

**CURATING HUMANITIES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH CULTURE TOURISM:
REFLECTIONS ON EKPO EYO'S THESIS**

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Abstract

Arising from his seminal publication on The Terracottas of Calabar, which was a follow up to his earlier lecture at the Museum on Old Calabarians through the Spade, Late Ekpo Eyo hoisted a flag for sustained research in archaeology to know who we are and what we have culturally achieved as a people. As an archaeologist, his interest was in the dug-up material culture of the people which is an important sign-post of cultural identity and a cherished corridor to culture tourism. In his exposition on the collections from the field using the spade, he stumbled on a rich culture of pottery of the Old Calabarians made principally of terracotta. Using Carbon dating, this rich material culture was almost on the heels of the popular and world acclaimed archaeological finds of Nok culture, but was older than Igbo Ukwu Culture and the Ife, Owo and Benin artefacts. Posing a scientific question, he queried, 'who then were these early Calabarians?' Searching further for a scientific answer, he reasoned that these artefacts were made before contemporary civilizations in the region. His thesis?- "Hence, the evidence invites reappraisal of the historical Bantu movements into Cross River..." for 'a broader Bantu cultural complex that encompasses more than language alone'. The paper expands on this thesis and seeks the use of research frontiers in humanities to integratively reconstruct our cultural identity and promote our culture tourism potentials by looking inwards for more evidence. Autochthonous traditions of origin and identity are discussed as well as major population movements in Sub-Saharan Africa to situate a terrain for future research concerning our material

past. The floating of Hamatic tradition of origin is punctured in the paper using genetic, archaeological, anthropological and linguistic evidence which further anchors the stand of the paper that Africans are Africans and cannot simply metamorphose structurally into Europeans or Asians! Curating humanities calls for collecting, assembling, reappraising and reconstructing evidence from research, some of which are wasting in our backyards and eaten off by insects and rodents in our homes. There is need for culture bearers to freely donate artefacts to the museum and be objectively open and friendly to researchers. The paper urges a renewal of interest/effort in the study of and research into our history, archaeology, anthropology and languages to reappraise and (re)interpret not only the Calabar finds, but to rediscover our past holistically. If this is not done, we may end up supporting the useless as the useful and unable to scientifically situate Ekpo Eyo's yearning to build a sustainable identity and promote culture tourism in Nigeria.

Introduction

Rebuilding history, albeit cultural identity and tourism, for the present and the future generations, was hoisted by Professor Ekpo Eyo (2008) in his co-published archaeological collections entitled *The Terracottas of Calabar*. This publication was a follow up to an earlier seminar he presented in 2004 at the Old Residency Museum, Calabar, Nigeria with the title, *Old Calabarians through the Spade*. In that lecture it was adduced that Calabar Culture had developed almost contemporaneously with popular Nok Culture which thrived 500BC-200AD+or-50. Calabar culture thrived between 400-800AD and proceeded the Igbo Ukwu Culture of 1000AD, Ife, Owo and Lower Niger Culture of 1600-1897AD (Charles, 2008, 2014). These are all interesting facts of history through archaeology which reproduces the need for identity barometer through culture tourism. To this end, Professor Ekpo Eyo advocated scientific reawakening through research to strengthen our culture history and concretize an identity through material culture.

Facts of history spiced with scientific evidence boost intellectual and tourism revolution. Obatala (2015), the researcher on Ikom monoliths, wishes to see a tradition in which Nigeria history and culture (artefacts) become the primary raw material for arts/tourism industry. Cultural heritage is a celebration of people's history and identity; it is a driving force to cultural harmony, reconciliation, national unity and growth (serve our tourism.com).

This paper is a humble attempt to strengthen scientific paradigm through humanities in an attempt to reconstruct our identity and boost tourism industry for nation building and development.

The Evidence

The scientific evidence as presented in his seminal publication, the first ever for people of this geographical zone, needs a closer attention. If nothing else, argues the Preface to the book:

The cultural artefacts found in the catalogue provide the most authentic evidence of the past achievements of our people and should provide an aspiration for our present and future endeavours. These wonderful archaeological collections help to show that there was a civilization in this part of the world before colonization (Adaka, 2008: 4).

These collections provide ample evidence which strongly challenges the Hamitic Hypothesis of un-inventiveness of Africans unless genetically propped by European blood flowing through their veins. Looking at the evidence more curiously but with some agitation, the Forward to the publication sees the finds/collections as late in coming and laments as follows:

One would have expected that Calabar, which was one of the earliest visited ports on the coast of the ancient Nigeria, and which traded with Europe for over five centuries, would have been well studied. However, this is not the case (Adeniran, 2008: 5).

His reaction is fostered by the fact that activities of explorers, traders, and missionaries as well as colonial officers were almost strictly concentrated in this region and undoubtedly added great fortunes in palm oil trade after the Atlantic Slave Trade. Re-igniting the need for a more scientific search for interpretation in spite of the curiosity and interest generated by the finds/collections, Adeniran further cautions:

Even at this, there is a greater danger to the interpretation of the finds as the oral history of the local people fall far from the dating of the terracottas... Time and further studies at all levels will eventually solve the mystery that presently beclouds the finds... This is just the very beginning of an interesting field of study of finds in a land of dispersed people with different claims of ancestry (Adeniran, 2008: 6).

No doubt, archaeology has opened up the frontiers of research on the material culture of a people, it behoves other studies in humanities covering history, anthropology, language/linguistics, arts and literature, even religion to consolidate the gains of this new challenge so as to discover who we really are and from where we came. Holistically, our cultural progress and development can be collectively assessed from the prisms of humanities to boost both our identity and culture tourism.

In this new awareness we need to forge a sustainable relationship with library science. So far, library study is not considered as one of the humanities probably because university curriculum roots this discipline in the sciences. But library science has a lot to share with humanities. All writings target history of man through various civilizations. The library, we must acknowledge, is the store house and physical space where knowledge, be it in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences and whether written, photographed, videoed, drawn or carved, are stored, preserved and used by seekers of knowledge all over the world. Without the library as physical space and its curating functions of assembling human research endeavours in all spectra of life, a lot of information would either be lost or destroyed thus creating a yawning vacuum in knowledge. The cataloguing of such published and unpublished works in our libraries will boost this intellectual reawakening in sourcing for true identity and promoting culture tourism. This challenges the librarians' artistic/humanistic as well as scientific skill to achieve.

The Excavations and Rescue collections: Further evidence to investigate Archaeology of Calabar is said to have begun in the 1970s just after the Nigerian Civil War when extensive public works began by the government. The rescue collections were done around areas such as University of Calabar, Cultural Centre, and State Library where massive civil engineering works were going on. The intriguing features of the rescue collections were that they were mainly terracotta- made pots of two types, namely: decorated and plain. The decorated ones were deposited by their sides or placed up-side-down, a way of exposing the motifs and complex designs on the decorated pots while the plain ones stood upright at the sites. These designed pots might have been used as ritual, royal or decorative items.

In 1995, Late Professor Ekpo Eyo went a step further to organize scientific archaeological excavations around present Margaret Ekpo Airport, Abasi Edem, Okang Mbang, Old Marian Road, Ndidem Usang Iso, Obot Okoho and Ikang. Features of these finds from the various locations were similar and dated between 445-785AD; some were somehow more recent at 530-

855AD and 1020-1290 AD as well as 1050-1440AD respectively, probably depicting features of areas of late and newer settlements. The finds were mostly terracotta-made pots, head crests, bowls, copper alloy bracelets, polished stone beads and glass and figurines made of terracotta with concentric circles, interlocking designs, squares and nsibidi signs of nkpe society (Eyo and Sloga, 2008). Okang Mbang excavations yielded pots while glass and stone beads were found in Ikang, a neighbouring community to Cameroon.

Oral tradition also houses stories of intercommunity trading especially in locally produced items like pots from Afikpo in Igboland in 19th and 20th centuries. These terracotta pots were transported to Calabar via Umon by the Umon people of Cross River State. The pots were popularly called esio umon (lit. pot made by the Umon people or pot coming from Umon), named after the middlemen transporters and not the original producers. In recent years such artefacts are getting extinct as they are today found in Efak Satan or Efak Ederimbot (lit. Satan Wing) of Watt Market in Calabar as ritual objects. Both the Afikpo producers and Umon middlemen are today forgotten by newer Calabar generations.

The problematic arising from the discourse so far is as follows:

- i. Arising from the Umon example, where exactly were the Calabar artefacts from; were they indigenous to the Old Calabarians or were they 'imported' from elsewhere?
- ii. These finds are said to predate the occupation of the entire geographical area of Calabar and the advent of written history (Eyo and Sloga, 2008). So, were there first set of settlers before the present occupants of Calabar?
- iii. Who were these early Calabarians whose past artefacts have so far been excavated in Calabar and its environs for the 21st century audience?
- iv. In the world of migratory history, are the old Calabarians still the contemporary Calabarians found in the configurations of Efik, Efut and Qua nationalities acknowledging the fact the early migrations were in groups while contemporary migrations are mainly individuals and nuclear families (Andah, 1983)?
- v. How have their collective identities fostered historical harmony, cultural exchanges and culture tourism in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria in general?

Cultural Identity and the Role of the Humanities: Some Reflections

The humanities are fields of study that concentrate in the study of man from various cultural perspectives. The elegance of the humanities lies in their integrative-ness, culture-relatedness and inter-connectedness, the aim being to reveal our cultural identity. Identity building is a human project and is socially and politically non negotiable. Sometimes identity building harp on exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness and tends to adumbrate egoistic syndrome instead of bothering about people and cultures that are similar to ours. A project in reinvigorating Humanities in Africa by African Humanities Program (2014) calls for a de-marginalization of the Humanities teaching and research which has been de-prioritized and currently in a parlous state in our educational landscape.

...It would seem that the study of the cultural achievements that make us human should hold pride of place in every national system of higher education and research. Nations justifiably look to their universities for the education of future citizens and leaders, and for the production of knowledge necessary for growth, security, and prosperity... A university's core mission is rooted in the humanities—in the study of culture, history, language, literature, anthropology, philosophy, religion, and the arts. They constitute our common heritage.

...The humanistic disciplines have a clear practical value: they teach critical and analytic thinking while at the same time stimulating the imagination and promoting ethical values. Leaders need these skills to lead, to identify problems, and to conceive creative solutions. Citizens need them to participate actively in public life. ... Humanistic studies help ground national dialogue on urgent issues in enduring humane values... every knowledge-led development strategy must have a solid humanities core. To envision the future, we need to understand the lessons of the past. To act in the present, we must be sensitive to current cultural complexities (p4)...

Anthropology is one of the disciplines in humanities that has given itself the odious mandate of studying man holistically for identity. This is why Melville Herskovits defined anthropology as the study of man and his works; man

being a culture-bearing as well as a culture-building animal. Therefore man is not just a passive consumer of culture; he is an active inventor and engineer of culture. Everything under the earth is all about man and his creativity (works), which translates into tourism artefacts. History also belongs to the humanities and has the task of methodologically and systematically recording or vocalising narratives about the activities and events surrounding man and civilizations over a period of time. Written history is for 'great civilizations' with knowledge of writing while the oral or vocalizing evidence is for the not very literate cultures. Stone carvings, paintings and nsibidi signs were forms of writing and communication, all were signposts of inventiveness of populations who made them. However, the strength and elegance of oral history lies in the integrity of the sources. That explains why the death of one very old man in a community is often equated with a fire disaster that engulfs and destroys a huge library stocked with books. The old man is a moving library of history and ideas. History is discursive; anthropology is comparative.

Language is a major cultural achievement of man and is used to record and transmit man's achievements and history from generation to generation. Language, apart from being a cultural tool, is an important tool for the constructing and reconstructing of cultural identity and tourism products. Anthropological linguistics studies history embedded in languages. In the process of interacting with other cultures, groups or cultures borrow from one another. In doing this, one group or culture would have lost significantly or totally its language and got assimilated by the other. An extant example is the case of the Efut and Efik in Calabar where the stories of origin are differently told but today the Efut speak Efik language, having lost their original language during the long period of continuous sojourn with the Efik in Calabar. In Akpabuyo/Bakassi geopolitical zones of Nigeria, where there is a preponderance of immigrant population from Akwa Ibom State with sustained contact with the Efik, this intermingling and exchange of vocabularies have witnessed some changes in the linguistic landscape of that region. The linguistic tone of both Efik and Ibibio speakers has changed significantly to disturb an agitated academic mind, as a new dialect of Efik/Ibibio is fast emerging in Akpabuyo. Acculturation is seriously at work. E.g.

Nkemeke (Efik)	Nkana (Ibibio)	Nkarake (new dialect)
Nkemeke ndinam (Efik)	Nkana nam (Ibibio)	Nkareke nam (new dialect)
Enyene nte etiede (Efik)	Anie nanga aba (Ibibio)	Enyene nanga etie (new dialect)

It is hypothesized that in the next few decades, a new dialect which has actually begun may gradually develop to give a variant of the Efik and Ibibio languages. A close attention to discussions in Efik traditional drama on our radio and television stations will reveal some of these new verbal injections taken for granted, and calls for scientific study by anthropologists and linguists. Although we all speak languages, still we remain laymen (not linguist) when we consider the role of language in culture and society and even the structure it takes.

Ekpo Eyo's Thesis

History and archaeology are admired disciplines. Some use them profitably; some also use and abuse them. Ultimately, history and other humanities are the harbingers of peoples' cultural identity. Arising from the Calabar finds through the spade, the history of Old Calabarians has been dug, exhumed, reassembled where possible, polished and documented for a wide readership. In his book, the author brilliantly combined archaeology, anthropology, history and language to propel a new image of cultural identity. He contends that there is more to African history and archaeology as well as artefact collections than just political or aesthetic postures. He invites more research reappraisal into the pre-colonial Bantu movements into the Cross River Basin where languages spoken in this region are figuratively labelled semi-bantoid and where the dug-up artefacts are believed to have origin in these proto human populations in Sub Saharan Africa.

Apart from connectivity to language of the Bantu, the Calabar finds contain evidence of burial chambers with artefacts such as terracotta-designed pots which resemble those of Congo, Central Africa and South Africa. Though similar burial chambers are found in Congo and elsewhere in Africa, the closest place found is among the Nri Igbos in Nigeria. Onwuegeogwu (1979) documents arrangement in Eze Nri's burial chambers where Ezes were buried in a sitting position with all paraphernalia of office including cultural artefacts such as terracotta-designed pots, copper products as well as live slaves. The Efik of Old Calabar had similar burial arrangements where slaves were interred with their masters (kings/royalties) leading to the resistance of the Blood Men in the 1850s (Oku, 1989) which have not been adequately documented and showcased. Thurstan Shaw (1978) alluded to the fact that the history of Nigeria is buried in our languages awaiting rediscovery by these specialties; and I add here that archaeological finds and artefact curating through voluntary donations by culture bearers would add in rediscovering ourselves. The disaggregated history as rendered by our people

sometimes blind us to the fact that Africans are Africans, Asians are Asians and Europeans are Europeans par excellence in their language, genetic make up and cultural achievements.

Nigerians and Indigenous Traditions of Origin

Migrations make the world history; Africa is not an exemption. Gugler (1978) contends, rather too strongly and very dramatically too, that the history of Africa is the history of migration. There are many traditions of origin by peoples of Nigeria. Some adopt autochthonous tradition emphasizing that they are indigenous to their present locations and therefore came from nowhere else. A good number also claim they came from somewhere. That means they migrated from a nucleus region to the present location with stopovers along the line. The notion is that pre-colonial migrants were in large groups, such as a whole community or clan and their descendants. The autochthons are many and varied in their narratives. They include the Igbo, Yoruba, Urhobo, Idoma, Ibibio and Tiv. For the Igbo, the deification of the land is a mark of honour for their origin. The earth goddess 'Ala' is the great and merciful mother that gives fertility, prosperity and victory in war (Uchendu, 1965). Recall what happened to Okonkwo, the brave character in *Things Fall Apart* who desecrated Ala by shading blood on the land and was sent on exile. Urhobo and Yoruba trace their origin ecclesiastically to the sky. For Urhobo, Eri their great ancestor descended from the sky like a great reptile in form of chameleon that walked the earth (Oтите, 1993).

To the Yoruba, their ancestor, Oduduwa came from the sky with a cock and sand through a chain magnanimously provided by Oludumare (Fadipe, 1978). Notwithstanding the oral tradition, both the Yoruba and Urhobo also claim origin from the global/mundane setting. The Yoruba from the perspective of modern historian claim they came from Egypt, passed through Sudan and finally to Ile Ife (Oguntomisin, 1993). The Urhobo also trace origin to Egypt, passed through Lake Chad where they left some of their kinsmen and finally to Benin where they were forced to move to the swamp of Niger Delta by belligerent neighbours (Oтите, 1993).

Idoma and Tiv peoples find the Lower Benue Valley as their traditional home land from where they spread to their various locations today in central Nigeria. Idoma tradition points specifically to Kwararafa as their original home land while the Tiv cling to Swem Hills as their ancestral home, all in the Benue Valley region. The Ibibio, another autochthonous people, are of the view that they are the longest living people to have inhabited the region between Lower Cross River and Qua Iboe Rivers. Fragments of oral

tradition trace their origin to Cameroon (Usakedet) where they moved to their present location through Ibom in Arochukwu (Talbot, 1914).

The Efut and Qua of Calabar are not hesitated about their Cameroon and Congo roots and the Bantu stock. The Efik tradition of origin is more controversial. Constituent Houses during the Hart Report of 1964 traced their origin from Sudan, Palestine, Egypt, Ghana, central Africa, Igbo, Ibibio, Niger, and many others. In recent years, however, the Palestine and Egypt origins are more popularly hoisted by Akak (1986) and Aye (1967) respectively and seem to gain popular acceptance (cf Andah, 1993; Jeffreys, 1935; and Hart, 1964). From the foregoing, migration becomes an important social index to explain our origin and therefore our identity. The various narratives concerning migratory roots of our people could be seen from the landmarks repeated by various groups. Modal sites tend to revolve around Benue Valley here in Nigeria, Egypt, Sudan and Cameroon all in Africa, with only Palestine located in far away Asia. Highlights into the great migrations in pre-colonial Africa could provide some insights into the art/science of historical reconstruction and culture tourism.

Some Major Pre-colonial Migrations to Challenge Origin Outside Africa

There were some pre-colonial migrations that had very telling effects on the dispersion and settlement of Africans across the breath and length of Africa up till the present 21st century. Ekpo Eyo writes about one of them- Bantu migration, to drive home his message. Other movements include:

- The Trans-Saharan Movement of Arabs into Africa
- The Swahili-Arab Merchants movement into the East African Coast
- South African Ngoni Nation movement into other African territories.
- The Nilotic movement into the Inter-Lacustrine Region of Africa.
- Ibibio movements into Akpabuyo.

The paper will restrict itself to the Bantu, Ngoni, Swahili-Arabs and Ibibio migrations.

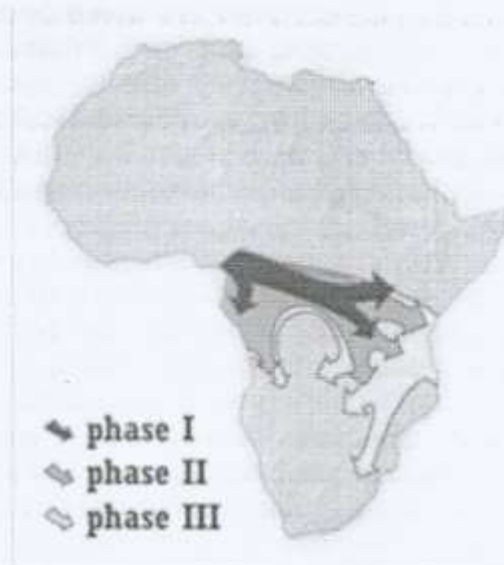
i. Bantu Migration

The pre-colonial Bantu movement in Africa still remains an enigma in history. Their origin is not only being debated, their spread and the changes they have brought are also of great interest to scholars. A school of thought would see the Bantu population as a gifted people in physical strength, weaponry, intellectual acuity, ruthlessness and adaptability. The enigmatic movement and coverage of about four-fifth (4/5th) of the geographical area in the Sub-Saharan region needs explanation. Certain questions arise as a

result of this. The questions include: Who are these people called the Bantu? Where was their nucleus area of origin? What facilitated their movement and adaptability? How were they able to conquer both their neighbours and hosts at such an alarming speed and had a wide spread in the continent? How were they able to cover and occupy such a vast area of land in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa? What artefacts for tourism can be reconstructed there from?

The Bantu, figuratively seen as a linguistic sub-group in Africa, actually are people that speak languages that fall under the Niger-Kordofonian language family of Africa. According to Robert Collins (1968) the word "Bantu" was first used by Dr. Wilhelm Bleek in a book published 1862 to describe the grammar of South African languages having common proto-prefixes which suggest common origin such as bu, mu, lu, ba and tu; (just as we call the Hausa- sa nu from sanu, and the Yoruba- aku sa from ekuse, taking a bearing from the way they greet). Reviewing the works of many scholars, Collins (1968) argues that the Bantu people were led by the Hamitized group in form of invasions which were aided by superior weaponry of the Hamitized autocracy that aided their spread from Benue Valley to South Africa probably as early as AD 300 (Wikipedia, assessed June, 2015).

The Hamitic origin of Bantu speaking people was popular for quite a long while as a credible explanation to the origin of this African stock. Though popular, it had no scientific base. In other words, there was no field-based data to support the argument that these people actually received any European influence genetically or technologically. It was purely a racist adventure into African ethno-linguistic explanation. Since Africans were generally seen as non-inventive and primitive, no achievement such as recorded by the Bantu progenitors could have been attributed to pure Africans unless those who had the Hamatic (European) blood flowing in their veins. It was Joseph Greenberg who began the search for some scientific truth surrounding the Bantu language by analysing fifty basic Bantu nouns (of non-cultural words). Of the fifty words which were analyzed, forty three were found in the Benue-Congo sub-family of the Niger-Kordofonian language family of Africa. With such a high percentage of vocabulary located in the Benue Congo sub-family of African languages, Greenberg suggested that the Bantu homeland should be somewhere in the Central Benue valley along the present Nigeria-Cameroon border. Greenberg's migratory route of the Bantu was traced from the Central Benue valley southward from where they moved eastwards to the Congo in the Sub-Saharan region.



Bantu Migration

From Wikipedia assessed June, 2015

It is further contended that the major factor which aided Bantu swift movement South of the Sahara was their superior knowledge of iron technology. Being originally a hunting and gathering people, the Bantu had very early knowledge of iron and use of iron weapons in form of spear for killing game and exploiting their environment. The Bantu were aided by the iron technology to also develop the technology for farming. At the time of their migration from the nucleus region of Central Benue valley, the Bantu were already skilled in hunting and farming with indigenous technology. They were better able to move and conquer the territories they passed through with relative ease because of the acquired iron technology. It is also argued elsewhere, that the Bantu borrowed their technology and crafts from indigenous peoples as they moved (Boston, 2007). As a result of this expansion from their nuclear region to other parts of Africa south of the Sahara, the Bantu were able to acquire more experiences, met many challenges and adapt well in the process to acquire various crops, wide variety of domesticated animals, tools and skills. As a result, 4/5th of Sub-Saharan Africa today is occupied by this enigmatic group. Cattle have also been acquired. The Bantu have equally instituted the caste system in parts of Africa such as Rwanda and Uganda. These are all features of culture tourism to be developed through sustained application of humanities through research.

ii. The Swahili-Arab Merchants' Movement into the East African Coast

According to Sagay and Wilson (1978), as early as the 5th century AD, some immigrants from South East Asia came through the Island of Madagascar to settle at the East African coast. This natural bridge provided by the Island for the South East Asians made it easy for them to cross into East African Coast with Asian food crops such as rice and beans. They established trading posts and latter trading settlements along the East African coastal regions extended to cover Zambia and other Islands. By the 12th century Muslim towns and Muslim religion were being established. By the 17th-18th centuries the Arabic settlers including their Bantu neighbours and hosts of the coastal belt became Muslims. Arabic language was used specifically for religious activities while a new trade language called **Swahili** was established and today has become a *lingua franca* of such countries as Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania, among others in East Africa.

iii. South African Ngoni Nation Movement into Other African Territories

Sagay and Wilson (1978) in their book *Africa: A modern history* have presented both a pictorial and descriptive account of the period 1820-1850 referred to as **the period of trouble** in South African spearheaded and led by **Shaka the Zulu**, Ngoni warrior. The major reason for this movement was lack of land and space for cattle rearing caused by over population. White South African were already present as traders, farmers and missionaries in South Africa with both superior financial, administrative and political machineries. Eventually the land meant for grazing of Ngoni cattle was encroached upon and taken over by the Boer farmers and settlers. This negatively affected the chances of the Ngoni speaking South Africans getting sufficient land to tend and graze their cattle as was the tradition before the coming of the whites. Land and land boundary became major problems of inter-group living. Suffocated of land space to grace cattle, and shy of attacking the Boers with superior weaponry, a profitable option was eventually adopted by the Ngoni, a cattle rearing and warlike group to wage war of territorial expansion on their immediate black neighbours; an option the Ngoni knew would yield a quicker dividend. The war caused many African countries to fight each other in the course of defending themselves and territories against Shaka's "Impi" regiment

(iv) Ibibio Migration to Akpabuyo

While the movements of Bantu and Ngoni spanned large areas of Africa, those of Swahili Arabs and Ibibio were cross border and neighbourhood

movements. The migration of the Ibibio people, firstly to Calabar town and ultimately to Akpabuyo predated the end of the 19th century. The migration and effective occupation of Akpabuyo must have coincided with the European slave trade. It was, therefore, an era of involuntary migration for the Ibibio people who served as commodities of trade. People were forcibly uprooted by slave traders. This transplantation of people gave rise to transplantation of cultures. At Calabar these slaves were either exported or retained in Efik households. The slaves who remained in Efik households as domestic slaves were never to be exported because such an action was considered a mark of poverty (Simons; 1956: 12). By 1842, when slave trade was abolished in Old Calabar, the domestic slaves had completely outnumbered the freeborn Efik and the population of Old Calabar was also significantly heterogeneous (Jones, 1956: 23; Waddel 1970; 663). Since it was a taboo to dispose of domestic slaves in Efik land, the Efik readily moved some of these stubborn slaves in pairs (man and woman) to Akpabuyo, a frontier region, where they engaged in land colonization for the Efik Houses in the 1830s (Charles, 2002; Charles, 2015). This was a period when international pressure was mounting against slavery and slave trade. This crop of slaves served as labourers who lived and toiled in this virgin land producing food and palm oil/nut for the Efik lords who lived in the town.

By the end of slave trade in Efik land in 1842, Akpabuyo had been completely colonized through the slaves for their owners. Udo (1983:235-236) observes that "the repeal of the House Rule Ordinance in 1915 meant loss of free labour in the Houses and was further worsened by the repeal of the forced labour in 1918. Most of the freed slaves declared themselves independent of their masters and refused to sell their labour to them. Indeed, this was the beginning of the contract labour or what can adequately be described as the "house-boy" system. A few brave and courageous Efik gentlemen once again went back to Ibibio land which was by then fully opened to outside contact, to recruit "**Nda utom**" (**labourers**) and "**ndito ufok**" (**house maids**) for their farms and domestic needs respectively. By the nineteen thirties to forties another category of migrants – the seasonal migrants – had emerged alongside the regular annual migrants. They were of two categories and mostly sponsored-temporary-migrants, namely:

- The palm-fruit harvesters and
- The school pupils.

Their mission was to sell their skills to those who needed them during a specific season of the year – usually the dry season. The school pupils were mainly holiday makers who were willing to serve any master or mistress for a fee during the holidays to enable them take care of the cost of

schooling in the pre- and post independence era. The palm fruit harvesters were "freelance" operators. They were not attached to any single master or mistress. Any person who employed their services became their master (*ete ufok*) or mistress (*eka ufok*) for the period they served as a servant (*eyen ufok*). Only a few "employers", owning a large plantation of oil palm, could keep an illustrious and hardworking palm fruit harvester fully occupied for a whole season. In actual practice, many palm harvesters had series of masters during each season whom they worked for on agreed terms. The terms of engagement differed from one master (*ete ufok*) to another. Fundamentally, all favoured the sharing of the output. The palm oil went to the master/owner and the kernel was taken by the harvester. In other situations, both the palm kernel and the palm oil would be shared using an acceptable proportion if the harvester also processed the palm oil (Charles, 2015). Madam Mary Effiong (alias Mma May) of Ikot Umo recalled her trips to Ibibioland long before independence and shortly before the civil war in 1967.

During some holidays I used to have more than twelve of them in this compound. They came as a team and left as a team. I provided them with places to sleep and food to eat. Oh! These Ibibio lads, they kept the compound warm during their stay. Most of them continued coming during every long holiday because I treated them as a mother. I was not the only person who had these holiday makers in my compound. Others too had them but some were not lucky to have them all the holidays. The boys were free to sell their labour to any person in the village although they lived with me. Any day I had nothing for them to do they were free to go out and seek for one. They were daily paid workers. At the end of their stay they left with their earnings.

Once a master or mistress had established a relationship with parents, it did not require any more visits to Ibibioland to recruit the children. Returning migrant pupils recruited other interested pupils who had not performed the trip before. By early 1940s contract labourers (*nda utom*) or housemaids (*ndito ufok*) who completed their terms but did not want to return to Ibibioland started to settle in Akpabuyo as independent migrant farmers. They rented farm lands and virgin forests on which they cultivated on their own account. They found independent farming a better economic alternative. Ibibio immigrants knew from years of interaction with their hosts that the Efik were willing to accommodate anyone who wanted to live and

farm peacefully in their community. This development opened up another phase of the scramble for Akpabuyo virgin forests, a scramble in which both the Ibibio and the Efik were major actors. It was also the beginning of the scramble for new contract labourers in Ibibio land by both Ibibio immigrants and Efik hosts. By the 1950s Akpabuyo had been completely "invaded" by thousands of Ibibio immigrants. By 1950-1960, a good number of them had built houses in Akpabuyo villages and became fully accommodated, acculturated and in many cases integrated by the hosts. Contract labour however, continued until after the Nigerian Civil War in 1970 where independent farming took over. From the foregoing, what aspects of these migrations can be used by humanities and curators to build up our history and culture tourism? What special sites and monuments have been selected through research, documented, reconstructed and preserved from various locations and routes of migration in Africa generally and Nigeria, nay, Cross River particularly?

The History, Linguistics and Archaeology of the movements and Implications for Identity and Origin

The topic of this paper, 'Curating' the Humanities for the re-construction of cultural identity gives us food for thought for a re-ordering of our orientations towards national and African consciousness through history and culture tourism. The lessons learnt from these migrations tend to support origin from various parts of Africa up to Egypt in North Africa. Interestingly, Egypt once reigned as world power and was the centre of civilization and world intellectual and agricultural supremacy. Even the foremost or classical Diffusionist School pioneered by British scholars who called themselves *The Sun Centered School of Difussionism* or *Heliolithic School* fingered Egypt as the nucleus of all inventions. Since the sun rises from the East and sets in the West, every good thing imaginable must come from where the sun rises. This single source of invention and diffusion persisted for a long time before the *German School of diffusionism*- *The KultureKrise School* emerged to argue that there were many centers of invention and gifted individuals from where such inventions spread in concentric circles to other parts of the universe. In Egypt their culture tourism is pronounced through the pyramids, the great ancient tombs of the kings, hieroglyphics, their religion, architecture, agriculture, and great collections in their museums, just to mention a few.

Historians who adopted Egypt for historical reconstruction of their cultural identity were called *Egyptologists*. The snag here is that North Africans are inherently Hamitic but sub Saharan Africans are not. Apart from their fair skin and curly or straight hair, they are also characterized by flat chin and with no prognathism. In no way should Africans be confused with their

European or Asian counterparts. These two populations are racially distinct. Each has specific physical characteristics that unmistakably distinguish one group from the other. Europeans are simply Europeans and Africans are simply Africans in spite of miscegenation or interbreeding. Hiernaux (1975) has refuted the Hamitic hypothesis with scientific data. For instance GM(x) hereditary factor which is absent in Sub-Sahara Africa is said to be present among the Europeans. Also, Transferin Di genetic blood semen present among the Europeans is very rare and in most cases not also found in Sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, Ro Alleles present in large quantity up to 33 – 99% in Sub-Saharan African is negligible or almost absent in Europe. "M" Allele is said to have a very high frequency in Arabia to the level of more than 65% whereas it is lower than 45% in most population of the Sub-Saharan Africa. Among Negroids, there is higher rhesus combination (CDE), the "V" gene is said to be up to 20% among Africans but only about 1% among Europeans. Again Js gene is prevalent in Africa and not among the Europeans.

In all these arguments of Hamitic origin of Africans South of the Sahara, Laurent Excoffier et al (2005: 151-194) argue that contributions of genetic data to the prehistory and history of Sub-Saharan African peoples using palaeontologic data of homo sapiens and linguistic/archaeological theories show that these families of populations seem genetically homogenous suggesting either recent or remote contact and continuous inter-group relations. More so, recent finds from the Calabar archaeological research tend to confirm the resemblances of the artefacts with those in Cameroon, Congo, Central Africa and to South Africa. Although the researchers caution about hasty conclusions, the vistas of research are now open for more fact finding. Sometimes archaeology, history and language/linguistics are analysed as separate and divisible aspects of a people. All of them work together to unravel the identity of people. Historical linguistics has played a key role in the reconstruction of early history of African peoples, argues Boston (2007, 173-199) to the extent that linguistic research particularly language classification, has been a guiding principle for historians and archaeologists.

In the classification of African languages by Joseph Greenberg (1963) Niger Kordofonian language family is the widest spoken language family in Nigeria; it also extends to Nuba hills in Sudan. The Fulanis, Igbos, Yoruba, Edo, Ijaw, Ibibio, Efik, Kanuri, etc speak various sub-groups of this language. Niger-Kordofonian language family in Nigeria include sub families, namely: West Atlantic, Benue-Congo and Adamawa Eastern.

Those various families and sub-families of African languages represent specific ethnic groups and their identity.

The West Atlantic sub-family of languages is spoken by the Fulani people, who are variously called Fulani, Fellata, Fula, Ful, Fulbe, Peul and Pullo in different parts of West Africa. The Benue Congo sub-family is further divided into Benue Cross River and Upper Benue. Essien (1994:61) gives credit to Greenberg's earlier classification but contends that such an effort was not "entirely definitive as there have been series of revisions leading to the latest by Williamson which now places Ibibio and all other Akwa Ibom languages in Delta-Cross group. Delta Cross has further been segmented into four subgroups – Upper Cross, Lower Cross, Ogoni and Central Delta spoken by people of Akwa Ibom, Cross River States and the Delta areas (see also Essien: 2001). Those who speak the Upper Benue sub-family of languages include Jukun, Tiv, Basa, Birom, Mambilla, Gure and many others are in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. The Adamawa Eastern on the other hand, occupies a transitional zone which includes the Southern forests and the Northern Savannah. The Benue-Congo sub-family of languages is one of the most widely spoken languages in Nigeria. It is also spoken concentratively in Southern and Central Nigeria among the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo, Ijo, Igala, Idoma, Nupe and Gbari.

Greenberg (1965:16) tells us that 'the question of what is relevant for determining common historical origin among languages is not difficult to grasp and needs no special training in linguistic science.' We can reduce this to an equation thus: $Rs + Rm = Co$ where **Rs** represents **resemblance in sound**, **Rm** stands for **resemblance in meaning**. If there are both resemblances in sound and meaning then we can, to a large extent, infer **Common Origin (CO)** (Charles, 2011). Genetic classification seeks to establish genetic history of languages believed to come from the same stock. The wider the difference between languages believed to have a common genetic origin, the longer the time of separation of the languages. Mutual intelligibility of languages refers to the similarity in the vocabulary of the languages spoken. When two languages are not mutually intelligible, we can infer very distant period of separation even if they belong to the same language family. Or, we can conclude that they are not at all related to the proto-language (Charles, 2015).

The relationship between migration and linguistic similarity or difference is illustrated using the Language Tree. The language Tree assumes that many world languages and dialects had a common ancestral origin known

as the Protolanguage. Protolanguage is the ancestral or first language ever spoken in that language family. Overtime people from the same ancestral stock begin to move away from the nucleus of origin. As they move, changes are made in the vocabulary. These changes may be significant enough to completely alter the original language to form a new major language. In other situations, the modification may just be minor, and gives rise to some dialects of the original protolanguage (Charles, 2011 & 2015). The case of Akpabuyo is an extant example here.

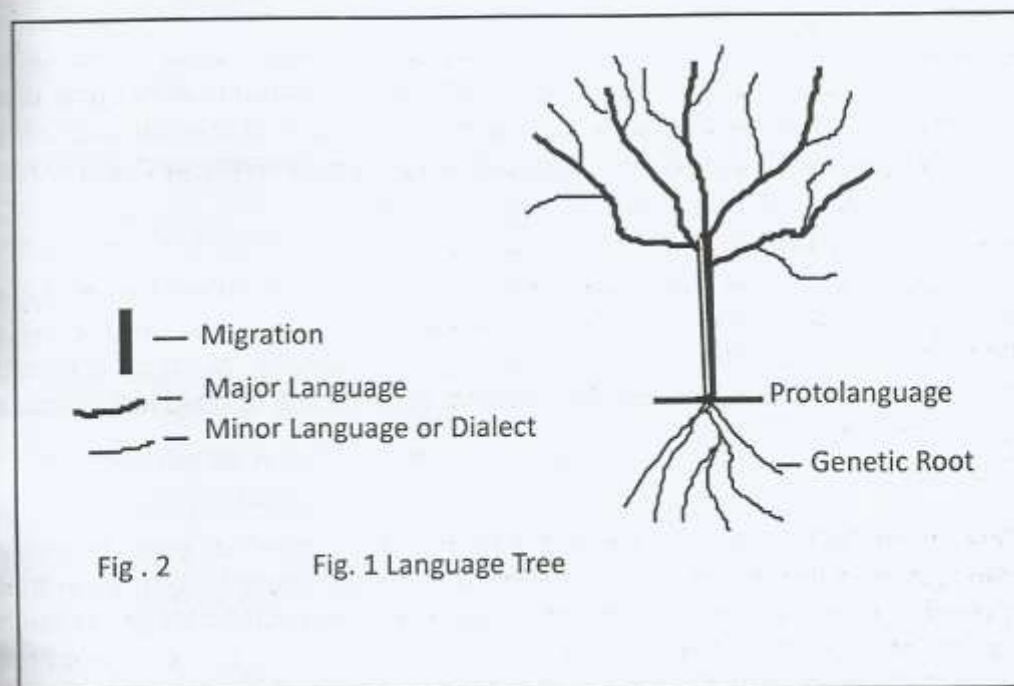


Fig . 2

Fig. 1 Language Tree

Conclusion

The paper has shown the relevance of humanities in the reconstruction of our identity and the promotion of tourism through research and artefact collections. The argument is that we should look closely at the major pre-colonial movements and see how best they can reposition our trajectory of origin combining the historical, linguistic and, archaeological evidence. It is evident that languages must have been exchanged, artefacts must have been shared, used and abandoned as the movements continued, the effect of which is evident in archaeological finds of the 21st century, exemplified by the Ekpo Eyo collections on the *Old Calabarians*. Further reconstruction of our past needs to be done with the desire to recreate our material and non material cultures in to promote history and tourism. There is need for culture bearers to freely donate artefacts to the museum and be objectively open

and receptive to researchers. A lot of these artefacts are wasting in our homes, backyards and gardens.

More interest should be given to the study of humanities such as history, archaeology, linguistics and anthropology. In recent years history has been bastardized and the training in history has vacated the educational space of our primary and post primary schools. In the universities, if '**International Relations**' is not added to history as a discipline, no student wants to venture into the study of history. The outcome, Guardian Newspaper of 22nd April, 2015 pathetically notes thus:

...history has become a terrain of the dilettantes, with each one posting versions of historical accounts that cannot stand the scrutiny of scholarship but are often to whip the hysteria and hatred in society.

The Vanguard strongly warns:

If we do not revisit the devaluation of history, then we are likely to continue to harvest crises arising from ignorance that comes masked in the most irresponsible framing of our different peoples...in enemy modes that makes it difficult to build an inclusive country.

The brain washing of black South Africans during apartheid rule of South African Boers that they were not part of the African heritage is today manifested in the xenophobic attacks of fellow Africans by blacks in that country. The sharing of our inventive past could be better fortified through archaeological finds. All these added together will make Africans South of the Sahara more inward looking and independent of distractions to distort their history, origin and achievements for a viable tourism industry. We have, somehow on a general note, been able to recreate the Atlantic Slave Trade in pictures and some artefacts. What of the specifics for the Niger Delta region and Cross River specifically. Lots of artefacts are wasted in Akpabuyo to depict both the slave trade and the palm oil trade. We can also recreate our traditional religion, political institutions/burial chambers, arts and crafts/technology, and migration history with artefacts abandoned or neglected somewhere. The great migrations in Africa should be our points of departure. Anything short of this will simply ignore and negate the scientific yearnings of Late Professor Ekpo Eyo and lead to the promotion of the **useful of the useless** in our effort to build inclusive cultural identity and tourism infrastructure in Nigeria. It is the contention of this paper that library science can partner with humanities to achieve this ethnographic feat.

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