

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

**NIGER DELTA PREHISTORIC STUDIES:
THE MOTIVATIONAL SUPERB
GAINS FROM THE *ODINANI*
NON-SCRIPT SOURCES**

An Inaugural Lecture

By

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2.45 pm. Guests are seated

3.00pm. Academic Procession begins

The Procession shall enter the CBN Centre of Excellence auditorium, University Park, and the Congregation shall stand as the Procession enters the hall in the following order:

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After the Vice Chancellor has ascended the dais, the Congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem.

The Congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS.

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The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction.

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The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver his Inaugural Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice Chancellor and resume his seat. The Vice Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

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The Vice Chancellor's Closing Remarks.

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DEDICATION

To the Omnipresent Awesome Paraclete

Alleluia; *Isee!*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Owunari Abraham Georgewill, thank you very much Sir, for the approval you gave so that this inaugural lecture (No. xxx) is delivered. I appreciate the University Governing Council under the indefatigable chairmanship of Senator Andrew Uchendu. To the principal staff of the University, I am very grateful for the committed support you have rendered in this regard. Same goes to the Chairperson and members of the University Inaugural Lecture Committee. I appreciate the Dean, and the Associate Dean of the foremost Faculty of the University of Port Harcourt - the Humanities, the Provost, and the other Deans, the Professors, Directors, Heads of Departments, and the entire teaching and non-teaching staff, the post-graduate and undergraduate students of the unique University of Port Harcourt.

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continuation and successful running of this race, may our creator continue to bless us all; Amen.

I owe a world of gratitude to the ageless Emeritus Professor (Chief) E. J. Alagoa the mentor Gburugburu 1, the Superstar Niger Deltan, Nigerian and African Historian; Sir, you are exceptionally special and great indeed. Special appreciations to the classic Historian and Administrator of our time, Professor S. J. S. Coockey, the relentless Emeritus Professor N. D. Briggs University of Port Harcourt's 5th Vice Chancellor and Professor J. A. Ajienka the 7th Vice Chancellor who made my research to appear on the global platform for the first time, and our very own last Acting Vice Chancellor Professor S. O. Okodudu who did a very good job in a short space of time. I am indebted to Professor Ikenna Nzimiro of blessed memory the academic icon with immortal kindness, Professor J. U. J. Asiegbu a spectacular man of excellence and great Historian, late Professor N. C. Ejituwu the one we often refer to as 'the father of liberalism', late Professor N. C. Nzewunwa the University's numero uno archaeologist, may your gentle soul continue to rest in peace Sir, Prof. A.A. Derefaka, my diligent, humble and kind academic master 'may you live long', Prof. B.B.B. Naanen the current leader of our HDS, Prof. Adaye Orugbani and the peaceful Prof. A. M. Okorobia my first degree project supervisor, Prof. J. H. Enemugwem, Prof. Nimi Wariboko, Prof. Mac Dixon-Fyle (I benefited from his academic contributions and so appreciate him), Dr (Senior Pastor) Steve Ogan, Dr Sophie Kpone-Tonwe, Ms. Dawes, you joined to lay the foundation upon which people of my generation who came to the Department from about 1990 built on. Others are Prof. E. M. Gbenenye, late Dr Nelson M. Ediyekio, E.C. Assor who together with me became part of the

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May the good Lord Almighty bless and happily keep us all in Jesus Holy Name; Amen!!

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1.1 Introduction

When events are placed in their proper time perspectives or in the proper time relationship one to the other the sequence of events and the sequence of developments between events become better known and established from one area to the other. Varying degrees of ideas of time are observable amongst humans; daytime with daylight, night time with night fall; early, middle, and later parts of day and night; dry season and wet season; farming seasons of planting, nurturing and harvesting; time expressed with regard to many other socio-economic activities; natural elements; and actuality of the time of the day, 12 noon for example. Time for many has several definitions but with Aristotle in his publication 'Physics', it is the measurement of motion in accordance with before and after. Aristotle's definition, clarified that movement is the interaction between form and space which is regarded as motion, being a statement of before and after that takes effect through space.



NIGER DELTA CROWING COCK



BIG BEN IN LONDON, ENGLAND

It therefore, takes the dimensions of space and form to attain time so that time in itself has become the invaluable framework within which cultural developments are studied. The scientific

idea of time measurement otherwise known in archaeology as chronology, and its relativity against historical occurrences posed a very serious challenge to the study of history for a very long time. Historians were not alone in this regard as other scholars, philosophers, and even clerics have over the years been faced with the challenge of assigning dates to certain accounts in the past.

Human memory is shallow to keep and recall the age-long time activities with the necessary accuracy when such is required. A certain Archbishop Usher had after many attempts of using the genealogy in the Bible to calculate the time of creation of the world by God, erroneously arrived at the date of 4004 BC. Even though his effort earned him a PhD, it was not enough to deal with the matter objectively. Today, it is a common knowledge that mother earth and her constituents including humans are by far older than the date he arrived at.

When the celebrated Charles Darwin of Evolution Theory fame published his books entitled “The Origin of Species by Natural Selection” (1859) and “The Descent of Man” (1871), the world became more eager to know about when and not just how the world was made and particularly the emergence of man in it. People began to make further efforts to establish the chronology of the world. Much of the problems have been solved but the fundamental issue about time which worries humans because they seem not to be able to deal with it, is that the major existential secret of earth is placed in the ever elusive timeless time. An old Arabian adage that says that ‘man fears time but time fears the pyramids’ seems to lay a definite credence to this.

Before the establishment of the University of Port Harcourt, the ideology, aim, objectives, scope, significance, and general modalities standing as the blueprint for the systematic study of the past of the Niger Delta had been prepared upon the mandate. The then nascent Rivers State (that is together with Bayelsa State) saw to this commencement with the hope of putting developmental situations the right side up in the area. The eventual emergence of the University of Port Harcourt with its schools and later research units and centres took root on this seedbed and was nurtured by the gallant pioneers already tagged “Fathers” (and I dare add “Mothers”) of the University. These scholars and administrators ensured that there was no deviation from the original focus of the mandate so that with further developments moving from the school system to the de-compartmentalisation (unbundling), the then introduced Faculties and their various Departments, together with the laid down objectives remained in operation in the research endeavours. Even the governments and peoples of the Niger Delta continued with the agitation to make the Federal Government and all, pay special attention to the Delta for the good of it. They lent support to the researchers and all seeking to carry-out researches and function from their various visions and directions.

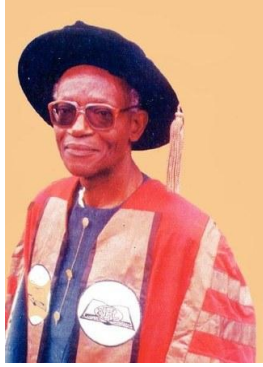
The Niger Delta as a geographical and sociological area has become better known to both the peoples and authorities within and outside of the region as the identity of the peoples of the southernmost area of the Niger and Nigeria. This understanding is reflected in the significant socio-economic developments around it thus far. This development was not an

isolated one but was as well experienced in the wider African continental space.

With the paradigm shift in the study of history in Africa in the mid-1950s from being mainly about Europeans or their affairs in Africa, to that of African history, the research orientation of history in Nigeria also changed course to become more focused on what can be called the local history. The historians in Africa and especially Nigeria worked towards actualising these objectives at the different angles. First, was the founding of the Nigerian Historical Society (NHS) in 1955; followed by the establishment of the Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria in 1956. These encouraged researches into the history of Nigeria. This was said to have been further strengthened by the publications of Kenneth Onwuka Dike's "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885" (1956), and Sabiru Biobaku's "Egba and their Neighbours" (1957). These among other scholars, sometimes referred to as afroophile historians such as O.A. Ogot, Ade Ajayi, A.E. Afigbo, E.J. Alagao, S.J.S. Cooney, Okon Uya, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, and Obare Ikime, functioned to constructively counter the rather racial prejudiced view of those Europeans such as Trevor Roper, Hegel G. W. Friedrich, and Haus Holf among others on Africa (Nigeria inclusive) and her past Okoroafor (2007). They succeeded, forming in the end, the foundation of the profitable further historical studies of the land and the indigenous peoples among whom are those of the Niger Delta.



PROF. K.O. DIKE



PROF. E.J. ALAGOA



PROF. S.J.S COOKEY



PROF. A.E AFIGBO



PROF. ABASI ATAI



PROF. OBARE IKIME

1.2 Historical Consciousness

Historical studies are structured in accordance with the diverse forms and contents. The original sense of it, being for certain developments which have since become less fancied. This is because the evolving globe with the numerous activities of humans in it has proven to be multi-dimensional as well as being pluralistic and polycentric. Values of one group (also of individuals and even times) vary so much in time and general circumstances; and from the temerity of the wider environment.

The concerns of the scholars of the past are also so divergent and innumerable. They are not for the event which can be ordinarily judged significant or the less eventful or those ordinary occurrences that seem to be insignificant by some persons. The explanation is that sometimes the simple, ordinary not so significant happenings become the seed out of which a plethora of activities including events and so on can emerge and become part of the narrative if not the history as is observable in the nuggets of certain elements of the oral traditions of Africa.

It is in line with this philosophy that George Lenard Hand said of history as being “the corner stone of a liberal education, and the begetter of social wisdom”. The cumulative existential experiences of a given society, family, individual, the world or anything at all anywhere that have some bearing with humans are the concerns of history. They need not be isolated in terms of their significance otherwise such suffers from the problem of subjectivity as against objectivity. Such varied human related experiences are consciously or otherwise constantly drawn for use in dealing with them, and their environments. Failure to appreciate this basic understanding about the nature of history will mean that people will not make good efforts to act historically and benefit from such. This act of keeping and referring to records of the accumulated knowledge of the experiences of peoples of successive generations, some have factually stated is a distinguished clear indication of the boundary between humans and other creatures. For this reason there is as should be the history of almost everything about and around humans. It is therefore, through historical studies and knowledge thereto, that humans keep their world in check and understanding. In recognition of this therefore, the study of history cannot be limited. It should be done as the time,

circumstance, forms, and content, present themselves. Hence the accuracy, factuality, objectivity, and the temerity of the nuances of human historical crafting would demand serious intellectual rigour, general capabilities as are obtainable in the various disciplines of knowledge. To streamline such, the historian is tasked to adopt the diligent scientific methods in arriving at his conclusions. In the realisation of this Bury a notable historian described history in 1902 as being “a science, no more, no less”. It is in the method of the new history that Bury’s description is well supported. For just as the scientist would want his result of empirical research to be subjected to repetition of the experiment in his kind of laboratory, so would the historian while doing his documentation, provide references and cross-references on the sources of the data (information) upon which he makes the deduction or otherwise in his submission for the sake of the verification of the conclusions.

This broad application of knowledge quest and acquisition in history Machenzie in: Ensor et al. (1990), is most desirable when one is faced with the historical accounts of earlier occupants of the world at the different corners of it. At this period the historical studies would rely largely more on the details coming from every element of the existence of the people then. The means of studying such is mainly scientific than otherwise. This is why there are today, different sorts of historians whose specialties are meant to address the various areas of concern of the past humans from the very beginning of time to the present (see A.E. Pollard in: Ensor et al.1990). The difference is mainly on the time of occurrence of the history being studied. As such historical past of the world is shared according to their times of occurrences in a process known as Periodization. They are categorised into three major divisions

namely, Prehistory, History, and the smaller period between these called Proto-history. This division based on the chronology of the past vary in the temporal scope from place to place. In some places however, they are all lumped into one, particularly, Prehistory.

Prehistory is very large anywhere historical studies are undertaken by experts. It is generally about 99% of the past of any given society. The study of prehistory is therefore, very broad in itself. There is thus no reason why a body of historical studies would be established without the pre-historical aspect especially in certain places around the world such as is obtained in many places in Africa with long preliterate past. Should we desire to have a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the past being in its totality the history, we should include the various sections of the past. The understanding is very impressive for humans aspiring to progressively live happily and comfortably in our world of matter. In this regard the totality of historical discipline would cover not just the past, but the present and the foreseeable future. The scholar is implored to be engaged in “an unending dialogue between the present and the past” (Carr 1961: 9). This is never an easy task but has a lot of relevance to it. For with the understanding and knowledge, history bequeaths persons, communities, nations, and the world, with the self-worth Collingwood (1977), self-determination, meaningful aspiration, great nationalism, ‘stronger feedback mechanism among our future generations’ Ade Ajayi (2005), and creativity; prompting organised living.

1.3 History at the Inception

The birth of history as a discipline during the Greco-Roman era of between the 5th C BC and the 3rd C AD with the classical writing of the Greek and the Roman scholars came with some understanding of what was needed, what to do about it and how to preserve it. Herodotus -the father of history and his contemporaries (Thucydides, Polybius, Livy, and Tacitus) had at that time, seen the need to report especially in documented manner, the notable actions of man in his environment, not just for those living but even for the unborn. Herodotus following the thinking of pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales, Anaxemenes, and Anaximander concerning the abiding principle of all natural phenomena which is unchanging of which they identified water, air, and fire as the primary matters which other matters were derived, made breakthrough when he thought it wise to begin a sphere of learning since all such thinking were necessary to change. He started to systematically document such developments and wrote for example *The Persian War*. This was how he started the new discipline called *enquiry-historia*.

During the classical period of historical development of the philosophy of history, there was a slight change in the discipline when the Greeks through their conquests moved overseas. Nonetheless, Greeks' thought underwent a revolutionary change brought about by the Romans when Rome became the centre of the then civilisation. This is because both for the Greeks and the Romans and even other historians, the scope of the evidence became expanded from the eye-witness accounts recording, to recording of events happening in other places relayed to the historians by others (something like oral traditions). In this way for example, such followers of Herodotus

as the Roman Polybius, and Livy, were able to write the books on Rome.

This development despite its reward to our knowledge of having first-hand information had some limitations. One of such was that it was mainly a narrative. It did not situate itself into the extensive sifting of the data but was merely presented raw sometimes almost baselessly.

Even though the goodness of avoiding embellishment through relayed information was there at this time, the disconnect between what really transpired and what is seen to have occurred, meant that much more service was owed humanity by the historian on the account of knowing and using same to excel in his world. Events do not occur in limbo, and not suddenly at all times. They happen as culminated actions which sometimes take very long time to snow-ball into the said events. Not looking into such evolving actions, and jumping into the eventful outcome which is then described as it appears with a view to having as much holistic knowledge as one can, is like trimming ones hedge. In other words such would serve as mere ornamentation being not incisive and terribly leaving society in an uncut crudity.

This was not a commission on the part of these intrepid historians but just the character of the embryo of the discipline. For even as some of them would have been naturally disposed to Eurocentricism, this bias in history was not to cover the glaring evidence which such scholars were compelled by Clio (the acclaimed god of history) to dispel in their strict narrative stereotype. Herodotus' accounts on the last episode of the glorious ancient Egyptian world bear testimony to such objectivity. So that notwithstanding the observed inadequacy of

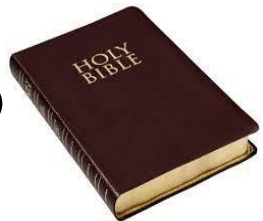
this beginning, the bane of the discipline was and has been objectivity. This was why it stood the taste of time.

1.3.1 History; from the 15th to the 20th Cs

The next phase to the one above began with the foundation of Christianity as a dominant and old world religion and the conversion of emperors and other important personalities in Europe to the faith. Jesus Christ the Son of Joseph the carpenter in Israel (including Judah) was accepted as being historically significant being a link between the past, the present, and even the future. Jesus was looked at as a historical personality advancing the idea of historiography in:



JESUS



- a) being the one that acted as the centre piece of historical process and
- b) the one that brought about change.

On Jesus did the next basic reference in history stand. On him and Christianity were the revolutionary thoughts of the ages of Renaissance, Enlightenment etc. of between the 15th and 18th centuries hinge.

In the middle course of the development of history during the ages of Absolutism and Enlightenment, there arose the need for man to re-examine his behaviour and to determine the justification for such. Then reason was enthroned as against

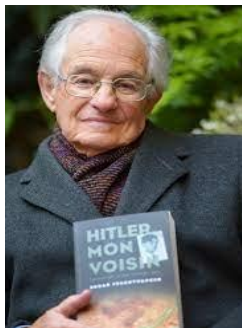
speculation. It was still in Europe that the discipline got its transformation. Scholars such as Thomas Hobe and Rousseau had asked the world not to over-Christianise so that its reason can guide it properly. As such although history as a discipline had become well established by the 18th C, its measures of standard practice were not that well set out. History was therefore, not yet an academic discipline. There was no chair of history in any of the ancient Universities such as Oxford, and Cambridge. What existed in this regard was the Radius Chair, which had only wig historians, who sat unto certain discussions that made their meeting places to be tagged tory centres of learning. It was in the 19th C that history took root properly as an academic discipline following the revolutionary changes of this period which discarded the old ideas and institutions paving way for the new ones.

The 19th C revolution in almost all spheres of life also brought changes in historical writing since the entire socio-political terrain of especially Europe was affected. This was realised mainly through German historians such as Neighbour, Herder, and the magnificent Von Ranke. With the effort of the historians of this time, came the revolution in historical scholarship. Such rose above the limitations experienced previously in the discipline till then. It established history as an academic discipline with new professorship being instituted in the German Universities. History's goals together with the rules of scholarship became clearly spelt out. To cap it all, a journal was floated to propagate these new ways and manners of doing historical works. For these modern historical revolutionists, history should be presented as clearly as it occurred. Their view is understood in history as the Idealist view of history.

Such idealist view of history is different from that which is derived from the works of the academic arch-angel Karl Marx and his contemporary and equally academically angelic, Fredrick Engels and their followers, known in history as Materialist or Positivist view of history. The study of history has since then not really changed with regard to the viewpoint and associated methodology. Such study however, was limited to political history, constitutional history and diplomatic history. The inclusion of intellectual history or the history of ideas, economic history and social history was only a development of the 20th C during which the scope of the discipline was enlarged. The inclusion of these new areas of the discipline was informed by



HERODOTUS
FATHER OF HISTORY



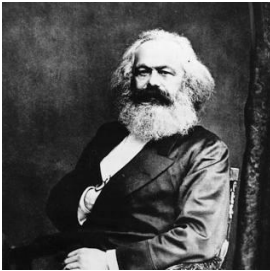
NEIGHBOUR



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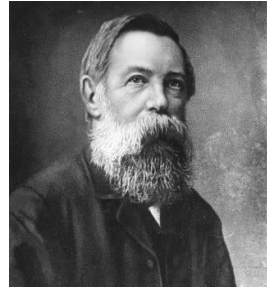
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FRIEDRICH ENGELS

the need to account for a people's past as holistically as can be secured. The industrial revolution, the intricacy of diverse human culture, tradition, and experience were all to be accommodated so as to have near balanced view from a comprehensive historical experience.

There arose also the need to properly scrutinise data and the justification of such. This is because many of the accounts had been written and when reviewed thereafter, had proven to be an antithesis of historical documentation meant by some to undercut others.

Two factors together caused the problem. The first being inability of a historian to properly investigate the history he is poised to do but to report whatever he beholds (told and or seen). The second is that quacks had also entered the field. Such quacks have been known for bias reporting being experts in sycophancy. This ultimately would lead to selectivity. Selectivity, being the opposite of objectivity in history, is abhorred by all true historians. It should not be condoned. There is also nonetheless,

the need for adequate instruments to be developed and adopted for the extraction of diverse historical information.

Problem diagnosed is said to be half solved. The need has been identified and historians are left with finding the solution. The discipline needs re-engineering following its extended scope in data collection and study, especially since the middle of the last century. A survey of such development around the world is not part of the objectives of this presentation but rather that of Africa.

1.4 African Historiography to the Latter

Here in Africa, although the act of historical writing began with the works of Arab Islamic scholars and traders in the 8th and 9th Cs AD, African historical consciousness dates back to thousands of years in the prehistory.

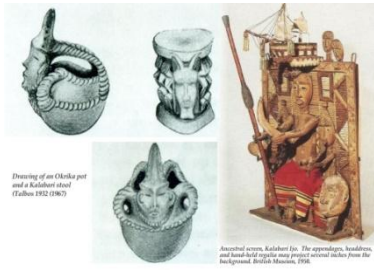


These historical situations were not all written down in black and white but are sometimes conveyed orally from generation to generation through the ages, via engravings, carvings, sculptures, paintings, and such other abstract means as dance, drama, composed sound (e.g. music, and drumlores) rituals, festivals, incantations and related mnemonics (e.g. folklores, legend, myths, aphorisms). The African historical ideology connects the past to the present, and the future, in a

historical continuum. In this respect, the position of the gods and the ancestors (who are sometimes deified) are recognized as they are seen as agencies connecting the past, and the present and sometimes relating the future. This is why miraculous developments are accepted in Africa as being part of historical developments since it is believed by the Africans that such occur as a result of the efforts being made to aid a given community.



**INDEGINOUS NIGER
DELTA SHRINE**



**IJOID ANCESTRAL
SCREENS AND POTS**



**PYRAMID AND SPHINX
OF ANCIENT EGYPT**



PHAROAH AKHINATON



EGYPTIAN MUMMIES

It is this traditional African historical system which survived and is observed in the form of oral traditions that provides the raw historical data with which modern scientific history is reconstructed, interpreted and taught in African universities,

colleges and schools. The fact that such original history in Africa was orally based made early European scholars on Africa's past to posit that there was no history at all in Africa. Their perception of African history and the relevance could best be seen in the words of Rudyard Kipling a British ethnographer and anthropologist. Kipling wrote in these words in his work "The Whiteman's Burden".

The black has no past, no culture, no history, no civilisation. The black race was all the while completely basking in great historical passivity, neither skilled nor innovative and having nothing to offer to universal civilisation.

This is similar to the views earlier noted of such other Eurocentric writers on African people, their history, culture, and worldview as Trevor Roper, and Hegel.

Although the development of modern history in Africa began with the Europeans especially during the colonial administration, written history was not completely lost on the Africans. The works of such Arab/Islamic writers as Hakwai, al-Masudi, al-Bakri, al-Idris, Ibn Battuta and Ibn Khaldun from Tunis, represent the early sources of written history of West Africa even though some did write such history based on hearsay (of the persons mentioned above, only Ibn Battuta was said to have actually visited West Africa). The first attempt by the West Africans themselves to begin to write their history was seen in the Tarikh, initially put together in the famous University in Timbuktu. It was from thence that the Arabic script development spread to other centres such as the chronicles in Kanem and Kano. They were limited to the western Sudan under Islamic

influence and dealt mainly with the political history of the places especially around rulers such as kings and their palaces.

On the other hand, some of the early European historical works on Africa includes “The Savage in History” and “Tribes of the Niger Delta”. These were done by amateur historians and anthropologists and as such were considered not properly done. They nonetheless, provided subsequent researchers with some relevant historical information. With the establishment of modern universities in Africa, such as the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (then a London University college) however, historiography in Africa was further moved forward. Although such started teaching European history and history of European affairs in Africa, it later as from the 1960s began to treat issues about Africa and Africans themselves. In Nigeria for instance, as earlier stated, the development gave birth to HSN and the JHSN. Also, the University of Ibadan launched the Ibadan History Series. These encouraged researches into indigenous history. I pay tribute to the modern African historians some of whom are K. O. Dike, Ade Ajayi, Obare Ikime, O.A. Ogot, E.J. Alagoa, E.A. Afigbo, A.O. Abasiatai, Okon Uya, Siberu Biobaku, Erim O. Erim, Bala Usman, A. Anyandele, J.U.J. Asiegbu, S.J.S. Cookey, O. Onwubiko, U.D. Anyanwu, N.C. Ejituwu, Nwabuogwu and Njoku to mention but a few. These historians were able to re-write the history previously done by the Europeans on Africa and her people. They threw away all forms of prejudice inherent in such works and indeed restored the image of Africa. This zeal and the nationalist crave at that time however, brought uncritical glorification of especially African leaders whose history had been written. Sometimes, there would be no justification of the actions of such past rulers (e g. Shaka de Zulu), which instead were at times

detrimental to their subjects as well as the wellbeing of the states they ruled over, yet they were so glorified.

Their successors were to try to make a difference in doing a universally accepted history that is devoid of bias whatsoever. The answer came in the systematic multi-disciplinary approach to the objective piecing together, the facts of history. They have to act justly in trying to get to the empirical evidence of the history; to in this regard critically review from the outside, the various accounts and issues as to arrive at a definite thought of such and therefore, the history. Such gurus of modern history as Oakshot, Walsh, Bradley, and Collingwood share the same view. They talk about reading between lines, extracting meaning from historical events and evidence and arriving at facts. Collingwood, for example, in "The Nature of History," thinks that historical facts are not available but are determined by the historian through a process of interpretation of the historical evidence that comes before the historian. This is because such facts are the motives and intensions surrounding the event, seen through the various ways the past actions of man are presented to the historian.

This is why historical fact of today together with the ingredient evidence would have to be pursued in diverse ways as they occur (in all spheres of human endeavour and in diverse manners as well). As such a historical hybridisation is necessary for a comprehensive and objective history of any give society to be arrived at. It is most apt for the historian in Africa with shallow literacy depth in most areas of the continent, and the associated misrepresentation and sometimes misleading reports by earlier writers from mainly European and Arab extractions.

This reward of evolving such new methodology in doing the history of Africa was re-echoed by T. Obenga when he wrote:

The work of a historian of Africa is becoming a continuous interdisciplinary dialogue. New horizons are opening up, thanks to an unprecedented theoretical effort. The idea of combined sources has, as it were, unearthed from the subsoil of general methodology a new way of writing history. The compilation and exposition of the history of Africa may therefore, play an exemplary pioneer role in associating other branches of learning with historical research (Obenga 1981 p.85).

Today, any material or immaterial object which bears witness to the past would constitute a historical data and therefore, would be sourced in the direction which it is observed. Such diversity of data availability and sourcing present a complexity of their appreciation and relevance. This should not be, bearing in mind the imperative of the studies thereof. The historical data source is the entity out of which an historian can inferentially construct historical accounts. Therefore, there is the need to classify such for clarity and efficiency of their use. Such classification has been done at various levels and proven very helpful. Sometimes the sources of historical data have been classified broadly into those written and the unwritten kinds. The former being the two sub-groups of archival materials, the published texts (e g. books, journals and periodicals) and the unpublished literary materials (e.g. diaries of especially important personalities, documents such as treaties, certificates, truce, memoranda, court judgments, fliers etc.). The latter comprises of such forms of data not found in writing such as oral information (this is found in an immaterial form e g. speech and acts containing relevant historical information such as contained

in drama, dance, drumbeat, and ritual), and archaeological and ethnographic data and any other of such coming from the sciences.

These are classified further into narrative and non-narrative data. The archival and other forms of written materials are classified as narrative since they convey readymade information to the reader (the historian). The non-narrative such as antics and the replicas bear information which are not ordinarily readable but would require ones intellect to observe, study, and explain.

The secondary source components do not bear such hard indicators but rather come as cross-evidence from sources (disciplines and sub-disciplines) whose businesses are not primarily about history. The data such can provide, may not originally be of historical data but could become significantly useful to researches in history. Such for example can be observed in palynology, limnology, geomorphology, geography, geology, sedimentology, palaeontology etc.

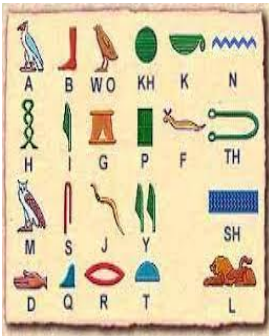
The primary sources are the main instruments used in doing historical investigation (commonly categorized into; history and prehistory). They are history in its selves, consisting of the written materials as indicated above, oral traditions including the verbal and non-verbal but of historical acts, ethnography, historical linguistics very similar to the oral traditions, works of art also similar to ethnography; and the gallant archaeology. It is with the synergy of the contributions of these primary sources and the aid of the secondary sources when they chance to be in the picture, that comprehensive history of today is written. They help to bridge the gap of what is

not known and what should be known in a proven more objective manner. Despite such advancement in efficiency in historical documentation, there is still need to be cautious in the use of the various disciplines directly or indirectly involved in the research process. So that it is with critical adoption and application of such that the finesse of this modern historical undertaking can rise up to the desired level.

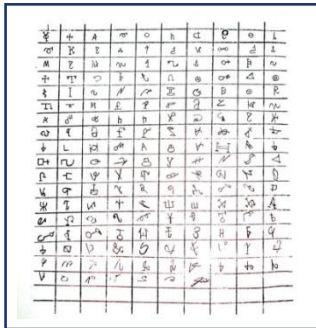
Vice Chancellor Sir, what follows next is an x-ray of the processes of such anagrammatisation in the study of history. Reference would be made to the indigenous situation for a more effective understanding of the discus.

1.5 Written Sources: the Strength, Deficiency, and Need

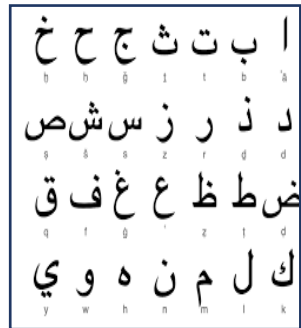
As earlier indicated the written sources encompass the archival and all other scripted materials in the general graphic systems form out of which information useful to history can be derived. The graphic systems are historically valuable because they are instructionally provided and are as well mostly chronological in their manners of presentation. They are categorized accordingly into for example, pictographic, ideographic, and phonological scripts. The pictographic category deals with written, painted or formed non-abstract with definite mundane representative sign of an object in either naturalistic or simplified, dramatic manner intended to convey a message associated with the object called pictograms such as Hieroglyphics (Ancient Egypt) Cuneiform (Sumeria), Aroko (Yoruba, Nigeria), and Mekutu Alele (Cameroun) and the tangible informative elements known as pictograms.



EGYPTIAN ALPHABET HIROGLYPHICS



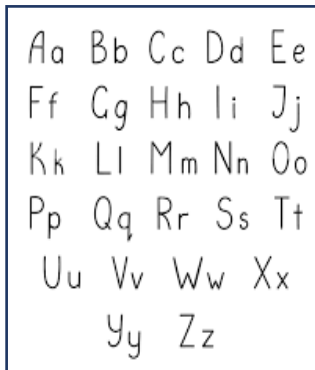
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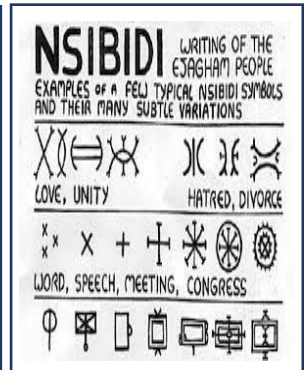
CHINESE ALPHABET



ARABIC ALPHABET



ENGLISH ALPHABET



NIGER DELTA ALPHABET NSIBIDI

The ideographic kind represent the written, painted or formed abstract sign representing an idea that could be in abstract form or be derived from an object in our world of matter such as *Quipu* (Amerindian Inca) (Farah and Karls p. 390 in: Okorobia, Okoroafor, and Asuk, 2021: 180), *Nsibidi* (Efik/Ibibio Nigeria; famous among the peoples' Ekpe [otherwise known as Man-Leopard] Secret Society), the *Ozo* society script (Igbo, Nigeria) (Okoroafor 2017d), *Sona*, and *Tusona* (Eastern Angola), also the later adaptations of Bruce Onobrakpera's *ibiabe*, Nelson Edewor's *ibie-ka*, Victor Ekpuk's *pseudo-nsibidi*, Johnson

Uwadinma's Afro-Tessellation, Uche Okeke's Ulism, Bolaji Cambell's Onaism, Michael Kpodo's Kpodoism, and Mofo Onifade's Araism (see Onekpe and Nwanze 2021) while phonological aspect consists of syllabic, hieroglyphic, and phonemic scripts such as *Via* (Liberia), the *Toma*, *Mende*, and *Bamum*. Script in this context can be described as a system of conventionally standardized inter-related visual symbols used in recording and transmitting ideas that can be interpreted and verbally presented. Such could have been inscribed on all sorts of materials as skins of animals and humans (including the head with hairs n it), plants' parts and materials, walls of caves, boulders, houses, slates of stone, wood, metal, sand-floor, and paper. They can also be modelled from among many other material objects such as feathers, strings, shells, and leaves.

These constitute the first line main sources of historical reconstruction though used only by the very few with the necessary skill to do so (e.g. pre-historians of the archaeologists, and anthropologists of sorts). Together with the normal writing they make-up the art of writing, on the basis of which history is traditionally studied. Ki-Zerbo (1981 p.348) joined issues with this when he said that "If history is an orchestra, its conductor has traditionally been the written record". We know better now however, that this is no more the true position in the study today. For the same Ki-Zerbo had countered such by informing thus; "...it is inappropriate to classify sources in order of importance, with written records at the top and oral tradition at the bottom".

The oldest form of main written sources of relevance around, are the writings of Arab/Islamic individuals (missionaries, traders, explorers, and sometimes classical or Arabic writers.

Before these, there were documentations by the various people of Africa as indicated above some of which were considered not standard and so unreliable in historical reconstructions. The Arab script, as they are sometimes called, can be seen in the form of Tarikh e.g. Tarikh al-Sudan and Tarikh al-Fattash or the Bilads, the Chronicles e.g. Kano Chronicle, Kilwa Chronicle, Gonja Chronicle, and Chronicles of the Wars of Amda Sion. Notable among the scholars were al-Masudi, (c.950AD) al-Bakri (1029-94AD), al-Idris (1154AD), Yakut (c.1200AD) Abu al-Fida (1273-1331AD) al-Umari (1301-49AD), Ibn Battuta (1304-69AD), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406AD), and al-Hassan Ibn Muhammad al-Wuzzan [the Africanus] (c.1494-1552AD) (Fage, 1981 p.26-28). Some of such works are in their archival forms and have also been useful in the historical researches of the various peoples of Africa concerned.

There is also the written source from the time of the coming of the Europeans to Africa, especially to the South (including the Niger Delta coastal areas), as from the 15th C. This has its own special consideration, in that the Arab scholars' writing on sub-Saharan Africa has not been judged objective enough in the overall assessment. This is because they were written sometimes on the basis of hearsay with the few exceptions being such by Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldun (himself a man from a Tunis) and Leo Africanus. The Europeans maritime activities from about the middle of the last millennium and subsequent interest in Africa South of the Sahara yielded some literary works that have become invaluable to today's historical researchers. From 1460 to the beginning of the 16th C, such works were done on the land and people of these Africans especially the coast lands of West Africa, the region of the lower

Zaire and Angola, the Zambezi valley and the adjacent highland and Ethiopia (Fage, 1981 p.28). There came to be examples of such works such as Esmald de Obis Situ (c1509), Dapper (1668); Pero Paez (d.1622) and Manel de Aimeid (1569-1646), Job Ludolf (1624-1704); Cadornega (1681) (Fage, 1980 p.29). These were not essentially publications in history; but contain some descriptive happenings in the areas including trade and adventures involving the Europeans. As from the 18th C however, the Europeans showed more interest in the study of the people not just in trading and the likes. Thus their universal histories and geographies of this time included Africa. For example, Fage noted that the Universal History produced in England between 1736 and 1765 had its Folio edition, and three volumes out of which sixteen were devoted to modern history with two volumes being on Africa (Fage, 1981 p.30). Fage further wrote that there were still some monographic essays including "Silva Correia's 'History of Angola' (c. 1792), Benezet's 'Some Historical Account of Guinea' (1772), and 'The Two Histories of Dahomey', Norris's 'Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Ahadae' (1789) and Dalzel's 'History of Dahomey' (1793)" (Fage, 1981 p.30).

As Hrbet (1981) noted however, upon all such narratives, were the attempts by the Africans to write in their own languages (such as Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanembu Dyla, and Malagasy) using the skill learnt earlier in the Arabic script, later in the Latin alphabet and subsequently in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. It was in this way that most areas of Africa were covered by written accounts. So that the Maghreb, Egypt, Ethiopia, the fringes of the Sudanese Sahel, the East African coast at first, and later the Senegal and the Gambia, Benin and

the Niger Delta, the Kongo State to the Zambezi, and the Mwene Mutapa Empire, to the south-west African coast of Monomotapa land began to have some historical representations.

These, together with the archival materials emanating from the colonial experience helped in trapping the valuable information on Africans, their history and environment. These added to the modern write-ups in newspapers, magazines, records, periodicals, books, and so on of the last century and the emphatic 21st century present a seeming rich literary base for African history which though are not enough representation of existing historical records. Hrbek thought wisely and stated that to be realistic, that there are many places that remained untouched for records on the continents' history. Such places he lamented have created vacuum on the overall knowledge of sources of African history. The earlier they are covered he concluded, "The richer will be the picture of the African past" (Hrbek, 1981 p.140). This is why it is advised, as has been the practice of some departments of history in African universities and colleges to encourage grass root history by the variously scholars of the diverse areas of Africa. Nonetheless, it has also become realistic that researching on the past of Africa using limited source of information as may be contained in written sources, would not be optimally beneficial to its full understanding.

This is because upon the dearth of such material in especially some areas, the general nature of written source would not permit it to assume being sacrosanct and blameless. Written sources despite sometimes being derived from properly informed persons (authors and their respondents) are susceptible to abuse in the form of falsification and

misinterpretation (especially in transliterations and translations). Not only as earlier pointed out, it would amount to some level of foolhardiness to assume that since it is in writing, that an account is an embodiment of factual history and nothing more. For since what is written down is first thought about and or said whether outwardly or in one's mind, it is not quite different in its validity from other sources such as oral traditions.

1.6 The Imperative of a Multidisciplinary Approach to the Historical Studies of Africa and the Niger Delta

To adequately function to actualise the objectives of history, the study today, requires more hands with diverse skills otherwise the discipline will wallow in deep dark biasness and subjectivity that would always portend ahistorical representation. In the event of such, a multidisciplinary approach to its study has been developed. In the view of Emeritus Professor E.J Alagoa "...every discipline concerned with specialised aspects of human life and activity must be relevant to the history of man in his totality" (Alagoa 1979:12). For this reason an eclectic pluri-disciplinary approach is being adopted to ensure that various areas of the concerns of man are covered accordingly. This requires more of hybridisation of the efforts at reaching the conclusion. Such has been attempted, then heeded to and is yielding wonderful results. The book "Groundwork of Nigerian History" so well edited by Professor Obare Ikime and the "Izon of the Niger Delta" edited by E.J. Alagoa, T.N. Tamuno, and J.P. Clark are some good examples of the collaborative efforts at doing a comprehensive and more objective history from different perspectives (disciplines and sub-disciplines). The weak method of a historian working alone using a review of the works of experts in the other disciplines that have dealt with the issues

relating to the theme of his research is more or less inglorious and so not quite desirable.

As a discipline which is relied upon by the governments and peoples everywhere to present an unbiased official document of fact finding mission of the past, it is better the responsibility is shared amongst specialists whose expert contributions would be synergised in a common reportage stemming from an objective, analytical and interpretative efforts of those with the know-how. For this reason, disciplines in the earth sciences such as archaeology, pedrology, sedimentology, paleo-botany, and geology; language studies such as linguistics and phonology,; glottochronology, and lexicostatistics, biological sciences such as palynology, palaeontology, and ethno-biology and health sciences such as DNA and typological studies, dentistry and dermatology are variously associated with on the diverse themes of historical studies today.

Mr Vice Chancellor Sir, our interest in all these is on the lofty contributions of prehistoric studies of archaeology and associated disciplines in investigating the Niger Delta's past in mainly the last six decades. What was demonstrated above is mere statement of the 'faith' of modern historical studies. In it, historical studies are described with regard to the nature, scope, aim and objectives, and relevance in meeting in an informed manner, the needs of man in his society or environment today. I had placed my personal views with regard to these as I have applied them doing my job as an academic in the University and the global society at large as a functional member of it. I was attracted to the scientific study of the past especially of the prehistoric aspect by the degree of objectivity it returns with in the entire procedure of its business. The methodology involved

in meeting with the needs of locating, gathering, analysing, reconstructing, and determining the past situation was quite appealing to me. The vivid presentation of the results in the reportage was very fascinating. Such tended to present the stories the way they occurred and are met in the spirit of "*agemena*"; saying it as it was (as our early Greek historians would have it).

Prehistoric studies lent very useful hands to the study of history generally. It made such, more authentic and credible beyond researchable doubts. The canal or provisional autonomy that history possesses doing its job so to become better established among the pronouncements, did not present with the lasting validity of the conclusions. History then could not stand tall in intent and purpose, due to pessimism of the result, stemming from the nature of its data and methodology applied in arriving at the conclusion. History however, was not the goofing entity. The relationship between the past and the present is forever one that is undeniably authentic and useful for humans within a societal transitional prognosis.

The attempt to properly objectivise history from the 17th C with Rene Descartes a French philosopher whose thesis negatively portrayed history to be escapist (escapism), doubtful (pyrrhonism), and non-beneficial to present generation of people getting use to the positive views of the Italian philosopher Vico, and English philosophers Lock and Hume who would not agree with him on the basis of their Cartesian or Critical Historiography, and beyond, historical knowledge has always been faced with some level of doubt in the reconstruction of the past. For this reason Descartes and those with his sort of conviction wanted a ban of history. The involvement of such disciplines and sub-

disciplines as archaeology, linguistics, ethnography, works of art, oral traditions, with the veracity is something which one can bank on. These disciplines have become the primary source data providers for African history. The prehistoric aspects such as archaeology of African history have as Alagoa would say partnered the history, validating or invalidating the conclusions earlier reached using the conventional method of historical crafting. The pace was set by the father of history in the University together with his cardinal compatriots namely: Profs. Cookey, Asiegbu, Dixon-Fyle, Ejituwu, Nzewunwa, Derefaka, Orgbani, Naanen, Wariboko and Dr. Ogan.

In the present arrangement, the weakness of one source of the historical data and the use is strengthened by the support of the other and vice versa. By the end of the 20th C, historical (including the pre-historical aspect) research in the Niger Delta became positioned to deliver on the good objectives. Alagoa's threefold concerns for professional history as represented below, served as the beacon of such delivery. These are:

to attempt to make a contribution to the development of the theory and methodology of African oral tradition(s) and historiography

to use the best resources of scholarship to extend our knowledge of the history of the people of the Niger Delta and of Rivers State (then together with the later created Bayelsa State) in particular and Africa in general

to apply the knowledge gained for the purposes of practical education at all levels. Both in formal classroom instruction and for public enlightenment (Alagoa 1979 p.14-15).

Alagoa desired to have researchers determine the theoretical base of their research concern. He required them therefore, to explicitly state the philosophical or ideological underpinnings of their researches. At that time, he had become a stronger advocate for the local histories being undertaken by the locals themselves using the provisions of oral traditions as Jan Vansina had educated the world since 1961. Oral traditions he postulated should be applied as “practical means of collecting, evaluating and utilising oral traditions in a systematic manner (Alagoa, 1979 p.15).

The basic challenge facing the evolving historiography is the methodology. Information, no matter the degree of importance attached, must be verifiable and credible so to keep-up with objectivity and authenticity. The suspicion and scepticism on the validity of the accounts being provided in his submission was mainly on the conventional historical data and the reconstruction thereto. Such was the fate of the information from the written records categorised as script (i.e. inscribed text). At this time proving of point was very essential in the general operation of modern societies especially to the West. The scholarship enthusiastically beamed its light on the script which no doubt has the methodology clearly set and the conclusions of researches made almost so clinically with satisfaction, to the general readership.

The University of Port Harcourt had already assumed the leadership position being at the forefront of the studies in the Niger Delta. It soon after became the centre of such study the world over.

2.1 Synopsis of the Niger Delta Pre-historical Investigations

There has been series of academic research in the Niger Delta from diverse angles over the past five centuries that is from the period of European maritime activities in the area. The concern here is on the pre-historical perspective of such studies in the region. The account of such investigation is quite long so to accommodate it within this lecture period, a succinct methodology of the presentation of the synopsis is conveniently adopted. In this way the narrative is presented upon which the constructive analysis can be properly made. First is the information on the land, the thematic and general systematic approach to the study, followed by the periodic developments of same till date.

2.1.1 Invitation to the Study Area

The Niger Delta is part of the sedimentary basin of southern Nigeria whose origins goes back to the cretaceous times. What is said to have emerged in the late cretaceous was what has been referred to as proto-Niger Delta (Sowunmi, 1981 p.26).The development of the Niger Delta as it exists now has been traced to the early tertiary times. Since then, the Delta is said to have continued to move in a cumulatively seaward direction (Allen, 1964, 1976; Hospers, 1965; Stoneley, 1966; Short and Stauble, 1967). Within this general seaward expansion of the Delta, there have been local regressions and transgressions Short and Stauble (1967). The seaward expansion of the Delta is said to have reached its maximum limit thus far during the Plio/Pleistocene period. Eustatic rise in sea levels are said to have caused a transgression in the submerged area that forms the present estuaries in the Niger Delta Short and Stauble, (1967).

Asseez, (1976 p. 263) explained that from sedimentological and faunal evidence, it appears that the geological character of the present Niger Delta is not different from what it was in the past. He notes that Short and Stauble, (1967) identified three subsurface stratigraphic units in the modern Niger Delta, this being: Benin, Agbada, and Akata formations. It is the upper part of the Benin formation, which is about 5,000 feet deep maximum that is encountered in the archaeological excavations carried out in the Delta. This formation is described as:

Its surface structural units (the point bars, cut-off channels, levees etc.) formation is said to be of Oligocene age in the subsurface in the north, and then becomes progressively younger, southward. In general, it ranges from Miocene to Recent. The other observation of Asseez (1976 p.264-5) that is of some significance for this study is that every little hydrocarbon accumulation has been associated with the formation. Indeed, although as observed Hospers (1965), the maximum thickness of the total detrital sediments of the Niger Delta to date is about 8,000 metres. It is instructive that archaeological investigations in the area have examined just a small fraction (about 2 metres on the average) of this pile of sediments. In this connection, Sowunmi's finding that there was a sudden and substantial upsurge of the pollen of *Elaeis guineensis* (4.3% at 5.90 metres dated to c. 2800 B.P.); being absent as from 20.35 metres and occurring feebly only thrice earlier i.e. 0.5% at 35.46 metres; 0.6% at 32.40 and 1.0% at 23.20 metres (Sowunmi, 1981a p. 136), is significant to its occupational history.

There is, thus, indirect evidence that agricultural practice could date at least as far back as about 800 BC in the Central

Delta especially if one goes by ethnographic data on the practice of farming in the Delta. It should, therefore, be plausible to suggest that the evidence under discussion could have originated further inland than where it was found. Indeed, contemporary economic practices indicate that crop farming is a more prominent subsistence strategy in the freshwater swamps of the lower floodplain than in the saltwater mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta, where it is a marginal (almost insignificant) component of the subsistence strategies of the inhabitants and where exploitation of aquatic resources is predominant.

Another significance of the evidence obtained from the sudden substantial occurrence of *Elaeis guineensis* pollen is that both G.I. Jones and K.O. Dike's implication or suggestion that the Delta environment has been a hostile one and so its inhabitants could have been forced into living there needs rethinking. This is particularly so because there is no record of forced movement of peoples from the hinterland coast wards about 800 BC. And appreciation of the diversity in faunal, floral and mineral resources available in the delta would suggest that people who have been accustomed to relating to a riverine environment both from their economic and religious practices (perhaps in the immediate hinterland of and from around the eastern and western extremities of the Niger Delta) could have recognized the abundance and diversity in resources as well as the attendant economic opportunities beyond their immediate environments and so decided to move into it. Although the movement to occupy parts of the Delta may have been brought about by different historical circumstances for the different groups, the preferred settlement zone of the groups in the Delta would have been influenced by both the kind of subsistence

strategy they were used to, their peculiar historical experience, and the attendant technological package available to them.

In the Delta, both terrestrial and aquatic resources were available and there was ample land for crop cultivation as well as forest for hunting and gathering. It does seem as if, having moved into the ecological transitional or buffer zone (which the area covered by this study represents), the peoples were able to increasingly depend on fishing as their occupation of the Delta continued to expand towards the sea.

The concern of the ethnographic dimension in Niger Delta studies earlier presented by Derefaka and Okoroafor, (2009) and is represented hereunder indicates that such predates the efforts of Professor E. J. Alagoa. As Anozie, (1976 p.189) rightly pointed out, anthropological work on the peoples and institutions in the Niger Delta had been carried out by Leonard, (1906), Thomas, (1910), Talbot, (1926, 1932), among others, before academic historians started work in the Niger Delta. Jones, (1963) had doubted the usefulness of oral traditions as a source for reconstructing the past in the Niger Delta (describing such traditions in the area as either a mass of uncoordinated and often contradictory material or authorized version(s) for external consumption), it has however become now, evident that oral traditions have led to the shedding of more light on what he has referred to as the prehistoric and proto-historic stages of the Niger Delta's past. Being less sceptical of the potentialities of oral traditions, Anene, (1963) admitted that the oral traditions are clearly inconclusive evidence, but made the important suggestion that eventually the disciplines of comparative linguistics and archaeology may throw considerable light on what is now very obscure.

Now to archaeology and how it has been used in the reconstruction of the past of the Niger Delta. Indeed, there is no gainsaying the fact that archaeological research in the Niger Delta began at the instance of an oral historian, Professor E. J. Alagoa. As he has explained (Alagoa, 1976b p. 3-4):

Because of the difficulties and limitations already apparent in the use of oral traditions and anthropology, it was decided to resort to archaeology in the study of Niger Delta history. The expectation is that archaeology would add concreteness and a more secure chronological base to cultural reconstructions that would be considered mere fabrication if derived from oral traditions alone, or as merely hypothetical if derived from anthropology. The plan is that excavations should eventually be carried out at old sites indicated by the oral traditions. Thus, each individual excavation not only tells the story of [the] developments [but also increases] { the} understanding of inter-relationships, contacts, migrations, trade, and diffusion of goods and ideas throughout the Niger Delta and with the Nigerian hinterland.

Added to these expectations, are the objectives set by Anozie and Nzewunwa for the research they subsequently undertook from the Eastern Niger Delta with the active participation of the Great-Grandfather –Alagoa himself. But perhaps before examining their objectives, which indicate how archaeology has been used in the Eastern Delta research, it would be useful to summarize the history of archaeological research in the Niger Delta. It is interesting to note that of the 400 sites produced by the reconnaissance of Eastern Nigeria by Hartle between 1963 and 1967, none appears to have been in the Niger Delta. None of the fourteen sites excavated by him

(Hartle, 1967) was in the Niger Delta (Anozie, Nzewunwa and Derefaka, 1987 p.122). As Anozie, (1978 p.3) has rightly chronicled, the first organised archaeological fieldwork in the Niger Delta was undertaken in December 1972 by a research team from the University of Ibadan made up of Professor Charles Thurstan Shaw, Professor E. J. Alagoa, and F. N. Anozie, then a junior research fellow in Archaeology.

The team carried out reconnaissance at Onyoma, Nembe, Oruokolo, Kaiko (Okpoama), Ke, Brass, and Ogbolomabiri and spent a few days studying these sites, which were previously recorded by Alagoa while studying the oral tradition(s) of the area. This statement agrees with Anozie's earlier information (Anozie, 1976 p.90) that:

Alagoa, while recording the oral traditions, noted many ancient settlement sites which were regarded as dispersal centres of the Ijo people. It was therefore, decided to start by investigating some of these sites.

On the return of the team to Ibadan at about the end of December 1972, the data obtained were analysed and so it was decided that test pits should be dug at Onyoma, Ke, and Oruokolo to study the cultural materials they contain and date them. The excavations at Onyoma and Ke were done in May, April and December 1973. Transport, among other difficulties, made it impossible for excavations to be carried out at Oruokolo. Apart from Alagoa and Anozie, Prof. (then Dr) (Mrs) M. A. Sowunmi, a palynologist participated in the excavations, and her main concern was to study the present and past vegetation of the area (Anozie, 1978 p.6).

It was in June 1974 that the Ogoloma site was excavated. Again, the master –Alagoa, had drawn attention to the site, warranting the initial action of reconnaissance in December 1973. In December 1975, the Saikiripogu site was excavated (Anozie, 1978 p.8). A new dimension to the research came in December 1976. Nwanna Nzewunwa, a junior research fellow at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, arrived from Cambridge to undertake the excavation at Okochiri. The explanation for this assertion will become evident when the research objectives before and after his introduction to Niger Delta archaeological work are examined. Perhaps one should state here that there are now accounts that have brought this summary of the history of archaeological research in the Niger Delta up to date except for the most recent excavations at Finima excavated near Bonny (see Anozie, Nzewunwa and Derefaka, 1987 and Nzewunwa and Derefaka, 1989).

Anozie has stated that one of the objectives of the excavations in the Eastern Niger Delta was to date the sites (Anozie, 1976 p.97). Nzewunwa has therefore, quoted him rightly when he reported him as having said that the Niger Delta archaeological research target was to among other issues attempt to establish the nature and age of the earliest settlements in the Delta and to compare with estimates based on oral traditions and linguistics (Anozie, 1976a p.1). This guided Anozie's excavation of nine shell middens at four sites, which have produced a series of radiocarbon dates providing a chronological framework within which the material culture of the Eastern Delta could begin to be analysed. Professor C.T. Shaw, the father of Nigerian Archaeology, who could be considered the pioneer archaeologist in Niger Delta Archaeology, has made a

challenging remark in his book on Nigerian Archaeology and Early History Shaw, (1978 p.51) saying:

Just when the Niger Delta was first colonized and a way of life evolved to exploit its highly specialized type of environment, is one of the problems awaiting Nigerian Archaeology.

This perhaps set tune for the objectives of the pioneering efforts in Niger Delta archaeological research that Nzewunwa abided by as the aim and objectives in his PhD thesis for the University of Cambridge as follows.

This is clearly a logical development from a situation in which excavations had already been carried out at four sites in the Eastern Niger Delta and radiometric dates obtained for them. When Nzewunwa excavated at Okochiri with the aid of Dr Anozie, the picture of prehistoric developments in the Eastern Delta was beginning to be defined in broad outlines based on the excavations already carried out. This is why it was necessary that he should examine the available data using an explanatory framework that could synthesize the information on this relatively new and unique region of Nigerian Archaeology. This is how his arrival on the scene introduced a new dimension to the Niger Delta Archaeology.

For Thurstan Shaw and Anozie, moving into a unique environmental zone in Nigeria to do archaeological research, was useful and indeed necessary, for them to concentrate on building up a reliable chronological framework (based on radiometric dates) for the Niger Delta. Given the physiographic delineation of the Niger Delta however, with all the sites excavated being in the salt water mangrove swamps sub-zone, the chronological

framework then made was rightly judged not applicable to the entire Delta.

Following NEDECO (1961) and Udo, (1978 p.227), Nzewunwa, (1979 p.4) has described the Niger Delta as being made-up of four ecological sub-zones, namely:

The freshwater swamps and forests on both sides of the Niger (from about the place of its bifurcation to where it empties into the Atlantic);

The coastal plains on the west and east of the freshwater swamps;

The salt water mangrove swamps, south plains sub-zones, made-up of mud and silt covering about 10,360 square kilometres;

The sandy beach ridges just at the front of the outer Delta.

This is a fair summary of the physiography of the Niger Delta and so it should be accurate to indicate that until a majority or all four sub-zones have been systematically sampled, it would be inadequate to apply chronological data from only one sub-zone to the entire Delta.

The Niger Delta has since been understood as having separate and unique environmental and historical circumstances, distinct from those of the other ones of the broader mother eastern and to a lesser extent, western Nigerian areas. Although politically, the Niger Delta had been made to include nine states of present day Nigeria namely; Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, geographically or environmentally, the entire land areas of the states cannot be

said to be in the Delta. Archaeologically still, the Cross River valley is on its own as an area of study, just as Benin is, in the same respect, on its own, even though these are as stated above, parts of the Niger Delta, using other criteria in deciding such. It is in this regard, that this lecture limits itself to areas determined conventionally by experts on its merit as the Niger Delta.

The archaeological and historical richness of the Niger Delta had been revealed, through the works of early scholars such as K.O. Dike, E. J. Alagoa, J.U.J Asiegbu, S.J.S Cookey, Okon Uya and N.C. Ejituwu. Some potential archaeological sites were also actually earmarked even before Nigeria's independence.

This is not surprising because the Delta had served like the theatre of three main lines of activities involving Nigerians and especially the West before outright colonialism of Nigeria including the area. This is aside from the earlier occupational activities of the people of the area with a lot of material remains lying there as the testimonials. Such publications as 'Nigeria and its British Invaders'; 'Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria'; 'The Small Brave City State'; and 'The Akassa Raid' by some of the above mentioned authors (the last two are by Alagoa) inspired Emeritus Professor of history E.J. Alagoa, who is also an archivist and archaeologist by super association, to as the pioneer chairman of Rivers State Research Scheme of the newly created Rivers State (created in 1967) in 1971, wisely use his office to gather men and materials from his base at the Institute of African Studies in the University of Ibadan to the young state, for a more scientific investigation of the past of the area.

This brave and wise move began the chain of activities in the historical investigation of the area which can now be divided

into five phases of its development. These five phases which results are presented below are as follows: Phase one of (1971-1973); Phase two of (1973-1976); Phase three of (1976-1980); Phase four of (1980-1985); and Phase five of (1985-2022).

2.1.2 Phase One of the Researches (1971-1973)

This was the initial phase of the development of the archaeological studies of the Delta. As stated earlier, it began with Prof. E J. Alagoa's interest in looking beyond the surface to understand the past of the area in a more meaningful manner. Alagoa had earlier published in 1964, "The Small Brave City State" and had in the same spirit gone to the United States of America to do his study and back and published the book "A Short History of the Niger Delta". This helped to spur him into acting in the manner he did at this time. In the US at this time, the trend was to provide proves for issues being presented. He had done a good work mainly based on oral and certain ethnographic data but was not quite satisfied. Using the old familiar method of going from the known to the unknown, Alagoa began the search from the central Niger Delta area where he hails from and where some of the information he had earlier gathered were so enchanting that he requested for their authenticity with passion.

In his team for this initial endeavour were geographers, palynologists cartographers, linguists, historians and soon after archaeologists. At this point he had two lines of historical conclusions about the coming, settlement, and dispersal of the Ijoid folks in the area. These were first, that they came as early as 1,000 years ago deduced from the oral accounts, and second, that the people first settled to the middle of the central Niger Delta area, and from there, dispersed to the left (west) and right (east) with time. These bottom lines were made on the account

of the distant past of the people provided orally. He therefore, instructed the team to check through the first line using other approaches including the scientific research means to validate or invalidate such position.

The archaeological aspect led by Dr F.N. Anozie of blessed memory (though initially spearheaded by Professor C. T. Shaw) was delineated and surveyed accordingly. It was followed by some reconnaissance activities out of which a number of sites were discovered and earmarked for excavation namely Onyoma, Ewoama (Agadagbabuo), Isomobom, Kaiko, Koroama and Saipripogu.

Of these Onyoma, Ewoama, and Kaiko were excavated within this first phase with the results as shown below. Four radiocarbon dates were secured for Ewoama as viz: AD 1580±60 that placed the site between AD 1100 and AD 1600. This, Nzewunwa informed was the earliest date for the occupation of the salt water beach zone in the 12th century AD (see Nzewunwa, 1980).

For Onyoma, the date ranged from AD 1330 ± 70, to AD 200 ± 95 for Onyoma I; and to AD 1335 ± 85 for Onyoma II.

Three radiocarbon dates from the charcoal samples have been obtained for Pit IV of Agadagbabou: HAR-398 25cm 310 ± 70BP (AD 1640) charred palm kernel HAR 4396 40cm 220 ± 80BP (AD 1730) HAR 4395 77cffi 220 ± 90BP(AD 1730) and charcoal from various levels mixed (Nzewunwa, 1983 p.108).

2.1.3. Phase Two (1973-1976)

In the second phase of from 1973 to 1976 more archaeologists had come to be involved and the following sites were excavated as viz: for Koroama, RCD-30 c. 16thC AD (see Derefaka 2003 p.140-143); for Isomobou, RCD-29 810±70 AD 1030-1290 (see Derefaka, 2003 p.173-174) and Nzewunwa, (1983).

2.1.4. Phase Three (1976-1980)

In the third phase, the research coverage of the Delta was extended from the central to the East of it. Here, with the help of Nzewunwa and Derefaka some more sites were worked on including Okrika (Okochiri), Ogoloma, and Bonny. The brief accounts of their excavations are represented below.

For Okochiri, the radiocarbon dates were obtained as thus: AD 940 ± 80 for Okochiri I, AD 965±85 for Okochiri IV, AD 1225±90 for Okochiri III. For Ogolorna, the radiocarbon dates ranged from 110 ± 75 BP (meaning AD1200 and AD 1900), 125 ±85 BP (meaning AD 1650-1925), to 125 ± 100 BP (meaning AD 1255-1410) Nzewunwa, (1983); Derefaka, (2003).

2.1.5. Phase Four (1980-1985)

The fourth phase witnessed a further extension of the areas of the Delta being covered in the investigation. The dual of Nzewunwa and Derefaka had pushed further north of the eastern Niger Delta to its mainland northwards. They therefore, at this period covered Ke, and later Naama-Sii in Ogoniland. As for Naama-Sii, the site is said to have been carbon-dated although the result is yet unpublished or has not been seen by this writer. With these, the chronological results supplied by the experts are summarized thus;

Ke AD770-1270; Okochiri, AD850 -1500; Saikiripogu,
 AD 1010-1640; Ogoloma, AD 1030 -1480; Onyoma,
 AD 1275-1690; Isomabou, AD1030-1480; Agadagbabou AD
 1640 -1730; Koroama, Nzewunwa (1983); Derefaka
 (2003)

2.1.6. Phase Five (1985-2023)

In this latest phase of between 1985 and 2023, the investigation moved further north to Ogbaland and the “head” of the Delta at Oguta, and later reversed down south to Brass and Wilberforce Island Nzewunwa, (1983); Derefaka, (2005); and Okoroafor, (2007; 2009).

The contemporary phase has witnessed fewer main excavations compared to the other phases. The Ogbaland fieldwork was surveyed and determined so to work on ten sites namely: Omoku, Obrikom, Ahiawhor, Amah, Ikiri, Obigwe etc. but only these six mentioned were really worked on with less fancied dates of the materials recovered. Seven ESR dates have been obtained as follows:

NO	SITE	DEPTH	MATERIAL	ESR DATE (in Kyr)	ABSOLUTE AGE (Approx.)
UPH/84/A	Obrikom I	168cm	Bone	5.500.50	3015BC
UPH/85/B	Obrikom II	80cm	Bone	2.00.25	AD10
UPH/85/C	Obrikom III	80cm	Bone	2.500.50	15BC
UPH/85/D	Ikiri I	111cm	Shell	4.200.20	2015BC
UPH/85/E	Ikiri II	(?)	Ivory	5.300.50	AD1235
UPH/85/F	Omoku I	50cm	Ivory	5.300.50	2815BC
UPH/85/G	Omoku I1	30cm	Bone	3.250.25	1015BC

(Nzewunwa, 1988 p. 43 in: Derefaka, 2003 p. 238).

Oguta excavation's date ranged from between AD1290 and 1850AD Okoroafor, (2017 p. 265-267). Some of its details read: Ogbanyi-Iberu: UPM-GUA OS 0002 - 600+/-60BP to 580+/-60BP i.e. AD1290 to1440. Umuamam: UPM-GUA OS 0003 – 112.11+/-0.82 p MC – 112.47+/-0.82p MC and Umuamam: UPM-GUA OS 0004 117.65+/-0.83p MC -118.34+/-0.83p MC. The last two are determined within 1850.

There have however, been demonstration excavations around the University in which I was directly involved, used as practical exercise for our undergraduate students offering archaeology related courses such as HDS 101.1: Introduction to Archaeology from 2000 to 2019. From 2020 the unfortunate year of the Covid-19 pandemic, and Federal Government and ASUU industrial disputes of 2020 and 2022, and the extreme neighbourhood insecurity would not allow such practical activity to take place (within these four years the University of Port Harcourt had at least once issued the directive that almost all the field practical involving students should not hold and such was obeyed). The laboratory aspect of the archaeological practical however, continued for not just the first year students but those of other levels in the Department offering archaeology, and cultural resource management related courses at the university museum. We have just returned to the field in 2023 to continue with the usual field exercise used in training the students and gathering data for systematic analysis of this area.

3.1 The *Odinani* Non-Script Sources for the Reconstruction of the Prehistory of the Niger Delta

Mr Vice Chancellor Sir, as a scientific historian, I use mainly the sources not basically adapted unto standardised writing (the

script), represented here as the non-script sources. Both script and non-script sources are concerned with historical reconstruction. They however, differ in the nature of their data, the methods of their acquisition but converge again in the application or use (the analysis, reconstruction, and interpretation). The non-script sources are of two categories: the primary and the secondary. There are five major primary source disciplines namely: archaeology, oral traditions, ethnography, historical linguistics, and works of art. These bear fundamental commonalities in the significance of their evidential fact (sometimes judged to be the intrinsic values).

The values represent the ethos of the land and people being studied. They are deduced, inferred, and generally distilled from the tangible and intangible elements of a people's cultural heirloom. Such is what is regarded here as the *Odinani* historical resource; a Nigerian word for the ethnological and ethnographic resources of a given place, in this case the Niger Delta.

The non-script sources would include to a very minimal extent, some tabloids which are mainly within the first class primary data of historical reconstruction such as some of the written documents reconstructed from certain ancient societies (e.g. the Rosetta of ancient Egypt, the *Nsibidi* from traditional Efik/Ibibio peoples (e.g. Ejegham, and Ekoi [also found among some Igbo, and later in Haiti and Cuba]) of Southern Nigeria, the *Ozo* title society script among some Oru, and Igbo peoples of Southern Nigeria, the *Via* script of traditional Liberia, and many others found in India, China, Aztec, and Inca of the Andeans of South America) and the diaries of VIPs of especially early visiting Arabian and European explorers, merchants, missionaries, colonialists among others. They may include certain official documents hundreds of years in the past which are particularly

classified. In this instance however, these function to strengthen the information secured using the mainstream non-script sources. Some of the written documents from colonialists may not be fully reliable because of gaps in the interactions such as the language barrier, disregard for other peoples' culture and personalities, share unwholesome practice of some of the parties involved.

The very non-script entities bear the most stubborn sorts of facts of history. They are no respecters of persons or authorities desiring to misrepresent the past in any way. Their stand is firm and final for whosoever is willing to keep the records straight and simple. They are the very best skill-sets of pre-historical studies. Prehistoric studies judged to be synonymous with the archaeological kind (see Knudson in: 'Prehistory of Scotland'), arrived the scene of general historical studies with a solution to the shallow depth of coverage of history based on written records, and shortness of memory and related issues of the oral data. Archaeologists categorised the scale chronology into two namely: relative chronology and absolute chronology. In the former the idea of chronology is calculated based on comparison. In simple sense of it, one can say that it is getting dark so the day is going over and vice versa. In the instance of the later, equipment in radiometric laboratories are mainly used in calculating the time and establishing the dates being assigned to events. The methods developed and those who helped in making and perfecting them such as Dr Willard F. Libby have since been celebrated.

3.2 Oral Traditions

A pioneer historian and chief proponent of the oral traditions in the reconstruction of Africa's history Jan Vansina wrote that "The oral tradition is complicated and it is not easy to find a definition which covers all its aspects" Vansina, (1981 p.143). This notwithstanding, he defined it "as a testimony transmitted orally from one generation to another". Oral traditions have since been better understood and used as a corpus of mainly verbally given testimonies handed down from one generation or person to another. As such there are oral tradition and oral history. The difference being that in the former, the transmitter of the information could not have been present when the account being rendered as oral information occurred but is only its conductor; while the latter is a situation where the one relaying the message was an eyewitness of the incidence or received it from one who experienced the occurrence.

Oral traditions can be stored and thus sourced in more forms than speech on which it depends. Sometimes for example, it can be stored in drumbeats otherwise called drumlores. The drumlores (as can be found among the Yoruba people of South West Nigeria with *Oriki* the talking drum) can be in other forms besides the drumbeats for example among some communities it is derived from gongs e.g. *Igbogene* in Bayelsa State Nigeria, *Ikoro* and *Ekwe* among the Igbo, *Ufie* and *Ibom* among the Oru people of Central Southern Nigeria Okoroafor, (2017c). They are also experienced at other times, in dance such as *Egwu-iji* (the yam dance) and *Agana*; in drama such as dance drama, in rituals and festivities. Yet oral traditions can be found in the forms of poems, songs, riddles, myths, legends mnemonics such as aphorism, idioms, proverbs and other metaphorical expressions and wise-sayings.

Despite the diverse ways and manners that they are stored and found the oral data can be seen in two categories the fixed text and the free text Alagoa, (2005).

The fixed texts appear in a strictly structured manner which does not allow room at all for change in the form of colouration or straightening. As such it is normally rendered in poetic manner with restricted language. It is found mainly around palace courts and religious and or cult affairs. Example of fixed text can be seen in the form of some coronation process e.g. ritual involved and in our Lord's Prayer.

The free text appears to be the direct opposite of the former, being freely given with a space for embellishment. It is rendered in everyday conversational language and in diverse areas of human dealings. However, that free text is appreciated in this way does not make oral traditions to take such ahistorical elements as gossip, propaganda and rumours as part of its data. The source is critical in its adoption as an instrument of reconstruction of Africa's past. Such and other inadequacies have caused the source to be highly criticized.

Oral traditions, some of such critics say, are liable to falsification as the narrator is likely to suffer from loss of memory and so present the much he can recall. He may also be conditioned by certain interest he relates the tradition. He may be bias in favour of his personal interest in religions, social inclinations such as ethnicity, preference in games and sports, art and music and sometimes occupation. Such biasness do not have limit but depends on the individual's interest. This definitely would lead to selectivity in history. The imbalance of selectivity would definitely structure the report out of tune with history, as it is genuinely desired to be practiced.

On the account of these, it depends on the method evolved for the collection of the oral data historical research. Oral texts whether in fixed or free forms are to be masterfully handled. If a specialist of the sub-discipline goes for such, the method to be employed would make it difficult for the data to be taken and used unfiltered so to become prove to the feared hazards of selectivity. The processes involved in the storage transmission and gathering of oral information are observed in diverse manners and should be appreciated similarly in the use by the expert. Since change is constant, the researcher should always be mindful of the changes that are inherent in the oral narratives. By so doing the sifting of the data and their application in historical writing would warrant oral tradition to remain valid as a source of African History.

Some of oral traditions faithful adherents as Vansina and his student Alagoa have argued on the validity of the source in the face of the scientific and universal, modern historicism, saying that when it is properly used, that it does not just stand as another source of history but rather that it sometimes can be seen as history in itself. This is because in most of the orally literate societies even outside Africa storage is deliberately carried out in a manner that it gets tied to keep the spirituality of the people. For example, in some communities, the oral texts are presented during very serious and important social and religious activities of the people such as coronation, initiation into say cult or manhood, and guild. During such exercise the content of the text is used undiluted and not polluted so that what is done remains authentic and therefore, valid in the historical judgment. This is because the historical fact of such presentation would not be in doubt and so the analysis and interpretation thereof. In Africa, despite the acculturation fever, certain traditions of the

people are still relatively intact and make room for the historical resources therein to be beneficial to her vivid historicizing and so is the case of the Niger Delta that the study has immensely benefited from.

3.3 Archaeology

Archaeology has been variously described by many scholars with some of these being favoured above others by different persons and at different times (see Clarke, 1986, Shaw, 1969, Hester, 1976, Fagan, 1975, Binford, 1968, Trigge, 1989, Andah, 1979, Deetz, 1967, Okpoko and Derefaka, 2012). Archaeology is the chief of the non-script sources for the reconstruction of the distant past. It is with archaeology that objectivity in historical reconstruction is made concrete. With its inclusion in historical knowledge acquisition, the conclusions become enhanced and dependable. This is because from the methodology in archaeology that the accounts of human cultural developments being historical rendered become vivid with better sequence of the events and with less doubt. In this way it lent further credibility to historiography. It is for this reason that archaeology has been described as a set of techniques used in the investigation of the past life-ways of people based on their material remains in order to acquire the knowledge thereto.

The objectives of archaeology are hinged on reconstructing the life-ways of peoples, their culture history, the process of the culture change, and the establishment of sound chronology, ensure that it covers the basic areas of historical concerns and also deals squarely with the age long problem of accuracy or certainty in the chronology. In this light, the thematic scope covers such areas as economy, dietary system, manufacture/technology, religion, governance, games and

sports, ceremonies, festivals, rituals recreation/entertainment/music and dance, warfare, etc. Such are defined by the very wide range of data archaeologists can gather in their researches. These are normally put in scores of classes due to their numerical disposition otherwise they range movable and immovable categories of the antiques, and ethnographic kind.

A list of few of such artefacts would include for immovable objects of archaeological evidence such as structures e.g. house, huts, palaces, shrines, and temples; structures of defence e.g. city-walls, moats, rapat ditches, shrines and temples mortuary places such as tombs, and graves or objects of ornamentations (e.g. statues); features such storage pit, granaries, ovens fire-place/hearth; movable artefacts such as potsherds, rims-herds, clay pots, plates, and cups and many other forms of ceramics such furnaces tuyere, clay vessel lamp (*utugbe, tonjo, fitila, mpanaka*, in some Nigerian languages), terra cotta (figures and figurines), glass beads, stone tools (hand axes, cleavers, discoid, spheroids, knives, picks, scrappers, manuports, and pebbles); clubs, bows and arrows, hoes, cutlasses, snap-trap, spears, arrow heads, dagger, swords, guns, metal pots, plates, cups, spoons and vessels; textiles of all sorts; leather works (shoes, bags, belts, caps, wallets,); crowns, pendants, bracelets, rings, amulets, maize, staff, walk sticks, smoking-pipes; full or skeletal remains of humans and other animate creatures, charcoal; plant remains (leaves and impressions, stem, braches, seeds, fruits, pollens and spores, resins,) bottles, books, palliates, lumps of clay, waterfronts, footpaths house, bridges, canoes, modern utensils, beds and beddings, vehicles etc. electronics e.g. television and radios, computers and the accessories, foot and other kinds of balls,

various gears, equipment, and implements, manufactured items of all sorts, and so on. These and more therefore, constitute the nature of the material/physical data of archaeology.

The rest are found in the ideational cultural element which are found through the interface between the researcher and the people directly or that are generally abstracted or deduced or extrapolated from the system upon which they operated including the material elements. Some of such are not really within the purview of the archaeologist but are usually taken as cross or supporting data from the other disciplines and sub-disciplines such as the oral traditions, historical linguistics, ethnography and works of art. For instance, an archaeologist can discern from drawing on cave walls the behavioural patterns of the people who made such which may relate to their religion, happiness and joy or otherwise and some other intents or capabilities together with their degrees of operations.

Ordinarily by the nature of the data of archaeology Hester, (1976 p.24), Heizer, (1973 p.87), it is often incomplete more so as some do not get preserved after sometime. This constitutes a line of limitation for the discipline so that the support from the other sources is important even though it can still have authentic reconstruction using the much of the artefacts it can recover. Archaeological evidence is practically a sample of a larger universe. In its eclectic nature makes it possible to relate with very many disciplines and when it does in some instances one may be a little confused as to where it belongs in the academia. For this reason it is domiciled in science (see Patty Watsoy, LeBanc, and Redman, {1975} in: "Explanation in Archaeology"), social sciences, earth/physical/environmental sciences, and the humanities. The more it is involved with other disciplines that much it gets better and more effective as a

unique discipline with multiple concerns. So archaeology would not just aid in telling the stories but is poised to bear its light on all areas of human endeavour aiming at not just their illumination but the projection of the behavioural intricacies, capacities, and general understanding. The knowledge application therefore, is wide and multifaceted targeted at wholesome development of peoples and their societies. For some they see archaeology as the study that focuses on the processes in human behaviour. That is to say that it is more inclined (especially with the processual archaeologists Binford, [1968]) towards a historical approach, Others view archaeology as being concerned with human activities which can be studied in isolated situation with regard to separate cultural systems. Such archaeologists are said to be engaged mainly with past activities of peoples from the narrative point of view.

Often people ask about the process constituting archaeological evidence in a given place in almost doubtful manner and archaeologist would provide some explanation similar to what has been briefly done below following on the scientific approaches archaeology adopts.

When we dispose unwanted things from the everyday activities (domestic, economic/industrial, socio-religious etc.), we systematically and gradually constitute archaeological sites from where the evidence can be derived, Systematic in the sense that people in their neighbourhoods normally choose a particular place (could be an existing pit, place of gully erosion and the likes), where they dispose of their refuse. Similar situation is found in the manufacturing or industrial places (for making of salt, pots, canoes, mats, etc.) where evidence of such human activities is also constituted through breakages, lose, and share abandonment. Some other ways of building-up sites are through

hunting, that results to butchery sites where certain unwanted parts of animals such as bones, horns, teeth, fore, blood, dung are discarded; ceremonial centres that may contain certain remains of food and drink taken by participants who would have had them for one purpose or another. In some of these outdoor activities there could be structures created and left behind which at another time would also be part of the artefacts/sites for archaeologists.

Archaeologists would normally approach a site to secure answers to a set of questions raised, bordering the theme or objectives of the research. The sites are visited so to be excavated in order to produce the answer to the hypothetical questions. Such questions range from testing for particular theories, to dealing with specific skills and manners of human adaptation. They precisely deal with the vertical and horizontal dispositions of the site with a view to addressing the peoples' behaviourism in a historical continuum.

Very many kinds of tools, implements, gadgets are required in a given excavation. The most common ones being vehicles, stationaries, electrical/electronics, clearing, digging, and surveying, equipment and implements, body protective gadgets, communication gadgets, photo and video cameras, measuring devices, spirit line, barrows, head-pans, hammer, saw, sieves, bags of various strengths, chemicals (solvents, desiccants, repellents, etc.), drawing board, clips and pins, etc.

Vice Chancellor Sir, Archaeologists are scholars involved in the location, recovery, and analysis of cultural elements and materials for the reconstruction of the past aimed at the acquisition of the historical knowledge for the purposes of incremental development.

At the middle of the archaeological method is excavation. Archaeologists would arrive to the field where they would often do the searching, measuring, plotting, note taking, drawing, sketching, photographing, mapping, and surveying, and excavating in the field in what is called field analysis. These are carried out mainly in the field that is an archaeological site (determined through the spotting of evidence of human activity in a place). At another time, the actions of the archaeologists are experienced in the laboratory where artefacts recovered from the site are studied closely. Here, such exercises as weighing, cleaning/washing, are done in further classification or segregation, of typology that would pave way for subsequent explanatory reconstruction of the culture history of the site. Some level of conservation and consolidation are carried out on the materials requiring such help especially when those were not attempted in the field. In the process of consolidation for instance, an object that appears fragile due to age or damage (even while in the field) can be repaired or re-enforced so to avoid further damage or deteriorations.

Archaeology which employs a host of techniques in searching for, locating, excavating/retrieving, studying and understanding remains of the past of peoples and societies has since been embraced in the inter-disciplinarity of historical research and learning. Developed in Europe but found most beneficial in such place as Africa with paucity of written data for the reconstruction of its lengthy past; archaeological view point has become the bedrock of the historical past being studied in the diverse areas of the continent. The scientific approaches involved in the discipline stands it out in terms of the credibility in the outcome of the research endeavour. This is because despite the great diversity in its data bank, experts make effort to study all such in

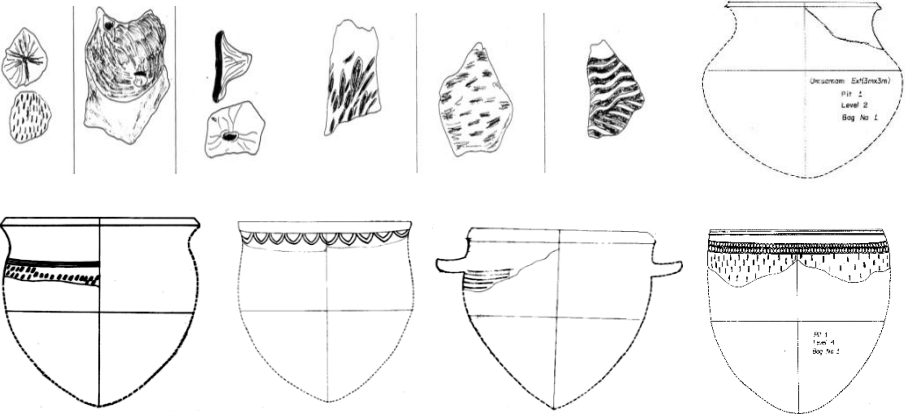
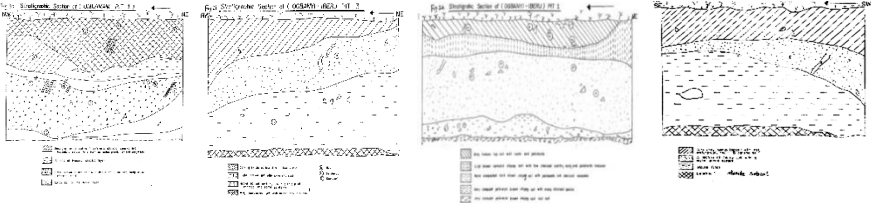
their various ways and converge same in a synthetic yet analytical manner. In this sense one can find both organic (e.g. nutritional, medicinal, industrial and ornamental materials) and inorganic (e.g. lithic [stone] ceramic and metallic materials) materials as the artifacts for the archaeologist to study. For the organic materials for instance, they pass through ignition, saponification, solvent extraction, infrared survey, thermal analysis or chromatographic analysis; while the inorganic materials are subjected to wet chemical analysis, emission spectrometry, x-ray fluorescence and x-ray diffraction or neutron activation. In fact the list is longer than this and depends on the kind of artifact being studied. This upon the field methods involved in the location and retrieval of artifacts such as foot-walking, use of magnetometry, Ariel photography, satellite imagery, use of GPS, theodolite quick-set and measuring rod of traditional survey, glazing, soaking, site mapping, desiccation, cleaning, brushing, bagging, labelling, spraying, recording (drawings [of objects and sections of stratigraphy, noting, photographic and video) and other methods that may be involved at field level of archaeological analysis and the laboratory ones. The latter would for instance, involve computer analysis using for example, AutoCAD and CorelDraw, weighing, general specific classification according to site, level, size, type



PROF. OKOROAFOR UNDERTAKING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXERCISE IN THE NIGER DELTA

and kind of materials, shape, motif, functionality, temper, class, sex, age and so on, to the dating processes (e.g. potassium-argon thermo-luminescence, carbon14 (C14), dendrochronology, seriation, typological and cross-dating and so on including the ones by other experts of which reports are submitted to make for collaboration of evidence.

SOME FINDINGS OF PROF. OKOROAFOR'S RESEARCH IN THE NIGER DELTA



It is in these ways that archaeology achieves its goals of reconstructing life-ways of people and societies, their culture history, offer explanation as to how and why the culture of a given people change with time and ice the cake with sound chronology that it gains from the studies. Through such methods and more, the diverse aspects of the past (distant or near) seen in the physical (anthropological) and the technological development as well as the material aspects of hunting and gathering, food production, trade, religion, social and political systems. But archaeology has even grown from what it used to be with new areas of its study such geo-archaeology, settlement archaeology, environmental archaeology, archaeometry, archaeo-botany (e.g. palynology), zoo- archaeology (e.g. paleontology), under-water (or marine) archaeology, contemporary archaeology (e.g. rubbish archaeology and gorilla archaeology).

With the study of archaeology, the history of humans including the prehistoric aspect has changed for good. It has been more beneficial to Africa as its history is no longer to be within the fringes of the realm of history, as was earlier suggested by the old school historians. It has become of general knowledge through archaeological studies powered by the crossbreed of some sciences e.g. modern physics with radioactive isotopes, atomic physics etc. that Africa is the cradle of mankind. Such evidence have come from the sites of Hadar, Omo, Lothagam, Koobi Fora, Kanapoi, Baringo, Fort Terrian, Peninj, Olduvai, Laetolil (in East Africa and around the Horn), Chad (in Central Africa), Ternifire, Casablanca, Rabat, Temara (in North Africa), Broken Hill (in Zimbabwe), Makapansgat, Swataai, Steikfontei, Kromdraai and Taung (in South Africa). There are

evidence from the stable of archaeology, of a cultural developments of man in Africa so that at least the *Homo sapient sapiens* would be in the know of what past he trails and perhaps the vision of what may become of his successors in time to come.

Such knowledge makes life for him more meaningful than having to wallow in the emptiness of ignorance of what was and the stark uncertainty of what would be. When reasonable meaning is made of life, its appreciation whether in the relationship with the heavens or with the physical environment (including his relationship with his kind) is faithfully assured and abided by. The pioneers African Archaeology deserve our commendation. Honour and respect therefore, to Louis and Mary Leakey and their family; Charles Thurstan Shaw, Z. Iskander, Bernard and his daughter Angela Fagg, D. Hartle, Graham Connah, D. Calvocoressi, G. Daniel, P. Darling, B.W. Andah, A. I. Okpoko, K.N. Momin, C. N. Nzewunwa, A.A. Derefaka, F.A. Folorunsho, P. Oyelaran, F.N, Anozie, Dr & Dr. (Mrs) McIntoshes, A. Aremu and Nicholas David among others.



PROF. E.J. ALAGOA



PROF. C.T. SHAW



PROF. F.N. ANOZIE



PROF. N.C. NZEWUNWA



PROF. A.I. OKPOKO



PROF. A.A. DEREFKA

3.4 Ethnography

One important source of history as it is practiced today is the unwritten and interesting ethnography. In the event of the ever elusive present and the long drawn past it has built-up in the background and the stimulating and ever changing future, sometimes it becomes very difficult for man to keep pace with these elements of time. But the changes do not occur at the same time; sometimes not even simultaneously so that man may have the opportunity to visit the past after the passive present had long conveyed him to the then excitingly expectant future. It is such opportunity that some experts of the studies of human past especially as it concerns cultural development seize and make connections between the reaches of time to the happy

knowledge of a living past in the present time. Ethnographers would leave the seeming comfort of urban life and move to the corners of all area where aspects of the life-ways of a people that may not be seen at all in the towns which before the urban places assumed their present status were practiced but now are found in the nooks and corners sometimes as dominant way of living of such peculiarity.

Such expert would not just be informed and put it down as historical evident fact but should be directly involved in the practice of that aspect of culture. By so doing he would gather authentic information about such practice and the application in the time past. He gets the picture (which though may not be exact) and educates the people of present time on the development and the understanding therein. Such ethnographic lesson are not learnt by Africans instead they look on to what new things that can be found in life with western civilization or general modernity. This is more so with the strings of globalization and globalism.

African societies thrived in all spheres of their life at one time or the other. But the peoples are constantly brainwashed to think that nothing good socially is of Africa; yet there are prove points, here and there, to be used to demonstrate and expose the detractors and theft falsehood. Such awareness would help direct the life of African societies so as to pick-up from where they were knocked down and strive to achieve again and excel. Former President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania's Ujama philosophy was anchored on such ideology. The African system should be explained and reworked from within instead of the hoodwinked knowledge transfer or some tele-guided stereotype enlightenment. All such knowledge derivable from historical

studies should be assessed from the diverse areas of the peoples' indigenous ways of life as comprehensive as is possible now.

3.5 Historical Linguistics

A people's language is one of their most important historical records. For it contains not only the people's basic ideologies but their life experience with regard to their relationship with the environment of their domain and the peoples around them with whom they also relate. Over the past centuries especially of the 20th and this 21st centuries with experts such as Joseph Greenberg, Ruth Kay Williamson and now Jenewari, and Yul-lfode to mention but a few around us, the study of language has grown and is branching into other relevant areas. One of such areas of diversification is the historical linguistics, which is the scientific technique for interpreting the historical information embedded in people's language being spoken today. For instance, linguists through the use of the methods of glottochronology and lexicostatistics, are able to discern when related languages or dialects of a language (e.g. the Ijoid, being Izon, Kalabari, Nembe, Okrika, Ibani, Defak etc.), separated from their prototype Izon language) and the relationship of such languages (vis-a-vis especially the core one).

Such methods in historical linguistics can therefore, aid the study of modern history as they provide independent source of dating in the chronology of more remote periods of history. The Linguists are also able to provide for us, the genetic relationship between languages and dialects and therefore, of their speakers, using the classification of languages spoken over a geographical area. Also, by the study of the words, used in a given area (as in word list) between two or more languages in the area. For example, such experts are able to know elements

of borrowed or loaned words and therefore, the directions in which ideas or objects have gone and from where it did so. For example, the word onion is called *ayim* by some Ibibio and Efik peoples of South-south Nigeria, *ayo*, and *yabasi* by many South-eastern Nigerians -*alubosa* by some South-Western Nigerians and *alibasa* by most Northern Nigerian peoples while its Arabic name is *albasa*. This shows how the object transcended from the place of its derivation to northern Nigeria through mainly the trans-Saharan trade routes or the earlier east African trade traffic and further with the Hausa-Fulani traders, nomads, and Islamic religious crusaders being the next conductors, to the middle course of the country with people between the north and south among whom the Yoruba, Igala, Tiv, Idoma, Egbira and such other peoples of northern Edo State of Nigeria and lastly towards the coast through Igbo land and the Ijo country side of Rivers State. Indeed the staple food of the Nembe, like that of their Izon kin has remained plantain. Moreover, that all Ijo groups of the Eastern Delta, that is, Okrika, Kalabari, Ibani, etc. have, at some point in their long history, shared in this common farming origin is attested to by the way they express the sensation known as hunger. Almost all of them say what amounts to I need to have yam. For example, in Okrika it is, *buru I tari a be*. Linguistic evidence amplifies this for all Ijo groups such that it is noteworthy that yam (*Dioscorea spp.*) is referred to as *buru* by the Kalabari, Okrika, Nkoroo, Ibani, Nembe, Kolokuma, Amegi, Okordia, Boma, Olodiana, Oporoma, Kabo, Mein, Arogbo, and the Iduwini (Williamson, 1970 p.167). This corroborates the suggestion being made here and underscores the antiquity of yam in this region. Such examples abound in Nigeria with her multi-lingual disposition.

Historians have used all such knowledge to answer certain historical questions of which without such sub-discipline, it may be difficult to work out even in the Niger Delta. Historical Linguistics has become one of the reliable primary sources of African history and its comprehensive pursuit of evidence and objective reporting of the peoples' life experiences.

3.6 Works of Art

By this is meant various forms of artistic representations with assorted impressions of a people's ways of life. People make use of different materials as medium of such expressions such as weaving (see Agigini, 2017), sculptures (see Okoronkwo, 2019), engravings, carvings (see Horton 1995), painting (see Okowa, 2016), pottery making (see Umor, 2017), textile designs (see Cyril-Agware, 2014, 2019), hairdos (see Fatusi, 1992, Okowa, 2018), body decorations (see Oramaleze, 2019), castings, songs, music and dance (including dance drama), oral literature, and so on to communicate, entertain, train, administer, worship and many more tangible and intangible aspects of the works of art, to achieve such. In doing so, some significant traces are created, that relate to peoples' experiences which are sometimes inferred and at other times deduced in the general reconstruction and analytical interpretation of the history thereto. Such have also graciously benefited the historical studies of the Niger Delta. The champions of such creativity of the recent times such Bruce Onobrakpera, Victor Uwaifor, Rex Lawson, Robert Ebizimo, Harcourt White, Evi Edna Ogosi-Okoli, Christiana Essien-Igbokwe, Bongo Sikwe, Charly Boy, and Sunny Okosun.



REX LAWSON



VICTOR UWAIFO



RAS-KIMONO



SUNNY OKOSUN



**CHRISTIANA
ESSIEN-IGBOKWE**



AGBANI DAREGO



TIMAYA



DUNCAN MIGHTY



VICTOR OSHIMEN

3.7 Miscellaneous (Secondary) Sources

The category of disciplines here put under miscellaneous sources can also be seen as the secondary sources of the non-script category. The disciplines come from diverse areas of studies; from the pure, to the applied sciences, to many others out of which information that can facilitate our understanding of the past of man can be derived not quite placed in the standardised writing. The expectation in today's historical crafting is that due to the complexity of the data pool in historical analysis, there should be some attempt by all practitioners to harness evidence from such multifaceted dimensions so as to fill the gap of objectivity that is ever desired by such experts in the holistic coverage and reportage of wholesome history. This is why most historical research today for example, Egyptology, and the Niger Delta historical research (since headed by the stallion Emeritus Professor E. J. Alagoa), are carried-out by a consortium of experts who have the skill to investigate the past and bring about information concerning man and his environment to human happy appreciation.

Sometimes the world has been entertained (educated, informed, and enlightened) on some of such hybridization when they are simulated in video clips; for example, the excavation and the analysis of the findings of ancient Egyptian civilisation. In it, forensic experts, experts in anatomy, pharmacology, physiology, dentistry, neurology, palynology, graphics, sedimentology, architecture, mathematics, geometry, general sciences, engineering etc. would be called upon at different periods of the research to provide their services so that fuller understanding may be reached on the issues of the historical analysis. The research team leader would intermittently call for meeting of members, who would convene and brainstorm,

compare notes, integrate ideas and techniques, and generally historicise on the theme, and the sub-themes.

It was in similar manner that the UNESCO team on African history was able to come out with a thorough and almost flawless General History of Africa that we treasure. Same as with 'Izon of the Niger Delta', 'Land and People of Rivers State' to mention but a few prepared within the Niger Delta. Today, there is greater need for experts to interface and review objects of the practice with regard to concept and model, and the research methodologies for better output. The Niger Delta prehistorical studies need to be properly positioned so to benefit from the modern multi-disciplinary research 11provision attending the global best practice. Below is a rundown of some of such which experts have gainfully adopted and used in dealing with the needs within especially the West African palm forest belt (inclusive of the Delta) among other places where the applications of the skills proved very valuable.

Fossils are anything (could be plant or animal or even physical entities) antiquated (Flint, 1971, 1976), and can be regarded as indicators of former environmental conditions (including the life, anthropogenic and physical constituents), when they are the types bearing such potentiality. The study of fossils especially during the Quaternary period (the penultimate period lasting since about the last 1.8 million YBP) developed as part and parcel of the general study of fossils in the geologic column as whole (Flint, 1971; 733). Flint, looking down the lane of history from the perspective of the fossils, observed that, individual occurrences were reported everyone at best including "taxonomic identification, a real occurrence, and stratigraphic position". Some of the plants and animals, whose fossils are encountered, have direct and indirect implications for humans

and their environment in the past. These apart from anthropogenic fossils themselves are the fossils associated to man and or his environment.

The contributions of plant and animal fossils together with the physical environment of humans in the past can be said to be the role of environmental archaeology to prehistory the older part of history. The archaeologist, since assuming multi-disciplinary study status, can now study deposits rich in fossils (fauna and flora for example) which are well preserved and found *in situ*, deducing a great deal of information as positive marks from them.

The study of the two fossil kinds with regard to archaeological research has areas where they contribute positively to the understanding of past culture of man and ensure proper and adequate reconstruction. In such area, the contributions can really be helpful. Given certain circumstances however, they could be misleading and are not just good enough for similar or even same reconstruction issues. Thus, their pros and cons in archaeological research which necessitates mastery of their use in prehistorical studies.

Plants are the primary producers and some parts of them such as pollens and spores are less vulnerable to decay in acidic sediment and thus less obliteration of the taxonomic record. There are yet certain parts of the fauna life that are normally fossilised such as the skeletal remain and preserved in an alkaline environment. Generally however, the hard parts of organic remains are normally fossilised. Nonetheless, under special preservation medium such as in ice rafts, more than the hard parts can be preserved. One good example is the case of the extinct large woolly elephant (mammoth) that was found under ice in Siberia area of Russia. In the use of fossil plants just as in

the case of the animals for archaeological research, there are two sides of the coin: the micro and macro flora indicators (the hard evidence). They can still be placed under subdivision of direct representations and indirect representations. First, the macro aspect of which archaeology has made most usage of parts of plants and animals for example seeds, stems and fruits with hard outer coverings, coprolite (fossilised human feces), wings of insects, bones, shells, hides, and claws for both plants and animals respectively, are fossilisable and bear direct evidence. Others are the -micro aspect that includes for plants, pollens and spores, phytoliths and epidermal cells; and cell tissues and genes for animals. Also imprints of parts of organisms themselves, can provide another line of their and indeed environmental evidence. Examples are leaves (impression) in plants (Hall, et al. 1978), and footprints in animals (Heigren and Brooks, 1983). The contributions of archaeo-botany and zoo-archaeology in archaeological research cannot be over-emphasized.

The stem of a plant can become filled with rock forming minerals such as silica and can then become rocky (that is petrified). Petrification of bulky stem can preserve information about some characteristics of the plant and its ecology; and thus archaeologically, that of the place (Binford, 1982). Whether it was savannah or forest etc., the botanist will tell better. This is especially important when it is found in archaeological context. In the same manner, minerals pass through matrices into (diagenesis) some carbonate fauna compositions of deposits, thereby fossilising them. The minerals are such that make bones stronger and able to withstand decomposition or weathering. Lucy the oldest fossil skeleton of human found in East Africa (Leakey, 1965) is an example of this condition in question. One of

such peculiar preservation of fauna part is the volcanic ash which when newly thrown out of the interior of the earth and on organic remains, can preserve them, given special circumstances of the deposition and thus contribute to our knowledge of the past environment with regard to humans. More animal constituents however, can be preserved compared to only the hard parts of plants that can be preserved in such situations. When their fossils are found, as they have been, they provide concrete results used by archaeologist in the research and interpretation of evidence. An example is the paleontological work of Lewis in 1934 during which fossil maxilla, mandible, bones, and teeth were identified and linked to *Ramapithecus*. This was followed by Leakey's (1961) *Kenyapithecus* bones that gave insight to *A. afarensis*, *H. erectus*, and *H. sapiens*.

In archaeological excavations such as that of D'har Tichitt in Mauritania West Africa, maize (*Zea mays*) grain imprints on pot at manufacture Munson, (1976) have been used to answer certain questions ranging from food production, societal development, and nature of the environment, in the place. Apart from the clever archaeological reconstruction by the American, Munson, Hall, et al. (1978), through their professional use of impressed and compressed plant leaves, used the knowledge on Lake Bosumtwi Ghana ancient deposit, to underscore the use of certain plant species to man and the very likely climatic condition that prevailed together with the associated vegetation of the area. The study of the leave impressions observed in the above site, showed relative abundance at some time of *Canarium schweinfurthii* (a tree which its fruits are edible and the pyrenes used for its oil content (Hall et al. 1978 p. 259). The researchers related this abundance to its usage by human. *Elaeis guineensis* (oil palm) is said to have replaced it in importance given its

population, following an open vegetation (in which it thrives most) inadvertently created by humans as they clear the forest for cultivation. This is more so, as the oil palm has higher oil yield than *Canarium*. Also in Kintampo Ghana, Rahtz and Flight, (1974), found carbonized *Canarium* pyrenes in an occupational layer dated 3560±100BP. These were supported by Smith's (1975) excavation at Bosumpra cave near Abetimfiti. In this excavation, Smith found at a depth of 90-100 cm below the cave floor, an occupational layer that is rich in the pyrenes of *canarium*.

Fossil leaves in vegetational reconstruction however, present difficulties in their identification. This is because of their different sizes and forms and the parallel development of similar forms in different genre. An example of this limitation is the difference between sample leaves and separate portion of compound leaves which could be difficult to decipher.

These leave impressions made through compression can be likened to the fauna imprints that serve archaeological purposes in palaeo-reconstruction. One of the earliest hominid evidence coming from Laitoli Tanzania discovered by Mary Leakey is one of such trails of archeological evidence. These were the footprints made by a hominid bipedal family passing through a newly laid volcanic ash. These later became solidified just the way they were made, only to be discovered thousands of years later.

In West Africa, rice chaffs met in excavation (McIntosh and McIntosh, (1981b), had been used archaeologically to reconstruct aspects of the life ways of the people. The occurrence of these materials has been used to infer food production at the time of its occurrence; and particularly the history of the plant species in the region. The relevance of rice in the diet and economy of the people coupled with the history of

occupation or habitation of the place can be inferred through this chaff. So also are the grains which can be fossilized and provide such clues. Similarly, Osborne, (1988) used the study of insect fauna from organic deposits laid down by the Warm-shire dating from the Late Bronze Age, to examine and underscore their environmental significance. From the result, the conclusion was drawn that the local countryside was open grassland (given the presence of species of the genera *Geotrupes*, *Aphodius*, *Colobopterus*, and *Onthophagus*, that live in droppings of grazing mammals (Osborne, 1988 p. 716), with evidence of large grazing mammals. Also that river Avon at the Late Bronze Age seemed to have a clean stony bed without the blanket of mud and silt which are found at the bottom at the present; suggesting climate warmer than today's. Through this insect fauna study, much of the environment of this English area in time past has been known and thus their ecological archaeology.

Kenward, (1975) was able to show the biological and archaeological implications of *Aglenus brunneus* (Gyllendal); an eyeless and wingless collidated beetle in ancient fauna. Since this cryptic beetle species is said to be found always in Europe at least in association with man (Peyeimhoff, 1945 in: Kenward, 1975), its archaeological importance does not need any amplification. It was said to have been introduced to Europe from North America but with such research like that of Kenward, (1975), better knowledge of its origin given the dates assigned to it is known. This beetle mainly occurs in dark damp places needing temperature according to Kenward that is above those experienced in natural habitats of Britain today. It is also associated with some kind of moult growth associated with decaying organic matter probably for food.

This therefore, means that in archaeological research, it will be reasonable to say that such conditions may have existed, where the species are found abundantly in archaeological material (context). For instance, in a grain fauna, a significant proportion of *A. brunneus* would be a strong indicator of very spoiled grain (Woodroffe, 1967 in: Kenward, 1975); thus the contribution of the use of such fossil fauna to archaeological research, and their usage as potential indicators of past environment that becomes limited, given the fact that further species grouping with specific and numerical structure is needed to show statistical relations or correlations especially in a particular habitat.

The study of plant characteristics, with regard to habit, habitat and by man has aided archaeological research as has been seen above. They act as pointers given the implication of their fossil forms presence (perhaps in abundance) in archaeological investigation. For instance, the significant presence of *Adansonia digitata* (boabab) has become an indication of human settlement. This is because apart from the fact that its large fruit is edible ethno-archaeological research has observed it as having spiritual functions.



BOABAB TREE

If an archaeologist researching in a particular vegetation area with the vegetation type and well known associated climatic type, and an indication of a different type of vegetation appears in the strata, the researcher would relate it to change in the environment (climate). This could help, especially given the age (for instance if it goes beyond about 3,000YBP when the activities of humans did not quite cause change in the environment) in the correlation of the cultural data, unconformity in the strata and other specific excavation results.

So also is the study of animal characteristics and their use in archaeological research. A case in point is the *Aglenus brunneus* beetle (Kenward, 1975). Researchers in this field have shown for instance, that humans easily killed the docile animals most, at the hunting and gathering level of human development. Also they have shown that hominids preferred to live in the savanna where there is relatively large number of fauna. Some animals have more values than just for meat; an antelope species hide is used in making drum, those of other large bovid serve as clothes; while others are kept for prestige reasons (those of wild large cats for instance). The knowledge of these

characteristics of human-fauna relations would aid archaeological investigation.

The stems of trees which are used for building of houses can also be found as relicts of the past in archaeological research, besides when they are petrified. The wooden veranda post found through archaeological investigation of Old Oyo (Willet 1960) is a case in point. Here the charred engraved stems that were used as veranda post were found. These have archaeological relevance of not just the architecture for which it was used but arts and craft, and societal life that must have a leadership. Also, of domestication and use (deduced), of the engraved animals (the horses) and the environment, (which could be said to be humid) judging from the reptile, probably a crocodile on a large stem of very likely, a forest tree species. The botanist could tell better on the tree species and inferences that could be drawn from there.

Parts of animals are also used by humans as architectural device and implements as has been gathered both from modern ethno-archaeological knowledge and from archaeological records (Binford, 1981). Large bones are known to have been used by ancient peoples as roof suspending device and support of the house where they occur. In the European area of Russia, evidence has arisen of the use of leather in making roof and walls (flanks) of huts by the pastoralists. Antlers are engraved and flat surface bones such as scapular used as slates (writing materials). There were also barbed bone harpoons among other bone implements. All these contribute to inform the archaeologist of the use of fauna; about what to expect, and deductions to make there from.

The experts in the field of botany and zoology have always lived up to expectation in identifying and describing these

plants and animals occurring in archaeological researches physically or in abstraction as they mattered to humans in their peculiar ecosystems.

The understanding of the origin of domestication of animals, and the consideration for the archaeologist has been illuminated by the contribution from biological study which has shown that animal domestication preceded plant cultivation. For example, dog bones were discovered in association with Mesolithic remains thus an age of its domestication known thus far. Sheep was said to have been domesticated Ca. 11, 000 years BP at Zawi Cherni-Shanida in Iraq while goat and pig at Ca. 3000 BC. These results are compared to those of cultivation starting with wheat and barley Ca. 7,000 BC in Asia. All these facts assist archaeologists in different ways in knowing about man (together with his culture) and his environment in the reconstruction of the past.

The dating method of counting annual layers or rings or values of trees such as pine known as dendrochronology can be compared to the isotopic determination (mainly carbon 14) in organic remains of both the plants and animals charred remains. This tree-ring dendrochronology method of dating can, apart from the dating function, be used for reconstructing the climate of the last five millennia (Ingram et al. 1981). This is similar to the function of Carbon 14 on carbonate shells of forams from cores used by marine archaeologists in knowing about climate variation through time and space (Emiliani, 1958, 1970; Shackleton and Opdyke, 1973). However, whereas the former may be precise to year, carbon 14 dating which goes as far as 50,000 years is much less in such coverage. (Ingram et al. 1981 : 10), noted that in the latter, errors alone give 16 limits of around 50 years or more which imply 95% confidence limits of + 100

years, with additional uncertainties can warrant conversion of carbon 14 to calendar date. Tree-line changes however, are at best only sensitive to climate change on a 50years time scale (Karlen, 1976 in: Ingram et al. 1981), and are said to be far less responsible than this.

On the other hand, the microscopic areas of contribution of related disciplines to archaeology have been of equal if not more help given their age limit advantage. This is because, archaeological reconstruction record is more appreciated with increase in age of dated materials and the numerical positions. Archaeo-botanists especially in palynology have contributed so much in archaeological research, that its correlation is quickly taking a prime importance in today's archaeology.

Munson, (1968, 1976), recorded that the pollen impressions of domesticated Pennisetum recovered from Tichitt escarpment in the South Central West Africa was dated to between 1,000 and 900 B.C. Earlier levels in this archaeological investigation bore plant materials that indicate that a phase of experimentation leading to concentration on Bulrush Millet long preceded the appearance of the domesticated form Okpoko, (1987).

Sowunmi, (1986) used the result of palynological investigation from Ofuabo Creek swampy Forest in the Niger Delta to answer environmental archaeological questions raised over excavations carried out in Iwo Eleru (Shaw and Daniels 1984), in rain forest area of Nigeria. This goes further down the road to let us see how beneficial this study of plant remains can be solving archaeological research problems. Sowunmi, (1985 p. 175) through same botanical evidence thinks that at least at about 2,800 YBP "farming technique preparatory to planting was being practiced in Nigeria's yarn and oil (palm) belts". This, she

cleverly related to Iversen's (1956) evidence showing that Neolithic man used stone axe to fell large trees and cultivated crops and presumed same for other parts of Southern West Africa within the belts.

Gary and Smith, (1963), observed the peculiar importance of pollen and spores to archaeology, which can be seen through the dating evidence of activities of humans that are preserved in pollen bearing strata two cultures: in Holstein (Europe) the Hamburgian (upper Palaeolithic) culture at Meiendorf, and the Arhenhurgain (lower Mesolithic) culture at Steilmoor. These species fossil, which Dimbleby (1969), referred to as marker species have stratigraphic ranges that are known. For example, the fauna *Globigerinoides sacculiferas* last appearance is used as a marker for Pliocene. These are commonly used today by archaeologists. They are identified anywhere they occur and sometimes are confirmed through C 14 dating method.

The use of forams for instance still has some presumption and assumption undertone irrespective of the relatively scientific back-up it has. Directions of coiling of shells of forams are now used in palaeo-environmental reconstruction of which environmental archaeologists are part of. Some forams coil dextrally, for example *Globorotalia menardi* indicating cold conditions while some others coil sinistrally, for example *Globorotalia truncatulinoides* indicating warm condition. Yet there is a third kind *Neogloboquadrina pachyderma* (Corliss 1975), which takes both direction of coiling. The results of such biological studies aid archaeologists to understand the change in the environment that sometimes reflect in the cultural and general ecological change. For example, the occurrence of Halimeda (*Calcerons algae*) is an indication of tropical climate Ghose, (1977).

The limitation to the use of this line of evidence is the geographical (latitudinal) variation of their habitats.

Not only this, pollen grains for instance have been used to ascertain age of a burial (of which tomb, pollens were found in the honey put around it) in Egypt, North Africa. This micro-botanical line of evidence was used to reconstruct the behaviour of the people such as believe in life after death. Pollen and Spores have been used to reconstruct the palaeo-ecology of the Stone Age hunting camp at Star Carr England Fagan (1975). Pollen profiles are however, rarely interpretable on time scales of less than a century (Karlen, 1976 in: Ingram et al. 1981).

Another point of intercession in this area of micro-botanical research is the use of Opal phytoliths in palaeo-ecological reconstruction. Experiment carried out by Rovner, (1971) showed that these inorganic biogenetic plant particles of microscopic size, besides pollen and spores, contribute immensely, given their varied morphology which is quite significant (Rovner 1971 p. 343). This is very important as it is compatible (and should even be more preferred to archaeologists) to pollen and spores that have been so harped on.

These micro-botanical studies and their contribution to archaeology can be compared to those of fauna. Molecular biological findings particularly those dealing with haemoglobin and albumin have contributed the itching problem of evolution in primates and hominids in phisic-cultural anthropological studies. Archaeologists (especially in the tropics) faced with poor preservation of macro carbonate materials have since been virtually helpless on the issues of peopling of the area (Africa for example) though the use of this method of approach has not been able to solve the problem as is evident of the peoples'

movements, for example the Nilo-Hamite and Nilotes to the East of Africa, for which archaeologists owe some consideration.

Andah, (1987 p.75) stated that the best documented case of cultural determinants of selection at gene and genotype levels through the use of the method has to do perhaps with the distribution and frequency of the genes for haemoglobin A and S in the native populations of West Africa.

Livingstone, (1976) in trying to understand ecological history of West Africa traced the genesis of the complex relationship between man, mosquito and protozoan. He viewed this as a probable sequel to the introduction of iron tools for clearing the tropical forest, the cultivation of food crops giving high yields of calories on tropical soils, and the formation of settlement of agricultural communities such that provided an ecological setting that favours *Anopheles gambiae* and a human population higher in density than that of the earlier gatherers and hunters.

Molecular biology in general including those of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and intelligent quotient ratio (IQ) have aided archaeological researches in a great way. And so have the micro-botanical studies. The difference here is also about age and associated taphonomical factors. The plant remains such as pollen and spore, and phytoliths together with xylem and epidermal cells are very resistible to destruction that they exist sometimes for from hundreds of thousands to millions of years. The animal remains which however, are predominantly the skeletal remains and others such as claws and nails, hide (skin) and hairs/fore during which period the sort of study addressed above could be applied.

Sometimes these two lines of study and their evidence come from same source e.g. the Roman Centurion Coprolite. Through the excavation that produced the coprolite and subsequent laboratory analysis, it was found, evidence of the centurion's diet using the botanical remains in the fossil, together with the disease he suffered from and the insect that attacked the grains he had eaten. Thus through these studies the archaeologist is enriched with cogent information with which he can reconstruct the behaviour at that temporal and spatial level.

Judging from the foregoing discussion about the contributions of biological studies to archaeological research, there is no doubt that archaeology has gained so much from them and so has history. Not only have such given us the impetus to determine the history of certain plant and animal species for instance maize (*Zea mays*) (Okpoko 1987 p. 257) and chicken (*Gallus sp.*) (West and Thou, 1988) but clues have been provided of what part they had played in the subsistence economy of the people (Bailey, 1975). Their taxonomic occurrence serve today as major yardsticks of essential correlation evidence as they have aided the archaeologist in placing the archaeological finding in an ecological perspective. They have fortified us more on the mission of finding out as much as possible, the past peoples and their societies.

It is pertinent to state here that the incomplete natures of biological fossil records are attributed to: first, the state of the research and geographical areas covered by such research. Even when the discussion is on general level, there are relatively better research activities conducted in perhaps the Western world, and less elsewhere. This is given the oneness of the planet earth as is evident in many research criteria and results.

The differential preservation sometimes makes it inadequate to adopt every biological data in archaeological research although they are considered necessary. This is the reason why improvements in dating methods for bones (through C14), genetic studies, and molecular biology generally would be seen as very significant contributions to palaeo-anthropology. This notwithstanding, the taxonomification of biological fossils is problematic. This is most glaring for macro-fossils, fragmentary and generally badly preserved ones and less so for micro-fossils, fold, and effects of attacks by bacteria. Biological fossils have as major limitation, the fact that they are not always directly or accurately datable. This situation permits errors; and element of uncertainty is thus introduced especially when it has to do with formulation of theories. C14 dating of bones and shells present better dates (absolute) and are preferable to archaeologists.

Due to long distance transportation of pollen and spores a wide geographical knowledge of the plants is needed to aid their usage in reconstruction of any sort. Also the pollens have the problem of their use coming from differential pollen production, dispersal and preservation polymorphism phenomenon.

A sharp decrease in forest species may not be due only to man's influence but may be climatic or edaphic. There will be need therefore, for a sharp differentiation between the anthropogenic and natural causes of the environment. Upon these are the use of uniformitarianism principle in deducing and inferring palaeo-environmental conditions. The problem with its usage is that it is based on presumption and assumption which could be misleading.

For instance, it is accepted by many scholars that the quantities of round in *midden* deposits represent more or less exactly the quantities actually consumed. Such assumption favour biases more often than not. This is because the possibility of such vision is made glaring by the complex nature of the taphonomic agents which even varies sometimes with a particular “place” or circumstance with respect to the dynamics of culture. Estimations of population size are also subject to various biases and uncertainties. This is mostly affected by the researchers’ bias: that is what they do want to, as against what they do not want to absorb or discard together with their implications.

Irrespective of these limitations, archaeologists will forever remain indebted to the contributions of the plant and animal fossils studies. In conclusion, to understand the deep and intricate relationship between man and his environment in pre-history better, it has become necessary to embrace the palaeo-environmental studies. These studies though blemish themselves their usage by archaeologists (pre-historians) Rovner, (1971) contended that for maximal benefit, the normal procedure is to utilize many independent avenues of investigation. This, he submitted will “reduce the effect of weakness and error factors present in any system: and hopefully, drawing conclusions from areas of agreement from all available data” (Rovner, 1971 p.343). In essence with the better understanding of the limitations of the contributions of the biological studies to archaeological research, they are eliminated and progress is made. Together with other new approaches adopted by archaeologists, archaeology has been launched into very resourceful modern trend of academic research.



SOME INCIDENTS OF PROF. S. I. OKOROAFOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE ACCOUNT OF THE LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE FROM THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE NIGER DELTA

4.1 The Indices of the Motivational Superb Gains of the Niger Delta Prehistoric Studies

By about 1979, the rewards of historical studies were mainly on the theoretical fronts of for instance, knowing that we should look inwards with our rapt attention fixed like that of the proverbial *anya eke* [python's eye] (Alagoa 1979). The understanding was to light-up the world beyond our own space and to be on merit so to observe our own yet not lose sight of those of our neighbours in the ever shrinking globalised world. Then the historical consciousness was emerging from the reactionary contributions of the afroophile historians exonerating African historical knowledge from the rather obnoxious biasness of the early European individuals who erroneously considered history as a subject with no African content in it except for the part when it dealt with activities of others who happened to have operated in and around Africa.

At this time there has come to be many great practical benefits of the application of the African or indigenous or local historical knowledge deeply based on the Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] (see the University of Port Harcourt Research Ethics Committee 23/01/2013 391st Extraordinary Senate Meeting approved{SP/2012-2013/027FV}document). These gains are turning golden before our very eyes.

1. Religion and Socialisation

In the religious sphere the Christian holy scripture- the Holy Bible has been translated into and printed out in many African (in the Delta, for example, Izon, Efik, Ogoni, Obolo, Urhobo, Edo) languages besides the numerous profitable advances in Christianity a few of which are hereunder outlined.

i. Music and Dance

The Christian faith arrived the shores of our land with a rather rigid un-African sort of musical renditions, the instrumentation of which was based on certain wind and string instruments such as flute, trumpet, organ, piano and guitar, and the songs, and hymns on the notes of alto, tenor, soprano, and base. These did not quite occupy the central sections in most of the church sessions and were generally, strictly contained in them. Since the churches became Nigerian and particularly Niger Deltan, the story has changed with immense benefit (if it is in this regard considered much more mundane) such that there is value added in the instrumentation, lyric, rhythm, and volume of the number of songs, music, and dance being steadily churned out from the church and her associates sometimes in fantastic freestyles. There is now Nigeria's brand of gospel music and dance and particularly the special style of the Niger Delta people. Asu Ekiye, Sammie Okposo, Frank Edward, Mercy Chinwo, Judikay, Preye Odede, Timi Dakolo, and the Bini Edo Brothers are some of the exponents who have made us proud in this respect. What difference they have made is unquantifiable. The Church has not only been maintained with their help but received more believers in the last fifty years than she received in centuries of her activities here.



SAMMIE OKPOSO



MERCY CHINWO



JUDI KAY



ASU EKIYE



FRANK EDWARD



PREYE ODEDE



TIMI DAKOLO

The Church had since about then seen the light in allowing herself to belong to the people. Heavy percussion Niger Delta musical instruments such as the *konga* drum, musical clay-pot (*udu*) large and small wooden and metal gongs, indigenous Marrakesh, and xylophone, but importantly very sensational sophisticated hand clapping (also made better in the region with the introduction of the wooden hand-held clapping device known as clappers) and more have all been allowed into the church for good. So that other what the stars of the brand in the region had achieved, the general laity had equally done fantastically well steadily composing very highly rhythmic, powerfully moving, hardly irresistible and danceable songs and choruses. Again they have succeeded in creating such through simple adaptation of the extant styles, and form. Almost all of such have succeeded because they used the available *odinani* technic and style.



**SET OF INDIGENOUS
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**



**SET OF INDIGENOUS
MUSICAL FLUTES**



INDIGENOUS XYLOPHONE



INDIGENOUS MARACAS



**INDIGENOUS MUSICAL
CLAY-POT**



**INDIGENOUS MUSICAL
CLAPPERS**

Examples of some these are hereunder replicated for your soulful good:

Satan don fall for grandu ooh
Mach-am mach-am
I don fall for grandu ooh
Mach-am mach-am.

Tonda faya satan wel-welu ooh
Tonda faya satan well-well.

Imela, onye nwe anyi imela aa eeh
Imela, onye nwe anyi imela, dalu.

Abasi ayaya ooh
Ayaya ooh
Abasi ayaya ooh
Ayaya nana ndoh.

Tamuno ee, oribime
Ibalafa ee, ibalafa ee
Ibalafa ee, ibalafa ee

‘When Jesus Says Yes, Nobody Can Say No’ one of Nigeria’s church popular choruses / gospel songs has been adopted in the USA and remixed into a resounding hit gospel song by three of their popular song stars namely: Beyoncé, Aliya, and Monica.

ii. Language and Name:

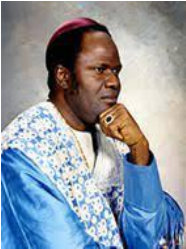
Africans can now baptise their societal converts using their earlier rejected (by some Europeans) African indigenous names some of which are indeed from their original religious practices sometimes belonging to the deities, gods and the divinities. The Biblical and saintly names have been Africanised with the people of the region following suit so that the names Peter, John, Paul, Timothy, Mary, and Deborah are accepted as *Pita*, *Jon*, *Polu*, *Timoti*, *Meri*, and *Debu*. The Niger Delta Christian faithful can appear in the various religious events in apparels of the indigenous design. Blackman version of the Lord Jesus crucified on the cross has been observed at different times in some denominations in the area.

It is important to note that these indigenously composed Christian choruses in the local church were derived from those of the people's ethnographic systems especially of the religious observances, and the general socio-cultural life-ways of the land such as the masquerades. Such were initially stereotyped as being completely devilish and their nuances fetish. These ways of identifying with the Church do not remove anything from the spirituality of the practice of the faith but make them more adaptive and appealing among especially the new converts. The African historians had replanted the mustard seed and are happy seeing it blossom and amazingly and motivationally bear these fruits.

iii. Training the Trainer

The tide is turning on many of this situation so much so that our people are now among the people taking the Word of God out of Africa to whence it originally came to us here in the Delta. I salute such saintly giants of the faith from the region as late

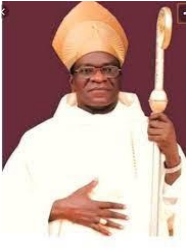
Apostle Garick Sokari Braide (Elijah II), Bishop Sam Amaga, Arch-Bishop Benson Idahosa, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome (Love World’s Christ Embassy), Pastor David Ibiyomie (of Salvation Ministry), the Arch-Bishop of Catholic Church of Port Harcourt Most Rev. Etukudo, the Auxiliary Bishop of Catholic Church Port Harcourt Arch- Dioceses Most Rev. (Dr) Patrick Eluke, Prof. (Sis.) Caroline N. Mbonu [the immediate past HoD of RCS Department, University of Port Harcourt], and Apostle Chibuzo Gift Chinyere the General Overseer of Omega Power Ministries (OPM) Worldwide.



**BISHOP
BENSON IDAHOSA**



**BISHOP
SAM AMAGA**



**CARDINAL
ETUK UDOH**



**GOD'S BATTLE AXE
UMAH UKPAI**



**PASTOR CHRIS
OYAKHILOME**



**PASTOR DAVID
IBIYIEMIE**



**BISHOP PATRICK
ELUKE**



**APOSTLE CHIBUZOR
CHINYERE**

2. Effective Governance

In terms of governance, the efforts at amending national constitutions across Africa for a more effective administrative operation is on the threshold of evolving a more realistic and beneficial application of the rule of law and administration of germane justice for the people. In Nigeria the constitutional injection of the ‘Not Too Young To Run’ in the polity of the nation is reflective of the fact that the Nigerian populace, Niger Delta people inclusive, is more of youthful citizenry (about 65%) than the situation in some Western climes such as Germany with almost the opposite population age ratio.



H.E. DR. BETA EDU

The crave to institutionalise the fourth tier of government (see Asiegbu 2003’s Indigenous Village Autonomous Community[ies] {IVACs}) representing the very local communities and their grassroots’ administration is a welcome development as it is poised to reach the previously ungoverned places to the happiness of all. The benefit in another direction is that the urban bias phenomenon would be better addressed and the reverse of the syndrome can be reached for good. The diversity

of Nigeria for instance, can be better taken advantage of when the entire hands are on deck showcasing what divers products (tangible and intangible) potential can be enhanced.

3. Modern Agricultural Practices:

The latest development in agriculture tend to be one which may mean that if not properly checked and followed some nations may someday not be able to produce food but rely on others to do so. This is because the life spans of the species grown for food are usually short and need to be steadily re-programmed to keep them sustained. The long and short terms effects of their hundred per cent adoption especially not having to be involved in their developmental procedures may mean that the other ideas of development such as the medical and educational sectors may not be in commensurate level of growth and so not provide the necessary back-up in the overall application of the new products/produces.

4. Economic and Social Reorientation:

In economic sphere, the realisation of the imbalance in trade transactions between African countries and their special places and those in Europe, America, and Asia for instance due to monetary policies, schemes of production streams, and their entire nuances of inter-continental/international trade and financial dealings.

All such things that meant to put down Africans and hype anything European are being systematically and meaningfully dealt with. Most principle administrators from Africa (also the Niger Delta) as a shining example would be clothed not in suit and tie by African fabric and designs. The days of bleaching

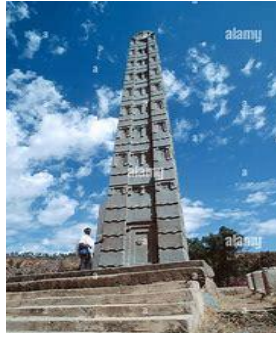
creams and bathing soaps, being used as means of achieving physic-whitening purposes, are getting over with. People can tune their skins to appear cuter etc. but not necessarily to want to develop a skin following after the European colour. The same with the plastic surgery for especially the nose ridge, contact lens fixation for the eyes, and perfecting the act of speech after the English people.

5. Cultural Reawakening:

The idea of having cultural day especially during Students' Week in the Nigerian universities is among the reawakening of the Africaness among the youths. The re-enactments of the various cultural events is not only enchanting but evokes the feeling of self-worth and esteem capable of reinforcing the credible life-ways of the peoples in the next generation. This is more so as it cascades further to secondary and primary schools in the region.



FESTAC '77 FACE



ETHIOPIAN OBELISK



STATUE OF LIBERTY



STATUE OF KING JAJA IN OPOBO



EIFFEL TOWER PARIS, FRANCE



ONYOMA-PERE BAYELSA NIGERIA



OFIRIMA MASCOT OF NUGA IN UNIPOINT

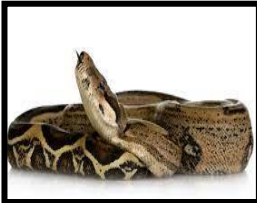
In this light the people of the Niger Delta and Nigeria in general have observed and are adopting symbols and elements of their communities in ceremonies of both circular and religious events. They have used Queen Idia of the old Bini kingdom to serve as mascot or elements of the environment in hosting for instance, the 1977 Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), in the University of Port Harcourt, the Ofirima was adapted as mascot for the last NUGA games she hosted.

Such elements are superb memorabilia which bear the ethos of our past and need to be preserved in special ways so that historical knowledge and wisdom stored in them become better and more profitably kept. They can be used on textiles such as the *Ankara(Acraa)/Ukpo/Abada/Kampala* more commonly used by our women, table cloths, curtains, upholstery, seminar bags and all sorts of souvenirs, designs, and patterns on door panels, plastic tables and chairs (Ghana has used this idea better than many of us in the West African sub-region including the Niger Delta area of Nigeria); foot-wears, headgears (e.g. scalps, hats, and caps), key-holders, ceiling board's design, back-cover of exercise books and sometimes published works; floor and wall tiles; plates, spoons and other kinds of utensils, greeting/congratulatory/good wishes cards, dresses such as gowns for fashionable ladies, matriculation, convocation, choir, cassock, hoods, pouch, purse, containers of all sorts, product/ brand symbols of manufactured goods/items. The Eiffel Tower in Paris France, the Statue of Liberty in New York USA, *Akuaba* in Ghana, the Pyramid in Giza Egypt, the Obelisk in Ethiopia, the Big Ben in London England etc. have all become the iconic principal national symbols of these societies and places. Sometimes entities in our wild life from both the flora and fauna categories are abstracted and used significantly in such manners; two examples are the Panda in China and Kangaroo in Australia. This has been the cultural development of certain societies which has transited it their civilisation supporting their progress march in life. The totems of many Niger Delta communities are despised mainly because of foreign/global religions and poorly acquired education (the ones with insufficient enlightenment).

Here in Akporland, the boa is becoming uncommon because people from other places who have come to be in the community especially since the establishment of the University of Port Harcourt would inadvertently or otherwise cause them not multiply in number. Many communities have the accounts of their emergence and subsequent growth and development tied to such special organisms that they are even named after them, For instance, Ogoloma which was named after the bird Ogolo- a species of white stock which were encountered in large numbers when the people earlier arrived and decided to settle in the place, while Nnewi took its name from the legendary rabbit that featured specifically to the people's good upon which they felt at home and continued to settle in the famous Aniedo land; even at the level of village or family-lineage e.g. Obi-Nkita Arochukwu where our late Museum staff Madam Christiana Uku and Prof, A. C. Onwuchekwa our February 2023 Valedictorian hail from. Names are important cultural element of proper identification but sometimes people fail to realise this and would simply copy and paste certain names without justification. This may lead to problems as experience has shown.

Many of the national football teams for example Cameroun, Senegal, and Algeria are named after lion which might have arisen due to careless borrowing of ideas; that lion is the king of the jungle even when python belongs to the same jungle. It is in similar manner that almost all the other national football teams are named after one animal or another; Nigeria's own are called Super Eagles, and Super Falcons (for the women's team) while the junior categories are known as Eaglets and Falconets. In this regard Rivers State could be regarded as the mother all the states since most of the states are named after one river e.g. Rivers, Imo, Anambra, Cross, Osun, Ogun, Kaduna,

Benue, and Niger, while she alone bears 'Rivers' and not particularly any one. Some of our became more enlightened and questioned why they should bear foreign names as freeborn of their communities and had to change to names of their fatherlands upon that certain elite persons of African descent in the 18th C, took such decision for themselves and their kinds.



BOA



ELEPHANT



LEOPARD



FALCON



EAGLE



RABBIT



DOG

4.2 Some Salient Derivatives of the Gains

a) Awareness and Dignity

Knowledge provision of Archaeology creates the necessary awareness about the people of the Niger Delta. The people are observed to be not lazy and unwelcoming but depict in their behaviour, the sense of unique adaptation to the environment. They were not forced to move into the Delta and to remain there as some scholars have tended to conclude. So that there has come to be a restoration of the people's dignity from its kingship studies at Onyoma with *Onyoma-pere* for example. The kingship in the Delta is considering the remodelling of their paraphernalia especially the crowns after the original tradition designs (e.g. that of *Onyoma-pere*) of the place Amanyabo D. G. Jaja, Jeki V (per. comm. 2023)

b) Higher Education

A broader educational curriculum has been created with the increased knowledge of the past of the Niger Delta. This added to the fact that from 1975, there has been an upsurge in the establishment of particularly, universities in the region; beginning with those second generation Universities of Port Harcourt, Benin, and Calabar, to about a dozen other public universities without considering the faith-based and privately own ones most of which admit students to offer historical courses bringing about increased knowledge of the land and people, and the need to expedite action on the further development. Local history is now responsively cherished in the region as a new means of understanding the people, culture, and peculiar socio-economic needs.



c) Finance

The replicas of the artefacts, images from the environment and beauty from the Niger Delta's fauna and flora, patterns, structures and strictures etc. are creatively produced and reproduced and commercialised aiding in the financial potentialities. This becomes better when synergized with the media as such can generating revenue and increasing the GDP.



PROF. K. R. WILLIAMSON AND HER POSTCARD FLOWER COLLECTIONS



d) Tourism and Recreation

Archaeological institutions/centres such as museums and sites help in attracting tourists to the Delta and thereby increasing the revenue of the place(s). Oloibiri oil museum worth almost two billion Naira, Akwanshi stone crafts, old shipping grounds/places e.g. Elem Kalabari, Isaka Bay, Benin Moats and Rapat/Ditches, cold and warm waters spring/river, all are major attractions to foreign tourists. These and many more offer recreational activities opportunities to the people and so add values in much more ways.

e) Technology

The people's detractors' claim of lack of good technological knowledge is being completely debunked using the results of archaeological researches in the Niger Delta. The results have shown the people as having the ability and capability technologically make canoes fishing gears and traps metal casting construction of bridge, houses etc.. the general adaptation is a sure prove that the people are technologically endowed.

f) Accreditation and Welfare:

The efforts of the archaeological and historical research personnel sort of accredit or authenticate the place of the

people in the past which clears them of any such doubt. It brings welfare development to the place e.g. NDDC, and MNDA after OMPADEC etc. of the immediate past with the associated programmes of provision of incentives targeted at up-scaling the livelihood of the people such the Amnesty programme for the repentant ex-militants, skill acquisition for the youths etc.

g) Social Integration:

Through the efforts of the cultural/ historical researchers, peoples from outside the Delta understand the people better today. They are no more seen as people of the 'spirits' in a derogatory sense. The peoples themselves also have better understanding of others who they encounter. They have embraced world religions and accepted national and international perspectives on many issues. This ensures cordiality and happier patriotism. The emergence of Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, a Niger Deltan from the Ijoid group for the first time in the history of Nigeria as the country's recent past President was realized in the spirit of this patriotism.



**FORMER NIGERIAN PRESIDENT
DR. GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN**

Dr Jonathan had accepted the call and became the Vice President serving under President U. M. Y’Adua to the furious reaction of especially the youths of the area who among other civil disobedience, violently protested, torching his residence at Otueke in Bayelsa State that consumed the property together with his original academic certificates inclusive of the hard earned University of Port Harcourt PhD. He was not long after in 2011, elected as the substantive President of Nigeria following the demise of President Y’Adua. The once disrespected people who had some elements among them declare war (though unconventional) against the Federal Government of Nigeria came to mount the mantle of the same government for six years. Above every achievement were the feelings of sense of belonging with something of equal right (no more some Nigerians being seen as true Nigerians while majority of the people from the Delta are regarded as spirit-sub-humans following after some names as Oruamabo, Orukoro, Orubite, Orugbani, Oruwari etc.), and gazetting of the name of one of the Deltans as a global democratic leader. Historians would always make reference to such gazetteer and gazette. In our Department here the University of Port Harcourt most of the end-dates for the researches conducted since about the last eight years have been fixed at 2015 reflecting the end of President Jonathan’s administration.

h) Agriculture/Food Production

Very unique agricultural practices (<https://simple.m.wikipedia.org>) evolved by the people of the Niger Delta are being showcased through the research results of the pre-historians. These can be further improved upon for the happier living of the people and optimal development of the

area. Also in processing of the food, there was better knowledge which its provision has been put up through the researchers helping in furthering the development of the dietary pattern and general upgrade of the cuisine (a good example is the Bole and Fish festival in Port Harcourt developing into global recognition; also the Fisherman Soup and the Ofe-Nsara Soup gaining popularity and patronage).

i) Employment

Activities involved in archaeological and related studies can help in creating jobs for people of the area especially the youths. They are not only to function in the fields but can become professionals in the various sections of the entire activity from being the Director, to field technicians and laboratory technologists, drivers, and picture developers/producers. They can write books or publish in journals and the likes, the outcomes of the researches and earn good money.

j) Conservation and Recycling

Recycling generates funds. It aids conservation. Conservation is very necessary today. It helps in rejuvenating the environment. For the non-renewable resources the conservation idea is key. The non-bio-degradable elements of our environment and its constituent should be recycled for the good of the environment and its entire constituents. The waters of the Niger Delta are full of plastics that are very dangerous of the environment and so need to be cleared off.



USED PLASTIC BOTTLES AVAILABLE FOR RECYCLING

k) Miscellaneous

The archaeological researches aid art work development as people tend to be very interested in ancient art. The business of sale of antiques is a lucrative one. The scope of history is expanded through the researches. The remote parts of the past are now being made known to people.

More insights in geology and palaeontology and many of such studies are developed and better undertaken because of the archaeological/pre-historical studies in the Delta. So many unanswered questions have been clarified using such prehistoric studies in the Niger Delta.

4.3 Are We There Yet?

Every historian should endeavour to check on the works of other historians especially those using different perspectives from his own but having some bearing on the theme for the research so to enhance his own skill of analysis and interpretation. Even the idea of compartmentalisation of studies is only being done for

the sake of the specialty but not that one is by that sanctioned not to look the other way academically. It is rather that ideas should sometimes be cross-breed and intellectualism holistically viewed for better understanding and increased knowledge. The University of Port Harcourt at inception had this kind of philosophy when it used the collegiate system and had for instance, in the humanities, the various departments as we have them today learning from one another and even more.

The programme of the general studies (GES) unit is intended to have students appreciate how inter-connected scholarly ideas are and how useful harnessing these could be to everybody. The trend of our social behaviour today is tending towards 'do it yourself', for those services, especially at home, that one does not have to invite specialists to do some of those. For example, people handle ornamental gardening, mending of shoes, clothes, shaving of bears, cutting of nails, typing or generally using the computer, servicing certain home electronic appliances and so on by themselves.

In recent times, many departments of history have tended to move away from the traditional manner of its study like a strait jacket. There has been an upsurge of double barrelling in more than 95% of the ones inside Nigeria. So that we now have some of such departments identified not as Department of History but of History and International Relations; History and Diplomatic Studies; History and Strategic Studies; History and Archaeology; and so on. This has been frowned at by some of our pioneer historians as Emeritus Prof. Ade Ajayi but supported by many others majority of whom are of the new generation. These felt that the progressive and steadily transforming labour market would not fairly treat history graduates should they go the old way of studying history without

some degree of specialisation. This has generated heated debate among the scholars in Nigeria.

During the Golden Jubilee anniversary celebration of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) at the University of Ibadan in 2005 members tried to lay the controversy to rest. Departments were asked to critically carryout the exercise for those who were on it and others who desire to do so. They were to comply with Nigeria University Commission (NUC) requirements of having the necessary things for such mergers such as having the library, the experts to teach in the new areas, the necessary courses and such others so to really go on with the new development if they must have it.

Many departments did not really do so initially. What was noticed was that the nomenclature alone was what really changed. It amounted to something of a trick by some of such departments. For students who joined the departments looking at the new areas which have been the appeal to them (since before now history as a discipline had become anaemic and was feared to die soon after unless quickly resuscitated were disappointed in some places. So for such departments, the new name was meant just to rescue the department and the historians. In the University of Port Harcourt for example, students complained after they gained admission wanting to study history and diplomatic studies that the programme was unavailable on the Internet and as such they were to receive the degree in history and not in history and diplomatic studies.

When the NUC officials came around the department for accreditation, they quickly pointed out that they were in the school for history alone since they did not know about nor were they directed to address the diplomatic component. They finally gave full accreditation for history in the University of Port

Harcourt and told the department to apply for the new component and expect them to come for such subsequently (this being in 2010 after eight years [that is in 2002 when the Senate of the university had given approval and the programme had started running]).

The Department has since then continued to perfect what it was required to do in actualising the merger. It has employed new academic staff in the new areas although far short of the necessary capacity so please Sir, we need more. The library has also in this respect been enriched. The Department has introduced some courses in diplomatic studies to join those of archaeology and cultural studies. It is encouraging co-operation in research among members of staff (sometimes involving academics from other departments) and even the graduate students.

The new evolving History has experienced stiff opposition in the implementation particularly from the sister departments who sometimes feel that historians are beginning to fish in their own waters. For example, certain departments in the social sciences often would want to mount a road block in protest that the diplomatic studies (just like international relations) component, is their own preserve and would not want any interference from anybody especially their elder sister, History. They would challenge such move in the Senate of the universities making sure that History does not get on with such intention. For instance, it is now known that the exclusion of commerce as one of the five subjects that a candidate should credit as requisite O'Level qualification for tertiary education when he wants to study History for example, is one of the plots by such detractors. Also, that the idea of requiring candidates to credit History or Government, is a plot by same people to side-line History.

This is because many students in the secondary school are prompted to see History as being more difficult to study and creditably pass than the subject Government. Based on this perception such students often take more interest in the latter instead and therefore, more often choose it at the expense of History in both WAEC or the equivalents, and UTME examinations. Presently, Government at the tertiary level will lead one to among others Law, Sociology, Political Science, Public Administration and History and so History has to contend with all such. It has been observed over the years that some students that finally opt to study History do so as a last resort.

During the 50th anniversary conference in Ibadan, I had prayed members of congress to look into the issue of choosing between history and government by students intending to study at the tertiary level. We also agreed to actualise the former President Obasanjo's order (re-ordered/re-directed since then in the tenures of Presidents G.E. Jonathan, and M. Buhari) that history be made compulsory at the secondary school level. We had also decided to make history more appealing to students and all. Before then we had reworked the secondary school syllabi for the junior and senior levels and awaited its printing and adoption by the education ministry of which we received promise on, just at the conference. We also resolved to do more of practical than the theoretical method of teaching history and to write on history (in newspapers, magazines, books, journals, periodicals etc.) often in a more appealing, down to earth manner; and to bring the knowledge of history, to practical use of the people and government.

To do this successfully, Lawal, (2004 p.14), has suggested team work of concerned experts to be led by capable hands (in the University of Port Harcourt such scholars as Emeritus Prof.

E.J. Alagoa and Prof. A.A. Derefaka; and recently Prof. B.B.B. Naanen have been doing so). Such coordinating work would be guided by discipline and respect so not to allow bitterness, prejudice and suspicion that could negatively affect the work, come in. The present Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for Universities in Nigeria being put together by the department nationwide as directed by the Ministry of Education/ National Universities Commission (NUC) is being followed through with the hope that it further adds value to the system with the expected incremental benefits necessary for the development of among other areas of Nigeria, the Niger Delta.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1.1 Conclusion

Hybridisation in historical research is a welcome development but one which must be carefully handled so not to distort the historical structure of history itself. The discipline and the sub-disciplines should be learnt by experts so as to benefit from their applications in historical researches. The nature of today's history is such that does not support one researcher working alone but rather requires a combination of efforts towards better understanding of the past and the beneficial interpretation of same.

Prehistorical (particularly the archaeological aspect) research in the Niger Delta is on the decline and needs to be revived. The interest in it is divided with increased activities in petroleum affairs in the country and our University of Port Harcourt which operates in a fast growing city that is the hub of oil and gas operations. This added to the desire of many to be actively involved in political activities, drive many young people

around here, to wish to be identified with certain disciplines for the civil ones while others get involved in thuggery, clergy activities, 'sharp business' with quick rate of financial return such as, taxi driving, riding of commercial tricycle and motorcycle, oil bunkering, advanced fee fraud (aka 419, Yahoo-Yahoo, Yahoo-Plus; Cyber Stocking, and other forms of inordinate Ponzi schemes and related social vices) local music/entertainment industry, fashion and design, and general buying and selling businesses. The get rich quick syndrome would not encourage the youths to be involved in long time plan for life. The patience and the well-with-all necessary for training in a meaningful industry such as is necessary in schooling is not there in the minds of some of the youths who rather tend to risk it all to make it big and quick.

Governments seem not to see the immense good in sponsoring research activities such as is done in archaeology, since erroneously for them it is of little use and does not reckon much with the societal expectation. We do not have credible armature societies or corporate bodies firmly supporting archaeology. Our society is carried away mainly with the fascinations of the world and not so concerned with the very essence of living. This is made worst as the process of training in such prehistorical studies as archaeology, the resources required, time and spirit are all very challenging yet with sometimes minimal prospects upon graduation for job opportunities because most potential employers have little or no understanding of the use of an archaeologist for instance.

The prospective students wish to see themselves in suit and tie, well-tailored caftans, in air-conditioned office, study, place of interview, vehicles, and the likes, than be on coverall, industrial boots, headgears, in say graveyards, refuse dumps,

abandoned human habitations, sacred groves and shrines, digging in the sun with dust, filth, blisters and at stress and risks of different colorations. They want to be seen with movie stars, popular musicians, sports and games superstars, and other celebrities than be with stones, skeletons, archaic occupational tools such as hoes, machetes, trowels, scrappers, brushes, and pushing wheelbarrows and be in makeshift houses in the jungle or 'dangerous' suburbs of one area or the other.

It is imperative that we cross-fertilize ideas as well as tap knowledge from each other. Archaeology as a discipline could be zeroing on man (the cultural anthropology), however, attempts must be made not to allow socio-political interests of the sponsors or those of the local people whose culture is being studied, become an inhibition for us in getting closer to the facts and the cultural historical reconstruction we strive to achieve.

Nigerians as indeed other Africans should endeavour to further revolutionize African historiography so to clear ourselves of the major problem of misinterpretation, misjudgement, and misrepresentation. To do this, Prof. Andah of blessed memory urged us to excavate and expose the paralyzing structures and strictures of definition of the African which confine both the African insider and the Arab/European outsiders (Andah, 1990 p.3). Ogundele, (1995 p.138) warns on this, that peripheralisation of the local archaeologists would result to greater unintelligibility of the archaeological as well as related data, with the associated problem of less understanding. The socio-economic and political dispositions in Nigeria do not favour archaeological investigation. Upon the fact that research facilities are inadequate in the country, are the incessant scarcity of fuel, general insecurity and civil disturbances.

On the general problem stemming from governance of the country, attempt should be made to counter and eliminate those we can, from our placements in the scheme of things in the nation. As such cultural policies formulation for our country as a matter of importance should duly involve the local Africanist archaeologists, considering their experiences especially from among the Universities and in fact put such professionals at the head of such activity for better results. As Andah, (1990 p.8) put it, Cultural Resource Management Institutions and their agents, in concert with drastically restructured educational systems, ought to contribute further to national development in Africa, in creating awareness of the numerous and various problems stemming from colonialism, neglect of the rural sector, a super position of an urban sector that is alien to African realities, failure to make proper use of our diverse natural and cultural resources, etc. These should be able to further adduce solutions that would involve the people of Nigeria and indeed the Niger Delta, aimed at preserving our National heritage, mutual understanding and improvement of the living standard, through understanding of our very stages of life.

5.1.2 Recommendations

There is need for proper orientation and sensitization of our young ones as they aspire to school at the university level. They have to be informed of the prospects in archaeological studies and some be dissuaded from wanting to take the popular ways of living such as being musicians, dramatists, footballers etc. Government should also try to fund adequately, archaeological researches in schools and other related institutions. In this way, more modern and interesting tools for the archaeological exercises would be procured and so attract the young ones to

the field. This would help to support the diversification of the economy through *inter alia*, tourism development in different parts of the country which would in turn improve the standard of living of the people and alleviate if not eradicate poverty.

As Andah maintained, the prehistoric studies problems and solutions are hinged on the society. A lot more could be done to correct this anomaly but specifically, policy makers should easily and without prejudice, acknowledge the importance of culture in development (Adande, 1990 p.102). Our ancestors made the tools they used without having to depend on their importation. So why, questioned Professor Obaro Ikime, in his keynote address at the 1996 West African Archaeological Association (W.A.A.A.) conference held at the University of Ibadan, are we not able to follow on their footsteps? Where did we go wrong? Professor T. N. Tamuno, a historian and one time Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan in *Humanitas* of 1989 edition, lamented that our problem is that we have neglected history and failed to learn from it and thus may be heading for the rocks. This was reiterated by Professor Cheikh Anta Diop, a staunch believer in our cultural capabilities when he observed that upright minds have been taken over by corruption; that the African especially the one who leads has no sense of history.

For possible solution to such problem, Adande signalled to education saying thus:

“Education is the best means of ensuring the continuity of collective historical facts which were seriously upset by colonial and neo-colonial presence. Sound education and instruction would generate positive actions and attitude thus ensuring the preservation of the value of our common heritage” (Adande, 1990 p.103).

Archaeology has contributed to knowledge, those things that were not known both in the written and oral realms; examples are Nok, Dahr Tichitt, Senegambian Megalith and their associated cultures. Archaeology has also further enhanced the written or known ones such as Ile-ife, Benin City, Igbo Ukwu, Kumbi-Saleh, Awdaghost, Niamei, Kilwa, Begho, Bono Manso, Kongi-Notse, Jenne-Jeno, Dufuna, and etcetera. Something about archaeology is its scientific principles, methods, results, and conclusions that are objective, factual, and real. It is mainly with this discipline that Africans will get to know who they really were, are, and should be, and escape from the chagrin of misconception and misrepresentation of her folks by their Euro-Asian and American counterparts.

With cultural studies we can retrace our steps back, re-orientate, and then move forward to better life. Instead of this, we discard things pertaining to our ways of life that are worthy of emulation, to adopt 'new civilization'. Colonization has caused us to exchange some of the good values marking our virtues, for negative ways of life which we have been brain-washed to consider as being the best. Knowledge derived from archaeology and the related anthropological studies when applied well, will take us to such good ways of our fore-bearers. This knowledge has the evidence and potentials to do this if given the opportunity.

What is important is that the ideas on necessary adaptations of such studies, to the real needs of our African societies, should be allowed to linger on (Diop, 1976 p.360- 372; Adande 1985). Practitioners in these fields should put more spirited efforts not considering much of reward, to see that more work is done to salvage the already deplorable situation. The entire citizenry must be informed on such archaeological and

anthropological concerns. It should not end with students alone but be extended to pupils, artisans and all workers as well. As a matter of fact Archaeologists, Anthropologists, and Africanists in the business of cultural/behavioural studies should be involved, by mobilising all the others to take part in their activities. They can do this through the media whose interest should be drawn to such cultural informative issues, which until now have remained highly irregular and in some places very rare. Print and electronic media of both local and international coverage in diverse languages should be used so to reach a wider audience. URTNA (Union of Radio and Television in Africa), VON (Voice of Nigeria) for example, can always be contacted to aid in dissemination of reports and documentaries in these areas besides the ever increasing number of traditional and modern media outfits here and there. This has been made even more interesting with the current revolutionary social media and the fascinating Worldwide Web. With these, it is hoped that the persons involved would feel challenged or worthwhile of what they do and the people are made aware of their cultural values. Such stands also to popularise cultural research results.

Other than this, the method of teaching in such disciplines as archaeology, history and anthropological studies should be such that would make students see the entrepreneurial credibility that can be innovatively developed. Such methods would be in line with the aspirations of the younger generations, involving the use of computers, facilities for slide projection, multi-media television with Web connection, and video machines with AV, USB, and Bluetooth means of connectivity. In addition to this see Myles, (1974), Afigbo, (1976; 1986) where earlier considerations and relevant suggestions have been made. For fieldwork, Darling, (1996) suggested that such

modern applications as GPS and AutoCAD be added to the traditional instruments and materials already in use for the survey and computer analysis. Andah, (1982 p. 49-66), advocated the integration of cultural studies in the educational curricula and encouraged innovations in teaching methods. Adande, (1981) observed that the experimental taking of students more to the field than classroom is paying off well. Local resources are being tried out in coaching the younger generations, which will instil in them more sense of history, entrenched in their cultural values.

Efforts should be made also by the professionals in these areas to create special avenues for such endeavour as seminar, conferences etc. to educate especially the students and the public on the issues concerning the profession and its state. Social studies, starting from primary schools should include adequately archaeology, if it cannot stand singularly as a subject as is done in Britain and France (Archaeology Review. 1986, Nos. 22 and 25; Lequenx, 1988, Corbishley, 1982 p. 63-64; Okpoko, 1986 p.141-153). Also, as Andah, (1982 p. 63- 64), and Okpoko (1986 p.141-153) advised, it will be good if the number of teachers in these prehistorical disciplines, especially archaeology is increased. Holl, (1984) also encouraged practical teaching practice and programme of African Archaeology. This sort of programme will be such that will respect the hybridization of such knowledge adopted world-over as we advance deep into the third millennium.

For those in training whose fear is how to succeed as archaeologists, they should be informed that the discipline is both an academic and a professional course. As an archaeologist with wide variety of interest, you can be employed by Universities, various ministries, museums, historical/cultural

agencies and park services. Also you can start something on your own in surveying. Draughtsman-ship, small-scale industries (e.g. ceramics, cosmetics) and geophysical consultancy (see Sowunmi, (1987), in *Humanitas* vol. 4 and also the 1997 edition).

In the light of these suggestions the persons involved in this endeavour should take their business serious knowing that there is a happy assurance for them. It is hoped that with a better understanding and appreciation of what has been done so far, and for the sake of tomorrow, a more responsive, meaningful and acceptable attitude will be developed by all (especially those in government involved in education and policy making) who are involved in the prehistoric studies of the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria at large.

5.1.3 Contributions to Knowledge

- 1) The *Odinani* non-script historical sources have made it possible for a clearer understanding of the chronology of occurrences in especially the past of the Niger Delta as have been shown in the sites made reference to in this lecture.
- 2) It has shown how through the sources more comprehensive knowledge has been acquired through new insights in research on the prehistoric past of the Niger Delta which would have remained obscured but for the application of such skills in the studies.
- 3) Such knowledge provision has bequeathed people especially of the Delta with excellent wisdom upon which significant, informed, and sustained happier development is being actualised in the region and beyond.

Signing Out

Vice Chancellor Sir, I learnt a about a didactic folklore from a senior pastor and colleague concerning a certain woman and a tortoise (*Mbekwu*, the *Okpara-osa*, husband to Madam *Anininga*) she found and picked working in the farm. As she headed home with the game, the tortoise called for her attention, pleading so passionately that he really wanted to be taken back to take care of just one thing and thereafter she could take him away to her family for whatever she cared about. She obliged him, took him to and placed him in the very place she had found him. The tortoise then moved scratching and leaving some pattern on the ground and thereafter told the woman that he was ready to go with her.

The woman's curiosity heightened and so she enquired from the tortoise the purpose of the marks he made. He replied saying that many people among whom relatives, friends, and foes would come calling to find out that he was no more, and that when they eventually get to know that it was just a woman that came and picked him away without him lifting a finger out of the struggle to survive, that they would not express any pity but instead mock him for his unprecedented cowardice. For this reason the tortoise had to return to endorse his signature in the sands of time as an enduring testimony of his gallant struggle. Historians through time have placed their very earnest contributions in the societal developmental struggle in informative scripts one way or another, to make for happier living among humans and so have I humbly done as a scientific one, bringing about the new things and the old things (Matt.13: 52).

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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Citation



PROFESSOR STANLEY IFEANYI OKOROAFOR JP
B. A (Hons.) (UPH); MSc. (IB.); PhD (UPH)
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Department of History and Diplomatic Studies
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Stanley Ifeanyi Okoroafor was born on December 22, 1969 at Ndoni Rivers State to Isagba-Ajie Mmaduagwunobieze James Okoroafor (Akwurunike) of Umueyiche Umuiyasara-Onaje, Umunkwokomoshi Oguta, Oguta LGA, Imo State Nigeria and Odozhiaku Dibaniogeri Mbajanu Victoria Okoroafor (nee Enemuwe) of Umusam, Utagba-Ogbe Kwale, Nigeria. Professor Okoroafor is a Christian family man.

Professor Okoroafor began his educational journey at the then Sacred Heart Primary School Oguta where he schooled for two years and moved to Artisan Quarters' Primary School Asata Enugu, and completed it, bagging his First School Leaving Certificate. He got back to Oguta to begin his secondary school

education and was enrolled at St. Michael Secondary School Orsu-Obodo to the southern shore of the blue beautiful Uhanmiri - the Oguta Lake, left shortly afterwards in the first term to the then Boys' Secondary School Nkwelle-Ezunaka, Oyi LGA, Anambra State taking away in the end the O'Level Certificate in Education. In 1989, Professor Okoroafor was admitted to study History in the young and very vibrant University of Port Harcourt where he graduated and obtained the B.A (Hons.) in History. He then moved to the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology in the prestigious University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria after one year of meritorious National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) and earned a Masters in Science (M.Sc.).

Upon graduation, Professor Okoroafor worked in the industry in Port Harcourt under Dr V. C. Obinna as a contract staff at the then Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUT) now Rivers State University, Port Harcourt on the socio-economic aspect of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)'s programmes of major companies (of mainly the oil and gas) operating in the Niger Delta as is legally prescribed by the Nigerian constitution. In 1999, he was employed as an Assistant Lecturer at the then Department of History, University of Port Harcourt that soon after in 2002, was re-engineered and transformed to become the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies. He worked hard and rose to the rank of Professor in 2021 being among the last set of aspirants to the rank that were interviewed although it was backdated to 2018 the year the prima facie was done.

Professor Okoroafor has served the University in various capacities including: Acting-Acting HoD HDS, in 2008, 2011, 2013,

2016; Acting HoD HDS, from 2018 to 2020; Director, University of Port Harcourt Museum, from 2020 till date.

Professor Okoroafor has published widely in local and international high-impact learned journals, numbering fifty-one (51), authored, co-authored, and co-edited eleven (11) books amongst which are Niger Delta Prehistory: Oguta, AD 1290-1891, (2017); Pears of African Culture (Readings on Oguta to the Niger Delta 'Head'), (2019); The Audacity of Love: Oguta of Africa's Experience (2018); Understanding Nigeria, c.1mYBP-1800AD (2023); The House of Skulls: A Symbol of Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Niger Delta and Igbo Hinterland (2009) co-authored with Prof. N.C. Ejituwu; The Forgotten National Hero: Apostle Garick Sokari Braide, 1918-2018 (2020), co-authored with Dr U. U. Okonkwo; The Making of a Professor (2021a); A Review of Comfort Amobi Chima's "The Contemporary History of Igberere" (2014)[a monograph]; Perspectives from the Niger Delta. A Festschrift in Honour of Professor A. Derefaka, (2021b) co-edited with Prof. D. Pratten and Dr O.C. Asuk; Aspects of Major World Civilisations to 1500 AD, co-edited with Prof. A. M. Okorobia and Dr O. C. Asuk, (2021c); Purposeful *Paraclete* and Angelic Humans: My Experience, Your Reflections (2022); have four (4) Chapters in Books: in Alagoa et al. (2009), Owete (2014a &b), and (2019). He has attended (presented in most of them) 27 conferences, seminars, and workshops and received multiple awards and honours, the list of which is too long for this occasion but significantly, was conferred with the award of honour as the Justice of Peace of Rivers State in 2010. He has supervised 162 under-graduate projects, 19 MA dissertations, and 18 PhD theses. He seemed to have put so much energy in serving the University of Port Harcourt that he has not, all through his 24 years with her, gone on sabbatical or even annual leave, been

out on adjunct or any secondment or external examination to any university or taken up any political appointment.

He has organised and functioned in 15 major exhibitions within and outside the university, been a delegate of University of Port Harcourt Research Fair/ Conference (in 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2019), served in various capacities in committees within the Department, Faculty, and University from 1999 till date, some of which are: Faculty Representative and Co-ordinator (2002-2015); Committee member SEPHIS programme in Nigeria under the auspices of the Government of Netherland (2000); Chairman, Faculty of Humanities Sanitation and Beautification Committee (2003-2010); Secretary, Institute of Niger Delta Studies Board University of Port Harcourt (2013-2020); Departmental Staff Students Adviser (2005-2010); Educational Officer University Museum(1999-2020); Secretary Faculty of Humanities Doctoral Seminar Committee, (2013-2021);Welfare Officer Faculty of Humanities, University of Port Harcourt; Vice President, Faculty Arts/Humanities Scholars Association of Nigerian Universities (FAHSANU) (2018-2020); Member, Mater Green Globe Foundation (MGGF) [*Laudator Si Animator* of Pope Francis on Environmental Sustainability] (2015 till date); and Founder, and President, Oganiboro (an NGO for the advocacy of History, Culture, Peace, Environment, and Development), (2008 till date).

Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a scientific historian, a consummate researcher, a prolific writer, a modern Niger Delta archaeologist and environmentalist, a humane and seasoned cultural resources manager, an astute administrator, and a charitable Christian family man, Professor Stanley Ifeanyi Okoroafor, to present the 183rd inaugural lecture entitled: “Niger Delta Prehistoric Studies:

the Motivational Superb Gains from the *Odinani* Non-script Sources”.

Prof. Owunari Abraham Georgewill
Vice Chancellor