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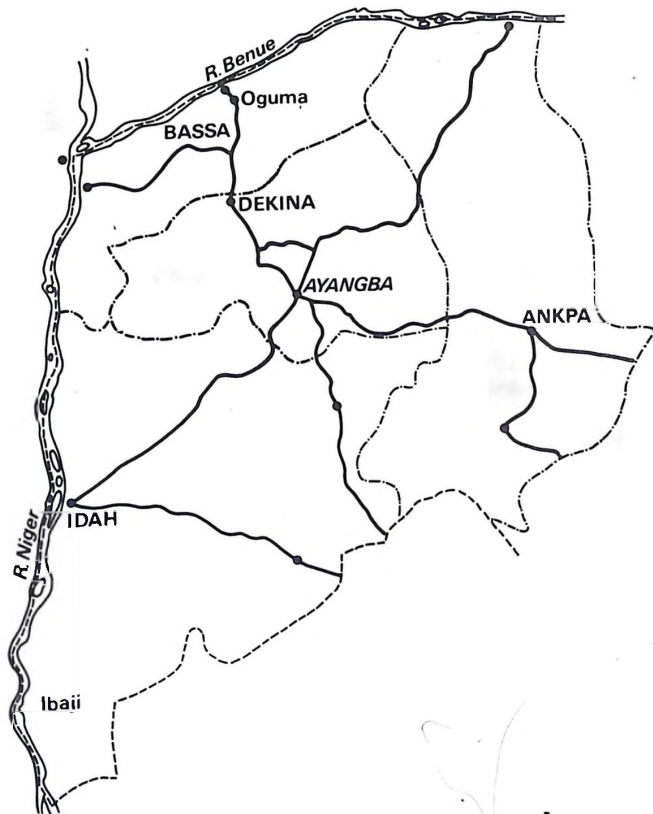


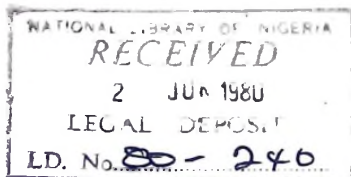
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A JOURNAL OF IGALALAND





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JOURNAL OF IGALALAND

Vol. I No. 1

Edited by
Brian Dawtrey

PUBLISHED BY
AYANGBA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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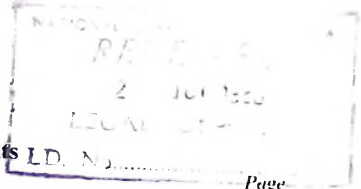


Elaeis guineensis
The Oil Palm

The Oil Palm is a major vegetative, economic and aesthetic feature of Igalaland. It has been widely propagated for centuries, and has developed from a suppressed indigenous component of dense climax forest, to become, in places, palm forest.

*The botanical name for the genus *Elaeis* derives from the Greek word for oil. Pronunciation is usually El-ee-iss gin-ee-en-sis.*

F.O.O. 22/7/80



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PREFACE

This Journal was initiated by the Ayangba Agricultural Development Project in 1978, to perform the function of lasting educational record, and to act as a medium for attracting national and international interest in the human and natural resources of the area covered by the four Divisions of Idah, Dekina, Bassa and Ankpa.

It is not intended to be a scientific journal as such, but to be reliably authenticated general interest publication aimed at a broad spectrum of readers.

Contributions are invited on any educational, historical, social, technical, cultural, domestic, conservational, agricultural or factual topic. They should be addressed to the Editor Elaeis, Ayangba Agricultural Development Project, Ayangba.

EDITOR



Al Haji Aliyu Ocheja Obaje, C.O.N., C.B.E.,

1956

Wearing the Crown of Cowrie Shells

Oral Tradition and the History of the Igala

Slightly abridged, from a paper presented to a seminar arranged by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, and also published in the Journal of African History, X, 1 (1969)

By J. S. Boston

If we assume, as we surely can, that the Niger and Benue rivers played an even more strategic role in the Nigerian past than they do today, then it is clear that the Igala area holds the key to an important chapter of Nigerian history. The Igala are located at one of the natural crossroads in Nigerian geography, the Niger-Benue confluence, and they themselves have exercised a considerable influence on surrounding peoples such as the Idoma, the Northern Ibo and the Nupe. Igala culture itself spread outwards beyond the boundaries of the kingdom. I begin with a brief sketch of the Igala political system, and try to show how this inevitably brings diversity into the body of oral tradition.

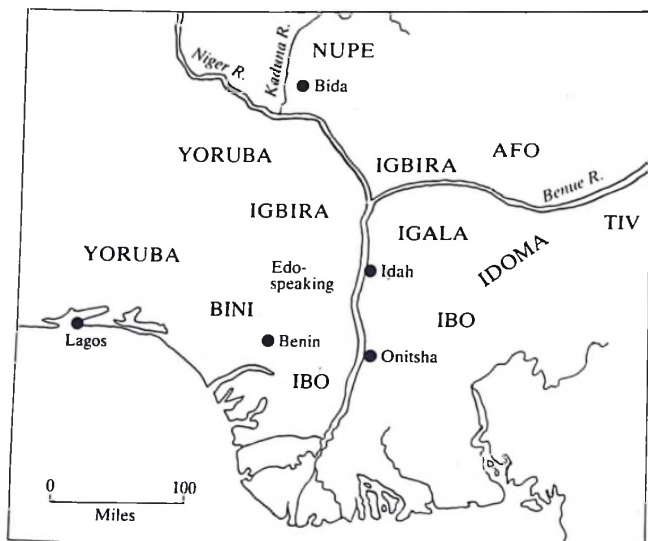
The Igala form a kingdom whose ruler, the Ata, has his capital at Idah on the river Niger. The total population of the kingdom in 1962 was around 460,000. Constitutionally the king's position was more like that of a Yoruba Oba than that of a strong ruler like the Oba of Benin. The Igala Ata ruled over a loosely federated kingdom in which the major provinces were organized and behaved like petty kingdoms. The provincial chiefs were relatively autonomous in their provincial capitals, and were only subject to the king in certain sovereign matters such as the payment of tribute, jurisdiction over homicide, and succession to their own offices. As in the Yoruba kingdoms, a strong ruler could improve his position against that of the provincial chiefs. But basically the kingdom conformed to what Southall calls the pyramidal or federated type rather than to the other type of kingdom, like Benin, in which power is strongly centralized.

The federated type of kingdom probably tends to have a higher degree of diversity in its oral traditions than kingdoms of the centralized type, since each provincial centre of government is also a centre for oral tradition, and the tradition of the royal group itself does not have the same kind of overwhelming authority that royal tradition has in a kingdom like Benin. In Igala some of the provincial chiefs are themselves members of localized branches of the royal clan, so that in addition to the problem of divergence between the histories of different descent groups, one gets the further problem of divergence within the royal traditions themselves, according to whether they come from the capital or from royal centres located in the provinces.

Igala is divided into clans, and its political structure is based on a system in which clans perform political functions at either the central level, in the capital, or at the provincial level or at the local level in the

districts. Each clan has its own traditions, and in each case the tradition is partly concerned with justifying and validating the clan's political function. For instance, the royal clan is concerned with legitimating its right to rule, and bases this claim on the principle of descent from older dynasties in other kingdoms. The royal dynasty in Igala is an immigrant one. The indigenous population of Igala is represented politically, and in the oral traditions, by a group of clans called the Igala Mela, who are supposed to have occupied Idah from the beginning. They act as kingmakers in the political system, and also control an earth cult which symbolizes the fertility and benevolence of the land throughout the Igala kingdom. One other aristocratic clan which I should mention is the clan of the Achadu, who is head of the kingmakers and holds the Igala Mela group together — though in fact the Achadu's clan, like the royal clan, is of immigrant origin and traces its descent to an Ibo who came into the Igala area for hunting.

I select this small group of clans — the royal clan, the Igala Mela, and the Achadu's clan — for special emphasis, because their traditions provide a framework that helps to co-ordinate the notions held in other, less important clans concerning origins and the sequence of time.



The Igala and their neighbours

This outline illustrates some of the structural and political factors that make for diversity in Igala oral tradition. Let us go on to examine this diversity in more detail, concentrating in particular on the problems surrounding the origin and introduction of the kingship.

Miles Clifford argued that a breakaway group of Jukun moved eastwards from Wukari, staying just south of Benue, and that they settled at Amagedde in the north-east of Igala, before finally moving from there across country to Idah. Clifford further argued that the first three of four Igala rulers, whose names appear on my list before Ayegba, lived and died in the Amagedde area, and that the first Igala king to rule at Idah was Ayegba. He also implies that the institution of kingship did not exist at Idah before it was introduced there by the Jukun.

(M. Clifford was a former District Officer in the early 1930's)

By paying special attention to the Jukun tradition of origin, Clifford gives the impression that other traditions of origin for the Igala kingship were either non-existent or else of no importance. He quotes a story by the French traveller Burdo, for instance, which connects Igala with Yoruba, and dismisses this as being ingenious but fantastic. And elsewhere he says that the Jukun tradition is the one most in favour with the royal house. But this argument that most of the Igala believe in a Jukun origin for their royal house gives an entirely false impression of unanimity and agreement in the oral traditions. The following legend, collected in 1960, claims an historical link between the Igala and Benin royal dynasties through the migration from Benin to Idah of a brother of the Oba of Benin. This legend is current in the ruling subclan of the Igala royal house. A slightly different version of royal origins claims that the first king, Abutu Eje, was fathered by a leopard.

Legend: Long ago, there was a chief of Benin (Onu Ibini) who came to the throne when it was the rule that the first son born to the Oba should succeed him on the throne. Now this chief and his wife quarrelled, and because the wife hated her husband, when she delivered a male child she did not take it for her husband to see. Shortly afterwards one of her co-wives also delivered a male child, and immediately went with it to the chief. So the Onu took all the insignia of his title, even down to the hat that the chief wore, and had all these things placed in a neighbouring town for the second child, who later on became chief of that place.

When the Onu died, the followers of the two brothers heard the news and began to discuss the succession. Those living at home said that it would fall on the senior brother, but the other party refused, on the grounds that the younger brother had been given the insignia of office, and still had them in his possession. In his reply the first group asked whether it was the rule that the elder of two kinsmen should step down to let the junior take his place. The argument led to fighting, and to so much killing that the junior brother said 'If this goes on, my father's people will

wipe each other out and the family will perish for the sake of a title. The best thing I can do to prevent this is to go away and leave the matter to be settled by God.'

So he went away, and was followed by the Bini who are the ancestors of the people in the country opposite Idah, right up to Asaba (Achaba) and Kukuruku (Ingele). Those that grew tired on the way stopped wherever they liked and were left behind.

When the younger brother came at last to cross over to Idah, the people around noticed the things that he was carrying and reported to the elders at home that a stranger was coming with some amazing things. The elders themselves went to look, and decided that the stranger was a man of truth, so they invited him to settle with them and become their Ata.

After this, the new Ata sent his own child back to Benin with a message to say that the elder brother could be given the Oba's title as he himself was more than satisfied with his new title of Ata. In return the Oba's messengers came to Idah and reported back that they were received with great ceremony in which the Ata had followed strictly the custom of their own forefathers, breaking kola for the visitors and invoking their ancestors by name. The Oba commented 'God has indeed given my brother the senior position', and from that time onwards the seniority of the Ata over the Oba has been accepted. In the past the Bini used to send eight slaves to Idah to be made eunuchs whenever a new Oba was appointed, and the Ata used to keep four of these eunuchs and send the other four back to the Oba,

End of legend.



Eju beju ailo, meaning "fierce countenance", the 16th century bronze mask worn by the Ata on ceremonial occasions.

Photo BD. 1978

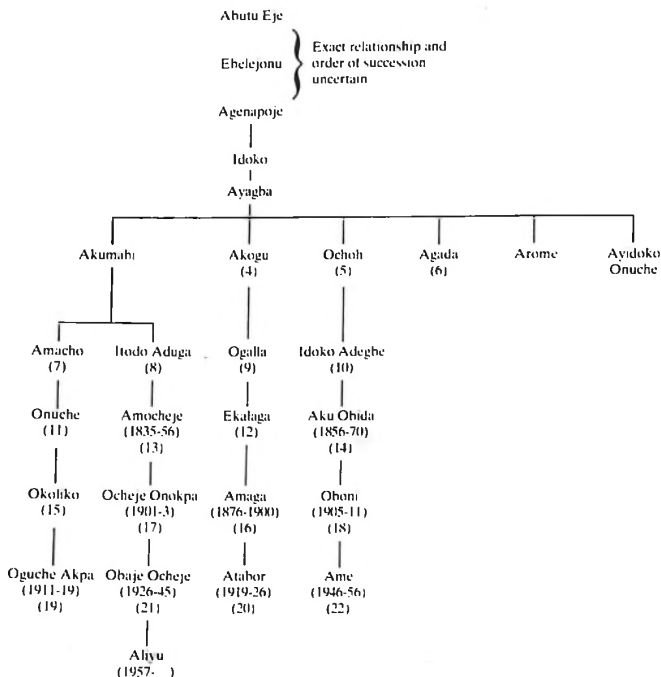
Igala kingship has also been connected by tradition with Yoruba, and the explorers who ascended the Niger in the nineteenth century were given various explanations of this connexion. Unlike Clifford, we should take all these different claims seriously as forming a set of divergent views about the origin of the Igala kingship. This divergence and the existence of different theories about the origins of the kingship are an essential feature of Igala oral tradition, and to emphasize only one of these views or even to try to select between the traditions, carries the risk of misrepresenting the nature of the historical corpus and of missing its essential point. So I would argue that all the traditions are equally valid, and that the first task of historical analysis in this case is to provide a framework within which the divergent views can be reconciled and synthesized. To find a solution to the problem I now move on to the second major problem, which is that of chronology.

In dealing with oral traditions based on king lists, there is a strong temptation to construct a time scale by computing an average length for each reign and using this figure to arrive at the estimated time span which the whole dynasty might have covered. Clifford for example, did this, in the case of the Igala, and assigns the colonization of the Agatu area from Wukari to the beginning of the seventeenth century, and Ayegeba's arrival at Idah to the later part of the same century. He does not say explicitly how he arrived at this date, but after comparing his article with unpublished notes by Clifford and other government officers in the files at Idah, I am convinced that he worked out the average reign of the kings for whom we have actual dates, and extrapolated this backwards to cover the reigns of previous rulers throughout the dynasty. The table of rulers given here provides exact dates from 1834 onwards, and shows that between 1834 and 1956 there were ten rulers. This gives an average reign of twelve years, and if this average is applied to the full king list, which varies between twenty-five and twenty-seven names, it produces a hypothetical time span of 300 or 325 years. This would take Abutu Eje and Ebelejonu back to the early 1600s, as suggested by Clifford and by other Administrative officers who have worked on this problem.

However the Igala traditions are partly mythological in character, and the early period does not have the same time value as the latter part of the dynastic record. Instead it takes a synoptic view of the past, compressing events and developments that must have covered many centuries into single reigns. Abutu Eje, for instance, is chiefly remembered because of his associations with the leopard myth: his name *eje*, leopard, is a symbol of his descent from this mythical founder of the royal clan. Similarly, Ebelejonu is treated by Clifford as an actual historical figure, whereas in fact the account of her reign contains mythological allusions to the marriage between the Achadu and Ebelejonu, the female *Ata*. This marriage in turn is a symbol of the ritual authority that the kingmakers possess over the king through their control of the succession and of the

Igala King List and Genealogy

The numbers correspond to the order of graves in the royal burial ground.



earth cult. All these early members of the royal house have mythological attributes, and cannot be regarded as historical figures occupying the same dimension of historical reality as the kings who ruled Igala in the nineteenth century.

Ayegba. Ayegba ranks as the founder of the dynasty in the sense that he forms the apical ancestor of the royal house, and in the sense that he is said to have fought a war which freed Igala from Junkun control. But Ayegba also is a stereotypical figure, a founder and creator in the same

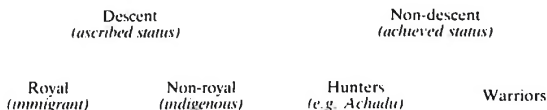
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kind of tradition and historical idiom as Oduduwa among the Yoruba, or Nyikang among the Shilluk. His supposedly historical achievements in fact symbolize the creation of a nation with all its political institutions and its full individuality. Ayegba is said, for example, to have defined the external and the internal boundaries of the kingdom, to have created the title system around which the clan system itself revolves, and to have assimilated all the important immigrant groups that have contributed to the development of the Igala kingdom. In short, Ayegba is a symbol of the nation and of the creation of Igala nationality. When the Igala wish to identify their nation and its land, they talk of an 'Ayegba, Ayegba's land. But to regard this development as the achievement of a single person, accomplished within one reign, is a good example of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness applied to historical thinking. Ayegba is a mythical figure, and in the indigenous perspective of Igala tradition he stands for a long period of creative political evolution which is not necessarily bound by the conventions of time that we would apply to the possibilities of royal achievement. To compare Ayegba with the later Igala kings is like comparing King Arthur, or the popular image of William the Conqueror, with the later kings and queens in English history, or Oduduwa with the present Oni of Ife. *sharp pen 16/6/94*

This view that Igala traditions take a synoptic view of the past, and are not concerned solely with unilinear development of time, may explain the divergence that exists in the Igala traditions of origin. The Yoruba, Benin, and Jukun traditions manage to co-exist because they refer to a period which is indistinct from a strictly historical point of view. Each tradition, as I shall try to show, emphasizes a different aspect of the mythical past, and the problem of trying to account for divergent traditions of origin resolves itself into a problem of explaining the function of myth in Igala tradition. And this brings us on to the third main general problem, which is the problem of separating the political facets of the traditions from their historical aspects, since I suggest ultimately that the function of myths in the Igala context is mainly political.

Thus I would argue that the early period of Igala history is concerned with the interaction of a number of different principles of political growth and change, and with the structure that was produced by their interaction. The time-span is conventionally defined by associating each major change with one reign or one generation. But this attribution of time is purely conventional, and stands for the passage of a much longer period if we think in objective terms of the probable time span of Igala history. The political principle with which these early myths are concerned is the principle of descent, and they make an antithesis between the facts of royal descent and non-royal descent. This antithesis corresponds to a basic division in the Igala political system between the kind of powers of legislation and sovereignty that are vested in the royal group, and the powers of local administration and eventual control of the

royal group that are vested in non-royal clans throughout Igala. For instance, the first Achadu conforms to the stereotype of the hunter who is cut off from his kin and all his connections by birth. But by his own merits, by the principle of achievement, he becomes head of the kingmakers and unites the indigenous population, represented by the Igala Mela, into a corporate group which becomes able to exercise ritual authority over the royal group, and over the king in particular. We can represent the principles that are put forward in these myths by the following diagram:



The early period of tradition is concerned with the interaction of these principles. In the first phase of this mythical period, the non-royal, unfederated group of clans, the Igala Mela, voluntarily hand over power to an immigrant royal group. In the second phase, the Igala Mela are consolidated and organized into a federation by the arrival of the first Achadu. And in the same phase the kingmakers, as they are now defined to be, assert their authority over the royal group through the marriage between the first Achadu and Ebelejonu, the female Ata. This myth justifies the ritual subordination of every Igala king to the head of the kingmakers. In the third phase, Ayegba appears as the founder of the nation, representing a synthesis of the former stages of development, and the co-ordination of the clan system within the political system. All of these early ancestors are to a greater or lesser extent stereotyped figures, standing as much for the emergence and development of the political system itself as for the actual achievements of real historical figures.

If this analysis of the perspective of Igala oral tradition, and of its strong political bias, is correct, then the historian can escape from the chronological limitations imposed by taking the early part of the dynasty too literally. The mythological or early part of the traditions probably corresponds to a lengthy span of actual time. And, if we take into account linguistic and other cultural evidence, it seems highly probable that the Igala have in fact been successively influenced by long periods of contact with the Yoruba, with the Bini, and with the Jukun. The evidence for a strong but ancient connexion between Igala and Yoruba is overwhelming, and there can be no doubt that the main affinity of Igala social and political institutions is with Yoruba. The sample of a small part of a comparative Igala-Yoruba word list which is appended to this paper shows how close the two languages are. I am grateful to Professor Armstrong for the information that over 60% of the words in the

comparative list of basic words are cognate. And he also informs me that in glotto-chronological terms this would indicate a separation date of from 1500 to 2000 years.

Politically, as I have already suggested, Igala kingship shows a closer affinity to the Yoruba type of kingship than it does to either Benin or Jukun. Political offices in Igala are mainly hereditary, in patrilineal descent groups, in the same way that the majority of political offices in Yoruba are located in patrilineages. Succession to these hereditary offices in Igala — and this is a highly specific point of resemblance with Yoruba — is by a rotating or circulating method of succession. The royal title at Idah, for instance, rotates around four lineages with the ruling house. And this kind of rotation is basically found in all clan titles in Igala, as it seems to be found in most lineage offices in Yoruba country. There are some points of dissimilarity as well as points of similarity in the two systems. The royal descent group in Igala is relatively more important in terms of its political functions, its size and scale, than royal lineages normally are among the Yoruba. But it is interesting to note that the Igala royal group is ultimately subject to the authority of the indigenous non-royal groups in the same way that Yoruba kings are made or unmade by the will of the title heads of the leading non-royal lineages in their towns. There is also the important point of decentralization in the Igala kingdom, through the system of provincial heads, which so closely parallels the functions and position of subchiefs in charge of outlying towns in the Yoruba system. One could extend this study of cultural similarities between the Igala and Yoruba to other fields such as the system of kingship, marriage and inheritance, or to the field of religious ideas. But my main concern here is with the basic affinity of the two political systems, and with the historical implications of this similarity. It is probably reasonable to assume that this Yoruba influence is the most ancient of the factors that influenced the formation and development of the Igala political system.

Royal Regalia: The traditions that connect the Igala kingdom with Benin have already been considered, and we need only add here some other items of evidence that point to a period in which Idah was closely linked with the Benin empire. Some of the most important items of royal regalia at Idah are of Benin origin and, according to royal tradition, were brought by the first settlers when they broke away from the Benin royal house. The Ata, for instance, wears a distinctive and beautiful pectoral brass mask called Ejubejailo, which is regarded by all Igala as the most important single item of all the royal regalia. This mask has been attributed by both K. C. Murray and W. Fagg to Benin, and they both suggest that it dates from the early part of the sixteenth century. Another important item of regalia at Idah which comes from Benin is a brass stool called akpa Ayegba, 'Ayegba's stool', or in my idiom, 'the stool of the

nation'. This so-called stool resembles the Bini cult objects called *ikegobo* which are used for the shrine of the hand, and symbolize in Benin a man's personal power and achievements. One other Benin item of regalia is an iron staff used in connexion with royal ancestor worship at Idah. This has exactly the same form as iron staffs that are used on shrines to the god of medicine at Benin.

There are few specific points of resemblance between the Bini and the Igala political systems, unless we compare the role of the Uzama, or kingmakers, at Benin with that of the Igala Mela who are in charge of the succession at Idah. And in this connexion it is interesting to note that the heir elect at Idah is given the title of *Adokainya*, which is terminologically cognate with the Bini title of *Edajiken* for the heir apparent. But the differences here are as important as the similarities. The Bini system of succession by direct primogeniture, for example, is unlike the Igala and Yoruba systems of rotating succession. And the Igala do not have open title associations like the non-hereditary political offices of the Bini.

The chronology of the Benin/Igala connexion is difficult to establish on present evidence, although it seems reasonable to assume that it follows in time the older connexion with Yoruba. The Igala fought a major war against Benin around 1517 and this, together with the evidence of the brass mask, suggests that the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were especially close and important in the system of relations between the two capitals. In this connexion it is interesting to note the existence of a large and imposing earth mound at Ida called *ojuwo Atogu*. The Institute of African Studies at Ibadan has excavated this important site, and preliminary carbon-14 evidence from the lower levels of some of the exploratory trenches suggest this part of the mound dates from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. The evidence of the date alone suggests that this monument may tie in with the period of intensive contact between Idah and Benin.

I have followed Clifford in regarding the Jukun connexion as the most recent of the important external political influences on Igala. But the chronology of this connexion is most uncertain, and the dating of anything to do with the Jukun raises problems which are beyond the scope of this paper. All we can say for certain is that, according to their own traditions, the Igala were at one time paying an annual tribute to the Jukun king at Wukari. Their refusal to continue paying this tribute led to a war, in which the Igala were victorious, and from which the Igala claim that they derived certain cultural items, including some of their masquerades, and various crops including sweet potato. These items are said to have been abandoned by the Jukun army that invaded Igala. Concerning other possible Jukun influences on Igala we know relatively little, since Meek's Jukun material is not presented in a form that would make a full-scale comparison of the two kingdoms possible. But the indications are that the Jukun political system is very different from the

Igala one, and that it has not contributed significantly to the development of the Igala constitution. Mr. M. Yamaguchi, who has been working among the Jukun, informs me that hereditary titles and descent groups are of relatively little importance in the Jukun system, and that the Jukun title system is based on achievement, not upon descent, with a system of promotional offices which is unlike the Igala system. So far as I know, the only item of royal regalia at Idah that comes from Jukun is a type of brass spur or anklet that the king wears on ceremonial occasions. There is still much research to be done in this field: we have not yet, for example, made more than a superficial comparison of Igala and Jukun word lists. But the preliminary impression is that the political relationship between Idah and Wukari was much less close than that between Idah and Benin, or between the Igala kingdom and the ancient Yoruba kingdoms.

In conclusion let me draw attention to the fact that I have concentrated on the analysis of the early part of the king list, since the main aim has been to establish the qualitative difference between these early Atas and their later descendants. But it must also be emphasized that the later part of the dynastic record needs to be used with extreme caution in attempting to produce historical reconstructions and chronologies. The list shows a tendency for names to drop out over a long period: Arome and Ayidoko Onuche, for example, are so little remembered now that they have no official graves in the royal burial ground at Idah. These two kings, together with Agada, are said to have had no issue, and are often omitted on this account when the king list is being recounted. But this explanation is in itself a conventional one, and from experience of change in other Igala genealogies, I would argue that it may simply mean that a lineage segment which at one time was important in the succession has become merged with another segment, or else dropped out of the genealogy entirely.

Furthermore there is a tendency towards telescoping, or what some anthropologists call 'structural amnesia', built into the *genealogy* itself. When the king list is being used for ritual or ceremonial purposes in Igala, it is conventional to recite the names of only nine kings. Thus, although there are at least twenty-two graves in the royal burial ground, only nine are cleaned and maintained during the annual festivals. These nine are the graves of Ayegba and the eight most recent Atas, from Okoliko to Ame. When the present king dies, Okoliko's grave will be ritually abandoned, and the cult will centre on the graves of Ayegba and the eight rulers beginning with Amaga. The same is true of the ritual staffs that represent the royal ancestors in palace rituals for the ancestors. Only nine of these staffs are kept in use, and only nine names are ritually significant, although there are occasions on which the fuller list of names is recited. The protodynastic ancestors, or ancestors before Ayegba, are represented separately, by the grave of Ebelejonu at the royal burial ground, which does not count among the nine important graves. And

there is a separate staff called Otutubatu, kept outside the palace, which forms a collective symbol of the early ancestors and a ritual link with them.

This convention of selecting only nine of the royal ancestors for special ritual attention can probably be explained by the system of rotating succession to the kingship, which circulates the royal title and a number of other important state offices around four lineages of the royal house. The shortened king list provides a paradigm of the system by showing the founder, Ayegba, and the two most recent kings in each house. This is enough to establish the principle of rotation and of direct succession within each lineage. And it indicates the lines along which power should flow sufficiently clearly to serve as a working model, and make it unnecessary for the whole king list to be repeated. This provides yet another example of the tendency to abridge historical sequences which seem to be built into the Igala system of oral tradition. Dating from archaeological and ethnographic material suggests that a much longer time span is involved in Igala history than might be indicated by a superficial analysis of the oral traditions, based on genealogical counting.



ODOGO, the oldest building in the Palace grounds is thought to originate in 16th century. It was used as a lookout for enemies or traders on the river Niger and for the procurement of customs duties from northern merchants, trying to reach S. Nigeria and the sea.

Photo BD 1978

The Supernatural Aspect of Disease and Therapeutics Among the Igala

by J. S. Boston

The Igala-speaking peoples, who number over 400,000 at the 1962 census, live in the middle belt of Nigeria, near the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers. Preliminary comparisons of Igala and Yoruba beliefs concerning medicine and the causes and treatment of illness suggest that similar categories are employed by both cultures.

In this paper I am emphasising the nonmaterial or supernatural aspects of Igala beliefs about the causes of disease, since these provide a key to the Igala system of diagnosis and treatment. But it should be made clear from the outset that the Igala also discuss illness in purely physiological terms and that they have a wide knowledge of and a deep interest in the physical aspects of disease. The classification of illnesses is based on physical symptoms rather than on notions of mystical causation. And in many cases of illness the patient is treated and recovers without recourse being made to supernatural explanation. On the one hand Igala say that virtually every type of sickness can have a mystical cause. On the other hand, in particular cases, they describe many illnesses as natural, *oga ofofof*, or as being sent by God (and therefore forming part of the normal order of events), *Ojo noga eyile*, or they talk of diseases that come on their own, *oga ki awa ototoyiola*.

All illnesses, whether supernaturally caused or not, are treated with herbal medicines, *ogwu*. Diseases are believed to be manipulated or sent by mystical agencies, not created by them, and in dealing with illness it is therefore necessary to apply therapy at the physiological level as well as at the spiritual level. Whilst the mystical action which I describe is taking place, to remove the spiritual causes of illness, the physical symptoms are also being treated, and the patient's reactions to medication are noted no less carefully than the indices of supernatural change.

We can clarify this distinction between the physiological and the mystical aspects of causation in illness by pointing out that the Igala use the notion of mystical causation to explain the particular and immediate causes of illness. Although disease and sickness form part of the normal order of events, it still has to be explained, in the Igala view, why illness afflicts one man rather than another, and why there is so much variation in the response to treatment. For instance, an Igala man who was attacked by a spitting cobra and injured in both eyes concluded that the attack was due to *inacha*, the action of either witchcraft or sorcery. In general terms he knew that the venom of the snake which entered his eyes was poisonous and capable of causing inflammation, and he also knew that Igala usually regard this kind of encounter with a spitting cobra as purely accidental. But the patient argued that in this particular case other

factors were at work. The snake had been sent by witch or sorcerer to injure a named person. In support of this particularistic interpretation he argued that his eyes had been involved in a series of accidents and misfortunes. On a hunting trip a stray piece of shot had struck his face, near the eye, and on another occasion he had walked into a projecting branch and injured his eye. This informant also pointed out that treatment by European medicine had failed to reduce the inflammation, whilst treatment by native medicine, which acted against *inacha* as well as against the venom, was successful. This case is typical of the way in which Igala find specific reasons for attributing their own illnesses to wizardry whilst still believing that illness in the abstract is due to natural causes.

The two principal mystical agencies to which Igala attribute illness are sorcery, *ogwu bibi*, and witchcraft, *ochu*. The two kinds of harmful action can also be included in one category, *inacha*. This term can be translated by the word wizardry, which is used scientifically to refer to either or both of these kinds of attack. To Igala the notion of *inacha* stands for the intention to harm another person by ritual means. In prayers Igala sometimes say "*uwe ki je ka gbo anyi inachan*" do not let us hear the laughter of wizards", and this forms a poignant expression of the association that they make between *inacha* and people's hatred, envy, anger and malice.

Sicknesses may also be caused by the ancestors, or by a class of nature spirits called *ebo*. In both cases the spirits are believed to act in this way only when provoked, and I discuss later the kinds of behaviour that can lead to this form of retribution.

Igala distinguish between sorcery and witchcraft by saying that sorcerers use medicines whilst the witch uses none. Following Evans-Pritchard's classic analysis of witchcraft beliefs in the Sudan, we can describe witchcraft as a psychic or nonmaterial phenomenon, which is believed to be accomplished by the projection of a spiritual part of the person. Igala say that witchcraft is *afu*, spirit, and they insist that the attack is carried out whilst the witch is sleeping, by a spiritual projection which leaves the body and travels on its own. This projection is bound by some of the limitation that affects material objects: in order to travel, for instance, it may have to take the form of a bird or horse, *i a dewe ochu* or *i a danyela*. But the body of the witch remains at home, and the witch is not physically present at the scene of an attack in the same way as a sorcerer. The attack itself is also described in spiritual terms, the witches remove the spiritual counterpart of the victim's organs and feast on this. And of a person who died from witchcraft I heard it said that before his death he was like a living corpse, a vital spirit had been removed from him and his symptoms were an outward sign of his inner loss.

Sorcery, on the other hand, utilises the power of medicines, *ogwu*, which is external to the magician and does not form part of his being. The sorcerer MAKES use of roots, leaves and tree bark, with other

substances and after preparing these ingredients tries to establish some form of physical contact between the medicine and his victim. The commonest type of sorcery in Igala, called *iwo*, is one in which a harmful medicine, *ogwu bibi*, is placed across the victim's path, under his threshold, or buried in the place where he urinates, so that the force of the medicine can be transmitted to him by external contact. Sorcery at a distance is also possible using the name of the victim as a substitute for the man himself, and relying on the principle of homeopathic magic to convey the force of the medicine to the victim. For instance, it is believed that a person can be killed by taking an axe, dried maize, the bark of a tree struck by lightning, a red feather, and alligator peppers. These ingredients are ritually cleansed, era, and the name of the victim is then called whilst the medicine is cut in half with a blow of the axe. This type of sorcery causes a fatal illness called *oga alimeji*, whose symptoms are excruciating pains in the abdomen.

The capacity to perform acts of witchcraft is transmitted from one person to another by placing witchcraft, *ochu*, in the second person's food. Igala are not clear about the nature of this substance, but insist that it cannot be seen. Nevertheless a person who eats food treated with *ochu* will immediately become aware of his witchcraft powers, through acquiring second sight, *ejumw mudele* (literally, he acquired a second pair of eyes). Witchcraft is commonly transmitted from a mother to her children, but may also be given to children by other relatives, including the father. Certain lineages are notorious for their witchcraft, and Igala may say such a family that *ugbe ma choh'ochu*, "witchcraft is in their line". But Igala deny that witchcraft is hereditary, and say that it can only be acquired by eating witchcraft.

Sorcery is transmitted in the same way as knowledge of good medicine, by teaching another the formula of a particular compound. A typical formula for *iwo* sorcery is as follows:

Leaves and roots of *apaila*, a forest creeper.

Ege akpabo, an egg left unhatched after the rest of the brood has hatched.

afu, white chalk.

odo ane, earth from a natural cavity broken into whilst farming.

onunu akpi, a scorpion's sting.

Ojiga mehie, seven soldier ants.

idago, a queen termite.

After teaching his client this formula, the sorcerer places some of the medicine in his pupil's hand and invokes it to ensure that it will work well for the new master. Without this formal rite of transfer it is believed that the medicine would not act, even though all the ingredients were present and had been correctly prepared.

When a person falls sick in Igala treatment may be carried out by the patient, if he is a man, and still able to direct proceedings. Women and children rely on the head of the polygynous family, in the first instance. If this initial treatment fails the family head consults the head of the extended family in which he is living, and if this again fails other relatives will be consulted, and one or more professional herbalists, *obochi*, will be called in. The range of kin involved is an index of the seriousness of the illness. In the case of a married person, two extended families are usually involved in addition to the persons' own lineage, and to other blood relatives living within walking distance of the patient's house. To give assistance in times of sickness is one of the major obligations of kinship in Igala and the diagnosis and treatment of a serious illness involves consultation between a large body of kin. As this circle of interested persons widens, the probability that a diagnosis will be made in terms of supernatural causation increases. This is primarily because *inacha* and other forms of mystical attack have their roots in social situations, in quarrels between relatives, in disrespect shown towards elders, in a neighbour's envy, or in some unfulfilled obligation. Sickness is explained not only in terms of individual misfortune, but also in terms of the group's experience, and in terms of the patient's role within the group. It becomes essential to review the patient's relations with others, in order to find a possible cause of *inacha* or of ancestral or spiritual anger. The mystical cause of the disease is identified in relation to the history of relationship within the kin group and to its contacts with members of other groups.

In this context the skill and experience of the elders are all-important. They direct the treatment in the light of their own knowledge of medicines and symptoms, combining with this practical therapy their deep knowledge of mystical forces, and of the social causes that bring these forces into play. Igala insist that treatment of a serious illness must proceed on two levels, the level of practical therapy, and the level of mystical counteraction in which the mystical consequences of the patient's previous social behaviour are fully explored. I came across instances on Igala of patients being removed from hospital on the grounds that their sickness was too serious to respond to European treatment. And this was a practical demonstration of the belief that the real cause of the illness is to be found in the patient's social background, and in the disequilibrium of mystical forces which results from disharmony in the social milieu.

Sorcery is usually diagnosed from specific physical symptoms, and may take any one of three main forms. Acute skin troubles which develop quickly, particularly on the legs, are attributed to sorcery. Acute stomach troubles and illnesses with severe abdominal swelling may be attributed to sorcery. The most feared type of sorcery here is *ogwu ujenw*, sorcery performed over food. In addition to suspicion of food or drink given one by possible enemies, strong suspicion attaches to any wife who is believed

to have a lover, since a woman may be encouraged by her lover to kill the husband. However, not all stomach troubles are explained by sorcery. There is a disease called *ofu* of which it is said that everyone carries *ofu* in their bodies, *enedu nofu olanw*. *Ofu* is located in the stomach, and its presence there is indicated by large amounts of mucus in a person's faeces. But it can produce a variety of symptoms, ranging from diarrhoea, to pains in the joints, or sterility in women.

The third set of symptoms diagnosis of sorcery appear in any illness whose onset is particularly sudden, or has some other dramatic and unusual feature. Leprosy, for instance, may be attributed either to natural causes or to sorcery, and the distinguishing factor seems to be that leprosy caused by sorcery takes a more virulent form than ordinary leprosy and proceeds to the stage of physical deformity more rapidly than usual. This is said by Igala to be caused by a sorcery medicine called *ete*. Epilepsy similarly has two forms. One caused by sorcery, and the other natural, and the severity and suddenness of the attacks seems to be a deciding factor in diagnosis. Menorrhagia resulting in death is believed to be caused by a form of sorcery called *ogwu otolo*. And in many other diseases if the illness takes what is regarded as an unusual form it may be diagnosed as being due to sorcery.

Witchcraft does not reveal itself through specific symptoms to the same extent as sorcery. In diagnosis of witchcraft the elders rely more on the suspicions of the patients and confirm these by consulting the Ifa oracle.

The following article is an extract from "Peoples of the Niger — Benue Confluence" by Professor Robert G. Armstrong of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. The article is based upon his field work in 1951 and 1952.

The Igala

Nomenclature and Demography

Despite the strategic location of the Igala kingdom and the length of time during which there have been important European contacts between it and governmental, missionary and trading agencies, extremely little is known of its ethnography. What recent literature there is, published and unpublished, has been mainly concerned with attempting to establish, on fragmentary data, the Jukun or, conversely, the Benin, origin of the Igala kingship.

The name Igala is by now established for the language, and the people is the only form I heard used by the people themselves. The form "Igara," found in much of the earlier literature, is Yoruba.

What was the Igala Division of Kabba Province (now within Benue State) covers an area of about 5,000 square miles. It is bounded to the north by the Benue River and to the west by the Niger. The 1952 Census gives a total of 294,392 Igala, mainly in Igala Division. The total population of the Division was given as 295,000 in 1944, of which 200,000 were estimated to be Igala, the rest being Basa-Nge, Basa-Komo, Igbira and Ibaji. The average population density is 59 per square mile. Idah, the capital, is a centre of river trade and has a population of about 5,000, including many foreign traders, craftsmen and labourers. In 1931 the number of adult males in the Division was given as 76,171, but only 73,432 appeared on the tax rolls in 1944. These figures may represent a real decline, but the discrepancy is more probably due to difficulty in making an accurate census with reduced staff in wartime. Nevertheless, early estimates suggest a higher population a hundred years ago. Oldfield, describing what may have been the ocho festival of 1833, says that "there were nearly 15,000 people assembled in the town (Idah)". Trotter estimated in 1841 that there were 2,000 huts in Idah and a probable population of 8,000 to 9,000. Crowther noted in 1853 that the population of Idah had sharply declined since his first visit in 1841, but that refugees from the Fulani wars had greatly swelled the population near the confluence.

The present northern Division of Bassa is largely occupied by non-Igala groups who came in about the middle of the 19th century as refugees. The Basa-Nge around the confluence are Nupe-speaking and are considered elsewhere. The Basa-Komo, further east along the Benue as far as Idoma, are an entirely different people, speaking a Semi-Bantu language. South of Idah, in a large district along and beyond the Niger, are the Ibaji, a primitive group about whom almost nothing is known.

Physical Environment of Igalaland

Allison described the physical environment in 1946 as follows:

"The crystalline rocks of the western bank of the niger extend into Igalaland between Echau and Etoke, but almost immediately dip under the cretaceous sandstones which constitute the rock formations of the greater part of the country. The country rises in the centre to a series of indented plateaux sometimes with bare ironstone caps, and an elevation of 1,200 ft.

"Rainfall statistics are available from Ankpa for the years 1911-1928, and the average monthly rainfall for this period was as follows:

| Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | April. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Total |
|------|------|------|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
| .32 | .66 | 2.2 | 4.02 | 6.47 | 7.55 | 6.41 | 7.15 | 11.08 | 6.63 | 1.52 | .42 | 54.42 |

"This adequate and well distributed rainfall and the deep red sandy soils give rise to a high forest vegetation, interspersed with areas of close growing savannah woodland. The crystalline soils between Etoke and Echau support a very much poorer type of open savannah woodland, and the vegetation of the alluvial soils south of Idah, between the Niger and the Anambra Creek, consists of seasonably flooded grassland with stands of Borassus palm and swamp forest.

"The population of the central area is fairly dense, and as the Igalas prefer to farm the high forest and live in widely scattered settlements, the forest is seldom allowed to attain any great age and consists mostly of secondary growth in varying stages of advancement. The conditions in these areas of secondary high forest are extremely favourable to the growth of rubber vines and oil-palms."

Language

No adequate study of Igalaland has ever been published. The great stumbling-block, as with the other Kwa languages, lies in the systematic transformations which the sounds and tones undergo in various morphological and syntactic contexts. Until these are worked out there can be no secure grammar or lexicography, and the interpretation of printed texts remains largely guesswork.

The final placing of Igalaland in linguistic relation to its neighbours must also await the careful study of better materials than are available at the present time, with the exception of those for the Oturkpo dialect of Idoma, which has by now been comparatively well studied. Nevertheless,

a broad picture is beginning to emerge which is not likely to be radically altered by further work.

Apart from the several short word-lists in Clarke, the first published study of Igala was that in Koelle in 1854. On the basis of a vocabulary of upwards of three hundred words, Koelle did not hesitate to class Igala as a language of the Yoruba group, although not a dialect of Yoruba. I agree with Crowther in accepting this. Igala is, however, also closely related to the Idoma language to the east, and therefore also to Egede and Afu and, less closely, to Akweya and Etulo. Its relationship to Idoma is at least as close as to Yoruba, while Idoma is not so close to Yoruba as is Igala. Igala is related in the same way to Egede, but not so closely as is Idoma. The nature of these linguistic relationships is such as to be most easily explained by the hypothesis that the various groups have been derived from a single social group, parts of which have at various times become separated. The spatial distribution of the peoples concerned would seem to correspond roughly to the length of the period of separate development. The degree of development of political institutions seems likewise to parallel the linguistic relationships and spatial distribution. Thus the Egede, with no political organisation beyond their lineage institutions, are spatially and linguistically the most remote from the Yoruba. Their nearest relatives, the Idoma, who are nearly all located somewhat closer to the Yoruba, had developed petty kingdoms in a number of places. The Igala, still closer, both geographically and linguistically, have traditions of derivation from the Yoruba, and have never in fact entirely lost contact with the Yoruba. It is to be noted, however, that their kingship, while it is of the same general level of development as many Yoruba kingdoms, differs in many respects from the Yoruba pattern, and they do not share the Yoruba legend of origin from Ife.

The fairly obvious resemblances between Igala and Idoma have often been explained by the suggestion that the original Yoruba dialect of the Igala invaders became mixed with the language of the original Akpoto (Idoma) inhabitants. Despite some borrowing of words, this explanation must be rejected, since Iyala, geographically the most remote dialect of Idoma, bears almost as close a resemblance to Igala as do the Akpoto and Agala dialects, where contact is, or has been, close. Even the existing, very inadequate, word-lists show half-a-dozen Iyala words which are closely similar to Igala but not to the Oturkpo dialect.

The word-lists of Clarke, Koelle and Crowther afford a means of estimating roughly the amount of change which has taken place in the last 100 years in the languages of Igala, Basa Komo, Tiv, and the Arago and Iyala dialects of Idoma. This material requires separate study, but few Europeans taking word-lists in these respective regions to-day would arrive at as close an approximation of the modern speech as these old word-lists represent; it may therefore be concluded that for upwards of a

100 years the five languages and dialects have remained fairly stable.

The languages under consideration fall together, as opposed to Yoruba, in having a peculiar syntactic construction which has been called the pre-posed object, with the meaning of completed action. This construction is missing in Yoruba and cannot have spread by diffusion among the Benue Valley languages, since the morpheme prefixed to the object shows much variability. A highly specific morphological correspondence between Igala and Egede has been noted in this construction, the two languages resembling each other and not intervening languages in this respect. A significant correspondence between Egede and Yoruba is the word for "not" in negative sentences. It is highly probable that further study will reveal other such correspondences.

Igala is fortunate in not being deeply divided by dialect differences. A central dialect, an Idah dialect and an Ankpa dialect may be distinguished, but they seem not to be so different from each other as to make communication difficult.

The earliest travellers found that Hausa was much used as a lingua franca. It is still used, and to-day one would have little difficulty in finding English-speaking persons in most communities. Since a great deal of trade and transport is in Ibo hands, a knowledge of Ibo would doubtless carry one a long way in Igala.

Traditions of Origin and History

The most definite historical statement that can be made about the Igala is that they had a common origin with the Yoruba and that the separation took place long enough ago to allow for their fairly considerable linguistic differences.

Crowther quotes two different origin traditions. According to the first, the King of Yoruba made a journey to Raba, the old Nupe capital on the Niger, and asked the Ata to indicate a suitable place for him to settle. The Ata accordingly took a canoe and dropped down the river till he came to Idah where the Akpoto, who lived there, allowed the Yoruba king to stay. The Ata had great influence and precedence over the Akpoto.

Crowther was told at Idah by a chief related on his mother's side to the Akpoto that the country had belonged originally to the Akpoto and that the king was named Igala. The first Ata was a hunter by profession who came from a tribe named Ado, to the west of the Niger. He ingratiated himself with Igala by gifts of big game and then, when a quarrel arose, drove out Igala and became king himself. Crowther was also told that the Akpoto were now subject to the Ata, and that their language was the same. The chief said, moreover, that the Ata of Igala and the kings of

Nupe and Aboh (in Ibo country) all came from Ado: he listed twenty Atas of Idah, inclusive of the reigning one. Crowther identified several places called Ado in or near Yoruba country, one of which is Benin.

Burdo does not mention having landed at Idah or having met the Ata in the course of his journey up the Niger in 1878. He nevertheless gives another version of this same origin story, which, one presumes, he obtained from his interpreter or some other informant. "After the annexation of the Yoruba to the Fulani Moslem empire, by the King Umoru, the dispossessed sovereign asked the Sultan of Rabbah for another state, in exchange for that which he had lost . . . Far from being angry, the sultan set out, descended the Niger, and arrived at Iddah, which the Akpotos then inhabited. He bought their territory and installed there the defeated sovereign who there took the title of Attah, which in Hausa signifies father or patriarch.

Seton says, without giving authority for his statement, that the Igala were driven across the Niger from Yoruba country by the King of Benin, in the 16th century. Allison states that "early Portuguese mission chronicles relate that Portuguese priests accompanied the Benin army on an expedition against the Atah during the 15th century, and armies apparently met on the right bank of the Niger." I have not had the opportunity to check these chronicles.

If several stories appear to bring Igala from what is now Nupe, we have, on the other hand, the Nupe story to the effect that at one time Nupe was tributary to the Ata of Idah. Yet again, Clifford argues not only that the ruling group in Igala had a separate origin from that of the Igala generally, but also that the present dynasty is Jukun in origin and was founded by a noble of the court at Wukari some time during the first half of the 18th century, a tradition in favour with one section at least of the ruling house. He admits, however, that there are to-day few points of resemblance between the two kingships. Thus the person of the Ata is not identified with the crops, as is that of the Aku of Wukari: the Ata was not therefore subject to sacred regicide, and was able to be himself a farmer. His health, unlike that of the Aku, could be a matter of public discussion. If anything, the Ata is concerned ritually more with the hunt than with the crops. The act by which an Ata is installed is a ceremonial rebirth from under the robe of one of the male elders of the Idah district. Linguistic evidence of connection between Igala and Jukun is entirely lacking, and no author has shown evidence of word borrowing from Jukun, with the possible exception of the word Ata, which, in addition to being the title of the king in Igala, means "father" in both languages. The tones of the two words are different, however. On the other hand, traditions collected by Shaw from Ocheke and Agatu, and by Leslie from Yangedde districts of Idoma afford further evidence for credence in stories of direct Jukun intervention in Idah.

G. T. Mott, a former District Officer in Kabba Province, in an

unpublished report, argues that the origin of the Igala kingship was not Jukun but Bini. Beyond a certain geographical plausibility he can point to the facts that the famous brass mask worn by the Ata is most probably of Benin workmanship, that the wearing of beads on the wrist as a symbol of chieftainship is common to Benin and Igala, and that in both places, the death of the king was kept secret for from one to three years. The last custom is also found more widely among, e.g., the northern Idoma and in the Worku district of Egede. Mott gives a list of titles in both Igala and Benin which he claims were borrowed in Idah from the Bini originals, but the alleged resemblances do not appear very convincing.

As various writers have pointed out, it is by no means easy to pursue these investigations further at Idah. The Ata and his immediate entourage simply say that his ancestor was one Agenapoje, "who landed on a rock near Idah, being sent from the Gods."

Nevertheless, even if we should admit a Jukun or Bini origin for the ruling group, we have contributed little to the explanation of the phenomena. Apart from the fact that the connections of Igala with Yoruba are far from having been explored, it is now obvious that very considerable development of political institutions has taken place at Idah itself, although not indeed in isolation from outside influences.

The earliest European explorers and travellers found the King of Idah in control of the whole East bank of the Niger from Adamugu, at the edge of Ibo country, to above Koton Karifi. The two Ib gira kingdoms of Koton Karifi and Funda (Panda) were tributary to him, although the Fulani were beginning to make inroads. Slave-raiding and slave-trading had for a long time been a regular part of the economy and, indeed, one of the major objects of the early expeditions was the attempt to stop these activities at their source. The early explorers, however, were witnesses to a sharp transformation of the slaving pattern which resulted from the Fulani conquests.

When Lair visited Panda in 1833, he was told that it had once been a much more important centre of trade, "a sort of entrepot where Arabs and Felatahs (Fula) exchanged European goods for slaves." What seems to have happened is that with the extension of the Fulani empire and the coming of Fulani raids in force into this region, the trade by which the town had prospered became increasingly difficult. Crowther gives us almost a war correspondent's report on the final destruction of Panda in 1853, and Allen provides an interesting description of what might be considered the older type of slave raid which he witnessed at the confluence in 1833.

At the time of the Laird and Oldfield expedition there were, in addition to Idah, two important Igala markets on the left bank of the Niger: Adamugu on the northern tip of an island about fifteen miles south of Idah, and Ikiri or Boqueh, about 24 river miles above Idah. Both were important centres of the slave trade. The Landers, in 1830, met both

Nupe and Bony (Niger Delta) slave traders at Adamugu. It was also a centre for the ivory trade, and to this day there are elephants in the riverain marshes from this region south to Onitsha. In the time of the first expeditions, Adamugu was under a chief by the name of Abokko, who also controlled one of the wards of Idah, was the principal contact man for the Europeans, and was even then quarrelling with the Ata. After Abokko's death Adamugu was abandoned, apparently as a result of factional quarrels. Crowther reports that by 1854 these quarrels had become very serious and had resulted in a great decline in the population of Idah since his first visit in 1841. The Abokko party had left Idah and settled up and down the Niger from the Ibo country to the confluence. They controlled most of the trade and had forced the break-up of the great market at Ikiri. Trade at Idah had nearly ceased.

Clifford says of the period under discussion that the political functions of the king were greatly reduced. A plethora of title office-holders came into being, the titles bearing few duties with them. The sons of the king's mother's kindred formed a corporate bodyguard, which, under the Ata Amocheje, at mid-century virtually took over the kingdom, causing great unrest. They and the titled officials kept the Ata increasingly isolated from the practical conduct of affairs, and he became more and more an inaccessible religious symbol. As such, however, his reputation went far beyond the effective political limits of Igala. From all over Idoma and from other places newly chosen chiefs would make pilgrimages to Idah to be confirmed in office and to receive from Ata the bead bracelet of office. The Ata was also called upon to arbitrate chieftaincy disputes. The cult of the Ata, it would appear, was a profitable one.

By 1854 the Fulani had become a really serious threat to the Igala. They had raided all the way down to the Delta along the west bank of the Niger, burning and pillaging towns and taking large numbers of slaves. North of the Benue, the situation was even worse. In 1853 Panda was finally destroyed, and the Emirate of Nassarawa was founded. The districts along the Benue River became flooded with refugees. The Basa-Nge came into the confluence region after 1840, many Igbira after the fall of Panda, the Basa-Komo in 1860. The power of the Ata had weakened to such an extent that he was unable to keep the Basa-Komo from spreading out much farther than he had intended.

Closer European control of the Mediterranean, beginning with the collective demarche of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1819 against piracy in Tunisia and culminating in the French conquest of Algeria, 1830-48, together with the wars with Morocco in 1844-60 and the British intervention in Tunisia beginning in 1855, closed the main outlet for Fulani slaves. It is worth considering the possibility that this, together with the general decline in the world market for slaves after 1850, deprived the Fulani of their principal motive and their principal source of weapons for their wars. It is often said that the tsetse fly prevented the Fulani from

establishing themselves south of the Benue, by killing the horses on which they depended. The fly may indeed have played a part, but the early accounts tell of many more horses in Igala than one sees there to-day, and the tsetse fly population may not yet have been so heavily infected with sleeping sickness.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the Igala seem to have turned to river piracy, and the Royal Niger Company punished Idah on more than one occasion. The Igala and their neighbours were a constant source of trouble to early administrations, even after the raising of the British flag at Lokoja in 1900. In 1904, and for 30 years thereafter, a garrison of troops was stationed at Ankpa in eastern Igala. For a time the boundary between the Northern Provinces and the Eastern Provinces passed through Igala in such a way as to cut Idah off from northern Igala, but this was corrected after 1918.

The effect of Government policy in modern times has been to strengthen the position of the Ata with respect to his officialdom and to encourage him to be more accessible.

Main Features of Economy

Agriculture. According to Allison the Igala system of agriculture has more features in common with Northern Yoruba farming practice than with that of the high forest farmers of the south. The work of clearing, heaping and planting is performed by the men and boys; crops are planted in sequence and the same ground is used for two or three years before being left to revert to bush. The most valued food crop is the red yam, for which a high forest soil is required, and a certain amount of tree cover is left during the growing period of this crop. The land is subsequently completely cleared and farmed, usually for another two years, the main crops being millet, maize, guinea corn, beans and bambara groundnut (*Voandzeia* sp.). Small quantities of cotton are also grown, and in the Ife district to the North of Ankpa it is one of the major crops, part of which is sold to the trading firms at Bagana and part headloaded down to the Ibo markets of Nsukka. During recent years an increasing quantity of castor seed has been grown for the export trade and small quantities of cocoa are produced, but, with the exception of the Ife district, cash crops are not raised to any extent in the Igala farms.

Livestock. Dwarf cattle, sheep, goats and fowls are kept and play a definite, though subsidiary, role in the village economy. During the Second World War there was a fairly extensive export trade in livestock to Onitsha and Enugu, probably as a result of the wartime prosperity of those cities.

Markets and trade. Markets are of great importance and are held every four days in villages of any size. Allison points out that, including the terminal towns themselves, there are eight large markets on the 80 miles of road between Idah and Ankpa. During the war over 30 main markets were listed for the collection of rubber, and rubber appeared in many more besides.

In 1833 Oldfield visited the ten-day market at Alburkah near the confluence and found maize, Nupe mats, elephants' tusks, Hausa robes, spiced balls, flour, a small breed of horses, slaves, native-made blue beads, beer, and a few coconuts, goats and dogs offered for sale. Along the river, in addition to other food products, rice, in specially made grass bags, was a popular commodity. Allen, who with Lander accompanied the Laird and Oldfield expeditions, wrote that trade was the ruling passion, but that "the staple commodity, alas, is man."

In 1841 the Trotter expedition found the market at Idah operating under a regular market judiciary, which maintained very good order. The Ata kept a close control of trade and attempted to enforce a royal monopoly, especially in ivory. He levied a small tax on all commodities brought to the market, and the market chiefs made sure that the articles were properly classified and offered for sale in their appropriate sections. Trotter noted "various native manufactures of cotton for robes and body clothes; red and blue cotton and grass threads, raw cotton of very short staple; native-made swords, knives, spears, and little calabashes of dye powders, pephrosea, oxides of iron and camwood, as also grass and ivory ornaments for the body, and pipes of clay or iron, very neatly made." Cowries were the only currency, but much business was done by barter. Blacksmithing, including the making of weapons, was a major occupation, but already completely dependent on supplies of iron from the coast. There was excellent leather work of many kinds. Fishing, by net or by poison, and largely in the hands of slaves, was extensively practiced. The expedition considered that the Igala "are industrious and evidently more advanced in civilization than their neighbours lower down the river. Their grounds are much better cultivated, manufacture more encouraged, and their social comforts increasing."

There are in the early sources many other indications of the existence of a considerable group of large-scale traders, some of them women. In Igala, the great bulk of the petty trade is in the hands of the women, who take little part in agricultural production. They also produce some cotton cloth in a number of villages, pots and native soap, and, in the country north of Ankpa, waist-beads from the shell of the fan-palm tree. Allison states, however, that there is no home industry on a comparable scale to the cloth-weaving, matting and pot-making carried out by the women of many Yoruba communities. Whether the Igala women once carried out these manufactures on a large scale is a matter for conjecture, but to-day their main occupation, apart from normal household duties, is the

collecting, processing and marketing of palm produce and rubber. The Igala men, on the other hand, continue to pursue their traditional agricultural occupations more or less unmodified by modern trends, while the women by their participation in production for the export trade provide the bulk of the cash income, which is expended on goods no longer provided by home industry.

The situation among the Igala appears at first sight to be the reverse of what acculturation studies made in various parts of the world have led us to expect. By and large, it is the men's world which shatters on impact with strong European influence, and the women's world which remains conservative. The present situation becomes much more intelligible if we bear in mind the general situation at the contact period, a situation which must then have been fairly old, when both men and women seem to have been about equally and vigorously engaged in trade. But there was a considerable difference in the pattern of trading activities by the two sexes. The men were more concerned with large-scale enterprise such as the capture and marketing of slaves, the trading and marketing of horses and other livestock, wholesaling or brokerage and the defence of the movement of commodities. In the more primitive regions, subject to slave-raids from the outside and the constant threat of head-hunting internally, the role of the men in providing armed defence for the movement of the women traders bulked larger and their own trading activities assumed somewhat smaller proportions. The Idoma Ayuta societies and dance guilds can be understood in this light. The 50 years following 1830 saw the break-up of the world market for slaves, and in this period too the Fulani Empire reached its greatest extent and radically altered the pattern of movement of slaves with respect to Southern Nigeria. States which had made a profitable business of slaving were now themselves subjected to devastating raids. The abandonment of the great markets at Adamugu and Ikiri at this time also makes sense in these terms.

The ending of the Fulani wars and the coming of the Royal Niger Company and the Pax Britannica saw no immediate recurrence of large-scale African trading enterprise. There was no ready substitute for the slave trade. As late as 1905 the money value of palm-oil exported from Igala was only a quarter as great as that of rubber (£9,000 and £36,000 respectively). Furthermore, the large-scale transport of manufactured commodities had previously always been by slaves. The supply of these must have fallen off very rapidly and likewise the long distance overland movement of goods. On the Niger and Benue Rivers, the European steamboats began to play an increasing role.

After 1870 increasing security from attack made itself felt. The Fulani had largely spent their force. Through most of the region there was some slaving going on until the time when particular districts were occupied and pacified, but the scale diminished continually. The Pax Britannica led

to the fairly rapid abandonment of most of the walled towns, which had been a necessary feature of the previous period, and to a large-scale movement out on to the land in scattered settlements, a progress that is still going on in some districts.

The Igala and the Benue Valley do not constitute an exception to the general rule that in a culture contact situation it is the man's world that is changed first. It was precisely the man's world which was completely transformed during the period for which we have records. The women continued their interest in petty trade and manufactures in very much the same way as before, the biggest change being that from textile to palm-oil production, in the regions where the oil palm flourishes. The relative withdrawal of the men from trade is seen to be recent and superficial.

Modern Developments. Towards the end of the 19th century, the trade in rubber, collected from the *Caropodinus hirsutia* and *Landolphia owariensis* vines, became increasingly important. Up till 1910 the most valuable export from Northern Nigeria was rubber, some 70% of which was estimated to come from Igala. Because of the inefficiency of the methods of native rubber production, buying ceased during the twenties, but was resumed for a period during the Second World War and the period of high prices.

The collection, manufacture and marketing of palm produce is largely the work of the women. The excellent river transport facilities to the north, place Igala in a favoured position, and in 1944 the entire supply of oil, surplus to home requirements, was bought up by merchants from Northern Nigeria. The recent construction of modern oil-extraction mills should considerably increase the income.

(Ed. note — these oil mills have been inoperative for some years, but are under survey by A.A.D.P.)



Social Organization and Political System

Central. Little is known about Igala social organization. Clifford says: "The country was divided into 'fiefs': microcosms of the Idah chieftaincy, the fief-holder (onu) receiving a title and official 'salutation' from the Ata, together with a gift of bead bracelets which were — as they are still to-day — the outward and visible signs of his authority." The tribe consisted of nine "moieties" each under its own elder.

Allison speaks of a "systematic hierarchy of Gagos and Onus (village and district heads) culminating in the Ata 'Gala as the supreme priest king." ("Gago" is in all probability a borrowing from Hausa.) He goes on to say, "the typical Igala village consists of an agglomeration of separate compounds and hamlets, each owning the authority of a madachi (a title of Hausa origin) through whom much of the administration appears still to be carried out. This apparently patriarchal system is presumably the indigenous Akpoto organization which continues to function beneath the various foreign cultural strata."

Meagre as this information is, it suggests a resemblance to the Idoma system, which may well in fact have preceded it in the same area. We may assume that the onu, or district chief, is at least roughly comparable with the Idoma "chief of the Land," except that instead of being independent he is in some way subject to the Ata. It is of course improbable that his relation to the Ata is sufficiently like the European feudal relation to justify the use of a term like "fief" to describe his district.

Forms of Settlement: House Types. In sharp contrast to the rectangular houses seen in Yoruba, Benin and parts of Ibo country to the west and south, Igala houses are nearly all round, with conical thatched roofs. In this they resemble house types to the north and east. They differ from Idoma houses in that instead of their roof-beams resting directly on the mud walls, they usually rest on a ring of vertical posts which stand just outside the wall, or are sometimes embedded in it. The wall itself supports no weight. The older type houses were quite small, but in recent years a considerable increase in size and an improvement in the quality of construction is to be seen. Compounds are not usually walled, nor are they constructed of inter-connecting houses, except in the case of chiefly compounds. Rather they consist in clusters of huts around open spaces. The several early descriptions of the Ata's palace at Idah agree that it was situated near the top of the well-known cliff on the bank of the Niger, and that it consisted of many dozens of inter-connecting circular huts of the type described. The entrances had the low lintel and raised sill commonly still seen to-day. Allen's drawings show verandahs similar to many still seen in northern Idoma, and his description of the house type of 1833 is of interest, since it is easy to find precisely similar houses to-day.

"No difference is found between the palace and the poor man's hut: the

former being in fact but an assemblage of the latter, proportioned to the number of wives and slaves of the possessor. These are thrown together apparently without plan, being merely inclosures made by joining with a low mud wall the circular huts which seem dropped by accident on a large piece of ground. They usually contain but one chamber each; although sometimes a small space is partitioned off for a store or lumber closet. The only admission of light and air is by a small doorway . . . A communication with the street, and from one courtyard to another, is by a hut called Zauli, having two of these inconvenient apertures.

The Igala

Trotter described Idah in 1841 as follows: There are on a rough computation about 2,000 huts, with a probable population of 8,000 to 9,000. On all sides the plantations are kept in nice order . . . The palace is situated in the most secure place, being naturally protected towards the river by the abrupt and precipitous cliffs, while, on the other sides are the surrounding villages as well as an intermediate thick mud wall, which encloses it perfectly. It is, moreover, guarded by a militia, armed with spears, a few muskets and swords . . . The higher classes observe the same protective system as the Attah, having the huts of subordinates and slaves, and often a clay wall, surrounding them, so that in the event of an attack their persons or houses are less exposed.

"The streets are very irregular and numerous; the principal market is held in the Attah's or northern division, on a clear level space, shaded by numerous trees."

The Kingship. The main features of the kingship, so far as they are known have already been outlined. Bearing in mind that "divine kingship" may mean very different things in various parts of Africa, we can with justice call the Ata a divine king. The Ata himself told the Trotter expedition: "The river belongs to me a long way up and down on both sides, and I am King. . . . God made me after His own Image: I am all the same as God and He appointed me a King." It is worth noting additionally that the nine elders mentioned above, who were probably heads of the leading lineages of the Idah District, collectively formed the Ata's council called the *Igala mela*. Their power seems to have been broken during the troubles in the middle of the 19th century. This council, together with the *ashadu*, had the power of selecting the new Ata, after the death of an incumbent. Their choice was limited in practice to eligible members of one of the four royal lineages whose turn it was to supply the Ata. These four lineages traced their descent from the sons of *Ayagba*, the second Ata after *Agenapoje*. The *ashadu* was a sort of permanent lord

chamberlain and king-maker: the descendant in office of the first ashadu, the husband of Omeppa, the founding queen, according to one legend. On her death he summoned her brother, Agenapojé, and "married" him, thus making him the first Ata.

There is no trace in the later writings of an important office of queen mother. Nevertheless, it is worth noting early evidence that points towards such a personage. The report of the Trotter expedition says: "The government of the Eggarah country is monarchical, and vested in the Attah, the succession is hereditary in the female line, the eldest son of the sister: thus, it is said, Ochejih, the present Attah, succeeded, taking precedence of the many children of the former king. Oldfield, in 1833, had many dealings with the "queen," who was not only quite an august personage with many attendants, but also an extremely active trader in ivory and other articles. On an occasion which may have been the ocho festival, she bought other articles. On another occasion which may have been the ocho festival, she bought other articles. On an occasion, which may have been the ocho festival, she bought a quantity of gunpowder. She is several times noted as referring to the Ata as her brother.

Position of Women. Most of what little is known about the position of women has already been stated in connection with the discussion of economic organization. Oldfield says that when a prince he knew was killed, while on what must have been a slaving expedition, his 60 wives had to drink poison (sassawood?) to see if any of them had wished his death. Over half of them died.

Slavery. Enough has been said about slavery to show its economic and political importance. There were many household slaves, but, as often elsewhere in West Africa, slaves could participate in trade. As has been noted, fishing was done chiefly by slaves, according to Trotter. There is no evidence of any use of slave labour for anything resembling a plantation system. The Ata and other chiefs made considerable use of eunuchs as palace officials. Slaves were always liable to be sacrificed on the death of the Ata and of other important personages.

Main Cultural Features

Mental and Physical Characteristics: Dress. Little can be stated reliably about distinctive features of Igala temperament. Seton and Allison have both emphasized the Igala dependence on diviners, which seems exaggerated to the point where it interferes with capital accumulation. Most early observers have commented that the Igala are a relatively industrious people, and my own impression was one of quiet prosperity. In 1951 there were 35 Native Authority schools in addition to a vigorous system of mission schools.

In physical type the Igala seem indistinguishable from their Idoma neighbours to the east. This means that on the whole they are of medium stature, with a fairly rugged build and rather less of the facial paedomorphism that one sees in districts nearer the coast. I found no evidence to support Temple's statement that there is a "marked Hamitic strain" in the population.

The earliest travellers found that Hausa mallams had considerable influence in Idah and made a good business out of selling charms, verses of the Koran, carefully wrapped in leather for wearing on various parts of the body. Hausa-type dress, more or less modified, and also the wearing of a cloth wrapped around the body and draped over one arm are described and portrayed by Allen and others. The children went naked — boys until adolescence, girls until marriage. At the present time one sees rather fewer naked children in Igala than in neighbouring districts.

Life Cycle. The life cycle has been very incompletely investigated. Some data are given by Seton, who says that the marriageable age for a girl is eight to ten years, for a boy sixteen to eighteen years. A girl may be betrothed at four to five years of age, the fathers arranging the match, though the later consent of both parties will be necessary also. The youth undertakes seven years of agricultural labour for his father-in-law, and brings gifts to him and the girl. Marriage is not permitted between closer relatives than first cousins, but a man will often marry his wife's sister.

Religious Beliefs and Cults

Clifford lists four principal annual religious ceremonies. The most important of these is the egu festival, in commemoration of the ancestors. It is celebrated at the beginning of the yam harvest (i.e. usually in July or August). So far as the Ata is concerned, this ceremony consists of the sacrifice of nine animals to the ancestral spirits of his nine immediate predecessors, represented by their staves of office (okute), which are displayed for the occasion. Two days later a sacrifice is made to the memory of the founder, Ayagba, and on this same day the ashadu carries out his own egu rites, corresponding closely to those of the Ata.

According to Seton, the egu or ambegu are the spirits of the dead and may be represented by a mask. "A curious tight-fitting red suit with strange ornaments and surmounted by a carved headdress is used on occasions. It is put in the bush the previous night so that the egu may enter it, though it is actually worn by the men the following day . . . When the figure enters the village, all the males are expected to follow it with drumming and shouting, while the women hide away. The chief object seems to be to awe the women."

The ocho is a hunting ceremony, celebrated when the grass is ready for burning. The exact day is selected in advance by a diviner and is kept secret. On the proper morning the Ata is called and goes secretly to a prepared place in the bush. At noon he sends a message home to the effect that he is out hunting and has no food or drink. A party is formed, including his senior wife, which brings the required food to him. At about three o'clock the Ata must shoot an arrow at a blindfolded goat. If he hits it there is great rejoicing, for this is a good augury for the hunting season. At home in the evening there is feasting and dancing.

The ogaigainye ceremony follows immediately on ocho. There is a week's merrymaking, after which the Ata in a public address reminds the people of the royal perquisites in ivory, leopard skins, etc., and officially opens the hunting season.

The enekpe ceremony takes place the day after ogaigainye. Enekpe was, according to tradition, the young and beautiful daughter of Ayagba, who was once faced with imminent defeat at the hands of the Jukun and was advised by a mallam to sacrifice her. He could not bring himself to do this, but when Enekpe heard of the mallam's words she insisted on being buried alive. She has become a tutelary Goddess and watches over the destinies of Igala. On the day of her celebration, sacrifices are made at her monument, a cone of mud four or five feet high, the only ornament of which is a pair of female breasts. In recent times the monument has been plastered with cement. Blood and palm-oil are poured over it, kola is placed on the ground in front and a cloth is draped over the monument. Having been fed and dressed, Enekpe is begged to care for her people during the coming year. The Ata then steps barefoot into the Niger and,

turning around, walks back. This seems to be a symbol of the fertilization of the land by the Niger and it is the only time the Ata's feet are allowed to touch the ground.

Editor's Note: a newer and impressive monument stands at the entrance to the riverside market in Idah. Gifts are thrown into the enclosure, and Enekepe is said to have saved Idah from the Biafran bombs and shells during the civil war, and they all fell into the river from the opposite bank.



*Enekepe's Tomb
&
Close-up of Notice on Tomb*

Timber Trees

| Botanical Name | Standard Trade Name | Nigerian Trade Name | Igala Name |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Afrormosa elata</i> | Afromostia | — | — |
| <i>Afzaha africana</i> | { Afzelia Papap | Apa | Anwa |
| <i>Albizia ferruginea</i> | Albizia | Albizia | Ayakpikan |
| <i>Alstonia boonei</i> | Alstonia | Alstonia | Ano |
| <i>Antiaris africana</i> | { Antiaris Kyenkyen | { Orito Oro | Abo |
| <i>Aubrevillea kerstingii</i> | Aubrevillea | Arere | Udu |
| <i>Berlinia</i> spp. | Berlinia | { Ekpogoi Berlinia | Otakpa |
| <i>Borassus aethiopicum</i> | Agobeam | — | Odo |
| <i>Butyrospermum parkii</i> | — | — | Oli-Okume |
| <i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i> | Canarium | { Canarium Otua | Oda |
| <i>Ceiba pentandra</i> | Ceiba | { Cotton wood Kapok | Agwu, Agwugu |
| <i>Celtis</i> spp | Celtis | { Ita Ohia | Ufia |
| <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> | Iroko | Iroko | Uloko |
| <i>Cylocodiscus gabunensis</i> | Okan | Arere | — |
| <i>Daniellia ogega</i> | { Daniellia Ogega | { Aghomi Ekhimi | — |
| <i>Daniellia oliveri</i> | — | — | Agha |
| <i>Detarium</i> spp | — | — | Ofo |
| <i>Diospyros kamarunensis</i> | African Ebony | { Otutu Awraw | — |
| <i>Diosypros</i> spp | — | — | Obidudu |
| <i>Distemonathus benthamianus</i> | — | { Ayam Anyaran | — |
| <i>Entandrophragma angolensis</i> | { Edinam Gedunohor | { Oron wood Eba | Olimama |
| <i>Entandrophragma candollei</i> | Omu | Heavy Sapele | — |
| <i>Entandrophragma cylindricum</i> | Sapele | Sapele wood | — |

| Botanical Name | Standard Trade Name | Nigerian Trade Name | Igala Name |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Entandrophragma utile</i> | Utile | — | — |
| <i>Erythrophleum ivorense</i> | Missanda | Erun | Orachi |
| <i>Erythrophleum sauevelolens</i> | — | Erun | — |
| <i>Guarea cedrata</i> | { Scented guarea | Obohonofua | — |
| <i>Guarea thompsonii</i> | Black guarea | Obohonckwi | — |
| <i>Hannoa undulata</i> | — | — | Umopula |
| <i>Khaya grandifoliola</i> | Grandifoliola | { Benin wood Mahogany (Benin) | Ago-Oke |
| <i>Khaya ivorensis</i> | { African Mahogany | { Lagos wood Mahogany (Lagos) | — |
| <i>Khaya senegalensis</i> | — | Benin wood, Mahogany (Dry zone) | Ago eghili |
| <i>Lophira alata</i> | Ekki | Iron wood, Eha | — |
| <i>Lovea trichiliodies</i> | African walnut | Sida | — |
| <i>Manikara multinervis</i> | — | — | Ukpi |
| <i>Mansonia altissima</i> | Mansonia | Ofun | — |
| <i>Mitragyna ciliata</i> | — | — | Otochi |
| <i>Mitragyna stipulosa</i> | Subaha, Abura | Uwem | — |
| <i>Nauclea diderichii</i> | Opepe, Kusia | Heavy Sapele wood | Oghahioko |
| <i>Nesogdonia papaverifera</i> | Danta | Otutu, Awraw | Opoko |
| <i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i> | Dahoma, Ekimi | Agboni, Ekimi | — |
| <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> | — | — | Acheoko |
| <i>Pterocarpus osum</i> | — | — | Oli-oru |
| <i>Pterygota macrocarpa</i> | Pterygota | Opoporo, Kefe | Ogooko |
| <i>Pycnanthus angolensis</i> | Llomba | Llomba | — |
| <i>Ricidodendron africanum</i> | — | — | Odede |
| <i>Sterculia oblonga</i> | Yellow sterculia | Okoko | — |
| <i>Sterculia rhinopetala</i> | Brown sterculia | Ayem, Orodo | — |

| Botanical | Standard Trade Name | Nigerian Trade Name | Igala Name |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| <i>Terminalia ivorensis</i> | Idigbo, Emeri | — | Uji-Okò |
| <i>Terminalia superba</i> | Afara, Ofra | White atara | Uji-Okò |
| <i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i> | Obeche, Wawa | Arere | Uwewe |
| <i>Uapaca togoensis</i> | — | — | Apo |

This list presents the more important timber trees of Nigeria. The species for which no Igala name is listed are rare or non-existent in Igalaland.

Compiled March 1978
 (Henrik Hvidberg-Hansen)
 A.A.D.P. Forest Officer

The Editor is interested in obtaining corrections and contributions to the above list of trees giving local vernacular names (which, as far as is known, have not been previously published). We are particularly interested in fruit bearing trees, utilised by Igala, Idoma and other local ethnic groups.

“Tree Spotters Guide”

Some Indigenous edible Fruits of Igalaland

Readers are invited to contribute to this list for future issues. Contributions can include a description of preparation of fruits or seeds for eating or medicine, the vernacular Igala/Bassa name, a drawing of the fruit and leaf, type of woodland or soil, time of year, market value, etc.

COLA VERTICILLATA

Occurs in lowland rain forest and is sometimes planted. Height up to 25m, clean straight stem, brown bark with fissures, leaves, simple, in whorls of 4, dark green. Fruits from May to July, in bunches of 5 carpels, which are green or brown and slightly rough to the touch.

COLA NITIDA

Planted by villagers, does *not* occur wild. Probably introduced from Ghana. Height usually 10 metres. Old trees are buttressed, grey bark with fissures. Leaves, simple, dark green, dense foliage. Fruits from September-January and June-July, carpels up to 5 in number, with large warts but smooth to the touch.

COLA ACUMINATA

Occurs in lowland rain forest and is sometimes planted. Height usually 10 metres (20 metres in forest). Trunk branching low down, branches markedly ascending and slender with dark green or grey bark. Leaves simple, dark green, foliage sparse and confined to ends of branches. Fruits from April to June, with 5 carpels which are russet brown and rough to touch.

General Note

There are about 50 species of Cola in West Africa, all occurring in lowland rain forest areas. The tallest is probably *Cola lateritia* (40 metres) which occurs from Nigeria eastwards to Zaire, and has a dense spreading crown a short twisted trunk and buttresses, with fruits (nuts) which are pod-like, in twos or threes, velvety and *bright red*. The pulp is sometimes eaten but seeds are of no commercial value. Cola nuts contain 2% (by dry weight) of Caffeine, and are marketed in three varieties, red, pink and white. Popular with long distance drivers to starve off hunger and fatigue.

B D

Health Notes

Schistosomiasis (Bilharziasis)

Schistosomiasis is a disease caused by certain parasitic worms known as schistosomes (Greek for "split, divided body") after the appearance of the adult male worm which is flat, with the sides of its body inverted so as to form a groove, in which it carries the female.

Three species of schistosomes are important parasites of man. Two cause intestinal and hepatic (liver) disease: *Schistosoma japonicum* and *Schistosoma mansoni*. The third, *Schistosoma haematobium*, causes vesical or bladder disease. Some other species also may infect man.

The larvae of certain other schistosomes of birds and rodents may penetrate the human skin causing a dermatitis known as swimmer's itch. This is prevalent among bathers in lakes in many parts of the world including North America; also in certain coastal sea water beaches. These schistosomes do not mature in man.

Life Cycle of Schistosomes

The sexually mature schistosomes vary in length from about 7 to 26 millimetres (mm) and in width from about 0.3 to 1 mm and have the appearance of elongated threads. Once mated the male and female schistosomes proceed in pairs, *S. mansoni* and *S. japonicum* to the veins of the bowel, and *S. haematobium* to the veins of the bladder. The females periodically leave their mates (partially or entirely), squeeze their slender bodies into the smallest veins, deposit their eggs, and return to their mates. A few eggs are carried in the blood stream to the liver, lungs, and other parts of the body, but must go through the vein walls into the surrounding tissues. Some become trapped in the tissues and die but others work their way into the bowel or bladder and leave the body in faeces or urine. As the disease progresses, tissues around the veins thicken and the proportion of arrested eggs increases.

To survive, the eggs (70 to 170 microns long, 40 to 70 microns wide) must reach water within a month, a task greatly aided by inadequate sanitation. The change of osmotic pressure in the water results in the hatching from each egg of a small, ciliated, swimming larva known as a "miracidium." Miracidia must penetrate the body of a suitable freshwater snail (the intermediate host) within 24 hours or die.

In the snail the miracidia undergo an essential development stage, lasting 4 to 8 weeks, and, by a process of asexual reproduction, each miracidium may produce thousands of larvae known as cercariae. Liberation of cercariae may continue over a period of several months. The barely visible fork-tailed cercariae may average 0.4 to 0.5 millimeters in length, swim about vigorously, tail first, for 24 to 72 hours without feeding and die if they fail to contact their definitive host which as a rule must be man, in *S. mansoni* and *S. haematobium*, and is often man in

S. japonicum, but may also be dogs, cats, rats, cattle, pigs, deer, or horses. (*S. japonicum* is recorded from the Philippines).

Upon making contact with human skin, the cercariae attach by means of suckers and penetrate their host within several minutes. Within hours they are in the blood stream and are eventually carried to the liver, where they grow to maturity within a few weeks. They mate and travel together against the flow of blood to small blood vessels in the wall of the intestine or bladder. Egg production starts about the fortieth day after penetrative diarrhoea with liver enlargement and tenderness, variable fever, and sometimes lung disturbances. During the period of egg laying and extrusion there is typical dysentery with frequent bloody stools, liver and spleen enlargement and tenderness, often rectal lesions and other serious complications. In the final period of tissue reaction and repair, various lesions such as intestinal papillomata, ulceration and fistulas may develop. The spleen and the liver are often greatly enlarged, there is usually serious diarrhoea, and there may be ascites and other major disturbances.

In *S. haematobium* infections, the urinary system is involved and there are often serious lesions of the bladder, ureters, and other organs, with fever and general distress. Bloody urine is a usual sign. In uncomplicated cases there is usually no diarrhoea or dysentery in *S. haematobium* infections.

During the incubation period the symptoms and signs of bilharziasis are due chiefly to toxic products of the worms and to allergic reactions. In the egg-laying period the extrusion of the eggs causes various tissue damage with consequent bleeding and distress. Gradually, cellular reactions tend to block the eggs and to cause fibrosis of the affected organs. This impairs functional activity of the liver and intestines or of the urinary system. Bacterial infections of damaged tissues may cause abscesses and fistulas.

One larva penetrating the skin can develop into only one worm. Thus, the seriousness of the disease depends on the number of larvae acquired, the frequency of reinfection, and the length of time the individual is subject to reinfection. Ordinarily, the disease develops slowly as more and more worms are acquired during childhood, and the maximum number is reached at about 20 years of age. Although the factors involved in the rate of acquisition differ greatly in different places, the slow, insidious nature of the disease and the great disability it causes are always important aspects.

With modern treatment in uncomplicated cases the chances of avoiding death are quite good and in early cases full recovery may be expected. But as the disease becomes chronic, vital tissues are destroyed and in advanced cases the prognosis is hopeless.

Ecological Notes on Intermediate Snail Vectors of Schistosomiasis (Bilharziasis)

Before it attacks man, each schistosome worm lives as a parasite of a snail. Thus there is an opportunity to prevent the human disease by destroying the intermediate snail host, in much the same way as mosquito extermination is used to prevent malaria. Many methods of killing the snails, or otherwise eliminating them, are possible, but two are most common: direct destruction with toxic chemicals (molluscicides) and indirect elimination or prevention through creation of an untenable environment.

The schistosomes are specific in the choice of their intermediate hosts. *S. haematobium* miracidia select snails of the genus *Bulinus* with isolated exceptions; *S. mansoni* prefer the genus *Biomphalaria* (also known as *Planorbis* in Africa and *Australorbis* in the Americas). Members of the genera *Bulinus* and *Biomphalaria* spend their lives in water. The illustration shows the shells of typical vector snails.



Any reader who is able to identify vector snails in Central or Southern Nigeria, is requested to contribute to this Journal. (Editor's Note).

The factors that cause snails to favour certain waters and to be absent from others are not surely known. Prediction is further complicated in that different species and varieties of the same genera, with differing preferences, act as hosts in various places.

Roughly speaking however, *Bulinus* species, hosts of *S. haematobium*, exhibit a preference for stagnant or slowly moving water, are more numerous in moderately polluted waters, prefer pools with bottoms rich in silt and organic matter, and often occur in apparently barren water. Although generally found only in permanent pools in Egypt and Iraq, those responsible for schistosomiasis in equatorial Africa may often be found in seasonal water holes and borrow pits.

Biomphalaria, host of *S. mansoni*, happily accept running water of moderate velocity and therefore are common inhabitants of stream and irrigation systems. In contrast to man-promoted transmission closely related to agriculture, there are areas, such as Northern Brazil, where transmission is not closely linked with agriculture.

Irrigation schemes tend to harbour the snail vectors also, but proper water management and improved agriculture methods can be used to greatly increase crop production and to eliminate 95 per cent of the snails at the same time. The few remaining colonies in such areas became amenable to control by molluscicides.

Lethal Stream Velocity. The frequent observation that vector snails are rarely seen in streams and canals having average flow velocities in excess of 30 to 35 centimeters per second, (cm/sec) (approximately 1.1 feet per second, (fps)) leads to the question: "What is the minimum velocity which will discourage establishment of snails?" The question is not as simple as it might appear. Snails can more easily cling to a firm smooth surface, such as that of concrete or stone, than to a loose and shifting surface such as silt or loam. Snails with conical shells such as *Oncomelania* and *Bulinus* may have lower drag coefficients than snails with flat discoidal shells, such as *Planorbidae*. Aquatic vegetation may shelter snails from the current. As velocity increases, snails are first immobilized, then dislodged. Immobilization may suffice for control where velocity is maintained constant. An important design note is that it is not the mean velocity in the channel but the peripheral velocity that dislodges snails.

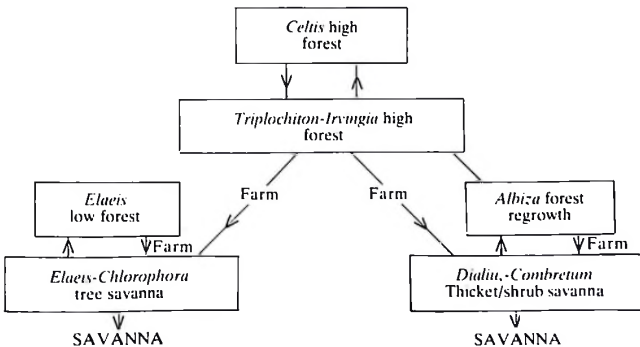
(Note: The above notes were compiled by the Editor from an A.I.D. Publication number 1888 of July 1955 edited by F. E. McJunkin)

The Influence of Farming and Fire on the Vegetation of Igalaland

The reader's attention is drawn to the list of vernacular names for some of the species of trees mentioned. This preliminary list was prepared by the Forestry Adviser to Ayangba Agricultural Development Project and is appearing in this issue of the Journal.

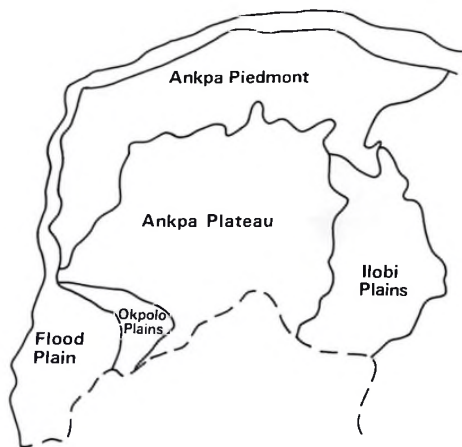
Historically much of the area carried heavy *Celtis* high forest, which is now isolated only in certain forest Reserves. More recently, (over 50 years ago) *Triplochiton-Irvingia* high forest was widespread, but population increase and saw-timber exploitation has rapidly reduced this to low forests of *Elaeis* (Oil Palm) and *albizia*. Dense thickets of evergreens occur in favourable situations here and there, but mainly the weed *Eupatorium* is the dominant understorey feature observed along main roads. This weed was introduced from the Pacific area in recent times (some say at the time of Independence, but some sources record its presence in the 1930s — hopefully more accurate information will come to light, on this aggressive scourge of Igalaland).

The stages in the development of the forest after cultivation are shown in the following diagram. On the right hand side the forest that results from short cultivation periods and long fallow periods is shown and on the left are the communities that result from a greater intensity of land use. It is emphasised that the communities often occur very close together and may even overlap (see Plate). The forest vegetation tends to persist in the valley bottom and lower slopes, whereas the savanna communities and tree savanna of forest species occur on the crest and upper slope. This is illustrated in Figure 2-1 which shows the vegetation communities on a typical Ankpa Plateau land system.





Parkia parkland. The land near the village is cultivated every year and only the economic farm trees are preserved.



When a farm is opened, the trees and shrubs are cut down and burnt and the grasses hoed in. Isolated trees of economic importance are left. The number of years the field is cultivated and the type of crops grown influence the kind of fallow regrowth that will appear when the farm is abandoned.

Forest species are particularly susceptible to fire. If the farm has been cultivated for only 1 or 2 years, the forest species may sprout again from old rootstock. If the farming period is longer, it is more likely that grasses or *Eupatorium odoratum* will invade the clearing. In these cases the site will revert to forest more slowly, depending upon the likelihood of fire and dryness and density of the vegetation when fire occurs.

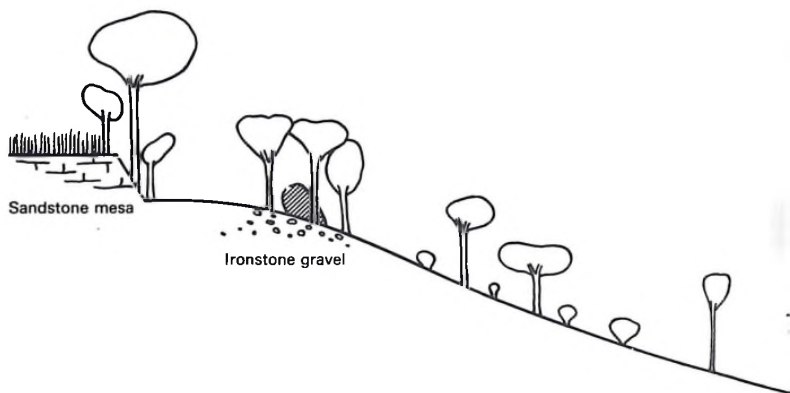
The *Elaeis-Chorophora* tree savannah is a more stable community than the *Dialium-Combretum* thicket. The result of recreated farming on the former will not necessarily lead to a degeneration, where as frequent farming and burning will destroy the *Dialium-Combretum* thicket.



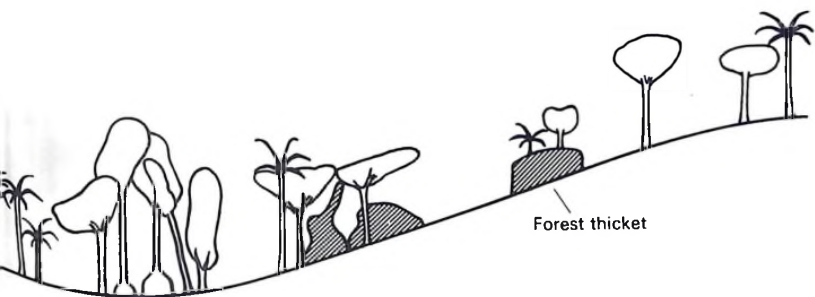
Triplochiton-Irvingia high forest in the middle back ground with *Elaeis* low forest on the left. The leaning tree on the left is *Khaya grandifoliola* and the straight tree next to it *Chlorophora*. Road to Ankpa.

A result of selective protection of economic farm trees, produces a zonation of the vegetation. In the immediate vicinity of the town or village a *Daniellia* or *Parkia* parkland of permanently cultivated fields occurs. In the next zone, shrubs or grass savannah is found, in a savannah of *Daniellia*, *Prosopis* or *afzelia*. In this zone shifting cultivation and some grazing occur regularly. The above zones are more typical of Bassa and Idah Divisions.

FIGURE 2-1 Profile diagram showing vegetation communities on a typical Ankpa Plateau land system



| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <i>Hyparrhenia welwitschii</i> grassland | <i>Khaya- Erythrophleum</i> open forest | <i>Daniellia- Chlorophora</i> woodland | <i>Khaya/Parkia/Daniellia</i> tree <i>Alchornea-Albizia</i> shrub |
|---|--|---|--|



| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Elaeis</i> low forest | <i>Brachystegia</i> riparian forest | <i>Albizia</i> forest regrowth | <i>Baphia-Dialium</i> thicket | <i>Elaeis-Chlorophora</i> tree savanna |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|

Description of the Communities

1. CELTIS HIGH FOREST

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| General description | Undisturbed, well developed high forest 25-33m (82-108ft) high with emergent upper storey, lower storey and shrub layer |
| Structure | Height 25-33m (82-108ft): canopy closure 80-100% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Emergent and upper storey | <i>Celtis zenkeri</i> , <i>C. brownii</i> , <i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i> , <i>Aubrevillae kerstingii</i> , <i>Alstonia boonei</i> , <i>Bosqueia angolensis</i> , <i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i> , <i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i> |
| Lower storey | <i>Rothmannia longiflora</i> , <i>Tabernaemontana pachysiphon</i> , <i>Ricinodendron heudelotii</i> , <i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> , <i>Aidia genipiflora</i> , <i>Chrysophyllum albidum</i> |
| Shrubs | <i>Rothmannia whitfieldii</i> , <i>R. hispida</i> , <i>Diospyros crassiflora</i> , <i>strombosia pustulata</i> , <i>Cuviera acutifolia</i> , <i>Trichillia prieureana</i> , <i>T. heudelotii</i> , <i>Monodora tenuifolia</i> , <i>Cola hispida</i> , <i>Craterispermum cerinanthum</i> , <i>Olax viridis</i> |
| Location | Confined to the forest reserves or very inaccessible parts of the Ankpa Plateau and Okpolo Plains |
| Relation to other communities | Climax vegetation type, which has not been part of a farming cycle for at least 100 years |
| Relation to the environment | Occurs on deep, well drained soils with a coarse textured surface horizon and a medium to fine textured B horizon |
| Source | Description based on 8 plots and 2 lists Example C390 |
| References | The moist semi deciduous forest described by Howard (1966) |
| Land use | Inside the forest reserves the community will be exploited for timber production |

2. TRIPLOCHITON-IRVINGIA HIGH FOREST

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| General description | High forest that has been modified by habitation or cultivation. Contains a high proportion of species with edible fruit particularly <i>Elaeis</i> . Covers a wide range from forest with an upper and lower storey to forest with houses built beneath big trees. |
| Structure | Height 20-30m; canopy closure 50-100% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Upper storey | <i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i> , <i>Alstonia boonei</i> , <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> , <i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i> , <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Ceiba pentandra</i> , <i>Iringia gabonensis</i> , <i>Cola gigantea</i> , <i>Antiaris africana</i> |
| Lower storey and shrub layer | <i>Tabernaemontana pachysiphon</i> , <i>Dacryodes edulis</i> (Obudu), <i>Cola nitida</i> , <i>Pentaclethra macrophylla</i> , <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Spondias mombin</i> , <i>Dracaena mannii</i> , <i>Myrianthus arboreus</i> , <i>Voacanga africana</i> , <i>Napoleona imperialis</i> , <i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> , <i>Alchornea cordifolia</i> , <i>Phyllanthus discoideus</i> , <i>Ficus vogelii</i> , <i>Chrysophyllum albidum</i> , <i>Bambusa vulgaris</i> , <i>Ricinodendron heudelotii</i> |
| Ground flora | <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> , <i>Cnestis ferruginea</i> |
| Climbers | <i>Entada phaesaelioides</i> , <i>Acacia ataxacantha</i> |
| Location | Occurs in the Ankpa Plateau and extends east to Adikpo and Obudu along the southern fringe of the project area |
| Relation to other communities | The seral stage below <i>Celtis</i> high forest; probably owes its survival in many places to the defensive qualities of the forest |
| Relation to the environment | Occurs on the Ankpa Plateau over the deep freely draining, coarse over fine textured soils, free of coarse material. In the Ilobi, southern Taraku Plain and Workum Hills the forest occurs on shallow soils |
| Source | Description based on 7 plots and 12 lists. Example C419 |

| | |
|------------|--|
| References | <i>Chlorophora/Triplochiton</i> forest (Tuley and Alford, 1975a) |
| Land use | The fruits of many of the trees are collected for food |

3. ALBIZIA FOREST REGROWTH

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| General description | The <i>Albizia</i> forms a light canopy of flat-topped trees above a dense growth of forest species |
| Structure | Forest regrowth; height 12-25m; canopy closure 70-100% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Trees | <i>Albizia adianthifolia</i> , <i>A. zygia</i> , <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Phyllanthus discoideus</i> , <i>Sterculia tragacantha</i> , <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> , <i>Dialium guineense</i> , <i>Holarrhena floribunda</i> , <i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i> |
| Understorey trees and shrubs | <i>Anthocleista djalonensis</i> , <i>Cola hispida</i> , <i>Napoleona imperialis</i> , <i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> , <i>Discoglypsemna caloneura</i> , <i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> , <i>Tabernaemontana pachysiphon</i> , <i>Voacanga africana</i> , <i>Baphia pubescens</i> |
| Ground flora | <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> , <i>Paulinia pinnata</i> , <i>Oplismenus burmannii</i> , <i>Clausena anisata</i> , <i>Icacina</i> sp., <i>Mussaenda elegans</i> , <i>Acanthus montanus</i> , <i>Anchomanes difformis</i> , <i>Macrosphyra longistyla</i> |
| Location | Only recorded on the Ankpa Plateau |
| Relation to other communities | This is a seral stage after cultivation between <i>Elaeis</i> low forest and <i>Triplochiton-Irvinga</i> high forest |
| Relation to the environment | Usually occurs on deep, freely draining soil with a coarse textured top 50cm and a clay loam texture below |
| Source | Description based on 1 plot and 18 lists. Example T461 |

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| References | Not previously described |
| Land use | Some collection of oil palm fruit |

4. ELAEIS LOW FOREST

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| General description | Has the appearance of an oil palm plantation. Occasional forest species occur in the main storey and forest thickets occur between patches of cultivation |
| Structure | Height 17m, range 7-25m; canopy closure 60%, range 45-90% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Upper storey | <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> , <i>Albizia adianthifolia</i> , <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i> , <i>Ficus</i> spp. (<i>F. exasperata</i> is common), <i>Ceiba pentandra</i> , <i>Bosqueia angolensis</i> , <i>Anthocleista djalonensis</i> |
| Understorey and shrub layer | <i>Antiaris africana</i> , <i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> , <i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> , <i>Napoleona vogelii</i> , <i>Cola hispida</i> , <i>Alchornea cordifolia</i> |
| Ground flora | <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> , <i>Oplismenus burmannii</i> , <i>Icacina</i> sp., <i>Scleria</i> sp., <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> |
| Climbers | <i>Paulinia pinnata</i> , <i>Mussaenda elegans</i> , <i>Abrus precatorius</i> , <i>Landolphia</i> sp., <i>Clerodendrum splendens</i> |
| Location | Occurs on the Ankpa Plateau |
| Relation to other communities | This community occurs where there is a moderate impact from farming. If farming stopped, the vegetation would become <i>Albizia</i> forest regrowth and then <i>Triplochiton-Irvingia</i> high forest. If the fallow period shortened this would become <i>Elaeis-Irvingia</i> tree savanna |
| Relation to the environment | Occurs usually on deep freely-drained coarse over medium to fine textured soils with no coarse material |
| Source | The description is based on 3 plots and 38 lists. Example H342 |

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| References | Not previously described |
| Land use | Oil palm fruit is collected regularly |

5. ELAEIS-CHLOROPHORA TREE SAVANNA

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| General description | A tree savanna with oil palms and forest species, many of which have edible fruit or useful timber. There is a discontinuous shrub layer of forest species where farming has not occurred recently |
| Structure | Height 15m, range 8-20m; canopy closure 20%, range 10-35% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Trees | <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> , <i>Khaya senegalensis</i> , <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i> , <i>Ceiba pentandra</i> , <i>Prosopis africana</i> |
| Lower storey and shrub layer | <i>Cola hispida</i> , <i>Voacanga africana</i> , <i>Phyllanthus discoideus</i> , <i>Ficus</i> spp., <i>Antiaris africana</i> , <i>Morinda lucida</i> , <i>Securinega virosa</i> , <i>Albizia adianthifolia</i> , <i>Nauclea latifolia</i> , <i>Holarrhena floribunda</i> , <i>Baphia pubescens</i> |
| Ground flora | <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> , <i>Andropogon tectorum</i> , <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> , <i>Pennisetum pedicellatum</i> , <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> , <i>Hyparrhena</i> spp., <i>Brachiaria brizantha</i> , <i>Panicum maximum</i> and <i>Rottboellia exaltata</i> |
| Location | This community occurs mostly on the Ankpa Plateau and the south-east of Obudu Town. Isolated examples may be found elsewhere on lower slopes where forest has been cleared for cultivation. |
| Relation to other communities | The forest has degraded to such an extent that there are now Savannah trees (<i>Prosopis</i> and <i>Nauclea</i>) as well as grasses. If cultivation were excluded this community would revert to forest |
| Relation to the environment | The community occurs on deep, freely-draining, coarse over medium to fine textured soils with coarse material. Some plots are on imperfectly drained soils |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Source | The description is based on 56 lists. Example T475 |
| References | <i>Elaeis</i> woodland/tree and shrub savanna (Tuley & Alford, 1975a) |
| Land use | Cultivation occurs; oil palm fruit is collected |

6. DIALIUM-COMBRETUM THICKET/SHRUB SAVANNA

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| General description | Shrubs and forest climbers form a dense thicket with occasional emergent trees. Sometimes the thicket is low and discontinuous approximating to a shrub savanna |
| Structure | Height 7m, range 4-12m; canopy closure 50-100% |
| Characteristic species | |
| Trees | <i>Chlorophora excelsa</i> , <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> , <i>Parkia clappertoniana</i> |
| Shrubs (forest spp) | <i>Baphia pubescens</i> , <i>Dialium guineensis</i> , <i>Combretum racemosum</i> , <i>C. paniculatum</i> , <i>Phyllanthus discoideus</i> , <i>P. muellerianus</i> , <i>Napoleona vogelii</i> , <i>Cola hispida</i> , <i>Allophylus africanus</i> , <i>Sterculia tragacantha</i> , <i>Uvaria chamae</i> , <i>Olax viridis</i> , <i>Voacanga africana</i> , <i>Albizia zygia</i> , <i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> |
| Shrubs (savanna spp) | <i>Ochna afzelii</i> , <i>Hymenocardia acida</i> , <i>Annona senegalensis</i> , <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> |
| Ground flora | <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> , <i>Mucuna pruriens</i> , <i>Anchomanes difformis</i> , <i>Gloriosa superba</i> , <i>Lonchocarpus</i> sp., <i>Cissus</i> sp. |
| Location | The community is found on the Ankpa Plateau |
| Relation to other communities | Provided that fire is excluded this is the first growth stage when an abandoned farm reverts to forest The next stage, depending on the intensity of farming may be <i>Albizia</i> forest regrowth or <i>Elaeis</i> low forest |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Relation to the environment | Usually occurs on deep, freely draining, coarse over medium to fine textured soils with no coarse material. It occasionally occurs on shallow soils |
| Source | The description is based on 1 plot and 15 lists, Example H317 |
| References | Not previously described |
| Land use | None |

This article was compiled by the Editor from the Land Resources Report for Benue Valley, printed in 1976 by the U.K. Ministry of Overseas Development.

Original source of data: Howard W. J. (1976), Land Resources of Central Nigeria. Forestry. Land Resources Report No. 7.

Some Farm Grasses in Igala/Idoma Land

By Gabriel A. O. Odoh

| Botanical Names | Igala | Idoma |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Imperata cylindrica | Iwo | Epe |
| Andropogon gayanus | Ikpo | Ekpo |
| Sporobolus pyramidalis | Iya-Okolo | |
| Pennisetum pedicellatum | Ikpakpala | |
| Eleusine indica | Elade | |
| Bracheria jubata | Okakakplu | |
| Digitaria ciliaris | Alicha | Ekpegbi |
| Jordinea cogoensis | Eji | Onji |
| Vetiveria nigriflora | | Aganya |
| Rottboellia exaltata | Agahama | Agahama |
| Paspalum orbiculare | Owu | |
| Bracharia brizantha | | |
| Hyparrhenia involucreta | Iganapa | Iganapa |
| Eragrostis tremula | Iyo | |
| Beckeropsis unisetata | Ukpafele | Ufie |
| Loudetia simplex | | |
| Cloris gayanus | | |
| Pennisetum ramosum | | |
| Panicum walense | | |
| Andropogon calvescens | | |
| Eragrostis ciliaris | | |
| Ctenium newtonii | | |

Farm grasses and soil relationship in Igala/Idoma land

| Grasses | Soil type and texture of soil | Type of crop planted in in such areas. |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Jordenia cogoensis | Swamps, clay soils | Rice (Oriza) |
| Vetiveria nigriflora | Swamps, clay soils | |
| Eragrostis tremula | Swamps, clay soils | |
| Pennisetum ramosum | Swamps, clay soils | |
| Andropogon calvesens | Swamps, clay soils | |
| Hyparrhenia involucrata | Savanna, loamy soils | Yams, Cassava, G/corn, millet, water yam. (Dascorea, sorghum) |
| Beckeropsis unisetata | Savanna, loamy soils | |
| Pennisetum pedicellatum | (Guinea in shades) | |
| Bracheria jubata | Savanna, loamy soils | |
| Imperata cylindrica | Any kind of soil | Maize, Soyabeans, Melon, Millet. |
| Andropogon gayanus | Sand to loamy sand — sandy | |
| Sporobolus pyramidalis | Loam, savanna, Guinea savanna | |
| Digitaria ciliaris | Loam, savanna, Guinea savanna | |
| Eleusine indica | Loam, savanna, Guinea savanna | |
| Rottboellia exaltata | Loam, savanna, Guinea savanna | |
| Loudetia simplex | coarse sand — rocky areas | No particular relation but sometimes sorghum is grown |
| Loudetia togoensis | Shallow soil | |
| Ctenium newtonii | Shallow soil | |

A.A.D.P. The Modern Concept for Agriculture

The Ayangba Agricultural Development Project, which sponsors this journal, will be reviewed periodically in these pages. Year one of the five year programme, began on April 1st 1978 and it is appropriate therefore to outline the purpose and objectives of this combined effort of the Nigerian Federal Government, Benue State Government and World Bank to achieve integrated agricultural development.

The project area is 13,100 square kilometres (4 Local Government Council Divisions), see cover page map. The indigenous people of the project area, are to be found working all over Nigeria, especially in the west and north, many holding very responsible positions in the professions, industry and government sectors. Within the project area the general standard of rural housing, health and education is satisfactory, but communications, commercial agriculture and trade are very poorly developed. The area has a good climate for agriculture but only 23% of the area is cultivated.



Traditional trade route into Igalaland

With a population growth averaging approx. 3.0% and an annual increase in agricultural production of approx. 1.3% (1970-75), the expanding urban populations in Nigeria depend increasingly upon imported food, which must be financed out of Nigeria's exports. With the declining consumption of oil on the world market, export earnings have suffered and the increase of agricultural production within the nation is

now vital to the economy, and the well being of the people. This is where the "Project" approach to production is important.

With the utmost rapidity it is intended to establish physical and organisational infra-structure over four Divisions, affecting around 1,000,000 people and probably 100,000 farmers. Complementary investments under the current National Third Five Year Plan, give support to this and similar projects by providing for major rail and road improvements within the Project area, rural electrification and improvement of health and social services. All these processes can be observed today in Igalaland.



The first Project road, crossing Okura River to Alloma, August 1978.

The Project management has taken over all the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources functions within the Project area, and is revitalising the administration with the use of the day-to-day operational autonomy granted to it by the Government. Additionally, a commercial sector is included within the organisation which would be impracticable for a Ministry to operate, thus allowing timely provision of essential agricultural inputs to farmers, through the new Farmer Service Centres (to be re-named Rural Development Centres), of which 30 are planned. Buying of produce through these Centres is another essential and stimulating function of the Commercial Department of the Project organisation.

The infra-structure includes the provision of feeder roads (some 1,300 kms are programmed for Project), seed multiplication, buying and selling

organisation, credit facilities, farm machinery hire services, and improvement to water supplies. An effort is currently being made to provide banking facilities to the service centres for local farmers.



Project policies are controlled by the Government and inherited MANR development schemes within the area, such as Land Development Schemes, subsidised tractor hiring services and subsidised fertiliser are to be continued by the Project.

Physical Progress in 1978

Eleven Rural Development Centres have been constructed or the contracts let. Divisional Development Officers have been appointed in all Divisions. Forest plantations are being re-vitalised. Farmer Training is being programmed on a large scale, supported by demonstration plots, livestock units, crop trial plots, school garden demonstrations, seed multiplication farms, and a programme of farmers' rotational gardens. Sixty farm tractors of the Tractor Hiring Units exist and the service to farmers is being re-organised to bring greater effective focus at field level in each District. The Project road construction team began work in mid-June, and up to the end of November had completed 60 kms of 9 metre-wide gravel road from Ayangba to Akpanya on the State boundary with Anambra State. This road is on a direct line drawn between Enugu and the proposed Federal Capital city site, and will link up hitherto isolated crop production areas with Rural Development Centres and markets.

The immediate road programme envisages a link up to Adoru and south-westwards, as well as with Ankpa Division to north-eastwards from Akpanya.

The initial phases of road construction in the southern sector, have been widely acclaimed by local people and their community leaders. The following is an extract from a letter presented to the Project Acting Road Engineer, on the occasion of a celebration in Alloma.

21st July 1978

NOTE OF THANKS

We express our thanks to you and your able workers for taking the pains to improve the condition of some roads in Alloma. We are very grateful for this kind gesture from you.

We are highly delighted for accomplishing this arduous task despite the fact that the work ahead of you is still enormous. No amount of recompensation from us can satisfy you for this, we can only wish you more success in your endeavour to develop this part of Benue State in particular and Nigeria in general.

We hope, Sir, you will continue to please us, your name will go down in the history of this town, as one of those who have contributed immeasurably to its development. This will go a long way in showing the developing nature of the World Bank in its noble desire to turn the "third World" into a "developed" nation.

*Thanks,
Yours faithfully,*

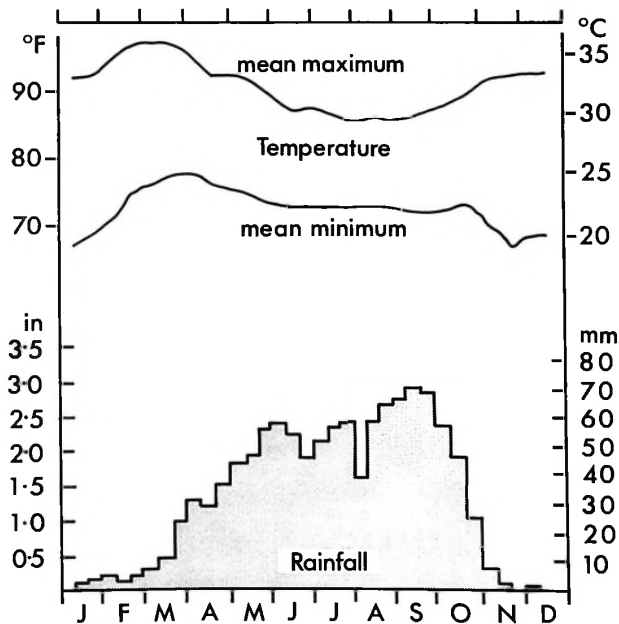
Daniel Akubo
for Alloma Community Development Association

APPENDIX

A sample comparative word list of Yoruba and Igala

| English | Yoruba | Igala |
|---------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| one | oko, eni | ooka, inye |
| two | eji, meji | eji` meeji |
| three | eta | eta |
| four | eri | ele |
| five | aru | elu |
| six | efa | efa |
| seven | eje | ebye |
| eight | ejo | ejo |
| nine | eso | ela |
| ten | ewa | egwa |
| father | baba (baba) | ata |
| mother | iya, iye, yeye | iye |
| child | omo | oma, (<i>pl. amoma</i>) |
| in-law | ana | ana |
| face | oju | eju |
| skull | agbari | akokoloji |
| brains | okpolo | okoto |
| head | ori | oji |
| hair | iru | iloji (<i>'roots of the head'</i>) |
| nose | imu | imo (<i>Idah: inmo</i>) |
| ear | eti | eti |
| eye | oju | eju |
| cheek | ereke | iti |
| beard | irugbo | ilagba |
| chin | agbo | agba |
| jaw | agbo isale | agba |
| mouth | enu | alu |
| leg | ese | ere |
| foot | ese | ere |
| hand | owo | owo |
| arm | akpa | oli owo |

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE CHART (LOKOJA)



Annual Rainfall=1311mm Rainy Period=210Days

