the hene. He was, like the Mai of Borno or the Atah of Igala subject to many restraints. He was and still is regarded

32. Anyebe, "The Idoma Chieftaincy," a typescript in my possession.
as being quite distinct from normal beings. This goes to explain
why there were elaborate procedures which hid the mortal humanity
of these kings from the public. In Borno for example, the Mai was
considered divine and so was worshipped by his subjects and was
widely regarded as the origin of life and death. All these
examples support the view that kingship is deeply rooted in every
society and that it also has its roots in religion. Thus kings
became the Caliphs of God among Muslims and lieutenants of God in
the Christian communities. Unable to claim divinity in monotheistic
societies, they yet preserved the claim to intimate relationship
with the Godhead.

To what extent are these religious ceremonies invented or
original and how did they come to be used for the purpose of hedging
the oche with god-like qualities? What are their origins? Are they
deliberate? Indications are that these ceremonies originated with
the people and fit perfectly well with the African idea of religion.
In most African societies God is the origin of life and death, the
creator of the universe. In the Idoma world, owoicho (God) is
both transcendental, all excelling, Supreme. He is also looked
upon as owo no fie owo dodu (omniscient). But since he is too physi-
cally removed from the world, there must be an intermediary. He is
the oche who is thereafter invested with god-like qualities and made
the ruler of the community. Did he come out of the ojira or did he

33. For example, see R.S. Rattray, Ashanti, (Oxford University Press,
Oxford, 1923) passim.
create the ojira? These are rather complex issues for constitutional historians to handle, but the evidence seems to suggest that he came out of the ojira.

The oche-ship appears to pre-date the migration period which started c. 1535-1625. Before this, outstanding father figures existed in several Idoma communities but it is doubtful if these individuals were designated oche by their various political groups. It is quite likely that after 1600 the political situation in Kwararafa changed drastically leading to the emergence of 'leaders' most of whom were famous warriors. The collapse of the Kwararafa capital within the Gongola valley brought with it an intense political struggle for supremacy among many disparate groups who dwelled there. As we saw in the last two chapters, the Abakwaraiga lost their political control of the confederacy to the Jukun. In the wake of the struggles which brought the Jukun to political power, those ethnic groups who supported the losing side became subjected to intense raiding during which men, women and children were removed and sold into slavery. It is this type of continuous warfare that forced several ethnic groups to call on their 'brave' ones to save the situation.

Indeed, among the early Idoma groups certain leaders emerged and led their groups from one settlement to another. For example, among the Otukpo, informants recall their leader, Akunte, who c. 1595-1625 began to lead his kindred group from Kwararafa to other settlements west of that homeland. According to one source, Akunte "in an Isrealite manner... journeled through Ogala, Ogodu, Abiche, Adagbayi,
Ajecho, Okwutachi and Ewilo, in an effort to avoid being raided by the enemies of his people. Similarly, among the Adoka, their leader Idom, according to some informants, fled from Kwararafa c. 1535–1565 and within the same generation fought some four major wars with non-Adoka people over hunting rights. These instances, and numerous others, lead to the conclusion that when the various Idoma groups were being ejected from their ancestral homeland, it became necessary to find a leader who would conduct his group into safer regions. This may explain in part why several otherwise independent groups began to subordinate themselves at this time to a military leader who generally seemed to have carried his wartime influence into peacetime conditions. It is thus clear that the oche was first and foremost a father of a family. He possessed admirable qualities, particularly bravery in war, which made the community look to him for leadership during periods of intense warfare in Kwararafa. Thereafter, a tendency developed among his people to believe that the characteristics of the oche were transmitted to his sons. This goes to explain why between the migratory period, between c. 1535 and c. 1685, succession patterns among the Idoma followed the principle of the son succeeding his father.

In spite of the development of the office of oche, the ojira watched the oche with grave concern. This concern is best illustrated by the elaborate procedures which the ojira invented to limit the powers of the oche. It seems quite possible that the elders in ojira 34. Anyebe, Otukpo, p. 1.

35. For more details see Chapter III.
were worried at the possible emergence of autocracy. This may explain why the ojira evolved two basic principles which guided recruitment into the office of the oche. The first was the rotation principle. In a kindred of three lineages each lineage would take its turn in nominating a candidate to the oche-ship of the group. This ensured that each lineage participated in supplying the oche in an ascending order of seniority. This second principle implied that while succession rotated among the constituent lineages, by proceeding from the most senior to the most junior (that is the lineage whose ancestor was the last to emerge) political power and authority would never become a monopoly of one lineage. Above all, the seniority principle virtually ensured that the oche was too old (and in some cases even too infirm) to present a threat of dictatorship.

Once in office, the oche's status was marked by traditional regalia, the most important of which were the akpa (royal stool), okwute (staff), and ofula (red cap). He also received agba (tributes) such as the trophies of fierce animals, elephant tusks and leopard skins. Shortly after the installation ceremony the oche became subjected to rituals which restricted his movements in and outside the community. For example, a new oche of modern Akpa district in Idoma Division was and still is forbidden to leave his compound for two years. Furthermore, he could not declare war without the consent of the ojira. All these restrictions on the personal liberty of the oche lead one to suggest that it was the excessive fear of the possible emergence of an autocrat that made the ojira resort to measures which prevented the concentration of that office in one unit or in the hands
of a young man.

What seems to have happened was that these early oches turned their attention to the religious aspects of the society. Evidence indicates that the oche was the chief-priest and president of nearly all the cults in the community. Like other African groups, the Idoma religion consisted of three essential elements. The first was the owoicho (the supreme God), the second Aje (the sustaining earth), and the third alekwu (the ancestral spirits). Although the owoicho was recognised as the creative supernatural force, yet because of the physical distance between the Idoma and God, the people thought it necessary to look for a substitute which acted as an intermediary between them and the latter. This intermediary was the Aje through which God transmitted His Force. In time, Aje became sacred to the Idoma. In fact, in some Idoma traditions, Aje is considered more important than God. 36

So important was Aje in the Idoma religious belief that each kindred group established an earth shrine within its ojira (kindred playground). The chief-priest of the Aje was the oche. In this capacity he was referred to as adaalekwu (father of the dead). In Idoma belief, the dead members of the kindred group were paradoxically 'alive'. In other words, death in the corporeal sense did not remove the dead from kindred membership as such. Rather, certain classes of the ancestors were considered vital and 'living' members of the commun-

ity. Consequently, they were endowed with certain rights and responsibilities. The oche, in his priestly role, was considered a vital link between the alekwa and the living community.

From the preceding analysis it is clear that kingship is rooted in every society and that it came out of the biological idea of the father of the family writ large. Clearly, among the Idoma, the oche was first a family figure before he became the 'father' of the community. Furthermore, it is also clear that the idea of kingship is deeply rooted in religion in which the oche or king became the carrier of God's will in the community. As for the crucial question of who came before the other, the oche or the ojira, it would appear that the oche came first but was later incorporated into the ojira which thereafter emphasised his religious aspects to the neglect of his political role. It must be stressed however that although warfare and charisma played significant roles in the historical development of the oche-ship they did not originate the oche-ship but merely strengthened the emergence of that office. To continue to attribute the emergence of kingship or of states merely to warfare or charisma, as some scholars have done, is to miss the fundamental issue. The origin of kingship is rooted in the history of the family, and is engrained in the nature of man the social animal.

Thus, prior to 1500 a strong tradition of oche-ship had been established among the Idoma groups in Kwararafa. Here in this homeland both the gerontocratic and conciliar principles of that office took root. However, between c. 1536 and c. 1745 most Idoma kindred
groups had abandoned their Kwararafa homeland in search of new and independent ones towards the western marches of Kwararafa. That shift to the new lands led to three different lines of political development. In one tendency, a variety of factors combined to weaken the principle of oche-ship to a point of crisis, in another the principle was strengthened but later weakened by centrifugal forces to a point of extinction, while in the third the oches emerged as kings of fully developed states. We shall now examine the background to these interesting political developments in pre-colonial Idomalnd.

Post-Migration: Phase I

Between c. 1625 and 1745 about sixty Idoma kindred groups established new homelands within the lower Benue valley. This homeland known as Apa I, has been discussed in chapter III. The first groups to arrive were the Owuna Bird, Red and Black Monkey groups, who subsequently established their political influence over a wide area of Apa I. The result was that groups such as the Civet Cat and the Agba, which came much later, were forced to wander from place to place in search of lands for settlement. For example, the founder of modern Adogoji Oje in Agatu district left Kwararafa c. 1625-1655. Evidence suggests that shortage of land within Apa I forced him further west into Apa 2. Once again, the group had to move from Apa 2 first towards the west bank of the Niger opposite Idah and later across to the northern bank of the Benue, before finally arriving at its present homeland in Agatu district. Thus, within one generation, the Adogoji Oje kindred group established four new settlements after moving out of Kwararafa and was forced to abandon each one in quick succession.  

The most dramatic story of the rapidity in which Kwararafa refugees founded new homelands comes from the Iga kindred group, also in modern Agatu district. Its founder, Apa, left Kwararafa between c. 1655-1685. Iga's historical traditions indicate that their group was chased first from their ancestral homeland in that confederacy and pursued by the Kwararafa to the northern banks of the Benue, opposite the modern Agatu town of Wetg. Here, the leader of the group, Ongbo, established a new homeland between c. 1685-1715. According to informants hardly had Ongbo settled his people than the Kwararafa forces struck again, thereby forcing the Iga group to move further inland to the Alago country. Evidence indicates that Ongbo established two new settlements but abandoned each when the Iga were being raided by their Alago neighbours. Finally, c. 1715-1745, Ongbo's grandson, Ochejeatekpa, was forced to cross with the remnants of the Iga group to the southern banks of the Benue. This unrest split the kindred group into the Ikobi, the Iga and the Ochumekwu, who are all settled today within modern Ochekwu district. In such conditions of prolonged wandering and unrest, few refugee groups had time to establish any significant political authority in their new lands. The result was that the institution of oche-ship remained much as it had been in Kwararafa before the migrations.

This point comes out clearly from a colonial administrator's description of a typical political organisation of the Adogoji Oje

38. AGHT-32, pp. 102-104, Enumula Olegahu (60), et al 23-6-75.
kindred group in Agatu district. He described it as "divided into two clearly distinct lineages which in turn hold the clan headship. The oche is normally the senior member of the lineage whose turn it is to hold office." Rotation and seniority principles were thus still operating in the new homeland after a period of nearly four hundred years of separation from Kwararafä. Chart XIX shows how the rotation principle worked in practice among this group. It can also be seen that between c. 1625-1685 the pattern of succession to the oche-ship followed the father/son principle. However, after c. 1685-1715 succession reverted to rotational principle as was practised in the Kwararafä homeland.

The same officer observed that the oche was "the holder of the sacred staff of the clan ancestor and the chief-priest of the cult of alekwu. The oche was regarded as the chief mediator between the kindred and its ancestors, the focus of all traditions that hold it together." Here the oche was still unable to divest himself of his purely religious role and assume some real political authority in the community, for "the civil functions of the oche are not easy to define, but generally it may be said that exactly in so far as he has physical ability and strength of character, he has executive authority. However, the oche was an old man who was primarily concerned with his religious functions." There can be very little doubt that nothing

40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
CHART XIX

ADOGOJI OJE CHIEFLET IN AGATU DISTRICT

1625-1655

1655-1685

1685-1715

1715-1745

1745-1775

1775-1805

1805-1835

1835-1865

1865-1895

1895-1925

*Numbers indicate order of succession within the kindred group.
substantial had happened to strengthen the principle of oche-ship; rather such factors as land shortage and prolonged periods of migration had combined to weaken the oche to a point where he can justifiably be called a small chieftain and his domain a chieflet.

However, this should not be construed to mean that chiefletship among some Idoma groups had remained static over the years. The contrary should be the case. Such factors as trade along the Benue as well as the arrival of more refugees between c. 1745–1775 brought some changes in the office of the oche. Socially, those refugees who fled from Kwararafa and settled in areas within modern Agatu became 'landowners' and those that came much later were called 'latecomers.' Economically, the latecomers depended on the landowners for land for their homes, farming, and fishing. For example, the Adogoji Oje chieflet claimed that their ancestors settled the Ikpele, Abacha, Ike-Epe and Enogaji on their ancestral lands in Agatu. Informants from another chieflet, Agbaduma, claim that their leader Ogbahi between c. 1745–1775 gave land to Abakpa, the leader of Aku chieflet and that land was also given to the leaders of ai-omaga. There is little evidence that these landowners attempted to subjugate the latecomers politically. Whatever political changes took place were of a minor character.

42. AgHT-6, pp. 22–28, Suleman Etuka (75), 19–6–75.
43. AgHT-32, pp. 102–104, Enumelu Olegahu (60), et al. 23–6–75.
However, the volume of trade on fish, salt and canoes by the Igbirra, the Alago, and the Epe across Agatu district brought many ethnic groups into several chieflets. This led to the establishment of central markets within the district. Soon there arose the need to maintain law and order in market places. Evidence suggests that the various oche had control over these markets. Subsequently, they appointed heads of families as market advisors. In principle, the oche had the right to all the profits realised from fines imposed on those who broke market rules. It was expected that these profits would enhance the dignity of the oche, but probably because these markets were too small to generate sufficient lucrative economic activities which would have strengthened the principle of the oche-ship; this did not happen. In modern Agatu district, little change in the oche-ship occurred but among three Igoma groups of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo, many significant changes affected the office of the oche.

Phase II

Between c. 1535-1625, with the collapse of their Kwararafa homeland, the leaders of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo moved westwards and established Apa I as their new homeland. The economic situation in this homeland enhanced both the size of the oche’s political organisation and his status.

The economic history of the lower Benue Valley is by no means clear, and considerable research is still required before a clear

44. AgHT-6, pp. 22-28, Suleman Etuka et al., 19-6-75.
picture of that story can be obtained. Indications are that before 1600 A.D. there was a brisk trade in salt, fish and dug-out canoes as well as opa (locally manufactured cloth) and red pepper which dominated. It would appear that this trade was confined largely to the area between the confluence in the west and modern Abinsi in the east. The Benue River remained the major commercial highway in this period although there were overland trade routes. Indications are that while the Igbirra monopolised trading on the Benue, Keana remained the chief salt producer during this period. There were trade routes connecting Keana in the north with Koma in the west, and Abinsi on the southern bank of the Benue.45

It appears that with the economic demise of the Igbirra by the last decade of the seventeenth century, the oche of Ugboju dominated the economy of Apa I. Initially his people were middlemen between the confluence and Abinsi as well as carrying both opa and salt further south into Igboland and Ogoja country. There was a major trade route which left Abinsi and traced the southern banks of the Benue past modern Agatu district slightly to the north and later branched further south into Igbo country. Along this trade route such items as fish, salt, palm oil and some domestic animals were taken to Igalalaland.46

The currency at this early period was in all probability what Baikie described in the 1850s as a "curious currency... It is of iron in the form of a small hoe, with a long pike at one end." According to him


46. Ibid.
"this strange money is in Domá and in Kororofa called Akíka, by the Mísha Ibia, and in Hausa Agelema."47 Evidence suggests that the profits from this long distance trade flowed into the coffers of the oche.

Some economic historians would view these economic developments as the pre-condition for the emergence of a state. If economic change originates political chieftaincy, the emergence of the oche among the Idoma should be dated to this period, that is c. 1655-1715. But in the Idoma case the theory will not work for the oche emerged in Kwarara before 1500 and left that cradleland thirteen generations ago (1535-1565). What trade in the new homeland did was not to create oche-ship but to enhance the dignity of the oche and encourage a significant increase in the size of his political unit.

By the c. 1680s each of the oches from Ugboju, Adoka and Otukpo had established large political groupings within Apa I. Politically each unit was governed according to the segmentary gerontocratic principle which was brought from their Kwarara homeland, but after c. 1700 each oche had emerged with an enhanced dignity. Economically, profits from the trade in Apa I allowed them to wield more political powers than before. Since these oches were patrons of markets within and of trade routes in and out of that homeland, tolls and profits went to the oches' coffers They not only appointed market masters but also sent officials as trade commissioners to neighbouring settle-

ments to arrange favourable trade terms with other groups. Such economic activities involved the oche much more in the secular life of the community. Socially, two of the oches adopted the ekwuafia ritual from the Igbirra and began to popularise the idea that even the dead chiefs should be 'resurrected' during ekwuafia ceremonies. During each such ceremony, the acolytes who impersonated the dead oche used opa as the ritual dress for the occasion. Furthermore, the oches introduced the idea of incorporating the small refugee groups who later invaded Apa I into their political units. These refugees were allowed to maintain their hereditary kingship with a large measure of autonomy. Ugboju, for example, incorporated several of these refugee groups between c. 1655-1715. Otukpo, another example incorporated the Akpachi and Otada refugees. These refugee groups later constituted the commoner lineages within Apa I. Individuals sometimes entered such political units to seek the protection of an oche. They too were allowed some measure of political autonomy and allowed to marry into the oche's family, in which case the descendants were designated ai-anunya (people of female attachments to the ruling lineages). Constitutionally, a select number of elders among the ai-anunya became the king-makers for the oches of Ugboju, Adoka and Otukpo. Thus, between c. 1535-1655, economic and social factors in Apa I created a distinct tendency to augment the secular authority of the oche along the road towards kingship.

That growth was halted by sudden Tiv in roads into Apa I between c. 1685-1745. The Tiv vigorously pushed from the southeast and totally disintegrated the political units of nearly all the Idoma groups that lived southeast of Apa I. From the north bank of the Benue came the Alago invasion which also flushed out groups on the north bank of the Benue including Otukpo. These events led to the final collapse of Apa I c. 1685-1745 and further emigration towards the south. The oches of the various groups then led their people to yet another homeland. There, new neighbours and different conditions reversed the trend to centralisation.

Further growth and decline of och-ship

Geographically, the new homeland which later became Idoma Division lies west of the powerful kingdoms of Idah and Ankpa. This geographical location brought new constitutional changes within Ugboju, Adoka and Otukpo. Two aspects of these changes are especially significant. First, between c. 1715-1745, nearly thirty migrant groups from both Idah and Ankpa fled eastwards and took refuge within these new political units. While Ugboju accommodated nearly fourteen Adoka made room for about thirteen with Otukpo taking only one refugee group into its midst. About the same time nearly forty migrant groups (also from Idah and Ankpa) took refuge among the various chieflets to the north, west, and south of modern Idoma Division. The presence of these migrant groups, particularly within areas controlled by Ugboju, Akoka and Otukpo, swelled the ranks of the commoner lineages which within the next two generations began to press for constitutional
concessions from the oche of each unit.

Second, between c. 1715-1775, the Idoma oches began travelling to Idah for their investiture ceremonies. So far, there is little evidence to suggest that these oches were tributary to the king of Idah. They probably went there for reasons of prestige. Armstrong comments that "Idah came to have great prestige, and lands which certainly never paid tax to Idah would send their chiefs there for proper installation." It is also possible that the presence of Idah royal émigrés and the tradition of a royal drummer from Idah within Ugboju and Adoka enhanced the dignity of their oches. With the influx of royal émigrés, both Ugboju and Adoka oches may have found it necessary to be installed at Idah to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of these new subjects. Otukpo received only one refugee group from Idah and its oche does not seem to have had the same problem of legitimacy vis-à-vis Idah royal émigrés. The oche of Otukpo went not to Idah, but to Abinsi from where it incorporated the Akpachi and Otada when the Otukpo were still located within Apa I. Thus the proximity to Idah enhanced the dignity of the oche and status of their political units which became more elaborate both in size and organisation.

The installation of the new oche became a major event in the calender of the community. The symbolic death that preceded his formal installation became a great day of feasting in the new homeland as the

49. Armstrong, "The Igala," p. 82.
citizens looted and destroyed his personal belongings in the belief that the oche entered his elevated status as a pauper. What originally started as a simple kindred affair in Kwararafa, became by the eighteenth century an elaborate state occasion when, for fourteen days, the people celebrated the installation ritual of the new oche. After the investiture ceremony at Idah the oche was formally installed amid great feastings. His status was marked by a new additional ritual oka (a bracelet of coral beads) which became the most important regalia, held to be above those which were brought from Kwararafa. Each oche was granted a special etiquette, and was addressed by traditional titles. Officially saluted with obande (royal salute) in Ugboju, in Adoka he was greeted alegwu and in Otukpo he was hailed odu. 50

Politically, the oche enhanced his position as secular leader of his community. According to one source, it was at this time that the oche began to bestow titles on all deserving sons of the society: "he bestowed the aigabo titles on the clan spokesman, thereby designating both his aides and his line of succession; appointed the aiuta (constabulary), received a share of fines imposed by the aiuta, acted as a court of appeal in the inter-family disputes; and took action to bring murders of justice to book." 51 (sic) Thus the oche, large-

50. The meanings of these official salutations are still unclear to the writer.

ly because of the presence of several non-ruling lineages within his area of influence, began to take a more active part in political life. Honorific titles were given to the heads of the new commoner groups; the titled aigabo now became the spokesman for the oche, spreading his influence about the society. The aigabo devoted their time to matters of supreme importance such as defence, war, festivals, inter-kindred negotiations and the more serious breaches of the law of the society. Day to day affairs, such as enforcing the laws in the community and in the market places, was the responsibility of other title holders. The most important of these was the och'ilihi (market master) whose official salutation was okpoju. He was assisted in his duty of maintaining law and order in market places by another group called the aiuta (constabulary) whose membership was drawn from the heads of the smaller social units. The aiuta in turn were assisted in carrying out the oche's orders throughout the political unit and in collecting debts by a number of secret societies. These included the onyonkpo, ichahoho, owuna-ekwu, odumu and the ikpokwu, found in almost every community. The challenges of the new homeland appeared to be such that the oche was emerging as the head of a powerful kingdom. Then between c. 1715 and 1745, the development of the oche-ship reached a point of crisis, and this trend was dramatically reversed by forces which desisted and weakened the oche's power.

The commoner kindred groups within each political unit, in spite of their

52. Ibid.
increase in number, were still denied certain political rights in their new homeland. They were still not truly integrated politically into the ruling groups in each settlement, but were allowed only two relatively minor concessions. They could maintain their hereditary headship. Moreover, of the many commoner kindred groups within Ugboju, Adoka and Otukpo, one only was selected to act as the king-maker in each. In Adoka, this was the Ojakapama; in Ugboju, the ai-Ochomoche acted in a similar capacity while Otada in Otukpo became the officials responsible for the installation of the new oche. With but one commoner kindred group (ai-anya) selected for each, the rest of the commoner groups thus did not participate in the political life of their community. This situation led to a number of crises.

As the population increased in each settlement, there was a proliferation of the royal kindred groups. For reasons which may not be unconnected with the presence of the numerous commoner kindred groups, the royal kindreds began at this time to differentiate between themselves. In each political unit at this time succession became confined to only three lineages. This implied that a large number of the royal lineages were now being treated like the commoner groups. In fact, there developed a tendency among the ruling lineages to look down upon all the other kindred groups as commoners. Those kindred groups which were excluded from ruling then joined forces with the "true" commoner kindred groups to foment political crises in each

53. For example see, AHT-18, pp. 83-84, Oduma Okpa (55), et al 6-6-75.
54. UHT-16, pp. 101-105, Egbe Egberikun (45), et al 29-11-75.
political unit. In Ugboju alone, there were about thirteen commoner kindreds, in Adoká about twelve and in Otukpo there were five. Between c. 1715 and 1895 each political unit went through a period of intense political turmoil.

The first crisis erupted in Ugboju and continued nearly four generations from c. 1715-1865. The complete political confusion of this long era is illustrated in chart XX, where it will be seen that from the foundation of the three political units in c. 1535-1625 each had remained politically united for about six generations during which time the oche fully institutionalised his office. Succession (as indicated in chapter II) followed the pattern of oches being succeeded by their sons. After c. 1715-1745, largely because of the influences from İdah kingdom to the west, each political unit within the new homeland broke down into sub-units. In Ugboju, instead of a united and virile political unit, three sub-chiefdoms emerged: ai-Oko, ai-Ogwu and the ai-Agbaja. In the next generation c. 1745-1775, the ai-Agbaja fragmented further into ai-Ejika. While these crises persisted between c. 1715-and 1865, the ai-Oko had only one oche, the ai-Ogwu five, and the combined forces of the former ai-Agbaja had six oches. What was happening was that each sub-chiefdom had quietly mustered a number of ai-anya and commoner groups around itself. For example the ai-Agbaja became identified with such commoner kindreds as Ofiloko, Ochomoche, Oduda I and II, Omolonye, Ifete and Ojagidigbe. The ai-Ejika surrounded itself with both Emichi and Akpachi for
political support. The ai-Ogwu attached Okudu and Ojoko to itself while the ai-Oko looked to the Jericho commoner group for support.

In Adoka chieftdom, the story was only slightly different in the sense that trouble erupted there one generation after Ugboju. After c. 1745-1775, instead of a strong single oche three new ones emerged, the ai-Adoka, the ai-Enyikwola, and the ai-Ode, all sons of Okalekwa (before whom succession had followed the pattern of son succeeding father). During the whole period of turmoil from c. 1745 to 1865, nine oches sat on the various chieftaincy stools of the three sub-chieftdoms. During the same period, all the ai-anya and the commoner kindred groups in Adokaland were shared between the three sub-chieftdoms with the exception of Umogidi and Iwili which were allowed to retain their political autonomy.

Evidence suggests that Otukpo was late in feeling these political effects but there too, between c. 1835-1895, its unified oche-ship split into three warring factions, the ai-Odaji, the ai-Oguche, and the ai-Agboko; and a total of eleven oches sat on the various stools within each of the new sub-chieftdoms. As elsewhere, each sub-chieftdom attached to itself a number of commoner lineages, with the greatest number going to the ai-Agboko sub-chieftdom.

About eight generations ago (c. 1685-1715) there was a gradual development of internecine wars between the three chieftdoms. As the oches shifted form Apa I to their new homeland, the traditional method of shifting cultivations, the large influx of emigrants from Idah and Ankpa, the frequent communal hunts away from the kindred...
territory, made intense demands on the available land within the new homeland. Soon, intra-group fights broke out and later these became full scale wars between one chiefdom and the other. Thus, while these wars persisted between c. 1685-1865, the principle of oche-ship was weakened to a point of crisis.

However, between c. 1685-1895, the pervasive internal crisis within each of the former chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo was driven underground by the persistence of external warfare. The defeat of the Tiv and Ankpa expansion pulled the Idoma together into large units, thereby once more strengthening oche-ship. This external threat lasted only one generation and as soon as it was over, disintegration set in again. According to one source, with the external threat removed the Idoma did not see

... the urgent reason for maintaining political unity behind a chief... Jealousy between the lineages, always present, became relatively more significant, and, while the ideology of chieftaincy remained strong, the lineages could never agree on the succession. In this situation chieftaincy as an operating social reality... evaporated. 56

55. Between c. 1685-1715 a total of 4 wars took place in the 3 chiefdoms.

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Such was the state of affairs in most parts of central Idomaland when the British began administering this area of Nigeria in 1900. British rule also helped to bring back unified oche-ship to each of the disintegrated chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo. Obsessed by the need for 'the maintenance of law and order' the colonial administration insisted on unified oche-ship throughout Idomaland and the administration set out to appoint one oche in each of the three chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo. While Amanyi of ai-Agbaja became the ochumbeke (whiteman's chief) in Ugboju, a certain Eche of ai-Enyikwola became the new oche of Adoka. In Otukpo, the new oche came from the ai-Agboko and he was Ogbole who now emerged as the oche of the whole of Otukpoland. Thereafter succession, although now confined to only three ruling lineages in each of the former chiefdoms of Adoka, Ugboju and Otukpo, became regular and the rotation principle was once more restored.  

Phase III: the emergence of state systems in the South

Between 1715 and 1935, true states emerged in both Igumale and Agila, the two southernmost administrative districts in modern Idomaland. Evidence suggests that the peopling of the two states was a slow historical process during which two ruling families came in from Idah and Kwararafa and built states in these areas of Idomaland.

While a large percentage of the Agila population claim Igala descent, those in Igumale trace their origins to Kwararafa. Much

57. For example see, UHT-24, pp. 130-133; Anyebe Ujo (75), 2-12-75.
later, between c. 1805-1835, the two states witnessed an unprecedented influx of Igbo immigrants from areas in both modern Abakaliki and Nsukka districts. It would appear from one source that from c. 1625-1655 when the pioneers from Igala began to arrive in the Agila area, that region was originally occupied by groups which have been identified as the 'Uma'uga, Oludu, the Egedegbe, and the 'Ugbe'etese', all of whom spoke what seems to have been an Igbo dialect. These early groups may have been the first Igbo settlers in this region. Whatever the precise situation may have been, these groups were later culturally assimilated by the Igala immigrants. It is thus clear that the modern population in both Igala and Igwumale did not originate from one ethnic group. They came from a diversity of sources and directions. It was this diversity, above all, that led to the emergence of a complex political structure which sought to weld these heterogenous elements into a single state system.

It is being argued here that the state among these Igdo groups originated from the meeting of different ethnic groups living in close proximity. The coming together of two different cultures of similar strength from both Kwararafa and Idah might promote either a modus vivendi or breed tension and harden lines of hostility. Webster's study in East Africa shows that the Langi chiefs were faced with the first option and achieved a modus vivendi without resorting to outright hostility. However, among both Agila and Igwumale, states

58. "Notes on Agila," a typescript in my possession.

59. Webster, History of Uganda, pp. 52-3.
evidence indicates that tension existed in the two states and that the situation was saved with the arrival of the third party, the Igbo. Thereafter, while the Idah and Kwararafa groups emerged as the royal families in the two states, other groups took charge of religious and military matters. Thus within each state the secular, religious and military organisations reflected diverse ethnic composition.

In Agila for example, the secular authority remained with the pioneer group, the Osiligama kindred which arrived there c. 1625-1655. But from c. 1715-1745 either because of population increase, or other factors, that kindred split into two. These were the Ajegba lineage group (today localised within Efofu wards) and the Utsirable (whose members now settle within Oriroko ward of modern Agila town). Since c. 1715-1745, succession has rotated between these two lineages, with sixteen kings from the two lineages occupying the Agila throne.  

It should be stressed here that since the inception of Agila, the Osiligama kindred has provided continuity to Agila throne until the present time. Similarly, among the diverse Igwumale group, kingship has been confined since c. 1745-1775 to the Idogwu kindred group which a generation earlier split into two ruling lineages. These were and still are the ai-Agbo and the ai-Ajibo respectively. According to the political traditions from Igwumale, these two lineages have provided a total of fourteen kings to the Igwumale throne. It is thus clear that in each of these states there was a clearly defined royal

family which has ruled in these areas since the first decade of the eighteenth century.

Though the non-royals had no power to select kings or take part in the king making process, yet they were compensated by a variety of religious, military, and secular offices. In Agila, there was one chief-priest for the state and the office fell to the ai-Idogodo kindred group, especially to the family of Onugwu. The most senior elder in that kindred became the chief-priest of the agye (earth cult), with the title of utsoba (head of the granary). His official salutation was olagye (lord of the soil). Although the chief-priest came from a non-ruling family, the royal family made sure that the state interests were adequately represented in the religious sphere. In order to ensure the efficacy of the religious ceremony, five okwutes (religious officers) were present. While two of these were to assist the chief-priest, the other three came from the royal family, probably as observers. In Igwumale state, the religious organisation was delegated to the non-ruling Iga kindred group, whose Ogwu lineage supplied the chief-priest, while his assistants came from other kindred groups such as Ebia. In both states, although the non-royal groups were charged with these religious duties, the king remained the 'defender of the faith' of his people.

In both states the non-royal groups also performed the military functions. The war officers were known as otokpa (spear throwers). In Agila, there were twenty military titles, six of which were held

61. Ibid.
by the Edogogbo kindred group and the remaining six by the Otsgogbo kindred group, neither of whom was genealogically related to the royal family (the Osiligama). The war officers distinguished themselves from the other state officers by wearing ogoglo (a tall pointed hat). As in Agila, the military officers in Igwumale state came from the non-ruling kindred groups, including the Otukpo, Iga, Osukpo, Okokwu, Ogbe, and Ebia.63

There was also an elaborate system of graded titles for civil officers of each state. In Agila there were five principal civil titles referred to in the oral tradition as onrafu (headmen). Two of these titles were held by the non-royal Edogogbo kindred group while the last three were held by the Otsgogbo kindred group. Five additional titles called ichogwo included the most important office of the chief-priest ekwuafi ritual. That office was filled by the Edogogbo kindred group in whose settlement the sacred alekwu enslave is still located. These civil officers distinguished themselves from their military counterparts by wearing a flat doubled pointed hat, akpalewo (dog’s ear). In Igwumale the civil officers were evenly distributed among the different non-royal groups in the state. The office of achadu (prime minister), next in rank to the king, was held by Iga, Ogbe, and Osukpo kindred groups. Other offices of lesser rank went to nearly every ethnic group in each state. These officers had a distinguishing hat like those of Agila states to the south.

63. IGHT-3, pp. 12-29, Okpokwu Onye (60) et al, 7-10-75.
In both the Agila and Igwumale state systems in the pre-colonial period of Idoma history, a number of ethnic groups each with its essential political duties were organised into a great corporation. Each state controlled a definite territory within which it preserved law and order and defended its people against external aggression. Membership in each state was based on a territorial rather than a kinship basis and the state's jurisdiction was obligatory upon all persons within it. Politically, the state was constituted in such a way that the non-ruling kindred groups were given specific state duties, religious and military, to perform. In Agila, where the process of state formation went further than in Igwumale, every citizen there totemised the Leopard, which was the royal totem of the state.  

The evolution of oche chieftainship, and of states in Idoma, suggests kingship is a natural phenomenon which is built up over the years upon the family, lineage and kindred ties and emerges from the general structure of the society. It is "tribal" in origin. In effect, chieftainship and kingship reflect the father figure principle writ large, just as the father in many European societies is the king writ small. This chapter has also shown that kingship is rooted in religion. Among the Idoma, as in many other African groups, the father figure has religious attributes. He is hedged with god-like qualities which confer on him the necessary legitimacy and majesty before the eyes of the ruled, sanctified in the Idoma example by

64. *AgHT-3*, pp. 53-63, Ochoga Ogbu (50) *et al.*, 9-10-75.
ritual death and 'resurrection', which no longer make him an ordinary mortal. In scores of pre-colonial African states there were elaborate procedures to hide the king's humanity from the general public. In many ways, he was looked upon by his people as God's representative on earth. Among the European and Ethiopian Christians, he became the father of the nation; among the Muslims, the Caliph of the people, a carrier of God's will. It is therefore clear that behind all kingship, in and outside Africa, there is a religious history. Finally this chapter has attempted to show that there is very little fundamental difference between a chief and a king. What in effect happens is that once a father-figure emerges, he becomes exposed to different historical pressures. In some cases, the presence of lucrative economic activity, long distance trade routes, and the existence of markets can strengthen the principle of kingship to a point in which a state system emerges. In other circumstances that same principle can be weakened, to the point of extinction. Factors such as the presence of Hamitic invaders, the effects of lucrative economic activities, or the development of warrior states do not explain the origin of kingship. Deep down, the origin of kingship is in the very psychological nature of man himself. Embedded in the biological family, if planted in the wider fields of larger social units, kingship may grow and flourish or wither and decay, according to the influences brought to bear upon it.
CONCLUSIÓN

The major theme of this study is ethnicity in Idomaland and its relevance to other parts of Africa. Until quite recently, it was common practice among Africanists to assume that modern African nations are simply a collection of 'tribes'. In their view, the 'tribe' was the family 'writ large' as well as the widest network of people biologically related to one another. Using the Idoma as an example, this implies that the half a million inhabitants of that region of Nigeria would be considered descendants of a putative ancestor. Over the years the offspring of that ancestor expanded in number to their present size. Thus was born the concept of 'pure tribe' in African studies and thereafter followed a spate of literature on 'tribal histories' all over the continent.¹ There are several reasons why this myth of unitary origins for modern African nations has persisted so long among Africanists.

The first is both linguistic and cultural. Usually the existence of a lingua franca as well as a common culture were the dominant criteria for the claim that a particular group of people comprised a tribe. This was the practice in nearly every part of Africa. For example, scholars among the Tumbuka of modern Malawi were predisposed

¹ The first generation of British Anthropologists in Africa popularised the idea that nearly every ethnic group in Africa can legitimately claim 'biological purity'. Subsequently all such works that appeared in the 1930s referred to African groups as 'tribes'. See for example, Capt. R.S. Rattray, The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1932); Temple, Notes on the Tribes of Northern Nigeria, pp. 1-408.
to see the non-Ngoni Tumbuka as a unit." Nearly every ethnic group in modern Idomaland speaks a common language and shares common cultural traits. It was largely because of this linguistic and cultural unity that colonial administrators claimed that every group there belonged to some 'tribe' or other. Thereafter there developed a tendency among all 'tribes' to emphasize kinship as a factor of unity. Thus the concept of 'pure tribe' became entrenched by the time of independence in the 1960s.

This study has demonstrated that the word 'tribe' is unacceptable because it does not represent the reality of history. Indeed, none of the modern ethnic groups in Idoma Division is biologically pure, nor does the presence of a common culture and lingua franca make them a 'pure tribe'. No one would argue that in modern times the presence of a lingua franca such as the English language in Nigeria makes the Nigerians British. It is therefore highly illogical to assume, as some scholars have tended to do, that linguistic unity denotes common ethnic origins. This study has shown clearly that this postulation is grossly oversimplified in the case of the modern Idoma groups. Idoma's modern ethnicity is the result of a slow historical process which mirrors the historical experiences of the diverse ethnic groups which, in a myriad of inter-connected events, have contributed to the emergence of a unique Idoma culture. The same is true of many pre-colonial African nations such as Busoga, Yoruba, Igbo and a score of others.


In other words, modern African 'tribes' are a complex mixing of ethnic and linguistic groups over the past centuries. Therefore we can safely reject the concept of 'pure tribe' in African historiography as each was created out of a multi-ethnic community.

The second reason why the myth of unitary origins has continued to dominate the thinking of some scholars has been the conspicuous lack, until very recently, of adequate methodology in handling the histories of the multi-ethnic plurality of African nations. The only exception to this general criticism is the work done on East Africa where historians have developed elaborate techniques to cope with the bewildering array of small social units there. One of these techniques is the utilization of totemic symbols as a device in historical reconstruction. Most East African groups are totemic and totemic identification of one social unit guided the East African historian to identify the origin of several such related units. For example, Cohen's creative use of totems enabled him to put together the origins of modern disparate groups in Busoga. His success in employing totemic symbols as a possible historical methodology encouraged other East African historians such as Carole A. Buchanan and J.F. Wilson. East African historians have also evolved elaborate techniques to deal historically with generation sets, royal and commoner genealogies and archaeological data in dating the pre-colonial history of most East African groups. The extensive use of these new methodological devices

5. Ibid.
6. For example, see, Carole A. Buchanan, "Courts, Clans and Chronology in the Kitara Complex" in J.B. Webster (ed.) Chronology in African History (in press).
in historical reconstruction may go a long way to explain why the myth of unitary origins in that part of Africa is less pervasive than it is in other parts of the continent such as in West Africa.

Indeed, in West Africa, the process of creating a chronological framework for dating the pre-colonial history of most modern groups has hardly begun. The use of totemic representation is still in its infancy. This lack of methodology may go to explain why modern groups in Ghana are still referred to as "the tribes of Ashanti hinterland" and such Nigerian groups as the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, and the Igbo are still regarded as "tribal groupings".

This study tries to pioneer the use of totemic representation as a historical device in the West African setting. The Idoma society possesses a wide range of totems which the writer used to check the claims of oral traditions. Admittedly totems can represent political affiliation, religious, social, or economic ties. However, the majority of Idoma totems suggest kinship ties among the various segments of many kindred groups. This class of totems has been designated primary while the other classes could be looked upon as secondary and tertiary totems. It was largely through the use of primary totems that the writer was able to discover that the various

7. Recent evidence shows that 'tribal history is still fashionable among some Africanists in East Africa. See, for example, A.D. Roberts (ed.) Tanzania Before 1900, (East Africa Publishing House, 1968).
8. See for example, Webster, "Animals of the Kingdom" in which he used totems in reconstructing the early history of the Jukun from 1600-1900.
groups had come from various places and directions to settle in what later became modern Idoma Division.

A chronological framework for dating the Idoma pre-colonial history has been attempted. Unlike most East African groups, the Idoma do not have generation sets nor archaeological data which can be used for dating purposes. As well, literate aliens did not write about or visit the Idoma until the beginning of this century. However, the Idoma possess a wealth of both royal and commoner genealogies with numerous cross references from one to the other. Between the Idoma and their immediate neighbours there are well spaced tie-in references. All these devices have been used to develop dates with realistic margins of error for the Idoma past. These dates have proved, under examination from regional, internal and documentary sources, to possess remarkable internal coherence.

This interpretation of Idoma's early history also sheds some light on two important aspects of Nigerian historiography. One of these is the extent and nature of the political as well as the economic influence of the ancient Kwararafa confederacy on the various groups within the Benue-Cross River basin in pre-colonial times. It is clear from this study that Kwararafa confederacy was a multi-ethnic society which occupied vast tracts of land which included such major groups as the Abakwariga, Jukun, Igala, Idoma and a host of others. Considerable research is still required before a clear picture of Kwararafa's multi-ethnic society is complete. Whether Kwararafa territories extended as far south as the modern port of Calabar, as some scholars would want us to believe, remains doubtful.
Politically, it is also clear that Kwararafà was a confederation made up of many kingdoms. While the Abakwariga ruled the northern areas whose capital was located within the Gongola valley before 1600, several Idoma groups ruled their various colonies within the lower Benue Valley within the region of modern Wukari. However, after 1600, the Abakwariga hegemony in Kwararafà was broken by a new ethnic group, the Jukun, whose coup d'etat in c. 1630 'generated a wave of unrest throughout Kwararafà so that many groups including the òdòma ancestors left that homeland c. 1535-1745. Thus began the tradition of migrations of other ethnic groups out of Kwararafà. Such groups included M'bula and Momuye, according to Abubakr. Webster dates the foundation of several Jukun colonies on the northern banks of the Benue to this period of political unrest which characterised the rise of some Jukun groups to political power in Kwararafà. The influx of Idoma refugees from both Idah and Kwararafà between c. 1625-1775 witnessed an unprecedented inter-group conflict which ultimately led some groups to migrate further southeastwards into Ogoja country within the upper Cross River valley. These groups included the ancestors of modern Yala, Akweya, and Utukwang peoples of present-day Ogoja country. It is therefore clear that, politically and otherwise, the ancient Kwararafà confederacy had an influence which extended well beyond the Benue Valley where its capital lay to areas within the Cross River valley.

Furthermore, commercial contacts were also established between the Benue Valley and the areas further south of it. Chapters III and IV of this work clearly showed the existence of many trade routes which criss-crossed the two areas and beyond. It is quite possible, as many sources have suggested, that the ubiquitous Arọ traders may have exploited these routes to carry their wares from place to place. The Idoma town of Igwumale was reputed to be an Arọ slave mart in pre-colonial times. Horses, which were in great demand among the Igbo further south, were exported from the Igala town of Idah.\(^\text{12}\) It is reported that the Igbo communities used horses for ritual purposes. From Ahiashi on the south bank of the Benue, close to modern Makurdi town, came salt, fish and red pepper which were eventually taken to areas within Ogoja country.\(^\text{13}\) It is also possible as some sources seem to suggest, a brisk trade on slaves existed between ancient Kwararafo and Calabar. These slaves were eventually sold to European traders who frequented Calabar port from the seventeenth century onwards. Though these patterns need more investigation, they indicate the types of commercial links which existed between Kwararafo and areas further south, which imposed on this region a greater measure of cultural unity than is generally realized.

Similar studies on other regions of Nigeria have also shown that various pre-colonial states, groups, and peoples of modern Nigeria


\(^\text{13}\) A. E. Afigbo, "Pre-colonial Links Between Southeastern Nigeria and the Benue Valley," a paper presented to ABU seminar, 1974.
shared common historical experiences before the coming of the British colonial administration. For example, Ajayi had shown that the lagoons and creeks of the Niger Delta, which stretch from Lagos in the west to Calabar in the east, remained for centuries the commercial highways of commerce and cultural communication between the peoples of this part of Nigeria.\textsuperscript{14} Other studies also show that both the Benue and the Niger with their numerous tributaries linked various groups in what later emerged as southern and northern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{15} Many trade and cultural links existed between the Yoruba in the west and the Ebo, Igala, and Igbó in the east and beyond.

In face of this overwhelming evidence of common historical experiences between several ethnic groups of modern Nigeria, it is difficult to continue to subscribe to the theory that Nigeria is no more than an artificial creation of the British colonial government, if this implies that until the British came the various ethnic groups which today inhabit this geographical area were virtual strangers to one another. This thesis has attempted to show that ethnicity is more the result of historical experience than of biological relationship. For the nation builders of modern Africa this conclusion may well inspire hope for the future.


SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

A. ORAL EVIDENCE

The Idoma Historical Texts

The bulk of information used for the reconstruction of the Idoma pre-colonial history comes mainly from Idoma oral traditions. These traditions were systematically collected during a fourteen-month period of fieldwork from April 1975 to June 1976. During this period I conducted a series of 295 formal interviews with 1065 informants from whom I also collected 740 genealogies. The series of 295 interviews have been typed, bound and serialised into three separate volumes. They constitute the 'Idoma Historical Texts' (IHT). Furthermore, they remain the single most important source of information used in this study.

It must be stressed at this point that the present work on the Idoma pre-colonial history is an integral part of another research scheme, the Benue Valley Research Project (BVRP). The basic aim of that project is the systematic documentation of the early histories of the diverse groups which inhabit that part of Nigeria. Between June 1974 and September 1976 several professional historians have worked on the following ethnic groups: the Jukun, Tiv, Hausa, Alago and the Kanuris. The field notes on these groups have been typed, bound, indexed and serialised into separate volumes running through one to six. The Idoma Historical Texts are a continuation of these series and have been serialised from seven to nine. These texts have
a full index attached to volume IX. Copies of the IHT will be deposited at the Killam Library, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. The Director of the BVRP has a full set of these texts while his assistant in Nigeria, Dr. A.C. Unomah has also been sent a full set of the series which he will make available at the Africana collection of the Ibadan University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria. Thus within the BVRP, the IHT will be catalogued according to the various volume numbers (volumes VII - IX).

For purposes of easy citation in this study, a different schema has been adopted. Up till June 1976; Idomal and was parcelled into twenty-two county-size administrative districts. Formal interviews were conducted in twenty-one of these districts. In other words, fieldwork was organised on the basis of the present administrative set-up. The three IHT volumes contain the field texts from each of these districts. For example, volume VII is devoted to Otukpo, Ugboju and Adoka districts respectively; while volume VIII contains the field texts from Agatu, Ochewu, Oglewu and Onyagede districts. The last volume contains the texts of the remaining fourteen districts.

To facilitate easy reference, the field texts of each administrative unit will be referred to as the historical texts of that particular district. Furthermore, each interview session in any district will be numbered serially and contains the following particulars: the name of the kindred group; place and date of the interview, and the ages of each informant in brackets. What follows below is a complete listing of the 295 formal interviews district by district.
1. Otukpo District (IHT, volume VII)  

Otukpo Historical Texts no. I (OHT), The Otukpo Ojira Idikwu settlement, 12-5-75, Late Ocheibi Okplefu (100), Eje Ulo (64), Onyolokwu Olonta (40), Onyolokwu Onum (65), Oibi Okpe Onyukwu (55), Ologu Oche (45), Adalo Ibi Akpele (40), Elaigwu Okpogo (66), Acho Ogblo Okodaje (40), Adakole Udenyi (40), Okonagba Agbag (40), Ohara Ekwu (70), Egbu Ogbo (40), Imonye Ichanya (69), Ajonye Ojeka (80), Ekahinu Ogbe (70), Omo Ocheibia (55), Iya Ode (65), Utobolo Ode (50), Ode Efutu (40).  

OHT-2 Otukpo town 12-5-75. Adakole Akor (45), Ikwu Kingsley (54), Robert Ikwe (55), Eje Ulo (60); Obugwu Oche (65).  

OHT-3 Otukpo town Ai Oguche kindred group, 13-5-75. Oogu Oche (45), Adakole Akor (45), Obugwu Oche (45), Tsekpa Haji (65), Ochae Ekaheinu (37), Ongba Ahukwu (70).  

OHT-4 Otukpo town, Akpachi kindred group 14-5-75. Onu Agootey (17).  

OHT-5 Otukpo town, Ai-Agboko kindred group, 15-5-75. Adakole Akor (45).  

OHT-6 Upu settlement, Ai-Ode kindred group, 15-5-75. Omakwu Ikwe (60), Ode Ochugboja (70) Ohinya Ochugboja (60), Ochenu Ikwe (37), Ode Onah (60), Aboja Ikwe (50), Oco Oche (50), Olaigwu Ikwatu (65), Ega Ochugboja (75), Echo Ikwe (32), Adakole Akor (45), Ouche Eka-Ai-Ode (35), Odaudu Iga (75), Agbo Ega (80).  

OHT-7 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Aboganya settlement 16-5-75. Oanu Ipuhe (100), Ella Oona (61), Adakole Akor (45), Ella Oka (50), Onche Otiosa (50), Ekedegba Odajie (25).  

OHT-8 Otukpo town, Ai-Agboko kindred group, 16-5-75. Ijauka Ochete (63).  

OHT-9 Otada kindred group, Otada settlement, 16-5-75. Akpo Abu (60), Ogwu Oche (55), Ohiokpa Onukwu (55).
OHT-10 Idikwu settlement, Ai-Agboko kindred group, 17-5-75. Late Ochelbi Okplefu (100). 51-53
OHT-11 District Head's residence (DH) Emichi kindred group 24-8-75. Onyilokwu Omaji (65), Ogboke Adamaka (45), Adejo Ona (70). 54-58
OHT-12 Ai-Odaji kindred group, Ai-Odaji ojira 25-5-75. Odawudu Ode (50), Ochagwu Echekwu (58) 58-82
OHT-13 Okpailo kindred group, Okpailo ojira 26-8-75. Iyoko Otokpa (50). 83-84
OHT-14 Ajobe kindred group, Ajobe ojira 26-8-75. Ogbo Abechi (60). 84-89
OHT-15 Ai-Agboko kindred group DH's residence 26-8-75. Ijauka Ochete (63). 89-109
OHT-16 Akpachi kindred group, Akpachi ojira, 27-8-75. Onu Ageje (70), Agaba Adikwu (50), Oguche Aboje (45), Onyilokwu Oche (50). 109-117
OHT-17 Otada kindred group, DH's residence 20-11-75. Oyihele Okopi (45), Adikwu Okodeje (50), Ajonye Ojekwa (55), Oko Ogbole (55), Ogbomole Ogale (65), Adekefa Anuga (70). 117-125
OHT-18 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Idikwu settlement, 20-11-75. Eje Ulo (60). 126-132
OHT-19 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Akpagede settlement, 21-11-75. Al-Akoja (75). Dije Okpachu (65), Aig Amadu (55), Ondoka Ochelbi (50), Amehe Oba (55), Onah Oyihi (75), Okeko Oma (65), Onyilo Ikwuebojila (75), Ogbede Ongbinyi (76). 133-138
OHT-20 Akpachi kindred group, DH's residence, 21-11-75. Ali Akoja (75), Onah Oyihi (75). 138-145
OHT-21 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Assa ojira, 22-11-75. Adakol Esehuja (50), Richard Idoko (45), Agida Esehuja (45), Adadu Ede (60). 145-148
OHT-22 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Assa ojira 22-11-75. Onche Ochediku (55). 149-152
OHT-23 Ikobi kindred in Assa, Assa ojira, 22-11-75. Onyilo Agida (65). 153
OHT-24 Ugboju kindred in Assa, Assa ojira, 22-11-75. Ableyi Ude (60). 154-155

OHT-26 Abakpa kindred, Upu settlement, 23-11-75. Onche Amali (55), Ada Otufu (60). 161-164

OHT-27 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Obaganya settlement, 25-11-75. Oyisi Okpe (45). 164-170

OHT-28 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Obaganya settlement, 25-11-75. Okpe (55). 171-175

OHT-29 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Otukpo town, 26-11-75. Ogwiji Ikongbe (50). 176-178


OHT-31 Otukpo town, informant's residence, 5-12-75. Owunah Ocheaguwu (58). 181-185

OHT-32 Ai-Ode kindred group, Upu ojira 5-12-75. Elaiguw Ikwatutu (65), Aboje Ikwe (45). 186-188

OHT-33 Ai-Agboko kindred, Assa Ojira 5-12-75. Adakole Ogo (65). 189-191

OHT-34 Ai-Ode kindred group, Upu settlement, 6-12-75. Elaiguw Ikweatu (65). 192-197

OHT-35 Ai-Ode kindred group, Upu settlement, 6-12-75. Aboje. Ikwe (45). 198-211

OHT-36 Ai-Ogabo kindred group, Ai-Oguche ojira, 6-12-75. Oyije Amilika (70), Unaji Aliche (50), Innocent Afi Eya (45). 211-217

OHT-37 Ai-Ogabo continued. 6-12-75. Amu Itoho (45), Iche. Igiri (60). 217-218

OHT-38 Ai-Ogabo continued. Unaji Aliche (50), Oyije Amilika (70). 218-226

OHT-39 Ai-Oguche kindred group, informant's residence, 8-12-75. Ochawudu Ogo (70). 226-230

OHT-40 Ai-Agboko kindred group, Otukpo town, 20-12-75. Adumu Ocheibi (55). 231-233

OHT-41 Ai-Agboko kindred group, informant's residence, 22-12-75. Adakole Ogo (28). 233-248
2. **Ugboju District** (IHT, volume VII)

Ugboju *Historical Texts no. 1* (UHT). Ai-Oko kindred group, Oboto settlement, 26-5-75. Anyebe Ujo (75), Ogbole Ekoja (55), Adaboyi Agida (45). 2-8

**UHT-2** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Oboto no. 2 ojira, 26-5-75. Iheko Agida (50). 9-20

**UHT-3** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, DH’s residence, 26-5-75. Ikpe Agwu (45). 21-23

**UHT-4** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Ogiri Ogori ojira, 27-5-75. Abobo Ogbidu (50), Ejembi Edache (55), Ede Oko (45), Alekwu Ape (50), Okene Ogboju (50), Ejajdu Oga (60), Anebi Odiba (75), Ejeba Amer (50). 23-29

**UHT-5** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Alaglanu ojira, 27-5-75. Egwo Ochi (80), Idoko Aba (60), Ogene Agbiti (70), Onaje Elewu (76), Ibu Agbiti (75), Akpa Uja (50), Adejo Ekoja (50), Omale Uja (55), Okwa Onoja (55), Abo Odejo (55), Ochhei Agbiti (45). 29-40

**UHT-6** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Oboto ojira 28-5-75. Aba Otakwuche (100), Iyaje Okokwu (60), Ejwache Ogbabo (70), Ugbagwu Ochibano (80), Idoko Abatu (80), Ama Idoko (70). 41-53

**UHT-7** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, DH’s residence, 28-5-75. Ahmaddu Agwu (65). 54

**UHT-8** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Ogobia scion, informant’s residence, 28-5-75. Ija Agogba (100), Ologom Anjeni (75), Okopi Ofikwu (60), Agokpa Odudu (60), Ejoja Ogbole (40), Alechenu Ochigbo (50). 54-67

**UHT-9** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, Headmaster’s residence, 29-5-75. Agokpa Odudu (60). 67-72

**UHT-10** Ai-Agbaja kindred group, informant’s residence, 30-5-75. Agokpaa Odudu (60). 72-86

**UHT-11** Ai-Oko kindred group, informant’s residence, 28-11-75. Anyebe Ujo (75). 86

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**UHT-13** Jericho kindred group, Jericho ojira, 28-11-75. Abo Ode (45), Ijegan Ode (53), Ogbeche Una (50). 91-92
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Igo Oga (50), Amedu Ikpa (50), Adugba Oriagi (55), Oguche Oklewu (50), Adama Akoji (40), Enumaje Adele (45).

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Igomu Ochiba (100), Ukwuonya Odoga (70).

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UHT-17 Emichi kindred group, Emichi ojira, 1-12-75.
Aanya Onche (50), Ude Ekeje (50), Benjamin Ohukwu Egbudu (45), Ochugbudo Adoje (60), Onyilo Ekoja (35).

UHT-18 Emichi continued.
Aanya Onche (50).

UHT-19 Akpachi kindred group, Akpachi ojira, 1-12-75.
Ikpe Igwu (55), Ugbedu Okobo (45), Olonta Oba (45), Aganga Egwa (60).

UHT-20 Ai-Ogwu kindred group, Ilaba ojira, 2-12-75.
Ochaqua Ogo (55), Obeka Ongbinyi (100), Obande Akpaiku (85), Abo Agbanyi (50), Agie Igwu (60), Ajo Ogbae (65), Ode Adeje (65), Eupe Aba (45).

UHT-21 Ai-Agba okindred group, informant's residence, 2-12-75.
Agokpa Odudu (60).

UHT-22 Ai-Agba okindred group, Garuwa ojira, 3-12-75.
Alla-Amedu Ogbo (65), Ejembali Edanche (60).

UHT-23 Ai-Agba kindred, Ondo ojira, 3-12-75.
Ejembali Edanche (60).

UHT-24 Ai-Oko kindred group, Nwabo ojira, 12-12-75.
Anyabe Ujo (75).

UHT-25 Ai-Oko kindred group, Nwabo ojira 4-12-75.
Anyabe Ujo (75).

UHT-26 Ai-Oko kindred group, Nwabo ojira 4-12-75.
Anyabe Ujo (75).

UHT-27 Ai-Ogwu kindred group, Ogobia ojira 5-12-75.
Agokpa Odudu (60).

UHT-28 Ai-Agba kindred group, Ogobia ojira, 5-12-75.
Agokpa Odudu (60).
3. **Adoka District** (IHT, volume VII)

**Adoka Historical Texts no. I (AHT) Adoka ojira, 2-6-75.**
Igoji Ede (70), Egiri Oko (50), Simon Echilikwu (35), Oka-Ula Ogba (60), Egwa Thebe (60), Abagonye Odiba (100), Ikwu Oche (75), Ochakiti Oleche (80), Efut Otowu (70), Ochiko Odejo (80), Abo Ako (80), Aba Ekainu (80), Agbehí Ogiri (100), Ochiche Idu (100), Egwa Ape (100), Agbege Ibu (100), Oko Ejè (86), Ojii Ojecho (100).

**AHT-2**
Adoka kindred group, Opa ojira, 3-6-75.
Ogbole Ejilikwu (100), Adagba Ogloja (90), Echewo Okpe (100), Agbiti Ala (80), Abije Apa (75), Aka Oguwu Ana (60), Oduba Onu (75), Idu Ona (65).

**AHT-3**
Adoka kindred group, Opa ojira, 3-6-75.
Egwa Thebe (65), Oyibo Eschiabo (80), Ogbadú Ogbeha (75), Iyeayaka Ichima (50), Ode Ike (75), Achenu Aba (40), Ocholi Egbiojolu (60), Ekwọ Aba (65).

**AHT-4**
Adoka kindred group, Opa ojira, 3-12-75.
Igochi Edé (70), Idu Ogodu (50), Enokele Okpange (60), Iyeji Olofu (59), Odoko Odiba (65), Otačhe Ebigoje (70).

**AHT-5**
Okpe Ogaibi (75), Onu Okopi (54), Ikpoga Opia (80), Amanyi Opia (60), Omalao Ache (45), Otačhe Ogbaru (31), Aabechi Elaigwu (65).

**AHT-6**
Adoka kindred group, Opa ojira 4-6-75.
Agebn Eko (50), Omaáe Itido (45), Agbochenu Odika (60).

**AHT-7**
Adoka kindred continued. 4-6-75. Agbehí Ogiri (100).

**AHT-8**
Akpachi kindred group, Opa ojira, 4-6-75.
Ichapi’Adua (55).

**AHT-9**
Ai-Enyikwolụ kindred Awume ojira 4-6-75.
Ogbolo Ogbeche (60), Ojili Egbačhe (40), Oghala Ogbeche (60), Ogwolọ Onche (50),...
AHT-9 Ogomola Ebegeche (70), Agilima Adugbe (55), Inalegwu Adugbo (45), Ikwu Oche (75), Uji Ofitu (70), Ichapi Oche (70), Oche Adeole (55), Ochakiti Oloche (85), Amer Ojanya (60), Otach Aha (70), Adeyi Ojebi (55), Anobi Aho (50), Adamu Aho (80), Onu Awulu (65), Ochede Ooda (75), Ocheche Amer (75), Odugbo Ailepa (75); Ogwu Ekwo (45), Enukala Obobia (45)

AHT-10 Ai-Adoka kindred, Ope ojira 4-6-75. Agbiti Ala (80)

AHT-11 Ai-Enyikwola kindred, Awune ojira, 4-6-75. Ape Ejigboga (50), Olocho Ejigboja (65), Inyakana Unu (65), Ikpe Ejigede (60), Ealigwu Oglekwu (55), Ofu Oyigbe (60)

AHT-12 Ai-Ode kindred group, Barracks' ojira, 5-6-75. Igwu Aha (75), Agyebe Adakwu (75), Enechela Ogo (70), Uja Zchelekwu (60), Eche Achekuku (60), Eche Enyikwola (60), Egege Onum (55), Uboju Anyabe (55), Ogbanjua Achoda (55), Awulu Onjezu (35), Ogboche Ujo (60), Eje Ode (55), Adakole Oga (45), Ada Agbeh (45)

AHT-13 Ai-Enyikwola kindred group, DH's residence 5-6-75. Adeyi Ojaba

AHT-14 Ai-Ode kindred group, Court Hall, 5-6-75. John Ogwu (45)

AHT-15 Ai-Adoka kindred group, DH's residence, 5-6-75. Egirr Oko (50)

AHT-16 Ai-Enyikwola kindred group, DH's residence, 6-6-75. Idikwu Achada (65)

AHT-17 Ai-Enyikwola kindred group, DH's residence, 6-6-75. John Ogwu (45)

AHT-18 Ojakpama kindred group, DH's residence 6-6-75. Ondona Okpe (55), Omale Abu-Idegwu (45), Omachi Itodo (65), Iyachi Itodo (45)

AHT-19 Uboju Ai-Omaga kindred in Adoka, Court Hall, 7-6-75. Adaonyiilo Oche (50), Awudu Aghadu (80)

AHT-20 Umoigidi kindred group, Court Hall, 7-6-75. Omakuw Aie (65), Orog, Ihe (50), Uloko Ajilime (55), Baba Ataga (50)
AHT-21 Umogidi continued. 7-6-75. Ataga Olonta (80).

AHT-22 Ai-Adoka kindred, DH's residence, 7-6-75. Egiri Oko (50).

AHT-23 Ai-Adoka kindred, DH's residence, 7-6-75. John Ogbu (45).

AHT-24 Ogodumokwo kindred group, Conrt Hall, 14-11-75. Aboje Otaje (75), Ochi Ogbols (60), Adungo Onyilokwu (50).

AHT-25 Okinyi kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira, 14-11-75. Agebe Idogbe (60), Itodo Ape (55), Obenyegba Ape (76).

AHT-26 Ojakpama kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira, 14-11-75. Omachi Itodo (65), Abu Idegwu (45).

AHT-27 Ojakpama kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira, 15-11-75. Itodo Ape (55).

AHT-28 Ejema kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira, 15-11-75. Apa Ejigboga (55).

AHT-29 Ai-Ode kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira 16-11-75. Agbah Ogiri (100).

AHT-30 Ai-Enyikwola kindred, DH's residence, 16-11-75. Ochekiti (40).

AHT-31 Ojonowa kindred group, Ai-Ode ojira 16-11-75. Olotu Apechi (35), Akawo Adonyebe (35), Ekainu Ebene (30), Owoicho Amonjenu (55), Oloche Adonyebe (35).

AHT-32 Ai-Enyikwola kindred group, informant's residence, 17-11-75. Abogonye Odiba (90).

AHT-33 Ai-Enyikwola kindred, Court Hall, 17-11-75. John Ogbu (45).

AHT-34 Ai-Enyikwola kindred group, DH's residence, 17-11-75. Agbehi Ogiri (95).

AHT-35 Entekpa kindred group, DH's residence, 17-11-75. Adeke Oche (75), Iyache Akpoga (75), Ada Akpoga (55), Edache Idobi (70), Aleyi Okake (40), Ukogwu Itodo (55), Omaju (40).
AHT-36 Ai-Adoka kindred group, DH's residence, 17-11-75. Egiri Oko (50).
166-172
AHT-37 Ikobi Upu kindred group, Ikobi ojira, 18-11-75. Odumu Okpaigu (50), Olékewu Ajegyu (70).
173-175
AHT-38 Igume-kindred group, Igume ojira, 18-11-75. Oyikwu Okpaigu (60), Ikpe Ayilo (60), Onhe Ije (55), Ochéhu Osiale (50).
176-180
AHT-39 Iwili kindred group, Iwili ojira, 18-11-75. Adoga Ogbole (45), Aboje Ogbole (80), Odoba Ogbaja (60), Olotu Ako (60), Adaji Agbochenu (55), Ogene Oganaga (65).
181-190
AHT-40 Igojibakoto kindred group, DH's residence, 18-11-75. Abichele Akada (50), Ogangsui Akada (45), Obiche Akada (30).
191-197
AHT-41 Umo gidii kindred group, Umo gidii ojira, 18-11-75. Oyibo Utolo (70), Ocheiunu Ubu (70), Iben Onyili Omu (70), Ikwe Omuakwu (65), Atoga Olonga (80), Eje Adoganye (55), Ekwulon Ogbole (60), Odude Ajeibi (60), Eje Eche Biabo (45), Achi Igboji (50), Ejeikwu Aloga (50).
197-209
AHT-42 Ai-Ode kindred group, Court Hall, 19-11-75. Eyigege Umu (55).
209-217
AHT-43 Ai-Ode kindred group, Court Hall, 19-11-75. Eyigege Umu (55).
218-221
AHT-44 Ai-Enyikwala kindred group, DH's residence, 20-11-75.
222-227.

Ochekwu District (AHT, volume VIII)

Obekwu Historical Texts no. 1 (OCHT), Ochekwu Ojira, 9-6-75: Amale Eje (65), Achebe Igboke (75), Sule Agabeunu (45), Aka Okopi (50), Agbodo Efu (55), Ogwola Epoga (60), Ihelegwu Ajenge (60), Ochijeke Okeene (75), Ochori Oka (70), Ochuma Ojibbo (75), Ochokwumu Aagwu (65), Ogo Aboje (70), Itodo Eke (75).
1-3

OCHT-2 Ai-Ooji kindred group, Court Hall, 10-6-75. Achebe Igboke (75), Idu Inalaigu (70), Ag Achechenu Aboje (70), Abu Ealaigu (70), Eda Aba (70), Ajonye Omoataha (65), Ogbolu Ochekwu (65).
4-6
OchT-3 Ugbokpo kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira, 10-6-75. Amale Eje (65), Onum Ujo (75), Eluma Isima (45), Onchi Ojoko (55).

OchT-4 Ooba kindred group, DH's residence, 10-6-75. Sule Agabani (80), Onu Ondoma (35), Adabo Elaigwu (70), Ewo Akпла (75), Igbita Ochohunu (45).

OchT-5 Adija kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira, 10-6-75. Okpachu Ebute (60), Eyicha Aloga (75), Ogbeba Ochi (75).

OchT-6 Ooji kindred group continued. 11-6-75. Amale Eje (65).

OchT-7 Ugbokpo kindred group continued. 11-6-75. Amale Eje (65).

OchT-8 Ooba kindred group continued. 11-6-75. Sule Agabani (80).

OchT-9 Adija kindred group continued. 11-6-75. Iga\scion. Okpachu Ebute (60).

OchT-10 Adija kindred group continued. 11-6-75. Iga\scion. Eyigege Aloga (75).

OchT-11 Iga kindred group; DH's residence, 11-6-75. Odangla Ugbu (80), Ako Ekpa (80), Aje Oga (75), Ada Okopi (90), Odega Obulu (70), Angulu Igboni (80), Awudu Oloche (85), Okobia Eyigege (85), Oche Ebenu Ofoje (70), Onucha Awodu (65), Ogiri Okeke (70), Olotu Adagbayi (75).

OchT-12 Edikwu kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira, 11-6-75. Akogwu Efuf (70), Uji Apochi (55), Otokpo Onwunye (70), Ogagwu Ena (70), Ecche Ula (50), Omalie Ogangle (55), Edache Echabo (65), Ataga Ukojo (70), Atangu Ajima (55), Adanu Ehoche (55).

OchT-13 Ugbobi kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira, 11-6-75. Idikwu Achigili (55), Enekola Aboje (55), Enekole Ujo (60).

OchT-14 Auke kindred group, DH's residence, 12-6-75. Ademu Ukpakw (65), Amonjenu (65), Amonjenu Ogwiji (70), Edo Okwo (45), Oko Idiyo (55).
OCHT-15 Iga kindred group, DH’s residence, 12-6-75.
   Odangla Ogba (80), Ada Okopi (100), Okobia Egiege (85).  47-52

OCHT-16 Edikwu kindred group, Ugbokpo ejira, 12-6-75.
   Akogwu Efua (70), Otoha Omuwene (70), Adanu Ehoche (55), Euche Ula (50).  53-56

OCHT-17 Ugbobi kindred group, Ugbokpo ejira, 12-6-75.
   Idakwo Achiijii (55), Enekola Ujo (60).  56-59

OCHT-18 AUTE kindred group, DH’s residence, 12-6-75.
   Ademu Ukporwu (65), Amonjenu (70).  59-63

OCHT-19 Ochumekwu kindred group, DH’s residence, 12-6-75.
   Ochijaka Okeme (75), Ochebe Otekwu (75), Aborje Itodo (75), Adanu Odogo (55),
   Oga Elaigwu (55), Olioma Amfiaya (65).  64-66

OCHT-20 Ojantelle kindred group, DH’s residence 12-6-75.
   Ochili Oko (75), Oyekwa Peter Eje (55), Adikwu Eyida (60), Okanaga Eyida (55), Adaobumu Ondoma (55), Eba Echono (55), Ogbajie Achukwu (65), Ochelefu Ejemanya (50), Edo Odongwo (45),
   Ogwola Oyaje (70).  67-70

OCHT-21 Odugbo kindred group; Ugbokpo ejira, 13-6-75.
   Inalegwu Ajenge (65), Emiye Ije (75), Igwu Otakwu (70), Igojugu Oglili (70).  71-73

OCHT-22 Akpete kindred group, Ugbokpo ejira, 13-6-75.
   Ayayi Oketa (75), Eyitama Ukporwu (35), Imsa Ogabada (55), Uweva Igache (50), Achema Igocha (50), Ukakwu Ega (70).  74-77

OCHT-23 Ataganyi kindred group, DH’s residence, 13-6-75.
   Eyibo Oga (75), Agbochenu Enyijebe (60), Aduba Onchajole (55), Omaji Eje (70), Oloto Idoko (55), Ochokunnu Eje Idu (70), Ikwobe Okoja (65), Oyikwu Eje (65).  78-80

OCHT-24 Ochumekwu kindred, DH’s residence, 13-6-75.
   Ochijaka Okeme (75), Ochebe Otaikwu (70).  81-84

OCHT-25 Ojantelle kindred group, Ugbokpo ejira, 13-6-75.
   Eyibo Oga (75), Oyikwu Eje (65).  85-89

OCHT-26 Odugbo kindred group, Ugbokpo ejira, 13-6-75.
   Ochili Oko (75), Ayekwa Peter Eje (55), Eba Echono (50), Ede Odongwo (45).  90-97
OchT-27 Ataganyi kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 13-6-75.
Omaje Eje (70), Ikwobe Okola (65). 88-100

OchT-28 Idada kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 14-6-75.
Ankpa Omaga (55), Ogbeke Ike (45), Anuga Angbo (50), Ochekwuma Ochinkwu (50), Edo Ede (50), Ochije Adunga (50). 101-103

OchT-29 Ojope kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 14-6-75.
Otene Adikwu (70), Yakubu Onchhe (50), Bawa Adukwu (50), Musa Okoliko (60), Adogbo Apa (75), Omaji Elakwu (65), Adehi Amonjenu (55), Omaji Ame (50), Ada Ajeibi (65), Emecha Oga (75), Alpha Adejo (65), Efuu Elakwu (70). 103-107

OchT-30 Tko-Abakpa kindred group, DH's residence, 14-6-75.
Alpha Aika (45), Ejika Ekoja (60), Abu Iyo (60), Sule Odawudu (45), Adama Mabamaoji (55). 108-109

OchT-31 Opaha kindred group, DH's residence, 15-6-75.
Itodo Epe (60), Edo Ede (55), Sule Elailgwu (60), Akpaluka Agebe (45). 110-111

OchT-32 Ikobi kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 15-6-75.
Unu Ochekwu (70), Eluma Amonjenu (75), Akpoko Ofie (70), Ogbabiale Anyakwlu (60), Aladu Olotu (55), Olope Adeyi (65). 112-114

OchT-33 Idada kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 15-6-75.
Ankpa Omaga (55), Ogbeke Ike (45), Anuga Angbo (50). 115-117

OchT-34 Ojope kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 15-6-75.
Otene Adikwu (70), Yakubu Onchhe (50). 118-120

OchT-35 Ejema kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 16-6-75.
Ogbenjua Ako (70), Tenkeli Okojha (70). 121-123

OchT-36 Igbirra kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 16-6-75.
Itodo Epe (60), Edo Ede (55), Sule Elailgwu (60), Akpaluka Agebe (45). 123-124

OchT-37 Ikobi kindred group, Ugboke ojira, 16-6-75.
Aledu Olotu (55), Olape Adeyi (65). 125-127

OchT-38 Ochumekwu kindred group, DH's residence, 24-6-75.
Ochijeke Okeme (75), Ochebe Otaikwu (70). 128-130
OcHT-39 Iga kindred group, DH’s residence, 15-6-75. Odangla Ogbu (80), Ada Okopi (90).
131-132

OcHT-40 Ujope kindred group, DH’s residence, 16-6-75. Otene Adikwu (70), Omaji Olakwu (65).
133-134

OcHT-41 Ooba kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira 17-6-75. Sule Agabanai (80).
134-135

OcHT-42 Ojantelle kindred group, Ugbokpo ojira 17-6-75. Ochili Oko (75), Oyekwa Peter Eje (55).
135-137

OcHT-43 Ijaha kindred group, DH’s residence, 18-6-75. Obiaje Ado (45), Ada Ede (65), Obagwu Ogbu (75), Ijele Echeipu (70).
138-152

5. Agatu District (IHT, volume VIII)

Agatu Historical Texts, no. I (AgHT), Agatu ojira, 19-6-75. Oyigbabo Uji (90), Ujepa Idu (80), Isa Aacho (75), Eje Oshu (60), Odum Iji (65), Omakwu Aji (70), Onowa Eje (65), Awudu Echoda (70), Ichapi Eje (80), Ochokunu Ogbela (60), Idegwu Abo (75), Anyebe Ogbaroyi (70), Elaigwu Igele (65), Eyioma Awaasha (55), Elaibi Egwagete (70), Achegbelu Eigonye (65), Eyigege Ogbanaku (55), Ajenu Uje (60), Idu Amauga (65).
1-4

AgHT-2 Adogoji Ojo kindred group, DH’s residence, 19-6-75. Osogbo Uji, Suleman Etuka (75), Ahmadu Ogwora (40), Achegbelu Olotu (75), Engba Akoja (75), Agida Oloha (75), Ologboji Ojoko (80), Adanu Igbo (70), Mgbeda Eka (85), Joseph Mgbeda (50), Echonoibi (75), Etheda Adikwu (80), Adoyi Inaigwu (70), Omakwu Ikwoch (75).
5-11

AgHT-3 Ologba kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 19-6-75. Amadu Ojepa (45), Adaha Egwa (70), Haruna Ondachi (45), Abu Adio (60), Mgbede Olotu (60), Mgbede Ondachi (45).
12-14

AgHT-4 Ogbeawulu kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 19-6-75. Isa Aacho (50); Adana Adogbole (70), Aghamgwa Oga (80), Adogboye Oluma (70), Awodi Amanyi (75), Eloyi Enekola (45), Amatu Ochejel (60), Musa Ochere (50), Onuminya Ogbole (70), Oyegwa Oyigwu (75), Sule Amanyi (60), James Edo (50).
15-19

AgHT-5 Adagbo kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 19-6-75. Anyebe Odagboyi (70), Ebi Edo (80), James Elamaji (40), Umola Echebanye (80), Ibrahim Anyebe (60).
20-24
AgHT-6 Adogaji Oje kindred group, DHMs residence, 19-6-75. Suleman Etuka (75), Agida Olota (75), Engbla Akoja (75), Adamu Igbona (70).

AgHT-7 Ologba kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 20-6-75. Adaha Egwa (70), Amadu Ojeje (45).

AgHT-8 Ogbawulu kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 20-6-75. Eloyi Enekola (45), Ogbeba Mgbede (70), Oyiigbede Edo (50), Sule Amanyi (60).

AgHT-9 Adagbo kindred group, Bagaji ojira 20-6-75. Anyebe Odogboyi (70), Ebi Edo (80).

AgHT-10 Usha Epe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 20-6-75. Eja Oshu (80), Ogbole Ogba (75), Inagwu Ogba (80), Ogudu Ochae (60).

AgHT-11 Ogufa Epe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 20-6-75. Odumu Iji (90), Adamu Adeka (75), Adame Abakpa (75), Oyikwu Ogam (65).

AgHT-12 Ogam Epe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 20-6-75. Oshoonya Ebu (50), Sule Ogbe (55).

AgHT-13 Bassa Komo kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Agani Ogwola (80), Ochokunu Ogweje (60), Ivoji Angulu (75), Eseni Azamaya (60), Ochekpo Onuminya (60), Aruna Elawani (40).

AgHT-14 Iga kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Ichapi Ejigbo (75), Oloje Ocheipu (85), Umoro Adamu (55), Idache Achukwu (60), Odoba Abo (70), Adakwu Ajodo (70), Okoloro Onume (70).

AgHT-15 Usha Epe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Eja Oshu (80), Inagwu Ogba (80).

AgHT-16 Ogufa Epe, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Odumu Iji (90), Oyiigwu Ogam (65).

AgHT-17 Ogam kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Sule Ogbe (55), Oshoonya Ebu (50).

AgHT-18 Weto-Ogbegbem-Bassa Komo kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Agani Ogwole (80), Aruna Elawani (40).

AgHT-19 Iga kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Oloje Ocheipu (85), Idache Adikwu (60), Umoro Adamu (55), Okoloro Onume (70).
AgHT-20 Iga kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 21-6-75. Onuminya Adamibyo (75), Elewani Atoughu (70), Enegedo Atungu (70). 69-72

AgHT-21 Ogwule Kaduna kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Onawa Eje (70), Otache Agbo (70), Ikakpo Idegwu (65), Ajaka Enbonye (75), Adaebida Enegola (75), Imom Iyojenyi (50). 73-74

AgHT-22 Ikpele kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Ochume Ogweji (80), Eje Gbole Ikwunja (75), Echono Echada (75), Alome Adokwola (50). 75-76

AgHT-23 Egba kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Anjeni Uji (90), Utologwu Icho (75), Ulok Ameh (65), Ahmadu Adeka (55), Awudu Oche (60), Ogwu Ekoja (70). 77-78

AgHT-24 Ogwuwole Ogbaulogo kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Abdullahi Echoga (80), Sule Ekwudani (60), Okpanachi Enogola (70), Ikaka Abo (80), Musa Onuminya (55), Eyigege Inalegwu (65). 79-81

AgHT-25 Egba kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Ajenu Uji (90), Awudu Oche (60), Ogwu Ekoje (70). 82-86

AgHT-26 Ogwuwole Kaduna kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Onowa Eje (70), Ajaka Enbonye (75). 87-89

AgHT-27 Ikpele kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Ochume ogweji (80), Echono Echada (75). 90-93

AgHT-28 Ogwuwole Ogbaulogo kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 22-6-75. Abdullahi Echoga (80), Sule Ekwudani (60), Ikaka Abo (80). 94-96

AgHT-29 Adana kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 23-6-75. Idegwu Abo (80), Abe Aduna (85), Ukweni Abeye (70), Aboje Abeye (75). 97-98

AgHT-30 Abogbe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 23-6-75. Elaiiku Ijele (75), Edo Odogo (55), Otene Oloche (50), Ogeebe Aje (45), Adegani Adikwu (50), Antenyi Elawani (60), Otacha Oyegwa (65), Edo Obiabo (60). 99-101

AgHT-31 Akpeko kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 23-6-75. Awashu Eyiorga (80), Oduba Ochukwu (60), Adikwu Ela (75), Oshoba Ogbo (65), Ikwulonu Agaba (75). 102-104
AgHT-32 Okokolo-Aghaduma kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 23-6-75. Enumu Olegbahu (60), Awudu Inalegwu (55), Egahi Ongaji (75), Ojeha Ogbole (70), Oba Ehwa (60), Ojebogba Ogbenyi (65), Eyiège Eyiibo (55), Eyiège Onuminya (65), Ogejima Idache (60), Obochi Enegela (50), Musa Ogwaie (50), Ejika Uleyi (75), Agbojini Afofo (65), Odagboyi Agbojini (30), Ada Idoko (80), Sam Ewuch (45), Elaigu Akolo (45), Udani Ega (50), Akono Adege (70), Ikwulono Ochche (70).

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AgHT-33 Abogbe kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 23-6-75. Elaiguw Abo (80), Otene Olocha (50).

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AgHT-34 Adana kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 24-6-75. Idegwu Abo (80), Ikwuenyi Abye (75).

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AgHT-35 Akpeko kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 24-6-75. Uwashu Eyimoga (55), Ikwulono Agaba (75).

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AgHT-36 Okokolo Aghaduma kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 24-6-75. Enumu Olegbahu (60), Egahi Ongaji (55), Musa Ogwaie (50), Ada Idoko (80).

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AgHT-37 Aku kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 24-6-75. Adiku Odejo (55), Oche Okpa (45), Danjuma Elada (60), Ochekpo Onum (50), Adagonye Uja (60), Amade Edache (65), Solumu Onum (60), Odogbo Okudu (50).

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AgHT-38 Aku kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 24-6-75. Adiku Adejo (55), Odogbo Okudu (50).

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AgHT-39 Atakpa kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 25-6-75. Ongbata Epo (90), Musa Epo (60), Igbita Otikwu (60), Adiku Anyebe (55), Maimuda Oloje (90), Isa Oga (60), Onereh Akpoko (80), Esheka Ekp (75), Sule Idoga (60), Usman Idoga (60), Agwoja Ewa (60), Oloche Elaiguw (70).

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AgHT-40 Enogaji-Abakpa kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 25-6-75. Abu Igboni (75), Ibrahim Okodeje (55), Adikuw Ocholi (60), Abu Elaiguw (50).

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AgHT-41 Okaqabi kindred group, Bagaji ojira, 25-6-75. Onchjele Ohemebi (65), Peter Ohemebi (50), Oyigegbe Okpoto (55), Odoha Ochebi (40), Onuminya Ongabili (65), Oboyi Ondachi (70), Ishabu Adan (60), Ichaba Akpa (70).

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6. Oglewu District (IHT, volume VIII)

Oglewu Historical Texts, no. I (OgHT), Ijami kindred group, DH's residence, 19-5-75. Michael Akpa (55).

OgHT-2 Ijaña kindred group, Oglewu Court Hall, 19-5-75. Abogonye Oga (49), Eje Agbenyi (60), Imalegwu Onakpo (50), Amojenu Omenyi (50), Omyni Ikwu (30), Ebegidi Ona (50), Ojoko Adole (35), Oko Onyilo (44), Able Echechina (43), Oko Uja (60), Ogwu Adikwu (32), Ogbue Oga (40), Oko Abua (42), Ilomu Ikwu (40), Oko Onyeni (40), Afo Idu (64), Adikwu Ejembi (32), Illuma Omaje (40), Alakpa Elaigwu (40).

OgHT-3 Ijami kindred group, Ijami ojira, 20-5-75. Awulu Ogbe (80), Achi Angbo (70), Ochaibi Ihu (70), Takida Ogbe (60), Aba Agbo (60), Oguiyi Ogbe (70), Idili Olupka (70), Udala Imoga (55), Egbe Odoko (68), Ogblogidi Akoji (59), Odoba Egwa (50), Otuamaje Odogo (55), Okoli Ilu (41), Ogbe Aloga (33).

OgHT-4 Ai-Agboke kindred group, 20-5-75. Anyeba Igomu (100), Okpe Olo (90), Abu Ebo (90), Okobi Ebo (70), Onche Okanagha (82), Obogu Onugbaje (63), Eje Onyilo (70), Jeremiah Igomu (40) Olohu Udala (30), Oklo Ikojo (50), Ochilega Okota (50),......
OgHT-4 ...Idu Ode (43), Ode Oche (54), Mathias Adekwu (48), Peter Itodo (40), Sam Ewa Oche (55), Egwu Okopi (38), Ode Ewache (50) 28-39

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OgHT-6 Anwule kindred group, Anwule ojira, 22-5-75. Oh. Idoko (61), Ewo Oche (75), Oche Oche (100), Bernard Ameh (45), Odeke Obakwu (20), Okede Ewauche (45), Uja Ako (61), Okori Oko (120), Oyili Otanwa (70), Anugu Ukwuonya (70), Ejembi Okpaku (80), Egbe Eletule (40), Oklewu Ohemu (100), Ochonya Agada (85), Agbo Okpe (70), Ode Oche (50), Ame Okpaleka (60), Okubi Okakwu (80), Okopi Ega (70), Oko Ogbiji (90), Okori Oguche (80), Odu Obale (75) 52-63

OgHT-7 Ochoho kindred group, Ochoho ojira, 23-5-75. Ode Oghenyi (70), Oganyi Otto (90), Ojekwa Anyigbo (80), Ochonye Ugbadu (75), Obala Odah (75), Ekoja Igagwu (30), Onuminya Ochefwu (75), Oko Aba (70), Aba Eyimogu (32), Obela Okwinya (65), Oguche Obaka (50), Adegeana Okwonya (65), John Abaraka (70), Awudu Adi (45), Ochalu Adi (60), Obiako Obaka (45), Egbo Eklebe (65), Udo Ojibo (30), Ajonye Umaji (70) 64-78

OgHT-8 Ochoho kindred group, informant's residence, 23-5-75. Aganyi Otto (90) 79

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OgHT-12 Ijam Kindred group, Court Hall, 25-5-75. Michael Akpa (55). 87-92

OgHT-13 Anwule kindred group, informant's residence, 26-5-75. Bernard Amie (45). 93-96
OgHT-14 Ijami kindred group, Court Hall, 22-11-75.
Michael Akpa (55). 97-98

OgHT-15 Idabi kindred group, DH's residence, 22-11-75.
Ubieke Ogbu (75), Enyime Ogb鞭e (45). 99-103

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Michael Akpa (55). 103-106

OgHT-17 Eboyta kindred group, continued, 23-11-75.
Thomas Ikwenya (50). 107-108

OgHT-18 Alagbanu kindred group, DH's residence, 24-11-75.
Thomas Ikwenya (50). 108-109

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Ocojila Ajaga (70). 110-111

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Michael Akpa (55). 112-113

7. Onyagede District (IHT, volume VIII)

Onyagede Historical Texts no. I (OnyHT), Onyagede kindred group, Court Hall, 19-8-75. Ude Agbane (75), Onyifokwu Ede (80), Okpabi Amah (70), Olo Uja (65), Idu Aba (60), Agba Oguchi (65), Ejelikwu Okodo (65), Oduminya Ogbe (55), Anawa Ominyi (55), Sule Ewache (45), Amka Ojila (65), Okwu Okla (55). 2-7

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OnyHT-3 Okpiko kindred group, Court Hall, 20-8-75.
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OnyHT-4 Awume kindred group, Court Hall, 21-8-75.
Okama Edache (45), Adeje Adigwu (40), Ododo Ejelikwu (50), Amanyi Ijike (55). 17-21

OnyHT-5 Agadagba kindred group, DH's residence, 30-11-75.
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OnyHT-6 Agadagba kindred group, DH's residence, 1-12-75.
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OnyHT-9 Abakpa kindred group, DH's residence, 2-12-75. Omale Ogani (55), Mahamadu Ochonyi (58).

8. Edumoga District (IHT, volume IX)

Edumoga Historical Texts, no. 1(EHT), Ojigo kindred group, DH's residence, 22-9-75. Daniel Ada Adulugba (46).

EHT-2 Ingle kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 24-9-75. Mathias Aba (35), Joseph Ocheme (30), Adebo Ogbe (50), Patrick Ago (30), Ame Ogomola (50), Ogunje Ochigbo (45), Agbo Obida (55), Matthew Obonyilo (45), Patrick Agbo (30), Okoko Agbidi (50), Gabriel Adoli (35), Oguche Ochai (50), Ogili Onoja (60), Ekoja Inedu (65).

EHT-3 Ingle kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 24-9-75. Agbo Obida (55), Patrick Agbo (30), Okoko Agbidi (50), Matthew Obonyilo (45).

EHT-4 Okpahele kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 24-9-75. Abu Ode (65), Idoko Ame (50), Oguche Onoja (35), Oko Ame (40), Idu Otaikwu (50), Oka Oloja (65), Oche Ochigbo (55).

EHT-5 Okpahele kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 25-9-75. Idoko Ame (50), Idu Otaikwu (50).

EHT-6 Ojigo kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 25-9-75. Chief Achadu Okoriko (65), Ochrai Onyilo (45), Aba Oche (45), Onwude Ebede (50), Chief Daniel Ada Adulugba (46).

EHT-7 Ojigo kindred group, Ojigo ojira, 25-9-75. Chief Daniel Ada Adulugba (46), Chief Achadu Okoriko (65).

EHT-8 Eke Nobi kindred group, Eke ojira, 25-9-75. Onoja Omaikwu (50), Onyilo Ada (65), Ochche Ogblechi (55), Ogwu Aba (55), Adogwu Agbo (60), Oda Ada (60).

EHT-9 Eke Nobi kindred group, Eke ojira, 26-9-75. Onoja Emaikwu (50), Onyilo Ada (65).
EHT-10 Eke Nowa kindred group, Eke ojira, 26-9-75. Onum Oguche (55), Ejembi Idoko (60), Omsga Ekle (50), Ada Otnawa (55), Ejembi Otnawa (60), Ule Idoko (55), Idu Aba (65), Igoche Aba (60), Ame Onyiegebe (65), Aaba Aba (70), Ata Okolonkwo (50).

EHT-11 Eke Nowa kindred group, Eke ojira, 26-9-75. Ule Idoko (55), Onum Oguche (55), Idu Aba (65).

EHT-12 Ugbohokolo kindred group, Ugbohokolo ojira, 26-9-75. Umore Agbam (55), David Oloja (45), Anawo Aba (70), Obitie Otume (55), Ogo Ikwie (55), Ejembi John (45), Augustine Igomu (55).

EHT-13 Ugbohokolo kindred group, Ugbohokolo ojira, 27-9-75. Umore Agbam (55), Obitie Otume (55).

EHT-14 Amejo-Okonobo kindred group, Court Hall, 27-9-75. Olo Okpofo (70), Idoko Ochigbo (60), Itodo Agbo (55), Agbo Ocheba (50), IkwE Ekwunyi (60), Oguche Olee Kwu (60).

EHT-15 Amejo-Okonobo kindred group, Court Hall, 27-9-75. Ocke Ocke (45), Aba Ere (55), Onjewu Ela (45), Okpabi Itodo (45), Aba Igwoji (40), Umele Adori (70), Okojukwu Obi (35).

EHT-16 Amuda kindred group, Court Hall, 27-9-75.

9. Otukpa District (IHT, volume IX)

Otukpa Historical Texts, no. I (OHT), Ai-Ono kindred group, DH's residence, 27-9-75. Ogoyi Adikwu (80), Ochigbo Odo (60), Abutu Adikwu (55), Adejo Odo (55), Ame Olaodi (45), Ame Ude (80), Idikwu Ewoyi (80), Otocho Enerari (60), OgbE Onu (60), Odo Odufu (50), Onokla Ame (50), Owoh Apu (45).

OHT-2 Ai-Olaichagbahna kindred group, DH's residence, 28-9-75. Umagba Ajunwa (65), Agbo Ame (65).

OHT-3 Ai-Olaichagbahna kindred group, DH's residence, 28-9-75. Aba Oganwu (65), Onoja Orukpo (45).

OHT-4 Ai-Ono kindred group, DH's residence, 28-9-75. Ogoyi Adikwu (80), Abutu Adikwu (55).
10. **Olokam District** (IHT, volume IX)

**OLHT-5**

Ai-Odo kindred group, Ai-Odo ojira, 28-9-75.
Eje Utaji (40), Hon. Abutu Obekpa (50), Ame Obekpa (65).

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**OLHT-6**

Ai-Odo kindred group, Ai-Odo ojira, 28-9-75.
Hon. Abutu Obekpa (50).

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**OLHT-2**

Ai-Oko kindred group, Olokam ojira, 29-9-75.
Aka Ogbaje (45), Amedu Akogwu (45), Onu Aba (50), Uroko Agada (50).

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**OLHT-3**

Ai-Ona kindred group, Olokam ojira, 29-9-75.
Aba Idoko (50), Ogbanje Agbo (55), Uja Ako (55).

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**OLHT-4**

Ai-Inamu kindred group, Olokam ojira, 29-9-75.
Odiniya Oduba (45), Igoche Okpe (45), Onogwu Onyeke (50).

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**OLHT-5**

Ai-Agbo kindred group, DH's residence, 29-9-75.
D.E. Enenche (40).

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11. **Owukpa District** (IHT, volume IX)

**OWHT-2**

Ehaje groups of kindreds, DH's residence, 29-9-75.
Amedu Sgbra (60), Ame Inedu (45), Nwaba Ilele (50), Igoche Ape (45), Okwoli Otaikwu (45), Etofi Aba (55), Onoja Eneke (50), Ojchema Chima (55), Oko Owude (35).

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12. Ichama District (IHT, volume IX)

Ichama Historical Texts, no. 1 (IchHT), Ichama kindred group, Ichama ojira, 30-9-75.
Christopher Eje (50), Anthony Agbo (46), Eje Okoko (70), Chief John Onyilo (52), Akogwu Uja (60), Idoko Oduma (80).

IchHT-2 Ai-Agbo kindred group, Ichama ojira, 30-9-75. Aba Itodo (60), Ona Ndu (90).

13. Okpoga District (IHT, volume IX)

Okpoga Historical Texts, no. 1 (OkpHT), Alekwu kindred group, Court Hall, 1-10-75.
Koko Oche (50), Ejemb Okpe (65), Eje Ochigbo (50), Ame Ochai (50), Aba Ichika (55), Odo Okpe (65).

OkpHT-2 Ai-Oche kindred group, Court Hall, 1-10-75.
Onaji Agbo (60), Ejekwote Ogbloja (55), Oja Abo (60), Ata Iddiko (45), Edache Ochai (50), Eje Okoriko (55), Odumu Idoko (60), Ada Idoko (50), Onaji Agbo (50), Akpa Ogaegwu (50), Ejeba Oguche (45), Onu Ogbo (50), Aba Idu (60), Ogbinya Igoche (45), Akpa Omaga (40), Ogbanye Okori (60), Okpe Odamu (50), Onoja Obeya (60), Oko Ogijji (55), Ejemb Ike (55), Ada Okekwu (65).

OkpHT-3 Idogodo kindred group, Court Hall, 1-10-75.
Obagwu Okpe (55), Okpe Ebisege (70), Eje Achanyu (60), Ikanya Olofu (55).

OkpHT-4 Ai-Oche kindred group, Ai-Oche ojira, 1-10-75.
Onaji Agbo (60), Ejemb Ogbloja (55), Eje Okoriko (55), Ada Idoko (50).

14. Igwumale District (IHT, volume IX)

Igwumale Historical Texts, No. 1 (IgHT), Ai-Ajobo kindred group, DH's residence, 6-10-75.
Chief Obande Ochogbu (100), Ubani Otaakpa (55), Ogenaya Achadu (60).
15. Ulaiy District (IHT, volume IX)

Ulaiy Historical Texts, no. I (ULHT), Ipole-Ai-Oga kindred group, Ulaiy ojíra, 6-10-75. Agbo Ochulayi (50), Onwe Ache (45), Ogeba Ochulayi (45), Achadu Echi (40), Ochje Oculayi (40), Ochoje Oche (45), Ogaba Ugwute (45), Ochoja Ochulayi (60), Ochiar Adam (45). 2-6

ULHT-2 Ebera kindred group, Ai-Okpe, Ulaiy ojíra, 7-10-75. Iko Achadu (45), Omonya Ochulayi (40), Agbo Ochulayi (45), Ogalegwu Eje (70), Uguwu Ochonu (50), Ocheme Okpe (50). 7-8

ULHT-3 Ai-Ochighla kindred group, Ulaiy ojíra, 7-10-75. Ojenyi Ode (45), Ochima Ongbinyi (45). 8-9

ULHT-4 Ukpala kindred group, Ulaiy ojíra, 7-10-75. Onugwu Achadu (45), Ogbe Izekwe (45). 9-12

ULHT-5 Obi-jang kindred group, Ulaiy ojíra, 8-10-75. Idua Eje (45), Adada Achadu (45). 12-16

ULHT-6 Ezza settlements, Ulaiy ojíra, 8-10-75. Ogbọjọ Eleke (50), Lawrence Ogere (40), Awoke Nweke (40), Adaka Nwele (40), Benedict Nwafor (40). 16-20
16. **Ijigbam District** (IHT, volume IX)

*Ijigbam Historical Texts*, no. 1 (IHT), Ijigbam kindred, Ijigbam ojira, 8-10-75. Chief Oriri Ocheje (43), Itodo Ochulayi (60), Itodo Ochima (55), Onyika Onogwu (55), Onyisi Onogwu (50), Okpang Ikpo (70). 21-26

*IjHT-2* Ijigbam-Ehaje section, Ijigbam ojira, 8-10-75. Ochay Enyagwo (60), Onugwu Agbalu (60), Ochodo Ukpera (60), Ota Ochima (45), Adikwu Oglechi (50). 26-29

*IjHT-3* Ekle kindred group, Ijigbam ojira, 8-10-75. Ogbaru Ocheje (50). 29-33

*IjHT-4* Izi settlements, Ijigbam ojira, 8-10-75. Omoruru Nwaonitha (55), Udokwu Oyibe (50), Nwodo Ori (60), Odumu Arua (55). 33-36

17. **Agila District** (IHT, volume IX)

*Agila Historical Texts*, no. 4 (AgiHT), Efofu and Efoha kindred groups, Agila ojira, 9-10-75. Onwe Ata (50), Oche Ongbeje (70), Egwoyi Ochigo (50), Onwe Onoja (45), Otokpa Ogbaru (45), Ogbaru Ochay (60). 40-48

*AgiHT-2* Osiroko and Ogboloko kindred groups, Agila ojira, 9-10-75. Paul Ochoga (55), Ogebe Odan (50), Ocheme Okpewu (50), Orinya Oche (50), Ocheme Ogeji (60). 43-53

*AgiHT-3* Other kindred groups, Agila ojira, 9-10-75. Ochoga Ogbaru (50), Ocheje Ongbeje (60), Osoba Aba (55), Onugwu Aba (55), Onugwu Osirebe (50), Eje Aje (50), Ikuebe Oche (65), Agbo Ocheme (55), Oche Agbo (60), Odeng Onoja (65), Ogbonya Omogu (50), Ochuanu Agbo (60), Orinya Nwenye (60). 53-63

18. **Utonkon/Uafia District** (IHT, volume IX)

*Utonkon Historical Texts*, no. 1 (UtUHT), Ukwuonya kindred group, Utonkon ojira, 10-10-75. Joseph Ijogi (50), Ekpoma Ejaha (55), Ogbaru Ogbaru (50), Ogbaru Uchauya (45), Uloko Itodo (65), Oma Ejaha (60), Nweje Enyi (70). 40-44
UtHT-2  Rijo kindred group, DH's residence, 11-10-75.  
Matthew O. Egede (35), Aduma Oyina (45), Ogo Efeke (50).  

UtHT-3  Adochi kindred group, DH's residence, 11-10-75.  
Ekpe Angbo (45), Aba Angbo (40), Oge Angbo (45), Anweke Ala (70), Odo Amno (30).  

19.  Akpa District  (IHT, volume IX)

Akpa Historical Texts, no I (AkpHT), Ifu, Mbo Ikpa kindred groups, Akpa ojira, 13-10-75.  
Ikana Ejukwa (70), Chief Odeba Eketeke (55), Ona Okpa (60), Ola Ojiji (55), Ochelega Amaka (40), Ogenye Egbara (60), Adikwu Etika (60), Ojiji Ojete (65), Odeje Ago (40).  

AkpHT-2 Settler kindred groups, Ijah, Adogbe, Akpa ojiri, 15-10-75.  Ojiji Igumale (80), Okponu Ode (75).  

20.  Ito District  (IHT, volume IX)

Ito Historical Texts, no. I (ItHT), Edumoga kindred groups, Court Hall, 14-10-75.  George Agi (45), Ongbinyi Onowa (50), Ikwu Ogeba (55).  

ItHT-2 Eke kindred groups, Court Hall, 14-10-75.  
Ukeba Edeba (80).  

21.  Oju District  (IHT, volume IX)

Oju Historical Texts, no. I (OjHT), Ada kindred groups, Oju ojira, 15-10-75.  Ogakwu Ogbu (55), Ikong Ochaole (65), Ochim Adoga (55), Odugbo Oga (45), Obahie Ike (55).  

OjHT-2 Ada kindred groups, Oju ojira, 15-10-75.  
Michael Ode (45), Adoga Eriba (55), Andrew Omanta (45), Echulewu Okwobo (60), Uguna Enyigwe (65), Okwe Edie (60), Ode Ogbae (65), Ewono Igwe (65).  

OjHT-3 Ocheche kindred groups, Oju ojira, 16-10-75.  
Idikwu Agba (60), Agbo Adoga (70), Onyilo Ogo (65), Edos Uta (60), Ogidi Okpaji (65), Ogene Ajigo (70), Chief J.I. Idikwu (50).  


B. ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Although the Idoma Historical Texts remain the most important source of information on the Idoma pre-colonial past, these sources were, however, supplemented by the unpublished reports on the Idoma, as well as their immediate neighbours. These reports, which were compiled by the erstwhile colonial administrators in Idomaland, today exist at the National Archives: Kaduna, Ibadan, and Enugu respectively. These reports appear under separate headings, such as: Intelligence, Annual, Assessment, to name but three of them. Below is a select listing of some relevant reports from each of the above National Archives.

National Archives, Kaduna (NAK)

**Agency Mark**

AR/ANT/1/7 Anthropological Investigations in Boju District, Idoma Division.

AR/ANT/1/8 Anthropological Investigations in Otukpo District, Idoma Division.

AR/ANT/1/9 Anthropological Investigations in Yangande District, Idoma Division.

SNP.12150 Anthropological Notes on Igumale tribe, Idoma Division.

SNP.12158 Anthropological Notes on Agatu tribes, Idoma Division.

SNP.17/3/25065 Notes on Otukpa District, Idoma Division.

K.201s.Vol.I Ethnographic Notes on Tribes in Idoma Division.

K.201s.Vol.III Ethnographic Notes on Tribes in Idoma Division.

SNP.17/3/25077 Intelligence Report, Owowo District, Idoma Division.

SNP.17/3/25078 Intelligence Report, Oturkpo District, Idoma Division.
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