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# THE DATING OF THE ARO CHIEFDOM: A SYNTHESIS OF CORRELATED GENEALOGIES

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Precolonial African historiography has been plagued by historical reconstructions which remain in the realm of legend because events are suspended in almost timeless relativity.<sup>1</sup>

Igbo history has not been adequately researched. Worse still, the little known about the people has not been dated. It might be suggested that the major reason which makes the study of the Igbo people unattractive to researchers has been the lack of a proper chronological structure. Igbo genealogies have not been collected. The often adduced reason has been that the Igbo did not evolve a centralized political system whereby authority revolved round an individual—king or chief—which would permit the collection of regnal lists. Regrettably, Nigerian historians appear to have ignored the methodology of dating kingless or chiefless societies developed and applied elsewhere such as in east Africa. In west African history generally, there has been an overdependence for dating on external sources in European languages or in Arabic, and combining these with the main regnal list of a kingdom. Even within kingdoms, genealogies of commoners and officials have rarely been collected or correlated with the regnal lists. Among the Igbo, the external sources are rare and the regnal lists few. Even the chiefdoms—Onitsha and Aboh, Oguta and Nri—were ignored for a long time after modern historiography had achieved major advances elsewhere. Arochukwu has been another neglected Igbo chiefdom. Most of these states with hereditary leadership were peripheral to the Igbo heartland. Nevertheless, they were important because of their interactions with the heartland and the possibility of dating interactive events from their genealogies.

The Aro evolved a confederate political system headed by a hereditary leadership, yet their genealogies have been ignored. Aro genealogies collected by the British colonial officials have not been worked over to obtain reliable dates for the chiefdom. This is surprising when it is considered that much has been written about Aro ubiquity in the whole of southeastern Nigeria. Aro works are “suspended in timeless relativity.” In this exercise I seek to provide tentative dates for the chiefdom. Such chronology, it is expected, would serve as a guide in cross-dating events in the various parts of the Igbo region. For the Aro to be dated, the basis will have to be the available genealogies, which have been charted following generational methodology. Whatever dates were obtained from the genealogies have been correlated with the importation of the first guns into Calabar, since firearms were said to have been used in the crisis which resulted in the foundation of the chiefdom. Thus the dating exercise has to proceed with an analysis of the genealogies from inside Arochukwu—the regnal list and the genealogies of the principal actors in the foundation process. Thereafter the Aro dating structure has been interrelated with the genealogies of their satellite settlements.

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According to oral tradition, the Aro chiefdom was founded as a consequence of the intermingling of three distinct groups: the Ibibio, Igbo, and Akpa. The chiefdom was a product of interethnic rivalry. Aro traditions vary in respect to the details of the conflict. However, the various traditions agree on the essential features of the crises in relation to the Igbo-Ibibio strife and the subsequent interference of the Akpa group. According to the traditions the original inhabitants of the Aro area were the acephalous Ibibio.<sup>2</sup> They were said to have possessed an oracle, Ibini-Ukpabi, which was of very local significance prior to the foundation of Arochukwu. In the previous decades the Igbo came to settle among the Ibibio of the region as land-hungry immigrants, slaves and traders.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently these migrant Igbo tended to dominate the indigenous Ibibio, who resented them. The resultant hostilities degenerated into disorder.

Anarchy reached a culminating point when one Uruk-nta, an Igbo slave, rebelled against his Ibibio master, Uruk.<sup>4</sup> In the skirmishes which ensued, the Igbo group were said to have called upon Nachi, a peripatetic priest-doctor from Edda just to the north near Afikpo, to come to their aid. Unable to tilt the conflict in favor of the Igbo, Nachi, through his son Okenachi,<sup>5</sup> invited the Akpa from the east of the Cross River, who came in as mercenaries. Under the leadership of Akuma and his brother, Osim, the Akpa arrived with firearms. The Akpa-Igbo alliance overwhelmed the Ibibio. Thereafter, peace was restored, and the Aro confederate chiefdom was founded, comprising elements of Igbo, Akpa, and Ibibio groups and Akuma became the first leader. But after him, Nachi's descendants, beginning with his son, Okenachi, took over the throne of a chieftaincy which survives until now. Without doubt, the foundation of the Aro chiefdom was a circumstance of ethnic discord.

As has been earlier alluded to, Aro history and more importantly, the Aro foundation has not been dated. Clearly, the dates obtainable from genealogies would assist in more accurate dating. In the documents from the Enugu branch of the Nigerian National Archives, there are approximately ten Aro genealogies, which were collected by British colonial anthropologists and officials between 1900 and 1933.<sup>6</sup> Despite the availability of these genealogies, Aro scholars have failed to use the existing methodology of chronology based on genealogies to obtain reasonably accurate dates for the founding of the chiefdom, as well as for the dating of events in the whole of Igbo country. Using thirty years as a generation length, this being the average employed in the Benue-Benin region, I have charted and tentatively dated these ten Aro genealogies.<sup>7</sup>

For purposes of correlation, these genealogies have been compounded into five charts, three for Akuma and his followers, one for Nachi and his descendants, and another for the Igbo slave, Uruk-nta, and Ezejaka, captive of a hunting party. Dating from the 1930s, when most of these genealogies were collected, they go back about eight generations. Akuma's genealogy puts him at *ca.* 1690-1720. The genealogies of his followers who left the east of the Cross River with Akuma also locate them about the same generation. Nachi's genealogy equally places him *ca.* 1690-1720, the same generation as Akuma. These dates correlate with the generations of the Igbo slave, Uruk-nta, who precipitated the Igbo-Ibibio hostilities, and Ezejaka, captured by a hunting party soon after the end of the encounter. Clearly, the contemporaneity of the generations of Akuma, Nachi,



Urunk-nta and Ezejaka in the same period suggests that the Aro chiefdom was founded in that generation. It appears safe to tolerate this chronological conclusion because these men, whose generations coincide, were the principal *dramatis personae* in the events which resulted in the foundation of the Aro state.

However, these British-procured Aro genealogies should be used with scepticism. Isichei has cautioned that the mutually consistent nature of these genealogies does not mean that they are complete and therefore faultless. According to her, "they may all be examples of the working of some iron law of elision."<sup>8</sup> This seems doubtful. There are actually few "iron laws" in human affairs. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that the elision would be uniform. Nevertheless, these genealogies were not secured for the purpose of dating the Aro. Rather, they were procured by the British colonial officials to determine the pattern of succession to the Aro chiefship. As a result they did not concern themselves over the accuracy of generations or even relationships. In such circumstances the genealogies are likely to be defective. Despite their seemingly relative consistency they exhibit disparities. From 1900 some of these genealogies go back five or six generations and others, ten, to the founder of the chiefly line, Akuma.<sup>9</sup> In chart I, for instance, dating from Torti Nwatorti (*ca.* 1900-1930) this genealogy stretches back nine generations to Akuma. Kalu Emo was very elderly, and Torti Nwatorti was under thirty when the British interviewed them. Therefore, the Kalu line must either be defective or the Torti Nwatorti lineage must have been artificially lengthened.

Furthermore it should be noted that in the Torti Nwatorti line, one father and son have been placed in one generation between *ca.* 1870 and 1900. It is possible that Kalu Emo was born *ca.* 1850 and was seventy-seven in 1927. However, a thorough researcher would have felt more comfortable with this lineage had the British officials collected the names of his sons and grandsons, and particularly had they estimated the age of the oldest grandson. As it is, Kalu Emo falls in the generation of the great-grandfather of Torti Nwatorti. As the Akuma genealogy presently stands in chart I, Akuma might have lived in any of the three generations between *ca.* 1660 and 1750. The middle generation has been chosen as the likeliest possibility by comparing the genealogies in chart I against each other as well as against those of Akuma's followers. The experience of field researchers has been that forgetting generations appears more common than artificial lengthening.<sup>10</sup> African elders are normally not conscious of the significance of a long genealogy, or that one may be a few generations shorter than the other. Even modern students frequently have difficulty understanding the averaging principle. As a consequence, if the middle generation *ca.* 1690-1720 was not a logical compromise, experience would suggest choosing the earlier one, *ca.* 1660-1690.

There are more problems in chart II, which documents the genealogies of two of Akuma's followers, Ukwa and Okwara Okpo, who have been placed in the generation after Akuma. This is acceptable because the mercenary followers of Akuma were likely to be predominantly unmarried young men more the age of his son, rather than his generational contemporaries. However, one would have felt more comfortable if the whole lineage slotted into the same generation with Akuma, *ca.* 1690-1720. A deliberate attempt to cause this would definitely create more problems than one is presently grappling with. Even Otusi Okpo (far right

hand side lineage) at about thirty-five years of age clearly belongs in the generation, *ca.* 1900-1930. Ukpabi Anwa could not have been about fifty in 1927, yet be born in the generation *ca.* 1840-1870. The Ukpabi Anwa generation back to the founder, Chichi, follows perfectly the Igbo naming system whereby the son's last name is the father's first name. The Orié Okoro lineage (far left-hand side) also appears correct in this regard. Neither of their "brother lineages" follow the tradition. An alert researcher would have queried this deviation.

Consequently the Orié Okoro line has been the only one of the three which appears completely normal and regular. Unfortunately his son was not recorded, but it could be assumed that the town chief of Amukwa, Orié Okoro, was older and probably belonged to the generation *ca.* 1870-1900, where he has been placed. While the probability of the Akuma genealogy in chart I places him *ca.* 1690-1720 with a bias towards an earlier date, chart II suggests the same generation but with a bias towards a later one. Chart III appears to be the most problem-free. However, Obin, the follower of Akuma seems to have been older than Akuma. This is possible. The slave lineage of Onyekwere through Ndubisi to Okpo Oguma confirms the accuracy of Obin's genealogy. The various informants in 1927 are almost perfectly located, even to the young boys in the post-1930 period. Obin's genealogy strongly supports the contention that Akuma ruled in the generation *ca.* 1690-1720, the probable foundation date for Arochukwu.

In chart IV, the generation of Nachi, the Edda priest-doctor, places him *ca.* 1690-1720, as a contemporary of Akuma. This strengthens the tentative dates for the foundation of Arochukwu. However, Nachi's wife, Okpo,<sup>11</sup> has been placed in the generation, *ca.* 1720-1750, below her husband. This is understandable. The generation of women is about half of the length of that of men. At the age of sixteen, most women begin to have children while most men do so from thirty. Furthermore, the marriage between young Okpo and old Nachi was in line with Igbo custom and tradition. A seventy-year-old man could marry a woman of fifteen to look after him as he aged. In such a marriage, any child born by the woman, whether as a result of a relationship with her husband or another man, belonged to the old man. The elderly husband was usually indifferent to the adulterous acts of his wife since he was ineffective in matrimonial relationships. This probably explains why Okenachi, born out of an adulterous relationship between Okpo and a slave, was acceptable to Nachi as a son.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that it was Okenachi who took over the throne after Akuma. Ndem, father of Okpo and Agwaba, was Nachi's contemporary. Their lineage extends two more generations back. To make their genealogy fit the generation chart, we must assume that Okpo was one of Ndem's oldest children, and that Agwaba was one of the youngest. It is quite possible for Ndem to have had his first child at thirty and his last at sixty, thereby placing them in two adjacent generations. There has been one confusion in Nachi's genealogy. One Akumanachi is recorded as a son to Nachi. It is not clear why Nachi's son should bear such a name reflecting Akuma. A careful researcher should have "dug" further into this overlap in names. Two possibilities might be suggested. The first is that either the British officials who collected the genealogies or their Aro informants were confused. The second is that Nachi might have named one of his sons after the brave Akpa warrior-leader, Akuma. In Chart V, Uruk-nta, the Igbo slave who was



said to have provoked the Aro strife, falls in the same generation with Nachi and Akuma, *ca.* 1690-1720. Also the generation of Ezejaka, a captive of the hunting party who founded Isimkpu town, locates him in the same generation with Uruk-nta.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the synchronism of the generations of the prime actors in the foundation of the chiefdom confirms the tentative dating of the Aro.

It is quite apparent that the British officials who collected these genealogies did not work with knowledgeable Aro elders to find missing generations or cross-check artificially lengthened ones. They did not ensure that father-son relationships were not in fact brother-brother or nephew-uncle relationships. These are the dangers of using genealogies that were not specifically collected for the purposes of accurate dating. Furthermore, the officials did not collect the names of living relatives of their informants. To refer to an elder as "very old" makes interpretation difficult. He could be sixty or ninety, a whole generation different. No commoner genealogies have been collected by Aro researchers to cross-check, confirm or even challenge the regnal lists procured by the British. If there has been manipulation of genealogies, it is most likely to occur in those that are royal. There were nineteen towns comprising the Arochukwu confederacy. The genealogies of their founders, at least, should have been collected. The British were rarely concerned with subordinate town chiefs. Whoever their paramount chiefly agent chose to recognize as representative for the subordinate towns was normally acceptable to colonial authorities. Idiosyncrasies in naming, as noted in this discussion, should have been checked. However, until commoner or all-embracing genealogies are collected among the Aro, the available genealogies will continue to be a major point of reference in dating the chiefdom.

In the oral traditions collected by an Aro, Kanu Umo, among the people and some of their satellite settlements around 1945, there are about five leadership lists, each beginning with the founder of the settlement.<sup>14</sup> There seems to be only one true genealogy among the list, that for Ndizuogu, near Orlu. This genealogy correlates with the Izuogu Mgbokpo lineage, as recorded by the British officials, and as shown in chart IV. The rest are just lists of names with an occasional explanation of relationships between them. However, these lists have been genealogically charted in order to obtain some dates which could help in the more accurate dating of the Aro. The dates of the foundation of these settlements would be correlated with the tentative ones relating to the origin of the Aro chiefdom, *ca.* 1690-1720, and cross-checked with the era of the take-off of slave exports, *ca.* 1740-1820. It was during this period that slave exports rose dramatically from 4,500 to 139,300 per decade leading to the founding of many Aro satellite settlements abroad.<sup>15</sup> The five leadership lists including that of Ndizuogu, have been integrated into two charts. In both charts, the vertical and horizontal lines indicate where Kanu Umo provided kinship relations. No such lines have been used in the lists with no kinship relations.

In chart VI the genealogy of Ndizuogu settlement (far left-hand side lineage) appears elaborate. Kinship relations are clearly indicated. The foundation of Ndizuogu falls in the generation *ca.* 1795-1825. This correlates with the dates obtained from Mathews' genealogy for Izuogu Mgbokpo in chart IV which puts him *ca.* 1780-1810. This is an extremely important correlating cross-reference between the genealogies. For Amawom settlement (far right-hand side lineage),

Kanu Umo did not indicate relationships within the list of leaders; thus, a problem of connections has been created which tends to render the list less useful. It should, however, be noted that two waves of migration from different Aro towns—one from Isimkpu and the other from Atani—resulted in the foundation of Amawom satellite settlement.<sup>16</sup> Charting the lists in their order of hierarchy as recorded by Umo suggests the foundation of Amawom *ca.* 1765-1795. Onyekwere was assassinated by Okpareke II, who was envious of the former, his only possible legitimate successor. The relationships between Okpareke II and Onyekwere on one hand, and Okpareke II and Mjinkonye, who ruled after, were not indicated. However, it is apparent that succession was not based on the principle of primogeniture. Onyekwere was not Okpareke's son, yet he was the only legitimate successor to him.<sup>17</sup>

In chart VII the leadership list of Aro Nkalunta settlement runs into twelve names, for which no kinship relations was demonstrated. But definite dates for the foundation of the settlement, *ca.* 1765 and the death of one Ndionyenma, son of Chief Okoro Ume in 1938, were given by Kanu Umo.<sup>18</sup> This informs the charting progression. Four names which come after 1938 have been placed under the date. This is quite comprehensible. Since Ndionyenma died in 1938, the list of names after him have been placed in the generation, *ca.* 1945+. Aro Nkalunta was therefore founded in the generation, *ca.* 1735-1765. Although the leadership list appears incomplete, in the case of Aro Mballa settlement, the foundation date given by Umo as *ca.* 1766 synchronized with the genealogical chart, which locates it *ca.* 1765-1795. Since Okereke Oyiri was presiding by 1945 and the foundation of the settlement was *ca.* 1766, the two question marks indicate that two successive leaders are probably missing in the list. A careful look at the two charts suggests some conclusions. Both show that the earliest Aro settlement of the five was Aro Nkalunta, founded *ca.* 1735-1765, and the latest, Ndizuogu, founded *ca.* 1795-1825.

While much of the evidence appears flawed, it could be improved only by actual field work targetted towards careful checking of the genealogies employed here, as well as collecting many more. Some of the anomalies probably would yield to explanation had the traditions of the individuals cited in the genealogies been recorded. The combined Akuma and Nachi genealogies form a regnal list which stands outside the traditional royal chronicle, which normally would complement it. Despite their flaws the collected genealogies suggest rather convincingly that the state of Arochukwu was founded *ca.* 1690-1720,<sup>19</sup> and many of its constituent villages were established in the next generation (*ca.* 1720-1750). The foundation of the satellite settlements, located over much of Igboland, occurred in the period between *ca.* 1735 and *ca.* 1825. This core dating structure determined solely from genealogies coincides well with "expectation" since it parallels the "take-off," *ca.* 1740, and climax, *ca.* 1790-1820, of the slave exports from the Bight of Biafra. Undoubtedly, Aro genealogies and those of the satellite settlements appear firm and therefore reliable.

The date of the importation of the first guns into Calabar is crucial in cross-dating the Aro. Aro traditions encompass an account of the use of fire-arms by the Akpa mercenaries in the hostilities. Such weapons were seen then for the first time by the people of the Aro region. According to Shankland, "the 'Akpa' probably owed their quick and immediate success to the fact that they possessed firearms,



seen for the first time by their Ibibio opponents.”<sup>20</sup> He further concluded that “these firearms, blunderbusses of a primitive type, were probably obtained by the ‘Okoyongs’ from the European slave-traders at Creek Town and Calabar.”<sup>21</sup> The date of the importation of the first guns into Calabar, therefore, would help in dating the foundation of the Aro chiefdom. No sooner were guns imported into Calabar than they were used in the Aro crises by the Akpa, who probably traded with the Europeans on the coast. Northrup, however, has argued that the account of the use of firearms by the Akpa mercenaries was not mentioned in the earliest traditions of the people, hence, was probably a later intrusion.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, Northrup doubts the possibility and reliability of any date when firearms were first imported in any quantities given the absence of any systematic documentation of the trade along the Calabar coast. He, therefore, cautions that “dating the events from the presence of fire-arms, while tempting, is risky.”<sup>23</sup> However, Northrup’s argument is flawed in that he did not show how “later” the account of firearms intruded into Aro traditions. Mathews and Shankland’s works, which are some of the earliest documentation of the people’s traditions, contain the story of the use of guns by the Akpa.<sup>24</sup> What is more, Dike and Ekejiuba, who recently carried out fieldwork among the people, concluded that “all versions of the Aro tradition unanimously agree that this weapon was first introduced into the area by the Akpa.”<sup>25</sup> The gun tradition does not appear to be a late embellishment. Clearly there is no doubt that the Akpa mercenaries employed guns in their maneuvers in the Aro conflict. The chronology of the importation of guns into Calabar is therefore important in dating the Aro.

Despite the fact that Northrup’s argument in relation to the late intrusion of the account of guns into Aro tradition has been faulted, his conclusions on the absence of a systematic documentation of the trade along Calabar coast remain tenable. Even the definite date when the trade in the Calabar estuary replaced that of Rio del Rey is still a matter of conjecture. Consequently, there is a problem in establishing when the first guns entered Calabar and its hinterland. Latham, who carried out detailed research on European trade on the coast of Calabar, has concluded that firearms were not imported into Calabar until after 1713.<sup>26</sup> This deduction was informed by two substrata. One, that John Barbot, who visited Calabar in the 1670s did not mention firearms as one of the articles of trade during that period. Two, that when William Snelgrave visited Calabar in 1713, he reported that the inhabitants were armed with bows and arrows.<sup>27</sup>

However, insofar as the foregoing evidence suggests that guns were probably not imported in large commercial quantities into Calabar before 1713, it would be rash to assume that between 1660 and 1713, an era of intensive trade on the Calabar coast, a few guns had not entered the hands of some leading African traders. Isichei believes that “a few guns were imported in the seventeenth century,” although not on a large scale until the eighteenth.<sup>28</sup> Barbot and Latham did not appear to realize that until the middle of the eighteenth century, firearms were not legal articles of trade. Hence, when they were traded before that period, it was on a secret and undocumented basis. Before 1713 trade on the coast was based on the “trust system” which hinged on barter. To achieve comparative outbidding advantage over others, some European traders employed various trade secrets which included offerings of bounties such as hats, guns, umbrellas, coats, and mirrors to

leading African traders. Jones noted that "firearms were...among the conventional presents made to the king [or prominent traders] by a merchant on his departure."<sup>29</sup> This was meant to retain them as loyal customers. Under this framework there is no good reason for Barbot, Snelgrave, and Latham to suppose that a number of guns, although not formal articles of trade, did not penetrate Calabar and its hinterland before 1713.

With the paucity or total absence of chronology and documentation of the trade and the importation of guns into Calabar, there appears to be no other option than to work with Latham's date, despite its shortcomings. If firearms were first imported into Calabar shortly after 1713, and it is accepted that the Akpa mercenaries employed them in the Aro skirmishes, it then becomes logical to argue that the Aro chiefdom was not founded before 1713. But if we follow genealogical evidence, Arochukwu was founded in *ca.* 1690-1720. These dates synchronize with 1713, Latham's date for the importation of guns into Calabar. It is quite possible to assume that guns were imported in commercial quantities into Calabar by *ca.* 1715. It is equally probable that the Akpa procured them the same year. The Akpa could have seen the Aro crises as a favorable opportunity to inflict a baptism of fire. Together with the Efik, the Akpa, who were said to have inhabited Akankpa in Okoyong clan near Creek Town, were principal traders along the Cross River and Calabar coast.<sup>30</sup> As middlemen they obtained articles of trade from the hinterland north to the Benue Valley which they exchanged for European goods in Calabar. Given the privileged position which they occupied, it is hardly surprising that the Akpa should have acquired firearms as soon as they became trade goods. The Igbo group who invited the Akpa were probably their trading partners, who were certainly aware of their possession of these strange weapons. In any case the relevant point has been made. The date of the importation of guns, though suspected to be earlier than 1713, correlates with the generation of Aro's foundation, *ca.* 1690-1720.

Nevertheless, European trade on the Rio de Rey had been in existence for at least 150 years before the concentration on Calabar.<sup>31</sup> Almost nothing has been recorded about this trade. It is difficult to believe that no guns entered the region over that lengthy period, especially when ivory was a major item. It is ironic in comparing the documentary evidence available about the coastal trade and oral tradition relative to Arochukwu, that the latter appears richer and more specific in detail. In such circumstances there has been a tendency for historians to reject oral data unless confirmed by the documentary evidence even when, as in this case, the latter virtually does not exist. I am not inclined to do that, but have rather accepted evidence as evidence. The genealogical evidence demonstrated a foundation date of Arochukwu as *ca.* 1690-1720 with a bias towards the previous generation. As a consequence the overall evidence suggests that the Aro state emerged in that generation and not necessarily towards the end of it as the date of the importation of guns into Calabar tends to connote. To push the foundation date to *ca.* 1715, therefore, would force the historian to overturn a substantial body of oral evidence. This would violate historical method.

Thus, a reasonable dating structure for the Aro has been put forward. The basis of this core dating has been the genealogies collected by British colonial officials, correlated with those of the Aro satellite settlements as documented by an Aro,

Kanu Umo, and the importation of the first guns into Calabar. Despite the shortcomings of the genealogies, they have yielded the first tentative, yet fairly reliable, dates for the Aro chiefdom. The synchronism of the generations of the principal actors in Aro strife, which culminated in the formation of the Aro confederacy in *ca.* 1690-1720, clearly suggests that the chiefdom was founded in that generation. Also in the analysis of the genealogies of the satellite settlements, it has been striking to note that none of them predated Arochukwu. This indicates the firmness of the core dates obtained from the British-procured genealogies. Furthermore, the date of the importation of guns into Calabar has been related with the foundation of the chiefdom. This has been an important cross-referencing since the Akpa invaders were said to have used firearms in the Aro imbroglios. If it is accepted that guns were first imported into Calabar in 1713, then Arochukwu should have been founded in that year, or shortly after. Although it has been argued that guns entered Calabar and the interior long before 1713, the Aro chiefdom was founded in *ca.* 1690-1720, a generation in which 1713 falls. This chronological overlap confirms the reliability of the emergent dates. Thus, the Aro has been dated. Their history has ceased to be "suspended in almost timeless relativity."

### Notes

1. R.A. Sargent, "On the Methodology of Chronology: The Igala Core Dating Progression," *HA*, 11 (1984), 269.

2. T.M. Shankland, "Intelligence Report on the Aro Clan, Arochukwu District, Calabar Province," National Archives, Enugu, Arodiv. 20/1/15, 1933, p. 7. Also see E. Ilugu, "Inside Arochukwu," *Nigeria*, no. 53 (1957), 100; K.O. Dike and F.I. Ekejiuba, "The Aro State: A Case Study of State Formation in Southeastern Nigeria," *Journal of African Studies*, 5 (1978), 273; and H.F. Mathews, "Discussion of Aro Origin and the Basis of the Widespread 'Aro Influence'," *Intelligence Report*, National Archives, Enugu, M.P. No. 24/1927/25; Arodiv. 20/1/15, 1927, p. 9.

3. Ilugu, "Inside Arochukwu;" Dike and Ekejiuba, "Aro State," 270-71. The infiltration of the Igbo into the Aro region has been explained in terms of the breakup of the Jukun empire, and the economic necessity caused by the great overpopulation of Owerri Province.

4. Aro traditions variously refer to the Igbo slave, who was said to have precipitated the Igbo-Ibibio hostilities, as Urunta, Agu, or Kakakpu. See Mathews' *Report*, 9-10.

5. The names Nachi and Okenachi have been used interchangeably in some of the people's traditions. See Mathews' *Report*, 10; Mathews' "Second Report on Aro," *Intelligence Report*, National Archives, Enugu, Arodiv. 20/1/15, 1927, p. 3; and Major I. Sealey-King, "Aro Genealogical History of—," Arodiv. 20/1/1, 1923, p. 2.

6. Specifically Mathews' "Discussion of Aro Origin...," 14-18.

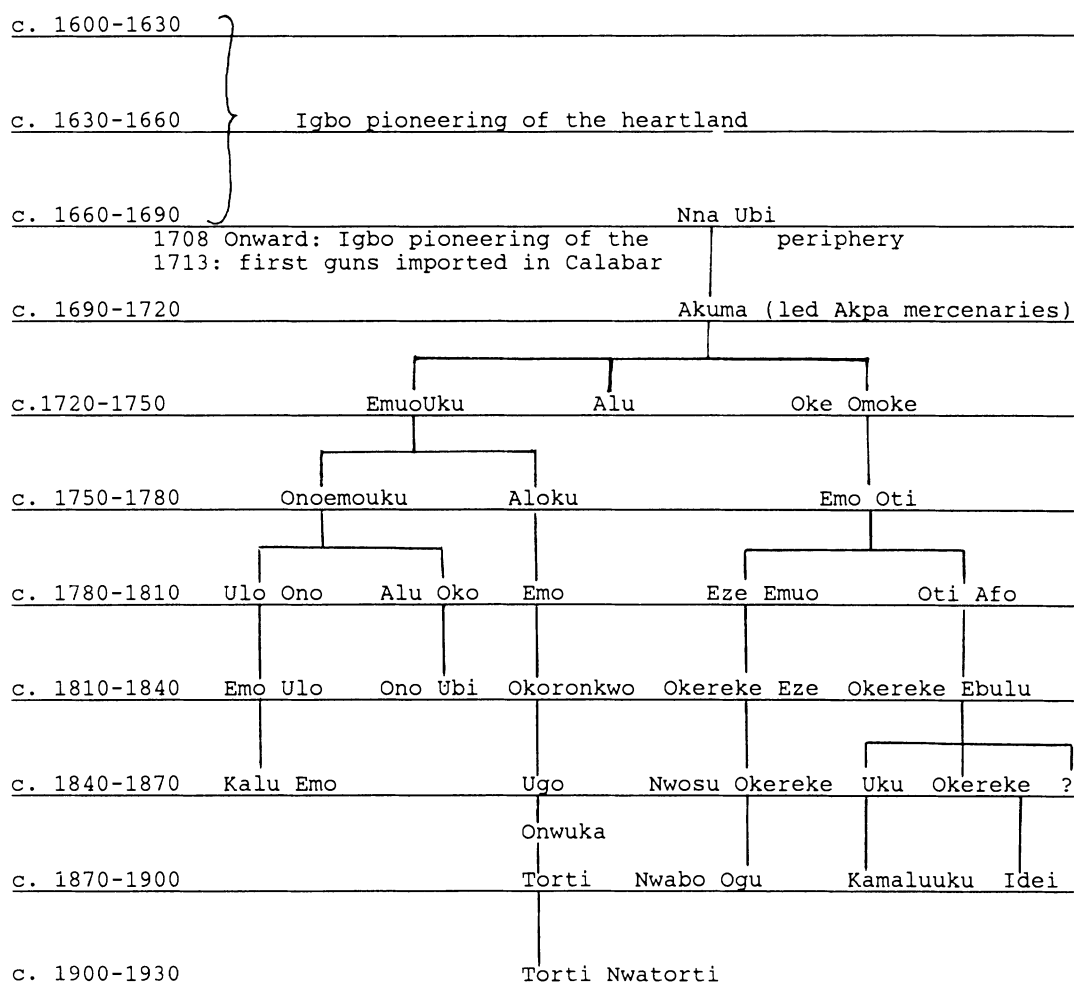
7. Sargent, "Methodology," 269-73. Also see R.A. Sargent, "Politics and Economics in the Benue Basin *ca.* 1300-1700," Ph.D., Dalhousie University, 1984., M.S.M. Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda*, (London, 1971), 271-86; and J.B. Webster, ed. *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa*, (New York, 1979), 2-3. This average is relevant for the Igbo. The phenomenon of late marriage persists among the Igbo today.

8. Elizabeth Isichei, *The Igbo People and the Europeans*, (London, 1973), 35.

9. Mathews, "Discussion," 14-18. See p. 15, paragraph 47 in particular. The genealogy hardly extends back beyond five generations.
10. J.B. Webster, "Through the Palace Gates, Chiefs and Chronology: Developing Reliable Dating Structures" *HA*, vol. 11, 1984, pp. 345-347. In this study, Webster observed that almost a century of Awe-Jukun history was being forgotten as evident in the royal genealogies collected by the British colonial officials. Thirty-two commoner genealogies he collected produced a startling date, ca. 1679-1706 as against ca. 1776-1794.
11. Mathews, "Discussion," 14. In another account by Solomon U. Okorafor et. al. "Chieftaincy of Aro," dd 4/9/1945, National Archives, Arodiv. 3/1/55, pp. 2-3, Okpo was recorded as the name of the slave who impregnated Nachi's wife.
12. Mathews, "Discussion, 14; Okorafor, et al., "Chieftaincy."
13. Oti Nwa Onicho, "Account of Aro Origin," dd 4/8/22, National Archives, Enugu, Arodiv. 20/1/1, 1922, p. 4; Sealey-King, "Aro Genealogical History," 5; and Mathews, "Discussion on Aro Origin," 12.
14. R. Kanu Umo, *History of Aro Settlements*, (Yaba, nd), 10-11. From the various dates quoted in Umo's book it would appear that the work was published about 1945.
15. A.J.H. Latham, *Old Calabar, 1600-1891*, (Oxford, 1973), 18.
16. Kanu Umo, "History," 33. Both Atani and Isimkpu Aro towns were founded by Ezejaka, captive of a hunting party.
17. Ibid.. Okpareke II's son also murdered Onyekwere's son, fearing the latter's revenge for his father's assassination. Onyekwere's lineage was thus extirpated.
18. Ibid., 29, 32.
19. The Aro have often been misdated. P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, (London, 1926) 1:182, has put the foundation of the chiefdom ca. 1300-1400. He had no basis for these dates other than that this was the period of the preponderance of the Portuguese on the coast of Nigeria. Sargent, "Politics and Economics," 99-152, was also caught up in the same problem. He refers to the two Igbo priests employed by Oba Ewuare of Benin as Aro. Oba Ewuare reigned ca. 1455-1482. Sargent also contends that it was the Aro-Benin alliance under Aji-Attah which sacked the Okpoto dynasty of Idah, ca. 1509-1536. These suggest that the Aro chiefdom was founded before ca. 1455-1482. Sargent's problem is understandable because he merely followed the usual tendency whereby scholars consider every Igbo-related involvement in southern Nigerian history as essentially an Aro action. The evidence at my disposal discredits such proclivity, and remote dating.
20. Shankland, "Intelligence Report," 9; F. Ifeoma Ekejiuba, "The Aro System of Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *Ikenga*, 1(1972), 13.
21. Shankland, "Intelligence Report;" Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, (London, 1976), 58. The remains of two of these weapons are still preserved while the rest are said to have been destroyed during the Aro Expedition of 1901-02. Shankland preferred to refer to the "Akpa" as "Okoyong" because he believed their original home was Akankpa, Okoyong clan in Calabar Division.
22. David Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, (Oxford, 1978), 36.
23. Ibid.
24. Mathews, "Second Report on Aro," 5-6; Shankland, "Intelligence Report;" Daryll Forde and G.I. Jones, *The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of Southeastern Nigeria*, (London, 1950), 85.
25. K.O. Dike and F.I. Ekejiuba, "The Aro State," 277. This fieldwork was conducted in 1963/64, 1965/66, and 1970.
26. Latham, *Old Calabar*, 24, 27.

27. William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea, and the Slave Trade*, (London, 1732), as culled from Latham, *Old Calabar*, 24.
28. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, (London, 1983), 164; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 59; Ukwu I. Ukwu, "The Development of Trade and Marketing in Iboland," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 3/4 (1967), 656.
29. G.I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, (London, 1963), 45-46.
30. Latham, *Old Calabar*, 26; Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 35; and Ilugu, "Inside Arochukwu."
31. Northrup, *Trade Without Rulers*, 39-40.

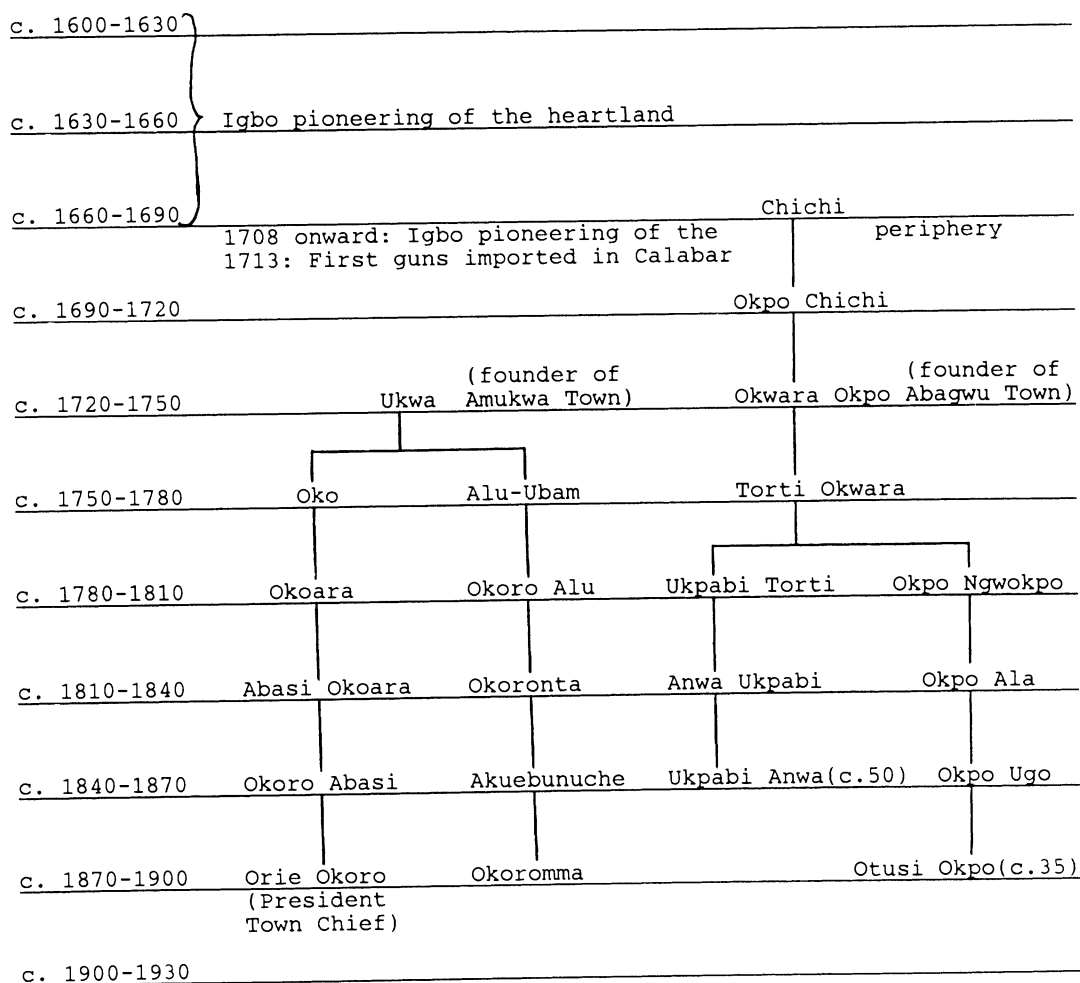
**Chart I**  
**Akuma Geneology**



Mathews/Shute, "Intelligence Report on Aro," 11, 15, 17.

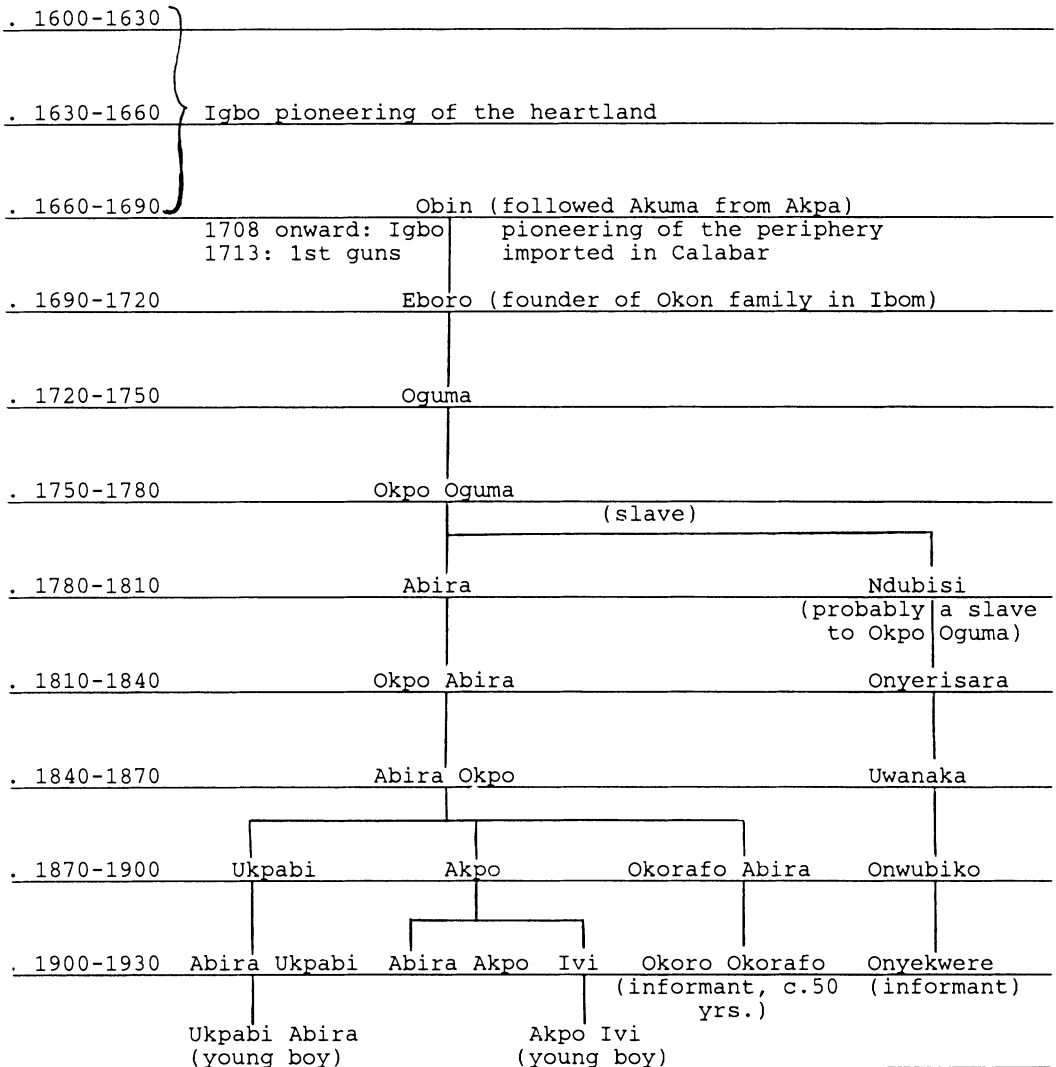


## Chart II Followers of Akuma



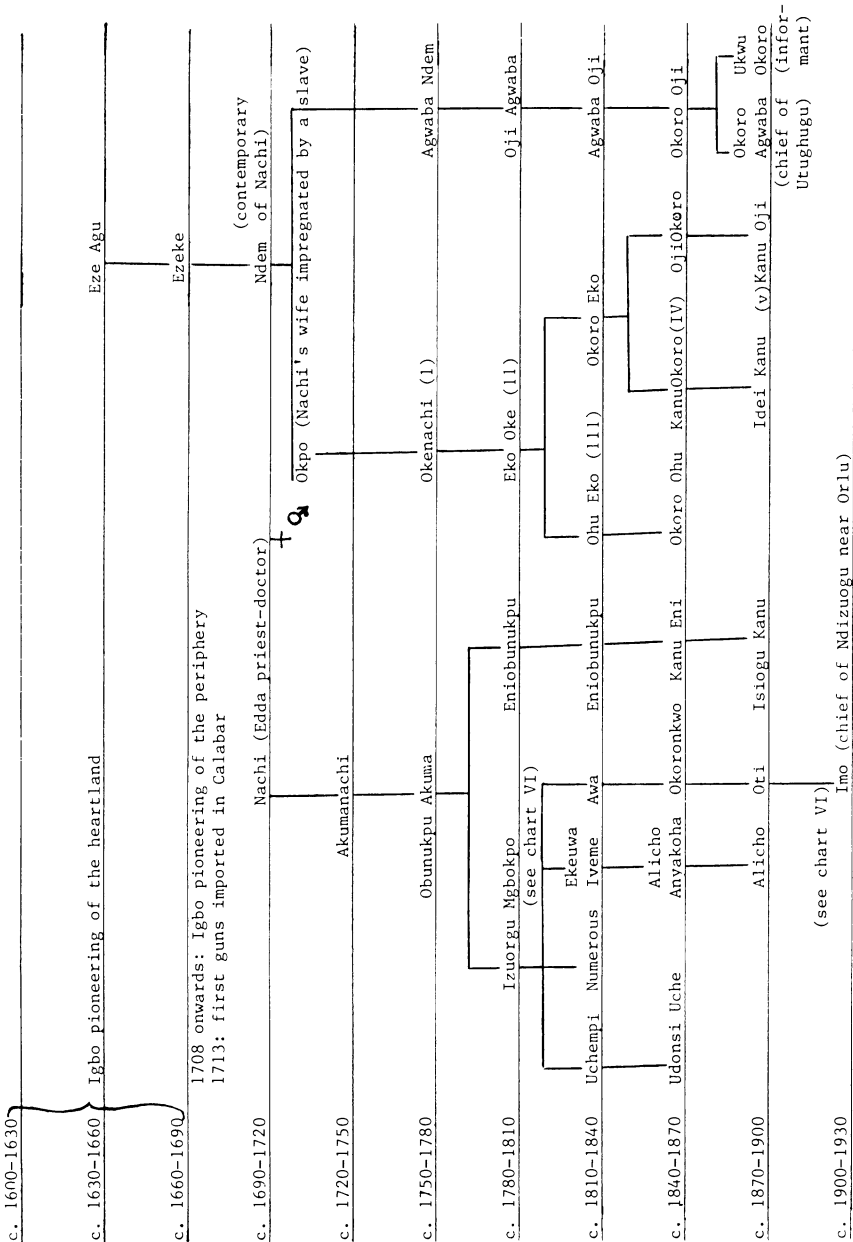
Mathews/Shute, "Intelligence Report," 15-16.

**Chart III**  
**Obin, Follower of Akuma**



Mathews/Shute, "Intelligence Report," 17-18.

Chart IV  
Nachi Genealogy



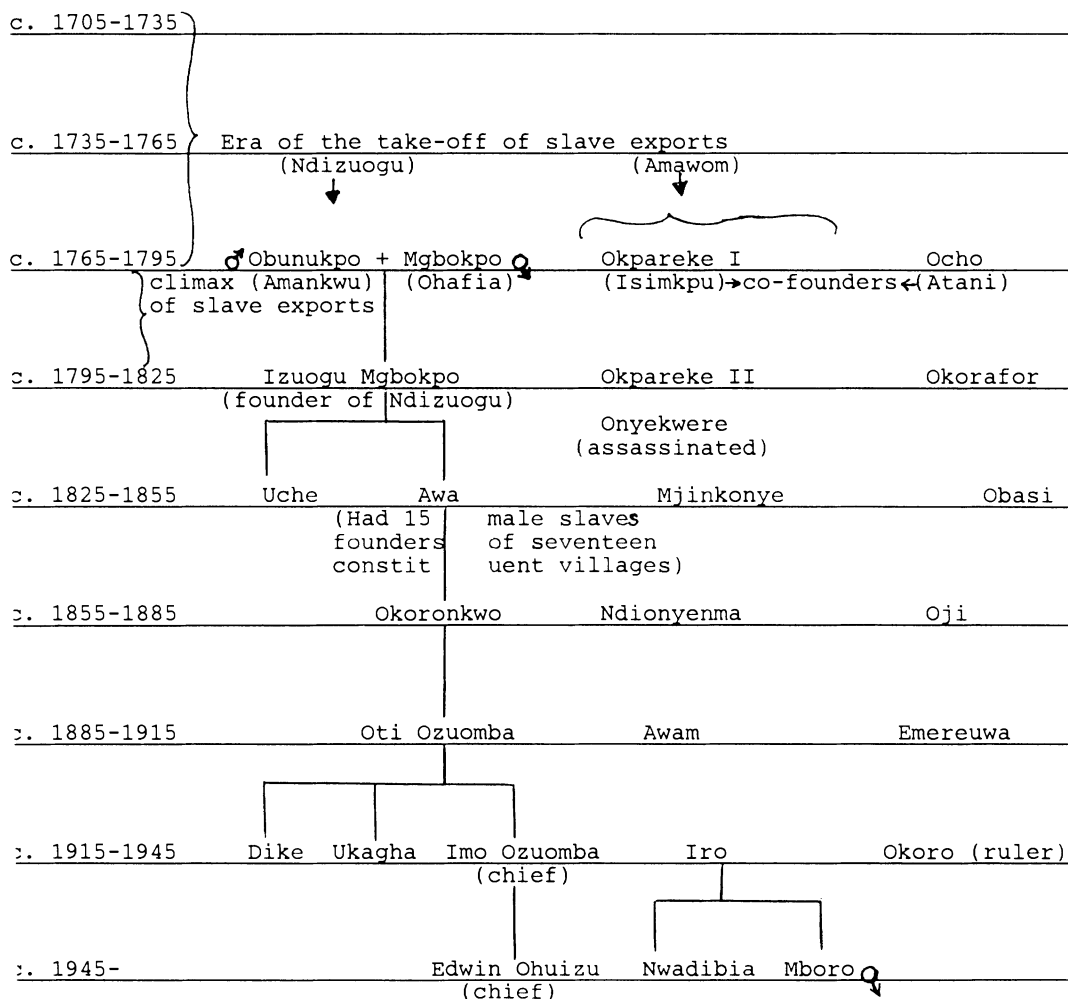
Mathews/Shute, "Intelligence Report," 14-15.  
Roman Numerals show succession to chiefdom of all Aro.

**Chart V**  
**Genealogies of a Slave and Captive**

c. 1600-1630		
c. 1630-1660	Igbo pioneering of the heartland	
c. 1660-1690	Uruk (Ibibio slave master) 1708 onward: Igbo pioneering of the periphery 1713: first guns imported in Calabar.	
c. 1690-1720	Uruk-nta (rebellious slave, contemporary of Akuma)	Ezejaka (captive & contemporary of Akuma)
c. 1720-1750	Agu	Amaja
c. 1750-1780	Kakakpu	Chukwu Aboko
c. 1780-1810	Ibe	Chukwu
c. 1810-1840	Inekwa	Emuo
c. 1840-1870	Ora	Obassi
c. 1870-1900	Okorafo Ora (informant)	Imuo Obassi (c.65 or 70, informant)
c. 1900-1930		

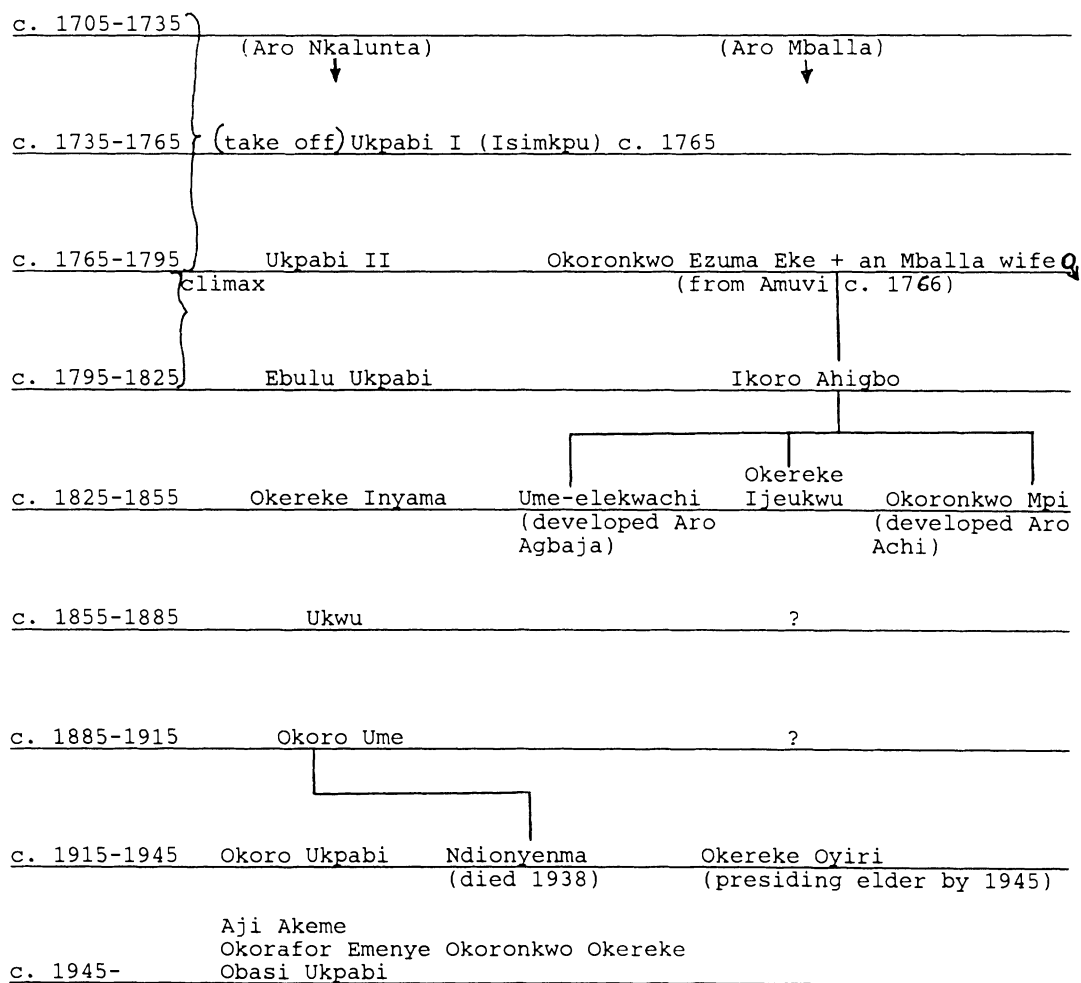
Mathews/Shute, "Intelligence Report," 10, 16, 17.

### Chart VI Satellite Settlements



Umo, *History of Aro Settlements*, 17, 33.

Chart VII  
Satellite Settlements (Aro Nkalunta and Aro Mballa)



Umo, *History of Aro Settlements*, 29, 32, 69.