

# **THE IJO GENESIS**

## **(A Short Discourse)**

(Provided by the London-based Ijaw People's Association of UK and Ireland)

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### **ANCIENT AUTOCHTHONOUS MIGRATIONS**

### **THE PEOPLING OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA**

The origins of the Ijo (Ijaw, Izon) People of present day Nigeria goes back to ancient antiquity. Back to a time when Africa gave birth to its indigenous cultures that flourished around 10,000 BCE in the Valley of the Nile, the Old Sahara grasslands, the Lake Chad inland sea, and the Great lakes region of East Africa.

**What is meant by the term Autochthonous?**

The term "autochthonous" means *native, aboriginal, indigenous original*. The available anthropological and archaeological evidence at our disposal makes it clear that the settlement of the Southern West Africa region is a recent event, going back not more than 5000 years. While the Northern part of West Africa, may stretch back to 10000 years, if we take into consideration the Sahara grassland of antiquity.

The so called Proto-Niger-Congo language is divided into the following language groups - Kordofanian, which split into Kordofanian and Mande-Congo, which also split into Mande and Atlantic-Congo, which also split into Atlantic, Ijoid, Dogon, and Volta-Congo. Volta-Congo split into North Volta-Congo and Benue Kwa, which split into Kwa and Benue-Congo. Now the Ijoid language split into Ijo and Defaka, while the Benue-Congo split into Yoruba, Igala, Edo and Ibo and some other southern Nigerian languages.

According to the Encyclopaedia of Precolonial Africa-Archaeology, History, Language, Cultures and Environment, edited by J O Vogel (1997, p172);

*"...The indigenous languages of western Africa belong to three of the four phyla of African languages established by J H Greenberg in 1963: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger-Congo.....Consequently, the homeland of Niger-Congo is normally placed in western Africa, whereas those of Nilo-Saharan languages and Afro-Asiatic are sought farther to the east and northeast respectively. From time to time, suggestions have been made that Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo are ultimately related. Recently Roger Blench has proposed that Niger-Congo is simply a branch of Nilo-Saharan, most closely related to the Central Sudanic family of Nilo-Saharan in the centre of the African continent. If this view is correct, Niger-Congo would have originated farther east than is usually assumed, perhaps to the northwest of the present-day central Sudan. The Congo family, in Sudan, is assumed to have moved eastwards. The other families of Niger-Congo presumably were gradually compressed into West Africa as a result of the desiccation of the Sahara. As Western Africa became more crowded, Adamawa-Ubangi and Bantu expanded southwards into central Africa and later, in the case of Bantu, into eastern and southern Africa...Two relatively small families, Dogon and Ijoid, are thought to have split off next. Dogon with little internal differentiation, remained on land, south of the bend in the Niger, while Ijoid, with somewhat more internal differentiation into Defaka and the Ijo group, moved down the Niger to its confluence with the Benue and then either directly along the Niger or via the Benue and Cross River to the Niger Delta and associated waterways where it is found today..."*

If Niger-Congo is a branch of the Nilo-Saharan proto-language, as has been suggested, then it gives credence to the argument that the ancient language differentiation of Africa took place in prehistory in the regions of the Nile-Valley and the Old Sahara grasslands, and not in the vicinity of the Niger-Benue confluence.

Since, according to the language studies, Ijo and Dogon branched from the Niger-Congo at a very early stage (5<sup>th</sup> generation) it demonstrates the relative antiquity of the Ijo and Dogon language groups in time, compared to Yoruba, Igala, Edo and Igbo which formed in the 8<sup>th</sup>

generation. Cultural and language studies of the Ijo and Dogon link them up to the founders of the Ancient Nile Valley Civilisations from about 10,000 BCE. Thus it seems that the language differentiation of Ijo and Dogon from a parent language derived from the Nile-Saharan proto-language, took place in the ancient Sudan in the valley of the Nile from whence the ancestors dispersed to different parts of the African continent. Of course other factors were at play that led to language differentiation, such as the use of specific cultic terminology. What the aforementioned demonstrates is that the ancestors of the Ijos have lived in isolation of the Yoruba, Edo, Igbo and Igala for generations before meeting up again in the vicinity of West Africa (Niger Benue region). If the language differentiation took place in West Africa there would not be a deep time separation between Ijo and the rest of them. Thus the languages were already differentiated before the ancient people met in the Niger/Benue region.

The absence of the anatomical remains of early human beings, and the lack of evidence for stone-age and bronze age cultures in the West Africa region, rules out any claims by a group of people, to be truly autochones or aboriginal to West Africa. All West African peoples migrated to the area at one time or another, from, either North, East or South Africa, as such, West Africa has been peopled at different times by successive waves of migration from East Africa and North Africa/Sahara region respectively.

Taking the combined evidence of language studies, ancestral tradition, anthropology and archaeology, it is certain that by at least 2000 BCE the West Africa region was being peopled. As to who arrived first is of no consequence as the land-mass is too vast for any one group of people to lay claim to ownership. By 1000 BCE we have the emergence of the Lake Chad civilisation of Daima and the Nok Culture of the Niger/Benue Confluence.

We can also discern a number of ancient peoples who entered the area of the Niger & Benue roughly about the same time. They include the following:

The Ancient ORU People. From language and cultural studies they seem to have been related to the Dogon and the founders of the Great Nile Valley civilisation complex (and possibly the lake Chad complex). The Ancient KWA People who seem to have been the founders of the Nok civilisation complex. The ORU and the KWA people belonged to the branch of African people often referred to as Sudanese or Nilotic Negroes. Lastly the Ancient Bantu, who migrated from East/Central Africa.

The ORU people are the proto-ancestors of the Ijos, while the KWA people branched out further to produce the UGBO people (proto-ancestors of the Yoruba, Igbo and Igala) and the EFA people (proto-ancestors of the Edos). The Bantu and Semi-Batu people were the proto-ancestors of other Nigeria peoples that live side by side with the Major Ethnic nationalities of Southern Nigeria. There were, of course other ancient peoples who were migrating into the West Africa region, but the aforementioned ones serve the purpose of tracing the origins of the Ijos, Yoruba, Edo and Igbo.

## **THE FORMATION OF NATION STATES IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA**

The facts that we have gained through the understanding of the related traditional narratives of the Ijos, Urhobos, Binis, Yoruba and Igbo has enabled us to reconstruct the sequence of events that led to the emergence of the City State complexes of Ife and Benin and of the Niger Delta. Our outline throws light on the seemingly confusion of the ancestral traditions of the aforementioned peoples and demonstrates that instead of looking at the traditions as isolated events, or at worst invented fables, we should view them as the individual perspectives of the whole story that has until now, not been fully told. So let the full story unfold. Based on the research we have done we are bold to assert the following.

### **Reconstructed History of the birth of Major Ethnic Nationalities in Southern Nigeria**

Starting from about 500 BC (although the peopling of West Africa goes back to at least 2000 BC) various ancient African peoples indigenous to the continent started to settle the Lower Niger, Savannah fringe and forest regions of present day Southern Nigeria. These ancient peoples had come from different parts of Africa namely the old Sahara grasslands, North Africa, North east Africa (Nile-Valley) and the East African Great lakes region: which were the homes of more ancient civilisations going back at least 10,000 years. For our research topic we have singled out four distinct ancient peoples who combined and came together in various ways to give birth to the kingdoms of Southern Nigeria. These ancient people have been identified thus:

1. The ORU PEOPLE they were mainly an aquatic based culture, settling the banks of rivers and watersides. They were indigenous to the Nile Valley and Lake Chad regions before migrating to the Niger/Benue region in antiquity.
2. The UGBO (also known as OYELAGBO), they were land based. They were originally indigenous to East Africa, before migrating to the Niger/Benue region in antiquity.
3. The EFA, they were also land based. The EFA & UGBO descended from a people once known as the KWA or KWARA people, who inhabited the Middle Niger region (hence its original name of Kwara river).
4. The BANTU & SEMI BANTU of unknown names, also from east and central Africa.

The period between 500 BC & 700 AD was a time of great demographic change and population migration into West Africa. From a central

location situated within the Niger/Benue confluence valley, some sections of the KWA people namely the IGBO (UGBO) and EFA started to migrate and settle the now Western and Eastern Nigeria regions. Also around about this period, from the Nile Valley and Lake Chad regions, the ancient ORU people started to settle the middle Niger, Lower Niger and Mid-west regions of present Nigeria. Some, even settling and making their way to the Niger Delta coast.

As to what time the ancient ORU people started to settle the Niger Delta is not clear as language studies cannot clearly indicate when a people settled a region. What is known is that they have existed as a distinct language and ethnic group for upwards 5000 years. Their settlements in the Benin region, Lower Niger & Niger Delta were aboriginal (i.e. being the first) and by 500 BC they may have started inhabiting the Niger Delta. The traditional Ijo narratives refer to the ancestors (the Oru-Otu) or the ancient people (Tobu-Otu) who descended from the sky (were of divine origin). They are also referred to as the WATER-PEOPLE (Beni-Otu). It is they who established the ancient communities of mask-spirits and mermaids (mami-water) dedicated to spiritual initiation culture. We will have much to say about this later.

By about 500 AD scattered primordial isolated communities of all the aforementioned ancient peoples began to come into being throughout the Southern Nigeria region.

This isolated and stateless existence situation was changed with the arrival of fresh immigrants from the Nile Valley due to the Arab onslaught from about 640 AD. In the various traditions these immigrants are referred to as having come from EGYPT, SUDAN, & ARABIA (MECCA) To clear up this point. The use of the term "NEAR MECCA" or "NEAR ARABIA" is just a reference to the ancient Nile Valley, While references to Egypt and Sudan have more factual foundation, as these civilisations were clearly indigenous Black African civilisations up until their colonisation by the Arabs. The migration route of these stream of refugees fleeing the upheavals of North East Africa was through the Lake Chad - Middle Niger (Borgu/Nupe) then on to the Ife, Benin and Lower Niger regions.

The fusion of these newly arrived immigrants with the older ancient communities was like a seeding process, causing a condensation of populations to converge in city like communities. It was this process that gave birth to the first dynastic City State centres, of which Borgu, Nupe, Ife, Benin and Ijo City states became the most prominent.

## **The Foundation of Nation States in Southern Nigeria**

From the ancestral traditions and contemporary scholarship we can reconstruct the following facts regarding the foundation of Nupe, Borgu, Ife & Benin.

From about 500 AD a branch of the UGBO referred to as OUYELAGBO started to arrive in the Ile-Ife region, from an ancestral home situated in the Niger/Benue confluence region. They set up dispersed communities within the now Ile-Ife region. Shortly afterwards (650 AD) a branch of the ORU known as the KUMONI, migrated from Upper Egypt and Sudan (Nubia) first to the Lake Chad region, then on to the Busa region (these were the Namurudu and Kisara migrations told in ancestral history). In the Busa and Nupe regions they fused with the local populations and established the BUSA OR BORGU and NUPE OR NUPA (Napata) Kingdoms. From the Busa and Nupe regions a section decided to settle in the Ile-Ife region and establish a City state to be known as YOBA (YEBA) derived from the original name of the Upper Egyptian province that they had hailed from.

The establishment of this new city was opposed by certain sections of the OUYELAGBO communities led by the chief Obatala priest ORELUERE, who argued that since it was they who arrived first, the king of the city must be from amongst them. This led to a war told in the ancestral traditions as the "war between ODUDUWA & OBATALA" In reality it was a conflict between two theocratic systems of government. On the one hand we had the new form of centralised Government based on a theocratic monarchy focused on the SUPREME MOTHER GODDESS (Woyingi in Kumoni language & Oduduwa in Ugbo language). The OUYELAGBO form of traditional chief's council opposed this with the head chief being focused on the GODHEAD (Obatala).

With the help of dissatisfied sections of the OUYELAGBO communities, led by Oba-Meri, and also ORU people living in the Nupe region; the leaders of the KUMONI people headed by a prince original named as ADIMU (ADUMU) went to war and defeated the opposing factions of Ouyelagbo tried to established his centralised government. Prince Adimu was also a priest of the SUPREME MOTHER GODDESS LODGE (known in Kumoni language as Woyingi, and in Ouyelagbo language as Oduduwa) and at the same time a high initiate of the ancient ADUMU (ADUM) spiritual Initiation lodge of ancient Egypt.

Before the final setting up of the new government, Prince Adimu invited the leaders of the hostile Ouyelagbo communities and his own allies (the Oru-Kumoni and Ouyelagbo supporters) to a constitutional conference. It was agreed to form a confederacy where all the communities living in the area would swear allegiance to Prince Adumu, but have control over their own internal affairs. At that conference Prince Adumu was declared the LORD OF THE FORTRESS 'ALA - AFIN' (ALA-lord or chief, AFIN-fortress) and henceforth addressed as "ALA-AFIN ADUMU-ALA" modified to OLOFIN in present Yoruba language. He also took on the alias 'ODUDUWA', as it was the term in the Ouyelagbo language for the Mother Goddess of which he was a priest.

In order to unite the opposing factions intermarriage was decreed. This is told in the tradition as the marriage between Obatala & Oduduwa with the birth of the sixteen gods and goddesses. Indeed Prince Adumu took several wives from the local Ouyelagbo women as well as his own Kumoni/Oru women. This policy was adhered to by his successors. King

Adumu (alias Oduduwa) administered the new City state (military & theocratic confederacy) so skilfully that he was remembered in ancestral tradition as the ancestor of the YOBA NATION, meaning the ORIGINATOR OF THE YOBA NATION. This was how the first Yoba nation came into being and how Ife became the centre of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynastic city-state in Southern Nigeria. This was also the Ife of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynastic period ruled by the Ala-Afin. Later on YOBA was corrupted to YORRIBA (YORUBA) by the Hausa neighbours and the term applied to all the people who spoke related dialects/languages, who had centuries later integrated to become one people.

Meanwhile at this early stage, even while the unification was yet complete, some sections of the KUMONI-ORU left Ife to establish themselves elsewhere, after accomplishing their task of setting up the City state with King Adumu (alias Oduduwa) as the first dynastic king. These included groups led by the following leaders who were said to have been princes with King Adumu;

Prince Ujo (alias Idekoseroake) who led a migration to the present Benin region and finally central Niger Delta:

Prince Nana who led a migration to the present Ghana region:

Prince Igodo who led a second group to the present Benin region, and established a centralised government to become the first ruler or OGISO:

Prince Ogbogbodiri (alias Ala-fun or Lufon I) who first established at Old Oyo (Oyokoro) and was called back to become 3<sup>rd</sup> King at Ile-Ife:

The 1<sup>st</sup> migration was led by Prince Ujo (alias Idekoseroake) mentioned in the ancestral tradition as being the first son of King Adumu. Prince Ujo along with the warlord Ogu (Ogun) were war commanders in the military alliance, who took part in the battles that were fought to subdue the hostile Ooyelagbo communities and establish the Yoba Kingdom. Between 650 -700 AD Prince Ujo led his migration out of Ife to the Benin region, where he encamped and established a settlement (Uzama) that later was to become the basis of Benin City. At this time ORU people, as well as the EFA people were settling the Benin region. These two people combined to form the genesis of the Benin Kingdom, later to be joined by other settlers.

Prince Ujo's instructions were to go to the Niger Delta, and establish a strategic base from which to defend the coastal region. Clearly his father King Adumu, regarded the whole southern region as a virgin territory which he would bring under his direct control. Prince Ujo proceeded to the central Niger Delta with his followers and came across isolated ancient communities of ORU in remote settlements of the central delta. Together with these people they formed viable communities in the central delta originally based on the City-state formation. This was the birth or genesis of the Ijo people.

Some of the Kumoni/Oru remained behind at Benin region, indeed a section of the Oru known as the Beni, who had come from the Sudan (NupaTU or Napata) through Nupe, gave the name Beni to some of the

newly emerging settlements. These were the Oru or Ijos of Benin City who later on between the 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD fled into the delta to escape the upheavals of Benin City. Along with the EFA people they were quite prominent at Benin.

Prince Igodo (Godo) led a 2nd migration from Ile-Ife to the Benin region. At the death of King Adumu, Igodo was sidelined in the scheme of things. It seems that what happened at this point in time was that King Adumu's chief warlord Ogu (Ogun) temporarily took over the reigns of government until a successor could be chosen. It was decided that a son whose mother was an Ooyelagbo should occupy the throne, and so Prince Ogbogbodiri (alias Ala-Fun or Lufon I) was recalled from Oyokoro (Old Oyo) assumed the kingship thus becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> King.

After King Ogbogbodiri (Lufon I) those who ruled Ile-Ife have been lost to time and the kinglist becomes hazy until the time of Lufon II (about 12 century AD 500 years afterwards). Thus there is a 500 year gap in the records of Ife that corresponds to the time of the Ogisos at Benin and the Nupe ruling dynasty at Gbarra.

Coming back to Prince Igodo. Prince Igodo and a few companions decided to leave Ile-Ife for good, acquiring the mystic source of powers which aided his father in the defeat of the hostile Ooyelagbo, Prince Igodo migrated to the Benin region and met up with the followers of Prince Ujo who remained behind in the Benin region and had established settlements at Benin (Uzama, Ogiama, etc). Later on like his father before him, Prince Igodo centralised the existing ORU and EFA communities and was proclaimed the 1<sup>st</sup> PRINCE OF THE REALM or OGI-SUO (OGISO). Also like his father he allowed the existing communities internal autonomy, thus the leader of the EFA communities was proclaimed OGI-EFA. These communities later on came together to give birth to the 1<sup>st</sup> dynastic state of Benin Kingdom (IGODOMIGODO). The 1<sup>st</sup> Ogiso dynasty lasted 500 years. The ancient quarters of Benin City prefixed (Idumu, Idunmu) such as Idumu-Igun (metal workers quarters) were the original settlements of the ancient Oru that formed the old Benin City of the Ogiso period. Others include, Uzama (Ujo's town).

#### **IJOS IN THE NIGER DELTA**

The Kumoni-Oru who settled the Niger Delta with the most ancient inhabitants also known as ORU (TOBU OTU) gave birth to the Ijos. The original settlements were in the western & central delta, from where they spread out to people the whole Niger Delta. This period has been estimated to have occurred between 500 BC to 1000 AD. These original ancestors were spiritual initiates of the ancient African spiritual initiation system of the CREATOR TEM (TEMUNO). They made heavy symbolic ritualistic use of the water, and hence have been referred to as the 'water people' 'beni-otu'. Later on between 1200 - 1600 AD the Ijos of the Niger Delta received immigrants from their relatives living at Benin and the lower Niger regions, who were fleeing the various upheavals and power struggles of Benin city during the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty. They collectively gave birth to the Ijo nation with its City-states and collective Clan communities.



## **THE URHOBOS:**

Some of the Orus that remained behind at Benin, intermarried with Efa women. The offsprings of these intermarriage referred to themselves as "ORU-BO" meaning "AN ORU PERSON". It was from the term ORU-BO, that URHOBOS was derived. As a people they slowly lost the use of the original language through taking on their mother tongue. This language was common to them and the Ijos (Orus) who were established in the main central delta. These people left Benin for the western delta uplands during the second period of Benin Kingdom. Furthermore Ijo men who has fled the upheavals of communities in the central delta and elsewhere during the epoch of the slave trade, also intermarried with Efa women. The offspring of these intermarriage referred to themselves as "UJO-BO" or "UZO-BO" meaning "AN UJO PERSON". It was from the term UZO-BO, that UZOBO OR SOBO was derived. Hence the term SOBO also refers to the Urhobo people. In their isolation from the main body of Ijo people, they intermarried more and more with Efa people. In so doing they lost their Ijo culture and adopted the culture of the Efas.

Traditional history maintains that at a point in time a common language existed between, not only the Ijos and Urhobos, but also the Benis (Benin Kingdom of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ogiso period). This language was a proto-Ijo language, which is now only spoken by the Ijos.

## **The second period of Ife, Benin & Niger Delta:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Adumu dynastic state of Ife and the Ogiso dynastic state of Benin existed for upwards 500 years starting from about 650 AD. Later on new conquering forces that came from the Niger/Benue heartlands of Igala of the ancient UGBO overthrew them.

We now know that at about 1150 AD a conqueror remembered as ORANJAN (ORANMIYAN) from Takpa-land of Igala (situated in the Niger/Benue region) took over the Old Oyo kingdom which was closely connected to Ife. Ife was attacked next, but the old Adumu dynastic rulers were not deposed, but made to pay tribute to ORANJAN at his base in Oko of the ancient Ugbo (hence them being describes as slaves to Obatala). It was from this Ugbo base that ORANJAN made war on Benin, which had by this time fallen into decay with the fleeing into exile of the Ogiso Prince Kaladiran (Ekaladerhan in the Benin narratives). It took several attempts for the Oranjan forces to gain control of Benin. When they did gain control, they changed the title of the Ogiso kings to OBA. Eweka was the first Oba of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Benin dynasty (1170 AD).

These immigrants from Ugbo, Igala and elsewhere, eventually fused with the Efa and Oru people of Benin to give birth to the present Edo nation of today.

Meanwhile at Ife the Adumu dynasty was finally overthrown, with the exiling of the Lufon II descendants, and the instalment of Lajamisan who claimed to be a direct grandson of Oranjan. This last group of

immigrants fused with the older populations and together they constitute the Yoruba nation of today.

In order to gain real legitimacy at Ife, Oyo and Benin, the new dynastic fraternity of Ife, Oyo and Benin was mythologised (distorting history in the process) as the last sons of King Adumu (alias Oduduwa), the founder of the first Yoba kingdom of Ile-Ife, even though at least 500 years separate the period of the establishment of the city state of Ife by King Adumu (alias Oduduwa) around 650 AD, and the emergence of Oranjan (Oranmiyan) in about 1150 AD. Oranjan originated from the Igala region, and did not come from Ile-Ife as is commonly supposed.

When the Ogiso Prince Kaladiran and his people fled into exile, he founded the town of Igodo (now Ughoton) south of Benin. It seems that it was from this place that many people who were part of the Ogiso dynasty migrated first to Oproaza to settle with their Ijo relatives, and then finally into the Eastern Niger Delta to form the Kalabari Clan of Ijos (The Igodo-ame and Ogiso-ame or Ogi-ame). And furthermore, about late 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, a large section of the Ijos who also once lived at Benin, migrated into the Niger Delta. Together they constitute the Ijo (Ijaw) nation of today. We will come back to the battles between the new ruling Oba-Eweka dynasty and the Uzama/Ogiame indigenous ruling element of Beni descendants of the ORU/kumoni and EFA aborigines of Benin kingdom, that led some of them leaving Benin for the Niger Delta.

By the time of the Oba kings of Benin, the Ijo speaking element of Benin had become a minority in the Benin region, due to intermarriage with the EFA and migration to the Niger Delta. This intermarriage gave birth to the Urhobo (& Isoko) nation of today.

Some members of the Eweka dynasty, along with other immigrants from Igala and elsewhere (from Yoruba land) made their way to the Niger delta coast. Initially they were settled by the Ijos of Warri region. These people gave birth to the Itsekiri people of today.

And lastly the ancient Igbo (Ugbo) people east of the Niger river, fused with Bantu speaking people and some ancient Oru communities living along riverfronts to give birth to the present Ibo (Igbo) nation of today.

#### **Conclusion:**

As we go further and further back in time, we cannot talk of the Ijos, Yorubas Binis, Edos, Urhobos, Igbos etc as we now understand them as ethnic groups in this present time.

We have established that certain ancient African people's settled in the Southern Nigeria region and gave birth to new ethnic groups. These ancient peoples were known as

The ORU,

The KUMONI (a part of the ancient ORU)

The OUYELAGBO and UGBO (a part of the KWA OR KWARA)

The IGBO (a part of the KWA)

The EFA (A part of the KWA)

The BANTU and SEMI BANTU

Of the above the ORU and KUMONI were aquatic previously living in the Nile-Valley Upper Niger and Lake Chad regions. While the KWA and BANTU formally lived in the East Africa and Nok regions.

Scientifically speaking, in the Southern Nigeria region these people fused in the following manner to produce the following major ethnic groupings.

In the Niger Delta - **KUMONI + ORU = IJO** (some intermarriage with EFA women and Bantu). The historical birth of the Ijo People is in the following manner. Their ORU ancestors originated from the Sudan and settled the Lake Chad region then, Nupe region, then Benin region, Lower Niger and Central Niger Delta in antiquity. They were joined by other ancestors (KUMONI) from Upper Egypt via Borgu, Ife and Benin region in about 650 AD. In about the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD the remaining ORU and KUMONI ancestors who lived at Benin settled with their relatives in the Niger Delta. (Ruled by the Pere's and Ala's) They collectively gave birth to the Ijo People as we know them today.

In the Ile-Ife region - **KUMONI + OUYELAGBO + (UGBO) + OTHERS = YORUBA** (some of the sub groups are less mixed than others). The historical birth of the Yoruba Peoples is in the following manner. Their UGBO ancestors originated from East Africa and settled the Niger/Benue (North) region in antiquity. Then finally they settled the Ile-Ife region. They were joined by other ancestors (KUMONI) from Upper Egypt, via Borgu region in about 650 AD. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> kingdom of Yoba with capital at Ile-Ife (the Ala-Afins ruled). In about the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD they were joined by other ancestral UGBO from the Niger/Benue and Igala regions. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> kingdom of Yoba with capital at Oyo (the Ala-Afins ruled at Oyo, while at Ile-Ife title changed to Ooni). Plus other immigrants they collectively gave birth to the Yoruba People as we know them today.

In the Benin region - **KUMONI + EFA + UGBO + OTHERS = EDO (Bini, etc)**. The historical birth of the Edo People is in the following manner. Their Efa ancestors originated from the Niger/Benue (North) region in antiquity after splitting from the UGBO. They settled the Benin region about the same time as the ORU. They were joined by other ancestors (KUMONI) from Upper Egypt, via Borgu and Ile-Ife in about 650 AD. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> kingdom of Beni (ruled by the Ogisos). In about the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD they were joined by other ancestral UGBO from the Niger/Benue and Igala region who had established themselves the new rulers of the Yoba (Yoruba) kingdom of Ife. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> kingdom of Beni (ruled by the Obas). Plus other immigrants they collectively gave birth to the Edo People as we know them today.

In the north-west delta region - **KUMONI + ORU + EFA + IGBO = URHOB0 & ISOKO** (Oru men marrying Efa women and children speaking mother tongue!). The historical birth of the Urhobo People is in the following manner. Their ORU ancestors originated from the Sudan and settled the Lake Chad region then, Nupe region, then Benin region in antiquity. They intermarried with the Efa. Their Efa ancestors originated from the Niger/Benue (North) region in antiquity after splitting from the UGBO. They settled the Benin region about the same time as the ORU. They were joined by other ancestors (KUMONI) from Upper Egypt, via Borgu and Ife in about 650 AD. During the 12-16<sup>th</sup> centuries many of these people left Benin and settled the southern forest region, to be joined by Ijos from the Niger Delta, and Igbos from east of the Niger. They collectively gave birth to the URHOB0 (ORUBO) and ISOKO Peoples as we know them today.

East of the Niger - **ORU + EFA + UGBO + BANTU + OTHERS = IBO (IGBO)**. Their UGBO ancestors originated from East Africa and settled the Niger/Benue (North) region in antiquity. Before settling in the eastern region. . Their ORU ancestors originated from the Sudan and settled the Lake Chad region then, Nupe region, then Benin region, Lower Niger. Their Efa ancestors originated from the Niger/Benue (North) region in antiquity after splitting from the UGBO. Their Bantu ancestors originated from east and central Africa in antiquity. While others originated from ancient Palestine. They collectively gave birth to the Igbo People as we know them today.

The above relationship between the various peoples that became known as the IJO, EDO, AND YORUBA, can be summarised in mythological ancestral history as follows.

"THE DIRECT SONS OF ODUDUWA (KUMONI) WERE UJO (IJO) THE ANCESTOR OF THE IJOS OR ORUS, LUFON THE ANCESTOR OF THE YORUBA, AND IGODO THE ANCESTOR OF THE BENIS (EDOS)". Which is to say it was the same people who derived from Upper-Egypt in about 650 AD who settled amongst the ancient aborigines of Nigeria the ORUS, UGBOS AND EFAS and OUT OF THAT INTERACTION THEY CONDENSED AND CREATED city state formations that eventually give rise to the present ethnic realities of today.

Here the term ANCESTOR means THE FOUNDER OF A NATION STATE, THE INITIATOR OF ETHNIC SOVEREINTY, BRINGING TOGETHER DIVERSE GROUPS OF PEOPLE UNDER ONE ETHNIC IDENTITY. This must be understood, as those who mythologised understood it as such. The ANCESTOR serves the function of unifying groups of people through time by transcending blood relationships. This was how communities were formed and how they remained dynamic and unified.

The common thread of KUMONI accounts for the prevalence of Nile Valley (Upper Egypt & Sudan) traditions of origin from the Ijo, Urhobo, Benin, Yoruba. The common thread of UGBO accounts for the similarity of language and culture between the Yoruba, Benin (Edo) Urhobo and Igbo. The minority of the Ugbo in the Ijo ancestral lineage accounts for the wide language and cultural divergence of the Ijos (hence the emphasis on aboriginal descent of the Ijos).

The historical presence of the ancient Kumoni-Oru;'s in the aforementioned regions which are now termed Yoruba, and Bini or Edo can be discerned by the underlying names of several towns and villages such as **Idumagbede (Idumu-Agbedi) "the ward of smiths"** in Ondo land, **Idomowo (Idumu-Owu)"the ward of masks"** in Sagamu area, **Idumagbo (Idumu-Agbo) and Iga-Idugaran or Idumu-Igaran "the ward of peppers"** both in Lagos, plus host of ancient quarters prefixed Idumu in Benin City such as **Idumu-Igun or "the ward of metals"** and **Idumu-Owina "the ward of carpenters"**, **Idumu-Ebo** and **Ujo-ama or Uzo-ama (Uzama)** to name a few. (The Kumoni and Oru were the first people to penetrate the coastal swamp forests stretching from Lagos (i.e. Kurama) to Calabar).

## **THE NIGER DELTA AND THE GENESIS OF THE IJOS**

This is important to stress so that we can understand the collective destiny of the Ijaw people in the Niger delta today. As the inhabitants of most of the Niger Delta and coastal regions, the Ijaws were the first point of contact between European visitors and the Nigerian interior. Indeed the Ijaws for a long time barred the Europeans from going into the interior of the land. For centuries they acted like the psychic protector of the mainland, bearing the brunt of the offensive powers of the foreigners intent on gaining access to the hinterland. Even in this present time, the Ijaws still bear the brunt of the oppressive forces of resource exploitation. It is time to raise our collective psychic energy to protect our collective existence from total annihilation.

The ancestor who is referred to as Ujo or Ijo is also known in traditional Ile-Ife history as Idekoseroake. He is also known by the titles "Kalasuo" and 'Indo-Oru". His identification as ORU, means that he was of the tribe of Oru (maybe his mother was Oru). His identification as Kumoni, means that he was of the tribe of Kumoni (the section that hailed from Upper Egypt), therefore he was Kumoni-Oru. In Ife traditional history it is believed that he died before his father. It is also stated that he died at Ife, although it is not known for sure that he did. All that is known is that King Adumu (alias Oduduwa) lost the service of a number of powerful and warlike sons early on during his reign. Where they went or what happened to them has never been explained by contemporary accounts at Ife. On the other hand Ijo traditions maintain that Ujo (i.e. Idekoseroake) migrated from Ife along with some brothers and a large entourage. Since these traditions are accurate and can be corroborated in regards to the foundation of Benin and Ife, then we can take it that they are also true in regards to the origins of the ancestors of the Ijo people.

The ancestor Ujo or Ijo is also the symbolic personification of the time when the Ijos became differentiated or separated as a distinct people on the West Coast of Africa. Prior to his time, as mentioned above, the Ijos were a part of the ancient Oru or Kumoni, one of the ancient tribes of Africa that integrated with other ancient people to

give birth to many of the ethnic nationalities that inhabit the Niger/Benue region of today.

The term Ijaw is the anglicised version of Ijo or Ejo, a variation of Ujo or Ojo, the ancestor who gave the Ijo people our name. Other modern variations include Izon (Ijon), Ezon (Ejon) and Uzon (Ujon) meaning the same thing. Other names referring to Ijaw people are Uzo (at Benin), the original ancestral name ORU (in Ijaw and Ibo land) and Kumoni (in Ijo). These names were applicable through the Niger Delta and environs as noted by early British visitors;

*"... The early British explorers applied the curious name "ORU" to the Ijo west of Brass from the Nun entrance to Taylor creek, Dr Baikie said of them in 1854. 'From the mouth of the river (NUN) up to this point (TAYLOR CREEK), the country on either side is named ORU. The people are of the same tribe as who inhabit the tract of country up to the Rio Formoso where however they are called EJO or OJO by which name they are known at Abo, at Brass and even Bonny, by English palm oil traders. They are often termed Jo-men. Throughout this district but one language is spoken with but little dialectical difference....Dr Bakie does not explain where he got the name Oru as the appropriate term for Ijaw. the word means "a God" in Nembe and it is clear the explorer did not get it from a Nembe source....In 1906 Major Arthur Glyn Leonard listed a number of tribes of the Delta, distinguishing an Oru as well as an Ijo tribe..."The Oru occupy the tract of country on each side of the Nun branch of the Niger and along the coastline between it and the Ramos river. Then in the triangle formed by the Nun and the Gana-Gana, also outside it, to a small extent, both eastward and westward, dwell the Ijo the most important tribe in the lower Delta, and indeed after the Ibo in the whole of Southern Nigeria..."*

*"..About three hours from Sunday Island, we came to inhabited villages; we induced two canoes to come off, from who we learnt that the people between Brass and Aboh are called ORU..."*

*"...July 2:...Some of the neighbouring chiefs of ORU came off, with whom we had conversation about legal trade..."*

*"...November 3: weighed early this morning, and anchored of Agberri, the first ORU village below the Aboh district..."*

*"...The ORU or Ijo or Udso of Koelle are identical with Brass, at the mouth of the Nun on the coast, otherwise called Hebu or Nemepe by their Ibo neighbours. This language is spoken to the extent of 100 miles from the mouth of the Nun, to the boundary of Abo territory: how far inland towards Benin, on the right and towards the Ibo country on the left is yet unknown..."*

The Formation of the Ijo ethnic nation was a gradual process. We have the period **500 BCE ,up to 700 CE (AD)**, of which the proto-Ijos or "ancient people" ancestors (Tobu Otu) or Oru settled in the central delta and fused with the subsequent immigrants. Then we have the time of; **700-1200 CE (AD)**, where we have the ancient Kumoni-oru ancestors who came with the ancestor Ujo ultimately from Upper Egypt, migrating through Ile-Ife and other places such as Gbara in Nupe, establishing

further settlements at Agadagba-bou in Igbedi creek, and the Nun river in present day Kolokuma Ijo. It was from here that the bulk of the ancient ancestors fused and founded several towns and clans.

After establishing at Igbedi creek (the lost city of Ujo or Agadagba-bou), Ujo sent for more of his people who were at Wari-Ife/Warige and Ujama or Uzama (i.e. Ado or Beni). This was at the very beginning of the foundation of Beni, and it is this account that some traditions mention Beni as a place of origin (also a district around Nupe was also called Beni, founded by the Beni clan of Kumoni, with capital at Gbara);

*"...The first place of Ujo's encampment in his journey from Ile-Ife was the site where Benin City now stands. Then like the Yorubas all the tribes founded by members of Ujo's retinue and by Ujo himself claimed that place (Benin City) as the place of their original settlement whence they emigrated..."*

*"...The Origin of the Ijos. There are lots of different **opinions** about the origin of the Ijos. Some anthropologist say that the Ijos came from South Africa, some say from East Africa. Some say they are from a district around Nupe province in Northern Nigeria and some say that the Ijos came from Benin.... In general the Ijos themselves believe that they came from Benin and in fact most of their traditional stories and folklore refer to Benin. yet we are left to wonder the great difference in language among the Ijos and Benin. If we should assume the belief that the Ijos came from Benin according to the natives **it might be that the Ijos left Benin far earlier than any other tribe migrating from Benin....**"*

From the Benin region, Ujo and his expedition came and settled in the central delta. Ujo, after establishing his authority over preexisting communities in the central delta centralised the government and founded his city-state (the extinct City of Ujo known in ancestral tradition as Agadagba-Bou). He instructed an expedition force to go and guard the mouth of the delta and other important places along the coast as stipulated by his father King Adumu. These people became the ancestors of several Ijo clans. Keni Opu Ala or Keni-Ala, the holy seer (Asain) of Adumu, the Supreme Intelligence symbolized by the sacred serpent python, was the ancestor who founded Ke or Keni and its daughter towns. Kula and Bille were also founded in this way. Ogulagha and Iduwini, were founded as a result of proto ancestors settling in the western coastal delta, to guard that region. Oguru (alias Kala-Ogbo who gave his name to Warri region (Ogbo Ijo) settled the area now known as Warri region, these ancestors were to be joined by people from Oporoma. Others such as Kuru, founded the Kru people (they seem to have been proto-Ijos), who eventual migrated to the present day Liberia region, while some ended up settling in present day Ghana region.

After many years of settlement Ujo left his headquarters in Igbedi creek in charge of the Agadagba of Egbesu (military officer), and decided to go back to Otu-Ife (Ile-Ife). He traveled with nine companions including his grandson Apoi (Opoi) the son of Kala-Okun. Without a skilled astronomer they got lost and decided to settle in a creek near the vicinity of the Nun river. It was here they founded the village of Apoi. Ujo made his permanent home with his grandson Apoi at

the quarter now known as Okoto-aja. It was here that he died and was buried. Ujo who was titled Kalasuo, gave the title to his grandson Apoi, since then the rulers of Apoi clan have been titled "Kalasuo". From the central Apoi, a section migrated to the western delta, to found Apoi Ijo of the Ondo region. Also from the central Apoi, was founded Akassa clan along the coast.

The ancient town of Ujo-Gbaran or Gbaran for short, was founded by Gbaran an elder son of Ujo. Gbaran was given the scepter of Ujo on the death of his father. Later on his descendants went and founded the town of Oporo-aja (Oproza) in the western delta region of Escravos, to give birth to the Gbaranmatu and also Arogbo in Ondo area. Children of Ujo, Olodi and Oporo, went and established a common settlement, from which descendants founded Oporoma and Olodiana clans. From Olodiana in central delta ancestors left to found Olodiana in the western delta near Benin, and also ancestors left to found Olodiamabiri and Onyomabiri and other towns, to form Nembe clan. From Agadagba-bou was also founded Ogbia (Ogbo-Oyan) clan who are the descendants of Oyan. From the same Agadagba-bou, led by Opu-Ogbo, was founded, Isoma-bou or Opuan-bou, from which ancestors later migrated to found, Ekpetiama, and Seimbiri clans.

The last to leave the ancient town of Agadagba-bou, were the ancestors of the Opukuma, Kolokuma, Tarakiri and Andoni. Opu-Okun was the ancestor of the Opukuma, while Kala-Okun was the ancestor of the Kolokuma, both were children of Ujo by the same mother. Tara a younger child of Ujo was the ancestor of the Tarakiri, while Ayama the son of Tara was the ancestor of the Andoni in eastern Ijo,. The Andoni (ruler known as the Andoni-Oru) town of Asarama was founded by Asara or Assa an ancient ancestor descendant of Ayama.. At that remote period most of the ancestors lived in Igbedi creek at Agadagba-bou and the immediate environs of the Nun river. Afterwards their descendants migrated all over the delta. Lastly Abowi, the Asain (seer) of Ujo who led the migration from Otu-Ife or Ile-Ife, journeyed up the river Niger to establish a number of villages which gave rise to Abo and Atani (ruler known as the Atani-Oru). Abo or Aboh and Atani no longer speak Izon language.

The lost City of Ujo and other settlements within the Igbedi Creek area of the central delta under one central authority (the Pere) would have existed from upwards 400 years starting from about 670 AD to about 1070 AD. During this time the ancestors evolved the new Ijo ethnic identity, so that by the time they started to disperse, the ethnic identity had become fully established and their descendants described themselves as such.

**Lastly we have the 1200-1600 CE (AD) period;** From these early formations and migrations sprang other clans, while at the same time ancestors joined the Ijo of the delta at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE or AD when the old Napata kingdom collapsed at Gbara, the Adumu or Oduduwa dynasty was overthrown at Ile-Ife, the last Ogiso Kaladiran, were overthrown at Benin City, and civil strife at Benin caused people to leave. From the central delta Apoi, was founded the Apoi of the western delta area of Ondo. From Oproza town in Gbaranmatu clan was founded at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kabo, Kumbo and Gbaran clans, which was the result of a large family



migration from Oproza town about 1480. From Kumbo was founded Okparabe. From Gbaran town in central Izon, was founded Effurun and Uvwie. Efferun a descendant of Gbaran, elder son of Ujo, was the ancestor of the Effurun in upper Warri area, while Owei was the ancestor of the Uvwei. Likewise from Gbaran was founded via Efferun, the Tuomo clan. From Oporoma was founded the Operemo clan, and some went to join the Ogbos, descendants of Kala-Ogbo to become the Ogbe-Ijo clan. From the Isedani lineage of Kolokuma, led by Opumakuba and Alagbariye (alias Kala-Beni), a migration to the eastern delta coast founded the Ibeni or Ibani clan now known as Bonny early in the 12/13<sup>th</sup> century. From the Isoma-bou area along the Nun, was founded Obiama, from which came Boma and Ogboin. Izon who lived at Benin city later joined these ancestors. From Benin City, migrated Beni-Izon people who were fleeing the local wars. They founded Obotebe, and Beni (Oyakiri) clans. The ancestor Mein, who was Beni-Izon, i.e. an Izon citizen of Benin, and his family migrated from Benin City because the reigning Oba had started to confiscate the private lands and property for his own use. Mein settled in Igbedi creek and founded the town of Ogobiri. From Ogobiri, was founded the Mein of the western delta. Perebokekalakebari shortened to Kalabari the grandson of Mein was the ancestor who gave his name to Kalabari clan.

Basan, Furupagha and Tungbo was also founded about this time, through ancestors coming from Nupe, Oporoma, Kolokuma and Ke. Other clans include the Buseni and Okodia, who hailed from Kolokuma and Benin-Izon (Ado), Egbema from Iduwini and Operemo. Okirika or Kirikeni hailed from Isoma-bou, Andoni, and Ogboin,. Others include the Ndoki, who came from Isedani of Kolokuma, but now speak Ibo, Nkoro or small Okirika, Zarama and Egbema of Imo region, Opobo (1800), who hailed from the house of Opubo of Ibani (Bonny) and Oruma, whose other name is Tugbene hailing from Oboloma. Altogether they constitute the Ijo people who stretch from the eastern shores to the western shores of the Nigerian coast.

**Others:** Other people who were of Ijo origin or related ancestrally are the Aboh (i.e. mixed Ibo and Izon), the Ndoki (i.e. mixed Ibo and Izon), Nkoro or small Okrika, Zarama, Egbema of Imo area (i.e. mixed Ibo and Izon) and Oruma. Engenni, Abua and related groups (through intermarriage and adoption). Some Urhobo groups (i.e. mixed Edo, Ibo and Izon) and the Ojos in the Badagiri creek region of Lagos (i.e. Izon who have adopted Yoruba language fairly recently around the early 20th century. In the Awori-Lagos traditions, the original Proto-Ijo founders of settlements in Lagos are referred to as the "AROMIRE'S" i.e. "LOVERS OF WATER"). Opobo was founded by Jaja who was of the house of Opubo (Opubo Wari) at Bonny (Ibani). Oruma's other name was Tugbene, the ancestor Tu hailing from Oboloma. The Epie-Attisa resulted from migrants from both Ijo and Edo speaking people. The Ijo element coming from Ekpetiama or Seimbiri mother settlements.

It should also be noted that the whole of the eastern delta was faced with a situation whereby immigrants and captives from the slave raiding and trading era had to be settled due to the abolition of the Atlantic trade in human beings. This of course led to a lot of mingling and mixing with a profusion of languages and dialects in that region. Thus the language modification of the eastern Delta. So even if they do not speak the Ijo language, they are related ancestrally speaking.

The formation of the Ijo ethnic group was a dynamic affair. The central delta section of the Niger Delta was the main area of activity. It was the site of the most ancient settlements of the proto-Ijos, places mentioned in tradition as dispersal centres include, Agadagba-bou, Isoma-bou, Opuan-bou and Orubiribau-bou, Oporoma, and Ke. Other ancient ancestral sites from which Ijos migrated to the areas of habitation include, Warife/Warige area in the western delta fringe, the site of the settlement of the Ijos on their migration from the Benin region (Ado), the Amatu region of Iduwini, and Oproza region of Gbaranmatu. On the Western coast, we have the Lagos region of Kurama. The central delta is not surprising, as in those times it was the main outlet to the sea, and one of the first areas suitable for human habitation. The ancestors did not settle anywhere, but at places that were not prone to flooding, and had good farming and fishing grounds. It seems that internally the Ijo were very frictional. This friction caused conflicts. The consequences of conflict was to flee the punishment and the results of internal disharmony. This gave rise to a lot of migrations. Internal friction and disharmony was also fuelled by the European introduction of firearms to settle community quarrels. This resulted in whole communities being sacked, captives being sold into slavery and the survivors dispersing to areas of safety.

The nature of the Delta made it very hard, for unity conscious rulers to effect a unified State stretching from one end of the Izon Ebe to the other. War and strife were nevertheless not the main theme in the Izon experience. Superficially this may seem so, but for long periods of time (centuries), communities lived in peace and tranquillity, but due to the absence of accurate dates, it seems that everything happened in one long stretch. The reality is that the dispersal from the Isoma-bou area near Ikibiri was in two phases, one which left peacefully and the second which dispersed at least not earlier than 1500 AD after the European introduction of firearms. Likewise the ancestors of the Kumbo, Kabo and Gbaran only left the coastal town of Oproza starting from 1485, because of the activities of the Portuguese in the area. The Tarakiri lived peacefully in the Igbedi creek region up to 1500 when they had a conflict with the Mein. And so on. Other causes of migration were exploration, adventure, overpopulation (the delta was in continued formation and there was limited dry land at the time.), fishing trips. People would go on fishing expeditions, set up fishing camps and later bring their families and close associates to the new fishing grounds. And all the other reasons why people migrate.

The Ijo recognised that they were from one source, this is evident from the European records, where, the ancestors identified themselves with the variations of the name Ujo, which were Ijo, Ojo, Ejo, Oru, Uzo, Uzon and more lately Izon. From Ke to Bonny up to Aboh and westwards to Lagos. Because of the loose network nature of the Izon Ebe, the Ijo were to suffer from the effects of 400 years of slave raiding, trading, kidnapping, and all the associated violence more than the empire of Benin. which was centralised in authority. During the long formation the Izon learnt to live in harmony with the Delta environment, becoming the original "Beni-Otu" i.e. the "water people". The Ijo enjoyed external relations with sister States and kingdoms, trading with the Aboh, Nupe, Benin, Ondo, Ile-Ife, Akwa of Iboland etc., and were part of the intercontinental trading network. This is a short summary of Ijo or Izon traditional history.

## THE FINAL MOVEMENT OF THE IJOS FROM BENIN REGION

According to ancestral tradition and validated by traditions recorded at Benin itself, the Orus or Ijos were the autochthonous inhabitants of Benin along with the Efas before the Ugbo (Proto Yoruba) element arrived from the immediate north. How the kingdom was taken over by these new elements and the subsequent migration of the Ijos out of Benin is explained below.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Kingdom of Benin was established by Prince Igodo one of the younger sons of King Adumu (alias Oduduwa also referred to as Ala-Afin Adimula or Oba-dimu, although he never bore the Oba title) at Ife in about 670 AD. He was crowned the 1<sup>st</sup> Ogiso (Ogi-Suo meaning Prince or Ruler of the Sky or literally Prince of the Realm). Prior to his arrival his elder brother Prince Ujo, the ancestor who gave the Ijos their name established a settlement known as Ujo-ama (Uzama) which later became the basis of Benin Kingdom. After the death of Ogiso Igodo (later referred to as Oba-Godo although he never bore the Oba title.) his grandson Prince Ere ruled. After him at least 30 Ogisos ruled the land before its decay 500 years later. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Benin Kingdom of the Oba Eweka dynasty started traditionally about 1170 AD, when Eweka's father (Oranjan or Oranmiyan) made war on Benin and occupied the town of Uzama. Now this Oranjan was an Ugbo whose origins is confusing. Some falsified historical narratives claim that he was a direct son of King Adumu (alias Oduduwa), but internal evidence from investigating oral tradition from Ife itself reveals he was not. Also a 500 year gap separated King Adumu from Prince Oranjan. Prince Oranjan represents a change in dynasty at both Oyo Ife and Benin, which was imposed by outside Ugbo forces originating from the Igala region.

The Old Kumoni/Efa dynasty of the Ogisos came to an end when Kaladiran (Ekaladerhan) left Benin due to political intrigue. He and his people of the Aghoro (Ughoron) quarters of Benin left and eventually settled with their relatives in the Western, Central and Eastern Niger Delta. The Ijos that remained behind, along with the Efas formed an active resistance to the new dynasty that imposed itself on the people. During the Benin Kingdom of the 1<sup>st</sup> period of the Ogisos, the Ijos of the Niger Delta and the people of Benin shared a common language, which was the Ijo language. This is reflected in the names of the most ancient quarters of Benin (prefixed 'idumu' or 'ama') and the individual names of some of the founding Ogisos such as IGODO, ERE of which Ijo people still bear these names till the present time. This Ijo language was common to the Beni (indigenous element of Benin) and the Orubo (Urhobo, also indigenous element of Benin). Later on the Efa language took predominance. It was during the time of the Ogisos that Ijo language was still predominant at Benin.

When Oranjan made war on Benin he encountered stiff resistance by the ferrymen (Ijo boat people) at the Ovia River of which he turned back and tried an indirect route to the kingdom. Eventually he occupies Uzama and sets up base here. But because of the intrigue by the indigenes of the place he leaves in vexation calling it a house of vexation (Ile-

Ubini). During his stay at Uzama he meets an Efa woman from Ego and she has a son by him, later named Eweka.

When Eweka grows to be a man he also makes war on Benin, and again he only occupies Uzama. It is here that Eweka is installed as the first Oba of the Benin kingdom despite stiff opposition from the indigenous elements represented by the Uzama chiefs and the Ogiame (children of Ogiso). He later retreats back to Oko-Ugbo and governs indirectly through the Uzama chiefs

The Obas could not gain a foothold over the entire Benin kingdom until the time of their 4<sup>th</sup> Oba known as Ewedo. Ewedo also encounters stiff opposition by the Ijo ferrymen of the Ovia River, but eventually makes some headway. He also encounters the Uzama who by this time had reassumed their independence, and also the Ogiame at Benin City (Igodomigodo). During the ensuing battles Ewedo and his forces gain the victory and take control of the Ogiso sacred stool. As a part of the peace deal, the remnants of the Ogiso, the Ogiame and the Uzama chiefs are invited to form a united government of the monarchy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> kingdom of Benin.

The new dynasty is not fully accepted and still remained illegitimate in the eyes of the indigenous Benin people made up of Oru-kumoni, Efa and other people. Thus we have a long struggle for legitimacy from the beginning of the Oba Eweka dynasty right up to the time of 12<sup>th</sup> Oba Ewuare and through to the 16<sup>th</sup> Oba Esigie.

Prince Ogun (Ewuare) was the son of an Ogiso princess (Ogiame) and thus united in himself the two dynasties. His nickname (Ewuare) means (the trouble has ceased) meaning that because he was the descendant of the Ogisos on his mother side, he could legitimately claim the Ogiso throne, and thus the trouble had ceased. It was from his time that the Oba Eweka dynasty becomes legitimate and stabilised.

Even though it was now fully legitimate and stabilised, the dynasty was not accepted by all sections of the people. It was this opposition that led to civil war with the sacking of the town of Udo, and also the confiscation of large portions of land from the indigenous element, many of which fled into the Niger Delta. (giving rise to some Ijo clans and some Urhobo clans).

This short narrative is the historical context that the second wave of Ijo people into the Niger Delta took place. As I have mentioned earlier, remnants of the Ogiso dynasty left Benin in the 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and made their way into the western delta and settled with the Ogulagha and Gbaranmatu at Oproaza. From these places they later migrated to the eastern delta and formed a part of the new Kalabari (the Igodome and Ogisome or Ogi-polo sections) Clan. Some Ijos not wanting to be victims of the civil war between Oba Esigie and Prince Oruayan (Aruaran) engulfing the kingdom during the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD, migrated first to Aboh and then into the central delta to form the Mein, Kalabari (Endeme section) and Beni (Oyakiri) clans, while others settled amongst the Kolokuma, Tarakiri, Opokuma, Ogboin and other clans.

This represents the last and final movement of the Ijos from one of their ancestral habitations situated on the site of Benin City itself. But not all Ijos left. Many who inhabited the riverine and creek coastal region of Benin remained and today they constitute the Olodiama, Egbema and Furupagha clans of Ijos who are the Ijo Aborigines of the Benin riverine region.

#### **LANGUAGE COMPARISONS.**

This work is not a specialist work, but some general information gathered from comparing words and terminology which are current in Izon or Ijo language with the Ancient Egyptian language as translated by Egyptologist. It is logical that we do so since ancient Egypt was a part of Black Africa. On another level it is the foundation of a whole new area of language research. Egyptologists claim that the Coptic language is the only surviving language directly related to the ancient Egyptian language. The following will make the reader understand that this is not true. In fact the precision of the Izon language can be used to correct mistranslations of the sacred ancient Egyptian language. A major work of this nature should be a feature of future research.

#### **Words common to Izon and ancient Egyptian**

##### **Ijo Ancient-Egyptian(Egyptology translation)**

name ren ren

invisible ama-en, or amu-en amen

deity oru, eru horu or heru, neteru

ruler (king) pere per, pera, perao

in emi em

Greeting-

Form ai-emi yemi

relaxation etipu hetepu (also translated as peace)

anxiety eti heti

house etu or otu, wari het,

creator teme-owi, temuno temui, temu

creator tamara, temuno,

All deity osse-oru auser, osiris

Heat, boil Afere afiri (from whence the term Afrika came)

paper fun para papyrus\* (Greek corruption)

blank paper pa-para papyrus\* (Greek corruption)

people otu or kemetu ntu

head tebe tepe or tape

person ebo or obo heb, hebo

correct kere kheru

abode bou bu

place biri, piri per, peri

fluid beni nu, ni

water beni nu, ni

water minji, mire(old) miri

sun orau rau, ra

dream state duai-toru duat

subconsciousduai-toru duat

space, sky suo shu

Supreme- adum, adumu atum, atumu

Intelligence

Life, world akpo ankh

Crown

Royalty ade, ate, atef, aten

Mother-

Title mutu mut

nana-ara nana

take ke, ake kef

scatter wasa wasa

oppress aepi asep, aepi (apothis Greek corruption)

teaching-

priest sibabo seba-heb

high priest karibo khari-heb, kheri-heb

At present the few words given as examples are enough to start up a research project. On another level the comparison is difficult because the Egyptologist translations suffer from the Europeanisation of African words, also they make use of Coptic language that has been heavily influenced by the Semetic languages during ancient times.