

REPLANTING THE SEEDS OF HOME: SLAVERY, KING JAJA, AND IGBO
CONNECTIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA, 1821-1891

By

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ABSTRACT

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My dissertation argues that past examinations of West African slave systems have over-emphasized the importance of social, linguistic and cultural marginalization, highlighted by a lack of access to the enslaving society's kinship networks, as the defining factors of slavery in West Africa. By centering the narrative of renown nineteenth century slave-turned-king, Jaja of Opobo, my work argues that, as abolition took effect in the Atlantic world, Igbo slaves amassing in Niger Delta trading state of Bonny were increasingly able to maintain elements of their natal identities and, in cases like Jaja's, were able to reconnect with their natal kinship network in the Igbo interior. Furthermore, my dissertation argues that the slavery-to-kinship continuum model, first put forth by Miers and Kopytoff in 1977, is inherently flawed, inasmuch as it only accounts for the ability of the enslaved to be absorbed into the kinship networks of the slave-holding society, ignoring completely their ability to reconnect with their natal kinship groups in this increasingly turbulent period of West Africa's history.

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This work is dedicated to my collaborators, my friends and all of the citizens of Umuohara.

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INTRODUCTION

Prelude

In 1945 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who would later become Nigeria's first president, visited the small community of Umuduruoha in the Igbo heartland community of Amaigbo, with an "unknown man" named Douglas.¹ As the visit progressed, Dr. Azikiwe and Douglas told the people of Umuduruoha that they had come to find evidence that was critical to the formation of Nigeria's burgeoning national identity. The "unknown man" was in fact Douglas Jaja, the direct descendant of a renowned nineteenth-century "slave-turned-king," King Jaja, who had established the Niger Delta town of Opobo nearly a hundred years earlier.² Dr. Azikiwe's visit

¹ Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, February 6, 2012; E.C. Osuala, interview by Author, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, July 16, 2010; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya, interview by Author, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010.

I was unable to attain any photographs or newspaper clippings from the time period of Azikiwe's visit in 1945 and texts documenting Azikiwe's life make no mention of his trip to Umuduruoha. Each of my collaborators independently verified the year of this visit as 1945, but could not remember the exact date in 1945. Those who recalled the visit first-hand were also able to discuss the visit within the context of their own lives, making the dating of this event somewhat more concrete. Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. Ohaya, both in their early 70s, were both around 4 or 5 years old when the visit took place, while Mr. Wilfred Oforha spoke of the event in relation to his return to the village in his early twenties. Mr. Oforha was, by his counting, 90 years old in 2012. This would place his date of birth around 1922, making him twenty-two or twenty-three when the visit occurred. Prof. E.C. Osuala, who was 76 when I spoke with him in 2012, said he was 8 or 9 years old when the Azikiwe came to Umuduruoha. The consistency of the year 1945 across all of my collaborators' narratives coupled with their ages (and assumed years of birth) at the time of the visit allows us to accept the year as concrete. In all of the narratives collected, my collaborators refer to Douglas Jaja as an "unknown man" as he had never traveled back to his ancestral home of Umuduruoha until 1945.

² Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, December 31, 2011.

While Christian was not alive in 1945, he recounted the story his father had told him regarding the visit. Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja (King Jaja III) was the son of Frederick Sunday Jaja (King Jaja II). Frederick Sunday Jaja was removed from Opobo with his father when King Jaja (Jaja I) was exiled to St. Vincent in 1887. Jaja II returned to Opobo in 1893 and held the title *amadabo* until 1915. Jaja III ruled as the traditional leader of Opobo on two separate occasions, first from 1936 to 1942 and again from 1946 to 1980. What is interesting here is that Jaja III (Douglas) visited Umuduruoha after he had been removed from Opobo's throne. It is likely that Douglas had returned to Umuduruoha to legitimize himself as the rightful heir to King Jaja's throne and was, by most measures, successful in doing so, since he returned to the throne in 1946. This would not be the only example of Opobo rulers seeking legitimization for their Delta authority in the Igbo heartland. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in my conclusion.

For a comprehensive overview of Opobo's leadership since Jaja's death, see S.J.S. Cooley, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891* (New York: Nok Publishers, 1974); E.A. Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891): A Sketch History of the Development and Expansion of Opobo* (Lagos: Opobo Action Council, 1977).

marked an event in which one of the most prominent Igbo figures of the twentieth century had come to seek out the natal home of arguably the most powerful Igbo figure of the nineteenth century. On the eve of independence, Dr. Azikiwe was trying to identify the roots of an early African nationalist. But why?

As Douglas and Azikiwe traversed the red clay streets of Umuduruoha, they were looking for hard evidence of Jaja's connection with the village. Azikiwe did not know what he was searching for, but Douglas knew exactly what he had come to find. Douglas was looking for two iroko trees, a small pond, and some large iron pots, used for boiling palm oil, sent to Umuduruoha by his forefather, Jaja, in the latter half of the nineteenth century.³ As the visitors entered the center of town, Douglas first laid eyes on the remnants of Jaja's link to the hinterland society. In the Duruoshmiri compound, just outside the main building or *obi*, the large iron pots were fastened down with a rusted iron chain.⁴ Douglas knew he had found his home.

Nnamdi Azikiwe and Douglas Jaja had come to Umuduruoha at a critical point in Nigeria's history. Growing anti-colonial sentiments had taken hold. The fifth Pan-African Congress, organized by Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore, was held in London in 1945.

³ Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 18, 2012.

It is worthy of mention here that many in the Umuduruoha community recall the size of the iron pots as “being big enough to cook a man,” before making allusions to past incidences of cannibalism in the region, prior to the introduction of Christianity. Leaving the suspect allusions to cannibalism aside, what is important about this quote is that it conveys the size of these numerous iron pots. In order to shoulder the weight of these many, heavy pots overland from Opobo to Umuduruoha, one would require the ability to organize incredible amounts of manpower. This speaks volumes for Jaja's ability to call upon readily-available labor sources during his reign in Opobo from 1870 to 1887.

⁴ My collaborators all agreed that the original number of iron pots sent to Umuduruoha was in the seventies, but claim that, over the years, many of the pots had been carried off by thieves or taken by other members of the community and stored in their respective compounds. According to my collaborators, the number of pots in the Duruoshmiri compound was in the thirties when Azikiwe and Douglas Jaja visited in the middle of the twentieth century. As of 2012, when I conducted research in Umuduruoha, the number of pots had dwindled to twelve. Eleven of the pots are just outside the Duruoshmiri's *obi* while the remaining pot is located in a storage shed on the back of the Duruoshmiri's property, along with other Jaja related artifacts. In addition to the pots, Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, the descendant of Jaja's brother Duruoshmiri, maintains a collection long-range weaponry, such as rifles and a cannon, a cutlass and a crown awarded to Jaja by Queen Victoria in recognition of Opobo's contributions to the Asante War. These other artifacts will be discussed at length in the conclusion.

Much of the focus of this congress revolved around the treatment of African and African-American soldiers by their white counterparts during World War II, the exclusion of Africans from political processes in Colonial African governments, and the increased need for unity among colonized African nations. The first Pan-African Congress was organized in 1900 and had steadily grown throughout the twentieth century as anti-colonial sentiments grew in Africa and calls for equal treatment and civil rights for people of African descent became more prominent in the Americas. A year after the fifth Pan-African Congress, in 1946, the Pan-African Federation was formed. This multinational group's aim was to eliminate global discrimination against people of African descent while also demanding the right to self-determination in African political affairs. The formation and consolidation of these organizations reflect the sentiments of African political and intellectual elites whose calls for independence were growing increasingly louder.⁵ The seeds of discord had been planted at the end of World War I⁶ and were finding a more acute voice in the sentiments of those returning from the battlefields of the Second World War.⁷ Africans who had fought and died alongside their European counterparts were quickly disproving any lingering notions of an innate European cultural supremacy. A flagellating world economy had eroded the economic bases of colonialism in West Africa roughly a decade before.⁸

⁵ Hakim Adi, "George Padmore and the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress," in *George Padmore: Pan-African Revolutionary*, ed. Fitzroy Baptiste and Rupert Lewis (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2009), 69-70. For details regarding the return of Nigerian soldiers after World War II, see Olufemi Vaughan, "Nigerian Vets and Independence Movements," in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, ed. Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), 135-161.

⁶ Vaughan, "Nigerian Vets," 135-161; Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), chapter 9.

⁷ Jackson, *The British Empire*, chapter 9.

⁸ Moses Ochonu, *Colonial Meltdown Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009). While Ochonu's book deals primarily with the Great Depression in Northern Nigeria, Ochonu points to British-imposed, colony-wide economic policies designed to keep Nigeria's economic output in stride with the costs of maintaining the colonial infrastructure, usually at the cost of "social expenditures." This argument is extended to the whole of Nigeria in Ochonu's article "Conjoined Empire: The Great Depression and Nigeria". The British drive to maintain a self-sustaining colony led to an increase in taxation on Nigerians, which, coupled with drastically declining export markets for Nigerian goods, led to widespread poverty. See Moses Ochonu, "Conjoined Empire: The Great Depression and Nigeria," *African Economic History*, No. 34 (2006), 103-145.

The return of war-weary veterans from the front lines of Europe and North Africa, coupled with a growing class of western-educated Africans,⁹ was the final blow in a fight that had begun before the British had even planted their flag in Nigeria's soil, a fight that took shape during the life of King Jaja.

As men like Nnamdi Azikiwe stood up to take the mantle from their anti-colonial predecessors, they sought to place themselves within a long line of Nigerians who had fought against the oppressive rule of the British Crown.¹⁰ Azikiwe hoped to achieve this by identifying the Igboland birthplace of one of Nigeria's earliest and greatest nationalists, King Jaja of Opobo. To Azikiwe, the visit could have been for the direct purpose of identifying an Igbo figure whose life highlighted Nigeria's proud and independent past.¹¹ To Douglas Jaja and the people of Umuduruoha, it was a more personal discovery and a homecoming of sorts. Over 100 years prior, Douglas Jaja's grandfather, Mbanaso Ozurumba a.k.a. Jaja, was born in this rural

⁹ Gloria Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), chapter two. Here, the author argues that a uniquely Igbo intellectual tradition began with abolitionist writer and former New World slave, Olaudah Equiano, and carried through to the post-independence period in the works of writers and historians like Chinua Achebe and Helen Chukwuma, respectively. One could argue that Jaja's insistence on establishing institutions of western education, an issue that will be discussed in depth in chapter four, in Opobo could be reflective of this Igbo intellectual tradition playing out in a Niger Delta setting.

¹⁰ Nnamdi Azikiwe also promoted an African Nationalism similar to that espoused by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Some scholars have argued that this was, in fact, a veiled attempt to place Igbo people at the top of a newly developing social hierarchy as the colonial era drew to a close. With this assertion in mind, Azikiwe could have been attempting to create an image of the Igbo as long-standing impediments to British rule by highlighting the Jaja's role in repelling the British from the interior prior to the onset of formal colonialism in the early twentieth century. See Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) 53–54. For more on Nnamdi Azikiwe, see COO. Ugowe, *Eminent Nigerians of the Twentieth Century* (Lagos: Hugo Books, 2000); K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, *A Life of Azikiwe* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1965). The writings of Nnamdi Azikiwe, himself, can be found in Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik, A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961) & Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey; An Autobiography* (New York: Praeger, 1970). For more on Azikiwe's philosophies on African Nationalism, see Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (London: Cass, 1968). Other prominent figures emerged from southern and eastern Nigeria to engage in the movements for independence during the 1940s and 1950s. Jaja Anucha Wachuku, the traditional leader of Ngwa in southern Nigeria, was a respected statesman, lawyer, politician and humanitarian whose calls for greater autonomy in African political affairs were heard around the world. Jaja Wachuku was named after Jaja of Opobo, who was an important ally, trade partner and friend of Wachuku's grandfather at the end of the nineteenth century. For more on Jaja Wachuku's nationalist philosophies, see Millar MacLure, Douglas George Anglin and Jaja Wachuku, *Africa: the Political Pattern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

¹¹ Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 41-83.

community in central Igboland. The people of Umuduruoha were, in fact, his kinsmen. Armed with knowledge about Umuduruoha that was passed down to him from his grandfather,¹² Douglas Jaja was sure he was home. Moreover, he was prepared to rekindle his relationship with his ancestral home. The relationship had survived the pressures of Nigeria's independence movement, the horrors of the Nigerian-Biafran War,¹³ and continues on to provide meaning to the people of Umuduruoha and Opobo to this very day.

It was during the late nineteenth century that individuals became heroes, leaving traces of their staunch opposition to foreign rule scattered across the landscape of southern Nigeria and the world.¹⁴ One man embodied this period of economic, political, social and religious turmoil more clearly than his contemporaries. His name was Mbanaso Ozurumba, but was better known as King Jaja of Opobo, and he is now a household name in Nigeria.¹⁵ He is hailed as an early example of Nigeria's constant struggle to maintain a degree of self-determination and political autonomy in the face of the increasingly imperial policies of the British in the years leading up to

¹² Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu. The collaborators who were living in Umuduruoha in the 1940s all agree that Douglas Jaja had been told that he was looking for the iron pots in the Duruoshmiri compound, a large iroko tree, under which Jaja used to play outside of the Okwara Ozurumba compound and small watering hole next to the Okwara Ozurumba compound. These Jaja-related landmarks of Umuduruoha are still situated in the same locations in the community and would have been easily identifiable to any outsider, as they are all located in the *ilo*, or village square, within twenty yards of each other, of Umuduruoha.

¹³ The sitting *amanyanabo*, or king, of Opobo during the Biafran War was Dandeson Jaja. He and his family fled to Umuduruoha to seek refuge from Federal Republic's naval forces that had invaded the Delta communities through the Bight of Biafra. This episode of Umuduruoha/Opobo history, recalled by many of my collaborators, was marked by the tragic death of one of Dandeson Jaja's female family members. Apparently, a young woman accidentally drowned in a creek near Umuduruoha while fetching water for her compound. This topic will be discussed in detail in the conclusion. E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁴ In addition to King Jaja, other Delta Rulers served as stumbling blocks and impediments to the onset of British political and economic dominance in the affairs of what would become southern Nigeria. Another noteworthy example is Nana Olomu of Benin. For more information on Nana Olomu see George W. Neville, "Nanna Oloma of Benin," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 14, No. 54. (Jan., 1915), 162; Peter Ekeh, *Studies in Urhobo Culture* (Nigeria: Urhobo Historical Society, 2005) & Cooley, *King Jaja*, 132.

¹⁵ While Jaja's exploits in the Delta have made him a hero of Nigerian history, there is, to this day, a great deal of dispute over Jaja's place of birth among the general populace of Nigeria. While conducting research in the eastern city of Enugu, I heard Jaja's place of origin variously attributed to Nkwere (not far from his birthplace in Umuduruoha), Bonny (where he rose to prominence from his rank as a slave), and Kano State (an area with which Jaja was never connected or affiliated). Jaja's slave origins likely play a large role in the confusion over his place of birth. However, it suffices to say, that, despite his place in the national psyche, there is still a great deal of disconnect between Jaja, the King of Opobo, and Jaja, the Igbo boy who was taken into slavery in the minds of average Nigerian citizens.

formal colonialism at the end of nineteenth century.¹⁶ However, one will find details regarding Jaja's life outside of the pre-colonial exchange with Great Britain are difficult to come by in academic literature. Moreover, a failure to mine the details of his life represents a failure to identify the potential outcomes that social mobility afforded to enslaved individuals in Eastern Niger Delta in the middle to late nineteenth century.



Figure 1: Southeastern Nigeria, showing Umuduruoha, Bonny and Opobo

A Brief Outline of Jaja's Life

King Jaja was born around the year 1821 in Umuduruoha, a village associated with the larger Amaigbo division in what is now Imo State in southeastern Nigeria.¹⁷ Jaja's experiences

¹⁶ K. Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 182-202; Walter Ofonagoro, *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria, 1881-1929* (Ibadan: Nok Publishers, 1979), 95-107.

¹⁷ While contemporary sources and the later scholarship of historians are unable to identify the day of Jaja's birth, it is universally accepted that he was born in 1821. The years of his birth and death are, more often than not, cited from the statue erected of him in Opobo. These dates have been reiterated, without further investigation, by nearly every scholar writing on Jaja since his death. 1821 as Jaja's year of birth merits some discussion and will be discussed in detail in chapter one. However, the year of his death, 1891, is concrete, as there is a wealth of archival evidence surrounding the exhumation of his body from Tenerife, an island in the Atlantic Ocean, and its return to Opobo.

National Archives, UK, FO 2/51, Sir Claude MacDonald, Correspondence, January 28, 1893; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 36/3/5, G.H. Davidson, Correspondence Relating to the Exhumation of Body of Late King Jaja of Opobo, September 7th, 1891 & National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 53/1/1, Louis Camacho, Accounts re: Jaja 1891, 1894. It should be noted that much of the material related to Jaja's death and exhumation are written in both English and Spanish, as the independent Spanish businessmen who provided Jaja

during his early years in his natal village were likely similar to those of his cohort.¹⁸ Jaja was exposed to a communal system of child rearing in which the community praised their youth for achieving individual milestones in public settings, like the marketplace or the village square. Yet, one fateful day Jaja was seized while playing with his sister near his father's compound and whisked away from Umuduruoha around the year 1833.¹⁹

Upon his entry into Bonny as a slave,²⁰ Jaja was absorbed into one of the *wari*, the Anna Pepple house.²¹ Jaja proved his acumen as a trader in palm oil and was able to secure a great deal of personal wealth trading under the Anna Pepple *wari*. However, the Anna Pepple *wari* soon came into conflict with the Manilla Pepple *wari*, which was led by another Igbo ex-“slave” named Oko Jumbo.²² This conflict soon disintegrated into an all-out civil war which would only be resolved with Jaja's removal of his house from Bonny and the establishment of a new state, Opobo, in 1870.²³

From the 1870s forward, Opobo dominated the export markets for palm oil trade in southern Nigeria and Jaja, ever the effective autocrat, had consolidated his economic and

with services and goods in his final days were left to seek compensation from the British Crown. There are no discrepancies between English and Spanish versions of Jaja's death, burial and exhumation.

¹⁸Cookey, *King Jaja*, preface. Even among the people of Umuduruoha and Amaigbo, there seems to be no memory of any major events occurring during Jaja's early life in his natal village. Incidents, such as conflicts with neighboring communities, periods of famine, outbreaks of major diseases and episodes of drastic social change would likely be retained in communal memory. The lack of any such memory is likely indicative that, at the time of Jaja's birth and during his early childhood, the community of Umuduruoha was experiencing a period of relative peace with their neighbors and stability in their social, economic and religious institutions. For more on dating in pre-nineteenth century Igboland, see Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005), 7-8.

¹⁹ Again, this date is tentative and will be investigated in-depth in Chapter Two.

²⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 26-30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-185. The year of Jaja's arrival in Bonny is questionable at best and is alternately given as 1833 or 1834. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in chapters one & three.

²¹ *Wari*, also known as houses, were social, political, economic and religious organizational units of the Ijo of the Niger Delta.

²² E.J. Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta states and Calabar” *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 5 (4), 1971, 565–570; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 117-120.

²³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 51-77; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions”, 565-570. Cookey's text also provides a copy of the Minima Agreement, signed by fourteen Opobo chiefs, including King Jaja, and three British representatives, which outlines British recognition of the newly established trading state of Opobo in 1871. See Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169 & 170.

political reach to the point of monopoly.²⁴ In the 1880s, Jaja's relationship with British representatives on what was then called the Oil Rivers broke down, and in 1887 Jaja was deposed and exiled to St. Vincent in the West Indies. In 1891, Jaja died during his return voyage to Opobo.²⁵

Thesis

The 1945 visit rekindled the memory of Opobo and Umuduruoha people alike. It provided the proof Douglas Jaja needed to re-establish the ties forged between the two communities by his grandfather in the 1870s.²⁶ It tied two branches of one family tree back together for the second time in a century. It is also a useful entry point to the purpose of this study.

This dissertation centers King Jaja of Opobo's life history as a means of investigating a previously overlooked bond that developed between Umuduruoha and Opobo in the latter half of the nineteenth century and continues on into the present. Despite Jaja's stature in the economic and political histories of southeastern Nigeria, the social implications of his movements through the indigenous slave network, his rise to power in the Niger Delta trading state of Bonny, and his establishment of Opobo have yet to be examined through the lens of slave studies literature. My dissertation addresses this oversight by examining the circumstances through which social mobility in the indigenous slave networks of southeastern Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth

²⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169 & 170; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 190-199; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 568-570.

²⁵ National Archives, UK, FO 2/51, Sir Claude MacDonald, Correspondence, January 28, 1893; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 36/3/5, G.H. Davidson, Correspondence Relating to the Exhumation of Body of Late King Jaja of Opobo, September 7th, 1891 & National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 53/1/1, Louis Camacho, Accounts re: Jaja 1891, 1894.

²⁶ As mentioned earlier, the purpose of Douglas Jaja and Nnamdi Azikiwe's visit will be explored in detail in chapter six. More likely than not, Douglas Jaja was attempting to reclaim the Opobo throne as the sitting *amanyanabo* by establishing that he was the rightful, hereditary ruler, using Jaja's ancestral ties in Umuduruoha to legitimize his lineage and kingship. This was not the only time a dispute over Opobo's headship was contested by calling upon Jaja's Igbo kinship networks in the interior. It would happen again in the early 2000s, an issue that will be addressed later in this work.

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allowed Jaja and other Igbo slaves like him to maintain aspects of their former identities when emerging in the Niger Delta city-states and, in rare cases like Jaja's, re-establish ties to their birth communities in the interior from their positions on the coast.²⁷ This dissertation also seeks to move beyond Jaja's life in order to follow the relationship he was responsible for forging between Umuduruoha and Opobo through to the present. In this sense, my dissertation has two purposes. First, this dissertation seeks to revise our understanding of the social marginality of Igbo slaves in the Niger Delta and those slaves' relationships and connections to their natal homes and kinship networks. Secondly, it will function to fill in the gaps of Jaja's life history wherever possible. Dozens of texts highlight Jaja's role as a monarch in the Niger Delta, his monopoly over the palm oil trade on the Oil Rivers, and the decline of his relationship with his British trade partners. However, little to nothing has been written about Jaja's home in the Igbo interior and his relationship to that home both before and during his tenure in the Niger Delta. Thus, my dissertation necessarily pays less attention to Jaja's political career in favor of focusing on his connections to his natal home in the Igbo heartland.

Jaja's life history allows the scholar of African slave systems to center the ways in which enslaved individuals in the coastal city-states of the Niger Delta were able to maintain elements their natal identity during their terms of enslavement. The title of this dissertation, "Replanting the Seeds of Home: Slavery, King Jaja, and Igbo Connections in the Niger Delta, 1821-1891," is telling inasmuch as it identifies the two units of analysis I use to frame Jaja's life within existing notions of African indigenous slave systems. Whereas past slave studies literature pertaining to

²⁷ Jaja is not the only Igbo ex-slave to reconnect with his natal community. For another example see Ndubueze Mbah's discussion of Eze Kalu. Ndubueze Mbah, "Emergent Masculinities: The Gendered Struggle for Power in Southeastern Nigeria, 1850-1920" (PhD Diss, Michigan State University, 2013), 394-396.

Kalu was, by his own account, one of Jaja's most trusted slaves and succeeded in gaining his manumission from Opobo slavery when Jaja was exiled to St. Vincent. He returned to the Igbo hinterland community of Isigwu, Ohafia where he was born, reconnected with his natal kinship group and lived as a respected hunter and elder in the community for the rest of his days.

Africa have elevated the experiences of social dislocation and the marginality of the enslaved, this study centers Jaja's slave experiences to show how he continued to maintain elements of natal identity while living in slavery in Bonny and, as a result of this continued maintenance of his natal identity, allowed Jaja to once again “connect” with his hinterland home, rekindling his relationship with his ancestral lineage in Umuduruoha. Jaja's maintenance of his natal identity manifested itself in a number of ways. First, Jaja, even after his enslavement in Bonny, never abandoned his mother tongue, Igbo.²⁸ Linguistic patterns in the Niger Delta trading state of Bonny are critical to this study because language is the primary medium through which more nebulous concepts such as “culture” and “worldview” are expressed and understood. The relationship between language and cultural transmission is best expressed through the “principle of linguistic relativity,”²⁹ adopted by American anthropologists Franz Boas and Edward Sapir in the early twentieth century.³⁰ This model has been reiterated in many forms over the past century. In its strongest expression, the principle of linguistic relativity argues that language categories determine one's cognitive processes, completely impacting and even limiting the way an individual views and understands his or her world. It has also been applied in more tentative forms, with some claiming that language categories simply influence thought processes and cognition.³¹ For the purposes of this study, the principle of linguistic relativity is applied to assess the dialectical or discourse-based nature of Igbo usage in the Niger Delta state of Bonny. Anthropologist and linguist Joel Scherzer, who works on the relationship between language and culture among the indigenous groups of Latin American, neatly summarizes the principle of

²⁸National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28.

²⁹ The principle of linguistic relativity is also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

³⁰ Joel Scherzer, “A Discourse-Centered Approach to Language and Culture,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 89, No.2 (June 1987), 295.

³¹ Sheila Kennison, *Introduction to Language Development* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014); Jane Hill and Bruce Mannheim, “Language and Worldview,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 21, (October 1992), 381-404.

linguistic relativity when he writes,

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, as usually formulated, searches for isomorphisms between grammar and culture and views language as either providing the means for thought and perception, or, in its stronger form, conditioning thought, perception, and world view... I consider discourse to be the concrete expression of language-culture relationships. It is discourse that creates, recreates, modifies, and transmits both culture and language and their intersection...³²

Working from Scherzer's modification of the principle of linguistic relativity, formerly known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, we can argue that the increased buildup of Igbo slaves led to an adoption of the Igbo language as the primary means of discourse between slave and slave master in Bonny and is representative of a changing cultural fabric in the Niger Delta that allowed space for Igbo world views and cultural expressions to survive and flourish, regardless of the subservient or enslaved position of the Igbo classes. This linguistic shift, as it occurred, challenges the notion that the enslaved individual was linguistically and thus socially isolated in their new positions in the Niger Delta trading state of Bonny.

Prior to Jaja's arrival in the Bonny, the day-to-day language used in Bonny was Ijo.³³ Igbo was, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, used only in business transactions in the Igbo interior markets of Nigeria. However, by the 1830s, with the onset of Atlantic abolition and vast buildup of Igbo domestic slaves in Bonny, Igbo had become the lingua Franca in Bonny, in both business and domestic settings.³⁴ As such, this eliminated one of the major hurdles that Jaja faced in adapting to his new position as a slave in the Anna Pepple house. Slave studies that have been produced to this point have all pointed to the enslaved individual's knowledge, or lack

³² Scherzer, "Discourse-Centered Approach," 295.

³³ E.J. Alagoa and A. Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 3-12 ; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 7-9; G.I. Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 9-15 & 160.

³⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28.

thereof, of the slave-holding community's language as the first assault on the social identity of the enslaved individual.³⁵ In other words, an inability to grasp the language of the slave-holding community was the first factor that led to a slave's social marginality in his or her new society. This simply was not the case for Jaja, as when he arrived in Bonny both slaves and slave-masters used Igbo to communicate, even in the domestic settings of Bonny.³⁶

The second factor that functioned to lessen the impact of Jaja's social dislocation in Bonny stems from Jaja's upbringing in the Igbo interior. Here, I argue that the social structures of central Igboland generally, and Umuduruoha specifically, challenged the individual to make his or her own way in society.³⁷ Systems of child-rearing and title-taking that existed in Umuduruoha promoted the success of the individual in the communal setting, a point I discuss in detail in chapter three. This, in turn, taught young Igbo children that regardless of their initial place in the social hierarchy of their society, they were capable of achieving great things and becoming prominent citizens of the community. This is critical to Jaja's narrative as he had to rely on this upbringing to become a successful and wealthy trader in Bonny, in spite of his slave status. Bonny slaves were able to amass their own wealth and create vital trade connections by moving up through the ranks of Bonny's trading culture. Most slaves adopted into Bonny culture began their time in enslavement as lowly “trading boys,” or canoe paddlers.³⁸ While their sole responsibility was to navigate the canoes to the interior market, they would often learn the

³⁵ Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 22-30; Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick, eds., *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 1-9.

³⁶ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28.

³⁷ My conversations with Prof. O.N. Njoku at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka helped me in formulating an understanding of the relationship between Igbo child-rearing practices and individual stories of Igbo people who found success from their positions as slaves in the Niger Delta. Prof. O.N. Njoku, conversation with Author, July 7, 2010, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria.

³⁸ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30; Jones, *Trading States*, 13-19.

nuances of trade with the interior markets when accompanying their slave-masters on these trading expeditions. This, in turn, allowed them to take on greater responsibility, and their masters would extend a form of credit to their slaves to begin their own trade relationships, creating a stream of personal revenue.³⁹ When the amount of wealth amassed by the individual slave exceeded that of other traders in his house, whether he was free-born or enslaved, that individual would, usually, assume the headship of a *wari* upon the passing of a former master.⁴⁰

While Jaja was able to achieve the headship of the Anna Pepple *wari*, lazy or unmotivated individuals would fail to move up in the social hierarchy of Bonny's houses. Therefore, the personal drive for success and the understanding that one's own actions equate directly to their social position, provided the framework in which Igbo people understood their terms of enslavement as transient or temporary. The emphasis on individual success, represented by bestowing public praise on a child for success in minor endeavors like hunting, that was instilled in Jaja in Umuduruoha from a young age contributed directly to his successes as a trader in Bonny.⁴¹ These successes placed Jaja in a position to assume headship of the Anna Pepple

³⁹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions", 565; Jones, *Trading States*, 13-19; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 153-165.

⁴⁰ Evidence of this process is clearly articulated by both King Jaja's experiences in the Delta, as well as that of his leading Bonny opponent, Oko Jumbo.

⁴¹ E.C. Osuala. In my interview with Prof. Osuala, we spoke at length about the child-rearing practices of Umuduruoha, specifically. Prof. Osuala was born and raised in Umuduruoha during the middle of the 20th century. He emphasized that, during his upbringing, many of the same practices that functioned to instill a sense of individualism in an Umuduruoha child that existed in Jaja's day were still in practice when he was a child, over a century later. In particular, Prof. Osuala pointed to the practice of young boys hunting small animals, mostly birds and lizards, as a means of instilling this sense of individualism. While the primary purpose of this practice was to help an individual hone his skills as a hunter, the community at large gathered together in the *ilo*, or village square, to publicly praise the young boys for their successes. The community's recognition of individual success is further articulated in the process of title-taking, which recognized the adult males of the community for their achievements in war, trading, farming and other individual activities important to the community at large. It is important to note that the overtly patriarchal system of the Amaigbo division of Igboland did not allow for females in the community to take titles. For more on the patrilineal nature of Amaigbo, specifically, and central Igboland, generally, see Uchendu's discussion of the "*umunna* belt" in Victor Uchendu, "Ezi na Ulo: The Extended Family in Igbo Civilization," *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 31, No. 1/3, (2007), 167-219.

While this is not true of the other regions of Igboland, it suffices to say that only men took communally recognized titles in Umuduruoha and the surrounding villages that comprised Igboland. For more on women, the

house and eventually provided the material and human resources Jaja needed to establish the new trading state of Opobo. This allowed him to reconnect with his natal home.

Finally, an examination of Bonny's slave system helps to challenge the primacy of social marginality and dislocation as organizing factors in African slave systems. In Bonny, one sees a unique system in which the enslaved individual is immediately integrated into the social fabric of the society through a process of adoption into a kinship network. The practice of an adoptive Bonny "mother" shaving a slave's head and giving him or her a new name is representative of enculturating that individual into Bonny society. The shaving of a slave's head and the adoption of an Ijo name are intended to facilitate a slave's "rebirth" or "replanting" in Bonny society as soon as the enslaved individual arrived.⁴² Thus, the first experience a slave in Bonny would undergo was this process of adoption into the kinship and patronage networks or the *wari*, or houses.⁴³ As such, the Bonny system placed little emphasis on social dislocation and marginality because the enslaved classes, by the middle of the nineteenth century, were absolutely necessary to maintaining the wealth and prosperity of a *wari*.⁴⁴ This notion runs in stark contrast to the idea that a slave is, at the onset of his time in enslavement, socially marginalized or a social "non-actor." The slave in Bonny was not a "quasi-kinsmen,"⁴⁵ but rather a full-fledged member of the

female principle and authority in other regions of Igboland, see Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings* & Nwando Achebe, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

⁴² The name "Jaja" is a shortened and Anglicized version of Jaja's given Ijo name, Jubo-Jubogha, given to Jaja by his adoptive mother upon his arrival in Bonny. The British representatives at the coasts of West Africa often had great difficulty pronouncing the names of their African trade partners. The importance of names and naming in both Igboland and Bonny will be discussed at length later in this study. See Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29.

⁴³ Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 565; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 55-57; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30.

⁴⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions", 565; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 55-57.

⁴⁵ This term is borrowed from the work of Frederick Cooper in his investigation of plantation slavery in East Africa. See Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1977).

house, albeit with limited responsibilities initially.⁴⁶ The slave's vested interest in the financial and political well-being of the *wari* functioned to ease tensions between the slave and the slave-master. The increased wealth of the slave-master directly increased the prosperity of his or her subordinates. Thus, Bonny's slave system is not one of pure economic exploitation, but rather a system that allows increased prosperity and social standing for both slave and slave-master alike. Therefore, in Bonny, it was not only the slave-master who had an interest in perpetuating the slave-system, but also the slave as this shared interest led to accumulated personal wealth for the slave as well.

Slave studies have, for quite some time, examined the relationship between domestic African slavery and the Western forms of chattel slavery, creating a dichotomy between the “benign” practice of slavery in West Africa and the rigid, de-humanizing, and relatively violence-based forms of slavery being practiced in the New World.⁴⁷ While it has become established canon that West African forms of servitude were, in contrast to European notions of slavery, rather innocuous and afforded greater social, economic and political mobility for slaves,⁴⁸ historians have yet to examine the full implications of this social mobility. In juxtaposing

⁴⁶ It is important to note that there were social distinctions between the free-born and the enslaved members of Bonny's houses. But these distinctions, in the middle of the nineteenth century, generally emerged only when claims to the headship of Bonny was at issue. In Bonny, only free-born members of the community could hold the position *amanyanabo*, while those who were not “free-born” could only rule as regents until a hereditarily-recognized monarch could come of age. Therefore, Bonny slaves did have access to the highest positions of political authority, but could not be recognized as “Kings” or *amanyanabo* in Bonny. Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 55-57; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 39-46.

⁴⁷ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3-8; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 9; Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 108-135. It should be noted that not all slave studies scholars agree on the “benign” nature of African slavery prior to the onset and growth of the Atlantic trade in slaves. French scholar Claude Meillassoux argued in his 1991 publication *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* that African slavery, much like its New World counterpart, was in fact based on violence or the threat of violence against slaves. While this is likely true in certain areas of Africa, it does not reflect the realities of slavery in Bonny specifically, or southern Nigeria in general. See Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). The recent slave studies literature has moved past comparisons of African and New World slave systems to more localized or regional assessments of slave systems.

⁴⁸ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 17 & 18; Martin A. Klein, “Slavery in the Western Sudan” in *African Systems of Slavery*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 11-44; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 8.

domestic slave studies literature and Jaja's narrative, I intend to provide a revision to the notion that systems of slavery in West Africa operated on and were defined by the social, linguistic, and economic marginality of newly acquired slaves. Rather, I argue that, during the mid- to late nineteenth century, slaves in the coastal communities of southern Nigeria were increasingly capable of maintaining pieces of their natal identities while simultaneously adopting customs and traditions of their slave-holding coastal societies.

I employ the model of the “slavery-to-kinship continuum”⁴⁹ to frame this study. This model argues that newly procured slaves were relative strangers in their new communities and were, at this initial point in their time of enslavement, the most marginal and socially isolated members of the community.⁵⁰ This model goes on to argue that as the enslaved person adopts a new social identity, learns the language of their new home and acquires greater personal wealth and community connections, they become less a “slave” and more a “citizen” or member of a kinship network, of their adoptive home.⁵¹ While this model provides the base on which my thesis is constructed, I argue that the “kinship” end of this continuum does not necessarily come to fruition with a newly adopted identity in the slave-holding community. Rather, I argue that the “kinship” end of the continuum comes to fruition when the enslaved individual was capable of “replanting the seeds of home,” or re-establishing elements of their former identity, which I refer to as one's “natal identity.”

The model of the “slavery-to-kinship continuum” incorrectly pre-supposes that, with the act of enslavement, the enslaved individual experiences a drastic break from his or her natal

⁴⁹ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3-8; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 9; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 8, 213-215.

⁵⁰ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3-8; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 9; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 8, 213-215.

⁵¹ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3-8; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 9; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 8, 213-215.

identity and is left to fill the void with the social customs of those who enslave the individual. This does not hold true when examining the Bonny system of slavery. In the middle of the nineteenth, one could have readily found elements of the language, religious customs and social habits of the largely enslaved Igbo classes permeating the day-to-day customs of the traditionally Ijo coastal state. Moreover, as Igbo slaves of Bonny witnessed the rise of legitimate trade in the mid-1800s, they increasingly found themselves traveling back to their natal communities to procure palm oil for export in the Atlantic World, placing them in direct contact with free Igbo traders who, often times, came from the same communities as they did.⁵² In earlier decades, these same Igbo people were actively being shipped out of the Niger Delta for the plantations and mines of the Americas;⁵³ however the abolition of the Atlantic trade in slaves left many of the same individuals enslaved, but easily within traveling distance to their natal communities. To be sure, Jaja's rise to power and monopolization of Delta palm oil markets was unique, but the relatively short distance between his former home and his new home was not.

Jaja's life history shows that the culmination of shifting societal norms in the Niger Delta, the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the rise of legitimate trade on the West Coast of Africa, as well as the loosely defined and adaptable slave systems of trading states like Bonny provided an opportunity for Jaja to replant the seeds of home and rekindle his relationship with his natal community in general and his family, in particular. Thus, Jaja's story is not one of social marginality, but of the bonds of kinship. Jaja's life history is a celebration of perseverance in the

⁵² This is how Jaja came to relocate his natal home of Umuduruoha in the early 1880s. The narrative surrounding this topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. See J.N. Oriji, "A Re-Assessment of the Organisation and Benefits of the Slave and Palm Produce Trade Amongst the Ngwa-Igbo," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1982), 525.

⁵³ Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 256; Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa: Revised 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005), 236; G. Ugo Nwokeji, "African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, (Jan. 2001); G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 53-81.

face of adversity. It is a story of connection, not dislocation. It is a story that emphasizes the importance of family and kin to one's identity, not the loneliness and dislocation of slavery, even if that system of slavery is relatively “benign.”

Organization and Layout

This dissertation is divided into six chapters that deal with Jaja's life and his legacy beyond his death in 1891. I dedicate the chapter following this one to analyze the various literatures on slavery and Jaja. The first chapter provides a discussion of the sources and my methods of data collection that are employed throughout this study. In addition to identifying the archival sources, I provide a framework for understanding how I intend to use non-written sources of history, such as oral interviews, relics and artifacts from Jaja's life, geo-spatial mapping and identification of notable landmarks, and the actions of community organizations and institutions in maintaining memories of Jaja. The first chapter also includes a discussion of how I, as a white American graduate student, relate to this subject and the community of Umuduruoha, where I conducted the bulk of my oral interviews. Here I intend to highlight the various impressions that people in Umuduruoha and beyond held of me, as well as how my interactions with the collaborators who have maintained oral narratives regarding Jaja impacted my collection of information, in particular, and this study holistically. It is in this chapter that I identify my many collaborators⁵⁴ in Umuduruoha and the surrounding villages. Finally, I introduce the framework for how I intend to approach the more nebulous concepts of “legacy” and “memory” when dealing with the life history of a nationally-prominent figure like King Jaja.

The second chapter introduces the community of Umuduruoha in a historical view. Here,

⁵⁴ This term is borrowed from my adviser and mentor Nwando Achebe. Achebe's own works, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings* and *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*, as well as our many one-on-one discussions provide the basis for my use of the term “collaborator” and how these “collaborators” were involved in the production of knowledge about Jaja and his legacy. This topic will be addressed at length in Chapter One.

I trace the founding and expansion of Umuduruoha through to the period of Jaja's birth in the first half of the nineteenth century while highlighting the relationship between Umuduruoha and neighboring communities in Amaigbo and Igboland, as well as the place of Jaja's family in the village network. I also address the social, political, economic and religious institutions that existed in Amaigbo in the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the practices that prepared Jaja for the ordeals that would come later in his life. Moreover, this chapter provides the various narratives of Jaja's "kidnapping"⁵⁵ and his journey through southern Nigeria, ending with his emergence in the Niger Delta state of Bonny.

Chapter Three begins with Jaja's adoption into the Anna Pepple house in Bonny while also providing an ethnographic baseline for Bonny. Here I highlight the prevailing social structures as they existed in Bonny in the beginning of the nineteenth-century as well as Bonny's place in the wider Atlantic world as a principal supplier of slaves and, later, palm oil. I also include a discussion of the relationship between the external Atlantic slave markets and domestic slave markets, the emergence of "legitimate trade" in the wake of the Atlantic abolition of slavery, and the rise of palm oil as the principal export of the Niger Delta after the 1830s. Finally, this chapter details Jaja's activities as a member of the Anna Pepple house and the ways in which he amassed great wealth and political clout in the Delta State and the hinterland markets.

Chapter Three goes on to address the eruption of civil war in Bonny. Here I provide a discussion of the role that religious change played in the civil war in Bonny from 1867-1870, an element of the conflict that is often overlooked. I discuss Jaja's efforts as a combatant in the war, his attempts to sway other houses to his side, his contentious relationship with Oko Jumbo and the Manilla Pepple house, and his attempts to avoid the complete decimation of his forces in the

⁵⁵ I have placed quotations around the word "kidnapping" for the time being, as there are multiple narratives that dispute the claims that he was, in fact, kidnapped. These narratives will be discussed comprehensively in chapter one.

course of the war. Chapter Three draws to a close with a section dedicated to Jaja's removal of his followers to Egwenga Island in Andoni territory and the founding of the new city-state of Opobo in 1870 and 1871.

Chapter Four discusses formation and growth of the newly-founded Opobo. I analyze Jaja's institution and maintenance of traditional African religious ideals, his increasingly troubled relationship with British representatives, and the means through which Jaja was able to virtually monopolize palm oil exports in the region. In addition to identifying Jaja's activities in this time period, this chapter also discusses the most critical aspect of Jaja's life. I detail how Jaja, as the ruling monarch of Opobo, was able to reconnect with his family and kinsmen in Umuduruoha through his vast and extensive trade network in the Igbo hinterland and what that relationship meant to both Jaja and his kinsmen in Umuduruoha and Opobo.

Chapter Four then moves to a discussion of Jaja's seizure, trial in Accra, and his exile in St. Vincent in the West Indies. This section of the dissertation highlights the many attempts of Jaja and his network of friends and acquaintances to secure Jaja's return to Opobo specifically and West Africa generally as well as his death and burial on the Spanish-held island of Tenerife.

My concluding chapter addresses the longstanding ties between Umuduruoha and Opobo, the ways in which the communities supported one another and how the relationship between the two communities waned and was rekindled under various circumstances. The conclusion also analyzes the many ways in which Jaja has been memorialized and remembered in his natal home of Umuduruoha. It discusses the various landmarks and artifacts related to Jaja that can be found in Umuduruoha today as well as the ways the citizens of Umuduruoha have used Jaja's stature in Nigeria's history to organize the community towards productive ends and elicit funds for development projects from state and federal authorities.

It also draws my dissertation to a close by suggesting further lines of inquiry for researchers to follow. I reiterate the calls of Umuduruoha for greater recognition of their community as a national heritage site and greater recognition of Jaja as a national hero by the Federal Government in Nigeria. It also addresses the current state of Jaja related documents and artifacts held in Nigeria as well as the increasingly deplorable conditions that threaten the future viability of these sources of history.

King Jaja of Opobo left an indelible mark on the landscape of southern Nigeria and the Atlantic world during his lifetime. Through this study, I hope to reinvigorate discussion about this critical figure in Nigeria's history and show how his narrative can provide challenges to our existing notions of slavery, slave systems and social identity in Africa. Furthermore, my aim is to convey just how palpable his impact on Umuduruoha and Opobo has been over the course of the last century. While Jaja's contributions to maintaining and perpetuating African autonomy in the Nigerian-British exchange at the end of the nineteenth century are undeniable and have been well documented by historians, the reality is that Jaja's influence has extended well beyond his lifetime but has remained obscured from the view of West Africanist historians and slave studies historians to date. This study hopes to rectify that shortcoming in the literature.

AFRICAN SLAVE SYSTEMS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review presented in this chapter breaks down by subject. First, I review the literature surrounding the subject of African slave systems, starting with the slave narratives produced by individuals who were taken from Africa to the New World and were largely writing in support of the abolitionist movement as it grew throughout the eighteenth century. This section of the literature review comes to a close with an analysis of African slave studies in academic literature. Secondly, I frame the works that discuss Jaja, in particular, in a chronological fashion, showing how attitudes towards Jaja and his tenure in the Niger Delta have changed from the nineteenth century to the present.

Eighteenth Century Slave Narratives

The earliest indigenous evidence for the existence and structure of slave systems in West Africa can be found in the slave narratives produced in the context of the abolitionist movements of the mid to late eighteenth century. While the primary purpose of these texts was to draw out the inhumane and cruel nature of New World slavery, they also provide the best window we have to glean information about the systems of slavery in place in the hinterland and coastal areas of West Africa in a period for which we have very little written documentation of events occurring in the region.¹ Historians have long used these narratives to draw comparisons between New World and African slave systems. Moreover, they have used these narratives as a contextual backdrop for centering the experiences of African slaves who did not leave a written account of their ordeals. Many individuals, like King Jaja, had entered into and come out of their slave positions without providing a written account of their experiences. As such, these early slave

¹ Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

narratives are perhaps our best available source to describe the nature and structure of African slave systems.

The first notable description of indigenous African experiences of slavery comes to us from Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, known to the English speaking world as James Albert. Gronniosaw was born in the Bornu region of northeastern Nigeria sometime around the year 1705. According to his narrative, despite being a favorite son of his mother and being doted upon by his grandfather, the King, he was exceedingly unhappy at home, constantly asking his friends and relations about the existence of a higher power or “supreme man” that lived “above the sun.”² His melancholy disposition eventually led Gronniosaw to leave his home and his family around the age of fifteen,³ with an ivory trader from the Gold Coast. The merchant told Gronniosaw and his family that, by traveling with him to the Gold Coast to see new and wonderful sights, he could cure the boy of his continuing sadness, at which point he would return the young Gronniosaw to his home. After traveling from Bornu to the Gold Coast under constant threat of death from the merchant's companion, Gronniosaw was taken to the King of the Gold Coast to be beheaded. However, upon seeing Gronniosaw so unafraid of death, the King of the Gold Coast apparently wept and decided not to kill the boy, instead opting to have him sold as a slave so that he could not function as a spy for the Kingdom of Bornu.⁴ Gronniosaw was sold to a Dutch captain in the Gold Coast. From there, he was taken across the Atlantic to Barbados and sold as a slave to a Calvinist minister from New York. He eventually resettled in the English town of Kidderminster, it being the home of a Calvinist minister whom Gronniosaw admired greatly. In 1770, Gronniosaw published an account of his experiences through a publisher in Bath, England.

² James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw and Walter Shirley, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince* (Bath: Printed by W. Gye, 1770), 3-5.

³ Gronniosaw and Shirley, *A Narrative*, 3-5.

⁴ Gronniosaw and Shirley, *A Narrative*, 7. Gronniosaw claims the King at the Gold Coast suspected him of spying for his grandfather, the King of Bornu, so that Bornu could make war on the Gold Coast.

Gronniosaw's account differs greatly from the slave narratives of the latter eighteenth century in a number of ways. First, Gronniosaw's account claims that he was innately aware of the existence of a single, supreme deity while living with his pan-theistic family in Bornu. This is often described as a reflection of the Calvinist belief in predestination, as Calvinism's influence on Gronniosaw manifested itself in such a way that he cast his entire life as devoid of happiness until he comes to accept the Christian doctrine. Also, Gronniosaw's account highlights his spiritual enlightenment and subsequent happiness as a result of his proximity to Caucasians. These aspects of Gronniosaw's narrative make it a noteworthy departure from the African slave narratives that would come later, as these later narratives were written with the intention of undermining the many justifications used for perpetuating Western systems of slavery.⁵ While Gronniosaw's narrative was the forerunner of other slave narratives, there are few details in his narrative that inform King Jaja's experiences in slavery during the early to mid-nineteenth century.⁶ The only similarity between Gronniosaw's and Jaja's narrative worth noting is that both individuals were related to the ruling class of their natal homes and were taken as young teenagers.⁷ Descent from or relation to the ruling lineage or royalty seems to be a reoccurring phenomenon within the slave narrative body of literature.

⁵ Gronniosaw and Shirley, *A Narrative*, 1-3; Michael Echeruo, "Theologizing 'Underneath the Tree': an African topos in Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, William Blake, and William Cole," *Research in African Literatures*, 23.4 (Winter 1992), 51-58; Jennifer Harris, "Seeing the Light: Re-Reading James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw," *English Language Notes* 42.4, (2005), 43-57.

Whereas later slave narratives would employ abolitionist interpretations of Christianity to condemn the practice of slavery, Gronniosaw does not see his conversion to Christianity in this light. Rather, he casts himself as being inherently aware of Christian interpretations of God well before his exposure to Christianity. Because of Calvinism's belief that God has a pre-ordained path for all of his followers, Gronniosaw, whose narrative was written and published well after his conversion to Calvinism, speaks of his time in West Africa through the lens of Christian.

⁶ Descent from or relation to the ruling lineage or royalty seems to be a reoccurring phenomenon within the slave narrative body of literature. In addition to Gronniosaw, Olaudah Equiano claimed his father was a chief and titled man in Igboland, Ottobah Cugoano makes mention of his family's closeness with the the ruling chief of Akumako in Fanteland, the narrative of Abdu-l-Rahman Ibrahim Ibn Sori described him as a prince of Fouta Djallon, Venture Smith claimed his father was "the prince of the tribe of Dukandarre" and Ayuba Suleiman Diallo is said to have come from a family of religious leaders in Bundu, Senegal.

⁷ Jaja's connection to Umuduruoha's founding lineage will be discussed in the Chapter Two.

The most relevant eighteenth century slave narrative for grounding King Jaja's experience of slavery is that of Olaudah Equiano, otherwise known as Gustavus Vassa the African. Equiano's narrative, published in 1789,⁸ closely mirrors the events of Jaja's early life.⁹ Both men hailed from central Igboland, were said to be the sons of titled village elders or chiefs, were kidnapped around roughly the same age, and both ended up in the coastal trading ports of southern Nigeria. Equiano's text has been the source of some debate among West Africanist historians. While it is generally accepted that Equiano was born in Igboland, some scholars have pointed to evidence that he was, in fact, born on a plantation in the New World.¹⁰ The argument surrounding his location of birth brings into question the validity of his account of African slave-systems.¹¹ While some of the evidence questioning Equiano's birthplace is compelling, defense

⁸ Olaudah Equiano and Robert J. Allison, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995).

⁹ Because Jaja left no written account of his time in enslavement, the details surrounding his capture, sale and emergence in the Bonny are drawn from oral accounts that exist in Opobo, Bonny and Umuduruoha. The oral accounts that detail his experiences of enslavement are contradictory in areas, but the general details of Jaja's story have been retold and reiterated by various authors and tend to contain roughly the same details. While it could be argued that details of Jaja's narrative have been recast to reflect elements of the better-known Equiano narrative, the similarity in the retelling of Jaja's story across generational, regional and educational lines would suggest that Equiano's narrative did not impact the recounting of Jaja's life history in any meaningful way. In my time in Umuduruoha, I spoke with PhD-holding historians, farmers, and young men in their 20s and 30s as well as elders in their 70s, 80s and 90s. It is unlikely that this diverse group of collaborators all had access to or had read Equiano's account of his capture, let alone chose to recast these details to tell Jaja's story. The narratives from Opobo and Bonny have been well documented and published widely and the details of Jaja's early life from oral histories in Umuduruoha more readily reflect details from these published accounts than those of Equiano.

¹⁰ Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-made Man* (University of Georgia Press, 2005), 365. Carretta claims that baptismal records from a plantation and later records from ships that Equiano served on place his birth in South Carolina. However, Equiano's description of the custom and habits of Igboland have been identified as proof of his birth in Igboland. Notable slave studies historian Paul Lovejoy has argued that, while some of Equiano's account is likely distorted, these distortions more readily point to shortcomings that exist in all autobiographies as a result of the author selecting to highlight certain aspects of his life while omitting others. This argument is backed by the wide majority of scholars. Historians like Douglas Chambers and Adam Hochschild have adamantly backed Lovejoy's position of Equiano's birth taking place in the Igbo interior of Nigeria.

See Paul E. Lovejoy, "Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 3 (2006), 317-34; Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 372; Douglas Chambers, "'Almost an Englishman': Carretta's Equiano," *H-Net Reviews*, (November 2007).

While the dispute over Equiano's birthplace has largely revolved around contemporary sources from Equiano's life and writings, Nigerian historian Catherine Acholonu has provided evidence that the supposed community of Equiano's birth has remembered Equiano's ordeal through oral histories, thus providing further evidence that he was, in fact, born in Igboland. See Catherine Acholonu, *The Igbo Roots of Olaudah Equiano: An Anthropological Research* (Owerri, Nigeria: AFA Publications, 1989).

¹¹ Carretta, *Equiano, the African*, 365. If Carretta is correct, then Equiano was simply using knowledge gleaned from

of his Igbo origins has been equally adamant. For the purposes of this study, Equiano's narrative represents useful access to an otherwise poorly documented period and his claims of Igbo identity are accepted for the valuable access they provide.¹²

Equiano was born in 1745 in the Aboh region of Igboland. Equiano was eleven years old when he and his sister were taken, sometime in the year 1756, by slave traders as the adults of the village had gone to the fields to work for the day, leaving Equiano and his sister to look after the younger children. After being seized, Equiano was carried far away from his natal home, separated from his sister and sold to indigenous slave-holders. Equiano tells of his treatment at the hands of indigenous slave holders in southern Nigeria, pointing to the fact that he was treated much like the children of his slave masters as he passed hands and moved south towards Nigeria's Atlantic trading ports.¹³

However, Equiano's narrative breaks drastically from Jaja's once he arrives at the coast.¹⁴ By the mid-eighteenth century, the Atlantic Slave Trade was hitting a peak in its four century existence. At this time, more slaves were leaving West Africa's shores than in any period previous to the mid-1700s.¹⁵ Nearly a century later, when Jaja arrived at the Atlantic coast, the trade in slaves across the Atlantic had been largely suppressed by the activities of British naval patrols in the region.¹⁶ As a result, Jaja remained in domestic slavery in the southern Nigerian

his activities as a slave-trader on the West African coast to provide the details of his early life in Igboland.

¹² It is worth noting that, even if Equiano was born elsewhere in the world, those who claim he was not of Igbo origin readily admit that he must have drawn upon existing literary tropes and accounts regarding the nature and structure of slavery in West Africa. Thus, his claim of Igbo birth, even if not factual, would have required Equiano to draw information from existing knowledge about African slave systems in the late 1700s. Thus, his narrative still provides contemporary access to a poorly-documented institution. It is, for this reason, that I have chosen to accept and include this narrative in my discussion of West African slave systems.

¹³ Equiano and Allison, *The Interesting Narrative*, Chapters One and Two.

¹⁴ Equiano and Allison, *The Interesting Narrative*, Chapter Two.

¹⁵ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, "Estimates", <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed December 7th, 2013); Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 252-274.

¹⁶ Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa, 2nd Edition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 236; Basil Davidson, *The*

port-city of Bonny while Equiano was shipped across the Atlantic to America. While the realities of the slave trade in Nigeria and the Atlantic had changed drastically over the century between 1750 and 1850, Equiano's narrative can be used as documentary evidence to support the oral narratives that tell of Jaja's journey through and experiences in Southeastern Nigeria.

Another notable slave narrative from the mid-to-late eighteenth century bears striking similarities to the oral narratives surrounding Jaja's kidnapping and sale into slavery. Ottobah Cugoano was born in the Fante region of what is now Ghana. After being sent off to live with one of his uncles, Cugoano was captured by slave traders while playing in the woods near the village with a large group of children sometime in the year 1770, at the age of 13. After marching with his Fante-speaking captors, who took around 20 children at gun and sword-point, Cugoano traded hands to slavers who did not speak Fante. Five or six days later, Cugoano arrived at the coast, where he was separated from his mates into various holding houses. It was only at this point that Cugoano realized he would likely never see his natal home again. Upon reaching one of the European-built slave fortresses off the Cape Coast with his Fante captor, Cugoano was sold to the European traders and shipped away from Africa for the West Indies.¹⁷

Much like Equiano's narrative, Cugoano's story of his seizure in Ghana bears a number of similarities to Jaja's narrative. First, many of the narratives concerning Jaja's capture by slave-traders mention that Jaja was seized while playing too far away from his father's compound, similar to the circumstances in which Cugoano was taken. Other narratives suggest that Jaja was taken either while staying with or on his way to his aunt's home in the neighboring Igbo

African Slave Trade (Boston: Little Brown, 1980), 256; Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 65-81.

¹⁷ Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, "Narrative of the Enslavement of Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa; Published by Himself, in the Year 1787," in Thomas Fisher, ed., *The Negro's Memorial; or, Abolitionist's Catechism; by an Abolitionist* (London: Hatchard and Co., 1825), 120-124.

community of Nkwerre.¹⁸ Differences in these two narratives, however, point to the changing relationship between Atlantic and domestic slavery. While Cugoano was seized along with a large group of children, Jaja's story claims that only Jaja was seized in the raid that led to his enslavement. This suggests that the demand for slaves at the coast had drastically decreased in the roughly 80 years between Cugoano and Jaja's capture.¹⁹

Together, Cugoano and Equiano's slave narratives reflect the similarities in the methods used to procure slaves from the interior of West Africa. Despite the changes in the Atlantic trade between 1750 and 1850, the march away from their homelands bear striking similarities to Jaja's march south through Nigeria. However, many studies of African slave systems point to the social dislocation of the slave,²⁰ based on their inability to understand or speak the languages of their captors and slave-masters. In a period where the political borders of West African states and territories were fluid and constantly redefined, one would only realize they had reached a place drastically different from their home when they came into a territory where a different language was dominant. This was not necessarily the case in Jaja's experiences. Upon arriving in Bonny, Jaja was adopted into an Ijo wari through the ritualistic shaving of his head by an adoptive Ijo mother. However, despite the Ubani dialect of Ijo being the “indigenous” language of the Bonny

¹⁸ As a result of this narrative, Jaja's birthplace has often been incorrectly attributed to Nkwerre. It should be noted here that Umuduruoha sources claim that this version of events is not accurate and Jaja's family had no connections in Nkwerre during Jaja's childhood.

¹⁹ S.J.S. Cooke, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891* (New York: NOK, 1974), 25-26; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-184. This fact may also be indicative of other factors. That Jaja was the only child taken could simply imply that the slave raiders who took him were unlucky or unsuccessful in this particular raid or, more likely, that Jaja was specifically targeted by the slave raiders as the son of a leading, and somewhat controversial, chief.

²⁰ Robert Baum, “Slaves Without Rulers: Domestic Slavery Among the Diola of Senegambia,” Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick, eds., *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010); Randall Fegley, “Death's Waiting Room: Equatorial Guinea's Long History of Slavery,” in Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick, eds., *African Systems of Slavery*; Victor C. Uchendu, “Slaves and Slavery in Igboland, Nigeria,” in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); James H. Vaughan, “Mafakur: A Limbic Institution of the Margi (Nigeria),” in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).

“free” class, Igbo was used as the language of trade with the Bonny's interior partners and markets.²¹ As a result of this trend, and the quickly growing Igbo slave population in Bonny, Igbo itself became a widely used language in Bonny, with “masters” addressing the slaves in Igbo. This linguistic break from the earlier narratives of Equiano and Cugoana suggests that the concept of social dislocation of the slave through a lack of access to the dominant language of the area had shifted along with trends in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

By the 1830s, when Jaja arrived in Bonny, the suppression of the Atlantic slave trade had led to a massive buildup of Igbo speakers in Nigeria's coastal trading states, as those who had previously found themselves on ships bound for the Americas were now being absorbed into the domestic slave structures.²² This shift impacted not only linguistic patterns, but also the cultural fabric of the coastal societies deemed “slave-states” at this time period. Along with Igbo language, Igbo habits, worldviews and customs moved along with the large group of migrants who would have previously been sold at the coast but were now building noticeable influence in the coastal states.²³

²¹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30; E.J. Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (June 1971), 565; G.I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria* (London: Published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1963), 55-57.

²² Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 256; Shillington, *History of Africa*, 236; G. Ugo Nwokeji, “African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 1, New Perspectives on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, (Jan., 2001), 47-68; G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 53-81; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565.

²³ While documents relating to Bonny's history in the 1700s show that the heads of the *wari* were largely free-born, Ijo-speaking Bonny natives, the evidence from the early to mid-1800s show that these free-born Ijo people were being supplanted by Igbo-born former slaves. The *wari* represented Bonny's primary means of social, political, religious and military organization. Thus, Igbo-led houses exerted considerable influence on day-to-day operations in Bonny and, at this period in Bonny's history, were largely influential in the political decisions that shaped Bonny's relationship with her African neighbors and European trade partners.

See Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565- 568; Jones, *Trading States*, 13-15; E.J. Alagoa and A. Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 67-73 ; Cooney, *King Jaja*, 30-34.

African Slavery in Academic Literature

The most relevant starting point for any discussion of African slave systems in academic literature is to address the arguments of the Guyanese historian, socialist, and political activist Walter Rodney and the British-born historian J.D. Fage. In his 1966 article in the *Journal of African History* entitled “African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade,” Rodney argues that slavery was not an ancient or long-standing institution in Africa. Rather, Rodney argues that the early arrival of Europeans on the West African coast was the impetus for an African adoption of the institution of slavery.²⁴ This view of African slave systems was directly challenged by J.D. Fage in 1969. Fage's article “Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History,” provided compelling evidence that institutions of servitude and slavery had existed in West Africa long before Europeans began to arrive in the coastal areas in the middle of the fifteenth century.²⁵ Here Fage argues that the emergence of an Atlantic trade in slaves functioned to bolster the states in West Africa who were already engaged in enslaving members of neighboring communities.²⁶ While Rodney produced many other well-respected texts and articles²⁷ on Europe's relationship with Africa during the turbulent centuries of the Atlantic slave trade and beyond before being assassinated in 1980, his claim that slavery did not exist in Africa before the arrival of Europeans

²⁴ Walter Rodney, “African Slavery and other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade,” *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 7, no. 3, (1966), 431-443.

²⁵ J.D. Fage, “Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History,” *The Journal of African History*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1969), 393–404.

²⁶ Fage, “Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 393–404. Historian Paul Lovejoy reiterated the views of J.D. Fage in his book *Transformations in Slavery*, which was published in 2000. In this text, Lovejoy posits on the differences between slavery in Africa and slavery in the Atlantic World, supporting the idea that African slave systems were, in comparison to Atlantic slavery, relatively benign. Moreover, Lovejoy supports Fage's view that African slave systems, which were already in existence, dramatically expanded with the increased demand for slaves in the New World colonies. See Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 252-274.

²⁷ Walter Rodney, A.M. Babu, and Vincent Harding, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981); Walter Rodney, *West Africa and the Atlantic Slave-Trade* (Nairobi: Published for the Historical Association of Tanzania by the East African Pub. House, 1967); Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

has largely been discredited and Fage's interpretation has become the accepted view.²⁸ This dispute over the existence of slavery in Africa prior to European influence sparked other scholars to examine the similarities and differences between Western systems of chattel slavery and the many varied systems of slavery in West Africa.

A notable text to undertake a comparison of Atlantic and African forms of slavery and servitude was Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff's edited volume *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, published in 1977. In the introduction to the text, penned by Miers and Kopytoff, the editors argue that the variety and diversity of slave institutions on the African continent make it nearly impossible to create a singular definition of "African slavery."²⁹ Rather, Miers and Kopytoff juxtapose examples from across the African continent to convey that, in most areas of Africa, slavery more closely reflected European notions of "serfdom" than it did Western notions of slavery.³⁰ Thus, slavery in Africa, as Miers and Kopytoff view it, functioned without the overt threats of violence that underpinned the chattel forms of slavery being practiced in the Americas.

²⁸ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*; Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Paul Lovejoy, Igor Kopytoff and Frederick Cooper, "Indigenous African Slavery [with Commentary]," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 6, No. 1, *Roots and Branches: Current Directions in Slave Studies* (Summer/Été 1979), 19; Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations Along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003).

²⁹ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 77. Here, Miers and Kopytoff point to seventeen distinct terms that could be applied to individuals in some position of human servitude across Africa. Claude Meillassoux's 1991 publication *The Anthropology of Slavery*, argues that it is not possible to find an underlying thread to define slavery in Africa, and attempting to do so would be a fruitless endeavor. Rather, Meillassoux argues that slavery, as it existed in its various forms in Africa, can only be recognized by intuition, rather than an inflexible, singular definition. Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 19.

³⁰ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 23. This idea is challenged by Frederick Cooper in his 1979 article in the *Journal of African History*, entitled "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies". Here, Cooper discusses the flaws in assessing African slave systems in light of the western understanding of chattel slavery. Cooper argues that a push by Africanists to disassociate African slavery from American slavery has led to an overemphasis on the benign nature of African slavery. Instead, Cooper argues that African slave systems, like others in the world, operated on the basis of economic inequality rooted in the concentration of wealth amongst the elite. Moreover, Cooper contends that limited access to revenue streams creates the same sort dichotomous relationship that exists between the "haves" and the "have nots" in other systems of slavery. See Frederick Cooper, "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, no. 1 (1979), 103.

In addition to Miers and Kopytoff's comparison of New World and African slave systems, the editors also introduced the notion of the "slavery-to-kinship continuum" to readers for the first time. *Slavery in Africa* provides the reader with a number of chapters specifically outlining the actualities of slavery in a variety of African locales, which are nicely tied together by the analysis in Miers and Kopytoff's introduction. While Miers and Kopytoff contend that the institution of slavery on the African continent was not exactly "benign," their introductory chapter does call for an overwhelming revision to the way African slavery has been examined through a Western lens.³¹ They begin by addressing how slavery is conceptualized in the Western mind as contrary and dichotomous to ideas like freedom, autonomy and labor rights due to the New World manifestation of the institution.³² At the very core of this matter lies the understanding of the individual's place in a community. This book argues that in African societies, the divide between "free" and "enslaved" is necessarily skewed due to the communal nature of cultures, modes of production, and individual rights in all African societies. Since the kinship system dominated social organization on the continent, Miers and Kopytoff argue that every slave would undergo a process in which they began at the margin of society at their time of capture, but could gradually, and in many different ways, become more integrated into that society as a "quasi-kinsmen."³³

By theorizing about the various institutions that make up human servitude across Africa, they determined that an individual's output, whether he or she is "free" or "enslaved", belonged to the society at large in empires, centralized, or decentralized societies. If this holds true, then a person familiar with a chattel system of slavery, like that of the Americas, would have great

31 Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3.

32 Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3.

33 The term "quasi-kinsmen" can be attributed to Frederick Cooper and is used in his book *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. See Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann, 1997).

difficulty distinguishing “free” from “slave.”³⁴ By portraying kinship groups as “corporate” entities, Miers and Kopytoff convey the idea that slaves did not constitute a separate or isolated social stratum, as they did in the New World slave societies. Therefore, the slave in Africa had much greater access to social mobility and did not experience the same level of social, economic and political disenfranchisement as his or her American counterpart.³⁵ According to Miers and Kopytoff, social dislocation and disenfranchisement at the time a person enters a society as a slave seem to be the only consistent measures by which one can assess slave-status and slavery across time and space in Africa.

However, this interpretation is problematic as Miers and Kopytoff’s model eliminates any possibility that the enslaved individual would or could maintain elements of their natal identity when entering into the slave system. Further, Miers and Kopytoff’s slave-to-kinship model speaks to the assimilation of slaves into a slave-holding society over long durations of time, often showing cases in which the stigma of not being fully within a kinship network does not fade until generations pass.³⁶ Thus, while Miers and Kopytoff readily identify means through which the enslaved could gain political, economic and social clout in their newly adopted homes, they do so by making generalizations across time and space about increased social mobility afforded by the society that enslaves the individual, not the opportunities to reconnect with one’s natal home that greater social mobility and geographic proximity actually afforded to individuals like Jaja. Nor do Miers and Kopytoff show examples from states in the Eastern Delta region, like Bonny, that readily adopted individuals purchased from inland markets into kinship networks upon entering the slave-holding society.³⁷

³⁴ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 22-23.

³⁵ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 3-30

³⁶ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 32-35.

³⁷ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 158-160; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions”, 568. It is worth noting here that

East Africanist Historian Frederick Cooper provided a case study for contextualizing many of Miers and Kopytoff's assertions in specific location and time with his 1977 publication *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. While dealing with a vastly different region of Africa than the one with which we are presently concerned, Cooper argues that, in order to accurately address the changes that occur in an African slave system, one must attribute much of the change to the agency of slaves and not simply to slave masters. By focusing on four coastal locations of East Africa in what is now Tanzania and Zanzibar, Cooper provides a view of slavery in Africa as a constantly adapting and ongoing dialogue between the slave, slave-master, and societal institutions.³⁸ In penning this argument, Cooper reminds the reader that while slaves were able to maintain functions outside of the economy, as well as conduct trade for their own economic buoyancy, and were involved in setting the limitations and standards for production through slave labor, the relationship between the slave and the slave-master was still one of assumed inferiority and superiority.³⁹ Despite conveying the many instances in which slaves and slave masters were socially intimate, Cooper is careful never to show this intimacy as superseding the economic exploitation that provided the basis of East African plantation slavery. Despite being far removed from southern Nigeria geographically, many of the topics Cooper addresses as relevant to understanding slave systems in East Africa can be applied to the situation Jaja entered in Bonny during the middle of nineteenth century. While Jaja's absorption

Miers and Kopytoff's edited volume includes examples of slavery in other areas of modern-day Nigeria, most notably Uchendu's chapter on slavery in Igboland.

³⁸ Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 15-17; Also see Cooper, "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies," 105.

³⁹ Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 15-17; In addition to Cooper's work on the plantation societies of Zanzibar and coastal Tanzania, his 1979 article in the *Journal of African Studies* also discusses the flaws in assessing African slave systems in light of the western understanding of chattel slavery. Cooper argues that a push by Africanists to disassociate African slavery from American slavery has led to an overemphasis on the benign nature of African slavery. Instead, Cooper argues that African slave systems, like others in the world, operated on the basis of economic inequality rooted in the concentration of wealth amongst the elite. Moreover, Cooper contends that limited access to revenue streams creates the same sort dichotomous relationship that exists between the "haves" and the "have nots" in other systems of slavery. See Frederick Cooper, "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies," 103.

into the Anna Pepple *wari* provided the *wari* head with economic value, it also drew Jaja immediately into his kinship network, creating the same type of “social intimacy” Cooper addresses in the East African context. My work seeks to build off of Cooper's example while shifting the focus to a different geographic region of Africa.

Orlando Patterson published his text, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, in 1982. In this widely-read book, Patterson argues that the African slave had no identity outside of the one bestowed upon him by his slave-master. Patterson describes the enslaved individual as a “social nonperson” in African society.⁴⁰ In short, where Miers and Kopytoff see the enslaved individual as experiencing a social “rebirth” in their absorption into kinship group of the slave-holding society over time, Patterson sees this same process as a “social death.” He argues that, without the slave master, the slave has no identity of his or her own. As such, any socialization process that occurs stems not from the agency of the enslaved, but from the power and position of the slave master. Furthermore, slavery in Africa, to Patterson, was nothing more than a commuted death sentence. Those who would have been killed in battle or slaughtered when losing in an armed conflict were, over time, equally likely to be enslaved as an alternative to death.⁴¹

In examining a number of slave systems over time, Patterson comes to the conclusion that in African slave systems, much like their western counterparts, the enslaved experienced complete social death as a non-genealogical member of the society and the slave-master was bestowed ultimate authority over the enslaved.⁴² This dichotomous interpretation of African slave systems runs in direct contrast to the model being employed in this study. Both Miers and

⁴⁰ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

⁴¹ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 78-79.

⁴² Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 10.

Kopytoff and Patterson point to the unique socialization process that occurs in many African slave systems, but do so with drastically different interpretations.⁴³ However, both views rest on the idea that the enslaved individual necessarily sheds all elements of his or her “natal” identity once he or she is enslaved. In examining the slave system of Bonny in the Niger Delta, one will begin to see a pattern in which the enslaved maintained multiple identities simultaneously. They were both slaves and slave masters. They had both superiors and subordinates in the social hierarchy. They worked to make a place for themselves both economically and politically in society while also bolstering the political authority and the coffers of their superiors. Finally, many elements of the Niger Delta societies had shifted by the onset of the nineteenth century to create a space for slaves to maintain linguistic and social elements of their identities from the Igbo hinterland while also accepting cultural elements of the various ethnic groups of the Niger Delta.⁴⁴ Thus, I argue that the slave does not shed all elements of their natal identity upon enslavement and experiences neither a social death nor a social rebirth. Rather, the enslaved individual utilizes elements of these various identities when and where it was beneficial for them.⁴⁵

⁴³ Where Patterson sees the absorption into a kinship group of the master as a social death, Miers and Kopytoff see this same process as the means through which Africans enslaved on the continent were able to exercise social mobility. While Miers and Kopytoff's interpretation is closer to the one employed in this study, my work argues that both models fail to account for those who maintained elements of their natal identity while also assuming a new identity in the slave-holding community.

⁴⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 29-30; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 55-57.

⁴⁵ In her article, “When Deities Marry,” Nwando Achebe employs a mode of investigation that allows the researcher to see how an “enslaved” individual could simultaneously be empowered and disenfranchised through the social benefits and limitations of their “slave” status. While Achebe deals with “spiritual slavery” rather than physical slavery in Igboland, this article is critical in informing my thesis. It is important never to lose sight of the fact that the individual who experiences slavery, whether physical or spiritual, does not cease to make decisions or act in his or her own best interests, regardless of the circumstances they faced. Rather, individuals utilize whatever means available to them to achieve an outcome that they see as most beneficial. Thus, slaves are not “non-actors,” subject to the whims of an individual master or the limitations of slave status in a society. See Nwando Achebe, “When Deities Marry: Indigenous 'Slave' Systems Expanding and Metamorphosing in the Igbo Hinterland,” in Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick, eds., *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 105-134.

In 1986, French anthropologist Claude Meillassoux challenged the widely held view of African slaves systems as being benign to their American counterpart.⁴⁶ In his book, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, Meillassoux argued that social hierarchies in slave-holding societies of Western Africa and Central Sudan were maintained and reproduced by social marginalization of the slave and his or her offspring, which would devolve into violence or the threat of violence towards the enslaved classes as slavery “evolved” within the society over time.⁴⁷ This argues directly against the conclusions reached by Miers and Kopytoff's work on African slaves systems in 1977, in which their selection of case studies emphasized the lack of violence underpinning African slave systems and pointed to the more inclusive models of African slavery that allowed for social acclimation of the enslaved individual.⁴⁸ Here, Meillassoux argues that one must assess how slave systems maintained themselves from generation to generation, pointing to “social” reproduction of the slave system occurring when slaves are violently seized, through warfare, or purchased from one community and enslaved in the other.⁴⁹ Moreover, Meillassoux identifies the ways in which economic and military institutions in West Africa and Central Sudan relied upon the efficient maintenance of the society's slave-system, which he interprets as being accomplished through a constant threat of

⁴⁶ Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 22; In many ways, Meillassoux attempted to challenge the notion of benign African slave systems like Patterson had done in *Slavery and Social Death* while simultaneously trying to create a singular, rigid definition of slavery in African societies. Whereas Patterson had seen the “social death” as the element of African slave systems that most negatively impacted the enslaved, Meillassoux points to the social stigma that comes with forever being distinguished as not being a free-born lineage.

⁴⁷ Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 88-90; It is important to note that Meillassoux treats slaves in societies in what would become French-held territories of Africa as a distinct and separate class from free-born individuals. This distinction relegates African slaves to a position more like that experienced in New World Slavery. This view has been refuted by Igor Kopytoff. See Igor Kopytoff, “Review,” review of *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, by Claude Meillassoux, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May, 1993), 391.

⁴⁸ Uchendu, “Slaves and Slavery,” 121-132; Martin Klein, “Servitude among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia” in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 335- 358; Vaughan, “Mafakur,” 88-99.

⁴⁹ Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 35.

violence and death to the enslaved individual.⁵⁰

The theoretical underpinning of Meillassoux's interpretations of slavery among the societies of the Western Africa and Central Sudan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century is critically flawed, however. Despite Miers and Kopytoff's disclaimer that African slave systems were as diverse as the states that maintained them and therefore must be grounded in the terminology and concepts of that state, Meillassoux employs the framework of Roman slavery to this uniquely African context. Roman slavery made no room for kinship relations between free and the enslaved, as was the case in most African forms of servitude. In response to Meillassoux's book, Igor Kopytoff writes,

Since the Roman definition of slavery relations deny the relations of kinship and imply the existence of classes, only forms of dependency that answer these requirements qualify for his [Meillassoux's] consideration. And never mind the problematics of such terms as 'property' or 'exploitation.' All these features must be present- 'theoretically,' but in fact, 'logically' and 'tautologically-' when slavery is 'true' slavery. When they are not present, the case is not, for Meillassoux, one of slavery and need not be bothered with any further. In brief, when not in Rome, think as the Romans do.⁵¹

For as much as Meillassoux was concerned with creating a very rigid, theoretical framework to identify and assess African slave systems, the definitions upon which Meillassoux builds his theoretical framework are anachronistic, geographically and culturally distant, and ill-equipped to expose the realities of African slave systems. Meillassoux's assessment of African slavery also falls woefully short in defining the historical circumstances seen in the eastern states of the Niger Delta in the middle and late nineteenth century.⁵²

In 1989, Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts published an edited volume called *The End*

⁵⁰ Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 125-127.

⁵¹ Kopytoff, "Review," 391.

⁵² Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 70. Here Meillassoux assumes that economic base of most African societies is that of sedentary agriculturalists. However, trade had long been the institution that underpinned the economy of Bonny upon Jaja's arrival in the 1830s. See Dike, *Trade and Politics & Alagoa*; "Nineteenth Century Revolutions."

of Slavery in Africa. In this text, the editors arranged fifteen regional case studies that combine to ask the question of how African rulers and enslaved Africans responded to the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade. One case study, Don Ohadike's "The Decline of Slavery among the Igbo People," focuses on how slaves amongst the Igbo reacted to the suppression the slavery and the emergence of wage-labor systems that would, later, become one of the bases of the British colonial administration in Nigeria.⁵³ Many of Ohadike's arguments regarding abolition in Southeastern Nigeria relate to the situation during the nineteenth century in Bonny. Ohadike points out that "voluntary servitude" persisted among Igbo slaves long after the suppression of the slave trade in the region.⁵⁴ This same trend occurred in Bonny, where British efforts to suppress slavery and slave trading occurred much earlier in the nineteenth century. In the Niger Delta setting, we see many rulers agreeing to discontinue their trade in slaves over the Atlantic while maintaining the domestic systems of slavery within their own territories.⁵⁵ There is even evidence that, as late as the 1880s, Jaja himself was engaged in purchasing slaves from interior traders to bolster to the work force of his new coastal kingdom of Opobo.⁵⁶

While the chapters themselves are deeply focused on area-specific reactions to the abolition of the slave trade, Igor Kopytoff's conclusion to the text, "The Cultural Context of Atlantic Abolition," turns away from the overall theme of text to examine the "structural continuity" in the experiences of enslaved Africans as abolition took hold.⁵⁷ Kopytoff argues that these enslaved individuals largely maintained their identities in the area they were enslaved and continued living as they did before abolition, or, in many other cases, removed themselves from

⁵³ Don Ohadike, "The Decline of Slavery among the Igbo," in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (eds), *The End of Slavery* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 445-449.

⁵⁴ Ohadike, "The Decline of Slavery," 450-454.

⁵⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 49; Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, 91-92; G.O.M Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1918*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 20-22.

⁵⁶ Emmanuel Nkemkaudo, interview with Author, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria, December 30, 2011.

⁵⁷ Igor Kopytoff, "Cultural Context of Abolition," in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (eds), *The End of Slavery* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 489-493.

their areas of enslavement and sought to return to their natal homes.⁵⁸ The other contributors did not weigh in on the slavery-to-kinship continuum, but Kopytoff took this opportunity to extend the “continuum” or “structural continuity” model from slavery to abolition.⁵⁹ However, Jaja’s story, and this dissertation, moves beyond the dichotomous relationship Kopytoff builds in this chapter between “staying” or “going home” to examine how, even during his period of enslavement in the Bonny, Jaja maintained critical connections to the Igbo interior and, more specifically, to Umuduruoha and his family. There is evidence in Cookey’s text on Jaja that, even while in Bonny, Jaja had managed to reconnect with his natal kinship group.⁶⁰ More importantly, the abolition of the Atlantic trade in slaves had little impact on the standing of domestic slaves in Delta trading-states like Bonny.⁶¹

My dissertation can be located within the questions posed by the editors, Miers and Roberts, and contributors in the *The End of Slavery in Africa*, in defining local reactions to the abolition of slavery in domestic settings across West Africa. Bonny’s domestic slaves and slave holders did not understand “abolition” as the end of slavery in Bonny. Rather, the slave system adapted to provide palm oil exports to their trade partners who, previously, had been at the coast to purchase slaves. In this adaptation, one sees very clearly that greater economic and political authority was vested in enslaved Igbo individuals who, over the course of the nineteenth century, shaped the trajectory of Bonny’s relationship with coastal and interior trade partners.

In 1990, noted world historian and Africanist Patrick Manning published his work, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades*. While this work does not attempt to provide a comprehensive definition of African slavery or create a framework with

⁵⁸ Kopytoff, “Cultural Context of Abolition,” 496, 502-506.

⁵⁹ Kopytoff, “Cultural Context of Abolition,” 498.

⁶⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63.

⁶¹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28-30.

which one can compare African slave systems with other notions of slavery, it does provide a gripping narrative for how the external trades in slaves impacted domestic slaving activities and how the indigenous communities adapted their notions of slavery and the slave-trade as a consequence of the external trade in slaves.⁶² At its core, Manning's text argues that the demographic loss Africa had suffered as a result of external slave trades permanently destabilized the region. For our concerns here, Manning claims that West Africa, particularly the Bight of Benin, suffered an incredible blow to its population as the preference for male slaves at the coast led to a loss of working-age males in African societies, deeply compromising the integrity of the hinterland economies.⁶³ While Manning's assessment of the wider impacts that the Atlantic slave trade had on hinterland West African communities were useful in understanding the general relationship between the Atlantic World, coastal Africa, and the African interior, we again see Jaja's narrative as running in contrast to core slave studies literature. While the Igbo community of Jaja's birth was a "prey" state for local slave-traders, Jaja's ascendance to the throne of Opobo led to his brother's consolidation of power in the Igbo hinterland, mainly through the act of Jaja sending manufactured goods⁶⁴ purchased from European traders at the coast back to his natal community in the Igbo interior.⁶⁵ The types of manufactured products sent back to Umuduruoha by Jaja were not readily available to interior communities and placed Jaja's brother, Duruoshimiri, in a unique position of power in Umuduruoha in the late nineteenth century. Thus,

⁶² Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 126-130.

⁶³ Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 38-59.

⁶⁴ Among these goods were long-range, European weaponry, such as canons and repeater rifles. Access to these types of European products would have given Umuduruoha a means through which to fight off well-armed slave raiders.

⁶⁵ It is worth noting that Walter Hawthorne's *Planting Rice, Harvesting Slaves* deeply complicates the black and white nature of the "predatory" and "prey" states concept. Here, Hawthorne argues that decentralized states of Guinea Bissau engaged in slave trading as a means of protecting and insulating themselves from the slave-raiding actions of larger centralized states. Thus, one can not think of "prey" states as passive victims, subject to the slaving activities of larger, centralized entities. See Hawthorne, *Planting Rice, Harvesting Slaves*.

while Manning's view of the impact of Atlantic trades negatively impacting the interior communities of West Africa does seem credible, he overlooks a critical aspect of rekindled coastal interior relationships that, at times, functioned to strengthen the interior community against predatory neighbors.⁶⁶

John K. Thornton has published extensively on the issue of slavery, slave-states, and warfare in African society. In his 1998 book, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, he addresses the level of engagement of “Atlantic Africans” in the trans-Atlantic trade and the contributions of Africans to the foundations of American societies. Thornton argues that African engagement in the Atlantic trade had been marginalized in existing literature on slavery and slave studies. He posits a model in which he contends that the only independently owned facet of African production was labor, which produced wealth for the political and merchant elites.⁶⁷ Therefore, in Thornton's assessment, all non-elite Africans were dependents, and therefore “enslaved” to a certain degree. Thornton's identification of the impact that Atlantic slavery had on West African conceptions and systems of slavery runs in stark contrast to that of Patrick Manning. Thornton argues that African slave systems were well insulated from and were not deeply impacted by the Atlantic trade in slaves.⁶⁸ While Thornton is more concerned with how Africans impacted the social, political and economic structures of the New World through their travels in the “Atlantic World,” his understanding of the relationship between African slave-holding states and the Atlantic Trade can help inform this study.

Whereas Thornton's assessment of African and Atlantic slavery stops just prior to Jaja's

⁶⁶ For a more comprehensive discussion of how African communities repelled attempts to enslave their community members, see Sylviane Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003). One of the main methods of repelling slave trading activities was for hinterland communities to fortify themselves through armament. For a useful case study on this method, see Hawthorne, *Planting Rice, Harvesting Slaves*.

⁶⁷ John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 125.

⁶⁸ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 74.

lifetime, the nineteenth century witnessed a rise in the number of Igbo slaves in the Niger Delta working their way into the political and economic structures of the societies in which they are enslaved.⁶⁹ In the case of slavery in Bonny, there is not such a dichotomous divide between “elite” and “non-elite” status, as an individual could shift their influence in society over time and was not always subject to the heads of their particular *wari* or house. As was the case for Jaja, one could begin their time in enslavement in Bonny as a canoe paddler with little or no economic or political authority. However, that same individual could rise to the status of the head of a house in a relatively short period of time.⁷⁰ Thus, Thornton's understanding of political and merchant elites reaping vast benefits from slavery in African societies off the backs of all “non-elites” does little to describe the actual mobility in social and economic positions that existed in the Niger Delta state of Bonny. Yet, Thornton's model of African slavery does help to inform Jaja's motivations for breaking away from the trading-state during the civil war.⁷¹ Jaja quickly rose to a powerful economic position in the Anna Pepple *wari* but still found his influence over Bonny's political affairs to be a hindrance to increasing his power during the reign of William

⁶⁹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending June 1892, 29-30; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 55-57.

⁷⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-46. Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 565-568; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 29-30. Dependency on a house head in Bonny was a temporary condition and actually served to familiarize the young trader, who was often newly enslaved and dependent on his *wari* head's credit with existing trade networks and markets relationships in the interior, creating a situation in which that young trader could accumulate personal wealth and business contacts through interior trade. The process of trade in Bonny did not shift much structurally when legitimate trade supplanted the trade in slaves. See John Oriji, “A Re-Assessment,” 525- 527 & Cookey, *King Jaja*, 34-38. Therefore the same networks through which a trader and a slave could accumulate wealth by trading in human cargo provided the underpinning through which that same individual could accumulate wealth and status through a healthy trade in palm oil. Thus, employing a framework that separates African actors into juxtaposed elite and non-elite classes oversimplifies the relationship between the master, the slave and the economic structures that were in practice in the middle part of the nineteenth century in Bonny.

When I use the term, “a relatively short period of time,” I am referring to the immediate absorption of a slave into a *wari* in Bonny. The symbolic ritual that accompanies the absorption of a slave into a *wari*, while meaningful, did not function to remove all elements of social dislocation experienced by the enslaved, but did go a long way in providing access to the kinship networks, spheres of public politics, and economic opportunities enjoyed by free-born citizens of Bonny. With the other prevailing social conditions of the Delta slaves, this period of acclimation is reduced to a few years, rather than generations, as have been discussed by sources like Spaulding and Beswick and Miers and Kopytoff.

⁷¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-46. Jones, *Trading States*, 13-17; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 570-572.

Dappa Pepple, the *amanyanabo* of Bonny during Jaja's time in the Anna Pepple *wari*. As such, it could be argued that Jaja sought greater authority than the traditions of Bonny would allow. His slave status barred Jaja from the ultimate political authority held by the *amanyanabo*. Therefore, breaking away from Bonny in 1869 could be framed as Jaja's final effort shedding all the trappings of his slave status in the Delta.⁷² In essence, founding Opobo made him reliant upon and subject to no one.

Walter Hawthorne's seminal book *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves* provides a unique study of the methods that "stateless" societies used to protect themselves from the growing demand of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Focusing on the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau, Hawthorne points to a need for iron, used to make both agricultural tools and weaponry, as the motivating factor for slave-raiding activities.⁷³ As iron was generally provided through the Atlantic trade network, the Balanta became more reliant on the patterns of the global market and saw an opportunity in supplying that market with slaves, a process which Hawthorne refers to as the "iron-slave-cycle."⁷⁴ Hawthorne then focuses on how the Balanta reorganized their agricultural methods to begin producing large quantities of rice. This fueled the growth of communities, as rice proved a more reliable staple crop than yam. As a result, the Balanta began to adjust their social structures to meet the need for the more labor intensive rice crop.⁷⁵

Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves marks a great contribution to studies of resistance to and by participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade in West Africa. Hawthorne masterfully shows how West African communities adapted to accommodate the changes that accompanied the rise in the demand for slaves. In this case, Hawthorne is speaking back to earlier scholars like Basil

⁷² Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-202; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions" 570.

⁷³ Hawthorne, *Planting Rice*, 11-12.

⁷⁴ Hawthorne, *Planting Rice*, 96-97.

⁷⁵ Hawthorne, *Planting Rice*, 45-47.

Davidson, who proposed and espoused a dichotomous relationship between the “predatory” and the “prey” state in African society.⁷⁶ *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves*, has informed my view of the relationship between Umuduruoha and their Arondizuogu neighbors, who were well known for their slave-raiding activities in the Amaigbo Division. Jaja's father, Mbanaso Ozurumba, ordered for the creation of a standing military in an effort to combat the rising threat of the Aro satellite state in Amaigbo Division. Also, the reorganization of Balanta social structure to meet coastal demands mirrors adjustments in the Niger Delta trading state of Bonny as the demand for slaves increased at the coast. Finally, Hawthorne's assessment of African coastal communities' connections to Atlantic world networks has contributed deeply to our understanding of how African actors, especially those who have been cast as passive victims of the trade in past literature, were actively negotiating and navigating the Atlantic world for their own benefit.⁷⁷

G. Ugo Nwokeji, in looking towards the decentralized Igbo peoples of southeastern Nigeria, with whom we are very much concerned here, employs a similar framework as Thornton, insofar as he casts the Aro of Igboland as the “elites” solely responsible for slave production in the Bight of Biafra.⁷⁸ In the book *The Slave Trade Culture and the Bight of Biafra*, Nwokeji fails to recognize the agency of Igbo communities surrounding the Aro, casting them all as victims of or satellite mercenaries for the Aro.⁷⁹ This overly simplified representation of the Aro and their neighbors in Igboland skirts the reality that many Igbo communities were actively engaging in judicial processes, warfare, and kidnapping that produced slaves without Aro

⁷⁶ Hawthorne, *Planting Rice*, 97; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*.

⁷⁷ For more on Africans in the Atlantic World, see Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁷⁸ Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade Culture*, 64-71. It should be noted that this view of Aro domination over the Igbo interior is also present in Nwokeji's early article, “African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic.”

⁷⁹ Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade Culture*, 178-184.

initialization. Thus, the relationship between Aro and the rest of Igboland is not the hierarchical representation laid out by Nwokeji, but is more representative of a symbiotic relationship sustained by the profits had in the Atlantic trade. As the Aro, in many of the narratives about Jaja's seizure from Umuduruoha, play the role of the slaver-raiders,⁸⁰ it is critical to state that my study employs a framework that accounts for the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the Aro and their Igbo neighbors, and does not simply designate Jaja's capture as being the product of the Aro hold over the Igbo interior.⁸¹

In *Transformations in Slavery*, historian Paul Lovejoy identifies major shifts in African slavery as occurring over three distinctly identifiable periods. Here, he outlines the development of the institution of slavery in Africa as it transformed from 1350 to 1900. Essentially, he argues the period from 1350 to 1600 as being dominated by the Islamic interpretation of slavery, which he views as a social and political function at the periphery of African life, with little to no economic value.⁸² Lovejoy continues his analysis by marking the years between 1600 and 1800 as a period in which the Atlantic Slave Trade drastically increased the demand for slaves at the coast, which dramatically reorganized African societies and slaves systems. Here, Lovejoy contends that African societies became more oriented towards increased militarization and decreased centralization.⁸³ Finally, the period between 1800 and 1900 ushered in formal abolition of the Atlantic slave trade which gave rise to an increase in indigenous African slave use while at the same time transforming what Lovejoy considers the indigenous African slave paradigm

⁸⁰ I should note here that the version of events that explain Jaja's kidnapping and removal from Umuduruoha cast Aro agents as the individuals who moved Jaja from the slave markets of Oguta south to Bonny, but does not attribute Jaja's capture to Aro agents.

⁸¹ Many of my collaborators cited internal fractures in the Umuduruoha community as the reason for Jaja's sale into slavery. While some point to rival wives of Jaja's father, Ozurumba, seeking to sell Jaja off to slave traders, others cite Ozurumba's political enemies as the culprits in Jaja's seizure and sale. This issue will be investigated further in chapter two.

⁸² Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 24-44.

⁸³ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 45-65.

towards a system in which slaves are primarily economic actors as massive labor forces.⁸⁴

Transformations in Slavery is an ambitious book that seeks to synthesize the wide scope of slavery's functions in Africa as they relate to external factors over roughly five centuries. However, Lovejoy's definition of slavery or slave is somewhat problematic. Although he does account for much of the variety in types of African slavery, Lovejoy oversimplifies the institution to a matter of ownership/property rights.⁸⁵ This does not accurately portray the diversity in slave experience in Africa and, really, it only seems to tighten his narrow lens of slavery as a mode of economic production. This was certainly not the case in Bonny. While slaves in the Bonny *wari* were used, primarily, for the procurement of interior goods for sale at the coast, this was not their only function. The *wari* of the Niger Delta were, simultaneously, units of political, religious, economic, and military organization.⁸⁶ Thus, in the case of Bonny's slave system, the relationship between the slave and the slave master was not only economic. The *wari* actually functioned to underpin every aspect of Bonny society. If the head of one's *wari* converted to Christianity, so too did his slaves and dependents. If the head of the *wari* became embroiled in a conflict, his slaves and other dependents would man the war canoes to fight on his behalf.⁸⁷

Still, Lovejoy's text does provide some useful connections between the demise of the trans-Atlantic trade in slaves and a rise in the number of slaves in coastal African communities. Lovejoy's text discusses the increasingly large slave classes that were maintained by coastal African states in the nineteenth century and points directly to British efforts to eliminate the Atlantic trade as leading to this massive buildup of slaves at the coast.⁸⁸ This is relevant

⁸⁴ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 66- 87.

⁸⁵ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 108-112.

⁸⁶ Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 13-19.

⁸⁷ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 36-38; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 13-19.

⁸⁸ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 136; Shillington, *A History of Africa*, 236-237; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 258-261.

inasmuch as it accounts for the changing social fabric of Bonny when Jaja arrived in the 1830s. While the economic mode of production had already shifted away from slave trading in favor of exporting palm products, the society itself was experiencing massive challenges to the existing political hierarchy and was witnessing changes to the linguistic patterns of the region, both of which stemmed from the accumulation of large numbers of Igbo slaves who, in previous decades, would have been shipped out of Africa on European ships. Clearly, the slave-system Jaja entered in the 1830s was based on more than economic production and value. The Bonny system of slavery placed slaves in roles of political authority and allowed slaves the space to challenge the free-born members of the society in economic, political, and social matters.⁸⁹

Building off of the work done by Miers and Kopytoff in 1977, Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick produced an edited volume on African slave systems in 2010. The introduction to this text, penned by the editors, employs the slavery-to-kinship continuum model and advances the idea that the social relationships of African slave systems were as diverse as the communities that housed them.⁹⁰ The chapters selected in this volume show that the diversity of slave systems in Africa extended beyond the physical world and incorporated elements of African cosmology and spiritual bondage. In her chapter “When Deities Marry: Indigenous ‘Slave’ Systems Expanding and Metamorphosing in the Igbo Hinterlands,” Nwando Achebe explores the practice of marrying a deity as a form of “spiritual” bondage, which limited the traditional forms of autonomy that women had in choosing a marriage partner while also increasing the spiritual and, thus, political authority of “enslaved” Igbo women in the twentieth century.⁹¹ Achebe's chapter deals exclusively with role female spiritual slavery in the inland Igbo

⁸⁹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 156-159; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 568-570.

⁹⁰ Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 3-9.

⁹¹ Achebe, “When Deities Marry,” 105-134. Nwando Achebe's work builds off of her unique interpretation of the impact of religious structures on other facets of Igbo society. Achebe argues that, in the worldview of Igbo people,

communities of Nigeria, but there are aspects of her research that reinforce the approach taken in this study. While Achebe does identify the ways in which spiritual 'slavery' isolated these women from the wider community by rendering them “unmarriageable,” she also carefully notes when, where and how these same women exploited elements of spiritual slavery for increased wealth or political power. Thus, Achebe's narrative of Igbo spiritual slaves in the Nsukka division of Igboland provides a framework through which we can view “slaves” exploiting the “slave system,”⁹² and not the other way round. This is critical to framing Jaja's life history, inasmuch as Jaja was capable of exploiting the rapidly changing slave system in Bonny for material wealth, political clout and, later, to re-establish ties with his natal community in Amaigbo.

While there has been a wealth of literature produced about slave systems in Africa since the initial discussion in the 1960s on slavery's existence on the continent prior to European influence, there has been very little work done on the situation for slaves in the Niger Delta during the nineteenth century. This period of time and this particular region are remarkably difficult to sum up with broad, sweeping assessments of slavery in the Bight of Biafra or slave systems across Africa. Slavery was on the decline across many locales in Africa, yet slave numbers kept growing in Bonny. The trade in slaves with interior markets had largely diminished by the 1830s, yet it was in fact hinterland slaves who were the most active Delta traders in the newly emerging markets for palm oil and other interior goods in coastal states like Bonny.⁹³ Of the many case studies and edited volumes addressing slave systems, none of these works looks

the spiritual, unseen world of the deities impacts every facet of the physical world, lending legitimacy to political, economic and social authority within Igbo social institutions. As such, the power attributed to “spiritual” slaves manifested itself in the physical institutions of Igboland. This view of the connection between the spiritual and physical worlds in Igboland will be employed for this work as well. In addition to her work on spiritual slavery, one can find further clarifications in Prof. Achebe's model of the interconnectedness of these two worlds in her books *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings* & *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria*.

⁹² This mirrors the assertions of Frederick Cooper's work on plantation in East Africa.

⁹³ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude MacDonald, Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the Six Months ending, June 1892, 13-19.

critically towards the Niger Delta in the middle of the nineteenth century as a space and time that can alter our existing views of what it meant to be a slave in Africa.

My dissertation addresses this oversight while also calling upon scholars to abandon their long-held views of slavery as an institution that wrests a social identity from the enslaved. Jaja's story of enslavement and self-manumission sheds new light on how these long-held notions of the social marginality, linguistic and social isolation, and subordinate status of the enslaved have dominated the discussion of African slave systems while equally obscuring the possibility for a retention of one's natal identity and his or her ability to reconnect with natal kinship networks. Social dislocation has become the nexus for our understanding of the variety of African slave systems. It represents how we identify and interpret African slave systems. My dissertation does not repeat this shortcoming. Rather, I use King Jaja's story as a means of highlighting the possibility of employing connection and continuity in understanding an enslaved individual's experience in southern Nigeria in the nineteenth century. While I am aware that Jaja's life history is, in many ways, exceptional and unique, and that it is not applicable to the vast majority of those who found themselves enslaved in West Africa in the nineteenth century, Jaja's life history does show that social dislocation and marginality are not always the most useful units of measurement for assessing what has long been considered the most oppressive human institution in history. While we, as Africanists, have long attempted to avoid applying western definitions to African institutions, we have failed to remove from our thought process the exceptionally dichotomous western view of slavery. The literature discussed above shows that we have come to acknowledge African slavery as distinct from western, chattel slavery. It also shows that we have identified the possibilities for upwards mobility in the social, economic and political realms of the societies that housed those slave systems. What this literature has failed to do is show how

this upward mobility provided avenues for an enslaved individual to retain elements of their natal identity, or, put differently, to replant the seeds of home.

The slavery-to-kinship continuum allows us to see how the slave could become a more fully-functioning member of the society in which they were enslaved. This, I argue, places far too much weight on the process of enculturating a slave into a community. It is important to remember that a brother, sister, son or daughter who was taken into slavery in Africa did not cease to exist in the minds of their natal kin. They were physically removed from the community, but their identity and place in the family was never forgotten by those who loved them and cared for them. Moreover, the natal kinship network was never far from the enslaved individuals' mind. Jaja's acceptance of a new identity to facilitate life in Bonny did not equate to the abandonment of his identity as an Umuduruoha man. African slave studies literature has, to an extent, fallen victim to the very notion it has ardently fought against- the conflation of African and New World slavery. The slave who was removed from the African continent in shackles and sent to a plantation or mine in the New World would likely never see or hear from his or her natal home again. These slaves were forced to resign themselves to the idea that, no matter what they did, they were units of labor in a land that was unreachable to their kinsmen. In essence, this experience of forced removal from the African continent is the only standardized notion unifying slave experiences in the New World. However, Africanists have applied this New World experience of slavery to African slavery with one breath, while condemning the conflation of African and New World slave systems with another. The very issue African slave systems studies rose up to negate has, in fact, been perpetuated in the assumption that, at the point of enslavement, an individual automatically forfeits all ties, personal and otherwise, to their natal home. As we will see through the story of Jaja's life, this simply was not the case in the slave

systems of the Niger Delta.

In order to adequately frame Jaja's life history and its impact on our current understanding of African slave systems, we must also investigate the literature that addressed Jaja's story from the time of his death through to the present. Over the course of the twentieth century, the literature produced about Jaja followed more general trends in the production of literature about Africa. The shifting demographic of those authors, moving from European authors at the onset of the twentieth century towards the increased production of scholarly literature by African historians after 1960 reflects wider trends in academia that sought to reclaim the African past from western models of historical inquiry. As this shift occurred, the emphasis on Jaja's role as a pre-colonial African nationalist emerged. Thus, we must now take a moment to examine the production of literature about Jaja of Opobo to date.

The Historiography of King Jaja of Opobo

Jaja's political exploits as the monarch of Opobo have been well-explored in other academic literature.⁹⁴ Historians focusing on Jaja's successes as a merchant-king in the Niger Delta have long identified his powerful connections to hinterland markets of southern Igboland as a source of his power during his oft-troubled treaty negotiations with the British. However, these sources have failed to draw out the connections that Jaja was able to form with his natal home of Umuduruoha in Igboland during his reign in the Delta, as well as how these connections inform our understanding of slavery and slave systems in Southern Nigeria. Jaja's story intersects with larger trends in West African and Atlantic history, making his life narrative, unique as it may be, applicable to larger populations of Igbo people held in bondage in the Niger Delta in the nineteenth century. In addressing the many works written about Jaja, I show how the events of

⁹⁴ Nwokeji, *Slave Trade and Culture*, 185; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 77-126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-202; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 258-261. These texts are but a few examples of the plethora of works that include Jaja's influence on the political exchange between British representatives and Coastal Delta States in Nigeria.

Jaja's life in domestic slavery and as a monarch in the Niger Delta have been discussed over the past century.

The literature regarding King Jaja of Opobo is presented in chronological order. As the twentieth century progressed, so too did the literature pertaining to Jaja. Developments in the fields of African Studies and African History, coupled with the global events that sparked a greater academic interest in “Area Studies” and the history of Africa, run parallel to the texts produced about King Jaja. Changing societal attitudes become apparent in the way writers approached Jaja of Opobo's position towards and relationship with the British. Moreover, the people who contributed to this body of literature also changed drastically throughout the twentieth century, provided varied and eclectic views on Jaja, his life, and the circumstances he faced as the sovereign of Opobo. This literature review extends back to encompass the travelogues and writings of various British actors in Southern Nigeria during Jaja’s lifetime and directly afterward. Additionally, this category addresses the post-independence period writers who sought to reclaim Jaja’s life history from western literature and ground it in an internal, Nigerian understanding of history.

References to Jaja’s life and deeds can be found dating back to the end of the nineteenth century. The travelers and journeymen of the British Isles swarmed to southern Nigeria around the turn of the century to find profitable employment under the newly formed Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.⁹⁵ These individuals were often called in to mediate internal disputes that disrupted British trade in the Niger Delta. One author in particular identifies Jaja as a person of interest to British authorities, as he was seen largely as a hindrance to free trade in the region both before and after his death in 1891.

⁹⁵ While other European actors were certainly active in the Niger Delta before and during Jaja's lifetime, for linguistic reasons, this study focuses solely on the text produced by English-speaking representatives working in the Niger Delta.

A.F. Mockler-Ferryman served the British Crown in the Niger Delta in the late nineteenth century. Like other British agents of the time period, he also meticulously documented his travels in the area and published widely about them after the turn of the century. In 1902, Mockler-Ferryman produced an article that related the same images of paternalism on the part of the British, and barbarism on the part of Africans that underpinned social attitudes of the times. Unlike Mockler-Ferryman's last book, *Up the Niger*,⁹⁶ which was, according to the author, intended to document his encounters with Niger and Benue River rulers, the article published in 1902 presented to the reader a much more direct explanation of different rulers and the state of their territories.⁹⁷ For example, this text references King Jaja and his 'problematic' nature in smooth trade relations when Mockler-Ferryman states, "Opobo, at the mouth of the river of the same name, whose notorious chief Jaja will be remembered for his constant quarrels with his neighbour Oko Jumbo, of Bonny."⁹⁸ Mockler-Ferryman's narrative about his travels up the Niger does not address the various treaties between Jaja and British agents in Nigeria, any aspects of Jaja's rise to power in Bonny and Opobo, or Jaja's slave origins. Here we see the concerns of the British, which were relegated to maintaining an economically profitable protectorate in southern Nigeria and little more, are reflected Mockler-Ferryman's focus on documenting Jaja's impedance of trade. Meanwhile, Jaja's role in protecting the interior markets from British interference, the day-to-day operations and maintenance of his powerful trading state, or even the means through which he consolidated power were conspicuously absent from Mockler-Ferryman's account. These facets of Jaja's life in the Delta would, in the middle of the twentieth century, become mainstays in re-telling Jaja's story. In essence, what is missing from early

⁹⁶ A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Up the Niger: Narrative of Major Claude MacDonald's mission to the Niger and Benue rivers, West Africa* (London, G. Philip & Son, 1892). This text makes no mention of Jaja or Opobo.

⁹⁷ A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, "British Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2. (Jan., 1902), viii.

⁹⁸ Mockler-Ferryman, "British Nigeria," 166.

accounts like Mockler-Ferryman's reveals more about the position of the authors than it does about Jaja's life and times.

From 1902 to 1915, there seems to be a gap in works produced about King Jaja and the Niger Delta palm oil trade. This could be viewed as a result of the official establishment of the Southern Nigerian Protectorate in 1900. Historian C.C. Ifemesia submits:

Thanks largely to the operations of the British squadron, consuls, merchants and missionaries and to the intestinal quarrels within and among the indigenous communities themselves, the power of coastal principalities was gradually reduced and finally eliminated during the course of the century... After the proclamation of 1900, the coastal inhabitants ...followed the moving economic frontier into the hinterland...⁹⁹

Ifemesia provides an explanation for the dearth in literature on Niger Delta relations after colonization. If British society's general economic interests shifted away from coastal palm oil traders and middlemen, then the literature produced about that same topic would theoretically subside as well.

Nevertheless, in 1915 George W. Neville, memorialized in his obituary as the "Grand Old Man' of West Africa" produced an article devoted to another merchant prince of the Niger Delta, Nana Olomu of Benin. In this article, Neville contends that Nana Olomu feared cooperating with the British after he blockaded access to certain inland markets because of the recent exile of Jaja to St. Vincent in the West Indies.¹⁰⁰ This is a critical turn in the literature of Niger Delta trade relations insofar as it is the first attempt to gain some glimpse of a Nigerian perspective on the occurrences between 1885 and 1900 and it shows that Jaja's exile was the impetus for other Delta rulers to begin to identify how the British intended to operate in the

⁹⁹ C.C. Ifemesia, *Southeastern Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: NOK Publishers, 1978), 59.

¹⁰⁰ F.S., "Obituary for George W. Neville," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 29, No. 114. (Jan., 1930), 201.

area.¹⁰¹ While this work was not directly dedicated to examining the relationship between Jaja and the British, it does show that the incident in Opobo at the end of the nineteenth century was a driving factor in the decision making process of other Niger Delta rulers who were attempting to cope with circumstances similar to those faced by Jaja.

The single text detailing the events surrounding Jaja in 1920s was written by a British author named W.N.M Geary. Geary had practiced as a barrister in Lagos from 1909 to 1913, after the colony had been established and the resistance efforts in the Delta had largely subsided.¹⁰² Despite being the only author of the 1920s to produce literature related to King Jaja of Opobo, Geary was the first author to attempt synthesizing a sympathetic stance towards Jaja while producing the most complete and accurate history of Jaja's years in power. In this respect, Geary's text stands out from all of the texts published prior to the 1920s. Although Geary's book devotes only small amounts of discussion to Jaja's role as middlemen in the body of the text, it does include an appendix, entitled "Jaja, African Merchant Prince," devoting an unprecedented amount of space to Jaja when compared to literature mentioning Jaja prior to the 1920s.¹⁰³ Originally an article in the publication *West Africa*, this appendix traces Jaja's rise to influence in Bonny, his establishment of the Opobo trading state during the Bonny civil war, his faltering relations with Consuls Hewitt and Livingstone, and his eventual exile from Opobo in 1887.¹⁰⁴ In doing so, Geary presents a Jaja quite unlike the troublesome, belligerent ruler portrayed in earlier British literature. In fact, Geary presents Jaja as a level-headed mediator during the Bonny civil war, as he was the only figure seeking a resolution in the conflict when he moved his trading

¹⁰¹ George W. Neville, "Nanna Oloma of Benin" *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 14, No. 54. (Jan., 1915), 162-167.

¹⁰² Neville, "Nanna Oloma," 162.

¹⁰³ W.N.M. Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1927), 275.

¹⁰⁴ Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule*, Appendix 1.

house to Opobo.¹⁰⁵ One other specific turn emerges from Geary's text in the 1920s as it is the first to challenge the British stance that Jaja was legally exiled as punishment for trading in slaves at interior markets.¹⁰⁶ Geary contends that, "...rightly or wrongly, it was considered that he [Jaja] had been kidnapped."¹⁰⁷ As can be seen in the above discussion, Geary treats Jaja in much greater detail and more sympathetically than other British authors discussed to this point.

The 1930s were also marred by poor production in Niger Delta histories and are again exemplified by a single text, written by Henry Gallwey, relating specifically to trade and middlemen in the nineteenth century. The same Henry Gallwey had published *Travels in Benin Country, West Africa* in 1897. In the 1930s, he published an article entitled *Nigeria in the Nineties*. The only noteworthy contribution in this text was a brief story about how Gallwey was supposed to see a one King Jaja back to Opobo in 1891, but Jaja died en route on the island of Tenerife.¹⁰⁸ The discussion of British attempts to restore Jaja's authority in Opobo, and the resulting sorrow of the inhabitants upon news of his death allow an insight to Jaja's influence in both African and European realms. Moreover, this text provides some voice to the archival evidence that details the missteps between British and Spanish authorities in moving Jaja's body back to Opobo, resulting in periods of civil unrest in the Niger Delta town.¹⁰⁹

The 1940s and 1950s witnessed a proliferation of western-produced literature about Africa. This phase also bears witness to a breaking through of American scholarship on the topic of Jaja and the Niger Delta. Furthermore, the 1940s frame a shift in authorship, as PhDs and university-sanctioned scholars slowly supplanted the men involved in British- Niger Delta trade

¹⁰⁵ Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule*, 276.

¹⁰⁶ The claim that Jaja was, in fact, involved in the traffic of human cargo well into the nineteenth century was supported by one of my collaborators whose great grandfather had supposedly sold slaves to Jaja.

¹⁰⁷ Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule*, 283.

¹⁰⁸ Henry L. Gallwey, "Nigeria in the Nineties," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 29, No. 115 (Apr., 1930), 222-223.

¹⁰⁹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 36/3/5, Acting Consul General R. Moore, Correspondence Relating to the Exhumation of Body of Late King Jaja of Opobo, September 4th, 1894.

relationships as the primary producers of literature about the subject.

In 1942, Henry L. Gallwey published another article relating his experience as a British agent in the Delta. This article, entitled “West Africa Fifty Years Ago,” extends a more sympathetic view to the plight of King Jaja’s situation than was characteristic of his earlier interpretations. Gallwey writes:

Major MacDonald had induced the Foreign Office to allow Jaja to return to his country in the same ship that took us out. It was a clever move on MacDonald's part, as it would have been a great act of diplomacy to start his rule in the new Protectorate by such an act of clemency. The removal of Jaja from Opobo was not an act of which the British Government could be proud. It is readily allowed that Jaja was a headstrong man and had to be kept up to the bit, but the manner of his capture was unfortunately very contrary to our ideas of fair play.¹¹⁰

This is the first time in any of Gallwey’s texts that one can observe an outright condemnation of British actions towards Niger Delta rulers, traders and middlemen. Also, unlike his first piece of literature, this work is not riddled with speculation on societal structures, nor does it use loaded words such as Ju Ju, savage, barbaric or cannibalistic.¹¹¹ In 1943, An American historian by the name of A.N. Cook produced a seemingly eclectic view of Jaja’s role as a middleman in nineteenth century Delta politics.

In his book, *British Enterprise in Nigeria*, Cook includes a chapter titled “The Making of

¹¹⁰ Henry L. Gallwey, “West Africa Fifty Years Ago,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* Vol. 41, No. 164 (Jul., 1942), 90.

¹¹¹ Gallwey, “West Africa,” 90-92. Noting the distinction in the language used to discuss the people, religious and social structures of the Niger Delta on the part of British actors in southern Nigeria from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century is critical to understanding shifting attitudes in British society towards Africa. As slave-trading diminished and 'legitimate trade' increased, leading to formal colonization in southern Nigeria, the tone of British writers adjusted accordingly. As Britain moved to formally colonize the states of the Niger Delta, more attention was paid to the realities of social and political structures in localized systems than was paid to casting the “Africans,” generally, as backwards savages. In essence, the underpinning of the colonial mindset was an idea that European colonial powers could somehow “civilize” their colonial subjects into a mode of behavior and existence more palatable to Western European notions of “civility,” at the same time saving the Africans from themselves. Gone were the days of casting all Africans as hopelessly backwards peoples. Such an assumption would completely negate the idea that such a society could or would adopt elements of what westerners considered civilization. With this being the case, British writings about the Niger Delta, as is clearly reflected in the shift in tone from Gallwey's first and second pieces on Jaja of Opobo, focused less on the innate differences between British and African cultures and more on the perceived areas in which Africans were likely to adopt elements of British influence.

Southern Nigeria.” This chapter specifies many of the same details as Geary’s account of Jaja’s rise to power and deposition at the end of the nineteenth century, but includes a far more detailed analysis of Jaja’s use of British merchants to facilitate his maintenance of authority in the region.¹¹² Cook also was successful in creating the first piece of literature to adequately explain the importance of Jaja as one of the many puzzle pieces that needed to fall into place for the British to maintain control of the southern reaches of Nigeria. Cook writes, “The deposition of King Jaja marks an important step in the establishment of British authority over the ‘Oil Rivers’ since the protectorate had heretofore existed largely on paper.”¹¹³ In addition to Cook and Gallwey, historians and anthropologists like K.C. Murray and William Bascom provide some relevant insight to the historiography surrounding Jaja. Bascom’s article, “West Africa and the Complexity of Primitive Cultures,” provides an entry point into the variety in the status and function of middlemen, specifically in the trading states of Opobo, Benin and Whydah.¹¹⁴ K.C. Murray’s article, “Opobo To-Day,” is pertinent insofar as it conveys the struggles of Jaja’s descendants to collect on a settlement with the British government for the wrongful imprisonment and exile of King Jaja by Lord Johnston in 1887.¹¹⁵ While these articles are short and of little interest to many scholars, they further bolster the idea that the historiography was shifting away from British agents and amateur historians towards degree-holding, professional historians.

As World War II came to an uneasy end in 1945, societal structures across the globe were

¹¹² A.N. Cook. *British Enterprise in Nigeria*, (USA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943), p. 61. Here we see Jaja circumventing the hold that British Consuls had over trade relationships in the Delta. Jaja was able to employ his own steamship that could traverse the Atlantic and engage directly with customers in Great Britain, specifically in Liverpool. The Elder Dempster Trade Company, who would later fight for Jaja's return to Opobo from the West Indies, supplied Jaja with this steamer, ostensibly to increase their trade interests in the Niger Delta.

¹¹³ Cook, *British Enterprise*, 65.

¹¹⁴ William Bascom, “West Africa and the Complexity of Primitive Cultures,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 50, No. 1, Part 1. (Jan. - Mar., 1948), 18.

¹¹⁵ K.C. Murray, “Opobo To-Day,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 43, No. 172 (Jul., 1944), 134.

deeply affected as soldiers returned home. The experience of African soldiers returning to their respective colonies can be likened to the experience of African-American war veterans in the post-war period. Among other reactions to World War II, the most discernible seems to be the West African response, with a staunch push towards independence from European colonialism, as is most clearly displayed in Ghana in 1957 and Nigeria in 1960. Historian G.O. Olusanya contends that Nigerian soldiers' experiences of being thrust into war with whites dashed the previously held myths of white men being more than ordinary soldiers. This myth clearly helped to maintain a sense of white superiority in the colonies prior to the war.¹¹⁶

One could easily imagine the same circumstances facing black American soldiers, and more accurately black Americans, after World War II. It must be said that the promotion of African and African American histories was in effect well before the war by black scholars like W.E.B. Du Bois. In his 1998 presidential address to the American Historical Association, Joseph C. Miller states:

The scholarly W. E. B. Du Bois led several African-American colleagues at the beginning of this century in creating a professional history for Africa against the backdrop of American racism. As an undergraduate at Fisk University, where the "natural inferiority [of people of African descent] was strenuously denied," it had been Bismarck who struck Du Bois as a model of the "strength and determination under trained leadership" ...¹¹⁷

With the end of World War II and the return of discontented black soldiers, which built on already growing nationalist and desegregationist trends, societies and academic institutions the world over turned their interests towards Africa.¹¹⁸

The literature pertaining to Jaja exploded in conjunction with the quickly widening

¹¹⁶ G.O. Olusanya, "The Role of Ex-Servicemen in Nigerian Politics" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2. (Aug., 1968), 224.

¹¹⁷ Joseph C. Miller, "AHA Presidential Address: History and Africa/Africa and History," *The American Historical Association*, http://www.historians.org/info/AHA_History/jcmiller.htm, Accessed April 22, 2010.

¹¹⁸ Carol A. Dressel, "The Development of African Studies in the United States," *African Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Dec., 1966), 66.

disciplines of African history and African areas studies in American academic institutions. Furthermore, the nationalist and pan-African movements, spearheaded by leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe on the continent created greater interest in Africa's history and politics abroad.¹¹⁹ Also, Nigeria's achievement of independence from the British Crown in 1960 created an opportunity for Nigerian historians to apply their own perspectives on the Niger Delta middlemen of the late nineteenth century. With wider academic adoption came greater opportunities for publication and dissemination of these histories. Despite a proliferation in universal black rights movements beginning directly after World War II, trends in the literature regarding Jaja seems to lag roughly a decade behind shifting societal currents.

In 1956, the Nigerian Broadcasting Company began a series of talks over the air with Nigerian scholars, known as the "Lugard Lecture Series." From among these scholars came Dr. K.O. Dike, a professor at the University of Ibadan. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Dike was hailed as, "...the first of a rapidly expanding group of young West Africans who are bringing to African history insight and understanding from their own culture, and detachment born of mastery of European techniques of research."¹²⁰ Dike was also the first Nigerian scholar to undertake a discussion of the reign of Jaja in the Delta. It is of great relevance to point out that there is a distinct possibility that Nigerians prior to Dike had produced some amateur histories about the subject. However, gaining access to these types of documents, if they exist, was not possible for this study. Therefore, K.O. Dike is treated as the first Nigerian to write on this topic.

Dike's series of discussions on N.B.C. was published under the name *100 Years of British Rule in Nigeria*. This work was too short to effectively engage any of the topics mentioned in

¹¹⁹ See earlier discussion on Azikiwe and Pan-Africanism. Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 41-83.

¹²⁰ John Flint, "Review," *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* by K. Onwuka Dike" in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 19, No. 3. (Sep., 1959), 439-40.

great depth. However, it is held in great regard as an effective entrance into the variety of subtopics that consume Nigerian history. For example, of the coastal middlemen, like Jaja and Nana, Dike says very little, aside from listing them among other rulers deposed by the British.¹²¹ However, Dike's work heralded a new tide in the literature, reflecting the widely changing composition among authors producing Niger Delta histories and the creation of greater opportunities for Africans to involve themselves in their own historical production. The revisionist nature of much of the literature in this phase of the historiography seems to be a direct reaction to British domination of the publications about Nigeria.

Later, in the same year, K.O. Dike published what has been considered a groundbreaking study in Niger Delta histories. In *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria*, Dike devotes an entire chapter to Jaja's circumstances in Opobo. This evaluation of Jaja and the Opobo trade situation differs greatly from treatments in earlier literature for two main reasons. One being that Dike was the first PhD-holding Nigerian to undertake a Delta history, and therefore presented a very different perspective on the rise and fall of Jaja. The other being that Dike was the first scholar to maintain that King Jaja actively attempted to hinder further inland incursions by the British, while at the same time maintain a policy of free trade for Africans in the Niger River.¹²² Dike explains:

Realizing that the source of Delta wealth was in the oil markets, he (Jaja) made himself persona grata with the chiefs of the interior and spent more time with them than with the artificial society of the coast. Similarly, he sought popularity with the supercargoes who were at the receiving end of interior products. He perceived that Europe was determined to capture the hinterland trade and made his plans accordingly.

¹²¹ K.O. Dike, *100 years of British Rule in Nigeria: 1851-1951* (Lagos: Federal Information Services, 1956), 29.

¹²² Prior to Dike, Jaja's blockade of British trade was largely presented as the actions of a belligerent ruler seeking to achieve personal wealth and political power through the domination of his neighbors and rivals. Dike, on the other hand, presents Jaja as an early nationalist who attempted to keep the balance of trade relations in the hands of Africans, much to the dismay of British agents. This turn is truly critical, inasmuch as Jaja would, in most literature to come after Dike, be presented in this same light.

Dike continues to explain Jaja's actions towards African traders in the Delta when he says, "He [Jaja] helped them 'to trade on their own account, bought canoes for them, took them to European traders' who gave them trusts, Jaja himself standing guarantee for them."¹²³ Dike's book actively engages in an attempt to place agency, autonomy, and the making of vital decisions and policies back into the hands of Africans in historical literature. Moreover, it details Jaja's attempts to insulate other African actors in the coastal states from the impact of oppressive British trade policies designed to wrest power from the autonomous African states of Niger Delta. In relation to Jaja, this work remains relevant insofar as it is the first to convey a sense of Jaja's policies being reactive to what he perceived as benefits or blights of European involvement in the oil trade. Rather than being the unfortunate pawn of the British or the 'savage' troublemaker, Jaja was now, in contrast to earlier writings, portrayed as actively aware of the increasing British attempts to encroach in his enterprise, and how that awareness influenced his decisions as an economic and political leader. Also, Dike's text sets the stage for a discussion of Jaja's possible motivations in fortifying his brother Duruoshimiri in the Igbo hinterland,¹²⁴ perhaps as a means of neutralizing the dominance of British gunboats in Niger Delta.

No discernibly valuable literature was produced about the King Jaja by Nigerian scholars in the early 1960s. After independence in 1960, ethnic fissures propagated by arbitrary colonial boundaries created an unstable political atmosphere which, in the middle of the decade, would erupt into the Biafran War.¹²⁵ This disrupted production of literature as many Nigerian scholars were either embroiled in the war or, like Dike, fled the country to establish careers abroad. As

¹²³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185.

¹²⁴ While Jaja's connections back to his interior home of Umuduruoha and his brother, Duruoshimiri, are absent from Dike's text, his discussion of the British actions that motivated Jaja's decisions provide a framework into which I can place the many oral narratives I collected in Umuduruoha describing Jaja and Duruoshimiri's attempts to create a powerful Coastal-Hinterland alliance.

¹²⁵ David Williams, "Nigeria: One or Many," *African Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 272. (Jul., 1969), 245.

Nigerian scholarship decreased, American scholarship provided no support to these histories and British scholars had, with a few exceptions, all but abandoned the topic.¹²⁶

However, in 1962 an Australian historian named Cherry Gertzel published an article about Jaja's relations with the British at the end of the nineteenth century and his legacy after his death. Gertzel's work focuses heavily on life in Opobo after Jaja's exile in 1887 until the end of the century, as well as discusses the effects of Jaja's former leadership on resistance efforts after his exile. This appears to be the first turn towards discussing the men that surrounded Jaja throughout his affair. Gertzel writes:

The Ibo producers were well and truly under the influence of the Opobo middlemen, in spite of Jaja's removal, and certainly feared to act against their instructions-which were not to trade with the Europeans. The presence of Opobo settlers in each of these markets was a constant reminder of Opobo's power, not to be treated lightly. Thus the village people not only refused to trade, but also took active steps to keep the Europeans' agents from traveling about the country, setting up booms across the creeks to hinder their movement. In 1889, two years after Jaja's exile, the Opobo middlemen were still successfully preventing any European business in the markets, so much so that the Consul ordered a blockade of Opobo Town to try to 'bring them to their senses.'¹²⁷

Although this article is chronologically isolated, Gertzel identifies a crucial aspect of the historiography that had previously been missing. Establishing the resistance efforts of Jaja was only part of Gertzel's text. She highlights the important point that men like Jaja were not isolated from the communities they lived in and the people with whom they interacted. Therefore, to truly understand the relevance of these figures, one must evaluate the actions of those that surrounded them. This attitude is reflected in the countless Native Court Cases that call upon Jaja's legacy to secure claims on property, land or kingship that appear in the archival records regarding Opobo

¹²⁶ It is worthy of note that British-born historian Thomas Hodgkin makes a brief mention of Jaja's exploits in the Niger Delta in his book *Nigerian Perspectives*. While this text does not provide any new information on Jaja's life, it does convey that Jaja's story remained a subject worthy of some, albeit limited, attention in larger anthologies concerning Nigeria. See Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives; An Historical Anthology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

¹²⁷ Cherry J. Gertzel, "Relations between African and European Traders in the Niger Delta 1880-1896," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1962), 63.

after Jaja's death.¹²⁸ Moreover, Gertzel's text identifies Jaja's continued influence in interior Igbo markets as well as in Opobo, even after his death in Tenerife.

In 1963, former British colonial officer, G.I. Jones produced an outline on the political development in eastern and southern Nigeria from the late 1800s through to Nigeria's independence movement in 1960. Jones' work, entitled *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, on the many coastal markets and their relationship to the resource rich areas of the southern and eastern Nigerian hinterland, as well as to British agents and one another, has been critical in informing our understanding of the structure and organization of trade and trade relationships on what, in the nineteenth century, was known as the "Oil Rivers." Building largely upon archival records left by the British which Jones supplements with some limited oral traditions and narratives, Jones is able to convey the extremely interconnected relationship shared by the many coastal states engaged in supplying palm oil to the British. It is, perhaps, the most useful resource for understanding the rise of Opobo, and Jaja, in the wider context of southern Nigerian export trade.¹²⁹ With Jones' emphasis on the political structures of the Delta, which he sees as inexorable from the external trade relationships maintained by these states, Jaja's narrative is not addressed until the onset of civil strife in Bonny. Here, Jones gives a comprehensive overview of the political leadership in Bonny by tracing the various houses in their development all the way back to the founding of Bonny. In particular, Jones highlights the dispute over kingship that existed between the Anna Pepple and Manilla Pepple *wari*.¹³⁰

The end of the 1960s and the 1970s emerged as the period in which treatments of Jaja and Niger Delta resistance movements would proliferate more so than in any other time in the past

¹²⁸ The National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OPODIST 1/1/57, Claims by the Various Houses of Opobo Town for Compensation in Respect of War Canoes etc.; June 24th, 1892.

¹²⁹ Jones, *The Trading States*, 116-132.

¹³⁰ Jones, *The Trading States*, 125-132.

hundred years. This also marks the period of the greatest amount of Nigerian publications about the subject. In order to more effectively engage this part of the historiography, we must address the scholarly literature along lines of genre, rather than chronologically, from the late sixties to early seventies. The texts are most easily assessed if they are separated into life histories about Jaja and historical monographs that treat him as parts of studies with a wider scope.¹³¹ Much less attention is paid to the wider studies that only mention Jaja, as they tend to simply reiterate many of the ideas that were established in earlier publications, Dike's in particular.

Biographies of Jaja are few and far between. However, in the late sixties and early seventies, two life histories concerning the Niger Delta's "merchant prince" were published.¹³² These biographies were written by Nigerian authors E.A. Jaja¹³³ and Sylvanus Cookey. These texts sought to build on the increasing trend in African history to move away from discourse about Africa in relation to external forces and focus more on the causes and effects of drastic change from within African communities.

The biographies about King Jaja generally aimed to extend knowledge of his rise to power in the Delta, his influence as the monopolistic head of trade and his eventual downfall. E.A. Jaja's book, *King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891): A Sketch History of the Development and Expansion of Opobo*, builds directly off the text written by W.N.M. Geary.¹³⁴ In this text, the

¹³¹ One text from the 1970s that contributes greatly to establishing the context in which Jaja arose from his slave status in Bonny to become the head of the Anna Pepple house is E.J. Alagoa and A. Fombo's *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny*. This text traces Bonny's rise as a primary source of the Niger Delta's export trade from its founding through to the eventual decline of Bonny in latter half of the nineteenth century. While this text provides little new information on Jaja's political exploits or early life, it does represent a critical source in accounting for Bonny's long history prior to Jaja's arrival in the 1830s. See Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*.

¹³² In addition to the biographies produced about Jaja in this time period, a handful of other texts list Jaja as a historical figure critical to the pre-colonial exchange between British and Nigerian actors in the Niger Delta at the end of the nineteenth century. See Obaro Ikime and S. O. Osobo, *European Conquest and African Resistance* (London: Longmans, 1973); Obaro Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1977); G.N. Uzoigwe, *Britain and the Conquest of Africa: The Age of Salisbury* (Lagos: NOK Publishers International, 1978), 96-97; E.J. Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 565-573.

¹³³ Not to be confused with prominent Igbo historian, E.J. Alagoa.

¹³⁴ E.A. Jaja. *King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891): A Sketch History of the Development and Expansion of Opobo*

author centers Jaja in a migratory/community history. In discussing Jaja's life, this book addressed the establishment and progression of the newly formed town of Opobo. Two sections of this text provide the reader with the demographic history of the territory and how the religious beliefs of Jaja's migrating followers re-established themselves in Opobo.¹³⁵

Sylvanus Cookey's biographical book, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891*, provides a precedent in this body of literature and echoes changing attitudes towards methods in African studies and African history as disciplines. Cookey was born and raised in Opobo and recalls times in his childhood when he "...played around the foot of his [Jaja's] statue..."¹³⁶ In establishing a detailed chronology of events in Jaja's life from birth to death, Cookey offers two major contributions to the historiography. In discussing Jaja's early childhood, Cookey establishes the vital connection between Jaja's Igbo roots and his later influence and success in trading with Igbo palm oil producers.¹³⁷ As Cookey further explains Jaja's kidnapping and sale by Aro slave traders,¹³⁸ the literature opens up a vital theme in African history by discussing experiences within indigenous African slave systems.¹³⁹ The text follows Jaja through the intricate network of inland slave traders until he was finally purchased for domestic servitude and settled at the coast in Bonny. At this point Cookey writes, "It had become usual for capable, intelligent, alert, and virile slave youths to be retained by their owners as

(Lagos: Opobo Action Council, 1977), 26.

¹³⁵ Jaja, *King Jaja*, 20-22.

¹³⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, preface.

¹³⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 25. While Cookey is not the first to make this connection between Umuduruoha in the hinterland and Jaja at the coast, Cookey's work was the first published, widely-available monograph on Jaja that identified this connection. However, Cookey discusses Jaja's birthplace tersely and without great detail. Moreover, he draws no attention to the rekindled relationship between Jaja and his family and kinship network in Umuduruoha during Jaja's reign in Opobo.

¹³⁸ It should be noted here that Cookey implies Jaja's kidnapping and sale was the work of Aro agents operating in the area. As this dissertation will discuss in Chapter Two, Umuduruoha-based sources cite enemies of Jaja's father within the community as the one's who carried out Jaja's kidnapping, before passing him on to slave traders, who may or may not have been affiliated with the Aro, in the slave markets of Oguta.

¹³⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 27.

members of the household. Jaja must have exhibited all or some of these traits at the time.”¹⁴⁰

The opportunity for manumission from slave-status through actions of the enslaved individual is an important distinction that differentiates the African slave systems from the American slave system. The failure to address this distinction has, in the past, led to Euro-centric justifications of the Atlantic slave trade and chattel slavery. The other noteworthy contribution of Cookey’s text was his use of oral history as a method of research.¹⁴¹ As more African scholars undertook histories of their own communities, they fought diligently for recognition of oral tradition as a vital element of their culture and a legitimate mode of communicating history across generational lines.¹⁴² Cookey’s recognition and inclusion of oral history as a viable resource in Jaja’s life history coincides with a growing popularity of the method throughout the social science disciplines.¹⁴³ However, it should be noted that, while Cookey built heavily upon oral narratives from Opobo, he neglected to collect oral narratives from Jaja’s natal community of Umuduruoha. This has led to a massive shortcoming in Cookey’s text, as he dedicated only three pages to a discussion of Jaja’s childhood and home in the Igbo interior. As such, Cookey employs oral narratives from Opobo about Jaja’s childhood in Igboland and, without question, reproducing the narrative of Jaja’s childhood in Umuduruoha presented by Dike almost a decade earlier.¹⁴⁴ My dissertation is different in that Jaja’s early childhood has been reconstructed from sources within Umuduruoha and, even during his economic and political career in the Delta,

¹⁴⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 179.

¹⁴² Jan Vansina is often credited as the scholar most responsible for legitimizing African oral history as a method of research in the social sciences. See Jan Vansina, *Living with Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) & Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, 2nd edn, trans. H. M. Wright (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973).

¹⁴³ Samuel Proctor, “Oral History Comes of Age,” *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 3 (1975), vi.

¹⁴⁴ This fact helps to explain why collaborators in Umuduruoha were so intent on establishing Umuduruoha as Jaja’s natal home. This subject will be discussed in the next chapter when considering my methods for collecting narratives and my experiences in doing research in southern and eastern Nigeria. For now, it suffices to say that, despite my having come to Umuduruoha to seek out Jaja’s birthplace, many of my collaborators spent a good deal of our discussions trying to convince me that Jaja was, in fact, an Umuduruoha man.

focuses on his connection with his natal home in the Igbo heartland.

While Cookey and Dike's text were widely disseminated through international publication, they were not the only pieces of literature to address the many aspects of King Jaja's life in the period following 1960. Walter I. Ofonagoro, who holds a PhD in history from Columbia University and is, himself, a traditional ruler in the neighboring Amaigbo community of Umuobi,¹⁴⁵ produced an article in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* about King Jaja's roots and lineage in Umuduruoha in 1978, entitled "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Okwaraozurumba otherwise known as King Jaja of Opobo, 1821-1891." This article is critical in the historiography inasmuch as it is the first published account dealing with Jaja's birth and life in Umuduruoha prior to being taken into slavery. The details of Jaja's early life that emerge in Ofonagoro's article are built largely upon an unpublished manuscript written by his close friend Capt. H.O. Ohaya and a descendant of Jaja's family S.A. Duru, both from the Amaigbo community of Umuduruoha.¹⁴⁶ Ofonagoro's article, when coupled with oral narratives I was able to collect from Ohaya, Ofonagoro himself and other members of the Umuduruoha community, represents the most comprehensive and useful account of Jaja's life and family in Umuduruoha. Here, the author challenges the existing dates attributed to Jaja's birth and enslavement, as well

¹⁴⁵ I was fortunate enough to be received as a guest of Dr. Ofonagoro in the summer of 2010 while conducting research in Umuduruoha. In addition to Ofonagoro's critical insights on Jaja and the Umuduruoha community, his hospitality and support were vital in making inroads into the Umuduruoha community and, for his friendship and assistance, I will be forever grateful to him.

¹⁴⁶ According to both Dr. Ofonagoro and Capt. Ohaya, the manuscript was held in the private library of S.A. Duru until his death. Duru was head of the Duruoshmiri clan in Umuduruoha and was Jaja's oldest living relative in the community until his passing 2010. At that point, the manuscript should have passed to Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri. However, Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri claims that he never inherited such a document from his late uncle, S.A. Duru. Despite co-authoring the piece, Capt. Ohaya did not possess a copy of the manuscript at the time we spoke. I had the opportunity to search through S.A. Duru's library for works pertaining to King Jaja of Opobo and the Umuduruoha community in general, and the article was not present in his collection. As all other artifacts relating to Jaja seemed to have passed from S.A. Duru to Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri upon Duru's death, it is likely that this manuscript would have followed with the physical artifacts. It is possible that Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri does hold a copy of manuscript, but simply wished not to share it with me while I was conducting research. A more thorough account of my problematic relationship with Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri will be provided in Chapter One, when I discuss my many Umuduruoha-based collaborators and their relationship to the sources of Jaja's narrative.

as the sources from which those dates are derived. Ofonagoro accurately identifies when and where “the facts” about King Jaja came into conflict with Umuduruoha accounts of Jaja's childhood and capture.¹⁴⁷ To date, this article is the only published and disseminated work to address the concerns of this dissertation, Jaja's early life in Igboland. However, Ofonagoro stops short of addressing how Jaja's relationship with his natal community challenges existing notions of West African slave systems, which is the primary concern of this dissertation.¹⁴⁸

In 1970, Nigerian scholar Okpete Kanu, while a student at Dalhousie University in Canada, undertook a study of King Jaja's life and times for her master's thesis. In this thesis, Kanu did little to illuminate details of Jaja's origins in Umuduruoha. While Kanu was successful in identifying Umuduruoha as Jaja's place of birth,¹⁴⁹ she did nothing to further investigate Jaja's lineage and family, or the position they held in Umuduruoha. While Kanu's work does reinforce the idea of a continued interest in investigating Jaja's story among scholars of the 1970s, her neglect of Jaja's childhood in Igboland is an oversight that has been repeated by many scholars since the 1970s. Kanu's impressions of Jaja's childhood are best summed up in her abstract when she writes,

Not very much is known of Jaja prior to his coming to Bonny in 1830. One can only assume that, like the average Ibo (sic) boy of his time, no prophecies preceded his birth and no stars descended upon him at all. Indeed, one may deduce from the fact of his having been taken into slavery at the very tender age of twelve that Jaja's opportunities were less than that of an average Ibo boy of his time. Prisoners of war provided the main

¹⁴⁷ W. Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba otherwise known as King Jaja, 1821-1891,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1978), 145-156.

¹⁴⁸ It should be mentioned here that Ofonagoro's book, *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria, 1881-1929*, does discuss the circumstances of Jaja's conflicts with the British and, much like Dike's work, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, focuses on the economic changes in the Delta that led to the onset of formal colonialism in the twentieth century, in particular the process of moving European production centers from the coastal territories to the hinterland. Again, much like Dike, Ofonagoro presents Jaja as a stumbling block that was preventing British economic interests from taking hold in the Igbo interior of Nigeria. See Walter Ofonagoro, *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria: 1881-1929* (New York: NOK Publishers, 1979).

¹⁴⁹ It is important to note that, prior to this Dike's work, a variety of locations in Nigeria had been credited as Jaja's birthplace, most notably Nkwerre. Here, Okpete reiterates Dike's claim that Jaja's ancestral home was in fact Umuduruoha. However, she fails to challenge Dike's questionable process of dating Jaja's early life.

victims of the slave trade from this area. There were cases of child kidnapping and raids but victims of such vicissitudes tend always to have been first of all victims of meagre family resources which by denying the children necessary care and protection left them exposed.¹⁵⁰

In addition to Kanu's failure to investigate the place Jaja's family held in Umuduruoha, she also presents unsubstantiated and problematic dates for King Jaja's life, claiming he was born in 1812 and lived until 1895.¹⁵¹ Kanu, it would seem, fell woefully short of critically investigating the archives, Opobo-held narratives and Umuduruoha-based narratives. This, in turn, has led to a wealth of shortcomings in her master's thesis, the most notable of which was her willingness to, without evidence, relegate Jaja's family and their place in Umuduruoha to a relatively mundane position.

In considering texts that do not specifically relate to King Jaja's life, one finds little digression amongst the analysis of the Delta ruler. Rather, this literature simply approaches his lived experiences in the Niger Delta from various theoretical frameworks. In 1963, G. I. Jones, "a South African-born British colonial officer and anthropologist,"¹⁵² published an article focusing on European held myths throughout the history of relations in the Delta. In the article, Jones seeks to reclassify the late nineteenth and early twentieth century European views of Jaja as a head-eating cannibal in terms of political propaganda spread by his rivals.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Okpete Kanu, "The Life and Times of King Ja Ja of Opobo, 1812-1895," (Halifax, N.S.: Dalhousie University, 1970), Abstract.

¹⁵¹ No other scholar has offered 1812 as a date of birth for Jaja nor do oral accounts from Umuduruoha reinforce this date. Ofonagoro, citing Dike, Cookey and Ohaya and Duru, calls Kanu's method of placing these dates to Jaja's birth and death an "inspired guess." In addition to the citing flawed birth year of 1812, Kanu give the year of Jaja's death as 1895. Archival sources housed in both Nigeria and the U.K. clearly show that Jaja died in 1891.

¹⁵² John C. McCall, "G.I. Jones, Photographic Archive of Southeastern Nigerian Art and Culture", World History Sources, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/r/193/whm.html>, Accessed 23 April, 2010.

¹⁵³ Jones, "European and African Tradition on the Rio Real", p. 402. In addition to rumors of Jaja's "cannibalism", there were also rumors that, after the British had effectively stepped in to stop the trade in slaves in the Bight of Biafra, Jaja was still carrying on with slave exports. This was likely used as a justification for Consul Johnstone to depose and exile Jaja in the 1880s. However, sources from Aro Chukwu indicate that Jaja was still very much engaged in buying slaves from the interior. However, no evidence exists that Jaja was selling these people into slavery in the Atlantic. It is likely that Opobo, a newly-founded town, needed an increase in manpower to help

Prominent Nigerian historians re-established Jaja as a necessary inclusion in the literature again at the end 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In 1966, a professor at the University of Ibadan named J.C. Anene published a book that discussed the British process of encroachment and treaty signing by subdividing the process into compartmental phases. Jaja features prominently in this text, as does his complicated relationship with British during their treaty negotiations. Essentially, Anene rests on the conclusion that Jaja, and Delta rulers like him, had vastly different interpretations of “free trade” than their British counterparts acting in the area. As “free trade” was the linchpin upon which these treaties were based, this discrepancy in the meaning of such a nebulous concept seems to provide the framework through which most of these treaties were deemed “void” or “broken” by the parties involved. Thus, Anene's text lends insight to the complicated back and forth between British representatives and Jaja and his chiefs, resulting in the many broken treaties that plagued Jaja's relationship with the British in the latter years of his reign.

In 1971 and 1972, another Nigerian historian, E.J. Alagoa, produced two books and an article about Jaja, Nana Olomu, who ruled Benin during Jaja's reign and saw Jaja's ouster from Opobo as a harbinger of his own troubles with the British, and the Niger Delta's struggles with the British at the end of the nineteenth century. His 1971 article, entitled “Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar,”¹⁵⁴ does much to set the stage for the turbulent latter half of the nineteenth century in Delta communities during a time when Jaja was among the most politically powerful African rulers with whom the Europeans carried on trade.

develop the area for settlement. Thus, any evidence of Jaja's engagement in buying slaves from the interior is more than likely evidence for the need of an expanded workforce domestically in Opobo and not evidence of his engagement in Atlantic slave trading endeavors.

¹⁵⁴ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions.”

Alagoa also authored and co-authored books in 1972 which add greater depth to the topic.¹⁵⁵

Alagoa was able to accomplish this by establishing links between Jaja's standing with other communities in the Delta and his ability to maintain power¹⁵⁶ and re-establishes Jaja's position as a hero in Nigerian history.¹⁵⁷

Mentions of Jaja in American produced texts are rare and generally superficial. The importance of American scholarship to this body of literature lies in the readership of texts about Niger Delta middlemen, not necessarily on the production end. The literature being produced by Nigerians was being consumed in many American universities as Area Studies Programs and scholarly interest in the developing world expanded drastically from the 1960s onwards.¹⁵⁸ Therefore the increasing interest in American institutions towards African studies had a greater effect on the scholarship of this topic than did contributions by American scholars. There is one exception in Georgia McGarry. Her book, *Reaction and Protest in the West African Press*, published in 1978, further strengthens the images of Jaja as a resistance leader and explains how he was understood by the media in his own time.¹⁵⁹ In diving into the publications surrounding King Jaja, McGarry's text also provides a deeper analysis of the dismay expressed by British subjects and Nigerian actors alike regarding King Jaja's seizure and exile from Opobo in 1884. This text is useful in that it nicely summarizes contemporary public opinions regarding the treatment of Jaja in his own time. This text compliments the archival sources that discuss Jaja's seizure from the perspective of the actors involved with the opinions and reactions of relative

¹⁵⁵ E.J. Alagoa, *A History of the Niger Delta* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 171; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny*; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions."

¹⁵⁶ Alagoa, *A History of the Niger Delta*, 171.

¹⁵⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 178; David L. Szanton, "The Origin, Nature and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States," in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (University of California Press, 2004), 10–11.

¹⁵⁹ Georgia McGarry, *Reaction and Protest in the West African Press: A Collection of Newspaper Articles on Five Nineteenth Century African Leaders* (Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1978).

outsiders who were observing the events that played out from 1884 to 1887. McGarry's introduction to the text provides useful insights on how to frame and contextualize the various newspaper articles she included. However, her book really functions as a collection of primary source materials, as she leaves the articles, unaltered, for the reader to digest.

The end of the 1970s brought about an end to the expanded scholarly interest in King Jaja. However, the proliferation of literature throughout those two decades made an immense contribution to the historiography of the subject as well as African studies as a larger discipline. This phase in the literature saw a marked distinction from the literature of the previous phase in content and interpretation. This can primarily be attributed to the expansion of Nigerian produced histories of authors such as Dike, Cooley, Fombo and Alagoa. The growth of Nigerian authorship and American academic consumption of the literature coincide with this spike in production of Niger Delta histories.

1980 saw the publication of two works¹⁶⁰ relating to Jaja and his interaction with British missionaries in Opobo. E.J. Alagoa's co-authored work with T.M. Tamuno present Jaja's relationship with Christianity as vital to understanding his position on European encroachment into the palm oil producing hinterland. In their book, *Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State*, Tamuno and Alagoa argue:

Another important aspect of the Treaty was that Christianity be allowed to spread in Opobo territory, and that white Christian missionaries would be protected. King Jaja was an exponent of traditional religion, but he did not oppose the spread of Christianity in his territory...but he was deeply skeptical of the Christians' loyalty, particularly in view of

¹⁶⁰ British historian, Susan M. Hargreaves, also published a related article in 1989, "Indigenous Written Sources for the History of the Bonny". Here, Hargreaves provides an entrance point into the resources available to historians researching the Niger Delta just prior to colonization. Moreover, Hargreaves explains the scattered nature of indigenous sources in the Bonny and identifies newly discovered indigenous texts that further research efforts on the subject. Hargreaves' topic identifies the importance of critiquing not only interpretation of the subject matter, but also the reliability of the sources used to support those interpretations. While this text is not specifically related to King Jaja's life or legacy, it is a critical resource to deconstructing the information that resides in texts that do speak to Jaja's life and legacy. See Susan M. Hargreaves, "Indigenous Written Sources for the History of the Bonny," *History of Africa*, Vol. 16. (1989), 185-186.

the role which the Christian missions allegedly played during his struggles in Bonny.¹⁶¹ Alagoa and Tamuno regarded religious fissures within the Delta community of Bonny as a pertinent source in understanding Jaja's stance against the spread of British influence. The discussion of Jaja's position towards Christianity in this text is discussed primarily insofar as it affected relations with the European contingency in the Niger. It is important to note that this book dedicates little space to discussions on Jaja and functions simply to show that Jaja's narrative had not been forgotten, despite the decline in texts that paid acute attention to his story. From the 1980s forward, Jaja has often been mentioned in encyclopedic texts like *Eminent Nigerians of Rivers State*, with these texts providing nothing particularly new or insightful about King Jaja, his family or his life.

Another 1980 text by Nigerian historian G.O.M. Tasié raises questions as to how Jaja's views on religion affected his relationship with other African Christians in the Delta. In discussing Jaja's civil war with Oko Jumbo of Bonny, Tasié writes:

Although it is quite clear that the war being fought was not a religious war (of Christianity versus traditional religion-- that is, all Christians on the one side against all traditionalists on the other) part of Jaja's major propaganda to enlist local sympathy on his side was that he was fighting to protect the traditions of Bonny which he claimed Christianity was destroying.¹⁶²

It is of relevance to point out that this book was originally published in Belgium in 1978 and was not available to the English-speaking public until 1980. Tasié's book helps to address the social changes occurring in Delta and to frame Jaja's conflict with the Manilla People house in this light. Moreover, Jaja's contentious relationship with Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the prominent Nigerian clergyman and missionary operating under the auspices of the Church

¹⁶¹ E.J. Alagoa and T.M. Tamuno, *Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State* (Ibadan: Heinemann Education Books Ltd., 1980), 52-53.

¹⁶² Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 40.

Mission Society, is explored in depth in this text. This dispute with Bishop Crowther, in many ways, informed Jaja's attitude towards Christianity, African Christians, and British influence in the Niger Delta.¹⁶³

Elizabeth Isichei's 1983 publication, *A History of Nigeria*, briefly addresses Jaja's story within the larger story of the rise and fall of the Delta States of southern Nigeria. Like authors before her, Isichei discusses the critical role Jaja played in shifting trade away from a previously dominant Bonny. Moreover, Isichei gives a brief glimpse into Jaja's childhood, citing his birthplace in the Amaigbo division. Here, Isichei points to the political enemies of Jaja's father, Ozurumba, as the culprits in Jaja's kidnapping in Umuduruoha.¹⁶⁴ This narrative of Jaja's kidnapping was reiterated by some of my collaborators, along with many other stories of how and why Jaja came to be sold into slavery. Moreover, this particular narrative of Jaja's kidnapping lends credence to the claim that Jaja's family was of elevated social and political status in Umuduruoha.

In addition to identifying Jaja's place of birth, Isichei's text also mentions the role that religion played in the onset of war in Bonny, as well as Jaja's maintenance of social practices in Opobo after 1871. During her discussion of the Bonny civil war, Isichei points to the critical fact that Jaja, and his Anna Pepple house subordinates, were vehemently opposed to conversion to Christianity and the operations of Christian missionaries in Bonny. The rival faction in the civil war, the Manilla Pepple house, had, by the onset of the war, converted to Christianity. This disagreement over religious affiliation, which was a major facet of G.O.M. Tasi'e's text, was, among others, largely the motivation for taking up arms against one another.¹⁶⁵ While most texts that mention Jaja in the wider scope of regional events tend to ignore the religious component of

¹⁶³ Tasi'e, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 202-234.

¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, (London: Longman, 1983), 98.

¹⁶⁵ Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, 98-100.

the civil war, Isichei's work, despite the minimal amount of space paid to Jaja and his dealings in the Delta, gives a more nuanced view of what drove the conflict in Bonny from 1867 to 1870. Furthermore, Isichei explains how Jaja's religious views from Bonny spilled over into his policies towards Christianity once on the throne in Opobo.

The final relevant turn in this body of literature emerged in the 1990s. The nineties ushered in an age of variety in the way this history was disseminated to the public, primarily in Nigeria.¹⁶⁶ Three essential examples that reflect this turn stand out in the literature. Two of these texts consist of fictional stories and dramatizations of Jaja's struggle to stave off the British and maintain control of the oil markets. The other is an example of a public history exhibit honoring Jaja's achievements. Mr. N.A.I. Waribere published a very short fictional biography of the King of Opobo in a book titled *King Jaja the Great of Opobo*.¹⁶⁷ This biographical sketch can be considered rudimentary in its detail at best. The other dramatization of Jaja's life was published in 1999 by Christian Ogbuji.¹⁶⁸ These fictions tend to glorify Jaja's resistance efforts through dramatic dialogue. However, their relevance lies in their entertainment value. This sort of popular literature helped to draw awareness of Jaja as a resistance leader away from scholarly domination while making it more accessible to a wider public.

An example that reflects the trend of this history moving away from exclusively scholarly literature was the establishment of a temporary public history exhibit about King Jaja of Opobo in Enugu state, Nigeria in 1997.¹⁶⁹ The exhibit included photographs, paintings and artifacts that dated to Jaja's time in Opobo. This exhibit of public history in relation to Jaja seems to be the

¹⁶⁶ Another encyclopedic mention of Jaja appears in Raph Uwechue, *Makers of Modern Africa: Profiles in History*, (London, U.K.: Published by Africa Books Ltd, 1991). This text provides no new or relevant information on King Jaja.

¹⁶⁷ N.A.I. Waribere, *King Jaja the Great of Opobo* (Port Harcourt: River States News Paper Corporation, 1991).

¹⁶⁸ Christian Ogbuji, *King Jaja*, (Abia State: Longman Publishers, 1999).

¹⁶⁹ West African Museums Programme, "Exhibition on the Roots of King Jaja: The Amaigbo born and Opobo Crowned Monarch," *National Museum, Enugu*, 25th October- 24th November, 1997.

only one of its kind and reflects a clear attempt to bring Jaja back into public discourse.

A 1998 publication by Edward L. Cox, only one copy of which resides in at University of the West Indies in Barbados, expounds upon Jaja's influence on New World slave communities while in exile at the end of the nineteenth century. *Rekindling the Ancestral Memory: King Jaja in St. Vincent and Barbados, 1888-1891* discusses how Jaja's presence in the West Indies while he was exiled there impacted the African populations enslaved in Barbados. This book speaks to the immense contributions of Jaja as a figure of importance among Diasporic communities at the end of his life. This text is of immense importance to this study, as it can be read in conjunction with the archival materials regarding Jaja's time in exile to give a wider view of the community in which Jaja resided.¹⁷⁰ The archival documents for this period of Jaja's life make no mention of Jaja's relationship to enslaved Africans toiling in the West Indies islands under British rule at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷¹ Cox's work relies upon contemporary publications and periodicals from the islands of Grenadine, Barbados and St. Vincent to speak to Jaja's impact on the Diasporic communities of the New World. As I was unable to conduct research in the West Indies,¹⁷² Cox's text helps to fill in the gaps about Jaja's time in St. Vincent that remained after pouring over the documents held the National Archives of the United Kingdom that spoke of Jaja's life in the West Indies.

Since the Cox's 1998 publication, only one notable reference to Jaja has been produced.

¹⁷⁰ Edward L. Cox, *Rekindling the Ancestral Memory: King Ja Ja of Opobo in St. Vincent and Barbados, 1888-1891*. (Cave Hill, Barbados: Dept. of History, the University of the West Indies, 1998).

¹⁷¹ It is important to note, however, that correspondence in the British archival records detail very precise measures to be taken with regards to Jaja's movements in the West Indies and his contact with other peoples of African descent on the Island.

¹⁷² While my original research plan included a visit to St. Vincent and Barbados to examine the documentation regarding Jaja held in their universities and archives as well as to find evidence of existing oral traditions surrounding Jaja in the islands, financially it was impossible to work into my budget. Since the focus of this dissertation is to speak to Jaja's maintenance of his Igbo identity while in slavery in Bonny and his rekindled relationship with his ancestral home while ruling in Opobo, I opted to focus my time and resources on thoroughly investigating oral traditions and narratives from Umuduruoha, Nigeria.

In a 2009 article in the journal *African Research Review*, Nigerian historian J.H. Enemugwem evaluates Jaja's war with the Ibeno people of the Niger Delta in 1881. Enemugwem's motivation for producing the article was to draw attention to the conflict between the Ibeno and King Jaja in 1881 that gave rise to Jaja's monopoly over the Kwa-Ibo palm oil markets, a topic that was not adequately addressed in previous literature about Jaja.¹⁷³ Enemugwem's account not only outlines the trajectory of the 1881 conflict, but, more importantly, also posits that the Opobo monarch's attempts at rehabilitating the Ibeno into Opobo's trade networks effectively led to the monopoly that brought Jaja into conflict with the British.

Jaja's appearances in academic literature over the twentieth century were scattered but consistent. His inclusion in literature of various mediums speaks to his impact on not only the academic community, but the Nigerian public as well. While interpretations of Jaja have changed over the century, his position in Nigerian history as a hero of pre-colonial resistance to British encroachments has been cemented in the popular imagination of Nigeria and Nigerians.

¹⁷³ J.H. Enemugwem, "Jaja-Ibeno War of 1881: The Ibeno Account and the Refugee Settlements," *African Research Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2009). Enemugwem's critique of the existing literature on Jaja's relationship with the Ibeno is quite accurate. In all of the texts discussed above, only fleeting mentions of the conflict between Opobo and Ibeno emerge. While this conflict with the Ibeno is interesting in that it shows how Jaja dealt with belligerent neighbors and uncooperative trade partners, the Ibeno conflict was simply one of many conflicts Jaja entered into in his attempts to monopolize the interior palm oil markets.

CHAPTER ONE- “THE ACCIDENTAL RESEARCHER”: METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the circumstances surrounding the formation and execution of my research plan. Here I recount how I became acquainted and re-acquainted with Umuduruoha and discuss the many advantages and disadvantages of being a white, American researcher in southeastern Nigeria. Further, I discuss my individual collaborators, as well as my relationship to them, before outlining the theoretical underpinning that has informed my research. In providing this information to the reader, I hope to show exactly how this study took its current shape as well as to shed some light on the various sources on which the study is built.



Figure 2: Nigeria, showing Enugu and Imo State

Getting Acquainted with Umuduruoha

Prior to entering the field in 2010, I held no firm preconceptions about the types of narratives I would encounter about Jaja in his natal village of Umuduruoha. The scope and purpose of this current study had not yet come to light and, based on previous conversations with

American and Nigerian scholars¹ familiar with King Jaja's life, I headed to Umuduruoha armed only with the knowledge that the oral narratives² that shed light on Jaja's story had only been collected from people in Bonny and Opobo.³ In all my previous trips to Nigeria, I resided in Enugu State, first in the college town of Nsukka, and then in the city of Enugu while conducting archival research. While in Nsukka, I was informed that some physical remnants of Jaja's life were held in Umuduruoha and was also told that the physical layout of Jaja's natal village, Umuduruoha, was the basis for his construction of Opobo Town.⁴ This information did not strike me as a watershed moment for the formation of a dissertation thesis at the time, but did seem relevant enough to justify traveling to Umuduruoha to see the place of Jaja's birth for myself.

When I was finally able to arrange transportation to, and accommodation in, the rural Amaigbo village in 2010,⁵ I began to move towards Umuduruoha with a nagging fear that

¹ Conversations with Nwando Achebe at Michigan State University made me acutely aware of the fact that no one had, to date, conducted oral research in the Amaigbo Division of Igboland about King Jaja's early life; Prof. O.N. Njoku at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was instrumental in helping me to understand the relationship between Igbo child-rearing practices and future accumulation of wealth and prosperity of Igbo slaves in the Niger Delta in the middle of the nineteenth century. Finally, I must credit Prof. Robert Edgar with supplying the title of my dissertation. I had a chance to speak with Robert Edgar about my ongoing research in 2008 while he was delivering a talk to graduate students at Michigan State University.

² As I move forward, I intend to use Prof. Nwando Achebe's definitions of oral narratives and oral history. Achebe writes, "*Oral history* is used to mean the end product of recording, editing and transcribing women's words....*Oral narratives* is used to mean the material gathered in the oral-history process by using a digital recorder." See Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960*, (Portsmouth, NH; Heinemann, 2005), 20. While Achebe's definitions were employed to address the oral narratives and histories of Igbo women, I will utilize the terms with regards to the oral narratives and histories of both men and women.

³ S.J.S. Cooley, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891*, (New York: NOK Publishers Limited, 1974), preface; Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 65-81. Dr. Walter Ofonagoro published a brief article on Jaja's ancestry in Umuduruoha, based largely on local narratives from Amaigbo, in 1978. I was not aware of this article until I spoke with Dr. Ofonagoro in 2010. See Walter I. Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Okwara-Ozurumba Otherwise Known As King Jaja of Opobo, 1821-1891," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9, Iss. 3 (1978).

⁴ E.C. Osuala, interview by Author, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, July 16, 2010. This claim has not been reinforced by any other sources I have encountered.

⁵ My initial trip to Umuduruoha in 2010, which was undertaken over a single weekend while I was conducting research in the archives in Enugu, was organized and funded by Rev. Chinedu Nebo, then the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Rev. Nebo had also called his friend, Dr. Walter I. Ofonagoro, the sitting *nze* of Umuobi, to inform him of my visit.

Umuobi shares a border with Umuduruoha and is part of the same village group in Amaigbo. Additionally,

nothing of value in elucidating Jaja's early life would still be maintained there, given the amount of time that had passed since Jaja was seized from the community in the 1830s. Upon my arrival in the village, I was escorted to the major landmarks that had ties to Jaja and his family.⁶ This brief visit provided little opportunity to ask critical questions about Jaja's life and his family. At this point in my research, I had not formed poignant or critical questions to ask anyhow. In essence, this was a scouting trip to determine if my research topic was truly viable and if it could yield anything of value to the wider subject of West African history.



Figure 3: King Jaja Road Sign (Photograph by Author)

I was provided with letters of introduction by Prof. E.C. Osuala, an Umuduruoha native and distinguished Professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Rev. Chinedu Nebo.

⁶ During this first, brief visit, I was shown the many iron pots, used for boiling palm oil, that Jaja had sent back to his natal village while ruling in Opobo, the remnants of the Ozurumba compound where Jaja had grown up, as well as two large iroko trees and a small pond that delineated the boundaries of Okwara Ozurumba's land.

While touring the village, I was approached by scores of people curious to know why I had come. When I explained, in no great detail, that I was there to study Jaja's birthplace, my explanation elicited what I then understood to be a rather mundane response. That response was simply, "this is where Jaja was born." Thus, my faith in the usefulness of my research project was thoroughly shaken. I could not conceive of how I was going to write a dissertation rooted in the knowledge that Jaja was, in fact, born in Umuduruoha. I had already been convinced of that. I had read about where Jaja was born in all of the scholarly literature produced about the slave-turned-king I had encountered to that point. In my mind, my very presence in the village was proof enough that Jaja was born in Umuduruoha. Otherwise, why would I have gone to such great lengths to get "there" without first ascertaining what "there" was?

On the surface, this line of thinking was validated by local reaction. As much as I was there to ascertain if there were still memories and artifacts of Jaja's life, my presence in the community, to the people of Umuduruoha, functioned to reinforce Jaja's connection to the village.⁷ During my visit, unbeknownst to me at the time, I had posed for a photograph that would later appear in the local newspaper *Igbongidi*. I had taken pictures of the many sites around the center of town and was told of their connection to Jaja. Yet, I had encountered nothing during that two-day visit that would reinforce my now wavering belief that the oral narratives in Umuduruoha would offer something of value to Jaja's life history, let alone to the history of West Africa in general.

As it had been quite some time since a Westerner had entered the village, my presence apparently became an event. The publication *Igbongidi* had published the article, citing my name

⁷ As stated in the previous chapter, Jaja's connection to Umuduruoha is not well known to most Nigerians outside the area and published literature has placed his birth in neighboring town of Nkwerre. This, coupled with the fact that the people of Umuduruoha have been petitioning for greater recognition of the village as a national heritage site of sorts, seemed to make my visit all the more relevant to citizens of Umuduruoha.

as “Joseph M. Daney,” and attributed some rather vague and uninspired quotes to me that I can not recall giving. I was never even informed that the picture was to be used in a local newspaper. I had posed for at least six or seven photographs already that day and had no idea that one of the photographers was a local journalist.



Figure 4: Igbongidi Newspaper Article (Photograph by Author)

“Onye Ocha bia ala Igbo”

The phrase, “*onye ocha bia ala Igbo*,” became part of a daily ritual during my dissertation research trip in 2011 and 2012 in Umuduruoha. When I left the compound in which I was staying each morning, a group of children who played in an adjacent field would collectively shout “*onye ocha bia ala Igbo*.” In English, this simply means “White man (person), you've come to

Igboland” or “White person that came to Igboland.” By the fourth or fifth time I heard it, the children had made a song out of it. Nothing forces you to re-evaluate the meaning of race more than being identified by your skin color every, single day. It has been well-established that the identity of the researcher necessarily impacts the ways in which he or she is perceived by the community in which the research is conducted.⁸ My identity played a critical role in carrying out my research in Umuduruoha and Igboland.

I am a white American, born and raised in a fairly affluent suburb of Metropolitan Detroit. My ethnicity is fairly homogenous, as the majority of my ancestors came to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from Ireland and Scotland.⁹ Being a white researcher in Nigeria impacted my work in two unique, but dichotomous, ways that manifested themselves differently in both institutional and communal settings. The first way can most adequately be described as “whiteness as social capital,” while I categorize the second as “whiteness as an impediment.” These processes afforded unique benefits and peculiar blights in almost every research setting I encountered.

“Whiteness as social capital” seemed to play the largest role in institutional settings. While Nigerian researchers with a haphazard plan for their movements would have had incredible difficulty negotiating the many hurdles of simply gaining entry into an academic community, my whiteness created a scenario in which opportunities and assistance from extremely well-positioned people were almost automatically afforded to me. Anyone familiar with the peculiarities of Nigerian university life knows how difficult it is to secure a meeting

⁸ Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 4-6; David Bridges, "The Ethics of Outsider Research," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 35, no. 3 (2001), 371; Stephan F. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁹ While my family almost exclusively identifies as Irish, we came to Ireland by way of Wales. Also, my father's maternal heritage can be traced back to the Ukraine, which was then part of the Russian Empire, although they identified as ethnic Germans. It suffices to say that, superficially, my appearance is entirely that of a person of western European heritage.

with top-ranking officials and distinguished professors from the Universities on short notice. However, without any real standing in an academic community and few personal contacts, top scholars and administrators went out of their way to accommodate my requests for their time and help.¹⁰ Some went even further, providing financial and logistical assistance in planning my research trips, contacting personal acquaintances from Amaigbo division to make sure I was accommodated when I arrived in the area and ensuring my safety, even when I was not particularly careful myself, while moving around different areas of Igboland.¹¹

My whiteness functioned as social capital in communal settings as well. First, my work, as it was perceived by the community, has the ability to extend to a much wider reading audience than the works of local and amateur historians. Wealth, and through wealth, influence, were two attributes that were bestowed upon me by way of being an obvious, or *de facto*, “outsider” by the people of Umuduruoha. As such, many in the community were exceptionally accommodating, as they perceived my work as possibly bringing national and international attention to the local community. My position as an obvious outsider,¹² by virtue of my race, also placed me in an advantageous position in the collection of narratives. While the people of Umuduruoha might have omitted information about what they considered to be mundane or commonplace information to a Nigerian researcher, they provided me with lengthy explanations about social

¹⁰ In particular, I am truly grateful for the assistance extended by Prof. O.N. Njoku, Professor of History, for helping to identify some possible avenues for fruitful investigation; Prof. Anyanwu, the Chair of the Department of History, for providing the material support of his department at U.N.N and Rev. Chinedu Nebo, then the Vice Chancellor at U.N.N., for arranging my preliminary trip to Umuduruoha.

¹¹ Rev. Chinedu Nebo and his wife provided a great deal of support, both financial and personal, in arranging my first visit to Umuduruoha. Aside from paying for travel and security, Rev. Nebo also reached out to his friend, Walter Ofonagoro, to ensure that I was well looked after during my first brief visit in the Amaigbo community. On many occasions, his wife, knowing that I was staying alone in a hotel in Enugu, welcomed me to their home for dinner. They also brought home-cooked meals for me at the hotel, often consisting of spaghetti and banana nut bread, knowing that I was probably missing some of the comforts of home. I am eternally grateful for the support Rev. Nebo and his family extended to me. Additionally, Dr. Ofonagoro took me into his home, provided shelter, food, and security during my first visit to Umuduruoha, as well as accompanied me around the village to help identify notable landmarks.

¹² Robert Feleppa, “Emics, Etics, and Social Objectivity,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Jun 1986), 243-247.

customs, religious institutions and economic patterns in the community because they assumed that, being an American, I was unfamiliar with them.

“Whiteness as an impediment” in institutional and communal settings played an equally large role in my archival work and the collection of oral narratives. When working in the archives and universities of Nigeria, one must practice extreme patience. Whereas certain doors automatically opened for me in institutional settings, the nature of working within these institutions was often a source of incredible frustration. First, one must deal with the notorious practice of “African time.” Institutional contacts often fell through and never showed up, scheduled meeting times ran consistently late and, on many occasions, institutional resources were blocked until some form of financial compensation was provided.¹³ Impediments were also notable when working within a communal setting, as much of Umuduruoha's past has been politicized and debated among and between factions in the community. Those factions often tried to use the presence of a white, American researcher in the community to lend credence to their positions.

My identity as an academic also played a unique role in blocking access to information. Academics often find themselves at a crossroads between relaying a history that the community can identify with and constructing a history that will be valued by their academic readership.¹⁴

This is usually a concern specific to what appears in the finished product of historical research

¹³ It should be noted that this “financial compensation” was rarely, if ever, a legitimate institutional cost and usually took the form of what Americans would call “kickbacks.”

¹⁴ Terence O. Ranger, "Towards a Usable African Past." in Basil Davidson and Christopher Fyfe, eds., *African Studies Since 1945: a Tribute to Basil Davidson* (London: Longman, 1976) 17-22; E.J. Alagoa, "The Dialogue between Academic and Community History in Nigeria," in Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David W. Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices : Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 92; Bogumil Jewsiewicki, “One Historiography or Several? A Requiem for Africanism,” in Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David S. Newbury, eds., *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), 10-17.

but is often overlooked in the process of collecting oral narratives in a research location.¹⁵ Under certain circumstances, the white academic can be seen as, more often than not, a means of legitimizing one of many conflicting narratives that are contested or disputed in the locales where they carry out research.

My whiteness often played a large role in blocking my *free* access to information, with intentional emphasis on the word *free*. Being white in Nigeria often relegates one to an assumed position of wealth and power. Unfortunately for white researchers, these assumptions are not always accurate. Being a graduate student with relatively small amounts of money to dedicate to research means that one needs to carefully budget and plan for all costs associated with his or her trip. Yet, that budget dwindles rapidly as the price of nearly every commodity and service, in the bartering system that underpins Nigerian economic transactions, doubles for a white person. Whether buying toiletries, food, securing transportation or gaining access to archival materials, white people are almost universally quoted higher prices than their Nigerian counterparts in a phenomenon that I have often jokingly referred to as the *onye ocha* or “white man” price. In the absence of fixed prices, a white researcher can, quite literally, be “nickled and dimed” to death.

The institution of “kola hospitality” can also present difficulties to the white researcher in Igboland. Anthropologist Victor Uchendu writes, “Kola nut features prominently in all aspects of Igbo life. It is a symbol of Igbo hospitality. To be presented with kola nut is to make one welcome.”¹⁶ The bitter kola nut has traditionally been extended as a sign of hospitality and welcoming from the host to the guest. However, when conducting research in Igboland, you are subjected to a system of “kola homage,”¹⁷ in which the “kola” can represent anything from money, to food products, to high priced alcohol. The expectation that a researcher will bring kola

¹⁵ E.J. Alagoa, “The Dialogue,” 91-92.

¹⁶ Victor Uchendu, “Kola Hospitality in Igbo Lineage Structure,” *Man*, Vol. 64 (Mar.-Apr. 1964), 48.

¹⁷ I have borrowed this term from my friend and colleague Dr. Ndubueze Mbah.

for their collaborator has been conflated with perceptions of the wealth of white people. The process of kola homage varies widely, but most often rests on the economic position of the collaborator. Collaborators who are educated or financially well-off often expect nothing from the researcher. Those collaborators who face economic hardships may demand a specific kola homage paid in cash. In my experience, this could reach costs of 20,000 Naira, which is over one hundred U.S. dollars at the current exchange rate.¹⁸ While “insider” researchers, who have greater familiarity with the limitations and boundaries of this institution, can often negotiate the kola homage more expertly, white researchers are often dictated a price and expected to pay it in order to conduct oral interviews which may or may not be of value, as the kola homage must be given up front. Add to this already expensive phenomenon, the rare instances in which collaborators simply demand money of the researcher for information, without even couching the exchange in terms of “kola homage” and conducting interviews alone can put a serious dent in the researcher's budget.

On a communal level, whiteness as an impediment played out in three distinct ways. First, community “secrets” are often closely guarded from the outside researcher. Being an outsider and a researcher also creates a situation in which collaborators tailor their narratives or omit details either knowingly or unknowingly. Sometimes this happens because collaborators feel a white researcher is looking for specifics usually associated with western traditions of history, such as specific dates, clear linear cause and effect patterns and so on. When they can not provide a narrative that meets perceived western standards of history, they may choose to say nothing at all.

Last, but certainly not least, is the impact of being white on one's freedom of movement in a Nigerian context. Freedom of movement is something we take for granted in our own towns,

¹⁸ The exchange rate for Naira to Dollars while I was in the field was about 162 Naira to 1 U.S. Dollar.

communities and cities. Our familiarity with the area allows us to go where we want, when we want. Being in a foreign country always limits this freedom of movement. Being white in Nigeria or West Africa is a whole other situation. In the evenings, when the streets of Enugu were bustling with local life, I was often told that it was unsafe for me to step foot outside the hotel. In Umuduruoha, the idea of me leaving the compound after, or even just before, sunset was portrayed as being nearly suicidal. These limitations on my movements can not simply be attributed to my relative unfamiliarity with the place, as I would watch Nigerian visitors at the hotel come and go as they pleased and people I knew within the village often stayed out at local establishments well past sundown. These types of limitations, while minor, take their toll on the psyche of an individual after long periods of time.

Getting Reacquainted with Umuduruoha

Two years after my initial visit to Umuduruoha, I returned to Nigeria with the singular purpose of conducting oral interviews with the people of Umuduruoha. These interviews would ultimately shape my perspective on the true relevance of Jaja's life history that had, in all previous literature published about him, been overlooked. When I arrived in Nigeria in 2012, I was working on a vague and poorly defined thesis about social mobility in Niger Delta slave systems and how the rapid rise of Igbo slaves in the mid-1800s related to the child-rearing systems of the Igbo.¹⁹ I was armed with formulaic questions about Jaja's parents, their place in the community and Jaja's relationship to the rest of his family and community-at-large. After conducting my first oral interview with members of the Duruoshimiri family and listening to them speak at length about the iron pots chained outside their compound, I realized that my

¹⁹ Looking back on this proposed thesis, the underlying concept still seems like fertile ground for investigation. However, I was overtly aware that Jaja's life history, as a singular case study, would not, in and of itself, provide compelling evidence that would change historians' perspectives on the reality of West African slave-systems or child-rearing practices in Igboland. As such, I was poorly positioned to produce a dissertation of value prior to arriving in Umuduruoha for a second time in January of 2012.

dissertation subject, and thus, line of questioning would need to change drastically.²⁰ However, the challenge of gaining access to the community would first prove a looming hurdle over which I would have to jump.

My initial plans for gaining access to Umuduruoha in 2012 were met with some opposition. First, I had planned to seek out the *Igbo* of Amaigbo,²¹ as gaining the sanction of the traditional ruler of the community before conducting research seemed a critical first step in gaining the trust of the community where I planned to carry out oral interviews. Here, I intended to rely on my “whiteness as social capital” to gain an audience with the *Igbo* of Amaigbo. However, the *Igbo* of Amaigbo had died in 2010 and an ongoing battle over secession to the position was still being hashed out in an Imo State²² courtroom and had even delayed the burial of the late *Igbo*.²³ Furthermore, my primary contact in Umuobi, Dr. Walter I. Ofonagoro, had recently been re-appointed to a position within the Federal Ministry of Information and had no plans to return to Amaigbo from Abuja during my stay in the village.²⁴ Finally, the eldest member and principle historian of Duruoshimiri clan, the leading lineage in Umuduruoha, Hyacinth Duruoshimiri had passed away in 2011.²⁵ With these issues facing me in trying to gain access to Umuduruoha, I needed to find another way to gain community trust and sanction for my research project, to say nothing of working practicalities like securing housing, travel and so forth. It was

²⁰ Upon going home the evening after I interviewed members of the Duruoshimiri family, I came to the realization that Jaja would have necessarily needed to have re-established some ties with the community, either through trade or through a reconnection with someone in his kinship network. So, I began to revise my thesis to reflect that reconnection and immediately saw the value it could have to slave studies literature that has long focused on isolation from kinship networks in the slave-holding society, rather than connections with natal kinship networks.

²¹ The traditional ruler of Amaigbo took the title *Igbo*, which translates roughly to “King” or “Head-Chief.” This title is the local equivalent of the more-widely used *eze* that appears in other parts of Igboland.

²² Umuduruoha, currently, is in the Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State.

²³ Unknown Author, *Igbongidi*, “Go and Bury Your King! Court tells Amaigbo People,” Vol. 1, No. 18, July-September, 2011; Walter Ofonagoro, phone conversation with Author, December 29, 2011.

²⁴ Walter Ofonagoro.

²⁵ Walter Ofonagoro; Dan Ihenetu, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 18, 2012; Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Hyacinth Duruoshimiri was not present in Umuduruoha during my first visit.

in light of these developments that gender came to play an enormous role in the viability of conducting my research, even though it does not play large part within my work.

Focusing on the life of one man leaves little space for relevant discussions of gender, particularly in elucidating the role that gender played in the experiences of female slaves in the Niger Delta. However, finding the details of Jaja's connection to his natal home would not have been possible had it not been for well-positioned women from Amaigbo communities. While wrapping up some unfinished work in the National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, in December of 2011, I was introduced to a young woman, Ijeoma Ochiagha, who was friends with one of my colleagues. I explained to Ijeoma that I was planning my trip to Umuduruoha to conduct oral interviews about King Jaja. A look of shock spread across Ijeoma's face. She asked me to repeat the name of the village and, upon reiterating that I was trying to travel to Umuduruoha, she explained that her mother was born in the small Amaigbo community and was a member of the Ochiagha clan that resided there.²⁶

The next day I arranged to meet Ijeoma and her mother, Mrs. Ngozi Ochiagha, in their shop outside a police barrack in Enugu. Mrs. Ochiagha was equally awe-struck to learn that I was aware of the village and its significance in Jaja's life history and she immediately set out to make arrangements for the three of us to travel to the village the following week.²⁷ By this point, I had become very familiar with Enugu and Nsukka in Northern Igboland, but knew nothing of the Central Igboland village group that comprised Amaigbo. I had no idea how I would get there, where I would stay or how I could gain access to the community and identify potential

²⁶ Upon later speaking with Ijeoma's mother, I found out that she was, in fact, born in Umuchioke, also in Amaigbo, but moved to Umuduruoha upon marrying her husband. Tragically, Mrs. Ochiagha's husband, a police officer, was murdered in Enugu while on the job in 2008.

²⁷ Again, this episode shows how being an outsider and, in particular a white outsider, can function as a source of social capital. It is unlikely that the Ochiaghas would have been so concerned with my attempts to get to Umuduruoha had I not come from so far to undertake such a study.

collaborators. When the time came to travel to Umuduruoha, Mrs. Ochiagha saw to it that my outstanding concerns were laid to rest. She found a reliable driver to get us to Amaigbo, which was no small task given the fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria had, overnight, removed oil subsidies that kept petroleum for vehicles affordable. So, while communities and workers across Nigeria had come to a screeching halt to protest the removal of oil subsidies, we were headed south towards Imo State.²⁸

When we had arrived in Umuduruoha, we turned off the main road to an adjacent street that led to Alaenyi, a neighboring village in the Amaigbo group. We arrived at the home of Mrs. Monica Igbokwe. Mrs. Ochiagha and Mrs. Igbokwe had arranged living space for me in the guest quarters of Mrs. Igbokwe's large compound. After exchanging greetings, Mrs. Ochiagha explained that Mrs. Igbokwe would identify members of the community who could help me with my research and that I could stay with her, for a nominal fee, for however long it would take me to complete my research. From that day forward, Mrs. Igbokwe functioned as my lifeline to the community and its members.

I was surprised at the briefness of Mrs. Ochiagha's stay in Amaigbo, being a “wife” in one of the leading clans there. When I pushed for some explanation of why she was not staying for a longer period of time, she said that Mrs. Igbokwe was “in a better position to introduce me.”²⁹ From that initial meeting with Mrs. Igbokwe, she became a crucial point of access to the

²⁸ Ola Awoyini, “Nigeria Update: Oil Subsidy Removal, Protests, Tear Gas as Fuel Prices Soar in Nigeria,” January 3, 2012, Nigeria Energy Intelligence Website, <http://nigeriaenergyintelligence.wordpress.com/2012/01/03/nigeria-update-oil-subsidy-removal/>, accessed 12/9/2014.

²⁹ I later found that, while Mrs. Ochiagha was an *inyomdi*, or “wife”, in Umuduruoha, having married into the Ochiagha lineage, Mrs. Igbokwe was a member of *otu umuada*, or “daughters” of the Duruoshmiri lineage, giving her greater access to the community. Also, while Mrs. Ochiagha and her husband had left the village for Enugu many years ago, Mrs. Igbokwe had married into a lineage in the neighboring town Alaenyi, and was thus better acquainted with the familial relationships, and, as I would soon find out, tensions, in Umuduruoha. For a deeper explanation on the differences between wives and daughters, as well as their relative access and authority in Igboland communities, see Nwando Achebe, “Nwando Achebe- Daughter, Wife and Guest-- a Researcher at the Crossroads,” *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 14, Iss. 3, 9-31.

community and, as I will explain later in the chapter, a key factor in alleviating outstanding family tensions, which ultimately allowed me to move freely between two feuding factions of the Duruoshimiri clan.

The Accidental Researcher: Oral History Methods

In the most direct way possible, my thesis about Jaja's narrative and its impact on the slavery-to-kinship continuum was pulled directly from the words and stories highlighted by my collaborators in the first few days of conducting interviews.³⁰ In telling the story of Jaja's ties to Umuduruoha, I had no choice but to allow the people of Umuduruoha dictate the scope and framework of this study. The narratives and traditions held in the village were completely unfamiliar to me. And, from what I could gather, the information I deemed critical to telling this story was unfamiliar to Umuduruoha. In an effort to avoid my collaborators and I talking past one another, I simply let them talk. In essence, I became a student of Umuduruoha's oral history.

Oral history has long been accepted as a vital method of investigating the African past and has sought to supplement the European archival accounts of Africa's history with indigenous viewpoints.³¹ The oral traditions and narratives of Africa have their own stories to tell, but, too often, the academic, as both researcher and writer, has interjected an outsider perspective into these stories to make them digestible to academic audience.³² Also, researchers have done much to problematize historians' interpretations of oral traditions in research in order to avoid the

³⁰ I had entered the village to find if memory of Jaja's early childhood still existed and how I could use that memory to explain his rise to power in the Niger Delta. I had no idea I would find evidence that Jaja had reconnected with his natal village during his lifetime before speaking with my collaborators.

³¹ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition. A Study in Historical Methodology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Dike, *Trade and Politics*; Bethwell Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo* (Nairobi: East African Pub. House, 1967).

³² Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*, 8-10; Ranger, "Towards a Usable African Past," 17; Jewsiewicki, "One Historiography or Several?" 10-12; Alagoa, "The Dialogue between Academic and Community History in Nigeria," 92.

pitfalls that are incumbent within it.³³ In a way, my own ignorance of critical practices in oral history has led to a study whose scope and content was defined by my collaborators' knowledge, rather than my own.

In an effort to define oral history, oral tradition, oral narratives and my use of the term “collaborators,”³⁴ I am employing the framework laid out by Nwando Achebe in her book *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*. Achebe defines “oral history” as the finished product of the process of collecting, recording and transcribing “oral narratives,” which she defines as the knowledge held by collaborators as they are spoken to the researcher in the interviews.³⁵ While I rely heavily on Achebe's definition of oral narratives, I diverge from her use of oral history.³⁶ I am actively choosing to conflate the terms “oral tradition” and “oral history,” and I use them interchangeably.³⁷ My reasoning for this is simple. I have been unable, despite my best efforts, to disentangle where “traditions” in the community became “history” to the community. Drawing some sort of distinction between the two would not adequately reflect Umuduruoha's perspectives on the village's past and present. Where “tradition” became the community's “history” seemed to make little difference to my collaborators. In essence, the traditions of the community became historical “truth” and, as a researcher, implying that these traditions are not “history” would be to co-opt and manipulate the narratives from the same people who give them

³³ Jan Jansen, “Narratives on Pilgrimages to Mecca: Beauty Versus History in Mande Oral Tradition,” in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 249-252; Constanze Weise, “Kingship and the Mediators of the Past,” in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 286-288. Here, Jansen describes how Mande narratives of Nfa Jigin became conflated with the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa, relegating historians who collected these oral traditions to cast Jigin as a fictive character. Wiese, in writing on the Nupe of Nigeria, points to historians' inability to see the retention of pre-Islamic traditions in kingship practices because they placed too much emphasis on the Islamic traditions of the area.

³⁴ Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*, 20.

³⁵ Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*, 20.

³⁶ As such, the individual stories brought forth by my collaborators constitute “oral narratives” while oral “history” and oral “tradition” will be used to describe the sum of the narratives that exist in Umuduruoha.

³⁷ David Henige “Oral, but Oral What? The Nomenclatures of Orality and Their Implications,” *Oral Tradition*, Vol. 3, No. 1-2 (1988), 229-38; Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*, 5-7.

historical meaning.

I choose to borrow the term “collaborators” from Nwando Achebe where others may use the terms informants or participants. Achebe writes, “I have sought to create a space in which Nsukka women felt safe to make serious contributions, rather than assume passive roles in the investigative procedure. In the end, I believe the process was indeed collaborative.”³⁸ While Achebe made a conscious effort to become research partners with her collaborators, I must admit that I had little choice in the matter. It could be easily argued that I was the collaborator and the members of Umuduruoha were the historians. Aside from maintaining the oral narratives that provide the content of my study, my collaborators also set the scope and framework for my study. It could even be argued that my only contributions to this study are putting the words to paper and presenting them in a context in which they can relate to established fields of scholarly inquiry.³⁹

Had I any clue that Jaja had successfully reconnected with his natal home during his lifetime prior to entering the field, I would likely have fallen victim to forcing my collaborators' narratives through a predetermined lens that had been mediated and adjusted by my lines of questioning, my understanding of my intended readership, and my own hubris.⁴⁰ In a sense, I felt I knew everything about King Jaja. After all, I had spent hours reading books, archival documents, and travelogues that made any reference to him. For reasons that I do not fully comprehend, knowing what I know now, I expected the community of Umuduruoha to simply

³⁸ Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 5.

³⁹ While I am downplaying my own role as a researcher and writer of this history, it needs to be said that the very process of putting the words down to paper necessarily alters the lens through which the story is being told. Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 9.

⁴⁰ In the process of reviewing the interviews I collected while still in the field, I found myself being quite critical of my collaborators for what I perceived as a “lack of knowledge” about the basic trajectory of Jaja's life. Names, dates and locations that I had uncritically accepted, because I read them in a book, became canon to me. And, when those points of information were not regurgitated back to me as I knew them, I labeled this a “lack of knowledge” on the subject. As it turns out, I had a lot to learn about the types of information oral narratives and oral traditions could yield.

recite events from Jaja's early life citing specific names and dates, to explain his personal relationships with family and friends, and to tell me of the many great deeds he had achieved by his early adolescence.

In retrospect, I understand now that my original intent was to fill in the gaps of Jaja's nearly completed life history.⁴¹ I quickly realized, however, that this was simply impossible. Too much time had passed since Jaja had lived in Umuduruoha to find this type of evidence. While this realization was somewhat deflating at first, over time it became apparent that many collaborators in Umuduruoha reiterated the same story again and again, about a Umuduruoha trader in Opobo whose language Jaja recognized as his mother tongue. The consistency of this story intrigued me, so I decided to probe deeper as to why this seemed to be important to the tale about King Jaja. It was only then that I discovered the deep wisdom of my collaborators and the pools of knowledge that had eluded the archival documents and publications in which I had placed my faith. This was the story that described how Jaja had “replanted the seeds of home.”

The methods I used to conduct these oral interviews were diverse in terms of theory, but were ultimately the constructions of my collaborators and not my own. At times, I conducted one-on-one interviews, using open-ended questions⁴² to allow my collaborators' knowledge to take us to subjects they found relevant or interesting. I can not take credit for being well-versed in the practices of oral history.⁴³ I simply did not know enough about what my collaborators

⁴¹ Much of this task had been completed for me by the numerous biographies about Jaja and the micro-studies that centered him in a particular thematic field.

⁴² Helen Metzner and Floyd Mann, “A Limited Comparison of Two Methods of Data Collection: The Fixed Alternative Questionnaire and the Open-ended Interview,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Aug. 1952), 486-491; David Henige “Oral, but Oral What?” 229-38; Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings*, 5-6.

Here, I borrowed heavily from the methods of my mentor, Nwando Achebe, in that I attempted to make these one-on-one interviews a dialectal process, in which who I was, and what I knew of the subject, was equally open to questions by my collaborators.

⁴³ The interviews I conducted in Umuduruoha represent my first and, to date, only attempt to collect oral narratives through the interview process. While I found the process to be shaky, on my end, at first, the more I became acquainted with the practice, the better I became at negotiating the process.

could tell me to conduct interviews in any other fashion. Sometimes I conducted “group” interviews,⁴⁴ not for any deep understanding of how these interviews might yield something that one-on-one interviews had not, but simply because there happened to be two people around when I arrived for an interview with one of them. I even conducted one interview by way of questionnaire, as this was how my collaborator asked that we go about dealing with the interview.⁴⁵

Given the duration of time I spent in the village collecting interviews from a relatively small pool of collaborators, I was able to consistently conduct follow-up interviews with the majority of these individuals. These follow-up interviews were markedly more structured in tone for two reasons. First, many of my initial interviews were long, allowing the collaborators to follow any tangential points they felt were important for me to know. This led to them feeling that they had already told me “everything,”⁴⁶ which put the onus on me to drive these follow-up conversations forward. Secondly, after reviewing the initial interviews and writing-up field notes each night when I returned home, a practice I stuck to religiously, I had a much clearer sense of the topics my collaborators had deemed important. From this simple practice, I was able to better articulate the outstanding questions I had and probe any areas left untouched or unfinished in our initial interviews.

Ironically, one of the few well-articulated aspects of my research method about which I was initially adamant ended up not coming to fruition. I had entered the field in 2012 with five years of training in the central dialect of the Igbo language. I had arranged for, and paid, a

⁴⁴ Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 84-108; David H. Mould “Interviewing,” in Donna M. DeBlasio, ed., *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History* (Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 2009), 82-103.

⁴⁵ One of my collaborators, Mr. Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye, requested that I present written questions to him prior to the interview, which he read and answered in a more questionnaire style method of data collection. As, I was present for his “answers” and could ask follow-up questions, this did not really represent a “survey” style interview as it has been defined. See Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 84-108.

⁴⁶ This was the response I received upon arranging follow-up interviews with three of my collaborators.

translator who could help me conduct interviews in Igbo as a means of accessing more locally-grounded narratives in which the ideas and knowledge my collaborators could be expressed in their mother tongue. Much to my chagrin, all but one of my collaborators expressed that they would prefer to conduct the interviews in English.⁴⁷

While I have been able to retroactively apply some theory to the collection of these oral narratives, it remains abundantly clear, from the reasons given above, that I was, in fact, an “accidental researcher” who stumbled upon a wealth of information that has yet to be brought to scholarly literature. It would be easy for those immersed in the field of oral history theory to attack my “haphazard methods” of collecting oral interviews and conducting research. I would argue that, regardless of the motivating factors for my practices being “accidental” or “intended,” I was able to elicit a truly Umuduruoha-centered study of Jaja's connection to his natal village, albeit through sheer luck.

Sources

My initial intention to reconstruct Jaja's early life in the village grew directly out of the silences on this subject that exist in the archival records and extant literature. Scholarly literature about Jaja to that point was built primarily on the extensive archival holdings in both Nigeria and the U.K. After the publication of K.O. Dike's *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, much of the literature produced about Jaja was supplemented with oral traditions held in Bonny and Opobo.⁴⁸ The most complete account of Jaja's life, Sylvanus Cookey's biographical *King Jaja of the Niger Delta*, relied largely upon the author's discussions with a community historian of Opobo named

⁴⁷ While Nigerian friends and colleagues have cast my collaborators' decision to conduct the interviews in English as a desire for them to let me know that they are well-versed in my language, I suspect that they simply thought it would be easier than trying to ascertain if I had understood what they had said.

⁴⁸ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-202.

E.M.T. Epelle.⁴⁹ While Niger Delta-based sources provided a locally grounded counter-narrative to the wealth of information on Jaja's political career as a wealthy trader in Bonny and the ruling monarch of Opobo, it came no closer to illuminating the details of his connections to the Igbo interior beyond those of trade. Every source that spoke of Jaja highlighted the exploits of a “slave-turned-king,” but focused largely on his kingship with little concern for the life of the boy that was taken into slavery. I could not articulate my uneasiness at this oversight until I began conducting interviews in Umuduruoha, but this struck me as a grave shortcoming in addressing the story of Jaja.

As my collaborators spoke at length about Jaja's connection to the town, I became acutely aware that Jaja was not just the “slave-turned-king” who acted as a roadblock to the expansion of British influence in southeastern Nigeria. He was a son, a brother, and a member of a kinship network. Like any other individual, he was loved by his family and valued as a member of the Umuduruoha community. Though he was taken by slave raiders at a relatively young age, he did not suffer a “social death” in the eyes of his family and friends.⁵⁰ He was not forgotten by Umuduruoha and he, in turn, never forgot his natal home. As the voices of my Umuduruoha collaborators grew more emphatic in this point, I realized that this was the aspect of Jaja's life history that has, to date, been silenced in the archival records and scholarly literature. In addition to the academic and amateur histories produced about Jaja that were discussed in the last chapter, there exist many forms of memory that grew up around Opobo's first king.

Archival Sources

As mentioned above, the archival records relating to Jaja directly are intently focused on Jaja's political career in Opobo. The National Archives of the U.K. has compiled a document of

⁴⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, preface.

⁵⁰ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

treaties relating to free trade in the Niger Delta, correspondence between Jaja and his chiefs and British agents operating in or with political/economic interests in Opobo, and the documents outlining his capture and trial in Accra in front of the Court of Equity.⁵¹ The bulk of archival evidence regarding Jaja's life in Nigeria is now organized neatly by date into this one, incredibly dense document. In addition to this voluminous archival source, there were a number of letters and circulars passed between representatives of the Windward Islands, as well as the Governor General in Barbados, and the Home Office in London regarding Jaja's life in exile in the West Indies. These documents relate his treatment at the hands of British officers, the movements of Jaja's family in Opobo and abroad, some allusions to perceived medical issues about which Jaja was complaining, and Jaja's efforts to secure his freedom and return to West Africa.⁵² Finally, the holdings in the U.K. detail Jaja's death in Tenerife and the exhumation of his body at the request of his subjects in Opobo. Unlike the documents that tell the story of Jaja's political career prior to his exile, these papers were scattered across various departments of British governance, such as the Foreign Office and Colonial Office holdings, and were much more difficult to track down in the National Archives of the U.K.⁵³

The National Archive of Nigeria, Enugu primarily houses documents that were produced after 1905, when Southern Nigeria was brought into the colonial fold. At first glance, one would assume that, since Jaja had died in 1891, the archival holdings in Enugu would yield little of value to reconstructing his life history. However, Jaja's legacy in Opobo is borne out in the many native court cases that reside the National Archives in Enugu, including those calling upon his

⁵¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Johnston to Jaja, September 18th, 1887; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Salisbury to Johnston, September 13, 1887.

⁵² National Archives, UK, CO 321/102; National Archives, UK, CO 321/118.

⁵³ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 36/3/5, Correspondence relating to the exhumation of the body of the late King Jaja of Opobo, September 7, 1891; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/ 2110, Macdonald to Anderson, July 4, 1891.

name for the recovery of goods, territorial disputes, and chieftaincy issues in governing the local community during the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁴ While these documents do not speak directly to the issue of showing how Jaja was able to reconnect with his natal home and his kinship network, they help to describe the impact he had on the trajectory of Opobo in the twentieth century. This information is critical in establishing how Jaja's legacy is shared by two geographically disparate communities and is readily called upon by both members of Opobo and Umuduruoha in settling local disputes and issues of political authority. These documents form the Opobo-based counterpoint to the oral narratives regarding the twentieth century passed to me during my time in Umuduruoha. When examined together, they shed light on how both communities access the past to settle disputes of the present. Moreover, these documents help to set the stage for episodes in the twentieth century during which the people of Opobo called upon their extended kinship network in the Igbo heartland during times of crisis or internal strife.⁵⁵

Despite the wealth of information that existed in the U.K. archives that related directly to King Jaja, I spent just over a week in those archives and feel quite confident that I was able to access the critical documentary evidence needed for this project. This runs in stark contrast with my experiences in the Enugu archives. I stayed in the northern Igbo city of Enugu for two and a half months and spent Monday through Friday (usually from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) in the archives. However, progress in this particular research setting moved slowly and was frustrating from start to finish. Much of this was due to a severe lack of resources dedicated to the Enugu archives,

⁵⁴ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OPODIST 1/10/47, Stephen U. Jaja, Petition to J.S. Smith, February 16, 1937, 137-139; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OPODIST 1/10/47, David Jaja to J.S. Smith, January 10, 1938.

⁵⁵ One point that was emphatically reiterated across many of the oral narratives collected in Umuduruoha was that of the kinship relationship between the people of Opobo and the people of Umuduruoha as a whole, not just the families Jaja left behind in Umuduruoha and started in Bonny, then Opobo. The kinship connections of these communities is evidenced in such social institutions as marriage, community festivals and dances, and burial ceremonies of notable community members. E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya, interview by Author, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010.

but, the fact that I was a white, American researcher played a large role in the inefficiency of my work in the archives at Enugu, as I had yet to understand and negotiate how to work within a Nigerian bureaucracy.⁵⁶

The first issue that frustrated my efforts in the Enugu archives was the poor conditions in which the documents have been housed. While it is against policy for researchers to actually see the state in which the documents are housed, many of the documents I encountered had degraded to the point of uselessness. Large sections of the documents were rendered unreadable due to the fact that the paper on which they were written has literally disintegrated over time. This is largely because these old documents are not housed in any sort of temperature controlled settings, let alone in a setting that ensured moisture, dirt and other degrading elements did not come into contact with documents. Many of the documents I requested for use in the reading room were “missing.” While I am unclear as to the exact fate of these elusive documents, it suffices to say that, despite their presence in the archival index, they were apparently not housed in the locations in which they were indexed.⁵⁷ They could have been placed back in the wrong section of the archives. However, a complete lack of accountability and security once those documents are brought down to the reading room could also mean that someone simply walked off with these documents in years past.⁵⁸

The other aspect of my frustration in the archives was directly related to the workers' perceptions of me as a white American and the entire milieu that comes along with that label in

⁵⁶ My experiences in Enugu's archives serve as an example of whiteness as a social impediment while conducting research in Nigeria.

⁵⁷ It is worth noting here that many archival documents housed in Enugu were burned when Nigerian troops stormed Enugu in the Nigerian-Biafran War in the 1960s.

⁵⁸ Although the reading rooms are supposed to be monitored by the staff at the archive to ensure that they are handled properly and returned, there were many occasions when the staff simply left the room and did not return for hours at a time. Furthermore, the single security guard for the building would often be missing from his post by the front door as well. This would make it incredibly easy, if one were so inclined, to simply get up, sign themselves out and leave with the documents in hand.

Nigeria in general. I often liken my experiences in Nigeria to walking around with a dollar sign on my back.⁵⁹ The widely-held perception of me was one that automatically, and without fail, relegated me to the status of being wealthy. Although I tried my best to dispel any notions that I was well-off financially,⁶⁰ it never seemed to strike a chord with many people I dealt with during my time conducting research. Perceptions of my wealth and influence because of my skin color and nationality would resurface throughout my time conducting research, both in the archives and in the village of Umuduruoha.

My whiteness led to a constant, unending discourse with the workers in the archives. While speaking with the coordinator of the archives, explaining my research project and paying the standard fees for non-Nigerians to access the documents,⁶¹ I was asked to, when my research came to a close, “show some appreciation for the services provided.” However, this individual made it quite clear that the appreciation be shown to him “directly” and never to the individual staff members who were actually tasked with locating and bringing me the documents I requested. With a limited budget, I told him it would have to be something I considered over the course of my time there and put the request out of my mind for the time being. This was the first

⁵⁹ This falls in line with my explanation of whiteness as an impediment.

⁶⁰ One exceptionally telling example of this perception came to the fore while I was sitting at my hotel bar after working in the archives one evening. I was enjoying a bowl of pepper soup and drinking a Star, which is a nice pale lager sold throughout Nigeria, when a neighborhood acquaintance of the bartender entered the thatched-roof establishment. He spoke to the bartender, whose name was Ike. Ike and I had become close friends by this point. After having a brief conversation that I did not pay much attention to, Ike said the man wanted to speak with me and asked if that was okay. This was not a particularly unusual occurrence from my experiences around Nigeria, so I agreed. After the usual pleasantries of beginning a conversation, the man pointed to the television in the bar, which was showing a Tyler Perry movie related to couples taking a beach vacation at a resort. He then asked me, “is your house like that one?” I told him I do not own a house, that this was a fictional movie that did not accurately represent American standards of economic norms, and that I was just a student who rented a small apartment. He was shocked. His follow up question was why I would rent a small apartment when everyone in America has a million dollars? I explained that most Americans don't have a million dollars. He quickly said, “I know the black ones don't, but white Americans do.” A long conversation that centered on the reality that all Americans are not millionaires followed. This conversation struck me as telling at the time and has stuck in my mind to this day when describing the perceptions that some Nigerians hold of Americans, in particular, white Americans.

⁶¹ The fee for foreign researchers is drastically higher than those of Nigerian researchers. If my memory serves me correctly, I paid 5,000 Naira for access to the archives while my Nigerian colleague paid 1,000 Naira.

in a series of discussions regarding extra monies for services that I had, in my mind, paid for with the initial registration fee. It would not be the last.

The archives in Enugu have a policy that allows an individual to request five documents at one time. Understanding this policy well, I devised a research plan in which I would examine the index of documents held in the archives under various colonial designations in its entirety in the first week I was there. During this week, I did not request anything from the staff. I then compiled the list of documents I wanted to read by call number, in order of their perceived relevance. I then spent the rest of my time systematically requesting five documents at a time, much to the dismay of the staff at the archives.⁶²

While I had an efficient system in place for working through the many documents I needed to read, after a week or so had passed, my requests seemed to go unheeded. In the first week, it would take about a half hour or so for the documents to come down to the reading rooms. During the second week, it stretched to an hour, then an hour and a half, then two hours. Adding to my growing frustration was the fact that the staff was beginning to bring down one or two documents at a time, rather than the five I requested. By week three, the frustrations of the staff and my own anger over the situation had grown to a point that it could no longer go unaddressed. I pointed out the decreasing quality of service over my time there and asked the staff person why this was happening? While standing in front of a sign that indicated that staff persons were not to request or receive any additional payment from researchers for services rendered in the archives, the staff person said that, if I were to continue to receive all the

⁶² I was told on numerous occasions that requesting five documents at a time was simply too much to ask of the archive staff. Among other complaints, I was told that the rooms in which the documents were held were “too dusty” to spend that kind of time in and would ultimately lead to the staff workers contracting asthma. I responded by telling them that, if that were in fact the case, I would assume the risk and would simply retrieve the documents from the room myself. I was quickly told that this was not allowed. After a few days of requesting as many as 20 documents, I was then told the policy was that they were obligated only to bring five documents day. I immediately responded by asking why the document request forms had five spaces for five separate documents, and, also, why was I furnished with multiple request forms each morning? I was never given an answer to that question.

documents I requested at the rate I was requesting them, I would have to pay them for it.

I still had a sizable amount of time left to work in the archives and a large number of documents that I had not yet had the chance to read through, so I was dealing with a delicate situation in which I needed to balance their requests for “extra considerations” and my extremely tight financial constraints. I left the archives with a quandary that needed to be solved. Knowing that I could not afford to pay each individual some small sum of money each time I requested documents, I devised a plan in which I could show them some appreciation for their assistance with a singular gesture that would not impact my budget too badly over the course of my time spent in Enugu. On a Friday, after the archives closed, I met the staff at a local bar and restaurant about three blocks from the archives where we ate, had drinks and had the chance to get to know each other personally. This gesture, albeit it a minor one, worked very well in repairing and even improving my relationship with the staff at the archives. From the next week forward, my archival research in Enugu progressed smoothly, without any serious delays in the delivery or disagreements over the quantity of documents I requested.

Oral Sources

At this point, I feel it is appropriate to introduce the main collaborators, all of whom provided the perspectives that formed this study and some, who, at times, provided the biggest roadblocks to accessing Jaja's and Umuduruoha's oral narratives. I present these collaborators in the order that I met them. The order of the following list in no way reflects a hierarchy of importance in my collaborators' input on my project, nor does the order reflect my personal relationship with individual collaborators.

Collaborators

Prof. Esogwa C. Osuala: I met Prof. Osuala at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in July of

2010. After having lengthy discussions with his colleague, prominent historian Prof. O.N. Njoku, I was told that Prof. Osuala was born and raised in Umuduruoha and should seek him out for an interview and to become better acquainted with Umuduruoha. When I met with him in his office at U.N.N. in 2010, Prof. Osuala was the Dean of the Faculty in the Department of Vocational Teacher Education. After finishing his schooling in Nigeria, Prof. Osuala went on to teach at Columbia College in St. Louis, MO in the late 1970s and early 1980s before returning to Nigeria to take up a post at Nsukka. His earliest memory of King Jaja's connection to Umuduruoha was of Nnamdi Azikiwe's visit with Douglas Jaja in 1945, when his senior brothers were in “standard 6” of the education system in Nigeria, which he said would have placed him around “kindergarten-age.” This places his date of birth sometime in the late 1930s, likely 1938 or 1939.⁶³

Dr. Walter Ibekwe Ofonagoro: I was put in contact with Dr. Ofonagoro by his friend, Rev. Chinedu Nebo, who was, at the time, the Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Rev. Nebo had taken it upon himself to arrange for and fund my initial trip to Umuduruoha and sought the help of Dr. Ofonagoro, the sitting *nze* of Umuobi, a village that neighbors Umuduruoha. Dr. Ofonagoro had completed his undergraduate degree in history from Trinity College, University of Toronto in Canada in 1966 before attaining his M.A. and PhD. D. at Columbia University in New York in 1967 and 1972 respectively. He taught African history at Columbia University from 1968 to 1973 before moving to Brooklyn College from 1973 to 1976. Dr. Ofonagoro returned to Nigeria in 1976 and took up various academic posts until 1980.⁶⁴ After working in the private sector for many years, Dr. Ofonagoro was appointed Federal Minister of

⁶³ E.C. Osuala.

⁶⁴ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Website, Stanwal Securities Limited, <http://stanwal.com/index.php?p=people#Dr.WalterIbekweOfonagoro>, (accessed October 14th, 2014).

Information and Culture in 1995.⁶⁵

Dr. Ofonagoro is the only collaborator who has published scholarly texts on King Jaja. His titles include *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria 1881-1929* and "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Okwaraozurumba Otherwise Known as King Jaja of Opobo, 1821-1891."⁶⁶ A devout Anglican, Dr. Ofonagoro has been a prominent member of the church in Imo State for many years.⁶⁷ Dr. Ofonagoro's faith played a role in our conversations and interviews. While transparency about one's own background is critical to a fair and open exchange between the researcher and the collaborator,⁶⁸ I must admit that I was forced to conceal the fact that I am an atheist for fear that admitting this would have put an immediate end to our relationship, thus breaking my only tie to the community of Umuduruoha at the time.⁶⁹ Aside from this one episode, Dr. Ofonagoro was a vital source of information on King Jaja's life in Umuduruoha and proved to be a pillar of support for my research and my ability to make inroads to the Umuduruoha community.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Website, Stanwal Securities Limited, <http://stanwal.com/index.php?p=people#Dr.WalterIbekweOfonagoro>, (accessed October 14th, 2014).

⁶⁶ Walter Ibekwe Ofonagoro, *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria, 1881-1929*, (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1979) & Walter I. Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Okwaraozurumba Otherwise Known As King Jaja of Opobo, 1821-1891." in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. 9.3 (1978), 145-156.

⁶⁷ Website, Stanwal Securities Limited, <http://stanwal.com/index.php?p=people#Dr.WalterIbekweOfonagoro> , (accessed October 14th, 2014).

⁶⁸ Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 5.

⁶⁹ During our initial conversations, I began to inquire about the traditional deities that governed life in Umuduruoha prior to the emergence of Christianity. I was quickly reprimanded for this line of questioning when Dr. Ofonagoro responded by calling the pre-Christian deities "pagan nonsense." I felt, at the time, that to push this line of questioning would have been detrimental to the personal rapport Dr. Ofonagoro and I had already built. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. Ohaya.

⁷⁰ In addition to his contributions as a collaborator, Dr. Ofonagoro was an incredibly welcoming host to whom I owe the deepest gratitude for his efforts in getting me acquainted with Umuduruoha.



Figure 5: From Left to Right: Walter Ofonagoro, Joseph Miles Davey, H.O Ohaya (**Photograph by Joseph Mgbokwere**)

Capt. Ohaya: Capt. Ohaya is a former military commander and the head of the Ochiagha lineage in Umuduruoha, Amaigbo.⁷¹ Capt. Ohaya is also an amateur historian in Amaigbo and was the co-author, along with Duru, of the unpublished manuscript upon which Dr. Ofonagoro's article, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Okwaraozurumba Otherwise Known as King Jaja of Opobo, 1821-1891," was built.⁷² I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with Capt. Ohaya in 2010 during a group interview with Dr. Ofonagoro. However, when I returned in 2012, Capt. Ohaya was staying in Lagos to receive medical care.⁷³ A man in his late 70s, Capt. Ohaya was present during Nnamdi Azikiwe's visit with Douglas Jaja in 1945. He is also the brother-in-

⁷¹ Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya.

⁷² Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry," 145.

⁷³ Ngozi Ochiagha, interview by Joseph M. Davey, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria, December 10, 2011.

law of Mrs. Ngozi Ochiagha, who was critical in helping me find my way back to Umuduruoha in 2012 when the contacts I made in 2010 were indisposed upon my return to the village.

Mrs. Ngozi Ochiagha: Mrs. Ochiagha was born and raised in Umuezeobolo, an Amaigbo village to the north of Umuduruoha. When we first met in 2010, through her daughter Ijeoma, in Enugu, she was 59 years old and running a shop near the police barracks. She was born in 1951 and married her husband, Capt. Ohaya's brother, when she was 17 years old. Through this marriage, she was introduced to the community of Umuduruoha. Mrs. Ochiagha's husband was a member of the Ochiagha clan in Umuduruoha. As a member of the *otu inyomdi*, she readily admitted that she was not well-positioned to explain or describe Umuduruoha's past or the town's connection to Jaja.⁷⁴ Mrs. Ochiagha was one of the few women I was able to interview, and her responses seemed to set the tone for a recurring trend in collecting oral narratives in the Umuduruoha area. Mrs. Ochiagha stated that men were the primary holders of history in the Amaigbo area and that women did not know much about “such things.” It is highly unlikely that women in Amaigbo and Umuduruoha can or do not engage in the maintenance of history, but, rather, for a subject such as this, which has been folded into the political and “public” history⁷⁵ of the area, women had little to say about such matters, inasmuch as it did not concern matters specifically related to women.

Mr. Emmanuel Nkemkaudo: Mr. Nkemkaudo is one of the few non-Umuduruoha based sources I was able to interview while conducting research. I met him while staying at a hotel in Enugu just prior to heading south to Umuduruoha in December of 2012. A somewhat common

⁷⁴ She also stated that her and her husband had moved to Enugu shortly after their marriage, so she had not spent much time in the village.

⁷⁵ By “public”, I am referring to the issues of historical importance that have been maintained and sanctioned as the community history by the lineage heads, who, in this region, are exclusively men. I suspect that a researcher, equipped with the proper tools to access such gendered divisions within the histories, could find a rich tapestry of oral traditions and narratives that relate the experiences of women in the region, despite the fact that the women themselves did not view women as keepers of history.

occurrence, Mr. Nkemkaudo approached me while in the lobby area of the hotel to ask why I had come to Nigeria.⁷⁶ I explained my research project to Mr. Nkemkaudo, who told me he was born and raised in Amanawu village in Arochukwu, Abia State. He is from the Ndo Ukpabi compound and is the great-grandson of the famed chief Omenuko, or Chief Igwebe Odum, the historical subject of Pita Nwana's 1966 semi-fictional novel *Omenuko*.⁷⁷ His mother was the last daughter of Omenuko's youngest son. Omenuko was an active trader during the latter half of the nineteenth century. A man in his early to mid-40s, Mr. Nkemkaudo graciously volunteered his time to offer accounts, passed to him by his maternal grandparents, of his great-grandfather's trade relationship with Jaja while he was the sitting *amanyanabo* of Opobo. Though my time with Mr. Nkemkaudo was brief, we shared three interviews over two days, his perspective was a refreshing counterpoint to the other oral narratives and literature that inform this study, as well as shows Jaja's interconnectedness with the other notable figures of his time.⁷⁸

Mrs. Monica Igbokwe: Mrs. Igbokwe, a woman in her early 80s when we met in January of 2012, lives in Alaenyi, which is adjacent to Umuduruoha and shares the same market. Mrs. Igbokwe was my gracious host throughout my time spent in Amaigbo division, and was kind enough to rent me a room in her compound during my stay in the village. Alaenyi is the senior village that gave the land on which Umuduruoha sits to the town's early settlers.⁷⁹ Mrs. Igbokwe

⁷⁶ This, again, reinforces the idea that “outsider” researchers, especially those who are white, have some increased access to oral narratives that “insider” researchers may not. Had I been Nigerian, or even a black American, researcher my presence in the hotel would not been unusual, and it is unlikely that Mr. Nkemkaudo would have approached me and openly offered to share his account of Jaja's relationship with his ancestor. Thus, by virtue of being visibly different from most people in Nigeria, I stumbled upon a wonderful oral narrative that adds texture and depth to Jaja's history that insider researchers would have had to actively seek out, most likely by traveling to Arochukwu. However, I did not even have to leave the gates of my hotel to find a collaborator with intimate knowledge of a trade relationship that has been obscured in the scholarly literature on Jaja.

⁷⁷ Pita Nwana, *Omenuko* (Ibadan: Longmans of Nigeria, 1966). For more on the historical figure, Chief Igwebe Odum, see Raphael Chijioko Njoku, “Ogaranya' (Wealthy Men) in Late Nineteenth Century Igboland: Chief Igwebe Odum of Arondizuogu, C.1860-1940,” *African Economic History*, Vol. 36 (2008), 27-52.

⁷⁸ Emmanuel Nkemkaudo, interview by Author, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria, December 30, 2011.

⁷⁹ Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Monica Igbokwe, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, February 7, 2012. Both Mr. Oforha and Mrs. Igbokwe explained that the

was born into the Duruoshimiri clan in Umuduruoha and lived in the Duruoshimiri compound until she married her now late husband, at an early age, and moved to Alaenyi. In the 1970s, Mr. and Mrs. Igbokwe moved away from Alaenyi to Northern Nigerian city of Jos, in Plateau State, where she had lived for most of her life. Upon her husband's passing in the early 2000s, she moved back to Alaenyi to live in the family compound, about a ten minute walk from her natal home in Umuduruoha.⁸⁰ As such, she has been privy to the most recent developments within her lineage and, while she was understandably unwilling to share all of the issues that have arisen to fracture the Duruoshimiri clan in recent years, she was vital in making sure my research was not entirely bogged down within this ongoing conflict while I conducted oral interviews. Mrs. Igbokwe was essential in pointing me to individuals around the community, particularly lineage heads outside of the Duruoshimiri family, who could lend their insight regarding Umuduruoha, King Jaja's place in the community and narratives that the Duruoshimiri family members had chosen not to share.

A few months into my stay in Amaigbo, I was able to interview a reluctant Mrs. Igbokwe about her knowledge of the area and the history of her family. She, much like Mrs. Ochiagha, felt that she could not lend what she determined to be valuable knowledge regarding this study. She reiterated what was now a familiar refrain from the women in the area, that men were the individuals that retained this history.⁸¹ However, when I was able to convince her that I was simply interested in hearing about her life, her movements and her connection to the Duruoshimiri family, she was willing to speak with me, although much of our interview skewed

village of Alaenyi represented the “original people” of the area. Alaenyi was, and still is, a village with few people and a sizable amount of land. When the original settlers who formed Umuduruoha arrived, the people of Alaenyi allowed them to take the territory that is now Umuduruoha in order to maintain the practice of exogamous marriage.

⁸⁰ Monica Igbokwe.

⁸¹ It should be noted that it is entirely possible that the way in which I framed and explained my study to women in the area made them feel that they had little to offer on the subject, since many of my questions were tailored specifically to identify the individuals who had maintained some knowledge of the history of Jaja and his immediate kin, a realm of historical inquiry that the community left vested in the head of the Duruoshimiri clan.

towards the death of Hyacinth Duruoshimiri, her brother, and how it impacted the community when he had died and his nephew, Christian Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri, became the head of the Duruoshimiri clan.⁸²



Figure 6: Mrs. Monica Igbokwe (**Photograph by Author**)

Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri: Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri (whom I will refer to simply as Christian Duruoshimiri) is the nephew of the late Hyacinth Duruoshimiri. He became the head of the Duruoshimiri lineage when his uncle died. His father was the younger brother of Hyacinth Duruoshimiri. A man of 53 years of age,

⁸² Referring back to the last footnote, Mrs. Igbokwe indicated that, when her brother Hyacinth Duruoshimiri had died, much of the history of Umuduruoha died with him. In particular, she said “He [Christian Duruoshimiri] does not value reading, he values Naira.” I asked for further clarification because I did not fully understand what she meant. Her grandson explained that Hyacinth Duruoshimiri was a well-educated man who dedicated much of his life to maintaining the family and community history for the general benefit of the community, whereas his nephews were “illiterate” men who sought to cash in on the few Jaja-related artifacts that had passed to them without bothering or caring to know their relevance to the community. This view of Christian Duruoshimiri was echoed by many within the community. Monica Igbokwe; Mark Ginikanwa and Patrick Ginikanwa, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 10, 2012; Dan Ihenetu.

Christian Duruoshimiri presents himself as a “self-made working man” who had earned a living as a contractor before returning to the village in 2010, after his uncle's passing. He now lives in the main Duruoshimiri compound and has taken possession of the majority of Jaja-related artifacts in the village. It is in this compound that the remaining iron pots sent back to Umuduruoha by Jaja reside to this day. My first few encounters with Christian Duruoshimiri were quite pleasant. He recounted his family history freely, showed me around his compound and the surrounding area of the village, pointing to landmarks identified with Jaja. My initial interviews with him left me with the impression that he would be a critical source to the formation of this study. Indeed, the passion with which he spoke about his ancestor Duruoshimiri, Jaja's younger brother, and the primacy of Jaja's family in the village led me to arrange weekly visits and discussions with him in the coming weeks. However, our relationship became one of conflict and incredible frustration for me over an incident that erupted in 2005 between him and his cousin, Richard Duruoshimiri. I, quite unknowingly, became embroiled in their conflict when he found out I had also spoken with Richard. This led to Christian ignoring my calls and visits for weeks. When I was finally able to track him down in person, he warned me against ever talking to Richard again, as he claimed his cousin was a liar and a thief.

The source of their dispute centered on the rightful place of some of the iron pots chained outside the main Duruoshimiri compound. While Christian claimed to be the rightful heir and owner of all the pots, Richard claimed that the artifacts rightfully belonged to his father, Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri, and that Christian and other members of his family had broken into their compound and stolen the Jaja-related artifacts under cover of night.⁸³ Upon learning that I had

⁸³ There is still a great deal of confusion over the rightful place of these iron pots. While some collaborators sided with Christian, others sided with Richard, while still a third faction claimed that the pots were sent back and belonged to all the clans of the town, not just the Duruoshimiri family. While this story yielded little concrete evidence beyond the usual “he said, she said” claims of various collaborators, it suffices to say, for now, that the all

spoken with Richard, my relationship with Christian changed drastically. Whereas I was once a welcome visitor in his home to whom he would speak freely, I was now *persona non grata*. Luckily for me, Mrs. Igbokwe interceded on my behalf and, from the account of her grandson, chastised both Richard and Christian for involving me their personal conflict. While this intercession was appreciated, it proved inadequate to get Christian to speak with me again. However, his brother, Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri, was willing to listen to Mrs. Igbokwe and hesitantly opened up a dialogue with me after these incidents had played out.

Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri: Uzoma Duruoshimiri is the younger brother of Christian Duruoshimiri. He was 47 years old when we met in the main Duruoshimiri compound in 2012. I was unable to collect much information from Uzoma initially, on account of the fact that he felt his brother Christian was in a better position to relay the family history.⁸⁴ He was present for my early interviews with Christian, but did not say much of anything in response to my questions or his brother's comments. His involvement in this study became more critical when he chose to speak to me alone, despite the growing conflict between his brother and I, at the behest of Mrs. Monica Igbokwe. While I do appreciate his willingness to conduct interviews with me, in which he was able to answer some outstanding questions I had regarding his family's history in the community, our working relationship could not be described as fruitful. One of the primary reasons I came back to the Duruoshimiri compound after my falling out with Christian was to photograph a helmet, a cutlass, one canon, and two long-range repeating rifles that were housed in the back of their compound. My desire to photograph these Jaja-related artifacts led to one of the more frustrating, but also humorous, encounters I had experienced while conducting my

of the iron pots are in Christian Duruoshimiri's compound, but also that Richard has provided photocopies of his complaints to the authorities in Amaigbo regarding the alleged theft of the pots.

⁸⁴ Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, December 31, 2011.

research. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, I became aware of a newspaper article from the local publication *Igbongidi* that was run in 2010 after my first brief visit to the town. I was unaware that this newspaper existed until I met with Uzoma Duruoshimiri. Ironically, when I asked to photograph the Jaja-related artifacts, Uzoma told me that he could not allow me to take pictures of them unless I paid him \$500 USD.

I, in a moment of frustration as this conversation had been ongoing over the course of two interviews, lost my temper and asked who in their right mind would pay such a large amount of money for a picture? Uzoma pointed to the article, hanging on the wall in his compound, and told me that this American researcher was “just here” and was willing to pay such a price.⁸⁵ My stomach dropped. I thought another American scholar had already been in Umuduruoha investigating Jaja's Amaigbo roots. I was sure someone else had honed in on my research subject, until I realized the American he was referring to was, in fact, me. When I pointed this out to him, he simply smirked and again requested that I hand over \$500, if I wanted the pictures.⁸⁶

Mr. Wilfred Oforha: Mr. Oforha lived along the same street as Mrs. Igbokwe in Alaenyi. He was an incredibly affable and welcoming man of 90 years of age when I visited in 2012, making him the oldest living member of Alaenyi, Umuduruoha, and Umukobia, three villages that immediately bordered each other and shared a main market. Born in 1922, he has lived in Alaenyi his entire life and has been a devoted member and catechist of St. Gregory's Catholic Church in the Amaigbo village of Umudike. Mr. Oforha, being the oldest member of Alaenyi, had some unique insights on the development of the region, particularly in relation to the coming

⁸⁵ Uzoma Duruoshimiri.

⁸⁶ I was fortunate in that all of these artifacts had already been photographed and published in the 1997 King Jaja history exhibit, when they were handed over to the museum by Hyacinth Duruoshimiri so that they could be put on public display.

of Christianity in Amaigbo. He was able to recite the history of the many churches in the area from memory, listing off the names of various churches and associated missionaries as well as the dates they were established or had entered the region faster than I write them down.⁸⁷ Mr. Oforha was incredibly knowledgeable about the affairs and recent history of the Duruoshimiri family and was one of few collaborators, along with Mrs. Igbokwe, who was able and willing to point to potential collaborators outside the Duruoshimiri family. When I became embroiled in the Duruoshimiri family's conflict my work came to a sudden halt. However, on a friendly visit with Mr. Oforha one day, while on my way to the main market, I was complaining of my issues with Richard and Christian Duruoshimiri.⁸⁸ Mr. Oforha was quick to point out that “the Duruoshimiris are not the only clan in the village.”⁸⁹ He then sent me on my way, armed with a list of names of other potential collaborators, many of whom provided counter-narratives to the Duruoshimiri's version of community history.

Richard Duruoshimiri: Perhaps the most vocal and colorful collaborator of the bunch, I did not find Richard, Richard found me. I was approached by a tall, thin man, roughly 35 to 40 years old, while walking to the market for some supplies to make Egusi soup⁹⁰ for dinner. Richard worked for the Nwangele Local Government Area (L.G.A.), although he never made it quite clear what he actually did there. On my initial encounter with Richard, I was overwhelmed. After introducing himself, he launched into an extended rant concerning “my team of white men”

⁸⁷ Wilfred Oforha.

⁸⁸ Mr. Oforha's advice was that I needed to look past the spat between Richard and Christian Duruoshimiri. He said, and I quote, “You need to see past the 'my daddy did this, my daddy did that', it's all bullshit!” He then suggested I ignore them for the duration of my time in the village and speak with as many heads of the nine lineages that comprised Umuduruoha as I could. Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, February 6, 2012.

⁸⁹ Wilfred Oforha.

⁹⁰ Egusi soup is an Igbo dish derived from the seeds of the Egusi melon. It contains stock fish, dried and ground crayfish, and, when I made it, beef, tomatoes, onions, and ukazi leaves.

waiting in nearest urban center of Orlu. Apparently, Richard was present during my visit in 2010. When he saw me again and recognized me, he assumed that I had come back to the village with large checks, constructions crews, and building materials with the intention of building what he called “King Jaja Land”, a museum/monument/theme park dedicated to preserving King Jaja's memory in Umuduruoha.

Unfortunately, all I had brought was myself, a digital-recorder, and a rapidly decreasing budget to keep myself afloat. Despite trying to dispel notions that I was in any position to make such a thing happen, even on the day I left the village to return to the U.S., Richard was still hopeful that, someday, we would make King Jaja Land a reality.⁹¹ Although I must admit that my initial impressions of Richard were less than favorable, I soon learned that Richard had dedicated every moment of his spare time to the Progressive Youth Movement of Amaigbo Kingdoms (PYMAKS),⁹² a youth organization centered in both Amaigbo and Opobo which was dedicated to empowering youths using King Jaja as an example of overcoming adversity, and putting them to work on community projects as a means of deterring them from criminal activity or drug use in the face of the crippling poverty many of these youths faced.⁹³ Richard considered his father, Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri,⁹⁴ the rightful heir to the iron pots, as well as all the other Jaja-related relics, and claimed that Christian and Uzoma Duruoshimiri had stolen them, five in number, in 2005 in an incident he reported to the Umuduruoha Development Union. I,

⁹¹ He often spoke of the “Joe Davey” Hotel and Resort, attached to the attraction, which would surely be named after me.

⁹² Richard was so dedicated to this group and its mission that he preferred I refer to him as PYMAKS. I found it strange, but I obliged.

⁹³ Not only was this group an important facet of the Umuduruoha community, but its strong membership presence in Opobo reflects the interconnectedness of the two places King Jaja called home and how the relationship between them extended well beyond his lifetime, creeping into social, political and economic institutions. Rev. Anselm Obijiaku and Prince Richard Duruoshimiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 5, 2012.

⁹⁴ Often times, Richard would point to his home, where his father lived, and claim that, “This is where Jaja was born.” He even pointed to pictures of his own father, Ignatius Durushimiri, and said “this is Jaja's father.” He evidently meant that his father was of the Ozurumba lineage, founded by Jaja's father in the nineteenth century. The house, which was obviously of modern construction, seemed to be built in the 1950s or 1960s,

unfortunately, became embroiled in this conflict, as each faction actively tried to keep me from speaking to the other.



Figure 7: Author with Dan Ihenetu (**Photograph by Emmanuel Igbokwe**)

Mr. Dan Ihenetu: Mr. Ihenetu's parlor is a library, dedicated to the history of Nigeria. Stacks of books on subjects ranging from slavery, colonialism, economic history, histories of the Biafran War and so forth lined every tabletop and shelf that met the eye upon entering. I was pointed to Mr. Ihenetu's compound by Wilfred Oforha. I was greeted by a short, unassuming man of about 65 when I walked up the dirt path off of the main road that led from Alaenyi to Umuduruoha. After stating why I had come to see him that day, he quickly informed me that I had just missed his brother Ken Ihenetu, the head of the Ezeala lineage and, according to Dan Ihenetu, the man who knew “everything about Umuduruoha.”⁹⁵ Regrettably, Mr. Ihenetu's brother had recently fallen ill and had been in Ghana for treatment. Despite this setback, Mr. Ihenetu brought me

⁹⁵ Dan Ihenetu.

inside his compound and said that he would be happy to share any information he had that could help my research. Mr. Ihenetu proceeded to produce a full overview of the various clans that comprised Umuduruoha. The Ezeala clan was founded by Jaja's first cousin, Ezeala, who had functioned as a representative of Duruoshimiri in foreign affairs at the end of the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ Ezeala also played a pivotal role in Jaja's ability to rekindle his relationship with Umuduruoha and Duruoshimiri, as he worked as a messenger between the two men. Furthermore, Mr. Ihenetu had held onto the various documents produced locally about Umuduruoha's history, which he kindly offered to me to peruse and return at later date. In addition to his knowledge of the relationship between Jaja and Duruoshimiri, facilitated by his ancestor, Mr. Ihenetu was one of the few collaborators I met that was able and willing to recount the many pre-Christian deities of the area. This shed light on an area of Umuduruoha history that had been silenced by the overtly Christian-leanings of the town, a history to which I was having the greatest difficulty achieving access. Mr. Ihenetu had been a primary school teacher in Owerri for many years before returning to Umuduruoha for his retirement, a profession I suspect drove his penchant for consuming any and all history texts he could.

Mr. Barnabas Emeh: Mr. Emeh, when I encountered him in February of 2012, was a man in poor health that the rest of the community referred to as “Man No Good.”⁹⁷ My interview with Mr. Emeh was one of the few I conducted in Igbo, as his grasp of English was tenuous. I enlisted the help of Mrs. Igbokwe's grandson Emmanuel to function as a translator.⁹⁸ Mr. Emeh is the

⁹⁶ Dan Ihenetu.

⁹⁷ I assumed his nickname was in reference to his failing health, but I was hesitant to ask him about the moniker. As this was one of the few interviews that was facilitated by use of an interpreter, for which I enlisted the help of Mrs. Igbokwe's grandson Emmanuel, I asked him why everyone called Mr. Emeh “Man No Good”. He said he did not know, as this was a nickname that was given to him a long time ago.

⁹⁸ Despite my many years spent studying the central dialect of the Igbo language, I felt it best to use an interpreter, as I still am not entirely fluent. Moreover, the older generations of Igbo people have a tendency to speak in proverbs.

head of the Umunwaka kindred. The Umunwaka kindred separated out from Okwareke clan, the kindred of Jaja's grandfather, and were separate from the Ozurumba kindred by the time of Jaja's birth to Okwara Ozurumba. Mr. Emeh's recounting of the details about the community outside his own kindred was suspect,⁹⁹ but he did offer some interesting narratives regarding the history of the iron pots, their place and meaning in the community, as well as how they came to be collected in the compound of the Duruoshimiri family.¹⁰⁰

Mr. Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye: Mr. Uwazuruonye is the head of Umunwofor kindred. He was a man of about 55 when we had our discussions in 2012. Mr. Uwazuruonye provided a rather detailed account of how the headship of the community had changed during the twentieth century while Nigeria was under colonial influence.¹⁰¹ In an interesting turn, Mr. Uwazuruonye had a few requests for me when I arranged our meeting. First, he asked that I write down every question I had so that he could read them in advance and respond accordingly. Secondly, he insisted that the kola I bring with me should be alcoholic in nature. This had surprised me, as in every other instance I brought kola it was a gift of my choosing and was brought of my volition. Since we were meeting at nine in the morning, I also did not understand why the kola needed to be alcoholic. I complied with his wishes, created a list of 45 questions and bought a bottle of white wine to present to him before our interview. When I arrived at his compound the next morning, he put away the wine, produced a bottle of brandy, and proceeded to pour shots of the drink for him and myself while speeding through every question on the sheet

While I know a handful of these proverbs, my knowledge of the language, at that point, was not at a level of fluency that would make me comfortable conducting interviews without the use of a translator.

⁹⁹ Some examples of such “suspect” information was the fact that Mr. Emeh was adamant that Okwara Ozurumba was Jaja's older brother instead of his father, a claim disputed by every oral interview and local history I encountered in the area, and his insistence on talking about Jaja's deeds in 1912, 1916 and 1922 when Jaja had died in 1891. Barnabas Emeh, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 7, 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Barnabas Emeh.

¹⁰¹ Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 11, 2012.

in about 30 minutes. This presented a unique problem for me, as most of my interviews were long conversations that afforded me a number of opportunities to ask follow-up questions or ask for clarifications if I had missed something. This, on the other hand, was akin to waiting for a collaborator to fill out a questionnaire. When the flurry of answers had finished, I decided that the best way to glean more relevant information was to continue the line of questioning relating to the headship of Umuduruoha in the twentieth century, a subject about which Mr. Uwazuruonye was able to speak quite confidently and in-depth.¹⁰²



Figure 8: Left to Right: Richard Duruoshimiri, Author, and Anselem Obijiaku (Photograph by Emmanuel Igbokwe)

Rev. Anselem Ugo Obijiaku: Rev. Obijiaku is a co-coordinator of PYMAKS, along with Richard Duruoshimiri. Rev. Obijiaku was the only collaborator who prepared and provided a written biography of himself. He was born in 1967 in the Orumba North L.G.A. in Anambra State. Rev. Obijiaku describes himself as, “a Visionary Missionary, an ebullient Evangelist of International Repute, a Motivational Speaker....a Man-of-God endowed with prophetic mandate

¹⁰² Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

to rescue lost souls coupled with his personal character worthy of emulation.”¹⁰³ Rev. Obijiaku provided little in the way of elucidating Jaja's connections to Umuduruoha or about the village's past in general, as he was not from there. However, the ways in which he has employed the popular narrative of Jaja to achieve PYMAKS' end goal of empowering youths says much about the impact of Jaja's legacy to the present in both Amaigbo and Opobo. Whereas Richard Duruoshimiri had a difficult time explaining the form and function of PYMAKS,¹⁰⁴ Rev. Obijiaku was able to provide some background on the organization and described, in quite tangible terms, what exactly the group did within the community. Being a Reverend and a “Man-of-God,” Obijiaku also provided some interesting biblical corollaries in which Jaja's story could be grounded.¹⁰⁵

Mark Ginikanwa and Patrick Ginikanwa: I have listed these collaborators together, as they were brothers whom I interviewed together. Prior to this, my only “group” interview was with Dr. Ofonagoro and Capt. Ohaya, two men that I had, on multiple occasions, also spoken with alone. Patrick was Mark's immediate elder brother. They both appeared to be in their mid to late 40s, suggesting that their separation in age was fairly slim. Patrick Ginikanwa is the local government chairman and was usually away from the village in Owerri for work. I was fortunate

¹⁰³ Rev. Anselem Ugo Obijiaku, “A Profile of a Missionary Icon: Rev. Obijiaku, Anselem Ugo (A.K.A. Rev O.A.U)”, source provided by collaborator; Rev. Anselem Ugo Obijiaku, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 28, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ When questioned about this, Richard would often launch back into a tangent about his hopes for establishing King Jaja Land rather than providing a direct answer to questions.

¹⁰⁵ Most notable was a comparison between the biblical story of Joseph and the events of King Jaja's life. This was an important inclusion in our interview as I, an Atheist, would never have thought to tie such stories together. This lent some clarity as to how the people of Umuduruoha, most of whom would identify as devout Christians, tended to ground Jaja's life history in terms relative and relevant to them. I must admit that, at the time of our interview, I was rather unclear about this particular biblical story, thinking initially he was talking about Jesus' father Joseph. Anselem Obijiaku.

enough to catch him when he had returned to the village for a burial service.¹⁰⁶ Mark also lived in Owerri, where he owned a hotel. The Ginikanwas spent a good deal of time grounding their narrative in other, established events that would be well-known to a historian of Southern and Eastern Nigeria.¹⁰⁷

Physical/Material Sources

The physical remnants of Jaja's life that exist in Umuduruoha rest at the center of the community's history. They are not only a source of pride and evidence of Jaja's connections to Umuduruoha, but also a critical point of contention as to who “owns” the history of Umuduruoha. Ironically, anything connected to the young boy taken as a slave in the 1830s serves as a crucial factor in legitimizing local headship and community hierarchies to the present. Moreover, there exists a good deal of evidence that Umuduruoha's distant past has been reconstructed to reflect the primacy of Jaja's lineage in the village.¹⁰⁸ Access to these physical remnants, when possible, is closely guarded. Digging into the African past has brought to the

¹⁰⁶ Poor health and deaths were a consistent problem in accessing viable narratives from well-positioned people in the community. This was one of the few occasions that, as morbid as it sounds, I was able to capitalize on the death of a community member, as it afforded me access to collaborators who, otherwise, would not have been in the village during my stay here.

¹⁰⁷ For example, their narratives included mentions of the Aro Expedition and Jaja's settlement of Opobo after leaving Bonny, allowing me to attach some established dates to narratives mentioning the same details as those relayed by the Ginikanwas.

¹⁰⁸ The oral narratives of the Duruoshmiri family, supported by some and cast as reconstructions by others in Umuduruoha, tie the lineage back to the founding father of the town, Duru. In constructing this view of the past, the Duruoshmiri family has portrayed their place in Umuduruoha as a sort of dynastic lineage that had always, and will forever, rule over the village. However, many of my collaborators have declared that Duruoshmiri, whose local authority was bolstered by his connections with his wealthy and powerful merchant brother in the Delta, had no legitimate claim as a “King” in the community. Rather, they point to the roles of his son and grandson, Ukadike and Ibe, as colonial collaborators through the warrant chief system that took hold after the Aro Expedition of 1905. Mark Ginikanwa and Patrick Ginikanwa, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 10, 2012; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh. This version of events in Umuduruoha has other corollaries in Igboland. For more on warrant chiefs, see A.E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929* (London: Longman, 1972) & Nwando Achebe, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

fore the need to look outside traditional written sources of history.¹⁰⁹ While physical artifacts of the African past have long been within the realm of archaeological analysis, there remains a need for increased dialogue between history and archeology in reconstructing Africa's history. Unfortunately, these two fields have yet to develop a usable framework through which each field can lend its methods and units of analysis to the other.¹¹⁰

There have been fruitful studies carried out by historians that call upon the compiled knowledge of the field of archeology and vice versa.¹¹¹ However, not all of the physical sources of the African past are relegated to archeology, nor do the tools of that field adequately prepare researchers to address the diversity of physical sources that hold memory in African communities. For example, Ghanaian historian Emmanuel Akyeampong's work, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon*, analyzes what the author has termed an “eco-social” history of the Anlo in Ghana, providing a framework for considering the impact of the physical environment on the social structures of the people in the area.¹¹² There are also a handful of studies dedicated to uncovering the social importance of Ghana's “Sacred Groves,” again showing the relationship between the history of societal and religious institutions through the lens of ecological factors.¹¹³

When considering the relative dearth of written sources for the African past, it is critical

¹⁰⁹ James Mulira, “Sources of African History,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 20, No.1 (March, 1979), 228; Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, “Introduction,” in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), xiii-xiv.

¹¹⁰ Jan Vansina, “Historians, Are Archaeologists your Siblings?” *History in Africa*, (1995), 369-408; Christopher R. DeCorse and Gerard L. Chouin, “Trouble with Siblings: Archaeological and Historical Interpretations of the West African Past,” in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 7-8; Peter R. Schmidt and Jonathon R. Walz, “Re-Representing African Pasts through Historical Archaeology,” *American Antiquity*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Jan. 2007), 53-54.

¹¹¹ Heidi J. Nast, *Concubines and Power: Five Hundred Years in a Northern Nigerian Palace* (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Ann B. Stahl, *Making History in Banda: Anthropological Visions of Africa's Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹¹² Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, C. 1850 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

¹¹³ Michael J. Sheridan and Celia Nyamweru. *African Sacred Groves: Ecological Dynamics & Social Change* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008).

that historians utilize any and all “sources” of history that hold relevance to the subjects they are engaging. In Umuduruoha, there exists myriad physical sources of the community's relationship to King Jaja that hold deep meaning to the people of the village. I will now turn towards these sources to show how they have impacted this trajectory of this study. Rather than wade into the troublesome waters of pseudo-archeology often carried out by historians untrained in the practices of identifying and dating such artifacts, I am choosing, rather, to allow the voices and narratives of my collaborators to bestow meaning, both historical and present, to such physical sources. These sources are broken into two separate categories, manufactured and natural.

Manufactured Sources of Jaja's Past

I use the term “manufactured” for two reasons. First, it identifies objects that were man-made in an effort to distinguish them from natural or ecological markers of memory. Secondly, the symbolic value of these objects to the people of Umuduruoha rests in their connection to King Jaja and Opobo. While “manufactured” has often been academic literature to describe the goods coming from the coast to the various locales in West Africa through trade with Europeans,¹¹⁴ there is an implicit inference that man-made African products were somehow inferior to these European wares and, thus, less desirable. However, the people of Umuduruoha have co-opted their connection to the Atlantic world through Jaja by making these European-produced¹¹⁵ objects hallmarks of and objects of memory for the village's history.

As discussed at length earlier in the chapter, Jaja's connection to Umuduruoha is evidenced by the existence of manufactured objects held, primarily, by the Duruoshimiri family. Chief among these physical sources are the large iron pots that reside in the Duruoshimiri

¹¹⁴ David Eltis and Lawrence C. Jennings, “Trade Between Western Africa and the Atlantic World in the Precolonial Era,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Oct. 1988), 936-959.

¹¹⁵ Sources in Umuduruoha shed little light on the actual process for manufacturing these goods. What is clear is that European iron was used in the construction of the large pots outside the Duruoshimiri compound. However, I can not say with certainty whether the pots were produced by blacksmiths in Opobo or in Europe.

compound. Upon my visit into 2012, there were 11 iron pots chained-up outside the Duruoshimiri compound.



Figure 9: The iron pots held in the Duruoshimiri Compound (**Photograph by Author**)

In all of the oral narratives I encountered, my collaborators agreed that the number of pots had dwindled throughout the years, however there exists little agreement on the number of pots originally sent by Jaja.¹¹⁶ The location of the remainder of pots is unknown, as they have been

¹¹⁶ The number given has been as low as 36 and as high as “hundreds.” However, there seems to be a general consensus that actual number sent was somewhere around 70. Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Christian Duruoshmiri; Richard Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Duruoshmiri.

carried off by “thieves” over the years.¹¹⁷ Sent to Umuduruoha in the 1870s, these pots were used for boiling palm oil to make a usable product that could then be sold, by coastal middlemen like Jaja, to Europeans operating in “legitimate trade” in the Atlantic world.¹¹⁸ While the neighboring community of Nkwerre has been long known for their practices as blacksmiths, they more often functioned as itinerant metal workers, traveling widely to bustling market towns both in and out of Igboland, making the practice of metalworking within the community limited. The Nkwerre blacksmiths were better known for their process in creating metal tools and smaller items used in religious rituals and, as iron products were becoming increasingly available through trade with the Atlantic, indigenous forms of blacksmithing were downsized.¹¹⁹ With this being the case, it is highly unlikely that these iron pots were produced locally. This evidence, coupled with the oral narratives of my collaborators and other physical artifacts conclusively linked with Jaja existing in Umuduruoha, points to the validity of Jaja sending the iron pots back to Umuduruoha.

This episode in the Umuduruoha-Opobo exchange draws three critical issues to the fore. First, the pots in Umuduruoha prove that Jaja was not only aware of the location of natal community, but had re-established, at the very least, trade connections with the village. Secondly, it displays the type of resources Jaja was willing to commit to strengthening the position of his community in the wider economic context of southern Nigeria. Finally, the fact that pots have

¹¹⁷ I would like to state here that, despite the agreement among my collaborators that many of the pots had been stolen from the Duruoshmiri compound, I find it difficult to believe that so many pots, weighing 150 to 200lbs each, could easily be lifted and carried away in secret from the compound without coming to the attention of the “rightful” owners. It is quite possible that others in the community, over many years, took the pots with the knowledge of the Duruoshmiri family.

¹¹⁸ Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa: Revised 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005), 236; E.J. Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta states and Calabar” in *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 5 (4), 1971, 565–570

¹¹⁹ Nancy C. Neaher, “Akwa Who Travel: Itinerant Metalsmiths of Southern Nigeria,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (1979), 352-366; David Northrup, “The Growth of Trade Among the Igbo before 1800,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1972), 227-228; G.I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria* (London: Published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1963), 15.

been maintained and, in essence, memorialized by the community over the years speaks to the centrality of Jaja to the identity of the community.

The other man-made artifacts held by the Duruoshimiri family are stored in a shed behind the main compound and consist of a cutlass sword, a European style crown, two, now dilapidated, repeating rifles, and a long-range cannon.¹²⁰ These artifacts are crucial evidence of Jaja's relationship with Umuduruoha for two reasons. The fact that Jaja sent weaponry, in conjunction with the pots used for boiling palm oil, help to reiterate the idea that Jaja was, in fact, fortifying his brother Duruoshimiri militarily and economically. Moreover, the weaponry could also be representative of Jaja's ongoing struggles with the British during the 1880s. Many of my collaborators claim that Jaja, growing increasingly concerned with the machinations of power he saw in British representatives in Delta, was attempting to fortify Umuduruoha so that, in the event that an armed conflict broke out, Jaja could flee into the interior while still having access to the types of military equipment he would need to repel British advances.¹²¹ In the publication "100 Years Today: Special Memorial Edition: King Jaja of Opobo," intended to celebrate Jaja one-hundred years after his death, an unknown¹²² author writes,

Ancient relics and weapons of war were taken to Amaigbo the ancestral home of King Jaja and are still preserved till this day, although the canon is already showing signs of age and wear. The movement of war weapons was intensified during the political battles with the British. It is claimed that Jaja had attempted to shift his base to up-country stations and to attack the British from there. Even the King of Bonny had a watchful eye on his movement and reported to the Consul. These plans by the King [Jaja] were overtaken when he was arrested and removed from the Opobo River in a battleship, HMS "Goshawk," on September 21, 1887 for trial in Accra in Gold Coast (now Ghana).¹²³

¹²⁰ While I was shown these artifacts by members of the Duruoshimiri family, I was not allowed to photograph them without paying a large fee of \$500 USD. Working on a limited budget, this simply was not possible.

¹²¹ E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu. It is worth noting here that only one cannon remains in the Duruoshimiri compound, along with a single sabre, said to be the same sabre gifted to Jaja by Queen Victoria for his assistance in the Asante War, and a single repeating rifle. Despite the fact that only these items remain, my collaborators all agreed that Jaja many cannons and guns back to Umuduruoha in the 1880s.

¹²² This publication has a number of contributing authors, some of which include H.O. Ohaya, E.C. Osuala, Walter Ofonagoro, and E.A. Jaja, among others. However, the particular passage from above is not credited to any author.

¹²³ Unknown Author, "100 Years Later: Special Memorial Edition, King Jaja of Opobo," (Lagos, Associated Printers

While there is indeed much in the way of Opobo and Umuduruoha-based evidence that Jaja, looking forward towards the inevitable conflict with the British, was trying to create a new base of operations from which he could fight off British advances, the official reason for his capture from Consul Johnston was that he had blocked “free trade” in the Delta.¹²⁴

As much as these artifacts or physical sources can tell us about Umuduruoha's past and Jaja's life, they also speak volumes for Jaja's meaning in the present. In his article, “Material Culture and Cultural History,” historian Richard Grassby writes, “Goods are subjected to both etic and emic analysis-- the study of their objective attributes and their significance to those who used them. The ultimate objective is to move beyond concrete data and grasp the more nebulous concept of culture.”¹²⁵ The use of these artifacts in Umuduruoha, in the present, lends unique insight to the cultural construction of authority in the area. Whoever maintains these artifacts related to Jaja is bestowed the authority of traditional leadership in Umuduruoha by way of their connection to Duruoshimiri. As such, the constant quarreling within the Duruoshimiri family about the rightful location of these artifacts is, in all actuality, members of the family staking their claim to the history and headship of the community through the use of “symbolic” artifacts.¹²⁶ I intend to center these artifacts as such, rather than taking a “materialist” approach towards them, in trying to ascertain their exact date and origin of manufacture, tangible use in the community and the patterns of their movements from the coast to the hinterland.¹²⁷

Not all the man-made artifacts in Umuduruoha are the subject of debate over traditional

& Publishers LTD, 1991), 18.

¹²⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123-126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-202.

¹²⁵ Richard Grassman, “Material Culture and Cultural History,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Spring 2005), 592.

¹²⁶ Peter R. Schmidt, “An Alternative to a Strictly Materialist Perspective: A Review of Historical Archaeology, Ethnoarchaeology, and Symbolic Approaches in African Archaeology,” *American Antiquity*, Vol. 48, No.1 (Jan., 1983), 62-63.

¹²⁷ Schmidt, “An Alternative,” 62-63; Grassman, “Material Culture and Cultural History,” 592.

leadership and contemporary hierarchies however. One man-made object, whose meaning to and ownership within the community, has remained uncontested is the shrine erected at Okwara-Ozurumba compound.



Figure 10: Shrine at *Obi Okwara Ozurumba* (Photograph by Author)

The shrine at Obi Okwara Ozurumba is located on the grounds Jaja's and Duruoshimiri's father, Okwara Ozurumba's former compound. This was the site where Jaja was born and spent his early life in Umuduruoha. Erected well after the deaths of Okwara Ozurumba, Jaja, and Duruoshimiri, the site was constructed to memorialize Ozurumba's and Jaja's central place in the community.¹²⁸

The value of the site to the community is multifaceted and speaks to the interconnected relationship of Opobo and Umuduruoha. Obi Okwara Ozurumba has functioned as the central meeting place, or town square if you will, for community-wide activities in Umuduruoha throughout the twentieth century. Masquerade dances, holiday celebrations and meetings

¹²⁸ Some of my collaborators have stated that the concrete foundation and slab that marks the site of Jaja's place of birth were left intact from the nineteenth century. As concrete buildings were not present in nineteenth century Igboland, this assertion is simply impossible. As none of my collaborators could put an exact date to its construction, we must accept the more generalized knowledge from other collaborators that it was built in the 1920s or 1930s. E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha.

amongst the elders of the village are held at this site.¹²⁹ Moreover, members of the Opobo community, when they travel to Umuduruoha, congregate at the site to pay respect to their first King's natal home and the land of their ancestors. As it is cemented in one place and the location, rather than the shrine itself, is the site of interest and memory, this is one of the few Jaja-related artifacts that truly belongs to the community-at-large. The place holds symbolic meaning and represents the community's deep ties to their storied past. Moreover, the site features prominently in the narrative of how Jaja rekindled his relationship with his natal community, a subject that is dealt with below.

Natural Landmarks as Sources of Memory

In the narratives related to Jaja finding his natal home, natural landmarks play a crucial factor. These natural landmarks come in the form of two large iroko trees and a small pond, known locally as *olu Duruoshimiri*.



Figure 11: (Left) *Olu Duruoshimiri*, (Right) iroko tree lining the Ozurumba compound
(Photographs by Author)

In much the same way that the sacred groves of Ghana represented ties to religious traditions of

¹²⁹ E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha.

the region,¹³⁰ the natural landmarks of importance in Umuduruoha are maintained as sites dedicated to remembering the familial bond that exists between Opobo and Umuduruoha. Jaja had maintained his memory of his natal home through the identification of the trees and pond that formed the boundary of his father's land. Upon becoming King in Opobo and encountering an Umuduruoha trader-- an episode that forms the central piece of this study-- Jaja sent the Umuduruoha man back to the community armed with the knowledge that Jaja's place of birth was lined by the iroko trees and *olu Duruoshimiri*. From his earliest memories of these landmarks, Jaja was able to identify his natal home.¹³¹ While the pond has dried up in recent years and one of the iroko trees looks to have been dead for many years, these natural landmarks are as revered by the people of Umuduruoha and Opobo as the other physical artifacts sent directly from Jaja to Umuduruoha and are equally critical as evidence that this was, in fact, Jaja's natal home.

Naming

One issue that presents a unique difficulty in telling Jaja's story is that of naming. Jaja's birth name was Mbanaso Ozurumba. Mbanaso, I was told, meant “nations fear me.”¹³² When a young Mbanaso arrived in the Anna Pepple house of Bonny, he was renamed Jubo-Jugboha or Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem.¹³³ Later in his career as a trader in Bonny, Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem used a shortened form of the name “Jo Jo,” which in Ijo was pronounced “Jaw Jaw.” Through his many dealings with the British, Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem accepted the Anglicized version of his name, which was rendered “Ja Ja,” or Jaja. I have chosen to utilize this moniker throughout the body of this

¹³⁰ Sheridan and Nyamweru. *African Sacred Groves*.

¹³¹ Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Christian Iheanyichukwu Duruoshmiri; Richard Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Duruoshmiri.

¹³² Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Duruoshmiri; E.C. Osuala.

¹³³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 25. Cookey, as well as every other author writing on Jaja, fails to give an explanation of what this name meant. It likely had some symbolic significance. However, I did not carry out research in the Ijo community of Bonny, nor do I speak Ijo. As such, I could not provide a conclusive answer to the question of what this name meant.

dissertation for two reasons. First, I felt using Jaja consistently across my discussions would help provide some continuity for the reader and would, generally, make navigating through Jaja's life easier. Second, the name Jaja has eclipsed Mbanaso and Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem in academic literature and in the memories of my Umuduruoha collaborators. During our conversations, the name Mbanaso was only used to explain what Jaja's birth name meant, as well as how the name “nations fear me” was a fitting one for the powerful Delta king. In every other regard, the people of Umuduruoha themselves remember him as Jaja, as evidenced by the existence of “King Jaja High School” and “King Jaja Road.” The people of Umuduruoha refer to the kings of Opobo not as *amanyanabo*, their official Ijo title, but rather as “King Jaja, King Jaja II, the current King Jaja,” and so on. Thus, I felt it best to present Jaja as my collaborators remember him and I have only chosen to use Mbanaso where it was necessary.

Conclusion

The presence of Jaja looms large in Umuduruoha's past and present. In many ways, the history of Umuduruoha has been constructed and recast to reflect Jaja and Duruoshimiri's influence in the village from the precolonial period to the present. The narratives of some of my collaborators speak to the primacy of Jaja's family and to their influence in Umuduruoha from time immemorial, while others have presented a history of the village that was not influenced by Jaja's family rise to prominence until after his lifetime, well into the colonial period.

In Chapter Two, I supplement the voices of my collaborators by drawing Umuduruoha into a wider context and situate the village in relation to its neighbors and the surrounding region in the period before Jaja's birth. Through an examination of Umuduruoha's foundation, nineteenth century patterns of trade, and the impact of slave-raiding on the society, the narratives surrounding Jaja's departure from Amaigbo, and the route Jaja took, come into clearer view.

CHAPTER TWO- UMUDURUOHA AND JAJA’S ANCESTORS

Introduction: Umuduruoha Today

Umuduruoha is situated in a larger constellation of villages known as Amaigbo, which today is part of the Nwangele Local Government Area in the Orlu Division of Imo State. The topographical features of Imo State are characterized by gently undulating hills which fall sharply into the Imo River valley. This once densely forested region alternates between two seasons, rainy (*udu mmiri*) and dry (*okochi*). Bounded by the Oran Hills to the west and Oguta Lake to the East, Amaigbo Division is home to a variety of flora that are harvested for subsistence as well as profit, such as mahogany, iroko, rubber trees and, most importantly, oil-producing palm trees.¹

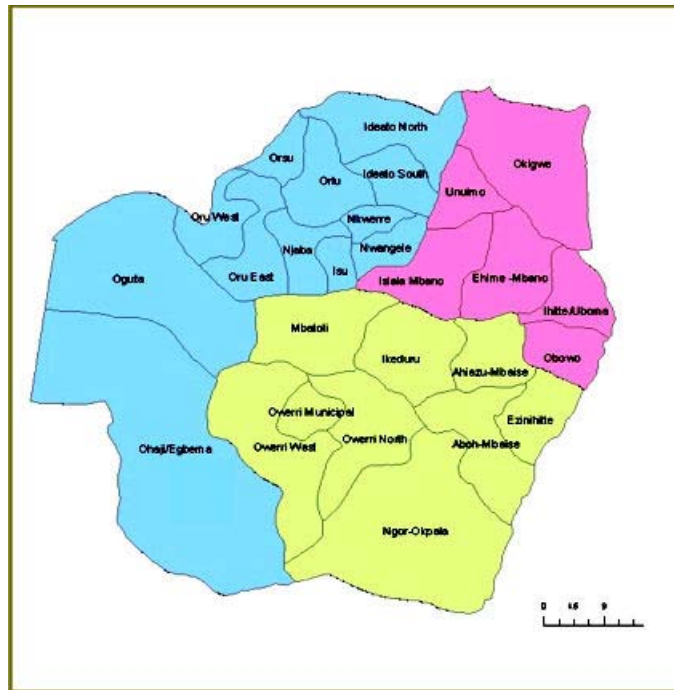


Figure 12: Imo State with Local Government Areas²

¹ Chima J. Korieh, “Yam is King! But Cassava is the Mother of all Crops: Farming, Culture, and Identity in Igbo Agrarian Economy,” *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 31, No. 1/3, (2007), 226-227.

² Website, “The Heartlander,” <http://www.theheartlander.com/list-of-655-autonomous-communities-in-imo-state/>,

Amaigbo lies within northern portion of Imo State. Today, this area of the Igbo heartland is roughly twenty miles south of the urban center of Orlu and roughly thirty miles north of the Imo State Capital, Owerri. Upon the onset of formal colonialism in Southeastern Nigeria in 1905, Orlu was reconstituted into an administrative center by the British. However, Amaigbo remained relatively obscured from European sight until Catholic missionaries came in 1915 to establish the area's first church.³ As one travels through Igboland, he or she will notice a distinct leveling of the terrain when moving south through Imo State from Enugu towards the swamps and waterways of the Niger Delta. The position of Imo State between the Igbo highlands of the North and the extreme southern Igbo communities that bordered the Delta states has earned the area the title of “Igbo core” or the “Igbo heartland.”⁴

In this chapter, I trace the origins of Umuduruoha and place the village within the larger context of the Amaigbo village-group as well as in relation to more distant locales in Igboland in order to provide contextualization for the circumstances into which Jaja was born. In doing this, I outline the major political, economic and religious traditions of the area as they changed over the years leading up to the early nineteenth century, before moving on to discuss Jaja's early life, and the position of his family within the wider Umuduruoha community.

In tracing and presenting the history of Umuduruoha over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this chapter also seeks to fill a void in the academic literature regarding the general history of Amaigbo. In the introduction to the amateur history entitled *Amaigbo Kwenu*, written by Charry Onwu, Abel Anozie Anyiam states, “The history of Amaigbo

(Accessed February 18th, 2015).

³ Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Dan Ihenetu, interview Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 18, 2012; Charry A. Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu: History, Legend & Myth of Amaigbo* (Place of publication not identified: publisher not identified, 1988), 56-59.

⁴ G.I. Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 30-31; B. Floyd, *Eastern Nigeria: A Geographical Review* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 29-30; A.E. Afigbo, “Igboland before 1800,” in Toyin Falola, ed., *Igbo History and Society: The Essays of Adiele Afigbo* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 170-171.

Town. . . has for long existed in contemplation in the minds of the people. Because of the enormity of the involvements, historians have found wading into it so forbidding that attempts have been too long in coming.”⁵ Thus, retracing this history to situate narratives of Jaja's early life and capture from Umuduruoha doubly functions as a rudimentary history of the village that has, thus far, not been undertaken by academic historians.⁶ In order to accomplish this task, I employ oral narratives from Umuduruoha, local histories produced by indigenous historians of Amaigbo, and secondary literature that speaks to wider changes in patterns of commerce, culture and religious traditions in neighboring Igboland communities.

Umuduruoha in Historical Perspective: Duruoha and his Brothers

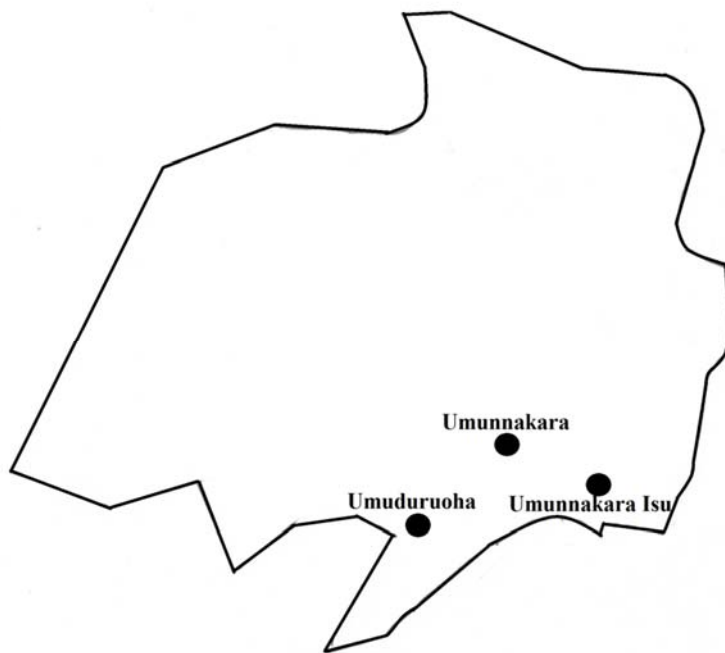


Figure 13: Amaigbo, showing Umuduruoha, Umunnakara, and Umunnakara Isu

⁵ Abel Anozie Anyiam, “Forward,” in Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 6.

⁶ A WorldCat search of the subject name “Amaigbo” yields only Ms. Onwu's amateur history and a pamphlet associated with the popular 1997 museum exhibit about King Jaja named, “The Roots of King Jaja: The Amaigbo Born and Opobo Crowned Monarch.”

Any discussion of the establishment of Umuduruoha necessarily begins with the narratives held in the village regarding its founding father, Duruohanenye.⁷ When compared to the folkloric founding of other Igbo communities, the origins of Umuduruoha and its founding father, Duruohanenye, seems unremarkable. However, Jaja, his family history and his contemporary legacy are inextricably tied to the stories of Umuduruoha's genesis. Literally translating into “the children of Duruoha,” an exact date can not be applied to Duruohanenye's founding of the community. However, using a locally-produced genealogical table, it is possible to deduce that the community was settled in the latter half of the 17th century, most likely in the period between the 1660s and 1680s.⁸

⁷Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, December 31, 2011; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, January 16, 2012; Dan Ihenetu. The name of this individual is alternately given as Duru, Duruoha, or Duruohanenye in local oral narratives and locally produced documents.

⁸ Unknown Author, “Genealogical Table: The Ancestral Lineage of King Jaja and his Brothers,” (unpublished, unknown date); Walter I. Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba otherwise known as King Jaja, 1821-1891,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1978), 153-154.

Here, I came to the conclusion of Umuduruoha's estimated dates of foundation by working backwards from the known birth dates of Jaja's grandfather, Okwarannaku. From there I estimated, applying a gap of twenty years between fathers and sons across four generations of the family, placing Duruohanenye's birth date in the middle of the of the 17th century. It would stand to logic that Duruohanenye was at least twenty years old when he founded the town and could not have been more than sixty years of age when he founded Umuduruoha.

Genealogical Table: The Ancestral Lineage of King Jaja and His Brothers

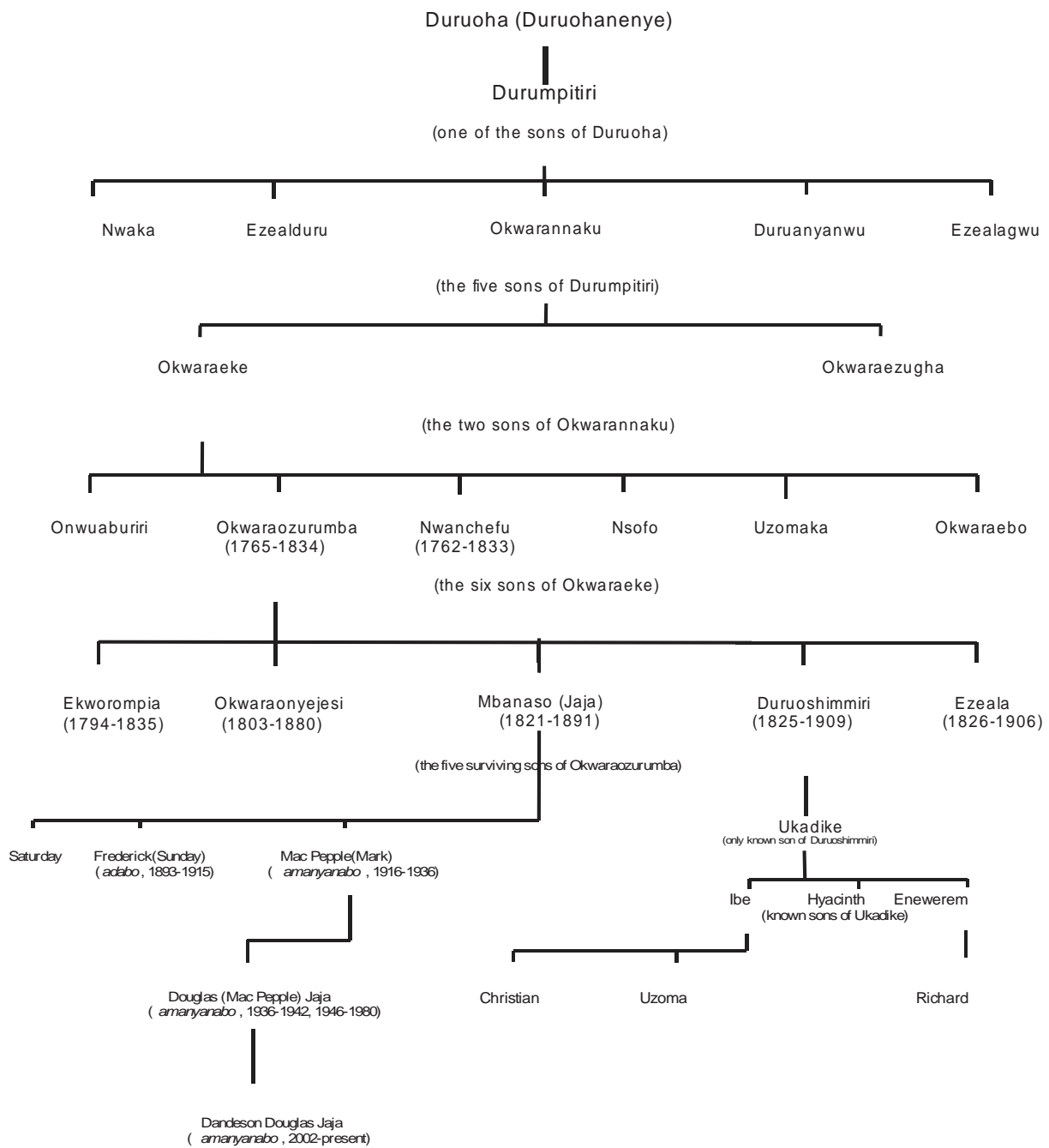


Figure 14: Genealogical Table of King Jaja⁹

⁹ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table." Additions since Jaja's generation were added by the author. See Appendix 3 for original document.

While there is no confusion as to who founded the village, the way in which Duruohanenye came to settle in present-day Umuduruoha is up for debate. There are two distinct narratives from inside and outside of Umuduruoha that shed light on the community's early formation. While some inhabitants of Umuduruoha claim that Duruohanenye, the founding father of the town, was the brother of Durumpitiri; others claim that when Duruohanenye died, leadership of the town passed onto his eldest son, named Durumpitiri. This latter claim is reinforced by the official lineage of Jaja's family circulating in Umuduruoha.¹⁰ Jaja's family tree, which is directly linked back to Duruohanenye through male children, states that Durumpitiri was Duruohanenye's only known male son. Sources from inside the Umuduruoha community state that Duruohanenye, Durumpitiri, and a third brother, Durudibiala, all traveled out from an unknown location simultaneously to found the towns of Umuduruoha, Umunnakara and Umunnakara Isu.¹¹

However, oral narratives from the neighboring towns of Alaenyi and Umuobi claim that Duruohanenye traveled out from the town of Umunnakara to settle in the current location of Umuduruoha.¹² There is a good deal of legitimacy to this narrative. Alaenyi is unquestionably the senior village in the area surrounding Umuduruoha. Therefore, gleaning insight from Alaenyi's history is useful here. The narrative that exists in Alaenyi states that their people “were always there.”¹³ However, in the early history of this village, Alaenyi's people were few and

¹⁰ Unknown Author, “Genealogical Table;” Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba”, 152-155; Dan Ihenetu; Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 5, 2012; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

¹¹ Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya, interview with author, digital-recording, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010. It is possible that Durumpitiri is the name of both Duruohanenye's brother and son. However, it does not seem to be a common pattern for a familial given name to pass from generation to generation in Amaigbo. Whereas a western audience may not find it unusual for an individual named John to also have an uncle named John, this would be much less likely given the common practices of naming a child in Igboland.

¹² Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹³ Wilfred Oforha; Mrs. Monica Igbokwe, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, February 7, 2012.

geographically isolated. This can be substantiated by the physical geography of the area. Alaenyi was, and still is, surrounded by unbroken and undeveloped forest on its western, eastern and northern sides.¹⁴ This forest land was a natural barrier between Alaenyi and neighboring villages.¹⁵

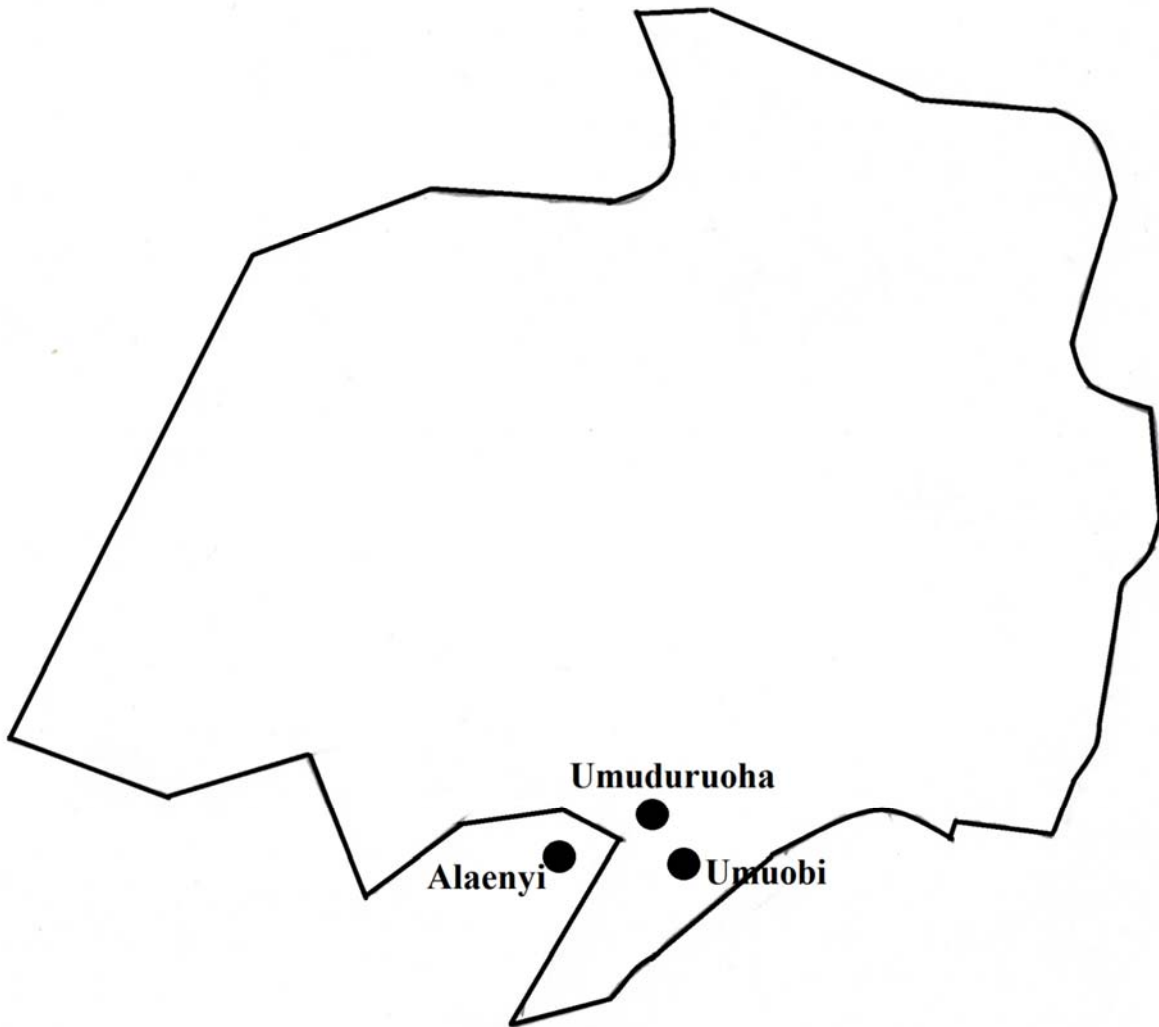


Figure 15: Amaigbo, showing Umuduruoha, Alaenyi, and Umuobi

¹⁴ Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe. Here, both collaborators indicated that the forest to the north and west of Alaenyi, which still exists today, has remained untouched since the town's foundation.

¹⁵ Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

Sources from Alaenyi claim that, with their relatively small population¹⁶ and geographic isolation, there was no one for the people of Alaenyi to marry. The standing rule of exogamous marriage was becoming more and more difficult to achieve. The town's narrative goes on to state that the land to the south of Alaenyi on which Umukabia and Umuduruoha presently sit was vacant when Duruohanenye arrived, so when Duruohanenye came to Alaenyi from Umunnakara, the people of Alaenyi were more than happy to have Duruohanenye and his followers settle in what would become Umuduruoha.¹⁷ Over time, the population of Umuduruoha and Umukabia exploded, yet Alaenyi stayed very sparsely populated and small in comparison.¹⁸

Amaigbo, Umuduruoha and Traditions of Igbo Origin

References to “Umuduruoha” are non-existent in the archival records and the early ethnological works from the colonial period.¹⁹ Rather, one must rely upon references to the Isu sub-group of Igbo people, as this group formed the dominant majority of Amaigbo Division and the people of Umuduruoha themselves recognize this ethnic affiliation.²⁰ There are no sources describing this Igbo sub-group until after the turn of the twentieth century.

The foundation of Umuduruoha needs to be placed within a wider discussion of the origins of the Igbo people, as discussion of this subject raises unique perspectives on the foundations of Amaigbo people. There are two distinct traditions of origin here. Academic

¹⁶ I do not have historical figures for the population of Alaenyi, so it is difficult to trace the size of the village over time. It must suffice to say, here, that currently about 400 to 500 people live in Alaenyi on a permanent basis. Although, one could argue that population of permanent residents has decreased over time as urbanization has drawn many away from the villages to the cities of Southeastern Nigeria. Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹⁷ Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹⁸ This shift likely occurred in the middle to latter half of the 18th century. It is clear that, by the time of Jaja's birth, festivities and community-wide events held in Umuduruoha were attended by Alaenyi neighbors. Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe.

¹⁹ The only notable exception is a brief field report from 1917, identifying Duruoshmiri's son, Ukadike, as the warrant chief for the community. See National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, ORLUDIST 14/1/3, Intelligence Report, 1917.

²⁰ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Christian Ihenanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dan Ihenetu; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

explanations of the origins of the Igbo people, citing archaeological and migratory evidence, run in direct contrast to the locally-held origin traditions, which highlight religious traditions adopted in the twentieth century to explain existing Igbo settlements.



Figure 16: Possible sources of Igbo Migration

Noted Igbo historian A.E. Afigbo devoted a great deal of his scholarly attention to the topic of disentangling myth from historical reality when considering the origins of Igbo people.²¹ Afigbo points to the influence of the Kingdom of Nri, in what is now Anambra State, Nigeria, as the driving force that spread some semblance of homogeneity among the current communities who identify as Igbo through the religious authority of the *Eze Nri* sometime before the 10th century.²² While Afigbo was successful in pointing to a common set of traditions spreading from Nri, his many works came no closer to providing a conclusive answer on where the Igbo people physically originated. He posits that the Igbo-Ukwu axis, citing the renowned archaeological

²¹ Afigbo, "Igbo Land before 1800," 170-174; A.E. Afigbo, "Traditions of Igbo Origin: A Comment," in Toyin Falola, ed., *Igbo History and Society: The Essays of Adiele Afigbo*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005); A.E. Afigbo, "An Outline of Igbo History," in Toyin Falola, ed., *Igbo History and Society: The Essays of Adiele Afigbo*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005).

²² Afigbo, "An Outline of Igbo History," 116 & 117; Afigbo, "Traditions of Igbo Origin," 131 & 132.

work of Thurstan Shaw,²³ was a likely origin of the Igbo people, but accounts for traditions that state otherwise. Among those traditions is the theory that Igbo people migrated outwards from present-day Amaigbo to settle the rest of Igboland.²⁴ Afigbo writes,

Traditions in this category are found in those communities located in what has often been called the Igbo heartland, that is the Akwa-Orlu-Okigwi complex. The traditions of such Igbo groups as the Ngwa, Ohuhu, and Mbaise who claimed to have migrated from the Amaigbo-Umunneoha axis, may be taken to fall within this group. So, by extension, can the traditions of the Cross River and Northeastern Igbo that point to secondary and tertiary migrations from this same axis, or in any case from the Ohuhu area.²⁵

The existence of these traditions likely accounts for the overwhelming lack of information on the indigenous foundation, formation and organization of current-day Amaigbo.

In the absence of concrete evidence, many Amaigbo people have re-cast their entry into the current area that is known as Amaigbo in terms of the town's adoption of Christianity.²⁶ The most notable tradition of Amaigbo's origins states that two men, Odudwa and Ngidi, of the “Hebrew-Gentile race” started out on a long journey to find fertile new grounds for settlement. After crossing oceans and forests, Ngidi and Odudwa came across a beautiful land, located in the present position of Umuchoke. Ngidi planted a tree and settled near the area, leaving Odudwa to continue on to Ife, eventually becoming the progenitor of the Yoruba. The area where Ngidi planted his tree is said to be the current site of the Holy Trinity Church, Amaigbo.²⁷ This tradition goes on to explain that,

²³ Thurstan Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

²⁴ Afigbo, “Traditions of Igbo Origin,” 131.

²⁵ Afigbo, “Traditions of Igbo Origin,” 131.

²⁶ The idea that the Igbo people are the descendants of Hebrew migrants is not new. The idea was first posited by Olaudah Equiano, who came from the Amaigbo area. Historians have repeatedly debunked this myth. See Edith Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective," *The Journal of African History*. 10.4 (1969), 521-532; Philip S. Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order: Southern Nigerian Historians and the 'Hamitic Hypotheses' C. 1870-1970," *Journal of African History*. 35 (1994), 427-455.

²⁷ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 15; Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya; Afigbo, “Traditions of Igbo Origin,” 131-132. Here, Afigbo makes mention of Odudwa and Eri without tracing these figures back to Amaigbo and without attributing their heritage to the “Hebrew-Gentile” race. Thus, there are similarities between the locally-held narratives of Amaigbo's origins and academic explanations of the origins of Igbo people, generally.

Ngidi eventually settled with his own people and his wife who were all on the entourage. He was blessed with three sons but it has not been proven that he had a daughter. His sons were Igbo, Oke, and Eshi (Eri). Naturally at Ngidi's death, his first son inherited his father's dwellings. Oke, the second son of Ngidi, settled at Aro and multiplied. Today, he is known as the founder of Ndi Aro (Aro people). Eshi or Nri, the third son of Ngidi, also migrated to the part of the present Niger area (Anambra) where he also became the founder of the present Nri in Anambra State of Nigeria. His real name of Eshi was changed to Nri according to the dialect.²⁸

Thus, when trying to ascertain the origins of Amaigbo, one meets great difficulty in trying to disentangle the town's foundation from the origin stories explaining the appearance of the Igbo people, generally, in southeastern Nigeria. It is not surprising that, in the absence of concrete evidence, the inhabitants of Amaigbo have cast themselves as the progenitors of the entire Igbo race. This The traditions of Amaigbo's origins, as they were passed to me in Umuduruoha, Alaenyi, and Umuobi, speak directly to this origin story, either citing it directly or addressing it indirectly in saying, "the Amaigbo are an ancient people," implicitly stating that the people had always been there.²⁹ While it is interesting to consider these possibilities, Afigbo warns the wary researcher that many traditions of Igbo origin have become conflated with accounts of Europeans that attributed Hamitic origins to separate sub-groups of the Igbo whom the Europeans perceived as more "civilized" from other Igbos and sub-Saharan Africans.³⁰

Still, the narratives that explain the foundations of the Igbo, Amaigbo, and Umuduruoha all reflect a similar trend that speaks to the settlement patterns within Igboland. The concept of individuals "walking out" of one community to found a new settlement reflects G.I. Jones' assessment of population patterns among the Igbo when he writes, "In every case, however, the

²⁸ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 15-16; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

²⁹ Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

³⁰ Afigbo, "Traditions of Igbo Origins," 126; Olaudah Equiano and Robert J. Allison. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995); Philip Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order," 427-55.

purpose of the layout remains the same, namely to allow a number of villages to live reasonably close together as a sign of local community and yet be able to expand without too much friction.”³¹ This very clearly reflects the narratives of Umuduruoha's founding, inasmuch as the narrative speaks to Duruohanenye and his brothers settling, first, in the present Imo State communities of Umunnakara and Umunnakara Isu before moving outwards to a neighboring area to settle a new, but related, community.

Situating Amaigbo and Umuduruoha within the Literature on Pre-Nineteenth Century Igboland

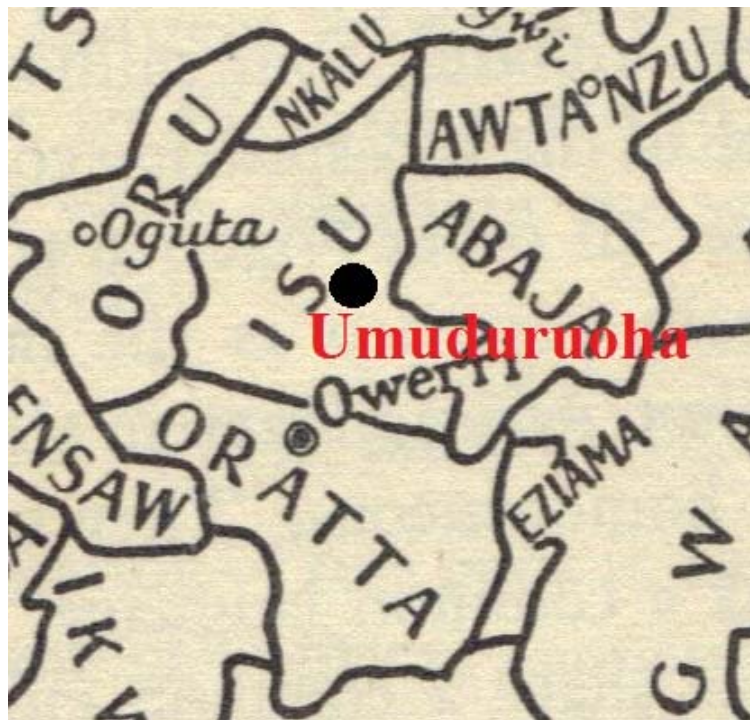


Figure 17: Umuduruoha among the Isu Sub-group³²

Anthropologists P. Amaury Talbot and Charles Kingsley Meek undertook extensive studies of the Igbo sub-groups during the early colonial period, and these studies included the Isu. Meek and Talbot identified the Isu sub-group as inhabiting a landmass that extends north from Owerri to Orlu, encompassing both the village of Umuduruoha and the division of

³¹ G.I. Jones, "Ibo Land Tenure," *Africa*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1949), 310.

³² C.K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe: A Study in Indirect Rule*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 2. Umuduruoha added by author.

Amaigbo, alongside another sub-group, the Oratta. According to Talbot's 1921 census of Igboland, he estimated the Isu sub-group was comprised of nearly 250,000 people, with just over 90,000 living in the communities around Owerri, which would include the Amaigbo Division.³³ Meek identifies the Isu as being distinct from their immediate neighbors, the Oratta sub-group, in that the Isu were actively engaged in distance trading as well as agricultural production, whereas the Oratta engaged only in subsistence farming. Meek writes,

Thus, in Owerri Division, the large group of people known as Isu are noted traders, and on any of the main roads leading to Port-Harcourt hundreds of Isu on foot or on bicycles to and from this centre of trade. But their immediate neighbours, the Oratta, take very much less interest in trade and affect, indeed, to despise the Isu for their trading propensities. The reason for the distinction between the two groups of people appears to be that Oratta are possessed of better farming land than the Isu, and have not the same necessity for seeking a livelihood by other means than agriculture.³⁴

Meek further distinguishes the Isu from the Oratta when he writes,

The former affect to despise the latter as they (the Oratta) were warriors in the past, whereas the Isu were merely traders. . . In the matter of government, too, there were between the Isu and Oratta, due principally to the fact that among the Isu the influence of the Ozo society, or institution of title-taking, was predominant. This institution was one of the principal means of maintaining law and order and served as a unifying force between the various village groups, thus giving the Isu a greater measure of solidarity than they would otherwise have had.³⁵

Most of Meek's writings on the Isu seek to separate the Isu sub-group from the neighboring Oratta. However, his works, along with Talbot's, are the best sources we have for reconstructing nineteenth century Umuduruoha.

Whereas the founding of Umuduruoha is an event that is deeply entrenched in the minds of the community, the development of Umuduruoha throughout the long eighteenth century

³³ Percy Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria: A Sketch of Their History, Ethnology and Languages, with an Abstract of the 1921 Census* (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1926); Meek, *Law and Authority*, 4 & 92.

³⁴ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 19; This same assertion is made in Meek's 1932 Intelligence Report. See National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932.

³⁵ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 92; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 30/08, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932.

remains obscured in scholarly and amateur histories, as well as the oral histories maintained in the community. Evidence to show how institutions changed over time from the founding of Umuduruoha to the nineteenth century simply does not exist, so we must necessarily frame a discussion of Umuduruoha's past firmly within the nineteenth century.

Umuduruoha in the Village-Group and Amaigbo

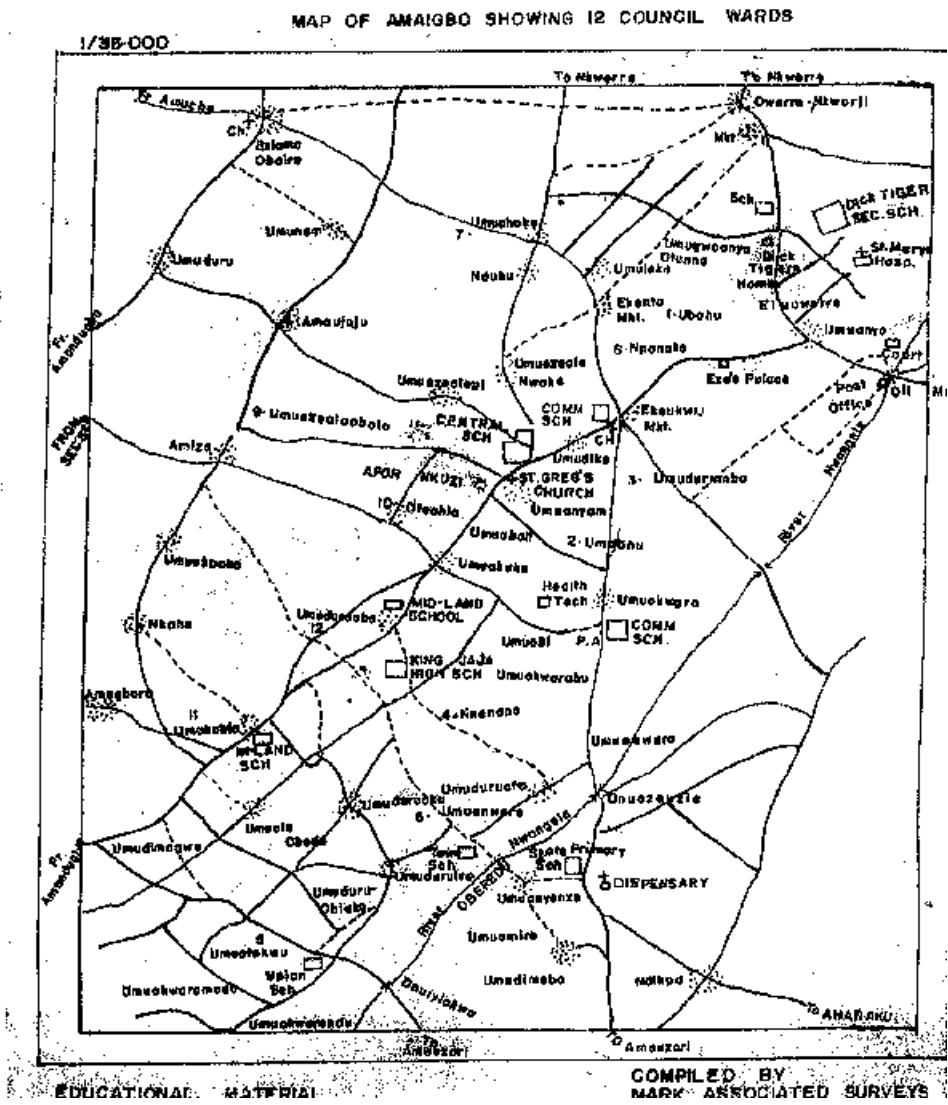


Figure 18: Amaigbo Division

Amaigbo Division consisted of thirty-two villages that organized together based on

seniority.³⁶ The villages organized into eight village-groups, with four villages in each village-group. These village groups can be further organized into two categories, *ibeahia amamishi ubahu* and *ibeahia amamishi umuchoke*.³⁷ Umuduruoha was a relatively late addition to the youngest village-group, being the juniors of a group comprised of the villages of Ofeahia, Umukabia and Umuduruoha. These two larger categories represent administrative units that functioned to organize the labor of Amaigbo on community-wide tasks such as the clearing and construction of the roads and the organization of the daily and weekly markets.³⁸

Political organization in nineteenth century Igboland was largely based on representative authority invested into the heads of clans, kindreds and villages; Amaigbo people also recognize a singular political head, the *Igbo* of Amaigbo, whose palace was in Amaigbo Town proper.³⁹ The *Igbo* of Amaigbo settled inter-village disputes and organized the thirty-two communities to protect from outside threats.⁴⁰ However, Umuduruoha would collaborate politically with Umukabia and Ofeahia more often than with Amaigbo as a whole.⁴¹ This pattern of political affiliation likely grew, as Afigbo explains it, out of an informal pattern of collaboration that was deemed as beneficial to all involved.⁴² As such, the individual villages made the village-group an

³⁶ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 21-24. While it is accepted that older community of Alaenyi ceded land to Umuduruoha settlers in the latter half of the 17th century, they did not and do not associate politically with Amaigbo, as they recognize ties to Uratta sub-group of Igbo people, while the Amaigbo communities are part of the Isu sub-group. Still, the two communities share social connections through intermarriage, shared festivals and masquerades, and a shared marketplace, but Alaenyi is not one of the villages that make up Amaigbo. In the latter half of the twentieth century, Amaigbo expanded from 32 to 36 villages.

³⁷ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 21-24; Walter Ofonagoro, interview by Author, January 10, 2012.

³⁸ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 24. Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro.

³⁹ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 26-27; Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 10, 2012. The *Igbo* of Amaigbo's authority was further bolstered with the arrival of British colonizers, when Anyado of Umuanya became the first colonial warrant chief for the area in 1910

⁴⁰ Afigbo, "Igbo Land before 1800," 172-173; Wilfred Oforha. There remains evidence that Umuduruoha aligned socially and, at times, militaristically with the neighboring town of Alaenyi. While Alaenyi was never part of the Amaigbo collective, the proximity of Alaenyi to Umuduruoha would have required extensive cooperation between the two communities in the days prior to the establishment of a unified Amaigbo political unit.

⁴¹ Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁴² Afigbo, "Igbo Land before 1800," 172-173; Jones, "Ibo Land Tenure," 310.

official facet of their communities' political organization after the conglomeration met with some level of success in achieving the goals of maintaining peace and prosperity among its members.⁴³ Collaboration among these villages was largely situational, with the communities coming together to discuss collective solutions to village-group-wide problems as they arose. While the oral narratives collected from the area speak generally to this situational collaboration, there remains little memory of specific incidents that drove Umukabia, Ofeahia and Umuduruoha to come together as a single decision-making unit during the eighteenth century.⁴⁴

Social Structure of Umuduruoha during the Nineteenth Century

It is necessary to supplement local narratives of Umuduruoha's institutions with wider assessments of social customs, trade, politics, and religion in central Igboland during the pre-colonial period. Here, I address the social structure of Umuduruoha, before moving on to identify patterns of political, religious, and economic organization throughout the nineteenth century. The structure of Isu society was organized on three levels: the household, the village and the village-group. The household, or *umunna*,⁴⁵ was the most basic unit of social organization.⁴⁶ In Umuduruoha, the *umunna* was headed by a man, and was made up of that man's wives,⁴⁷ sons, and unmarried daughters.⁴⁸ Individual members of the *umunna* undertook various responsibilities, but would often assist one another in the maintenance of individual plots of land set aside for agriculture.⁴⁹ The head of the household had numerous, “ritual, moral, and legal

⁴³ Afigbo, “Igbo Land before 1800,” 172-173; Jones, “Ibo Land Tenure,” 310; Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that a conflict in which Umuduruoha and the neighboring Amaigbo village of Umuobi erupted in military actions at the end of the nineteenth century, while Jaja's brother Duruoshmiri was the leading chief in the community.

⁴⁵ In English, this means “children of a father.”

⁴⁶ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 541-542; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 95-96.

⁴⁷ The Isu practiced polygamy in the nineteenth century.

⁴⁸ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 541-542; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 95-96.

⁴⁹ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 96; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 541-542; National Archives of Nigeria,

rights and obligations.”⁵⁰ Among these obligations was the maintenance of shrines dedicated to the ancestors of the *umunna*, the naming of newborn children, and the allocation of farm land to the various *umunna* members. Further, he would bear the costs of special events, such as funerary and birth celebrations. He also shouldered the bulk of the *umunna*'s contributions to community-wide celebrations such as masquerade festivities or the New Yam celebrations.⁵¹

The Isu subgroup, of which Umuduruoha was a part, also heavily engaged in long-distance trading. Trade was a critical occupation for the women of the *umunna* to increase their resources, as the farming plots that belonged to the wives and daughters of the *umunna* were often smaller than those maintained by the men.⁵² The younger males of the house also relied heavily on trading, as farming plots were divided up according to age and sex, with the eldest male children generally being given the largest plots to farm, thus leaving less land available to the more junior males.⁵³ Women governed the marketplaces of Amaigbo Division and were tasked with setting the standards for prices and measurements of goods.⁵⁴ Yams, coco-yams, and palm products, including palm oil, palm kernels and palm wine, were the major trade goods produced in this region, and women and young men traveled to markets as far south as Bonny, Brass, and Elem Kalabari to pedal their wares in exchange for salt, fish, and European-produced

Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932.

⁵⁰ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 98.

⁵¹ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 541-542; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 95-96.

⁵² Meek, *Law and Authority*, 96.; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 555-558; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Dan Ihenetu.

⁵³ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 96-99; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 555-558; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

⁵⁴ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 92; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 541-544; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

This pattern seems to be consistent across Igboland, as is evidenced by Nwando Achebe's work on women in the Northern Igbo communities of the Nsukka Division. See Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005), 7-8.

goods accessible through Atlantic trade.⁵⁵

In the early nineteenth century, the agricultural practices of Amaigbo Division also functioned along gendered divisions of labor. The men were primarily responsible for cultivation of yams, the staple crop of all Igbo communities, while women predominantly dealt in the cultivation of other crops. They could include food items such as coco-yams, cassava and plantains, among others.⁵⁶ There is evidence that women assisted in the cultivation of yams as well, but yam was primarily the concern of male agriculturalists.⁵⁷ Beyond the sustenance these crops provided for the community, yam was also of ritual importance, with the people of Umuduruoha celebrating the *ji mmiri*, or “New Yam Festival,” with their neighbors in what is now Amaigbo town proper, from June to July of each year.⁵⁸ Local narratives state that the *ji mmiri* was invented in Amaigbo town prior to the nineteenth and spread to the other areas of Igboland, centering Amaigbo as the source of a widely-held Igbo tradition. From Amaigbo Town, the festival was said to have spread outwards to the local communities that comprised Amaigbo Division.⁵⁹ If *ji mmiri* was not held in any particular year, no community or person in the Amaigbo region could eat the “new yam” crop for the following year, when the festival would be held again.⁶⁰ This would create a uniquely difficult situation, as yams represented the staple food of the Amaigbo diet. Moreover, the New Year could not be ushered in and the community itself would come to a complete standstill, with their yam crops rotting in the ground and their fields

⁵⁵ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 92; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁵⁶ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

⁵⁷ Korieh, “Yam is King,” 222-224; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 34; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 911; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 88-92.

⁵⁸ Korieh, “Yam is King,” 222-224; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 34; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁵⁹ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 34; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁶⁰ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 34; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 910-911.

left to waste.⁶¹

Children of both sexes assisted in the domestic duties of the household, with young boys being responsible for the clearing and maintenance of the public areas of a household, and young women being tasked with fetching water from nearby streams and creeks.⁶² When a child, male or female, was physically capable, usually around the age of eleven to thirteen, he or she would assume the same responsibilities of agriculture and trade as other grown members of the household.⁶³

Palm products were harvested by both women and men.⁶⁴ The head of the *umunna* was often shown appreciation for his duties to the household through gifts of palm wine given to him by young men and women of all ages in the household.⁶⁵ The young men were usually responsible for the dangerous task of climbing and tapping the palm tree to draw out the wine, while the wives and daughters were responsible for bottling and fermenting the drink until it was palatable.⁶⁶ As the nineteenth century progressed and palm oil supplanted slaves as the Niger Delta's chief export,⁶⁷ the production of palm oil became more important to the Umuduruoha economy, and both men and women carried this product to the markets of Southern Nigeria.

The Village

The village was the next unit of social organization among the Isu of Amaigbo Division

⁶¹ This occurrence, and the resultant fallout from it, formed the basis of Chinua Achebe's novel, *Arrow of God*. See Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969).

⁶² Meek, *Law and Authority*, 89-90; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu.

⁶³ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 89-90; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu.

⁶⁴ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 93; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu.

⁶⁵ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 89-90; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu.

⁶⁶ Monica Igbokwe; Janet Ngozi Ochiagha, interview with author, digital-recording, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria, December 12, 2011; E.C. Osuala.

⁶⁷ See the next chapter for a full discussion of this transition.

in the nineteenth century. The village, or *obodo*, was made up of the various *umunna*.⁶⁸ The *umunna* were represented on a communal level by the head of each household. Each head of an *umunna* would represent his family or household in community-wide decisions. The authority vested in this individual was represented by an *ofo* staff.⁶⁹ This staff passed to the eldest member of each household to show that he had the authority to speak for the *umunna*. When the *ofo* holders met together to discuss village matters,⁷⁰ they were presided over by the *ofo* holder of the oldest lineage, who was given the title of *okpara*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 554-556; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 88-92; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁶⁹ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 554-556; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 88-92; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁷⁰ These matters could include a wide range of issues. For example, *ofo* holders would ultimately be the governing body that passed laws and punishments for breaking those laws, make the final decision on whether or not an Amaigbo community would go to war, and adjudicate civil and criminal issues that faced the community.

⁷¹ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 104-108; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 592-596; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.



Figure 19: The *ofò* staff of the Ezeala *umunna* (Photograph by Author)

The *okpara* of the oldest *umunna* in an Amaigbo community was given de facto leadership when the various *umunna* heads gathered together to discuss community-wide issues.⁷² The *okpara* title in Umuduruoha, thus, is passed to the *ofò* holder of the Duruohanenye lineage. This individual was granted the greatest degree of respect in political decision-making processes and represented a connection between the world of the living and the spirits of the ancestors who had passed on. He also functioned to adjudicate disputes among community

⁷² Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 147-148; Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table."

members, including other *ofo* holders and titled men.⁷³ When writing about *ofo* title holders in the Isu subgroup, Meek states, “The controlling authority is the general body of family heads [okpara], the senior amongst them acting as a ceremonial president.”⁷⁴ While a great deal of authority is rested in the position of an *okpara* holder, his authority was not complete or totalitarian in nature as much as it was “ceremonial” or representative. The *okpara* and *ofo* institutions, unlike the other titles bestowed in Umuduruoha, was not subjected to a change in symbols of one's status as the diversity of trade goods increased through a more lively exchange with the Atlantic at the coast, but stayed vested in the lineage's *ofo* staff, passing from a father to his eldest son (*anyadike*) upon the father's death.⁷⁵ Upon taking the *ofo* staff, a man was bestowed with the title *nze*.⁷⁶

There were four distinct *umunna* in Umuduruoha in the early nineteenth century. They were named after the founder of each lineage as they broke away from Duruohanenye's lineage to settle their own *umunna* from the late 1600s to the early 1900s.⁷⁷ They were, from oldest to youngest, Ozurumba, Duruju, Oduafo, and Ekwume. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number had expanded to six, adding the Ezealaku and Duruegbuso lineages, the former being founded by Jaja and Duruoshimiri's youngest brother, Ezeala.⁷⁸

⁷³ Victor Uchendu, “Ezi na Ulo: The Extended Family in Igbo Civilization,” *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 31, No. 1/3, (2007), 167-219; Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, 91-92; J. N. Oriji, “Political Authority in Igbo Society” in *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies*, No. 29 (Jan 1986), 73-74.

⁷⁴ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 111.

⁷⁵ Uchendu, “Ezi na Ulo,” 172-180; Joachim Ifeuzo Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal of Ozo Title Taking and its Implications for Current Leadership in Igbo Catholic Church (Nigeria),” (Dissertation, South African Theological Seminary, May 2011), 73-75.

⁷⁶ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 104-108; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 592-596; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya. Here, Meek and Talbot record the title as “eze” among the Isu of Owerri Division, but my Umuduruoha collaborators indicate that the title is, locally, known as “nze.”

⁷⁷ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁷⁸ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

Headship in Umuduruoha

Headship in Umuduruoha's political affairs was vested entirely in men.⁷⁹ Access to these positions of headship was based on the personal successes of individuals in spheres such as warfare, trade, agricultural, and the maintenance of a large number of wives and children. Additionally, the maintenance of a successful labor force through the acquisition of slaves was also a notable way to achieve public or political authority.⁸⁰ The success of these individuals was marked communally through the process of taking a title, or *ichi ichichie* in Igbo. Having already discussed the organization of the village of Umuduruoha and their place in the village-group as well as in the wider division of Amaigbo, we must now turn our attention to the specific titles bestowed to the citizens of Umuduruoha. The title-taking system in Umuduruoha applied exclusively to men⁸¹ of the community in nineteenth century Umuduruoha and had seven distinct titles that could be described as a hierarchy, organized in a three-tiered system. While in some areas of Igboland, these titles could pass hereditarily from a father to his first son, the title-taking system in Umuduruoha and the Amaigbo region does not recognize this practice.⁸² The seven titles bestowed upon Umuduruoha men were as follows:

⁷⁹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Victor C. Uchendu, *Ezi Na Ulo: The Extended Family in Igbo Civilization* (Nigeria: Ministry of Information and Social Development, 1995), 24-28.

⁸⁰ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 26; M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu, "The Genesis, Diffusion, Structure and Significance of Ozo Title in Igbo Land," *Paideuma*, Bd. 25 (1979); Axel Harneit-Sievers, "Igbo 'Traditional Rulers': Chieftancy and the State in Southeastern Nigeria," *Africa Spectrum*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1998), 60; Chinwe M.A. Nwoye, "Igbo Cultural and Religious Worldview: An Insider's Perspective," *The International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (2011), 306-307.

⁸¹ Monica Igbokwe; Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro. Notable female members of the community could take the honorific title of *lolo* in Umuduruoha, but this title often reflected the achievements of a woman's husband and male children rather than achievements of her own in pre-colonial Umuduruoha. This pattern changed during the twentieth century to bestow honor on women based on their own accomplishments, rather than those of the males in her family.

⁸² Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 11, 2012. Certain titles in Umuduruoha, in particular, the *okpara*-ship title, are only available to men of a particular lineage, in this case the lineage of Duruohanenye. However, the title did not automatically pass from a father to his eldest living son. Rather, the title was available to the eldest living son if he had, personally, accomplished great things in the eyes of the community.

Tier I

- 1) *okorobia* (translation: “young man” or “male youth”)- This title was bestowed upon young men in the community who had achieved some distinction or notoriety in the community. It allowed them to voice their concerns or opinions in public settings, but carried less authority than the titles typically bestowed upon older men.

Tier II

- 2) *iche oha (ndi-ishii)* (translation: “title of headman”)- This title was indicative of one's standing as the head or voice of a kindred and his ability to represent that kindred authoritatively at the communal level.

Tier III

- 3) *onumonu iche* (translation: “warrior chief”)- This title reflected an individual's abilities in war as well as trustworthiness in settling communal disputes. Any man who holds this title must speak the truth about what he has seen or knows at all times. Lies or falsities spoken by these titled men would be met with incredible misfortune, sent down from the deities of the land.
- 4) *onumonu ukwu* (translation: “great warrior chief”)- This title placed a slightly higher degree of trust in the title-holder than the related *onumonu iche* title. It was vested in men who could be trusted to speak the truth in both village and inter-village matters. As the name implies, successful efforts in warfare largely contributed to the taking of this title.
- 5) *ukwu duru* (translation: the “great Duru”)- The *ukwu duru* title reflected the village's founding by Duruohanenye, and called upon his name to bestow upon a more advanced public figure the authority to speak for the village as a whole when represented in inter-

village settings.

- 6) *anwu-anwu* (translation the “chief who will never die”)- This title allowed for its holder to convene with the other advanced titled men of Umuduruoha in making community-wide decisions, including the decision to take up arms and fight against external threats. As suggested by the name, this title also enshrined the individual holder into the memory of the people.
- 7) *nwedo* (translation: the “title of the god of peace”)- The highest honor bestowed on a man by the Umuduruoha community. It took incredible amounts of time and wealth to attain, and endowed its holder with the greatest degree of autonomy in making village-wide decisions that Umuduruoha would allow. While few would challenge the words of an *nwedo* holder, it did not imbue the individual with unchecked or absolute authority.⁸³

Each title allowed for some degree of political representation at the communal or inter-village level and came with its own set of qualifications for achieving the title. In every case, the candidate for these titles had to inform the highest titled man in the community of his intention to take a title.⁸⁴ From there, the candidate would announce his intentions to take a title to his family and the community. After this announcement, the candidate would undergo an “inquiry period” during which his qualities were vetted against the community's standards for bestowing a particular title. During the inquiry period, community members could raise concerns about the candidate, thus allowing the community a voice in choosing the titled men who represented the village.⁸⁵

⁸³ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal,” 60-75. While this last source is a dissertation dealing with the current implications of title taking in Igboland, it is worthwhile for our discussion here, as it traces the history of the institution in various communities in Central Igboland.

⁸⁴ Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal,” 68-75.

⁸⁵ Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal,” 68-75.

In the nineteenth century, the “lesser” titles of *okorobia* and *iche oha (ndi ishii)* required a candidate to present gifts or sacrifices to the deities, which, if accepted, would pave the road for existing title-holders to sanction an individual's candidacy, when he would be formally bestowed with his title in an initiation ceremony open only to other titled-men. The greater titles in Umuduruoha required the same process for declaring one's intentions to take a title, but the inquiry period for these titles was a great deal longer than those of the lesser titles.⁸⁶ Moreover, gifts were presented to the deities of communities as well as the other titled men and required the candidate to stage a community-wide celebration during which he provided food, drink, and festivities for the other members of the village. The taking of these titles required an incredible amount of resources, as the gifts included large sums of money in addition to other items such as palm wine, kola nut, yams, and cloth, among other material goods. As access to manufactured products increased through trade with coastal states in the Niger Delta in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the requirements for gifts presented in the course of seeking a title also changed.⁸⁷

These titles functioned progressively, so that a candidate had to take a lesser title before moving on the next stage of the process. Thus, in the end, a holder of the *nwedo* title would also hold the six other titles that came before it. Beyond the political authority and honor within community bestowed upon title-holders, the title-holders also played a specific social function of providing support to widows and orphans of the community.⁸⁸ These titles were not available to

⁸⁶ Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal,” 68-75; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro.

⁸⁷ Raphael Chijioke Njoku, “‘Ogaranya' (Wealthy Men) in Late Nineteenth Century Igboland: Chief Igwebe Odom of Arondizuogu, C.1860-1940,” *African Economic History*, Vol. 36 (2008), 27-31; K. Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 28; David Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers: Pre-colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 118; Robin Law, *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 108.

⁸⁸ Oforchukwu, “A Theological and Biblical Appraisal,” 65; Barnabas Emeh.

slaves of Umuduruoha and were bestowed only upon free-born members of the community.⁸⁹

Umuduruoha's growth leading up to the nineteenth century occurred in conjunction with the rise of the Atlantic Slave Trade. The frequency of slave raids increased just before the nineteenth century, before leveling off in the years preceding Jaja's birth in 1821.⁹⁰ Slave-raiding activities in the early nineteenth century likely impacted headship in Umuduruoha in two ways. First, access to goods available only through Atlantic trade began to creep deeper into the Igbo hinterland and changed the physical goods associated with wealth, status and, thus, the title-taking process.⁹¹ The acquisition of goods, such as swords and guns, replaced agricultural products as markers of one's status as an established man within a community as southern trade networks began to flood the central Igboland area with such products.⁹² Secondly, it has been suggested by various authors who have written about Jaja, including Okpete Kanu and S.J.S. Cookey, that the children of titled-men and political authorities were better insulated from being taken by slave raiders as the raids grew more frequent throughout the 1700s and into the 1800s.⁹³ While the spread of Atlantic goods likely reached Umuduruoha through trade networks and changed how the community viewed status and title-taking practices during the early to middle nineteenth century, there does not seem to be any concrete evidence of political authorities being

⁸⁹ Oforchukwu, "A Theological and Biblical Appraisal," 68-75; Harnett-Sievers, "Igbo 'Traditional' Rulers," 60; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Dan Ihenetu; Okechuwku Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁹⁰ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 29; Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 108-135; Paul E. Lovejoy and J.S. Hogendorn, "Slave Marketing in West Africa," in Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn, eds., *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 213-235; Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, *The Cambridge World History of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 583.

⁹¹ Njoku, "Ogaranya'," 27-31; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 28; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 118-120; Law, *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce*, 107-109.

⁹² Njoku, "Ogaranya'," 27-31; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 118-120; Law, *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce*, 106-110.

⁹³ Okpete Kanu, "The Life and Times of King Ja Ja of Opobo, 1812-1895" (Halifax, N.S.: Dalhousie University, 1970), abstract; S.J.S Cookey, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891*, (New York: Nok Publishers, 1974), 25-26; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 148-150. This was the reason that Kanu and Cookey attribute a "commoner" status to Jaja's family. They assumed that if Jaja had been taken as a slave, his family must not have been in an elevated political position in Umuduruoha.

able to better insulate their families from the activities of slavers. In much the same way as Olaudah Equiano, the son of a titled man, was taken by slave raiders in the 1750s, Jaja, whose father Okwara Ozurumba had attained the title of *nwedo* by the time of his third son's birth in the 1820s, was similarly whisked away into the slave networks of southern Nigeria in the 1830s.⁹⁴

Age-Grades and Childrearing in Umuduruoha

The labor and duties allocated to the members of an Amaigbo village broke down according to various age-grades. Such duties could include trash removal and sweeping of public areas, the clearing of forests or grasses from the roadways, and the selection of members in the society who would go to war.⁹⁵ These organizations were divided by gender and generally grouped individuals of the same age, usually born within a five-year period of one another, together. Age grade designations would be assigned to an individual girl or boy beginning around the age of four or five, and that individual would remain a member of their designated age-grade throughout the remainder of his or her life.⁹⁶ Age-grades, “each forms a sort of club, the members of which try all minor cases or quarrels occurring between themselves, and usually have the power to inflict small fines or light punishment when this is considered necessary.”⁹⁷ As such, day-to-day issues between members of the community who were part of the same age group could be settled without bringing the issue before the elders of the community, which left them to

⁹⁴ Equiano and Allison, *The Interesting Narrative*, one; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Okechukwu Emmanue Uwazuruonye.

While it is clear that West African societies mounted numerous and varied defenses against slave raids, there is no evidence from Umuduruoha, or Amaigbo in general, that suggests the titled men or their families were any better insulated against slave-raiding activities. For more on these defending against slave raids, see Sylviane Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003) & Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations Along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003).

⁹⁵ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 549-552; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 197-205; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁹⁶ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 549-552; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 197-205; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁹⁷ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543.

deal with issues of wider importance to the community as a whole.⁹⁸

Childrearing in the nineteenth century was a communal activity in Amaigbo Division. From birth, the community at large shared in the milestones and developments of an individual, celebrating as a child passes from one stage of life to the next.⁹⁹ Of particular importance were the many instances in which children were recognized on a communal level for his or her individual achievements. Many of my collaborators cited this pattern of childrearing in Umuduruoha as the source of Mbanaso's successes later in life that allowed him to navigate Bonny's slave system to become a king of his own state.

Among the Isu, the birth of a child was announced by a midwife to the father, who would spread the word of his child's birth to the other male members of the *umunna*. The midwife would also inform the female members of the *umunna*, who greeted the birth of a healthy child with "shouts of joy."¹⁰⁰ These shouts of joy would indicate to the surrounding villagers that the birth had been a success. Anywhere from 4 to 12 days after the birth, a child, male or female, would undergo circumcision. In other areas of Igboland, this practice was carried out later in a female child's life, usually after she reached sexual maturity. However, evidence from Meek and Talbot suggests this was not the case for girls in nineteenth century Amaigbo Division.¹⁰¹

The naming ceremony was a critical practice among the Isu in the nineteenth century, as it was often the first time the child was presented to the wider family unit. Here Meek writes, "Generally on the twenty-fourth day after delivery the naming ceremony is performed. The brothers and sisters of the mother come to the husband's house, the former bringing calabashes of

⁹⁸ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 197-205; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁹⁹ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543-544; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 292-295; E.C. Osuala; Prof. O.N. Nkjoku, conversation with author, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, July 12, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 292; E.C. Osuala; O.N. Njoku.

¹⁰¹ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 293; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543-544.

palm wine and the latter a supply of yams."¹⁰² After an exchange of gifts between the mother's family and the father's family, the father would raise the child in the air four times before announcing the name to the child's extended family. Here we can see that, from very early in the child's life, his or her kinship network surrounded that child and celebrated alongside his parents.¹⁰³

Until the age of five, children of both genders were primarily under the care of their mothers. During this period, young girls were encouraged to begin fetching water in small calabashes while male children were given the responsibility of sweeping the compound.¹⁰⁴ From early on in their lives, Isu children were taught to respect their elders as they would their biological parents. Children in nineteenth century Umuduruoha addressed their grandfathers, grandmothers, elder aunts and elder uncles as "nna" or "nne," or "father" and "mother." This respect afforded to one's elders simultaneously reinforced the idea that the individual was seen as a child of the wider familial unit, not just his or her biological parents.¹⁰⁵

The society, "tended to encourage in young men [and women] the virtues of endurance, self-restraint, and respect for authority, as well as truthfulness and honesty in their dealings with one another."¹⁰⁶ Meek asserts that "The Ibo family is not a small group like ours; it entails on each member continual obligations towards a wider circle of relatives."¹⁰⁷ Upon reaching the age of five, male children would begin to occasionally accompany their fathers and male relatives to the fields, where they would begin to learn the agricultural methods vital to the well-being of an

¹⁰² Meek, *Law and Authority*, 295.

¹⁰³ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 296; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 544; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹⁰⁴ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 298; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹⁰⁵ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 299-300; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹⁰⁶ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 301.

¹⁰⁷ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 302.

Igbo family. Females, on the other hand, who had reached five years of age would often assist their older female relatives with domestic duties. These tasks could include watching over the younger children of the household, accompanying older girls to the stream to fetch water, or assisting in the preparation of meals.¹⁰⁸

Also around the age of five, male and female children entered into their "age grades."¹⁰⁹ Members of an age-grade would be communally recognized as the unit advanced in age and collectively reached milestones in their lives. Age-grades were permanent in Igboland, and as the unit got older, they undertook a wider array of responsibilities. When they took on these new responsibilities, the "father" of an age-grade would host a celebratory festival, where the children's achievements were communally recognized through a feast accompanied by celebratory dances.¹¹⁰

On an individual level, children were also praised communally for their personal successes in nineteenth century Amaigbo. A common activity among the young male children of Umuduruoha was hunting for small animals, such as lizards and birds, with a bow and arrow. If a boy was successful in this endeavor, he would be held up in front of the community in the *ilo*, or village square, where community members celebrated their accomplishments.¹¹¹

From my earliest discussions with Nigerian scholars¹¹² and my collaborators, they emphasized the importance of communal recognition of a child's achievements. This, they said,

¹⁰⁸ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 298-299; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543.

¹⁰⁹ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹¹⁰ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 543-544; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 303; E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹¹¹ E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; O.N. Njoku.

¹¹² Both Prof. E.C. Osuala and O.N. Njoku at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka informed me of the importance of these childrearing practices and suggested I follow this aspect of Umuduruoha society as a possible source for Jaja's later successes.

was a prominent feature of nineteenth century Umuduruoha and often used this practice to explain Jaja's ability to overcome his slave status and rise to the head of the Anna Pepple house.¹¹³

Religion in Umuduruoha

Umuduruoha, like other areas in nineteenth century Igboland, housed a pantheon of deities, all designed to serve a specific purpose. Unearthing the names and purposes of the specific deities that ruled the spiritual life of Umuduruoha prior to the coming of Christianity was a difficult task to undertake due to the overwhelming influence of Christianity in the community at present.¹¹⁴ Many Umuduruoha people today see a remembrance of these deities as tantamount to blasphemy.¹¹⁵ As such, the older members of the community who maintain memories of these deities are reluctant to discuss their places and roles in pre-Christian Umuduruoha and generally regard these deities as “pagan nonsense.”¹¹⁶ Younger members of the community seem simply to not remember these deities, as the older generations have actively sought to phase them out.

The people of pre-Christian Umuduruoha, like most other Igbo groups, believed in a single creator deity known as Chineke.¹¹⁷ This genderless creator God could not be communed with directly, but rather was propitiated through sacrifices and gifts to the lesser gods and goddesses of the land.¹¹⁸ It was the lesser deities that governed the day to day aspects of life in Umuduruoha, such as ensuring a prosperous agricultural yield, accepting gifts for safe passage

¹¹³ E.C. Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; O.N. Njoku.

¹¹⁴ Barnabas Emeh; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye. I cite these three interviews as I was told during both not to bother with investigating the deities of pre-Christian Umuduruoha.

¹¹⁵ Walter Ofonagoro; Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

¹¹⁶ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

¹¹⁷ This supreme God is known as Chukwu in other communities in Igboland.

¹¹⁸ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-30; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 92; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 956-958; Dan Ihenetu.

on one's journey over water or land, and meting out punishments for crimes and offenses committed against the laws of the land.¹¹⁹ The lesser deities of Igboland were subject to change from community to community, but Amaigbo people worshiped a set of deities across the territory, while also housing unique deities in each village.¹²⁰

Among the Isu, elements of the natural world held a special place in the Amaigbo pantheon. They held a position between Chineke and the lesser deities. In particular Anyanwu (the sun) was the deity most often called upon to bring good fortune and luck to those who worshipped at its shrine.¹²¹ Anyanwu also filled a role in the Isu pantheon as a god of creativity and dance. Meek claims that the Isu people would practice a new dance in the dark before performing the dance during the daytime, so as not to offend Anyanwu with an imperfect performance. Ala (the earth) was a female deity that protected the people of Amaigbo.¹²² Igwe (the sky), was a popular deity in other parts of Igboland, but played a particularly important role in the pantheon of the Amaigbo Isu. Igwe, among the Isu, had a shrine erected in the community of Umunoha, and criminals were often brought before this shrine to be tried for their offenses.¹²³

Amaigbo people worshipped a family of lesser deities prior to the introduction of Christianity in the early twentieth century as well.¹²⁴ The father of this family was Iyi Eke,¹²⁵ a

¹¹⁹ Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity and Ibo Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 34-36; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-30; Dan Ihenetu.

¹²⁰ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-30; Dan Ihenetu. While Amaigbo, as a political unit, did not form together until the twentieth century, evidence suggests that specific Amaigbo deities were shared by the groups that would become Amaigbo during the eighteenth century.

¹²¹ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 23; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-30.

¹²² Meek, *Law and Authority*, 23-24; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 963-964.

¹²³ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 23-24; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 964-965. While Meek suggests that Igwe plays a critical role as an adjudicator in the pantheon of the Isu of Owerri Division, Talbot suggests that Igwe was represented in the area by a rainbow, and that the rainbow was viewed by the people as a bad omen.

¹²⁴ It should be noted that the deities discussed in this section do not represent a comprehensive list of deities in pre-Christian Amaigbo. Moreover, the adoption and abandonment of various deities was dictated by the specific needs of a community at specific times. While the discussion in this section does little to identify when and why these deities arose, largely due to the fact that my best-positioned collaborators were unwilling to discuss such issues, it needs to be stated that this pantheon was not static and likely underwent many changes throughout the nineteenth century.

“spirit from the sea” whose earthly home was made at the Eke Ukwu market in Amaigbo Town proper. This deity, whose earthly manifestation was the African rock python,¹²⁶ guided and protected the people of Amaigbo. His wife, Lolo Iyi Eke, bore to him three sons, Ezeagu, Nwantike, and Ikesomba.¹²⁷ These three sons functioned to carry out the will of their parents in the mortal realm, inflicting swift punishments on those who had violated the laws of the land while their parents protected the righteous and just from bad fortune.¹²⁸ In addition to these deities of Amaigbo, the people of Umuduruoha worshipped deities unique to their village. In particular, the goddess Ezealaonyekwele held a special place in the pantheon of Umuduruoha, and provided protection to its citizens who traveled out of the community on trade expeditions.¹²⁹ This deity played an enormous role in Jaja's efforts to reconnect with Umuduruoha in the 1870s, an issue that will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Alongside the gods and goddesses specific to Amaigbo and Umuduruoha were deities from further flung locations outside of the Igbo territory that were incorporated into the Umuduruoha pantheon as the people deemed necessary. A notable example of this is the presence of Amadioha in Umuduruoha. Amadioha is the god of thunder and lightning who watches over

¹²⁵ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-31. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this character is in no way related to the physical landmark of *iyi eke* in Arochukwu, which is a cave where enslaved individuals were blindfolded and carried off towards the coast to be sold into slavery.

¹²⁶ Iyi Eke translates to “River Python” in the central Igbo dialect. This dovetails nicely with descriptions of the *Python Sebae Sebae*, or the African rock python, which is known to spend a good portion of its life in and around the water.

¹²⁷ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-31; Dan Ihenetu. There is only one published source on the subject of these deities and this particular source does not seem to be clear on the identities or functions of these gods and goddesses. In one paragraph, Ezeagu, Ikesomba, and Nwantike are listed as the sons of Iyi Eke and Lolo Iyi Eke. In the next paragraph, all three are said to be the sons of Akamigwo, whose name appears no where else in the text. It would seem that Akamigwo and Iyi Eke are two variant names of a singular deity, but the author did not specify this anywhere in the text.

¹²⁸ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-31.

¹²⁹ Walter Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba,” 155; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri. While Ofonagoro makes a brief reference to this deity in his article on Jaja's lineage, he was unwilling to discuss the deities of pre-Christian Amaigbo during our oral interviews. This deity is critical and well-remembered by the people of Umuduruoha however, as it was this deity's name that allowed Jaja to identify a trader in Opobo as an Umuduruoha man through his calling upon Ezealaonyekwele's name.

the waterways of southern and eastern Nigeria.¹³⁰ He is often depicted as being the husband or mate of the earth goddess Ani or Ala, whose influence spread in tandem with, and sometimes beyond, his own.¹³¹ As riverine trade networks grew in sophistication and scope over the course of the nineteenth century, the people of Umuduruoha adopted Amadioha as his influence spread throughout the central region of Igboland from the southern Igbo town of Ozuzu in current day Rivers State.¹³² Amadioha is one of the few gods or goddesses in Umuduruoha whose emergence in the community can be dated. My collaborators stated that Amadioha did not emerge as an important deity until Jaja's younger brother, Duruoshimiri, built a shrine to her in community at the end of the nineteenth century.¹³³

Shrines to the ancestors played a pivotal role in connecting the human and spiritual worlds in pre-Christian Umuduruoha. The development of Umuduruoha's shrines can be tied back to Duruohanenye's male lineage. As the progeny of Duruohanenye accepted headship, the eldest male of each successive generation held the title of *okpara* of Umuduruoha. This pseudo-dynastic lineage was enshrined into the religious practices of the community through the many important shrines to the ancestors. Ancestors in Igboland are individuals who have passed on from the human world and taken up residence in the spiritual world, where they would function to watch over and protect the future generations of their lineage.¹³⁴ These ancestors were propitiated by sacrifices of animals, libations, kola, yams, and other gifts at their shrines, which

¹³⁰ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 24-25; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 956; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Durusohimiri.

¹³¹ Dan Ihenetu; Herbert M. Cole, "Mbari is Life," *African Arts*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Spring, 1969), 8-10. As stated in Cole's article, as well as my conversations with Mr. Ihenetu, Ani was known as Ala, or "earth," in most areas of Imo State, including Amaigbo and Umuduruoha.

¹³² John Oriji, *Sacred Authority in Igbo Society* (Paris: Archives de Sciences sociales de religions, 1989), 115; Dan Ihenetu.

¹³³ Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Durusohimiri.

¹³⁴ Dan Ihenetu; C.N. Ubah, "The Supreme Being, Divinities and Ancestors in Igbo Traditional Religion: Evidence from Otanchara and Otanzu," *Africa: The Journal of International African Institute*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1982), 90-105; John C. McCall, "Rethinking Ancestors in Africa," *Africa: The Journal of International African Institute*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (1995), 256-270.

were erected in the deceased individual's ancestral homestead upon his passing.¹³⁵ When Duruohanenye died, his children erected a shrine to his memory as did Durumpitiri's children do for him upon his passing and so on. As of 2012, there was only a single shrine to which the people of the community still paid homage and that was the shrine of Okwara Ozurumba, Jaja's father. Shrines unrelated to individual village heads have some place in the community as well, such as the *adakunwa onyeukwu*, which was built to protect daughters marrying out of the community as they entered their adopted, marital homes elsewhere.¹³⁶

Trade and Economics in Nineteenth Century Umuduruoha

With its founding at the middle to end of the seventeenth century, Umuduruoha took shape during a period in which Igboland was inextricably tied to the Atlantic markets through the Bight of Biafra. Throughout the eighteenth century, slaving activities in the Bight of Biafra and the Igbo interior exploded in volume.¹³⁷ However, the nature of this connection needs to be grounded locally in the pre-existing trade networks forged by the Igbo and their neighbors in the eighteenth century in order to adequately ground Umuduruoha's place in the economic systems of southeastern Nigeria in the nineteenth century.

Before moving on to a discussion of trade networks, however, a comment needs to be made here on the movement of agricultural products to the markets. While Umuduruoha did not recognize a singular community head, nor were the non-titled villagers “subjects” of villagers of elevated titles, the wealth of titled-men was represented through their access to larger swaths of

¹³⁵ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 92-93; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-31; Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

¹³⁶ Dan Ihenetu.

¹³⁷ Njoku, “Ogaranya,” 27-31; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 118-120; Law, *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce*, 106-110; G. Ugo Nwokeji, “African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, (Jan. 2001); G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 53-81.

agricultural lands.¹³⁸ Moreover, titled-men were able to maintain many wives in their compounds. Women were the principal organizers of and traders in the markets in nineteenth century Igboland.¹³⁹ This increased access to arable land as well as the markets, through their many wives who operated therein, allowed titled-men greater access to wealth accumulation through trade with neighboring communities. Thus, despite the absence of a “centralized” authority to organize a formal hierarchy in economic activities, wealth distribution in the Umuduruoha and Amaigbo area was not a process that resulted in economic equity for all members of the community.¹⁴⁰

The market formed the base unit of regional Igbo economies. Each village-group maintained its own market for the buying and selling of everyday necessities within the community.¹⁴¹ Large markets, to which people from a larger geographic expanse would arrive to sell their goods, shifted from village to village based on the day of the week according to the traditional Igbo calendar. Eke, Orié, Afo, and Nkwo were the days that comprised a week in the traditional Igbo calendar. Certain towns would be designated to hold large markets for an entire region based on one of these days of the Igbo week. In these large markets, more exotic trade goods from long-distance trade centers would reach the Igbo hinterland in the nineteenth century.¹⁴² In Umuduruoha, the people held their small daily markets in Umukabia, traveling to Amaigbo town on Eke for the large market.¹⁴³ The markets represented the main social links that

¹³⁸ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 96-99.; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 555-558; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OWDIST 13/48/70, C.K. Meek, Intelligence Report on the Isu Group of Owerri Division, 1932; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

¹³⁹ Meek, *Law and Authority*, 96-99; Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 555-558; Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 109 & 144-148.

¹⁴⁰ S.J.S. Cookey, “Review,” *Trade without Rulers: Pre-colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria* by David Northrup, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1980), 364-369.

¹⁴¹ David Northrup, “The Growth of Trade among the Igbo before 1800,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1972), 222; Nwando Achebe, *Farmers Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 140 & 141; Birgit Müller, “Commodities as Currencies: The Integration of Overseas Trade into the Internal Trading Structure of the Igbo of South-East Nigeria,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, Vol. 25, Cahier 97 (1985), 58.

¹⁴² David Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-222; Muller, “Commodities as Currency,” 66-68.

¹⁴³ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 31-32; Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro.

drew the communities of Amaigbo together.¹⁴⁴ Two critical and related factors arose to impact the structure and nature of long distance trade in Amaigbo and Igboland in the middle of the eighteenth century. The first was the increase in demand for slaves in the coastal territories of southern Nigeria, and the second was the rise of the Aro Confederacy within Igboland.

The eighteenth century, by far, accounted for the bulk of the Atlantic trade in slaves. Nearly half of the entire Atlantic Slave Trade was carried out in the 1700s.¹⁴⁵ This marked increase in the demand for slaves in the Bight of Biafra impacted the Igbo hinterland deeply, as slave acquisitions in the Bight of Biafra moved from roughly 4,000 to 5,000 people a year in the beginning of the eighteenth century to around 17,000 people a year by the middle of eighteenth century.¹⁴⁶ While the trade in slaves represented a major facet of the southeastern Nigerian economy, the already established trade in agricultural products carried on alongside the growing movement of human beings.¹⁴⁷

In literature regarding the movement of slaves from the hinterland to the coast, there are two marked notions on how the patterns of slave movements related to pre-existing trade structures. While some historians posit that movements of slaves followed pre-existing trade routes established for the movements of other goods, others argue that the routes taken by slaves

¹⁴⁴ Muller, "Commodities as Currency," 58-60; Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 31 & 32; David Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 221-222; Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁴⁵ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, "Estimates", <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed December 7th, 2013); Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 252-274; David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1660-1807," in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 440-64.

¹⁴⁶ Richardson, "The British Empire," 440-445; Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 103-110; Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis," *The Journal of African History*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1982), 473-501.

¹⁴⁷ Cookey, "Review," 368 & 369; Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 221-222. It is suggested, though not adequately proven, that as the movement of palm oil supplanted the trade in slaves, waterway routes supplanted land routes previously used to move people through southern Nigeria. It is most likely that, for the movement of both people and agricultural goods, some combination of land and water routes would be necessary.

and their captors to the coast changed drastically during the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁸ Evidence from the Umuduruoha area suggests that the patterns of trade established prior to the increase in slave traffic remained the same along these routes to Niger Delta.¹⁴⁹ The centralized location of Umuduruoha and Amaigbo provided access to an easterly river route towards the Delta. A land/river route moved directly south out of the region to markets like Ohambele and Akwete. Finally, there was a western axis of trade, which in the middle to late parts of the eighteenth century ran through the heartland of the Arochukwu Confederacy.¹⁵⁰

Establishment of Arondizuogu



Figure 20: Igboland showing Umuduruoha and Arondizuogu

Umuduruoha's central location in Igboland gave the community both waterway and land access to the many critical markets that were situated between the Amaigbo Division and the Niger Delta. While there existed a healthy opportunity for trade for Amaigbo people in all directions, the increasing demand for slaves at the coast minimized the importance of previously

¹⁴⁸ Paul Lovejoy, Igor Kopytoff and Frederick Cooper, "Indigenous African Slavery [with Commentary]" in *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (Summer/Été 1979), 32; Apollos O. Nwauwa, "The Evolution of the Aro Confederacy in Southeastern Nigeria, 1690-1720: A Theoretical Synthesis of State Formation Process in Africa," *Anthropos*, Bd. 90, H. 4./6. (1995), 353-364; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 148-150; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 37-41.

¹⁴⁹ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁵⁰ Nwauwa, "The Evolution of the Aro Confederacy," 353-364.

used trade routes to the north, which facilitated trade with northern Igbo neighbors.¹⁵¹ To the west, the market town of Oguta, on the eastern bank of the Niger, was an important center for the movement of goods south down the Niger River to the Delta trading states of Nembe and Elem Kalabari.¹⁵² The Oguta market could be reached by land from Amaigbo, with the Niger and Orashi Rivers carrying trade further south from there.¹⁵³ The Imo River, directly to the south of Amaigbo and Umuduruoha, provided access to the marketplaces at Oloko, Akwete, Ikwerre and Aba. These markets supplied goods primarily to the Niger Delta state of Bonny and, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Opobo.¹⁵⁴ To the east, Amaigbo traders could carry their wares to the markets of Bende and Arochukwu, providing riverine access to the Eastern Delta trading state of Calabar.¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, by the end of the eighteenth century, the “long-distance” traders of Umuduruoha had little contact with non-Igbo neighbors outside of those from the Delta states. When moving outward from Umuduruoha and Amaigbo, there existed Igbo-held centers of trade in all directions which facilitated the movement of goods to further off, non-Igbo territories.¹⁵⁶

The trade in slaves dominated exports from the Bight of Biafra from roughly 1750 to the 1830s, when human cargo began to be supplanted by the international export of palm oil as part of the transition to legitimate trade.¹⁵⁷ To what extent the Umuduruoha people were engaged in supplying slaves to the southern markets from the 1750s to the 1830s is debatable. Local narratives hold that Umuduruoha's primary concern in the late eighteenth and nineteenth

¹⁵¹ Walter Ofonagoro; Dan Ihenetu; Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture*, 53-81; Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵² Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵³ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵⁴ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵⁵ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵⁶ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-22.

¹⁵⁷ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 41; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 9-10; Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa: Revised 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005), 236; G. Ugo Nwokeji, “African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, (Jan. 2001); Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade*, 53-81.

centuries was to mount barriers to prevent their own people from being enslaved by outside slave raiders.¹⁵⁸ However, the narratives also suggest that Umuduruoha traders were active in providing goods to the Delta states from at least the 1750s onwards, during a period when coastal markets were demanding massive amounts of human cargo.¹⁵⁹ It is highly unlikely that Amaigbo and Umuduruoha traders would have wholly avoided the trade in slaves or actively rejected the profits and resources to be had from such an endeavor. Yet, the oral narratives on this subject remain, understandably, silent.¹⁶⁰ While Umuduruoha's traders likely engaged in slave trading alongside trade in other goods between 1750 and 1830, the impact of their activities seemed to have little effect on the overall flow of Igbo people towards the Delta states when juxtaposed to other Igbo communities of the period.

Fighting the Slave Trade¹⁶¹

The Aro settlement of Arondizuogu was established in the middle eighteenth century and played a large role in the procurement of slaves in Amaigbo Division.¹⁶² Prior to the settlement of this Aro colony, the Amaigbo remained well insulated from the more detrimental aspects of Aro growth. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Amaigbo people largely benefited

¹⁵⁸ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Barnabas Emeh; For more on defensive mechanisms to prevent enslavement, see Sylviane Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice, Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003).

¹⁵⁹ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 221-22.

¹⁶⁰ Sandra E. Greene, "Whispers and Silences: Explorations in African Oral History," *Africa Today*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Oral Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge (Autumn - Winter, 2003), 42; Ralph Austen, "The Slave Trade as History and Memory: Confrontations of Slaving Voyage Documents and Communal Traditions," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 58(1), 229-244; Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 439.

The reasons that explain communal silences on the subject of slavery are numerous. Often, slaves and slaves descendants in Igboland are stigmatized by the wider society, making them unwilling to speak about their own pasts. Since the trade in slaves has been cast and recast as one of the worst events in human history, this makes collaborators whose ancestors were engaged in slave trading equally unwilling to discuss the subject as well.

¹⁶¹ I have borrowed this subtitle from the title of Sylviane Diouf's book about West African methods of resisting slave-raiding activities, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies*.

¹⁶² R.O. Igwegbe, *The Original History of Arondizuogu from 1635 to 1960* (Aba: International Press, 1962), 10-12; Muller, "Commodities as Currency," 66-67.

from the well-articulated patterns of trade established by the Aro.¹⁶³ After Arondizuogu's establishment, the villages of Amaigbo Division were more frequently subjected to the slave-taking activities in the area.¹⁶⁴ Thus, it appears as though the defense mechanisms employed to avoid the activities of slavers that developed in Umuduruoha largely grew out of the need for the community to defend itself from Arondizuogu operatives in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁵ The increase of slave raids in the area, coinciding with increasing demands for slave labor at the coast around the turn of the nineteenth century, precipitated the events that saw Jaja snatched from his home and family in Amaigbo in the 1830s.

“Nations Fear Me”

Having provided a rudimentary backdrop of Umuduruoha's history and interaction with her neighbors, we must now turn our attention to a discussion of Jaja's family history, his birth and early childhood, and his seizure from the Umuduruoha community in the nineteenth century. As stated previously, Jaja's family line, according to the narratives of Umuduruoha's people, extends back to the founding father of the village, Duruohanenye. The patrilineal pattern of descent in this area of Igboland drastically colors the information available to us about Jaja's family history.¹⁶⁶ Local historians and community members have traced Jaja's lineage back to Umuduruoha's founding, strictly citing the male members of his family, with no mention of the women who factored into this lineage. While oral narratives and the work of S.A. Duru, H.O.

¹⁶³ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, “The Growth of Trade,” 221-222; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁶⁴ Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa; Igwebe, *The Original History*, 13-14; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 133-134; Cooley, “Review,” 366. It should be noted here that Northrup drastically understates the importance of the Aro in the facilitation of trade in the Igbo interior. This view is countered in Cooley's review of his work. Moreover, Northrup claims that an oracle was established at Arondizuogu, but there seems little supporting evidence to bolster this theory.

¹⁶⁵ I will address the specific method Umuduruoha took to defend itself from these operatives below.

¹⁶⁶ In retracing Jaja's lineage to the founding of Umuduruoha, which spans six generations, only the names of Jaja's mother, his adoptive mother, and his grandmother have come to the fore.

Ohaya and Walter Ofonagoro have helped to identify the names of some female members of Jaja's immediate family, these sources fail to illuminate the larger role played by women in Umuduruoha and Jaja's family.

The primary source for reconstructing Jaja's family history is drawn from a locally-produced genealogical table that was circulating in Umuduruoha when I was conducting oral interviews there in 2012. Nearly all of my collaborators had a copy of this genealogical table and referred to it repeatedly in the course of our discussions. It is unclear who drafted this document or when it originated.¹⁶⁷ The dates of birth and death applied to the individuals listed in the table are speculative at best and have not been corroborated by any other source outside of the oral narratives I myself collected in 2012. However, this is the only source of its kind that provides dates for the lives of these individuals, so I have decided to present them here, as they appear in the table. I would like to point out here that it is encouraging that the dates appearing on the genealogical table for Jaja, Duruoshimiri and Ezeala have synced up accurately with other, more certain, sources.

It is clear that Duruohanenye had at least one son who survived to adulthood, Durumpitiri.¹⁶⁸ No specific dates are given for Durumpitiri's birth and death, but estimating a roughly twenty year gap between fathers and sons would suggest that Durumpitiri would have been born in the latter half of the seventeenth century (sometime between 1670-1690). Durumpitiri's wives bore him five sons. From oldest to youngest, they were Nwaka, Ezealaduru, Okwarannaku, Duruanyanwu, and Ezealagwu. Following the same pattern of estimation, the

¹⁶⁷ More likely than not, this genealogical table was produced by S.A. Duru in the course of his writing a local history, the manuscript of which has been lost. However, in the absence of concrete evidence to reinforce this claim, I have chosen to label the document's author and date as "unknown."

¹⁶⁸ Duruohanenye likely had many sons, however, all but Durumpitiri have been lost history. Given the pattern of passing lineage authority to the eldest surviving male, which would occur upon the father's death, it is safe to assume that Durumpitiri was the eldest of Duruohanenye's sons upon the latter's death.

males in this generation of Jaja's family would have been born some time between 1690 and 1710. It is clear, from the fact that the Okwarannaku took over as the head of the lineage upon his father's passing, that his older brothers Nwaka and Ezealaduru had either died young, or at least before their father had passed, or had shown some inherent character defect that prevented them from taking over the *okpara* title of the lineage.¹⁶⁹ Okwarannaku's sons, Okwaraeke and Okwaraezugha were born in the late 1720s and early 1730s. We can look to Walter Ofonagoro's work in tracing Jaja's lineage, as his article gives specific dates for the birth and death of Okwaraeke. Working from oral narratives collected in the 1970s, Ofonagoro states that Okwaraeke was born in 1728 and lived until 1793.¹⁷⁰ As the elder brother upon Okwarannaku's passing, Okwaraeke, took the *okpara* title from his father and held this position of political authority in Umuduruoha as the community witnessed increased slave-raids and the establishment of Arondizuogu to west.¹⁷¹

Okwaraeke's male children, Onwubuariri, Nwanchefu, Okwara Ozurumba, Nsofo, Uzomaka and Okwaraebo represent the first generation of males in Jaja's lineage about whom we can speak in some depth. While dates are not given for birth and death of every male child, Nwanchefu's birth in 1762 suggests that his elder brother, Onwubuariri, was born no later than 1760. The third of Okwaraeke's sons, Okwara Ozurumba, was born in 1765.¹⁷² There are no dates given for the births of Nsofo, Uzomaka or Okwaraebo, but it is safe to assume these men were

¹⁶⁹ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table"; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba", 153-154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁷⁰ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 153-154. The dates of Okwaraeke's birth and death are not recorded in the genealogical table, nor did they feature in the oral narratives collected for this study.

¹⁷¹ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table," Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba", 153; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Igwebe, *The Original History*, 10-12.

¹⁷² Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table"; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba," 153-154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

born no later than 1780. From this generation, it is possible to glean more detailed stories from the oral narratives surrounding Jaja's father Okwara Ozurumba.

Okwara Ozurumba's older brothers were in line to take the *okpara*-ship from their father upon his passing. However, Onwubuariri died at a rather young age, before his father's death, and the *okpara*-ship passed to Nwanchefu. Nwanchefu held the *okpara*-ship of Duruohanenye's lineage until his death in 1823.¹⁷³ By this time, Okwara Ozurumba had become a well-respected community figure in his own right. He possessed fertile agricultural lands, maintained a large labor force of both free and enslaved individuals, and had proven himself a great warrior by the time of his brother's passing.¹⁷⁴ He had, by 1823, achieved the title of *ozo nwedo* and was, in Umuduruoha, second only to his brother Nwanchefu, who also held the esteemed *ozo nwedo* title. When Nwanchefu died at the age of sixty-one, Okwara Ozurumba's took over as the lineage head at the age of 58.¹⁷⁵

Okwara Ozurumba is remembered as a warlord of sorts. He was respected in battle¹⁷⁶ and had achieved great victories in armed conflicts during his life.¹⁷⁷ Pressures related to the rise of slave trading activities in the region and sporadic armed conflicts broke out with neighboring communities during Okwara Ozurumba's time as *okpara*. Okwara Ozurumba sought to consolidate the four lineages that comprised Umuduruoha into one unified village, with an eye

¹⁷³ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table"; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba," 153-154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

¹⁷⁴ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table"; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba," 153-154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku.

¹⁷⁵ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table"; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba," 153-154

¹⁷⁶ Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu*, 29-30. The only battle remembered from the time of Okwara Ozurumba was a battle between select Amaigbo villages and a neighboring village-group of Amauzari, to the south of Amaigbo; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

¹⁷⁷ Again, this was the information passed to me by many collaborators. However, the only evidence of armed conflict I could come across was the skirmish with Amauzari. It is possible that establishment of a standing military has impacted Umuduruoha's collective memories of Okwara Ozurumba's prowess in battle.

towards raising a military.¹⁷⁸ Ozurumba's bravery on the battlefield coupled with his great wealth earned him a reputation as a leader and allowed him to create a more centralized form of authority in the community than had existed under past *okpara*-ships. Upon swearing allegiance to this new and unified Umuduruoha, the lineage heads of the nine clans also had to commit their sons to a mandatory two-year service period in Ozurumba's military.¹⁷⁹ When considering this event, which occurred in the mid-1820s, it is important to turn an eye to wider regional events. As mentioned earlier, increased demands for slaves at the Atlantic coast, when placed against the backdrop of the establishment and growth of the Aro's satellite state of Arondizuogu to the west of Amaigbo, created a situation in which assuring a standing military force in Umuduruoha could be seen as reactionary to the encroaching dangers rising up around Umuduruoha. It has been well established that communities in West Africa actively sought to arm and defend themselves from the rising threat of military raids for the purpose of acquiring slaves.¹⁸⁰ Thus, Ozurumba's push to create a large and reliable military force in the community could function as evidence that slaving activities in and around Umuduruoha were becoming more aggressive, fueling the need for communities to raise equally vigorous defenses.¹⁸¹

In addition to his great military strength and expansive wealth through agriculture and trade, Ozurumba was also said to have taken many wives.¹⁸² These wives bore Ozurumba five

¹⁷⁸ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa.

¹⁷⁹ Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

¹⁸⁰ See Sylviane Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*; Hawthorne, *Planting Rice, Harvesting Slaves*. These authors speak to a common method of repelling slave-raiders in West Africa through force and armament. It would seem that this was the preferred tactic to defend against slaving activities in Umuduruoha.

¹⁸¹ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye. This possibility becomes even more likely when paired with the fact that Umuduruoha people do not recall any specific internal conflicts within Amaigbo for which Umuduruoha would need to arm itself.

¹⁸² The exact number of Ozurumba's wives has been lost over time.

male children.¹⁸³ The eldest, Ekworompia, lived from 1794 to 1835. The second male child was Okwaraonyejesi, who lived from 1803 to 1880. Okwara Ozurumba's third male child was born in 1821 and given the name Mbanaso, which translates to “nations will fear me.”¹⁸⁴ This child would grow to become the man history now knows as King Jaja of Opobo. Ozurumba's wives gave birth to two more male sons before his death in 1834. Uzoho, born in 1825, would later become known by his titled-name Duruoshimiri. The youngest male child of Ozurumba was Ezeala, who was born a year later in 1826. On the subject of Jaja's brothers, Walter Ofonagoro writes,

In his [Jaja's] own generation, three of his five brothers were titled men. His older brother, Okwaraonyejesi, was reputed to have taken the highest ozo title in Amaigbo. His brother, Duruoshimiri not only took the title himself, but also went through the expense of investing the ozo title on his favourite iroko tree, which stood in the public square of Umuduruoha as his own personal emblem. His youngest brother, Ezeala, was also a titled man.¹⁸⁵

Little is remembered about Jaja's mother, Uru,¹⁸⁶ other than that she died when he was just nine years old. Duruoshimiri's mother, Ahoro, took Jaja into her home and raised the boy upon the passing of his mother. Jaja's paternal grandmother, Lolo Ojiure of Obodoukwu, was also said to have played a large role in raising her grandsons and influenced them deeply at a young age.¹⁸⁷

The death of Jaja's mother at such a young age prevents an analysis of the influence she likely had on Jaja during his early years,¹⁸⁸ but does help to explain the incredibly close bond between Jaja and his brother, Uzoho, later known as Duruoshimiri. When looking at the genealogical table of Jaja's paternal lineage, the large gap in age between Okwaraonyejesi and

¹⁸³ Ozurumba likely had many daughters as well. The same can be said of every generation of Jaja's family. Unfortunately, the male-centric nature of Umuduruoha's history has obscured the names and deeds of these women.

¹⁸⁴ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku; E.C Osuala.

¹⁸⁵ Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba,” 154.

¹⁸⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 25.

¹⁸⁷ Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba,” 154.

¹⁸⁸ When I asked my collaborators for details about Uru, they said they could not recall anything about her.

Jaja is evident. In Umuduruoha, as in other areas of Igboland, children are generally grouped into age grades, which are units in the community in which individuals are organized within a four to five year age range to achieve common tasks.¹⁸⁹ This suggests that Jaja and Duruoshimiri would have been in the same age grade and, as such, would have shared the experiences of childhood together as brothers and age mates. This idea is bolstered by the oral narratives in Umuduruoha. Jaja and Duruoshimiri were described as being nearly inseparable in their youth, often playing together by the large iroko tree outside of Ozurumba's compound.¹⁹⁰

Separating the Fact from the Fiction: Jaja's Birth, Childhood, and Capture

There are some misleading accounts of Jaja's birth, early childhood, and movement out of Umuduruoha that need to be addressed here. In widely-published literature about Jaja, little is said of his childhood and forced migration out of Umuduruoha.¹⁹¹ Since few scholars have directed their attention to the narratives held in Umuduruoha, Jaja's capture is usually attributed to Aro slavers, or some other unknown party, operating in the area.¹⁹² The Aro have often been portrayed as the *de facto* culprits when an individual is taken into slavery in Igboland and no concrete account of how that individual came into slavery has been left. However, if we turn to lesser-known publications, it becomes clear that local traditions from villages around Umuduruoha offer explanations for Jaja's movement out of the community that are unrelated to the Aro. First, Elizabeth Isichei claims, based on narratives collected from a Chief F.U. Anyiam

¹⁸⁹ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table;" Onwuejeogwu, "The Genesis, Diffusion, Structure and Significance of Ozo Title in Igbo Land," *Paideuma*, Bd. 25 (1979).

130 & 131; M.A. Onwuejeogwu, *Political Organisation of Nri*. (Unpublished M. Phil, thesis. London University, 1974); Cooley, *King Jaja*, 26. Onwuejeogwu's work, here, clarifies the role and leadership patterns associated with age grades that spread from the Nri axis to other locales in Igboland.

¹⁹⁰ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku; E.C Osuala.

¹⁹¹ Isichei, *A History of the Igbo*; Dike, *Trade and Politics*; Cooley, *King Jaja*.

¹⁹² Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 8-10 & 27-28; Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 98-100.

in Nkwerre, that,

The man whom history knows as Jaja (his full name was Jubo Jugboha) was an Nkwerre man, born in Amaigbo village group, in what was later Orlu Division, in c. 1821. He was sold into slavery for apparently cutting his top teeth first (a phenomenon which Igbo communities regarded as non-normal, and therefore sinister).¹⁹³

Isichei's work has contributed to a widely-spread myth about Jaja that, by the time of Isichei's publication, had long been discredited by the work of Cookey and Dike.¹⁹⁴ Jaja's family had no apparent connections to Nkwerre before or during his lifetime.¹⁹⁵ Some oral narratives in Umuduruoha claim he had an aunt living in that community, but it is likely that these collaborators were, in fact, referring to Jaja's niece, Nwauruozo, rather than his aunt.¹⁹⁶

Nwauruozo was one of Duruoshimiri's daughters and had married into Umunaubo, Nkwerre in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, neither Isichei nor her source, Anyiam,¹⁹⁷ claim to have collected this information about Jaja from Nwauruozo.¹⁹⁸ Ofonagoro's article on the ancestry of King Jaja addresses this particular myth and debunks the bases of this account as nonsensical. The first glaring oversight in Isichei's work is her conflation of Nkwerre and Amaigbo. These are two distinct and unrelated villages. They are in the same region, roughly 20 miles apart, but share no other bonds beyond their geographic proximity. Furthermore, Nkwerre is not part of Amaigbo. Further, a child who "cut his upper teeth first" would, much like twins born in pre-colonial Igboland,¹⁹⁹ be cast into the *ikpa*, or "evil bush." Jaja would not have lived

¹⁹³ Isichei, *A History of the Igbo*, 98.

¹⁹⁴ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 25; Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 151-152.

¹⁹⁵ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 152; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹⁹⁶ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 152.

¹⁹⁷ Here, I am not saying that Isichei was alive during the nineteenth century, but that Nwauruozo lived well into the twentieth century. If a reliable source of information regarding Jaja's seizure were to exist in Nkwerre, it would surely have been Nwauruozo. However, Isichei does not claim Nwauruozo as this source. Furthermore, Isichei's work was published after Cookey and Dike had published their accounts of Jaja's life that, accurately, traced his heritage back to Umuduruoha.

¹⁹⁸ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 152.

¹⁹⁹ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba", 152.

for over a decade in his father's home if he were seen as an abomination or abnormality and his mother would, more often than not, choose to follow her child, which meant ostracization for her as well.²⁰⁰ There is some evidence which argues that, as the slave trade progressed, mothers who were deemed to have committed an abomination through the birth of “abnormal” children would have been sold into slavery,²⁰¹ but this does not explain how Uru would have lived another nine years in the community, nor does it account for Jaja remaining in the community until the 1830s.

While collecting oral narratives in Amaigbo, some collaborators have pointed to Duruoshimiri's mother as the catalyst for Jaja being sold off into slavery, although this is by far the least likely possibility.²⁰² By all accounts, Jaja was a precocious child at best and a belligerent or troublesome child at worst. In his younger years, it was said that Jaja would often pick fights with other children, take things that did not belong to him and generally cause disorder in the town when given the opportunity.²⁰³ As such, some have posited that Jaja's adoptive mother, Ahoro, convinced Okwara Ozurumba to sell his child off into slavery, as Jaja's behavior reflected poorly on the community leader, while others claim she simply took matters into her own hands and sold Jaja into slavery behind his father's back.²⁰⁴ This version of events, however, does not seem to correspond with what is known in Umuduruoha about Jaja's relationship with his brother Duruoshimiri and his adoptive mother Ahoro. The most coherent accounts of Jaja's childhood

²⁰⁰ Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba”, 152.

²⁰¹ Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 726; Meek, *Law and Authority*, 291-292. Both Meek and Talbot point out that, among the Isu, there were ritual sacrifices (usually of chickens) in place to avoid the stigmatization of the mother who gave birth to twins or a child who cut his or her upper teeth first. It would appear that by the twentieth century, at least in Amaigbo Division, that the sale and murder of “abnormal” children and their mothers had largely been done away with.

²⁰² Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Mark and Patrick Ginikauwa.

²⁰³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183; Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Prince Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselm Obijiaku; E.C Osuala. It should be noted here that Dike, when speaking to Jaja's stubbornness and issues with authority figures, points to how his Bonny masters viewed the young boy's behavior.

²⁰⁴ Barnabas Emeh; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Mrs. Ngozi Ochiagha, interview with author, digital-recording, Enugu, Enugu State, December 12th, 2011; Joseph Abaekpe, interview by Author, Nsukka, Enugu State, July 14, 2010.

point to Ahoro taking Jaja into her home and loving him as if he were her own biological child. These accounts also speak to Jaja and Duruoshimiri being the best of friends. It is unlikely, given these accounts, that Ahoro would endeavor to sell Jaja into the slave networks of southern Nigeria, depriving her son of his best friend, her husband of his beloved son, and herself of a child she had chosen to protect and raise.²⁰⁵ Moreover, Jaja's bond with Duruoshimiri survived four decades of Jaja's absence from the community and was rekindled at the first opportunity in 1880s, with Jaja sending an Umuduruoha trader back to the village to identify and send word to his beloved brother.²⁰⁶ This would suggest that Jaja held no ill-will towards Duruoshimiri, which, given the circumstances, would not have been the case had Duruoshimiri's mother sold Jaja out of the community.

As stated above, many scholars simply attributed Jaja's seizure from Umuduruoha and sale into slavery as the actions of the oft-cited Aro slave traders. This narrative suggests that Jaja was playing too far outside his father's compound in the 1830s when he was suddenly kidnapped and whisked away from Amaigbo by unknown Aro actors.²⁰⁷ Given the emphasis in historical literature on Aro slave-acquisitions during this time period, the narrative is not far-fetched nor is it detailed enough to show any serious inconsistencies with what is known about Jaja's early life. However, there are a few points to this story that raise red flags. The first question raised would be how these Aro slave raiders (presumably from Arondizuogu) would have bypassed town security? By the time of Jaja's seizure in 1835, Ozurumba had already secured a standing military force in Umuduruoha ostensibly to protect against this type of incident.²⁰⁸ Moreover,

²⁰⁵ Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Prince Richard Duruoshimiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku; E.C Osuala.

²⁰⁶ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154 & 155; Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu; Prince Richard Duruoshimiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku; E.C Osuala.

²⁰⁷ E.C. Osuala; Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

²⁰⁸ Dan Ihenetu; Mark and Patrick Ginikanwa; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

Okwara Ozurumba's compound lies in the center of Umuduruoha and not at the outskirts of the town. This would mean that the slave raiders would have needed to access central Umuduruoha, bypassing a number of other compounds and children on the way in order to do so. This narrative also begs the question as to why Jaja alone was taken? By all accounts, Jaja and Duruoshimiri were inseparable. Their youngest brother, Ezeala, was also close to Jaja and Duruoshimiri in age and would have frequently played with his brothers in the community. Furthermore, the game that Jaja was said to be playing was “slave-raiders,” which, as it was explained to me, was a game much like hide-and-seek.²⁰⁹ This game required more than one child, making it very suspect that Jaja would have been the only child taken in the raid by the external Aro slavers. Even if the other children avoided capture, they would have likely seen Jaja being taken away by his captors. It would seem that the scholars willing to attribute Jaja's capture and sale into slavery to the Aro would be doing so based on a very generalized knowledge of larger trends throughout Igboland, rather than an acute understanding of the inner-workings of Umuduruoha. This brings us to the most likely and prevalent narrative regarding Jaja's entrance into slavery.

By 1833, Okwara Ozurumba had brought the *umunna* of Umuduruoha together under his headship. In doing so, he demanded military service from the sons of each lineage. It was apparently this consolidation of power and demand for service that precipitated Jaja's capture. In the process of placing himself at the center of Umuduruoha's political life, Okwara Ozurumba had made enemies within the community. It would seem that his newly established authority sparked jealousy in some segments of Umuduruoha. However, Ozurumba died in 1834, passing the *okpara* honor on to his son Okwaraonyejesi. In the wake of Ozurumba's death, his enemies had conspired and decided to take their revenge by striking at his family. Thus, the narrative states, Jaja was seized by these colluding community members and sold away to slave traders

²⁰⁹ E.C Osuala; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro.

traveling from east to west, through the Amaigbo region, towards the market town of Oguta.²¹⁰

Jaja's disappearance was not taken lightly by his family. Okwaraonyejesi²¹¹ sent representatives of the community to all the surrounding markets where slaves were sold in an effort to find his sibling. He even sent representatives to the *ibini ukpabi* oracle in Arochukwu in an effort to ascertain the whereabouts of his younger brother. Okwaraonyejesi's efforts to track down his brother and those who had purchased him were not successful and, in time, the family had given up hope of finding the boy again. However, some time later, Umuduruoha traders returned from the Oguta marketplace carrying word that they had seen Ozurumba's son, Mbanaso, for sale in the slave markets in that town.²¹² The family rallied in an effort to have him ransomed, but their efforts were unsuccessful as his captors feared the backlash from the powerful Ozurumba family. If those who had sold Jaja to the traveling traders had stepped forward to reclaim him, even Jaja's return would not have saved them from retribution. Here, Ofonagoro writes, "Effort to have him ransomed failed because his captors were afraid of reprisals and those to whom he had [been] sold did not wish to have to answer uncomfortable questions as to how they came to gain possession of him."²¹³ It was by way of these events that Jaja would come to be a member of the Anna Pepple house in the Niger Delta state of Bonny. It was here that Jaja would forge his career and legacy.

I would now like to briefly turn to the possible routes that slaves in Amaigbo, including Jaja, would have taken towards the Niger Delta trading states. While it is nearly certain that Jaja's was kidnapped by his father's enemies and sold in the markets of Oguta, other narratives

²¹⁰ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154 & 155; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

²¹¹ Richard Duruoshmiri and Rev. Anselem Obijiaku; E.C Osuala. In some of the oral narratives I encountered, my collaborators have said that Jaja's father was still alive at the time of this incident and it was Okwara Ozurumba, not Okwaraonyejesi, that sought, unsuccessfully, to return his son to his home.

²¹² Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dan Ihenetu.

²¹³ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154.

highlight the potential routes of slavery out of the community and shed light on Amaigbo's place within the slave trading networks of southern Nigeria.

Nineteenth Century Slave Routes: Jaja's Internal Passage

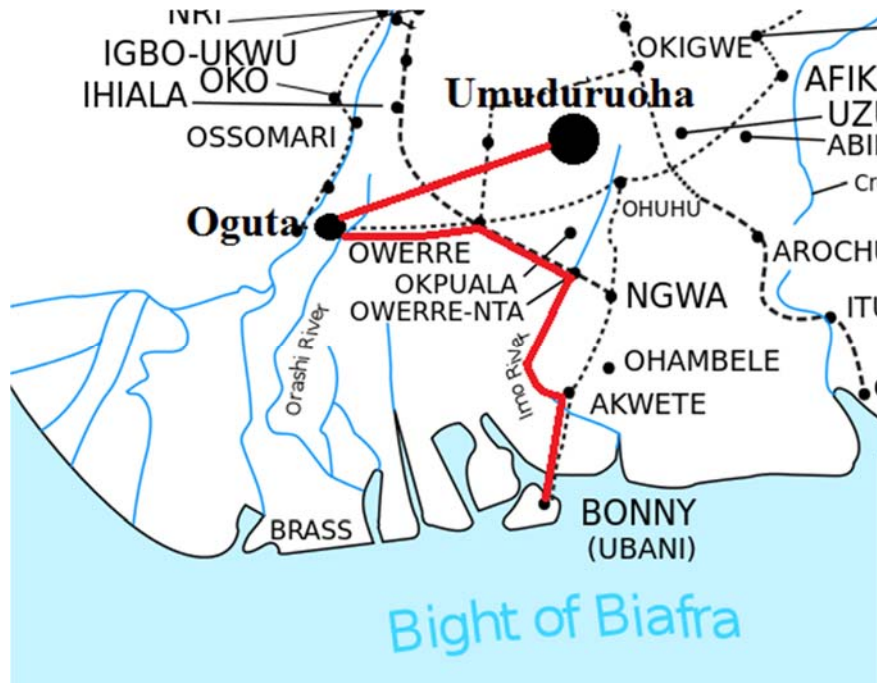


Figure 21: Jaja's Route to Bonny²¹⁴

The slave networks of southeastern Nigeria followed pre-existing patterns of trade, building and expanding upon already existing marketplaces in the region.²¹⁵ Umuduruoha-based sources insist that Jaja was marched westward, over land, to the marketplace at Oguta, a town on the southern end of Oguta Lake, which feeds into the Niger River. Oguta's position along the banks of the Niger and Orashi Rivers allowed for easy access by water, making the market a popular hub for the sale and purchase of slaves in the Igbo interior.²¹⁶ Jaja was then carried back

²¹⁴ Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*. The graphic above illustrates possible paths taken by those enslaved in Amaigbo and marched to the coastal city-states.

²¹⁵ Lovejoy, Kopytoff and Cooper, "Indigenous African Slavery," 353-364; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 148-150; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 37-41.

²¹⁶ "Notes on the Ancestry of Okwara Ozurumba," 153 & 154; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dan Ihenetu.

on a southeastern land path to the market town of Akwete, which rested firmly within Bonny's sphere of influence. In Oguta, Jaja was said to have been purchased by a trader named Ike Inyama, who carried Jaja to Akwete and sold him to a Bonny trader in the house of Opubo named Odiari, trading on behalf of his king, before being transported along the final bend of the Imo River south to his eventual home in Bonny.²¹⁷

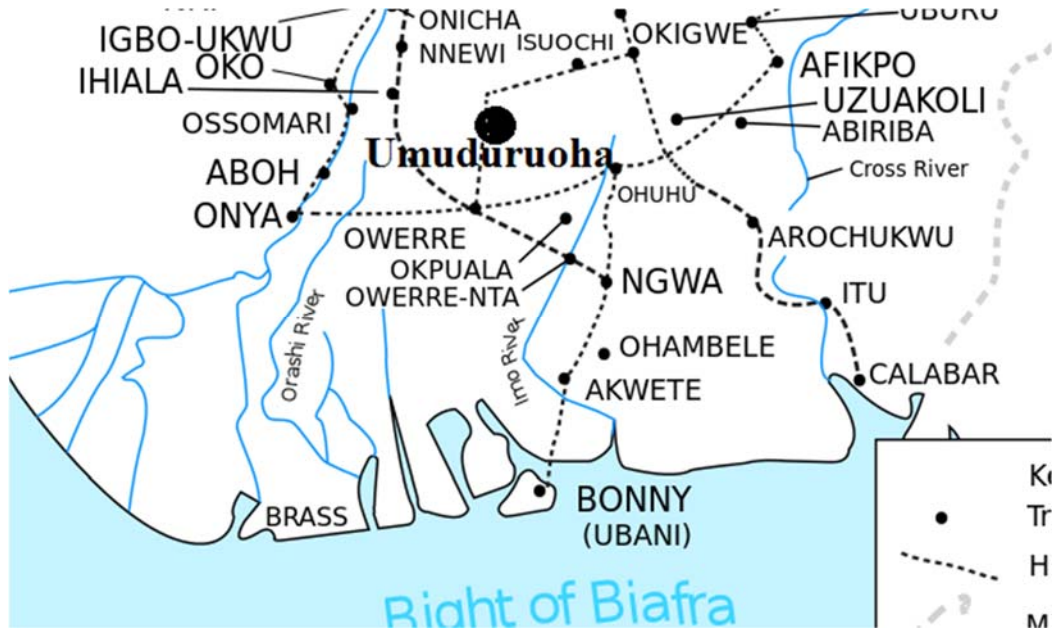


Figure 22: Southern Slave Trade Routes of Nineteenth Century Igboland

Jaja's path to the Delta took some unexpected and circuitous turns. This is likely explained by his captors' interests in avoiding detection by Jaja's family, who were attempting to ransom him from the marketplace in Oguta.²¹⁸ However, other slaves acquired in the Amaigbo area of the Igbo hinterland likely took a route that moved directly south, by land, through Oloko

²¹⁷ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 28. Oral narratives and popular dramatizations of Jaja's life from the Niger Delta make specific references to Jaja being carried by canoe down the Imo River to reach Bonny. This would indicate that he did not take the land path south from Akwete to the mainland port within Bonny's sphere of influence before reaching the island community off the southern coast.

²¹⁸ Ofonagoro, "Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba," 154; From the map above, it is clear that Jaja's path to Bonny was not direct. If the traders who acquired Jaja had plans to sell him to Bonny traders in the first place, they could have taken a direct southerly route through Oloko and Akwete to sell him. However, his departure from Oguta east and south towards Akwete may suggest that those who possessed Jaja were interested in selling him to the first available buyer to avoid detection by Jaja's family. This is in no way certain, nor did my sources address this subject. It is simply a theory to explain Jaja's unorthodox route to Bonny.

to the market town in Akwete. This market fell squarely within Bonny's sphere of influence and represents the most direct path to enslavement in to the city-state, bypassing the westerly routes that were firmly within the territory controlled by the Kalabari and Brass.²¹⁹ Akwete was a site where Bonny traders would come into direct contact with their hinterland business partners.²²⁰ This is by the far the most likely possibility accounting for how the bulk of Amaigbo slaves were carried to their new home in the Niger Delta city-state of Bonny.

If, in fact, an individual fell into the hands of traders from Arochukwu moving from the west to the east, it is plausible that they would move that individual through the markets at Ohuhu or Bende on the way to Arochukwu proper.²²¹ Here, an enslaved individual would have been brought to the priests of *Ibini Ukpabi*. After some divination determining that the individual should be sold into slavery, he or she would have been moved southeast to the ancient city-state of Old Calabar.²²² One final path to enslavement in the Delta that needs to be mentioned here is the route south, by river, out of Oguta, carrying trade to the Nembe city-state of Brass. The Orashi River provided direct access south from the western fringes of Igboland to the bustling slave markets of the Western Delta.²²³

The Aro's economic and religious influence over the Igbo hinterland translated into a well-articulated system of trade connections in the Delta region and adjacent areas by the nineteenth century. As such, the hinterland slave traders who were working in the western areas of Igboland, near the Niger River, would have carried their trade to Kalabari or Nembe

²¹⁹ Lovejoy, Kopytoff and Cooper, "Indigenous African Slavery," 353-364; Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*, 148-150; Cookey, "Review," 368.

²²⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 28; Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148.

²²¹ Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 217; Muller, "Commodities as Currency," 66-68

²²² Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 144-148; K.O. Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 38-40; Cookey, "Review," 367-368.

²²³ Muller, "Commodities as Currency," 66-67; Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 144-148; Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 217

controlled markets.²²⁴ Those working in the central region of Igboland had trade connections to Bonny directly south, as discussed above. The Aro dominated groups operating in the far east of Igboland, around the Cross River, carried on their trade almost exclusively with Old Calabar. Therefore, regardless of where a hinterland slave trader was operating in Igboland, he was connected with a geographically close marketplace that gave him access to the powerful city-states of the Delta.

Conclusion

This outline of Umuduruoha's history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries highlights the growth of outside influences impacting Umuduruoha that precipitated Jaja's entrance into the slave networks of southern Nigeria. Moreover, the events described in this chapter necessarily locate the place of Jaja's family in the history of Umuduruoha. While Jaja is best known for exploits as the *amanyanabo* of Opobo in the Niger Delta during the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is important to understand that he was but one of many individuals entering the Delta from Amaigbo through slavery. Understanding the wider movement of people from north to south along the trade routes of Igboland and the Niger Delta helps to explain the social circumstances that faced Jaja upon his arrival in the Delta state of Bonny, specifically in clarifying how the masses of Igbo slaves were able to negotiate the terms of their enslavement upon arriving in the Delta.

The next chapter describes how the Delta trading-state of Bonny changed leading up to the nineteenth century. It also examines how Igbo slaves impacted the political and social institutions of the Delta states in which they were enslaved, using Jaja's own experience as a case study to describe the circumstances which faced a much larger group of people. Finally, the next

²²⁴ Northrup, "The Growth of Trade," 216-218; K.O. Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 38-40; Muller, "Commodities as Currency," 66-67.

chapter details how Jaja was able to break the bonds of slavery in Bonny and reconnect with his natal kinship network by capitalizing on shifts in Bonny's prevailing social institutions during the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER THREE- BECOMING JAJA: BONNY AND THE CIVIL WAR

Introduction: What's in a Name?

“His name was not always... Jaja.”¹ These words, uttered by my collaborator Dan Ihenetu, convey a powerful truth. Jaja was not born Jaja. He became Jaja. His actions during his period of enslavement in the Niger Delta trading state of Bonny paved the way for Jaja to replant the seeds of home and rekindle his relationship with his natal community in Igboland. However, before this, in the years preceding his 1835 capture, Jaja was Mbanaso, the son of Okwara Ozurumba of Umuduruoha. The boy whose birth name meant “nations will fear me” arrived in Bonny with no way of knowing what awaited him. The power that would later bring his enemies to their knees had not yet come to fruition. In this chapter, I present brief outline of Bonny's history, identifying religious traditions, social organization and patterns of political authority in order to set the stage for Jaja's arrival and provide a context for his rise in the coastal trading state. I then move to a discussion of Jaja's rise to chieftaincy before dealing with his split from Bonny during a civil war in the late 1860s. This chapter then closes with a discussion of Jaja's settlement of the new trading state of Opobo.

First, Bonny was facing a unique economic situation as its citizens and headmen struggled to adjust to the demand for palm oil, which was quickly supplanting slaves as the Delta's main export product.² It was under this backdrop that Jaja entered Bonny during a time of extreme political unrest, when the rightful kingship of the community was constantly being

¹ Dan Ihenetu, interview with author, digital-recording, Umuduruoha, Imo State, January 18th, 2012.

² E.J. Alagoa & A. Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny*, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 19-20; Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 97-98; S.J.S. Cookey, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891*, (New York: Nok Publishers, Ltd., 1974), 22-23; E.J. Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar," in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Iss. 5, Vol. 4 (1971), 565-573.

challenged by two opposing factions.³ The ensuing political turmoil was largely related to the emergence of Christianity, which had been gaining influence in neighboring Delta communities since the beginning of the century.⁴ It was the schism between practitioners of traditional religion⁵ and newly converted Christians that eventually led to a civil war in the 1860s--⁶ a time during which Jaja was able to establish the new state of Opobo. Very few details are known about Jaja's life during his time as a slave, so we must rely upon what is known about the institutions of the state and extrapolate outwards from there to discuss Jaja's place in Bonny society.

Bonny's Settlement and Early History

The exact date of the earliest migrations into the Delta and the ethnic affiliation of the migrants are unknown. Leading historians of Niger Delta history K.O. Dike, E.J. Alagoa and Adadonye Fombo speculate, from oral tradition and ethnographic accounts from the Europeans writing on the Delta, that the earliest movements of Ijo, more specifically Ubani/Ibani Ijo, people from the Ndoki area of the Central Delta into what is now known as Bonny occurred sometime before 1600 C.E.⁷ Bonny, according to oral tradition, was settled by an Ijo hunter named Alagbariye, traveling with his brother and two other men, who immediately realized the benefits of Bonny as a site suitable for settlement.⁸ Over the next two hundred years, Bonny witnessed a massive influx of people from hinterland ethnic groups, predominantly the Igbo, resettling in

³ Alagoa & Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 3-5; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 11-12; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 82-85.

⁴ G.O.M. Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1918*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978); Cookey, *King Jaja*, 55-56; Alagoa & Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 34.

⁵ A discussion of Bonny's pre-Christian religious organization will be provided later in the chapter.

⁶ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, p. 98; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 19-21; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 565-568; Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 33-36.

⁷ Alagoa & Fombo *A Chronicle*, 3-5; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 11-12; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 23.

⁸ Alagoa & Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 24; G.I. Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press 1963), 30-31; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10.

Delta due to the displacement of captured men, women and children to be sold at the coast in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁹ While Ijo cultural and societal structures permeated day-to-day institutions in Bonny, as the Ijo were the early ethnic majority in the region, the traditions and cultures of many of the Niger trading states were often the result of hundreds of years of migration into and out of the region, creating a syncretism in *many* institutions that combined Efik, Ibibio, Igbo and Ijo customs.¹⁰ Of this movement of people into the Eastern Niger Delta, Cooley writes,

The original Ijo settlements were presumably no more than small villages on the Igbo model but later their features altered radically as a result of socio-economic factors. The settlements were sited within the creeks, rather than on the beaches of the Bight of Biafra to avoid the giant waves of the South Atlantic. Their transformation into the flourishing city-states of the 18th and 19th centuries constitutes one of the most remarkable aspects of Eastern Nigerian history. The canoe, carved from the towering trees of the equatorial forest by the hardy inhabitants of the Central Delta region, provided the means of communication among the village settlements. At the same time, it was used in conveying salt and fish obtained from the creeks for sale to the farming communities of the mainland and in turn bringing back produced purchased from the latter. This commercial relationship, which existed since the Delta became inhabited, received a stimulus from the opening of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Just as the Aro had transformed their shrine into an oracle that fed the slave trade, so did some of the Delta communities evolve social and political institutions that were capable of exploiting new economic opportunities to the fullest.¹¹

⁹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, p. 28; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 13-19; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 12-13; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 4-12.

¹⁰ Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: A Revised and Expanded Edition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 213; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 20; Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, 13-19; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 10-12; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 3-5.

¹¹ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 11.

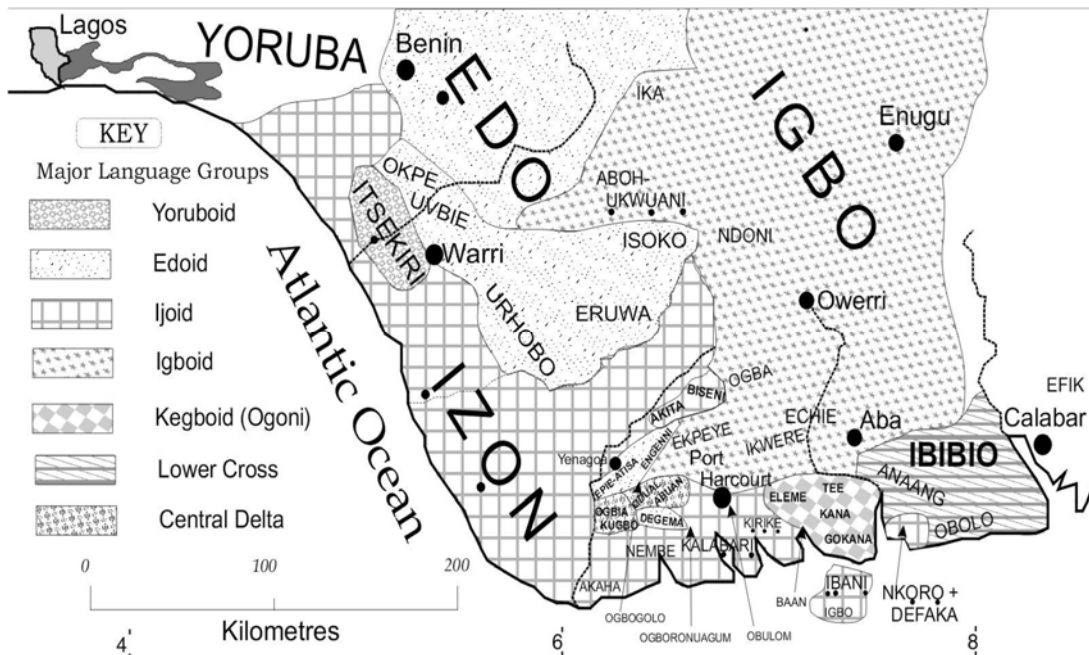


Figure 23: Ethnic Groups of the Niger Delta¹²

While not all the burgeoning communities were able to make the transition from fishing village to trading-state, the Eastern Delta communities of Brass, Calabar, Kalabari, Okrika and, most relevant to our discussion here, Bonny were able to take full advantage of the trans-continental trade over the Atlantic that was growing by leaps and bounds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹³

The Early Kings of Bonny

Originally named *Okolama*, meaning “Curlew Town” in Ubani Ijo, after the many curlew birds that populated the island, the exact date of Bonny's foundation is unknown.¹⁴ Bonny recognized a hereditary kingship system, with the first four kings of the land, Ndoli,

¹² Website, Urhobo Historical Society, <http://coral.lili.uni-bielefeld.de/langdoc/EGA/Proposals/Ega-proposal2/sv019026.jpg>. (Accessed March 16th, 2015)

¹³ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 570-573; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 45-47; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 25-30; Jones, *Trading States*, 63-65.

¹⁴ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 24; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 3; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10. While no sources for Bonny's history nail down a particular year or date for the town's founding, there is consensus among them that this migration from the central to the eastern Delta occurred in the 14th century.

Opuamakuba, Alagbariye, and Asimini, becoming enshrined as the founding fathers of Bonny and its dynastic lineage. The male children of these lineages would rule Bonny for centuries to come, although not without internal resistance to their leadership and community-wide fissures that saw their kingly authority challenged.¹⁵

Despite Alagbariye being listed as the individual who found the site on which Bonny was settled, his elder brother Opuamakuba, because of his seniority, was enshrined as the first king of Bonny.¹⁶ After ruling for an indeterminate period of time, an aged Opuamakuba was persuaded by the chiefs and priests of Bonny to hand authority over to Alagbariye, who, at the time, was the high priest of Bonny. Alagbariye had brought the *kala ikuba* (junior ikuba) deity to Bonny, leaving behind the *opu ikuba* or elder ikuba at Opuri, a site the Ibani Ijo had settled during their migrations from the central Delta to the eastern Delta and Bonny.¹⁷ *Kala ikuba* was a deity of war who ensured Bonny's victory in armed conflicts with neighboring communities.¹⁸ The institution of the *kala ikuba* whose earthly manifestation found shape in the iguana, would play a vital role in shaping Bonny's destiny during Jaja's lifetime.¹⁹

It was also during the reign of Alagbariye that the first Portuguese traders found their way

¹⁵ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 24; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 3; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10

¹⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, p. 105; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10. It is important to note here that there is little agreement among the authors cited here as to the order in which the early kings of Bonny reigned. I have accepted Alagoa and Fombo's descriptions of Bonny's early dynastic history for two reasons. First, these authors were focused solely on Bonny's history, while other authors were writing about Bonny in the wider systems of the Niger Delta as a whole. With this being the case, Alagoa and Fombo utilized oral tradition from Bonny more thoroughly than other authors, who largely relied on European writers recording the history of the state. Secondly, Alagoa and Fombo's work cites the work of Dike and Jones, identifying their sources of information and challenging those sources where they felt the information was inaccurate or incomplete.

¹⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8.

¹⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 60-61; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8.

¹⁹ Upon making Bonny's new state religion Christianity, King William Dappa Pepple ordered the mass slaying of iguanas in Bonny and the destruction of the deities shrines. Jaja would come to the defense of the deity and rebuild these shrines.

to Bonny. At this time, the mouth of the Bonny River on which the town rests was not yet wide or deep enough to allow European ships to make landfall there.²⁰ The priests and chiefs decided to make sacrifices to the gods of the sea, but Alagbariye was unwilling to follow suit. Because of his refusal to propitiate to the gods of the sea,²¹ Alagbariye handed over the *amanyanabo*-ship²² to Asimini. Asimini, in turn, became the first Bonny king to entertain Portuguese traders. His sacrifice to the sea god Finnima has since become enshrined in Bonny tradition and, after this act, it was said that the estuary on which Bonny sits gradually widened to allow European traders access to the town.²³ Before Asimini's reign ended, he instituted Bonny's supreme judicial body, which adjudicated community disputes and determined the proper course of actions in Bonny's dealings with their neighbors, both African and European.²⁴ This decision-making council's rulings were final and not subject to dispute. This council, comprised of Bonny's king, chiefs, and priests, met every four days in Bonny's village square.²⁵ Asimini also established friendly relations with the Kalabari people and was said to have turned to the King of Elem Kalabari for advice on his dealings with the Portuguese.²⁶ In doing this, he also established the system of “comey,”²⁷ in which the European traders paid a “customs” fee for trading in Bonny's markets to

²⁰ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; Jones, *Trading States*, 5 & 44-46;

²¹ I was unable to conduct oral research in Bonny and was not able to access information about all the traditional deities as they changed over time. It must suffice, here, to say that *finnima* was the chief sea god who protected Bonny's citizens as they traversed the coastal waterways of the Niger Delta.

²² The term *amanyanabo* translates to “keeper or holder of the land,” and was applied to the hereditary rulers of the community.

²³ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6. Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 105; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10.

²⁴ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8-9

²⁵ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8-9

²⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 6-7; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8-9; Jones, *Trading States*, 105.

²⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 21; Count De Cardi, “A Short Description of the Natives of the Niger Coast Protectorate,” in Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), 522-523.

The system employed in the Eastern Delta for Europeans to trade in the coastal markets was 3-tiered. Chiefs and kings of Delta communities received “dashy,” which was a present made to rulers of a state to establish and maintain friendly trade relations. “Comey” functioned as a sort of customs tax paid to rulers and chiefs. Finally,

the *amanyanabo*, or king. The comey system would become a crucial source of financing for Bonny as international trade with European supercargoes increased in the state.²⁸

Asimini's son, Edimini became *amanyanabo* of Bonny upon his father's death.²⁹ No specific events of his reign have been documented. However, his daughter, Queen Kambasa, is notable as the first and only woman to hold the headship of Bonny. It is rumored that Kambasa stole an ivory tusk, a symbol of royal authority in Bonny at the time, from her father upon his death. Kambasa was reputed to be an autocratic ruler whose orders could not be defied.³⁰ During Kambasa's reign, trade with the Portuguese intensified. In addition to waging a successful war in which Bonny defeated their Ogoni neighbors and seized control of the town of Opuoko, Kambasa also introduced a hierarchy to the priesthood in Bonny, established a battalion of royal bodyguards and a masquerade club, known as *owu ogbo*.³¹

When Kambasa's reign ended, her son Kumalu took the position of *amanyanabo*. While there are no established dates for the reigns of these early rulers, it is likely that the transitions in headship discussed thus far occurred before the turn of the eighteenth century. Kumalu was followed by his son Opu Dappa, who in turn was followed by Amakiri, who passed the headship of Bonny to his son Apia. After Apia's reign, his son Wari became the *amanyanabo* of Bonny,

“trust” represented a credit system in which the Europeans gave European-produced goods to the kings and chiefs so that they could use them to acquire interior products to be brought back to the coast.

²⁸ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 567-569; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 43 ; Jones, *Trading States*, 5 & 44-46; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 8.

²⁹ There are no dates that can be applied to these early rulers, as they are ambiguously remembered as the founders or early kings of the community. The establishment of the community itself also remains undated and it is not until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Europeans were heavily engaged in trade with Bonny, that we can begin to apply dates to the reigns of particular rulers. It should be noted here that a deep investigation of the oral history of Bonny would assist in applying dates to the early events of the community's history. However, such an undertaking did not fall within the scope or budget of my dissertation research.

³⁰ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 8-9. It is important to note here that none of the other authors detailing this period of Bonny's history identify Queen Kambasa. It is possible that she appears in Jones' *Trading States of the Oil Rivers* as “Edimini ba Kamba”, but as this name only appears in the genealogy leading up to Kamalu's reign, it is unclear if this is the same person. See Jones, *Trading States*, 105.

³¹ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 8-9.

most likely in the early 1700s.³² Wari was said to have hated war and focused his energies on developing the cultural arts of singing and dancing. At the Finnima festival, held yearly in Bonny for eight days, Wari was apparently insulted by praise singers who pointed to his father's great deeds in war, implying that Wari was not as brave or bold as his father.³³ Wari, in response, arranged to have the chiefs and priests massacred in his mother's home town of Ayangala in Andoni territory for this perceived insult. However, through divination at the *kala ikuba* shrine, the priests of Bonny learned of the plot before it was carried out and they were able to avoid Wari's wrath. After this plot was foiled, Wari was struck dead by a lightning bolt upon returning to Bonny from Ayangala. His body was buried in Bonny, but without the royal treatment befitting a king or *amanyanabo*.³⁴ Recounting of this incident sheds some light on the perceived power of *kala ikuba* in Bonny. Wari, in plotting to kill the leading chiefs and priests of Bonny, had violated the laws of the land by attempting to circumvent the democratic system of leadership. His punishment for this offense was his immediate death through supernatural means. In essence, this reflects the Bonny belief that no man, king or otherwise, was above the rule of law and will of the gods.

The trade in slaves between Bonny and European partners had steadily grown and provided the economic underpinning for Bonny society since the reign of Asimini.³⁵ Bonny's growth over the eighteenth century can best be measured by examining the number of slaves exported over the Atlantic. Bonny, from the 1650s forward, was the principal trading site for

³² Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 105-106; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 8-9; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 8-10.

³³ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9.

³⁴ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9. Again, this story exists in the oral traditions of Bonny and was only recorded by Alagoa and Fombo. However, Wari appears in the genealogical tables of all the authors recording Bonny's dynastic lineages.

³⁵ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10; Jones, *Trading States*, 106; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 11.

Europeans buying slaves in the Bight of Biafra.³⁶ Between 1651 and 1700, it is estimated that nearly 150,000 slaves were shipped over the Atlantic to various locations in the New World from the Bight Biafra.³⁷ That number increased to nearly 250,000 between 1701 and 1751.³⁸ In the last half of eighteenth century, slaves exported from the Bight of Biafra increased dramatically, with an estimated 655,000 slaves being purchased in the coastal markets.³⁹ The incredible growth in slave exports from the Bight of Biafra over this time period directly contributed to economic growth and stability of Bonny as an Atlantic trading center.

However, upon Wari's death, Awusa, known to European trade partners as Halliday, took the throne of Bonny in 1759.⁴⁰ Awusa's time as the *amanyanabo*, or king, was also a difficult period for Bonny. From the outset of Awusa's reign in Bonny in 1759, a war in Europe had temporarily decreased the number of European slavers traveling to Bonny to purchase slaves.⁴¹ Additionally, Bonny's neighbors and economic rivals, the Okrika, Kalabari, and Andoni, entered into an alliance to fight Bonny, with the aim of further disrupting their trade with European partners at the coast.⁴² During this “national crisis,” the chiefs and princes of Bonny were said to

³⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 48-49; Jones, *Trading States*, 106; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 11.

³⁷ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, “Estimates”, <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 252-274; David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1660-1807," in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 440-64.

³⁸ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, “Estimates”, <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 252-274; David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1660-1807," in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 440-64.

³⁹ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, “Estimates”, <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 252-274; David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1660-1807," in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 440-64.

⁴⁰ Jones, *Trading States*, 105-106; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9 & 10.

⁴¹ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10; Jones, *Trading States*, 106; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 11.

The war which local Bonny sources refer to is, more likely than not, the “Seven Years' War.” This conflict ran from the mid-1750s to the early 1760s and involved most of the major European powers.

⁴² Jones, *Trading States*, 105-106; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10.

have provided no support to Awusa, resentful of the fact that his father did not come from royal blood.⁴³ The war dragged on for seven years, but the beleaguered Awusa was dethroned by chiefs and priests unhappy with his reign only one year after he was installed on the throne.⁴⁴

This episode provides a glimpse into a recurring pattern in Bonny's history in which the hereditary right of an individual to take the stool of the *amanyanabo* was challenged by successful and well-positioned chiefs. It is a pattern that would repeat itself during Jaja's lifetime and would lead to his leaving Bonny in the 1860s.⁴⁵ Bonny's chiefs and traders were capable of amassing great wealth through the Atlantic trade in slaves. Whenever trade was disrupted, they lost money. When they lost money, the most powerful and wealthy traders sought to place themselves on the throne of Bonny by circumventing the patterns of hereditary kingship. With four founding lineages existing in Bonny, there was always a way to manipulate one's heritage and the history of the community to make justifications for hereditary kingship, even when such justifications were suspect at best.⁴⁶

The next ruler of Bonny was King Perekule, more commonly known to history as King Pepple I.⁴⁷ Pepple I was a merchant who sold spices and beads to European slavers at the coast and had amassed incredible wealth as a result of his trade.⁴⁸ As the war with the Andoni,

⁴³ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10; Jones, *Trading States*, 106; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 12. There is little to no discussion of Awusa's parentage in Alagoa and Fombo's or Webber's account of Awusa's reign. They simply cite local tradition in recounting the dissent over Awusa's role in Bonny as the *amanyanabo* as being related to his "commoner" status. Since I did not collect oral interviews in Bonny, it is not possible for me to weigh in on this issue.

⁴⁴ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 9-10; Jones, *Trading States*, p. 106; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 11.

⁴⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 51-60; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-202; Jones, *Trading States*, 128-132.

⁴⁶ Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 565-573; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46-48; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 43 & 44.

⁴⁷ I have chosen to refer to this King Perekule as "Pepple I" in order to distinguish the events during his reign from those that occurred during the reign of his son, Fubara Manilla Pepple, who I will call Pepple II.

⁴⁸ It is worth mentioning here the information we have about Pepple I are drawn directly from Bonny oral traditions, collected by Alagoa and Fombo. A question worth asking of this information is how a man who traded in spice and beads could amass such great wealth while others around him were engaged in the more profitable trade in slaves? It

Kalabari and Okrika alliance dragged on from 1759 and into 1760, King Awusa, lacking support from his leading chiefs, ran out of money. The only person deemed wealthy enough to continue to fund the war was Pepple I.⁴⁹ Pepple I essentially bought Awusa out of power, paying him a pension to cede any and all rights to the throne. Of King Pepple I, Alagoa and Fombo write,

Perekule's ascension was a turning point in Bonny dynastic history. The succession was thenceforward restricted to his direct descendants, and Bonny has been ruled by the Pepple dynasty from the eighteenth century when Perekule (Pepple) seems to have taken possession of the throne... Perekule became a great war leader. He made it a rule for aspirants to chieftaincy to show military capability, *mgbi aki* (win a cannon ball). Because of his wealth and liberality, he was popular with the common people and established many aspirants in positions of affluence and leadership.⁵⁰

Pepple I was a man of advanced age when he took the *amanyanabo*-ship in 1760. The English slave trader John Barbot, who referred to Pepple I as, “The King's general, Captain Pepprell” shows that, as early as 1699, Pepple I was active in the public affairs of the state.⁵¹ Pepple I's son, Fubara Pepple, or Pepple II, rose to the position of *amanyanabo* after his father's death and would go on to establish the powerful Manilla Pepple house in Bonny.⁵² Pepple II was given the name Manilla Pepple after he introduced the *Atoni* manilla as a new currency at his coronation.⁵³ Pepple II died in August of 1792 and was followed by the man whose name would be

is possible that Bonny's oral traditions have deliberately obscured his role in the slave trade.

⁴⁹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 32; Jones, *Trading States*, 106-107; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 10.

⁵⁰ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 10-11.

⁵¹ John Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea; and of Ethiopia Inferior, Vulgarly Angola: With and Appendix; Being a General Account of the First Discoveries of America in the Fourteenth Century ... and a Geographical, Political, and Natural History of the Antilles-Islands*, (London: Henry Lintot and John Osborn, 1746), 460; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 11; Jones, *Trading States*, 106; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 32; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 11; Hugh Crow & John R. Pinfold, *The Memoirs of Captain Hugh Crow: The Life and Times of a Slave Trade Captain*, (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2007), 43.

⁵² There are no clear dates for Pepple I's death and Pepple II's ascension. As stated above, Pepple I was quite old when he took the throne of Bonny in 1760. It is clear that Pepple I was ruling after the war with the Okrika, Andoni, and Kalabari alliance. This would indicate that his reign lasted until at 1766.

⁵³ The manilla was the standard currency of trade in the Niger Delta. It is a horseshoe shaped copper ring. The value of the manilla varied over time and, depending on where the manilla was produced, often had minor variations in their design. Some manillas were more valuable than others, depending on the design and place it was struck. The *Atoni* manilla was a variation that was designed to look like an elephant's foot. Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 11-12.

memorialized by Jaja when he founded his trading state in the 1870s, King Opubo.

The reign of King Opubo began in November of 1792. Opubo gained access to the throne after he married Aluka, the wife of the deceased King Fubara, who was Opubo's brother and the elder son of the late King Perekule.⁵⁴ Of chief importance here, Opubo founded the trading house, or *wari*, known as the Anna Pepple house.⁵⁵ The Anna Pepple house would, in years to come, be the house that absorbed the young Mbanaso.

Opubo saw the opportunities of palm oil as an export early in the nineteenth century and began to supplement income from the trade in slaves with revenue from the sale of this all important agricultural product.⁵⁶ Opubo's decision to turn towards the palm oil trade was likely driven by the declining prices and demand for slaves in the coastal markets.⁵⁷ During the last decade of the 1700s, slave exports from the Bight of Biafra remained statistically congruent with the previous decades.⁵⁸ However, there was a drastic decrease for the demand for slaves in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. As estimates show, slave exports from the Bight of Biafra dropped, by about 15,000, to 140,000 total during the period 1801-1810.⁵⁹ The trade bottomed out between the years 1811-1820, period which saw roughly 60,000 people exported from the Bight of Biafra.⁶⁰ This massive decrease in slave exports threatened to topple Bonny's economy, which relied almost exclusively on their position in the Atlantic trade networks.

⁵⁴ Alagoa and Fombo *A Chronicle*, 12. This interpretation was based off of Bonny tradition. It should be said that in 1792, British Capt. Hugh Crow was in Bonny when Opubo was crowned. This led Crow to believe that Opubo was Fubara's son. However, tradition maintains that Fubara had no children, and both he and Opubo were the sons of King Perekule (Pepple). See Hugh Crow and John R. Pinfold, *The Memoirs of Captain Hugh Crow*.

⁵⁵ Alagoa and Fombo *A Chronicle*, 12-13; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 62 & 78.

⁵⁶ Obaro Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, (London: Heinemann, 1977), 13; Fombo and Alagoa, *A Chronicle*, 13-15.

⁵⁷ Alagoa and Fombo *A Chronicle*, 12-13; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 62 & 78; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 32.

⁵⁸ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, "Estimates", <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 440-64.

⁵⁹ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, "Estimates", <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 440-64.

⁶⁰ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, "Estimates", <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed January 23rd, 2014); David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 440-64.

Thus, Opubo's reign marks the beginning of a major transition in trade in Bonny, as palm oil would increasingly supplant slaves as Bonny's chief export. King Opubo waged successful wars against the Andoni, increasing the territory held by Bonny, and made himself quite wealthy through lucrative economic affiliations with both hinterland and British traders.⁶¹ Opubo is also credited with institutionalizing open trade at the Bonny coast as well as waging two successful wars against Calabar to cement Bonny as the chief trading port of the Niger Delta by the nineteenth century.⁶²



Figure 24: Bonny and Her Neighbors⁶³

However, Opubo's became increasingly autocratic and centralized all authority in Bonny around

⁶¹ Ikime, *The Fall*, 13; Gentle Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes of Grand Bonny* (Lagos: Faghafagha Communications, 2001), 21; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 13-15; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 13.

⁶² Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 25; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 13; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 32-33; Jones, *Trading States*, 107-110.

⁶³ Harold Bindloss, *In the Niger Country*, (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1898).

himself, removing wealth and power from the hands of previously important chiefs of Bonny's other houses.⁶⁴ Upon his death in 1830, Opubo's son, William Dappa Pepple, was too young to become Bonny's monarch.

A man named Bereibo, whose paternal lineage traced back to Bonny's founder, Alagbariye, ascended to the throne of Bonny through his mother, Adumta, who was a daughter of King Opubo of the Pepple lineage.⁶⁵ Bereibo was largely considered illegitimate by the chiefs of the two most powerful trading houses in Bonny, the Manilla and Anna Pepple houses, as he was born out of wedlock and was known to be a secret lover of one of the late King Opubo's wives.⁶⁶ Maduka and Ibaniburufigha, both former slaves of Igbo origin, had risen to the headship of the Anna Pepple and Manilla Pepple houses respectively.⁶⁷ These men were the most active opponents of Bereibo.⁶⁸ Maduka, in 1830, was recognized as the regent of Bonny as his slave origins prevented him from taking the position of *amanyanabo*, but he died shortly after in 1833.⁶⁹ His son, Alali, then took control of the Bonny regency until he was disgraced by an unnamed incident in which his authority was essentially trumped by British naval forces in 1836.⁷⁰ The Bonny chiefs decided to bring Opubo's son, William Dappa Pepple, who was no longer a minor, to the throne in 1837.⁷¹ The history of Bonny prior to Dappa's reign is

⁶⁴ Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 24; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 33.

⁶⁵ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 15; Jones, *Trading States*, 110-111; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33.

⁶⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 15-16; Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 24; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33.

⁶⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 15-16; Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 24; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19; Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 33.

⁶⁸ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 16; Jones, *Trading States*, 124; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 18-19; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33-35.

⁶⁹ Jones, *Trading States*, 124; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 15-16; Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 24; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33.

⁷⁰ Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria*, 20; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70; Jones, *Trading States*, 124. The actual circumstances here remain unclear. While Ikime and Dike identify Maduka's son, Alali, as regent from 1832 to 1836, Alagoa and Fombo make no mention of him. Furthermore, Jones, on page 124, references Alali, but says nothing about his position as regent.

⁷¹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District,

complicated, and at times unclear. However, the brief discussion above provides a glimpse of the chaotic political circumstances that prevailed in Bonny before Dappa Pepple's reign as monarch.

Slavery and Political Authority in Bonny

Having recounted a brief dynastic history of Bonny from its founding to the nineteenth century, we can now turn our attention to the role of slaves in Bonny economic, political, and social institutions. In order to show how these institutions changed over time, we must backtrack to the middle of the eighteenth century and the rule of King Pepple I. King Perekule, also known as King Pepple, established a monarchy based on the Pepple lineage in which his descendants would have exclusive rights to the throne of Bonny in the middle of the eighteenth century.⁷² However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of Bonny's population was of slave origin.⁷³ This point will be of immense importance later, when dealing with Jaja's secession from Bonny in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Thus, in the nineteenth century the tradition of kingship in Bonny was based on hereditary claims to the throne, but the politics of the trading-state would often be deeply influenced by powerful chiefs in the prosperous *wari*, or trading houses, comprised of ex-slaves and regents who maintained the governance of the polity while 'waiting' for a Pepple monarch to come of age.⁷⁴ These were the circumstances around which Jaja was absorbed into the Anna Pepple house in Bonny as a slave in the 1830s. However, we must first examine the institutions that operated in the Niger Delta trading state during the nineteenth century.

Owerri Province, 1931, 18-19; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 17; Jones, *Trading States*, 112; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70. It is worthy of note here that Dike, citing a conversation between Dappa Pepple and Scottish explorer Dr. W.B. Baikie in 1854 at Fernando Po, claims that William Dappa Pepple is of Igbo descent. Bonny-based sources make no mention of Dappa's Igbo roots.

⁷² Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 10; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 31-32; Jones, *Trading States*, 106 & 107.

⁷³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 25-29; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29.

⁷⁴ Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 26; G.I. Jones, *Trading States*, 105.

Social Organization and Religious Institutions in Bonny

As the trade in slaves across the Atlantic intensified over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bonny was well-positioned to make sure supply met demand. Reacting to the increasing demand, Bonny traders sought out interior partners who could meet this demand head on.⁷⁵ This elevated Bonny's political and economic status in the region, placing them among a handful of Niger Delta trading-states, such as Calabar and Brass, which rose to prominence on the back of the Atlantic trade in slaves.⁷⁶ By the nineteenth century, Bonny had become extremely well-known to European traders as a principal port in the Bight of Biafra from which they could purchase slaves, captured in the interior, in great numbers.⁷⁷ The political and social institutions of Bonny were designed to promote the community's position as coastal middlemen in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

The social, political and economic affiliations of Bonny prior to the late eighteenth century were based around the traditional “houses”⁷⁸ of the trading-state, known in Ijo as *wari*.⁷⁹ Essentially, the *wari* functioned to absorb resettled slaves into kinship systems, created financial opportunities and support for men involved in coastal trade endeavors, and formed the base of

⁷⁵ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 570-573; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 18-19; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29.

⁷⁶ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 570-573. It is important to note that Okrika, by the turn of the nineteenth century, had become a trading site of diminished importance to Europeans. The Okrika people fell firmly within Bonny's sphere of influence and carried on trade with Bonny merchants who would sell interior products to the coast. A conflict with Okrika traders later in the nineteenth century, coupled with Jaja's establishment of Opobo, contributed to Bonny's sharp decline as a crucial supplier of palm oil.

⁷⁷ Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 570-573; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 18-19; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29.

⁷⁸ In many texts, the *wari* are referred to as “canoe houses.” Fombo and Alagoa reject this translation of *wari*, as the phrase “canoe house” does not have an Ijo equivalent. Therefore I am choosing to refer to the *wari* as “houses” when using the English term for them.

⁷⁹ It should be noted here that the term *wari* can applied to a single house, or refer to the many houses in Bonny. *Wari*, as such, will be applied in both singular and plural contexts.

support for *wari* heads who found themselves in a position to vie for political authority of the state.⁸⁰ These *wari* were organized in a hierarchical fashion, with the head of each *wari* representing all the members of the organization in community-wide decisions. All the men of the *wari*, freeborn or slave, were tasked with conducting trade on the creeks and rivers that connected Delta markets with sites of trade in the interior.⁸¹

The *wari* system traveled with the Ibani Ijo migrants from the Central Delta as they moved east to settle Bonny in the Eastern Delta.⁸² Traditionally, the houses of the Central Delta Ijo were designed to serve small populations and communities that did not require massive labor forces. As such, each house was based entirely on a lineage system. Headship, rights and property passed from a father to his male sons and so forth.⁸³ Thus, there were few to no opportunities from someone outside the lineage, for example a slave, to move upwards within the lineage-based house system. However, the system adapted to its new environs in the Eastern Delta as economic circumstances created new needs and opportunities.

During the reign of King Perekule (Pepple I) in the middle of the eighteenth century, the previous hereditary lineage-based house system was adjusted⁸⁴ to promote an individual within

⁸⁰ G.I. Jones, "European and African Tradition on the Rio Real," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1963), 392; Jones, *Trading States*, 51-53; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 45-47; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 34-37; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 59-63.

⁸¹ Jones, *Trading States*, 51-53; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 45-47; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 34-37; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 59-63. Here, it must be said that men of the *wari* were tasked with the trade endeavors of the state while females, freeborn or slave, would engage in subsistence agriculture and child-rearing. None of the sources I have encountered to date have indicated that Bonny women were engaged in trading activities.

⁸² Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 29-30; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46.

⁸³ Jones, *Trading States*, 51-53; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 45-47; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 34-37; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 59-63.

⁸⁴ It is unclear if this adjustment occurred as the result of a state decree by Pepple I. It is more than likely the result of changing economic and social circumstances, most pointedly the high demand for labor needed within the houses to meet increased demands for slaves at the coast.

the house based on their wealth, trustworthiness, ability in war and acumen as a trader.⁸⁵

Lineage-based houses were supplanted by a merit-based house system as overseas trade endeavors called for an increase in Bonny's labor force. This merit-based system was growing during the latter half of the eighteenth century and was firmly in place by the nineteenth century when Jaja arrived in Bonny.⁸⁶ This radical shift in the social organization of Bonny created space for slaves and kin-less individuals to rise to wealth and prominence in the Bonny houses, as well as gave them access to the political process of the state.

The merit-based house system formed a sort of representative governing council for the state. The heads of the most powerful houses were responsible for assisting the king in his political, economic and religious decisions as well as mobilizing members of their respective houses' for war efforts.⁸⁷ Resettled slaves in Bonny, under the merit-based house system, could make claims to political authority, as the most profitable traders could become heads of a *wari*, regardless of their lineage or status as "slave" or "freeborn."⁸⁸

Bonny's house system was a fluid, ever-adapting system that saw the rise of some houses to prominence while watching other houses fall out of existence. Of the malleability of this system, Fombo and Alagoa write,

The new system was such that as new successful traders came to prominence, they built new Houses as offshoots of the older Houses to which they themselves had belonged. They became House Heads or Alapu (sing, Alabo), and members of the king's council, and were required to equip a war canoe for the defence of the kingdom. But just as new Houses arose in this manner, some old ones fell into debt, or became depleted in their numbers, and finally disappeared, or were absorbed by more successful Houses.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 12-14; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69 & 135-137; Jones, *Trading States*, 55-56.

⁸⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 12-14; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69 & 135-137; Jones, *Trading States*, 55-56.

⁸⁷ Jones, *Trading States*, 55-57; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 35-37; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46-47.

⁸⁸ Jones, *Trading States*, 55-57; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 35-37; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 47.

⁸⁹ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 147.

By the time Jaja arrived in Bonny in the 1830s, two houses had come to overshadow all other houses in the community. One was the Fubara Manilla Pepple house, which was founded by King Pepple II. The other was the Opubo Anna Pepple house, which was founded by the late King Opubo. This latter house would become the lineage group into which Jaja was absorbed upon his arrival from the Igbo hinterland. These two houses were in constant struggle to become more influential and powerful in the community. As a result, community-wide politics became increasingly dichotomous, with all the houses of Bonny siding with either the Manilla Pepple or Anna Pepple when disputes and discussions arose.⁹⁰

Slavery and the Economy in Bonny

Slaves came to provide the underpinning for the economic success of the *wari*. The lineage-based house system could not provide enough labor to meet the international demand that arose for slaves throughout the eighteenth century. A larger work force was required to carry trade between the coastal European traders and the hinterland supply markets where slaves could be purchased. The solution to this situation rested in the problem itself. In order to procure more slaves for sale at the coast, the Bonny houses needed to acquire more interior slaves to work domestically in the city-state.⁹¹

A slave bought by a Bonny house went through a unique process to help integrate him into the house network. All newly acquired slaves purchased in Bonny went through a ritual in which their heads were shaved by an older woman of the house.⁹² As she shaved the boy's head, she would give him a new name. This process is symbolic of the individual's absorption into the

⁹⁰ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-184; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 47; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33-34.

⁹¹ Jones, *Trading States*, 56- 59; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46-48.

⁹² Jones, *Trading States*, 169; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29-30. As far as I can tell, this process of absorption was unique to male slaves. However, there is very little information regarding patterns of slavery as they pertained to females in the Bonny, so it is possible girls underwent this ritual as well, but it simply was not recorded.

wari, making them kinsmen of the other slaves of the house as well as the free-born members.⁹³ The slave, who would belong to the house from the completion of this ritual, was integrated into the lineage of that house immediately and fully.⁹⁴ It should be noted here that slaves in Bonny were not a homogenous group. Some slaves were born into slavery in Bonny, usually when their free-born fathers bore children with slave mothers, making them natural members of a house. Other slaves, like Jaja, were purchased outside of the community and absorbed into a house through the ritual head-shaving process. While there was a greater social stigma attached to the slaves purchased from outside the community throughout their lifetime, this stigma seems to have very little impact on the ability of a slave to gain wealth and political influence. The social stigma attached to purchased slaves also did not limit access to the support of his or her house in external trade or community matters.⁹⁵

This ritual was incredibly important in understanding how slavery in nineteenth century Bonny widens our understanding of West African slave systems in general. As discussed in the introduction, the slavery-to-kinship continuum posits that the slave is initially isolated and marginalized from the slave society because he or she has no kin in or ties to that community.⁹⁶ The model argues that the individual becomes increasingly integrated into a kinship network and the community in which they were enslaved over a long period of time, sometimes taking generations to become full members of the societies in which they were enslaved.⁹⁷ However, Bonny's slave system evolved the head-shaving ritual as a means of immediately adopting a slave into a house. This provided the slave with connections to the kinship network of the head

⁹³ Jones, *Trading States*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 35-37.

⁹⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29-30; Jones, *Trading States*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 35-37; Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions," 535-537.

⁹⁵ Jones, *Trading States*, p. 169 & Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 35-37.

⁹⁶ Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 22-30; Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick, eds., *African Systems of Slavery*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 1-9.

⁹⁷ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 22-30; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 1-9.

of the house from the onset of his terms of enslavement.⁹⁸ As all members of the *wari*, freeborn and slave, were tasked with essentially the same goal-- increasing the wealth and prosperity of the house while also increasing their own wealth-- it was necessary that the enslaved people without pre-existing ties to the community be immediately integrated to work towards the same ends as other house members.⁹⁹ This entire process runs in drastic contrast to the slavery-to-kinship continuum.

The system of slavery in Bonny reflected the hierarchical organization of the society's political system. Slaves were organized into three categories that reflected their expertise in trade and the trust that their master(s) placed in them. These categories could be likened to the system of age-grades that dominated social organization in the Igbo interior.¹⁰⁰ Slaves were usually purchased as young boys or teenagers; as they matured towards adulthood, they were given different duties to perform by their masters. If a slave performed his¹⁰¹ duties well, he would move from one category to the next, achieving greater independence and wealth which would culminate in his ability to trade for himself.¹⁰² The first category of slaves was the “small boys” who did light domestic work around their masters' plantations. They shared this work with women, free-born and enslaved, of all ages.¹⁰³ This was the initial job given to newly-acquired

⁹⁸ Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29-30.

⁹⁹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 18-19; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29.

¹⁰⁰ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-79; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

¹⁰¹ Again, this hierarchy of slavery applies exclusively to males and does not represent the realities faced by female slaves in the Delta.

¹⁰² National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

¹⁰³ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC

male slaves as well as the Bonny-born slaves in their early childhood in the community. These slaves did not leave their masters' plantations until they matured enough to become “gig boys.”¹⁰⁴

The “gig boys”¹⁰⁵ were responsible for paddling the canoes for their masters as they conducted trade in the interior markets and brought goods to the coast. The gig boys were not yet able to trade on their own, did not amass wealth in their trading activities and were not extended credit by their masters.¹⁰⁶ However, they learned how trade relationships with interior markets functioned and also acquired the necessary skills to navigate the many creeks and rivers of the Niger Delta.¹⁰⁷ Once a “gig boy” had proven himself adequately in his job, he would be promoted to a “trading boy.”

“Trading boys”¹⁰⁸ were the individuals responsible for taking canoes, without their masters, upriver into the hinterland markets and trading for goods on their masters' behalf. These individuals physically carried the goods between their point of purchase to the European supercargoes at the coast.¹⁰⁹ The “trading boys” would be extended credit by their masters and

6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

¹⁰⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 168-172.

¹⁰⁵ For those unfamiliar with nautical terms, a “gig” is a small watercraft that is employed to convey crewmen from larger vessels into waters that the larger vessel can not navigate. British observers applied the term “gig” widely to the canoes that traversed the waterways of southern Nigeria.

¹⁰⁶ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 168-172.

¹⁰⁷ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60

¹⁰⁸ As these English titles applied to slaves were concocted by British observers, it is worth taking notice of the consistent use of the word “boy” here. This likely reflects the common practice of infantilizing African workers.

¹⁰⁹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 168-172.

allowed to carry on trade with the interior for personal enrichment in addition to supplying resources to his master.¹¹⁰ As a general rule, the “trading boys” would retain eighty percent of the profit they made in trade and gave twenty percent to their masters in a process known as “topping.”¹¹¹ The topping system was mutually beneficial to “slaves” and “slave-masters” alike. On an individual level, the slave benefited from the house head's extension of credit and was able to amass personal wealth. On the corporate level, the slaves provided the necessary labor to keep up with demand for interior products at the coast that could not be readily accessed in the lineage-based house system. The manpower necessary to ensure that coastal demands for exports were met simply did not exist in Bonny's free-born populations.¹¹² Rather than abandoning the profits available at the coast, Bonny house heads chose to incentivize the positions that were necessarily held by slaves. This simultaneously bolstered the house head's coffers, as employing large numbers of slaves provided the house with wealth it would otherwise not have access to, while also ensuring the complacency of the slave classes, as cutting them in on the profits kept slaves working towards fulfilling the desired ends of the house head. To the slaves of a *wari*, maintaining the status quo was as beneficial for them as it was for the master.

There is evidence that suggests that the masters in this slave-master relationship did ultimately have the ability to place social constraints, such as determining who his slaves could

¹¹⁰ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80.

¹¹¹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 101. It should be mentioned here that house heads received “dashy” and “comey,” which were more or less trading fees and customs taxes, from European merchants on the Oil Rivers. The amounts of these taxes and fees were related to the total output of goods from a particular trading house. Thus, it benefitted the house heads to maintain wide-scale trading operations with interior, and they were happy to allow slaves make money in doing this, because it simply made the house heads richer.

¹¹² National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

or could not marry, on his slaves and could sell a slave off in the markets or to a business associate if he wished to do so.¹¹³ However, most evidence suggests that, in the merit-based house system, masters rarely sold their slaves and did so only in extreme circumstances when a particular slave had proven useless in maintaining the wealth of the house.¹¹⁴ Moreover, most slaves who proved themselves capable in their duties were permitted to marry whomever they wished. Any offspring born to slave parents was automatically integrated into the structure of the house of his parents' master and would go through the usual phases of slavery until he was able to carry trade on his own account.¹¹⁵

The most notable difference between the free-born and enslaved member of a Bonny house was the ability of that individual to rise to the status of *amanyanabo* of Bonny. During the nineteenth century, slaves increasingly gained access to the political process through their headship of a *wari*. This could occur in two ways. First, the master of the house could die, leaving an existing house without a political head. In these cases, the trader, free-born or slave, who had accumulated enough wealth to buy out his master's trading debts could do so and assume headship of the house.¹¹⁶ The second avenue for an individual to be promoted to the head of a *wari* was through the establishment of an entirely new *wari*. This occurred when a trader within an existing house forged strong relationships with both interior and coastal trade partners

¹¹³ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 168-172.

¹¹⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 168-172.

¹¹⁵ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 31-32; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80.

¹¹⁶ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 31-32; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 80.

and had sufficient labor to man the many canoes necessary to carry goods over the creeks and rivers of the Niger Delta. As such, Bonny slaves were able to purchase additional slaves themselves to work under them, trading in the interior markets.¹¹⁷

However, the position of the king, or *amanyanabo*, remained lineage-based throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹⁸ Regardless of a slave's power and wealth, he could only aspire to function as a regent of the king, but could never take the title himself. Despite the reign of Queen Kambasa¹¹⁹ sometime before 1700, Bonny never again had a female leader and the title of *amanyanabo* could only be achieved by free-born men of the Pepple lineage after the changes to the structure of Bonny's house system in the late eighteenth century.¹²⁰

The king's wealth in Bonny was, in many ways, directly proportional to the activities of his slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A king was not allowed to leave the capital, and therefore could not make connections with inland palm oil or slave traders himself. Thus, he was forced to rely on trading through slaves as proxies, while at the same time allowing the slave to trade for himself.¹²¹ Through a large number of slaves, a king could attain great wealth. The *amanyanabo* was able to supplement his wealth with the “dashy” and “comey” taxes levied on European traders in his markets as well.¹²² However, this also created a situation in which the slave himself could attain personal wealth that would eventually elevate his status in political

¹¹⁷ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 33-36; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 82-84.

¹¹⁸ Jones, *Trading States*, 179; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 14-18; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 70.

¹¹⁹ It is not clear if Kambasa took the title of *amanyanabo* or if she was given a different title.

¹²⁰ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, p. 8.

¹²¹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

¹²² National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

arena of the Bonny.¹²³

Bonny's economy had long centered on trade. Subsistence agriculture, fishing and the production of salt had places in Bonny society, but these modes of production were marginal and supplemental at best.¹²⁴ The house heads often maintained small plantations to the north of Bonny Town proper, and these plantations were tended by the female slaves and young children while the men and teenage boys were engaged in distance trading.¹²⁵ As mentioned earlier, the rise of the Atlantic Slave Trade provided the economic impetus reorganizing the house system. The international trade in slaves at the coast led to a drastic rise of domestically-held slaves in Bonny to meet labor needs. As this occurred, events in the western world, most notably the push for the abolition of the Atlantic trade, did not immediately slow slave production in Africa's coastal enclaves.¹²⁶ However, Bonny's *amanyanabo* in the late eighteenth century, King Opubo, apparently saw the proverbial writing on the wall. Just as the Atlantic Slave Trade was hitting its peak, Opubo decried that the traders of Bonny begin supplementing their trade in slaves with palm oil.¹²⁷

In 1807, the British abolished the slave trade throughout their empire and subsequently banned their citizens and subjects from carrying on the trade in human beings. It took nearly three decades for the British to give their paper edict very real teeth and British warships

¹²³ Ikime *The Fall of Nigeria*, 17-18; Coockey, *King Jaja*, 16-18; Jones, *Trading States*, 180-181.

¹²⁴ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

¹²⁵ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60

¹²⁶ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 79-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 68.

¹²⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 12-13; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 68; Jones, *Trading States*, 79-80.

swarmed into the Bight of Biafra to face those engaged in the slave trade head on.¹²⁸ With the trade in slaves petering out, British merchants sought a new resource from their trade partners in West Africa. The industrial revolution in England created a need for massive amounts of palm oil as lubricant in newly designed machinery and West Africa was the source of the palm oil they now desired.¹²⁹ Because of Opubo's visionary foresight to encourage his subjects to trade in palm oil, Bonny's economy was ready to meet the demand for this agricultural product at the coast during the early 1800s. It is important to note that while the international slave trade had begun to die out, the domestic slave trade was still a critical part of Bonny's economy. Bonny still needed laborers to carry on the growing trade in palm oil and slaves who were, in previous decades, likely to be sold off in the Atlantic trade were now increasingly being absorbed into the houses of Bonny.¹³⁰

This influx of slaves being retained in the Delta state drastically altered patterns of life in Bonny. While Ijo was the language of the ruling class in Bonny, the Igbo language began to supplant Ijo in both trade and domestic settings.¹³¹ The vast majority of the slaves held in Bonny were from some area of the Igbo interior and, despite coming to Bonny as slaves, they brought many of the cultural elements of Igboland along and replanted them in the Delta.¹³² In an intelligence report from 1892, British Consul to the Bight of Biafra Claude MacDonald writes of the languages of the various “tribes” in and around Bonny. Of Bonny, MacDonald says, “In each of the above mentioned tribes the Igbo language is also spoken. It is the language of the interior

¹²⁸ Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa: Revised 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005), 236; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 256.

¹²⁹ Shillington, *History of Africa*, 236; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 256.

¹³⁰ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 68; Shillington, *History of Africa*, 236; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 256.

¹³¹ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28.

¹³² National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 27-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 78-80; Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60.

tribes and covers an immense area. It is the language spoken at the markets and in which all trade affairs are conducted. It is also used by the masters in addressing their slaves.”¹³³

The fact that Igbo had become the lingua Franca for the Niger Delta is extremely relevant to understanding how the experience of a slave like Jaja requires us to adjust our view of African slave systems. The slavery-to-kinship continuum argues that the African slave is initially marginalized and isolated from the community. The most compelling evidence of this marginalization is the slave's inability to use the slave community's native language upon initially being enslaved.¹³⁴ This simply was not the case in Bonny. In this setting, the language of slaves dominated the discourse between the master and slave. Moreover, it dominated the institution of trade on which Bonny society relied. As such, an Igbo slave entering Bonny in the 1800s would not find him or herself in a foreign land with no concept of the language or customs of their new home. Rather, they would enter Bonny hearing their mother tongue in day-to-day communications, live in a community where the majority of citizens were in fact slaves of Igbo origin and were immediately brought into the fold of Bonny's house system, giving them access to the kinship networks of their “slave masters.” The title of this dissertation refers to Jaja's ability to reconnect with his natal home, but is applicable to the wider population of Igbo slaves in the Delta. It could be argued that these growing classes of Igbo slaves were actively replanting the seeds of their homes in their new Delta environment. In Bonny, the slaves shaped the state as much as the state shaped the slaves.

Religion in Bonny

The pre-Christian religion of Bonny centered around a pantheon of deities that served very specific functions and a belief in one supreme deity, usually given a female gender

¹³³ National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, Sir Claude M. MacDonald, Intelligence Report on the Bonny District, Oil Rivers Protectorate for the six months ending, June 1892, 28.

¹³⁴ Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 22-30; Spaulding and Beswick, *African Systems of Slavery*, 1-9.

designation, to whom the followers of Bonny religion rarely appealed for help in daily matters.¹³⁵

G.O.M. Tasia, one of the few scholars who has compiled a comprehensive study of Christianity in the Niger Delta, when speaking about religion prior to Christianity writes,

The traditional religion is animistic and highly influenced by fear; nearly every creek, stream or grove is peopled with spirits conceived to have very real existence. Worship is ritualistic and each act of devotion is approached with all sincerity and seriousness... Such religion is so easily susceptible to ridicule by the outsider; often easily disparaged or completely dismissed with words like ‘fetishism,’ ‘superstition,’ ‘uncivilized.’¹³⁶

The python was the “most highly venerated” of deities in the Niger Delta generally.¹³⁷ However, in Bonny, the most powerful deity was the *ikuba*, or iguana deity.¹³⁸ The chief priests of Bonny, often tied to the *ikuba* cult, exerted a great deal of political influence as members of a ruling council (a body that assisted the king in political decisions) due to their ability to invoke and interpret the will of deities and buttress political decisions with their religious authority.¹³⁹ G.I. Jones writes,

The European records of this period bring out very clearly the important political role of

¹³⁵ Egbe Ifie, *A Thousand Gods of the Niger Delta*, (Ibadan: Oputoru Books, 1998), 3 & 6; Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 4-7.

¹³⁶ Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 5.

¹³⁷ Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 36; Ifie, *A Thousand Gods*, 6.

¹³⁸ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 221; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 5; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 40 & 60. The importance of the iguana in Bonny religious traditions is evidenced by the inclusion of an article in the 1846 treaty between Bonny and Andoni in which the lizard, here named “Guano,” is protected from harm by Andoni men at the request of the Bonny signatories. It should also be noted here that members of the family iguanidae are not native to Africa, nor do any of the extant members of that family exist in any Old World locations, with the exception of Madagascar. More likely than not, Europeans, unfamiliar with the species of animals in Africa, mislabeled the African monitor lizard an iguana and subsequent translations of the Ijo language repeated the labeling of monitor lizards as iguanas. I do not speak Ijo, nor am I a zoologist, so I can not state that my interpretation here is accurate. However, when taking Igbo language courses in Nsukka, a similar circumstance arose in which the Igbo word *agu* was translated again and again as “tiger” in English. Being familiar with the families of big cats, I knew that tigers were native to Asia and had never existed on the African continent. Upon further inquiry, I was told *agu* really refers to any big cats in the bush, meaning *agu* would more accurately translate to “leopard” or “cheetah.” Yet, even in some Igbo language textbooks, *agu* is listed as meaning “tiger”. See Michael J.C. Echeruo, *Igbo-English Dictionary: A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Igbo Language, with an English-Igbo Index*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 8.

¹³⁹Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 5-6; Jones, *Trading States*, 69-71; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 5-8; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 75-76.

priests in Bonny as members of the general council, judicial matters, and as mediators in civil disputes...The priests of the major Bonny deities were considered persons of sufficient importance for their signature to be recorded on the earlier treaties.¹⁴⁰

As can be seen in the information above, successful trade on the many creeks of the Niger Delta and political success in governing the state relied heavily on propitiating the deities that ruled the area in the minds of the followers of traditional religion.

Trade was also very much tied to traditional religious structures until the middle of the nineteenth century in Bonny. The oath system that existed between the Igbo palm oil traders of the hinterland and coastal traders of Bonny was based on oaths enacted by priests.¹⁴¹ Essentially, trade agreements were given security by religious oaths made by the coastal and hinterland trader to ensure that the particulars of the trade agreement were met. Moreover, the priests that often traveled with traders into the interior were protected by the gods of the land. This helped to protect traders from being robbed by marauders and bandits as they carried on trade.¹⁴² This system remained vital to Bonny trade until the middle of the nineteenth century. However, growing foreign influence in the Delta would threaten this pattern of trade and increase internal tensions in Bonny, as will be seen later in this chapter.

Now that we have examined the structures and institutions that existed in the Delta upon Jaja's arrival there, we can now turn our attention back to 1835 to identify events in Jaja's life that led to his founding of Opobo and, eventually, to his reconnection with his kinship network in Umuduruoha. The focus of the rest of this chapter is dedicated to identifying the religious fissures that emerged in Jaja's time in Bonny, as these fissures largely explain why Jaja and his people withdrew to Egwenga Island in Andoni country in 1870.

¹⁴⁰ Jones, *Trading States*, 71.

¹⁴¹ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 37; Jones, *Trading States*, 68-71.

¹⁴² Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 37; Jones, *Trading States*, 68-71; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 21-22; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 77.

Jaja in Bonny

After being seized from Umuduruoha in Amaigbo, Jaja was moved west through the market town of Oguta.¹⁴³ While in Oguta, he was purchased by an Aro slave trader named Ike Inyama. Inyama carried Jaja south to the market town of Akwete. In Akwete, a Bonny trader named Odiari,¹⁴⁴ who belonged to the Royal house of Opubo Anna Pepple of Bonny, purchased Jaja.¹⁴⁵ Unlike many of the slaves sold at Akwete, who were bought for the purposes of resale,¹⁴⁶ earning the endeavoring trader a sizable profit at the coast, Jaja must have displayed some laudable personal qualities that led Odiari to move Jaja to Bonny, where he was given to a childless woman in the Opubo *wari* named Mgborie Igonidon.¹⁴⁷

Mgborie Igonidon initiated Jaja into the Anna Pepple house through the ritual process of shaving his head, renaming the boy and allowing him into her “kitchen” as her “child.”¹⁴⁸ Mbanaso Ozurumba was renamed Jugbo Jugboha or Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem, depending on which source one reads. In any case, Jaja's new name was shortened to Jo-Jo, which would later

¹⁴³ W. Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry of Mbanaso Ozurumba otherwise known as King Jaja, 1821-1891,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1978), 154; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya, interview by Author, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ Dike gives this man's name as Iganipughuma Allison. He claims Jaja was given to Maduka after Allison found the boy too weak for resale as a slave. However, Umuduruoha-based sources and S.J.S. Cookey all list the Opubo Anna Pepple trader as Odiari. See Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183.

¹⁴⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 28-29; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, p. 183; Ofonagoro, “Notes on the Ancestry,” 145-156.

¹⁴⁶ Jaja may not have been sold off at the coast because of his physical weakness at this point in time.

¹⁴⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 28-29. While Alagoa and Fombo's *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny* represents the most detailed source for elucidating Bonny's history with the use of oral tradition, the authors seemed to have no interest in digging out details about Jaja's emergence in Bonny, or his rise to power. In fact, the authors, probably reflecting Bonny's position towards the subject, take a very antagonistic stance against Jaja and his actions. As such, no mention is made of Jaja until he appears on the political scene to hasten the downfall of Bonny. This is a major shortcoming in Alagoa and Fombo's work, as the bias against Jaja is incredibly clear. The authors found oral sources to describe the personalities of the early kings, whose reigns were so ancient that the authors had to admit they could not place dates to them, but failed to bring out a single detail of one of Bonny's most important figures of the nineteenth century. Dike's analysis of Jaja's early years in the Delta boil down to a single sentence and Jones says nothing of Jaja until he begins to consolidate the late Iloli's debts in the 1850s. Finally, my Umuduruoha-based sources account for Jaja's life up until the point he reached Bonny, but make no mention of events after that until Jaja is reigning in Opobo in the 1880s. As such, Cookey is the only source of information we have this period of Jaja's life.

¹⁴⁸ Jones, *Trading States*, 56-60; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29-30. Jones does not make reference to Jaja's ritual head-shaving and renaming, but does speak to the institution and its impact on creating a system of support for purchased slaves.

become Ja Ja or Jaja when English traders misinterpreted his Ijo name.¹⁴⁹ During his first year in Bonny in 1835, Jaja had become depressed and suffered from continual health problems as he had yet to adapt to his new coastal environment. Because of this, Igonidon arranged to have Jaja moved to Ohambele, an important market town on the mainland that was within Bonny's sphere of influence. Ohambele was chosen because the mainland climate was thought to be a potential remedy to the poor health Jaja experienced on the coast.¹⁵⁰

While in Ohambele, Jaja lived with the widow of the head of the Annie Pepple house, Gwafagha. Under her care, Jaja's health was restored. Moreover, Gwafagha provided Jaja with patronage as he began to gain his footing in the trading market of Ohambele.¹⁵¹ It was here that Jaja was introduced to Bonny's trade networks and began to gain understanding of how trade operated in the city-state. King Opubo, who had died six years earlier in 1830, had issued a standing order to begin supplanting the trade in slaves with the trade in palm oil and palm kernels.¹⁵² Thus, Jaja began his trading career at an opportune time, having entered into the system of trade just as palm oil began to overtake slaves as Bonny's principal export good.

Although he was living in Ohambele during his early years as a slave, Jaja was still a member of one of Bonny's leading houses and had been introduced to trade quite early in his tenure in the Anna Pepple house. Two years after Jaja arrived in 1835, William Dappa Pepple, the son of Opubo, would be installed on the throne of Bonny as the *amanyanabo*. But, for the previous five years, Bonny had been ruled by a co-regency of two Igbo slaves from the Anna

¹⁴⁹ English traders also referred to Jaja as “Jack” at times.

¹⁵⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183. Dike does not recount the events in the same manner as Cookey, but does acknowledge that Jaja was in poor health when he arrived at the coast.

¹⁵¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 29-30.

¹⁵² Finapiri, *Forgotten Heroes*, 25; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 13; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 32-33; Jones, *Trading States*, 107-110; Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria*, 13; Fombo and Alagoa, *A Chronicle*, 13-15.

Pepple and Manilla Pepple houses.¹⁵³ Maduka, of the Anna Pepple house, wielded the most authority in this co-regency and was initially successful at carrying on the autocratic tendencies of his late master, Opubo. However, his desire to insulate the kingdom from increasing European influences led him to create policies that alienated many of the European traders.¹⁵⁴ Maduka, in an incident that would lead to his downfall, imprisoned a prominent Bonny chief for unwittingly trading with a Spanish merchant before that merchant had paid his comeys to Maduka.¹⁵⁵ This was the final straw for Bonny's chiefs, who immediately sought out a 19 year old William Dappa Pepple to rule, who at this time was living with his mother in the small mainland village of Epelema.¹⁵⁶

Dappa Pepple's presence in Bonny sparked a wave of enthusiasm in its citizens, who had lost money as a result of Maduka's autocratic tendencies.¹⁵⁷ Dappa Pepple had few resources to speak of and even fewer men to support his cause. However, the prominent chiefs and European traders operating at the coast gladly supplied Dappa Pepple with the money and manpower he needed to take the throne so that trade could continue freely as it had before Maduka.¹⁵⁸ As a result, Maduka was forced to stand aside as Dappa Pepple was enthroned as the new *amanyanabo* of Bonny in 1837. The Anna Pepple house, under Maduka's control, wholly opposed the ascension of Dappa Pepple to the position of *amanyanabo*. The rival Manilla Pepple house fully supported the young king. This would mark the beginning of tensions between these

¹⁵³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 31-39; Jones, *Trading States*, 111.

¹⁵⁴ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33-39.

¹⁵⁵ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 31-39; Jones, *Trading States*, 111.

¹⁵⁶ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 31-39; Jones, *Trading States*, 111.

¹⁵⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 36-39.

¹⁵⁸ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 36-39.

two houses.¹⁵⁹ By the 1860s, the rivalry would rip the trading-state apart.

Maduka died shortly after he lost his position as regent. His death was hastened by his alcoholism, which worsened when he was removed from power.¹⁶⁰ As Maduka drank himself to death, his son, Alali, took control of the Anna Pepple house, becoming Jaja's new master.¹⁶¹ Alali, desperately trying to maintain, if not restore, Anna Pepple's position of power in the community actively began to seek out able and astute young slaves in his house that could increase the *wari*'s profits through the burgeoning trade in palm oil.¹⁶² Jaja's experiences in Ohambele made him a prime candidate for this job, and Alali brought him back to the island of Bonny from the mainland.¹⁶³

The 1840s was a turbulent time for Jaja and Bonny. Jaja, at first, seemed as if he would fail miserably as a trader. In a reflection of oral narratives collected in Umuduruoha, Jaja exhibited signs of stubbornness, belligerence, and volatility in his disposition.¹⁶⁴ In his early years as a Bonny trader, he would often steal products he was entrusted to sell, causing a loss to his house and earning him censures from his master, Alali.¹⁶⁵ However, with age came maturity, Jaja soon straightened out and gradually rose to become one of the more trusted traders in the Anna Pepple *wari*.¹⁶⁶

William Dappa Pepple took the stool¹⁶⁷ of the *amanyanabo* in 1837 and began his efforts to rectify Bonny's sinking economic prowess. He came to power with two goals in mind. The

¹⁵⁹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-70; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52-53; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 31-39; Jones, *Trading States*, 111.

¹⁶⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 34; Jones, *Trading States*, 112.

¹⁶¹ It is important to note here that Dappa Pepple's ascension to throne did not place him at head of either the Manilla Pepple house or the Anna Pepple house. As stated above, he became the King of Bonny with few to no resources of his own and no *wari* or trading house under his control.

¹⁶² Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 34.

¹⁶³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 34.

¹⁶⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 33-34.

¹⁶⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 34; Okpete Kanu, "The Life and Times of King Ja Ja of Opobo, 1812-1895," (Halifax, N.S.: Dalhousie University, 1970), 29-36.

¹⁶⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 34; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 33-36.

¹⁶⁷ The stool is a symbol of the *amanyanabo*'s royal authority in Bonny.

first was to promote Bonny's trade in palm oil so as to further monopolize access to the major inland oil markets. He would do this by keeping foreign traders out. Secondly, he invited more European activity to Bonny in the hopes of improving social conditions and creating more direct contacts with European traders for economic transactions at the coastal ports.¹⁶⁸ Dappa failed to achieve the first objective when he signed a series of British-initiated treaties from 1837 to 1839.¹⁶⁹ The treaties of 1836, 1837 and 1839 openly allowed the British to "intervene," forcibly if necessary, if the trade in slaves continued or a British subject was maltreated.¹⁷⁰

In signing these treaties, Dappa Pepple was seen as a king who would bend under British influence.¹⁷¹ In 1844, Dappa Pepple and his men seized British ships and traders in retaliation for years of unpaid dues arising from abolishing the slave trade in Bonny.¹⁷² While Dappa Pepple held the British traders in an effort to force the British to pay what was owed, a local priest named Awunta, supposedly working on his own, organized a group of "terrorists" from Juju Town¹⁷³ to attack and kill British men trading on the rivers and creeks controlled by Bonny.¹⁷⁴ While Awunta and his group wished to rid Bonny of all foreigners, and therefore threatened the economic structure of the state, Dappa Pepple could do nothing to stop Awunta, as he was protected by his traditional religious authority.¹⁷⁵ Dappa relied on the British to stop Awunta and his men themselves, but he was also, quite secretly, using Awunta's movement to disrupt trade

¹⁶⁸ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19-20; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-43; Jones, *Trading States*, 112-114; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 84-85.

¹⁶⁹ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19-20; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-43; Jones, *Trading States*, 112-114; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 84-85.

¹⁷⁰ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19-20; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-42; Jones, *Trading States*, 112-114; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 84-85.

¹⁷¹ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19-20; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 84-85.

¹⁷² Jones, *Trading States*, 114-115; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 39-43; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 91-92; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22.

¹⁷³ Juju Town was a satellite community within Bonny's sphere of influence, roughly 20 miles north of Bonny town, proper.

¹⁷⁴ Jones, *Trading States*, 114-115; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47-49; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 91-92; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22.

¹⁷⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47-49;

between Britain and Bonny's chief rival, Calabar.¹⁷⁶ Awunta's rebellion came to an end in 1848, when Captain Birch of the British navy captured him and his followers and convinced Dappa and his chiefs to sign a trade treaty under which the protection of British subjects would be supplied by Bonny. In return, King Dappa Pepple accepted the meager stipend of 2000 GBP promised to him in the 1839 anti-slaving treaty.¹⁷⁷



Figure 25: Trading States of the Niger Delta, also showing Juju Town

Having been drawn into the conflict between the British and Awunta, Dappa's desire to increase the European presence in Bonny became more pressing. The rivalry between Calabar and Bonny for economic domination of the Delta took on a distinctly religious dimension in 1846 when the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPCS) established a mission in Calabar, whose trade was operating quite effectively at the time.¹⁷⁸ Seeing Calabar's actions in inviting the

¹⁷⁶ Kanu, "The Life and Times," 47; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47-49; Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22. Dappa sent emissaries to Awunta to tell him and his men to attack the British subjects on rivers and creeks in Calabar territory as well.

¹⁷⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 49; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 91-92; Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22.

¹⁷⁸ Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 19; Jones, *Trading States*, 84; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 55. The UPCS had no "native" agents evangelizing at this time. This lends more credence to the idea that Dappa and his chiefs desired the kind of prosperity that they thought could be brought by European missions. This distinction will become important when Crowther and his "native" agents establish a mission in Bonny in 1864.

UPCS to establish a mission as the root of their success in trade with European partners, Dappa Pepple was entertaining the idea of opening a mission in Bonny. By 1848, Dappa Pepple and his chiefs sent two letters of invitation, through European acquaintances, to missionaries from the UPCS to come to Bonny. Tasié, foreshadowing later events, writes,

Pepple and his chiefs stated quite frankly what they were asking for: ‘two or three missionaries for the purpose of educating their children and enlightening themselves’; ‘that those sent out may be capable of teaching the young people the English language.’ Evidently Bonny rulers were not asking for an evangelistic mission... In any case, Pepple did not realise that the commencement of the mission would demand a breach between Bonny and its traditional religion and ritual practices.¹⁷⁹

Clearly Dappa’s initial invitation to the UPCS to begin mission work was motivated by the economic and political needs of Bonny at the time. Dappa was not concerned with the religious influence that Christian missionaries might have in his state, only the ways in which affiliations with said missionaries could make his state more prosperous. While the UPCS administrators were enthusiastic about King Dappa Pepple’s letter (insofar as they felt it reflected an African-initiated request for the Christian religion to be brought to Bonny), they responded by saying that the environmental conditions in Bonny were unsuitable for Europeans in 1849.¹⁸⁰

Dappa Pepple and the heads of the UPCS seemed to suffer from a major breakdown in communication. While Pepple had been told by a white trader that a missionary was a “juju man,” the UPCS considered Pepple’s request a sincere call for Christian religious influence in Bonny.¹⁸¹ With the failure to reach a mutual understanding of what was desired by Bonny and the UPCS, the idea of opening a mission in Bonny was dismissed by both Pepple and the UPCS in 1850.¹⁸²

While Dappa Pepple was trying to bring a Christian mission to Bonny in the hopes of

¹⁷⁹ Tasié *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-21; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 54-56.

¹⁸⁰ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 22; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 54-56.

¹⁸¹ Tasié *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 22.

¹⁸² Tasié *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 25.

providing western education, which in turn would increase trade with Europeans, Jaja was committing himself to his commercial enterprises more seriously.¹⁸³ Unlike many of the older traders in the Anna Pepple house, Jaja was not forced to make the transition from slave trading to palm oil trading. From his earliest years of slavery in Ohambele, he had been engaged in the buying and selling of palm oil, not people. Thus, he was uniquely positioned to rise quickly as a trader in the Anna Pepple house and began to amass serious wealth in the palm oil trade. What was more, Alali, Jaja's master, had not given up his father's fight: Alali and the Anna Pepple house continued to oppose William Dappa Pepple at every turn, looking for any opportunity to call his leadership into question. Thus, when Dappa Pepple made overtures to the UPCS in the 1840s, many in the Anna Pepple house saw this as an abandonment of the traditional religious structure that underpinned political and economic systems in Bonny.¹⁸⁴ This, coupled with Dappa Pepple's lukewarm reaction to engaging its Andoni neighbors in a war¹⁸⁵ in 1846, led many in Bonny to question his fitness as a ruler.¹⁸⁶

The head of the Anna Pepple house, Alali, died in 1850.¹⁸⁷ He was followed by a man named Iloli. Iloli was an ambitious leader who, over the course of the next decade, would expand the Anna Pepple house's influence by leaps and bounds, creating a vast network of traders in the palm-oil rich interior. Under Iloli, Jaja became one of the principal traders of the Anna Pepple

¹⁸³ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta*, 25; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 54-55; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 48-49.

¹⁸⁴ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 54-55; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 45-47.

¹⁸⁵ Tensions between Bonny and the many communities to the north and west in Andoni country were ongoing throughout the nineteenth century. The decentralized Andoni communities lay directly between Bonny town and the upriver markets they relied on for trade. As Bonny expanded its area of influence, they came into conflict with various Andoni communities. However, they did not carry out any wars against the entire Andoni ethnic group, just the communities that stood in the way of Bonny expansion.

¹⁸⁶ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 20-22; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 54-55.

¹⁸⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 52. It should be noted here that Alagoa and Fombo seem to be under the impression that Alali and Iloli were, in fact, different people. However, Dike, Cookey and Jones only make references to one or the other, indicating that they believe them to be the same individual. Again, given Alagoa and Fombo's intimate knowledge on this subject, I have chosen to follow their interpretation. It should also be noted that Tasie makes a distinction between these two figures.

house.¹⁸⁸ As Iloli's wealth grew, so did Jaja's. As both men became wealthier, Iloli's political clout was augmented greatly. In fact, Iloli was identified as one of the leading figures in Bonny agitating to remove Dappa Pepple from the position of *amanyanabo*.¹⁸⁹

Dappa's Exile and Conversion

By 1852, *amanyanabo* Dappa Pepple was recovering from a stroke and had lost the favor of his subjects and chiefs in Bonny, in particular Iloli of the Anna Pepple house. In 1854 Dappa Pepple was removed from the trading-state by British consul John Beecroft.¹⁹⁰ Alagoa and Fombo claim that it was unlikely, given the traditions of kingship in Bonny, that any of the citizens or chiefs of the trading state would have felt that they had the authority to ask for the ouster of King Dappa Pepple. Rather, they point to a letter drafted in 1857 on behalf of Dappa Pepple¹⁹¹ in which the deposed ruler claims he was unjustly taken away by Beecroft against the will of his chiefs and subjects.¹⁹² Instead, Fombo and Alagoa believe that the primary reason for Dappa's removal was tied to Beecroft's view of the monarch as a staunch obstacle to British interests in the area.¹⁹³ Also, it must be noted that Dike suggests that Dappa Pepple was removed as a result of displeased supercargoes¹⁹⁴ colluding against the sovereign by claiming he was still engaged in the slave trade.¹⁹⁵

While in exile, Dappa was detained at Fernando Po and Ascension Island¹⁹⁶ before

¹⁸⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 51-52.

¹⁸⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 43; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69-72.

¹⁹⁰ Jones, *Trading States*, 117-120; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 160; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 41-42.

¹⁹¹ Dappa Pepple could not read or write in English.

¹⁹² Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 20; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 43-46; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 43-45.

¹⁹³ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 20-21.

¹⁹⁴ "Supercargoes" were the individuals paid by firms in Europe to engage in trade abroad. The term broadly defines any European people in the Delta at the behest of a trading firm in Europe. The term could apply to the captain of a vessel, its crew, or representatives of the firm travelling with the vessel. The firms represented in the Delta during the nineteenth century were mostly based in Liverpool, with some smaller firms being located in Glasgow, Scotland.

¹⁹⁵ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 160.

¹⁹⁶ Ascension Island was a British-held island in the middle of the South Atlantic, roughly 1,000 miles from the coast of West Africa and 1,400 miles from the coast of South America. It's location in the center of the South Atlantic

leaving for London, where he would successfully fight against his removal from Bonny.¹⁹⁷ Little is known about the details of Dappa's period in exile. However, two events were vital to the future development of a Christian mission in Bonny. In 1854, while in exile at Fernando Po, Dappa Pepple met Bishop S.A. Crowther,¹⁹⁸ a man of Yoruba origin, who was rescued from a slave ship in the 1820s. He had received western education and converted to Christianity after settling in Sierra Leone.¹⁹⁹ While speaking with Crowther in 1854, Pepple had learned of the plans to open a Church Mission Society mission station on the Niger, an event that would occur in 1857 in Lokoja. This meeting between the Bishop and the King would later form the basis for the establishment of an Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) mission being established in Bonny in 1864.²⁰⁰

In England, Pepple's appeals to Parliament for his return to Bonny were largely a result of the help of a group of British Quakers.²⁰¹ More relevant to this discussion was King Dappa Pepple's conversion and subsequent Baptism in Christ Church, London in 1859.²⁰² While Dappa was preparing for his return to Bonny in 1860, he became more actively engaged in establishing a mission presence in his trading-state. Dappa Pepple appealed to Rev. G.H. McGill, who was

made it a convenient stop-off point for ships engaged in long journeys over the Atlantic.

¹⁹⁷ Kanu, "The Life and Times," 45; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 46-48; Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 24-25.

¹⁹⁸ Crowther was in Fernando Po to discuss the possibility of opening missions in the Bight of Biafra with British Consul John Beecroft.

¹⁹⁹ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 26; J.F. Ade-Ajayi, *A Patriot to the Core: Bishop Ajayi Crowther*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2001.), 4.

²⁰⁰ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 26; Ade-Ajayi, *A Patriot to the Core*, 4. It is important to note Crowther's emergence on the scene in the Niger Delta, insofar as a conflict between Crowther and Jaja would lead to Jaja's banishment of African missionaries in his Kingdom of Opobo. This issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁰¹ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 27; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 48.

²⁰² Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 26-29; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 75-76. The reasons for his conversion are unknown. There are three distinct possibilities that exist. First, he could have sincerely adopted the tenets of Christianity when he was exposed to them in England. A second possibility is that Dappa Pepple felt a conversion to Christianity could have aided him in his fight to be returned to the throne of Bonny, as having a Christian king in the trading state would have been viewed as beneficial by Europeans. Finally, he could have converted as a means of convincing British missionary groups of the need for a mission station, and mission education, in his trading state of Bonny. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Dappa Pepple had been under the impression that mission work in Delta communities facilitated trade with European agents in the area. Any one reason, or any combination of the three, could explain Dappa Pepple's conversion.

not only a friend of Dappa's but also the man who baptized him in London.²⁰³ Dappa's appeal to McGill was successful and he returned to Bonny in 1861 with "a chaplain, schoolmaster, carpenter, gardener, schoolmistress, surgeon and nurse."²⁰⁴ This early attempt at establishing a mission in Bonny ultimately failed, insofar as the Europeans that came to Bonny with Dappa Pepple left shortly after their arrival due to poor health and living conditions.²⁰⁵

Unfortunately for Bonny, the internal politics of the trading state had deteriorated immensely while Dappa Pepple was in exile. Upon Dappa's exit from Bonny in 1854, Dappo, the grandson of King Opubo, was named monarch.²⁰⁶ Although he died only a year after his ascension to the throne of Bonny, in this short time he was forced to sign a treaty with the British that would foreshadow events to come. This 1854 treaty essentially ceded the rights of Bonny's monarch to profit personally from trade revenues, declare war without British approval, or monopolize the trade of the Bonny River. Furthermore, this treaty established the authority of the Court of Equity, over which British supercargoes were given the authority to mediate discrepancies amongst the many merchants in Bonny.²⁰⁷

King Dappo's reign, while short, provides a glimpse into Bonny's attitudes towards traditional healing and western medicine and how these attitudes intersect with politics. It also sheds light on the deepening of the fracture between the Manilla Pepple and Anna Pepple houses. According to Alagoa and Fombo, the Manilla Pepple house supported the exiled King Dappa Pepple.²⁰⁸ On the other hand, the Anna Pepple house saw Dappo's monarchy as a chance to

²⁰³ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 27; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 45-47; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 48.

²⁰⁴ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 27. During Dappa Pepple's time in exile, his Prime Minister, Fred Pepple, also adopted Christianity.

²⁰⁵ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 27; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 45-47.

²⁰⁶ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 21; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 144-148; Jones, *Trading States*, 77-83.

²⁰⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 21; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 144-148; Jones, *Trading States*, 77-83.

The Court of Equity was a judicial body comprised of the kings and chiefs of local communities, the British consul or vice-consul, and European representatives of the trading firms who maintained interests in the Niger Delta.

²⁰⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 46-47; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 145-147; Jones, *Trading States*, 181-186.

solidify their position as the dominant house in Bonny. Upon his taking the throne, Dappo was obliged to tour his country by war canoe.²⁰⁹ While on this 1855 trip, Dappo fell ill and died.²¹⁰ Two explanations emerged about his death: The Anna Pepple tradition states that Dappo was cursed by traditional chiefs at the behest of the leaders of the Manilla Pepple house; a suspicion they claim was confirmed by an Igbo “medicine man.”²¹¹ However, European documents state that Dappo fell ill and died because the weather was quite inclement during his trip in the war canoe and he refused to take western medicine.²¹²

While trying to ascertain the cause of Dappo’s death over a century later is somewhat futile, what is important here was the way in which traditional concepts of medicine and religion not only prevailed, but, in essence, hastened and cemented growing political tensions in Bonny. While discussing Dappo's death, Dike writes, “European institutions and dogma had remarkably small influence, and traditional religious and political beliefs, though unwritten, still dominated the daily life of the nineteenth century.”²¹³ The break between the Manilla Pepple and Anna Pepple houses²¹⁴ was so severe that the two factions took to outright war to resolve the dilemma. In the chaos that ensued, Dappa Pepple’s house suffered severe losses in his absence, both in terms of manpower and resources.²¹⁵ The British Acting Consul, J.W.B. Lynslager, appointed a four-man regency after Dappo’s death, in the hopes that the warring factions could find some sort

²⁰⁹ This event, known as the King's Regatta, is still practiced in the Niger Delta communities of Bonny and Opobo. This was the only time an *amanyanabo* was allowed to leave his capital during his reign.

²¹⁰ Jones, *Trading States*, 125; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148-149; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 21-22.

²¹¹ Jones, *Trading States*, 125; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148-149; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 21-22.

²¹² Jones, *Trading States*, 125; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148-149; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 21-22.

²¹³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 161.

²¹⁴ Here, I am referring to the fact that the Anna Pepple accused the Manilla Pepple of murdering King Dappo with traditional medicines. The Manilla Pepple had never fully accepted Dappo's reign, as, prior to his exile, they were staunch supporters of King William Dappa Pepple. The Manilla Pepple consistently supported his efforts to be returned to the throne. The Anna Pepple house, headed by Iloli at this point, did not support Dappa Pepple before, during or after his exile.

²¹⁵ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 22; Jones, *Trading States*, 125; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148-149.

of power-sharing arrangement.²¹⁶ However, this regency failed to regain control of the political and economic crises in Bonny, insofar as the men appointed were ex-slaves whom the traditional framework of leadership would not legitimize.²¹⁷ Therefore, when Dappa Pepple returned to Bonny in 1861, he returned to a broken state and his traditional bases of authority, his divine Pepple Kingship and his wealth, had been challenged and depleted.²¹⁸ In his final years as the *amanyanabo* of Bonny, Dappa Pepple never regained his political authority. However, this freshly converted Christian King would deeply impact views on religion in Bonny for years to come, and fissures over religion would lead to a civil war.

In 1864, King Dappa Pepple and Bishop Crowther, whom Dappa Pepple had met in Fernando ten years earlier, agreed to establish a mission in Finnima, an area that was under the control of Bonny.²¹⁹ The mission was vastly under-funded and under-staffed. To further exacerbate the mission's problems, the official ratification of the mission in Bonny territory was further delayed by the deepening rift between the Manilla Pepple and Anna Pepple houses.²²⁰ As the tension in Bonny mounted the head of the Anna Pepple house, Iloli, died and Jaja, still a relatively young trader, took control of one of Bonny's most powerful political factions.

“Drink Make Man Fool”: Jaja’s Rise to Chieftaincy

Jaja's rise to power in the Anna Pepple *wari* is directly tied to the merit-based system on which Bonny's houses operated. Iloli was ambitious, but his ambitions had caused him to overreach in his quest to cement the Anna Pepple house as the primary power in Bonny.²²¹ In

²¹⁶ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 45-46; Jones, *Trading States*, 125.

²¹⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 23; Jones, *Trading States*, 125; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148-149.

²¹⁸ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 148; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 45-46; Jones, *Trading States*, 125.

²¹⁹ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 30-32; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 53.

²²⁰ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 30-32. Finnima was chosen, according to Tasié, for two reasons. First, the climate was more favorable to non-Delta peoples. Secondly, Finnima was an important site of traditional religion, as it was the home of the powerful Simingi Cult in past decades.

²²¹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 138-142; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 45-48; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 51-53.

creating his vast trading empire, Iloli had taken an immense number of trusts²²² from the European supercargoes operating at the coast.²²³ As Iloli's health failed him and his fondness for drinking increased, he continued to take on large trading contracts with his European partners, despite an inability to deliver the massive amounts of palm oil agreed upon.²²⁴ At the time of Iloli's death by a stroke in April of 1862, his debts to trading partners were rumored to be in the vicinity of 15,000 to 20,000 GBP, or 1000 to 1500 puncheons of palm oil.²²⁵

Jaja was anything but an ideal candidate for headship of the Anna Pepple house. He had not yet acquired the experience of leadership and other, more senior members, of the house had long been active in the state politics of Bonny. The senior chiefs of the Anna Pepple house at the time of Iloli's death were Uranta and Kala Nduwise.²²⁶ Nduwise was better known as Annie Stewart.²²⁷ Both men were experienced in Bonny's statewide affairs, while Jaja seems to have watched the events of the previous decade unfurl from the sidelines. However, Iloli had left debts so large that neither Uranta nor Kala Nduwise were willing to absorb the responsibility for them. Of the situation, Cookey writes,

Substantial traders themselves, they [Uranta and Nduwise] had their own obligations to meet and feared the wealth that had taken them so long to amass would be frittered away in settling Iloli's debts, leaving them impoverished in their old age. Instead, Annie Stewart sponsored Jaja for the position and thus suddenly catapulted him into the vortex of Bonny politics.²²⁸

Although Jaja, irresponsible in his youth and silent in the recent politic turmoil, seemed like a scapegoat candidate for a job no one else wanted, his willingness to shoulder Iloli's debts and

²²² Credit extended by European supercargoes to Delta traders.

²²³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 138-142; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 45-48; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 51-53.

²²⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 46-47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183.

²²⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 46-47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183.

²²⁶ Both of these men were former slaves of Igbo extraction. They, like Jaja, had risen through Bonny's merit-based house system and were appointed by Lynslager to the four-man regency that controlled Bonny politics after Dappo's death.

²²⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 46-48; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 183.

²²⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47-48.

take responsibility for leadership of the Anna Pepple *wari* during this trying period showed his resolve to achieve greater levels of wealth and authority. And, as history would show, his gamble would pay off, but not before embroiling him in the most chaotic period of Bonny's history at the time.

Jaja's rapid rise to the head of the Anna Pepple house would mark the beginning of his journey towards replanting the seeds of home and reconnecting with his natal kinship group. Upon taking headship of the *wari*, Jaja showed how he had changed over the years. The boy who pilfered goods and spent freely, became a man who ran the Anna Pepple house frugally.²²⁹ The boy with a reckless nature and wild disposition, now abstained from drinking imported alcohol completely, preferring to drink only palm wine and water.²³⁰ Of seeing the downfall of those around him at the hands of imported alcohol, Jaja is reported to have said, "Drink make man fool."²³¹ Upon his ascension to the head of the Anna Pepple house, Jaja took Bonny customs more seriously, becoming a member of the all-important *ekine* society,

...through which he learned the drum language of the masquerades and the folklore of Bonny. In particular, he had learned to recognize as well as respect the various roles of Bonny deities (*amanyanaoru*), which played a vital role in the political, social, and religious life of the community. His subsequent defense of these deities against the encroachments of Christianity was to be a prominent theme in his life.²³²

It is clear that Jaja had grown and matured during his time as a trader in the Anna Pepple house and his leadership became an invaluable asset to the Anna Pepple house when it faced

²²⁹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 184; Jones, *Trading States*, 128; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-49.

²³⁰ While palm wine does contain alcohol, there seemed to be a belief among some West Africans that the drink was not as harmful as alcoholic drinks of western extraction. This is evidenced in the travelogues of early European observers in Muslim territories of West Africa. While Muslims are required by their religion to abstain from drinking alcohol, many early travelers, such as Mungo Park, Francisco Travassos Valdez, and Michel Adanson note that African Muslims would often drink palm wine, as they did not consider the drink to be a breach of their religious tenets. See Mungo Park, *Travels in the interior districts of Africa, performed in the years 1795, 1796 & 1797 with an account of a subsequent mission to that country in 1805*, (London: George Newnes, 1805); Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia*, (Dublin: G. and A. Ewing, A. James, and H. Bradley, Booksellers, 1759) & Francisco Travassos Valdez, *Six years of a traveller's life in western Africa*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1978).

²³¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 48.

²³² Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 48.

annihilation in the war that would break out by the end of the decade.

Jaja worked diligently to pay the debts of Iloli. In working out a plan to pay Iloli's debt, Jaja was also able to maintain the support of the European firms operating in Bonny, getting the same credit that was extended to the late Iloli guaranteed to him.²³³ While doing so, he also took upon himself the debts of traders in lesser houses of Bonny.²³⁴ This bolstered support for the Anna Pepple house in the populace of Bonny. No less than fifteen *wari* were absorbed into the Anna Pepple faction in Bonny.²³⁵ Jaja willingly gave the heads of these houses the ability to govern their affairs independently, but the houses, in their weakened state, remained tied to Jaja through a system of patronage.²³⁶ This move deeply aggravated the Manilla Pepple *wari*, and in 1865, a fist fight between members of the two houses erupted into a riot that was only quelled when newly-enthroned King George Pepple broke it up with his pistol.²³⁷

While Jaja emerged as a competent leader in the Anna Pepple house, the Manilla Pepple house was suffering from years of in-fighting. When the head of the Manilla Pepple house, a man named Ncheke, died in 1863,²³⁸ Oko Jumbo and another leading Igbo ex-slave of the Manilla Pepple house named Will Banigo were at odds over who would assume the headship of the house.²³⁹ This dispute came to an uneasy resolution when Jumbo and Banigo agreed to place another Igbo ex-slave, named Warribo, in the headship position.²⁴⁰ However, Warribo remained a feckless figurehead, and Oko Jumbo and Will Banigo ruled the house and influenced state

²³³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-50; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 53-56.

²³⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-50; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 53-56.

²³⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-50; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 53-56.

²³⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-50; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 53-56.

²³⁷ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 38-39.

²³⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 25.

²³⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 25.

²⁴⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 25.

politics from behind the scenes. At some point between 1863 and 1865, Banigo lost much of his influence and the Manilla Pepple *wari* fell firmly under the control of Oko Jumbo.²⁴¹

Despite the opposition of the Anna Pepple, mission work continued in Bonny, and the youths of the trading-state, as well as some older members of the Manilla Pepple house, began to undertake Christian education through Crowther's mission.²⁴² Older and more prominent members of Bonny society felt that Christian education was a practice best left to children.²⁴³ The feeling was that the primary purpose of the mission was to "train youth, especially in the fields of trade and communication with Europeans."²⁴⁴ Unlike King Dappa Pepple, the other leaders of Bonny still viewed Christianity in this pragmatic light. The ideological aspects of Christianity were of little importance to the majority of Bonny political elites and seemed only to have been considered by the members of Dappa's Manilla Pepple house. Christianity was adopted by Dappa Pepple while he was abroad. Despite his position in the internal affairs of Bonny's trade and political institutions, Christianity, at least ideologically, was not espoused by the majority of political elites who had remained in Bonny during Dappa Pepple's absence.²⁴⁵

In 1866, when King William Dappa Pepple died, he left a fledgling congregation of Christians in Bonny to his son and successor, King George Pepple. Of George Pepple, Dike writes:

...the new king, through his eight years' education in England and long absence from Bonny, did not quite belong to the society he came to rule. Unlike his father he was a thorough convert to Christianity and in other respects a typical westerner. At Bonny these attainments disqualified him in the eyes of his subjects. 'Few people can understand the reason for this. It is simply another proof of the power of Ju-Ju amongst these people,' declared an eyewitness with over thirty years' experience of the Delta trade, 'for it is to

²⁴¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 47; Jones, *Trading States*, 126; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182 ; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 25. Jones gives Ncheke's name as "Ntshaka" and Dike speaks to Oko Jumbo's rise in the Manilla Pepple house without mentioning Ncheke.

²⁴² Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 33; Ade-Ajayi, *A Patriot to the Core*, 122-132; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-51.

²⁴³ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 33; Ade-Ajayi, *A Patriot to the Core*, 122-132; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-51.

²⁴⁴ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 34; Ade-Ajayi, *A Patriot to the Core*, 122-132; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 48-51

²⁴⁵ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 33.

that occult influence that I trace the general ill-success of the educated native of the Delta in his own country- unless he returns to all the pagan gods of his forefathers, and until he does so many channels of prosperity are completely closed to him.²⁴⁶

Dike clearly defines the attitudes of Bonny chiefs and citizens towards a foreign-educated and influenced ruler's adoption of Christianity. George Pepple, like his father before him, had adopted Christianity elsewhere, and it was not easily brought to bear on the masses, as it was still largely seen as a foreign concept brought by a foreign man. While some sections of Bonny society began to warm to the ideas of Christianity over the next few years of George Pepple's reign, rifts between George Pepple and traditionalists in Bonny would eventually lead to the economic collapse of the trading-state.²⁴⁷



Figure 26: Jaja in Traditional Dress of the Niger Delta (**Date and photographer unknown**)

King George Pepple, lacking a base for economic and political control, continued to push forward in his support of the CMS mission in Bonny. In 1866 and 1867, George Pepple declared

²⁴⁶ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 164.

²⁴⁷ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 36-38; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 164-165.

that Christianity would be the new state religion of Bonny and ordered the destruction of the many trappings of the *ikuba* cult in the society.²⁴⁸ While George Pepple was able to pass these orders with the help of the Manilla Pepple house alone, the society at large adopted the King's policy and proceeded to destroy the *ikuba* shrine and engage in the mass killing of iguanas, the earthly representative of the *ikuba* deity.²⁴⁹ The Anna Pepple house, now led by Jaja, remained in strong opposition to the religious policies of King George Pepple, and the tensions that would culminate in the outbreak of war again became apparent.

Having successfully suppressed two previous episodes of violence between the Manilla Pepple *wari* and the Anna Pepple *wari* in 1867 and 1868, George Pepple's policies could no longer be tolerated by the fervently traditionalist Anna Pepple faction and its leader, Jaja. In 1869, a full-blown civil war broke out between these two political factions. We can now bring this chapter to a close by briefly analyzing the civil war and Jaja's removal of his followers to the island that would become the kingdom of Opobo.

The Bonny Civil War and Jaja's Rekindling of Connections with Home

As stated above, the tensions between the Manilla Pepple house and Anna Pepple house had come to a head in 1869. The Manilla Pepple house, now firmly under the influence of Oko Jumbo, an Igbo ex-slave who had adopted Christianity, attained a handful of cannons and began to look to war as the only solution to their Anna Pepple problem.²⁵⁰ According to Dike, "Though King George was supposed to rule the country, 'Oko Jumbo and Jaja were looked upon by

²⁴⁸ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 36; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 61; Jones, *Trading States*, 86; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

²⁴⁹ Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 36; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 61; Jones, *Trading States*, 86; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67. Again, it is likely that the actual animals killed were African monitor lizards, not iguanas.

²⁵⁰ Tasié *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 40; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 59-60; Jones, *Trading States*, 128-130.

everyone as the rulers of Bonny.”²⁵¹ The decline in George Pepple’s status in Bonny was tied to his inability to maintain the traditional order of trade and politics. In decades past, one of the King’s primary functions was to mediate conflicts between houses. However, finding support largely in the Manilla Pepple house for his policies, George Pepple naturally alienated those who did not see eye to eye with him on matters of politics, trade or religion.²⁵² The outbreak of civil war in the late 1860s was inherently tied to religion, insofar as members of both the Anna Pepple and Manilla Pepple houses adhered to various religious traditions. It can comfortably be asserted that Jaja seized upon the religious divide between himself, Oko Jumbo and George Pepple.

Before discussing the civil war, we must first deal with evidence of Jaja's connection to his natal home that emerged from 1869, while he was still in Bonny. S.J.S. Cookey, in his book *King Jaja of Niger Delta*, writes that while Jaja's sister had come to visit him in Bonny from Umuduruoha on the eve of the war, a fire erupted in Jaja’s friend’s compound and the flames spread to burn a large swath of the Opubo Anna Pepple section of Bonny.²⁵³ Cookey claims that Jaja's sister, whose name is not given, died in that fire.²⁵⁴ The presence and unfortunate death of Jaja’s sister establishes the fact that Jaja was able to reconnect with his natal kinship network well before establishing the trading-state of Opobo. My Umuduruoha collaborators all made allusions to Jaja's sister coming to live with him while he was the sovereign of Opobo,²⁵⁵ but they placed this event as having occurred while he was the sitting *amanyanabo* of Opobo. In fact,

²⁵¹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185.

²⁵² Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 184-185; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 62.

²⁵³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63. The fire of 1869 in the Opubo Anna Pepple section of Bonny has been well documented and accounts of it appear in Dike, Jones and Alagoa and Fombo. Whether or not the fire occurred is not in question. However, Cookey is the only author to claim, from evidence apparently related to him by Chief Cookey Gam of Opobo, Jaja's sister, from Umuduruoha, died in the fire.

²⁵⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 63.

²⁵⁵ Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, December 31, 2011; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, January 16, 2012.

Umuduruoha recollections cite a fortuitous event²⁵⁶ in the 1880s, while Jaja was king of Opobo, that allowed Jaja to identify a trader in his markets as being from Umuduruoha. It was by way of this event that Jaja was said to have sent word back to his brother regarding his whereabouts and, according to Umuduruoha sources, Jaja later sent word to his sister to come live with him in Opobo.²⁵⁷ If Coockey's claim of Jaja's sister's visit is true, then it would drastically change the timeline and location for Jaja's reconnection with his natal kinship network and would place this reconnection during Jaja's days as a slave in Bonny. Furthermore, if Coockey's assertion is accurate, it would only further reinforce my thesis that African slave studies have failed to adequately engage with or account for a slave's ability to rekindle his or her ties to his or her ancestral home, even while still technically a slave.

A number of reasons can be cited for the break between Bonny and Opobo in the early 1870s. First, Jaja, being an ex-slave, had no opportunity to rise to a higher position in Bonny politics. He would necessarily be relegated to the head of the Anna Pepple house and nothing more, given the traditional customs of kingship in Bonny, which prevented slaves from taking the position of *amanyanabo*.²⁵⁸ Moreover, the deep divisions between the Anna and Manilla Pepple houses were only exacerbated by disagreements over the right to "comey," or a customs tax, throughout the 1860s. War, it would seem, was inevitable.²⁵⁹ In conjunction with these political disagreements, Jaja saw George Pepple's push for Christianity in Bonny as a direct threat to the traditional economic systems on which his wealth had come to rely.²⁶⁰

As the head of the Anna Pepple house, Jaja devoted himself to rebuilding, on a grander

²⁵⁶ This event will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁵⁷ Dan Ihenetu; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

²⁵⁸ Tasie *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 39; Jones, *Trading States*, 179; Coockey, *King Jaja*, 14-18; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 70.

²⁵⁹ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30-31; Coockey, *King Jaja*, 56-60; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185-187.

²⁶⁰ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 39.

scale, the defunct *ikuba* shrine in Bonny. Additionally, “Jaja’s major propaganda to enlist local sympathy on his side was that he was fighting to protect the traditions of Bonny which he claimed Christianity was destroying.”²⁶¹ However, the events that precipitated the war came on the back of the devastating fire described above. After the fire consumed the part of Bonny that Jaja and his followers inhabited, Jaja resolved to rebuild. However, he moved his people and began to rebuild at a site miles outside of the town of Bonny, known as Minima.²⁶² This position was further up the Imo River and, whether or not this was Jaja's intention, the move effectively cut Bonny off from the profitable inland markets from which they bought palm oil.

Jaja's movement of his followers away from Bonny to a strategic position from which he could restrict Bonny's trade with the inland markets infuriated the members of the Manilla Pepple house. British agents, as well as King George Pepple, pleaded with Jaja to abandon this position and return to Bonny town proper. However, their pleas fell on deaf ears as Jaja was unwilling to return.²⁶³ In September of 1869, Jaja sent an appeal to the Court of Equity²⁶⁴ that the Manilla Pepple *wari* was planning an attack on his people. The Court of Equity sent a letter to the Manilla Pepple chiefs, asking if there was any truth to this claim. The letter was met with no reply. On September 8th, 1869, the people of Bonny began to prepare for war.²⁶⁵ Average citizens removed their valuables from the city and looked for any place they could find shelter. The would-be combatants dug trenches and arranged cannons for the conflict. The events just before

²⁶¹ Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 40.

²⁶² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186. It is interesting to note that both Dike and Cookey speak to Jaja's ingenuity in leaving Bonny and selecting a strategic site upriver, while Alagoa and Fombo cast this decision as Jaja blindly following the initiatives of British agents that suggested he make this move. Again, this seems to reflect a strong degree of bitterness for Jaja in the Bonny narrative. This is not surprising, as his movement away from Bonny effectively destroyed the economic prosperity of the state. As such, Alagoa and Fombo cast a man who has been nearly universally hailed as a hero of Nigerian history for his efforts in repelling British influence as a mere pawn of British operatives.

²⁶³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 64; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186.

²⁶⁴ A judicial body in the Niger Delta comprised of British Consuls and Vice Consuls as well as British supercargoes.

²⁶⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 65; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186-187.

the onset of hostilities made it abundantly clear that the war would be fought in Bonny and not at Minima.²⁶⁶ Bonny was preparing to be attacked. For four days, both sides made preparations while the British supercargoes pulled out of the Bonny estuary.

At dawn on Sunday, September 12, 1869 Jaja, with columns of his warriors behind him, entered Bonny and challenged the Manilla Pepple *wari* to come out and fight. An intense firefight that lasted two days ensued.²⁶⁷ The Anna Pepple faction, because they ran out of bullets, fled the fighting on September 14, 1869 and retreated towards Minima.²⁶⁸ Opobo legend states that this retreat was part of Jaja's overall plan to win the war, but all other evidence suggests that the retreat was hasty and unplanned.²⁶⁹

Some of the Anna Pepple faction were left behind in Bonny or in sites that were firmly within the Bonny sphere of influence. Many of those stranded in the fighting were hunted down by the Manilla Pepple and slaughtered.²⁷⁰ After this slaughter, Jaja came to the staunch realization that he had been effectively defeated. Upon realizing this, Jaja sent word to the British Court of Equity that he could no longer continue in the fight and sought the protection of the British crown.²⁷¹ This request for the protection of the British was a far cry from a call for the imposition

²⁶⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 65.

²⁶⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 65; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186-187; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1308, Encl. 1 No. 24, Bonny, Court of Equity, Letter to Consul Livingstone, September 17, 1869.

²⁶⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 65; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186-187; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1308, Encl. 1 No. 24, Bonny, Court of Equity, Letter to Consul Livingstone, September 17, 1869.

²⁶⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 67; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 187-188; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1308, Encl. 1 No. 24, Bonny, Court of Equity, Letter to Consul Livingstone, September 17, 1869.

²⁷⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 65-66. This slaughter of Anna Pepple people by the Manilla Pepple during the retreat is absent from Alagoa and Fombo's account. It also does not appear in Dike. I have chosen to address it in this chapter because, given the fact that there seemed to be an intense fire fight, there is no other account of a death during the war. Jaja and his followers would not have seen defeat as imminent if they did not lose a single fighter. Thus, this slaughter of stranded Anna Pepple people helps to explain Jaja's decision to remove his people from Bonny once and for all.

²⁷¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1308, Encl. 1 No. 24, Bonny, Court of Equity, Letter to Consul Livingstone, September 17, 1869.

of British rule in the area, rather, Jaja was reconnecting to the principle of his natal land as well as the Niger Delta by invoking a widely-held, “whereby an individual could entrust himself or his property to another sufficiently powerful and willing to provide adequate protection until such a time as the threat to the individual or property receded.”²⁷²

Evidence suggests that Oko Jumbo and the Manilla Pepple house did not seek the wholesale slaughter of the Anna Pepples.²⁷³ If they had, the Manilla Pepple faction would have followed Jaja's forces to Minima and obliterated them completely. However, if Jaja were to return to Bonny, his former wealth and influence, as well as the respect they afforded him, would have been dashed. Jaja would have to return to Bonny humiliated in defeat. A headstrong man such as Jaja would never have accepted these conditions. So, in the face of near annihilation, he and his chiefs devised an ingenious plan. They decided to leave Bonny behind them for good and establish a new trading-state from which they could control access to the Imo River.²⁷⁴ The only variable in this plan was whether or not Jaja could convince European supercargoes to bypass Bonny and engage his new state in trade. To put these fears to rest, Jaja called upon an old British friend whom he had conducted trade with in the past.²⁷⁵ This man, whose name was “Charley,” had been trading in the Delta for years and had recently taken up residence at Brass. He, and another friend name Charles MacEachen, both decided to gamble on Jaja's plan and moved their trade to the site on which Jaja would establish his new state.²⁷⁶

“Charley” turned out to be none other than the renown British trader Count M. de Comte

²⁷² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 67.

²⁷³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 188; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 67-68.

²⁷⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 67; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 30; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 186. While Minima was a position that also cut off Bonny from the Imo River palm oil markets, it was not suitable for permanent settlement. This location was still firmly within Bonny's sphere of influence and would have left Jaja and his followers surrounded on all sides by their enemies.

²⁷⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 191; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 131.

²⁷⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 191; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 131.

Charles de Cardi.²⁷⁷ Count de Cardi's writings about his time spent in the Bight of Biafra provide crucial evidence about events in the Niger Delta during the nineteenth century.²⁷⁸ When Jaja approached de Cardi, he was a small, independent trader who struggled to compete with larger British firms in the Niger Delta. Yet, his agreement to Jaja's plan cemented the viability of Jaja's new trading-state.²⁷⁹ On September 13, 1869, Jaja and his chiefs signed the “Minima Agreement.” In addition to stopping the hostilities, the “Minima Agreement” also relegated the newly formed trading-state to elect its political representatives. Thus, Jaja's lineage would have no future guarantees to their position on the throne of the newly formed state.²⁸⁰ However, Jaja's influence in southern Nigeria would eventually become so pervasive that the newly formed state would recognize his offspring as the natural rulers of the place.²⁸¹ There was nevertheless still one major hurdle that Jaja had to overcome: His state existed on paper but, at this point, had no physical location.²⁸²

Jaja, unsure about where to place his new settlement, turned to de Cardi for help. The primary concern was that European supercargoes would need to pass through Bonny to get to any trading site located on the mainland. After testing the depth of the waters at the estuary of the Imo River, de Cardi determined the waters were deep enough for European ships to operate in

²⁷⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63-64; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185-191; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 55-57.

²⁷⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 191; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 131.

²⁷⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63-64; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185-191; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 55-57.

²⁸⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 63-64; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185-191; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 55-57.

²⁸¹ See Appendix 1, “Minima Treaty, 1873;”

²⁸² To rectify this problem, Jaja appealed to the neighboring Andoni people, who had fought countless wars against Bonny in years passed. The head chief of the Andoni people was also the man who maintained the shrine to their supreme deity. As such, the chief was sympathetic to Jaja's stance against Christianity and, after calling all of his chiefs to the Andoni town of Alabie, it was agreed that the Andoni would cede some piece of their territory for Jaja and his people to resettle. In particular, Jaja was close friends with an Andoni chief named Kpopko, who ruled over the small village of Nkoro. Jaja and his people removed themselves from Minima to a site in Nkoro, which could easily be fortified and served as an adequate base for Jaja and his people while they sought out land for clearing and permanent settlement. While the remnants of the Anna Pepple house undertook this endeavor, they were also able to repel at least one surprise attack by the Manilla Pepple people. As a result of their assistance to Jaja during the war, Opobo and Andoni people would remain at peace as Jaja expanded his influence over the territory in later years. See Cookey, *King Jaja*, 70-71 & Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31-32.

the area.²⁸³ As such, the site for Jaja's permanent settlement was decided. He and his people would resettle on an island a few miles out from the mainland. The island was known at the time as “Egwanga” or “Igwenga.”²⁸⁴ Of this settlement, Cooley writes,

... work on the new site was redoubled with labor hired from the Ogoni... the site was impregnable from local attack on all sides. At the same time it was close enough to the Mbambie, the place where the narrow creek from Bonny joins the Imo and its markets. Consequently, it afforded an easy platform for blocking the Bonny canoe traffic to that River.²⁸⁵

Jaja was confident in this new site, which he renamed Opobo, especially since he already had the support of de Cardi and Charles MacEachen, and British consul David Livingstone had noticed that European ships were steadily increasing their trade with Jaja in his new state.²⁸⁶ By February of 1870, Jaja had made his intentions quite clear. He had no reason to return to Bonny and he would not abandon his new trading-state. Consul Livingstone did everything in his power to try to get Jaja to return to Bonny, as the British were not eager to forge relations with a new state at the expense of a state in which they had long been trading, but Jaja was not ready to concede on a single issue.²⁸⁷ His plan, no matter how haphazard, had worked. Jaja made it very clear that Bonny traders were not welcome in his new state, Opobo, which he and his followers had settled on December 25, 1870.²⁸⁸

By the beginning of 1871, Livingstone had finally accepted that mediation of the dispute was impossible. Rather, he only sought the protection of British subjects in both Bonny and

²⁸³ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 63-64; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185-191; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 55-57.

²⁸⁴ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 51 & 87; Jones, *Trading States*, 83.

²⁸⁵ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 71.

²⁸⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1326, Letter from Livingstone to Clarendon, May 23, 1870; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1326, Letter from Granville to Livingstone, August 3, 1870.

²⁸⁷ The primary concern of these negotiations was whether or not Bonny traders would be allowed to do business in the territory. Jaja's answer to this question was that Bonny traders would be banned from his river for 1000 years. See National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1326, Letter from Livingstone to Clarendon, May 23, 1870; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 73; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 191.

²⁸⁸ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 74; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 196.

Opobo's spheres of influence.²⁸⁹ Bonny, in a last ditch effort to maintain influence in trade on the Oil Rivers, launched sporadic attacks on Kalabari settlements in mainland that provided the all-important access to palm oil.²⁹⁰ The British intervened in this conflict and brought the fighting to a close through a peace treaty between the Kalabari and Bonny. The end result of this treaty was that the Kalabari owned all the markets in the important trading site of Obiatubo. Opobo was granted hegemony over the Kwa (Qua) and Igbo (Eboe) markets, and Bonny was left only with their markets in the Okrika territory.²⁹¹ On January 4, 1871, Jaja and his chiefs signed a treaty with the British government recognizing Opobo as a legitimate trading-state, and Jaja as its undisputed leader.²⁹²

Conclusion

Jaja had gambled, and won. In the face of defeat, he found an alternate route to victory. His establishment of Opobo in 1871 would lead to his reconnecting with his natal home and amassing great wealth and influence in the Igbo interior. His former masters in the trading-state of Bonny would witness their inevitable decline into obscurity as the nineteenth century came to a close. Born into a politically important in Umuduruoha, and then relegated to the position of a slave, Jaja had beaten the odds. It would seem unlikely that a single slave could hasten the end of a once dominant state, but that is exactly what Jaja did. Bonny and the Manilla People house would stumble on into disrepair, and Jaja would go on to become one of Nigeria's greatest precolonial leaders.

The civil war in Bonny can be viewed as Jaja's final act as a slave. Once he had become

²⁸⁹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1326, Letter from Granville to Livingstone, August 3, 1870; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 74-75.

²⁹⁰ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 7-10; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 74; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 196.

²⁹¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 170-173; Jones, *Trading States*, 231-245. Both of these texts reproduce the peace treaties in full in the appendices cited here.

²⁹² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 170-173; Jones, *Trading States*, 231-245.

the head of the Anna Pepple house, only one thing separated Jaja from his freeborn counterparts in Bonny. They, under the right circumstances, could become *amanyanabo*, or king, of Bonny. Jaja, regardless of his power and influence, would never attain the title of king in Bonny. Thus, his establishment of Opobo can be seen as a mission of manumission. Whether he intended to or not, Jaja had separated all ties from his former slave status. In Opobo, he answered to no one. He was subject to no one. His decisions would be final and his authority would hold no limitations. Jaja was finally free. The boy whose birth name, Mbanaso, meant “nations fear me” now had adequate power to make that fear a reality for his enemies. And, with an ever increasing trade network that stretched into Umuduruoha, the area he once called home, Jaja would eventually find a way to replant the seeds of home. His position as the first *amanyanabo*, or king, of Opobo provided him with the opportunity to rekindle a relationship with his family and his community.

CHAPTER FOUR- JAJA’S NEW BEGINNINGS AND OLD HOME

Introduction

Jaja's political career as the first *amanyanabo* to reign over the newly formed state of Opobo is legendary; notably, his efforts to maintain indigenous autonomy in the Delta in the face of an increasingly imperial presence have been well-documented in historical literature.¹ Jaja's capture and consequent exile at the hands of British Consul Harry Johnston was belied as a miscarriage of the British sense of justice in his own time, and, in subsequent literature, has continued to be cast as a move that showed the true motivations of the British on the eve of colonialism.² However, a critical piece of Jaja's narrative has remained obscured to date. While establishing a monopoly over trade on the Oil Rivers, Jaja reconnected with the community from which he was captured almost fifty years earlier. His rekindled relationship with Umuduruoha ultimately shows that, for Igbo slaves in the Niger Delta in the nineteenth century, one's absorption into the kinship networks of the enslaving society was not the only end to his or her slave experience.

In this chapter, I touch upon the organization and development Jaja's new state of Opobo and outline the major events of Jaja's reign in the newly formed state. I then present an account of Jaja's exile in the West Indies as a political prisoner. However, the main focus of this chapter is to outline the circumstances that allowed Jaja to identify and reconnect with his natal community in the Igbo heartland during the 1880s. Recounting this facet of Jaja's life history has the ability to reshape how we, as historians, examine West African systems of slavery. It is through this

¹ S.J.S. Cooley, *King Jaja of Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891* (New York: NOK Publishers, 1974), 77-126; Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 182-202; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: A Revised and Expanded Edition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 258-263; E.A. Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891): A Sketch History of the Development and Expansion of Opobo* (Lagos: Opobo Action Council, 1977), 15-32.

² Cooley, *King Jaja*, 126-134 ; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 201-202; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 261-263; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 33-39.

event that we come to see how enslaved Igbos in the eastern Delta still maintained the ability to physically reconnect in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way with their natal kinship networks.

Politics, Economics, and Religion in Opobo

Having gained recognition from the British for his authority over Opobo in early January of 1871, Jaja's position as the *amanyanabo*, or king, of Opobo was firmly established in the minds of his Opobo subjects as well as British agents operating in the Delta.³ It is worth noting here that Jaja did not force himself into the position; rather, he was democratically elected to take the headship of the state in a vote cast by the head chiefs of the houses that followed him to Opobo during the Bonny Civil War.⁴ The heads of houses subordinate to the Anna Pepple *wari* in Bonny reorganized themselves into a ruling council that assisted Jaja in the decisions he made for the state moving forward.⁵ The truly democratic nature of Opobo's political system would seem to be a return to more traditional values for the displaced Bonnymen. Whereas a political council of house heads to help assist the *amanyanabo* in state-wide decisions had been a “traditional”⁶ feature of Bonny's political system, the turmoil in Bonny, both in regard to political discord and rapidly changing religious beliefs, deeply eroded the influence of the *amanyanabo*'s council of chiefs.⁷ Jaja recognized this from the outset of his reign in Opobo and took necessary

³ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 219-220; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169-170; The “Minima Agreement” is reproduced in full in both Dike and Cookey's texts.

⁴ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 219-220; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169-170. In particular, Article iii of the Minima Agreement stipulates that the executive authority of Opobo would, in perpetuity, be decided democratically through an open election. The “Minima Agreement” formed the basis of the Opobo Constitution until a 2003 court decision that will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 74-77 & 169-170; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 219-220; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 13 & 14; S.O. Jaja, *Opobo Since 1870: A Documentary Record* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press Pub. House, University of Ibadan, 1991), xii-xvi.

⁶ I use “traditional” here to describe how Bonny operated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, before Bonny became increasingly autocratic in the decades leading up the Civil War.

⁷ G.O.M Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1918*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 36; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 61; G.I. Jones, *Trading States of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), 86; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H.

action to ensure that a council of headmen played a critical role in Opobo's dealings with interior trade markets and British representatives on the coast.⁸

Jaja immediately acted to reestablish traditional religious practices from Bonny in his new state. In Opobo, Jaja built grand shrines to the *ikuba* deity, the god of war to whom cut heads⁹ of vanquished foe were placed. He erected small clay monuments to *suo-dikuru* shrines,¹⁰ who protected the chiefs and headmen of the land, and established an unprecedented number of shrines to the ancestors of the Anna Pepple house and notable leaders in Bonny's past.¹¹ While Jaja was clearly an adherent of the pre-Christian, animist practices of Bonny in terms of his own religious views, he did not take a particularly antagonistic stance against Christianity in his own state. The majority of Jaja's supporters who had moved with him to become the “first citizens”¹² of Opobo were likely supporters of traditional religion as well,¹³ but Jaja and the chiefs that governed Opobo felt that western education, particularly instruction in the English language and the standard weights and measurements used in trade, was critical to the success of Opobo's future generations.¹⁴ Thus, from the early 1870s through the date of his exile in 1888, Jaja chose

Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

⁸ Okpete Kanu, “The Life and Times of King Ja Ja of Opobo, 1812-1895” (Halifax, N.S: Dalhousie University, 1970), 64-68; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 74-77 & 169-170; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 219-220; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 13 & 14; S.O. Jaja, *Opobo Since 1870*, xii-xvi.

⁹ It is critical to note here that “cutting a head” was a symbolic practice. Whereas warriors once placed the actual severed heads of vanquished foes at the shrine of the *ikuba* deity, other items, such as palm wine, alcohol, kola nuts, food, or animal sacrifices, replaced human heads as sacrifices during the nineteenth century. The term “cutting a head” was maintained despite the disappearance of the practice. See Leonard Ndubueze Mbah, “Emergent Masculinities: The Gendered Struggle for Power in Southeastern Nigeria, 1850-1920,” (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 2013).

¹⁰ These shrines were sites where adherents of traditional religion gave gifts to propitiate the personal deities that protected chiefs and headmen. The concept of *suo* among the Ibani is akin to the concept of *chi* among the Igbo.

¹¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 83-84; G.O.M. Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 36-40; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

¹² As discussed in the last chapter, Jaja and his followers established Opobo on a previously uninhabited island called “Egwenga” or “Igwenga” in the Andoni territory.

¹³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 85; Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 36-40; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 74-77.

¹⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 112; Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 39-40. Jaja's attitude towards secular education can be examined through his choice to send his sons Mark and Sunday to the U.K. to attend a state-run school and, later, his appointment of a freed black American woman to open a secular school in Opobo.

not to interfere with the efforts of missionaries operating within his territory. He never allowed for the opening of a mission school in Opobo, as he felt the religious component of mission education threatened the time-honored practices brought to Opobo from Bonny. Moreover, Jaja was deeply opposed to “African”¹⁵ missionaries working in Opobo and would only allow white missionaries into the state during his reign.¹⁶ This tension was tied to an episode during the Bonny Civil War, which I discuss below, during which Jaja came into conflict with the renowned African missionary, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther.



Figure 27: Jaja and his Chiefs, Opobo (**Date and photographer unknown**)

¹⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 93/6/16, Edward Hyde Hewett and King and Chiefs of Opobo, Treaty of Protection, December 19, 1884. The treaty guarantees the freedom of movement in Opobo for “white” missionaries. It is very likely Jaja meant African missionaries were banned, although it is uncertain whether this prohibition extended to black missionaries from locations outside of Africa.

¹⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 93/6/16, Edward Hyde Hewett and King and Chiefs of Opobo, Treaty of Protection, December 19, 1884; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 82-83; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 39-40. In particular, see Article VII, regarding the free movements of representatives of religion, which Jaja had altered to reflect the fact that he would not allow black missionaries in his lands.

Jaja had sent his young sons, Saturday and Sunday,¹⁷ to take shelter in Crowther's mission school at Abeokuta during the height of the Bonny Civil War. When Jaja had resettled in the Andoni territory in 1869, he called upon Crowther to send his sons back, deeming it safe for the boys to return. Crowther, however, did not honor Jaja's request and held onto his son until the peace agreement was signed between the chiefs of Bonny and Opobo in 1873.¹⁸ This act on Crowther's part infuriated Jaja and led to his banishing of African missionaries from his new state, as he did not feel they could perform their duties without getting involved in local politics.¹⁹

In spite of Jaja's misgivings, one of his most trusted chiefs, Oko Epelle, converted to Christianity while being held prisoner by the Manilla People during the Civil War. He retained his belief in Christianity and began leading sermons on Sundays upon his release and move to Opobo.²⁰ Jaja never banned these sermons, but he also did not endorse them.²¹ The Christian populations of Opobo during Jaja's lifetime remained small and innocuous and the Christian faith was ultimately of little consequence to the maintenance of the state.²² What was more, Jaja remained wary of Christian influence in Opobo throughout his reign.

Although he harbored a deep mistrust of African missionaries and Christianity, Jaja and his chiefs immediately recognized the need to “modernize” Opobo by ensuring that the youths

¹⁷ I have deliberately chosen not to include a discussion of Jaja's marriages, his wives, or his children to this point because evidence for this aspect of Jaja's life is simply unavailable. It is clear that Jaja took many wives who gave birth to his children. However, the exact number of wives or children is unknown, and only a few figures from Jaja's family emerge in the historical record. A collection of oral histories in Opobo, which was not possible for this study, could yield some insight on Jaja's personal life as a family man.

¹⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 85; Archives of the Christian Mission Society, CMS CA 3/013, D.C. Crowther, “A Missionary Trip to the Benin River,” November 18, 1875.

¹⁹ It has also been argued that Jaja's refusal to allow black missionaries into his state was tantamount to banning missionaries in general. This line of thinking states that Jaja knew that the European churches, at this late of a date, were relying on African evangelism to spread the word and rarely opted to send a European into local communities to spread the Bible. See Cookey, *King Jaja*, 85.

²⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 85; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 46-48; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 22.

²¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 85; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 46-48; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 22.

²² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 84-85; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 48; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 46-48 & 94-96.

acquired sufficient education to maintain the smooth operations of the state's palm oil trade.²³

Jaja, astute as he was, opened a secular, Opobo-run school in 1873 that was designed to teach the youths in the community the English language and standard weights and measurements that the British used in trade.²⁴ To ensure that education remained secular, Jaja and his chiefs employed a woman named Emma Johnson, who can only be described as a remarkable woman for her time. Born into slavery in the United States, Emma Johnson earned her freedom and traveled to Liberia after the American Civil War. She tried to engage in coastal trade in Liberia, but failed miserably in this endeavor. Destitute, she traveled to Opobo in search of new opportunities in 1875. Jaja instantly seized upon the depth of knowledge this globe-trotting woman could afford his state and, after taking over duties as Jaja's personal secretary, Johnson was made headmistress of Jaja's school.²⁵ Emma Johnson would remain loyal to Jaja and Opobo, even following him to Accra when he was exiled to there in 1887.²⁶ Under her instruction, Jaja's school steadily grew to provide the state of Opobo with well-educated, business savvy traders who could provide wealth to the *wari* of the state.²⁷

As discussed in the previous chapter, Jaja cemented his foothold in the Qua (Kwa) and Ebo (Igbo) interior markets by cutting off Bonny's access to the riverine routes that supplied oil from the interior markets to the coast. This allowed Opobo traders to reap the lion's share of the

²³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 84-85; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 48; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 46-48 & 94-96.

²⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 86-87; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 96; National Archives, UK, FO 2/50, encl. 43, Anna Pepple to Papa and Mama, September 7, 1869; National Archives, UK, FO 2/20, encl. 52, Edith De Cardi to Jaja, October 24, 1869.

²⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 87-88; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 96; E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longmans, 1966), 117; Unknown Author, *The Sentinel*, August 3, 1888; *The Sentinel* was Barbados' leading newspaper in the late nineteenth century. Here they give Emma Johnson's name as Sally Johnson. It is important to note that, once she moved to Opobo, she was often referred to as Emma Jaja.

²⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 87-88; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 96; Unknown Author, *The Sentinel*, August 3, 1888

²⁷ In addition to Jaja's school, run by Emma Johnson, it was also common practice for Jaja and his leading chiefs in Opobo to send their sons abroad to gain a secular education. Jaja sent his sons Mark and Sunday Jaja to the U.K. for their educations.

international palm oil export trade in the Central Delta. The Kalabari maintained their connections to the interior on the eastern side of Opobo in the Niger Delta. Bonny, to the west, was now rapidly deteriorating in its influence in the region.²⁸ The Bonnymen clung steadfastly to their trade with the Okrika in effort to stem the inevitable decline of the trading state. However, the Okrika traders, who generally did not have a strong grasp of the English language, eventually discovered that the Bonny middlemen were cheating them, as Bonnymen routinely misrepresented the price of palm oil paid by European traders at the coast.²⁹ The Okrika responded by refusing to trade with the Bonnymen. The loss of the Okrika markets coincided with violent outbursts of conflict between practitioners of Ibani religion and newly converted Christian slaves. This led to a rapid decline in Bonny's influence in the palm oil trade in the 1870s and 1880s,³⁰ effectively removing Bonny from Jaja's considerations as a competing trading state.

In light of these events, it was becoming apparent to the British that, if they wished to continue to buy palm oil en masse, they were going to have to cooperate with King Jaja and his Opobo-based traders.³¹ In Opobo, the merit-based house organization that dominated Bonny in Jaja's time was instituted. The heads of the houses in Opobo provided an opportunity for young traders to learn the nuances of the business while also supplying credit to these same young traders to chase their own fortunes in the interior markets. Despite British insistence that Delta rulers cease all slave-trading activities, there is evidence that Opobo still relied on domestic

²⁸ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 189; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 8-9; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 259.

²⁹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

³⁰ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 163-165; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 93; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 43; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

³¹ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 163-165; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 93; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 43; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67.

slaves who could mature into independent traders to maintain the Opobo export trade economy.³²

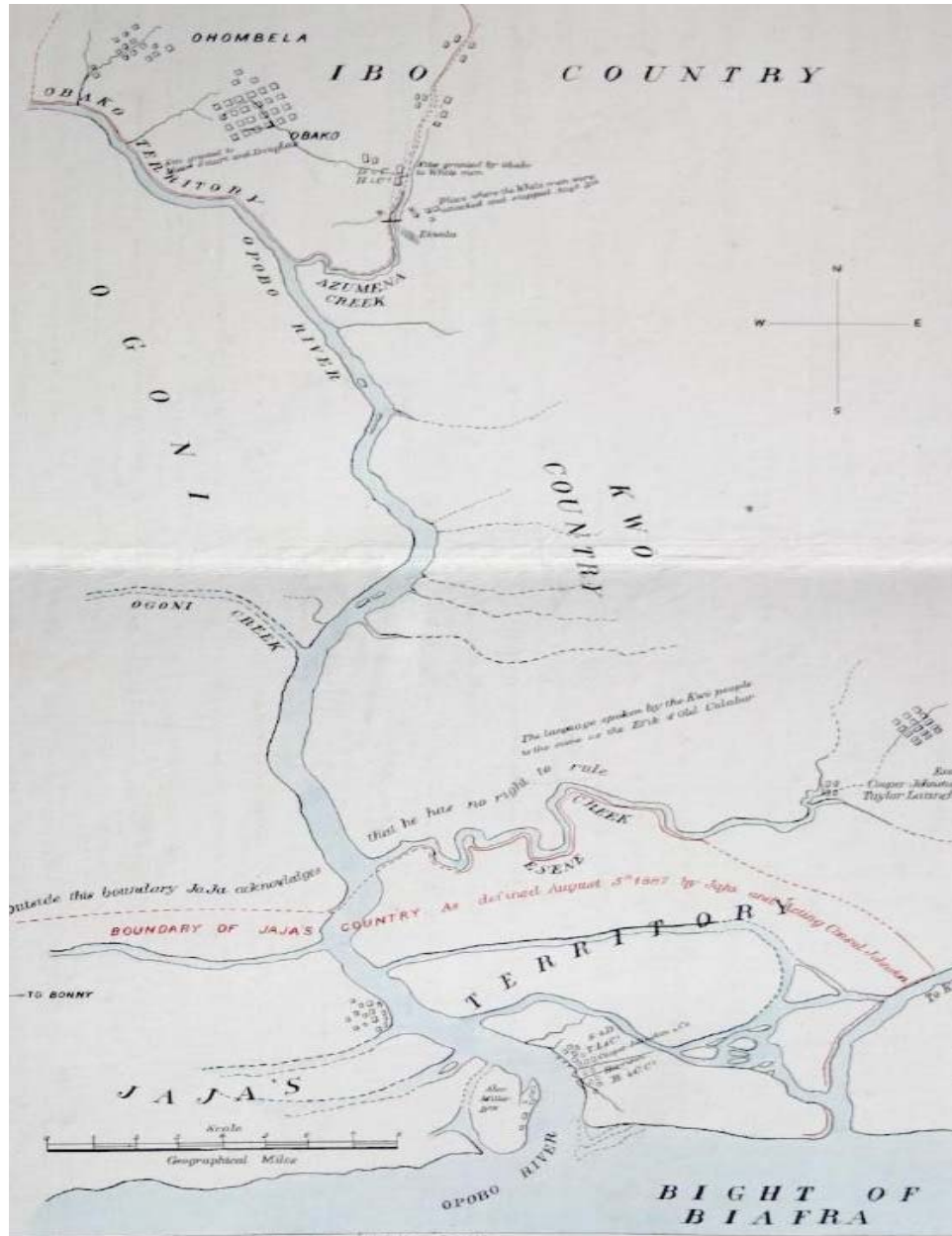


Figure 28: Jaja's Territories³³

³² Emmanuel Nkemkaudo, interview by Author, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria; December 30, 2011; National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, MINLOC 6/1/160, H. Webber, Intelligence Report on Bonny District, Owerri Province, 1931, 63-67. Emmanuel Nkemkaudo claims that his great-grandfather, Chief Igwebe Odum, supposedly the model for Pita Nwana's famed *Omenuko* novel, was very active in distance trading with sites in the Niger Delta. Mr. Nkemkaudo was adamant that his great-grandfather supplied Opobo, generally, and Jaja, personally, with slaves taken from the Igbo interior.

³³ National Archives, UK, FO 925/124, Map of Jaja's Territory.

Moreover, Jaja's identity as a former Igbo slave in Bonny helped to expand Opobo's influence over the interior Igbo trading markets. K.O. Dike writes, "To the Ibos the word 'Opobo' became synonymous with 'Ubani' or Bonny, and Jaja was from 1869 its leading figure. Since he was Ibo... Ja Ja had the goodwill of the majority and was served by the best talents in Iboland."³⁴ As is clearly conveyed by Dike, Jaja's rise to primacy in the economic systems of the Oil Rivers can be viewed through the lens of Jaja's ability to move between identities. He took the best of what Bonny had to offer and put it to use to boost the economy of his newly formed trading state. He utilized his Igbo origins as a way to facilitate strong relationships with the Igbo-dominated, oil rich interior. In addition to Jaja's ability to employ various identities and institutions to strengthen his influence in the palm oil trade, his reputation with British supercargoes further entrenched his position as the head of the premier trading-state in the Delta.

Jaja, while attempting to found Opobo in the midst of the Bonny Civil War, had turned to his European trade partners to entice British supercargoes to relocate their trade to the Opobo River.³⁵ He would, throughout the rest of life, be appealing to these European trade partners, first in an effort to boost Opobo's influence in trade and later in an effort to secure his release from exile in the West Indies.³⁶ However, throughout the 1870s, the structure of trade continued unaltered, with a relatively small British presence at the coast seeking access to interior goods through Niger Delta middlemen states.³⁷

In 1873, British Consul Livingstone brokered the final peace treaty between Opobo and Bonny.³⁸ This treaty recognized Jaja's authority as the head of Opobo and called for a cessation of

³⁴ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 196.

³⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 169; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 191; Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 31; Jones, *Trading States*, 131. The Opobo River is a small tributary that breaks away from the larger Imo River by the island of Opobo.

³⁶ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 198; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 100-103

³⁷ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 198; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 100-103; E.J. Alagoa, "Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar," in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Iss.5, Vol. 4 (1971), 565-573.

³⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 170-171; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 221-222. Again, the 1873 Treaty of Peace is reproduce in

all hostilities between Bonny and Opobo agents and ensured that Jaja would receive the same “comey” paid to the King of Bonny by British traders. This treaty also laid out the initial boundaries of Opobo's territory.³⁹ These boundaries would be the root of Jaja's conflicts with British agents in the Delta as the 1870s gave way to the 1880s.

By 1875, trade was flowing smoothly, Opobo was flourishing and Jaja's influence was steadily expanding across the southern markets of Igboland.⁴⁰ Jaja sought to further augment his personal coffers and the wealth of Opobo by entering into a trade agreement with a European firm, Miller Brothers, based out of Glasgow, Scotland.⁴¹ Not only did Jaja entice the Miller Brothers to carry their large trade in palm oil through Opobo's coastal markets, but he was also able to negotiate terms in which the Miller Brothers would supply Jaja with his own personal steamer that could traverse the Atlantic and bring palm oil directly to Liverpool.⁴² Through his relationship with the Miller Brothers, Jaja had learned of the great discrepancy between prices for palm oil in the Delta and in England. Thus, Jaja very astutely began his own direct shipping line in an effort to supplement the comey he received from trade carried out in Opobo.⁴³ The relationship between the British and Jaja throughout the 1870s had been profitable for both parties involved. However, this situation would abruptly change in the early 1880s, as Jaja's relationship with British agents on the Delta began to spiral downwards.

Before turning to the events that led to a decline in the relationship between Jaja, British

full in both Cooley and Dike.

³⁹ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 170-171; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 221-222.

⁴⁰ It should be noted here that many of the supercargoes that had continued to trade at Bonny after the establishment of Opobo, abruptly left Bonny for Opobo in 1873 when a bout of yellow fever devastated the formerly powerful city-state. See National Archives, UK, FO 403/ 71, Capt. Nicol, Memo, November 4, 1873 & Cooley, *King Jaja*, 100.

⁴¹ National Archives, UK, FO 403/72, Herschell to Jaja, April 9, 1875; National Archives, UK, FO 403/72, Miller to Jaja, May 22, 1875; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 63-65.

⁴² National Archives, UK, FO 403/72, Herschell to Jaja, April 9, 1875; National Archives, UK, FO 403/72, Miller to Jaja, May 22, 1875; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 63-65.

⁴³ Jaja's comey was 25% of all the trade that passed through Opobo markets at this point. See Cooley, *King Jaja*, 82.

supercargoes and the acting consuls of the Bight of Biafra in the 1880s, we must first examine the event that allowed Jaja to rekindle his relationship with his natal community and kinsmen in the Igbo village of Umuduruoha.

“Ezealaonyekwele!”

The event that allowed Jaja to replant the seeds of home occurred sometime in the early 1880s.⁴⁴ As discussed earlier in this chapter, Jaja had become widely known as the most influential trader in the Niger Delta to the Igbo people of the interior of Eastern Nigeria.⁴⁵ His vast trade networks stretched over an extensive territory that could be described as a pseudo-empire. Within this vast network lay the interior community of Umuduruoha. The Amaigbo region of Igboland, in which Umuduruoha rests, traded in palm oil with Opobo agents at interior markets like Elele, Ohambele and Akwete, but also sent long-distance traders to the coastal regions for the direct sale of their goods.⁴⁶

At some point in the early 1880s, a trader from Umuduruoha, whose name was Aburum Nwole, was loading his boat with trade products in the Opobo markets on the Opobo River.⁴⁷ Nwole and his colleagues overloaded the canoe they had arrived in when it began to capsize and sink into the river. Fearing for his very life, Nwole cried out an exclamatory phrase equivalent to the English phrase “My God!”⁴⁸ Aburum Nwole instinctively called upon the Umuduruoha

⁴⁴ Umuduruoha-based sources state that Duruoshmiri had already taken over from his brother, Okwaraonyejesi, upon the latter's death in 1880. We can also safely say that this event occurred before the conflicts between Jaja and British agents emerged in 1883 and 1884.

⁴⁵ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 196; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 19.

⁴⁶ Dan Ihenetu, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, January 18, 2012; Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, December 31, 2012; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, February 11, 2012.

⁴⁷ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁴⁸ This is not an exact translation of *ezealaonyekwele*. Rather, my collaborators, in effort to get the gist of the story across to an English speaker like myself, said that when someone cries out *ezealaonyekwele*, it is equivalent to an English speaker's use of the exclamatory phrase “my god” or “oh my god!” One of my collaborators, Dan Ihenetu, described the phrase as being closest to the English, “Oh shit!” inasmuch as it was usually only uttered in times of extreme crisis.

goddess Ezealaonyekwele, the goddess of war who also functioned to protect the Umuduruoha people when they were traveling abroad.⁴⁹

Jaja, as he often did, happened to be supervising trade on the beach from a landing on the Opobo side of the river. Upon hearing Nwole shout *Ezealaonyekwele*, Jaja was taken aback. He immediately recognized Nwole's pleas to *Ezealaonyekwele* as the cries of desperation of an Umuduruoha man. Jaja told his entourage to retrieve Nwole and his fellow traders from the river and bring them to his *opu wari*, or palace.⁵⁰

The traders surely thought they had been called before the great *amanyanabo* of Opobo for some offense, as it was highly unusual for a king like Jaja to call upon common traders unless they were to be punished for breaking some law.⁵¹ So, they were incredibly surprised, as well as relieved, when Jaja began asking them about Umuduruoha.⁵² While few details from this conversation have survived to the present, it is known that Jaja explained how he was seized from Umuduruoha nearly half a century earlier⁵³ and explained that this was the source of his recognition of Nwole's cries for help. He told Nwole and his counterparts that, upon returning to Umuduruoha, they must find his father's compound, that of the great Okwara Ozurumba. Jaja called upon his childhood memories and told Nwole to look for a compound in the center of the village that was lined by a small pond, *olu Duruoshmiri*,⁵⁴ and two large iroko trees that Jaja had

⁴⁹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Charry A. Onwu, *Amaigbo Kwenu: History, Legend & Myth of Amaigbo*, (Place of publication not identified: publisher not identified, 1988), 56-59.

⁵⁰ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya, interview by Author, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012.

⁵¹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁵² Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁵³ This explains how the people of Umuduruoha can now speak with a degree of certainty about the circumstances surrounding Jaja's seizure at the age of 12.

⁵⁴ It is important to note that *olu Duruoshmiri*, or the pond adjacent to Okwara Ozurumba's compound, was not given this moniker until Duruoshmiri himself was titled in the late nineteenth century. As such, Jaja would not have

played around as a child.⁵⁵ He also instructed Nwole to send word to his beloved younger brother, Duruoshimiri, that his brother Mbanaso lived and was, in fact, the powerful King Jaja of Opobo.⁵⁶

Duruoshimiri, who had, by now, become a powerful community head in his own right in Umuduruoha, had taken many grand titles and built upon the great traditions passed to him when his elder brother, Okwaraonyejesi, had died in 1880.⁵⁷ Since Jaja, his older brother, had been taken from the community as a youth, the order of succession had passed down to Duruoshimiri. According to Umuduruoha oral tradition, Duruoshimiri had continued to promote the defense of Umuduruoha through a standing military, had taken several wives⁵⁸ who bore him many male children, and was a successful agriculturalist who maintained a massive *oba-ji*, or yam house. His wealth, coupled with the absence of his older brother Mbanaso (Jaja), made him a natural choice to be named head-chief of Umuduruoha upon Okwaraonyejesi's death.⁵⁹

Nwole and his colleagues did as Jaja instructed and returned home to bring news of Jaja's survival to Duruoshimiri. Upon learning of his beloved older brother's survival through his term of enslavement in the Delta, Duruoshimiri enlisted the help of his and Jaja's youngest brother, Ezeala, to function as an emissary between the two political heads.⁶⁰ Aburum Nwole, due to his role in Jaja's reconnection with his natal home, was also designated as an emissary to Opobo along with Ezeala, and through these two men Jaja and Duruoshimiri replanted the seeds the

called this pond *olu Duruoshmiri*, as people do today.

⁵⁵ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁵⁶ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

⁵⁷ Unknown Author, "Genealogical Table: The Ancestral Lineage of King Jaja and his Brothers," (unpublished, unknown date); Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁵⁸ Some say as many as 70; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya.

⁵⁹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya.

⁶⁰ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya.

home by rekindling their ties of kinship in form of trade and gift-giving. Sadly, Jaja and Duruoshimiri would never meet again face-to-face, as their duties to their respective communities did not allow them to travel and visit one another.⁶¹

A vigorous trade relationship began between Opobo and Umuduruoha from the day Duruoshimiri and Jaja reconnected. Duruoshimiri actively encouraged the palm oil producers of his community to trade only through Opobo's spheres of influence, while Jaja promoted the trade relationship by offering Umuduruoha traders the best prices available for palm oil and simultaneously sending gifts of manufactured goods to his brother and Umuduruoha.⁶² It is quite clear from Umuduruoha-based narratives that Duruoshimiri came to power in the community through his own merits and ingenuity, coupled with his hereditary claim to primacy in the town, and not through Jaja's support.⁶³ However, Duruoshimiri's influence began to grow far beyond what he could have achieved without Jaja's support, as Jaja sent back crucial trade items such as long-range cannons, huge iron pots for boiling palm oil, European-produced cutlasses and sabers as well as repeating rifles.⁶⁴ Despite never having traveled to the coast himself or engaged directly in Atlantic trade networks, Duruoshimiri, through his rekindled relationship with Jaja, became one of the *Ogaranya*, or “big men,” who made their wealth on, and tied their status to products shipped over the Atlantic in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁶² It is unclear whether Jaja sent the iron pots that reside in Umuduruoha today to Duruoshmiri, in particular, or the Umuduruoha community at large. This, to the present, has led to a number of conflicts within Umuduruoha and will be dealt with in the next chapter. Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁶³ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dan Ihenetu; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁶⁴ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁶⁵ Raphael Chijioku Njoku, “Ogaranya' (Wealthy Men) in Late Nineteenth Century Igboland: Chief Igwebe Odum of Arondizuogu, C.1860-1940” in *African Economic History*, Vol. 36 (2008), 27-30; Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

In addition to the impact Jaja's reconnection to his natal home had on trade, his replanting the seeds of home also allowed the people of Opobo to seize upon this reconnection to better articulate their own identities. Those who followed Jaja from Bonny to Opobo were not a homogenous group.⁶⁶ The merit-based house system had blurred the lines that separated free-born from slave-born members of Bonny society.⁶⁷ Furthermore, there were members of various houses that followed Jaja to Opobo who were purchased slaves, not born in Bonny. Most of these slaves both born in and outside of Bonny were acutely aware of their identities as Igbos.⁶⁸ However, they had no particular place within Igboland to which they could tie their Igbo identity and allegiance. Ibani members who had moved with Jaja were equally ready to shake the trappings of their Bonny pasts and take up a new identity as Opobomen. But what did it mean to be Opobo? The state was nascent, less than ten years old; there was little that distinguished their political and economic identities as Opobomen from their previous terms as Bonnymen. Yet, Jaja's reconnection with his natal home came to provide an acute identity which the people of Opobo could claim.

While they honored and recognized the great leaders from Bonny's past,⁶⁹ the people who lived under Jaja's reign also recognized how deeply tied they were to this one individual, their leader, King Jaja. They adopted the identity of their beloved king, Jaja, and came to recognize Umuduruoha as their ancestral homeland, despite having no overt or physical ties to the place.⁷⁰ And, while Jaja had not established a state to be governed by his progeny as the natural rulers of the land, no one outside of Jaja's direct lineage has taken the throne in Opobo to date. As such the

⁶⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 83-85; E.J. Alagoa & A. Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 31-33; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 49-50.

⁶⁷ Alagoa and Fombo, *A Chronicle*, 46; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 12-14; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 69 & 135-137; Jones, *Trading States*, 55-56.

⁶⁸ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 182-195; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 78-79; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 12-14.

⁶⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 82-84; Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 46-47.

⁷⁰ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

Opobo people, through their kings, continue to recognize Umuduruoha as the ancestral homeland of their people.⁷¹ Jaja rests at the center of Opobo history and identity, and even members of the society that can trace their lineage directly back to Ibani people in Bonny recognize the Amaigbo town of Umuduruoha as their ancestral predecessors through their connection with King Jaja.⁷²

The Scramble for Africa and the Fortification of Umuduruoha

The early 1880s ushered in a time of great political turmoil for many African nations, states, and kingdoms on the Western coast. While the rise of the “legitimate” trade across Africa in the wake of the Atlantic Slave Trade's abolition provided sorely-needed resources for Europe's industrial revolutions, it also made the Europeans acutely aware that, by dealing with coastal trading states, they had not yet exploited the vast resource wealth that lay in the interior of the continent. As competition heated up between European nations, eventually leading to the Berlin West Africa Conference of December 1884 and January 1885, British interference in Jaja's and Opobo's affairs grew increasingly difficult for the slave-turned-king to ignore.⁷³ Coastal middlemen states like Opobo, once vital to Europe's demands for palm oil, were increasingly seen by Europeans as a hindrance to accessing interior resources.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁷² Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

⁷³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 110-115; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 213-214 ; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 262.

⁷⁴ Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185 & 199; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, 258-261; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 106-109; Alagoa, “Nineteenth Century Revolutions,” 563-563; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 23-24.



Figure 29: Bonny, Opobo, Ibeno and Kwa-Ibo Confluence

The Jaja-Ibeno War (a.k.a the Kwa Ibo Conflict)

In 1881, Jaja waged a war against the Ibeno⁷⁵ people in the Andoni territory.⁷⁶ The war began as a result of a conflict over the interpretation of the 1873 peace treaty between Bonny and Opobo.⁷⁷ In the treaty, the Ibeno people were recognized by both Bonny and Opobo as free traders who could carry their commerce to any market they pleased without molestation from either middleman state.⁷⁸ And, in 1881, the Ibeno people, in an effort to circumvent carrying their trade to Calabar,⁷⁹ sought to enter the Atlantic trade directly with a British merchant, George Watts, at the Kwa-Ibo confluence.⁸⁰ Watts had come to the area after the British Consul, David Hopkins, had declared all the Delta trade markets open to British “free-trade” in 1879. He had

⁷⁵ Ibeno is a dialect of the Andoni language and is not to be confused with Ibani, which is a dialect of the Ijaw language. The Ibeno are generally recognized as the Obolo subgroup of Andoni ethnicity.

⁷⁶ J.H. Enemugwem, “Jaja-Ibeno War of 1881: The Ibeno Account and the Refugee Settlements” in *African Research Review*, Vol 3, No 2 (2009). Online.

⁷⁷ Enemugwem, “The Jaja-Ibeno War,” 123-125; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 104-109; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 110.

⁷⁸ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 170-171; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 221-222.

⁷⁹ Calabar's markets were geographically distant from Ibeno territory. Also, the Ibeno traders recognized that they were losing profits by selling to a middleman state rather than selling directly to Europeans.

⁸⁰ See Map 15 above.

done this in an effort to bypass the authority of middleman kings like Jaja and get to the interior resources directly.⁸¹ The trade agreement between King Uko Utong of the Ibeno people and George Watts infuriated Jaja. Opobo's most profitable oil markets were on the Essene Creek, which is a tributary to both the Kwa and Ibo rivers. Watts believed, as a British subject, he was free to trade anywhere in the Delta. The Ibeno, based on their interpretation of the 1873 treaty, felt it was their right to carry trade directly to Europeans. Both parties, had, in Jaja's eyes, undermined his influence over the territory.⁸² Jaja thus quickly dispatched mercenaries to Ibeno and, in a brief but violent battle, King Uko Utong and his son, Prince Nso, were killed.⁸³ The Ibeno abandoned their plans and Watts' trade endeavors in the region were largely unsuccessful⁸⁴ after the conflict and the territory, for the time, remained firmly within Jaja's grip. Jaja took steps to repatriate the Ibeno people,⁸⁵ but this conflict represented an early jump-off point for the tensions that would arise between British representatives and Jaja as they both postured for greater authority in the area.

After the Jaja-Ibeno war, Watts tried to appeal to the British Navy to coerce Jaja to leave him to trade unhindered in the region, going so far as to spread rumors that Jaja's subjects and locals in the Kwa-Ibo markets viewed Jaja as a despotic tyrant, and would turn against Jaja to seek his ouster.⁸⁶ Moreover, Watts argued that if the British Navy did not seek Jaja's removal,

⁸¹ Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 123-125; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 104-109. It should be noted here that, aside from Enemugwem and Cooley, no other sources make reference to this conflict. While Enemugwem's work focuses entirely on this conflict and efforts to repatriate the Ibeno people after their loss, Cooley discusses the conflict simply in terms of George Watts' movements and Jaja's reactions to them. As such, Cooley makes only brief references to the role of the Ibeno people, whom he refers to as "Ibuno" people.

⁸² Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 123-125; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 104-109.

⁸³ Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 123-125; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 104-109.

⁸⁴ Watts was allowed to stay and trade in the Delta, but not without interference from Jaja and his men. Watts was followed by Jaja's men everywhere he went. Anyone who traded with Watts would be arrested and brought before Jaja, would have their wares confiscated, and were banned from conducting further trade operations in Jaja's territory. All of this led to Watts' inability to undertake profitable trade endeavors thereafter. See Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 123-125; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 104-109.

⁸⁵ Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 128-129.

⁸⁶ Enemugwem, "The Jaja-Ibeno War," 123-125; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 104-109.

then the local people would turn to the Germans to force Jaja out of the region.⁸⁷ However, the British Admiralty did not buy Watts' assertions and decided that Jaja should be warned against further molestation of British subjects trading in his territories, but were also adamant that they would not turn their guns on Opobo or Jaja's forces.⁸⁸ For the time being, armed conflict with the British was avoided, but tensions between Jaja and the Acting Consul for the British government, Edward H. Hewett, would lead to a further deterioration in the previously profitable arrangement in the years that followed 1881.

By 1884, British agents in the Bight of Biafra were no longer interested in playing politics with coastal rulers like Jaja. Consul Hewett, with his eye turned towards the interior, came to Jaja and the chiefs of Opobo with a Treaty of Protection.⁸⁹ The British representatives at the area were concerned with the increasing French presence in the Niger Delta region, and moved quickly in November 1883 to establish a protectorate over the lower Niger, the Oil Rivers and Cameroon.⁹⁰ In an effort to give this paper protectorate real teeth, Hewett was tasked with gaining the signatures of local leaders on the Treaty of Protection. Jaja was, rightfully, suspicious of the British and their offering of “protection.” Thus he challenged nearly every article of the treaty and wrote to Hewett demanding a clarification of this principal of “protection.” Hewett responded by writing,

...with reference to the word “protection” as used in the proposed treaty, that the Queen does not want to take your country or your markets, but at the same time is anxious no other natives should take them. She undertakes to extend her gracious favour and protection, which will leave your country still under your government. She has no wish to disturb your rule, although she is anxious to see your country get up, as well as other countries of the other tribes with whom her people have been so long trading.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Enemugwem, “The Jaja-Ibeno War,” 128-129; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Enclosure 1, Jaja to Salisbury, November 26, 1885; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 117-120.

⁸⁸ Enemugwem, “The Jaja-Ibeno War,” 126; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 109.

⁸⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 171-173. To see this treaty in full, see Appendix II.

⁹⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 112; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 217-218; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26-27.

⁹¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Enclosure 1, Jaja to Salisbury, November 26, 1885; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 117-120.

For the time being, Jaja was satisfied with Hewett's explanation of the protection clause. However, Jaja only agreed to one other clause without amendments: he consented to not establishing any agreements or treaties with other foreign powers without first informing the British. Nevertheless, Jaja continued to challenge Hewett on the other seven remaining clauses of the 1884 Treaty of Protection.⁹² For instance, Jaja had vehemently argued against Article VI, which guaranteed the protection of all men from all countries to trade without harassment in all the markets of the Oil Rivers, because it effectively undermined the monopoly over trade in the interior markets that Jaja had worked so meticulously to build. Jaja demanded that this article be removed entirely from the treaty. Moreover, Article VII of the treaty, which guaranteed the free movement of missionaries in the territory, had to be amended to state that only “white” missionaries could operate in Jaja's lands unhindered. After continued negotiation, Jaja, realizing the British would not take no for an answer, dropped his argument to expunge Article VI.⁹³ The beleaguered Hewett had finally acquired Jaja's signature and the Protection Treaty of 1884, with the above-mentioned alteration to Article VII in place, went into effect in January of 1885.⁹⁴ By December of 1884, Jaja and his chiefs were coming under intense pressure, as every other Delta ruler had signed the original treaty as it was written by the British Foreign Office. On December 19, 1884, Jaja finally relented and agreed to the nearly unaltered treaty.⁹⁵ With the protectorate established, the British had repelled the real or imagined threat of the French and Germans in the

⁹² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 115; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 24-25; Jaja, *Opobo since 1870*, 25-26 & 40; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 117-120. To read the treaty in full, see Appendix II.

⁹³ Jaja seems to have finally agreed to Article VI based on Hewett's response that the British Crown did not want to see him removed from power or interfere in his affairs. To a logical man like Jaja, there must have been an assumption that the British would not interfere with his trade revenues, as it was the source of his power and authority in Southern Nigeria.

⁹⁴ Jaja, *Opobo since 1870*, 40; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 115-116; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 117-120.

⁹⁵ Jaja, *Opobo since 1870*, 40; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 115-116; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 117-120. Jaja refused to agree to allow African missionaries into Opobo, but dropped his amendments to all the other articles of the treaty.

Niger Delta and taken the first steps towards colonizing southern Nigeria.⁹⁶

In 1884 and 1885, prices for palm oil drastically decreased in England, as the supply had been steady for a number of years.⁹⁷ Jaja was suspicious that British traders, who had come to his port offering smaller and smaller prices for the much sought after product, were not fairly representing the true price fetched for the good in Europe.⁹⁸ The leading Liverpool trading firms formed a collective and pooled their resources together to buy Opobo's oil in one massive purchase which they then would split evenly. Moreover, the Liverpool collective independently decided to lower the comey Jaja received from this large purchase.⁹⁹ By 1885, Jaja had had enough of this collective and, ever the ingenious businessman, found a way to break Liverpool's grip on trade negotiations. He contacted his friend, Alexander Miller, in Glasgow.¹⁰⁰ The Miller Brothers, although vital to the import of palm oil to the U.K., had never been in league with the Liverpool collective. Jaja, quite astutely, arranged to have all the oil produced in the area shipped to England by the Glasgow-based brothers' firm. In doing this, the amount of oil exported from the Delta was left unaffected, and the leading Liverpool firms had been completely cut out of the exchange.¹⁰¹

The Liverpool collective, reassured by the articles of the 1884 Treaty of Protection and the Acting Consul Hewett, responded to Jaja's actions by sending their boats past Opobo into the

⁹⁶ The British had, by the end of the nineteenth century, firmly established their dominance among the Europeans trading in the Delta region, so it is likely that this "threat" from the French and Germans was used as an excuse to formally establish their Protectorate through the acquisition of treaties with indigenous leaders of the Delta.

⁹⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 116; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 25-27; C.B.N. Ogbogbo and Olisa Muojama, "The Global Economy and the Niger Delta Crises," in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 17, (2007/2008), 179-181.

⁹⁸ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Charles De Cardi, Protest of Traders against Jaja's rule in the River Niger, January 27, 1886; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, White, Consul White to Jaja, June 3, 1885; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 117-119; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 117-120.

⁹⁹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Charles De Cardi, Protest of Traders against Jaja's rule in the River Niger, January 27, 1886; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, White, Consul White to Jaja, June 3, 1885.

¹⁰⁰ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Charles De Cardi, Protest of Traders against Jaja's rule in the River Niger, January 27, 1886; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, White, "Consul White to Jaja," June 3, 1885.

¹⁰¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Charles De Cardi, Protest of Traders against Jaja's rule in the River Niger, January 27, 1886; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, White, Consul White to Jaja, June 3, 1885; Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 117.

interior markets under Jaja's control.¹⁰² If they had hoped to be welcomed with open arms and ample oil, they were sorely disappointed. Jaja, foreseeing the collective's intentions, had sent his *owu ogbo* police force into the interior markets ahead of the British trading ships.¹⁰³ While he did not interfere directly with their trade, thus upholding his end of the treaty, Jaja's influence over the African traders in these markets kept them from carrying on trade with the Liverpool collective, whose agents returned to the coast empty-handed. Jaja, fearing this encroaching British effort to bypass the coastal middleman states, turned to his old foes in Bonny and Calabar in an effort to present a united front to further British incursions in the interior. Unfortunately, both states were suffering from internal political schisms that prevented them from following Jaja's lead.¹⁰⁴

The Liverpool collective again appealed to the British Navy to settle the dispute, but when the British gunboats arrived in Opobo and saw certain British ships, those owned by the Miller Brothers, trading peacefully, they saw no cause to fire upon any of the markets or Jaja's men.¹⁰⁵ Simultaneously, the British Foreign Office sought to rectify the situation by creating the post of Vice-Consul for the Bight of Biafra to further increase consular authority in the area. In this position, they placed Harry Johnston.¹⁰⁶ Johnston, as described by Cookey, was an, “adventurous, unscrupulous, and ambitious man who sought, in extending the British Empire in Africa, to advance his own career as rapidly as possible.”¹⁰⁷ Arriving in the Delta in January of 1886, while Hewett was home in England, Johnston took an antagonistic stance towards Jaja

¹⁰² Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 117; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 118-119.

¹⁰³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 117; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 118-119.

¹⁰⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 117-118; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, 46-47; Jones, *Trading States*, 231-245; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128. Although it would seem unlikely that Bonny's leadership would want to work with Jaja, it is important to note that Delta rulers and chiefs were becoming increasingly aware of the threat formal British colonialism constituted to their positions as middlemen in a wider network of trade.

¹⁰⁵ Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118.

¹⁰⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118; For a more detailed account of Johnston's role in the scramble for Africa, see Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston & the Scramble for Africa*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957).

¹⁰⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118.

from the outset and, without having ever met Jaja, decided that the only way to restore peace and prosperity on the Oil Rivers, at least for the British agents involved, would be, “by the humiliation or banishment of Ja Ja.”¹⁰⁸

The Admiralty of the British Navy, now devoid of any of Jaja's allies, was waiting for the consular office to give the word and they would remove Jaja from Opobo.¹⁰⁹ However, the consular office still needed a “legitimate” reason to give the order for Jaja's seizure. Thus, in March 1886, Hewett volunteered to sit in on a palaver to hear the complaints of the British supercargoes levied at King Jaja.¹¹⁰ On the H.M.S. *Watchful*, Hewett listened carefully to the list of grievances provided by the British agents and, by all accounts, did not allow Jaja to respond to the accusations or give him the opportunity to give his account of events.¹¹¹ Hewett went about levying a fine of 30 puncheons of oil on Jaja for allegedly breaking the terms of the 1873 Treaty of Peace. The fine was to be paid within seven days.¹¹²

Jaja, knowing that Consul Hewett and Vice-Consul Johnston were against him, went over Hewett's head and appealed directly to Lord Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary at the time.¹¹³ Unfortunately for Jaja, Lord Salisbury was not in his post when the letter arrived and Jaja's arguments were passed to Salisbury's replacement, who, admitting he had no background knowledge of the situation, handed Jaja's letter to Admiral Lister, a British naval officer who had long taken a negative view of Jaja and his rule in the Delta.¹¹⁴ Before Lister could move on his

¹⁰⁸ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1784, Johnston to Salisbury, January 15, 1884; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118-119; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128.

¹⁰⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26-27; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128.

¹¹⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26-27; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128.

¹¹¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26-27; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Enclosure 3, Jaja to Salisbury, April 2, 1886

¹¹² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 118; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 26-27; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 126-128.

¹¹³ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/72, Enclosure 3, Jaja to Salisbury, April 2, 1886; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 121; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 129-130.

¹¹⁴ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Rosebery to Jaja, June 16, 1886. Lister had been advocating for Jaja's removal since the Ibeno War of 1881 and the issues related to George Watts that followed. See National Archives,

desires to dethrone Jaja, word was sent from the foreign office that the 1884 Treaty of Protection superseded the 1873 Treaty of Peace, and Jaja's signing of that 1884 Treaty was deemed to have voided any previous agreements between Jaja, the chiefs of Opobo, and the British Crown. As such, the 30 puncheon fine enacted by Hewett was also declared unjust, and Lord Roseberry, who had been filling in as the Secretary of the Foreign Office during Salisbury's absence, instructed Hewett not to pursue collection of this fine.¹¹⁵

Jaja had bested Hewett at his own game. Throughout the row over the 1884 Treaty of Protection, Jaja referred again and again to Hewett's earlier correspondence, in which Hewett promised Jaja that the Queen did not wish to interfere with his rule in Opobo and southern Nigeria.¹¹⁶ However, Jaja's legitimate gripe would fall on deaf ears. Going over Hewett's head, directly to the Foreign Office, was an act that humiliated Hewett as well as raised questions about his fitness to govern the affairs in the Bight of Biafra. Hewett, sensing the end of his tenure on the Oil Rivers, moved to discredit Jaja in any way he could.¹¹⁷ First, Hewett called the chiefs of Opobo to an open meeting to discuss matters of trade, during which he made repeated references to Jaja's slave origins in an effort to infuriate the monarch. Jaja, ever the statesman, did not react to the insult, simply writing again to the Foreign Office of Hewett's "uncouth" behavior during the palaver.¹¹⁸ Next, Hewett demanded that Jaja return all the "hand shake" money, or informal gifts given to him between 1871 and 1873 by trading firms for access to his market. Hewett claimed that Jaja had no right to collect those gifts, as he was not recognized by

UK, F.O. 84/1784, Hunte-Grubbe to Secretary of the Admiralty, March 13, 1886.

¹¹⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 72, Foreign Office to Hewett, April 19, 1886; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 121; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 129-130.

¹¹⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja to Salisbury, April 2, 1886; Cooley, *King Jaja*, p. 120-121; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 128-129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 28.

¹¹⁷ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja to Salisbury, January 13, 1887; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja to Salisbury, January 24, 1887; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 122; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 129-130.

¹¹⁸ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja to Salisbury, January 13, 1887; National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja to Salisbury, January 24th, 1887; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 122; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 129-130.

the British crown as the monarch of Opobo prior to the signing of the 1873 Treaty of Peace.¹¹⁹

Finally, Hewett seized upon internal dissent among Opobo's chiefs in an effort to incite a rebellion against Jaja. A leading chief, named Uranta, who had followed Jaja from Bonny to Opobo had fallen on hard times. In an effort to save his failing trading business, Uranta turned to Jaja for a loan. Jaja, in turn, referred Uranta to another chief, one Oko Jaja. However, Oko Jaja was of slave origins and, as Uranta was a free-born chief from Bonny, he viewed being indebted to Oko Jaja as a great insult to his personal honor.¹²⁰ Uranta reminded Jaja that all the signatories of the 1873 Treaty of Peace were entitled to share the profits of the state equally.¹²¹ Needless to say, Jaja did not see eye-to-eye with Uranta on this point. Fearing reprisals for his perceived rebelliousness, Uranta removed himself and his family to a beach across the Imo River from Opobo and sought out Hewett's protection. Hewett responded by naming Uranta's fledgling settlement Queen's Town.¹²²

While Hewett's actions irritated Jaja, they did little to break his resolve or his grasp over trade on the Oil Rivers. British supercargoes were still trying to carry trade directly with interior markets within Opobo's sphere of influence. Jaja, always carefully eyeing a solution to his problems without breaking his treaty obligations, again fell back on a policy of sending his men to the interior markets, not to harass the British agents in the area, but rather to “compel” local merchants not to carry out trade with any British supercargoes.¹²³ The plan was, again, successful. The British supercargoes could not convince interior merchants that carrying on trade, at the risk of incurring Jaja's wrath, was worth the effort.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 28; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 122; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 135.

¹²⁰ Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 28; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 122; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 135.

¹²¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 122; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 29-30; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 136-138.

¹²² By recognizing this settlement, Hewett essentially made it impossible for Jaja to attack and destroy the new town without fearing reprisals from British gunboats. See Cookey, *King Jaja*, 122-123.

¹²³ Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 28; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 135-136.

¹²⁴ Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 144; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123. It is worthy to note here that Cookey and Kanu pulled

While these events played out in the Niger Delta, sources from Umuduruoha offer a more complete picture of Jaja's grand scheme. Having reconnected and established trade relations with his powerful brother Duruoshimiri in Umuduruoha, Jaja, during his faltering negotiations with the British, had moved a large amount of western-produced weaponry back to the Igbo interior.¹²⁵ Jaja was aware that Opobo's position at the coast was indefensible against the might of the British Navy. Opobo could be raised to the ground without a British boot touching African soil. However, Jaja also knew that the British were not yet ready to carry out a ground war in the Igbo heartland. If they were to attempt such an endeavor, it would surely become a war of attrition that the British were not prepared to carry out.¹²⁶ The British Crown had no allies in the interior. Jaja's fame and influence among the Igbo communities of the interior, largely derived from his own Igbo roots, meant that he would be able to mount a massive defense force against any aggressive British overtures.¹²⁷ By this point, Jaja seemed sure that armed conflict was coming and fortifying Umuduruoha to stage his war against the British seemed the most prudent tactic to ensuring survival for himself, his people, and his autonomy.¹²⁸ However, Jaja's war with the British would never come to be. The tides began to shift on him in June of 1887.

In the continuing conflict over access to the interior markets, Jaja appealed yet again to the British Crown. He sent four delegates to England to plead his case. In addition to one his sons, Sunday, Jaja sent three of his most trusted chiefs, Cookey Gam, Shoo Peterside, and Albert

this information from the personal papers of Chief G. Cookey Gam, one of Jaja's closest allies and a leading chief of Opobo.

¹²⁵ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹²⁶ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹²⁷ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 185.

¹²⁸ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

Jaja.¹²⁹ The Opobo delegation presented a very clear argument to the British. While in England, the delegation argued that the oil traders from whom Opobo purchased their goods were also middlemen in the larger scheme of the trade. By removing the Opobomen from the oil trade, the British would really only be cutting out the last link in a long, complicated chain of commerce. In essence, they would be trading one middleman for another whose customs and culture the British did not truly understand. Finally, the Opobo delegation argued that they, having invested over 10,000 GBP into the development of trade in the interior, had a rightful claim to the profits they making from the trade in palm oil.¹³⁰

While the Opobomen were pleading their case in England, Jaja's circumstances in Opobo took a drastic turn for the worse. The Foreign Office decided that Hewett needed assistance in his role as Acting Consul for the Bight of Biafra. As a result of this, the British Crown sent the antagonistic Harry Johnston to help Hewett quell the increasingly tense situation in the Delta.¹³¹ When Johnston stepped into this role, his opinion of what to do with the “belligerent” King Jaja had already been formed. As the Vice-Consul in the Bight of Biafra, Johnston had long agitated for Jaja's immediate and humiliating removal from the throne of Opobo and the Niger Delta.¹³² He was, now, finally in a position to make Jaja's removal from power a reality.

Johnston seemed to understand his role in the conflict as singular. He was in the Delta to protect the movements, and increase the profits of British traders and supercargoes, at any cost. If consular arbitration was biased or one-sided under Hewett, it would become decidedly more so

¹²⁹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja and Chiefs to Salisbury, July 20, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 29.

¹³⁰ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Jaja and Chiefs to Salisbury, July 20, 1887; National Archives, UK, FO 403/73, Memorandum of King Jaja's Chief Grievances, July 17, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 29.

¹³¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Memorandum of King Jaja's Chief Grievances, July 17, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 123; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 29.

¹³² National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Johnston to Salisbury, July 28, 1887; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 148; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 125.

under Johnston.¹³³ Liverpool-based oil traders had become restless as they watched their piece of the African cake slip through their fingers in the ongoing tensions with Jaja and Opobo. Through numerous appeals to the Foreign Office, these traders forced the British Crown to take direct action on the Jaja problem.¹³⁴

The issue of Jaja's removal was argued at length amongst the British Admiralty, the Foreign Office and the Consulate. Jaja's efforts to resolve the issue peacefully and with civility by his sending the Opobo delegation to London failed. Admiral Lister, who represented the British Navy, was fully prepared to use force to remove Jaja from Opobo.¹³⁵ Hewett, still in charge of the Consular affairs in the Delta, had penned a number of letters reiterating this same solution to the Jaja problem.¹³⁶ The Foreign Office Secretary, Lord Salisbury, was seemingly the only British officer still on Jaja's side. He penned a long treatise on the illegality of Jaja's removal under the contemporary standards of international law.¹³⁷ Unfortunately for Jaja, Salisbury's vacation in France effectively removed his measured and reasonable voice from the discussion.¹³⁸

In Opobo, Johnston had called on the H.M.S. *Goshawk*, under the command of Capt. Hand, to anchor off the coast of Opobo.¹³⁹ The *Goshawk* was accompanied by two British gunboats. Johnston called upon Jaja and a handful of his advisers to meet for a palaver on the *Goshawk*. In this meeting, Johnston threatened Jaja with a fine for restricting British movements in the interior, which Jaja rightly claimed he never did. He demanded that Jaja hand over the oil-

¹³³ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Johnston to Salisbury, July 28, 1887; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 148; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 125.

¹³⁴ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 125-126; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 30; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 147-150.

¹³⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/1784, Hunte-Grubbe to Secretary of the Admiralty, March 13, 1886.

¹³⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Hewett to Salisbury, August 20, 1887.

¹³⁷ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Lord Salisbury, Complaints against Jaja, August 29, 1887.

¹³⁸ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 127; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 151.

¹³⁹ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 127; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 151.

rich market of Ohambele, along with all the buildings in Ohambele, to the British.¹⁴⁰ Jaja refused to concede to any of Johnston's threats. In response, Johnston sent representatives to Ohambele to inform the people that their allegiance to Jaja was no longer valid and that the people of the market should begin to trade with the white supercargoes, regardless of Jaja's orders not to do so.¹⁴¹

The chiefs of Ohambele were not prepared to take this drastic step without first considering the implications, and Johnston, who had hoped to come back to Opobo from Ohambele with a formal treaty in hand, returned to the coast without the interior support he had so desired.¹⁴² Upon returning to Ohambele three days later, Johnston, who claimed that the markets were now filled with Jaja's men rather than the Igbo people he had met previously, found that Ohambele, regardless of British interference, would not turn its back on Jaja.¹⁴³ In addition to his inability to secure the loyalty of the Ohambele people, Johnston was also supposedly mocked and humiliated publicly by Jaja's men.¹⁴⁴

The “disrespect” he was met with at Ohambele was the final straw for the already agitated Johnston. While he tried to appeal to the British government that the entire fate of the oil trade rested on resolving the Jaja crisis, the conflict was becoming increasingly personal for him.

¹⁴⁰ Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 50-51; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 128 & 129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 31-32.

¹⁴¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Hewett to Salisbury, August 20, 1887; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 128 & 129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 31-32.

¹⁴² Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 150-151; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 33-35. It is worth noting that both Kanu and Cooley argue that the Igbo inhabitants disappeared from sight when Johnston arrived because they were warned not to deal with any British agents by Jaja. Kanu goes further, stating that Jaja had taken a wife from one of the prominent families of Ohambele, thus the community saw him as a son, not the tyrannical overlord imposing his will on Ohambele that Johnston makes him out to be.

¹⁴³ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Johnston to Salisbury, August 20, 1887; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 150-151; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 33-35.

¹⁴⁴ Johnston claims that Opobo agents chased the Igbo inhabitants of Ohambele into the bush, proceeded to laugh and jeer at him and his men, and one chief, in particular, stared him down and blew smoke in his face repeatedly. See National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 73, Johnston to Salisbury, August 20, 1887; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 150-151; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 129; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 33-35.

He ordered that all British trade with Opobo and Ohambele be ceased immediately.¹⁴⁵ This final blow to Johnston's machinations pushed the British officer to take drastic measures. On September 12, 1887, Johnston sent a desperate correspondence to the Foreign Office, asking to remove Jaja from the throne and deport him immediately. Jaja, Johnston claimed, was fortifying the interior and preparing to launch an attack on the British.¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, historians to date have treated this letter to the Foreign Office as a deliberate misstatement of the truth by Johnston's to justify his removal of Jaja from Opobo.¹⁴⁷ Yet, Umuduruoha-based sources reinforce Johnston's claim that Jaja was actively fortifying the interior.¹⁴⁸ It seems unlikely that Johnston was aware of Jaja's actions in the Igbo heartland. Johnston had no way of knowing Umuduruoha even existed, let alone know where it was. Neither did he understand Jaja's connection to the place or have any idea of what was going on there. All of my Umuduruoha-based collaborators claim Jaja was fortifying his natal home as a final resort, in case the situation in the Delta deteriorated rapidly. That being said, there does not seem to be any evidence that Jaja would go on the offensive and attack the British without overt provocation. In retrospect, Johnston's claim of Jaja's fortification of the interior was, at best, an inspired guess which, whether or not it turned out to be true, would provide justification for the actions that Johnston would take next. Of this correspondence, Cookey writes,

Nothing, of course, had transpired to make the situation worse than previously. But by sending the telegraphic message Johnston managed to imply a deteriorating crisis which required prompt and decisive action. It was clearly the tactic of an unscrupulous character which was to be compounded by fortuitous circumstances in London.¹⁴⁹

Johnston had sent two telegrams to the Foreign Office on September 12, 1887. The first

¹⁴⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Salisbury, September 12, 1887.

¹⁴⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Salisbury, September 12, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131.

¹⁴⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 35-36; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 150-152.

¹⁴⁸ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya.

¹⁴⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131.

informed the office that Johnston had stopped all trade with Opobo and Ohambele.¹⁵⁰ The second telegram requested permission to remove Jaja from the throne.¹⁵¹ Salisbury, who was still on holiday in France, responded by saying, “Your action re Ja Ja approved. Further instruction will be sent after communication with Admiralty.”¹⁵² Johnston immediately seized upon this brief and unclear response. Salisbury's telegram, as Johnston viewed it, granted Johnston the authority to immediately remove Jaja from his throne. However, Salisbury was, in fact, responding to Johnston's first telegram.

On September 18, 1887 Johnston sent word to Opobo that he would like to meet with Jaja on the H.M.S. *Goshawk*,¹⁵³ which was perched off the coast of Opobo. Jaja, who was justifiably suspicious, requested that Johnston send a white man to Opobo to be held until he was safely returned from the palaver.¹⁵⁴ Johnston refused this request and claimed that he simply wished for Jaja to hear his terms for a resolution. He further intimated that Jaja, whether or not he accepted the terms, would be allowed to leave the meeting without any interference.¹⁵⁵

Jaja, against his better judgment, agreed to Johnston's terms. On the morning of September 19, 1887, Jaja, with an entourage of war canoes, set sail for the *Goshawk*. Once Jaja was securely on-board the British ship, the *Goshawk* immediately set its cannons upon Opobo.¹⁵⁶ Johnston offered Jaja two options, sign an agreement to step down as the monarch of Opobo and be sent to the Court of Equity in the Gold Coast for trial, or return to Opobo as an enemy of the British Crown, thus providing a justification for the *Goshawk* to open fire on Opobo and its

¹⁵⁰ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Salisbury, September 12, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131.

¹⁵¹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Salisbury, September 12, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131.

¹⁵² National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Salisbury to Johnston, September 13, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 131.

¹⁵³ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Jaja, September 18, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 132-133; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 170-171.

¹⁵⁴ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Jaja, September 18, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 132-133; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 170-171.

¹⁵⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/73, Johnston to Jaja, September 18, 1887; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 132-133; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 170-171.

¹⁵⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 133; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 171; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 36.

inhabitants.¹⁵⁷

Jaja had to choose between two bad options. Jaja, reluctant to see his people and his town decimated, was also likely considering the fate of his son and chiefs away in England. Were a white man to die in the conflict with Opobo, revenge could be visited upon his beloved son and most trusted chiefs abroad. Jaja's choice was made. He conceded to Johnston's demands, sent for an entourage that would follow him into exile¹⁵⁸ and turned himself over to the British Crown for trial.¹⁵⁹ Two days later, the *Goshawk* sailed for Bonny, where Jaja and his entourage were transferred to a ship setting sail for Accra, Gold Coast.¹⁶⁰ There is no doubt that Johnston's actions were manipulative, underhanded and a miscarriage of justice in the eyes of British law. Even Johnston's colleagues in the British government condemned Johnston's actions on September 19, 1887,¹⁶¹ but these voices of opposition meant little to Jaja, whose fate was effectively sealed.

Trial in Accra

Jaja arrived in Accra on September 30, 1887 aboard the steamer *Calabar*.¹⁶² Upon arriving in Accra, Jaja was met with a most unwelcome sight. The delegation he had sent to London had been detained by the Governor of Gold Coast, at Johnston's request, on their return trip to Opobo.¹⁶³ The people he was trying desperately to spare, including his beloved son Sunday, were now very much embroiled in the conflict. More importantly, the delegation also represented the leading authority figures of Opobo who could replace Jaja during his exile.

However, those authority figures were now with him in Accra and not in a position to carry on

¹⁵⁷ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 133; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 171; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 36.

¹⁵⁸ Eight individuals joined Jaja on the *Goshawk*, including Emma Johnson, his trusted secretary and the head of his school, and his youngest wife, whose name was Patience.

¹⁵⁹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 37-38; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 185-188.

¹⁶⁰ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 37-38; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 185-188.

¹⁶¹ W.N.M. Geary. *Nigeria Under British Rule* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1927), 275.

¹⁶² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 37-38; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 185-188.

¹⁶³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo*, 37-38; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 185-188.

his fight. Initially, Jaja and his entourage were treated as guests of the Gold Coast government, but two weeks into his stay in the colony, Jaja's freedom of movement was greatly restricted, when the colonial authorities found out he had been sending letters to people in England who could fight his removal from Opobo on his behalf.¹⁶⁴ The British response was to detain Jaja and his people and regard them as prisoners throughout the rest of their stay in the Gold Coast.¹⁶⁵

If Jaja had hoped for an honest inquiry into the events that led to his detainment, he would be sorely disappointed when the “trial” began on November 29, 1887. Johnston, according to Cooley, acted as, “accuser, witness and prosecutor” for the trial.¹⁶⁶ The onus was put on Jaja to defend himself and, because they were no longer in Opobo, he could call no witnesses to attest to Johnston's treachery.¹⁶⁷ Johnston, on the other hand, produced “eyewitness” testimony from two disgruntled citizens of Opobo, whom he claimed provided the evidence that Jaja had willfully broken the 1884 Treaty of Protection.¹⁶⁸ The British Admiral residing over Jaja's trial in the Court of Equity, Admiral William Hunt-Grubbe, quickly returned a verdict that Jaja had broken the 1884 Treaty of Protection, in particular Article V that stated Jaja was to submit to the acting consul's decisions in any conflicts that arose in Opobo, and sentenced Jaja, as well as his son Sunday, to five years of exile away from the West Coast of Africa.¹⁶⁹

In February of 1888, Jaja called upon his allies in the U.K., the Miller Brothers, to help him out of his current predicament.¹⁷⁰ The Miller Brothers enlisted the support of Irish members

¹⁶⁴ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 191.

¹⁶⁵ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 134-135; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 191-192.

¹⁶⁶ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 137.

¹⁶⁷ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 135-136; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 191-193; E.M.T. Epelle, *The Trial of King Jaja* (Enugu, The Literary Book Company, 1959), 40-41. Epelle was a native Opobian historian who has written on the development of Christianity in Opobo. While *The Trial of King Jaja* is a dramatized play, Epelle based this story of Jaja's trial on Opobo oral traditions and a strong knowledge of the documentary evidence surrounding Jaja's trial in the Gold Coast.

¹⁶⁸ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 195-197; Epelle, *The Trial*, 42-43.

¹⁶⁹ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 196-197; Epelle, *The Trial*, 42-43.

¹⁷⁰ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 196-197; Epelle, *The Trial*, 42-43.

of Parliament to take up the cause of Jaja's freedom.¹⁷¹ The Irish parliamentarians were receptive to the idea, not out of any great respect or admiration for Jaja or justice, but simply to try to embarrass the British government, for whom the Irish had no great love. These Irish Parliament members were successful in raising doubts as to the legality and justification for Jaja's seizure and the House of Parliament decided to move for a more informed inquiry.¹⁷² A "blue book" was compiled that outlined all the correspondence regarding Jaja. However, this book was provided by the Foreign Office, and the documents in it were necessarily skewed against Jaja and in favor of the British government's decision.¹⁷³ After a drawn-out argument in Parliament, the issue was tabled and no further actions were taken.

Jaja in Exile

While the parliamentary hearings surrounding Jaja's case were on-going, Jaja had been removed from the West African Coast for the British island colony of St. Vincent in the West Indies.¹⁷⁴ Jaja made pleas to the Governor of the Gold Coast that he be allowed to stay in Accra during his exile.¹⁷⁵ While Accra was hundreds of miles from Opobo, the shipping lanes that ran throughout West Africa's waters would allow Jaja some ability to stay in contact with his people and his kingdom. It was for this very reason that Jaja's request was not honored. As long as Jaja stayed in West Africa, he posed a threat to British trading interests there.¹⁷⁶ After Jaja's trial and the unfavorable ruling, the deposed monarch seemed to have lost hope of ever returning to his beloved kingdom and began to encounter severe bouts of depression that would remain with him

¹⁷¹ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 196-197; Epelle, *The Trial*, 42-43.

¹⁷² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 196-197; Epelle, *The Trial*, 42-43.

¹⁷³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 136-138; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 197.

¹⁷⁴ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 74, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, February 16, 1888; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 141-142; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 199.

¹⁷⁵ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 74, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, February 16, 1888; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 141-142; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 199.

¹⁷⁶ National Archives, UK, F.O. 403/ 74, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, February 16, 1888; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 141-142; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 199.

throughout the rest of his life.¹⁷⁷

On May 8, 1888, the day of Jaja's departure had finally come. Jaja boarded the H.M.S. *Icarus* and undertook the month long voyage to the port city of Kingstown, St. Vincent, where he arrived on June 9, 1888.¹⁷⁸ Jaja's presence in St. Vincent so excited the black populace of the island that the minor issue of disembarking from the *Icarus* and moving, by carriage, to his new house became an ordeal. The scene in Kingstown's port on the morning of June 10, 1888, when Jaja was to be moved to the house where he would live while in exile, can only be described as chaotic. The people of African descent in Kingstown celebrated Jaja's arrival with great fervor. Jaja was hurried into his carriage with his head down as throngs of screaming supporters rushed him and his entourage. As the carriage sped away towards Jaja's new home, crowds hurried after it shouting, simply trying to catch a glimpse of the great African monarch.¹⁷⁹



Figure 30: Fort Charlotte, Jaja's home in St. Vincent¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 8247, Mr. Winsfield, Jaja's Desire to Come to England, April 10, 1889; National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 14222, Mr. Meade, King Jaja: Request to be Transferred to the Gambia, July 5, 1889; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 141.

¹⁷⁸ Jaja was initially headed for Grenada, but continued on to St. Vincent when the British Foreign Office had decided there was not adequate housing for Jaja in Grenada. Cookey, *King Jaja*, 141-142; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 199.

¹⁷⁹ Unknown Author, *The Sentinel*, October 19, 1888; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 144; Edward L. Cox, *Rekindling the Ancestral Memory: King Ja Ja of Opobo in St. Vincent and Barbados, 1888-1891*, (Cave Hill, Barbados: Dept. of History, the University of the West Indies, 1998), 9-10; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 200. While Cox's book argues that Jaja's presence in the West Indies incited a slave revolt in Barbados, the only reference I found to any such incident was an episode in which a mass of black St. Vincentians surrounded Fort Charlotte, where Jaja was initially housed, and the police feared a riot. However, it was also said that Jaja calmed this crowd and prevented such a riot from occurring.

¹⁸⁰ Website, "Africa Resource," <http://www.africaresource.com/rasta/sesostris-the-great-the-egyptian-hercules/king->

In July of 1888, Jaja petitioned the British Crown to allow his son, and eventual successor, Sunday Jaja to continue the education he had begun in the U.K.¹⁸¹ The petition was denied and Sunday was supposed to stay in St. Vincent with his father. However, the reply to Jaja's telegram arrived in St. Vincent too late, and Jaja had already placed his son on a boat headed for England.¹⁸² This would mark the last time Jaja saw Sunday, which, in months to come, would only contribute to his already depressed mood.¹⁸³ While Jaja spent his days traveling by carriage around the island and his evenings dining with the social elites of the island, by whom he was afforded the regal treatment he had become accustomed to in Opobo, stability in Opobo broke down and tensions again emerged between the Opobo chiefs and the British Consulate's Office.

Jaja, through his many business contacts and friends in London, no doubt heard of the turmoil that had gripped his kingdom on the West African coast. This must have stirred in him an even greater longing to return home to support his people in their time of need. But it was not to be. Jaja's physical and emotional health deteriorated with each passing day in St. Vincent.

In April 1889, Jaja sent a request through Lord Knutsford, then the Governor of the Windward Islands, to Lord Salisbury in the Foreign Office, asking that he be moved to either Britain or the Gambia.¹⁸⁴ It would seem, in examining this request, that Jaja asked first to be sent to England so that he could be closer to his son and better positioned to fight the terms of his

[jaja-of-opobo/](#), (Accessed March 28th, 2015).

¹⁸¹ National Archives, UK, CO 321/102, Lord Knutsford, Sunday Jaja, July 28, 1888; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 143-144; Cox, *Rekindling*, 18-19.

¹⁸² National Archives, UK, CO 321/102, Lord Knutsford, Sunday Jaja, July 28, 1888; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 143-144; Cox, *Rekindling*, 18-19.

¹⁸³ National Archives, UK, CO 321/102, Lord Knutsford, Sunday Jaja, July 28, 1888; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 143-144; Cox, *Rekindling*, 18-19.

¹⁸⁴ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 7254, Lord Knutsford, Jaja's Desire to Come to England, April 10, 1889; National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 14222, Mr. Meade, King Jaja: Request to be Transferred to the Gambia, July 5, 1889.

ongoing exile and to make full use of his allies in the U.K.¹⁸⁵ When this request was denied, Jaja again asked to be moved to the Gambia, ostensibly to be closer to his home and to have greater access to any news of events playing out in Opobo. The British delayed Jaja's requests, over and over again.¹⁸⁶ It was clear that the British had no interest in returning a vital, healthy Jaja to the West African coast for fear of what his presence there might mean for domestic issues in Opobo, which were already deteriorating for the British Crown. British officials continuously delayed Jaja's request to move from St. Vincent. It would seem their tactic for dealing with Jaja was to simply put his requests off until a later date. It can be safely assumed that the British were hoping that, with the passing of time, the Jaja problem would resolve itself through his death. At the very least, they were likely waiting for Jaja to become so ill before considering his request to be returned to West Africa that he would not have the strength or presence to impact the events playing out there. Whatever the case may be, Jaja would stay in St. Vincent for the time being.

At the request of Lord Salisbury, a British doctor was brought in to examine Jaja on June 15th, 1889, during one of his bouts of ill-health.¹⁸⁷ The doctor seemed less interested in Jaja's physical health than he was with Jaja's mental and emotional health. He made a note in his records that Jaja was clearly suicidal and suggested that steps be taken to prevent the once-proud monarch from killing himself.¹⁸⁸ In a letter sent discussing Jaja's physical examination, the Undersecretary of State for the Windward Islands, writes,

Upon consideration of the report of the Medical Board appointed to examine Ja Ja by the Governor General of the Windward Islands included in your letter of the 10th Ultimo, he considers that it will be wise to allow the prisoner to return to Opobo rather than to run

¹⁸⁵ Jaja asked, first, to be moved to the Gambia. When that request was denied, he asked to be moved to England. When that request failed as well, Jaja again petitioned to be relocated to the Gambia.

¹⁸⁶ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 8247, Mr. Winsfield, Jaja's Desire to Come to England, April 10, 1889; National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 14222, Mr. Meade, King Jaja: Request to be Transferred to the Gambia, July 5, 1889.

¹⁸⁷ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 1187, T.V. Lister, King Jaja, June 11, 1889.

¹⁸⁸ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 1187, T.V. Lister, King Jaja, June 11, 1889.

the risk, feared by doctors, of his committing suicide.¹⁸⁹

In response to the Undersecretary of State's letter, Jaja's old nemesis, Admiral Lister, ceded that if Jaja were to kill himself while in British custody, the situation in Opobo would explode and the British efforts to pacify the state would be lost. Jaja's failing health brought his case back to the House of Commons in England, where his Irish allies in Parliament demanded that the Foreign Office provide a report on Jaja's health. Again, the Foreign Office provided a selective excerpt from the doctor's report, omitting any mention of his failing health or deteriorating mental state, and pointing simply to one line in which the doctor had stressed that Jaja had nothing “organically” wrong with him.¹⁹⁰ Conveniently absent from the Foreign Office report were the paragraphs detailing the physical ailments that plagued Jaja or his suicidal tendencies.

Meanwhile, Jaja received a devastating blow to his psyche when news arrived in St. Vincent regarding the actions of his eldest son, Saturday Jaja.¹⁹¹ Jaja had never placed great faith in Saturday. Saturday was the only son of Jaja's whom he had not bothered to educate abroad and, more importantly, Saturday had long had a reputation for being impetuous, childish, and irresponsible in his dealings with money and people.¹⁹² What was more, Saturday had taken his father's favorite wife Nwaelechi, alerted Consul Johnston to any and all internal dealings in

¹⁸⁹National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 118 no. 1178, Undersecretary of State, re: Jaja's Health, June 15, 1889.

¹⁹⁰National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 117 no. 9791, Administrator to Sendall, Health of King Jaja, May 13, 1889; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 153-154; Cox, *Rekindling*, 26-27.

¹⁹¹Cookey, *King Jaja*, p. 157. It is worth noting here that Cookey's collection of oral narratives in Opobo and his access to the personal papers of Opobo's leading chiefs form the crux of the evidence for this claim. The situation with Saturday Jaja appears only in Cookey's text. However, Jaja's personal correspondence tend to reinforce the view that Jaja did not much care for his son Saturday. At best, Jaja was disappointed in how Saturday turned out. At worst, Jaja very much disliked his eldest son. Moreover, Jaja, at great cost, sent his younger sons Mark (later Mac Pepple) and Sunday, as well as his grandson Kingston, to be educated in the U.K. No such cost or effort was put towards Saturday's education, probably because Jaja was so disappointed in the character of his eldest son that he did not see such an endeavor being worth the price he would have to pay. Saturday would eventually fade into obscurity whereas Sunday would eventually become the second *amanyanabo* of Opobo.

¹⁹² Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157-158.

Opobo, and had attempted to seize all of Jaja's wealth and property.¹⁹³

Jaja's response in a letter to Chief Cookey Gam was for the chiefs of Opobo to seize Saturday at their earliest opportunity, take from him all of his wives, all of his canoes, and all of his money.¹⁹⁴ Jaja opined that, if Saturday objected, lashed out at, or injured any person, he was not to be spared from the harshest punishments Opobo law would allow, regardless of his father's honored position in the community.¹⁹⁵ While Jaja was clear that this was how he wished his eldest, wayward son to be dealt with, his right hand man and regent in Opobo, Chief Cookey Gam, conferred with the other chiefs of Opobo and the decision was made that to take the drastic steps Jaja suggested could unsettle the already turbulent state of affairs in Opobo.¹⁹⁶

By the middle of 1890, Jaja again fell into a bout of ill-health and was re-examined by the colonial surgeons in St. Vincent.¹⁹⁷ There could be no more manipulation of their report. It asserted very clearly that St. Vincent's climate was directly contributing to Jaja's failing physical state.¹⁹⁸ The Foreign Office finally relented. They would finally allow Jaja to return home.¹⁹⁹

The impetus for the change in the Foreign Office's stance on this matter was two-fold. First, Jaja was, by now, far too ill to become embroiled in local politics if he were to be returned to Opobo. Secondly, the state of affairs in Opobo had changed so much since his exile, that he was no longer in a position to simply reinsert himself back into the local political fray.²⁰⁰ They requested that Jaja sign a document promising not to foment discord or agitate the political scene

¹⁹³ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157. The ailing monarch had already vested his wealth in his younger sons Mark and Sunday, with the support of the chiefs as well as Consul Johnston.

¹⁹⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157.

¹⁹⁵ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157-158.

¹⁹⁶ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157-158

¹⁹⁷ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 126, Col. Surgeon to Administrator, enclosed in Marling to Knutford, October 9, 1890.

¹⁹⁸ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 126, Col. Surgeon to Administrator, enclosed in Marling to Knutford, October 9, 1890; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 200-202; Cox, *Rekindling*, 28-30.

¹⁹⁹ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 127, F.O. to C.O., November 12, 1890.

²⁰⁰ National Archives, UK, CO 321/ 127, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, July 26, 1890; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 157-158; Cox, *Rekindling*, 29-30.

upon his return. Jaja signed this document and returned it to the Foreign Office.²⁰¹

After some waffling, the Foreign Office changed its course and decided to delay Jaja's return until the state of affairs in Opobo's political arena had been settled. Jaja, who had initially been ecstatic about his potential return, fell into a deeper depression over this delay. He was transferred to Barbados for medical treatment and to await his departure for Opobo.²⁰² The Governor in Barbados was, initially, in no hurry to get Jaja on his way home until he realized that Jaja's presence there was only functioning to sow unrest in his own colony, as the black masses had once again crowded around the home where Jaja was staying and the boat he was to travel home aboard, shouting and cheering on the African hero king.²⁰³ Furthermore, a final examination of Jaja by three doctors in March of 1891 revealed that his heart, lungs and kidneys seemed to be failing. Governor Sendall of Barbados sent a frantic note to England stating that, if Jaja were not moved immediately, he would likely die in Barbados.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ National Archives, UK, CO 321/127, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, May 26, 1890; National Archives, UK, FO 403/ 73, King Jaja to Lord Salisbury, April 5, 1890; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 158; Cox, *Rekindling*, 22-23; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 203-204.

²⁰² National Archives, UK, CO 28/229, W. Sendall to Knutsford, March 7, 1891; Cox, *Rekindling*, 28-30; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 159-160; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 204.

²⁰³ Cox, *Rekindling*, 28-30; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 159-160; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 204. The reaction of the people of African descent in the New World to Jaja's presence is indeed fascinating. It is likely that, with so many slaves coming from what is now southeastern Nigeria inhabiting the Windward Islands, Jaja represented a connection to their homes or was considered as a means through which they could learn of the events playing out in their native lands. I am not able to weigh in assertively on this aspect of Jaja's reception in the Windward Islands, as it falls beyond the scope of this study and I lack the resources to do so. However, the question of why Jaja was so revered by the black populations of the New World is certainly one that merits further investigation.

²⁰⁴ National Archives, UK, CO 28/ 229, Broome to Knutsford, April 25, 1891; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 160; Cox, *Rekindling*, 30.



Figure 31: Historical site dedicated to Jaja, St. Vincent, West Indies²⁰⁵

Jaja finally boarded the H.M.S. *Comus* in Barbados and began his return trip to Opobo over the Atlantic on May 11th, 1891.²⁰⁶ Jaja's health took a turn for the better when the prospect of returning home had finally been realized. A last minute dispatch from the Foreign Office instructed the *Comus* to stop on the Spanish-held island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands before carrying Jaja back to Opobo.²⁰⁷ No one made Jaja aware of this alteration to the ship's course for fear the news would kill him on the spot. Thus, it was not until the *Comus* docked in Santa Cruz, Tenerife that Jaja became aware of this delay and lamented that the “the British government want

²⁰⁵ Photograph by J. Makali Bruton, “King Jugbo-Jugbo-Fem Marker,” April 21, 2015.

²⁰⁶ Cox, *Rekindling*, 31; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 159-160; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 204.

²⁰⁷ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/ 2110, Macdonald to Anderson, July 4, 1891; Unknown Author, *African Times*, August 3, 1891; Cookey, *King Jaja*, 161. It is not clear why the British decided that the *Comus* should stop over in Tenerife. None of the sources discussing Jaja's attempts to return to Opobo discuss the reason for this change in course. It is possible that the British deliberately delayed Jaja's return for political reasons. However, it is equally likely that the *Comus* stopped in Tenerife for logistical reasons that had nothing to do with Jaja or the state of affairs in Opobo.

to kill me.”²⁰⁸ Sir Claude MacDonald, who had recently been appointed to the newly-formed post of Consul-General in the Bight of Biafra, was supposed to retrieve Jaja in late June, 1891, but an epidemic broke out in Tenerife and the Island was under quarantine.²⁰⁹

On July 4, 1891, Jaja awoke to tell his attendants that he had seen his father, Okwara Ozurumba, in a dream and predicted he would die in three days’ time.²¹⁰ Jaja penned a final letter to his son Mark with instructions regarding his dressing for burial, and, on July 7, 1891, true to his dream, Jaja died in Camacho's Hotel on the Island of Tenerife.²¹¹ Jaja had succumbed to the symptoms of dysentery at the age of 70.

Conclusion

Jaja's storied career in the Niger Delta has been told and retold. His exploits in attempting to repel the British from the Igbo interior has long been cast as one of the single greatest anti-colonial displays in Nigerian history. Ultimately, the removal of Jaja and other rulers like him, paved the way for the British to exert more direct control over the affairs of what would soon become the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Men like Jaja stood in the face of mounting pressure and adversity to ensure that African lives were dictated by African decisions.

In my concluding chapter, I examine how Jaja's legacy has left an indelible mark in the

²⁰⁸ Unknown Author, *African Times*, August 3, 1891; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 160. This Newspaper article also mentions that Jaja, sure that the British were simply going to execute him, asked that they shoot him rather than hang him. This, Jaja said, was because he wanted to die like a soldier and not a prisoner. On a humorous side note, Jaja spent his remaining days in Tenerife with his pet Bull Terrier, whom he ironically name Oko Jumbo.

²⁰⁹ National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/ 2110, Macdonald to Anderson, July 4, 1891; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 161.

²¹⁰ Cooley, *King Jaja*, 161; National Archives, UK, FO 84/2110, Macdonald to Anderson, July 4, 1891.

²¹¹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, CALPROF 36/3/5, Correspondence relating to the exhumation of the body of the late King Jaja of Opobo, September 7, 1891; National Archives, UK, F.O. 84/ 2110, Macdonald to Anderson, July 4, 1891; Cooley, *King Jaja*, 160-161; Kanu, “The Life and Times,” 205. For some strange reason, Kanu rejects the date of July 7th for Jaja's death. Despite a close reading of the archival records throughout the rest of the text, Kanu seems to be working on the assumption that Jaja's final letter to his son Mark was penned on July 14, 1891. The document is clearly marked July 7, 1891 and every other researcher universally accepts the date of July 7, 1891 for Jaja's death. Also, documents in both Spanish and English, related to the exhumation of Jaja's body, also list his death date as July 7, 1891. Kanu also badly mislabeled Jaja's date of birth as being 1812 and, for some reason, seems to think he lived until 1895. This is particularly troubling as the author makes reference to Jaja's dead body arriving in Opobo in September of 1891.

memory and identity of his natal community of Umuduruoha. Further, I explore the relationship that flowered between Umuduruoha and Opobo that would survive through the tribulations of the colonial period, the horror of the Biafran War, and continues on to the present.

CONCLUSION: JAJA'S LEGACY IN UMUDURUOHA



Figure 32: Painting of King Jaja (Jonathon Knight, Commissioned by Anheuser Busch Inc.)



Figure 33: King Jaja Stamp (W.H. Irvine)

Introduction

This chapter brings Jaja's story full circle. Here, I provide an examination of Jaja's legacy in his natal home. More importantly, it investigates incidents of reconnection during the twentieth century between the people of Umuduruoha and Opobo. The bond that has existed between Jaja's birth community and the city he founded represents the most enduring legacy Jaja left after his death. In addressing the circumstances that drew Umuduruoha and Opobo together, one begins to see the lasting impact Jaja had on these communities when he planted and replanted the seeds of home. Finally, the chapter draws this dissertation to a close, suggesting further avenues for research as well as reiterating the calls of my collaborators for greater recognition of Jaja's birthplace in the nation of Nigeria.

Douglas Comes Home

“There were so many problems for him there. That is why Douglas had to come home.”

Internal political discord in Opobo in the late 1930s and early 1940s prompted Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja's four year hiatus from the throne of Opobo. Despite the 1873 Treaty at Minima in which Jaja explicitly stated that his lineage should not be assumed to be the natural heirs to the position *amanyanabo*,¹ Douglas found himself trying to dispel Stephen Jaja's claims that the Mac Pepples were the offspring of an Ibibio slave girl, Bessy, and Jaja's Scottish friend and business partner, Charlie MacEachen.² It is for this reason that Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja, in an attempt to establish his birthright, traveled to his ancestral home of Umuduruoha in Igboland with the leading Igbo politician, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. This homecoming occurred in 1945.

¹ S.J.S. Cookey, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891*, (New York: Nok Publishers LTD, 1974), 74-77 & 169-170; Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885; An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 219-220; E.A. Jaja, *King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891): A Sketch History of the Development and Expansion of Opobo* (Lagos: Opobo Action Council, 1977), 13 & 14; S.O. Jaja, *Opobo Since 1870: A Documentary Record*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press Pub. House, University of Ibadan, 1991), xii-xvi.

² National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OPODIST 1/10/47, Stephen U. Jaja, Petition to J.S. Smith, February 16, 1937, 139.

While in Umuduruoha, Douglas and Azikiwe were hosted by the Duruoshimiri family, now under the headship of Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri, and were taken on a tour of the village to see the many gifts Jaja had sent to his natal home after reconnecting with his brothers, family, and kinsmen. Most notable among these gifts were the large iron pots chained outside of the Duruoshimiri compound. While the twelve iron pots are currently housed inside this compound, in 1945 they rested in the public square of Umuduruoha. A handful of the iron pots, not housed in the public square, were rumored to have been dispersed throughout other family compounds in the community.³ When Jaja gifted these pots, they numbered around seventy, and Duruoshimiri reportedly felt it his duty to the community to spread the resources sent by Jaja evenly amongst the lineages of Umuduruoha.⁴

Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja had heard stories about Jaja's natal home since his childhood. Douglas' father, Arthur Mac Pepple Jaja, had learned of the physical features of his grandfather's childhood compound, *obi Okwara Ozurumba*, from his father and his uncle, Ezeala. He, in turn, had passed these same stories down to his son, Douglas.⁵ As the information trickled from one generation to the next, Douglas heard stories of the great King Jaja's childhood, most notable among them were tales of Jaja playing around two large iroko trees⁶ and a small pond (*olu Duruoshimiri*) that lined Okwara Ozurumba's compound. Upon reaching the center of Umuduruoha and seeing these natural features around the compound, Douglas was convinced

³ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, December 31, 2011; Dr. Walter Ofonagoro and Capt. H.O. Ohaya, interview by Author, Umuobi, Imo State, Nigeria, August 19, 2010; Mr. Okechukwu Emmanuel Uwazuruonye, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 11, 2012; Mr. Barnabas Emeh, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 7, 2012; Mr. Wilfred Oforha, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, January 16, 2012; Prof. E.C. Osuala, interview by Author, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, July 16th, 2010; Dan Ihenetu.

⁴ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

⁵ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

⁶ One of these trees, Duruoshimiri's favorite of the two, was bestowed a title by Duruoshimiri in his later years.

that he was now standing in the natal home of King Jaja. For their part, Umuduruoha's citizens needed no further proof beyond seeing Douglas to be convinced that he was, in fact, a descendant of Jaja and, as such, a native son of Umuduruoha. It was said that the members of the Duruoshimiri family were immediately convinced of Douglas' lineage upon seeing him, as they noticed a remarkable resemblance to the members of their own family.⁷



Figure 34: The iroko tree outside of *obi Okwara Ozurumba* (Photograph by Author)

⁷ Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri, interview by Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 29, 2012; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

Douglas then returned to Opobo with the support of the Duruoshimiri family⁸ and the well-respected Nnamdi Azikiwe to bolster Douglas' claims of his hereditary right to the throne of Opobo. Once back in Opobo, he was restored to the throne of Opobo in 1946. Many chiefs who once supported Stephen U. Jaja's assertions that Douglas was an imposter to the throne quickly reversed course when Douglas returned to Opobo with the support of Azikiwe and the Duruoshimiris.⁹ Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja went on to become the longest-sitting *amanyanabo* in Opobo history, reigning until his death in 1980.¹⁰ However, the 1945 visit with Dr. Azikiwe would not be the only time Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja called upon his ancestral kinsmen for support.

The Nigerian-Biafran War

The colonial period in Nigeria came to an end on October 1, 1960. Abubakar Tafawa Balela assumed the position of Prime Minister in a unified government with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe assuming the role of Governor General. In 1963, Nnamdi Azikiwe was elected as Nigeria's first president.¹¹ He held this position until early 1966, when the first military coup leading to the Nigerian Civil War occurred.

Ethnic, religious, and political fissures plagued Nigeria's early independent governments. Upon Nigeria's assertion of its independence, many southerners felt northern politicians had

⁸ It is unclear whether or not members of the Duruoshimiri family physically accompanied Douglas and Azikiwe back to Opobo to provide evidence of Douglas' claims to the position of *amanyanabo*. It is possible they provided a letter of support or simply relied upon Azikiwe's testimony to assure Opobo citizens of Douglas' rightful place as Jaja's heir.

⁹ National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, OPODIST 1/10/47, Stephen U. Jaja, Declaration of Oath, undated; "Traditional States of Nigeria," World Statesman, accessed April 12, 2015, http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nigeria_native.html. In this document, Stephen U. Jaja rescinded his claim to the stool of the *amanyanabo* of Opobo and promised he would aspire after the position or commit any act that undermined Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja's reign as the *amanyanabo*.

¹⁰ "Traditional States of Nigeria," World Statesman, accessed April 12th, 2015, http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nigeria_native.html.

¹¹ John J. Stremlau, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1977), 15-16; Margery Perham, "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War," in *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Apr., 1970), 231; Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, *The Biafra War: Nigeria and the Aftermath*, (Lewiston, N.Y., USA: E. Mellen Press, 1990).

undue influence in Nigeria's national government, despite a near total lack of resources and economic buoyancy in that region.¹² As coups led to counter-coups and any sense of national unity broke down, soldiers were recalled to the “ethnic” territories of their homelands in the midst of what can only be called a massacre of Igbo citizens living in the northern part of the country. As a result of this, a large number of Igbo soldiers returned to the south, east, and mid-west from their posts in the north, further bolstering the perception that the current strife in Nigeria was entirely a conflict between the Hausa/Fulani people of northern Nigeria and the Igbo people in southeastern Nigeria.¹³

In May of 1967, Col. Yakubu Gowon, then head of Nigeria's military, reorganized Nigeria into twelve states, with the Eastern Region breaking down into the South Eastern State, Rivers State, and East Central State, of which Orlu Division became a part.¹⁴ Since the latter part of the colonial era, Amaigbo and Umuduruoha had fallen under the jurisdiction of Orlu Division. Opobo fell under the newly formed Rivers State. This action wrested control of the oil rich areas of the Delta out of the hands of the Igbo who had previously represented a vast majority in the Eastern Region. In reaction to this division, the military-governor of the Eastern Region, Odumegwu Ojukwu, declared the secession of the Republic of Biafra. After a breakdown in negotiations at Aburi, Ghana, between Biafra and Nigeria, armed conflict ensued. Federal forces stormed and occupied the northern Biafran town of Nsukka.¹⁵ The Biafrans then launched an offensive into the mid-western territory, which fell quickly due to the large number of ethnically Igbo soldiers who had returned to the mid-west when they were earlier recalled to their

¹² Stremlau, *The International Politics*, 25; Chibuike Uche, “Oil, British Interests, and the Nigerian Civil War,” in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (2008), 130-132.

¹³ Perham, “Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War,” 231; Monday Efiog Noah, “The Nigerian Civil War and the Gullibles,” *Africa Today*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 1970), 5-6.

¹⁴ Dr. Walter I. Ofonagoro, “Orlu Zone Stands Still for Dr. Walter Ofonagoro,” *Igbongidi*, October-December, 2009, Vol. 1 No. 14, 7; Perham, “Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War,” 230.

¹⁵ Stremlau, *The International Politics*, 150-154; Perham, “Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War,” 231.

homelands. As the conflict dragged on, the Federal Republic of Nigeria launched an offensive into the Niger Delta, and in July of 1967, they entered and occupied the oil hub of Bonny.¹⁶

Fearing the conflict would soon rage into Opobo, Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja, the sitting *amanyanabo* of Opobo, quickly fled the town with his family and loved ones in an effort to save themselves from the Nigerian's operations in the Delta. Now refugees, Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja and his retinue sought shelter in their ancestral homeland, Umuduruoha.¹⁷ Douglas and his family were warmly welcomed back to Umuduruoha, where they resided until the fall of Owerri to Nigerian troops in January of 1970. Ojukwu fled the country and Col. Gowon declared the cessation of hostilities with Biafra. Phillip Effiong, Ojukwu's replacement, was left to deal with the details of Biafra's surrender on January 13, 1970.¹⁸

Little is remembered about Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja's stay in Umuduruoha during the Biafran War. With a war raging around them and many of Umuduruoha's sons off fighting Nigerian troops, the day-to-day movements of Opobo's king seemed trivial to most.¹⁹ However, one particular incident is remembered because it led to the tragic death of one member of Douglas' retinue. A young woman, whose name is lost to history, was engaging in the daily chore of fetching water from a stream near Umuduruoha. Heavy rains had quickened the pace of this stream and, while attempting to fetch water, this young woman was sucked into the current, and swept downstream, where she drowned. Amidst the horrors of the Nigerian-Biafran war, the unanticipated death of this one woman in Umuduruoha was remembered. Surely many men and

¹⁶ Uche, "Oil, British Interests," 130-132; Perham, "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War," 237.

¹⁷ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

¹⁸ Perham, "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War," 243-245; Ofonagoro, "Orlu Zone Stands Still," *Igbongidi*, 7.

¹⁹ Ofonagoro, "Orlu Zone Stands Still," *Igbongidi*, 7; Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala. Despite the participation of soldiers from Orlu on the Biafran side of Nigerian Civil War, no conflicts between Biafran and Nigerian soldiers occurred in Umuduruoha. As a result of Umuduruoha's insulation from the conflict, it proved an effective place for Opobo's traditional ruler and his retinue to take shelter during their flight from the Delta.

women from Umuduruoha and the surrounding villages had been massacred. Yet, the nonviolent death of a member of Douglas Jaja's retinue is more readily remembered by people in Umuduruoha today.²⁰ Why would this be so? The fact that the Umuduruoha people chose to remember this particular incident, in my view, speaks volumes for how citizens of Umuduruoha view their connection to Jaja and, by extension, his progeny in Opobo.

1980-2002: Umuduruoha, Opobo, and the Supreme Court of Nigeria

When Douglas Mac Pepple Jaja died in 1980, his son Dandeson Douglas Jaja seemed the natural choice to fill the role of *amanyanabo* of Opobo. However, the leading chiefs of the Opobo houses again split in their allegiances, as they had in the 1930s and 1940s, leaving the stool of the *amanyanabo* vacant.²¹ Many leading chiefs of Opobo found themselves questioning whether or not being a descendant of Jaja was justification enough to recognize a traditional leader of the town.²² Dandeson Jaja and the opposing chiefs of Opobo entered into a protracted legal battle which would ultimately drag on for twenty-three years before coming to a close in Nigeria's highest court.

The case of Dandeson Jaja and the dissenting chiefs ultimately ended up in the Supreme Court of Nigeria in 2002. The primary cause of this legal conflict centered on whether or not Jaja had established a dynastic claim to the stool of the *amanyanabo* in Opobo.²³ During this disagreement, Dandeson Jaja, like his ancestors before him, reached out to his ancestral brethren.²⁴ The descendants of Duruoshimiri, in particular Hyacinth Duruoshimiri, were integral

²⁰ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

²¹ Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala; Unknown Author, "Nigeria: Supreme Court Confirms Jaja Dynasty," *The Vanguard*, June 13, 2003.

²² Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala. It is worth noting here that this was the explanation given to me by my Umuduruoha-based collaborators. I have not been able to corroborate this assertions with evidence from Opobo.

²³ Unknown Author, "Nigeria: Supreme Court Confirms Jaja Dynasty," *The Vanguard*, June 13th, 2003.

²⁴ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha;

in validating Dandeson Jaja's claims to headship in Opobo by confirming his connection to their kinship network. In addition to the support that Hyacinth Duruoshimiri provided, Walter Ofonagoro, the Nze of neighboring Umuobi and a PhD.-holding historian, and Capt. H.O. Ohaya, an Umuduruoha native and local historian, threw their support behind Dandeson Jaja.²⁵ Once it had been well-established that Dandeson was truly Jaja's descendant, the Supreme Court of Nigeria was left to decide whether or not Jaja had established an effective dynasty over the *amanyanabo*-ship of Opobo.²⁶

Regardless of Jaja's assertions that his family should not represent the “natural” rulers of Opobo simply by virtue of their heritage, the Supreme Court in Abuja unanimously declared that the Jaja family had, in fact, been successful in establishing a dynastic claim to the stool of *amanyanabo*. On June 13th, 2003, *The Vanguard*, reported,

The Federal Supreme Court Abuja has in a unanimous landmark decision confirmed that Nigeria's illustrious King Jaja of Opobo clearly established a royal dynasty in his kingdom which fact now stands incontrovertible. In a lead judgment last weekend by Hon. Justice Niki Tobi, the Supreme Court held that there was no evidence before the court to show that the plaintiffs/respondents in the case were involved in the selection, proclamation and installation of any Amanyanabo (King or Oba) from the days of King Jaja in 1870 to Chief Douglas Jaja, the last Amanyanabo of Opobo who died in 1980.²⁷

With this decision from the Supreme Court, Dandeson Douglas Jaja was able to claim the stool of the *amanyanabo* of Opobo and, simultaneously, guarantee that no member of the Opobo community outside of Jaja's direct, recognized lineage would be able to take the position.

E.C. Osuala.

²⁵ Dan Ihenetu; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Barnabas Emeh; Wilfred Oforha; E.C. Osuala.

²⁶ It is unclear whether or not the above-named Umuduruoha citizens provided testimony or statements in the Supreme Court case. None of the newspapers reporting on this case specifically mention Umuduruoha or Amaigbo citizens testifying. One newspaper references the attempts of the Supreme Court justices to ascertain Dandeson Jaja's true lineage before moving on to the question of whether or not the Jaja lineage were the natural heirs to traditional headship in Opobo. If Umuduruoha citizens did testify in the case, it would likely have occurred in the early phases of the trial. See Gbolahan Gbadamosi, “23 Years After, Supreme Court Okays New Monarch for Opobo Land,” *The Guardian*, June 11th, 2003.

²⁷ Unknown Author, “Nigeria: Supreme Court Confirms Jaja Dynasty,” *The Vanguard*, June 13th, 2003.

For the second time in the twentieth century, Jaja's family in Opobo called upon Jaja's family in Umuduruoha to help legitimize their claim to headship in the town Jaja had established. Despite the physical distance between the two communities and the time that has elapsed since Jaja's death in 1891, Jaja's progeny in the Delta community of Opobo still view the Igbo heartland community of Umuduruoha as kinsmen. Jaja was seized from the community in 1835; yet as late as 2003, the Jajas and the Duruoshimiris still share a singular heritage. They see themselves as two branches of one family tree whose seeds were planted and replanted by Jaja in the nineteenth century. Jaja's notoriety in the Delta had left an indelible mark on the internal politics of Opobo, but also left an indelible mark in his natal home as well.

Replanting the Seeds of Home and the Saga of Ite-Igwe: The Iron Pots



Figure 35: *Ite-igwe* (Photograph by Author)

In Umuduruoha today, Jaja's influence on the community remains quite apparent. A major thoroughfare that runs through Umuduruoha bears the name King Jaja Road; the local high school is named after King Jaja; the iron pots Jaja sent back to Umuduruoha still sit prominently

in the center of the town;²⁸ additionally, the two large iroko trees and small pond Jaja used to identify his father's compound remain untouched in the village square;²⁹ and Okwara Ozurumba's compound, where Jaja spent his childhood years, has been preserved and functions as a meeting place for the community. What is more, masquerades, holiday celebrations, and village-wide events are still held in *obi Okwara Ozurumba* (the house of Okwara Ozurumba).

The location of *ite-igwe* in Umuduruoha merits a brief discussion. The public or village square, or *ilo* in Igbo, has symbolic importance in Igbo culture. The *ilo* is the area where community-wide festivals, masquerade performances, and celebrations occur.³⁰ These open-spaces within the Igbo villages also functioned as meeting places for lineage heads to discuss matters of importance to the community as a whole.³¹ It is where the Igbo, for instance, declare war on their enemies. That these iron pots were placed and displayed in the village center conveys the importance of the pots to the community-at-large. The iron pots stood in the public square as a symbol of Jaja's connection to the community as a whole, and not just to his immediate lineage, the Duruoshimiris. In many ways, their location in the center of the village functions as a reminder to the citizens of the great deeds achieved by one of Umuduruoha's sons. Also, the fact that the Duruoshimiri compound is the closest family compound to the village square indicates the place of the Duruoshimiri lineage in Umuduruoha's past.

Being the direct descendants of the community's founding father, Duruoha, the proximity of the Duruoshimiri compound to the village square reinforces the assertion that this particular

²⁸ While these pots once rested just outside the Duruoshimiri compound in the center of town, they are now kept within the walls of the compounds to deter theft.

²⁹ The pond has effectively dried up into a puddle and both trees seemed to have died long ago but have not been cut down.

³⁰ Bess Reed and Benjamin Hufbauer, "Ancestors and Commemoration in Igbo Odo Masquerades," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 47 (Spring, 2005), 35; Ikemefuna Stanley Okoye, "History, Aesthetics and the Political in Igbo Spatial Heterotopias," *Paideuma*, Bd. 43 (1997), 78-79; Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Fawcett Crest Books, 1969), 36.

³¹ Reed and Hufbauer, "Ancestors and Commemoration," 35; Okoye, "History, Aesthetics," 78-79; Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 36-37.

lineage played a critical role in the leadership of the community since its founding centuries before Jaja's birth.³² Thus, the iron pots' resting place in the village square simultaneously convey the important place Jaja's family holds within the community, while also functioning as a reminder of the important place that Jaja, and by extension Umuduruoha, holds in the national history of Nigeria.

However, these iron pots have led to some disputes in the community. Many of my Umuduruoha collaborators contend that the pots originally sent back to the Igbo heartland by Jaja in the 1880s numbered anywhere from 50 to 70.³³ Whatever Jaja's intentions for the pots may have been, it is clear that they had, at some point between 1880 and 1909, been distributed widely around the community by Duruoshimiri.³⁴ By the time of Douglas Jaja and Nnamdi Azikiwe's visit in 1945, at least 20 iron pots were still sitting outside the Duruoshimiri compound.³⁵ The rest are rumored to have been kept privately by various family members, sold for profit, or stolen from their rightful owners.³⁶ Mrs. Janet Ochiagha, a daughter of the Duruoshimiri family, recalled that her late husband, a man from the neighboring Amaigbo community of Umuchoke, was required to hire a number of young laborers to move the pots inside the Duruoshimiri compound. This service was done as part of her bride price in the mid-1970s.³⁷ The Duruoshimiri family asked that he do this to avoid further theft of these communally important artifacts.

³² Reed and Hufbauer, "Ancestors and Commemoration," 35; Okoye, "History, Aesthetics," 78-79; Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 36-37.

³³ Mrs. Monica Igbokwe, interview by Author, Alaenyi, Imo State, Nigeria, February 7, 2012; E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

³⁴ E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Dan Ihenetu; Barnabas Emeh; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye.

³⁵ E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe.

³⁶ E.C. Osuala; Walter Ofonagoro and H.O. Ohaya; Wilfred Oforha; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshimiri.

³⁷ Mrs. Janet Ngozi Ochiagha, interview by Author, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria, December 12, 2011. Shortly after being married, Janet and her husband moved to Enugu and began a family there.

As the Duruoshimiri family expanded from generation to generation, they took up plots and houses adjacent to the main Duruoshimiri compound. Richard Duruoshimiri, the son of Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri and nephew of Hyacinth Duruoshimiri, claimed that in 2005 five of the pots that now rest within the walls of Christian Iheanyichukwu Ukadike Ibe Duruoshimiri's compound (the main Duruoshimiri compound) were stolen from the house of his father.³⁸ In a petition to the President of the Umuduruoha Development Union, Richard claims that Christian and his brother Uzoma Duruoshimiri broke into Enwerem Duruoshimiri's compound, stole the five iron pots, and moved them within the walls of his own compound in the dark of night. In his petition, Richard argues that the iron pots had resided in his father's compound for the past 100 years, and that his father, Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri, had an ancestral claim to the pots, as well as a repeating rifle, saber, and cannon sent by Jaja to Duruoshimiri.³⁹

Christian Iheanyichukwu and Uzoma Duruoshimiri vigorously deny any claims of theft and maintain that Richard and his father Enwerem are simply trying to usurp the objects from the rightful heirs in the Duruoshimiri family. The petition, lodged in 2006, has yet to yield any result for Richard Duruoshimiri, and the Jaja-related artifacts in question remain in the possession of Christian and Uzoma Duruoshimiri to this day.⁴⁰

However, the accusation of theft has functioned to exacerbate an already deep rift between these two factions of the Duruoshimiri family, both claiming to be the elder branch and,

³⁸ Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri and Richard Duruoshimiri, "Petition to the Umuduruoha Development Union," March 18, 2006; Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri and Richard Duruoshimiri, "Reminder of Petition," November 21, 2010.

³⁹ Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri and Richard Duruoshimiri, "Petition to the Umuduruoha Development Union," March 18, 2006; Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri and Richard Duruoshimiri, "Reminder of Petition," November 21, 2010. The saber, repeating rifle and cannon are housed in a shed in the back of Christian Duruoshimiri's compound to this day. As I experienced first-hand, the family guards these Jaja-related artifacts very closely. See Chapter One.

⁴⁰ While I was unable to obtain pictures of the saber, rifle, and cannon, I was shown these Jaja-related artifacts and can attest that they were, as of 2012, housed in a shed in the Duruoshimiri compound. To see the petition, see Appendix IV.

thus, the rightful heirs to these Jaja-related artifacts. Other members of the community were reluctant to support either side in this dispute, seeing it as a problem within the Duruoshimiri family that ought to be dealt with by the Duruoshimiri family. Most collaborators outside the Duruoshimiri family tended to view the dispute with disdain, stating simply that both sides were acting childishly and should resolve the matter internally and peacefully.⁴¹ I, as a foreign researcher, do not feel it is my place to weigh in on the validity of the claims of either side in this dispute; rather, I mention the argument and petition over the ancestral right to these objects because it deeply impacted the nature of my research.⁴² Any time I met to speak with one faction of the Duruoshimiri family, the other faction would become quite angry with me. At one point, I was asked by Christian to bring Richard to his compound so that they could “settle the matter” in front of me, which I felt would only erupt into a physical fight. I told Christian I had no interest in becoming embroiled in the family's conflict and, from that time on, Christian refused to speak with me.

While there is little agreement about the rightful owner of the *ite-igwe* among the opposing factions of the Duruoshimiri family, this conflict conveys how important Jaja-related artifacts have become to bolstering positions of traditional authority in Umuduruoha. Despite Jaja's removal from the community in 1835, the iron pots and other manufactured goods Jaja sent back to Umuduruoha in the 1880s, in essence to “replant the seeds of home”, in many ways, help

⁴¹ Dan Ihenetu; Wilfred Oforha; Barnabas Emeh; Emmanuel Uwazuruonye; Monica Igbokwe. When I broached this subject with collaborators outside of the Duruoshimiri family, I was often told, “The problem is illiteracy!” When I pressed for a further explanation, I was informed that this meant neither side of the dispute had any intrinsic respect for what the pots meant to the community and its history as a whole. Rather, both sides were vying for the artifacts because of the financial windfall maintaining such objects could provide to the individual in possession of them.

⁴² As mentioned in the “Methods” chapter of this dissertation, many of the older citizens of Umuduruoha and Amaigbo passed away shortly before I began my research in December of 2011. In particular, Richard, Iheanyichukwu and Uzoma's uncle, Hyacinth Duruoshimiri, would have been helpful in sorting through this family feud. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2010.

to legitimate “the rightful heirs” of the Duruoshimiri family.⁴³ Additionally, the artifacts represent access to coveted pieces of Nigeria's national history which, in turn, represent very real access to financial wealth. As history museums and public exhibitions have sought out information from Jaja's natal community, they have also offered incredibly high sums of money to the Duruoshimiri family to display these artifacts publicly. The cannon, repeating rifle, and saber sent back to Igboland by Jaja were put on public display for the King Jaja Exhibit in Enugu in 1997.⁴⁴ According to Uzoma Duruoshimiri, the family was paid 5,000 USD to lend them to this exhibit.⁴⁵ Given the money that items like this can bring, the rightful place of these Jaja-related artifacts is likely to remain contested in the future.

PYMAKS: The Progressive Youth Movement of Amaigbo Kingdoms

In the early 2000s, Richard Duruoshimiri helped to establish an organization known as the Progressive Youth Movement of Amaigbo Kingdoms (PYMAKS) along with his friend and colleague Rev. Anselem Obijiaku.⁴⁶ The primary purpose of this group is to retell Jaja's story in such a way that it will inspire youths in Amaigbo and Opobo to focus on community-building projects and pursue education as a means to contribute to the well-being of “Amaigbo Kingdoms.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshmiri and Richard Duruoshmiri, “Petition to the Umuduruoha Development Union,” March 18, 2006; Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshmiri and Richard Duruoshmiri, “Reminder of Petition,” November 21, 2010; Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁴⁴ J.C. Obi and L.C. Ekechukwu., *The Roots of King Jaja: The Amaigbo Born and Opobo Crowned Monarch*, (Enugu Nigeria: National Museum, 1997). This exhibit was held at the National Museum, Enugu from October 25 to November 24, 1997.

⁴⁵ This was part of Uzoma's justification for asking 500 USD from me to photograph the items. However, he also told me that the last US researcher to come to the community paid 1,000 USD for photographs of the rifle, cannon, and saber linked to King Jaja. Unfortunately for Uzoma, I realized he was fabricating the story when it turned out the researcher he was referring to was, in fact, me. I was not even aware of the existence of these items during my first visit to Umuduruoha in 2010 and I can assure the reader that I did not pay anyone for anything on my first visit, let alone the astronomical price of 1000 USD. With this being the case, the figure he cited as being paid by the public exhibit must be taken with a grain of salt.

⁴⁶ Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku, interview with Author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, February 5, 2012.

⁴⁷ It should be noted here that the application of the term “Kingdom” to describe Amaigbo reflects the language used



Figure 36: Sign for PYMAKS Jaja Kingdom (Photograph by Author)

The goals of PYMAKS are best summarized by the leadership when they write,

Captured by the essence of Jaja's struggle, thoughts, admiration and heroism which are aimed at instilling in the youth a sense of pride, patriotism, agitation and selfless service to our Country and to humanity which King Jaja has led the way.⁴⁸

The literature produced by this organization often utilizes correlations between Jaja's rise from slavery to kingship in Opobo and the biblical tale of Joseph, son of Jacob, who was sold into slavery by his brothers and rose to the position of vizier in Egypt.⁴⁹ A locally-produced

by Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku and do not reflect the views of the author.

⁴⁸ Rev. Anselem Obijiaku and Richard Duruoshmiri, "Antecedent of the Foremost Nigerian Nationalist Leader of the 19th Century: King Jaja of Opobo," (Unpublished, Undated).

⁴⁹ Rev. Anselem Obijiaku, "Destined to Reign," (Unpublished, Undated). This document is given to new members of PYMAKS to familiarize them with Jaja's story; Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku.

document, titled “Destined to Reign”, adequately summarizes the comparison when it states,

Jacob wept, Okwaraozurumba could not hold back tears either. But the Almighty Creator had definite plan. First to unfold the bitterness of man against his brother by extension man's inhumanity to fellow man in the name of slave trade. Secondly his ultimate power in reenacting history in other [sic] to show vividly that destiny can only be delayed but cannot be denied...the slave boy Joseph became a prime minister in the land of his travels- Egypt. Jaja the slave boy equally became a crowned king in the Niger Delta Opobo Kingdom, a famous legendary African monarch- for that matter.⁵⁰

In connecting Jaja's story to the biblical tale of Joseph PYMAKS is able to enlist the support of local churches and religious organizations in Amaigbo and Opobo. The group, as of 2012, had enlisted the support of community leaders in both Opobo and Amaigbo and its membership stood at just over 200. The Umuduruoha arm of PYMAKS⁵¹ has been active in efforts to clean and restore King Jaja High School, undertaken road-clearing projects, and occasionally performs dances and plays to entertain the public. The organization works to instill a sense in Amaigbo and Opobo youths, that, regardless of their circumstances in modern Nigerian society, they can achieve great things by working hard, staying away from drugs and criminal activity, and investing in their education.⁵²

What is interesting to note about this group is the broad scope they use to identify “Amaigbo kingdoms.” Opobo, as a result of its founding by Jaja and the continued relationship between the traditional leaders of Umuduruoha and Opobo, is defined by the group as an Amaigbo kingdom. Further, the group claims to have been in contact with “members of Jaja's family” in the West Indies and has extended an invitation to them to visit Jaja's ancestral home.⁵³ Who, exactly, these members of Jaja's family are remains unclear. Jaja brought his youngest wife, Patience, with him to the West Indies during his period in exile and she chose to stay in the

⁵⁰ Obijiaku, “Destined to Reign,” 3.

⁵¹ PYMAKS is headquartered in Umuduruoha, with its base of operations being King Jaja High School. There is a smaller secondary branch that operates out of Opobo.

⁵² Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku; Wilfred Oforha; Monica Igbokwe.

⁵³ Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku.

New World after Jaja attempted to return to Opobo.⁵⁴ It is likely that, if the individuals mentioned above are in fact related to Jaja, they are related to him through Patience and her children in St. Vincent.

The scope of PYMAKS, as it was explained to me, could extend even more widely to include anyone inspired by Jaja's story to do great things for their communities. Richard Duruoshimiri, upon extending an invitation to me to join PYMAKS, explained that with my membership, "We are now the Progressive Youth Movement of American Kingdoms also."⁵⁵ While I am neither a "youth"⁵⁶ nor is West Bloomfield, Michigan regarded by anyone as a "kingdom," I was honored to be invited into the group and observe the many community projects they were planning for the future.

Chief among the goals of Richard Duruoshimiri, Rev. Anselem Obijiaku, and PYMAKS is the construction of a King Jaja Museum, Memorial, and Hotel/Resort in Umuduruoha. A plot of land has been set aside for the project within the borders of Umuduruoha, and the organization is looking for donors willing to commit their financial support to building on this site. While walking through this plot of land, Richard Duruoshimiri pointed out where he thought the buildings would be ideally located. He ended this tour by pointing to an empty plot of land and saying, "Once your work is done, this will be the Joe Davey Hotel. You can bring your people to swim and play tennis."⁵⁷ As of 2012, no new construction had begun there. Plans, however, included an Olympic-size swimming pool, hotel accommodations, dining, tennis courts, and

⁵⁴ Cookey, *King Jaja*, 133; Kanu, "The Life and Times," 171; Jaja, *Jaja of Opobo*, 36.

⁵⁵ Richard Duruoshimiri and Anselem Obijiaku.

⁵⁶ It is important to note that in Nigeria's history, in particular during the period in which Nigerians were agitating for independence from Britain, "youth" did not always reflect an age-based concept. Historian Insa Nolte claims that youth was, "...not so much circumscribed by biological age as by status and behavior." See Insa Nolte, "Identity and Violence: The Politics of Youth in Ijebu-Remo, Nigeria," in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Mar., 2004), p. 62. In the case of PYMAKS, however, "youth" refers to the children and teenaged members of society.

⁵⁷ Richard Duruoshimiri, conversation with author, Umuduruoha, Imo State, Nigeria, January 20, 2012.

many other modern amenities that would function to bring income through tourism to Umuduruoha.⁵⁸ While the completion of such a project seems unlikely in the future, the efforts being made to construct such an attraction reflect the community's desire to be adequately recognized as the birthplace of one of Nigeria's greatest nationalists. In essence, the construction project would represent the culmination of Umuduruoha's desire to proclaim to Nigeria and the world that Jaja had, in fact, recognized and replanted the seeds of home.

Conclusion

Jaja's experiences in the community of Bonny and his rise from slave to king represent a challenge to existing patterns that historians have used to identify the multifaceted institutions that comprise “African slavery” or “African slave systems.” When examining Jaja's ability to navigate through the merit-based house system of Bonny; his assumption of the headship of Bonny's leading Anna Pepple house; his ability to draw large numbers of free-born and enslaved individuals to his newly formed state of Opobo; and his eventual reconnection with his natal home in the Igbo heartland, it is impossible to elevate the concepts of social dislocation and marginality over elements of continuity and connection in a consideration of nineteenth century slavery in the eastern Delta.

Past examinations of West African slave systems have over-emphasized the importance of social, linguistic, and cultural marginalization, highlighted by a lack of access to the enslaving society's kinship networks, as the defining factors of slavery in West Africa. By centering Jaja's narrative, we have seen that, as abolition took effect in the Atlantic world, Igbo slaves amassing in Niger Delta trading state of Bonny were increasingly able to maintain elements of their natal identities and, in cases like Jaja's, were able to reconnect with their natal kinship network in the Igbo interior. Furthermore, the slavery-to-kinship continuum model, first put forth by Miers and

⁵⁸ Richard Duruoshmiri and Anselem Obijiaku.

Kopytoff in 1977, and reiterated in works by Cooper, Meillassoux, as well as Spaulding and Beswick, is inherently flawed: as it only accounts only for the ability of the enslaved to be absorbed into the kinship networks of the slave-holding society, ignoring completely their ability retain elements of, and reconnect with, their natal kinship groups.

Igbo slaves, in fact, were increasingly able to exert their influence in the cultural and political spheres of Eastern Delta society as the lineage-based house system gave way to the merit-based house system over the course of the long nineteenth century. Moreover, the sheer volume of Igbo slaves, both born in and outside of the confines of the Delta, reshaped the patterns of economic, religious, and political power within the trading houses of the Eastern Delta in such a way that Igbo slaves could hardly be identified as kin-less, marginalized “outsiders.” While there was certainly a period of adaptation for Igbo slaves to find a successful means of existence within the slave-holding societies of Eastern Delta, they were never forced to abandon the elements of their natal identities that we recognize as being inherently “Igbo.”

The geographic patterns of trade from the coast to the interior were utilized to facilitate the movement of slaves captured in Igboland to these coastal middleman societies before the nineteenth century. However, as the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade took effect, these trade routes increasingly functioned to place Delta “slaves” in close proximity with traders from their natal homes. Jaja's story represents a unique opportunity to examine how Igbo slaves in the Eastern Delta were increasingly able to reconnect with their natal homes. His notoriety on an international-scale as a nationalist freedom fighter has left enough evidence to retrace his journey to replant the seeds of home in the archival and oral histories of southeastern Nigeria.

As we have seen in my dissertation, Jaja's efforts to connect the community he established and the community in which he was born has not been diminished by time. Jaja's

reconnection with his brother Duruoshimiri has blossomed into a meaningful, kin-based relationship between leading families in Umuduruoha and Opobo that has endured the trials and tribulations faced by southern Nigeria throughout the twentieth century. While Jaja is fondly remembered by Nigerians on a national scale, his life and his actions have taken on acute meaning in Umuduruoha and Opobo, where he is remembered as both a son and a father, respectively. And, while my dissertation has highlighted the critical points of Jaja's narrative as they pertain to an examination of the wider sub-discipline of African slave studies, there remain fruitful areas for future investigation.

Recommendations for Future Action and Investigation

The current generation of the Duruoshimiri family has attempted to bring greater awareness of Jaja and his connection to Umuduruoha into the national spotlight. Christian and Uzoma Duruoshimiri have continued the efforts of Hyacinth Duruoshimiri in petitioning the government of Nigeria to change the name of Port Harcourt to Port Jaja.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Duruoshimiri family has requested that Jaja's face be printed on national currency.⁶⁰ It is clear that Jaja legacy has played a critical role in Umuduruoha's past and will continue to do so in the future. Any publications identifying Amaigbo's notable figures list King Jaja as a favored son of the community, along with legendary figures such boxer Dick Tiger,⁶¹ and Olaudah Equiano.⁶² While Jaja's story has been told and retold, both in popular and historical literature, there is still much ground to cover in fully unraveling Jaja's impact in Nigeria, West Africa, and the World.

Aside from Edward L. Cox's publication of *Rekindling the Ancestral Memory*,⁶³ little

⁵⁹ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁶⁰ Christian Iheanyichukwu Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri; Uzoma Ibe Ukadike Duruoshmiri.

⁶¹ Dick Tiger's given name is Richard Ihetu.

⁶² Ofonagoro, "Orlu Zone Stands Still," *Igbongidi*, 6.

⁶³ Edward L. Cox, *Rekindling the Ancestral Memory: King Ja Ja of Opobo in St. Vincent and Barbados, 1888-1891*, (Cave Hill, Barbados: Dept. of History, the University of the West Indies, 1998).

work has been done to assess Jaja's impact on communities in the New World. This remains a worthwhile area for investigation as newspapers from St. Vincent and Barbados provide but a glimpse into the excitement Jaja's arrival stirred among the populations of African descent. There are even rumors that stories of Jaja made it as far as Jamaica.⁶⁴ The collection of oral histories in these New World locales could yield fascinating narratives about Jaja's impact there.

While Jaja's political career, attitudes towards religion, and his feelings on the encroaching imperial presence of Britain in the Niger Delta has been well-documented, not much can be said of Jaja, the family man. It is clear that Jaja took many wives who bore him many children; however, the historical narratives surrounding this aspect of Jaja's life have been limited in scope, often focusing only on Frederick Sunday and Mark Saturday, later Mac Pepple Jaja. It would be interesting to piece together a more complete picture of Jaja's life within the *opu wari*, surrounded by his family and friends.

This leads to another shortcoming in the narratives surrounding Jaja's life and family. While I have done my best here to highlight the role of Jaja's family in Umuduruoha both before and after his birth and death, the oral narratives I collected about Jaja's family remained remarkably silent when it came to elucidating the roles of women in Jaja's family. A study that sought to unearth the gendered narratives of the women in Jaja's life could potentially yield information of great historical value.

Despite the many avenues from which one could approach Jaja's history, the scope of this dissertation is to highlight how Jaja's remarkable life challenges our existing understanding of West African slave systems during the nineteenth century. The social mobility afforded to slaves in Bonny's house system, both born into slavery and acquired from the interior Igbo

⁶⁴ Prof. Nwando Achebe, conversations with Author. In casual conversations, my adviser, Prof. Nwando Achebe, has indicated that she had encountered a Jamaican undergraduate student whose grandmother sang songs about King Jaja.

communities, provided opportunities for many to not only form new identities within the society which enslaved them, but also afforded opportunities for slaves to reconnect with natal kinship networks. For individuals like Jaja, the end of the slavery-to-kinship continuum came not when they had been absorbed into the kinship networks of the slave society, but when they were able to reconnect with their natal kinship networks. In Bonny, social dislocation was not the primary feature of the slave system, and, as such, many were able to retain their identities, customs, and language during their terms of enslavement.

Jaja's story is not a story of dislocation. It is not a story of forging a new identity in a foreign land. It is not, like many stories of slavery, a story of a misery, loneliness or joylessness. It is a story of tenacity. It is a story of belonging. It is a story of perseverance. But, most of all, Jaja's story is a story of family. All too often slave narratives are reduced to the turmoil incumbent with being wrested from one's home and sent to work in a strange and foreign place. Focusing on the social dislocation and marginalization of enslaved individuals in African society obscures the truth that the conditions under which individuals were enslaved did not diminish the memory of an individual within his or her natal family or community. Despite being physically removed from their families and homes, those who found themselves in the slave systems of the Niger Delta never stopped trying to replant the seeds of home.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: British Treaty with Opobo (1873)

British Treaty with Opobo

1. In the name of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, we hereby acknowledge Ja Ja King of Opobo, and fully entitled to all consideration as such.
2. The British traders in the River Opobo shall pay the same amount of “comey” as British traders in Bonny. No other tax or impost shall be placed on them. Any disputes which may occur with Ja Ja's people are to be referred to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for settlement.
3. After April 5, 1873, the King of Opobo shall allow no trading establishment or hulk in or off Opobo Town, or any trading vessel to come higher up the river than the white man's beach opposite Hippotamus Creek. If any trading ship or steamer proceeds further up the river than the creek mentioned, after having been fully warned to the contrary, the said trading ship or steamer may be seized by King Ja Ja, and detained until a fine of 100 puncheons be paid by the owners to King Ja Ja.

Signed on board her Britannic Majesty's ship Pioneer, off Opobo Town, on the 4th day of January, 1873.

J.E. Commerell, Commodore, Commanding-in-chief Her Britannic Majesty's Naval Forces on the Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station. Charles Livingstone, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for the Bight of Biafra and Benin.

Appendix II: Treaty with the King and Chiefs of Opobo (1884)

Treaty with King and Chiefs of Opobo. Signed at Opobo, 19 December 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, &c, and the Kings and Chiefs of Opobo being desirous of maintaining and strengthening the relations of peace and friendship which for so long have existed between them

Her Britannic Majesty has named and appointed E.H. Hewett, Esq., Her Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to conclude a Treaty for this purpose. The said E.H. Hewett, Esq., and the Kings and Chiefs of Opobo have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles:-

Article I

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland etc. in compliance with the request of the King, Chiefs, and people of Opobo, hereby undertakes to extend to them, and to the territory under their authority and jurisdiction, her gracious favour and protection.

Article II

The Kings and Chiefs of Opobo agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, Agreement, or Treaty with any foreign nation or Power, except with the knowledge and sanction of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

Article III

It is agreed that full and exclusive jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over British subjects and their property in the territory of Opobo is reserved for Her Britannic Majesty, to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as Her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose. The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the said territory of Opobo over foreign subjects enjoying British protection, who shall be deemed to be included in the expression 'British subjects' throughout the Treaty.

Article IV

All disputes between the King and Chiefs of Opobo, or between them and British or foreign traders, or between the aforesaid King and Chiefs and neighbouring tribes, which cannot be settled amicably between the two parties, shall be submitted to British Consular or other officers appointed by Her Britannic Majesty to exercise jurisdiction in Opobo territories for arbitration and decision, or for arrangement.

Article V

The Kings and Chiefs of Opobo hereby engage to assist the British Consular or other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them, and further to act upon their advice in matters relating to the administration of Justice, the development of the resources of the country, the interests of commerce, or in any matter in relation to peace, order, and Government and the general progress of civilisation.

Article VI

The subjects and citizens of all countries may freely carry on trade in every part of the territories of the Kings and Chiefs parties hereto, and may have houses and factories therein.

(Free Trade article- not accepted by Ja Ja)

Article VII

All White Ministers of the Christian Religion shall be permitted to exercise their calling within the territories of the aforesaid King and Chiefs, who hereby guarantee to them full protection.

Article VIII

If any vessel should be wrecked within the Opobo territories, the King and Chiefs will give them all the assistance in their power, will secure them from plunder, and also recover and deliver to the Owner or Agents all the Property which can be saved. If there are no such owners or agents on the spot, then the said property shall be delivered to the British Consular or other officer.

The King and Chiefs further engage to do all in their power to protect the persons and property of the officers, crew, and others on board such wrecked vessels. All claims for salvage due in such cases shall, if disputed, be referred to the British Consular or other Officer for arbitration and decision.

Article IX

This Treaty shall come into operation so far as practicable from the date of its signature, (article VI as herein printed being expunged).

Done in duplicate at Opobo, this nineteenth day of December in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four.

(Signed)	Edward Hyde Hewett	
	Jaja	Shoo Peterside X
	Cookey Gam	Sam Annie Pepple X
	Prince Saturday Jaja	Thomas Ja Ja X
	Finebourne his X mark	Sam Oko Epella X
	John Africa X	Duke of Norfolk X
	How Strongface X	William Toby X
	Ogolo X	Jungi X
	William Obanney X	Warisoe X
	Black Foubrah X	Samuel George Toby X

Witness to the above marks
(Signed) Harold E. White,
H.M. Vice-Consul
R.D. Boler,
Chairman of the Court of Equity

Appendix III: Genealogical Table: The Ancestral Lineage of King Jaja and His Brothers

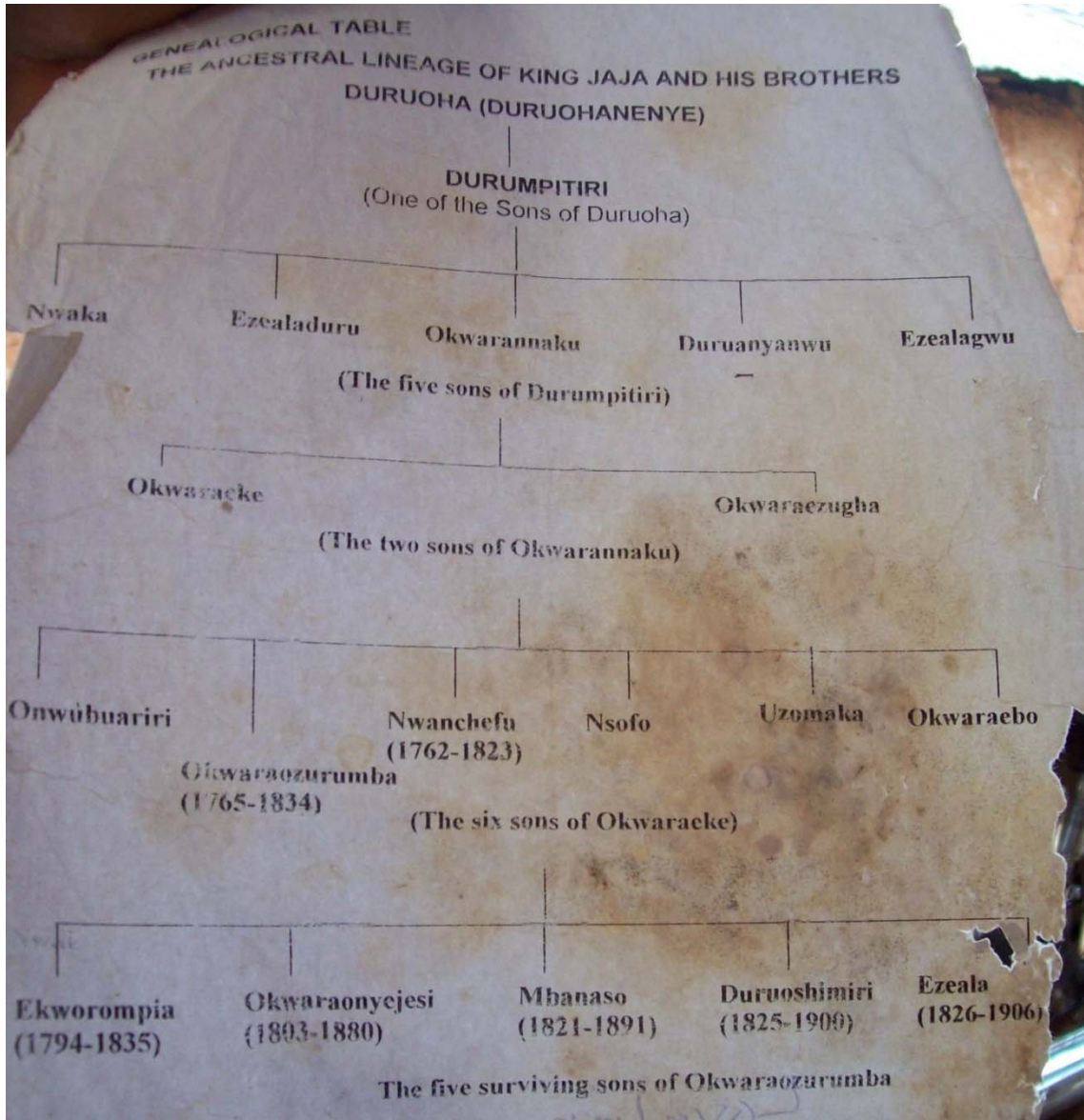


Figure 37: King Jaja's Genealogical Table as found in Umuduruoha

Appendix IV: Petition sent to the Umuduruoha Town Union by Richard Duruoshimiri on behalf of his father, Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri

MR IGNATIUS CHUKWUEM ENWEREM.
DURUOSHIMIRI UMUDURUOHA
AMAIGBO NWANGELE L.G.A, IMO STATE.
18TH MARCH, 2006.

THE PRESIDENT,
UMUDURUOHA DEVELOPMENT UNION(UDU)
AMAIGBO COMMUNITY NWANGELE L.G.A.
IMO STATE.

Dear sir,

I wish to thank Umuduruoha Development Union (UDU) over ~~their~~ efforts in maintaining peace and unity in Umuduruoha village. I am writing to lodge the complaint of how Mr Christian Ibe criminally removed with force the traditional Iron Pot (Ite-Igwe) from my house.

I am not satisfied that since I brought the complaint on 4th January 2005 to Umuduruoha home branch, I had waited for him to return the Pot the way he removed it, but up till now he seized the Pot and had been going about boasting that I will do nothing. I therefore appeal for the interest of peace that Christian Ibe should be persuaded to return the Pot back to my house without delay.

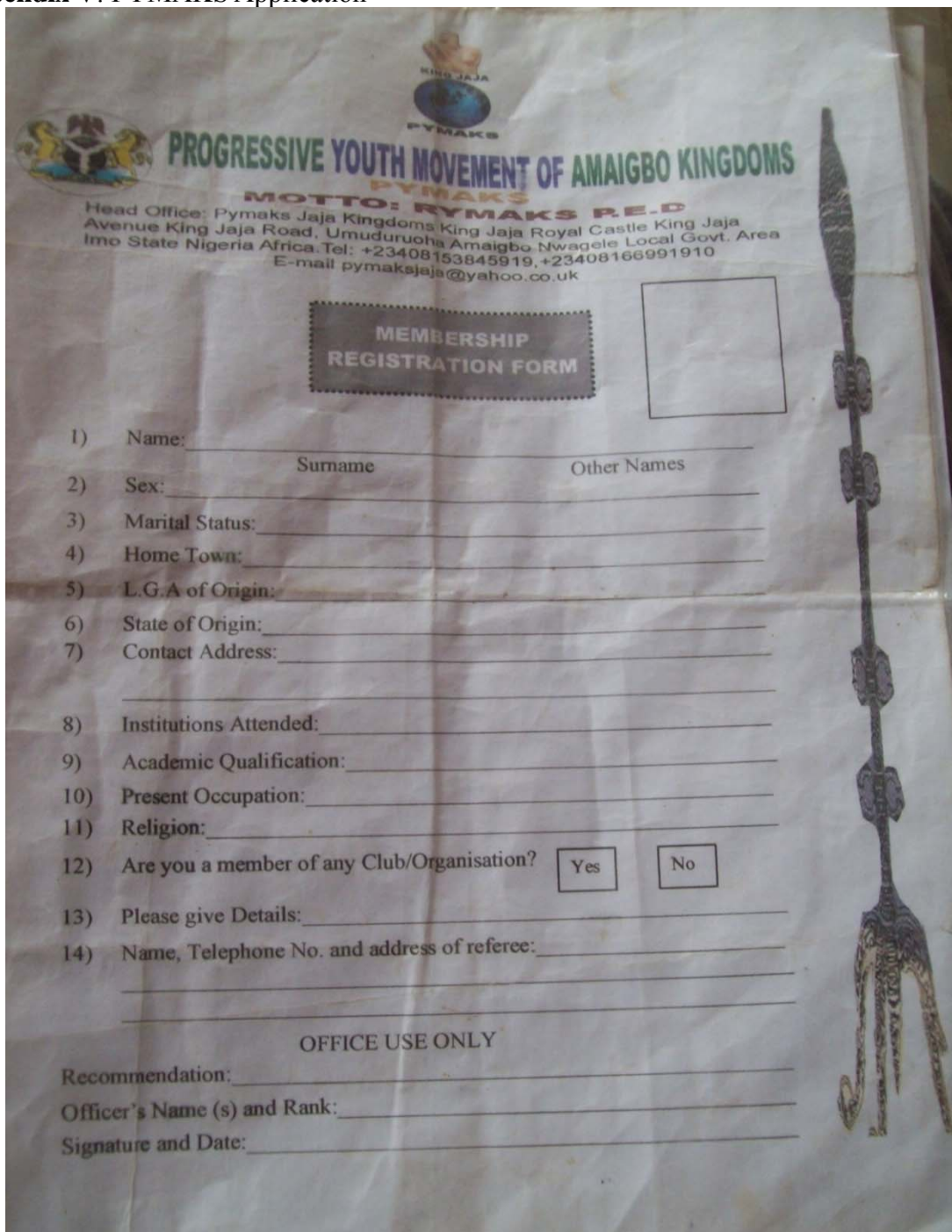
The traditional Pot has been in the custody of my fathers for more than 100 years, it has been in the custody of my father Enwerem and in the custody of my forefather Duruoshimiri, so it is an insult for Christian Ibe to break into my house in my absence and criminally removed the ancestral Iron Pot that has been under my custody for many decades. I therefore plead with Umuduruoha Development Union to order Mr Christian Ibe to return the Iron Pot immediately or they should allow me to expedite action to recover the traditional Pot that the forefathers kept in my custody which he criminally and forcefully removed.


Thanks and God bless Umuduruoha Development Union

Signed *Ignatius Enwerem*
Mr Ignatius Enwerem Duruoshimiri.

Figure 38: Petition to Amaigbo Town Union

Appendix V: PYMAKS Application




PROGRESSIVE YOUTH MOVEMENT OF AMAIGBO KINGDOMS
PYMAKS
MOTTO: PYMAKS R.E.D

Head Office: Pymaks Jaja Kingdoms King Jaja Royal Castle King Jaja
 Avenue King Jaja Road, Umuduruoha Amaigbo Nwagele Local Govt. Area
 Imo State Nigeria Africa. Tel: +23408153845919, +23408166991910
 E-mail pymaksjaja@yahoo.co.uk

**MEMBERSHIP
REGISTRATION FORM**

- 1) Name: _____
Surname
Other Names
- 2) Sex: _____
- 3) Marital Status: _____
- 4) Home Town: _____
- 5) L.G.A of Origin: _____
- 6) State of Origin: _____
- 7) Contact Address: _____
- 8) Institutions Attended: _____
- 9) Academic Qualification: _____
- 10) Present Occupation: _____
- 11) Religion: _____
- 12) Are you a member of any Club/Organisation? Yes No
- 13) Please give Details: _____
- 14) Name, Telephone No. and address of referee: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

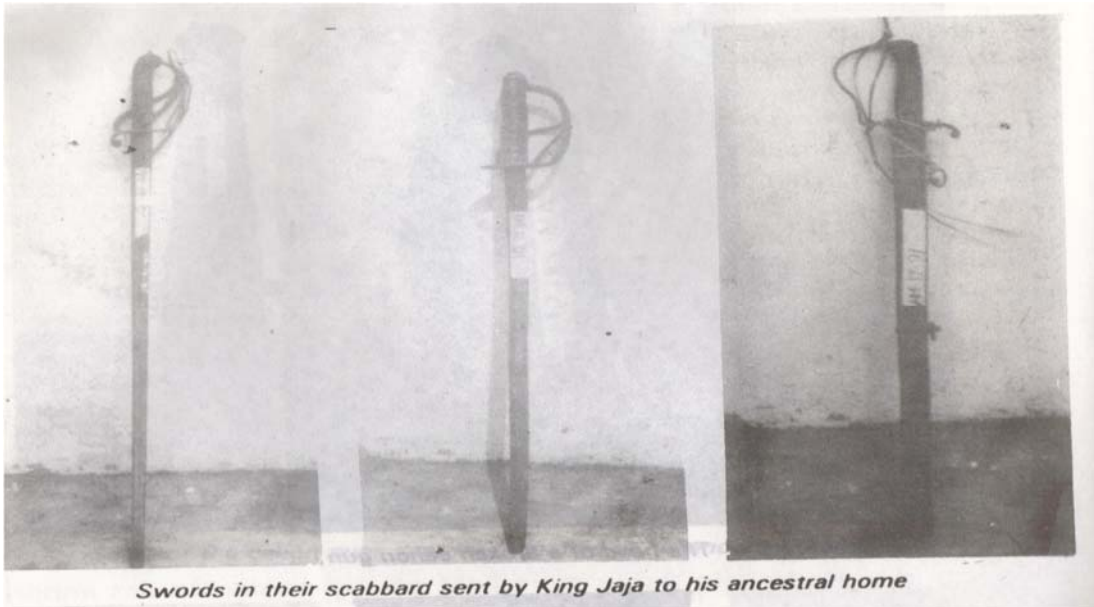
Recommendation: _____
 Officer's Name (s) and Rank: _____
 Signature and Date: _____

Figure 39: PYMAKS Enrollment Form

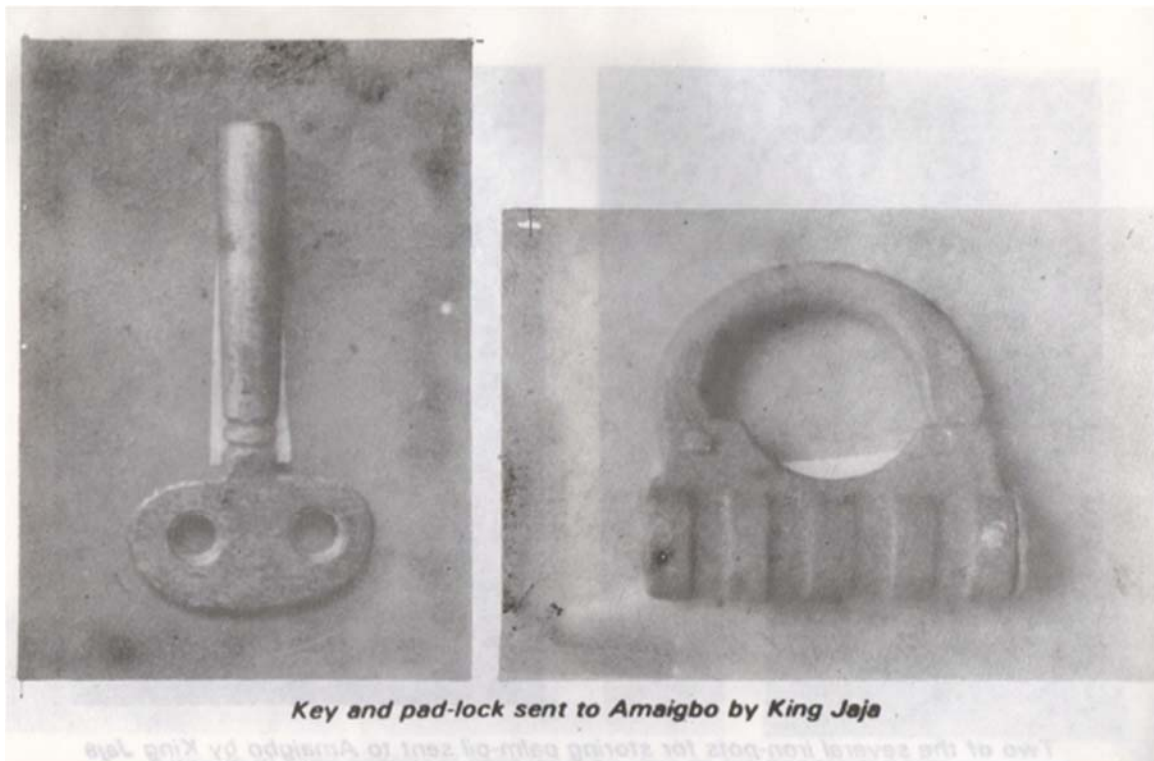
Appendix VI: Photographs from the King Jaja Exhibit, 1997



Figure 40: Cannons and Guns sent to Umuduruoha by Jaja



Swords in their scabbard sent by King Jaja to his ancestral home



Key and pad-lock sent to Amaigbo by King Jaja

Figure 41: Swords, Lock and Key sent by Jaja to Umuduruoha

Appendix VII: Glossary of Igbo and Ibani Terms

Igbo

eze or *nze*- Titled chief. These terms can be used interchangeably, although *nze* is more widely used among the Isu people or Orlu Division.

ezinaulo- family or lineage. This term can indicate a nuclear or extended family as well as functions to indicate an organizational unit among the Isu Igbo people.

igbo- king or ruler. This title applies to the king or ruler of Amaigbo, where *obi* or *eze* is used in other Igbo territories.

ilo- public or village square.

ite-igwe- iron pots

obi-main house of an Igbo compound.

obodo- town, village or community.

olu- pond or small body of water.

ofo- staff of authority. *Ofo* staffs are a symbol of the authority bestowed upon *ozo* title-takers.

ozo- title. Various *ozo* titles exist across Igboland. The *ozo* titles in Umuduruoha are based on the *ozo* title taking system of the Isu sub-group of Igbo people.

umu- children. This term is of particular importance among the Isu sub-group in Orlu, as the names of many towns in the region begin with *umu*, indicating they are the children of a real or mythical founding father.

Ibani (Ijaw)

amadabo- caretaker, custodian, or regent of the throne.

amanyanabo- “keeper of the land,” or king. This title was carried by Jaja and his people from Bonny to Opobo.

wari- house, trading house, or canoe house. *Wari* are organizational units of the Eastern Niger Delta.

opu wari- palace or great house.

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