

Edoid Nation of Nigeria, One Nation in Diversities:

Historic Relations and Future Challenges

A BOOK

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(Unedited Version)

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“United we stand, divided we fall” – Unknown

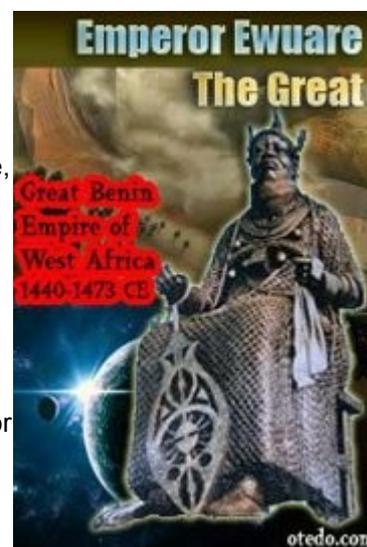
“The more united a people become the more powerful they are.”--unknown

INTRODUCTION:

According to internet Dictionary, there are more than 25 Edoid group of dialects present today in southern Nigeria. Edoid is taken from word Edo. Edo is what the Ancient Benin people spoke and called themselves as stated by Ben-Amos, Paula on Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1996. quote:

"Edo" is the name that the people of the Ancient Benin Kingdom give to themselves, their language, and their capital city and kingdom. Renowned for their art of brass and ivory and for their complex political organization, the Edo Kingdom of Benin is one of the best known of the pre-colonial kingdoms on the Guinea Coast of West Africa. From at least the fifteenth century, the Benin Empire held varying degrees of authority over neighbouring peoples, including the western Igbo, north-eastern Yoruba, and various related Edo-speaking groups. In 1897 British-colonial forces conquered the kingdom and made it part of the Niger Protectorate. Today it is incorporated into the modern state of Nigeria.

Edoid is derived from Edo and Edo could mean Benin in the English correlation term for Edo(Edo grammar) in some cases. The popularly known Benin Empire is Edo or Edoid Empire, which was one great nation but in diversities. Edo, in other words, is also seen as a generic name given to a group of people who have a common ancestor and have a common language, with some different variants, depending on the distance between the group and the " tap root, " residing in and around the present day Benin City. A land, political state, people, race, language and the principal city called Edo. On a reference note by Avenbuan Omo Omwenyike in an internet conversation: The origin of the two names [Benin and Edo] have no connection in language or history. Ile-Ibinu (later corrupt by the British as Benin) was a royal proclamation over Igodomigodo by Prince Oranmiyan prior to leaving the Great Idu Kingdom in 1200AD to found Oyo Empire while Edo was royal proclamation by Oba Ewuare the Great over Ile-Ibinu in 1400AD. These was earlier stated by Egharevba, that it was Oba Ewuare Ne ogidigan (The great), about 1440 A.D to 1473 A.D, who changed the name of the country to Edo after his deified (servant) friend. Prior to this, the land had been called the land of Igodomigodo. Thus, the City has been known afterwards as Edo ne ẹvbo ahirre (Edo the City of love) because through love Edo (the servant friend) was able to save Ewuare from a sudden death.



According to Osamuyimen Stewart narrative on his article "Nigeria: The Edo of Benin", Benin City is called Edo by its inhabitants and in certain contexts individuals from all parts of the kingdom will refer to themselves as ovbiedo (child of Edo). Except when speaking English, no Edo person ever refers to himself as "Benin" or "Bini". These are non-Edo words of doubtful origin used by Europeans as an adjective and for the dominant people of the Edo kingdom and their language. Perhaps, this can be linked to the pre-colonial practice of naming areas after major geographic landmarks, in this case the Bight of Benin. It is on record that in 1472, the Portuguese captain Ruy de Siqueira brought a sailing ship as far as the Bight of Benin under the reign of Oba Ewuare. Egharevba provides further confirmation that Europeans named areas after major geographic landmarks. According to him, the label Lagos (the popular capital City of Nigeria) can be traced to the Portuguese because of its proximity to the lagoon. It has been suggested that "Benin" or "Bini" derive from the Yoruba phrase Ile-ibinu (land of vexation) which was purportedly uttered by Prince Oranmiyan declaring the fundamental fact that "only an Edo prince can rule over Edo land." This Yoruba-based etymology of "Benin" or "Bini" is doubtful since there is no evidence indicating that these words already occur in

Portuguese writings about Edo dating back to the fifteenth century. According to Crowder, "unfortunately little is known about the early history of Oyo, for there was no written language, unlike Benin which was first visited by Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century." Not until the end of the seventeenth century are there any definite dates for the history of Oyo which is no doubt linked to the later contact with the Europeans. The different close neighbors refer to the Edos by different names. For example, the Urhobos call the Edos ikhuorAka (the people of Aka), the Ikas (Agbor) use the label ndi-Iduu (the people of Iduu). Along this line of reasoning, the Yoruba phrase Ile-ibinu, later corrupted to Ubinu, may be Yoruba's label for the Edos in light of the constant warfare against the Oyo empire by different Edo kings, though the explanation is particularly striking because the Yorubas (for example, the Ekitis) refer to the Edo as Ado and not Ubinu.

The Benin Empire was an independent country who had an embassy establish with Europe as stated in an extract from Thomas Hodgkins, *Nigerian Perspectives*, London, 1975, p.125" :

From Ruy de Pina, *Chronica del Rey Dom Joao II, 1481-1495* (first published in 1792) Kap 24. *Atlantida* 1950, English translation. "The king of Beny (Benin) sent as ambassador to the king a negro, one of his captains from habouring place by the sea, which is called ugato (Ughoton), because he desired to learn about these lands, the arrival of people from them in his country being regarded as a novelty. This ambassador was a man of good speech and natural wisdom. Great feast were held in his honour, and he was shown many of the good things of these kingdoms. He returned to his land in a ship of the king's, who at his departure made him a gift of rich clothes for himself and his wife: and through him he sent a rich present to the king of such things he understood he would greatly prize. Moreover, he sent holy and most catholic advisers with praise worthy admonitions for the faith to administer a stern rebuke about the heresies and great idolatries and fethishes which the negroes practice in their land.

– *In an extract from Dr Chief Jacob Egharevba:*

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"Benin Empire or Benin Kingdom was an independent Country or Nation before the British illegally invaded us in 1897 as we had traded with the Portuguese for 400 years before the invasion. We had Ambassadors in Portugal and Brazil at the time we traded with the Portuguese and had a National flag. Our King (OBA) did not sign any agreement with the British to be a part of the Country called Nigeria which they created .Our King did not even touch the pen and paper with which the agreement was written , and his name was wrongly spelt with an X marked after his name by the British which was pure crime in any court of law .The British Colonial Officials involved in forging that X as a mark supposed to have been signrd by our king for consent were the fathers and mothers of ' IDENTITY FRAUD '. Our land today has been given to two other Nigerian States by Nigerian Presidents without our consent or that of our King(OBA) .This would be a matter for the courts at national or international levels in future litigations .No African tribe has ever defeated us in any war as we were the masters of our Empire .We defeated a Muslim army in Idah War (1515 -1516) which stopped Islam advancing South . The Ga tribe in Ghana migrated from Edoland in 1300. It was Benin Kingdom that founded the Ports of Lagos and Badagry . Historical record stated that the influence of Benin Kingdom extended west as far as Sierra Leone and south to the Congo river"

These can also be observed from many European visitors comments and memos. "Lourenco Pinto, who was the captain of a Portuguese ship that carried missionary to Warri in August 1619, sent a note to the Sacra Congregazione the instance of Father Montelcone. According to the testimony of this captain, Great Benin, where the King resides, is larger than Lisbon, all the streets run straight and as far as the eyes can see. The

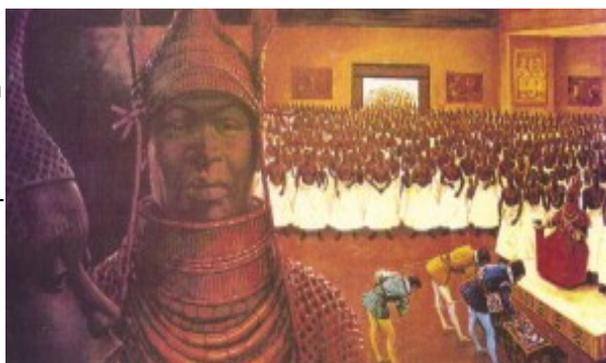
houses are large, especially that of the king which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown and the people live in such security that they have no door to their houses"

However, understanding fundamental principles of the Edoid group of race means understanding the Benin(Edo) language, people history and culture. Before 1897 and the birth of Nigeria with diverse language and dialects today, the Edoid – Benin Kingdom was one great nation, except for a few that have mixed up with migrants from other kingdoms like the Igbos, Ashanti, Oyo and mid Igbos. It should be well noted that Edoid dialects of today have their deep roots and affiliation in the Benin-Edo language, mainly spoken in southern part of Edo state. Roger Westcott, Professor Emeritus, Drew University stated in his article "Bini names in Nigeria and Georgia" that the Edoid language invariably the Bini language belongs to the most wide-spread of the five great language families of Africa. Variably known as Niger-Congo or Congo-Kordofanian, contains in most of the languages of coastal West Africa as well as all the Bantu languages of eastern and southern Africa, including Swahili.

ORIGIN OF THE EDOID RACE:

The history of ancient Benin Kingdom and its transformation into an Empire is a story of about 2,300 years before any contact was made with Europeans. The pre-contact phase saw flourishing development in art, science, administration, technology, political organization, architecture, astronomy, town planning and indigenous medicine amongst others. Benin Kingdom is purely an African initiative whose growth was not stimulated by external forces. A Dutch map of 1705 and reprinted in 1907 in English by Sir Alfred Jones KCMG, the name Benin is shown to designate what today may be described as Nigeria South of the Niger and Benue. Other contemporary states on the map include Melli, Grain Coast, Gold coast, Slave Coast and immediately to the West of the Niger only Great Benin and Warri (awyi) are marked. It is instructive to note that various ethnic groups under the ambit of the Benin Empire like the Republic of Dahomey decided to change her name in 1975 to the Republic of Benin. The Itsekiri of Warri, the Igbo of Onitsha and others trace their own royal lineage to Benin. The Kalabari, Ijaw of Degema as well as the Epie-Atissa group in Yenagoa trace their origin to Benin (DR. O. J. EBOREIME Ph.D).

Relating to own story of the ancient Benin by some prominent traditional figures: Many centuries ago, at the time when Benin was called Igodomingodo, that geographical area now known as Benin, was the hub of a conglomeration of little towns that developed or spread into most of the areas of modern Bendel State, now further represented by South South geo political zone of Nigeria. Throughout that period, Igodomingodo made steady progress especially in the areas of spiritual, philosophical and administrative development. Its efforts were largely concentrated on the arrangement of human order so that by the time Europeans made contact with the people of Benin in the 15th century, they had already established an administrative system which, till this day, baffled the Europeans and earned for the Capital of this "far flung" African country, the appellation "City". The nucleus of this great civilization was the monarchy which the Binis perfected around the 11th century when, after a series of experimentation with the Ogiso, and some of the past-Ogiso Obas, they introduced a monarchical system that is based on the principle of primogeniture, beginning with Ewuakpe, about 1712 A. D. From the days of Owodo until now, the system of direct



ascension has endured making the Benin Royal family one of the oldest families in Africa. It's history spans more than 2000 years. Benin City remains today as conservative as it ever was. Shifting slowly, sometimes uneasily, under the pressures or demands of modernity, Benin recognizes that all living organisms (including states and cities) change. That change has reduced to mere historical fact the political influence Benin exercised over places such as Eko (Lagos) which she founded at the time of Oba Orhogbua (about 1550 A.D.) Ghana, Dahomey, both across the borders of modern Nigeria; Onitsha on the Niger and many other places such as Asaba, Agbor, Issele-Uku, Warri, Idah etc. Many of these towns actually owe their corporate existence to Benin. Since inter-action between African kingdoms began around the 5th century, Benin found herself in a unique geographic position by occupying mid-way between what the early Europeans referred to as the "Yoruba" and the "Ibo" territory.

On the other hand, the origin of the Edoid race - the ancient Benins by Mike Jimoh on his article "Benin And His Mystique" narrated that the exodus of the migrations from Egypt was followed by a mass movement of a dark-skinned people not recorded anywhere in the Holy Bible. But descendants of the migrants of yore still remember their story today. They were not slaves, nor were they unduly oppressed under the Pharaohs. Their departure was voluntary. And nobody tried to stop them when they decided to leave. Thus began the great trek of the founders of what would become Benin kingdom. Led by a few intrepid ones dab hands in magic and mysticism inclusive – the band of migrants braved it down the desert, across mountains and great rivers, through the vast savannah, overcoming obstacles along the way, fending off marauders or forming alliances with local tribes until they reached the jungly forests of Benin where they eventually settled. The wayfarers from Egypt immediately made themselves at home, as shipwrecked sailors suddenly discovering an island. The first settlers were organized into family systems called Okhaigbe whereby the head of each family decided on domestic matters. Of course, the land they settled was fertile enough for subsistence agriculture and so many of the new arrivals took to farming. There were hunters as well. As the population increased over time, it became necessary for authority to be vested in one man. This was the beginning of the Ogiso dynasty – derived from Ogie n' oriso (king in heaven or king from the sky). The first Ogiso was Obagodo while the last, Owodo, reigned until the current obaship system started with the ascension of Oba Eweka 1 in about the year 1200 when the monarchical system of government began proper in the ancient city. On the throne now since Eweka 1 is the 38th king, Oba Erediauwa (formerly Prince Solomon Igbinogodua Aisiokuoba Akenzua), crowned on March 25, 1979. In-between have been great obas such as Ewedo, Oguola, Ezoti, Esigie, Akenzae, Akengbedo, Akenzua 1, Adolo, Ovoramwen, Eweka 11, Akenzua 11, and many more. All of them were sired of royal blood, thus conferring on the ancient city an authentic monarchy as well as an empire that has endured for centuries compared to others before or after it.

Today, Amongst group of dialects and clans of the Edoid (Ancient Benin) race mostly seen in present Edo-Delta, Rivers and part of Ondo State are the Afemais known as Ivbiosakon by those living in and around Benin City to the north of Ishan/Esan clan, Akoko-Edos based in Igarra, Ibillo and its environs to the north of Afemais, The Owans-Oras occupying Eme, Sabogida-Ora, Afuze, etc. Uhobe and Ifon in Ondo State, Ekas-to East of Benin. A sizeable chunk of the Edo speaking people flow across River Niger and ending at Onitsha, Ika, Igbanke, Isoko, Urhobo, Itsekiris and about 70% percent of western Izon (Ijaws) in Ndegeni and its environs, A sizeable chunk of the Edos is found in River States and Balyesa States e.g. aduge in kwara state, Degema, Iga, Atala, Usokun, Ediro, Inedua, Ogua in rivers state, Ivhimion, Emai, luleha, Epie, Atissa, Eruwa, Erohwa, Erakwa, Arokwa, Ekpon, Ghotuo, Ikpeshi, Ndokwa, Ivbie, Okpela, Arhe, Iyayu called Idoani, Okpamheri, Okpe, Ososo, Sasaru-Enwan, Uhami, Ukue-ehuen, Uneme, Urhobo, Uvbie, Yekhee, Auchi, Uzairue, south Ibie, Uwepa-uwano (weppa wano), Avianwu (fugar), Aviele, Ivhiadaobi, Izon, Western Ijaws. In Ogba land, Diobu, Port Harcourt and a sizeable now Yorubanised in Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos and Ogun States. There are many Edos in Ekiti land, Idoani, Idanre etc going through life in Nigeria with Yoruba names. Acculturation taking place. You are either a Yoruba man or you go nowhere, according to Prof. Iyi Eweka

HISTORIC RELATIONS OF SOME OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS SOUTHERN NIGERIA

Before I continue, will like to use Chris Okafor' quote on his article "The Origin of Ogwashi-Uku, Anioma, and The rest of Delta Ibos:

"What really is the point of trying to teach anything to anybody?' This question seemed to provoke a murmur of sympathetic approval from up and down the table. 'What I mean is that if you really want to understand something, the best way is to try and explain it to someone else. That forces you to sort it out in your mind. And the more slow and dim-witted your pupil, the more you have to break things down into more and more simple ideas. And that's really the essence of programming. By the time you've sorted out a complicated idea into little steps that even a stupid machine can deal with, you've learned something about it yourself.' - Douglas Adams, Dirk Gently's Holistic Agency Detector".

Chris Okafor continued that the chronological history of early settlements in Ogwashi-Uku can authoritatively portray the following facts that the Ikelike people from the Bini kingdom were the first to settle in Ogwashi-Uku (see Ben Nwabua, Ogwash-uku Kingdom, 1000 Years of Traditional Democracy and Cultural Life, 950-1914). Both traditional and empirical sources gives credence that Ikelike people were the first set of immigrants to settle in the present Ogwashi-Uku as against the notion that Adaigbo who purportedly came from Nri in present Anambra State today is the founder of Ogwashi-Uku. So far, no counter claim has been made on this. According to Ogwashi-Uku intelligence report by Mr. J.E Hull, the then Assistant District Officer dated on the 9th of April 1936, the Ikelike people from all indications migrated from Benin to settle where they are found themselves today, because of a reign of wanton persecution of subjects by the then Benin Monarch, Oba Eweka 11. The story further goes that at the head was Odigie Ikelike with his younger brother Ado who later founded Adonta, a relatively small village close to Azungwu in Ogwashi-uku today. The Ikelike migrants were said to be politically averse and could not, therefore evolve an orderly method of governance even though there were small in number. Jull's report further went on to point out that because of such indisposition towards an effective means of governing themselves, it cost them the political leadership they were first to settle in. Rather, Adaigbo, the prince from Nri later came, controlled the situation and imposed leadership based on Igbo customs and tradition on them and what later became Ogwshi-Uku kingdom. Adaigbo's imposed of republican system, however, later gave way to the hereditary system of the Benins .

Oba Ewuare and Ozolua is traditionally regarded as the gladiators, ancestral fathers and founder of most towns and villages in the midwestern region of Nigeria during their reign as Oba. They fought these wars as mater plan of re-uniting the great Edo people and families who were dispatched and scatered away from the kingdom with many emigrations during ogiso period and the reign of the previous political leaders who were in one way or the other making strict policies and strong laws. Most of these emigrations were due to family problems, communal disagreements, political, economic and marital factors.

The Benin Empire was one country or nation in diversities. Prof Iyi Eweka's narrated that most of the the chieftancy groups that was responsible for the Oba's well being at a time, were dominated by Ishan/Esan descendants.

The Ivbiosakon (Afemais) were the dental surgeon of the palace. That is the origin of the name Ivbiosakon. Oba Esigie assigned that function to them in the c1500's. The Owan/Ora people were the propitiators of the physical earth for the Oba of Benin. It was their responsibility to prevent things like earthquake, hurricanes,

tornadoes, volcanoes and anything associated with geological disturbance to occur in Benin. In short, they were the geologists and weathermen of their day, forecasting and preventing physical calamities. Those we call Benins today, were the traditional bureaucratic administrators and military generals. The Izons (Ijaws) were the "Ozigue" -Sailors. The Ekas were farmers. They were in charge of the royal farms. The Ibos across the Niger call the Edos, Idu, the name of the progenitor of Edo race, the Yorubas call us Ado, which is a corruption of the word Edo. However, the Itsekiris, another sub group in the Edo clans call us Ubini. Tradition asserts that it is derived from Ile-ibinu, which is descriptive of the exasperation and frustration encountered in Benin City, by Prince Oranmiyan of Ile-ife. A further research may prove that, it was the Itsekiris who gave that name, to the people living in and around Benin City. The Itsekiris told the white man of the powerful overlord living in Igodomigodo. It was the Itsekiris who told the Whiteman that the name of the tribe of this powerful king was Ubini a term which Whiteman corruptly wrote down as Benin. For example, the name of the eldest daughter of Oba Osewende, the mother of the Osulas and the Aiwerioghene is today known as Aghayubini. A closer examination of that name would reveal that the name is an Itsekhiri phrase-" The Ubini Lady or woman " i.e. the woman from Benin. Aghayubini was a very wealthy trader among the Itsekiris, from whence she got the money she used, is getting the throne for her brother, who became Oba Adolo. An Itsekhiri descriptive phrase has simply over powered her original Edo name, to the extent that nobody knows anything about it now. The ancient Edo/Benin Empire covered the whole of Bendel, parts of Bayelsa State. The second son of the Enogie of Brass, popularly known as "Iyase ne ohenmwun" became the Iyase of Benin under Oba Osewende. Iyase Ohenmwun is the ancestor of the Otokitis, the Okeaya-Inneh and the Aiwerioghene of Benin today. He went further to explain that The Edoid race covers the Igbo-speaking areas of Delta State stretching to Onitsha. That the actual title of the Obi of Onitsha is Aigboghidi. The historical Chief Agho Obaseki of Oba Ovoranmwun era and later the Iyase of Benin under Oba Eweka II, was a descendant of the second son of Enogie of Nsukwa now in Delta State. It extended to the whole of Ondo State, parts of Ekiti and Ogun State and the whole of Lagos State including Badagry. It stretched to southern Dahomey (Republic of Benin) and on to the coast of Togo and Ghana.

Again, the Benin - Uzea war for example have it that Oba Ozolua (1481-1504 CE) , left his son call Ugan to be the Enogie of Uromi, After the war. He fought with the people of Uzea near Uromi to a pulp when there was a revolt. Ozolua invasion of Uromi/Uzea was basically to bring them under control of the Benin kingdom, whom were early emigrants from Benin, during Ogiso and Ewuare strong rule. This was part of Ozoluo reconciliation peace plan to bring the Esan back again to their ancestral lordship of the Great Benin Kingdom they hailed. He extended his carnage to Uromi when the Enogie was reported to have been rude to his messengers. He went up through Akoko Edo land, wandering into Nupe lands where he acquired a lot of sophisticated weaponry then. Attacked the Igallas and Igbirras in the present Kogi and Kwara states. After spending the greater part of his life in Ora, he left behind his son Ugan and returned to Benin City where he was murdered on his way. But before he left, he proclaimed everybody free men and free women, entitled to enjoy the privileges of Edo princes and Princesses, for all the services they had rendered in his military campaigns and reunion peace plan. That is why the Oras and Afemai call themselves today, the children of Ozolua.

The Ogbas

The Ogbas people trace their ancestral origin to Ancient Benin Empire, a migration they said, took place during the reign of Oba Ogun whose two sons were Ezuwarha and Edaiken. In Ogba myth of origin, Akalaka is the founder of Ogba nation by Ben-Fred Ohia and Henry O. Onyedibia on the Ogba Nation 1460-2003 Volume 1 (19). Akalaka left Benin where he was born during war , married a Benin girl called Iyavaeme. Before leaving, prepared some charms which he placed on his bow and arrow, shot into the air that directed

him to the destination where he and his followers, eastward. The number of years it took Akalaka to get to the Ogba and Ekpeya present day location cannot be easily estimated because of orality of the narrative. Ekpeye was the first of the three sons of Akalaka.

The Afemai – Akoko Edo

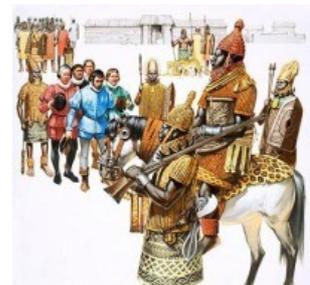
By Theodore Anani on Afemai People of Nigeria, Oba Ozolua's reign marked what one might call a migration plaque. During his reign mass migration of different tribes and at different times were recorded. The Edos speaking people of north-east of Benin city migrated to their present home lands in groups in Ozolua's reign. Some had left to escape pains, conscription and for refusal to bring to the Oba leopard skins as the custom dictated. The migration of the Etsako peoples- the Ibies, Uzairues, the Avhianwus, the Weppa Wanos, the Auchis, the Agbedes, the Okpellas, the Avhieles, the Jagbes and the Anwains- had been associated with these movements. Azama, who later became the great Ancestral Father and the Foster father of the peoples who today form two thirds of Etsakor, was a Bini by birth. Azama married his first wife called Ughiosomhe for whom he had four sons. They were Imekeyo, Ikphemhi, Anwu and Omoazekpe. Azama married another woman Etso for whom he had two sons. Eppa and Ano. The marriage with Azama has been Etso's second. Her first son, Uneme, was from her first marriage. Etso married for the third time after Azama's death and had her fourth son, Ekperi. All sons and parent lived happily together in Bini.

The Itsekhiris

The Itsekhiris by J.O.S Ayomike states that a party from the Benin Royal family about the end of the 15th century set up a monarchy which constituted erstwhile autonomous mini-communities into a nationality that exist till today. Prof. P. C Lloyd says that "in the English literature they are known as Warri or Jekri, though in the 19th century they were often referred to as Benin since contacts with them were first made on the banks of the Benin River". Here was a Kingdom founded by the royal party from Benin, but by the early sixteenth century through the seventeenth, it had done so much overseas trade to match or exceed that of the mother - kingdom; the reason being its advantageous position within the empire on the rim of the Atlantic. The Itsekiri speak Yoruba dialect also whose vocabulary has been widened by the infusion of a large number of Portuguese, Bini and English words. As an introduction of the influence of the Bini culture in Itsekiri land, it is pertinent to recall part of the address presented to Prince Solomon I.A Akenzua, then Edaiken of Uselu (now His Majesty the Oba of Benin by the Itsekiri community in Benin) by the Itsekiri community in Benin on the occasion of his retirement from public service and return home in 1973.

The Ika

The Ika historical account have it that Umunede Kingdom was founded by a Benin Prince, called Ede and his wife, Iye who migrated from Benin and settled in the present location, later known as Umunede. The exact date of migration of Ede and his wife from Benin was not recorded but generally, historians put the approximate period as the Thirteenth Century A.D., during the reign of Oba Ewedo The Great (1250-1280 A.D.) Thus, the Kingdom is over seven hundred years old and many historians believed that Umunede Kingdom is one of the oldest kingdoms east of the Benin Empire. Historians had contended that during



Oba Ewedos reign, the Oba had two battles to fight: a diplomatic battle against the great nobility led by the Ediommehan and military battles against Ogiamien III in order to destroy once and for all this anti-royalist movement. As a result of these events, many princes and noble men fled with their families to different safe locations. The second wave of migration to Umunede probably took place under Oba Ewuare The Great (1440-1485). During his reign, an attempt to eliminate members of the nobility who were threatening the monarchy gathered momentum and brought about another wave of migration out of the Benin Empire.

The Urhobo

The Urhobo history generally began from an Edo territory supposedly around where the ancient town of Udo and Benin City are currently located. At the end of the Ogiso dynasty, many Urhobo and Edo-groups left Udo in different directions, each at its own pace, in search of more peaceful territories. It was natural that in those compelling circumstances, peace loving and less powerful Edo-groups had to leave the territory to seek fortunes in less populated but more economically resourceful territories. The Urhobo left under separate leaders in different directions to found separate governmental organization. Egharevba (1960:14), When some of the emigrant left Benin, they found in their destinations in Urhobo territory some Edo-speaking settlers. Each 22 socio-political unit was called a "clan" by earlier writers especially by British Colonial Officers in their various intelligence/assessment reports. The word Urhobo is used to describe the Urhobo group or clan of the Edoid race.

According to the Chief Oje Aisiku, PhD on his Keynote Speech presented at the 14th Annual Convention of Edo National Association in the Americas, Inc. Wyndham Hotel and Resorts, Elizabeth New Jersey September 3, 2005, quotes: "The Ora people in Owan West Local Government Area, as a unit or subgroup, presents a good example to illustrate micro cultural variation of a common Edo macro culture. History has it that Ora people are off springs of Prince Okpame who left the Benin Kingdom as a youth and returned to reign in the Kingdom as Oba Ozolua the conqueror (1481 1504). Thus, the culture that emerges today among the Ora people are derivative and variation brought about by the peoples survival strategy and response to the environmental circumstance of their location outside the immediate Benin-City environ of the kingdom. They (the Oras) like most other peoples of Edo State, share same ancestry, though with some notable differences in the history of migration, location and circumstances of each subgroup. In essence, one can explain the Edo human group as macro culture which has within it, overarching values, symbols, beliefs, traditions and norms, shared to some degree, by all its subcultures or subgroups of micro cultures: Akoko-Edo, Esan, Esakon, Ora, and not to forget, the Edo people in the immediate Benin-City environ. As noted earlier, all Edo people have same ancestry and same heritage. Hence one is able to claim, confidently, the existence of a common macro Edo culture. Admittedly, over time, as groups began to migrate, they began to respond to special geo-social and metaphysical environments (to use Bullivants terms). Cultural elements, including dialect as version of Edo language, unique to each migrating group, began to evolve as each group mediate, interpret and reinterpret, perceive and experience the circumstances of their new environment. This explains the subtle differences we see among the many Edo dialects of the sub-Edo ethnics"

Emeka Esogbue on his article "The Origin of Agbor" explained : The History of Agbor Kingdom like those of other African ancient kingdoms, empires and peoples. He explained that various oral accounts on the origin of Agbor and Ika people exist but the most credible being that "Ogunagbon" and his followers who founded Agbor came from Benin and first settled in "Ominije" presently located in today's Agbor-Nta. Following what can best be described as personal crisis between two princes in Benin and subsequent settlement of this dispute as agreed to by the chiefs and elders of Benin determined by casting of lot, one of the princes settled in what became known as "Agbon". Agbon like other Anioma towns and communities was later anglicized by

the British who found it difficult to pronounce as "Agbor" the present name of the town. For certain reasons, I have decided to ignore all other events that transpired leading to the foundation of the town called Agbor in acknowledgement of the fact that what concerns us here is the progenitor of the kingdom and his origin. Agbon (Agbor) in Benin means "Earth or "Land". Anglicization of names of Anioma communities found difficult to pronounce was not new by the British was not uncommon to these peoples. Igbo in circumstances beyond the understanding of the indigenes was anglicized as "Ibusa," Ahaba (Asaba,) Ogwanshi-Ukwu (Ogwashi-Uku) Isei-Ukwu (Issele-Uku) Isei-Mkpitime (Issele-Mkpitime) Okpam (Okpanam) Umuede (Umunede) Notice also that in some cases the name remains the same but the spelling may change as in the case of Onicha (Onitsha) of Anambra state another of Anioma city. As noted earlier Cheime, a refugee from Benin is historically credited with the foundation of majority of Anioma communities. Historical accounts records Cheime who was driven away from Benin fled from the kingdom traveling eastwards towards the Niger River and founded Onitsha where he finally settled, his followers having been exhausted founded certain of these Anioma towns. Many of which includes the present day Onicha-Uku, Onicha-Ugbo, Onicha-Olona, Onicha-Ukwu, Issele-Uku, Idumuje-Unoh, Idumuje-Ugboko and a lot more.

At the present day Onitsha in Anambra state, his final place of settlement, Cheime had had a daughter called Owuwu, Owuwu was believed in oral history to have abandoned Onitsha fearing she might lose her life after her father lost nine of his sons in this very town owing to witchcraft. Owuwu was soon to return to Agbor settling at Osarra in Agbor. The name "Owuwu" which now is a Quarter in Agbor is a historical testimony of this. The argument in certain Quarters that Agbor people bear Igbo names and to some extent assimilates Igbo language and vocabularies is well a defeated one, it is asking why the language of Onitsha people is Igbo having been founded by Cheime from Benin.

LANGUAGE:

The orthographic composition of Edoid dialects are taken from the Benin(Edo) alphabets [a b d e ẹ f g h l k l m n o ọ p r s t u v y z] with some double consonants varying from one dialect to the other. Basically all the edoid dialect have same alphabet with the Benin-Edo language."A not-too-well known fact about Edo state in the context of our common macro culture is that Edo is multi-dialectical not necessarily multi-lingual. I recognize that I might be delving into an area in which I have no expertise, but I make these observations knowing the intricate link between language and culture. I say that Edo is multi-dialectical, because there is a difference between being bi-dialectical and being bi-lingual. According to Ricardo Garcia (in Banks, 2001) bilingualism is the ability to speak with distinctively different language systems while bidialectism is the ability to speak with different versions of the same language. Ora, Esan, and Esakon dialects, to a large extent, are versions of the same language system. They are not different languages but dialects of an Edo language. I challenge the language scholars among us, to identify or evolve that one Edo language which others will be versions (dialects) of." - Chief Oje Aisiku, PhD on a Keynote Speech presented at the 14th Annual Convention of Edo National Association in the Americas, Inc. Wyndham Hotel and Resorts, Elizabeth New Jersey September 3, 2005.

Scholars have argued that, the lack of a structured and standardized language institution and documentation of the Edo language in early history of the great Benin Empire gave rise to its multiplicity of dialects, though language variations wasn't a problem as chiefs and traditional leader including the king's subjects could communicate perfectly. This also lead to lots of today's mistaken identity and doubt of a common ancestral lineage of the Edoid race in the body politics of Nigeria. Brothers of same father or mother, now enemies or strangers. While this identity crises not only peculiar to the Edoid race, it is true a fact that most descendants

of enslaved Africans in America are still finding their ancestral root in West Africa. Again, factors like inter-marriages with other ethnic nationalities, travelling abroad, use of foreign language [*English in the case of Nigeria as national language*], political and economic reasons have also contributed to these great changes. Most youth or children of the 21st century may find this obvious history and linguist affiliations uninteresting as they cannot or do not understand the present day Benin-Edo language because their dailect (to them) is totally difference from Edo. Many have eventually come to find or see the central Benin(Edo) City, people and language as distance or probably other nationality in his entity. Again politicians are now standing on that ground to gain momentum, on their political carrier and corrupt motives, enriching themselves and family living the mass to huge, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and underdevelopment. Sad but true some scholars are also becoming indulge to fairy tales of distorted histories and statics to suit their egos and clans loyalty in the name of ethnic nations. A menace to an Edoid civilizations that have thrived for centuries and scores of years before Nigeria was born. That children, whose grand parents were once Edos or Benins that travelled oversea countries like Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Spain, Japan, China, Senegal, Cape Verde, etc now nationals of other nation does not mean that their ancestral lineage is false being Benin or Edo.

Looking at the post-colonial history of Nigeria on how the Edoid language became minimal and religated to the low statue she is today in the body politics of Nigeria, Alex Igbineweka explained that In 1950s, when the 'Redifussion' or house-to-house Radio speaker boxes were introduced into Nigeria by the then Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, the Federal Government of Nigeria was finding a way to disseminate the News broadcasts by duly translating it into the various indigenous Nigerian languages so as to get to the grass roots. Therefore, they decided to translate the hourly News bulletins into about nine different Nigerian languages, namely: Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Izon, Tiv respectively. This was very cumbersome as it took lots of minutes or hour to end the vernacular news broadcast and most other non language speakers were not interested listening to other languages no sooner theirs was translated. Consequently, when the Military men came into power, they decided and spruned the number of languages down from nine to just three, namely: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages only and tagged it "WAZOBIA", meaning: "Wa" (come in Yoruba language; "Zo" (come) in the Hausa language; and, "Bia" which also meant (come) in Igbo language respectively. In other words, (come, come, come), i.e. it was a matter of everyone wanting to speak and be silence at the same time - how stupid! The name WAZOBIA was given by the late talented musician - Roy Chicago. And then Nigeria embarked on radio and television translation of news in what they called the three major languages, and sent all the other languages into the cooler, for them to groan and get lost, as if the country did not belong to them as well. This single action is what has led the country into its present doom of the "Federal Character syndrome", (you must come from any of those three major languages and ethnic groups) to be heard, recognized and given reasonable political appointment no matter your talent and accredited professionalism! It was in the light of these and several other reasons that I decided to improve or develop Guosa - the language of my vision to save Nigeria now and in the future. Guosa is a scientific and artistic evolution and integration of all the languages and dialects to be found in Nigeria as a unified lingua franca (National Language). A lot of tribal and ethnic sentiments will be religated to the background when we can speak one monogenous national language at home and abroad.



The Edoid race as it is today wasn't how it was in pre-colonial times. Ibukunolu Alao Babajide on an internet conversation, narrated that the British foundation architects placed certain core pillars in its colonial territories during and after their invasion of West Africa. The pillars was to hold Nigerian (for example) building together or make the structure fall. First when they conquered Nigeria, they conquered existing political orders. The king of Lagos, the lesser kings of Igbessa, Oja Odan, Ado, Owode, Ilaro, etc and then bigger ones like Ibadan, Oyo, Benin, and like that to Borgu, Sokoto and Kanuri Sufawa. As they conquered, they changed the old order and replaced it

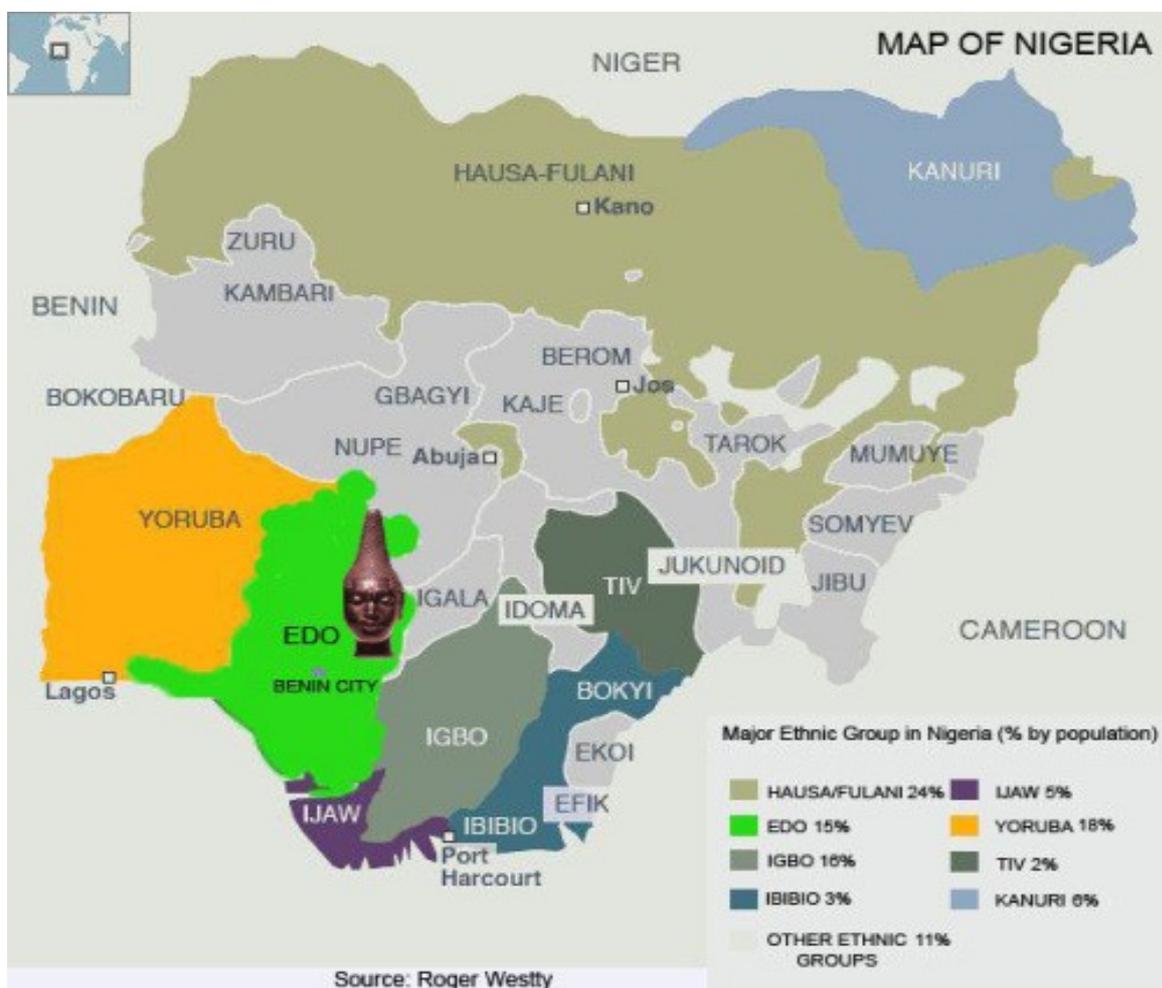
with Pillars and Provinces. And with those pillars and provinces with slight variations the military built the current states around. In those in those pre-Nigeria administrative provinces, administrations and internal denudation of old political arrangements happened. Jostling went on, and empires crumbled. Before Ovonramwe Nogbaisi of Benin was killed, when he wants a head cut along the Niger, he gets it. Today if the Oba of Benin wants a head in Benin city, he must do it clandestinely at night using sworn palace hands who will take the rope instead of squeal that the Oba sent them. Before the British destroyed Oyo, the Alaafin having sex with his wife who flippantly called him "Eniyan tin tin ti nda igbe ru", a diminutive man disrupting the bushes, caused the Alaafin to behead her father and present her with the father's head in a calabash. With a fiat. The British encode that all the old powers that are not in line or conform with their own norms of equity, order, and good conscience are proscribed. They established a new order. All the old powers then began to juggle and jostle for the new order! That happened between 1860 and 1923 when the Egba and Sokoto empires including Benin in 1897 were finally subjugated by force of arms. 63 years of British men, soldiers, traders, and administrators riding bicycles in thick forests and dying of malaria and so many simple things like bees, snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, that kill white men in the African jungles and Savanahs. In this motley crowd were missionaries - who created the foundation pillars that today make our youths and professors "Prayer Warriors" instead of "Political or SNC Warriors". Nigeria was created with great risks, bloodshed, and guns and violence.

Scholars like Dr. Nowa Omoigui on "The Benin-Urhobo relationship" have also drawn a dynamic linguistic affiliation between the Benin-Edo-Edoid language with the Urhobo. Presented the political analogy of the of "Benin and the Midwest referendum" connecting the Edoid race in the region. Prof. Iyi Eweka on "What is Edo", Naiwu Osahon on "Edo civilization and Empire: The correct history of the Edo people of Nigeria", Pa Anthony Enahora Autobiography and his paper on the proposal of 18 regional structure for Nigeria, Peter P. Ekeh on Ogiso and Eweka times: A preliminary history of the Edoid complex of culture, Uyilawa Usualele of the institute of Benin studies, on "Colonial State and Education Benin Division 1897 – 1959", shared some light on the devastating effect and marginalization of the colonial administrative rule on the Benin people, education, land and politics including their divided and rule tactics employed to disorganise, destabilize a reunion and reformation of the great pre-colonial Benin-Edoid Empire. And recently Prof. Patrick Edozor Igbinoia on The future of the Benins in future of Nigeria delivered at the 12th Egharevba's memorial lecture at the Institute of Benin studies 2010, All commenting on historical co-relations of the Edoid race.

WHY EDOID – EDO NATION?

The world is changing. All across is a revolution going on starting with the suppose first Black president of the United State of America, Barack Obama, elected into presidency in the midst of economic crises and Bush war. People and integrity in action all over Arab world, building their lives and future, from Tunisians to Egypt, Egypt to Libya and to other parts of the continent. These is obvious over the place, on digital satellites and local broadcasts. Youths, women and children rising up to challenges designing better life and future for their generation unborn. The Edoid race is not left out on the blowing wind of change as they must break new grounds and boundaries to emerge a better nation of Nigeria, an exemplary Nation of diversities on the African hemisphere. Yes, with recent uprising by most Nigerian scholars, politicians, organisations and foreign commentators for a sovereignty national conference to restructure current states of the Nigeria federation to ethnic state or regional autonomy, it is therefore crucial that the Edoid race come together to forge a common future and linguistic fusion, using their shared and common language(Edo), culture, tradition, custom, and historical values.

National self determination and actualizations is not new in world history, if that is the fear. European countries have always had this historic advantage. The Germans for example, have always been one people. one culture, one language, one religion, one history, under the same political system for more than a 1000 years. They were separated into two countries by the allies only in 1945 - after world war II. The Chinese always have been one people. one language, one culture, same history for close to 7000 years. Those on the island of Taiwan - traditionally a part of china - "escaped" theirs during the Mao communist revolution, and have been since sustained artificially as a "separate nation" by American might. The Koreans have always been one people - one language, one culture, one history for some 2-4000 years - until they were forcibly split up, again by the Americans - after the so-called Korean war - and it is the Americans who are still artificially maintaining south Korea as a viable nation. Czechoslovakia, the former soviet union, and Yugoslavia on the other, splited along its line of ethnic division. The Spanish too, though proclaim as one country, do have their various nations, with their language, political structure and future nations developed within. Recently southern Sudan splited with northern Sudan for a new nation born. Pakistan and Bangladesh were splited, and they have both moved on. Eritrea was carved from Ethiopia along its line of ethnic-religious divide and they have both moved on. so while not in Nigeria?



However, Inspite of all attempt by pan African scholars, politicians, revolutionary groups and organisation to unite, organise and develop Africa states, people and resources against their common enemies and exploiters, Africa still remains one of the most disorganise, disunited and underdevelopment nations on planet earth. Reasons range from wrong territorial and geographical boundaries of the colonial

administrators, impositions of foreign language and religion, miss-education, deculturalization and above all wrong and corrupt leadership. Developing Africa means organising Africa and organising African means learning from history to correcting or ameliorating the present designing the future. A re-awakening, enlightenment, re-culturalization, building common linguistic unifications and territorial regionalization. The Edoid race must understand that to organise and develop Africa they must unite to form the Edoid nation. One people, One language(Edo as a national language), shared culture, education, politics, economy, industrialization, science and technology. Unity is strength translated from an ancient Benin philosophy quote "Akugbe ér'óh étin".

The common values, history, culture and linguist relations in dialects around the Edoid group of language, including the Esan or Ishan makes their strong connection and affirmation obvious. In fact, the words "Edoid language " directly related to "Benin language".

What must be done to Implement the Edoid language as National language.

- a. To discontinue the trend of more further duplicity and divide in Edoid race, Edo language should be encourage, thought and adopted by the Edoid Nation of Nigeria.
- b. A bill should be passed by the federal and state house of Assembly on the Use of Edo language as the National Edoid Nation language.
- c. This should be entrenched into the federal constitutional of Nigeria as the common and general future language of the South South geographical zone of Nigeria
- d. Edo language should be use as one of the main language on media broadcasts in all communications media on the region.
- e. Edo language should be included in primary and secondary school educational curriculum
- f. More Books and Lecturers should be encourage, trained and employed.
- g. Universities in Edo, Delta, Rivers, Kogi and Ondo should have a departments of Studies for research, development and use of the Edo- Edoid language.

Challenges of The future in a New Regional Structure of Nigeria:

The Edoid race should seek their national vision from the cricket construct call Nigeria. Pursue a family unification extending as far north with Kogi, west with Ondo, Delta and River state. The Edoid race can form a viable Edoid nation where Edoid culture and language is use as national language along side English, under the same political system - if need be at least for the transition period with a general consencors from representatives of all mini-dialectical composition within its geographical zone. Edo or Edoid nation and people have suffered for too long in the body politics of Nigeria, and must no longer wish to continue the injustice and marginalization by WAZOBIA political / ruling elites. Denounce and minority statues because they are not minority but the largest Nation of Nigeria with diversities. Mobilize growth and develop across the region...Save the African children from further disintegration!

"They who have seen only a little vociferate about how much they have experienced, while they who have seen a great deal cannot even find the words to express what they have gone through" - EWUARE OGIDIGAN (The great) Oba of Benin 1440 AD - 1473 AD (A great Magician, Physician, Traveller and warrior; constructed Akpakpava street, created the Edaiken title, renamed the land Edo and the first Oba to come in contact with Europeans).

“Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without.” - William Sloane Coffin, Jr. quotes (American Activist and Clergyman, b.1924)

Long Live the Federal Republic of Edo

Long live the king! Oba gha tor kpere Isee!

Uwagboe Ogieva hailed from Egun village, Oka III, by Idogbo village, Ikpoba okha, Edo State. Belong to Ogbeide Ogieva family. Grew up in Benin City at parents' residence, Dumez rd off Sapele rd with 5 sisters and 2 brothers. Father, Mr. David Obasohan Ogieva pensionable from UNIBEN after 35 years of service. Mother: Mrs. Justina Egbon Ogieva, formal sole trader at Ekiosa market, third East Circular (Muritala Mohamed way) junction. Both currently living together in good health at Ugbekun quarters, upper sakponba, Benin City

Attended Niger College Benin City, Obtained an ND in Financial Studies / Accountancy at Federal Polytechnic Oko. Anambra State. Served as a teacher in accounting and mathematics a year before departure to Spain. In Spain, continued on Spanish language and computer technology at Micro Jem Institute (A professional private institute) and CENTRO PARKER COMPUTERS (A European Union extended University Program) for software Dev. and Prog. Analyst. A trained and certified IT engineer with good understanding of three European languages.

Have experienced most West African and European countries including Germany, Norway, Copenhagen, France, Italy, Belgium, London, Mali, Senegal, Algeria, Morocco, and Niger. Led protest, rallies on African matters, Edo cultural participations in both local and international Festivals, a member of community of Nigerian in Cataluña, Secretary and co- founder of Edo Association in Barcelona, currently site manager of organizations and establishments.

Active in more than 30 egroups and social forums. Exchristian now Agnostic with respect to Edo/African spirituality and traditional culture. Read books and authors on psychology, philosophy, science, religion, and politics. Author and publisher of various articles and journals for various media outlets. A freelance writer , working with yawewe magazine, bykem, otedo.com, and other publishing companies. Uwagboe is also working on Edo language research and development program, chair person-Edo language for all vision 2020.



RECOMMENDED READING:

- Scholarly Books & Films on Great Edo Kingdom

- Abolish Edoid Group of Race for One Edo Nation or Edoid Nation!
- Great Benin Influence on the Yoruba in the Americas
- Contesting the History of Benin Kingdom By Peter P. Ekeh
- Benin - Urhobo Relationship By Dr. Nowa Omoigui
- The issue of whether we are Benin or Bini by Naiwu Osahon
- Language and unity of Edo people By Uyilawa Usuanlele
- Benin_Igbo_Yoruba Historic relations (Onitsha, Orisha) By PHILIP EM...
- The Oduduwa Controversy Resolved. By Naiwu Osahon
- Esan Not An Ethnic Group But Benin(Edo) By Uwagboe Ogieva
- Ogiso and Eweka times: A preliminary history of Edoid Complex of cul...By Peter P. Ekeh
- Let Boko Haram have their own country, says Omoruyi By Omo Omoruyi
- Crisis in Belgium:If Flanders Secedes Wallonia Disintegrates
- The Correct History Of Edo People By Naiwu Osahon
- Edo-African heritage within the context and the dynamics of Nigerian culture
- First European Contact With Nigeria Was 1485 By The Great Benin Emp...
- Greatness of an African Queen Mother: IDIA By Uwagboe Ogieva
- Excellence in education and culture for the new millennium By Chief Oje Aisiku, PhD
- Bini Names in Nigeria and Georgia By Roger Westcott, Professor Emeritus, Drew University
- Nigeria: The Edo of Benin By Osamuyimen Stewart, Ph.D.
- THE CORRECT HISTORY OF EDO By NAIWU OSAHON
- THE STORY OF ARHUANRAN (THE DUKE OF UDO)
- Agbor link with Edo people "Origin of Agbor - Agbon" By By Emeka Esogbue
- Benin (Nigeria) and its Mystique By MIKE JIMOH
- Benin History and the Museum's Benin Collection From the museum.upenn.edu
- 100 Years after the Invasion of Benin Reflection By Chief Richard Akinjide (SAN)
- Benin Chronology

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897 by Alan Frederick Charles Ryder
Product details: Hardcover: 388 pages / Publisher: Prentice Hall Press; 1st Edition edition (July 1969)
Language English / ISBN-10: 058264514X / ISBN-13: 978-0582645141
 - Graham Connah. 1975. The Archaeology Of Benin: Excavations and other researches in and around Benin City, Nigeria. Clarendon Press : Oxford. Pages - 266 (plus photographs) ISBN - 0 19 920063
[7http://ihuanedo.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-archaeology-of-benin](http://ihuanedo.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-archaeology-of-benin)
 - Kings, Magic, & Medicine " by Chief Dr. Dayl Peavy JD. An African American that has an Esan Chieftaincy title (2007). An Ob'oguega as well as an Ob'orunmila. Have been conducting research in Edo State since 1997 and published in a book titled: "Kings, Magic & Medicine". <http://ihuanedo.ning.com/forum/topics/new-book-on-great-benin>
 - Evolution Of Benin Chieftaincy Title (Very specific facts on Edo and Edo's in Diaspora). \$25.00
 - Benin City Pilgrimage Stations (Detailed Edo History). \$25.00
 - Benin City- Edo State Capital (More details on the colonial Era).
 - The Edo Man of the 20th Century (Oba Eweka 11 life history). \$10.00
 - Erediauwa, Prince of Benin. (About the Prince and not this Oba).\$10.00
 - Iwu- The body marks of Edo People. \$10.00
 - A DVD on Edo History from Ogiso to current. Concluded by an address by Omo N'oba himself. \$10.00
- [Contact Tina Iyare tinaigho@yahoo.com Tel:610-563-9131 Tel:610-873-6842** TO PURCHASE ANY OF ABOVE BOOK WITH PRICE TAG]**

TOURIST PLACES TO VISIT:

- The Portuguese National Archives in Lisbon
 - British Museum
 - National Museum Benin City

LINKS:

- THE IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE OF GREAT BENIN.(facebook)
 - [EDO NATION PREMIER WEB \(www.edonation.net \)](http://www.edonation.net)
 - [EDO FOLKS HISTORY AND LANGUAGE \(www.edofolks.com \)](http://www.edofolks.com)

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