

Examining the Interwoven Relationship Between Igala, Benin, Ika, Urhobo, Isoko and Ijaw

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Abstract: The aim of this work was to investigate the inter-relationship between Igala and Benin and some neighbouring kingdoms or people such as Ika, Urhobo, Ijaw and Isoko, using the available library and published materials which have provable evidences. It was discovered that there are numerous similar cultural practices between these people or groups studied in this work. It was also discovered that there are many common vocabularies, as well as related history of origin, routes of migrations and settlement between Igala, Benin, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Ika people, especially the Ife/Uhe town of Omala Igala area of Kogi state factor in Benin, Urhobo and Ijaw journeys. In addition, it is evidently true that some of the people in Ika or Isoko who trace their ancestry to Eri (Nris) are indirectly Igala since Eri, their ancestor was Igala as reported by various sources such as Boston (1960), Idigo (1955), Meek (1937), Isidienu (2021), Chief Albert (2020), Nwankwo (2021), etc. It was concluded that Igala, Benin, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Ika, are related directly and indirectly through ancestry, migration, culturally and /or vocabularies.

Keywords: Benin, Igala, Ika, Ijaw, Isoko, Urhobo.

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, language is not the major determinant of ancestry of a people because language can be borrowed, adopted, lost or changed due to various factors such as separation from the source, intermarriage, superstratum, substratum, adstratum, religion, politics, economic benefits, war, migratory route and times, etc. That is why the descendants of a particular people or tribe can speak another language that is different from their ancestral language, but they are still the same people. In some cases, the elements of their language are found only in their traditional rituals or festivals. But, despite the loss of language, some similar vocabularies can still be found within the language of the descendants and the ancestral language. Igala and Benin kingdoms have many descendants' communities and kingdoms outside Edo or Kogi states that speak another language other than Benin or Igala language, but maintain some vocabularies as well as their cultural festivals and the rulership systems. In addition, people who are related sometimes migrate together or settle in the same place at the same time or arriving the area at different times. The migration routes, history of origin, and settlements links of Igala, Benin's Pa Idu, Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko and Ika, suggest that there may be some connections directly or indirectly between these people mentioned above if an investigative study is carried out. As a result of this thought, which can result in development, unity, peace, and even economic advancement between the people through partnership and collaborations, there was a need to examine the interwoven relationship between this people or kingdoms. Interwoven relationship is defined as the complex interconnected bond that exists between two or more groups in a place or society. From various literatures studied so far, no

such works have been done, hence the need for the work. The scope of this study is limited to Igala, Benin, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Ika only, and covers Kogi, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, ... where these tribes are located in Nigeria.

II. BRIEF HISTORY OF IGALA, BENIN, IKA, URHOB, ISOKO AND IJAW

A. Brief History of Igala

Igala people originated from the ancient Nile valley area of Egypt and/or Ethiopia (interviews with Attah Aliyu Obajeand reported by Audu, 2014; Attah Idakwo Ameh Oboni II (2020) by Summitnews newspaper), and Ayegba, 2020). Igala, who's original name is Galla, meaning "freemen", "owners of land", were part of the first dynasty rulers of ancient Egypt, part of the 8th dynasty rulers through Anu clan, and rulers of the 10th dynasty known as Galla dynasty which spanned from 2130 BC to 2040 BC (Petrie, 1991). The ancestor of Igala, known as Ata (Djet) was the 4th ruler or Pharaoh of the first dynasty rulers. Ata was the son of King Ateth, who was the son of King Teta, who was the son of king Mena or Nerma, the one who unified upper and lower Egypt (King and Hall, 1906). He ruled from 3000 BC to 2990 BC (Ayegba, 2022). Igala migrated from Al-Garah in Abu Tesht, Northern Governorate of Qena, and Qa (Tjebu), now in Asyut Governorate, Egypt when the Kush Kingdom invaded Egypt around 760 BC, coupled with desertification and unfavourable policies, and travelled through land and waters to the present-day Nigeria, and later formed Kanem empire around 700 BC (Temple and Temple, 1965), with Kanuri people from Nuri town in Egypt. The first settlement of Igala in Kanem empire now Borno state is Attagara (Attah Igala) community which is still in Gwoza, Borno State, and later in Attagara (Tangara) in Ibi, Kwara state, and later to Idah though some settled on the way at Ife in Omala area of Kogi State now, while others continued to Idah where two groups, Igalamela and Igalaogba were already staying since 500 BC (Jacob, 2018) as early emigrants from Ibi. Just like Benin Kingdom, communities and towns of descendants of Igala are in Southeast, Southwest, South and in Northern zones of Nigeria in addition to those in Brazil, Cuba, USA, Netherlands, etc. who are descendants of the Igala people forcefully taken from Nigeria during trans-Atlantic trade. Igala has various cultural festivals such as Ocho, Uchokwo, Ulor, Iyalo (Yam festival), Ogani, Egwu/Egwugwu, Ogaganyi, etc. and most of these are being celebrated by the indigenous Igala people across Nigeria outside Kogi State and even outside Nigeria. Igala and Benin have many things in common ranging from kingship rituals, coronation, festivals and even some vocabularies. The present and the past relationship between Igala and Benin before the Portuguese arrival at Benin suggest that Igala and Benin are brothers, and their distant ancestors are related by blood and not just culturally related.

B. Brief History of Benin

The ancestors of the Benin came to their final place of inhabitation in the depth of tropical forest from the savanna belt in the first millennium BCE (Bondarenko and Roese 1999; Bondarenko 2015). First millennium BCE is from 1000 BCE – 1 BCE. It is also known as the last millennium.

Benin kingdom became an organized city State around 40 BC from a gerontocratic system of government to hereditary system. The kingdom, at the beginning, was ruled by a king with a title of Ogiso, which means “king from the sky”. This is related with the title, Anu, of Igala kingdom, which means “the sky god”. The earliest name of the present-day Benin kingdom was Igodomigodo, and the first Ogiso (king) was called OgisoObagodo nicknamed Igodo who was the son of Odudu, a great farmer and warrior from Udo community who came to the present areas of Idumwun-Ivbiotor and adjoining area of Ugbekun(wherethe first palace of the earliest Ogisos where domiciled)(Ayegba and Izoduwa, 2023).

Benin, as a new name after Igodomigodo, was said to have stemmed from Ubini, which means the land of pageantry. Benin had/has greater influence in Nigeria, and till date, various towns and people in southsouth, southeast and southwest Nigeria trace their origin to Benin Kingdom. The present title of the king of Benin is Oba of Benin. Before the era of the Oba, Benin kingdom had already been ruled by 31 kings or Ogisos. The Prince from Ife called Oranmiyan, son of Oduduwa, the Benin prince who went on exile in Ife, Omala Igala land at the Benue confluence, and later became king in Ile Ife in Osun state, was the one who's timethe title changed from Ogiso to Oba. Oba in Igala is associated with light or evening sun, which is almost the same in Benin too. The new king (Oba), now seen as the light, protector and lord over the entire kingdom. The Oba title in Benin is the oldest Oba title in Nigeria because it was commenced by the son of Oduduwa when there was no such title in the Oduduwa territory in Ile Ife. Oduduwa himself was Oni of Ife and not Oba. The present Oba of Benin, HRM Omo N'ObaN'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo Oba Ewuare II, is the 40th Oba, after 31 Ogisos from OgisoIgodo who ruled from 40 BC – 16 CE as the first Ogiso to the 31st and last Ogiso, OgisoOwodo who ruled from 1059 – 1100 (Peavy, 2010). Benin, which is now the capital of Edo State, Nigeria, used to be the cultural and political hub of an ancient kingdom, “which stretched from the lower Niger in the East, to the frontiers of modern Dahomey in the West, and far in land, taking in much of Yorubaland (Ogunlami and Olukayode, 2020). This is still seen in some towns in Ondo, Ekiti and even in Lagos, where their kings still wear their Benin Royal regalia. Though, many cultural festivals of Benin kingdom were suspended after the invasion of Benin by the British in 1897, some of the cultural festivals still celebrated in Benin kingdom till date are Emoro (New yam festival), Olokun festival, Igue festival, Ague festival, Ugie festival, etc. and most of these festivals are being celebrated by other descendants' communities outside Benin kingdom such as Ika, Isoko, Ogba kingdom in Rivers state, etc.

Some similar vocabularies between Igala and Benin:

1. Servant/Aid: Edibo in Igala, Odibo in Benin
2. Head/leader: Oji or Agboji in Igala, Ogie in Benin
3. Mother is Iye in Igala and Benin
4. Child: Oma in Igala, Omo in Benin
5. Onoji in Igala, Enogie/Onogie in Benin, some chiefs in Igala or Benin
6. Banana: ogede in Igala, Oghede in Benin.
7. Cup: Ukpa in Igala, Ukpu in Benin

8. Water: Omi in Igala, Ame in Benin
9. Forest: Efoko in Igala, Egbo in Benin
10. Hill: Oke in Igala and Benin
11. Farm: Oko in Igala, Ugbo in Benin
12. Cutlass: Opia in Igala, Opia in Benin
13. Very old woman: Inene/Iyeogijo in Igala, Iye in Benin
14. Plate: Okpa in Igala. Okpan in Benin
15. Town: Ewo/Ugbo in Igala, Ogbe in Benin
16. Air: Afu in Igala, Afere in Benin
17. Small: Okekele in Igala, Okhere in Benin
18. Neighbour: Arogbe in Igala. Edogbo in Benin
19. Joy: Uyo in Igala, Ogbo in Benin
20. Prison: Ugah in Igala, Eghan in Benin
21. Mirror: Egigo in Igala, Ughogbe in Benin
22. Box: Akpati in Igala. Ekpiti in Benin
23. War: Ogu in Igala, Ogun in Benin
24. Secretary: Akowe in Igala, Akowe in Benin
25. Family: Ugbe in Igala, Igbe in Benin.

C. Brief History of Ika

Ika has many towns and kingdoms. Most of the people are mostly from the same origin, though some few groups are said to have originated from other areas. Ika is divided into two Local government areas which are Ika North-East and Ika south. Some towns in Ika North-east are Owa, Umunede, Otolokpo, Idumuesan, Igbodo, Ute-Okpu, Igbide, Mbiri, Akumazi. Also, some towns in Ika South local government area are Abavo, Agbor, Ihuozomor (Ozanogonogo), Ihuiyase, Boji-Boji, etc. Historically, most of these towns trace their origin to Benin kingdom. Akumazi, Igbodo, Mbiri, Otolokpo, Umunede, Ute-Ogbeje, Owa, Ozanogonogo, Ihuiyase, etc. from oral sources, claim their origin from the ancient Benin Kingdom. In addition to the oral history, there are numerous similar vocabularies between Ika people and Benin kingdom. Also, the royal regalia and various Benin cultural festivals such as Igue festival, yam festival, etc. are still celebrated in various Ika towns as done in Benin. Although most of Ika towns trace their origin to Benin, there are some, though may be few, who trace their origins to Igala and Nri. According to Obi of Owa, His Royal Highness E.O Efeziomor II, they were successful in tracing the dispersal process in the course of Owa migration, and that some Owa people are from Nri (Eborka, 2022), though he did not say if they are descendants of Eri or that their ancestors were on migration to Nri, then to Ika as a different people. As recently seen in a video on Facebook, the Obi of Owa confirmed the same, and adding that the ruling house of Owa is of Nri, and that link extended to Idah, in Kogi state. In addition, Idah is one of the towns in Owa kingdom, and they trace their origin directly from Idah (Solomon, 2023; interview), Kogi state, which is the headquarters of Igala kingdom. And looking deeper into the ruling house of Owa kingdom, or part of Owa kingdom tracing their origin to Nri as Eri's descendants, it can be said historically that this part or group are Igala too since the Eri's origin is traced by Boston (1960), Idigo (1955), Meek(1937), Isidienu (2021), Chief Albert (2020), Nwankwo (2021), etc. to Igala, Kogi state too, as shown thus: “Nteje people traced their origin to Igala. The tradition has it that one Igala warrior called Eri was the father of Aguleri, Onogu, Igbariam, Nteje, Nri, Nsugbe, Amanuke. Like their father, they were all warriors”, (Ifeyinwa and Nwokoye, 2021). "The Northern Umueri villages say that the clan was founded by a man called Eri who came to the Anambra are from Igala country, and settled at Aguleri" Boston, 1960. The ruling families of Aguleri trace their own descent from one Aguve who is said to have been given the title of Eze by the Ata Gala at Idah, (Meek, 1937). In addition,

it is evidently true that some of the groups in Ika or Isoko who trace their ancestry to Eri (Nris) are indirectly Igala since Eri, their ancestor was Igala as reported by various sources cited in the work. In Kogi state Igala area, there is Owa town as in Delta state. There is Ika town in Ankpa LGA of Kogi state, and there is Ika town in Ibaji LGA of Kogi state, and the two are in Igala areas of Kogi state. Ika as an Igala word, means distance location or the settlement that is far away from home. In addition to this Idah town of Owa relationship, it was said that Adagba was a particular man who came from Ovia area of Benin and founded Owa Ofien. A school named after the Adagba is still in Owa Kingdom. Adagba, though from Edo or Benin area, may be Igala man because from History, Adagba is Igala name and not common with Benin Kingdom. It is an Igala name for elephant. Adagba is an emblem of Attah Igala; king of Igala people worldwide. The original name of Abeokuta, Ogun state was Oko Adagba, named after a hunter called Adagba. Again, Adagba is not a Yoruba name. But irrespective of the origin of Adagba of Owa kingdom, the bottom line is that Ika is majorly of Benin people, and some Igala people.

Some similar words between Igala, Benin and Ika or Owa:

1. Servant/Aid: Edibo in Igala, Odibo in Benin, Odibo in Ika.
2. Head/leader: Oji or Agboji/Onu in Igala, Ogie in Benin, Olotu in Ika a variable of Onotu of Igala.
3. Mother is Iye in Igala and Benin, Iye, mother is Nne like Nene as grandmother in Igala.
4. Child: Oma in Igala, Omo in Benin, Umun in Ika.
5. Onoji in Igala, Enogie/Onogie in Benin, some chiefs in Igala or Benin,
6. Banana: ogede in Igala, Oghede in Benin, Ogede in Ika.
7. Cup: Ukpa in Igala, Mkpu or Ugban in Benin, Mkpu.
8. Water: Omi in Igala, Ame in Benin, Mirin in Ika
9. Forest: Efoko in Igala, Egboko in Benin, Egboko in Ika.
10. Hill: Oke in Igala and Benin, Oke in Ika.
11. Farm: Oko in Igala, Eku in Benin, Eku or Ogo in Ika.
12. Cutlass: Opia in Igala, Opia in Benin, Opia in Ika.
13. Very old woman: Inene/Iyeogijo in Igala, Nene in Benin, Nene or Odede in Ika.
14. Plate: Okpa in Igala. Okpa in Benin, Okpan.
15. Town: Ewo/Ugbo in Igala, Ogbe in Benin, Ogbe in Ika.
16. Air: Afu in Igala, Afere in Benin, Ufere in Ika.
17. Small: Okekele in Igala, Ekere in Benin, Ekere in Ika.
18. Neighbour: Arogbe in Igala. Edogbo in Benin, Edogbo in Ika.
19. Joy: Uyo in Igala, Oyo in Benin, Oyo in Ika.
20. Prison: Ugah in Igala, Egan in Benin, Egan in Ika
21. Mirror: Egigo in Igala, Ugegbe in Benin, Ughegbe in Ika.
22. Box: Akpati in Igala. Ekpeti in Benin, Ekpeti in Ika
23. War: Ogu in Igala, Ogun in Benin, Agha/Ogun in Ika.
24. Secretary: Akowe in Igala, Akowe in Benin, Akowe in Ika.
25. Family: Ugbe in Igala, Ugbe in Benin, Ugbe in Ika. Etc

D. Brief History of Urhobo

There are various theories of the origin of Urhobo people. However, the most acceptable theory is that of the Benin origin (Mathias, 2017). He went further by quoting Atkins who stated that the Urhobo people migrated, at various waves, from Benin (Aka) at the time of the *Ogisos* to settle in their current places. Also, according to Egharevba (1960) as quoted by Otite (2003), Urhobo originated from the Benin kingdom. It is further stated by Godwin (2010), that Urhobo people migrated from "across the Benin River". It should be noted however, that it is not all the clans that are unanimous on this account of origin. For instance, while Oeogun, Olomu, Agbon and Abraka

clans claim to have migrated from Benin, others such as Ughelli and Ewu clans believe they have come from the Ijo – speaking people of Delta State, though Ijaw (Ijaw) also trace part of their origin from Benin too.

Another important version of the origin of Urhobo is the one that links them with Ife in the Benue confluence in the present-day Kogi state, precisely in Omala Local government, though many researchers mistook that Ife to be Ile- Ife in Osun state. According to Erhueh (1987), the Urhobo for the first time came from Egypt, left some of their people on the shore of lake Chad, halted for a time at Ile – Ife, had a permanent abode at Benin and finally were driven to the swamp of the Niger – Delta. This also links the migration history of Urhobo people with Benin kingdom. As stated earlier, many authors and researchers up till date, sometimes mistaken the Ife (Uhe or Uwhe) in Omala, Kogi state for Ile Ife in Osun state. The Ife in Omala Kogi state is just on the way from Lake Chad through Borno to Idah or Benin. The same Ife/Uhe in Kogi state was the location Pa Idu, the ancestor of Benin people had to relocate to with his people when flood took over his Igodomigodo territory in the present-day Benin around 40 BC. He was said to have lived in the Ife, established his deity which the descendants were still coming to worship there before later relocating it to Benin. It was reported that Pa Idu died in the Ife, and was buried there according to oral history. As a result of this stay of Urhobo people in Ife in Igala land of Kogi state before moving forward to Benin and other factors, there are some similar vocabularies between Igala and Urhobo people, though it cannot be confirmed here that they migrated from Egypt, as they could be part of Benin people whom Idu led back during the flood but did not go back to Benin immediately until around the 6th century as reported by various sources. According to Obiomah (digitallibrarymuseum.com), the widely held [history] among Urhobos is that they were at some distant past among the people of Ife. They migrated to Benin from Ife in the 6th century A.D, and they began their migration from Benin around 11th century A D during the time of Ogo dynasty to Urhobo land of today.

Some Similar Vocabularies Between Igala and Urhobo:

1. Greeting in English, Wado in Urhobo, Awa/Awao in Igala.
2. Guilty in English, Abe in Urhobo, Abi in Igala,
3. Group in English, Otu in Urhobo, Utu in Igala.
4. Radio in English, Agboro in Urhobo, Agboro in Igala.
5. Matches in English, Agbuna in Urhobo, Achana/Agbuna in Igala,
6. Gong in English, Agogo in Urhobo, Agogo in Igala.
7. Water in English, Ame in Urhobo, Omi in Igala,
8. Show off/Rich in English, Anama in Urhobo, Anana in Igala.
9. Knife or Cutlass in English, Aphia/Apia in Urhobo, Opia in Igala.
10. Breeze in English, Afifo in Urhobo, Ofefe/Afu fefe in Igala.
11. No guilty verdict in English, Ase in Urhobo, Ale in Igala.
12. Seller in English, Atētē in Urhobo, Atēnwu in Igala.
13. Woman in English, Aye in Urhobo, Iye/Ebule in Igala.
14. Build in English, Bō in Urhobo, Bō/Kō in Igala.
15. Steal in English, Chuji in Urhobo, ji or eji in Igala.
16. Box in English, Ekpeti in Urhobo, Akpati in Igala.
17. Oracle in English, Efa in Urhobo, Ifa in Igala.
18. Three in English, Erha in Urhobo, Eta in Igala.
19. Pig in English, Esi in Urhobo, Ehi in Igala.
20. Stomach in English, Evu in Urhobo, Efu in Igala.
21. Goat in English, Evwe in Urhobo, Ewo in Igala.
22. Charcoal in English, Ibi in Urhobo, Egunwubibi in Igala.

23. Proverb in English, Ite in Urhobo, Ita in Igala.
24. Search thoroughly, Gbo in Urhobo, Tugbo in Igala
25. Die, Ghwu in Urhobo, Kwu in Igala.
26. Father: Ibaba in Urhobo, Ubaba/Ibaba in Igala
27. Like or accept: Je in Urhobo and Igala
28. Gather: Koko in Urhobo, Koma in Igala
29. Peel: Kpe in Urhobo, Pe in Igala
30. Me: Me in Urhobo, Mi in Igala.
31. Sick: Muoga in Urhobo, ogamu in Igala.
32. Mother: Nene in Urhobo, Iye/Nene in Igala.
33. Fence: Ogba in Urhobo and Igala.
34. Thick woven cloth: Okpa in Urhobo, Okpe in Igala
35. Corn: Oka in Urhobo and Igala.
36. Village: Oko in Urhobo, Ojoko in Igala.
37. Walking stick: Okpo in Urhobo, Okpa in Igala.
38. Child: Omo in Urhobo, Oma in Igala
39. Cover: Udio in Urhobo, Udo/Uchi in Igala.
40. You: We in Urhobo, Uwe in Igala

Some similar statements/vocabularies between Urhobo and Benin:

1. Urhobo: gbu-nuwe-shut up, Benin: gu-nue-shut up, 2. Urhobo -yanre-come, Benin-laie-come, 3. Urhobo-inowota- I am asking you questions, Benin -Inowota-i am asking you questions, 4. Urhobo-wekobokhian-weldone, Benin-bokhian -welcome, 5. Urhobo-tewmanta- talk true, Benin -tewmanta-talk true, 6. Urhobo-Wenowmen-it means are you asking me? Benin-Uwenowmen, tu-nowmen-a'?-it means the same thing above, 7. Urhobo-yanre-bone-it means come this side, Benin-Laie vbo bona-It means the same thing in Benin, 8. Urhobo-vbiare-what did I do, Benin-vbiaru-what did I do, 9. Urhobo-wa no-ask Benin-no -ask, 10. Urhobo-kemukemuntarivbumikiru-it means whatever you want me to do, I will do, Benin-Kevbinkevbin nu ta nihi I gharu-it means the same thing above, 11. Urhobo-we rhooya-you don suffer, Benin- Urhiooya ne-you don suffer, 12. Urhobo-waahian- make unadae go, Benin-waakhian-make unadae go 14. Urhobo-Igbiyaja-prostitute, Benin -Igbiyagia-prostitute, 15. Urhobo-ighodo- compound, Benin-Ighodo- can range from a compound to a place e.gvbu a ye vbiighodo-na? meaning where are you in this place, 16. Urhobo-Dawmuen or Dawmen-it means to try something, Benin-Dawmen or Dawmuenit means to try something- e.ggheghi Dawmuen- do not try it again, 17. Urhobo-Odafa- a big man, a wealthy man, Benin- Odafen- Big man, Wealthy man, 18. Urhobo-Ogo- bottle, Benin-ogo-bottle, 19. Urhobo-ovie-king, Bini-Ogie-king, 20. Urhobo-Aghogho-Joy, Benin-Oghogho-Joy, 21. Urhobo-Ame-water, Benin-Ame-water, 22. Urhobo-Igho-money, Benin-Igho-money, 23. Urhobo-akpo -life, Benin-agbon- life, 24. Urhobo-wowo-i am sorry, Benin-Lahorwowo -i am sorry, 25. Urhobo-ohu-vexation or anger, Benin-ohu-vexation or anger, 26. Urhobo-Oji-thief, Benin-Oji-thief, 27. Urhobo- otu- mate, Benin -Otu- mate, 28. Urhobo-Eriwmin-spirit, Benin-Ehiwmin-spirit, 29. Urhobo-nerhun-pray, Benin-nerhun-pray.

E. Brief History of Isoko

Benin is one of the distant neighbours of the Isoko. This is so stated because there is no geographical contiguity between the two, yet most account of the Isoko origins are linked to Benin (Uwomano, 2020). He also confirmed the statement by Ikime, (1972) that any discussion on the relationship between the Isoko and the other ethnic groups in the western Niger Delta region should appropriately begin with Isoko-Benin relation. One common denominator of the majority of Isoko clans is that they all recount their migration routes eastward

from Benin to the Niger and then southward to their final destination-Isokoland (Uwomano, 2021).

According to Frank (urhobotoday.com), the Isoko people are divided into two groups such that some groups such as Iyede, Emede, Owhe, Emevo, Aviara, Okpe-Ozoro and Uzere who traced their origin from Benin kingdom, other groups Enwhe, Igvide and Ume were from Igbo side or east of the Niger, though he did not mention if they were from Benin or Igala communities in the east such as Ogurgu, Abbi, Enugu Ezike, Onitsha, Orba, Ukpologwu, Nando, Onitsha, Ossamala, OgwuIkpele, Enugu Ezike, Odekpe, Achala, etc. It is also worthy of note that even Eri or Nris traced their origin to Igala as recorded by various authors. According to Meek (1937), "the Northern Umueri say that the clan was founded by a man called Eri who came to Anambra area from Igala country. "Eri was an Igala warrior who together with his followers came to Aguleri on a military expedition. He established his war camp at Eri-Aka...", Idigo, 1955. According to Chief Nwoye Albert of Nteje in an interview with Center of Igbo History and Culture and published on you tube in October, 2020, Nteje people and all other Nris are from Igala. He added that Nteje also gave birth to many other communities in Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Delta

Furthermore, "Nteje people traced their origin to Igala. The tradition has it that one Igala warrior called Eri was the father of Aguleri, Onogu, Igbariam, Nteje, Nri, Nsugbe, Amanuke. Like their father, they were all warriors", (Ifeyinwa and Nwokoye, 2021). "The Northern Umueri villages say that the clan was founded by a man called Eri who came to the Anambra area from Igala country, and settled at Aguleri" Boston, 1960. The ruling families of Aguleri trace their own descent from one Aguve who is said to have been given the title of Eze by the Ata Gala at Idah, (Meek, 1937). In confirmation of Meek's history on Aguve, the second king of Aguleri been crowned by Attah Igala in Idah palace, as the second Eze Aguleri, Boston, (1960), had this to say. Aguve was given the title of Eze Aguleri by Attah Igala. *A military commander called Aguve was a native of Aguleri but was always going to Idah home to see the Attah Igala. That time, communities were ruled by elders not traditional rulers. The coordination was not okay, hence he complained to Attah Igala who was the king of all of them then. After a careful consideration, Aguve was appointed King of Aguleri by the ruler of Igala* (Idigo, 2023). From the foregoing, it can be summarized that Isoko people are mostly from Benin, and the remaining part who trace their origin from the East or Igbo side are possibly from Benin or Igala ancestry considering the Eri's Igala origin, and other towns' connection with Igala according to various authors quoted above.

F. Brief History of Ijaw

Just like the other groups above with different versions of origin, Ijaw are said to have migrated from Upper Egypt in the ancient Nile valley to Lake Chad area before coming to their present locations. According to Banigo (2005), a school of thought claims that the Ijo (Ijaw) people originated from the Nile valley in Upper Egypt. Uzobo, *et al.*, (2013), states thus; the conception of God by the Ijos gives more credence to the fact that the Ijoshas its historical origin from Ancient Egypt who worshipped goddesses instead of gods. They went further to add that, the ancient city of Annu or Onnu of kemet or ancient Egypt is of importance to the origins of the ancestors of the Ijo people, as this city was the site of the temple dedicated to Tem/Atum or Atumu (the supreme being) founded by ancient Khem-Anu. This implies that the Izon

(Ijaw)canological system of Tem which was developed by ancient ancestors and had its headquarters at the ancient Egyptian city of Annu or Onnu. Going by this, Ijo people might be said to be related with Igala people through the Anu clan or descendants of Igala kingdom. Anu was the thirteenth king of the 8th dynasty rulers of ancient Egypt. His son, Abba, became the king or pharaoh of Egypt after his father. Anu ruled from 2171 to 2170BC, and his descendants were said to have stayed in Anu town in ancient Egypt. Therefore, if Ijaw people were from Anu town in ancient Egypt, they are probably Igala relatives. Aside that, Igala (Galla) people were the 10th dynasty rulers of ancient Egypt, hence, tracing of Ijaw origin to the same Egypt Igala migrated from implies a possible relationship between Igala and Ijaw. But another common or popular version is that from or through Benin kingdom.

Ijo ancestral traditions mention Ife and Benin regions as points of immediate origin (Oko, 2022), which means that the origin of migration of Ijaw people within this Nigeria are Ife and Benin. Any references to Ife and Benin in Ijo traditional history refer to the first aboriginal period that started before 600 AD, when the ancient Oruonce inhabited the Ife and Benin regions, he added. It is also worthy of mention here that the Ife here is the Ife in Kogi state which was in existence since 40 BC even when Pa Idu of the ancient Benin kingdom was alive. Oduduwa came to Ile Ife in Osun state around the 12th/13th century according to Igala oral history, and after a short time, he sent his son to rule Benin kingdom on his behalf after the death of his father, Ogiso Owodo. Thus, it is after about 600 years that Ijaw people migrated from Ife that Oduduwa came to establish Ile Ife which is in Osun state. Oduduwa is said by Yoruba people to be their ancestor or progenitor. In other words, the origin of Ijaw is somewhat linked to Benin, either directly or indirectly.

CONCLUSION

Based on these repeated references to the Ife/Uhe Igala town in Kogi state which is said to have existed right from the time of Pa Idu (40 BC), the father of Benin and many other towns in southeast, southwest and Southsouth, where he was reported to have come to live during a devastating flood that took over Igodomigodo (now Benin Kingdom), and died and buried there, as well as the numerous similarities in vocabularies, kingship system, origin, cultural practices and festivals between Igala, Benin, Ika, Urhobo, Ijaw and Isoko, it can be concluded that Igala, Benin, Ika, Urhobo, Ijaw, and Isoko are related in many ways, and may be people with related distant ancestors. In addition, it is evidently true that some of the groups in Ika or Isoko who trace their ancestry to Eri (Nris) are indirectly Igala since Eri, their ancestor was Igala as reported by various authors cited in the work such as Meek, Boston, M. C. M Idigo, Nwankwo, Ifenyiwa, Fred Idigo, etc.

RECOMMENDATION

As a result of these numerous similarities between these people or kingdoms, it is recommended that unity network between these kingdoms or people be established in order to have a stronger bond between them that will lead to economic, political and cultural developments among them in the nearest future.

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