

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA

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TOPIC:

**THE ANCESTRAL ORIGIN OF THE IGBO PEOPLE
ACCORDING TO THE IGBO CUSTODIAN OF NRI**

**A RESEARCH WORK FOR THE
COURSE RCS 204 (FIELD TRIP AND TUTORIAL II)**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Nri is the ancestral homeland of the Igbo's in history. Nri kingdom is the oldest Kingdom in Nigeria; it was founded around 900AD by the progenitor, Eri, the son of Gad.

Origin of the Igbo's

According to the Nri custodian (HRH Eze Nri Enwelana II MFR.jp). The Igbo's were the descendant of Abraham, the patriarch, the Hebrew who began his work with God and made a covenant with God. God picked Abraham and made a covenant with him and God gave Abraham a son Isaac and Ishmael; Sarah is Abraham's wife through whom Isaac came. From Isaac comes the descendants of Abraham and from Ishmael comes the Muslims of the world today.

The Igbo's is one of the families of the Israelites. The Igbo's regard Isaac as the first born of Abraham and not Ishmael, Isaac inherited all things from his father Abraham. And after this things, Isaac grew and married and gave birth to his first son Jacob whom he loves so much and from Jacob came the Igbo's.

Jacob had Leah as his wife who begot four sons for him. But before she conceived it happened that when Leah noticed she had passed child-bearing age, she gave her maid – servant, Zilpah to Jacob to be his wife, and through Zilpah he had a son named Gad. Gad then begot Eri, who later formed a clan known as Erites vide Genesis Chapter 30 verse 9; 46 verse 16 and Numbers chapter 26 verses 15-19. Eri was therefore amongst the twelve tribes of Israel via Gad.

During their stay in Egypt, Eri became the high priest and spiritual adviser to Pharaoh Teti and had the responsibility of taking care of the religions in Egypt, the fifth dynastic king of Egypt around 2400 BC.

During the Exodus, which marked the beginning of the mass movement of the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Eri was amongst the tribe that left Egypt following the instruction from God to the Israelites (see Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 58 – 68). The character of the Igbo's showcased during the splitting of the sea, they became impatient, and some of them returned back to Egypt; the Egyptians used them as slave to make bricks and to build the Egyptian pyramid. Some of the Igbo's fled from the Egyptians and some of these tribes founded settlements in the southern part of Sudan, where they established the "Nok" culture, which is similar to that of other (sun Cult) culture, like Nri, Fiji, Samoa, and Jukun in the Northern part of Nigeria and elsewhere. But others who could not remain in the Southern Sudan travelled further South, some branched off to Jukun, in Northern part of Nigeria, others continued and arrived at the confluence of River Niger and Anambara known as "Ezu-na-Ọmambala" and settled there while some veered off to the Island of Fiji in the South Pacific Ocean. An intelligence report notes that the Fijians have the same sun culture with the people of Nri.

When Eri arrived at the confluence of "Ezu-na-Ọmambala" he used tree's to build his house. In this place was the first place where fire was first generated, when the smoke of the fire ascended to the sky some men saw it and traced it and they came down to where Eri and his house hold was, and then they ask them who they are, and they answered them that they are the Igbo's. "Igbo's means the people of the bush". And this is the first time the name was used. And there is no specific people who are referred to as the Igbo, except those that splitted. It was at this time that Eri had an encounter with God who converted him and called him "Nri" which means king. Eri had two wives, namely Nneamakụ and Oboli, Nneamakụ begot five children, namely (a) Nrifikwani-Ọmambala being the first son (b) Agụlụ (c) Ogbodudu (d) Onogu and (e) Iguedo the only daughter. Oboli begot Ọnọja, the only son who founded

the Igala Kingdom in Kogi State. Meanwhile, Nri-Ifikwuanim begot Agukwu Nri, Enugwu-Ukwu, Enugwu-Agidi, Nofia, and Amobia, while his brother Ogbodudu who later became Nrinaoke N'Ogbodudu had founded the Diodo Dynasty, while his brother Ezikannebo founded Akamkpisi and Amanuke. Onogu Begot Igbariam, while Iguedo, the only daughter, begot Ogbunike, Okuzu, Nando, Umuleri, and Nteje, Known today as Umu-Iguedo clan, while the former are better known as Umu-Nri clan. According to Nri Oral tradition recently substantiated by archaeological findings of Oraeri/Igbo-Ukwu objects, the unification of Agukwu, Diodo, and Akamkpisi was enacted constitutionally during the beginning of reign of Nribufe (AD 1159 – 1252) who was the first Eze Nri to observe the Igbo-Aro Festival as a pan – Igbo affair in 1160AD (Prof. M.A. Onwuejeogwu 2003).

Nri-Ifikwuanim took after his progenitor Eri, and became a high priest among his people. He left Aguleri in search of a better living place, according to Mr. M.D.W. Jeffreys report, and settled at present Nri site. He started performing what Eri did at Egypt, cleansing of abominations, giving titles such as prestigious Ozọ title, to his people, proclaiming the New Year (Igbo-Aro) etc.

Conclusion

The igbo's is not a particular group of people, but only those that parted from among the Jews during the Israelites movement to the promised land. Eri then became the founder of the igbo race in history and Nri multiplied and became the ancestral home of the Igbo people in history.