

OXFORD STUDIES IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS

# OLD CALABAR 1600-1891

The impact of the international economy  
upon a traditional society

A. J. H. LATHAM

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The purpose of this book is to analyse the response of a traditional African society to the demands made upon it by the expanding international economy from the seventeenth century to the establishment of Colonial rule. It tries to obtain insight into the dynamic process of change: thus the growth of the slave trade and its successor the trade in palm produce, with their effects on the domestic economy, are described in depth and at length.

Efik society was modified by the inclusion of the many slaves needed as extra hands as the people of Old Calabar turned from fishing to slave trading, and yet more modifications became necessary as the palm produce trade developed. But contrary to the opinion of earlier writers, the fundamental stability of the Efik social and political systems was not affected by these changes so much as by the ever growing influence of Britain, the major trading partner, which slowly and unwittingly undermined the traditional political system, resulting in anarchy and a demand from certain sections of Efik society for annexation. To this the British government reluctantly acceded for fear that her commercial rivals in Europe would step in instead, thereby excluding her merchants at a time of fierce international competition.



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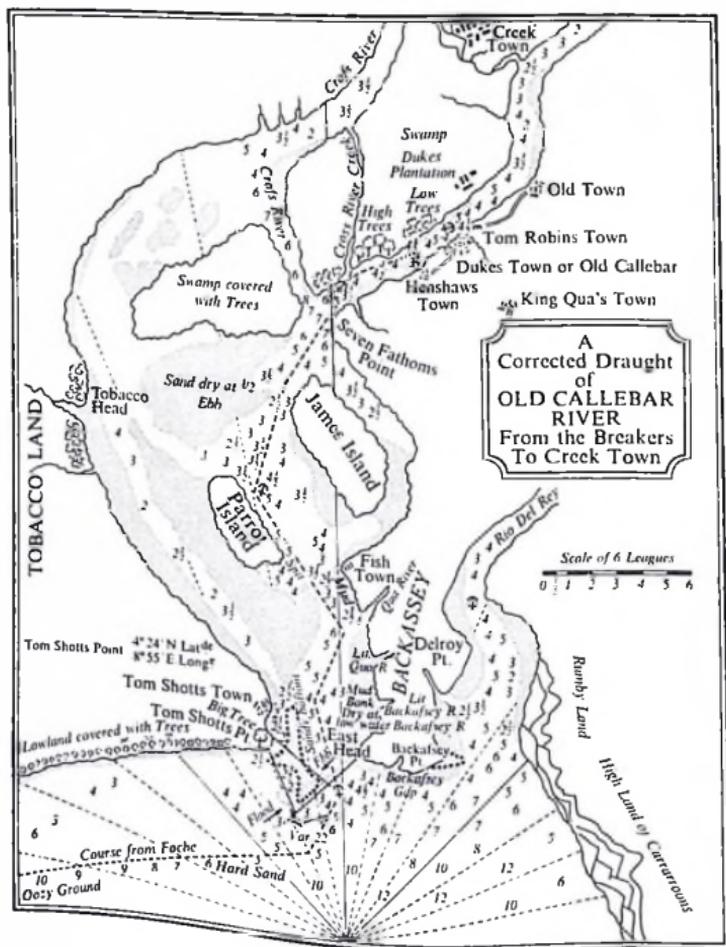
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JOHN D. HARGREAVES *and* GEORGE SHEPPERSON

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THE IMPACT OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY  
UPON A TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

BY  
A. J. H. LATHAM

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## Preface

SINCE Dike's pioneer study appeared in 1956,<sup>1</sup> others such as Newbury, Jones, Alagoa, Ajayi, Akinjogbin, Ayandele, Ikime, Wilks, and more recently Rodney, Ryder, and Daaku,<sup>2</sup> have advanced our knowledge of West African history and society in pre-colonial times. Each has sought to explain the evolution of African societies from the internal point of view rather than from that of the uncomprehending external observer. It is hoped this study will fill in another of the many gaps in our knowledge of particular West African societies.

Accordingly, this is an analysis of a traditional West African society as it evolved under the influence of the economic demands of the West, from the arrival of the first Europeans to the establishment of British rule. It presents Old Calabar and its relationship with the West not as a static model, but as a dynamic one. As such it attempts to overcome the limitations of the short-period analyses of anthropology, which do not consider how change takes place within the system. And it also tries to overcome the weaknesses of historical studies over long periods of time, which so often fail to understand the working of the society they describe, and the economic forces which tend to determine the changes they chart. In so far as Old Calabar is considered, this is intended to be a contribution to African history. But in demonstrating how a traditional society was drawn into the international economy, it is intended to be a contribution to international economic history.

Early work on Old Calabar was done by Dike,<sup>3</sup> but his account is rather superficial, being based mainly on European sources. Consequently he fails to penetrate the skin of Efik social and political life, which leads him to misinterpret the slave movements of the 1850s as revolts to obtain liberation. This error invalidates his over-all conclusions about social and political development in the Oil Rivers at large in the nineteenth century.

The most important work on Efik social and political organization

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Oxford, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> See Bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Dike, *op. cit.*

has been done by G. I. Jones.<sup>4</sup> By combining oral tradition with European written sources, he has provided a much more perceptive understanding of Efik society than did Dike. Yet he has failed to appreciate the full significance of economic forces upon the evolution of Efik society, and he has not attempted to discuss domestic politics, or the relationship between Calabar and the West.

More recently Nair has produced a study of politics and society in Old Calabar in the late nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> But there are serious weaknesses in his work. His failure to consider Calabar earlier than the nineteenth century leads him to assert that slaves became part of Efik society as a result of the palm-oil trade, although they had actually been incorporated much earlier. Because he does not understand the Efik political system, particularly the relationship between the King and the *Eyamba*, his interpretation of political events lacks depth. His economic information is misleading. And by his determination to vilify the British as imperial aggressors he blinds himself to the internal political disintegration at Calabar which was such a vital part in the process of imperialism.

Part 1 of this book is devoted to the impact of the slave trade on Efik society. Although this section is quite short, owing to the sparseness of evidence for this period, much previously overlooked material has been used, such as Watts's description of Calabar in 1668,<sup>6</sup> and Nicholls's visit in 1805.<sup>7</sup> These sources have been combined with new information made available in the Hart Report on the *Obong*-ship of Calabar,<sup>8</sup> together with oral tradition collected during fieldwork in Calabar 1965-6.

Part 2 considers the effect of the development of the palm-oil trade at Calabar. Again, material that was previously overlooked has been used, such as Robertson's *Notes on Africa*,<sup>9</sup> a great rarity containing

<sup>4</sup> G. I. Jones, 'The Political Organisation of Old Calabar', in Daryll Forde (ed.), *Efik Traders of Old Calabar* (London, 1956).

<sup>5</sup> G. I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers* (London, 1963).

<sup>6</sup> K. K. Nair, 'Politics and Society in Old Calabar, 1841-1906' (University of Ibadan Ph.D. thesis 1967).

<sup>7</sup> John Watts, 'A true Relation of the inhuman and unparalleled Actions, and barbarous Murders, of Negroes and Moors, committed on three Englishmen in old Calabar in Guinea, &c.', in *Harleian Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. II (London, 1745), pp. 512-17.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Hallett (ed.), *Records of the African Association 1788-1831* (Nelson, 1964).

<sup>9</sup> A. K. Hart, *Report of the Enquiry into the Dispute over the Obongship of Calabar*, Official Document No. 17 of 1964, Enugu.

<sup>9</sup> G. A. Robertson, *Notes on Africa* (London, 1819).

vital economic information on the early years of the oil trade. Use has also been made of personally discovered manuscript material, particularly the Revd. William Anderson's Journal for 1851-2, crucial years in Efik social history, and the Black Davis Papers, which belong to the family of one of the important Efik slaves of the last century. Oral evidence has also been used. Because so much more material is available, this section is much longer than the first, despite determined compression.

In writing this book I am indebted to A. G. Hopkins and G. I. Jones for their detailed criticism, and to the late R. E. Bradbury for his correspondence. I am also indebted to the Leverhulme Trust, who granted me an Overseas Scholarship which enabled me to spend a year in Nigeria (1965-6) on fieldwork and research.

A.J.H.L.

*January 1971*

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<sup>1</sup> *Source*: Edward Bold, *The Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide* (London 1822).

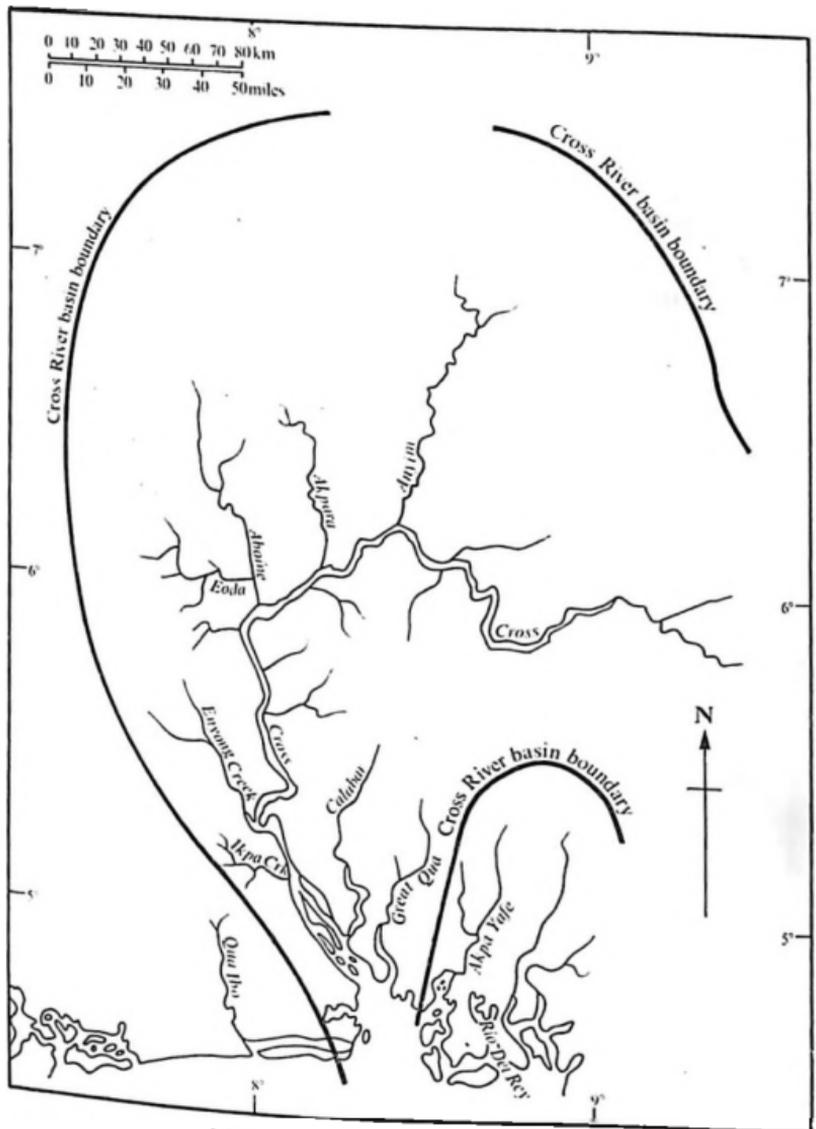
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## Abbreviations

Calprof cit.	Calabar Provincial Papers citing
<i>E.H.R.</i>	Economic History Review
I.R.	Intelligence Report
<i>J.A.H.</i>	Journal of African History
<i>J.H.S.N.</i>	Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria
<i>J.R.A.I.</i>	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
<i>J.R.G.S.</i>	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
<i>P.R.G.S.</i>	Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society
<i>UPCMR</i>	United Presbyterian Church Missionary Record

References in the form of a name and date denote interviews.



MAP 1: The Cross River Basin

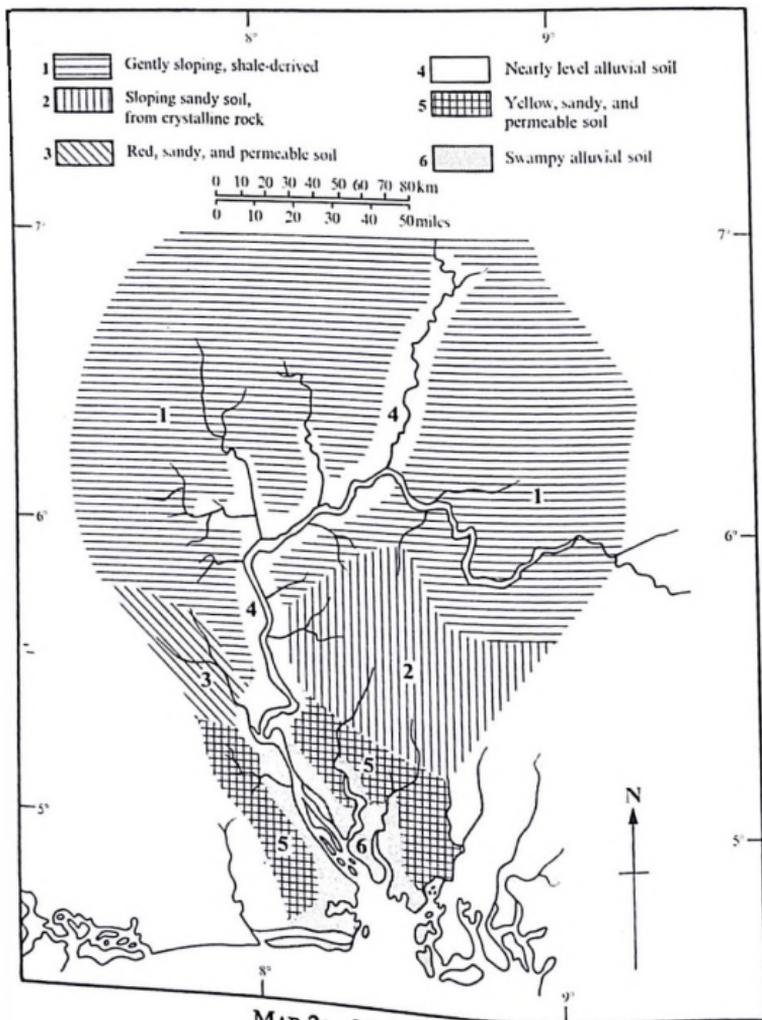
## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction: The Cross River basin and the Efik before the arrival of the Europeans

### 1. *Geography*

THE Cross River rises in the Cameroons Mountains and flows north-west until it meets the Anyim River (Map 1). There it turns south-west towards Enyong Creek, from where it flows south-east to the sea. Leaving the forested and hill area near the Cameroons, the river passes through a gently undulating savannah plain until its confluence with Enyong Creek. Then it continues through the forested coastal plain which extends west to the Niger Delta. The annual rainfall in the Cross River basin varies from about 60 inches in the north to 150 inches on the coast. To the north the wet season begins in March and ends in October, but on the coast the rains are from February to November. Temperatures are fairly constant throughout the year, varying according to season between 94 °F. and 71 °F. In the rainy season the winds come mainly from the south-west, and the skies are clouded, with mists common in the morning, and thunderstorms often occurring in the afternoon and evening. During the dry season, the winds come from the east or north-east. They are relatively dry, causing cloudless but hazy weather, when visibility may be reduced to half a mile.

In the north the soil is derived from shale, and is mostly gently sloping and poorly drained (Map 2). It is capable of producing large quantities of yams, cassava, maize, and legumes, and if carefully managed it can be kept in production for many years. Following the river from its junction with the Anyim, to beyond Enyong Creek, lie nearly-level, deep, loamy alluvial soils. Surface drainage is necessary for grain crops, yams, or cassava, and areas flooded during the rainy season are not cultivated. West of Enyong Creek is an area of red, sandy, permeable soil, derived from thick sandy deposits. These retain little water or plant nutrients, but oil palm and banana can be grown, with some cassava, yam, and other vegetables. East of the confluence of Enyong Creek and the Cross River is a large area



MAP 2: Major soil areas

of sloping sandy soils derived from weathered crystalline rocks. Forest covers most of this area, which is largely unsuited for crops. To the south is an area of yellow, sandy, and permeable soil, on which oil palm, bananas, maize, and vegetables are grown. Lastly there are the swampy alluvial soils around the Cross River estuary, which are mainly covered in mangrove.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *The People*

Although the people who now inhabit the region arrived at different times, the main settlement pattern was almost certainly established before the end of the sixteenth century (Map 3). To the north and north-west of the Cross River the people are Ibo. G. I. Jones suggests that they are descended from Ibo groups which came from the west at an indeterminate date. Some of these groups say they were later driven north by 'white-eyed dwarfs armed with blunderbusses'. These people are principally farmers, and yams their most important crop.<sup>2</sup> The Aro are a sub-tribe of specialist traders, whose trading activities derived from their contacts gained through their possession of the Long Juju of Arochuku, famed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries throughout the area and beyond, as an oracle and fertility spirit.<sup>3</sup> To the west and south-west of the river are the Ibibio. They have no tradition of migration from any other place, which suggests they have long been settled where they now live. Palm products are the basis of their economy, but the Uruan, who live on Ikpa Creek, are specialist fishermen who make their catches in the Cross River estuary.<sup>4</sup> In the late sixteenth century a dispersal movement occurred from the Uruan area, some people moving north to form the Enyong tribe, and others moving south where they founded fishing communities on the lower Cross River,<sup>5</sup> the Effiat and Efik being part of this movement.<sup>6</sup> East of the Cross River, where the Efik settled, the population is sparse. Spread widely to the

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Christiansen, C. L. Scrivner, F. C. Jones, F. R. Olive, 'Preliminary Survey of the Cross River Drainage Basin of Eastern Nigeria', Ford Foundation and USAID, Enugu, 12 January 1963 (unpublished).

<sup>2</sup> Daryll Forde and G. I. Jones, *The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria* (London, 1962), p. 52.

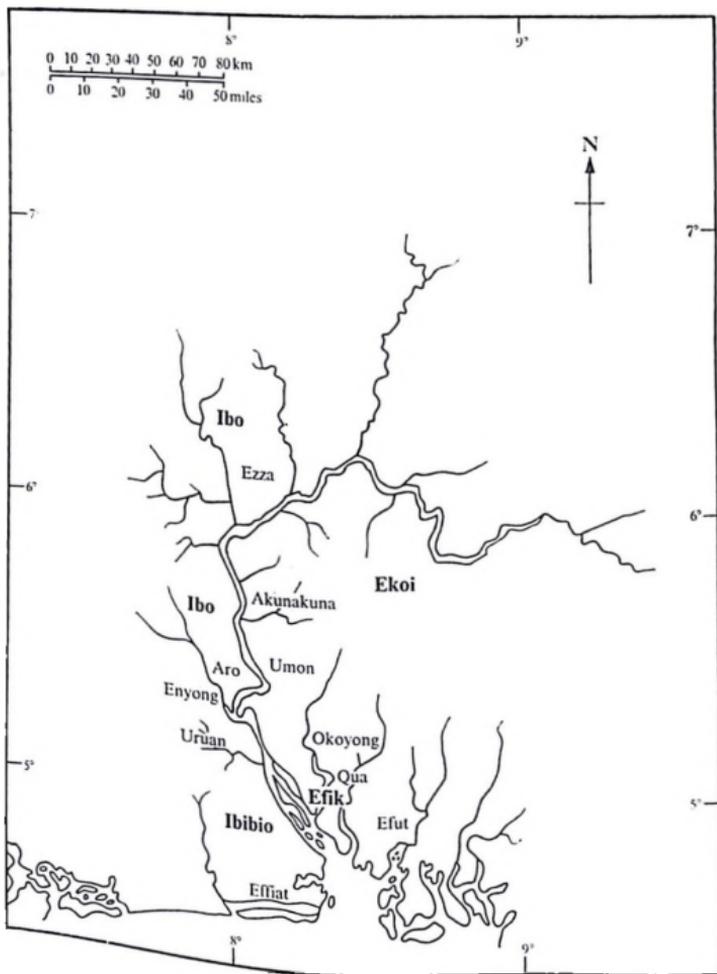
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 55-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68. Enugu I.R. 120 EP 9303A, Uruan Clan, Uyo District, Calabar Province, 1932, Capt. H. P. James, D.O., p. 3, para. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 31. Ibadan I.R. 31382, Enyong Clan, Aro District, Calabar Province, 1935, N.A.P.G. Mackenzie, A.D.O., p. 2, para. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Forde and Jones, pp. 89-90.

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MAP 3: Cross River people

north are the Ekoi, and other smaller groups such as the Umon and Akunakuna, whose origins are obscure. To the south-east are the Okoyong,<sup>7</sup> and still further south, the Qua who are an Ekoi group,<sup>8</sup> and the Efut, who migrated from the Cameroons.<sup>9</sup> Most of these people are hunters and subsistence farmers.

### 3. *The Economy*

The population settled on the most fertile land, which is reflected by the proportion of land now in cultivation in the various areas (Map 4). While overall the soils are of low fertility, in the north-west, an estimated 11 per cent of the land is under cultivation, a much higher proportion than elsewhere. West of Enyong creek about 7 per cent of the land is cultivated, but even this is higher than east of the river, where in the north only 4 per cent is tilled, and in the south-east only 1 per cent.<sup>10</sup>

Resulting from the distribution of fertile soil, the traditional economy of the Cross River basin is as old as the settlement of its people (Map 5). Essentially the pattern was one of the interchange of yam, from the fertile Ibo areas of the north, for the palm produce of Ibibioland, and the fish and salt from the coast. This was facilitated by the ease of canoe movement along the Cross River and its innumerable tributaries. Even in modern times this pattern of exchange has not altered,<sup>11</sup> except that salt is now imported rather than made by evaporation of sea water.

Most of the yams came from Afikpo and Abakaliki. There the people are excellent farmers, and the Ezzas even use fertilizer made up of leaves, crop remains, the manure of their sheep, goats, and cattle, and night-soil.<sup>12</sup> Yams also came from Obubra in plentiful years.<sup>13</sup> The yams were carried by canoe down the Cross River to the Ibibio and Efik markets such as Itu, Ikorofiong, Ifiyong, Ikpa, and

<sup>7</sup> Ibadan I.R. 27674, Okoyong Clan, of Calabar Division, Calabar Province, 1933, T. M. Shankland, A.D.O.

<sup>8</sup> H.R.H. Chief the Hon. Ika Ika Oqua II, M.H.C., M.O.N., The Ntoc of Big Qua Town, 18 Nov. 1965.

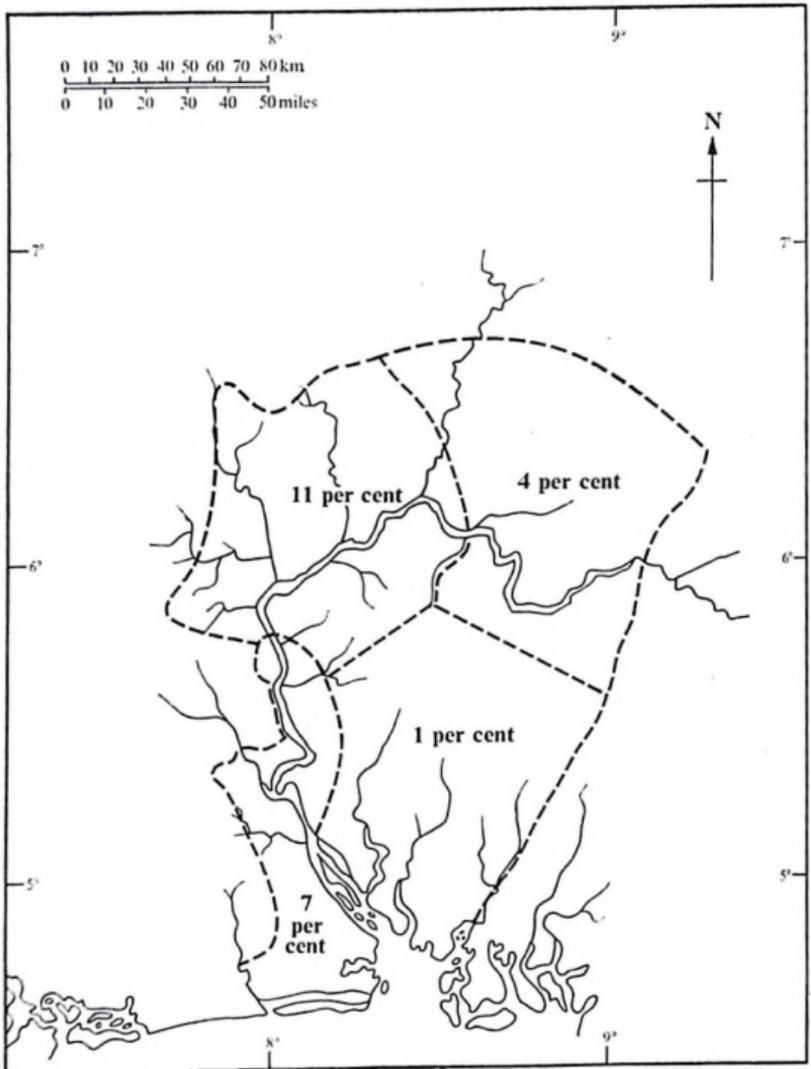
<sup>9</sup> Chief E. Edem, 'A Brief History of Efut People' (unpublished manuscript, Calabar, 1947).

<sup>10</sup> Christiansen, Scrivner, Jones, and Olive, pp. 32-4.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Martin, *The Oil Palm Economy of the Ibibio Farmer* (Ibadan, 1956), p. 15. Forde and Jones, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> J. W. Wallace, 'Agriculture in Abakaliki and Afikpo', *Farm and Forest* 2 (1941), 90-1.

<sup>13</sup> C. Partridge, *Cross River Natives* (London, 1905), pp. 109-10.



MAP: 4 Land use. Figures indicate proportion of land under crops

Calabar.<sup>14</sup> From there, other traders took them to the small inland local markets. As the Ibibio could only grow about half a year's supply for themselves, they were, like the Efik, very dependent upon these imported yams.<sup>15</sup> Oil palms are abundant in Ibibioland, and palm products the basis of their economy. Oil was exported both up-river to the specialist yam areas, and down-river to Calabar.<sup>16</sup> In return for the oil and yam carried down to the communities living on the Cross River estuary, these people sent fish, shrimps, prawn, and salt, to the inland markets, where they were distributed on foot to the local markets by petty traders, as with the yam from the north.<sup>17</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, Barbot observed these coastal fishing and salt-boiling communities,<sup>18</sup> and as late as 1805 salt was being boiled there.<sup>19</sup>

Within this basic distribution network, nineteenth-century evidence suggests particular places specialized in producing certain durable goods. Pottery was made at Afikpo,<sup>20</sup> Ikorofiong,<sup>21</sup> Nkpara,<sup>22</sup> and Ikot Ansa.<sup>23</sup> Canoes were made at Emuramura,<sup>24</sup> and raffia cloth at Ikorofiong.<sup>25</sup> Metal-working was done by itinerant Ibo blacksmiths,<sup>26</sup> using iron which probably came from the Cameroons.<sup>27</sup> To the east of the Cross River there was little of importance, for the people were largely self-sufficient, although the Qua did obtain some salt from Mamfe.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Forde and Jones, p. 81.      <sup>15</sup> Ibid.      <sup>16</sup> Martin, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> M. D. W. Jeffreys, 'Cross River Prawn and Shrimp Fishing', *Nigerian Field* (July 1952), 139-40. Enugu I.R. 120 EP 9303A, Uruan Clan, p. 3, para. 9.

<sup>18</sup> J. Barbot, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. v. *A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea* (London, 1732), p. 382.

<sup>19</sup> Robin Hallett (ed.), *Records of the African Association, 1788-1831* (London, 1964), p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> S. and P. Ottenburg, 'Afikpo Markets', in P. Bohannon and G. Dalton (edd.), *Markets in Africa* (North Western University Press, Evanston, 1962), p. 121. Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 22 Nov. 1965.

<sup>21</sup> *UPCMR* 14 (Aug. 1859), 153, cit. Baillie, 12 Feb. 1859.

<sup>22</sup> Revd. H. M. Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 7, p. 44, 24 Nov. 1849, vol. 10, p. 55, 12 Jan. 1855.

<sup>23</sup> Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 22 Nov. 1965.

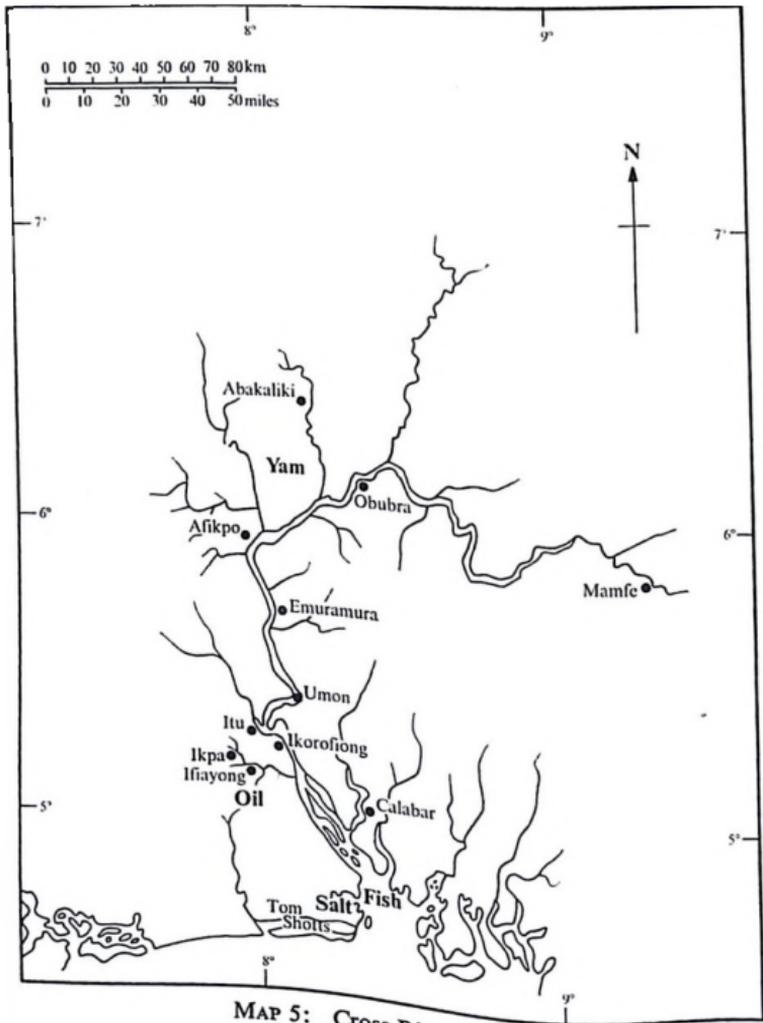
<sup>24</sup> Revd. Goldie, H. *Calabar and its Mission* (Edinburgh and London, 1901), p. 340. *UPCMR* n.s. 2 (1 Nov. 1881), 371, cit. Edgerley. Ibid., n.s. 6 (Sept. 1885), 301, cit. Goldie, 13 Nov. 1884.

<sup>25</sup> *UPCMR* 14 (Aug. 1859), 153-4, cit. Baillie, 12 Feb. 1859.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 13. Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 77, 22 Mar. 1851. Coulthurst to Nicolls, in Nicolls to Hay, 29 Mar. 1832, CO 82/5.

<sup>27</sup> Revd. H. M. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa* (London, 1863), p. 326.

<sup>28</sup> The Ntoe of Big Qua Town, 18 Nov. 1965.



MAP 5: Cross River economy

#### 4. *The Efik*

Such was the environment within which the Efik, the subject of this study, dwelt. Now their origins, social and political structure, and economic life, prior to the arrival of the Europeans, must be analysed.

Originally the Efik lived at Uruan in Ibibioland,<sup>29</sup> and as the Uruan still do,<sup>30</sup> they fished the Cross River estuary,<sup>31</sup> selling their catch at the up-river markets. But late in the sixteenth century they left Uruan after a disturbance,<sup>32</sup> and after settling temporarily at Ikpa Ene,<sup>33</sup> an island in the Cross River, and then at Ndodoghi,<sup>34</sup> on the eastern bank, they finally established themselves at Ikot Etunko, now known as Creek Town.<sup>35</sup> Verbal tradition appears to hold that there were five founding fathers who settled at Creek Town with their wives and families.<sup>36</sup> As can be seen from Chart 1, four of the founders were closely related, for Eyo Ema was uncle of the three brothers Oku Atai, Ukpong Atai, and Adim Atai, all being descended from a common ancestor, Ema.<sup>37</sup> Oku was the eldest brother, but Ukpong and Adim shared a different mother.<sup>38</sup> The fifth founding father was Efiom Ekpo, who was unrelated to the others,<sup>39</sup> and may have been an Ibibio who sided with the Efik in their dispute at Uruan.<sup>40</sup>

Not long after the establishment of Creek Town, about the beginning of the seventeenth century,<sup>41</sup> a dispute apparently led to the departure of the Ukpong and Adim Atai groups, who established themselves at Obutong, now Old Town. About the same time, Efiom Ekpo died, and his eldest son Nsa Efiom became head of the lineage.<sup>42</sup> Then Efiom Ekpo's daughter, Okoho, bore twins<sup>43</sup> to an Efut man.<sup>44</sup> It was customary for the secret society to kill twins,<sup>45</sup>

<sup>29</sup> A. K. Hart, *Report of the Enquiry into the dispute over the Obongship of Calabar*, Official Document No. 17, Enugu, 1964, p. 27, para. 69, p. 29, para. 79, p. 31, para. 87.

<sup>30</sup> Forde and Jones, p. 81. Enugu I.R. 120 EP 9303A, Uruan Clan p. 5, para. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Hart, para. 105. The Ntoe of Big Qua Town, 18 Nov. 1965.

<sup>32</sup> Hart, paras. 69, 81, 87.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 65, 69, 82, 89.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 66, 67, 82, 89.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 82-3, 87.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 83, 90.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 121-6. G. I. Jones, 'The Political Organisation of Old Calabar', in *Efik Traders of Old Calabar*, p. 159.

<sup>38</sup> Hart, para. 90.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 71, 85, 90, 98, 127. Jones, 'Political Organisation', p. 159.

<sup>40</sup> Hart, para. 81.

<sup>41</sup> See below, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> Hart, paras. 68, 73, 85, 90, 100.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 71, 85, 98.

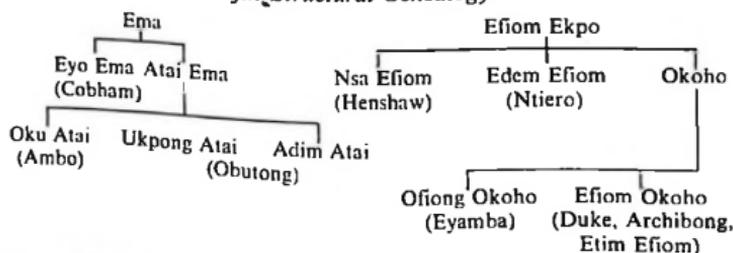
<sup>44</sup> Chief Ekpe Asuquo Ene Ekpo Bassey Edem, 26 Feb. 1966.

<sup>45</sup> Hart, paras. 71, 101. Forde and Jones, p. 77.

and Okoho's predicament was made worse by the fact that they were illegitimate. But Edem Efiom, her second eldest brother, arranged for her to be taken to Nsutana, an island in the Cross River.<sup>46</sup> There the boys grew up, and in the second or third decades of the seventeenth century,<sup>47</sup> founded Atakpa, now Duke Town.<sup>48</sup>

To date the arrival of the Efik at Calabar is not an easy matter. However their oral traditions, and those of their neighbours, the Qua and Efut, indicate that the Efik arrived in Calabar before trade with

## CHART I

*Efik Structural Genealogy*

Europe began.<sup>49</sup> Although it has been suggested that Old Town and Duke Town were founded in response to the European trade,<sup>50</sup> this is improbable, for the Qua and Efut would be unlikely to allow the Efik to settle on their land to participate in the European trade, which they would have wanted to keep to themselves. As it was, the Efik had to pay tribute to the Qua for the privilege of living on their land, until at least the early nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Hence the Efik must have arrived in Calabar before the middle of the seventeenth century, for as will be shown in Chapter 2, the European trade did not begin until then.

In the absence of archaeological evidence,<sup>52</sup> the only sources which can throw further light on the date of settlement are the genealogies. With other peoples genealogies can be misleading, because insignifi-

<sup>46</sup> Hart, paras. 71, 85, 98.

<sup>47</sup> See below, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Hart, paras. 65, 71, 85.

<sup>49</sup> The Ntoe of Big Qua Town, 18 Nov. 1965. Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 1 Dec. 1965. Chief Asuquo Edet Okon, 25 Nov. 1965. Edem. Hart, paras. 104-5.

<sup>50</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 309.

<sup>51</sup> Halleit, p. 202. Goldie, pp. 12, 150-1.

<sup>52</sup> Ikpa Enc, or Old Efik island, has been uninhabited ever since the Efik left, and therefore could be an interesting site.

cant men are forgotten. But this is unlikely in the case of the Efik, as the father's first name becomes the son's second name. Consequently any omission would be easily detected. The striking point about Efik genealogies and chief lists is their shortness. At Bonny and Kalabari, where settlement took place as early as the late fifteenth century,<sup>53</sup> the lists are much longer.<sup>54</sup> The obvious implication is that by comparison with Bonny and Kalabar, the date of Efik settlement is more recent.

Old Town was established by one of the founding fathers of Creek Town, Ukpong Atai, together with his brother Adim.<sup>55</sup> Chart 2 shows that there were only seven kings of Old Town, representing six generations, the last being Willy Tom Robins who died in 1854.<sup>56</sup> The fifth king, also known as Willy Tom Robins, was reigning 1786–8,<sup>57</sup> and the fourth, Ephraim Robin John in 1767.<sup>58</sup> Even if the first

## CHART 2

### *Old Town Kings*

1. Ukpong Atai
2. Oso Ukpong
3. Akabom Oso
4. Efiom Otu Ekon (Ephraim Robin John) c. 1767
5. Eso Asibon (Willy Tom Robins) c. 1786–8
6. Ekpenyong Etim Asiya
7. Asibon Eso (Willy Tom Robins) Died 1854

### *Genealogy*

1. Ukpong Atai
  - 2. Oso Ukpong
    - 3. Akabom Oso
      - Asibon Akabom (not king)
      - 5. Eso Asibon
        - 7. Asibon Eso

*Sources:* Etubom A. E. Archibong, Chief Antigha Efefiom, Chief Efiom Obo Efanga, Chief Etim Otu Bassey, Chief Otu Otu Efiom, Chief Oku Efiom Asiya, 14 Feb 1966.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, pp. 29–35.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>55</sup> See p. 9 above.

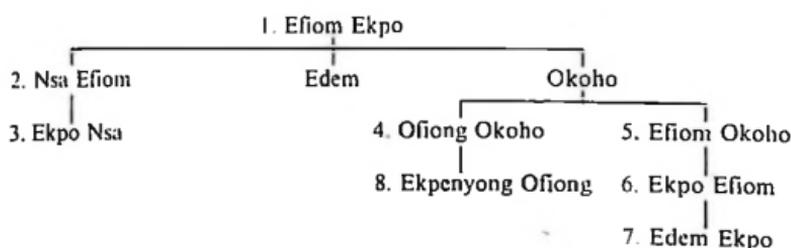
<sup>56</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 550.

<sup>57</sup> Antera Duke, 'The Diary of Antera Duke' in Forde, *Efik Traders*, p. 47, 19 July 1786, p. 59, 16 Sept. 1787, p. 64, 17 Jan. 1788.

<sup>58</sup> Gomer Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque* (London and Liverpool, 1897), p. 536.

four kings ruled for thirty years each, which is unlikely, Old Town must have been founded after 1600. This date is supported by the few generations recorded as heads of Efiom Ekpo lineage, indicated on Chart 3. Ekpenyong Ofiong was head in 1805, although he was then old.<sup>59</sup> Edem Ekpo, the seventh head, died in 1786.<sup>60</sup> If each of the seven heads ruled for thirty years, then Efiom Ekpo must have founded Creek Town at the earliest in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. But it is unlikely that the average period of rule was thirty years, as only five generations were involved, and two of the heads were twin brothers. So Creek Town was probably founded about the end of the sixteenth century, Old Town early in the seventeenth, and Duke Town, the last settlement, in the second or third decade of the seventeenth century.

## CHART 3

*Heads of Efiom Ekpo Lineage (to 1805)*

Sources: Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 4 Dec. 1965, 9 Dec. 1965;  
 Chief Joseph Henshaw, 6 Dec. 1965, 8 Feb. 1966;  
 Chief Michael Henshaw, 18 Nov. 1965.

Because the Efik had lived so long in Uruan, it is reasonable to assume that the main outlines of Efik culture, and social and political organization, were similar to those of the Uruan Ibibio. Certainly their language was Ibibio.<sup>61</sup> In Ibibio society, the smallest social unit was the *idip* consisting of a man with his wives and children. Several *idips* together made up a compound, known as an *ufok*, and a group of *ufoks* made up the extended family, or *ekpuk*, which has been described as 'a group of patrilineal relatives tracing descent from a single male ancestor'.<sup>62</sup> A village was composed of several *ekpuks*.

<sup>59</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

<sup>60</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 46, 4 July 1786.

<sup>61</sup> Forde and Jones, p. 90.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Although each *ekpuk* was self-governing under the authority of the *ete ekpuk* or lineage head, they were bound together in the village group by their common religion, secret society, and village council. Religion was supervised by a chief priest or *oku ndem*, who was responsible to the tutelary deity or *ndem*. This office usually descended in a particular *ekpuk*. The functions of the secret society to which the menfolk belonged are not fully understood because of their very secrecy, but the society appears to have had a judicial role. The village council dealt with secular matters concerning the village as a whole, including external relations, and was composed of representatives of each *ekpuk*, under the chairmanship of the village head or *obong isong*. Decisions were taken by the council as a whole, and the *obong isong* could not take decisions by himself.<sup>63</sup>

It appears that the Efik were organized in a similar fashion in the early years of their settlement at Creek Town. There were two basic lineage groups, the Emas and the Ekpos. There was a common tutelary deity, the *Ndem Efik*, whose priest was Eyo Ema, from whom all subsequent priests are directly descended.<sup>64</sup> There was a secret society called *Nyana Yaku*.<sup>65</sup> And there was a secular figure of authority, presumably the *obong isong*.<sup>66</sup>

If settlement at Calabar did not at first affect Efik social organization, neither did it alter their economic life. For they continued to be specialist fishermen<sup>67</sup> as they had been at Uruan, selling their catches at the up-river markets in exchange for yam and palm oil. But the arrival of the Europeans in the middle of the century was radically to change all this.

<sup>63</sup> Forde and Jones, pp. 71-5.

<sup>64</sup> Hart, para. 200.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 81, 101, 176.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 98.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5, paras. 104-5.



PART I

The Era of the Slave Trade



## CHAPTER 2

# The Slave Trade at Old Calabar

### 1. *The rise and fall of the external slave trade*

THE arrival of the first European traders at Old Calabar cannot be dated exactly,<sup>1</sup> and although the Portuguese may have known of the Cross River, it is unlikely that they traded there before the middle of the seventeenth century. For Pieter De Marcees, writing about 1600, advised traders to ignore all the rivers of what is now called the Bight of Biafra, because there was nothing to be gained there, and there was a danger of being stranded.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Ardener has recently drawn attention to Leers's 1665 edition of Leo Africanus, in which an addition to the text states that a great reef prevented entry to the Old Calabar river.<sup>3</sup> But trade had begun with Calabar by 1668, for John Watts, an English sailor, recounted how in that year the *Peach Tree* of London 'sailed to old Calabar, in the bay of Guiney', where she 'entered a river called the Cross river into Paratt island'.<sup>4</sup> She took on a load of slaves, which proves the trade was already established. But the fact that Watts, having been kidnapped by the inhabitants, could not escape for several months, until another ship arrived, suggests the trade was not very regular.<sup>5</sup>

However, English ships continued to visit Old Calabar, for in 1672 it was said that 'many ships are sent to trade at New and Old Calabar for slaves and teeth (ivory tusks)'.<sup>6</sup> Captain Reckord of the *James* took such a cargo in 1675-6,<sup>7</sup> and John Elliot of the *Welcome* arrived at Barbadoes with 210 negroes from Old Calabar in February 1679.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. E. Afigbo, 'Efik Origin and Migrations Reconsidered', *Nigeria*, 87 (Dec. 1965), 275-7.

<sup>2</sup> Pieter De Marcees, *Description et Recit du Riche Royaume D'or de Gunea* (Amsterdam, 1605), p. 93. J. Bouchaud, 'Les Portugais dans la Baie de Biafra au xviième siècle', *Africa*, 16 (1946), 220.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin Ardener, 'Documentary and Linguistic Evidence for the Rise of the Trading Polities between Rio del Rey and Cameroons, 1500-1650', in I. M. Lewis (ed.), *History and Social Anthropology* (London, 1968), p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii, 512.

<sup>5</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii, 512-15.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington, 1930), i, 193.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* i, 205.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* i, 243.

In January the following year Captain Andrew Branfill made landfall at Jamaica, with 278 slaves, also from Old Calabar.<sup>9</sup> So greatly did the slave trade expand in the next twenty years that in 1700 it was complained that 'there is so many Ships gone to Old Calabarr that you cann have no trade there'.<sup>10</sup> The Dutch traded occasionally at Old Calabar at this time,<sup>11</sup> and probably the Portuguese as well.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, it can be said that the development of the slave trade at Old Calabar during the last half of the seventeenth century reflected the changes that were taking place in the pattern of trade along the West African Coast. For everywhere the Portuguese dominance was being challenged by the French, Dutch, and English, and new areas of supply such as Old Calabar were being tapped, as demand for slaves for the 'sugar revolution' in the Caribbean outstripped supply.<sup>13</sup>

But it was the eighteenth century which saw the spectacular rise in slave exports from the Bight of Biafra in general, particularly after 1730. Curtin estimates that total exports per decade from this region rose from 4,500 in 1721-30, to 139,300 in 1761-70, and 137,600 in 1791-1800, a total of 823,700 being exported between 1711 and 1810.<sup>14</sup> In this period the English emerged as the leading traders on the West African coast, after several Anglo-French wars.<sup>15</sup> However, London's share of the trade declined as a consequence of the South Sea Bubble, leaving Bristol as the principal English slaving port.<sup>16</sup> These changes affected the ships coming to Old Calabar, for at an incident in 1767 there were only English ships in the river, four from Bristol, one from London, and one from Liverpool.<sup>17</sup> But as Graph 1 makes clear, Liverpool was of growing importance as a slaving port. Between 1795 and 1804, 1,099 ships left Liverpool for West Africa, but only 155 from London, and 29 from Bristol.<sup>18</sup> At Calabar, Liverpool certainly appears to have been predominant, for as Table 1 shows, of the 24 captains named by Antera Duke in his Diary for 1785-7, at least 13 were Liverpool men.

Yet, although the late years of the eighteenth century and the early

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. i. 255.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. iv. 82.

<sup>11</sup> Barbot, p. 383.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 465.

<sup>13</sup> J. D. Fage, *A History of West Africa* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 65-70.

P. D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1969) pp. 116-26.

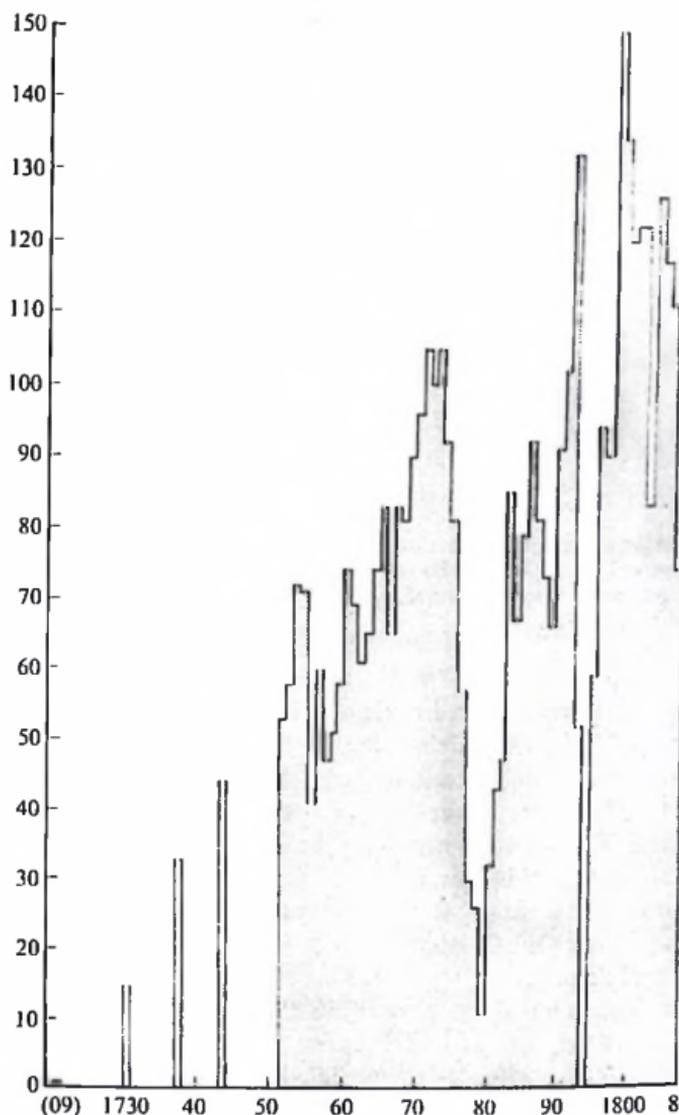
<sup>14</sup> Curtin, p. 221.

<sup>15</sup> Fage, pp. 70-80.

<sup>16</sup> *The History of Liverpool from the earliest authenticated period down to the present time* (Liverpool, 1810), p. 111.

<sup>17</sup> Williams, p. 536.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Appendix xi, p. 680.



Graph 1: Ships from Liverpool to Africa 1709-1807

Source: Williams, *op. cit.* Appendix, p. 678.

years of the nineteenth century marked the apogee of the slave trade,<sup>10</sup> a contemporary observer, Captain John Adams, stated that Old Calabar became less popular as a slaving port in these years, because

<sup>10</sup> Curtin, p. 266, Fig. 26.

## THE ERA OF THE SLAVE TRADE

TABLE I

*Captains known to have been in Old Calabar 1785-1787*

<i>Liverpool Captains</i>	<i>Others</i>
Aspinal	Brivon
Brighthouse	Brown
Combesboch	Collins
Tom Cooper	John Cooper
Fairweather	Hewitt
Ford	Loosdam
Hughes	Morgan
Johnston	Opter
Overton	Osatam
Potter	Rogers
Savage	Williams
Small	
Tatam	
TOTAL 13	TOTAL 11

*Note:* The list of captains is taken from Antera Duke's Diary. It is not a complete list, for many Liverpool men who sailed for Calabar, according to the Holt and Gregson papers, are not mentioned. See Holt and Gregson Papers, vol. x, nos. 457, 465-7, 473, 481.

port dues (or 'comey') were £250 compared to £150 at Bonny.<sup>20</sup> There may be some truth in this, for in 1762 a Liverpool Captain about to sail for Old Calabar was instructed by his merchants to 'use your utmost endeavour to keep down the Comeys which in General are too extravagant there'.<sup>21</sup> Jones has suggested that such a movement of trade to Bonny may have been due to civil war at Calabar, although this cannot be substantiated.<sup>22</sup> All that can be said is that, as Table 2 shows, Bonny apparently did handle more Liverpool ships than Old Calabar in most years, and in the late 1790s considerably more.

When Britain made the slave trade illegal in 1808, the trade continued unabated, and at Old Calabar the vacuum created by the absence of British ships was soon filled by those of other nations, particularly the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch.<sup>23</sup> Between October 1820 and July 1821, 162 cargoes of slaves left Old Calabar.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Capt. John Adams, *Sketches taken during ten voyages to Africa, between the years 1786-1800* (London, 1822), pp. 43, 112, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Williams, p. 486.

<sup>22</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1826, CO82/1.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Jamieson, *Commerce with Africa* (rev. edn., London, 1859), p. 21.

But it was in 1821 that the British fleet involved in suppressing the slave trade first visited Old Calabar.<sup>25</sup> and from then on, the trade fluctuated as to whether or not the fleet was in the vicinity. In 1825 the trade was increasing in the river,<sup>26</sup> and it continued vigorously in

TABLE 2

*Slaves exported in Liverpool ships from New Calabar, Bonny, and Old Calabar, 1752-1799*

(Figures indicate the number of slaves anticipated as cargo.)

	<i>New Calabar</i>		<i>Bonny</i>		<i>Old Calabar</i>		
	<i>Ships</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	<i>Ships</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	<i>Ships</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	
1752 <sup>1</sup>	6	2,260	12	4,670	8	3,130	
1771 <sup>2</sup>	3	1,050	16	6,850	11	3,250	
1784 <sup>3</sup>	11	4,210	13	6,900	11	4,200	
1785 <sup>4</sup>	15	5,450	14	8,600	8	3,150	(2,504)
1786 <sup>5</sup>	6	2,200	11	5,750	13	5,150	(2,828)
1787 <sup>6</sup>	5	1,860	9	6,650	7	2,360	(2,545)
1798 <sup>7</sup>	11	3,234	34	14,078	6	2,473	
1799 <sup>8</sup>	8	2,583	37	14,945	6	2,275	

*Note:* Numbers of slaves marked in brackets are calculated from entries, in Antera Duke's Diary, of slaves actually carried away. It is unlikely that he counted them all.

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Williams, Appendix vii, pp. 675-7. <sup>2</sup> Donnan, ii. 545-6. <sup>3</sup> Holt and Gregson Papers, vol. x, nos. 463-71. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 449-59. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 473-5. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 481. <sup>7</sup> Williams, Appendix xiii, pp. 681-4. <sup>8</sup> Donnan, ii. 646-9.

1828.<sup>27</sup> But in 1829 it was said to be entirely suppressed,<sup>28</sup> and the river was free of slavers in 1831,<sup>29</sup> and 1832.<sup>30</sup> That slavers avoided Old Calabar between 1829 and 1832 was due to the proximity of the British settlement on Fernando Po in 1827-34, from which naval activities were based, for Col. Nicolls, the Governor commented in 1834 that the slave traders were returning to the area again 'thinking we are gone'.<sup>31</sup>

During his residence on Fernando Po, Nicolls tried to persuade Duke Ephraim, the leading figure in Old Calabar, to stop selling

<sup>25</sup> Duke Ephraim to Collier, 9 Apr. 1821, in Collier to Croker, 16 Apr. 1821, FO84/14. Knight to Croker, 5 Aug. 1821, FO84/14.

<sup>26</sup> Hamilton etc. to Canning 10 Apr. 1825, FO84/38.

<sup>27</sup> Owen to Hay, 16 Dec. 1828, CO82/1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 Apr. 1829, CO82/2.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolls to Hay, 4 Dec. 1831, CO82/4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 Aug. 1833, CO82/6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 Apr. 1834, CO82/7.

slaves, and in 1832 was hoping 'that an arrangement might be made with him (Ephraim), for a very trifling present, which would do more to put down the Slave Trade than all the exertions of our active, expensive, but inefficient squadron'.<sup>32</sup> The following year he pointed out to the Duke and his chiefs the benefits of legitimate commerce,<sup>33</sup> but they continued to sell slaves, and ships which had loaded in Old Calabar were captured by the squadron in 1836, 1838,<sup>34</sup> and 1839.<sup>35</sup> But in 1840 two ships were captured which had taken slaves from Old Calabar, and two more slavers were wrecked at the mouth of the river, which virtually brought the slave trade there to an end.<sup>36</sup> Consequently the two Kings of Old Calabar were content to sign treaties with Britain on 6 December 1841, ending the external slave trade in exchange for five annual payments of 2,000 Spanish dollars each,<sup>37</sup> (or the equivalent in goods) a sum of about £416. 13s. 4d.<sup>38</sup> So it was that the slave trade at Old Calabar came to an end, for when in 1842 a French slaver, backed by a gunboat, tried to force the Efik to supply slaves, they refused steadfastly.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Exports

As has been discussed, the slave trade at Old Calabar lasted about 190 years, from about 1650 to 1841. But how many slaves were exported in this period is a matter for conjecture, as there are no adequate statistics. Table 2 on page 21 shows the few figures which exist, which are for Liverpool ships for eight years between 1752 and 1799. These figures are a very poor guide, as they give only the number of slaves anticipated as cargo. Nor is there any way of knowing how representative these eight years were. Moreover, the full total for each of these years must have been greater than the total carried in Liverpool ships, for although Liverpool dominated the trade, Bristol, London, and foreign ships still carried some slaves. However, the figures indicate that Calabar provided about 16.25 per cent of the slaves carried from the Bight of Biafra in Liverpool ships during the eight years in question. Assuming that this proportion

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Jan. 1832, CO82/5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 July 1833, CO82/6.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell to Wood, 28 Apr. 1838, FO84/262.

<sup>35</sup> Tucker to Elliot, 17 Apr. 1839, FO84/302.

<sup>36</sup> Tucker to O'Ferrell, 26 May 1841, FO84/384.

<sup>37</sup> Blount to Tucker, 7 Dec. 1841, FO84/439.

<sup>38</sup> Dike, *Trade and Politics*, p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> Foote to Herbert, (undated, but 1842-3) FO84/495. Canning to Admiralty, 26 June 1843, FO84/492. Raymond to Foote, 10 Jan. 1843, FO84/495.

was true of Calabar's over-all contribution to the slave trade from the Bight of Biafra between 1711 and 1810, then from Curtin's estimate that 823,700 slaves were carried away in these years,<sup>40</sup> it can be calculated that Calabar may have provided 133,600 of the total. These were the peak years of the slave trade from this region, so it is unlikely that as many slaves were carried away from Calabar in the years before 1711, and after 1810, although Badgley did estimate, in 1828, that from six to eight thousand slaves were exported annually.<sup>41</sup> So a reasonable guess of the total export of slaves from Calabar during the years of the slave trade would be 250,000 at most. The actual figure may lie somewhere between 133,600 and 250,000. It must be borne in mind that these figures are really only obtained by guesswork, and could be wide of the mark.

If there is little information about the number of slaves exported from Old Calabar, there is no more detail of their cost. What price evidence there is, is quoted in terms of the copper-rod currency peculiar to the Cross River and Rio del Rey areas,<sup>42</sup> which dates back at least to 1668.<sup>43</sup> Barbot at the end of the seventeenth century quotes male slaves as costing from 38 to 48 coppers, and female slaves from 28 to 37.<sup>44</sup> This suggests that the price of a slave varied according to his appearance, and according to market conditions. By 1767 male slaves cost as much as 100 coppers each.<sup>45</sup> The price rise could have been due to many factors, such as increasing demand in the New World, or decreasing supply in Old Calabar, or even a depreciation of the copper rod. But the absence of concrete information makes discussion of this topic fruitless.

Slaves were not the only exports in these years, for small quantities of ivory and barwood were also bought by the Europeans,<sup>46</sup> and at the end of the seventeenth century, monkeys from Old Calabar were popular in Europe.<sup>47</sup> The ships also bought their provisions for the

<sup>40</sup> Curtin, p. 221.

<sup>41</sup> James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1.

<sup>42</sup> G. I. Jones, 'Native and Trade Currencies in Southern Nigeria during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Africa*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Jan. 1958), pp. 46-7. See Chapter 5, below.

<sup>43</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii. 512.

<sup>44</sup> Barbot, pp. 383, 465.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, p. 539.

<sup>46</sup> Barbot, p. 383. Adams, *Sketches*, p. 43. Williams, p. 486. Francis E. Hyde, Bradbury B. Parkinson, and Sheila Marriner, 'The Nature and Profitability of the Liverpool Slave Trade', *E.H.R.* 2nd Ser., vol. 5, no. 3 (1953), p. 369.

<sup>47</sup> Barbot, p. 383.

middle passage,<sup>48</sup> including quite large quantities of palm oil,<sup>49</sup> some of which appears eventually to have found its way to Liverpool.<sup>50</sup>

### 3. Imports

Imports are even more difficult to quantify than exports, because of the lack of information. However, from what evidence there is, it is clear that the goods imported were of direct utility: iron, copper, hardware, and cloth.<sup>51</sup> Therefore the common accusation that the Europeans were foisting rubbish on to the Africans is not true. Certainly gaudy clothes and gold-finished walking canes were sent to Calabar,<sup>52</sup> and even elaborate wooden houses,<sup>53</sup> but these were not the basis of the trade, and were only for the personal display of particular wealthy men. A display of personal prestige was of great importance to the African traders, as it revealed their status and credit-worthiness, not only to their own people, but also to the European traders who would have virtually no other yardstick by which to judge. Spirits were also imported,<sup>54</sup> but they do not appear to have been very important. Early nineteenth-century material suggests that liquor was mainly used for 'dash' by the Europeans.<sup>55</sup>

Over the years there were some significant changes in the type of goods imported. For example, guns were not imported until after 1713, for Barbot does not mention them, and when William Snelgrave visited Old Calabar that year, the inhabitants were armed with bows and arrows.<sup>56</sup> Yet by 1767 guns were a standard article of trade.<sup>57</sup> Nor was salt apparently imported until the development of the palm-oil trade in the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

### 4. The effect of external trade on the domestic economy

The majority of slaves exported came from far inland, as will be discussed in the last section of this chapter, and unfortunately this

<sup>48</sup> Barbot, pp. 383, 465.

<sup>49</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 43, 113, Duke, 'Diary', p. 40. 14 Dec. 1785, p. 42, 22 Jan. 1786.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 55-6.

<sup>51</sup> Barbot, pp. 383, 465. Williams, pp. 539-40.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, pp. 545-6. <sup>53</sup> Hallett, pp. 207-8.

<sup>54</sup> Williams, p. 540. Duke, 'Diary', pp. 35-6, 7 and 11 July 1785.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Bold, *The Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide* (London, 1822), pp. 77, 80-1. Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 113-16.

<sup>56</sup> Capt. William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea, and the Slave Trade* (London, 1734), Introduction.

<sup>57</sup> Williams, pp. 539-40. <sup>58</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 73-4.

means it is not possible to assess what damage may have been caused by the vast outflow of labour. But as regards the lower Cross River the effect of the movement of labour was favourable, as the Efik themselves accumulated slaves to assist their trading operations.

It is also difficult to judge how imports from Europe affected the indigenous economy. However, on the whole they must have been beneficial. Iron was probably the most important import, the greater supply of which must have had far-reaching consequences. Now tools and implements could be made or sheathed in iron, whereas previously they had been usually made of wood.<sup>69</sup> The distant areas where the small amount of indigenous iron was produced may have been seriously disturbed, but nothing is known about this. The import of hardware would have had a more direct effect on the economy, European-made knives and axes greatly increasing the efficiency of the local labour force. Such hardware meant competition for the local smiths, but the fact that unworked iron continued to be imported in quantity indicates that they simply redirected their efforts into producing articles of metalware which were not imported, like hoes and other implements. When guns were imported after the second decade of the eighteenth century, the bow-wrights and fletchers may have also turned their hands to making tools. The copper which was imported was mainly used for currency, although as an extension of this it was used for personal ornament.<sup>60</sup> The brass basins or 'neptunes' which were imported were presumably sold to the salt-boiling communities on the coast, and thereby increased the efficiency of salt production. The import of textiles brought a new article of consumption to a people who had previously managed largely without,<sup>61</sup> save for raffia ceremonial costumes which are used to this day. As the amount of cloth manufactured in the region was negligible before, these cloth imports can hardly have damaged local industry.

##### 5. *The internal slave trade*

During the two centuries or so that the Efik were engaged in the slave trade, they built up a trading organization which channelled slaves to the coast, and distributed European manufactured and semi-manufactured goods inland. How did this originally small group of fishermen achieve this?

It is not clear to what extent the Efik and other people of the lower

<sup>69</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii. 515-16.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 516.

<sup>61</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii. 512, 516.

Cross River were slave-holders before the arrival of the Europeans. But Watts's description of Old Calabar in 1668 shows that slavery already existed.<sup>62</sup> Cannibalism and human sacrifice were also practised,<sup>63</sup> as they were up-river until this century,<sup>64</sup> which suggests that slavery existed before the Europeans came, at least to provide victims for feasts or rituals. As the Efik were very like the Ibibio, who were not great slave-holders,<sup>65</sup> conceivably those eaten or sacrificed were merely prisoners of war.<sup>66</sup>

It was a simple development from eating prisoners of war to selling them, and Watts supports this hypothesis by stating 'The slaves, they sell to the *English* are prisoners taken in war . . .'.<sup>67</sup> A century later Isaac Parker recounted how he had joined an Efik chief on a slave-raiding expedition by canoe in the 1760s,<sup>68</sup> and other observers of the time also tell of slave-raiding.<sup>69</sup> But by the 1780s a trading network had come into existence, for Alexander Falconbridge noted that the slaves were bought by the traders at fairs held two hundred miles inland.<sup>70</sup> Antera Duke, also writing in the 1780s, establishes that both raiding and trading provided slaves. One entry in his Diary notes 'Tom Aqua and John Aqua joined together to catch men'.<sup>71</sup> Elsewhere he says that he had sent his brother 'Egbo Young to Boostam to trade for slaves', and also 'Opter Antera to Enyong to trade for slaves'.<sup>72</sup>

The date of the development of this internal marketing system, so clearly established by the 1780s, is bound up with the origins of the Aro. They were the most important suppliers of slaves to Bonny, New Calabar, and Old Calabar, in the nineteenth century. The basis of their commercial success was their possession of the Long Juju of Arochuku. It was famed far and wide, and litigants came long distances to seek the oracle's judgement. Fees and fines were made in

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* ii, 516.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* ii, 512-13, 516. Barbot, p. 381. Snelgrave, Introduction.

<sup>64</sup> Johnston to Salisbury, 9 Feb. 1888, No. 6, Africa, FO84/1881. Johnston, Memorandum on the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, 26 July 1888, FO84/1882. Unsigned letter from H.B.M.'s Niger Coast Protectorate, 26 Oct. 1895. Calprof 8/2 vol. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Forde and Jones, p. 75. *UPCMR* N.S. 11 (1 July 1869), 398, cit. Dr. Robb,

<sup>66</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 115.

<sup>67</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii, 516.

<sup>68</sup> *Abridgement*, iii (1790), 53.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* iii (1790), 61.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander Falconbridge, *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (London, 1788), p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 28, 30 Jan. 1785.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34, 21 June 1785, p. 35, 7 July 1785.

slaves which the oracle was supposed to devour, but in fact the slaves were hidden and later sold. Beside slaves gained in this way, the Aro also dealt directly in slaves.<sup>73</sup> Their traditions maintain that they originated in a fusion of elements of different tribes, united by Okoyong mercenaries from Akankpa near Creek Town, Calabar. These mercenaries were successful because they possessed the first guns to be seen so far inland, which came from Calabar.<sup>74</sup> Presumably their guns also played an important part in establishing the Aro trading network. These guns are crucial to the process of dating the founding of the Aro people, and the network they built up. For, as has been shown above, firearms were not imported to Calabar until after 1713.<sup>75</sup> So it is clear that the Aro did not come into being until nearer the middle of the eighteenth century, nor did their trading network.

Coinciding with the development of the marketing network inland during the middle of the eighteenth century, came a sophistication of trading relations with the Europeans. It is unlikely that credit was given to the Africans in the uncertain conditions which Watts described in the early years of the trade. But by the 1760s the Europeans were advancing credit or 'trust' as it was known to the Efik in the form of trade goods, taking as security a hostage known as a 'pledge' or 'pawn', often one of the African traders' sons.<sup>76</sup> The Efik would then give the goods to their agents, and send them to the inland markets to buy slaves.<sup>77</sup> Holman described the working of the slave trade as practised by Duke Ephraim in 1828 in this way:

He induces the Captains to deposit a quantity of goods in his hands, which he sorts into such portions as would form an ordinary load for a man to carry on his head. He then sends his agents into the country with the goods to purchase slaves, promising the Captains their cargoes, amounting to any given number, within a stated time.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Dike, pp. 37-41.

<sup>74</sup> Ibadan I.R. 29017, Aro Clan of Arochuku District, Calabar Province, 1933, T. M. Shankland, A.D.O., pp. 9-10, paras. 35-7. For a slightly different version of Aro origins, see G. I. Jones, 'Who are the Aro?', *Nigerian Field*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1939), pp. 100-3.

<sup>75</sup> See above p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> Williams, pp. 533-4, 541, 543-5. Duke, 'Diary', p. 35, 24 and 27 June 1785, 7 July 1785, p. 44, 20 Apr. 1786. *Abridgement*, ii. 205-6.

<sup>77</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 34, 21 June 1785, p. 35, 7 July 1785.

<sup>78</sup> J. Holman, *Travels in Madeira, Sierra Leone, Teneriffe, St. Jago, Cape Coast, Fernando Po, Princes Island, etc., etc.*, (2nd edn., London, 1840), p. 396.

In effect the Efik traders were receiving credit from the Europeans, and then giving credit to their agents, expecting slaves in return.

Although there may have been credit involved in internal transactions before the arrival of the Europeans, the growth of credit, as the slave trade developed, created special problems, because of the large sums involved. Commercial credit of the kind of which the Efik were now availing themselves, was essentially capitalist in origin and nature, and having espoused capitalism proffered by the Europeans in this way, they had now to adopt institutions to govern the bad debts which might occur. Rather than copy any western institution to solve this problem the Efik produced a brilliant solution of their own, a new form of secret society called *Ekpe*. Like the introduction of guns, the development of the internal marketing system, and the trust system, *Ekpe* dates from the period of the rapid expansion of the slave trade in the mid-eighteenth century, as will be shown in Chapter 3, where *Ekpe* will be discussed at length. Although *Ekpe* had many other functions, its debt-collecting role was vital, and in the case of bankruptcy it had the power to destrain the debtor's property. It was therefore a genuinely African capitalist institution of an elementary kind.

The last question to be considered is the origin of the slaves which the Efik sold to the Europeans. The earliest slaves sold were the unlucky members of lower Cross River tribes captured in war. But as war became raiding specifically for slaves, and as the market network for slaves developed inland, slaves were brought from further and further inland. Falconbridge tells of English seamen being seized on the coast somewhere between Bonny and Old Calabar, probably on the Qua Ibo, and force-marched across country to Calabar where they were sold as slaves, thereby revealing a trade route to the west.<sup>79</sup> Antera Duke's men traded at Boostam (Umon) and Enyong for slaves.<sup>80</sup> And Nicholls in 1805 stated that the Calabar slaves came from 'Ericcock (Ikot Offiong), Tabac (Oron) Ericcock Boatswain (Umon), and Ebeo (Iboland); sometimes some Brassy (Bakasi) slaves and Cameroons Slaves'.<sup>81</sup> But tradition holds that the main slave market was Itu, and the majority of slaves Ibo, provided by the Aro.<sup>82</sup> Waddell supports this view, for he stated in 1849 that

<sup>79</sup> Falconbridge, pp. 44-5.

<sup>80</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 34, 21 June 1785, p. 35, 7 July 1785.

<sup>81</sup> Hallett, p. 204.

<sup>82</sup> Chief U. E. E. Adam, 22 Nov. 1965. Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 1 Dec.

the Ibo slave market was very extensive.<sup>83</sup> And Curtin and Vansina, using Koelle's *Polyglotta Africana*, have recently shown that there were large numbers of Ibo slaves liberated in Sierra Leone from captured slave ships, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Other liberated slaves who may have been sold at Old Calabar came from Ibibioland, and the tribes of the upper Cross River, such as the Akunakuna, Yako, and Ekoi, but there were also Tiv, and people from the Cameroons Highlands.<sup>84</sup> Waddell was aware of the latter source of slaves to the east, for he refers to the Qua market,<sup>85</sup> probably Uwet which he elsewhere states to have been a great slave market in the days of the external slave trade, but which had declined since its end.<sup>86</sup> There the slaves came from 'some district of Mbudikom, a country several days journey beyond the Qua mountains'.<sup>87</sup> As late as 1888 most of the slaves brought to Old Calabar were from this area,<sup>88</sup> and Chilver has recently identified them as coming from the Bamenda Grassfields of the Cameroons Highlands.<sup>89</sup> Many however may have been Tiv, for there was a slave route from the middle and upper Benue to Old Calabar,<sup>90</sup> and the Tiv shared the same copper-rod currency as the Efik,<sup>91</sup> unlike the people of Bamenda.<sup>92</sup>

So it was that the advent of the external slave trade revolutionized the Efik economy. Originally fishermen, the Efik became slave traders, at first obtaining the slaves by war and raiding, and then by purchase. As a proper market network for slaves built up during the middle of the eighteenth century, the Efik began both to receive and give credit, adopting a new institution, *Ekpe*, to govern the inevitable problem of bad debts. It was an elementary capitalist institution, of

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1965. Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965. Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 23 Nov. 1965. Ibadan I.R. 31013, Itu Clan of Itu District, Calabar Province, 1935, R. Floyer, A.D.O., p. 3, para. 5.

<sup>83</sup> P.P. 1849, (308) xix, 1, 1st Report, Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, p. 393, Revd. H. M. Waddell.

<sup>84</sup> Phillip D. Curtin and Jan Vansina, 'Sources of the Nineteenth Century Atlantic Slave Trade', *J.A.H.*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1964), pp. 186, 197.

<sup>85</sup> P.P. 1849, (308), xix, 1, 1st Report, p. 393, Revd. H. M. Waddell.

<sup>86</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 459.

<sup>87</sup> *UPCMR* 14 (Sept. 1859), 169, cit. Goldie, 27 June 1859.

<sup>88</sup> Report on the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, Section F. Ethnology, in Johnston to Salisbury, 1 Dec. 1888, FO84/1882.

<sup>89</sup> E. M. Chilver, 'Nineteenth Century Trade in the Bamenda Grassfields, Southern Cameroons', *Afrika und Ubersee*, xlv, 233.

<sup>90</sup> Curtin and Vansina, p. 190.

<sup>91</sup> Paul and Laura Bohannon, *Tiv Economy* (London, 1968), p. 237.

<sup>92</sup> Chilver, p. 251.

entirely African origin. Yet the credit which the Efik gave was dependent upon the credit which they received from the Europeans. In this way the Efik economy dovetailed into the international economy, where the demand for their slaves originated, and became an integral part of the international economic system. Such a revolution in the Efik economy inevitably resulted in substantial changes in Efik society, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

# The Slave Trade and Efik Social History

THIS chapter will discuss the changes which the slave trade brought about in Efik society. Although information about Efik social structure is very limited before the middle of the nineteenth century, care has been exercised not to project backwards the mid-nineteenth-century situation, for as Dike,<sup>1</sup> Jones,<sup>2</sup> and more recently, Nair<sup>3</sup> have suggested, by that time Efik society had been modified by the ending of the slave trade, and the development of the palm-oil trade.

### 1. *The incorporation of slaves into Efik society*

When the Efik arrived in Old Calabar about the beginning of the seventeenth century, their social organization was like that of the Uruan Ibibio among whom they had lived so long. Accordingly, their social structure was composed of family cells, of a man, his wives, and children. Several of these cells, related through their menfolk, made up a compound group, known as an *ufok*, or house. And several compound groups, acknowledging agnatic descent from a common founding ancestor, made up a lineage group. The original village settlement was made up of two lineage groups, bound together by their common tutelary deity, secret society, and council.<sup>4</sup>

But the onset of the slave trade introduced a new element to Efik society. For it is unlikely that the Efik were owners of many slaves when they were simple fishermen.<sup>5</sup> But now they required extra hands to man the canoes, join the raiding gangs, and later, to trade at the slave markets. Although Nair states that the Efik were not slave holders during the days of the slave trade,<sup>6</sup> the very earliest record of Old Calabar society shows that in 1668 domestic slavery was already common.<sup>7</sup> Mid-eighteenth century material bears this out, for Isaac Parker, an English seaman who stayed in Old Calabar for

<sup>1</sup> Dike, pp. 153-9.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', pp. 132-5. Jones, *Trading States*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>3</sup> Nair, K. K., 'Politics and Society in Old Calabar, 1841-1906' (Univ. of Ibadan Ph.D. thesis 1967), pp. 63-4.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 25-6.

<sup>6</sup> Nair, pp. 63-4.

<sup>7</sup> *Harleian Collection*, ii. 516.

several months, in 1765-6, remarked that Dick Ebro', the Efik chief with whom he lived, had many slaves which he employed in cutting wood, fishing, and as canoe boys.<sup>8</sup> And Captain Hall, a sea captain who traded at Old Calabar in the 1770s, affirmed that the canoe boys were slaves.<sup>9</sup> There are also numerous references to domestic slaves in Antera Duke's Diary,<sup>10</sup> including reference to a trading slave, in the entry 'my first boy came from Curcock with slaves'.<sup>11</sup>

As the structure of Efik society was based upon kinship, which determined a man's membership in family, compound, and lineage, the slaves who now were settled at Old Calabar were inevitably 'outsiders'. They were considered to be the personal possessions of their master,<sup>12</sup> and therefore appendages to the basic framework of society, without economic, social, or political rights. As the numbers of slaves grew, their masters, who could all trace their descent from one of the two Efik ancestors, became a ruling élite of freemen.

Yet slaves were expected to support and identify with the interests of their masters, for whom they had to work, and if necessary, fight. This gave them opportunity to achieve both wealth and influence despite their lack of kinship. Those slaves who were born and brought up in Calabar were especially favoured,<sup>13</sup> as they were fully 'Eficised', and by the middle of the eighteenth century there must have been many of these. But the most eminent was Eyo Nsa, whose career will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 4. Although not a freeborn Efik, Eyo Nsa became a great warrior, for which he was rewarded by the Ambos with one of their princesses as a wife.<sup>14</sup> This was tantamount to being granted freedom because it gave him kinship with the freemen by marriage. By his active participation in the slave trade, he became extremely rich, and by buying slaves for business and prestige, built up a large household of retainers which established itself as a new lineage group, and segment of the Efik community.

<sup>8</sup> P.P. 1790 (699), lxxxviii, Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee appointed for the Examination of Witnesses on the Slave Trade, pp. 133-4, Isaac Parker.

<sup>9</sup> P.P. 1790 (698), lxxxvii, Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee appointed for the Examination of Witnesses on the Slave Trade, p. 551, Capt. J. A. Hall.

<sup>10</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 33, 17 June 1785, p. 42, 23 Jan. 1786, p. 44, 20 Apr. 1786, pp. 48-9, 14 Oct. 1786, p. 49, 15 Oct. 1786, p. 50, 6 Nov. 1786, p. 54, 17 Mar. 1787, p. 60, 1 Oct. 1787, p. 62, 1 Nov. 1787, etc.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30, 21 Apr. 1785.

<sup>12</sup> Marwick, p. 325.

<sup>13</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 318. Marwick, p. 326.

<sup>14</sup> Hart Report, paras. 285, 287.

## 2. *Development of the house or ward*

But Eyo Nsa was not alone in creating a new segment in Efik society during the days of the slave trade. For the two original lineage groups, which formed the two segments of Efik society at the date of settlement, subdivided into six separate segments, which Jones has called 'wards'. The Ema lineage split into the Cobhams and Ambos, while the Efiom Ekpo lineage split into the Henshaws, Ntjeros, Eyambas, and Dukes.<sup>15</sup> Together with the Eyos, there were now seven wards. As all the wards, with the exception of the Eyos, had originated in compound groups which had formed part of the two basic lineages, they retained the Ibibio name for a compound group, which was *ufok* or house.

The reason for the expansion of particular compound groups into independent wards lay in the accumulation of slaves by the members of the compound group. As in the case of Eyo Nsa, successful traders needed many slaves to work their canoes, and handle their business, and as a result became masters of large numbers of retainers. If several men in the compound group were successful, the compound group as a whole would possess a substantial body of retainers. This would give the compound group political strength, and the power to enable them to reject the authority of the old lineage head, and establish themselves as a self-governing group, to all intents and purposes a new lineage group. Consequently it can be said that the Efik house-system was the direct result of the introduction of slaves into Efik society. Yet the fact that several compound groups broke away from the control of their original lineage group, as they filled out with slaves, did not mean that they no longer acknowledged their descent from the original lineage founders. This was still acknowledged, because it defined the free status of the ward leaders. All that had happened was that the freemen no longer accepted the political control of the old lineage.

Of the two original lineages, more compound groups expanded into wards from Efiom Ekpo lineage than from Ema lineage. Apart from the groups which separated to form Old Town, only two wards developed from Ema lineage. These were Cobham, which is the remnant of the original lineage, and Ambo, which grew from the compound group headed by Oku Atai, one of the original settlers at Creek Town. But from Efiom Ekpo four wards had grown up by the end of the eighteenth century. These were Henshaw, which was

<sup>15</sup> See *Chart 1*, Efik structural genealogy, p. 10.

the remnant of the original lineage, Ntiero, which was based on the compound group of one of Efiom Ekpo's sons, and the two wards Eyamba and Duke which grew from the compound groups established by the outcast illegitimate twins of Efiom Ekpo's daughter.<sup>16</sup> These last two wards are of particular interest in that neither could claim for their freemen agnatic descent from either of the two Efik traditional ancestors. Like the Eyo ward, founded by Eyo Nsa, their legitimacy was dubious, and yet, as will be seen in Chapter 4, they dominated Efik commercial and political life in the last third of the eighteenth century, and thereafter.

Each of the wards which came into being was governed in the same way as the lineage groups they had superseded. All the freemen acknowledged descent from the founder of the ward, and were organized in families and compounds within the ward. Each subdivision of the ward was governed by the elder and the head of that subdivision, together with a council of elders. If two subdivisions clashed they could put their dispute to the arbitration of the head and council of the higher subdivision, of which they were both part. Ultimately each ward was ruled by a head and council of elders, just as the old lineages had been. As Waddell described it in the nineteenth century, Old Calabar was made up of 'a number of small republics, each with its own chief and council'.<sup>17</sup>

The development of the Efik ward or house differed considerably from the development of the canoe-house at Bonny and New Calabar. There the original lineage-system broke up completely as slaves were incorporated into society, and independent canoe-houses came into being which could be governed by slaves. Jones describes the canoe-ward as 'a compact and well organized trading and fighting corporation, capable of manning and maintaining a war canoe'.<sup>18</sup> There was nothing analogous to this in Old Calabar, save perhaps for the ward established by Eyo Nsa. Yet this had nothing to do with manning a war canoe, and functioned just like the other Efik wards.

### 3. *The forces which united Efik society*

Although the incorporation of slaves into Efik society resulted in the expansion of certain compound groups to the extent that they chose to cast aside the control of their lineage heads, the resulting wards did not separate themselves from the village group. Even

<sup>16</sup> See pp. 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 314.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 67.

though Duke Town was on the other side of the river from Creek Town, the two settlements continued to form what was essentially one enlarged village. The original village with its two lineage segments, had been united by their common tutelary deity, secret society, and council, and this remained mostly true of the enlarged village with its seven segments or wards which had come into being as a direct result of the slave trade.

The first of these integrating forces was the cult of *Ndem Efik*, the tutelary deity whose guardian priest has always come from the Cobham ward which is the remnant of the original Ema lineage.<sup>19</sup> *Ndem Efik* is a water god, appropriate to the traditional Efik occupation of fishing.<sup>20</sup> He is supposed to dwell in the river near Parrot Island, where albino or light-coloured girls were commonly sacrificed to him.<sup>21</sup> Apparently the *Ndem* priest had once been of great importance in Efik affairs, and was known as King Calabar.<sup>22</sup> As late as the middle of the nineteenth century, he was the ultimate judge of crimes for which there was no precedent.<sup>23</sup> But although the *Ndem* priesthood still exists,<sup>24</sup> it had already lost much of its influence by 1805.<sup>25</sup> This was because the *Ndem* priest was debarred from trading,<sup>26</sup> an unimportant factor when the Efik were only fishermen, but decisive as they became slave traders. While other Efik freemen could trade, grow wealthy, and build up retinues of slaves, the *Ndem* priest could not, until he was left with nothing but ritual importance in a ritual which itself had ceased to be very important.

As the *Ndem* cult lost effectiveness as an integrating force during the development of the slave trade, a new cult grew up which helped to bind together the newly emergent wards. This was called *Ekpe*, and was associated with a secret society. The new secret society modified or replaced the secret society called *Nyana Yaku*, or *Mkpe*, which had originally helped to integrate the two lineages in the village group.<sup>27</sup>

*Ekpe*, or Egbo as it was known to the Europeans, is first referred to in the 1770s, for in 1776 Otto Ephraim wrote to Ambrose Lace, a

<sup>19</sup> Hart Report, p. 75, para. 200.

<sup>20</sup> Revd. Hugh Goldie, *Dictionary of the Efik Language* (Edinburgh 1874), p. 144, s.v. 'ka, v. t', p. 200, 'Ndem Efik'.

<sup>21</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 617. Marwick, p. 398, citing Anderson, 14 June 1862. *UPCMR* n.s. 4 (1 March 1872), 81, cit. Dr. Robb.

<sup>22</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 43. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 314-15.

<sup>23</sup> T. J. Hutchinson, *Impressions of Western Africa* (London 1858), p. 146.

<sup>24</sup> Hart Report, para. 200.

<sup>25</sup> Hallett, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Hart Report, paras. 101, 81, 176.

Liverpool merchant, 'I pay Egbo men yesterday I have done now for Egbo'.<sup>28</sup> And in 1773 'Grandy King George' of Old Town wrote that 'the New town people . . . has blowed abuncko for no ship to go from my water to them nor any to cum from them to me.'<sup>29</sup> But *Ekpe* must have come into being at a date nearer to the middle of the eighteenth century. Tradition maintains that the founder of *Ekpe* was Esien Ekpe Oku, grandson of Oku Atai, one of the first Eñk settlers at Creek Town. Esien Ekpe Oku is said to have bought the *Ekpe* secrets from Archibong Ekundo, a man from Usak Edet,<sup>30</sup> now known as Bakasi, on the Cameroons side of the Cross River estuary.<sup>31</sup> Thus Esien Ekpe Oku became Eyamba I, the first president of *Ekpe*. Later he transferred this office to his senior half-brother, who therefore became Eyamba II.<sup>32</sup> But Ekpenyong Ofiong, who was Eyamba III,<sup>33</sup> was in office in 1805, for the traveller Nicholls refers to him as 'Egbo Young Eyambo'.<sup>34</sup> He appears to have held office as early as 1787, for in a distribution of *Ekpe* entry fines in that year, he received more than any other member.<sup>35</sup> This is certainly possible, for he is described as 'between sixty and seventy' in 1805.<sup>36</sup> Thus he would have been in his middle forties in 1787. As it is unlikely that he took office before he was twenty, the very earliest date at which he might have taken office would be about 1760. As his predecessor was the senior half-brother of the founder of the society, it is improbable that together they had ruled for more than fifty years. In which case *Ekpe* cannot have been founded before 1710. A date later than 1710 is suggested by the fact that Eyo Nsa, the second Ebunko in *Ekpe* received this office through his wife, on the death of the founder.<sup>37</sup> Eyo Nsa held this position in 1805,<sup>38</sup> and died in 1820.<sup>39</sup> If he held office for fifty years, and the founder had also held it for fifty years, the society must have been founded at the earliest about 1720. But a more reasonable estimate would place the date of foundation of *Ekpe* closer to the middle of the century. Indeed the development of *Ekpe* seems to have come about in those years of the

<sup>28</sup> Williams, p. 548.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 543-4.

<sup>30</sup> Hart Report, paras. 177, 180, 182.

<sup>31</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, 'Note on the Old Calabar and Cross Rivers', *P.R.G.S.* 16 (1871-2), 136.

<sup>32</sup> Hart Report, para. 186. See List of Eyamba title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> See List of Eyamba title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Hallett, p. 198.

<sup>35</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 59, 31 Aug. 1787.

<sup>36</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

<sup>37</sup> Hart Report, para. 186.

<sup>38</sup> Capt. Hugh Crow, *Memoirs of the late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool* (London, 1830), p. 280.

<sup>39</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

## CHART 4

## Eyamba title-holders in Ekpe

Esien Ekpe Oku (Ambo) CT.	Eyamba I	
Ekpenyong Ekpe Oku (Ambo) CT.	Eyamba II	
Ekpenyong Ofiong Okoho (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba III	(King)
Efiom Edem (Duke) DT.	Eyamba IV	(King)
Edem Ekpenyong Ofiong Okoho (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba V	(King)
Nticro Ekpenyong Ofiong Okoho (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba VI	
Efiom Edem Ekpenyong (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba VII	
Edem Archibong (Archibong) DT.	Eyamba VIII	(King)
Orok Edem (Duke) DT.	Eyamba IX	(King)
James Eyamba (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba X	
Efiom John Eyamba (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba XI	
Adam John Eyamba (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba XII	
Efefiom John Eyamba (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba XIII	
Effa John Eyamba (Eyamba) DT.	Eyamba XIV	

CT. = Creek Town                      DT. = Duke Town

Source: Hart Report, para. 158.

mid-eighteenth century in which the pattern of commerce at Old Calabar was changing as the Europeans began to give the Efik traders credit, and the internal slave market developed. The introduction of *Ekpe* was an integral part of this process, for the society had important powers to control credit indebtedness, as will be discussed below.

*Ekpe's* functions were religious, judicial, commercial, and social. *Ekpe* itself was a forest spirit, which had to be propitiated for the well-being of the community. *Ekpe* society claimed to interpret the desires of *Ekpe*, and invoked his authority to back their decisions.<sup>40</sup> Being a spirit, *Ekpe* was never seen by anyone, but it had a messenger called *Idem Ikwo*, who dressed in a raffia costume with a black hood, and a bell fastened to his side. This figure went about the town carrying a bunch of leaves in one hand to denote his forest origin, and a large whip in the other, with which he whipped those who were not members of the society.<sup>41</sup> In this way the leading men of Calabar exercised control over law and commerce, in the name of a deity of which the rest of the population was kept in awe.

It was *Ekpe* society which made and enforced the law in Calabar. While the wards had complete authority over their own people, it was *Ekpe* which made laws for the community as a whole,<sup>42</sup> and adju-

<sup>40</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation,' p. 137.

<sup>41</sup> Hutchinson, *Impressions*, pp. 142-3.

<sup>42</sup> Hart Report, para. 152. Brief Statement of Henshaws Town, 30 Dec. 1877, in Offor to Derby, 14 Feb. 1878, FO84/1527. Statement of Henshaws Town, 20 Aug. 1878, paras. 3, 17, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 6.

licated disputes between wards.<sup>43</sup> G. I. Jones has recognized seven principal sanctions which *Ekpe* could apply to enforce its judgments. First it could boycott a person, by having *Ekpe* 'blown' against him, which would prohibit anyone from trading or having any other dealing with the offender. Secondly, it could place a mark on someone's property which prevented its being used until the mark had been removed. Thirdly, it had the power to impose fines. Fourthly, it could arrest an offender and detain him or hand him over to the person with whom he was at odds. Fifthly, it could execute an offender, either by decapitation, or by tying him to a tree in the bush with his lower jaw removed.<sup>44</sup> Sixthly, it could confine people to their quarters by hoisting a yellow flag. And lastly it could destroy or destrain a man's property.<sup>45</sup> Of these sanctions nearly all had a definite economic force, and it is clear that *Ekpe*'s powers in commercial matters were very great.

Its most important economic function was that it had the power to enforce the repayment of debts, an essential power in a society which had adopted credit trading. Holman describes how this was done in 1828:

When a person cannot obtain his due from a debtor . . . the aggrieved party applies to the Duke for the Egbo drums; acquainting him at the same time with the nature of his complaint; if the Duke accedes to the demand, the Egbo assembly immediately meet, and the drums are beat about the town; . . . If the complaint be just, the Egbo is sent to the offending party to warn him of his delinquency, and to demand reparation, after which announcement no one dares move out of the house, inhabited by the culprit, until the affair is settled, and if it be not soon arranged, the house is pulled down about their ears, in which case the loss of a few heads frequently follows.<sup>46</sup>

Because *Ekpe* had the power to collect debts, several European traders joined the society during the nineteenth century if not earlier, the advantage being, as Captain J. B. Walker related, that credit could be given to the African traders, with full confidence that it could be recovered.<sup>47</sup> It was this power to insist on the repayment of credit which lay behind the spread of *Ekpe* societies among the other

<sup>43</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', pp. 140-2.

<sup>44</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 472.

<sup>45</sup> Holman, p. 393.

<sup>46</sup> Holman, p. 392. Hart Report, paras. 166-170.

<sup>47</sup> *UPCMR* 6 (2 Oct. 1876), 284, cit. Walker.

peoples further inland up the Cross river,<sup>48</sup> for by adopting *Ekpe* they made themselves credit-worthy in the eyes of the Efik, and therefore could avail themselves of Efik credit.

Besides *Ekpe* society's religious, legal, and commercial functions, it also acted as a chamber of commerce and club for the important menfolk from the various wards, where they might meet over a drink, or the occasional banquet.<sup>49</sup>

Membership of *Ekpe* was open to all men, slave or free. There were nine grades of membership, the most important grades all having been introduced by Esien Ekpe Oku, the founder of the society.<sup>50</sup> The first four grades in order of descent were *Nyamkpe*, *Okpoho*, *Okuakama*, and *Nakanda*, and were only open to freemen. Beneath them were the remaining five grades to which slaves could belong, which were in order of descent, *Mboko*, *Mboko Mboko*, *Mkpe*, *Mbakara*, and *Edibo*. Membership to each grade had to be bought, and before one could be admitted to any but the first grade, one had to possess all the grades below it. Each grade had its own worshipful master, known as the *obong* of the grade, this position tending to be associated with a particular family. Above all the grades was the vice-president of the society, called the *Ebunko*, and the president known as the *Eyamba*.<sup>51</sup>

Of the *Ekpe* grades, it was *Nyamkpe*, the top grade, which formed the main decision-making council,<sup>52</sup> and *Okpoho*, the second grade, which implemented its decisions.<sup>53</sup> These grades were of course restricted to freemen, which has led Jones to conclude that one of *Ekpe*'s purposes was to keep the slave population in subjection.<sup>54</sup> Yet this cannot have been entirely so, for Eyo Nsa managed to achieve the exalted position of *Ebunko*, vice-chairman of *Ekpe*, on the death of the society's founder.<sup>55</sup> In fact the effect of *Ekpe* was to integrate the slaves into Efik society by giving them a share, however small, in the central organ of government. That they had an inferior status in the society was due to the fact that they belonged to freemen,

<sup>48</sup> Hart Report, para. 149. John Parkinson, 'A note on the Efik and Ekoi Tribes of the Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria', *J.R.A.I.* 37 (1907), 264.

M. Ruel *Leopards and Leaders* (London, 1969), pp. 217-8.

<sup>49</sup> Hallett, p. 203. Jones, 'Political Organisation', p. 137.

<sup>50</sup> Hart Report, para. 177.

<sup>51</sup> Holman, p. 392. Hutchinson, *Impressions*, pp. 141-2. *UPCMR* 6 (2 Oct. 1876), 283-4, cit. Walker. Hart Report, paras. 150-1, 157. Chief E. Ekpenyong, *M.B.E.*, 3 Dec. 1965.

<sup>52</sup> Holman, p. 507.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', p. 139.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145-8.

<sup>55</sup> See p. 36.

yet as the case of Eyo Nsa proved, upward mobility was not totally impossible.

So it was that men from all wards, both free and slave, formed a common organization which made and implemented the law, and instituted bankruptcy proceedings. Not only did it unite them in a common organization, through which they might meet each other socially, as well as binding them together by the force of friendship, it also provided the machinery to solve any disputes which might arise between them. Indeed, as G. I. Jones has suggested, it is because of the integrating force of *Ekpe* society, that the separatist tendencies displayed by the wards, as they grew out of the old compound groups of the original lineages, were restrained.<sup>56</sup> Because their interests could be pursued via the *Ekpe* society, they were content to remain part of the extended village group, rather than break completely away to form new and independent village groups of their own.

But *Ekpe* was not a secular village council. This last integrating institution of the original village settlement continued much as before, being made up of a group of elders drawn from the various wards,<sup>57</sup> without any formal restrictions. It was chaired as before by what appears to have been the *obong isong*, and it was responsible for matters pertaining to the village as a whole, in particular relations with foreigners, as will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Thus the external slave trade resulted in the introduction to Efik society of domestic slaves required to meet the demand for extra manpower. Consequently the compound groups of the most successful traders filled out with slaves to such an extent that they were able to cast aside the control of their lineage, and establish themselves as independent wards. Yet these emergent wards did not break away entirely from the village group, but chose instead to remain within it as new segments. For although the integrating force of the old fishing cult had weakened as fishing ceased to be the basis of the economy, a new and vigorous cult called *Ekpe* came into being which was more orientated towards the problems of commerce. *Ekpe's* secret society made and enforced the law, especially commercial law, and its membership was open to members of all wards, who could afford its fees, whether slave or free. Moreover, all the wards

<sup>56</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', p. 144.

<sup>57</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 29, 12 Mar. 1785, p. 38, 27 Sept. 1785, p. 44, 21 Mar. 1786, p. 46, 23 June 1786, p. 55, 24 Mar. 1787, p. 60, 26 Sept. 1787.

participated in the common village council which dealt with general affairs, especially the vital question of relations with the Europeans. So it was that the central organs of Efik government were modified to serve the interests of the several wards, who therefore were content to remain within the enlarged village. Nevertheless considerable political manoeuvring took place as particular wards attempted to gain control of the organs of government, as will be described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Slave Trade and Efik Political History

WHILE the previous chapters have shown how the slave trade developed, and the social consequences of its expansion, this chapter will discuss the interplay of the emergent wards for the dominant political offices in the Efik community, and the struggle by that community for dominance over the other people of the lower Cross River.

### 1. *Efik political offices*

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that originally the three integrating ties of Efik society were the *Ndem* cult, the secret society, and the village council. But as the slave trade replaced fishing as the basis of the Efik economy, the importance of the *Ndem* cult diminished, and the new cult of *Ekpe*, connected to the refurbished secret society, largely superseded it in influence. The village council was unaffected by these changes, continuing as before. As in Ibibio society, each of these integrating organs had a particular office-holder at their head. Indeed Captain Hall who visited Old Calabar in 1775-6, noted that 'At Calabar they had Three Kings, one of which had the Civil Government, the other was at the head of the Religion, and the third at the Head of the Law.'<sup>1</sup>

The head of religion was the *Ndem* priest, known even in the nineteenth century as King Calabar. And the head of law was of course the *Eyamba*. But the head of the civil government requires some discussion, as there has been great confusion among European observers about this position. In the nineteenth century he was known as the 'King', and the use of this term has led Europeans to the conclusion that this office conferred sovereign powers upon the holder. But an examination of the possible Efik terms for this office shows this to be a false assumption. There are three possible Efik terms for this office: *etinyin*, *edidem*, and *obong*.<sup>2</sup> In Ibibio, *etinyin* is

<sup>1</sup> P.P. 1789 (646), lxxxiv, Papers received since the Date of the Report of the Committee for Trade, on the Subject of the Trade to Africa, and particularly the Trade in Slaves, Part 1, Capt. Hall.

<sup>2</sup> Hart Report, pp. 213-14, Appendix A, Native Court Proclamation, 1902.

used for certain office-holders,<sup>3</sup> but its Efik meaning is obscure,<sup>4</sup> and Goldie's *Dictionary*, published in 1874 and still the standard authority on the Efik language, does not mention it. Goldie does however include *edidem*, which he describes as a title superior to *obong*, denoting one who held absolute power, but which did not apply to anyone in Calabar, as no one there had such authority.<sup>5</sup> By elimination, therefore, *obong* must have been the term for the civil authority, and Goldie supports this by defining *obong* as a principal ruler or king.<sup>6</sup> That *obong* was the Efik term for the office-holder, whom the Europeans called the King, is supported by the fact that when the Henshaw ward attempted to make itself independent in the 1870s by declaring its own king, the latter began to call himself Obong Henshaw.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, when the British in 1902 prohibited the use of the word king for the Efik civil authority, the term *obong* replaced it.<sup>8</sup> Identifying *obong* as the correct name for the Efik civil authority, strongly supports the hypothesis that the powers of the Efik civil authority were those of an Ibibio *obong isong*.<sup>9</sup> Far from having sovereign powers, he was simply the chairman and spokesman of the village council which dealt with general matters, and foreign relations.<sup>10</sup> If the Europeans thought he was the most important political figure, it was because he was the person they negotiated with, in his role of 'minister' for foreign affairs.

## 2. *The changing location of political offices*

As the wards emerged from the original lineage groups with the absorption of slaves into Efik society, the location of two of the three main political offices was affected. Only in the case of the *Ndem* priesthood, or *Oku Ndem*, was there no change. For this position has always been held by a member of Cobham ward, which is the remnant of the original Ema lineage.<sup>11</sup> That there was no change in the location of this office reflects the fact that the fishing cult declined in importance as the economic basis of Efik society changed from

<sup>3</sup> Forde and Jones, pp. 74-5.

<sup>4</sup> Hart Report, paras. 198-202.

<sup>5</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 527.

<sup>7</sup> Agnes Waddel, *Memorials of Mrs. Sutherland of Old Calabar* (Paisley, 1883), p. 121, Obong Henshaw to Mrs. Sutherland, 16 Mar. 1878.

<sup>8</sup> Hart Report, pp. 213-14.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 13.

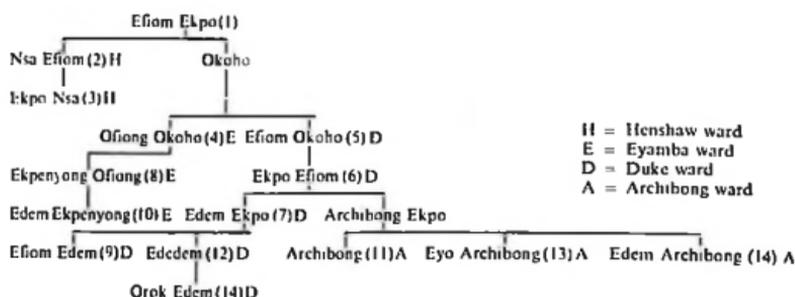
<sup>10</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', pp. 126-7. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 314. Hart Report, para. 188.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 33.

fishing to slave trading. The new wards did not seek the priesthood because it was no longer very important.

By contrast, the position of *Obong* became increasingly desirable, as it conferred considerable influence over relations with the Europeans, now so vital to Efik economic life. Originally this office was the prerogative of the Efiom Ekpo lineage, and the two *Obongs* Nsa Efiom and Ekpo Nsa, who succeeded Efiom Ekpo, came from what is now Henshaw ward, the remnant of the lineage.<sup>12</sup> Then Ofiong Okoho, co-founder of Duke Town, and founder of Eyamba ward, became *Obong*. He was followed by his twin brother, co-founder of

CHART 5  
*Genealogy of Efik Obongs, 1600-1891*



Sources: Hart Report, p. 55, para. 158.

Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 9 Dec. 1965.

Chief Joseph Henshaw, 6 Dec. 1965, 8 Feb. 1966.

Chief Michael Henshaw, 18 Nov. 1965.

Duke Town, and founder of Duke ward. Thereafter the *Obong*-ship has been held by a member of either Eyamba ward or Duke ward or one of the wards which separated from Duke ward in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup> The re-location of the office in these two 'illegitimate'<sup>14</sup> wards, resulted from their superior business success. This was due to their living at Duke Town, which placed them in earlier contact with the Europeans than the Henshaws who were still at Creek Town.<sup>15</sup> Moreover their dubious ancestry may have provided a spur to their commercial aggressiveness. Accordingly they rapidly accumulated slaves, which gave them the physical power to press for the *Obong*-ship, and being most accustomed to negotiating with the

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 33-4.

<sup>13</sup> See chart 5 above.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 9-10.

<sup>15</sup> Hart Report, para. 85.

Europeans, they also had the practical experience to justify their demands. This change in the location of the *Obong*-ship took place in the last half of the seventeenth century, for the Europeans began trading at Old Calabar about the middle of the century. A date close to the end of the century is suggested by the fact that Ekpenyong Ofiong, son of Ofiong Okoho, who was the first Duke Town *Obong*, was still alive in 1805.<sup>16</sup>

The *Obong*-ship was not the only office to be re-located in a different ward. For the *Eyamba*-ship also moved from the ward with which it was originally connected. The first two *Eyambas* were from Ambo ward, for it was the Ambo chief Esien Ekpe Oku who introduced *Ekpe*. He was *Eyamba* I, and he handed the office to his elder brother Ekpenyong Ekpe Oku, who became *Eyamba* II.<sup>17</sup> But Ekpenyong Ekpe Oku's daughter married Ekpenyong Ofiong of *Eyamba* ward, who became *Eyamba* III on his father-in-law's death.<sup>18</sup> Nearly all subsequent *Eyambas* have come from *Eyamba* ward, with the exception of three from Duke ward, or its offshoots.<sup>19</sup> Indeed it can be said that, from the late eighteenth century,<sup>20</sup> those wards which provided the *Obongs* also provided the *Eyambas*.

A similar change in location occurred in the case of the *Ebunko*-ship, the vice-presidency of *Ekpe*. This also had been held at first by Esien Ekpe Oku, founder of the society. But on his death it passed from Ambo ward via his daughter to her husband Eyo Nsa,<sup>21</sup> who was busily establishing a ward of his own despite his dubious origins.<sup>22</sup> All subsequent *Ebunkos* have come from Eyo ward.<sup>23</sup> The change in the location of the *Ebunko*-ship took place during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, for Eyo Nsa was vice-president to Ekpenyong Ofiong.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. Personalities and politics

It has been shown that the *Obong*-ship became located in *Eyamba* and Duke wards, and that the *Eyamba*-ship also became established in these wards. It was Egbo Young (Ekpenyong Ofiong), son of Ofiong Okoho, senior founder of Duke Town, who was the first in these wards to hold the *Eyamba*-ship. First recorded in 1777,<sup>25</sup> he

<sup>16</sup> Hallett, p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> Hart Report, para. 186.

<sup>20</sup> See below.

<sup>22</sup> See below.

<sup>24</sup> Hallett, pp. 198-9. Duke, 'Diary', p. 53, 16 Feb. 1787, p. 59, 31 Aug. 1787.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, p. 553.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> See Chart 4 p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Hart Report, para. 186.

<sup>23</sup> Hart Report, para. 186.

appears to have been *Eyamba* in the period of Antera Duke's Diary, 1785-8, for one entry reads 'Egbo Young and Willy Honesty dressed Grandy Ekpe in the palaver house',<sup>26</sup> clearly a reference to a ritual performed by the two senior officers of the society. And he received the largest share of an entry fee described in another note.<sup>27</sup> The many references to him in the Diary reveal his importance in Efik affairs in these years,<sup>28</sup> and after the death of Duke Ephraim (Edem Ekpo) in 1786,<sup>29</sup> he became *Obong*. For in 1805 Nicholls described him as 'principal chief and trader',<sup>30</sup> who was 'obliged to entertain all strangers, and, if required, give them his protection'.<sup>31</sup> This obligation was clearly that of the *Obong* in his role as spokesman for foreign affairs. Nicholls describes him at this time. 'Egbo Young Eyambo is between sixty and seventy, five feet ten inches high, very corpulent, and rather a commanding deportment; he appears a little disfigured by large bony excrescences upon his knees and elbows; he has a small nose and a large mouth, and all together has rather a pleasant countenance.'<sup>32</sup>

He died during the second decade of the nineteenth century, for his successor was in office by 1820.

Egbo Young's chief rival was Willy Honesty (Eyo Nsa). There is no agreed genealogy for him,<sup>33</sup> which suggests he was of outside origin.<sup>34</sup> He was a great warrior,<sup>35</sup> and played a leading role in the battle of 1767 by which Old Town was virtually excluded from the European trade.<sup>36</sup> Indeed he is remembered as a national hero, who defeated the pirates of Mbiakong at the mouth of Ikpa Creek, who had constantly harried the Efik trade-canoes.<sup>37</sup> It was in recognition of this victory that the Ambo chief Esien Ekpe Oku, founder of *Ekpe*, gave his daughter to Honesty in marriage, thereby conferring freedom

<sup>26</sup> Duke, 'Diary' p. 53, 16 Feb. 1787.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59, 31 Aug. 1787.

<sup>28</sup> Duke, 'Diary' p. 27, 25 Jan. 1785, p. 28, 5 Feb. 1785, p. 29, 6 Mar. 1785, 7 Mar. 1785, p. 35, 29 June 1785, pp. 36-7, 4, 14, 29, and 30 Aug. 1785, p. 40, 23 Oct. 1785, p. 41, 25 and 30 Dec. 1785, p. 43, 8 Feb. 1786, p. 46, 9 June 1786, p. 49, 26 Oct. 1786, pp. 52-3, 1 and 24 Jan. 1787.

<sup>29</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 46, 4 June 1786.

<sup>30</sup> Hallett, p. 198.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>33</sup> Hart Report, paras. 281-6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128, para. 285. Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965.

<sup>35</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

<sup>36</sup> P.P. 1790 (699), lxxxviii, Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee appointed for the Examination of Witnesses on the Slave Trade, p. 386, Mr. George Millar. D. Simmons, 'An Ethnographic Sketch of the Efik People', in Forde, pp. 67-8, note 14.

<sup>37</sup> Hart Report, para. 287.

upon him.<sup>38</sup> Active in trade,<sup>39</sup> Honesty established a ward of his own making in Creek Town, and was able to assume the *Ebunko*-ship through his wife on her father's death.<sup>40</sup> This took place after the battle with Old Town in 1767,<sup>41</sup> and before 1785, for in Antera Duke's Diary he appears as second in importance in *Ekpe* to Egbo Young.<sup>42</sup> The numerous other references to Willy Honesty in the Diary show how great his influence was at that time.<sup>43</sup> In 1805 he was described by Nicholls 'In person the king of Ebongo is about six feet high, with an extreme good natured negro countenance, has a very commanding deportment, and is a very great warrior.'<sup>44</sup> But between then and his death in 1820,<sup>45</sup> *Ekpe* was invoked against him, forcing him to pay an enormous fine which 'chopped him all to nothing'.<sup>46</sup> The cause of this attack is not revealed, but the most likely interpretation is that he had tried to establish Creek Town as an independent village, as his son Eyo Honesty II did in the late 1830s, and as the Henshaw ward attempted later in the century. The advantage he would have gained by so doing would have been direct control over relations with the Europeans, unbiased by Duke Town interests.

Willy Honesty had good cause to try and escape the strangle-hold over foreign relations held by Duke Town, for at Duke Town a younger and more powerful commercial rival was emerging, who was to monopolize commerce and political offices until 1834. Egbo Young and Willy Honesty had dominated Efik politics since the death of Duke Ephraim in 1786. But his son, also known as Duke Ephraim (Efiom Edem), turned his attention to trade, and by 1805 was 'by far the greatest trader',<sup>47</sup> although Egbo Young and Willy Honesty were still in office. He was then '... a very elegant formed young man, six feet high, with a very expressive countenance, and his skin is rather blacker than the Calabar people in general.'<sup>48</sup> It has been said that

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 29, 12 Mar. 1785, p. 33, 9 June 1785, p. 46, 23 June 1786. p. 60, 26 Sept. 1787.

<sup>40</sup> Hart Report, para. 287.

<sup>41</sup> Chief Etim Hogan Etim, 21 Jan. 1966.

<sup>42</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 53, 16 Feb. 1787, p. 59, 31 Aug. 1787.

<sup>43</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 27, 25 Jan. 1785, pp. 29-30, 12 Mar. 1785, p. 31, 14 May 1785, p. 33, 8 and 9 June 1785, p. 41, 25 Dec. 1785, p. 46, 23 June 1786, pp. 47-8, 4 Sept. 1786, p. 49, 19 Oct. 1786, p. 52, 24 Dec. 1786, pp. 52-3, 24 Jan. 1787, p. 53, 2 Feb. 1787, 16 Feb. 1787, p. 54, 22 Feb. 1787, p. 55, 24 Mar. 1787, 16 Apr. 1787, p. 57, 25 July 1787, p. 59, 31 Aug. 1787, p. 61, 9 and 22 Oct. 1787, p. 63, 25 Dec. 1787, p. 64, 8 Jan. 1788.

<sup>44</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

<sup>45</sup> Crow, p. 280.

<sup>46</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 310.

<sup>47</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

<sup>48</sup> Hallett, p. 199.

Duke Ephraim took office in 1814,<sup>49</sup> but there is no proof of this, and Robertson states in his book published in 1819 that he was not King.<sup>50</sup> Yet from Bold it is clear that he had become *Obong* prior to Willy Honesty's death in 1820.<sup>51</sup> Not only *Obong*, he was also *Eyamba*, as was his predecessor, for he signed a letter as Duke Ephraim Eyambo in 1821.<sup>52</sup> But unlike Egbo Young, he had no great rival such as Willy Honesty, who was now dead. Consequently his dominance was unchallenged, and he set about consolidating and extending his vast power. This is revealed in the changes in the comey distribution. In the past these dues had been made direct to the men with whom the Europeans traded, usually the ward head.<sup>53</sup> And as late as the second decade of the nineteenth century this was so, for Bold gives a list of twelve traders to whom comey had to be paid, noting that there were others who no longer received comey because they had ceased trading. It is clear that Duke Ephraim received most comey, and Willy Honesty had the next largest share, the comey being proportionate to the amount of business a trader furnished.<sup>54</sup> When Honesty died, Duke Ephraim was left as far and away the most important trader and receiver of comey. So the Europeans refused to pay comey to anyone but him. The oil traders led this movement, but the slavers presumably followed their example, for the Duke 'had nearly the whole of the Slave trade in his hands'.<sup>55</sup> So it was that by 1828 Duke Ephraim was *Obong*, *Eyamba*, sole comey recipient, and virtual monopolist of the external trade. To reinforce this position he was settling large numbers of slaves in the newly discovered agricultural district to the east of Duke Town, known as Akpabuyo.<sup>56</sup> These slaves formed a reserve of retainers, the physical reality of his power. He was the most influential man in Efik history.

<sup>49</sup> Nair, pp. 51-2.

<sup>50</sup> Robertson, p. 313.

<sup>51</sup> Bold, pp. 76, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Duke Ephraim Eyambo to Collier, 9 Apr. 1821, in Collier to Croker, 16 Apr. 1821, FO84/14.

<sup>53</sup> Duke, 'Diary' p. 33, 8 and 9 June 1785, p. 36, 23 July 1785, p. 46, 23 June 1786, p. 56, 21 May 1787, p. 60, 26 Sept. 1787, p. 62, 25 Oct. 1787.

<sup>54</sup> Bold, p. 77.

<sup>55</sup> James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1.

<sup>56</sup> Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 1 Dec. 1965. Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 23 Nov. 1965. Chief Bruno Efa, 30 Nov. 1965. Chief Maurice Efana Archibong, 19 Jan. 1966.

4. *Efik subjection of other Cross River peoples*

If the tendency within the Efik state was towards the emergence of a dominant ward, which gained control of the European trade, a similar process was taking place in relation to neighbouring tribes. For the Efik excluded all other peoples from direct access to the Europeans, establishing and maintaining a position as monopolistic middlemen.

The people of Old Town, who had separated from the original Efik settlement at Creek Town even before the establishment of Duke Town, had participated in the slave trade and prospered. But such was the rivalry between them and their cousins at Creek Town and Duke Town, that in 1767 what has been called the 'Massacre of Old Calabar' took place. Six British ships lay in the river, but as Old Town and Duke Town were in arms, trade was at a standstill. So the captains made a secret pact with the chiefs of Duke Town, to invite the Old Town chiefs on board in a pretence at mediation. But as soon as the Old Town chiefs arrived, they were seized and chained, their canoes fired upon, and their men butchered by the Duke Town people who emerged from hiding. It is said that about 300 people were killed in this treacherous action.<sup>57</sup> Further attacks were made upon a greatly weakened Old Town during the next thirty years,<sup>58</sup> and by 1805 Old Town was of little importance.<sup>59</sup>

Another group which was excluded was the Ebreros, whom it is difficult to identify, and may have just been an unsuccessful ward which dwindled away. Barbot refers to a King Ebrero in 1698, who supplied provisions,<sup>60</sup> and in 1765 Isaac Parker, an English seaman, went on a slaving expedition with a chief called Dick Ebro'.<sup>61</sup> Some

<sup>57</sup> Williams, pp. 535-9.

P.P. 1789 (646), lxxxiv, Papers received . . . on . . . Trade to Africa, Part 1, Capt. Hall. P.P. 1790 (698), lxxxvii, Minutes of the Evidence . . . on the Slave Trade, pp. 515-17, 527-9, 537-8, 557-8, Capt. J. A. Hall, pp. 633-6, Capt. Ambrose Lace. P.P. 1790. Vol. 88 (699) Minutes of the Evidence . . . on the Slave Trade, pp. 385-7, George Millar.

*Abridgement* (London, 1789-91), ii. 206-7, 212, 218-19, 244-5, iii. 155-6. Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965. Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 1 Dec. 1965. Etubom A. E. Archibong, Chief Oko Efiom Asiya, Chief Etim Otu Bassey, Chief Antigha Efeiom, Chief Efiom Obo Effanga, Chief Otu Otu Effiom, 14 Feb. 1966.

<sup>58</sup> Williams, pp. 543-4, cit. Grandy King George to Lace, 13 Jan. 1773, Hallett, pp. 204-5.

<sup>59</sup> Hallett, p. 206.

<sup>60</sup> Barbot, p. 465.

<sup>61</sup> P.P. 1790 (699), lxxxviii, Minutes of the Evidence . . . on the Slave Trade, pp. 133-4, Isaac Parker.

twenty years later Antera Duke mentions a Dick Ebrow,<sup>62</sup> although the fact that there is only one reference to him suggests that he was not important. Eyo Ebrow's son was Antera Duke's cabin boy.<sup>63</sup> But as there are no more references to the Ebreros after this time, they must have been driven from the trade or become extinct.

The Qua were also excluded from the trade. Duke records that they were active in the slave trade in 1785,<sup>64</sup> and Bold notes that the King of Qua was entitled to comey during the second decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup> However, at the time that comey was re-organized under Duke Ephraim, they lost their claim and were not to have direct contact with the Europeans again until after 1878.

But it was not only these adjacent communities which were cut off from the Europeans by the Efik. For the list of chiefs from whom provisions were bought in 1698 according to Barbot, included 'William King Agbisherca'<sup>66</sup> and 'Robin King Agbisherea',<sup>67</sup> clearly Ibibio chiefs, for Egbosherry was the name for Ibibioland until the late nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Yet the Ibibio were excluded from the trade during the eighteenth century, and the battles with the up-river tribes, which are traditionally associated with Eyo Honesty's military prowess, represent the culmination of this process.

Barbot also refers in 1698 to a 'captain Thomas, at Salt-Town',<sup>69</sup> clearly the chief of Tom Shotts, at the eastern side of the estuary.<sup>70</sup> They were prevented from trading with the Europeans at an early date, for in 1805 Nicholls describes them as 'having no communication with white men, and having no disposition to sell slaves'.<sup>71</sup> However, to embarrass the Efik, their chief occasionally attacked European boats and 'used to seize, kill, roast and devour all the whites he could lay hold of'.<sup>72</sup> Antera Duke records such an attack in his diary.<sup>73</sup> These incursions were finally prevented in the early years of Duke Ephraim's reign. For, about 1821, the Tom Shotts *Canning*.<sup>74</sup> In response, aided by some English seamen, the Duke attacked and defeated them.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 33, 17 June 1785.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28, 30 Jan. 1787.

<sup>64</sup> Barbot, p. 465.

<sup>65</sup> Bold, p. 78. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, map facing p. 242. D. Simmons, 'Notes on Antera Duke's Diary', in Forde, p. 74, note 66.

<sup>66</sup> Barbot, p. 465.

<sup>67</sup> Hallett, p. 197.

<sup>68</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 38, 27 Sept. 1785.

<sup>69</sup> Collier to Croker, 16 Apr. 1821, FO 84/14.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61, 3 Oct. 1787.

<sup>71</sup> Bold, p. 77.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Hallett, p. 197. Simmons, 'Notes', p. 74, note 65a.

<sup>74</sup> Crow, p. 271.

<sup>75</sup> Crow, p. 271.

About the time that Duke Ephraim conquered Tom Shotts, he also closed the Rio del Rey to the European trade. This place had been a minor trading place since Barbot's time,<sup>76</sup> and a long standing Efik sphere of influence.<sup>77</sup> But Ephraim forbade the Europeans to trade there because of the occasional attacks by pirates.<sup>78</sup>

Thus it can be said that the slave trade caused the emergence of wards from the original lineages, as their compounds absorbed slaves, and it was those wards most successful in trade which expanded fastest because they accumulated most retainers. Certain wards grew more quickly than others, for the Europeans traded and gave credit to those who paid their debts promptly and honestly. In the course of time, bad debtors lost their access to credit, and only the credit-worthy were supported. The more trust they were allowed, the bigger their organizations and reserves became, and the more they were able to justify being given further credit. Paradoxically, it was the three least legitimate wards, Eyamba ward, Duke ward, and Eyo ward, who prospered and became most powerful, no doubt driven to achieve commercial success by the insecurity conferred by their dubious ancestry. Consequently, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, they demanded and received the leading political offices in Calabar. The deaths of the heads of Eyamba ward and Eyo ward, during the second decade of the nineteenth century, left Duke ward in a dominant position under the leadership of the exceptionally able Duke Ephraim, who was both *Obong* and *Eyamba*, besides sole collector of comey, and virtual monopolizer of the external trade. His profits he used to expand Duke ward still further, using the newly discovered Akpabuyo territory to settle the slaves he bought. Externally, he completed the task of consolidating the Efik monopoly of trade, by excluding all other tribes from direct contact with the Europeans, a process which had been progressing steadily during the eighteenth century. His supremely dominant position was therefore the logical culmination of the processes set in motion by the slave trade. But it was a position never to recur again in Efik history.

<sup>76</sup> Barbot, p. 384.

<sup>77</sup> E. Ardener, 'Documentary and Linguistic Evidence for the Rise of the Trading Polities between Rio del Rey and Cameroons, 1500-1650', in I. M. Lewis, (ed.), *History and Social Anthropology* (London, 1968).

<sup>78</sup> Collier, Report on the Coast of Africa, 27 Dec. 1821, FO84/19.



PART 2

The Era of the Palm-Oil Trade



## CHAPTER 5

# The Palm-Oil Trade at Old Calabar

THIS chapter will discuss the evolution of the palm-oil trade at Old Calabar from a subsidiary of the slave trade to the main export business, and its growth up to 1891 when the imposition of tariffs by the British altered the conditions under which trade took place. As Old Calabar was the first palm-oil port, this chapter will help to test the generalizations commonly made about the development of the trade.

### 1. *The rise and development of the external palm-oil trade*

Although palm oil became the staple of the West African trade from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons as slaving declined, it had been purchased by the Europeans as early as 1522.<sup>1</sup> During the slave trade, oil was bought for food on the middle passage,<sup>2</sup> and as is shown on Table 3, small but increasing quantities were imported at Liverpool from 1772. Table 4 indicates that after 1790 when 125 tons were imported, British oil imports increased slowly until 1806 when 361 tons came in. Already Liverpool merchants were instructing their captains to buy oil.<sup>3</sup> With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, a dramatic increase in oil exports occurred, with steady growth until the middle years of the century, at which point the figures cease.

Old Calabar led the expansion of the oil trade. In the 1770s oil was bought there,<sup>4</sup> and Antera Duke apparently noted two ships taking away oil, 1785-6.<sup>5</sup> Adams refers to a considerable trade there in oil in the last years of the slave trade, but there is nothing to support

<sup>1</sup> Alan Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans 1485-1897* (London, 1969), p. 56.

Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (Glasgow, 1904), vi. 457, 467.

<sup>2</sup> P.P. 1790 (698), lxxxvii, Minutes of the Evidence . . . on the Slave Trade, p. 518, Capt. J. A. Hall.

<sup>3</sup> Messrs. Leyland to Captain Charles Kneale of Ship *Lottery*, 21 May 1802, Liverpool K.f. 96. Messrs. Thos. Leyland to Caesar Lawson of the *Enterprise*, 18 July 1803, Liverpool K.f. 96.

<sup>4</sup> P.P. 1790 (698), lxxxvii, Minutes of Evidence . . . on the Slave Trade, p. 526, Capt. J. A. Hall.

<sup>5</sup> Duke, 'Diary' p. 40, 14 Dec. 1785, p. 42, 22 Jan. 1786.

stiff competition continued from other firms,<sup>14</sup> which still entered the trade.<sup>15</sup>

The oil traders also had to face the competition of the slave traders until 1841, both Beecroft<sup>16</sup> and Nicolls<sup>17</sup> reporting how the arrival of slavers in the river brought the oil trade to a halt, as it did elsewhere on the coast.<sup>18</sup> So heated was the antagonism between the two groups that in 1828 an officer of the *Kent* was shot by a French slaver.<sup>19</sup>

As the number of oil ports increased from the 1830s, the decision to trade at Old Calabar in preference to other ports was largely determined by the supercargo's reading of current market conditions. Eleven different firms traded at Calabar 1847-51, six in 1847, five in 1848, three in 1849, six in 1850, and five in 1851. Only Horsfall & Sons were present in each of these years, and all the firms were Liverpool-based except one from Amsterdam whose ship came in 1851.<sup>20</sup> In 1855 six firms traded at Old Calabar, of which two had not traded there during 1847-51.<sup>21</sup> This speculative nature of the trade contributed to its competitiveness, for the fact that different firms traded each year made it difficult for buyers' rings to form.

In March 1854 the introduction of the monthly mail-steamer brought a new form of competition,<sup>22</sup> which ultimately revolutionized the trading system. Whereas previously the supercargoes had given out trust, and in return accumulated oil as they lay in the river for months, now produce could be shipped immediately to Britain on the steamer. So it became absurd to send a vessel to the coast to lie there for the season, with the crew under-employed and contracting the innumerable coastal diseases. Under that system, fixed capital in the form of the ship lay idle for months, and trading capital was also

<sup>14</sup> Owen to Croker, 5 Nov. 1828, CO82/2. Landers, iii. 329. Crow, pp. 284-5.

<sup>15</sup> Lee Trotman to Backhouse, 13 Mar. 1840, FO84/342.

<sup>16</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), ix, QQ 3406-7, Capt. John Beecroft [*sic*].

<sup>17</sup> Nicolls to Hay, 28 Oct. 1833, CO82/6. Nicolls to Hay, 4 June 1835, CO82/8.

<sup>18</sup> P.P. 1842, (551), xii, (1) Part 2, Appendix No. 3, Commissioners Report, The Palm Oil Trade. P.P. 1847-8, (272), xxii (1), 1st Report, QQ 2614-18, Wm. Hutton.

<sup>19</sup> Cummins to Badgley, 26 Jan. 1828, CO82/1.

<sup>20</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), ix, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, R. Dawson cit. John Clare. P.P. 1852 (284), xlix, Correspondence Relating to the Conveyance of H.M. Mails to the West Coast of Africa, John Clare to Admiralty, 16 Dec. 1851.

<sup>21</sup> List of Vessels laying in the River Old Calabar on 17 Oct. 1855, Inc. 6 in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975.

<sup>22</sup> Marwick, p. 296.

tied up over long periods. All that was to be necessary in future was a hulk or cask-house, and a buying agent with some local hands. Wage bills were cut to a minimum, capital costs reduced, and speed of turnover greatly increased.

So it was that after March 1854 newcomers entered the trade from which they had been previously excluded by their lack of initial capital. Exploiting the possibilities of rapid turnover, they operated on a lower cost-schedule than the old firms, whose prices they were able to undercut. The days of the sailing ship and supercargo were numbered, but faced with the probability of heavy loss, the established firms were not prepared to go under without a struggle.

Yet contrary to Dike's view, which echoes that of Consul Livingstone, the rivalry which ensued was not simply a struggle between a monopolistic group, and intruding competitors.<sup>23</sup> For competition under the old system had been intense. Rather it was a conflict between a group of traders on one kind of cost-schedule, within which limits they were highly competitive, and another group of traders operating on a much lower cost-schedule made possible by technological advance. While it was inevitable that the old-style traders should lose in the long run, it was only natural that they should use whatever means that were at their disposal to attack their upstart competitors.

The first to seize the opportunities offered by the mail services were liberated Africans from Sierra Leone who came to Old Calabar on the early steamers, and began to ship oil to Britain.<sup>24</sup> By October 1855, ten ships lay in the river, only four of which had been there less than 10 months, the rest having been there 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, and 20 months respectively.<sup>25</sup> This was because King Eyo II, the leading oil trader, had not supplied the oil for which he had taken trust, but was selling his oil to Peter Nicholls, a liberated African from Sierra Leone,<sup>26</sup> who had settled at Creek Town.<sup>27</sup> Eyo's son, and Black Davis, an important Duke Town trader, had been seized and imprisoned on board ship according to the traditional fashion of

<sup>23</sup> Dike, pp. 114-15, cit. Livingstone to Stanley, 1 Oct. 1866, FO2/47.

<sup>24</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 29 Sept. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>25</sup> List of Vessels laying in the River Old Calabar, Inc. 6 in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975.

<sup>26</sup> Journal of Proceedings, in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975. C. Fyfe, 'Peter Nicholls—Old Calabar and Freetown', *J.H.S.N.* vol. 2, no. 1, (Dec. 1960), pp. 105 etc.

<sup>27</sup> Lynslager to Cuthbertson, 5 Nov. 1855, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 12 Mar. 1856, FO84/1001.

forcing debts to be paid, without much effect.<sup>28</sup> So in November, 16 puncheons of Nicholls's oil were seized as they lay on the beach awaiting the steamer, by Captain Cuthbertson, who considered himself to have a prior claim to the oil, having given Eyo credit.<sup>29</sup>

This dispute set the scene for the turmoil which developed in the next few years between the supercargoes and those shipping on the steamers. Fundamentally, the supercargoes argued that the Efik must liquidate their existing trust debts before selling to the newcomers. But the Efik, supported by the new arrivals, insisted that although trust must eventually be honoured, there was no time-limit by which point debts must be paid, and that in the meantime they might sell to whom they wished. In practice this meant that the Efik were using the supercargoes' trust to purchase oil inland, which was then sold to the Sierra Leoneans, while they were paying off trust little by little.<sup>30</sup>

In May 1856 Captain Davies seized oil belonging to Daniel Hedd, another Sierra Leonean,<sup>31</sup> and in July, Antica Ambo was seized for debt.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, by October, ten ships were lying in the river, with trust out for 9,030 tons of oil, although recent annual production had been only 4,500 tons.<sup>33</sup> Six of the ships had been held up since at least the previous November,<sup>34</sup> and of these, Captain Davies's ships had been there for two years.<sup>35</sup> What is surprising is that since November, four ships had arrived and given trust despite the situation. It appears, therefore, that the supercargoes were hoping to defeat the Sierra Leoneans by giving trust, and insisting that the Efik repay it before trading with the newcomers.<sup>36</sup> Traders who did not do so were imprisoned, and any oil about to be put aboard the

<sup>28</sup> Journal of Proceedings in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 566.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolls to Lynslager, 2 Nov. 1855, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 12 Mar. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>30</sup> Davies to Hutchinson, 13 Oct. 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 1 Nov. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>31</sup> Hedd to Hutchinson, 21 May 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>32</sup> King Eyo to Hutchinson, 25 July 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 28 July 1856, ST 97. FO84/1001.

<sup>33</sup> Davies to Hutchinson, 13 Oct. 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 1 Nov. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>34</sup> List of Vessels laying in the River Old Calabar, Inc. 6, in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975.

<sup>35</sup> Davies to Hutchinson, 13 Oct. 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 1 Nov. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>36</sup> Board of Trade to Earl Shelborne, 16 Nov. 1857, BT 1/545/1794.

mail steamer was seized. This resort to direct action was facilitated by the Foreign Office's statement on the Nicholls affair that supercargoes were not accountable in English law for their actions in Calabar to Sierra Leoneans and others who were beyond the jurisdiction of English law. While such actions were disapproved of, the only influence the Consul had was his 'good offices'.<sup>37</sup> In January 1857, Mr. Hearn seized oil belonging to James Haddison,<sup>38</sup> a mission employee from Jamaica.<sup>39</sup> So the supercargoes won the initial skirmish, for Nicholls had returned to Sierra Leone in disgust,<sup>40</sup> and Hedd and Haddison had lost their oil.

But in 1857 the situation took a turn against the supercargoes. The *Olinda* from Liverpool arrived in the river chartered by King Eyo II.<sup>41</sup> Despite Eyo's agreeing to liquidate his debts before loading the *Olinda*,<sup>42</sup> she sailed fully loaded in July.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile Eyo continued to ship oil via his steward, on the mail boats,<sup>44</sup> and in June 1857 two Scotsmen, Mr. Inglis and Mr. Smith, arrived to begin shipping oil on the steamers, taking up residence at the Mission.<sup>45</sup> Being British subjects, they could not be treated by the supercargoes with the impunity relied on in the case of the Sierra Leoneans.

In 1858 the situation became even worse for the supercargoes, for the *Olinda* returned,<sup>46</sup> and both Efik Kings died, King Duke of Duke Town on 11 August,<sup>47</sup> and King Eyo II, still greatly in debt, on 3 December.<sup>48</sup> Within a few weeks, a fire destroyed King Eyo's palace and out-houses, making it unlikely his debts would ever be paid.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Clarendon to Hutchinson, 21 May 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>38</sup> Haddison to Hutchinson, 30 Jan. 1857, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 Feb. 1857, ST 10, FO84/1030.

<sup>39</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 Aug. 1857, ST 47, FO84/1030.

<sup>40</sup> Nicolls to Cuthbertson, 15 Apr. 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>41</sup> Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 19 Apr. 1857, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 29 Apr. 1857, ST 23, FO84/1030.

<sup>42</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 29 Apr. 1857, ST 23, FO84/1030.

<sup>43</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 Aug. 1857, ST 46, FO84/1030. Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 25 July 1857, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 31 Aug. 1857, ST 50, FO84/1030.

<sup>44</sup> Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 25 July 1857.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Smith and Inglis to Hutchinson (undated), in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 24 May 1858, ST 21, FO84/1061.

<sup>46</sup> Deposition of Mr. Michael Hearn, 2 Mar. 1858, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 25 May 1858, ST 22, FO84/1061.

<sup>47</sup> Marwick p. 374.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 376. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 646.

<sup>49</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 644.

By 1859 the situation was desperate. Tyson and Richmond sent one ship home empty because it was going rotten after lingering two and a half years. Michael Hearn, one of their supercargoes, seized Adam Archibong, a leading Efik debtor.<sup>50</sup> When Hearn's brother William, who also worked for Tyson and Richmond, arrived in the autumn, his ship was banned by the new King, who was Adam Archibong's brother.<sup>51</sup> Such was the resulting bitterness between the supercargoes that Mr. Cheetham of Horsfall's<sup>52</sup> suggested to his merchants that Consul Hutchinson had accepted bribes from the Hearn's.<sup>53</sup> This accounted for his connivance at the imprisonment of Adam Archibong, which had led to a total stoppage of trade,<sup>54</sup> and his refusal to recognize John Archibong as King until the ban on William Hearn's ship was removed.<sup>55</sup> A full Foreign Office enquiry was made into these accusations,<sup>56</sup> and although Dike and Nair have said that Hutchinson was found guilty and removed from office,<sup>57</sup> he in fact successfully defended himself against the bribery charge.<sup>58</sup> He was translated from Fernando Po merely for showing a lack of judgement and discretion, and far from being dismissed he was later Consul at Callao.<sup>59</sup>

Hutchinson's departure made no difference to the problems of the supercargoes, for in 1861 Stuart and Douglas alone were owed 1,000 tons of oil.<sup>60</sup> However many such debts must have been written off, for in April 1862 the price of oil in Britain plummeted. The supercargoes met, and decided to reduce the price they were prepared to offer. The Efik refused to accept the new prices, and stopped all trade.<sup>61</sup>

With the drastic fall in prices, many Liverpool firms cut their losses, and stopped trading at Calabar. By 1864, only three Liverpool firms

<sup>50</sup> Hearn to Hutchinson, 1 Mar. 1859, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, ST 12 FO84/1087.

<sup>51</sup> Hutchinson to Russell, 25 Jan. 1860, ST 1, FO84/1117.

<sup>52</sup> F.O. to Hutchinson, 4 Sept. 1860, FO84/1117.

<sup>53</sup> Hutchinson to Russell, 12 Sept. 1860, FO84/1117.

<sup>54</sup> Archibong to supercargoes, 28 Feb. 1859, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 21 Mar. 1859, ST 12, FO 84/1087.

<sup>55</sup> Hutchinson to Russell, 25 Jan. 1860, FO84/1117.

<sup>56</sup> F.O. to Hutchinson, 4 Sept. 1860, FO84/1117.

<sup>57</sup> Dike, p. 124, Nair, p. 224.

<sup>58</sup> F.O. Internal Memo, Sgd 'W', 18 Sept. 1860, FO84/1117.

<sup>59</sup> *African Times*, 28 Mar. 1874, p. 34.

<sup>60</sup> Stuart and Douglas to Russell, 2 Jan. 1861, Calprof 54/9/13 Enugu.

<sup>61</sup> Supercargoes to Burton, 28 Apr. 1862, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

were still trading there, Horsfall & Co., Stuart & Douglas, and Tyson, Richmond, and Jones. Three Glasgow firms had now entered the river, Walker, Scott & Co., Hamilton & Co., and Taylor, Laughland & Co. And there was the Company of African Merchants, and the Amsterdam firm of Messrs. Trankranem, making eight houses in all. But the supercargoes had gone, and each house now operated through an agent who lived aboard a hulk, with a cask-house on the beach.<sup>62</sup>

It was the fall in prices in 1862 which finally dealt the death blow to the supercargo system. Once the high prices of the crisis years 1854-62 had gone, it was no longer economic to maintain the old capital expensive way of trading, and those firms who wished to remain in business had to adopt the agent system. Some firms were forced out of the trade altogether. Yet the switch to the agent system did not mean the trade became less competitive; on the contrary new firms entered the market, and as many traded as before. However, the development of the agent system did spell death to the hopes of the liberated Africans, for the agents could now operate as cheaply, and had far bigger capital resources behind them.

Nevertheless the supremacy of the steamship was not complete, many of the trading companies still using their own sailing ships to collect oil from their agents.<sup>63</sup> This more efficient use of their own ships enabled them to compete with the steamships. But the late sixties saw a decline of the sailing ship and the victory of steam, particularly after the West African Mail Company started a fortnightly service in 1866.<sup>64</sup> In 1869 another steamship line began operations in Calabar, resulting in five steamships a month, and reduced freight rates.<sup>65</sup> As a result trading ships virtually ceased to come to Calabar,<sup>66</sup> and only the occasional sailing ship with a coarse and cheap cargo was to be seen in the early seventies.<sup>67</sup>

Although prices paid for palm oil in Britain improved in the late sixties with the increasing use of oil as a flux in the tinsplate industry, business apparently remained poor for the traders. In September 1869 John Holt noted in his diary that 'The losses of all concerned

<sup>62</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>63</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 1 Oct. 1866, FO2/47.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx (1), Africa, West Coast, Old Calabar, Report by Consul Livingstone on the Trade and Commerce of Old Calabar for the Year 1872.

<sup>66</sup> Livingstone to Clarendon, 3 Dec. 1869, No. 36, FO84/1308.

<sup>67</sup> Undated Memorandum, signed Livingstone, FO84/1343.

in the palm oil trade have been large this year.<sup>68</sup> Although oil was plentiful at Old Calabar in 1870,<sup>69</sup> the early seventies in general were poor years for the European merchants, as there was excessive competition between the old houses, and newly arrived traders with limited capital, working for themselves.<sup>70</sup> There were two of these new men in Calabar in 1871, D. J. B. Jansen and George Watts, the latter playing an important role in Calabar affairs during the next few years. They faced the competition of eight other houses, four from Liverpool and three from Glasgow.<sup>71</sup> So intense was competition that in 1874 the Old Calabar Chamber of Commerce sought the help of the African Association in Liverpool in making an agreement to reduce prices, as the numerous previous attempts had always failed.<sup>72</sup> So bad was the situation that McCoskry and Greer had already decided to withdraw from the trade and sell their hulk.<sup>73</sup>

Connected to this intense competition in Old Calabar was the opening of the kernel trade in 1869, probably due to the enterprise of Captain J. B. Walker,<sup>74</sup> an agent, who visited the oil-producing villages with a missionary, and persuaded them to start supplying kernels. These were now in demand in Europe for the newly developed manufacture of margarine.<sup>75</sup> But the Efik banned the kernel trade in 1872, as it was causing a glut of European goods at the markets, depressing their exchange value to the disadvantage of the oil middlemen.<sup>76</sup> It was not until 1874 that Consul Hartley was able to persuade the Efik Chiefs to re-open the kernel trade.<sup>77</sup>

The attempt to form a price ring in 1874 must have been unsuccessful, for in 1883 W. Tyrer, an agent, sought an agreement over prices for bad oil and short measures, because agreement for a general price-reduction could not be made.<sup>78</sup> But late in 1883 there was a sudden price rise in Britain, which provoked such rivalry on the coast that the merchants had to instruct their agents to reduce prices

<sup>68</sup> Cecil R. Holt, (ed.), *The Diary of John Holt* (Liverpool, 1948), p. 149.

<sup>69</sup> Livingstone to Clarendon, 10 June 1870, FO84/1326.

<sup>70</sup> P.P. 1873, lxxv (1), Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>71</sup> Agents and Merchants to Hopkins, 25 July 1871, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Old Calabar Chamber of Commerce to African Association, 30 Nov. 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 4/3 vol. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Walker to Hartley, 28 Sept. 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 3.

<sup>74</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 2 (1 July, 1869), 398, citing Dr. Robb.

<sup>75</sup> Allan McPhee, *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa* (London, 1926), pp. 34-5.

<sup>76</sup> P.P. 1873, lxxv, 1, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>77</sup> Hartley to Granville, 20 Mar. 1874, No. 6, FO84/1401.

<sup>78</sup> Tyrer to Owen, 1 Feb. 1883, Calprof Ibadan 3/2.

in order to maintain a profit margin.<sup>79</sup> So at long last an agreement was made in Old Calabar to hold prices down.<sup>80</sup> New price lists were issued to all agents on 27 December, and a meeting was called for the next day to make an agreement on gauge and dirty oil.<sup>81</sup>

Under the agreement, produce was divided according to the capital each firm had invested in the river. Of the 8 shares, Taylor, Laughland & Co. received  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , Thomas Harrison & Co.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , British and Continental African Co.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , R. & W. King  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , Stuart & Douglas  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , and George Watts  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Some parallels can be seen between this division and the proportion of estimated capital investment each later handed to the African Association, Laughlands giving £17,734, British and Continental £18,470, Kings £14,582, Harrisons £13,772, Stuarts £7,735, and Watts £8,962. The validity of this division is shown by each firm's exports in 1883, for, out of a total of 7,365 tons, Harrisons exported 2,000 tons, Laughlands 1,600 tons, British and Continental 1,226 tons, Kings 1,439 tons, and Watts 450 tons.<sup>82</sup>

But it was soon apparent that agents were circumventing the pool, and Harrisons' agent broke the price agreement by making a secret pact with some Efik traders. The original agreement therefore was revised to become a quota arrangement with prices no longer restricted. This second agreement only lasted from May 1886 to February 1888, for when Miller Brothers established themselves in Calabar in 1887 all pretence of combination collapsed.<sup>83</sup>

So the story of the oil trade at Old Calabar until the closing years of the nineteenth century is one of intense competition between the various European firms. At no time was there a monopoly or combination of firms, except for the short-lived trade agreements of 1883–8. Yet despite the attempts of liberated Africans, King Eyo II, and the Henshaws in 1881–2,<sup>84</sup> to trade directly with Britain, the Europeans continued to handle the external trade.

## 2. Exports

Old Calabar exported 700–800 tons of oil per annum in the last

<sup>79</sup> P.P. Africa, 1702 (1888), p. 31, Inc. 3 in No. 18, Calprof Ibadan, 5/9.

<sup>80</sup> Gertzel, Cherry, 'John Holt: A British Merchant in West Africa in the Era of Imperialism.' (Oxford D.Phil. thesis 1959), p. 205, cit. John Holt Papers, 3/11.

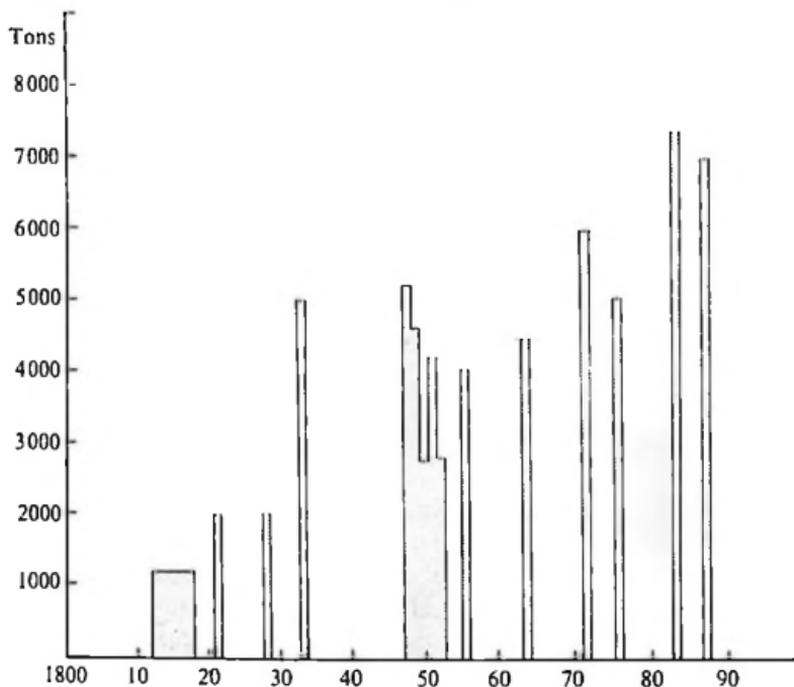
<sup>81</sup> Burn to Agents, 27 Dec. 1883, Calprof Ibadan, 4/3 vol. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Gertzel, 'John Holt', pp. 206–7, cit. John Holt Papers 3/11 and 26/3a.

<sup>83</sup> Gertzel, 'John Holt', pp. 209–12, cit. John Holt Papers 26/3a.

<sup>84</sup> N. B. Henshaw to Walkden & Co., 6 Oct. 1881, Calprof Ibadan 4/3 vol. 2. Walkden & Co. to N. B. Henshaw, 2 Dec. 1881, Calprof Ibadan 4/3 vol. 2. Walkden & Co. to N. B. Henshaw, 13 Oct. 1882, Calprof Ibadan, 5/1.

years of the legitimate slave trade.<sup>85</sup> Graph 2 shows the increase of Calabar's exports during the century, and reveals how important Calabar was in the early days. She exported 1,200 tons p.a. in 1812-17, although only in 1815 were more than 1,500 tons imported into Britain.<sup>86</sup> Bonny produced 200 tons p.a., and Cameroons only



GRAPH 2: Palm Oil Exports from Old Calabar 1812-1887

Source: see Appendix 1.

50 tons p.a. in the same six-year period.<sup>87</sup> In 1821, when Calabar was producing 2,000 tons, and total U.K. imports were 5,124 tons, Bonny was producing very little.<sup>88</sup> Yet despite the over-all increase in the oil trade, Calabar was still only producing about 2,000 tons in 1828, Bonny and Cameroons being of growing importance.<sup>89</sup> By 1833 Old Calabar was shipping 4,000-5,000 tons, total U.K. imports being 13,345 tons. So it is clear that as West African oil exports increased, Old Calabar contributed a decreasing share of the total, although the volume of her exports continued to grow. From the thirties to

<sup>85</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 42-3. <sup>86</sup> Table 4, p. 57. <sup>87</sup> Robertson, pp. 363-4.

<sup>88</sup> Collier, Report on the Coast of Africa, 27 Dec. 1821, FO84/19.

<sup>89</sup> Capt. W. F. W. Capt. *Narrative of Voyages to explore the shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar* (London, 1833), ii. 357.

the sixties, Calabar's oil exports continued at about the same level, 4,000–5,000 tons p.a., although, by the late forties, British imports were well over 20,000 tons. Only Bonny was exporting more than Calabar, with 7,773 tons in 1847, 8,450 tons in 1848,<sup>90</sup> 8,227 tons in 1849, 6,730 tons in 1850,<sup>91</sup> and 12,421 tons in 1851.<sup>92</sup> As slaving declined elsewhere on the African Coast, other ports became oil exporters, and the proportion of oil furnished by the Oil Rivers as a whole declined. Nevertheless Calabar's exports increased after 1864, for by 1871 her exports were running at about 6,000 tons. However in 1875 she only exported 5,085 tons to Bonny's 5,658 tons.<sup>93</sup> But in 1883 she exported 7,365 tons, and in 1887 her oil exports were estimated at 7,000 tons, while only Opobo of the Oil Rivers ports exported more, with 8,000 tons. Lagos however produced 11,470 tons, which made it the premier oil port, although the Oil Rivers aggregate was almost three times as large, at 33,000 tons.<sup>94</sup> Thus Calabar remained one of the most important West African oil ports until the last years of the nineteenth century.

Palm kernels became an important export after 1869, and Graph 3 gives the available kernel export figures. 1,000 tons were exported in the first year, and 2,000 tons in 1871, but then there was an embargo on kernel exports by the Efik. But in 1875 approximately 975 tons were exported, in comparison with Bonny's 422 tons.<sup>95</sup> By 1887 Calabar was producing 10,000 tons of kernels, well above her local competitors Opobo and Benin, which produced 6,000 tons each. Lagos however produced 31,259 tons, a much greater total.<sup>96</sup> This gives rise to the surprising observation that the ratio of oil exports to kernel exports at Lagos in 1887 was 1:2.7 tons, whereas at Old Calabar the ratio was 1:1.4 tons. As kernels and oil were in joint supply one can only assume that there was a greater relative oil-surplus in palm-abundant Ibibioland, than there was in the Lagos hinterland, where more oil must have been consumed domestically.

<sup>90</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), lx, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, Dawson cit. John Clare.

<sup>91</sup> P.P. 1852 (284), xlix, Correspondence Relating to the Conveyance of H.M. Mails to the West Coast of Africa, in John Clare to Admiralty, 16 Dec. 1851.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, in John Clare to Admiralty, 2 Jan. 1852.

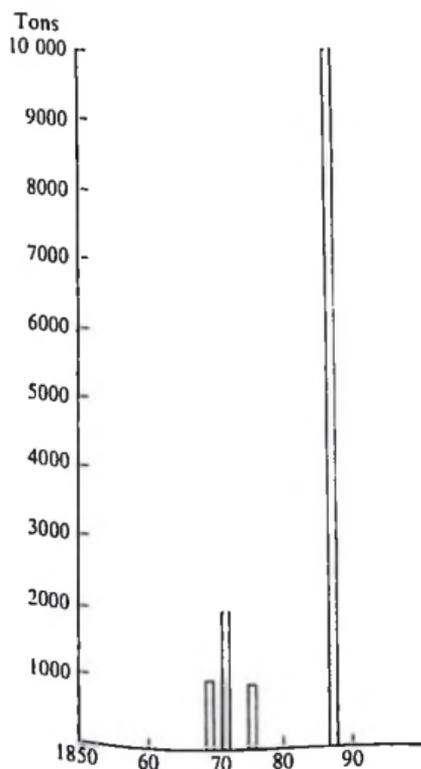
<sup>93</sup> James Irvine & Co. to Hopkins, 1 July 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Minute by Governor Moloney, in connection with his visit in April 1888 to the present eastern limit of the Colony of Lagos, Government Gazette, p. 201, FO84/1882.

<sup>95</sup> James Irvine & Co. to Hopkins, 1 July 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 7.

<sup>96</sup> Minute by Governor Moloney, p. 201, FO84/1882.

The price paid for oil by the Europeans varied according to market conditions in Europe, and in Calabar. In Britain oil was an alternative to tallow, from which soap and candles were made, and the two commodities were therefore in competition with each other.<sup>97</sup> Palm oil was also used for grease on the railways to a small extent.<sup>98</sup>



GRAPH 3: Palm Kernel Exports from Old Calabar 1869-1887

Source: see Appendix 2.

But the introduction of mineral oil in the early sixties greatly reduced the demand for oil for illumination,<sup>99</sup> causing a sharp drop in prices. In the late sixties prices picked up as palm oil was increasingly used as a flux in the tinplate industry.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter the price of oil remained

<sup>97</sup> P.P. 1847-8 (272) xxii (1), Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, QQ 2606-7, W. M. Hutton. James Irvine & Co. to Hopkins, 1 July 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 7.

<sup>98</sup> P.P. 1847-8 (272), xxii, (1), Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, QQ 2606-7, W. M. Hutton.

<sup>99</sup> McPhee, p. 33.

<sup>1</sup> McPhee, p. 34.

fairly steady, although the underlying trend was downwards, until after a brief improvement in 1883-4, prices fell away sharply until the end of the period in response to the general depression in Britain.

The earliest price evidence shows that prices fluctuated considerably in Britain, for although it can be deduced from Robertson that £40 a ton was being offered in 1812-17,<sup>2</sup> other sources give a price of £20 in 1816.<sup>3</sup> In 1823 oil was sold at £27, and in 1828 at £24 10s.,<sup>4</sup> and £20.<sup>5</sup> In the thirties higher prices obtained, for in 1832 £33 is quoted,<sup>6</sup> and £35 in 1834.<sup>7</sup> On 31 December 1842 the buying price for oil was £32, and on 31 December 1843 the buying price was £29.<sup>8</sup> This kind of price fluctuation is typical of a primary product such as oil. Graph 4, showing palm-oil prices in London, 1844-91, reveals that prices continued to vary considerably. Just as prices had moved between £20 and £40 till 1844, they moved between £25 and £40 until the early fifties, when the level rose steeply to between £40 and £50 until the crash of the early sixties when prices fell to about £32. Recovery came late in 1865, and prices held between £35 and £40 into the seventies. From 1879 the price slid slowly down to £30-35, when a short-lived recovery took place in 1883-4 with prices again £35-40. Then the price dropped away badly to fluctuate between £20 and £24, the lowest prices recorded since 1844. After a brief recovery in 1888-9 prices fell back again and in 1891 again went below the £24 level. McPhee noted this overall pattern, but not in detail.<sup>9</sup>

There is much less evidence of the prices paid for oil in Calabar, as oil was exchanged for goods valued in coppers, the local currency.<sup>10</sup> Certainly the price the Europeans were prepared to offer was partly determined by current prices in Britain, but it was also determined to

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, pp. 363-4.

<sup>3</sup> P.P. 1842 (551), xii, (1), Part 2, Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa, *The Palm Oil Trade*.

<sup>4</sup> P.P. 1847-8 (272), xxii, (1), Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, QQ 2608, W. M. Hutton.

<sup>5</sup> P.P. 1842 (551), xii, (1), Part 2, Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa, *The Palm Oil Trade*.

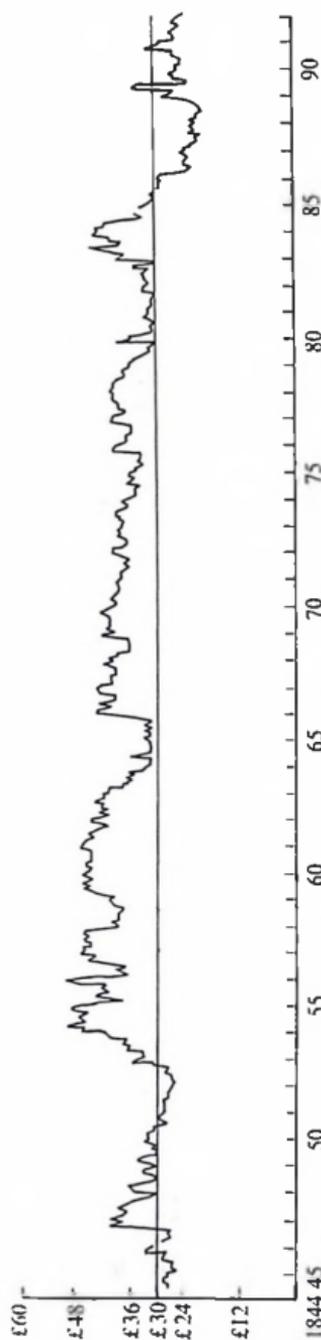
<sup>6</sup> P.P. 1847-8 (272), xxii, (1), Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, QQ 2608, W. M. Hutton.

<sup>7</sup> P.P. 1842 (551), xii, (1), Part 2, Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa, *The Palm Oil Trade*.

<sup>8</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), ix, Minutes of evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, R. Dawson.

<sup>9</sup> McPhee, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Supplementary remarks upon British Trade upon the West Coast of Africa. Wm. Tasker Nugent, 29 Apr. 1882, FO84/1630.



GRAPH 4: Buying Prices for Palm Oil, London, 1844-1891

Source: Monthly Prices from *The Economist*.

some extent by the availability of oil. This must have been subject to the vagaries of the season, although there is no information on harvest fluctuations. The supply of oil was also dependent upon the political situation at the markets, for it is known that in the high-price period of the 1850s, the Umon oil market was closed.<sup>11</sup> While it was opened again in 1860 just before the big price drop in Europe,<sup>12</sup> it was only intermittently open until the establishment of the Pax Britannica.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes the Efik combined to keep prices up, as in 1862 when they stopped all trade because of the falling prices.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately details of such combination attempts are virtually non-existent, although one may assume that *Ekpé* played an important part.

Adams in 1821 refers to oil prices at Calabar of £10 to £14,<sup>15</sup> and on Bold's information about the same time it can be calculated that prices varied between about £7. 15s. and £15. 10s., per ton.<sup>16</sup> There is no other information until 1855 when oil was being sold to the Europeans at £25 per ton.<sup>17</sup> But during the depression in 1864, prices in Old Calabar fell to between £13 and £15 per ton.<sup>18</sup> In 1868 some oil confiscated by the Consul was sold off at £20 per ton.<sup>19</sup> Thereafter there is not even such scanty price evidence.

Nevertheless these prices do suggest a rough estimate of turnover-profit margins for the Europeans. Waddell noted in 1854 that oil worth £50 in Calabar was worth £100 in Britain,<sup>20</sup> which suggests there was a 100 per cent turnover profit. This figure is supported by the other price evidence, for the variation of £7. 15s. to £15. 10s. in Calabar in 1820 fits the estimated variation in Britain at this time of £20 to £40. And the Calabar price of £25 per ton in 1855 fits the

<sup>11</sup> Eyo Honesty to Beecroft, 26 Sept. 1851, in Beecroft to Palmerston, 9 Oct. 1851, FO84/858. Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 30 June 1856, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 July 1856, No. 93, FO84/1001. Chiefs to Hutchinson, (undated), Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 21 Feb. 1857, ST 12, FO84/1030.

<sup>12</sup> *UPCMR* 16 (Mar. 1861), 41 and 42, cit. Anderson's Journal, 3 Nov. 1860, and 23 Nov. 1860, respectively.

<sup>13</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 361. *UPCMR* N.S. 4 (1 Jan. 1883), p. 13 cit. Goldie's Journal, 28 Aug. 1882.

<sup>14</sup> Supercargoes to Burton, 28 Apr. 1862, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>15</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 109, 113, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Bold, p. 78. Adams, *Sketches*, p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 10, p. 57, Waddell to Wilson and Dawson, 15 Jan. 1855. Bold, p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr., 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>19</sup> Livingstone to Clarendon, 28 Aug. 1869, No. 17, FO84/1308.

<sup>20</sup> Waddell, Journal, Vol. 10, p. 45, 25 Oct. 1854.

known variation of prices in London during that year, of £38. 10s. to £50. 10s.

However, even if the aim was 100 per cent turnover profit, the erratic nature of the market both in Britain and Calabar could mean that particular voyages might err on either side of this margin. Nor was a turnover profit of 100 per cent excessive in such a speculative business. The accepted turnover profit of a baker and confectioner in Britain today is 50 per cent, although they do not await their return eight months, nor bear the same risks. The oil merchants however had to bear the cost of the ship, depreciation, insurance, port dues, wages, comey, trade goods, ceremonial breakfasts, and dashes, out of the putative 100 per cent turnover profit, which could so easily be eroded by delay on the coast or a shift in prices. Loss above insurance cover was not uncommon, for in 1851 two ships were lost returning from Calabar,<sup>21</sup> and in 1853 the *Pytho* was destroyed by fire in Calabar.<sup>22</sup> Therefore it is a myth that excessive profits were to be made in palm-oil trade before the 1860s, certainly as far as Old Calabar was concerned.

After the depression of the early sixties, the trading system changed to that of agents resident at Calabar, sending oil home on the steamers, or their companies' ships which came out to pick up the cargo which awaited them. Because of the rapid turnover, smaller profits were now theoretically acceptable, and Livingstone, who is largely responsible for the myth that excessive profits were made in the days of sail, estimated that turnover profits were sometimes as low as 5 per cent.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, he suggests that as prices picked up again, the trading revolution may have increased prices paid to the Africans, although regrettably there is no evidence to support this assumption.<sup>24</sup> In fact, what little evidence there is suggests that despite the change in the mode of trading, the turnover profit remained the same, since the local prices of £13 to £15 in 1864 must be set against the London price of £32 to £36 in that year, and the puncheons of oil, which King Archibong was fined in 1868, were auctioned in Calabar at £8 a puncheon, and sold at a profit of £9 per puncheon in England.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> P.P. 1852 (284), xlix, Correspondence Relating to the Conveyance of H.M. Mails, in John Clare to Admiralty, 2 Jan. 1852.

<sup>22</sup> Marwick, p. 283.

<sup>23</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 1 Oct. 1866, FO2/47.

<sup>24</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>25</sup> Livingstone to Clarendon, 28 Aug. 1869, No. 17, FO84/1308. Livingstone to Clarendon, 28 Sept. 1869, No. 21, FO84/1308.

Besides palm produce, Old Calabar also exported sundry items of less importance. The value of Calabar's barwood, ivory, ebony, wax, gum, and red pepper was estimated at £8,400 p.a. for the years 1812-17.<sup>26</sup> Redwood was exported during the first half of the century,<sup>27</sup> but these items dwindled in importance over the years, although as late as 1871 a small trade in ivory and ebony continued.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. Imports

As in the days of the slave trade, the principle categories of goods were textiles, bar iron, copper rods, hardware, guns, powder, and spirits.<sup>29</sup>

But one new commodity, salt, not mentioned in any records of the slave trade at Old Calabar, was imported in increasing amounts as the oil trade developed. Although still produced locally at Tom Shotts in 1805,<sup>30</sup> by 1812-17 it was an important import 'especially for the purchase of palm-oil'.<sup>31</sup>

Bold described salt as 'a very profitable and commanding article'<sup>32</sup> at Calabar, and Adams, in about 1821, noted that as salt was cheap in Liverpool and always in demand at Calabar, the ships took as much as they could.<sup>33</sup> Holman in 1828 reported that salt formed the principal part of the oil trader's cargoes.<sup>34</sup> In 1845, out of a West African total of 8,392 tons of salt, Calabar imported from Liverpool 2,984 tons compared to Bonny's 1,477 tons, although the value of Bonny's total commodity imports was twice Calabar's.<sup>35</sup> Waddell noted the importance of salt,<sup>36</sup> and special ledgers of the salt imports were kept by the Europeans, the return of which to the Efik was tantamount to stopping trade.<sup>37</sup> Salt was vital to the trade with the main oil market at Ikpa,<sup>38</sup> and a dispute over the internal salt

<sup>26</sup> Robertson, p. 363.

<sup>27</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 327.

<sup>28</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, F.R.G.S., 'Notes on the Cross and Calabar Rivers, June 1871', *UPCMR* n.s. 4 (2 Sept. 1872), 280.

<sup>29</sup> Bold, pp. 80-1. Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 113, 116. P.P. 1850 (53), ix, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, R. Dawson, cit. John Clare.

<sup>30</sup> Hallett, p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> Robertson, p. 314.

<sup>32</sup> Bold, p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, p. 114

<sup>34</sup> Holman, p. 397.

<sup>35</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), ix, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, cit. John Clare.

<sup>36</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 10, p. 79, Waddell to Badenock, 22 Mar. 1855.

<sup>37</sup> Supercargoes to King Eyo Honesty, 16 Feb. 1858, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 25 May 1858, ST 26, FO84/1061.

<sup>38</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 1 (1 Oct. 1867), 405, cit. Anderson's *Journal*, 7 Jan. 1867.

trade was an immediate cause of the war between Henshaw Town and Duke Town in 1875.<sup>39</sup>

As the growth of salt imports was associated with the development of the oil trade, it is possible that Duke Ephraim's subjection of Tom Shott's in the 1820s was due to his desire to control the internal salt trade, and thereby the oil trade. The growth in salt imports coincided with the vast increase in salt production in Cheshire due to the use of the steam engine for pumping, and the construction of canals.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it was the huge hinterland-demand for salt which was the incentive for Calabar's early participation in the oil trade, at a time when she still had a profitable slave trade. Only the Liverpool traders could provide the quantities of cheap salt that were needed, and oil was the commodity they demanded in exchange.

Although no other new categories of goods were imported prior to 1891, changes did take place in the goods in each category. This was particularly true of cloth, for up until at least 1820, as in the days of the slave trade, Indian cloths such as romals, photaes, alligars, sastracundies, and carridaries, were of primary importance. A little Lancashire cloth was also taken,<sup>41</sup> but by 1847 it had ousted the Indian stuffs.<sup>42</sup> In 1872, however, Lancashire cloths themselves were suffering severe competition from cheaper and better Swiss prints,<sup>43</sup> although in the eighties Manchester regained her grip.<sup>44</sup>

Other British goods also had to face Continental competition. In the early seventies Belgian muskets superseded those from Birmingham, and Belgian matchets for a short time ousted those from the Black Country.<sup>45</sup>

Another change which occurred in the late sixties was the increased inflow of cheap gin. Hitherto spirits had not played a large part in the Calabar trade, although some had always been imported. In an abstract of a cargo suitable for purchasing 100 tons of oil at £14, in

<sup>39</sup> Statement of Henshaw's Town, 20 Aug. 1878, para. 10, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 6.

<sup>40</sup> T. C. Barker, and J. R. Harris, *A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution, St. Helens, 1750-1900* (Liverpool, 1954), pp. 57-8.

E. Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance, 1558-1825* (Manchester, 1934), pp. 396-403.

<sup>41</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 113, 116. Bold, p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 327.

<sup>43</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>44</sup> Minute by Governor Moloney, p. 201, FO84/1882. A Report on the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, in Johnston to Salisbury, 1 Dec. 1888, Section G. Trade, FO84/1882.

<sup>45</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Report by Consul Livingstone.

about 1820, Adams included brandy or rum worth only £66 out of a total of £1,400.<sup>46</sup> Bold did not even include liquor as an article of trade, although he notes it was essential for 'dash'.<sup>47</sup> In 1845 Calabar only imported 788 hogsheads of rum from Liverpool.<sup>48</sup> But with the opening of a steamship line from the Clyde in 1869, cheap spirits flooded into Calabar in increasing quantities, as the Scottish Missionaries noted to their regret.<sup>49</sup>

#### 4. *The effect of external trade on the domestic economy*

Because the oil-producing areas were inland, and the Efik themselves were not producers, little is known about how the expansion of the oil trade, from 1,000 tons p.a. to over 7,000 tons p.a. in the eighty or so years up to 1891, affected the economy in the producing areas. And it is only possible to speculate about the influence which imports had upon the local economy. Most of the commodities had long been imported, and their effect was merely a continuation of what had already been taking place.

European earthenware does not seem to have had an adverse effect on local potteries, as the Nkpara potteries were flourishing in the forties,<sup>50</sup> and pottery was made at Ikot Ansa, a Qua village close to Old Town, until the early years of the present century. Indeed the challenge to the local potteries came not from Europe, but from Afikpo, which now supplies the lower Cross River. Traditional types of pottery are still widely used, despite the competition of European pots, pans, and enamelware.<sup>51</sup>

Cloth imports had little effect on local industry, as none was made except raffia cloth woven from palm-wine-tree fronds. This had been driven out of the Calabar markets by 1847,<sup>52</sup> although still worn by the Ibibio in the 1870s.<sup>53</sup> To this day the Ibibio and Efik use raffia cloth for the ceremonial costumes of their secret societies.

Cheap spirits after 1869 may have had an adverse effect on those

<sup>46</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup> Bold, pp. 80-1.

<sup>48</sup> P.P. 1850 (53), ix, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, R. Dawson cit. John Clare.

<sup>49</sup> Marwick, p. 446, cit. Goldie's Journal, 6 May 1869.

<sup>50</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 361-2, and Journal, vol. 7, p. 44, 24 Nov. 1849.

<sup>51</sup> Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 23 Nov. 1965. Chief Asuquo Edet Okon, 25 Nov. 1965. Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965.

<sup>52</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 327.

<sup>53</sup> *UPCMR* 14 (Aug. 1859), 153-4, cit. Revd. Baillie, 12 Feb. 1859. *Ibid.* n.s. 2 (1 July 1869) 398 cit. Dr. Robb, and n.s. 4 (1 Oct. 1872), 301, cit. Dr. Robb.

employed in tapping palm wine, although there is no proof of this and Livingstone discounted the belief that the Africans suffered from drinking imported liquor.<sup>54</sup>

As regards the import of salt, it appears that this did undermine local production, for Tom Shotts ceased to make salt.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand the vast quantities imported indicated a demand which local industry could never have satisfied.

The import of hardware does not seem to have reduced demand for local blacksmiths, who were much sought after.<sup>56</sup> Ibo in origin,<sup>57</sup> they were being brought to Calabar to work as late as 1870.<sup>58</sup> Although by 1847 local carpenters had stopped using indigenously-made axes, preferring European tools,<sup>59</sup> there was still plenty of work for the smiths. They made staples,<sup>60</sup> shot, needles,<sup>61</sup> and fixed brass leglets on ladies of high estate.<sup>62</sup> They also made the 'black coppers' which formed the domestic currency.<sup>63</sup> As these were used well into the twentieth century, the smiths must have been kept well occupied.

The influx of copper and brass rods during the century must have had some influence on the local economy, for these 'coppers' (*okuk*) about three feet long and half an inch thick, were used as currency.<sup>64</sup> Table 5 reveals that the value of the copper rod fell from about 1s. in 1805, to fluctuate between 1½d. and 3d. from 1846 to the early twentieth century. The drop in value in the first half of the century may have been due to a considerable inflow of rods, for Bold, in about 1820, noted that none had been imported for many years, so

<sup>54</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>55</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, F.R.G.S., 'Note on the Old Calabar and Cross Rivers', *P.R.G.S.* 16 (1871-2), 136.

<sup>56</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 326-7, 514, and *Journal*, 8 (1 June 1851), 92, 10 (1 Nov. 1854), 46.

<sup>57</sup> Coulthurst, *J.R.G.S.* ii (1832), 305. Coulthurst to Nicolls (undated), CO 82/5. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 326-7, 468.

<sup>58</sup> Marwick, p. 470, cit. Anderson's *Journal*, 17 Apr. 1870.

<sup>59</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 326-7.

<sup>60</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 29, 16 Apr. 1846.

<sup>61</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 468.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247. Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 255, s.v. *Okuk*, 2. '... *Obubit oku*'.

<sup>64</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 255. African (West) No. 616. West African Currency Committee, Report, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices, 1900, p. 34, paras. 1382-3, CO879/62.

African (West) No. 645. Further correspondence Relating to the Currency of the West African Colonies, 1900-1903, p. 24, Moor to Colonial Office, 7 July 1901, p. 58, Moor to Chamberlain, 12 June 1902, CO879/66. Paul and Laura Bohannan, *Tiv Economy* (London, 1968), pp. 236-9. Mary Douglas, 'Primitive Rationing', in Raymond Firth, *Themes in Economic Anthropology* (London, 1967), pp. 137-8.

TABLE 5

*The Value of the Copper Rod, 1805-1910*

	<i>d.</i>
1805 <sup>1</sup>	12
1820 <sup>2</sup>	4-89
1828 <sup>3</sup>	10-12
1846 <sup>4</sup>	2-3
1851 <sup>5</sup>	2-4-3
1853	2-4
1857	4
1864 <sup>6</sup>	2-6
1869 <sup>7</sup>	3
1882	1-5
1890 <sup>11</sup>	2
1894 <sup>12</sup>	3
1897 <sup>13</sup>	3
1900 <sup>14</sup>	2-5
1901 <sup>15</sup>	3
1902 <sup>16</sup>	3
1904 <sup>17</sup>	3
1910 <sup>18</sup>	3-04-3-24

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Hallet, p. 207. <sup>2</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, p. 116. <sup>3</sup> James Badgley, Report on the Old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1. <sup>4</sup> *UPCMR* 1 (Nov. 1846), p. 175, cit. Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 7, p. 4, Waddell to Jameson, 2 Nov. 1846. <sup>5</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 81, 28 Mar. 1851. Anderson, *Journal*, 24 Mar. 1851. <sup>6</sup> Marwick, p. 278, cit. letter dated 4 July 1853. <sup>7</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 21 Feb. 1857, ST 13, FO84/1030. <sup>8</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221. <sup>9</sup> *West Africa*, 26 Oct. 1868, p. 1251, cit. Rev. Alex Robb to National Bible Society (undated) 1869. <sup>10</sup> Supplementary remarks upon British Trade upon the West Coast of Africa, Tasker Nugent, 29 Apr. 1882, FO84/1630. <sup>11</sup> Regulations for Maintaining Peace and Order in the District of Old Calabar, George F. Annesley, Old Calabar, 1 Sept. 1890, FO84/2020. <sup>12</sup> Moor to Foreign Office, 13 Nov. 1897, pp. 295-6, No. 289, FO403/250. <sup>13</sup> P.P. 1895, lxxi, (1), Africa No. 1, (1895) Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891 to August 1894, p. 37, Inc. 17, Casement to MacDonal, 10 Apr. 1894. <sup>14</sup> P.P. 1902 Cd. 788-23. lxxv. 513. Colonial Reports. Annual, No. 353 Southern Nigeria, 1900, p. 7-8. <sup>15</sup> P.P. 1903 Cd. 1388-5 xliiii 381. Colonial Reports, Annual, No. 381, Southern Nigeria, 1901, p. 6-7. <sup>16</sup> Rates of Exchange for Brass Rods and Manillas, (Undated) 1902, Calprof Ibadan, 9/2 Vol. 2. <sup>17</sup> P.P. 1906, Cd. (2684-5), (lxxv), 1, Colonial Reports. Annual No. 459. Southern Nigeria, 1904 p. 13. <sup>18</sup> *Akuakiri v. Efiom Okon*, (undated) 1910, Native Court Records, Calabar Native Court, Book 57, No. 60, p. 160.

*Note:* These values are only rough approximations. Although there was an 'official' value of a shilling, the actual value was clearly less than this. See James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb., 1828, CO82/1. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 247. General Report on the Bight of Biafra, 20 June, 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 June, 1856, 69A, FO2/6.

that a new rod could be exchanged for goods worth one and a half rods.<sup>65</sup> As traders took advantage of this 50 per cent gain, coppers were imported in numbers, leading to a change in the ratio of coppers to goods in circulation. In other words, Calabar imported inflation. Another possible factor in the decline of the value of the rod was the change from copper to brass, a change under way by 1846,<sup>66</sup> and nearly complete by 1856.<sup>67</sup> As the value of a rod depended upon its appearance,<sup>68</sup> the substitution of brass for copper may have been considered a debasement.

If the value of the copper held fairly steadily after 1846, the 'black copper' (*obubit oku*) did not fare so well. These wires were made by the local smiths from the rods, and were used for trans-

TABLE 6

*The Value of the Black Copper Wire, 1846-1910*

	<i>d.</i>
1846 <sup>1</sup>	0.5
1849 <sup>2</sup>	0.5
1864 <sup>3</sup>	0.3-0.5
1875 <sup>4</sup>	1
1900 <sup>5</sup>	0.12
1901 <sup>6</sup>	0.14
1904 <sup>7</sup>	0.15
1910 <sup>8</sup>	0.12-0.15

Sources: Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 7, pp. 4-5. Waddell to Jameson, 2 Nov. 1846. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 247. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 7, p. 29, 22 Sept. 1849. <sup>3</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221. Marwick, p. 407, cit. Anderson's *Journal*, 23 Aug. 1864. <sup>4</sup> Deposition before G. Hartley, H. B. M. Consul, 24 Sept. 1875, signed Ered Owo X Iseke, Calprof Ibadan, 5/8, vol. 1. <sup>5</sup> P.P. 1902 Cd. (788-23) lxxv (513), Colonial Reports, Annual, No. 353, Southern Nigeria 1900, pp. 7-8. <sup>6</sup> P.P. 1903 Cd. (1388-5), xlili (381), Colonial Reports, Annual, No. 381, Southern Nigeria, 1901, pp. 6-7. <sup>7</sup> P.P. 1906 Cd. (2684-5), lxxv, 1, Colonial Reports, Annual, No. 459, Southern Nigeria, 1904, p. 13. <sup>8</sup> Afion Abasi v. Udo Odusa, 26 Jan. 1910, Book 57, p. 138, No. 52. Native Court Records, Calabar. Ndarake Abasi v. Asibon Ene, (undated) (1910), Book 57, p. 222, Native Court Records, Calabar.

<sup>65</sup> Bold, p. 78.

<sup>66</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 247.

<sup>67</sup> General Report on the Bight of Biafra, 20 June 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 June 1856, 69A, FO2/16.

<sup>68</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 247.

actions for which a rod was of too high value.<sup>69</sup> They were particularly important in the oil trade, as it was only with them that oil could be bought at the inland markets.<sup>70</sup> Table 6 shows how the value of the wire declined from  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  in 1846 to 0.12 in 1900, to 0.15 of a penny in 1910, the main drop in value occurring after 1875. Yet there is not sufficient evidence to plot this decline closely, or to ascertain the effect of the devaluation on the domestic economy. However, such a rise in prices ought to have been a stimulus, and certainly the smiths must have benefited as they were called upon to make the increased amount of wires.

In sum, European imports do not seem to have had an adverse effect on the indigenous economy. On the contrary, they had a beneficial effect by introducing more efficient tools, and a wider choice of cloths and other goods. The wider availability of rods and wires can only have increased the flexibility of exchange in the entire Cross River basin. Just as European imports had been beneficial in the days of the slave trade, they continued to be so during the oil trade. And as the volume of exports and imports grew during the century, more people were able to benefit.

### 5. *The internal palm-oil trade*

The development of an export trade in palm oil presented few problems to the Efik, as it was a commodity which they had long sold in small quantities to the slave vessels for provisions. As the demand for oil increased, it was a simple matter to utilize the commercial skills of the slave trade in the evacuation of the new export commodity.

Until at least 1891, trade at Calabar continued to be based on trust, although the custom of taking a pawn or hostage as guarantee died out with the slave trade. No African accumulated sufficient capital to throw off his dependence on European capital, nor had he need to do so, because the intense rivalry of the Europeans ensured a constant availability of credit.

But as in the slave-trade days, credit created problems, and both Adams and Bold reported that there was difficulty in recovering credit debts.<sup>71</sup> Duke Ephraim's legendary credit-worthiness meant

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 255, s.v. *Okuk*, 2'. . . *Obubit oku*'.

<sup>70</sup> Bold, p. 78. Beecroft to Palmerston, 4 Mar. 1851, No. 19, FO84/858. Beecroft to Malmesbury, 20 May 1852, No. 1, FO2/7. P.P. 1873, lxv, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>71</sup> Bold, p. 79. Adams, *Sketches*, pp. 112, 114.

that during his reign bad debts were uncommon, but his successor Eyamba V in attempting to ape the Duke's prestigious display overstrained his more limited means and fell seriously into debt.<sup>72</sup> In 1846 one of his creditors imprisoned him on board ship,<sup>73</sup> this being the traditional way of ensuring debts were paid. His death in 1847 meant that his debts had to be written off,<sup>74</sup> and for a while all was well,<sup>75</sup> until in 1851 ships were again being delayed.<sup>76</sup> So in 1852 Beecroft negotiated a trade treaty, abolishing trust.<sup>77</sup> This proved completely ineffective, and by 1855 over £250,000 was held in credit by the Efik.<sup>78</sup> The struggle between the supercargoes and liberated Africans brought the credit problem to a head, and when the crash of 1862 brought trade to a halt, and drove many firms into liquidation, Consul Burton negotiated a new trade treaty which abolished trust.<sup>79</sup> This again had no effect, for by 1869 it was clear that credit was still being given freely, despite heavy losses.<sup>80</sup> In 1872 the Consul was at long last given magisterial powers over British subjects in his area, and forthwith declared that no British traders were to seize the person or property of local people.<sup>81</sup> As this was the only way the agents could insist upon their debts being paid,<sup>82</sup> between 1874 and 1880 many such as J. H. White,<sup>83</sup> Harry Hartje,<sup>84</sup> George Watts,<sup>85</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker,<sup>86</sup> and Alex Henderson,<sup>87</sup> joined the *Ekpè* society

<sup>72</sup> Gooch to Jones, 14 July 1845, FO84/612.

Rickin to Horsfall & Sons, 29 Sept. 1845, FO84/612.

<sup>73</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 274.

<sup>74</sup> *UPCMR* 2 (Nov. 1847), 185, cit. Edgerley.

<sup>75</sup> Beecroft to Palmerston, 5 Dec. 1850, FO84/816.

<sup>76</sup> Beecroft to Palmerston, 1 Sept. 1851, FO84/858.

<sup>77</sup> Treaty of Trade and Commerce, 17 Apr. 1852, Calprof Ibadan, 5/7.

<sup>78</sup> P.P. 1856, lxii, Africa, (Consular)—Bight of Biafra, pp. 42-3. Inc. 19 in No. 34, Supercargoes to Lynslager, 17 Jan. 1855.

<sup>79</sup> Agreement, 5 May 1862, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>80</sup> Wilson to Foreign Secretary, 23 Feb. 1869, No. 8, FO84/1308.

Livingstone to Clarendon, 1 Dec. 1869, No. 35, FO84/1308.

Livingstone to Clarendon, 4 Dec. 1869, FO84/1308.

<sup>81</sup> Rules and Regulations framed under Her Majesty's Order in Council of the 21st day of February, 1872, by Her Majesty's Consul at Old Calabar, 29 Apr. 1872, in Livingstone to Granville, 29 Apr. 1872, No. 8, FO84/1356.

<sup>82</sup> Stephens to Livingstone, 11 June 1872, in Livingstone to Granville, 3 Aug. 1872, FO 84/1356.

<sup>83</sup> Walker to Hartley, 25 July 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 3.

<sup>84</sup> Hart Report, para. 167.

<sup>85</sup> Agreement signed P. Jas Eyamba V, witness Harold Brooke, 14 Oct. 1879, John Holt Papers 22/2.

<sup>86</sup> Hart Report, para. 170.

<sup>87</sup> Easton to Foreign Secretary, 10 Feb. 1880, No. 5, FO84/1569.

which could use similar sanctions to demand debts be liquidated. So trust continued to be given, and although Vice-Consul Johnston tried to suppress it again in 1888, he was overruled,<sup>88</sup> and it continued into the nineties.

Trust was an integral part of the Efik trading system. For the Efik were monopolistic middlemen, who stood between the Europeans and the producers, receiving credit from the former, and using it to buy oil from the latter.

The exclusion of local rivals from the European trade had been pursued during the nineteenth century, and completed by Duke Ephraim.<sup>89</sup> Thereafter the Efik suppressed attempts by the Europeans and the hinterland people to contact each other. Eyamba V viewed with concern Beecroft's up-river explorations in 1841, fearing lest the oil markets be discovered,<sup>90</sup> and the missionaries also felt Efik disapproval when they attempted to explore inland.<sup>91</sup> Beecroft's Treaty of 1852 attempted to open trade to all local people, but was not successful.<sup>92</sup> So determined were the Efik to keep the Europeans from the inland markets that, as a result of the Revd. W. C. Thompson's evangelistic tour inland, in about 1860, a meeting known as *Mbre Iduke ke Esuk Urua* was called to discuss the ejection of the Mission, lest its activities deprive the Efik of their role as middlemen. Although the meeting was dispersed by a tornado, and the Mission remained, the Efik continued their monopoly.<sup>93</sup> In 1861 young men and boys began to trade in tiny quantities of oil, but were thwarted by an *Ekpe* law of 1862 which prohibited trading in other than the traditional casks and puncheons.<sup>94</sup> To combat this law Consul Burton negotiated in his treaty of 1862 that the trade be open to all without restriction.<sup>95</sup> But when he proceeded up-river forthwith to visit the markets, he was turned back at Itu by about sixty Duke Town slaves, armed with muskets. After a crisis in which Duke Town was evacuated of civilians and filled with armed slaves under orders to burn

<sup>88</sup> Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881.

<sup>89</sup> Chapter 4, p. 49-51.

<sup>90</sup> Capt. Beecroft and J. B. King, 'Explorations of Old Calabar River in 1841 and 1842', *J.R.G.S.* 14 (1844), 260.

<sup>91</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 454.

<sup>92</sup> Treaty of Trade and Commerce, 17 Apr. 1852, Calprof Ibadan, 5/7.

<sup>93</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 206, cit. James Irvine. *Nigerian Eastern Mail*, 19 Oct. 1935, p. 3, contribution from Etim E. J. Duke.

<sup>94</sup> Supercargoes to Burton, 28 Apr. 1862, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>95</sup> Agreement, 5 May 1862, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

the town to cancel outstanding debts should the Consul open fire,<sup>96</sup> the matter was settled peaceably although the river remained closed.<sup>97</sup> One young man from an up-river village did begin a brisk trade with the Europeans, but the Duke Town chiefs confiscated his canoes and fined him £300.<sup>98</sup> In 1869 a serious threat to the Efik monopoly came with the opening of the kernel trade, which was entirely in the hands of petty traders. The goods they obtained caused a glut of European manufactures at the inland markets, to the anguish of the great oil-traders, who prevailed upon the King to ban the kernel trade, in the interests of the Efik monopoly.<sup>99</sup> Not until 1874 was the kernel trade reopened, and small traders free to participate once more.<sup>1</sup> At long last a small breach was appearing in the Efik monopoly, and this was broadened by an agreement in 1878 opening trade to all local people including the Qua. One vital article in this agreement stipulated that brass rods could be bought by all local people, the rods being the currency with which oil was bought at the markets.<sup>2</sup> Thus a correspondent to the *African Times* could write in January 1879:

An important step was taken in the interests of free trade. Hitherto the palm-oil trade has been monopolised by a very small proportion of the population. Now, however, it is thrown open to all the inhabitants; and not only so, but the neighbouring towns and tribes are to have the same access to the shipping and to the European factories on the beach as had hitherto been exclusively enjoyed by a favoured few in Duke Town and Creek Town.<sup>3</sup>

With this liberalization of trade, came renewed European attempts to establish direct control with the oil producers, the first example of this being George Watts's penetration of the Qua Ibo in 1881, in conjunction with the Henshaws. But this was not a traditional Efik market area, as is proven by the fact that it was Jaja of Opobo

<sup>96</sup> Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>97</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, Private, FO84/1221.

<sup>98</sup> Livingstone to Russell, 3 June 1865, FO84/1249.

<sup>99</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Report by Consul Livingstone.

<sup>1</sup> Agreement, 27 Feb. 1874, in Hartley to Granville, 20 Mar. 1874, No. 6, FO84/1401.

<sup>2</sup> Agreement, 6 Sept. 1878, in Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508.

<sup>3</sup> Special Correspondent to Editor January 1879, *African Times* (1 Apr. 1879) p. 39.

who objected to Watts's activities, not the Efik oligarchy.<sup>4</sup> But Coco Bassey recorded in his diary, on 12 July 1883, a more serious threat to the Efik hold on the Cross River: 'Thuday [*sic*] Harry Hajte [*sic*] & George Watts went up with a steamer to go and trade with Bosen [*sic*] people but Bosun people refuse.'<sup>5</sup>

Despite this setback Hartje soon began to receive letters from the up-river people, begging him to come and open trade. He pressed John Holt to support the venture, privately deriding the other firms for their lack of interest in opening the river. In December 1883 Hartje even informed the Henshaws that he intended to open the river and build a factory at every market. But the scheme foundered, for Holt feared Efik reaction, and was unable to lay his hands on the necessary capital.<sup>6</sup> Holt's fears were justified in 1884 by the Efik rejection of the article in the Treaty of Protection, which would have given foreigners freedom to live and trade anywhere they desired.<sup>7</sup> By 1885, rather than attempting to break the Efik stranglehold on the river, the agents were seeking an agreement with the chiefs, to limit future trade to those already involved. Trading establishments were to stay as they were, but agents could go beyond Umon for trade if they wished.<sup>8</sup> Although it is not certain that this agreement was ever signed, it does indicate that the merchant houses were not really interested in breaking the hold of the Efik oligarchy, but were content to trade by way of it. The only possible exception to this was the area beyond Umon, never part of the Efik sphere of influence, and usually disturbed by local wars.

In fact, the only Europeans who established themselves up the Cross River in the eighties were the missionaries, and before the Efik would allow them to establish their interior stations they had to agree that they would take no part at all in trade.<sup>9</sup> It was not until the consolidation of British authority after 1890 that the merchants penetrated up the Cross River. The end of Efik control is marked

<sup>4</sup> Memo by Watts, 24 Aug. 1881, John Holt Papers, 7/2. John Harford, *Pioneering in West Africa*; or *The Opening up of the Qua Iboe River*, in Mary H. Kingsley, *West African Studies* (London, 1899), Appendix ii, Part ii, pp. 582-7. P. A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* (London, 1926), i. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Diary of Coco Bassey, 2nd Folder, Coco Bassey Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Gertzel, 'John Holt', pp. 185-8.

<sup>7</sup> Draft Agreement, 1885, John Holt Papers, 7/3.

<sup>8</sup> Treaty with Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar, 10 Sept. 1884, Inc. 16 in No. 13, p. 27, FO403/47.

<sup>9</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 20.

by the imposition of customs duties on 10 August 1891,<sup>10</sup> the revenue from which was to finance the administration, and opening up, of the country, and payment to the chiefs in lieu of comey which was abolished.<sup>11</sup>

While formal restrictions on local people trading were relaxed during the seventies, the lion's share of the trade continued to be in the hands of the chiefs who formed the ruling oligarchy. The social history of Calabar will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 6, but it can be said here that the number of trading chiefs increased during the century. It was Duke Ephraim's fundamental achievement that he virtually monopolized the trade in the twenties and early thirties, eliminating rival house-heads from contact with the Europeans. Some could only obtain credit on his guarantee.<sup>12</sup> But this monopoly was broken up on his death, and the number of men trading directly with the Europeans increased. Those who had traded under the auspices of the Duke now carried on business in their own right, and negotiated their own credit. By 1847 there were at least ten trading.<sup>13</sup> During the fifties, men of slave origin such as Black Davis, Yellow Duke, and Bassey Henshaw, joined these privileged ranks. They did not advance on their own initiative from being petty traders, but as the favoured agents of their masters.<sup>14</sup> Some managed for their masters who were more concerned with political affairs, and others took control of their master's business after his death. By 1875 there were at least 31 Efik traders,<sup>15</sup> and in 1888 a minimum of 23 were threatened with being banned from trading because of their debts.<sup>16</sup> All were well connected in Efik society, as freemen or privileged house slaves. Thus despite the relaxation of trading restrictions from the seventies onwards, petty traders and those of neighbouring tribes played an insignificant part in business. Trade remained in the hands of the Efik oligarchy, and did not pass to a competitive, individualistic group of small traders.

<sup>10</sup> Macdonald to F.O., 11 June 1891, No. 30, FO403/171.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 31, FO403/171. <sup>12</sup> Holman, p. 398.

<sup>13</sup> Kings, Chiefs, and Gentlemen Traders to Hope, 30 Sept. 1847, in Hotham to Admiralty, No. 42, 24 Jan. 1848, FO84/746.

<sup>14</sup> *Ofion Asibon v. Bassey Duke & House, Claim: To recover the Estate of late Yellow Duke*. 5 Oct. 1903, No. 376, pp. 231-2, E. E. Offiong's Judgement Book, 1902.

<sup>15</sup> Trust due to Couper Scott & Co., Hulk 'Queen of England', Mr. Johns Account, 1875, Calprof Ibadan 5/1.

<sup>16</sup> Notice dated 13 Apr. 1888, signed H. H. Johnston, in Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881.

It was this well defined oligarchy which received the all important trust. Each 'gentleman trader' was head of a business organization with many workers, both slave and free, members of his ward or family. The majority were employed transporting manufactures and oil to and from the markets, as Waddell described:

Those employed in canoes are fed, and are in crews of six to ten in each canoe under a captain or super-cargo. He has a commission on his trade, and may trade on his own account a little, but not in palm oil, or so as to neglect his master's interests. The canoe people traffic in provisions, buying with English goods up the country, and selling to the towns-people, ships and mission houses.<sup>17</sup>

More important were the buying agents who lived at the markets. Black Davis had been a buying agent at Ikpa in 1839,<sup>18</sup> and King Eyo II's principal trader was his Ikpa agent, who had many slaves and wives of his own.<sup>19</sup> At the other markets such as Itu,<sup>20</sup> Ikoro-fiong,<sup>21</sup> and in the Cameroons,<sup>22</sup> colonies of Efik buying-agents grew up, surrounded by their families and hands.<sup>23</sup>

From Waddell's information it is likely that agents had a commission on the business they furnished for their master. They traded by giving the market people goods on credit, which their masters had received on credit from the Europeans. In 1850 Itu fell heavily in debt to King Eyo II as a result of mis-spending credit they had received,<sup>24</sup> and one of the causes of the Henshaw-Duke Town war in 1875 was that King Archibong had prohibited the Henshaws from trading after they had given out trust.<sup>25</sup> In 1882 the Henshaws suffered a similar blow when the people of one of the inland markets stopped trade after receiving credit.<sup>26</sup> And Goldie attributed the recurrent Umon-Calabar wars to the fact that the Umon ran up big credit debts, and then declared war in order to repudiate them.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>18</sup> Black Davis, 3 Sept. 1839, House Record of Black Davis, pp. 334-5.

<sup>19</sup> *UPCMR* 12 (1 Apr. 1857), 53, cit. Waddell's Journal.

<sup>20</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 8, p. 74, 22 Mar. 1851.

<sup>21</sup> *UPCMR* 13 (July 1858), 129, Letter from Alexander Robb, 19 Mar. 1858.

<sup>22</sup> *UPCMR* N.S. 6 (1 Sept. 1877), 632, cit. Revd. Alex Ross.

<sup>23</sup> *Nigerian Eastern Mail*, 19 Oct. 1935, p. 3, cit. Etim E. J. Duke. Chief Maurice Efana Archibong, 19 Jan. 1966.

<sup>24</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 8, p. 16, 26 May 1850.

<sup>25</sup> Statement of Henshaw's Town, 20 Aug. 1878, para. 10, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Henshaw to Court of Equity, 17 Jan. 1882, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>27</sup> *UPCMR* N.S. 4 (1 Jan. 1883), 13, cit. Goldie's Journal, 28 Aug. 1882.

Thus as in the days of the slave trade, credit chains extended from the Europeans on the coast far into the hinterland market areas.

Lastly, the location of the oil markets must be considered. The Efik themselves did not produce oil in commercial quantities,<sup>28</sup> despite Nair's suggestion that the territory of Akpabuyo to the east of Calabar was settled during Duke Ephraim's reign in order to provide oil.<sup>29</sup> For Waddell writes of the people of Akpabuyo in 1855: 'But the oil trade being in the hands of their masters whose authority they disown & their part of the country not growing the Palm nut tree in abundance sufficient for oil making in quantity, they are excluded all share in that trade now.'<sup>30</sup>

To this day Akpabuyo produces very little oil. Indeed, the oil palm is not cultivated,<sup>31</sup> and, as is shown on Map 6, it is to the west of the Cross River, from Afikpo to the coast, that the palm belt lies.<sup>32</sup> The main markets lay within this region, Ikpa, Ikot Offiong, Itu, and Umon, with lesser markets at Ifiayong and Enyong.<sup>33</sup> Bold and Grant in the 1820s were aware of the importance of Ibibioland as a producer of oil, and the markets of Ikot Offiong and Enyong.<sup>34</sup> But Waddell knew that the principal oil market was Ikpa,<sup>35</sup> which Goldie described as 'The largest oil market of the Calabar people'.<sup>36</sup> The Efik took great care to keep this market open, even sending annual presents to the people there.<sup>37</sup> Umon was also an important market, at the furthest point of Efik penetration up the Cross River,<sup>38</sup> its supplies coming from the region to the north-west of the Cross River. In the early fifties, its production, when available, was estimated at 1,600-1,800 puncheons annually, i.e. 640-720 tons p.a.,

<sup>28</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, 'Note on the Old Calabar and Cross Rivers', *P.R.G.S.* 16 (1871-2), 136.

<sup>29</sup> Nair, pp. 54-7.

<sup>30</sup> Waddell to Badenock, 22 Mar. 1855. In Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 10, p. 79.

<sup>31</sup> Martin, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> A. F. B. Bridges, D.O., Report on Oil Palm Survey, Ibo, Ibibio, and Cross River Areas, 11 June 1938, CSO 26/17696, Ibadan, p. 4, para. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Chief Michael Henshaw, 18 Nov. 1965. Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965. Chief Maurice Efana Archibong, 19 Jan. 1966.

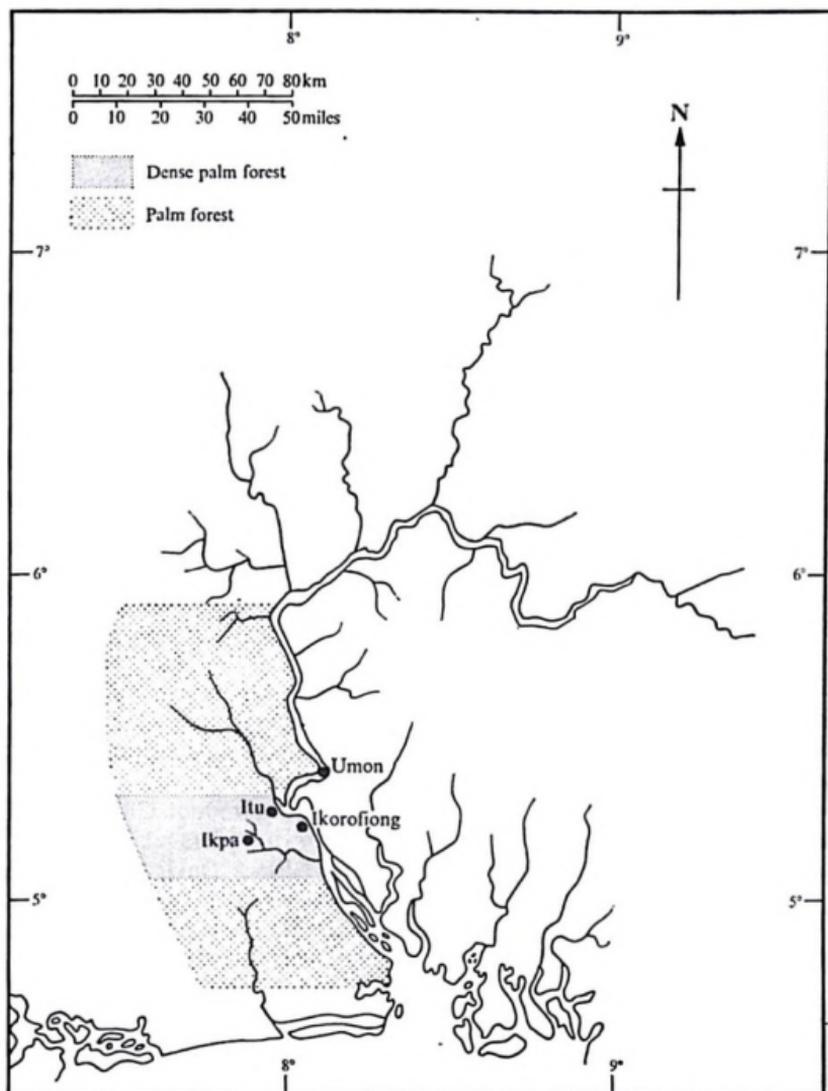
<sup>34</sup> Bold, p. 78. Crow, p. 271.

<sup>35</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 68, 24 Feb. 1851.

<sup>36</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 359.

<sup>37</sup> Archibong and Chiefs to Hutchinson, 1 Mar. 1859, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 21 Mar. 1859, ST 12, FO84/1087.

<sup>38</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 361.



MAP 6: Palm belt with main oil markets

which would have increased total exports by about 17 per cent.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, repeated outbreaks of war made trade there irregular.<sup>40</sup>

East of the Cross River, an insignificant amount of oil was bought by the Efik from the fragmented tribes there such as the Uwet, Ekoi, and Okoyong.<sup>41</sup> Further to the east, an important supply area was the Cameroons, although it is not clear which markets were used, or where the palms were situated. Although Bold noted in the 1820s that oil came from the Cameroons,<sup>42</sup> since then this source was kept secret from the Europeans until 1877 when the Revd. Alex Ross reported that Yellow Duke was the major trader there, with a base at Odobo.<sup>43</sup>

Little is known of market expansion as exports increased during the century. Efik connections with the heart of the Ibibio palm belt were of long standing, as the Efik had migrated from that region, and had continued to buy oil there for domestic use. As the oil demand grew, more was gathered by the local people. Yet expansion did not take place without tension, as the following newly discovered entry for 3 September 1839 in the Black Davis House Book shows:

I Black Davis states When Efik traders went to Ikpa for the purpose of trading, A great disturbance usual arose in the market as that was only a market which was called Creek Town or Ikpa market. Eyo Eyo Inyang was head Chief of Creek Town Traders and Eyo Honesty King of Creek Town at the time. Through this war then the (Atakpa) or Duke Town traders who were living together with the said Creek Town traders called the attention of Ibibio Chief and asked them for another portion of land to open a special market of ours. . . . The said paramount Chief Akpan Ekpene then showed in the Atakpa or Duke Town traders a bush to clear and open a market and build houses thereto. I Black Davis built a place of mine as well as other traders did on the said land gave us by the paramount chief Akpan Ekpene. Eyamba alias Edem Ekpenyong was King of Duke Town at the time the new market was opened . . .<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Eyo Honesty to Beecroft, 26 Sept. 1851, in Beecroft to Palmerston, 9 Oct. 1851, FO84/858. Bold, p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Goldie, *Dictionary*, p. 361. *UPCMR* n.s. 4 (1 Jan. 1883), 13, cit. Goldie's Journal, 28 Aug. 1882.

<sup>41</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, 'Note on the Old Calabar and Cross Rivers', *P.R.G.S.* 16 (1871-2), 137.

<sup>42</sup> Bold, p. 78.

<sup>43</sup> Marwick, p. 435, cit. Adam Duke to Anderson, 15 Oct. 1868. *UPCMR* n.s. 6 (1 Sept. 1877), 632-3, cit. Revd. Alex Ross.

<sup>44</sup> Statement of Black Davis, 3 Sept. 1839, translated into English by Messrs. Williams, D.O. and E. Offiong, Black Davis House Book, pp. 334-5.

Efik connections with Umon, Itu, and Ikorofiong were well established during the slave trade, as was intercourse with the Cameroons.<sup>45</sup> But in the late seventies there was a quest for new markets, which was reflected in increased exports. The Henshaws were particularly active, for Joseph Henshaw began business at Oron, and settled there in 1879.<sup>46</sup> He also accompanied George Watts on the expedition to open the Qua Ibo in 1881.<sup>47</sup> But the Oron began to make difficulties,<sup>48</sup> demanding tribute for produce passing through their territories, until they were defeated in an attack on 25 January 1882, by the Henshaws and Duke Town.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, this market expansion was offset by consolidation of German control in the Cameroons. Yellow Duke, who was very active there, kidnapped some people from Iduan in May 1888.<sup>50</sup> On 1 July restrictions were placed on Efik traders operating there; a licence costing 2,000 marks a year was required to import spirits, and tariffs were to be paid on many other goods. In notifying Hewett, the Imperial Governor asked especially that Yellow Duke should be informed.<sup>51</sup>

These restrictions probably had little effect at first, as the Efik resorted to smuggling, even today a widespread activity. Because the Efik were flouting the restrictions, a German gunboat sailed up to Creek Town in 1889 and took Eyo VII prisoner, making him responsible for the actions of two Creek Town traders at New Wamaso on the River Rumby on the Rio del Rey. Eyo was released but two hostages were carried away.<sup>52</sup> By 1891 several important Efik traders had been nearly ruined by the assumption of German sovereignty in that region.<sup>53</sup>

So the Efik switched over smoothly from the slave trade to the oil

<sup>45</sup> Ardener, pp. 109-13. Duke, 'Diary', p. 38, 3 Oct. 1785, p. 43, 11 Feb. 1786.

<sup>46</sup> Henry Cobham v. Idiok Une, representing the people of Uyaron, Oron, in the Calabar Divisional Court, 1937 (supplied by Chief Efana Daniel Henshaw, 21 Dec. 1965).

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum by Watts, 24 Aug. 1881, Holt Papers 7/2.

<sup>48</sup> Henshaw to Court of Equity, 17 Jan. 1882, Calprof Ibadan 3/2.

<sup>49</sup> Newspaper cutting in Watts to Holt, 19 Mar. 1882. John Holt Papers, 4/6, (year deduced from list of deaths on reverse of cutting, mentioning death of Louisa Anderson, on 26 Jan.).

<sup>50</sup> Imperial Governor to Hewett, 24 May 1888, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Imperial Governor to Hewett, 24 May 1888, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 10.

<sup>52</sup> *Unwana Efik*, vol. iii, no. 2 (Feb. 1889), in Hewett to Salisbury, No. 14, 18 Apr. 1889, FO84/1941.

<sup>53</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 30 May 1891, Book of News Cuttings, 1881-96, John Holt Papers.

trade, utilizing the trading mechanisms and know-how they had built up in the slave trade to export palm produce. It was not until the consolidation of British authority on the Cross River, and German rule in the Cameroons, in the 1890s, that the Efik lost their grip on the monopolistic trading-network they had built up. Meanwhile they successfully kept the Europeans from the hinterland, and the hinterland people from the Europeans. But it was the misfortune of the Efik trading empire that it was a purely commercial organization, which did not control the source of supply of the palm produce it handled. With the establishment of free trade on the Cross River under the Pax Britannica, the Efik commercial empire was short-circuited, and Old Calabar's prosperity disappeared. If this was a disaster to the Efik, it was hardly a disaster to the oil producers, who were now free to negotiate their own prices with the Europeans. But that is another story.

## CHAPTER 6

# The Oil Trade and Efik Social History

DURING the period of the slave trade, Efik society was modified by the incorporation of slaves into the original compound groups. The compounds of successful traders expanded into wards which cast aside the authority of their lineage groups, and became independent segments of the community. Yet the new wards did not separate from the village group, because the three integrating forces of *Ndem*, secret society, and council, particularly the latter two, were adapted to enable their interests to be served. But the cessation of the external slave trade, and the development of the export of palm oil, introduced new forces to which Efik society had to adapt. This chapter will discuss these forces, both internal and external, and the problems which they presented.

### 1. *The expansion of the agricultural slaves*

The population of Old Calabar grew steadily during the nineteenth century, that of Duke Town being about 2,000 in 1805,<sup>1</sup> and roughly 6,000 after 1846, with perhaps ten times as many in the farming areas.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the expansion of the population between 1805 and 1846 was due to the settlement of large numbers of slaves in Akpabuyo, a large agricultural district to the east of Calabar. Tradition holds that this took place particularly in the twenty or so years of Duke Ephraim's reign, which ended in 1834.<sup>3</sup> This was the transitional period from the export of slaves to the export of palm oil, and Jones has implied that the settlement was undertaken to absorb surplus slaves left over from the slave trade.<sup>4</sup> But although some of the settlers had been released from slaving ships at the approach of the

<sup>1</sup> Hallett, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 23, 11 Apr. 1846, p. 25, 13 Apr. 1846. Marwick, p. 497, cit. Anderson to Law, etc., 22 Dec. 1871.

<sup>3</sup> Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 1 Dec. 1965. Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 23 Nov. 1965. Chief Bruno Efa, 30 Nov. 1965. Chief Maurice Efana Archibong, 19 Jan. 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', pp. 134-5.

squadron, they were a minority.<sup>5</sup> For traders were unlikely to buy slaves inland until they had sold their stocks in Calabar; and the fact that the slave trade continued even after 1834, when Akpabuyo was well established, meant that slaves temporarily unshipped could be sold later.

It is tempting therefore to assume that slaves were being diverted from the export trade to the collection and production of palm oil in Akpabuyo, as Nair has suggested.<sup>6</sup> But Akpabuyo was virgin land, and had no oil palm, which is secondary vegetation found only in conjunction with agriculture. Commercial oil was not produced there in the nineteenth century, and to this day little is produced.<sup>7</sup>

However, the area may have been peopled to grow food for Calabar, which was so dependent upon the Cross River markets for supplies. The legend of Akpabuyo's discovery lays great emphasis on the fertility of the land. By the middle of the century Calabar was taking produce from Akpabuyo, for during the war among the slaves there in 1852, food prices rose sharply.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless farming may not have been the real reason for settlement, as recent studies indicate that the area is not very fertile.<sup>9</sup>

Probably the movement of slaves to this area owes more to the political situation in Calabar than it does to directly economic motives. The more potential warriors that a ward possessed, the greater its power. To Duke Ephraim the discovery of Akpabuyo provided an opportunity to build up a large reservoir of retainers who would provide their own maintenance. Once he had begun to settle slaves there, the other wards had to try to follow suit, if they were not to be overwhelmed.

Thus the Duke converted his profits from the oil trade, and the dying slave trade, to the purchase of slaves for Akpabuyo. His superior wealth is reflected in the fact that he established by far the largest number of villages there.<sup>10</sup> This could still be observed in 1963, when of the 71 villages there, 23 were in Duke ward, 11 in Etim Effiom, 4 in Archibong, 7 in Eyamba, 5 in Henshaw, 7 in Ntiero, 10 in Cobham, and 4 in Obutong (Old Town).<sup>11</sup> As Etim

<sup>5</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 426.

<sup>6</sup> Nair, pp. 54-7.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> Marwick, pp. 263-4, cit. Anderson, 9 Aug. 1852.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter I, Map 4, Land Use, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Hutchinson, *Impressions*, pp. 144-5. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 497.

<sup>11</sup> Appendix, List of Principal Efik Villages at Akpabuyo, in X. N. Ephraim to Minister of Customary Courts and Chieftaincy Affairs, Thru Provincial Com-

Effiom and Archibong ward only separated from Duke ward long after the settlement of Akpabuyo, their villages must be added to those of Duke ward to show the approximate balance of power in Duke Town at the time of settlement.

Although Nair has stated that it was the development of the oil trade which led to the incorporation of slaves into Efik society,<sup>12</sup> in fact slaves had long been ward members. What was new was the expansion of the wards with large numbers of agricultural slaves living some distance away from the townships. While this did not cause any problem at first, by the middle of the century tensions grew up between the urban dwellers, and the agricultural slaves, as the latter developed a communal life of their own. The tendency for the farm slaves to consider themselves virtually independent of the townsmen was increased by the fact that the death of Duke Ephraim in 1834 left the biggest group among them with no clearly recognized master. By 1850 they were reluctant to acknowledge any direct master at all.<sup>13</sup> They constituted the first internal force for change in Efik society.

During the late forties slaves from various wards escaped from their masters to the farms, to avoid harsh punishment,<sup>14</sup> and when Duke Ephraim's son John died in 1846,<sup>15</sup> many of his slaves fled to the farms to avoid the massacre which normally took place on the death of important men.<sup>16</sup> These funeral sacrifices became a major cause of contention between the farm slaves and the 'gentlemen' of Duke Town, in 1850. In February an *Ekpe* law was passed abolishing funeral sacrifices, as a result of pressure from the Mission and the Captains.<sup>17</sup> There was unrest among the slaves during the next few months, and in June another *Ekpe* law was passed making it a capital offence for slaves to abscond.<sup>18</sup> But unrest continued, and when King Archibong seized some of the farm slaves later in the year, the rest bound themselves with a blood oath to resist the arbitrary treatment

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missioner, Calabar Province, Calabar, 31 July 1963 (copy in the author's possession).

<sup>12</sup> Nair, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> *UPCMR* 6, (Aug. 1851), 118, cit. Goldie's Journal, 12 Dec. 1850.

<sup>14</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 379.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295. See Chapter 7, below.

<sup>17</sup> Marwick, pp. 231-7, cit. Anderson's Journal, 5-16 Feb. 1850. Extract from *UPCMR* 5 (July 1850), in McGear to Palmerston, (Undated) (Aug. 1850), FO84/818.

<sup>18</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 19, 27 June 1850.

of the freemen in Duke Town. They plundered a farm belonging to King Archibong's mother, and only restored their loot when the captured slaves were released. To settle the matter they demanded to be treated as freemen, and that funeral sacrifices be absolutely abolished, as they did not believe this had already happened.<sup>19</sup> Thus they achieved freedom from the arbitrary actions of the freemen.

But, at the end of January 1851, the farm slaves entered Duke Town as a body, in what Dike has suggested was a revolt to secure 'full emancipation'.<sup>20</sup> Jones, with whom Nair largely agrees,<sup>21</sup> interprets this invasion not as an attempt to gain liberty so much as to demand freedom from capricious ill treatment such as funeral massacres.<sup>22</sup> However, they had already gained this the previous year, and a closer analysis of the situation reveals that the slaves were Duke-ward slaves who had been summoned to town by King Archibong to support him in a political move against his rivals in Eyamba ward. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. That the slaves were prepared to support the King reveals clearly that they did not have revolutionary aims.<sup>23</sup> Now they had secured fair treatment, they were content to remain the agricultural sector of Duke Town, supporting their ward leaders in inter-ward politics.

The Duke-ward slaves were again invited to town a year later, when King Archibong, also of Duke ward, died in February 1852. Obuma, the King's mother, wanted the slaves to force the Eyamba-ward leaders to submit to the poison ordeal to determine whether they had used witchcraft to kill the king.<sup>24</sup> She thereby hoped to destroy the Eyamba candidates for the succession. Rather than face the ordeal the two leading Eyamba chiefs fled from town for a while, suffering a damaging loss of prestige.<sup>25</sup> However, the slaves did not use their new-found political power to overthrow their freemen, but returned to the farms. There a war broke out between the slaves of the late Henshaw Duke, and the slaves of the late John Duke, over the division of the 100,000 coppers Obuma had paid them for their

<sup>19</sup> *UPCMR* 6 (Aug. 1851), 118, cit. Goldie's Journal, 12 Dec. 1850.

<sup>20</sup> Dike, pp. 155-9.

<sup>21</sup> Nair, pp. 79-82.

<sup>22</sup> Jones, 'Political Organisation', pp. 148-57.

<sup>23</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 477, and Journal, vol. 8, p. 62, 5 Feb. 1851.

<sup>24</sup> Marwick, pp. 258-60, cit. Anderson.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, Journal, 7 Feb. 1852. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 498.

intervention.<sup>26</sup> Peace was not made until 6 August 1852.<sup>27</sup> However, the slaves maintained their ameliorated conditions, although the headmen benefited most, the ordinary field hands being little better off than before.<sup>28</sup>

At Creek Town there was a large expansion of agricultural slaves in the area behind the town during the reign of King Eyo II, which ended in 1858.<sup>29</sup> Like Duke Ephraim, Eyo converted the profits of the large share of the export trade which he had gained into slaves, for political reasons. Although forbidden to take the blood oath by the King in 1851,<sup>30</sup> his slaves united under the oath on his death in 1858, and entered the town to prevent any funeral sacrifices.<sup>31</sup> They reappeared on the death of Eyo III in May 1861, to kill Egbo Eyo who it was believed had procured the King's death by witchcraft.<sup>32</sup> Thus at Creek Town as at Duke Town the farm slaves united initially to secure freedom from arbitrary murder, but having achieved this did not overthrow the freemen but chose instead to support their ward leaders in the internal political interplay. Having improved their position within the existent social and political system it became their interest to uphold it. They did not seek freedom from their slave status.

During the remaining years of the sixties the farm slaves busied themselves with their agriculture, and did not play an active part in urban politics. But in 1871 both King Archibong and Eyo VI fell ill, and their ward slaves at Duke Town and Creek Town entered the towns to seek the enemies of both men, who were supposedly using witchcraft to induce their illnesses. The missionaries, however, thwarted the slaves.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear then that the farm slaves were still an important political force. Yet they were essentially conservative in outlook, and, now they had secured freedom from arbitrary treatment, were contented ward members, and did not even seek to penetrate the upper echelons of Efik society, with the possible exception of George Duke, one of

<sup>26</sup> Anderson, *Journal*, 10 Feb. 1852. Marwick, p. 263, cit. Anderson, 9 Aug. 1852.

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, *Journal*, 7 Aug. 1852.

<sup>28</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 558.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 366, 462, 604, and 643.

<sup>30</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 61, 3 Feb. 1851.

<sup>31</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 643-4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 650-1. Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 210-13, cit. Mr. Timson.

<sup>33</sup> Marwick, pp. 486-90, cit. Anderson's *Journal*, 29 May-5 June 1871. Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 233-5.

the Duke-ward slave-leaders. Their continued ward allegiance was demonstrated in the war in 1884-5 between Duke and Archibong sections of Duke ward which led to the separation of the Archibongs as an independent ward.<sup>34</sup> To this day the people of the Duke Town and Creek Town farms consider themselves ward members. Hence it can be said that the great expansion of agricultural slaves during the nineteenth century caused no revolutionary change in Efik society; the basic ward-structure which had emerged during the days of the external slave trade continued unaltered.

## 2. *The upward mobility of the urban trading-slaves*

The movement among the agricultural slaves for better treatment was paralleled by an improvement in the status of some of the leading trading-slaves. And just as it was Duke-ward slaves, particularly those of Great Duke Ephraim himself, who led the movement at the farms, it was the Duke-ward trading-slaves who were most successful in improving their social and political status.

Duke Ephraim had built up a vast centralized trading organization which encompassed nearly all the external trade in slaves and oil. Slaves had played a prominent part in this organization, both as agents and canoe captains. Consequently when the Duke died without an heir in 1834,<sup>35</sup> these slaves were left in control of his business empire. As the trading network was the foundation of his ward's prosperity, these slaves also inherited influential positions in Duke ward, dominating it. To this day such a ward member is head of Efiom Edem (Great Duke) section.<sup>36</sup> Acting the roles of freemen, the leading slaves began to seek the acknowledged symbols of freedom during the 1850s. Accordingly they constituted the second internal pressure upon the Efik social structure.

The uppermost group in Efik society were the 'gentlemen' who had bought the highest grades in *Ekpe*. To enter these grades one had to be a freeman, and rich. While in theory freemen had to be descended from a founding father, a more liberal interpretation obtained by the mid-1850s, as Anderson noted:

There is no impassable gulf between the depths of bondage and the heights of gentlemanship, such as it is, in this country. All slaves born in Old

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>35</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 497, Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 23 Nov. 1965. Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 9 Dec. 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Chief Thomas A. Efiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965, Chief E. Ekpenyong, M.B.E., 3 Dec. 1965.

Calabar are termed *half-free*; the children of the half free are sometimes termed *three-quarters* free, but more frequently, I think, *whole-free*. The half-free cannot, in ordinary circumstances, be sold out of the country. More than this, they are allowed to purchase four or five of the nine different grades of Egbo. *Their* children may buy all the grades save one or two, which are reserved by the 'proper free' for themselves.<sup>37</sup>

Thus it was that the leaders of Eyo ward, descended from the slave born Eyo Nsa, and the leaders of Eyamba and Duke wards, descendants of the illegitimate, outcast twins, Ofiong and Efiom Okoho, were by this time considered freemen, and were important office-holders in *Ekpe* and the council.<sup>38</sup> Like them, the great slaves now began to seek assimilation to the rank of 'gentleman'.

In 1850, the year the farm slaves asserted themselves, an *Ekpe* law was passed prohibiting persons, who did not own all the grades of *Ekpe*, from wearing long shirts or morning gowns.<sup>39</sup> This was designed to distinguish the 'gentlemen' from those of equal or greater wealth, who could now afford the outer trappings of status. One such was Iron Bar of Duke ward,<sup>40</sup> who apparently gained his opportunity at the death of Duke Ephraim, for when his master died, he brought up his children, traded for them and himself, and became wealthy and important.<sup>41</sup> Although a slave and excluded from *Ekpe* privileges, he was King Duke Ephraim's right-hand man, and was the next most influential man in Duke Town before dying in about 1851-2.<sup>42</sup> As he was excluded from *Ekpe* he must have made his influence felt in the council, membership of which was open to any man of influence.<sup>43</sup> By so doing he set an important precedent, and after 1855 other great slaves became council members.

Jones and Nair have both recognized that wealthy slaves were important at this time,<sup>44</sup> but neither has identified these men. However, it is reasonable to assume that council members signed the treaties and official letters, which exist from the period 1842-62. In Chart 6 there is an analysis of these signatories, which shows that after 1855 several were of slave origin. Of the 35 names which appear more than twice on these documents, 20 are identifiable. 5 were certainly slaves, 4 of which were from Duke ward, reflecting the

<sup>37</sup> Marwick, p. 326, cit. paper by Anderson on Slavery, 27 Jan. 1855.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>39</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 438.

<sup>40</sup> Efiom Edem Iron Bar, 15 Jan. 1966.

<sup>41</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 10, p. 73, Waddell to Blyth, (undated) (March 1855).

<sup>42</sup> Marwick, p. 258, cit. Anderson, 12 Feb. 1852.

<sup>43</sup> Chapter 3, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 190. Nair, p. 69.



fact that Duke-ward slaves were most successful in improving their status. Bassey Henshaw Duke appeared on 13 of the 19 documents, Yellow Duke on 12, Black Davis on 11, and George Duke on 4, although the latter was a farm slave not a trading-slave. The fifth man, Bassey Africa, mentioned on 5 documents, was from Eyamba ward.

It was the wealth and influence derived from their business successes which enabled these slaves to advance, but only a select few who were given permission to trade directly with the ships were allowed to achieve commercial success. This is indicated in the following quotation from E. E. Offiong's Judgement Book:

. . . after the death of Efiom Edem, (Great Duke Ephraim) the second Yellow Duke remains with Edem Odo (King Duke Ephraim) and was a storekeeper at the time not every man or chief who use to go to Hulk for business transaction and was greatly assisted by the King whereof Yellow Duke became rich. The reason why the King allowed Yellow Duke this privileges [*sic*] was that he may compute [*sic*] with Bassey Henshaw.<sup>45</sup>

By contrast the ordinary canoe boys remained as servile as ever.

The advance of the great slaves was furthered by the poverty of the Efik *Obongs* who succeeded Great Duke. King Eyamba went bankrupt,<sup>46</sup> King Archibong I, although wealthy and a successful trader, only reigned for five years,<sup>47</sup> and King Duke Ephraim was a poverty-stricken drunkard.<sup>48</sup> The reason for such poverty probably lies in the fact they were contemporaries of Great Duke, and had so long been excluded from trade, that they had no business knowledge or experience. Inevitably they were forced to rely on the superior know-how of the slaves who managed the trade.

Nair attributes the increased wealth and influence of the great slaves in these years to his belief that slaves could inherit their fathers' property, and not have it divided up among numerous relatives, like the freemen. But there is no basis for this theory, for a slave's property reverted to his master on death.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ofion Asibon v. Bassey Duke & House. Claim: To recover the Estate of late yellow Duke, 5 Oct. 1903, Native Council of Old Calabar, No. 376, E. E. Offiong's Judgement Book (1902-), p. 232.

<sup>46</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 274.

<sup>47</sup> Marwick, pp. 215-16, cit. Anderson's Journal, 28 May 1849.

<sup>48</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 392-3.

Beecroft to Malmesbury, 30 June 1852, FO84/886.

<sup>49</sup> Chief Asuquo Okody, 9 Feb. 1966. Chief Thomas A. Effiom, M.O.N., 21 Dec. 1965.

Although the great slaves obtained positions of influence in the council, Jones has stated that they were excluded from the upper grades of *Ekpe*.<sup>50</sup> But there is evidence to prove that some did buy the highest grades, in the late fifties and early sixties. An entry in the Black Davis House Book, 24 November 1861, reads:

In the day yellow Duke buying all Egbo people &c to let him have negrobell for the foot according to our fashion for dancing so they agree Duke Town and Creek Town charge him twenty (20) boxes of rods all Calabar allow him to buying this because he is Proper man to help Calabar in every so allow him to buy this as any Egbo man Put down name.

Doctor Eyo King of Creek Town

Prince Archibong II

King Eyo Honesty VI

Eke Eso

Offiong Enian

Black Davis

George Duke

Boco Duke

Ephraim Adam

Toby (?)

Offiong Effeo Iwat

Egbo Etam Henshaw

Egbo Young Hogan

Ephraim Lewis

Creek Town

Old Town

Ikoneto

And witness to writing by Big Adam Duke.<sup>51</sup>

This reveals that Yellow Duke was being allowed to purchase the right to wear a distinctive article of dress allowed only to those privileged in *Ekpe*.<sup>52</sup> Equally important is the fact that Black Davis and George Duke signed the document, implying they had already achieved this distinction. Further evidence that Yellow Duke did purchase the highest *Ekpe* grades at this time is the fact that he erected a wooden two-storey house of the kind allowed only to the holders of the highest grades.<sup>53</sup> That Black Davis had indeed bought the top four grades is indicated by a statement in the Black Davis House Book to that effect.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Jones, *Trading States*, p. 190.

<sup>51</sup> Black Davis House Book, 24 Nov. 1861, p. 38.

<sup>52</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 266, 356.

<sup>53</sup> Chief Amuquo Okody, 9 Dec. 1965. Marwick, p. 398, cit. Anderson, *Journal*, 12 Apr. 1862.

<sup>54</sup> Black Davis House Book, 27 July 1874, p. 39.



The analysis of official documents of 1875-84, Chart 7, shows that men of slave origin continued to be represented on the council. Of the fifteen names which appear more than once, Yellow Duke, George Duke, and the brothers Hogan and Adam Ironbar, descendants of the first influential Iron Bar who died about 1851, were of unfree birth. Both Yellow Duke and George Duke had become *Ekpe* gentlemen in the sixties, but it is not known if the Iron Bar brothers followed suit. It is possible that they did, for as late as 1888 Coco Otu Bassey, also of unfree origin, obtained the highest grades.<sup>57</sup>

However, in the late seventies and eighties there was a determined attempt by a new generation of leading freemen to curb the ambitions of the great slaves. Prince Duke claimed George Duke's estate on his death in 1879,<sup>58</sup> and Yellow Duke's estate on his death in 1888.<sup>59</sup> Indeed this period marks an attempt at retrenchment by the Efik leaders against the social changes of the previous thirty years. Presumably they feared that their own position would soon be completely undermined, and that the entire social and political structure might disintegrate. For not only were they subject to the pressure of infiltration by the great slaves, but they were also worried by the increasing numbers of British-protected people who were establishing themselves at Old Calabar. These will be dealt with next.

### 3. *The Mission*

The first of these foreign groups to establish themselves in Calabar was the Mission. Nair has dismissed the importance of the Mission in Efik social and political development,<sup>60</sup> but although the Mission was small in numbers, it had an influence out of proportion to its size. The missionaries contributed to the improvement in slave conditions, for they were opposed to slavery on principle,<sup>61</sup> and were always ready to save a slave from cruel treatment by his master.<sup>62</sup> Early after their arrival they determined to secure the abolition of funeral sacrifices,<sup>63</sup> which resulted in the passing of the *Ekpe* law against this

<sup>57</sup> Diary of Coco Bassey, 20 Apr. 1888, First Folder, Coco Bassey Papers.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson to Goldie and Ross, 10 Dec. 1879, Inc. with Memorial of George Duke, to Earl Granville, 13 July 1883, FO84/1654.

<sup>59</sup> Chief Asuquo Okody, 9 Feb. 1966.

<sup>60</sup> Nair, pp. 60-1.

<sup>61</sup> Marwick, p. 328, cit. Anderson's paper on Slavery, 1855.

<sup>62</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 256-7, 403-5.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 293-5, 336-8, 405-6.

custom in 1850.<sup>61</sup> Yet the Mission was unable to break the institution of slavery itself, which continued into the twentieth century.

The missionaries were more successful in obtaining the abolition of some of the unpleasant and cruel customs of Calabar, such as the murder of twin babies,<sup>65</sup> and the poison-bean ordeal, used to determine whether a person was guilty of witchcraft.<sup>66</sup> In 1878 an agreement was signed between the Chiefs and Consul to prohibit these practices.<sup>67</sup> Other ways in which the Mission influenced Efik life was in teaching some of the children to read, and in gaining a few converts to Christianity. The latter effect may have been of great personal significance to the people concerned, but did not alter Efik society in general. Indeed the impact of Christianity on the structure of Efik society was nil.

Where the Mission, as distinct from Christianity, had an effect was in establishing a community which was contingent with Efik society, but apart from it. At each Mission house, a household grew up independent of the customs and *mores* of Calabar. Some of the members had come with the Mission from elsewhere, but increasingly the missionaries gathered round them local people given to them as presents, and twin babies rescued from the bush.<sup>68</sup> More important, refugees from Efik justice sought the protection of the Mission, especially at Duke Town.<sup>69</sup> In Efik eyes all these people belonged to the missionaries, and were the slaves of the house or ward ruled by the missionaries as freemen, and they were even known among the Efik as *ofu makara* or 'whitemen's slaves'.<sup>70</sup>

At first the Mission households were able to live peaceably, and the refugees went about their daily affairs unchallenged, informally under British protection.<sup>71</sup> Many were baptised.<sup>72</sup> However, the mission-

<sup>64</sup> Marwick, pp. 231-7, cit. Anderson's Journal, 5-16 Feb. 1850. Extract from *UPCMR* 5 (July 1850), in McGear to Palmerston, (undated) (Aug. 1850), FO84/818.

<sup>65</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 442.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>67</sup> Agreement on Twin Murders, Sacrifices, Trade and Commerce, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508.

<sup>68</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 369-70. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 511-12. Marwick, p. 288, cit. Anderson, 30 Nov. 1853. Marwick, p. 355, cit. Anderson's Report for 1856. Anderson to Hartley, 8 Oct. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 4.

<sup>69</sup> Marwick, pp. 212-13, cit. Anderson's Journal, 22 and 23 Apr. 1849.

<sup>70</sup> Chief Thomas A. Efom, 25 Jan. 1966.

<sup>71</sup> Beecroft to Malmesbury, 20 May 1852, FO2/7.

<sup>72</sup> Marwick, pp. 336-7, cit. Anderson's Report for 1855.

aries wanted formally to emancipate their Efik household members,<sup>73</sup> and in 1855 Consul Hutchinson began to grant them emancipation papers,<sup>74</sup> which became a standard practice.<sup>75</sup> But by the early 1870s the Duke Town authorities began to fear that the granting of emancipation and British protection to these people was a threat to their position. Many more slaves might escape to the Mission, receive manumission papers, and thereby cease to be their subjects.

The situation came to a head over Egbo Bassey, a former steward of King Eyamba V who had fled to the Mission in 1849,<sup>76</sup> when accused of theft.<sup>77</sup> Baptised<sup>78</sup> and emancipated,<sup>79</sup> he worked hard, married, and bought slaves who were also emancipated.<sup>80</sup> But soon after the accession of Archibong III in 1872,<sup>81</sup> Prince Thomas Eyamba<sup>82</sup> tried to reclaim Egbo Bassey and his people,<sup>83</sup> forcing him to flee to Fernando Po.<sup>84</sup> Then it became apparent that the Efik authorities were concerned about all such emancipados, for in 1875 King Archibong informed Consul Hartley:

. . . those who were not redeemed from us by the mission with money, should leave my country entirely unless they agree to sign a document that they will remain at the mission still in submission to their respective master & consider themselves to be my subjects. . . . If the custom of giving free papers continues, it will become a serious matter to me as I shall lose my subjects and my country will be ruined . . .<sup>84a</sup>

Because further attempts were made in 1876 to re-enslave emancipados,<sup>85</sup> the Foreign Office was forced to clarify the situation, stating

<sup>73</sup> Anderson to Hutchinson, 18 Jan. 1855, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, No. 11, 31 Jan. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>74</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, No. 11, 31 Jan. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>75</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, No. 77, FO84/1001. Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 4 Mar. 1859, ST 10, FO84/1087. Laughland to Russell, 1 Dec. 1860, ST 49, FO84/1117.

<sup>76</sup> Marwick, cit. Anderson's Journal, 22 Apr. 1849, and 23 Apr. 1849.

<sup>77</sup> Anderson to Hartley, 8 Oct. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Marwick, pp. 336-7, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1855.

<sup>79</sup> Anderson to Hartley, 6 July 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Marwick, p. 504, cit. Anderson, 28 Aug. 1872.

<sup>82</sup> Egbo Bassey to Hartley, 17 June 1874, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Marwick, p. 531, cit. Anderson's Journal, 20 Apr. 1875.

<sup>84</sup> Egbo Bassey to Hartley, 17 June 1874, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Archibong III to Hartley, 4 Oct. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 4.

<sup>86</sup> Alex Ross to Act. Con. McKellar, 24 Apr. 1876, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 5.

McKellar to Foreign Secretary, 9 Sept. 1876, No. 45, FO84/1455. Cobham, Ballantyne, Cobham, Obong Henny to Foreign Secretary, 18 Sept. 1876, Calprof Ibadan 4/3, vol. 2.

that such people were not entitled to British protection unless attempts were made to re-enslave them or to prevent them trading.<sup>86</sup> This precipitated a rush of demands for British protection from slaves who had enjoyed increasing freedom during the middle years of the century, but who were now being subject to the reactionary backlash against this liberalism from the new generation of Efik leaders. James Egbo Bassey<sup>87</sup> and his brother petitioned for British protection in 1877 as the authorities were trying to enslave them and their people, and prevent them trading.<sup>88</sup> In 1881 Peter King Cameroons sought protection because he was being oppressed, for although a slave, he had become a family head.<sup>89</sup> Okon Ma sought protection the same year, because Archibong III was trying to reduce him to slavery.<sup>90</sup> And in 1883 George Duke, son of the George Duke who had been one of the most successful great slaves, requested British protection because King Duke had taken his late father's estate.<sup>91</sup>

Thus the Mission's impact on Efik society was felt in procuring British protection for the refugee slaves, who became members of their households. It was seen by leading slaves in Efik society that British protection and emancipation did remove the onerous demands which their masters might make. Consequently, when the new generation of Efik freemen, who dominated Efik politics from the early seventies, began to repress those slaves who had enjoyed considerable liberty in the middle years of the century, they turned to demand British protection. British protection became a shield behind which the oppressed slaves in Calabar could shelter.

#### 4. *The liberated Africans*

The group of emancipated slaves associated with the Mission were not the only threat to the control of the Efik oligarchy. The Chiefs became increasingly concerned about another group under British

<sup>86</sup> F.O. to Hartley, 10 Apr. 1877, No. 7, FO84/1487.

<sup>87</sup> Not to be confused with Egbo Bassey aforementioned. Egbo Bassey, father of James Egbo Bassey, died before 1868. Egbo Bassey of the Mission was alive in 1874. Marwick, p. 443, cit. Anderson's Journal, 15 May 1868. Egbo Bassey to Hartley, 17 June 1874, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 3.

<sup>88</sup> James Egbo Bassey to Tait, 1 Oct. 1877, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 10. Ibid. 17 Nov. 1877, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 6. Petition of James Egbo Bassey 2nd, (undated) Nov., 1877, Calprof Ibadan, 4/3 vol. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Petition of Prince James Eyamba V on behalf of Peter King Cameroons and family of Duke Town, to Earl Granville, 20 Sept. 1881, FO84/1612.

<sup>90</sup> Memorial of Okon Ma to Earl Granville, 27 Sept. 1881. FO84/1612.

<sup>91</sup> Memorial of George Duke to Earl Granville, 13 July 1883, FO84/1654.

protection which was expanding in Calabar, the free Africans from other parts of the coast.

The first of these was Fergusson, a Cape Coaster who had been on the Niger expedition in 1841, and became King Eyo II's clerk shortly afterwards.<sup>92</sup> But it was not until 1854 that any significant number of liberated Africans settled in Calabar, a little later than in Yorubaland. There Sierra Leoneans established themselves in the forties, becoming a vital force in commerce and education.<sup>93</sup> The Revd. Jones of the C.M.S. in Sierra Leone visited Calabar in 1853, and obtained Eyo's word that he would welcome liberated slaves who had come from the locality.<sup>94</sup> The first of these immigrants arrived in 1854, on the new mail steamers. They did not settle at Creek Town, but chose to live on the Mission ground at Duke Town. There were seven families, each of whom built a hut. Mostly they were old people wanting to end their days in the region of their childhood.<sup>95</sup> But in 1855, two of them began to trade with the local people for oil, sending the oil to Britain on the mail packets.<sup>96</sup> The supercargoes there persuaded King Duke to order the Sierra Leoneans to leave, lest large numbers come and take over the country.<sup>97</sup> Consul Hutchinson prevented their eviction, thereby establishing that, while not British subjects, they were to receive British protection.<sup>98</sup>

Nevertheless, opposition to the liberated Africans continued, and in 1858 King Duke informed Hutchinson,

A number of Sierra Leone men and others have come here to reside in my town now these men say they are Englishmen and British subjects and are not amenable to any law of mine, I do not understand when man do bad thing, and keep no law, that he say he be Englishman, and you must tell man come for any town for live here that he live for my country law, when he live here. Some carpenter and sawyer come for do work for we, we like that and pay them but they must have law for keep, but plenty other Sierra Leone man come here have nothing, and have only their for do, to

<sup>92</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 1, 16 Apr. 1846, p. 30.

<sup>93</sup> J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891* (London, 1965), pp. 25-52.

<sup>94</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 166.

<sup>95</sup> Anderson to Hutchinson, 17 June 1856, Inc. 2 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, No. 76, FO84/1001.

<sup>96</sup> Chapter 5, p. 59-61.

<sup>97</sup> Anderson to Hutchinson, 17 June 1856, Inc. 2 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, No. 76, FO84/1001.

<sup>98</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, No. 76, FO84/1001. Clarendon to Hutchinson, 19 Oct. 1856, FO84/1001.

get chop, you must tell all them men to go away he no use for we and only bring palaver.<sup>99</sup>

In 1859 Hutchinson sent two Sierra Leoneans back to the colony, one for arson and the other for slave stealing, and the Efik pressed them to expel them all.<sup>1</sup> But the number of liberated Africans continued to increase, especially after the crash in the oil trade in 1862. During the next two years the number of Sierra Leoneans and Accra men increased from thirty to fifty, and they caused considerable trouble by trading, owning slaves, and playing the chiefs, missionaries, and agents off against one another.<sup>2</sup> In 1867 Livingstone complained of the 'turbulent Accra natives' in Duke Town, who were constantly quarrelling with the Calabar people.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the trouble they caused, the liberated Africans had little impact on the cultural and political life of Calabar. Some became church members.<sup>4</sup> Fergusson had done some teaching in the 1840s,<sup>5</sup> and it was in education that they made their greatest contribution. The local traders preferred to send their children to these men for lessons, as the English and arithmetic they taught was more useful for business, than the Efik and Bible studies the missionaries concentrated upon. By 1872 there were at least three running schools.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the wave of reaction which overtook the Efik gentlemen in the seventies culminated in an attempt to eject the free Africans. In 1874, the year that Egbo Bassey fled to Fernando Po, the carpenters, coopers, tailors, and clockmakers from Sierra Leone, Accra, and Cape Coast asked the Consul whether they were entitled to British protection, as they were being oppressed by the Efik.<sup>7</sup> Next year King Archibong III sought clarification on this point, as the free Africans were refusing to abide by local law and were claiming

<sup>99</sup> King Duke Ephraim to Hutchinson, 6 May 1858, Inc. 5, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 25 May 1858, ST 23, FO84/1061.

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson to Hill, 28 Feb 1859, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 24 Feb. 1859, ST 4, FO84/1087.

<sup>2</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>3</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 27 Apr. 1867, No. 7, FO84/1277.

<sup>4</sup> Marwick, pp. 336-7, cit. Anderson's Report for 1855.

<sup>5</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 1, 16 Apr. 1846, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Marwick, p. 509, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1872. Ibid., p. 517, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1873.

<sup>7</sup> Memorial of Samuel Fuller, Daniel J. Josiah, etc., to Hartley, 21 Aug. 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 3.

to be British subjects.<sup>8</sup> But by July 1876 many had left Calabar as the Efik were threatening to massacre them, and those remaining were seeking immediate British protection.<sup>9</sup> That autumn Archibong made his attitude clear when he informed the Court of Equity:

... I will in no wise have any African born British Subjects in my Country who will not abide by the law of my country with the exception of the Hulk and Cask house dwellers.

I therefore implore the Court to inform the said British Subjects dwelling in Old Calabar Towns under my control that those who will not abide by my Country law must leave my Country entirely or abide in one of the Hulk in my river if they choose.<sup>10</sup>

But the court refused to act, and the liberated Africans remained.<sup>11</sup> Two years later, in 1878, King Archibong was still hoping to be rid of them, and Consul Hopkins was describing them as 'the most meddlesome and dangerous people on the Coast'.<sup>12</sup> The Foreign Office agreed with Hopkins, but was unwilling to withdraw protection from them.<sup>13</sup> By the end of that year there were only 26 free Africans—a drop in numbers from the 50 of 1864—because of the recent troubles: 9 were from Sierra Leone, 13 from Accra, and one each from Lagos, Monrovia, St. Kitts, and Fernando Po. Eight were carpenters, 4 tailors, 3 blacksmiths, 3 clerks, 2 traders, a butcher, a teacher, a sempstress, a cook-steward, a servant, and one 'washing and sewing', all of whom had arrived in the previous eleven years.<sup>14</sup>

Seven years later, in 1885, their numbers had increased to 48, of which 24 were from Sierra Leone, 13 from Accra, 7 from Lagos, and 4 from the West Indies. Five of them owned slaves, making 10 slaves in all.<sup>15</sup> This slave-holding had long been a cause of Efik opposition, for they had held slaves as early as 1864,<sup>16</sup> and in 1876 Prince Thomas Eyamba had reclaimed a girl one of them had bought and was seeking

<sup>8</sup> Archibong III per P. Eyamba to Hartley, 8 Oct. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Jas. A. Croker to ?, 5 July 1876 Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 5. James Africanus Croker to Hewett, 20 July 1876, Inc. in Hewett to McKellar, 13 Sept. 1876, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Archibong III to Court of Equity, 10 Oct. 1876, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>11</sup> J. B. Walker, Chairman, to Court of Equity, 10 Oct. 1876, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>12</sup> Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 28 Aug. 1878, No. 29, FO84/1508.

<sup>13</sup> F.O. internal memo *re* Hopkins, No. 29, FO84/1508.

<sup>14</sup> List of British Subjects resident at Old Calabar (internal evidence gives date Nov.-Dec. 1878) Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Act. Con. White to Granville, 9 Feb. 1885, Africa, No. 13, FO84/1701.

<sup>16</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

emancipation papers for.<sup>17</sup> The Chiefs feared that the purchase of slaves by free Africans, who then sought emancipation papers for the people they bought, would lead to slaves being removed from Efik control as when the Mission emancipated refugees. Vice-Consul White therefore tried to prohibit free Africans from redeeming slaves,<sup>18</sup> but was overruled by the Foreign Office.<sup>19</sup>

So it was that the Efik fought a losing battle against the influx of British-protected Africans. Like the emancipated Mission servants, they revealed to maltreated Efik slaves that they might escape ill use by seeking British protection. Moreover, these free Africans were another group resident in Calabar for whom the British government owned responsibility, and therefore represented an extension of British influence into Calabar affairs. After the establishment of full British protection in 1891, the numbers of such people living in Calabar, but not under Efik rule, increased rapidly.<sup>20</sup>

### 5. *The European traders*

Apart from the Qua and Efut communities which were peripheral to the evolution of Efik social and political life, the last important group at Calabar were the European traders, with their crews and hands. These men were independent of Efik society. Each ship was a self-governing unit, with European officers and a mixed crew of Europeans and Africans. Their relationship with the Efik was purely commercial, although in the twenties and late seventies several joined *Ekpe* in order to facilitate the collection of debts.<sup>21</sup> While cask houses were rented on shore,<sup>22</sup> the Europeans and their men lived aboard ship or hulk.

At the height of the oil season in the fifties, there would be several hundred Europeans in Calabar, officers and men, but with the decline of the oil trade in 1862, and its consequent reorganization to the hulk system, the numbers dropped to a maximum of about three hundred.<sup>23</sup> By 1874, when the hulk system was completely established, with

<sup>17</sup> Van der Grype to McKellar, 6 Sept. 1876, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Act. Con. White to Granville, 1 Feb. 1885, Africa, No. 8, FO84/1701.

<sup>19</sup> F.O. internal memo, *re* White to Granville, 1 Feb. 1885, Africa No. 8, FO84/1701.

<sup>20</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 353-4.

<sup>21</sup> Holman, p. 392. Chapter 5, pp. 80-1.

<sup>22</sup> James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1.

<sup>23</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

resident agents aided by hands who were usually Krumen, the numbers of Europeans resident in Old Calabar were few.<sup>24</sup>

In 1857 Mr. Inglis and Mr. Smith, when they arrived to ship oil on the mail steamers, tried to live on shore. Unable to find local accommodation, they were allowed to stay at the Mission, until the captains protested.<sup>25</sup> Then they obtained permission from the King to build their own house, well away from the Mission.<sup>26</sup> But many local people opposed this move in a great meeting called to discuss the situation:

All the mischief [they said] arose from the missionaries living on shore. They lived too long, and showed others how to live long also; and soon they would see all the white people living on shore, and more would come, till they would be too many. Before time white people lived all on ship-board; and while they lived in their ships the country was safe. They used to get sick and die soon, and were afraid to stay one year in the river. Now they won't die; the missionaries teach them to live long; so they stop in Calabar two or three years, and fill two or three ships before they go back to England.<sup>27</sup>

Hence they pressed that the Mission be sent home, and the captains be kept to their ships.<sup>28</sup> While the Mission was allowed to stay, the general antipathy to the traders settling on shore led them to choose instead to live on hulks from the early sixties.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Consul Livingstone was one of the first Europeans to live ashore, when he transferred the Consulate to Calabar in 1872-3, although he lived at one of the Mission houses.<sup>30</sup> At about the same time Capt. J. B. Walker established two schools and an experimental farm.<sup>31</sup> In 1874 he sought permission from the King to build a house inside his cask house. Louch, another trader, had already built a house, but had to pay an extortionate rent, and the King demanded a similar rent

<sup>24</sup> Marwick, p. 530, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1874.

<sup>25</sup> Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 25 July 1857, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 31 Aug. 1857, ST 50, FO84/1030. Waddell to Hutchinson, 7 Aug. 1857, Inc. 4, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 31 Aug. 1857, ST 50, FO84/1030. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 609-10.

<sup>26</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 611-12.

<sup>27</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 612.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>30</sup> Livingstone to Granville, 19 Oct. 1871, FO84/1343. F.O. to Livingstone, 2 Feb. 1872, FO84/1356. F.O. to Hartley, 21 Aug. 1873, No. 3, FO84/1377. Hartley to Granville, 17 Jan. 1874, FO84/1401.

<sup>31</sup> Marwick, p. 509, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1872, and p. 529, cit. Anderson's Journal, 21 Apr. 1874. Whitford, p. 297.

from Walker.<sup>32</sup> These high rents were presumably designed to discourage traders from dwelling ashore, and in 1881 they were still living in hulks.<sup>33</sup> Although the Efik refused to agree to the Article in the Protection Treaty of 1884 allowing foreigners to have factories and houses wherever they wished,<sup>34</sup> the agents did begin to live ashore soon afterwards, for they were addressing letters from their 'factories' in 1885.<sup>35</sup> By 1891 the African Association owned a property known as Fort Stewart, which contained a dwelling house.<sup>36</sup> With the establishment of the Consular administration of the 1890s, the Europeans finally established themselves on shore, and hulks became a thing of the past.<sup>37</sup>

So the European traders themselves remained isolated from Efik society until after 1891. The Efik had always recognized that they were a potential threat to Efik society, and consequently were always determined to prevent them establishing themselves on shore. Their direct impact on Efik society was negligible.

Thus the development of the oil trade did not of itself alter the structure of Efik society which had been established in response to the demands of the slave trade, because both trades were similarly organized. But the wards did expand as the profits of the oil trade were converted into self-maintaining agricultural slaves, potential warriors. Duke ward expanded most, a reflection of Great Duke Ephraim's enormous wealth. There were, however, modifications within the structure of Efik society, as the agricultural slaves demanded more humane treatment, and the great trading-slaves were allowed to enter the oligarchy of 'gentlemen'. Besides these internal pressures, there were external pressures, as British-protected Africans established themselves, both Mission emancipados, and free Africans, from other coastal towns. Ultimately a crisis developed, as the oligarchy began to repress those slaves who had pretended to high status. They in turn demanded British protection, the effectiveness of

<sup>32</sup> Walker to Hartley, 28 Sept. 1874, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Harford, 'Pioneering', p. 585.

<sup>34</sup> Treaty with Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar, 10 Sept. 1884, Inc. 16 in No. 13, p. 27, FO403/47.

<sup>35</sup> White to White, Palm Factory, 16 Apr. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 3/1. Lyon to Court of Equity, Hope Factory, 30 Nov. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>36</sup> Major MacDonald to African Association, 8 Dec. 1891, Inc. 3 in No. 117B, 80D, FO403/171.

<sup>37</sup> P.P. 1893-4 (655), lxii, General Correspondence, Africa, No. 11, Correspondence respecting the Affairs of the West Coast of Africa, No. 1, Sir C. MacDonald to the Earl of Rosebery, 12 Jan. 1893. Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 351-4.

which they had observed in relation to the emancipados and free Africans. In this way the internal and external forces united in a political demand for British rule.

All these changes stemmed from the trade connection with the West. If there had been no oil trade, there would have been no agricultural slaves or great trading-slaves. Nor would there have been a Mission, or free Africans, or British merchants and Consuls. But it is not true that the change from the slave trade to the oil trade precipitated social change by creating new groups based upon the oil trade which challenged those who had been based upon the slave trade. Such changes may have occurred in hinterland producing-areas, as A. G. Hopkins suggest happened in Yorubaland.<sup>38</sup> But they did not occur in Old Calabar, an entrepôt which merely dealt in both commodities.

<sup>38</sup> A. G. Hopkins, 'Economic Imperialism in West Africa, Lagos, 1880-1892', *E.H.R.* 2nd Ser. vol. 21, no. 3 (Dec. 1968), p. 586-92.

## CHAPTER 7

# The Oil Trade and Efik Political History

THERE are two main areas of interest in Efik political history from the beginning of the palm-oil trade to the establishment of British rule; first, Old Calabar's domestic political history, and secondly, the history of Anglo-Efik relations. This chapter will discuss both aspects.

### 1. *Inter-ward political rivalry*

In Chapter 4 it was shown that Efik domestic politics were primarily concerned with the competition between the wards for the three major political offices, the *Obong*-ship, *Eyamba*-ship, and *Ebunko*-ship. It was the triumph of the new wards, Eyamba ward, Duke ward, and Eyo ward, that they gained control of these offices during the eighteenth century. Yet while the *Ebunko*-ship remained unchallenged in Eyo ward during the nineteenth century, serious inter-ward rivalry continued for the other offices.

Two customs played an important part in resolving inter-ward conflict for offices. The first of these was the massacring of many of an important man's slaves on his death.<sup>1</sup> This weakened the power of the deceased's family, which prevented them replacing him with another candidate. Hence it was a crude political mechanism which tended to ensure that offices circulated among the wards. The second, and more important, was the *esere* poison-bean ordeal, which was believed to kill those drinking it who practised witchcraft.<sup>2</sup> Its political significance lay in the fact that when a leading man died, his friends and enemies would accuse each other of having used witchcraft to procure his death. Thus the various ward leaders had to submit to the ordeal, from which many died and were eliminated from the succession dispute.<sup>3</sup> In this way successions were decided without inter-ward warfare, and it was not until the late 1870s when

<sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 293-5, 336-8. Duke, 'Diary', p. 50, 6 and 8 Nov. 1786.

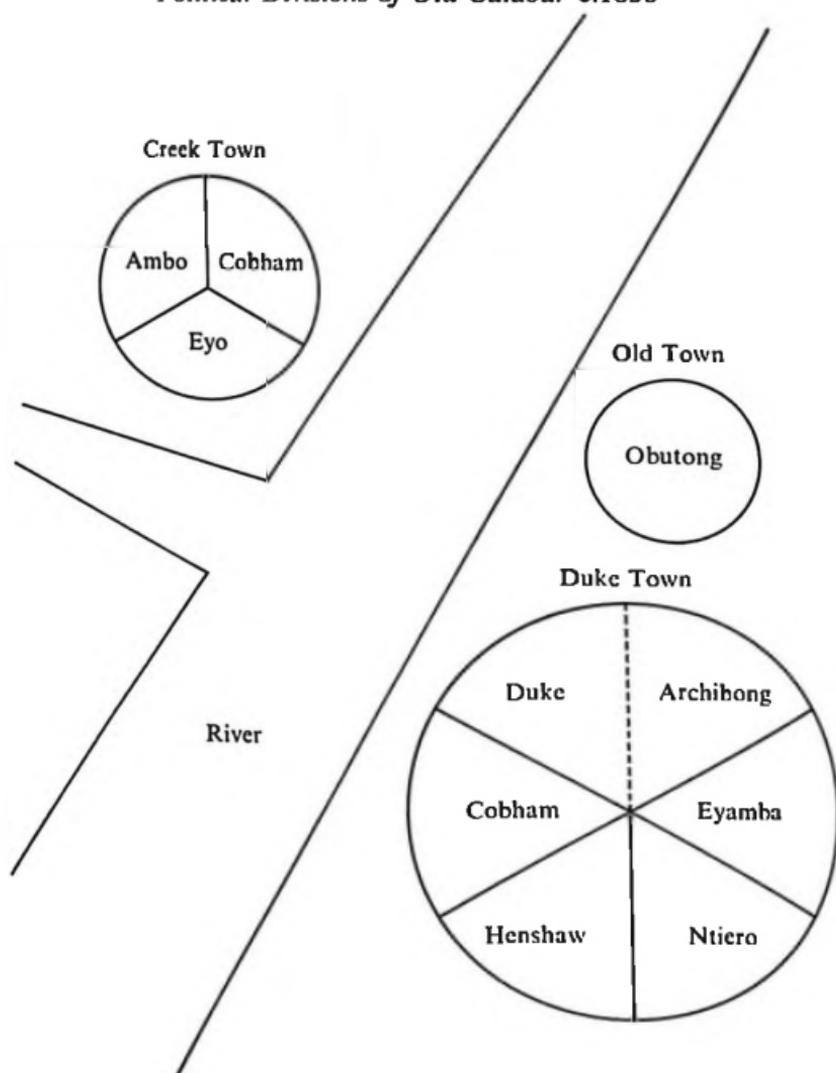
<sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 497-8. Duke, 'Diary', p. 47, 10, 11, 18, and 19 July 1786, p. 57, 15 June 1787.

these customs were abandoned that succession disputes became insoluble.

Eyamba ward and Duke ward had together monopolized the *Obong*-ship during the eighteenth century, and when Egbo Young Ofiong secured the *Eyamba*-ship late in the century, this office also fell into their hands. Egbo Young Ofiong of Eyamba ward was the first

CHART 8  
*Political Divisions of Old Calabar c.1850*



man to be *Obong* and *Eyamba*,<sup>4</sup> and on his death both offices passed to Great Duke Ephraim, the rival head of Duke ward. Under his influence Duke ward expanded very rapidly in the early nineteenth century, as the Duke capitalized on his position as *Obong*, *Eyamba*, sole gatherer of come, and virtual monopolist of external trade.<sup>5</sup> But on his death in 1834 the *Eyamba* ward and their allies conspired to use both available political mechanisms to break the power of Duke ward. Innumerable slaves were killed,<sup>6</sup> and of the fifty people who had to submit to the poison ordeal, over forty died, leaving Duke ward almost bereft of potential political candidates.<sup>7</sup> Consequently the *Eyamba* candidate, Edem Ekpenyong, son of Egbo Young Ofiong,<sup>8</sup> took office as *Eyamba* V,<sup>9</sup> both *Obong* and *Eyamba*.<sup>10</sup>

However the accession of King *Eyamba* V did not mean that Duke ward was permanently crippled. Although Great Duke's own family had been nearly wiped out in the succession dispute, there were still freemen in other families of the ward who could present themselves as candidates at a later date. And the economic power of Duke ward continued, for the slaves who had been Duke Ephraim's managers carried on trading. This undermined King *Eyamba*'s position, for prestige demanded that he present as good a display, and distribute as much largess, as his predecessor. But whereas the Duke had the vast wealth accumulating from his trade to draw upon, King *Eyamba* did not, for he was an inadequate business man and could not compete with the Duke ward slaves. Thus his expenditure outstripped his resources,<sup>11</sup> and he was imprisoned on board one of the ships for debt,<sup>12</sup> dying soon afterwards on 14 May 1847,<sup>13</sup> in effect an undischarged bankrupt.<sup>14</sup>

King Eyo II of Creek Town also contributed to *Eyamba* V's misfortune by capturing a large share of the external trade. Father Tom (Efiok Eyo) had become head of Eyo ward on the death of Eyo I

<sup>4</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37, Chapter 4, p. 45-6.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 4, p. 47-8.      <sup>6</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 497.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> Genealogy of *Eyamba* title-holders in *Eyamba* Ward, p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 311.

<sup>10</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 243, 311. Gooch to Jones, 14 July 1845, FO84/612.

<sup>12</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 274.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336. Hope to Hotham, 3 Dec. 1847, in Hotham to Admiralty, 24 Jan. 1848, FO84/746.

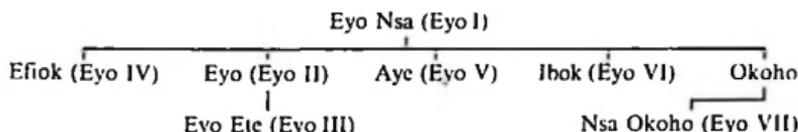
<sup>14</sup> *UPCMR* 2 (Nov. 1847), 185, cit. Edgerley's Journal.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson to Hartley, 25 Sept. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 4.



warriors to support his ambitions, just as Duke Ephraim had done in Akpabuyo.

CHART 10  
*Genealogy of Creek Town Obongs*



Source: Hart Report, pp. 125-31, paras. 281-90, Tables G, H, etc.

The death of Eyamba V in 1847 created a succession problem. The elimination of many Duke-ward freemen in the 1834 succession pogrom left only one obvious candidate from that ward, Duke Ephraim (Ededem or Edem Odo),<sup>22</sup> a brother of Great Duke Ephraim,<sup>23</sup> but an impoverished alcoholic.<sup>24</sup> Eyamba ward's candidate was Mr. Young, but he was also poor and an inadequate businessman,<sup>25</sup> sharing the financial ruin of Eyamba ward brought on by King Eyamba. King Eyo II was a possible candidate, being highly regarded by the British, and extremely wealthy.<sup>26</sup> But the *Obong* was finally selected by Lieutenant Selwyn of the Royal Navy, who on the advice of the missionaries, supercargoes, and masters, rejected Eyo because his only claim was wealth, and chose instead Archibong Duke, of the Archibong family of Duke ward.<sup>27</sup> He was the outside candidate, being young and inexperienced,<sup>28</sup> but he was a wealthy and successful trader,<sup>29</sup> a cousin of Great Duke,<sup>30</sup> and a nephew and son-in-law of Eyamba V.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 392-3. Hart Report pp. 71-2, para. 192.

<sup>23</sup> *Genealogy of Efik Obongs*, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 392-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Hope to Hotham, 3 Dec. 1847, in Hotham to Admiralty, 24 Jan. 1848, FO84/746. Murray to Hotham, 24 Mar. 1848, in Hotham to Admiralty, 3 May 1848, in Ward to Eddisbury, 21 July 1848, FO84/748.

<sup>27</sup> Selwyn to Fanshawe, 1 June 1849, in Admiralty to Eddisbury, 23 Nov. 1849, FO84/785.

<sup>28</sup> *UPCMR* 5 (Jan. 1850), 8, cit. Waddell's Journal, 22 Apr. 1849.

<sup>29</sup> Marwick, pp. 215-16, cit. Anderson's Journal, 28 May 1849.

<sup>30</sup> *Genealogy of Efik Obongs*, p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 337.

Selwyn's selection and crowning<sup>32</sup> of Archibong has been seen as an act of foreign interference,<sup>33</sup> yet the fact that Archibong was acceptable to the Efik shows that Selwyn's choice was sympathetic to local opinion. However, while a British officer might choose the *Obong*, whose responsibilities were largely concerned with foreign relations, he could have no influence over the selection of the *Eyamba*, essentially a secret office. So Archibong did not become *Eyamba*,<sup>34</sup> and for the next twenty-five years the two offices were held by separate people.

Mr. Young had the strongest claim to the *Eyamba*-ship as brother of the late *Eyamba*,<sup>35</sup> and, despite his poverty, had great influence as Archibong's chief minister.<sup>36</sup> Yet the *Eyamba*-ship lay vacant for some years, as two entries in Anderson's recently rediscovered journal show. On 31 January 1851, he wrote 'Evidently big palaver in market place between Duke Town gentlemen and plantation slaves'. And next day, 'Great day in town—Mr. Young was made *Eyamba* or keeper of all the Egbo's'.<sup>37</sup>

However, despite Anderson's entries, Mr. Young did not become *Eyamba*.<sup>38</sup> Previously it has been believed that the slaves who filled the town on 31 January were in revolt.<sup>39</sup> But they were Duke-ward slaves, and the fact that Mr. Young was made *Eyamba* the day after their arrival, suggests that they had been summoned by Archibong to prevent Mr. Young assuming the *Eyamba*-ship. Rumours of some such political motive were widespread at the time, although it was hidden from the Europeans.<sup>40</sup> In the face of the massed slaves, Mr. Young must have withdrawn his candidacy. Poverty was the reason for his lack of resistance and he was imprisoned on a ship for debt that October.<sup>41</sup> Because the Duke-ward slaves were prepared to back Archibong, the impoverished and less numerous members of *Eyamba* ward could not promote their candidate successfully. All they could

<sup>32</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 392–3.

<sup>33</sup> Hart Report, pp. 71–2, para. 192.

<sup>34</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 393. Genealogy of *Eyamba* title-holders in *Eyamba* ward, p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Marwick, pp. 215–16, cit. Anderson's Journal, 28 May 1849.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson's Journal, 31 Jan. 1851–1 Feb. 1851.

<sup>38</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Chapter 6, p. 94.

<sup>40</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 8, p. 62, 5 Feb. 1851. Becroft to Palmerston, 4 Mar. 1851, FO84/858.

<sup>41</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 484.

do was to prevent anyone else becoming *Eyamba*. It was political stalemate.

About a year later Archibong died, at noon on 4 February 1852.<sup>42</sup> This re-opened the question of the succession to both the *Obong*-ship and the *Eyamba*-ship. Almost immediately Mr. Young began to sign himself 'Eyamba VI'.<sup>43</sup> But again the Duke-ward slaves were summoned to town, by the late King's mother, who offered them 100,000 coppers if they would force the Eyamba leaders to submit to the poison ordeal.<sup>44</sup> In this way Duke ward hoped to smash the Eyambas in revenge for the decimation of Duke ward freemen in 1834.<sup>45</sup> The two wards confronted each other in the market place, many on both sides dying from the ordeal as accusation and counter accusation were made. But when Mr. Young was eventually challenged, he deferred his turn to the next day, and fled during the night to Creek Town, where his brother Antera joined him.<sup>46</sup> King Eyo came down from Creek Town to smooth matters over,<sup>47</sup> but Mr. Young's prestige had been so greatly damaged by his flight that Duke Ephraim of Duke ward was made *Obong*, although a drunkard.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless the Eyambas continued to block the selection of an *Eyamba*, and the office remained vacant until after Mr. Young's death on 11 February 1855.<sup>49</sup> Then at last the problem was solved, and by 1856 Mr. Young's brother Antera (Ntiero Ekpenyong Ofiong) had been made Eyamba VI.<sup>50</sup>

Duke Ephraim's accession had been a bitter blow to King Eyo's ambitions.<sup>51</sup> Eyo's mediation in the ordeal crisis marks the height of his political influence, for afterwards he was dogged by bad luck which eroded his position. A fortnight after intervening at Duke Town, he lost £8,000-10,000 worth of trade goods in a fire,<sup>52</sup> and had to start

<sup>42</sup> Anderson, Journal, 4 Feb. 1852.

<sup>43</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 497.

<sup>44</sup> Marwick, p. 260, cit. Anderson. Anderson, Journal, 6 and 10 Feb. 1852.

<sup>45</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 497.

<sup>46</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 497-8. Anderson's Journal, 7 Feb. 1852.

<sup>47</sup> Anderson's Journal, 9 Feb. 1852.

<sup>48</sup> Beccroft to Malmesbury, 30 June 1852, FO84/886.

<sup>49</sup> Marwick, p. 313, cit. Anderson, 28 Mar. 1855.

<sup>50</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37. Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 26 Aug. 1856, Inc. 4 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001. James Haddison, King Duke Ephraim, and Antero Young Eyamba to Hutchinson, 15 Sept. 1856, Inc. 8 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, loc. cit. Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 2 Mar. 1859, ST 8, FO84/1087.

<sup>51</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 414, and Journal, vol. 7, p. 67, 6 Jan. 1850.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, Journal, 27 Feb. 1852. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 499-502.

almost afresh to build up his wealth.<sup>53</sup> Although previously he had the largest share of the external trade,<sup>54</sup> his position now began to decline, and to fight this he turned increasingly to sharp practice. In 1854 he refused payment on his newly imported house,<sup>55</sup> and in 1855, with credit received from the supercargoes, he began to buy oil, which he then shipped to England on the mail steamers.<sup>56</sup> The following year his two most important trading agents died, one being his representative at Ikpa market.<sup>57</sup> Consequently his influence at this vital market declined, and in 1857 he ordered his people to burn the factory of Bassey Henshaw Duke, a wealthy Duke-ward slave who was depriving him of business.<sup>58</sup> Matters were made worse for Eyo by the continuing Umon-Akunakuna war which prevented 640-720 tons of oil reaching Calabar each year.<sup>59</sup> Against this background he made a last desperate attempt to restore his fortunes, by chartering the *Olinda* out from Liverpool, in 1857 and 1858, which he loaded immediately whilst still deeply in debt to the supercargoes of the trading companies.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless his share of the river's oil trade had dropped from 60-70 per cent in 1852, to about 25 per cent in 1858.<sup>61</sup> King Duke Ephraim's death on 11 August 1858<sup>62</sup> gave Eyo one last chance of becoming *Obong* but ironically he died suddenly, four months later on 3 December.<sup>63</sup> A fire in his premises soon after his death<sup>64</sup> dealt the final blow to Eyo ward's political ambitions, and thereafter Creek Town's importance declined rapidly.

The succession to King Duke Ephraim was solved fairly easily, for although Antera Young of Eyamba ward was still *Eyamba*, he was too old to press his claim to be *Obong*.<sup>65</sup> So John Archibong of Duke ward, brother of Archibong I, was chosen without any mass killings

<sup>53</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 160.

<sup>54</sup> Treaty of Trade and Commerce, 17 Apr. 1852, Calprof Ibadan 5/7.

<sup>55</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 579. Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 10, p. 43, 22 Oct. 1854, and p. 54, 2 Jan. 1855.

<sup>56</sup> Chapter 5, p. 59-60. <sup>57</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 11, p. 78, 9 July 1856.

<sup>58</sup> Bassey Henshaw Duke to Hutchinson, 31 Jan. 1857, Inc. 4 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 Feb. 1857, ST 8, FO84/1030.

<sup>59</sup> Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 30 June 1856, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 July 1856, No. 92, FO84/1001. Chiefs to Hutchinson, (undated), Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 21 Feb. 1857, ST 12, FO84/1030.

<sup>60</sup> Chapter 5, p. 61.

<sup>61</sup> Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 25 May 1858, ST 29, FO84/1061.

<sup>62</sup> Marwick, p. 374, cit. Anderson, 26 Aug. 1858.

<sup>63</sup> Marwick, p. 376, Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 196-7.

<sup>64</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 202. Hutchinson to Hill, 28 Feb. 1859, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 24 Feb. (sic) 1859, ST 4, FO84/1087.

<sup>65</sup> Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 2 Mar. 1859, ST 8, FO84/1087.

or poison orgies. The amicable nature of the succession was marked by the fact that Antera Young, the *Eyamba*, crowned the new *Obong* in August 1859.<sup>66</sup> However this acceptance of Archibong II by the *Eyamba* ward may simply represent their recognition of their own weakness. The last reference to Antera Young is in 1860,<sup>67</sup> and he probably died soon afterwards. But Archibong did not become *Eyamba*, and a son of *Eyamba* V, Efiom Edem Ekpenyong, was made *Eyamba* VII.<sup>68</sup> Virtually nothing is known of this man except a vague reference in 1864.<sup>69</sup>

Although Archibong was *Obong*, considerable power actually lay in the hands of the wealthy Duke-ward slaves who were so influential in council and *Ekpe* from the middle fifties. The great slaves had increased their share of the external trade as King Eyo's fortunes declined, but the ward leaders continued to be poor, as is evidenced by the fact that Adam Archibong, the *Obong*'s brother, was imprisoned on board ship for debt in 1859.<sup>70</sup> So men like Bassey Henshaw, Black Davis, and Yellow Duke were now important figures behind the scenes, Yellow Duke for example being King Archibong's creditor.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, their support gave Archibong considerable power, and one of the more notable political events of his reign was his deprivation of one of King *Eyamba* V's sons of his *Ekpe* privileges, an action which *Eyamba* ward was powerless to prevent.<sup>72</sup> The ward agricultural slaves also continued to support Archibong, and when he fell sick in May 1871, came to town to seek out and kill the King's enemies who it was believed were making him sick with witchcraft, although the missionaries persuaded Archibong to send them away again.<sup>73</sup> The *Obong* died on 25 or 26 August 1872.<sup>74</sup>

If the 1860s were a period of comparative political stability and economic strength at Duke Town, Creek Town by contrast virtually disintegrated in the aftermath of the collapse of King Eyo's political ambitions. His numerous slaves had united under the blood oath on

<sup>66</sup> Marwick, pp. 376-8, cit. Anderson, 30 Aug. 1859.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386, cit. Anderson's Journal, 8 Nov. 1860.

<sup>68</sup> Genealogy of *Eyamba* title-holders in *Eyamba* Ward, p. 116. *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>70</sup> Supercargoes to Hutchinson, 1 Mar. 1859, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 21 Mar. 1859, ST 12, FO84/1087.

<sup>71</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>72</sup> Marwick, p. 407, cit. Anderson's Journal, 12 Sept. 1864.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 486-91, cit. Anderson's Journal, 30 May-6 June 1871.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 505, cit. Anderson, 28 Aug. 1872.

his death,<sup>75</sup> and would only accept Eyo's son, Young Eyo, as master by dint of much persuasion.<sup>76</sup> As Eyo III,<sup>77</sup> Young Eyo could not cope with the problems confronting him, and took to drink.<sup>78</sup> The second Christian convert in Calabar,<sup>79</sup> though long since excommunicated,<sup>80</sup> he bled to death when a syphilitic ulcer burst<sup>81</sup> on 12 May 1861.<sup>82</sup> The slaves filled the town and hanged Egbo Eyo, one of Eyo II's brothers, and Inyang Eyo, Young Eyo's half-sister, on suspicion of killing the King with witchcraft.<sup>83</sup> Although Father Tom, Eyo II's eldest brother, was made Eyo IV in 1862,<sup>84</sup> the slaves would not accept him as master and chose instead Eyo Okon, a slave and close friend of Young Eyo, as their head.<sup>85</sup> The town population dispersed amongst the farms,<sup>86</sup> and so greatly had Creek Town's trade declined that her share of the comeys was reduced this same year.<sup>87</sup> By 1864 Creek Town was being boycotted by the Europeans because she owed oil to 20 ships.<sup>88</sup> As Eyo Okon was the real power in Creek Town, Eyo IV was ineffectual,<sup>89</sup> and he died on 22 March 1865.<sup>90</sup> During the brief interregnum, Duke Town made a peace settlement with Enyong without consulting Creek Town, a gesture of contempt for Creek Town's weakness.<sup>91</sup> Aye or John Eyo, another of Eyo II's brothers was crowned Eyo V in 1865,<sup>92</sup> and restored some degree of amity in relations with Duke Town.<sup>93</sup> He died on 11 June 1868, and was succeeded by Ibok or Doctor Eyo, another of Eyo II's

<sup>75</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 197-201. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 643-4. *UPCMR* 14 (Mar. 1859), 48-50, cit. Goldie's Journal, 18 Dec. 1858.

<sup>76</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 644.

<sup>77</sup> Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 2 Mar. 1859, ST 7, FO84/1087.

<sup>78</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 644-5, 647-9.

<sup>79</sup> Marwick, p. 286.

<sup>80</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 574.

<sup>81</sup> *UPCMR* 16 (Aug. 1861), 150. Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>82</sup> *UPCMR* 16 (Aug. 1861), 149.

<sup>83</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 650-1. Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 209-13, cit. Mr. Timson.

<sup>84</sup> Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>85</sup> Goldie, *Eyo VII*, p. 15.

<sup>86</sup> *UPCMR* 17 (1 Sept. 1862), 166, cit. Goldie, 27 June 1862.

<sup>87</sup> Laughland to Russell, 21 Jan. 1861, ST 3, FO84/1147. Agreement of Trade and Commerce, 5 May 1862, Inc. 4 in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>88</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221.

<sup>89</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 216-18.

<sup>90</sup> *UPCMR* 20 (1 July 1865), 135.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 20 (1 Nov. 1865), 204-5, cit. Goldie's Journal, 17 May 1865, and 23 May 1865.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 20 (1 Nov. 1865), pp. 205-6, cit. Goldie's Journal, 9 June 1865.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, n.s. 1 (May 1867), cit. Goldie's Journal, 19 Nov 1866.

brothers, as Eyo VI.<sup>94</sup> Creek Town's economic decay continued,<sup>95</sup> and in 1870 Archibong was threatening war against Eyo,<sup>96</sup> but before this could break out Eyo died on 25 June 1871.<sup>97</sup> He was the last of Eyo I's sons to survive, and so his death marks the end of an era in Creek Town's history.

## 2. Political disintegration

Up to 1872, Efik politics had been concerned with the struggle between the wards for the offices of *Obong* and *Eyamba*. This manoeuvring took place within the basic political mechanism of the state. Even when Eyo ward declared their leader *Obong* of Creek Town, they continued to recognize the *Eyamba*, and the *Ndem*. But after the deaths of Eyo VI in 1871 and Archibong II in 1872, a noticeable degree of political disintegration took place, as both wards and individuals appealed more and more to external powers against the traditional authorities, and as some sections of Efik society sought to opt out of Calabar entirely.

The licensing of the first Efik minister, Esien Esien Ukpabio, in January 1871 was symbolic of the change overcoming the political scene in Old Calabar.<sup>98</sup> For a whole new generation of political leaders was about to move into positions of influence. These men had been children when the Mission arrived in 1846, and had all been brought up, to some degree, under its influence. It was they who were to tear Calabar apart.

But at first there appeared to be greater harmony at the centre of Efik political life than had obtained since King Eyamba V's day. Adam Archibong, Archibong III, was made both *Obong* and *Eyamba*, the first man to hold both offices since 1847, and only the second member of Duke ward ever to hold the office.<sup>99</sup> This was only possible with the agreement of Prince James Eyamba, leader of

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, n.s. 2 (Sept. 1868), 170-1, cit. S. H. Edgerley. Wilson to Foreign Secretary, 23 Feb. 1869, No. 8, FO84/1308.

<sup>95</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1867, No. 38, FO84/1277. Livingstone to Clarendon, 3 Dec. 1869, No. 36, FO84/1308. *Ibid.* 10 June 1870, FO84/1326 (no number).

<sup>96</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, pp. 230-2. *UPCMR* n.s. 3 (1 May 1871), 480, cit. Goldie's Journal, 7 Nov. 1870.

<sup>97</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 3 (1 Nov. 1871), 672, cit. Anderson's Journal, 28 June 1871.

<sup>98</sup> Marwick, p. 501.

<sup>99</sup> *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37. Marwick, pp. 510-11, cit. Anderson, 25 Mar. 1873, and p. 577, cit. Archibong III Eyamba VIII to Anderson, 15 June 1877.

Eyamba ward, an old Mission scholar who was Archibong's chief advisor.<sup>1</sup> But as Archibong was old and blind,<sup>2</sup> Prince James had considerable influence and was virtually the power behind the throne.<sup>3</sup> The Eyamba ward was re-emerging as a political force from the doldrums in which it had languished in the sixties.

However the closer alliance of the two major wards at Duke Town did not mean that the other wards were content. Indeed the members of Henshaw ward were provoked by this change in ward alliance to seek complete political independence by declaring their own *Obong*, and attempting to leave Calabar. Although the Henshaws were the rump of Efiom Ekpo lineage, from which Ntiero ward, Eyamba ward, and Duke ward had separated, the latter two wards had long since overshadowed them. The Henshaws had not had a successful *Obong*-ship candidate for about two centuries, and since the 1820s had been denied a share of the comey.<sup>4</sup> But their final humiliation came when the *Ndem* shrine was rebuilt on 23 June 1867.<sup>5</sup> As they were the senior family, it was traditionally the Henshaws' task to erect the pillars at the front of the shrine. But the people of Duke Town came early in the morning and put up the pillars, thereby claiming seniority. Insulted, the Henshaws, many of whom were living in Duke Town, decided to re-establish themselves at their old village nearby.<sup>6</sup> Archibong II sanctioned the rebuilding of the village, and by February 1871 work was well under way.<sup>7</sup>

By introducing Christian-inspired reforms into their new village, the Henshaws cleverly obtained the interest and support of the Mission and Consul.<sup>8</sup> Encouraged, they then decided to create their own *Obong*, despite the contrary advice of the Mission and agents.<sup>9</sup> King Henshaw III was crowned on Christmas Day, 1872,<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 507, cit. Anderson.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 505, cit. Anderson, 28 Aug. 1872.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Eyamba to Chairman and Court of Equity, 2 Mar. 1874, Calprof Ibadan 3/2.

<sup>4</sup> Duke, 'Diary', p. 46, 23 June 1786. p. 62, 25 Oct. 1787. Bold, p. 77. See also Chapter 4 p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 1 (Oct. 1867), 407, cit. Anderson's Journal, 23 June 1867.

<sup>6</sup> Chief Joseph Henshaw, 10 Dec. 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Marwick, p. 481, cit. Anderson's Journal, 17 Feb. 1871.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484, cit. Anderson's Journal, 30 Mar. 1871. *UPCMR* n.s. 3 (1 Nov. 1871), 672, cit. Anderson's Journal, 28 June 1871.

<sup>9</sup> Henshaw Chiefs to Act. Con. Hopkins, 16 Feb. 1871, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 2. Marwick, p. 481, cit. Anderson's Journal, 17 Feb. 1871, and p. 483, cit. Anderson's Journal, 11 Mar. 1871.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 507-8, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1872. Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377.

but although the Consul had been invited to the ceremony he did not attend.<sup>11</sup> Archibong and Prince James Eyamba and the Duke Town Chiefs were determined to squash this unilateral declaration of independence, and Prince James with great diplomatic skill united the agents and *Ekpe* members against the Henshaws.<sup>12</sup> In retaliation the Henshaws exploited their good relations with the Consul by seeking his help, and offering to put themselves under his protection.<sup>13</sup> Fearing another situation like the Bonny-Opobo war, the Consul intervened, and having received an assurance from Archibong that the Henshaws would be allowed to govern themselves unmolested, persuaded them to hand over their crown.<sup>14</sup> They were fined three hundred boxes of brass rods by the King and the crown was burned in Duke Town market.<sup>15</sup>

By 1874, King Archibong was an invalid,<sup>16</sup> and Prince James Eyamba began to use the King's name to pursue his own policies.<sup>17</sup> Friction between Duke Town and Henshaw Town had continued since 1873, and in 1875 Archibong used *Ekpe* to ban the Henshaws from trading in salt. In retaliation they seized Prince Duke (Orok Edem) of Duke ward.<sup>18</sup> Eyo VII of Creek Town secured his release, but Duke Town demanded Chief James Henshaw be handed over to them for punishment. This was refused, and on 7 September 1875 war broke out between Duke Town and the Henshaws. About a couple of dozen people were killed, mostly Henshaws, and that evening Chief Henshaw escaped to a hulk. The agents acted as go-betweens, and it was agreed that Chief Henshaw be handed over to Duke Town, and Henshaw Town evacuated and put to the sack.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Adam Archibong to Consul, 17 and 24 Dec. 1872. Inc. 1 and 2, in Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377. King Henshaw III and Chiefs to Livingstone, (undated) (Jan. 1873), Inc. 3 in Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Archibong to Livingstone, 24 Dec. 1872, Inc. 2 in Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377. Marwick, pp. 507-8, cit. Anderson's Annual Report for 1872.

<sup>13</sup> King Henshaw III and Chiefs to Livingstone, (undated) (Jan. 1873), Inc. 3 in Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377.

<sup>14</sup> Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377.

<sup>15</sup> Black Davis House Book, 15 Jan. 1872 [*sic*].

<sup>16</sup> Pro. Archibong King Regent, to Court of Equity, 8 May 1874, Calprof Ibadan 3/2.

<sup>17</sup> Prince Eyamba to Court of Equity, 2 Mar. 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>18</sup> Statement of Henshaw Town, 20 Aug. 1878, paras. 6-12. Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Marwick, pp. 534-8, cit. Anderson to Revd. John Law, John Chisholm, etc., 14 Sept. 1875.

Again the Consul intervened, and the Henshaws were allowed to return to their village after swearing allegiance to King Archibong, and being guaranteed the same rights as the freemen of Duke Town.<sup>20</sup>

But the Henshaws were not satisfied with this settlement, and in 1876 they petitioned Lord Derby for an independent enquiry,<sup>21</sup> although they subsequently withdrew this demand.<sup>22</sup> In 1877 Joseph Henshaw, the second Henshaw Chief, complained of Duke Town oppression,<sup>23</sup> and went to Fernando Po to seek the Consul's help.<sup>24</sup> And in December the same year the Henshaws again petitioned Lord Derby.<sup>25</sup> Consequently Consul Hopkins made an enquiry, and discovered that the Henshaws had been excluded from *Ekpe*, which prevented them knowing of new laws which they were punished for breaking. Moreover, their trade had been ruined because Archibong had prohibited the purchase of oil in quantities less than a puncheon which they could no longer afford because of the war. Hence they wanted to leave Calabar for the Rio del Rey or Qua Ibo, and live under British protection.<sup>26</sup> Fearing that the Henshaws might interfere with Jaja of Opobo's markets, or traditional Efik markets, if they left Calabar,<sup>27</sup> Hopkins persuaded them to come to terms with Duke Town. The Henshaws were to recognize Archibong as *Obong*, and to obey him on all matters not contrary to Christian conscience. In return, Chief Henshaw was to have a place on the council, and Duke Town was not to interfere in Henshaw Town, besides which all restrictions on trade were removed.<sup>28</sup>

The Henshaws had shown considerable diplomatic skill in obtaining this settlement, having courted ever since 1871 the favour of the

<sup>20</sup> Henshaw Town-Duke Town Agreement, 28 Sept. 1875, in Hartley to Derby, 30 Oct. 1875, No. 46, FO84/1418.

<sup>21</sup> Petition of Henshaw Chiefs to Earl of Derby, 18 Feb. 1876, in McKellar to Foreign Secretary, 29 Feb. 1876, No. 11, FO84/1455.

<sup>22</sup> J. Henshaw to McKellar, (undated) (Mar. 1876), Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Henshaw to Senior Naval Officer in Command of the West Coast of Africa, 18 Nov. 1877, Calprof Ibadan, 4/3 vol. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Statement of Henshaw Town, 20 Aug. 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 6, para. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Statement of Henshaw Town, 20 Aug. 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Statement of Henshaw Town, 20 Aug. 1878, paras. 17-21, and conclusion, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508.

<sup>28</sup> Agreement between Henshaw Town and Duke Town, 6 Sept. 1878, in Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508. Trade Agreement, 6 Sept. 1878, in Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508.

Mission and Consul to bring British influence to support them against the powerful caucus of Duke ward and Eyamba ward acting in concert. To ingratiate himself with both Mission and Consul, Chief Henshaw had even been baptised in March 1878.<sup>29</sup> Yet not all the Henshaws were satisfied with the settlement, and Joseph Henshaw, an extremely enterprising trader, decided there was no future for himself in Calabar, and moved to Oron on the other side of the river.<sup>30</sup> There he introduced cocoa, the first cash crop to be grown on the Cross River, which he had seen growing at Fernando Po on his visit there in 1877.<sup>31</sup> In conjunction with George Watts, who had long associated with the Henshaws, and may have been their political advisor,<sup>32</sup> he attempted to open the Qua Ibo area for palm produce, in order to have an economic base independent of Calabar. This attempt was thwarted by Jaja of Opobo.

While in Calabar to make this enquiry, the Consul crowned Adam Archibong as Archibong III, even though he had actually been *Obong* since Archibong II's death six years earlier.<sup>33</sup> But Archibong did not long survive his coronation, and died on the night of 5-6 May 1879.<sup>34</sup> His death marked a turning-point in Efik history.

During Archibong III's reign, Creek Town had been torn by internal dissension which only hastened its economic and political decline. Eyo VI's death in 1871 had provoked a succession dispute. Whereas since Eyo III's death the line of succession had been clear, passing to each of Eyo I's surviving sons in turn,<sup>35</sup> now an entirely new line of succession had to be established. At first there was comparative stability, because Eyo Okon, the slave who was the real power in Creek Town since Eyo III's death, continued to hold sway. But after his death on 3 June 1873, serious disturbances ensued.<sup>36</sup> However, on 25 February 1874, Nsa Okoho, known as Henshaw

<sup>29</sup> Waddel, *Mrs. Sutherland*, p. 121, Obong Henshaw to Mrs. Sutherland, 16 Mar. 1878.

<sup>30</sup> Henry Cobham of Calabar v. Idiok Une, of Uyaron, Oron, in Calabar Divisional Court, 1937, supplied by Chief Efana Daniel Henshaw, 21 Dec. 1965.

<sup>31</sup> R. E. Dennet, 'Agricultural Progress in Nigeria', *African Affairs, Journal of the African Society*, 18 (July 1919), 280. Chief Michael Henshaw, 18 Nov. 1965. Chief Joseph Henshaw, 6 Dec. 1965.

<sup>32</sup> Adam Archibong to Livingstone, 24 Dec. 1872, Inc. 2 in Livingstone to Granville, 20 Jan. 1873, No. 16, FO84/1377.

<sup>33</sup> Marwick, p. 566, cit. Anderson's Annual Report, for 1878.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 567, cit. Anderson, 8 May 1879.

<sup>35</sup> Genealogy of Creek Town *Obongs*, p. 117.

<sup>36</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 237.

Tom Foster, was made King Eyo VII.<sup>37</sup> He was a grandson of Eyo I through his mother, Okoho.<sup>38</sup> However the Ambo ward would not accept him as *Obong*,<sup>39</sup> and in June 1875 he was forced to flee to the Cobham-ward section of Duke Town, with the intention of starting a new settlement on the other side of the river.<sup>40</sup>

The cause of the turmoil went back to Eyo I, who had been honoured with free status, and a princess as a wife, by the Ambos. In disgust, many Cobhams, members of the other ward at Creek Town, moved to Duke Town. Eyo II was the son of this Ambo princess, and was consequently acceptable as *Obong* to the Ambos, but not to the Cobhams, many more of whom left for Duke Town at the time of his elevation. Eyo III had been acceptable to the Ambos because he was the grandson of their princess. Eyo IV, Eyo V, and Eyo VI were insignificant figures, real power lying in the hands of Eyo Okon, so that their lack of connection to the Ambos was not important. But Eyo VII was descended from a Cobham princess who had been a wife of Eyo I. The Ambos feared that their arch-rivals the Cobhams would use their influence with the new *Obong* against Ambo interests, and therefore were adamantly opposed to him.<sup>41</sup> Eventually, however, the matter was settled and Eyo returned to Creek Town.<sup>42</sup>

The death of Archibong III in 1879 created a situation at Duke Town similar to that which had arisen in Creek Town on the death of Eyo VI. Archibong was the last of the generation of Great Duke Ephraim's contemporaries, and after his death the principle of succession for a new generation had to be decided upon. There was no longer a generally recognized series of venerable old men, whose order of succession could be determined by their order of seniority. Since the accession of King Duke Ephraim in 1852 there had been no serious succession dispute, as there had been no serious rivals to the candidates for the *Obong*-ship. Now, however, a three-cornered dispute broke out.<sup>43</sup> The Eyamba ward candidate was Prince James

<sup>37</sup> Hart Report, pp. 101-2, para. 245. Hartley to Granville, 20 Mar. 1874, No. 7, FO84/1401.

<sup>38</sup> Genealogy of Creek Town *Obongs*, p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 5 (1 Feb. 1875), 369, cit. Goldie's Journal, 29 Sept. 1874. Ambo Chiefs to Hartley, 6 Oct. 1874, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 3. *UPCMR* n.s. 5 (1 May 1875), 463, cit. Goldie's Journal, 17 Nov. 1874.

<sup>40</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 241. *UPCMR* n.s. 5 (1 Nov. 1875), 649, cit. Goldie's Journal, 7 July 1875.

<sup>41</sup> Hart Report, pp. 129-30, paras. 287-8.

<sup>42</sup> Goldie, *Calabar*, p. 241.

<sup>43</sup> Hewett to Granville, 17 Feb. 1882, ST 5, FO84/1617.

Eyamba, son of King Eyamba V.<sup>44</sup> Duke ward provided two candidates, Prince Duke (Orok Edem), son of King Duke Ephraim,<sup>45</sup> and Prince Archibong III (Archibong Edem), son of King Archibong III.<sup>46</sup> The latter represented the Archibong section of Duke ward, and signified that there was internal dissension in Duke ward.

The situation was complicated by the fact that the traditional mechanisms for resolving succession disputes had been abolished—funeral sacrifices in 1850, and the crucial poison-ordeal only the year before, in 1878.<sup>47</sup> Moreover Prince James Eyamba was a leading Christian, being an elder of the church and superintendent of Sunday schools, and was in any case opposed to these traditional mechanisms.<sup>48</sup> As a result, only negotiation or war could solve the succession, and as negotiation failed, disorder broke out.

In an attempt to bring an end to the chaos, Acting Consul Easton crowned Prince Duke as King Prince Duke Ephraim Eyamba IX, in March 1880.<sup>49</sup> He was both *Obong* and *Eyamba*.<sup>50</sup> But this foisting of a King upon the Chiefs and people did not satisfy them, and discontent continued.<sup>51</sup> So Consul Hewett asked the Chiefs to assemble and elect a King of their own choice.<sup>52</sup>

The re-opening of the dispute gave Prince Duke's rivals time to organize their campaigns. Most diplomatically skilful was Prince James Eyamba. While chief advisor of Archibong III, he had used his diplomatic ability to pursue the joint interests of Duke ward and Eyamba ward, but now he directed his energies against Duke ward. This was the traditional Eyamba ward position in Efik politics. As Archibong's chief minister he had witnessed at first hand the effectiveness of the Henshaws in courting the good favour of the Mission and Consul, in order to obtain British support for their policies. And he had also seen how effective British protection had been, in preventing the re-enslavement of Mission emancipadoes, and the ejection of free

<sup>44</sup> Genealogy of *Eyamba* title-holders in Eyamba Ward, p. 116. Anderson to Hartley, 9 Oct. 1875, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Genealogy of Efik *Obongs*, p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Chief Ephraim Duke, 9 Dec. 1965.

<sup>47</sup> Agreement, in Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33. FO84/1508.

<sup>48</sup> Marwick, p. 577, cit. Anderson to Chisholm, 25 Mar. 1881.

<sup>49</sup> Easton to Foreign Secretary, 23 Apr. 1880, No. 30, FO84/1569.

<sup>50</sup> List of *Eyamba* title-holders in *Ekpe*, p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> Hewett to Granville, 16 Aug. 1880, No. 23, FO84/1569.

<sup>52</sup> Foreign Office to Hewett, 19 Oct. 1880, No. 22, FO84/1569. Hewett to Granville, 17 Feb. 1882, ST 5, FO84/1617.

Africans. So he determined to woo British support for his claim to the throne.

In seeking British support, he stressed his active Christianity as a justification for his elevation, contrasting himself with the superstitious and licentious Prince Duke. He wrote to the Foreign Office three times during 1880-1 on these lines, and threatened that if Prince Duke remained King, the Eyambas would seek British protection, and leave Calabar to live somewhere else, governed by the Christian principles enshrined in the 1878 agreement abolishing human sacrifices.<sup>53</sup> He also supported the request for British protection made by the slave Peter King Cameroons, an elder of the church who was being oppressed.<sup>54</sup> And he inspired a publicity campaign, which stressed his piety, in the *African Times*<sup>55</sup> in support of his candidacy.

If Prince James hoped that the Mission would use its influence to support him because he was such an important church member, he was to be sadly disappointed. The Revd. Anderson, who had been the Duke Town missionary for many years, would not take sides in the succession dispute.<sup>56</sup> However, Mr. Ross, a relative newcomer,<sup>57</sup> who had been on explorations with Prince Eyamba,<sup>58</sup> supported his claims, and denounced Anderson's toleration of barbarous customs, and his apparent support for the unconverted Prince Duke.<sup>59</sup> Such was the rancour between the two missionaries, that an independent enquiry was set up to adjudicate between them. As a result Mr. Ross was ordered home without delay, and Mr. Anderson was reproached. Ross refused to go home, and instead resigned from the Church on Christmas Day, 1881. Prince James Eyamba and his ward, together

<sup>53</sup> Prince James Eyamba V etc. to Foreign Office, 24 June 1881, FO84/1612. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1881, FO84/1612. Hewett to Granville, 17 Feb. 1882, ST 5, FO84/1617. (The letter of 1880 is missing.)

<sup>54</sup> Petition of Prince James Eyamba V on behalf of Peter King Cameroons and family of Duke Town to Earl Granville, 20 Sept. 1881, FO84/1612.

<sup>55</sup> *African Times*, 1 Oct. 1881, p. 116, cit. Amindi Africanus to Editor, 24 Aug. 1881. *Ibid.*, 2 Jan. 1882, p. 8, cit. F. C. T. Wanabo to Editor, 9 Oct. 1881. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1882, p. 68, cit. Ami Ndi Africanus to Editor, 24 Mar. 1882.

<sup>56</sup> Marwick, p. 579, cit. Anderson to Chisholm, 25 Mar. 1881.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541, cit. Dr. MacGill c. 1875.

<sup>58</sup> Waddel, *Mrs. Sutherland*, pp. 122-3. Paul Langhans, 'Vergessene Reisen in Kamerun, I. Reisen des Missionars Alexander Ross, von Alt-Kalabar nach Efut 1877 und 1878', *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, 48 (1902), 73.

<sup>59</sup> Ajayi, p. 265, cit. Ross to Secretary F.M.C., 28 Aug. 1879, considered in Minute 1497 of F.M.C., 25 Nov. 1879 (Ajayi's account of the dispute is somewhat garbled, in that he confuses Prince Duke with the Archibongs).

with the Henshaws, withdrew from the Mission with Mr. Ross, Prince Eyamba giving his new house to Mr. Ross, and the Henshaws building him a church.<sup>60</sup> That the Eyambas and the Henshaws acted together on this issue reveals that Prince James had gained the co-operation of the Henshaws against the more powerful Duke ward. Their joint withdrawal from the Mission on this political issue demonstrates the political motivation behind their membership.

While Prince James Eyamba pursued an intelligent and constructive campaign for the *Obong*-ship, Prince Archibong pursued a bloody-minded and destructive policy. He committed a series of violent acts to show he was beyond all authority, early in 1881 capturing some men from Cobham Town, and in November seizing some of the Henshaw Chiefs. Both incidents nearly precipitated war with the wards concerned.<sup>61</sup> In October the same year he imported the first Gatling gun to be seen at Old Calabar, together with 5,000 cartridges.<sup>62</sup>

In August 1882 Hewett summoned the Chiefs to elect a King for him to crown, and notwithstanding their previous objections, Prince Duke was chosen, and crowned on 8 August.<sup>63</sup> However, as there was discontent when he was made King earlier, the re-affirmation of his position only guaranteed that discontent would continue. If the vast power of Duke ward was sufficient to achieve Prince Duke's accession, it could not prevent the disappointed wards from acting against him as *Obong*. Indeed, the situation in Calabar deteriorated.

Again it was Eyamba ward which most cleverly worked against King Duke. Now that their chance of the *Obong*-ship and *Eyamba*-ship was lost, they changed their policy from seeking British support for their claim to the throne, to seeking British annexation of Calabar. A flurry of letters was sent to the Foreign Office from Eyamba ward in 1883, complaining of the barbarities of Prince Duke, and the murderous and violent acts of Prince Archibong, which were contrary to the 1878 treaty on inhuman practices, and asking openly for British annexation as the only remedy.<sup>64</sup> But the Eyambas were not

<sup>60</sup> *African Times*, 1 June 1882, p. 68, cit. Ami Ndi Africanus to Editor, 24 Mar. 1882. *UPCMR* N.S. 2 (1 Apr. 1882), 92. Marwick, p. 581, cit. Anderson to Chisholm, 31 Dec. 1881.

<sup>61</sup> Hewett to Granville, 16 Feb. 1882, ST 2, FO84/1617. *Ibid.* 27 July 1882, ST 11, FO84/1617. George Watts to ?, 6 Feb. 1882, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 9.

<sup>62</sup> *African Times*, 2 Jan. 1882, p. 8, cit. F. C. T. Wanabo to Editor, 9 Oct. 1881.

<sup>63</sup> Hewett to Granville, 14 Aug. 1882, ST 12, FO84/1617.

<sup>64</sup> Hewett to Foreign Office, 19 Oct. 1883, FO84/1634 (this cites three letters which are now missing). Thomas S. Fuller to Granville, 27 Sept. 1883, FO84/

merely being spiteful in demanding annexation, for there was a genuine need for law and order, and the Eyambas themselves had a real need for protection. It was not that they were necessarily committed to humanitarian reform in the face of barbarous authorities, for they forced someone to submit to them as a vassal in November 1883.<sup>65</sup> Their fears for their own safety were justified by an attack upon them by Prince Archibong during the same month, in which one of their people was killed, and two dozen imprisoned. A full-scale war threatened, the Eyambas fearing an attack by Duke ward, and the Archibong sub-section of Duke ward.<sup>66</sup>

So it must have seemed a triumph to the Eyambas when Consul Hewett arrived in the river in July 1884 to negotiate a preliminary protection treaty. King Eyo VII signed on 23 July, and King Duke IX the following day,<sup>67</sup> and in September a more comprehensive treaty was signed.<sup>68</sup> However the main purpose of British protection was to prevent the interference of other foreign powers, although disputes between the Kings and Chiefs were to be adjudicated by the Consul.<sup>69</sup> But the fact that the Consul was now arbitrator between the Chiefs only exacerbated the political disintegration, as now aggrieved ward leaders appealed to the Consul and Foreign Office against the King, completely undermining what little authority he still retained.<sup>70</sup>

By 1 January 1885 war, which threatened to envelop the town,<sup>71</sup> had broken out at the farms between Duke ward and its Archibong sub-section. The fundamental cause of the acrimony was Prince Archibong's disappointment in the *Obong*-ship dispute. Acting Consul White brought the two sides to terms, and banned the import of arms.<sup>72</sup> Later the same year more complaints were made to the Consul on behalf of Eyamba ward, about Prince Archibong and

1655. E. John Eyamba to Granville, 27 Sept. 1883, FO84/1655. Ibid. 30 Sept. 1883, FO84/1655.

<sup>65</sup> Aayah Young to Chairman of Court of Equity, 24 Nov. 1883, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>66</sup> Prince Eyamba V to Court of Equity, 12 Nov. 1883, Calprof Ibadan 3/2. H. Hartje, to Court of Equity for their comments, 12 Nov. 1883, Calprof Ibadan 3/2.

<sup>67</sup> Craigie to Brooke, 26 July 1884, Inc. 5 in No. 22, pp. 18-20, FO403/32.

<sup>68</sup> Hewett to Granville, 24 Sept. 1884, No. 28, FO84/1660. Ibid. 24 Sept. 1884, No. 13, p. 9, FO403/47.

<sup>69</sup> Treaty with Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar, 10 Sept. 1884, Inc. 16 in No. 13, pp. 27-8, FO403/47.

<sup>70</sup> T. H. White, etc. to Salisbury, 9 Oct. 1885, No. 133, pp. 187-8, FO403/71.

<sup>71</sup> Prince Eyamba V to Munro, 1 Jan. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 3/2.

<sup>72</sup> White to Granville, 21 Jan. 1885, No. 4, FO84/1701. Acting Consul's

King Duke.<sup>73</sup> Although Consul Hewett intervened in March 1886,<sup>74</sup> and Vice-Consul Johnston in November, the situation at Calabar was deteriorating rapidly. Again war had broken out between Duke ward and the Archibongs, as a result of which the Archibongs were leaving Calabar to settle in the Rio del Rey, where they were already provoking further trouble.<sup>75</sup> This exodus marks the establishment of the Archibongs as an independent ward from Duke ward, as they are to this day.

Clearly the degree of British intervention permitted under the Treaty of Protection was insufficient to bring order to Calabar, and those who had sought British annexation began in 1887 to seek a complete and thorough establishment of British rule. Again the Eyambas led the way, now backed by the Cobhams and Yellow Duke.<sup>76</sup> While the Foreign Office was reluctantly coming to the conclusion that further intervention was necessary, the situation at Calabar descended into even more violent disorder in 1889-90, as King Duke struggled to re-establish his authority by a brutal show of *Ekpe* force. But this was *Ekpe*'s last fling, for in 1890 Consul Annesley prohibited the use of *Ekpe* except to enforce his own decisions.<sup>77</sup> Thus the instrument of Efik government passed under British control. In September the same year Annesley made himself President of the Native Court, because of the squabbling of the Efik officers, and he set up a governing council.<sup>78</sup> In August 1891, MacDonald, Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul General, arrived to administer the Government of the Oil Rivers, and tariffs were imposed to pay for the administration.<sup>79</sup> Calabar was no longer an independent state.

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Decision Re the Recent disturbances in Old Calabar, (undated) (April, 1885), Calprof Ibadan 5/8, vol. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas to H. G. White, 28 July 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 10. Unsigned letter from Eyamba Town, 17 Aug. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 10. Thomas to H. G. White, 15 Aug. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 10. Ibid. 24 Nov. 1885, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 10 (2 letters).

<sup>74</sup> Goodrich to Grubbe, 30 Mar. 1886, Inc. in No. 69, p. 65, FO403/72.

<sup>75</sup> Johnston to Consul, 22 Nov. 1886, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1, vol. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Prince Efom John Eyamba, etc. to Salisbury, 19 July 1887, FO84/1866. George Jos Turner, Prince E. J. Eyamba, Fred C. Thomas, Thomas Yellow Duke, etc. to Salisbury, 25 Oct. 1887, No. 249, pp. 197-200, FO403/73.

<sup>77</sup> Annesley to Foreign Secretary, 26 Feb. 1890, No. 12, FO84/2020.

<sup>78</sup> Annesley to Foreign Secretary, 2 Sept. 1890, No. 35, FO84/2020.

<sup>79</sup> MacDonald to Foreign Office, 11 June 1891, No. 30, p. 17, FO403/171. A Proclamation imposing Customs Duties within the Oil Rivers Protectorate, Inc. 1, in No. 30, p. 17, FO403/171. MacDonald to Foreign Office, 8 Aug. 1891, No. 55, pp. 33-7, FO403/171.

3. *Anglo-Efik relations*

Trade was the basis of the relationship between Britain and Calabar. To the Efik, British trade was vital, as their entire state was based upon the monopoly of the external commerce of the Cross River basin. To the British, Calabar was a comparatively unimportant primary producer, and a minor market for manufactured goods. The last thing which Britain wanted was to become involved in Efik politics, still less to assert political control. Yet very gradually Britain was drawn into Efik affairs, almost without being aware of the fact.

During Great Duke Ephraim's reign, Anglo-Efik relations had been amicable, as the Duke realized that his power was dependent upon his ability to maintain his credit-worthiness with the British. These good relations continued after his death, and in 1836 King Eyamba V invited Beecroft to help him solve a palaver which was interrupting trade.<sup>80</sup> Formal relations between the two countries were established with the signing of the anti-slavery treaties of 1841.<sup>81</sup> Indicative of future trends, additional articles signed in 1842 gave Britain the right to intervene with force if slave trading revived.<sup>82</sup>

So greatly had British interests in the area expanded by the middle forties, with the growth of the oil trade, that King Eyamba's failure to pay his British creditors led to suggestions, in 1844 and 1845, that John Beecroft be made Consul to mediate in such matters.<sup>83</sup> Although no Consul was appointed, Commanders of British cruisers were instructed they might intervene amicably in similar circumstances.<sup>84</sup> But if Britain did not consider Calabar's trade sufficiently important to warrant the appointment of a Consul, the French viewed Calabar more covetously. In 1847 a French steamer arrived to persuade the Efik to accept French protection.<sup>85</sup> The Chiefs refused, and instead asked that Britain annex Calabar.<sup>86</sup> Thomas B. Horsfall, Chairman

<sup>80</sup> R. K. Oldfield, 'A brief Account of an Ascent of the Old Calabar River in 1836', *J.R.G.S.* 7 (1837), 195-8.

<sup>81</sup> Treaties with King Eyamba and King Eyo, 6 Dec. 1841, in Blount to Tucker, 7 Dec. 1841, FO84/439.

<sup>82</sup> Additional Articles, with King Eyamba V and King Eyo Honesty, 30 Nov. 1842, in Foote to Herbert, 12 Dec. 1842, FO84/495.

<sup>83</sup> Nicolls to Barrow, 5 June 1844, FO84/549. Nicolls to Canning, 2 Dec. 1844, FO84/555. Gooch to Jones, 14 July 1845, FO84/612.

<sup>84</sup> Canning to Admiralty, 21 Nov. 1845, FO84/607.

<sup>85</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 350-2. Beecroft to Palmerston, 16 July 1849, FO84/775.

<sup>86</sup> King, Chiefs, and Gentlemen Traders to Hope, 30 Sept. 1847, FO84/746. Hope to Hotham, 3 Dec. 1847, Inc. 1 in Hotham to Admiralty, 24 Jan. 1848, FO84/746.

of the Liverpool African Association, eagerly pressed Palmerston to agree to the Efik request,<sup>87</sup> but Palmerston adamantly refused to entertain the idea,<sup>88</sup> and turned it down.<sup>89</sup> But the matter did not rest here, for in 1849 the Chiefs allowed Lieutenant Selwyn to select and crown King Archibong,<sup>90</sup> who immediately requested a flag from Queen Victoria.<sup>91</sup> This was interpreted as another request for British annexation,<sup>92</sup> but again Palmerston rejected the idea.<sup>93</sup> Contrary to Dike's opinion, Palmerston clearly did not have territorial ambitions in the area.<sup>94</sup> However, his basic interest in the commerce of the region is revealed by his making John Beecroft Consul in 1849.<sup>95</sup>

The Consul's job was to protect British subjects, and promote their commercial interests, but he had no authority over them, or over the Africans with whom they dealt.<sup>96</sup> In normal circumstances his only weapon was his good offices, although in an emergency he might call a man-of-war.<sup>97</sup>

But Beecroft was well known by the Calabar Chiefs, who consequently did not object to his intervention in the political crisis of 1851. If they hid from him the real motive behind the slaves' invasion, they signed the treaty he drew up confirming the abolition of human sacrifices, giving him the right to redress any infringements.<sup>98</sup> As in 1842, Britain was committed to intervention in Efik affairs, to uphold treaty obligations. Such was Beecroft's continued acceptance

<sup>87</sup> Horsfall to Palmerston, 4 Dec. 1847, FO84/710.

<sup>88</sup> Memorandum *re* M. Gibson Craig to Foreign Office, 6 Dec. 1847, signed Palmerston, FO84/710.

<sup>89</sup> Murray to Hotham, 24 Mar. 1848, Inc. 2 in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 21 July 1848, FO84/748.

<sup>90</sup> Selwyn to Fanshawe, 1 June 1849, in Admiralty to Eddisbury, 23 Nov. 1849, FO84/785.

<sup>91</sup> King Archibong I and Mr. Young to Queen Victoria, 14 June 1849, in Selwyn to Fanshawe, 10 Sept. 1849, Inc. 2 in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 23 Nov. 1849, FO84/785.

<sup>92</sup> Selwyn to Fanshawe, 10 Sept. 1849, Inc. 2 in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 23 Nov. 1849, FO84/785.

<sup>93</sup> Comment on Admiralty to Foreign Office, 23 Nov. 1849, signed Palmerston, 14 Dec. 1849, FO84/785.

<sup>94</sup> Dike, pp. 95, 128. Robert Gavin, 'Nigeria and Lord Palmerston', *Ibadan*, 12 (June 1961), 24-7.

<sup>95</sup> Dike, p. 95.

<sup>96</sup> D. C. M. Platt, 'The Role of the British Consular Service in Overseas Trade, 1825-1914', *E.H.R.* 2nd Ser. 15 (1962-3), 494-5.

<sup>97</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001.

<sup>98</sup> Treaty with Slaves of Qua Plantations, 15 Feb. 1851, Inc. 10 in Beecroft to Palmerston, 24 Feb. 1851, FO84/858.

by the Chiefs, that he supervised the election of Archibong I's successor in 1852.<sup>99</sup>

The consequences of making treaties which bound Britain to intervention were soon apparent. In 1854 Chief Willy Tom Robins of Old Town died, and traditional funeral sacrifices took place. This appeared to Acting Consul Lynslager to be a breach of the 1851 treaty abolishing human sacrifice, and after giving King Eyo and Duke Ephraim two days to hand over those responsible, he ordered the evacuation and destruction of the town.<sup>1</sup> Lynslager was not to know that he was being used by the people of Duke Town to crush their ancient rivals who had not been party to the 1851 treaty, nor was the Foreign Office, who accepted that compulsion to enforce the treaty was unavoidable.<sup>2</sup> The moral of this episode was that if Britain wanted to avoid being embroiled in Efik internal affairs, she should avoid making treaties with the Chiefs which committed her to intervention. Yet on this very visit Lynslager made a treaty with the Kings to abolish the murder of twin babies.<sup>3</sup> For the Consul could hardly avoid taking advantage of circumstances which favoured such humanitarian agreements, with the ever-watchful eyes of the Mission upon him. Fortunately, however, it was to be many years before Britain had to intervene again in such an affair.

Although the Consul was the protector of the British traders in his district, he had no authority over them. Thus he was powerless to control the situation in Calabar after 1854, when bitter rivalry broke out between the old trading companies using sailing ships, and the newcomers sending oil to Britain on the mail steamers. Men were assaulted, and oil was stolen. So the Foreign Office decided that the Consul's powers must be strengthened, either by drawing up commercial laws which would be enforced with the co-operation of the Kings, or by investing the Consul with magisterial powers over the British subjects in his area. Extending control over the Africans was not considered.<sup>4</sup> It was decided eventually to give the Consul magisterial authority, and he was instructed to seek the agreement of the

<sup>99</sup> Beccroft to Malmesbury, 30 June 1852, FO84/886.

<sup>1</sup> P.P. 1856, lxii, Africa (Consular)—Bight of Biafra, Inc. 1 in No. 34, Lynslager's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum 'W' to Clarendon, 1 May 1855, FO84/975. Clarendon to Lynslager, 8 May 1855, FO84/975.

<sup>3</sup> P.P. 1856, lxii, Africa, (Consular)—Bight of Biafra, Inc. 27 in No. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum, signed Clarendon, 17 Oct. 1856, FO84/1001.

Calabar Kings to this move.<sup>5</sup> Hutchinson obtained their agreement in 1860, but the whole scheme was scotched by the refusal of other Chiefs in the Bights.<sup>6</sup>

So it was left to Consul Burton to put commerce in Old Calabar on a more regular footing by negotiating a new code of by-laws in 1862, which King Archibong would only sign under threat of severe measures.<sup>7</sup> These permanently established a Court of Equity, which Hutchinson had unsuccessfully tried to set up in 1856.<sup>8</sup> The Court handled commercial matters, and was made up of the supercargoes or agents, and the two Kings, the Consul having final authority.<sup>9</sup> Although the new laws stipulated free trade on the Cross River, Burton was prevented by the Efik from establishing direct contact with the markets.<sup>10</sup>

Livingstone, the next Consul, wanted to pursue a forward policy to open the Cross River, but the Foreign Office was not interested, and turned down his request that the *Pioneer* be stationed in his district.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless Livingstone did interfere in Efik affairs, for, in 1867, he fined King Archibong II for violating the 1851 treaty abolishing human sacrifices, by killing some villagers and sacrificing two women.<sup>12</sup> And in 1869 Acting Consul Wilson had to fine Archibong again, this time for a breach of the 1862 trade by-laws.<sup>13</sup> Again Britain had had to intervene in Calabar, in order to uphold treaty provisions.

Despite fining Archibong II, the Consul still had no official power over Africans or British.<sup>14</sup> Thus Livingstone complained how difficult it was to settle squabbles between the agents, and make and uphold treaties with the Africans.<sup>15</sup> The agents also pressed that the Consul

<sup>5</sup> Malmesbury to Hutchinson, 23 May 1859, ST 15, FO84/1087.

<sup>6</sup> Hutchinson to Russell, 12 Feb. 1860, ST 8, FO84/1117. Ibid. 28 May 1860, ST 24, FO84/1117.

<sup>7</sup> Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>8</sup> By-laws, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 Sept. 1856, FO84/1001. Clarendon to Hutchinson, 20 Dec. 1856, FO84/1001.

<sup>9</sup> Agreement, 5 May 1862, Inc. 4, in Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

<sup>10</sup> Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176. Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, Private, FO84/1221.

<sup>11</sup> Livingstone to Russell, 3 June 1865, FO84/1249.

<sup>12</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 26 Dec. 1867, No. 34, FO84/1277.

<sup>13</sup> Acting Consul Wilson to Foreign Secretary, 23 Feb. 1869, No. 8, FO84/1308.

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum *re* Livingstone's No. 35, 1 Dec. 1869, signed N.H.W., 18 Jan 1870, FO84/1308.

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum (undated) signed Livingstone, FO84/1343.

should be invested with greater powers so that he might intervene more quickly in trade disputes with the Efik.<sup>16</sup> The Foreign Office accepted that the Consul ought to have more authority,<sup>17</sup> but it was not until a legal decision established that the West African Courts of Equity had no legal powers that they decided to act. At long last magisterial authority was conferred upon the Consul.<sup>18</sup> Now he could fine, banish, or imprison British subjects who broke the rules or regulations which he might make for the good order of the district.<sup>19</sup>

Although Livingstone himself was recalled in 1873 on the charitable belief 'that the Consul must be suffering in his head',<sup>20</sup> the assumption of magisterial powers by the Consul marked an important advance in British involvement in Efik affairs. Now two groups living in Calabar, the Mission and their emancipados, and the free Africans, fell under the authority of the Consul. This provoked a conflict between the *Obong* and the Consul as to who really had authority over these people.

However, first the Consul was drawn into Efik affairs on another issue. The Henshaws sought his intervention in their dispute with Duke Town over the crowning of their own *Obong*, in 1872-3. And when war broke out between the two towns in September 1875, the Consul negotiated a settlement, fearing that another Bonny-Opobo situation might develop. His interference in Efik politics was a threat to the *Obong's* authority, so Archibong tried to eject from Calabar the Mission emancipados and the free Africans, who claimed to be subject to the Consul alone. But the Consul insisted that these people remain, and his thwarting of Archibong's intentions strengthened his image, in the eyes of local people, as an alternative power and protector.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, discontented elements in Calabar began to clamour for British protection, which would make them subject to the Consul

<sup>16</sup> Agents to Hopkins, 25 July 1871, Inc. 2 in Hopkins to Granville, 2 Aug. 1871, No. 15, FO84/1343.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum, signed C. Vivian, 31 Aug. 1871, *re* Hopkins No. 15, 2 Aug. 1871, FO84/1343.

<sup>18</sup> F.O. to Livingstone, 11 Oct. 1871, FO84/1343.

<sup>19</sup> Rules and Regulations framed under Her Majesty's Order in Council of the 21st day of February, 1872, by Her Majesty's Consul at Old Calabar, dated 29 Apr. 1872, in Livingstone to Granville, 29 Apr. 1872, FO84/1356.

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum, signed 'E', 27 July, 1873, *re* Livingstone's No. 36, 10 June 1873, FO84/1377.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter 6, p. 104-5, 107-8.

and beyond the power of the *Obong* and his Chiefs. In 1877 James Egbo Bassey sought protection for himself and his people, and the Henshaws sought protection for their proposed new settlement. As Hopkins informed the Foreign Office, it was useless trying to explain that the Consul's job was only to watch over the interests of British subjects.<sup>22</sup> Thus in 1878 Hopkins negotiated a settlement between Henshaw Town and Duke Town, and also a treaty confirming the abolition of the murder of twin babies, and of human sacrifices, and abolishing the poison ordeal.<sup>23</sup> Like earlier treaties, this was soon to necessitate British intervention, as the Foreign Office feared at the time.<sup>24</sup>

As has been shown earlier, the death of Archibong III precipitated a vicious dispute about the succession. As the wards tightened their control over their members as the dispute deepened, people who had come to consider themselves free were subject to attempts at re-enslavement. In retaliation, they clamoured for British protection. Simultaneously, the Eyambas protested that if Prince Duke remained King, they would ask for British protection and leave Calabar. However, when Prince Duke's elevation was confirmed in 1882, the Eyambas began to demand British annexation of Calabar, arguing that only this could remedy the constant evasions of the 1878 treaty on inhuman practices. By making the treaty the British Government had trapped itself into having to consider annexation.

Pressure on the British Government to establish protection in the Oil Rivers was great. As early as 1879, the Kings of Cameroons had sought to place themselves under British rule.<sup>25</sup> And in 1881, letters in the *African Times* suggested that Old Calabar be placed under British protection for the benefit of those being oppressed there.<sup>26</sup> Consul Hewett strongly advocated that the territory from Benin to Cameroons be annexed, or the French would step in,<sup>27</sup> arguing that because of the chaos at Calabar, British protection would be a blessing.<sup>28</sup> Since the French would impose discriminatory tariffs, loss

<sup>22</sup> Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 28 Aug. 1878, No. 31, FO84/1508.

<sup>23</sup> Agreement, 6 Sept. 1878, in Hopkins to Foreign Secretary, 6 Sept. 1878, No. 33, FO84/1508.

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum signed J.P., 28 Oct. 1878, *re* Hopkins, No. 33, 1878, FO84/1508.

<sup>25</sup> Hewett to Granville, 14 Jan. 1882, No. 9, pp. 20-1, FO403/18.

<sup>26</sup> *African Times*, 1 Oct. 1881, p. 116, *cit.* Amindi Africanus to Editor, 24 Aug. 1881.

<sup>27</sup> Hewett to Granville, 14 Jan. 1882, No. 9, pp. 20-1, FO403/18.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 17 Feb. 1882, ST 5, FO84/1617.

of trade was the major consideration,<sup>29</sup> as John Holt pointed out.<sup>30</sup> This fear was heightened by the re-establishment of the French protectorate at Porto Novo in 1883.<sup>31</sup>

Thus the Foreign Office came to the conclusion that if Britain did not heed the requests for protection from the Cameroons and Calabar Chiefs, they would offer themselves to the French.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Goldie-Taubman, of the National Africa Company, pressed for action in September 1883, because of the presence of a French gunboat on the Niger,<sup>33</sup> and as a French move seemed imminent,<sup>34</sup> the matter was put to the Cabinet.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile more requests for British protection came from Calabar, on which Hewett commented that, as British policy had unwittingly led the people there to rely too much on Britain, protection was now the logical outcome.<sup>36</sup> Old Calabar needed good government, and British trade there was large and increasing.<sup>37</sup> By 22 December 1883, it had been decided to strengthen the Consular administration and make treaties with the Chiefs, with the effect that they were not to cede their territories to other foreign powers.<sup>38</sup> Hewett was to return to his post unostentatiously, and conclude the necessary treaties.<sup>39</sup> However, the financing of the scheme had not been decided, and the Foreign Office could not act unless the traders would bear the cost of the strengthened administration.<sup>40</sup> On 27 February 1884, although plans were complete, and Hewett ready to go, and despite increasing con-

<sup>29</sup> Supplementary Remarks upon British Trade upon the West Coast of Africa, Wm. Tasker Nugent, 29 Apr. 1882, In No. 23\*, pp. 29-33, FO403/18.

<sup>30</sup> Holt to Granville, 11 Dec. 1882, No. 1, pp. 1-2, FO403/19.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert to Lister, 12 May 1883, No. 11, pp. 11-12, FO403/19. Lister to Herbert, (Confidential), 22 May 1883, No. 14, pp. 15-17, FO403/19.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum by Mr. Anderson on the French Occupation of Porto Novo, 11 June 1883, No. 19, pp. 38-42, FO403/19. Hewett to Granville, 11 June 1883, No. 21, p. 44, FO403/19.

<sup>33</sup> Goldie-Taubman to Lister, 26 Sept. 1883, No. 37, p. 54, FO403/20.

<sup>34</sup> Lister to Bramston, 5 Oct. 1883, (Confidential), No. 45, p. 58, FO403/20.

<sup>35</sup> Bramston to Lister, 5 Oct. 1883, No. 48, p. 59, FO403/20. Lister to Bramston, 23 Oct. 1883, No. 61, p. 68, FO403/20. Lister to Meade, 30 Oct. 1883, No. 62, p. 69, FO403/20.

<sup>36</sup> Hewett to Granville, 3 Nov. 1883, No. 19, FO84/1634.

<sup>37</sup> 'Suggestions', Hewett to Foreign Office, 20 Nov. 1883, FO84/1634.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum by Mr. Lister respecting the Niger, Oil Rivers, and Cameroons, 22 Dec. 1883, No. 3, p. 3, FO403/31.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson to Sanderson, 15 Jan. 1884, Annex to No. 13, p. 14, FO403/31.

<sup>40</sup> Memorandum by Mr. Anderson on the Consular Protection and Jurisdiction on the West Coast of Africa (Niger and Oil River District), 25 Jan 1884, No. 15, p. 15, FO403/31. Granville to Aberdare, 6 Feb. 1884, No. 22, p. 20, FO403/31.

cern at French interest in the Niger,<sup>41</sup> all was deadlocked for want of funds.<sup>42</sup> The traders had refused to bear the cost, and the Exchequer was reluctant to pay.<sup>43</sup>

Late in April came news of a German mission departing for West Africa,<sup>44</sup> and early in May news of French movements on the Niger.<sup>45</sup> At last the British government was spurred into action, and although the financial problem was still not resolved, Hewett left for the coast on 28 May.<sup>46</sup> But the scheme was bungled because of the delay over finance, for when Hewett arrived in the Cameroons, he found the Germans there before him. However, he cut his losses and concluded treaties with the Kings at Calabar and the other Oil Rivers ports.<sup>47</sup>

The motivation for British intervention in the Oil Rivers has been under discussion in recent years.<sup>48</sup> However, trade was the basic consideration. Hewett's letter of instruction stated that intervention was being undertaken because British trade was increasing, making it necessary to protect the lives and property of British traders, and to safeguard commerce from the ignorance, greed, and weakness of the local Chiefs.<sup>49</sup> If this was imperialism, it was unashamed economic imperialism. The question of protection had first been brought to the attention of the Foreign Office by the demands for protection from the Cameroons and Calabar, particularly the latter, which were the consequence of the political disintegration there. So Britain was faced with the alternatives of acceding to these demands, or of seeing these people offer themselves to the French or Germans. As the French and Germans would have imposed discriminatory tariffs, British trade would have been seriously

<sup>41</sup> Granville to Aberdare, 6 Feb. 1884, No. 21, with enclosures, pp. 19-20, FO403/31.

<sup>42</sup> Memoranda by Mr. Anderson and Mr. Lister, No. 43, pp. 33-5, FO403/31.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Amphill to Granville, 23 Apr. 1884, No. 67\*, p. 49, FO403/31. Thompson to Lister, 2 May 1884, with enclosure, No. 69, p. 50, FO403/31.

<sup>45</sup> Secretary of the Admiralty to Lister, 3 May 1884, with enclosure, No. 70, pp. 51-2, FO403/31.

<sup>46</sup> Lister to Secretary of the Admiralty, 15 May 1884, No. 87, p. 57, FO403/31.

<sup>47</sup> Hewett to Granville, 25 Aug. 1884, No. 18, FO84/1660. *Ibid.* 24 Sept. 1884, No. 28, FO84/1660.

<sup>48</sup> J. D. Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (London, 1963). R. Robinson, J. Gallagher, and A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians* (London, 1961). M. E. Chamberlain, 'Lord Aberdare and the Royal Niger Company', *The Welsh History Review*, 3 (1966-7), 45-62. D. C. M. Platt, 'Economic Factors in British Policy during the new "Imperialism"', *Past & Present*, 39 (Apr. 1968), 120-38. Hopkins, pp. 580-606.

<sup>49</sup> Lister to Hewett, 16 May 1884, No. 88, pp. 57-8, FO403/31.

reduced, and hence intervention was essential. Yet if there had been no political vacuum in Old Calabar, there would have been no possibility of the people there offering themselves to the French or Germans, and therefore Britain's trade would not have been in jeopardy, and Britain would not have intervened. However, having established protection, Britain did not introduce discriminatory tariffs against her rivals, although she had intervened to prevent them introducing such tariffs.<sup>50</sup>

As with the earlier treaties which Britain had made with the Chiefs of Old Calabar, the protection treaty created more problems than it solved. By laying down that the Consul should adjudicate disputes between the Chiefs, it made him the central figure in Efik politics. Yet although he had powers of adjudication, he had no tools to implement his decisions if the parties refused to accept them.

These problems became apparent immediately. In January 1885, the Acting Consul had to adjudicate about a war which had broken out between the Archibongs and Duke ward. And later that year more demands were made from Calabar for a complete assertion of British control, because of the atrocities which were occurring. Hewett commented that unless Britain established control to suppress these cruelties, it would appear that she supported them, or was too weak to prevent them.<sup>51</sup> But the British traders at Calabar did not want further intervention, and instead, complained to Salisbury that Hewett was undermining King Duke's authority by his interference, to the detriment of the safety of themselves and their trade.<sup>52</sup> In 1886, Hewett and Vice-Consul Johnston both had to settle palavers at Calabar, but the situation continued to deteriorate. In 1887 the Eyambas, backed by the Cobhams, and Yellow Duke, begged Salisbury to annex Calabar completely, with Hewett eagerly supporting such a move.<sup>53</sup>

Further consolidation of power had been under consideration at the Foreign Office, where it had been hoped that the Oil Rivers could be brought under the Niger Company system. As this was now unlikely, some other self-financing system was sought, as it would

<sup>50</sup> Printed letter, White to Chairman of the Courts of Equity, 27 Jan. 1885, in White to Granville, 29 Jan. 1885, No. 5, Africa, FO84/1701.

<sup>51</sup> Remarks on letter of 29 June 1885, from British subjects at Old Calabar, signed Hewett, 4 Sept. 1885, FO84/1701.

<sup>52</sup> T. H. White, etc. to Salisbury, 9 Oct. 1885, No. 133, pp. 187-8, FO403/71.

<sup>53</sup> Observations on the Petition of Prince Efiom John Eyamba, of 19 July 1887, Hewett to F.O., 15 Oct. 1887, FO84/1828.

benefit the merchants.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile Hewett continued to press for annexation.<sup>55</sup>

The ineffectiveness of the Consular administration was growing daily more obvious. In 1888 Vice-Consul Johnston had to be restrained from interfering too vigorously in local affairs as Britain did not yet administer the district.<sup>56</sup> And Hewett fell out with Johnston, rescinding some notices he had issued.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, in 1889 a German gunboat openly sailed up to Creek Town and seized King Eyo, later sailing away with hostages.<sup>58</sup>

At long last, more determined steps were taken to improve the administration, and in April 1889, Major MacDonald discussed schemes for the future administration of the district with the Kings and Chiefs.<sup>59</sup> As a result he recommended that a strong consular administration be set up with an executive backed by armed police and a constabulary. If this was constitutionally unacceptable, then a Crown Colony should be established.<sup>60</sup> But he did not indicate how the administration should be paid for, which was thought by the British government to be the primary consideration. Sir Villiers Lister overcame this problem by suggesting an import duty,<sup>61</sup> and Johnston combined both men's ideas in a long memorandum in August 1890, although he proposed that the head of the administration be termed the High Commissioner.<sup>62</sup> Now that the financial question was resolved, the decision was taken to go ahead. MacDonald was made Commissioner and Consul General in April 1891,<sup>63</sup> and arrived in Calabar on 1 August 1891,<sup>64</sup> the day that the customs duties were imposed.<sup>65</sup> Old Calabar had passed under British control.

<sup>54</sup> Memoranda signed N.P.N., and I.V.J., 18 Oct. 1887, FO84/1828. Lister to Colonial Office, 2 Nov. 1887 (Confidential), No. 232, p. 178, FO403/73.

<sup>55</sup> Observations on Turner to Salisbury, 25 Oct. 1887, Hewett to F.O., 16 Dec. 1887, FO84/1828.

<sup>56</sup> F.O. to Act. Con. Johnston, 10 Feb. 1888, No. 3, FO84/1881.

<sup>57</sup> Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881. Memorandum *re* Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, signed I.V.J., 1 Aug. 1888, FO84/1881.

<sup>58</sup> *Uhwana Efik*, no. 2, vol. iii (Feb. 1889), in Hewett to Salisbury, No. 14, 18 Apr. 1889, FO84/1941.

<sup>59</sup> MacDonald to Salisbury, No. 11, 12 June 1889, FO84/1940.

<sup>60</sup> Report by Major MacDonald of his visit as Her Majesty's Commissioner to the Niger and Oil Rivers, March 1890, FO403/131, pp. 95-102.

<sup>61</sup> Memorandum by Sir Villiers Lister, 1 July 1890, FO403/134.

<sup>62</sup> Memorandum by Consul Johnston on the Administration of the Oil Rivers, 11 Aug. 1890, FO403/132.

<sup>63</sup> Lister to Major MacDonald, 18 Apr. 1891, No. 2, pp. 1-3, FO403/187.

<sup>64</sup> MacDonald to Foreign Office, 8 Aug. 1891, No. 55, pp. 33-7, FO403/171.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 June 1891, No. 30, p. 17, FO403/171.

Hopkins has recently drawn attention to the part that the depression in palm-produce prices during the eighties,<sup>66</sup> played in determining the course of political events in Lagos, and it must be considered to what extent political developments in Old Calabar were also affected. The London price of palm oil began to fall slowly in 1879 from the level above £36, which it had mostly maintained from the price revival of the mid-sixties, and by late 1882, prices reached about £32 to £33, their lowest point since the low of £32, reached in the early sixties. Then they rose sharply to a peak of £45 in 1883, from which they declined again from mid-1884, breaking the £30 level in 1885, and sinking below £24 until late 1888. Then they rose a little to fluctuate between £24 and £30, until late 1891.<sup>67</sup> Although unrest in Calabar after 1879 originated in the domestic political struggle for office, it may have been exacerbated by the fall in prices. Declining prices would mean declining profits, making the *Obong*-ship and *Eyamba*-ship even more desirable because of the control these posts conferred over come and commerce. However, during the crucial period of 1883-4, in which Britain decided to establish protection, prices were extremely good. These high prices did bring the British agents into association,<sup>68</sup> for fear of competing each others' profits away, but they did not seek intervention, and in 1885 actually complained that the Consul's interference was undermining King Duke's authority, to the detriment of their trade. It was only after the establishment of British protection that prices plunged to their all-time low. This had serious repercussions in Calabar, for in 1888 Johnston stopped the trade of twenty-three Efik traders who were in debt to the agents.<sup>69</sup> Although King Duke was not involved, more than half the leading Efik traders were, including (significantly) the King's main opponents, Prince James Eyamba, Prince Archibong III, and Chief Henshaw III. Thus, coming on top of the original political crisis, the price-fall contributed to the continued unrest which determined the British to consolidate their authority.

So it was that Britain took control of Old Calabar after nearly a century of trying to avoid becoming embroiled in Efik affairs. Britain's only interest in Calabar was trade, and Palmerston had strictly avoided broadening these commercial interests into political

<sup>66</sup> Hopkins, pp. 596-9.

<sup>67</sup> *Buying Prices for Palm Oil*, London, 1844-91, p. 70.

<sup>68</sup> Chapter 5, p. 64-5.

<sup>69</sup> Notice dated 13 Apr. 1888, signed H. H. Johnston, in Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881.

overlordship, even when directly invited to do so by the Efik themselves. Yet as the century wore on, each apparently insignificant treaty drew Britain deeper into Efik affairs, for if the terms of the treaty were broken the Consul had to intervene. At the same time groups of free Africans and emancipados were growing up in Calabar, informally under British protection. Thus when the Consul was given magisterial powers he became in effect the ruler of these groups in Calabar, and therefore a rival to the *Obong*. Having secured the abolition of the poison ordeal in 1878, the Consul was unwittingly party to the political crisis which developed in 1879 over the succession to Archibong III. Since the dispute could not be resolved by the traditional ordeal, inter-ward warfare broke out, against a background of falling oil prices. When the new *Obong* was finally selected in 1882, the defeated Eyamba ward began to press for annexation, on the grounds that the 1878 treaty was being transgressed, and because they saw the Consul as a preferable alternative to King Duke. Their pressure coincided with the requests for protection from those almost-free men who were being re-enslaved, as the wards tightened their grip over their members, in response to the threat of war. Faced with these demands for protection, Britain decided to intervene, lest those seeking protection should offer themselves to the French or Germans instead, an outcome which would have severely affected British trade. After protection, discontent continued, since the Consul's interference undermined the King's authority without replacing it, while oil prices hit the century's lowest point. Consequently, when a formula was discovered for financing a meagre administration without cost to the Exchequer, consolidation was effected, and in 1891 the Consul-General's authority replaced the *Obong's*. If the short-term cause of intervention was the political disintegration inside Calabar, this disintegration was a side-effect of the long-standing commercial connection with Britain. Had there been no Anglo-Efik trade, Britain would not have annexed Old Calabar.

## Conclusion

From 1600 to 1891 the economic demands of the expanding international economy were the main force acting for change in Efik society. The relationship between the West and Old Calabar was essentially commercial, and the changes which took place in Efik society were side-effects of this commerce.

It was the increasing need of the Western economy for slave plantation labour in the New World which first brought European traders to Calabar, and gave the small community of fishermen traders there the opportunity to develop their trading skills as slave exporters. Their success in meeting this external demand enabled them to develop into the dominant tribe on the Cross River, by purchasing domestic slaves to work for them as canoe hands and traders, with the profits which accrued. Thus the Efik state was a response to the demands of the international economic system, utilizing Western credit to evacuate labour for the Western economy.

In adapting to the demands of the West, the Efik demonstrated their sensitivity to economic stimuli, and the flexibility of their social and political system. The old lineage-system disintegrated, as wards emerged composed of freemen and slaves. Yet the wards were content to cohere in the enlarged village-group, rather than break away to form new independent villages. For their interests continued to be served by the modification—where necessary—of the integrating institutions of tutelary deity, secret society, and council.

Early in the nineteenth century, as the Western economic system evolved under the process of industrialization, the external demand for slaves was replaced by a demand for palm oil. To this the Efik quickly adapted, utilizing their commercial skills and knowledge to become middlemen in this trade, as they had been in the slave trade. They invested the profits of the new trade in slaves, which they settled in the newly discovered agricultural areas, to function as self-maintaining retainers essential to their masters' security in inter-ward politics.

From the middle of the century, as trade increased, and techno-

logical advance improved communications with other parts of the West African Coast and with Europe, enclaves of aliens began to establish themselves in Calabar, who were directly or indirectly dependent upon the oil trade. These were the missionaries and their emancipados, and the free Africans. Also, a Consul was sent out to protect the interests of British subjects in the area. When, in 1872, he was given authority over British subjects and protected people, he assumed control over these enclaves in Calabar, and therefore became a challenge to the authority of the Efik rulers.

Politics in Calabar had always consisted of inter-ward rivalry for the leading political offices. But the new powers of the Consul, backed by Britain's potentially overwhelming force, meant that parties discontented with the current rulers could seek the protection of the Consul as an alternative pole of political authority. Thus when the Eyamba ward was defeated in the vicious succession dispute of 1879-82, they turned to demand British annexation as a preferable alternative to the rule of their hated rival. They were joined by other discontented elements in Efik society.

During the seventies the spread of industrialization, associated with economic nationalism in the United States and in Europe, had deprived Britain of her wealthiest and most sophisticated markets. She was therefore forced to seek market expansion in the less developed areas of the world, in Asia and Africa. This had led to her political intervention in Egypt in 1882 to safeguard the route via the Suez Canal to India and the East. Consequently the growing interest of the new European industrial powers in West Africa was unwelcome, for if they annexed any of the Coastal states, they would establish discriminatory tariffs to Britain's loss. Hence, when faced with demands for protection from Calabar, Britain had no alternative but to intervene, lest the petitioners offer themselves to her rivals.

It was Britain's original intention merely to establish protection to keep other countries away. But the Consul was given the right to adjudicate between the King and Chiefs, unfortunately thereby undermining the King's authority without replacing it. Chaos ensued, and the only solution was to give the Consul ruling powers and assume control.

Thus intervention was determined by the political vacuum inside Old Calabar, and the growing economic competition between the

Western powers. Annexation was the resultant of the polygon of forces operating internally and externally at Calabar. These forces were economic, or the by-product of economic forces. The ultimate impact of the international economy upon Efik society was the establishment of British rule.

## Epilogue 1891-1971

EFIK history of the last eighty years, like the question of Efik relations with the hinterland people, has yet to be researched. Much of the obscurity of these years is due to the fact that records of the Colonial period are mainly concerned with the problems of Colonial administration, rather than with indigenous affairs. However, much could be gleaned from a careful study of Nigerian archival material, Native Court Records, and local newspapers.

Only a brief outline of the decline in Old Calabar's importance can be indicated here. Until 1900, Old Calabar was headquarters of the Niger Coast Protectorate,<sup>1</sup> and then headquarters of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria which followed.<sup>2</sup> Renamed Calabar in 1904,<sup>3</sup> its future as an administrative centre was ruined by the amalgamation of Southern Nigeria and Lagos in 1906, the latter becoming the new seat of government. Meanwhile the economic life of the city was being undermined by the opening of the Cross River and the establishment of European trading-stations at the main markets. The Efik were no longer middlemen.<sup>4</sup> Yet Calabar remained a major port for the evacuation of palm produce, and various schemes were proposed to link Calabar to the hinterland by rail.<sup>5</sup> But with the discovery of the deep-water harbour at what was to be Port Harcourt, in 1913, and the decision to develop it as the railway terminal for the country east of the Niger, Calabar's hopes of development as an entrepôt were destroyed. Much of the palm produce

<sup>1</sup> P.P. 1895, lxxi, 1, Africa No. 1 (1895), Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891-August 1894.

<sup>2</sup> P.P. 1901 cd. (431-7), xlv, 727, Colonial Reports—Annual; No. 315, Southern Nigeria, Report for 1899-1900. I. F. Nicolson, *The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960* (Oxford, 1969), p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *West African Mail*, 23 Sept. 1904, p. 613. 14 Dec. 1906, p. 903. 3 Mar. 1905, pp. 1163-4.

<sup>4</sup> *West African Mail*, 18 Dec. 1903, p. 978, 8 Jan. 1904, pp. 1050-1, 12 Feb. 1904, pp. 1166-7. S. M. Tamuno, 'The Development of British Administrative Control of Southern Nigeria, 1900-12: A Study in the Administrations of Sir Ralph Moor, Sir William MacGregor, and Sir Walter Egerton', (Univ. of London Ph.D. Thesis 1962), p. 338.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Anene, *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 296. Tamuno, p. 132.

which had previously been exported via Calabar now went via Port Harcourt, which became Nigeria's second port.<sup>6</sup>

What remained of Calabar's export trade was adversely affected by the collapse of primary-produce prices in the late twenties and early thirties. As unemployment grew, an exodus, spurred on by a revival of witchcraft, began—to Lagos, Enugu, and other more dynamic centres. Many Efik entered the Civil Service, now their most profitable sphere of employment. During the forties and fifties, Calabar remained a backwater, and the political wranglings of the post-independence era of the sixties only made matters worse. Because Calabar chose to back the Action Group rather than the N.C.N.C., she was largely excluded from the latter's economic policy. And in 1961, Southern Cameroons, for which Calabar was a leading port, chose for political reasons to leave Nigeria. Her trade was diverted to Victoria, causing many firms to close in Calabar, and precipitating further emigration. By the mid-sixties Calabar was deeply depressed.<sup>7</sup>

However, the outcome of the Nigerian Civil War has resulted in a marked improvement in Calabar's position. As early as 1958, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) State movement was pressing for the creation of an independent state, centred on Calabar, as part of the Federation of Nigeria. The Rivers Province leaders later separated from the movement.<sup>8</sup> But as a consequence of the war, General Gowon published a decree in May 1967, creating twelve states from the former regions of Nigeria, one of which was the long-sought-after South Eastern State. On 31 March 1968 the new state came into being. Despite some damage during the war, Calabar appears to have recovered quickly, the population increasing from 70,000 before the war to 100,000 afterwards.<sup>9</sup> There seems to be every reason to suppose that now the development of the south-east is in its own hands, Calabar will recover all its former prominence.

<sup>6</sup> Nicolson, pp. 186-90.

<sup>7</sup> E. U. Aye, *Old Calabar Through the Centuries* (Calabar, 1967), pp. 161-70.

<sup>8</sup> Aye, pp. 178-9.

<sup>9</sup> *West Africa*, 3 June 1967, p. 716, 30 Mar. 1968, p. 361, 18 Jan. 1969, pp. 62-3, 1 Mar. 1969, pp. 230-1, 15 Mar. 1969, pp. 295-6.

## Appendix 1

### *Palm Oil Exports from Old Calabar, 1812-1887*

	<i>Tons</i>
1812-17 <sup>1</sup>	1,200
1821 <sup>2</sup>	2,000
1828 <sup>3</sup>	2,000
1833 <sup>4</sup>	4-5,000
1847 <sup>5</sup>	5,217
1848 <sup>5</sup>	4,634
1849 <sup>6</sup>	2,782
1850 <sup>6</sup>	4,260
1851 <sup>7</sup>	2,838
1855 <sup>8</sup>	4,090
1864 <sup>9</sup>	4,500
1871 <sup>10</sup>	6,000
1875 <sup>11</sup>	5,085
1883 <sup>12</sup>	7,365
1887 <sup>13</sup>	7,000

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Robertson, pp. 363-4. <sup>2</sup> Adams, *Sketches*, p. 113. <sup>3</sup> James Badgley, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen to Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1. <sup>4</sup> Macgregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, *Narrative of an expedition into the interior of Africa* (London, 1837) i. 278. <sup>5</sup> P.P. 1852, ix (53), Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the African Slave Trade, QQ 3143, Dawson cit. John Clare. <sup>6</sup> P.P. 1852, xlix (284), Correspondence Relating to the Conveyance of H.M. Mails to the West Coast of Africa, in John Clare to Admiralty, 16 Dec. 1851. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, in John Clare to Admiralty, 2 Jan. 1852 (the figure is low as two ships from Calabar were lost at sea). <sup>8</sup> General Report on the Bight of Biafra, 20 June 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 June 1856, 69A, FO2/16. <sup>9</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221. <sup>10</sup> Capt. J. B. Walker, F.R.G.S. 'Notes on the Cross and Calabar Rivers', *UPCMR* n.s. 4 (2 Sept. 1872), p. 280. <sup>11</sup> James Irvine & Co. to Hopkins (1 July 1878), Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 Vol. 7 (this figure does not include the small Dutch shipment). <sup>12</sup> Gertzel, John Holt, cit. John Holt Papers, 26/3a. <sup>13</sup> Minute by Governor Moloney in connection with his visit in April 1888 to the present eastern limit of the Colony of Lagos, Government Gazette, p. 201, FO84/1882.

## Appendix 2

### *Palm Kernel Exports from Old Calabar, 1869-1887*

	<i>Tons</i>
1869 <sup>1</sup>	1,000
1871 <sup>1</sup>	2,000
1875 <sup>2</sup>	947
1887 <sup>3</sup>	10,000

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> P.P. 1873, lxx, Commercial Reports, Africa, West Coast, Old Calabar, Report by Consul Livingstone on the Trade and Commerce of Old Calabar for the Year 1872. <sup>2</sup> James Irvine & Co. to Hopkins, 1 July 1878, Calprof Ibadan, 4/1 vol. 7. <sup>3</sup> Minute by Governor Moloney in connection with his visit in April 1888 to the present eastern limit of the Colony of Lagos, Government Gazette, p. 201, FO84/1882.

## Appendix 3

### *Sources to Chart 6: List of Treaties and Official Letters signed by the Chiefs of Calabar, 1842–1862*

(Treaties signed only by the Kings are not included.)

1. Chiefs request Missionaries, c. 1842–3. Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 209.
2. Chiefs request British Protection. Chiefs to Hopc, 30 Sept. 1847, in Hotham to Admiralty, 24 Jan. 1848. No. 42, FO84/746.
3. Engagement to abolish Human Sacrifice, 20 Mar. 1848. FO84/748 and FO97/432.
4. Agreement of Duke Ephraim and Chiefs to Abolish the Murder of Twin Children, 18 Jan. 1855, Inc. 27 in No. 34, P.P. 1856, lxii, Africa, (Consular), Bight of Biafra.
5. Agreement that Egbo will be blown to recover European debts, 19 Oct. 1855, Inc. 9 in Lynslager to Clarendon, 31 Oct. 1855, FO84/975.
6. Duke Town Chiefs welcome Consul Hutchinson, 19 Jan. 1856, Inc. 6 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 31 Jan. 1856, No. 11, FO84/1001.
7. Declaration that British Subjects be not molested, 17 June 1856, Inc. 7, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 June 1856, No. 71, FO84/1001.
8. Duke Town Chiefs to Anderson, Edgerley, and Baillie, 26 Aug. 1856, Inc. 6 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001.
9. Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 26 Aug. 1856, Inc. 4 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001.
10. Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 1 Sept. 1856, Inc. 3 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001.
11. Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 14 Sept. 1856, Inc. 5 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001.
12. Proposed Trade Treaty, 19 Sept. 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 24 Sept. 1856, FO84/1001.
13. Chiefs and Native Traders to Hutchinson (undated), Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 21 Feb. 1857, ST 12, FO84/1030.
14. Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 1 Mar. 1859, Inc. 2 in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 21 Mar. 1859, ST 12, FO84/1037.
15. Archibong II to Lord John Russell, 9 Aug. 1859, Calprof Ibadan 4/3 vol. 1.
16. Chiefs request Baillie to return from Ikorofiong, 30 July 1859, *UPCMR* 14 (Nov. 1859), 203.
17. Duke Town Chiefs to Lord John Russell, 3 May 1860, Inc. 1 in Hutchinson to Russell, 28 May 1860, ST 25, FO84/1117.
18. Addition to Comey Treaty of 1856, 31 May 1861, Calprof Ibadan 5/7.
19. Trade Agreement, 1862, 5 May, 1862, Inc. 4 in Burton to Russell, 22 May, 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176.

*Note:* On the chart, those names which only occurred twice or less have been omitted. Creek Town Chiefs did not occur on some of the letters, i.e. those specifically from Duke Town. This explains the greater frequency of Duke Town names.

*Names omitted from Chart 6, 1842-1862*

	<i>Treaty or letter where names appeared</i>		<i>Treaty or letter where names appeared</i>
King Eyamba V	1	Egbo Young Etim	10
Archibong Duke	3	Little Capt Duke	10, 11
Young Eyo	3	Nkse Etim Duke	10, 11
Ephraim Antera	5	Ephraim Etim Duke	10, 11
Ephraim Boco Duke	6	Effiong Muncshu	10, 11
William Duke	6	Young Big Adam	10, 11
Bo dar nar	6	Old George	10, 11
Offiong Archibong	6, 15	Basi Duke Antario	10, 11
Egbo Eyo	10, 13	Egbo Jemmy	10, 11
Egbo Bassey	10	Egbo Bo	11
Etim Effiong Duke	10, 11	Ephraim Nacunda	11
David King	10, 11	Ekpenyong Ekpo	11
John Boco Cobham	10	Ekpenyong Etim	11
Boco Cobham	10	Adam Oku	11
Egbo Boyok	10	Apande Duke	13
Etim Effiong Esien	10	Young Cobham	13
Captain Duke	10, 11	Coco Henshaw Duke	14
Esien Ambo	10	Ephraim Adam	19

*Personal Details of Signatories*

NAME	WARD
<i>Jemmy Henshaw</i>	<i>Henshaw</i>
Young Chief of Henshaws, 1846. <sup>1</sup> King Jemmy Henshaw, visited by Revd. Anderson, 1849. <sup>2</sup>	
<i>Sources:</i> <sup>1</sup> Waddell, <i>Twenty-Nine Years</i> , p. 245. <sup>2</sup> Marwick, p. 225.	

<i>Antera Duke</i>	<i>Ntiero</i>
Traditional name for head of Ntiero House.	

<i>Henshaw Duke</i>	<i>Duke</i>
King Boco Boco in <i>Ekpe</i> , 1836. <sup>1</sup> Described as 'late' in 1846. <sup>2</sup> Offiong Henshaw Duke, presumably his successor, was King Boco Boco in 1846. <sup>3</sup> The Henshaw Duke of the 1862 treaty must be his successor, probably Lame Henshaw Duke. <sup>4</sup>	
<i>Sources:</i> <sup>1</sup> Waddell, <i>Journal</i> , vol. 1, p. 27, 15 Apr. 1846. <sup>2</sup> <i>UPCMR</i> 1 (Sept. 1846) 135. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, <i>Journal</i> , p. 31, 17 Apr. 1846. <sup>4</sup> <i>Ibid.</i> , vol. 10, p. 41, 11 Sept. 1854.	

<i>Duke Ephraim</i>	<i>Duke</i>
Brother of Great Duke Ephraim. <sup>1</sup> Claims Kingship on death of Archibong I. <sup>2</sup> (See Chapter 7, above.)	
<i>Sources:</i> <sup>1</sup> Beecroft to Malmesbury, 30 June 1852, FO84/886. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, <i>Twenty-Nine Years</i> , p. 497.	

NAME	WARD
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*Adam Duke**Duke*

Is King War, 1846.<sup>1</sup> Has considerable influence, 1849.<sup>2</sup> Dies 26 Feb. 1851.<sup>3</sup> Ephraim Adam Duke his son.<sup>4</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 258. <sup>2</sup> Marwick, p. 206. <sup>3</sup> Anderson, *Journal*, 1851, 26 Feb. 1851. <sup>4</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 30, 16 Apr. 1846.

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*Ephraim Duke**Duke*

Had been a leading man for twenty years when died a victim of rum, 28 Jan. 1870.<sup>1</sup> There is no other mention of this man although he appears on so many documents. It is probable that he was another brother of Great Duke Ephraim's, like Duke Ephraim who became King Duke. There was a junior brother who didn't hold office.<sup>2</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 467, cit. Anderson *Journal*, 28 Jan. 1870. <sup>2</sup> Chief Ene Ndem Ephraim Duke, 9 Dec. 1965.

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*Black Davis**Duke*

One of the slaves who dominated Duke House after the death of Great Duke.<sup>1</sup> Was of Etim Effiom family, Duke House.<sup>2</sup> Had top four *Ekpe* grades.<sup>3</sup> One of the wealthiest and most influential traders, dies 25 Jan. 1874.<sup>4</sup> (See Chapter 6.)

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Chief Thomas A. Effiom, M.O.N., 7 Dec. 1965. <sup>2</sup> Chief Nicholas Efa Ansa, Black Davis family, 17 Jan. 1966. <sup>3</sup> Black Davis House Book, 27 July 1874, p. 39. <sup>4</sup> Marwick, p. 525.

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*Yellow Duke**Duke*

One of principal native traders, 1862.<sup>1</sup> Is slave of Duke family, but rises above his master. Is 60-70. Fine House at Duke Town and 3,000 slaves.<sup>2</sup> King John Archibong almost subject to Yellow Duke, one of his head slaves.<sup>3</sup> Creditor of King Archibong, and favourite. One of the most dangerous men in river.<sup>4</sup> Buys Egbo privileges, 1861.<sup>5</sup> Original Yellow Duke escaped from a ship, and received his name because of his yellow complexion. He bought the slave called Namate who took his name and became the great Yellow Duke. Both belonged to Ekpo Offiong family of Duke House. The great Yellow Duke built a two-storey house, proving he was a full member of Egbo. He died in 1888.<sup>6</sup> Is a great trader.<sup>7</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 398, 12 Apr. 1862. <sup>2</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 5, (1 Oct. 1884), 307, cit. Wm. S. Peebles. <sup>3</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221. <sup>4</sup> Burton to Russell, 22 May 1862, No. 16, FO84/1176. <sup>5</sup> Black Davis House Book, 24 Nov. 1861, p. 38. <sup>6</sup> Chief Asuquo Okody, Head of Yellow Duke Family, 9 Dec. 1966. <sup>7</sup> Observations on letter to Lord Salisbury, from Mr. George Jos Turner, of Old Calabar, 25 Oct. 1887. Signed Hewett, 16 Sept. 1887, FO84/1828.

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## NAME

## WARD

*Bassey Henshaw Duke**Duke*

Is a slave of late Henshaw Duke, and oil trader.

*Source:* Hutchinson to Clarendon, 20 Feb. 1857, ST 8, FO84/1030.*George Duke**Duke*Led Henshaw Duke faction in farm war of 1852.<sup>1</sup> Vassal of Great Duke Ephraim, came from Aqua. Dies c. Oct. 1879.<sup>2</sup>*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Anderson to Goldie and Ross, 10 Dec. 1879, FO84/1654. <sup>2</sup> Marwick, p. 263, cit. Anderson, 9 Aug. 1852.*John Archibong**Archibong*Brother to King Archibong I.<sup>1</sup> Young Eyo detained on account of John Archibong's trade debts, 1855.<sup>2</sup> In debt to shipping, 1859.<sup>3</sup> Crowned Archibong II, 1859.<sup>4</sup> Dies 25 Aug. 1872.<sup>5</sup>*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Anderson, Journal, 21 Feb. 1852. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 11, p. 9, 21 Sept. 1855. <sup>3</sup> Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 2 Mar. 1859, ST 8, FO84/1087. <sup>4</sup> Marwick, p. 377. <sup>5</sup> Anderson to Miss M. Duncan, 2 Sept. 1872, in Anderson, Letters.*Adam Archibong**Archibong*Young Eyo detained on board ship for Adam and John Archibong's debts, 1855.<sup>1</sup> Is imprisoned on board ship for debt, 1859.<sup>2</sup> Half brother of King John Archibong (Archibong II).<sup>3</sup> Probable successor to Archibong II, is exercising power.<sup>4</sup> Dies 5 or 6 May 1879.<sup>5</sup>*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 11, p. 9, 21 Sept. 1855. <sup>2</sup> Duke Town Chiefs to Hutchinson, 1 Mar. 1859, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 21 Mar. 1859, ST 12, FO84/1087. <sup>3</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO84/1221. <sup>4</sup> Anderson to Revd. Dr. MacGill, 25 Mar. 1873, Anderson, Letters. <sup>5</sup> Marwick, p. 567.*Mr. Young**Eyamba*Secretary and brother of Eyamba V, 1846.<sup>1</sup> Brother of Antera Young.<sup>2</sup> Secretary of state to Archibong I, and claims to be 'King of all Blackmen'.<sup>3</sup> Is rival for throne on death of Archibong I, with Duke Ephraim. Calls himself Eyamba VI, 1852.<sup>4</sup> Is bad trader.<sup>5</sup> Trades on Sundays.<sup>6</sup> Made Eyamba or keeper of all the Egbos, 1851.<sup>7</sup> Dies 11 Feb. 1855.<sup>8</sup> Dies insolvent prior to 5 Jan. 1856.<sup>9</sup>*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 259. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 497. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392. <sup>6</sup> Marwick, p. 208. <sup>7</sup> Anderson, Journal, 1 Feb. 1851. <sup>8</sup> Marwick, p. 313. <sup>9</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 11, p. 36, 5 Jan. 1856.

## NAME

## WARD

*Antera Young**Eyamba*

Mr. Young's brother, 1847.<sup>1</sup> Is second man in Duke Town to Archibong II, 1859.<sup>2</sup> Is head of Egbo and candidate for Kingship on death of King Duke Ephraim, but too old to advance claim, 1859.<sup>3</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 337. <sup>2</sup> Marwick, p. 378. <sup>3</sup> Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 2 Mar. 1859, ST 8, FO84/1087.

*Bassey Offiong**Eyamba*

Duke Town Gentleman.<sup>1</sup> Attends Mission meetings in Eyamba V's yard, which implies he is of Eyamba family, 1849.<sup>2</sup> Is detained on board *Magistrate* for debts.<sup>3</sup> Abasi Offiong (Bassey Offiong) is one of the three main segments of Eyamba house. Bassey Offiong is the name of the head of this segment. Coco Bassey family is descended from Coco Bassey, a slave of Bassey Offiong.<sup>4</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 485. <sup>2</sup> Marwick, p. 206. <sup>3</sup> Anderson, Journal, 20 Jan. 1852. <sup>4</sup> John Coco Bassey, 11 Jan. 1966.

*Bassey Africa**Eyamba*

Slave of Bassey Offiong, who took over family when Bassey Offiong died.<sup>1</sup> Of Ibo origin, kept Coco Bassey as a boy.<sup>2</sup> Is oil trader, 1856.<sup>3</sup> His remains brought to town, Nov. 1867.<sup>4</sup> (See Bassey Offiong.)

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Regarding Otu Bassey Ofion, Coco Bassey Papers p. 8. <sup>2</sup> Generation of Coco Otu Bassey, as information for his children, Coco Bassey Papers, pp. 2-7. <sup>3</sup> Hutchinson to Clarendon, 1 Nov. 1856, No. 128, FO84/1001. <sup>4</sup> *UPCMR*, n.s. 11 (2 Mar. 1868), 38 cit. Anderson, Journal, 27 Nov. 1867.

*Enni Cobham**Cobham*

Brother of Antika Cobham.<sup>1</sup> Sits with King Eyo and Duke Ephraim to stop poison-bean ordeals on death of Archibong I.<sup>2</sup> Once fought with brother, Antika, in King's palaver house, so had slaves taken from him. But via his industry as trader has recovered position, 1846.<sup>3</sup> Boco Cobham his brother or son.<sup>4</sup> Shrewd active businessman sometimes called King of Cobham Town, Duke Town.<sup>5</sup> Dies 9 Nov. 1865, Chief of Cobham Town.<sup>6</sup> Dies 9 Nov. 1865, leaving sons Eyo, Andem, and John Antika.<sup>7</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 258. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, Journal, vol. 1, 2 May 1846. <sup>4</sup> *UPCMR* 1 (Oct. 1846), 154. <sup>5</sup> Marwick, pp. 205-6. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410. <sup>7</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 1 (1 Mar. 1866), 42-3, Mrs. Sutherland, 29 Nov. 1865.

## NAME

## WARD

*Egbo Jack**Cobham*

Is trader, as stands security for Eyamba V's debts.<sup>1</sup> Previously of Duke Town, now lives at Creek Town, 1849.<sup>2</sup> Has own palaver house at Creek Town.<sup>3</sup> Is head of Jack Town, one division of Creek Town.<sup>4</sup> Gives assent for abolition of Creek Town Sunday market, his assent being essential, 1850.<sup>5</sup> Faction fight with Ambos 1850, Jacks have own chief and palaver house.<sup>6</sup> Faction fight Jacks v. Ambos, 1852.<sup>7</sup> Dies insolvent.<sup>8</sup>  
Dies January 1855.<sup>9</sup>

A slave in Cobham (?).<sup>10</sup>

The information that he was a slave is in doubt, as it is not clear whether the same Egbo Jack was being referred to. If he was a slave, then his position as head of Jack family of Cobham in the early fifties makes him one of the earliest successful slaves.

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 274. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 505. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 506. <sup>5</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 25, 11 Aug. 1850. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 46, 2 Nov. 1850. <sup>7</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 507-8. <sup>8</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 11, p. 36, 5 Jan. 1856. <sup>9</sup> Marwick, p. 313. <sup>10</sup> Chief Joseph Henshaw, 18 Feb. 1966.

*Antica Ambo**Ambo*

Family head in Ambo described as Old Antica Ambo, 1855.<sup>1</sup> Antica Ambo imprisoned by Captain Davies, therefore an oil trader, 1856.<sup>2</sup> Antica Ambo and Tom Eyo are the two elders of Creek Town, 1858.<sup>3</sup> Old Antica Ambo and King Cameroons, Chiefs of Mbarakom.<sup>4</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 572. <sup>2</sup> King Eyo to Hutchinson, 25 July 1856, in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 28 July 1856, No. 97, FO84/1001. <sup>3</sup> *UPCMR* 14 (Mar., 1859), 50, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 23 Dec. 1858. <sup>4</sup> *UPCMR* (1 Mar. 1864), p. 39, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 21 Nov. 1863.

*King Cameroons**Ambo*

Real name Item Aret.<sup>1</sup> Ambo, and King Eyo's right-hand man.<sup>2</sup> Ambo.<sup>3</sup> One of Ambo Chiefs, 1850.<sup>4</sup> Old Antica Ambo and King Cameroons, chiefs of Mbarakom (Ambo), 1863.<sup>5</sup> Ikot Esien, inhabited by Mbara Kom, the part of Creek Town of which King Cameroons is now head, 1866.<sup>6</sup> Master of Peter King Cameroons, who takes over family on his death, although a slave.<sup>7</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 346. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 462-3. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 506. <sup>4</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 46, 2 Nov. 1850. <sup>5</sup> *UPCMR* 19 (1 Mar. 1864), 39, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 21 Nov. 1863. <sup>6</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 1 (Oct. 1866), 186, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 15 May 1866. <sup>7</sup> Petition of Prince James Eyamba V on behalf of Peter King Cameroons, to Earl Granville, 20 Sept. 1881. FO84/1612.

*Hogan Bassey**Ambo*

Eyamba V's attendant, 1846.<sup>1</sup> Of Ambo.<sup>2</sup> Of Ambo Town.<sup>3</sup> Negotiates in faction fight between Jacks and Ambos in Creek Town.<sup>4</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 263. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 508. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 46, 2 Nov. 1850. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

NAME	WARD
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*King Eyo Honesty II*

Eyo

Dances in Bunko dance.<sup>1</sup> Is king in Creek Town via his family ties and wealth.<sup>2</sup> Fire at his house causes £5,000-£10,000 damage, 1852.<sup>3</sup> Has commanding position in Egbo despite his claims to the contrary.<sup>4</sup> Dies suddenly, 3 Dec. 1858.<sup>5</sup> (See chapter 7.)

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 357. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 46, 2 Nov. 1850. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 499. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 609. <sup>5</sup> Marwick, p. 376.

*Tom Eyo*

Eyo

Is King of Calabar after Eyo I, and before Eyo II.<sup>1</sup> Is King Bunko (Ebunko), 1847.<sup>2</sup> Is King Eyo's eldest brother.<sup>3</sup> Father Tom, King's eldest brother, and head of Honesty family properly. Has three sons, eldest Young Tom Eyo, next Eyo Tom Eyo, last Eyo Eyo Tom.<sup>4</sup> Becomes Eyo IV.<sup>5</sup> Tom Eyo too good as King, crowned by Burton 7 May, 1862.<sup>6</sup> Is King of Creek Town, and fears bloodmen, 1864.<sup>7</sup> Dies night 21-2 Mar. 1865.<sup>8</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 7, p. 67, 6 Jan. 1850. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 357. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428. <sup>4</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 11, p. 88, 1 Sept. 1856. <sup>5</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 651. <sup>6</sup> Burton to Russell, 15 Apr. 1864, FO 84/1221. <sup>7</sup> *UPCMR* 19 (1 Feb. 1864), 245. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 20 (1 July 1865), 135.

*John Eyo*

Eyo

Is Eyo II's brother.<sup>1</sup> Crowned Eyo V, 9 June 1865.<sup>2</sup> Is good king, trying to stop barbarous customs.<sup>3</sup> Is brother of Doctor Eyo.<sup>4</sup> Dies 11 June 1868, succeeded by Dr. Eyo.<sup>5</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 261. <sup>2</sup> *UPCMR* 20 (1 Nov. 1865), 205-6, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 9 June 1865. <sup>3</sup> Livingstone to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1867, No. 38, FO84/1277. <sup>4</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 11 (Sept. 1868), 170-1, cit. S. H. Edgerley, 22 June 1868. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

*Doctor Eyo*

Eyo

King Eyo II's brother, and father-in-law to Young Eyo.<sup>1</sup> King Eyo II's brother.<sup>2</sup>

Ibok Eyo (Dr. Eyo) to succeed Eyo V, is brother of Eyo V.<sup>3</sup> Unanimously elected King on death of Eyo V. Crowned by Wilson, 3 Feb. 1869.<sup>4</sup> Talks of desire of Creek Town people to put themselves under protection of *Ndem Efik* again, now kept at Duke Town. Declares *Ndem Efik* wouldn't allow them twin mothers and their babies.<sup>5</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years*, p. 609. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 35, 21 Sept. 1850. <sup>3</sup> *UPCMR* n.s. 11 (Sept. 1868), p. 171, cit. S. H. Edgerley, 22 June 1868. <sup>4</sup> Wilson to Foreign Secretary, 23 Feb. 1869, No. 8, FO84/1308. <sup>5</sup> *UPCMR* n.s., vol. 3, p. 479, cit. Goldie's *Journal*, 1 May 1871.

NAME	WARD
<p><i>Thomas Hogan</i> Pilot for ships coming up river.<sup>1</sup> Is messenger from King Archibong on Waddell's Umon trip, 1851.<sup>2</sup> Pilot, chief interpreter, and speaker for Duke Town, in <i>Ekpe</i>-Mission palaver.<sup>3</sup> Dies 4 August 1861, local pilot, constant attender at public worship, very intelligent, pro-mission in native councils, not very wealthy, but his intelligence gives him respect amongst Gentlemen of Duke Town.<sup>4</sup> Probably of Eyamba family, as Tom Hogan (probably his son) and Young Egbo Young Hogan, son of his relation Egbo Young Hogan, both signed Prince James Eyamba V's letter to Hewett, protesting that King Duke was unacceptable. All the names on the letter appear to be of Eyamba ward.<sup>5</sup> He signed his own name on most of the treaties. Thomas Hogan was probably of Eyamba family, and the fact he was pilot and interpreter, makes it possible that he was a slave. But there is no evidence to prove this to date.</p> <p>Sources: <sup>1</sup> Waddell, <i>Twenty-Nine Years</i>, p. 485. Waddell, <i>Journal</i>, vol. 7, p. 40, 17 Nov. 1849. <sup>2</sup> Waddell, <i>Twenty-Nine Years</i>, p. 463. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, <i>Journal</i>, vol. 11, p. 75, 14 June 1856. <sup>4</sup> Marwick, pp. 395-6. <sup>5</sup> Prince James Eyamba V and others to Consul Hewett, 24 June 1881, No. 4, p. 16, FO403/18.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Egbo Young Hogan</i> Signs document allowing Yellow Duke negro bells, therefore is a member of the upper grades of <i>Ekpe</i>.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Source: Black Davis House Book, 24 Nov. 1861, p. 38.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Tobby Tom</i> No information.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Efong Ludianah</i> No information except that the <i>Ludianah</i> was a ship which visited Old Calabar.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Ephraim Henshaw Duke</i> No information.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Tom Offiong</i> No information.</p>	Unknown
<p><i>Egbo Tom</i> Gives Anderson a mat as a present when he leaves Calabar, is from Duke Town.<sup>1</sup> Is a trader.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Sources: <sup>1</sup> Anderson, <i>Journal</i>, 12 May 1851. <sup>2</sup> Hutchinson to S. J. Hill, 25 May 1858, Inc. 6, in Hutchinson to Malmesbury, 25 May 1858, ST 23, FO84/1061.</p>	Unknown

NAME	WARD
<i>John Ephraim</i> No information.	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>John Duke</i> Imprisoned on <i>Princess Royal</i> <sup>1</sup> (so a trader). <i>Source: Anderson, Journal, 10 Aug. 1852.</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>King War</i> No information.	<i>Unknown</i>

## Appendix 4

### *Sources to Chart 7: List of Treaties and Agreements signed by Duke Town Chiefs, 1875–1884.*

1. Agreement between Henshaw Town and Duke Town, 28 Sept. 1875, in Hartley to Derby, 30 Oct. 1875, No. 46, FO84/1418.
2. Agreement between Henshaw Town and Duke Town, 6 Sept. 1878 (not enclosed in anything), FO84/1508.
3. Agreement on Sacrifices, Trade, and Commerce, 1878. 6 Sept. 1878 (not enclosed in anything), FO84/1508.
4. Treaty with Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar, 10 Sept. 1884, Inc. 16 in No. 13: p. 27, FO403/47.

*Note:* Names mentioned only once have been omitted from *Chart*.

### *Names omitted from Chart 7, 1875–1884*

<i>Treaties or agreements where names appeared</i>	<i>Treaties or agreements where names appeared</i>		
Lord Archibong	1	Big Adam Duke	3
Effiong Otu (Old Town)	1	A. Eyamba	3
Egbo Young Etam	1	Ene Black Davis	3
Prince Samuel Eyamba	1	Aduk Ephraim Duke	3
Egbo King Archibong II	2	Ephraim Lewis	3
Eyo Ita	3	Eshien Etem Basseff Offiong	3
Edem Ephraim Adam	3	Offiong Effiono Imah	4
Ephraim Eyo Duke	3	P. Ejro Eyamba	4
Joseph George Duke	3	Prince Egbo Archibong	4
Archibong Henshaw Duke	3	Hogan Archibong	4
Egbo King Archibong	3	John Anderson	4

*Personal Details of Signatories*

NAME	WARD
<i>George Duke</i>	<i>Duke</i>
See 1842-62 list (page 156).	

*Henshaw Duke**Duke*

Is interesting and good-looking lame boy of about 16, (1846-7).<sup>1</sup> Is oil trader.<sup>2</sup> Presumably Henshaw Duke, son of Henshaw Duke (see 1842-62 list).<sup>3</sup> Egbo's confiscated after palaver with Cuthbertson.<sup>4</sup> Is oil trader.<sup>5</sup> In dispute with Prince Archibong III, (Archibong Edem), over Ekanem Eflanga's property.<sup>6</sup> In dispute with Archibong Edem.<sup>7</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> *UPCMR* 2 (Aug. 1847), p. 122, Revd. Wm. Jameson. <sup>2</sup> Calvert to Beecroft, undated in Beecroft to Malmesbury, 28 June 1852, FO84/886. <sup>3</sup> Waddell, *Journal*, vol. 10, p. 41, 11 Sept. 1854. <sup>4</sup> Guarantee, Eyo Honesty and Duke Ephraim, 20 Sept. 1856, Inc. 10 in Hutchinson to Clarendon, 23 Sept. 1856, No. 115, FO84/1001. <sup>5</sup> Trust due by Duke Town to Couper Scott & Co., Hulk Queen of England, on a/c Mr. Johns, 12 Nov. 1877, Calprof Ibadan 5/1. <sup>6</sup> Harold G. White to Prince Archibong III, 9 July 1885, Calprof Ibadan 4/2. <sup>7</sup> Hewett to Salisbury, 4 Sept. 1885, Africa, FO84/1701.

*Yellow Duke**Duke*

See 1842-62 list (page 155).

*Prince Duke**Duke*

Named Orok.<sup>1</sup> Is trader.<sup>2</sup> Claims George Duke's property on his death, as he was a slave or vassal.<sup>3</sup> Crowned King 17 Apr. 1880.<sup>4</sup> Acting King and head of Duke House, at variance with Eyamba House.<sup>5</sup> Crowned 2nd time, 8 Aug. 1882.<sup>6</sup> Is Juju high priest.<sup>7</sup> Not Christian. Comes to Consulate nude except for hat.<sup>8</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 578. <sup>2</sup> Trust due by Duke Town to Couper Scott & Co., Hulk Queen of England, on a/c Mr. Johns, 12 Nov. 1877, Calprof Ibadan 5/1. <sup>3</sup> Wm. Anderson to Goldie and Ross, 10 Dec. 1879, FO84/1654. <sup>4</sup> Marwick, p. 573. <sup>5</sup> Hewett to Granville, 16 Feb. 1882 FO84/1617. <sup>6</sup> Hewett to Granville, 14 Aug. 1882, ST 13, FO84/1617. <sup>7</sup> Turner to Salisbury, 25 Oct. 1887, No. 249, p. 197, FO403/73. <sup>8</sup> Report on British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, Johnston, in Johnston to Foreign Office, 1 Dec. 1888. Section F, Ethnology.

*Hogan Ironbar**Duke*

Presumably son of Ironbar.<sup>1</sup> Banished from Hulks.<sup>2</sup> Ironbar family in Duke House.<sup>3</sup> Trader.<sup>4</sup>

*Sources:* <sup>1</sup> See Chapter 6, p. 97. <sup>2</sup> Hogan Ironbar to White, Chairman of Court of Equity, 25 Sept. 1876, Calprof Ibadan 3/2. <sup>3</sup> Efiom Edem Ironbar, 15 Jan. 1966. <sup>4</sup> Trust Due by Duke Town to Couper Scott & Co., Hulk Queen of England, on a/c Mr. Johns, 12 Nov. 1877, Calprof Ibadan 5/1.

## NAME

## WARD

*Adam Ironbar*

Duke

Probably son of Ironbar and brother of Hogan Ironbar, see Hogan Ironbar. Oil Trader.<sup>1</sup> Ironbar family in Duke.<sup>2</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Adam Ironbar to Gillis, Chairman of Court of Equity, 19 Apr. 1883, Calprof Ibadan 3/2. <sup>2</sup> Efiom Edem Ironbar, 15 Jan. 1966.

*Archibong III*

Archibong

See Adam Archibong on 1842-62 lists (p. 156).

*Prince Archibong II*

Archibong

Presumably son of Archibong II, as son of Archibong III was Prince Archibong III. No other evidence.

*Prince Archibong III*

Archibong

Is Asihon Edem III, wealthy, powerful, headstrong, eldest son of last King of Calabar (Archibong III). Would be serious contender for crown if it were not elective.<sup>1</sup> Seizes Etim Bassy Henshaw although he was in company of European, this being contrary to Egbo law. Had previously seized some Cobham chiefs. Is of Archibong House.<sup>2</sup> Is beyond restraint.<sup>3</sup> His people in dispute with Duke people about Egbo Archibong's house on disputed ground.<sup>4</sup> King Duke to rebuild Archibong Edem's places destroyed or compensate him.<sup>5</sup> Unsatisfactory settlement of local war so it threatens again.<sup>6</sup> Keeps Okon Ma in chains, claiming him as slave.<sup>7</sup> His people leave Calabar for Rio del Rey.<sup>8</sup> Trader.<sup>9</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> George Watts to ?, 6 Feb. 1882, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 9. <sup>2</sup> Hewett to Granville, 16 Feb. 1882, ST2, FO84/1617. <sup>3</sup> Hewett to Granville, 17 Feb. 1882, ST5, FO84/1617. <sup>4</sup> James Munro, Chairman of Court of Equity, 19 Jan. 1885, Inc. 1 in Act. Con. White to Granville, 21 Jan. 1885, No. 4, Africa, FO84/1701. <sup>5</sup> Act. Consuls Decision *re* recent disturbances in Calabar, Act. Consul Harold G. White, (undated) (April 1885), Calprof Ibadan 5/8, vol. 11. <sup>6</sup> Prince Archibong III, to White, 13 Mar. 1885, Calprof Ibadan 4/1 vol. 10. <sup>7</sup> Thomas to White, 28 July 1885, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 10. <sup>8</sup> Johnston to Consul, 22 Nov. 1886, Calprof Ibadan 4/1, vol. 10. <sup>9</sup> Notice, 13 Apr. 1888, signed Johnston, in Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881.

*James Ephraim Adam*

Archibong

Consul burns Ephraim Adam's house for ill treatment of one of his servants by one of Ephraim Adam's men. Archibongs leave town except Archibong Edem.

Source: Journal of Commerce, 30 May, 1891, Book of Newspaper Cuttings, 1881-96, John Holt Papers.

NAME	WARD
<i>Prince James Eyamba V</i>	<i>Eyamba</i>
<p>Old Mission scholar, becomes Chief minister on death of Archibong II. Archibong III probable successor, 1872.<sup>1</sup> Elder and superintendent of Sabbath school, conducts the Efik services.<sup>2</sup> 24 Dec. 1881, withdraws from Church when Ross withdraws.<sup>3</sup> Is trader.<sup>4</sup> Head of Eyamba House, at difference with Duke House.<sup>5</sup> Threatens to withdraw from Calabar and go elsewhere, because Prince Duke, King, is licentious and superstitious.<sup>6</sup> Is prohibited from trading, 1888.<sup>7</sup> Was Prince Eyamba V, as son of Eyamba V.</p>	
<p><i>Sources:</i> <sup>1</sup> Marwick, p. 507. <sup>2</sup> <i>Ibid.</i>, p. 577. <sup>3</sup> <i>Ibid.</i>, p. 581. <sup>4</sup> Balance of Trust due Couper Scott &amp; Co., 1879, John Holt papers, 12/7. <sup>5</sup> Hewett to Granville, 16 Feb. 1882, ST 2, FO84/1617. <sup>6</sup> Hewett to Granville, 17 Feb. 1882, ST 5, FO84/1617. <sup>7</sup> Notice, 13 Apr. 1888, signed Johnston, in Hewett to Salisbury, 20 June 1888, No. 25, FO84/1881.</p>	
<i>Joseph Eyamba</i>	<i>Eyamba</i>
<p>Signs himself Joseph Eyamba V on letter from Prince James Eyamba V to Hewett declaring that King Duke is not acceptable. Hence he must be another son of King Eyamba V.</p>	
<p><i>Source:</i> Prince James Eyamba V etc. to Consul Hewett, 24 June 1881, No. 4, p. 16, FO403/18.</p>	
<i>Effiong Efiwatt</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<p>Summons all Chiefs of Duke Town to elect King, 1882, as is oldest of chiefs.</p>	
<p><i>Source:</i> Hewett to Granville, 14 Aug. 1882, ST 13, FO84/1617.</p>	
<i>Eyo E. Ndem</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<p>No information.</p>	
<i>Henshaw Toby</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<p>Is trader.</p>	
<p><i>Source:</i> Balance of Trust due Couper Scott &amp; Co., 1879, 25 Nov. 1879, Inc. in Statement of Goods and Trust due at Old Calabar, 12 Feb. 1880, John Holt Papers, 12/7.</p>	

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