

# **The Multi-Disciplinary Approach to African History**

*Essays in Honour of Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa*

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **OLD CALABAR REDISCOVERED**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

That part of the West African Guinea Coast which stretches from the Niger Delta in the west to the Rio del Rey in the east has much to offer the historian. It is particularly inviting to the adventurous scholar who enjoys juggling with a variety of different types of source material. Thus, not only do the people of this part of the coast possess a rich store of orally recounted historical traditions, but the advent of European traders at the end of the 15th century and the subsequent rise of the Atlantic trade also left us with a considerable body of written records relating to the area. It is, therefore, not surprising that the last forty years have seen a spate of historical research and writing devoted to the people of this area.<sup>1</sup>

This spate of work notwithstanding, there are still many outstanding problems and puzzles which demand fresh reflection, research and publication. Some of the more intractable of these problems are those posed by the written records of the European traders for they suffer from the limitation of their interest to matters relating to trade. But even in the matter of trade there were confusion arising from the cross-cultural setting in which the traders found themselves. Also, some of the things described are no longer in existence. Jeffreys, for instance, speaks of "Fort Stuart," situated between the Andoni River in the Niger Delta and the Rio del Rey in the Cameroons, which is no longer identifiable today.<sup>2</sup> Nor could Ibibio history be complete without some reference to the question of the identity of the "Moco" or "Moko", said to be one of the very early groups of slaves exported from the Niger Delta to the West Indies and believed to be of Ibibio stock.<sup>3</sup> Also,

the Andoni speak of the establishment of a Catholic Church in the Egwede-Unyangala-Agana complex. And while documentary evidence indicates that the King of Andoni seemed to have been Christianized by Roman Catholic Priests who were sent into the area from St. Thome and Brazil, and spoke the Portuguese language fluently,<sup>4</sup> there is no evidence anywhere in Andoni today which would suggest the existence of such a structure in the area. Yet again, the records speak of the existence of “a very large village” on the Rio Real (New Calabar River) with some 2,000 inhabitants who were engaged in the slave trade.<sup>5</sup> The inhabitants of the village engaged in salt-making which they sold to other people who came from a hundred leagues or more upstream to exchange hinterland goods for the salt. Neither the “very large village” and its inhabitants nor the people who came from a hundred leagues or more up-river to buy the salt have been sufficiently identified.<sup>6</sup>

The difficulty in identifying the large village has led the various writers on the Niger Delta to identify it differently. Kimble, Jones and Alagoa, for instance, identified it with Bonny; Jenewari with Kalabari, and Erekosima and Ejituwu with Andoni.<sup>7</sup> That the inhabitants of the very large village were Ijo did not help much, since “Ijo” appears to have been a generic name for the people of the Niger Delta at that point in time.<sup>8</sup> Equally, an effort has been made to identify the people coming from upstream. Jones suggested that they could be Kalabari, Bonny, Okrika or Andoni.<sup>9</sup> Ejituwu has identified them with the Ndoki, an Igbo community living up the Imo River, who, until the Nigerian Civil War in the late 1960s, kept up the tradition of coming to the Eastern Delta in canoes to exchange foodstuffs for the salt and fish of the Delta people.

Finally, there is the problem posed by the name, “Old Calabar.” Though from the eighteenth century onward, it was used consistently to refer to the Efik settlement at the mouth of the Cross River, a document from the late seventeenth century used it to refer both to a location in the Niger Delta and to another at the mouth of the Cross River. In this paper, I intend to consider the last of these problems, that of the original reference of “Old Calabar.” Scholarly suggestions that there was something suspect about this name began with Talbot in the 1920s when he writes that the name “Calabar” or “Old Calabar” was not applied to the Cross River until the 17th century when two Dutch maps carried it. His belief was that the word was derived from “New Calabar River”, which itself was derived from the town of the Kalabari who lived on

it.<sup>10</sup> The name was later applied to the Cross River estuary with “Old” added to it to differentiate it from the New Calabar River located in the Niger Delta.<sup>11</sup>

Later, Newns, a District Officer in the colonial administration, drew attention to the fact that while “Calabar” is normally associated with the Cross River today, it was originally associated with the Niger Delta.<sup>12</sup> This “discovery,” which dates back to 1947, has been neglected by later scholars with implications for the misplacement of information on parts of the Guinea Coast. This essay entitled “Old Calabar Rediscovered” is intended to assert that Newns’ “discovery” is a major contribution to the literature on the Guinea Coast, whose neglect could lead to the nullification of many of the conclusions reached on “Calabar” by scholars who have not taken note of its duplication in the Guinea Coast in the 17th century. However, while Newns’ emphasis was on “Calabar”, my emphasis is on “Old Calabar”.

#### OLD CALABAR REDISCOVERED

The time relevant to this study is the period from 1500-1700. Documentary evidence of the condition of the Guinea Coast in the 15th century was provided by the Portuguese. Thus, a map of 1500 identified certain rivers from the Gold Coast to Gabon; and among these rivers were the Rio Real (New Calabar River), Rio da Carmo (Bonny River), Rio Dony (Andoni River), Pero de Sintra (Imo River), Rio da Cruz (Cross River), Rio del Rey and Rio de Gabon.<sup>13</sup> From the 1490s the Rio Real, discovered in 1471-72 by Fernando Po and Pero de Sintra, was exploited as a source of slaves for the sugar plantations of St. Thome discovered in 1473. By a Royal Grant dated March 26, 1500, Don Manuel, King of Portugal, gave commercial concessions to the inhabitants of St. Thome to exploit the Guinea Coast.<sup>14</sup> This meant the establishment of formal slaving and trading concerns with the people of the Niger Delta and the Cross River Valley. About the middle of the seventeenth century, Dr. Olfert Dapper, a Dutchman, produced his *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686) which raised many questions about the Eastern Delta and trade. Dapper mentioned a number of rivers as well as people. And these are the Rio Real, the Andoni River which he called “River Loitomba” (Ilotombi) and the “Moko” or “Moco” country, a territory construed as *Mboko* (Ibibio)

territory. Significantly, he did not mention “Old Calabar” in the Eastern Delta or refer to the Imo River (Pero de Sintra) or Qua Iboe River (Rio de Conde). Rather, he passed from the Andoni River straight to the Cross River estuary and mentioned “Old Kalabarien”, also called “Old Kalborgh”<sup>15</sup>.

Dapper may well have missed reference to “Old Calabar” in the Eastern Delta as he missed any reference to the Imo River and the Qua Iboe River. The criticism of his work, generally, has been that he did not come out to Africa about which he wrote, and thus he may have created more problems than he solved existing ones.<sup>16</sup> This is why John Barbot and his detailed mapping of the Eastern Delta is crucial to this work.

Late in the 17th century, Barbot, Captain of the frigate *Albion*, produced his *Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea* (London, 1732) with an *Abstract* of a voyage by James Barbot, his brother, to New Calabar River or Rio Real in the year 1699. One of the peoples living on the Rio Real were the Kalabari, who derived their name from one of their early kings. The Rio Real was subsequently known as the “New Calabar River”. Of this Barbot writes:

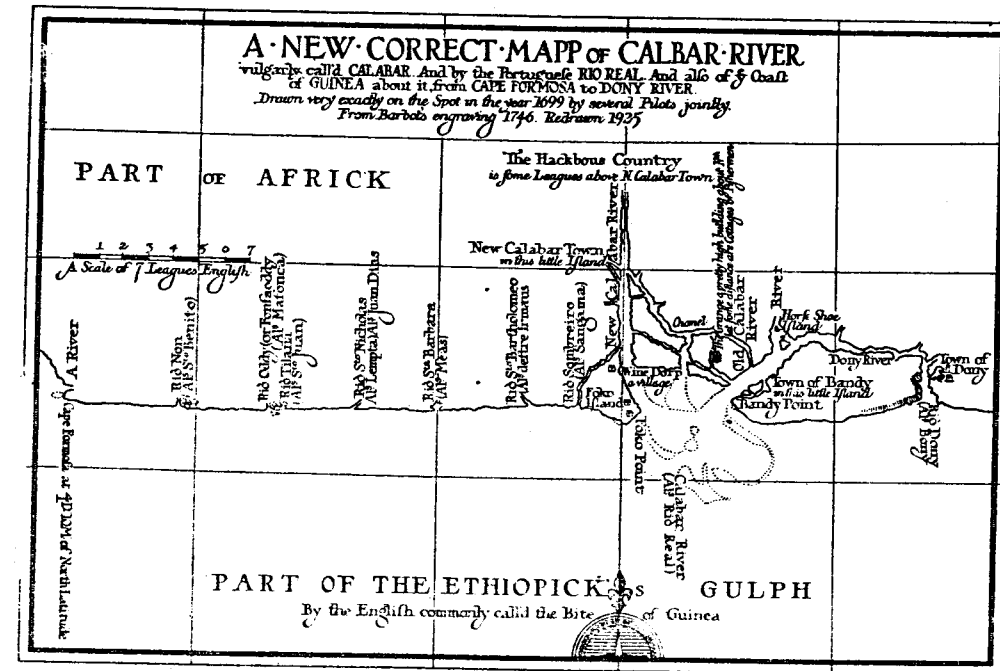
The territory of Calabar, or Calbary, lies on and about the river called by the Portuguese Rio Real, by the English, Calabar and by the Dutch Calbary, from the town of New Calabar or Calabar situated on the River.<sup>17</sup>

Barbot’s map of 1699, drawn by several sailors jointly and on the spot, actually located both “Old Calabar River” and “New Calabar River” on the Rio Real. He writes:

While we were by degrees taking in our complement of slaves at Great Bandy (Bonny), our mates, with the assistance and advice as well as of Captain Edwards, and the Portuguese master that lay there by us for a time, as of some of the most experienced natives pilots of Bandy town, employed several days in our pinnacle and canoes, to sound the channels, and depths of the bar and banks, that lie athwart the river’s mouth betwixt Foko (Ifoko) and Bandy point; with all necessary exactness and

caution; and drew a map thereof and of the rivers of New Calabar and Dony, which is here annexed for the benefit of sea-faring men trading thither.<sup>18</sup>

Barbot and the other sailors who produced the map could not have mistaken this Old Calabar channel with the Cross River which is about a



A NEW CORRECT MAP OF CALBAR RIVER.

Barbot.

Source: John Barbot, *Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea* (London, 1732), p. 462.

hundred leagues east. Newns, apparently moved by Talbot's observations already mentioned, emphasized that, in 1943, while at a museum in Cape Town, South Africa, he saw two maps of Africa made at different dates in the 17th century which, while showing Calabar on the Rio Real, made no mention of Calabar in the Cross River. From this, Newns, drawing from Talbot, concluded that what must have happened was that the word, Calabar, was taken from the New Calabar River, which was so named from the town of the Kalabari who lived on it and seems to have been more important from the trading stand point than the Cross River. Through some error, this name was applied to the Cross River estuary, which was finally called Old Calabar to distinguish it from the Kalabari River which was named New Calabar.

It would have been helpful if Newns had provided the names of the authors of the two ancient maps as it would have enabled us to make direct reference to them. However, D. Simmons records that Joannis Jansonii, apparently, a Dutch sailor and cartographer, "mentioned Rio Real d'Calabar and the towns [of] Calabari and Out Calabar on his map, *Negritarum Regnum* (c. 1650)".<sup>19</sup> From all this, it is obvious that Calabar is a Europeanization of "Kalabari". Similarly, the Efik regarded Calabar as a European word derived from "Calm bar". According to them, when the early traders came to the Cross River, they found the "bar" to be "calm" and peaceful, hence the name "Calm bar." "Calm bar" was later modified to "Calabar". The prefix "Old" was merely added to differentiate Old Calabar in the Cross River from "New Calabar" in the Niger Delta. This must have happened by 1698 because, in that year, Barbot, as Captain of the *Dragon*, traded in "Old Calabar" which appeared to be in the Cross River. He speaks, for instance, of Oyo (Eyo), Duke Aphrom (Duke Effiom), Agbishorea, and other names generally associated with the Cross River.<sup>20</sup> So, whether it is from "Kalabari" or "Calm bar", Calabar was a trade name derived from the European. Like Calabar, Cross River was a name of European origin. According to Newns, it was shown on Portuguese maps as the Rio da Cruz. He added that most of the names given to rivers and islands by the Portuguese were of a religious nature, hence the Cross River, and not because the river was supposed to have "crossed over from the Niger Delta" towards the Cameroons.

But the problem remains. The existence of Old Calabar in the Niger Delta and Old Calabar in the Cross River in the 17th century

poses a problem of identity. For instance, which of the Old Calabars was Barbot referring to when he said:

"There is also a market for slaves at Beli (in the Eastern Niger Delta), a large town at west of Old Calabar inland."<sup>21</sup>

The confusion arises from the fact that Bile is west of Old Calabar in the Cross River and south-west of Old Calabar in the Eastern Delta. Also, both towns are east of the the River (New) Calabar. And, while Old Calabar in the Cross River is east of Bile, Old Calabar in the Eastern Delta is "inland" in relation to Bile. This, indeed, is the significance of Newns' effort to draw attention to the confusion existing in the use of the same name for a settlement in the Eastern Delta as well as another of the same name in the Cross River estuary. He states, for instance, that "until it is realized that the Calabar of the more ancient maps and histories refers to the land of the Kalabari and not "Old" Calabar, they appear to be in some details, confusing".<sup>22</sup> Such confusion is clearly evident when some writers on the Guinea Coast identified names such as "Carabari" (Kalabari) in old documents with "Calabar" (Efik). According to Alagoa, such identifications are wrong.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, by the middle of the 18th century, the confusion existing between Old Calabar in the Niger Delta and the one on the Cross River had started to disappear. By now, a diarist, Antera Duke, an Efik trader on the Cross River, had begun to put down, in concrete terms, information which was useful in differentiating Old Calabar on the Cross River from the one in the Niger Delta. Also, British interest in the Guinea Coast had started to give rise to more efficient documentation. Captain Hugh Crow, John Adams, William Snelgrave and other British sailors had started to write of the conditions on the Guinea Coast and a better picture of Old Calabar in the Cross River Valley had started to emerge.<sup>24</sup> Thus, by 1790 Old Calabar on the Cross River was known to consist of four towns, namely, Duke Town (Atakpa), Henshaw Town (Nsidung), Creek Town (Obioko) and Old Town (Obutong).<sup>25</sup> Besides, there were Qua and Efut peoples said to be the original owners of the land but excluded from membership of Old Calabar for political reasons. The attraction of Old Calabar to the

British was influenced very much by the attitude of the Efiks to the white man, an attitude which was extremely cordial and friendly.

The proximity of Fernando Po to the Cross River was another factor. The island had been made a stopping place by the British since the late 18th century; and in 1827 they transferred the headquarters of the anti-slavery campaigns from Sierra Leone to Fernando Po.<sup>26</sup> Then in 1849 John Beecroft was appointed Consul for "The Bights of Benin and Biafra to regulate trade between the ports of Benin, Brass, New and Old Calabar, Bonny and Bimbia"<sup>27</sup>. "New and Old Calabar" in this statement would have been a source of confusion if the statement had been made in the 17th century. But in 1849, it would be reasonable to associate New Calabar with the Niger Delta and Old Calabar with the Cross River. For the latter had, in fact, become an English preserve clearly differentiated from the Niger Delta.

Further, in 1882 Consul Edward Hewett moved his headquarters from Fernando Po to Old Calabar in the Cross River; and when the British administration was established over the Oil Rivers in 1891, Old Calabar became the headquarters of the colonial administration.<sup>28</sup> In 1902, "Old Calabar" became "Calabar" and remained as headquarters of the administration until 1906, when the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was merged with the Colony of Lagos to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with headquarters in Lagos. Just as Old Calabar in the Niger Delta lost its importance, and actually disappeared with the rise of Old Calabar on the Cross River, so did the latter lose its strategic importance when Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta was founded in 1913 and made to serve as the rail link between the eastern coast and the interior part of Nigeria.

#### DECLINE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF OLD CALABAR

Discourse on the decline and disappearance of Old Calabar on the Rio Real must be somewhat speculative. However, the alternative is not to say anything about it, which would not be proper in this kind of inquiry. And where can one start other than by looking for a general pattern in the rise and decline of some city-states in the Niger Delta. Some of such city-states are Opobo, Bonny, and New Calabar.<sup>29</sup>

The segmentation of Bonny in 1869 and the emergence of Opobo is already well known. What may not be well known is that the

reason for the migration of Jaja from Bonny to Andoni was more commercial than military, and that Opobo soon deprived Bonny of its commercial eminence in the Eastern Delta. According to Andoni tradition, the dynamics and processes leading to the founding of Opobo Town in 1870 were not different from those that led to the founding of Bonny earlier. The Obolo (Andoni) were dominant in the overseas trade at the initial stage of the Atlantic trade. The Ibani emerged and occupied the strategic location that became the site of Bonny. With the occupation of a more convenient location, they seized the trade from the Obolo which, in turn, led to the decline of the latter.<sup>30</sup> This tradition is not as fresh as it appears, because Dike had earlier mentioned it in his work on the Niger Delta. According to him, "points on the Delta coasts, suitable as harbours for the European sailing ships, were quickly occupied. Such was the case with Bonny", and I should add Opobo.<sup>31</sup> From this perspective, New Calabar may well have emerged as "suddenly" as Bonny and Opobo, all located at strategic points suitable for the overseas trade.

The decline and disappearance of New Calabar and the emergence of Bakana, Abonnema and Buguma in the late 19th century, were influenced by military and commercial factors. New Calabar had always been in competition and confrontation with Bonny. In 1879, a civil war whose causes derived from conflict with Bonny, as well as from internal commercial and cultural differences, segmented the city-state, giving rise to Bakana, Abonnema and Buguma. Each of these towns was sited at a different location upstream, strategic for the palm oil trade.

From these facts a pattern emerges, namely, the segmentation of settlements and emergence of new ones in response to the dictates of the overseas trade. From this known pattern, we may now seek an explanation for the decline and disappearance of Old Calabar in the Niger Delta. First, as said earlier, Old Calabar on the Rio Real may simply have declined because of the rise of Old Calabar in the Cross River and patronage by the British. It may be observed that Old Calabar in the Delta may have been the home of the Dutch (Hollanders) who were being successfully ousted by the English, whose hold on Old Calabar in the Cross River was simultaneously increasing. Declining trade with the Dutch could be a factor for the segmentation of Old Calabar on the Rio Real. New Calabar, which emerged from the latter,

was slightly hidden in the creeks, and although it attracted not only the Dutch but also the English, it was the Dutch who had the secret of direct contact with the city-state, the English having to anchor at Bandy point (Bonny) and to make contact with it by “pinnacles” and “long-boats”.

Second, the Korome ward of New Calabar claimed origin from Old Calabar. Specifically, *Owamekaso*, the supreme deity of the Kalabari, is said to have migrated from Old Calabar to New Calabar.<sup>32</sup> It would be erroneous to think that they came from the Cross River Valley. The idea of the ward coming from the Efiks hardly makes sense, because there is no similarity in their rituals and institutions. For instance, the rituals and institutions of *Owamekaso* tie up with the rituals and institutions of the other Niger Delta deities and institutional practices. The Efiks have themselves claimed that they had no connections whatsoever with the Kalabari of the Niger Delta.<sup>33</sup> And so, the Old Calabar of the Korome must be the Old Calabar on the Rio Real.

On leaving Old Calabar and establishing New Calabar, the Kalabari regarded their dispersal centre as Old Calabar. This pattern was repeated when New Calabar itself segmented from 1879 to 1885. The Kalabari in Bakana, Abonnema and Buguma continued to regard New Calabar as Elem Kalabari, which means “Old Calabar”, and the latter continued to appear in official documents till 1931.<sup>34</sup> This development introduced a third “Old Calabar” into the analysis, two in the Niger Delta and one on the Cross River, with potential for further confusion. In any case, Old Calabar of Barbot’s map must have been in a state of decline when he met and documented it in 1699. It is significant that while Dony, Bonny and New Calabar, and even Old Calabar on the Cross River (in 1698), were described in some detail, Old Calabar on the Rio Real was not. Thus, by all indications, it was on its way to extinction by 1699.

However, if Old Calabar had provided a home for the Korome, and probably also for the Amabiana of New Calabar, who claimed migration from the *Asaramatoro* (Andoni River) general dispersal area, then we are talking of a settlement that must have been vibrant when it existed. And the question is: could not Old Calabar be the “very large village” of Pereira’s account of the late 15th century? These are questions for inter-disciplinary co-operation, as information available to us now does not permit us to answer them conclusively.

THE INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The answer to the history of Old Calabar may be found in the co-operation of the different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The historian and anthropologist, using oral tradition, should be able to guide the archaeologist to the site of Old Calabar. It should be emphasized that Barbot’s map does not only refer to the New Calabar River but also gives the location of New Calabar Town. In the case of Old Calabar, it refers to the Old Calabar River but does not mention Old Calabar Town. However, that there was an Old Calabar on the Old Calabar River is in no doubt. First, the Korome ward and *Owamekaso* of New Calabar came from Old Calabar. Second, as shown on Barbot’s map of 1699, there was a “Grange, a pretty high building,” located on the Old Calabar River. Horton suggested that the Grange might have been the shrine of *Owamekaso*, the national deity of the Kalabari people. He said, for instance,

“In the fifties, I recollect hearing old people say that in earlier days, *Owamekaso*’s house was very tall, and that no other house was permitted to be so tall. So, it is possible that “the grange” (Old Calabar) might have been the earlier shrine of *Owamekaso*.”<sup>35</sup>

Also, he claimed that such a shrine was located and maintained in New Calabar as well as in Buguma, the current capital of Kalabari.

From all this, the Grange was likely to have been the nucleus of Old Calabar, a tradition which was consistent with the tradition of many Delta communities of first setting up the shrine of their national deities before setting up their private buildings, the implication of which is that the age of the shrine determined the age of the settlement. In this particular case, no building in Kalabari territory was allowed to be as high as the shrine of the deity, which seems to correspond with the special mention of the height of the Grange in Old Calabar. The site of the grange (Old Calabar) could be identified for purposes of excavation and information-gathering.

Looking at Barbot’s map of 1699 closely, it will be observed that “Old Calabar” was located immediately north-east of the mouth of the Rio Real, while New Calabar Town was located on the New Calabar

River, located north-west of the mouth of the Rio Real. The positioning of these two Kalabari towns probably accounts for Barbot's description of the Rio Real as "New Calabari River" and Jenewari's identification of the "very large village" of Pereira with the Kalabari community.<sup>36</sup> Could the "very large village" of Pereira have been the Old Calabar of the Korome ward of New Calabar and the site of "the Grange" of Barbot's map? This we cannot say for certain. But we can at least go back to the sources at our disposal.

One of the sources is Erekosima's work. He had identified the very large village with Andoni because they were the ones who controlled the trade at its inception.<sup>37</sup> Ejituwu also identified it with Asarama (Andoni) but for a different reason, namely, that the "very large village" was located in a creek north-east of the main channel of the Rio Real. And this creek was the *Asaramatoro* which derived its name from Asarama, and means Andony River (or Dony River as shown by Barbot).<sup>38</sup> Thus Old Calabar on the Rio Real could not have been the "very large village".

This conclusion draws further support from oral traditions from some wards from New Calabar and Okrika in the Eastern Delta. For instance, while the Amabinima ward of New Calabar, which provided pre-18th century leadership of the city-state, claimed migration from the *Asaramatoro*, so did the Ogoloma, Ogu and Bolo peoples of Okrika claim migration from "the Big River, Idontoro, before the arrival of Alagbariya (Bonny) to the Eastern Delta".<sup>39</sup> Idontoro (Idoni-toro: Andoni River), appears to be synonymous with *Asaramatoro*. All in all, the *Asaramatoro* area of Andoni became known as the general dispersal area of many of the peoples of the Eastern Delta today. That Barbot's map mentioned no village on Dony River that could be construed as Asarama may well be due to the fact that, by 1699, Asarama had dispersed in a war with Bonny. Apparently, it is not only Old Calabar that could be regarded as a "lost site". Asarama, possibly the "very large village" of Pereira, could also be regarded as such. These are some of the puzzles of which the history of the Eastern Delta is composed.

However, we are convinced that the puzzles are not insurmountable, as the inter-disciplinary approach to African history can solve them. For this particular problem of the location of Old Calabar in the Eastern Niger Delta, oral tradition and Barbot's map are our main guide. Apparently, more oral tradition from Kalabari should

be collected. Then archaeology, which normally provides information about the location of homelands from which people having common origins initially dispersed, would be brought to bear on the problem.<sup>40</sup> Once information from the various disciplinary efforts, including linguistics, has become available, the historian could effectively reconstruct the past of Old Calabar in the Niger Delta. If the site is synonymous with Pereira's "very large village" of the late 15th century, we would expect it to yield a large quantity of trade goods and artifacts.

## CONCLUSION

The discourse on Old Calabar highlights situations of change and continuity characterized by the loss of the ability to identify several of the structures mentioned in European documents and/or in local traditions. In the case of the duplication of Old Calabar on the Cross River and in the Niger Delta in the 17th century, there is no problem with Old Calabar on the Cross River as Calabar is still in existence; and the need to answer some basic questions such as when it effectively took over from Old Calabar in the Niger Delta are still possible. In contrast, Old Calabar in the Niger Delta is no more. But its existence is confirmed not only by Barbot's map under reference but also by the traditions of some of the ancient families of Kalabari. Like Jeffreys on Fort Stuart, we may begin to describe it as "Old Calabar: A Lost Site" on the Rio Real.

The existence of Old Calabar in the Cross River and another on the Rio Real in the 17th century has implications for Kalabari and Efik history. For the Efiks, it suggests that some of the references made to them between 1500 and 1700 may, in fact, be references to the Kalabari in the Niger Delta, for writers on Old Calabar have generally failed to pay attention to the disturbing existence of the two city-states of the same name on the Guinea Coast with implications for the misplacement of information. Such misplacement of information has the potential for the nullification of many of the conclusions reached by such writers.

For the Kalabari, an urgent inter-disciplinary effort is needed to locate and excavate the site of Old Calabar, their earlier settlement. Recently, a rescue excavation was carried out in Finima, whose inhabitants were re-located to make room for the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The artifacts

obtained from the site were unbelievably informative on the Finima-European contact history as well as of the Niger Delta generally. Similarly, and perhaps even more important, urgent rescue excavation of the site of Old Calabar in the Niger Delta is necessary before it is destroyed by the activities of the oil companies operating in the area. Again, the site must first be located before excavation can take place. Information likely to be obtained from the excavation should be enough to lead to a conclusion that may provide greater insight not only into the history of the Niger Delta but also into that of the Cross River.

All said and done, the general findings from this essay, we believe, are important enough to merit the description of the title of this work as "Old Calabar Rediscovered".

#### NOTES

1. E.J. Alagoa and T.N. Tamuno (eds.), *Land and People of Nigeria: Rivers State* (Port Harcourt, 1989).
2. M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Fort Stuart: A Lost Site", *The Nigerian Field*, Vol. XX, 2 (April, 1955), pp. 89-96.
3. See Olfert Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686). Koko E. Ina, "Ibibioland Under Colonial Rule," (Ph.D Dissertation of the University of Port Harcourt, 1989). For more on Moko, see D. Simmons "An Ethnographic Sketch of the Efik People", Daryll Forde (ed.), *Efik Traders of Old Calabar* (London, Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 7.
4. John Barbot, *Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea* (London, 1732), pp. 462-463.
5. Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* (1508) (trans.) G.H.T. Kimble (London, 1937), p. 132.
6. *Ibid.* Also see J.D. Fage, "A Commentary on Duarte Pacheco Pereira's Account of the Lower Guinea in his *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* and on some other Early Accounts," *History in Africa* 7 (1980), pp 47-79.
7. Kimble, *op. cit.*, G.I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 34; E.J. Alagoa, *A History of the Niger Delta* (Ibadan, 1972), pp. 154-155; C.E.W. Jenewari, "The Identification of Ethnolinguistic Units in Early European Records: The Case of Kalabari," *Journal of Niger Delta Studies*, Vol. 1 (1976); Tonye V. Erekosima, "Cultural Institutions," a paper presented at a Workshop on the History and Culture of the Rivers State (1986); and N.C. Ejituwu, *A History of Obolo (Andoni) in the Niger Delta* (Manson and University of Port Harcourt Press, 1991), pp. 78-83. Erekosima raised the fundamental question of the identity of the Delta community that had primacy of contact with the Portuguese. According to him, the Andoni were the first people to establish contact with the Portuguese. Then the Kalabari, Ibani (Bonny), Nembe and other Delta communities entered the trade in a competitive spirit and eventually took away the dominance from the Andoni and opened it to ethnic rivalry. For similar views, see Jeffreys, *Old Calabar* (Calabar, 1935), pp. 11-15; C.N. de Cardi, "Andoni River and its Inhabitants" in Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies* (London, 1899), pp. 538-540 and J.C. Anene, *Southern Nigeria in Transition* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 7; and for the resultant rivalry, see O. Ikime, *Niger Delta Rivalry* (London, 1969).
8. In 1904, an image taken from the Andoni national shrine by the British was described by them as "an image of an Ijo man." See A.A. Whitehouse, "An African Fetish," *Journal of the African Society* (London, 1905), pp. 410-416. For the multiple references to Ijo ("Jos"), see Pereira, *op. cit.*, pp. 129, 130, 131 and 132.
9. Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 34.
10. P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. 1 (London, 1926), pp. 183-184.
11. *Ibid.*



12. A.F.P.P. Newns, "Reorganization Report on the Kalabari Clan," (May, 1947), pp. 14-16. For map, see Barbot, *op. cit.*, p. 462.
13. Monsieur J. Bouchard, "Les Portugais dans la Baie de Biafra au XVIème Siècle," Vol. 16, *Africa* (London, October, 1946) quoted in Newns, *op. cit.*, p.7.
14. *Ibid.* Also quoted in Newns, *op. cit.*, p. 6 is J.W. Blake, *Europeans in West Africa, 1450-1560* (London, 1942).
15. O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686) quoted in Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology* (London, 1957), p. 176.
16. Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, p. 159, fn.1.
17. Barbot, *op. cit.*, p. 380. Of early Kalabari Kings, Branco's account of the 1620, referring to the Guinea Coast, mentioned a "Rey de Calabar" who was a friend of the Portuguese and identified b Alagoa as a "King of Kalabari". See Antonio Duarte Brasio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* Vol. 6 (1955), p. 471, an account by Garcia Mendes Branco, cited in Alagoa, *op. cit.* (1972), p. 138. In 1699 Barbot met a King Robert of New Calabar, "a good civil man [of] about thirty years old", who in company with other Kalabari leaders negotiated business with him.
18. Barbot, p. 463.
19. Newns, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16. Also Daryll Forde (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 4.
20. Barbot, *op. cit.*, 465. It should be emphasized that two Barbots are mentioned in this analysis: one is John Barbot, the author of the *Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea*, while the other is James Barbot, his brother, whose *Abstract* refers to the Rio Real. Equally, two journeys to the Guinea Coast are mentioned: one was to the Cross River in the frigate *Dragon* in 1698, and the other to the Rio Real in the frigate *Albion* in 1699.

See Barbot, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-465. For more on the origin of the name "Calabar", see Robin Horton's essay (Chapter Eleven in this volume) fn. 44.

21. Barbot, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
22. Newns, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
23. Alagoa, *op. cit.*, p. 143, fn. 4. The old document under reference is Pierre Verger, *Trade Relations Between the Bight of Benin and Bahia: 17th-19th Century*, (Ibadan, 1976), p. 595. Alagoa's information is taken from the French edition of 1958, p. 673. For other writers on Old Calabar in the Cross River, see Talbot, *op. cit.*, A.J.H. Latham, *Old Calabar: 1600-1891* (Oxford, 1973), p. 17-24; E. Aye, *Old Calabar Through the Centuries* (Calabar, 1967) ; K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Oxford, 1956); E.O. Uya, "Old Calabar Studies: An Overview," in *Old Calabar Revisited*, (eds.) S.O. Jaja, E.O. Erim, B.W. Andah (Enugu, 1990), pp. 194-208, and G.I. Jones, "The Political Organization of Old Calabar", in Daryll Forde (ed.), *Efik Traders of Old Calabar* (London, 1956).
24. Antera (Ntiero) Duke, "The Diary of Antera Duke: 1785-88", *Efik Traders of Old Calabar* (ed.) Daryll Forde (London, Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. ix, 27-115. William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London, 1734); John Adams, *Sketches Taken During Ten Voyages to Africa Between 1766-1800* (London, 1822); Hugh Crow, *Memoirs of the Late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool* (London, 1830).
25. Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
26. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *The Story of Old Calabar* (Lagos, 1986).
27. Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
28. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *op. cit.* (1986).
29. For the evolution of New Calabar, see R. Horton, "From Fishing Village to City-State," *Man in Africa* (eds.), Mary Douglas and

- Phyllis M. Kaberry (London, 1969), pp. 37-58; and Alagoa, "The Development of Institutions in the States of the Eastern Niger Delta," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 12, 2(1971), pp. 269-278.
30. Erekosima, *op. cit.*, Also de Cardi, "Andoni River and Its Inhabitants," *op. cit.*, pp. 538-540; Jeffreys, *Old Calabar* (Calabar, 1935), pp. 11-15.
  31. K.O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Oxford, 1956), p. 24. Duke Town in the Cross River emerged suddenly in about 1748 in competition with Old Town for the overseas trade. See Forde, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
  32. Prof. Robin Horton in a personal communication, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, 1996.
  33. Jones, *Tribal Distributions: South-Eastern Nigeria* (forthcoming).
  34. Newns, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
  35. Horton, *op. cit.*, (1996).
  36. Jenewari, *op. cit.* (1976).
  37. Erekosima, *op. cit.*
  38. Ejituwu, *op. cit.*, (1991), pp. 78-83.
  39. Chief E.D.W. Opu-Ogulaya of Okrika, Port Harcourt, December 31, 1975. For details, see Ejituwu, *op. cit.* (1991), p. 253.
  40. *Ibid.* Also Horton, "The Contemporary Relevance of Kalabari Religion," a paper written on Buguma Centenary, 1985.

## CHAPTER NINE

### DEFAKA RECONSIDERED

Kay Williamson

#### 0 INTRODUCTION

One of the many qualities that colleagues appreciate about Professor E.J. Alagoa is his low-key way of drawing attention to areas that are likely to be of mutual interest as we work together on the complex past and present of the Niger Delta — a jigsaw puzzle with many stubborn pieces that refuse to fit in, a mosaic from an ancient broken pavement, or a palimpsest where one story has been written on top of another — the metaphors are many for the fascinating task we face.

It was E.J. Alagoa who, many years ago at the University of Ibadan, first told me that his cousin Mr Calvin Alagoa, who is from Nkọrọ, had told him that Nkọrọ has two languages: a form of East Ijọ known as Nkọrọ, and a second language, Defaka, spoken in the Afakani ward of Nkọrọ Town. He introduced me to Calvin Alagoa, who gave me a wordlist of Nkọrọ and told me that it was the common language of the town, Defaka being only a home language for members of the Afakani ward. In his *History of the Niger Delta* Alagoa (1972:165) referred to Defaka as 'a completely different language' and suggested that it might be connected with the language of Abuloma (which is actually a Central Delta language) or of Degema (actually a Delta Edoid language). Fortunately it was not long before C.E.W. Jenewari, then at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, was able to take up the investigation of this tiny language which was previously unknown to the outside world. He showed that Defaka did not belong to either the Central Delta or Edoid linguistic groups, and made a very strong case for its being most closely related to Ijọ, although not actually part of the Ijọ cluster itself (Jenewari 1983a,b).