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Emergent *Protozones*:

A Genealogy of Zoning Architectures in Calabar, Nigeria

By

Joseph Michael Godlewski

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of

Philosophy

In

Architecture

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Global Metropolitan Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Nezar AlSayyad, Chair

Professor Greig Crysler

Professor Ananya Roy

Professor G. Ugo Nwokeji

Summer 2015

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a historical investigation of the urban politics and mythic spaces produced in southeastern Nigeria, particularly in the port city of Old Calabar. As a city with a distinctive, and what some call “decentralized” and fragmented urban geography, this project draws connections between contemporary zoning strategies and these historical socio-spatial constructs, or “*protozones*”. These *protozones*, which were loosely tied together by secretive juridical systems and cultural codes, can be seen as precursors and potential anticipatory diagrams for the splintering forms of urbanism emerging globally today. Borrowing the concept of “paradigmatic spaces”, this dissertation is organized around a series of spatial designations, or diagrams of spatial relationships that were exemplary during a given time period in Old Calabar’s urban history. This dissertation employs four spaces as representative of particular socio-historical relationships in Old Calabar—the compound, the masquerade, the offshore, and the zone. The historical imbrication of these four models combined with a flexible application of their spatio-temporal boundaries, provide a useful matrix for understanding the architectural and urban history of Old Calabar and challenging the novelty attributed to contemporary neoliberal free trade zones. The dissertation provides a productive case study for theorizing architecture and urbanism from the historicized periphery.

To Bess

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Joseph Godlewski
Syracuse, 2015

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Neoliberal Paradise?

“Isn’t it beautiful?” he said. “The ball.” I looked and pondered. In front of me, beyond a desolate parking lot, at the end of long, vacant pedestrian bridge supported by concrete piers and sinuous trusses stood a giant goldish-green-aluminum sphere. Perched on the top, like a tawdry novelty toy or Christmas ornament was a statue of a gorilla. The gorilla was triumphantly hoisting a sign which proclaimed “NOLLYWOOD” in all-caps (Figure 1.1). Behind me, on axis with the sphere, was a neatly-paved concrete arcade lined with glass storefronts. On exhibit beneath the expansive, hazy sky was an architectural ensemble that was distinctly modern (Figure 1.2). Materially, tectonically, and spatially, it expressed openness, cleanliness, and ease of circulation—an idealized landscape for public interaction, pedestrian encounter, leisure, and consumption.

The shops were dark, though, decorated instead with photocopied images of birds to prevent real ones from flying into the glass. Nearby, on a chair precariously titled against a column, a security guard slumbered with his hat down under the tropical afternoon sun. We were the only people there—three strangers from different continents, different histories, with different ethno-racial identities, espousing different worldviews, and motivated by separate desires to converge at this point out of randomness and chance. The horizon was blank with the exception of a masonry wall hundreds of meters away which encircled the entire voluminous, though seemingly hollowed out site. Densely-packed palm and rubber trees, the edge of a lush rainforest, served as a stark and remote backdrop to the entire scene, marked by heat, stillness, and an eerie sense of loneliness that comes with isolation and unmet expectations. I was processing a lot of thoughts and being pulled in many directions.

It was 2010 and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort (TFZR) had recently been opened on the outskirts of the city of Calabar, the capital of the Cross River State in the southeast corner of Nigeria (Figure 1.3- Figure 1.5). The sphere and gorilla structure marked the entry to the Nollywood film studio—one of the many programmatic amenities housed at Tinapa. Nollywood, the colloquial name for the Nigerian film industry, had just surpassed the United States as the second largest national producer of films in the world (behind India’s Bollywood), and Tinapa was to be a new state-of-the-art center of production. Designed and built by Julius Berger Nigeria, the subsidiary of German construction and engineering firm, this indigenous *tabula rasa* was flattened to accommodate 80,000 square meters of retail, a 242-room luxury hotel, an aquatic park, a video arcade, and night club. It was envisioned as an alternative for jet-setting West African and international patrons who regularly traveled to Dubai and South Africa in search of leisure and consumption. As part of Nigeria Export Processing Zone Decree formulated in the 1990s, the free zone was conceived as a “semi-autonomous zone” within the country with “quasi-independent law-making and administrative powers” in the Cross River State.¹ While the Cross River State has been nicknamed in Nigeria the “People’s Paradise”, Tinapa, located about 10 kilometers outside of the core of Calabar’s metropolitan agglomeration, had been touted as an

¹ Ikeyi, Nduka. "Export Processing Zones and Foreign Investment Promotion in Nigeria: A Note on Recent Legislation", *The Journal of African Law*, Volume 42, Issue 2 (1998): 224.

“investors’ paradise”.² This pioneer project was a \$125 million investment, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in which public funds would come from the local Cross River State and be allocated solely for infrastructural improvements while all other development would be funded by private equity.³ As part of Nigeria’s Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) plan, goods imported and sold in the free trade zone were to be duty-free in an effort to attract foreign direct investment. A free market rendition of Costa and Niemeyer’s intentions for modernist Brasília, Tinapa encapsulated then Governor Donald Duke’s tourism and business agenda for the state.⁴ The audacious act of clear-cutting a thick rainforest and constructing a 4.8 kilometer four-lane highway into the hinterland of rural Nigeria seemed, however, to be built for no one. Just three years after its opening in 2007, the only cars in the 3000 car-parking lot that day were those of the assorted workers and my cabdriver. It was both impressive in the fact that a project of this scale was conceived and built here and spectacularly unimpressive in its use. So, how did I end up in the middle of an empty free trade zone in the tropical hinterland of Sub-Saharan Africa contemplating the beauty of a Platonic form adorned with a grinning ape?

I had been drawn to Tinapa by an interest in resort environments built in “free trade zones”—segregated, incentivized spaces which exist outside of national jurisdictional constraints such as taxes, levies, and labor laws in order to attract developmental investments. Free of regulations deemed unnecessary, these seemingly frictionless *laissez-faire* environments are premised on an undying faith that markets work best when left alone.⁵ I was interested in studying how free trade zones had become emblematic of a particular form of globalization and specifically how these spaces were articulated in an African context. Having worked in San Francisco as a designer of global tourist destinations—hotels, shopping centers, beaches, club houses, spas, and resort communities, I had developed an acute understanding of the organization of these spaces and the monetary, social, aesthetic, and symbolic values they expressed. These were intricately designed landscapes of leisure, many of them in “developing” contexts, financially underwritten by tax breaks and the logic of liberalization. Was it possible to conceive of these enclaved spaces, as legitimate, innovative alternatives to formalized versions of modern development, or were they simply manifestations of apocalyptic, “evil paradises”—bizarre neoliberal inventions, tragically unjust inversions of the utopian aspirations and public values latent in the project of modernity?⁶ Do free trade zones mark a global ideological shift from the modernist city to the “implosion” of modern public life, or do they point to some other emergent pattern, the potentiality of which we do not yet fully appreciate nor understand? What was the architecture of these zones—these “spaces of flows” so characteristic to contemporary processes of globalization?⁷

² *Cross River State*. Web. (Accessed June 15, 2015). *Tinapa Business Resort and Free Zone*. Web. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

³ Farole, Thomas. *Special Economic Zones in Africa: Comparing Performance and Learning from Global Experiences*. World Bank Publications, 2011.

⁴ Holston, James. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. University of Chicago Press, 1989.

⁵ Chen, Xiangming. "The Evolution of Free Economic Zones and the Recent Development of Cross-National Growth Zones." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19.4 (1995): 593-621. Easterling, Keller. *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and its Political Masquerades*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

⁶ Davis, Mike, and Daniel Bertrand Monk, eds. *Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2011.

⁷ Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*. Vol. 1. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

Ultimately, these were questions about the interrelationship between the political-economic and the cultural production of space. My aim was to analyze, via a particular, physically-realized case study in the global South, the construction of meaning in a built environment which espoused all of the tenets of economic liberalization—privatization, the removal of regulatory bureaucracy in pursuit of economic efficiency, the free flow of capital, and free markets. Originally conceived, this was to be a contemporary case study of a particular practice of urban informality in a city largely underrepresented in the discourses on architecture and urbanism. However, at this moment of personal reckoning, though, I found myself asking a different set of questions.

As a white, male, scholar from Berkeley I understood my own privileged politics of location, but I was unexpectedly thrust into a dizzying cocktail of other thoughts and emotions. On the one hand, I was legitimately impressed that despite the tremendous stresses and vast disparities in the world economic system, a project of this size and sophistication had been realized. The sheer vision, political will, and ability to garner and deploy vast resources to realize a project like this was remarkable. On the other hand, after investing a considerable amount of time finding a site for my fieldwork, crafting a research agenda, garnering a visa, and getting to this place, to find it barren was a profound disappointment. It was as though I had fallen victim to one of the infamous “419 scam” e-mails (named after the Nigerian Criminal Code dealing with fraud) sent from a Nigerian prince promising riches if I sent money to an overseas bank account.⁸ How was I to contest “Afro-pessimism” in a space which by all outward appearances was not working?⁹ Putting my aesthetic considerations aside, this project was an achievement in the pride that it elicited from nearly every resident I talked with. Further, Tinapa was a lightning rod for discussions about how the federal government is cheating Calabar and southern Nigerians out of money and opportunity. Unlike other controversies surrounding free trade zones globally which hinge on demanding rights for workers or environmental justice, this situation was entirely different. There were no protests or organized attempts to stop the construction of Tinapa and there were no campaigns against what in other contexts might be deemed as the work of greedy developers. Instead, the controversy after Tinapa was built was hinged on arguments about economic and developmental self-determination. Tinapa was a kind of Nigerian libertarian enclave. The guy inquiring on my thoughts on the beauty of “the ball” was a young cab driver named Oliver I had met a few days earlier on the grounds of a hotel in metropolitan Calabar. Oliver, who I had befriended since arriving was proud of “the ball” was very much a booster of the Tinapa project. The sleeping security guard didn’t seem ready to protest the development any time soon. I was at once disappointed, suspicious, and perplexed. Why was it so empty? Why was it located in such a remote location and designed in such a way? What was fueling the faith in this kind of development? Understanding the project as it was conveyed in popular media as an entirely new and semi-autonomous venture could not answer these questions. Instead, my aim was to understand the zone as political artifact constituted by cultural and historical processes. In this moment of forced reflection, I was prompted into taking a much deeper historical perspective of the city of Calabar.

⁸ Eichelberger, Erika. “What I Learned Hanging Out With Nigerian Email Scammers.” *Mother Jones*, March 20, 2014. (Accessed June, 2015).

⁹ Mbembé, J-A., and Sarah Nuttall. “Writing the World from an African Metropolis.” *Public Culture* 16.3 (2004): 347-372.

1.2 A Genealogy of Zoning Architectures

Old Calabar has a rich, multi-ethnic, and cosmopolitan history as an international trading emporium and slaving port extending back centuries. Much scholarly attention has been paid to the history of the city, particularly in the period after the arrival of European missionaries, traders, and colonial administrators in the mid-nineteenth century. Three ethnic groups, the Èfik, Qua, and Efut people have populated the city since the fifteenth century, with Èfiks socio-politically dominating throughout. Old Calabar has been variously described as the “Canaan City of Nigeria”, “a Nigerian Rome”, the “New York City of Ibibioland”, and more recently as “a Cross River Metropolis”.¹⁰ In many of the histories, however, the built environment is treated anecdotally, inconsistently, or not at all. Similarly, the few histories which explicitly address the traditional and colonial architecture of Old Calabar is often quite general, focusing on discrete formalized elements, but inadequately addressing the social, economic, and political factors informing the city's urban character. While architecture (*eribop*) has certainly existed in Old Calabar, it has systematically been overlooked. Moreover, existing Calabar scholarship often lacks sufficient visual evidence to supplement its findings. The minimal discussion of the architecture and urban spatial dynamics in these studies is hence rendered abstract and incomplete.

When trying to uncover the reasons for Tinapa’s struggles and to understand the tensions which seemed to undergird it, I looked to the city’s long history as cosmopolitan trading port. Reminded of the oft-cited Fredric Jameson slogan “always historicize”, I sought to make sense of what constituted this free trade zone and why its experience in Calabar seemed so much different than others.¹¹ Part of this insight came from the understanding that free trade zones are not new inventions. Conventional narratives around these spaces is that they emerged in China in the 1970s and proliferated with the spread of neoliberal economic policies worldwide.¹² Tracing the history of free trade zones through the decentralized spatial configurations in the fluctuating urban landscape of Old Calabar though suggests that these ostensibly neoliberal configurations occur in a range of environments and emerge from diverse and varied cultural traditions. This dissertation argues Tinapa’s immense scale, remote location, exclusionary entrance practices, and implementation of distinctly modern architecture evokes the districts of colonial experimentation in many other colonial outposts, though it challenges penetrationist models of European imperialism and the spread of neoliberal policy from the global North to the South.

So what is at stake in historicizing zones? First, it shows the act of zoning is not an activity reserved solely for the modern era, questioning the evolutionary and singular logic of capitalist development. Similar constellations of sovereignty and space have existed in Nigeria for quite some time. Moreover, it contests the idea that zones are autonomous entities, arguing instead they are multivalent constructs riven with conflicting interests. This study also illustrates how ingrained these ostensibly neoliberal conceptions of *habitus*—learned behaviors, spatial

¹⁰ Imbua, David Lishilinimle and Patience O. Erim. “Expatriate Researchers and the Historiography of Calabar, 1650 - 1960: A Reappraisal”, *Journal of Social Sciences: Interdisciplinary Reflection on Contemporary Society*, 30(2): 165-170 (2012): 166. Röschentaler, Ute, “A New York City of Ibibioland”? Local Historiography and Power Conflict in Calabar, in *A Place in the World: New Local Historiographies from Africa and South-Asia*, Leiden: Brill (2002). 87.

¹¹ Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981.

¹² Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

dispositions, and cultural values— are in some contexts.¹³ Often narrowly construed as the inherited legacy of colonialism and structural adjustment, privatization and enclavization have a long history in Calabar. The spatial practice of zoning has instead adapted to and has been inflected by a number of social, cultural, political, and economic forces.

While this dissertation is concerned with historicizing free trade zones with a focus on southeastern Nigeria, it is not a pursuit concerned with uncovering ancient origins or what Arjun Appadurai calls “trait geographies”.¹⁴ Assigning an area with a cultural coherence, historians often burden themselves with tracing origins which ultimately prove themselves elusive. The pursuit of origins is continuously upset by the constant accumulation of historical errors and plural claims. As Michel Foucault argues, “the rather weak identity, which we attempt to support and to unify under a mask, is in itself only a parody: it is plural; countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and compete.”¹⁵ Revealing this inextricable plurality in the spaces of Old Calabar is the aim of this study. The attempt to capture the exact essence of things, whether it be a primordial truth undergirding a particular ethnic identity or the secret truth underlying spatial forms like traditional Èfik compounds are ultimately frustrated by the realization that these essences have been historically fabricated in piecemeal and contradictory ways.

Existing scholarship demonstrates special economic zones are not new inventions. Geographers like James Sidaway chart the “new metageography of development” through a global emergence of enclave spaces which intensify processes of uneven development globally.¹⁶ Though for as long as organized societies have engaged in external trade, there has been a need for secured areas at ports or in strategic locations along trade routes where commodities can be stored or exchanged. Keller Easterling charts the development of free ports from the sixteenth century through their exponential growth at the turn of the twenty-first century.¹⁷ Thomas Farole looks back even further, noting that in 166 B.C. the Island of Delos in the Cyclades became the first “toll-free harbor” in that it approximated what might be termed free-trade-like conditions.¹⁸ These areas became free zones when the commodities circulated free of local prohibitions, taxation, duties, and excises.

In Old Calabar, there were similar configurations throughout its history. Because of its role as a trading port strategically located near access to transatlantic trade routes, for centuries the spaces of Old Calabar were informed by the desire to freely circulate goods. The name “Calabar” is thought to be given by Portuguese explorers visiting the Gulf of Guinea in 1472 in search of a sea route to India. It is said to be derived from the Portuguese *Calabarra* meaning “the bar is silent” referring to calm waters of the estuary.¹⁹ The prefix “Old” was added in order

¹³ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

¹⁴ Appadurai, Arjun. “Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination”, *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 6.

¹⁵ Foucault, Michel. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” in D. Bouchard, ed., *Language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977. 161.

¹⁶ Sidaway, James D. “Enclave space: a new metageography of development?”. *Area* 39.3 (2007): 331-339.

¹⁷ Chen, Xiangming. “The Evolution of Free Economic Zones and the Recent Development of Cross-National Growth Zones” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19.4 (1995): 593-621. Easterling, Keller. *Enduring innocence: global architecture and its political masquerades*. MIT Press, 2005.

¹⁸ Farole, Thomas. *Special Economic Zones in Africa: Comparing Performance and Learning from Global Experiences*. World Bank Publications, 2011. 37.

¹⁹ Nair, Kannan K. *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria, 1841-1906: A Study of Power, Diplomacy and Commerce in Old Calabar*. F. Cass, 1972. 2, Aye, Efiog Upkong, *Old Calabar through the Centuries*. Calabar: Hope Waddell Press: Calabar, 1967. 4, Ajekigbe, Philip G. “Old Calabar Architecture: An Overview.” *State, City*

to distinguish it from the river and port New Kalabar (which ironically is older than Old Calabar).²⁰ The name was shortened back to Calabar in 1904 under colonial rule. Missionaries established the first European foothold in 1846. Under British colonial rule, Old Calabar served as the headquarters of the Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 to 1891, the Niger Coast Protectorate from 1891 until 1900 when it became the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. When the headquarters shifted from Calabar to Lagos in 1906 the city experienced a period of decline as railroads previously planned were subsequently re-routed. Calabar remained part of the British Empire until it gained independence in 1960.²¹ Though scholarship exists documenting Calabar's multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan history as a trade port, it often neglects the centrality of architecture in the process of articulating the city's political and cultural values. It was against this background which I sought to historicize the spatial formation known as free trade zones.

This project grows directly out of earlier research on Rem Koolhaas's filmic representations of Lagos, Nigeria. In it I study Koolhaas's fascination with Lagos's informal economy and his own struggle with architecture and autonomy. True to his earlier theoretical work, Koolhaas successfully "disrupts" the perceived autonomy of architecture as an internalized exercise separate from political or economic concerns. However, in the same breath, he reinforces formalist auto-generative understandings of the city when he describes it as a "self-regulating entity," thus undercutting the initial disruption.²² As Matthew Gandy has pointed out, this approach can best be understood as "neo-organicist," in that it repeats classic formalist urban imaginings. Further, conceiving of Lagos as a "teeming marketplace" sheds light on how Koolhaas's thinking about the metropolis fits with his older, more established understandings of architecture in relation to the larger processes of capitalist development and modernization. The similar enthusiasm for the emancipatory and open-ended possibilities of crisis moments in capitalism with that of neoliberal scholars is compelling. Contesting the ahistorical and apolitical tendencies of Koolhaas's work, this project takes a different approach with a focus on a different southern Nigerian port city.

This dissertation focuses on Calabar and presents a comprehensive analysis of the ways market pressures and politics have intertwined with urban transformations since the seventeenth century to produce distinct and recurring patterns of urban enclavization. Unlike Lagos, Calabar's urban morphology has historically been polycentralized, scattered, and ephemeral. With the absence of large, centralized political administrations, Calabar proceeded with less formalized spatial practices. This informal spatial logic operated at varying scales at different points in Calabar's history. As we will see this spatial logic can at once be responsive, adaptive, and flexible, but also inefficient, incredibly inequitable, and susceptible to failure.

Focusing on four paradigmatic spaces: the traditional Èfik compound, the masquerade, the offshore, and the zone, this project argues that historically the experience of urban space in

and Society: Processes of Urbanisation (2002): 94, Efiog-Fuller. E. O. *Calabar: The Concept and its Evolution*. University of Calabar Press, 1996. 1. Efiog-Fuller writes, "The earliest known and documented European visit to Calabar was in 1472 by Captain Ruy de Sequeira, a Portuguese explorer." See also Tesco-Köztli Consulting Engineers, *Survey and Development Plan of Calabar, Nigeria*. Calabar, Nigeria, 1973.

²⁰ Nair, 2. *The Story of the Old Calabar: A Guide to the National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar*. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 1986. 74. Efiog-Fuller, 4. Foreword by Ekpo O. Eyo. Lagos: National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Noah, Monday Efiog. *Old Calabar: The City States and the Europeans, 1800-1885*. Uyo, Nigeria: Scholars Press, 1980, 1.

²¹ Efiog-Fuller, E. O. *Calabar: The Concept and its Evolution*. University Press, Calabar. 1996. 10-12.

²² Godlewski, Joseph. "Alien and distant: Rem Koolhaas on film in Lagos, Nigeria." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* (2010): 7-19. Godlewski, Joseph. "Seduction and a Misstep." *Clog: Rem* (2014): 58-59.

Calabar has fragmented in diverse ways. Complicating matters, the ensemble of spaces constituting Calabar's urban context have often been described as autonomous, decentralized, polynucleated, informal, ad hoc, scattered, self-organized, and thus "elusive" from the standpoint of the architectural historian. The presumption of autonomy, however, belies the complexity embedded in the politics of secrecy organizing these zones. In the absence of centralized, formalized permanent structures, the built environment has instead been characterized as one of spatial segmentation displaying multiple and contesting sovereignties. As a city with a distinctive, and what some call "decentralized" and fragmented urban geography, I hope to draw connections between contemporary zoning strategies and these historical socio-spatial constructs, or what I call "*protozones*" (which are not to be confused with 'protozoans'-- the unicellular biologic organisms, though the metaphor could be taken further). These *protozones*, which were loosely tied together by secretive juridical systems and cultural codes, can be seen as a precursor and potential anticipatory diagrams for the splintering forms of urbanism emerging globally today. This dissertation contends there are historical congruencies in these spatial disjunctures—these zones and *protozones* seek similar ends. It explores how similar desires for constructing anti-state counter-narratives, establishing economic autonomy, and seeking personal salvation inform these historic and contemporary strategies for organizing urban space.

There's a persistent sense of newness and crisis in the discourse on neoliberalism and neoliberal cities, which Calabar and its rich history of urban transformation serves as a direct challenge. My sense is that though this study illuminates a comparatively neglected and peripheralized site of inquiry, it also informs contemporary debates about urbanism in the face of persistent calls for infrastructural disinvestment, deregulation, and privatization. It is not the intention of this study to extol the historical spaces of Old Calabar as models for future cities, nor is it to malign contemporary Calabar and free trade zones as backward, "unprogressive", spaces of exception beyond rational comparison. To do so would be to participate in a crude form of temporal ethnocentrism. Calabar, it is argued, has a rich history of producing market-driven subjects and it isn't completely a colonial imposition. Formed in response to different socio-economic stresses, these configurations have operated much like what Giorgio Agamben has theorized as "spaces of exception"—spaces "in which the normal order is suspended *de facto*."²³

Achille Mbembé and Aihwa Ong historicize and upset the universal claims latent in Agamben's spaces of exception. Mbembé points to the history of slave trade as one which contests the notion of the "camp" as the paradigmatic space of the twenty-first century, whereas Ong notes that is not enough to trace the logic of exception that is invoked against the politically excluded and that is measured in relation to a "universal norm of humanity". In the context of Calabar, the dislocations resulting from the nineteenth-century transition from a slave economy to one based in "legitimate" palm oil and the later transition from colony to postcolony led to major cultural realignments. These shifts propelled transformations in the built environment and the associated experience of the built environment. Rather than replacing prior structures of power these bounded sovereignties partially aggregated, multiplying internal territorial boundaries, and overlaying one another in an urban palimpsest of traditional and modern enclosures. Further, the notion that these spaces were "self-organized" responses to market fluctuations is contested by highlighting the role of secret societies such as Ékpè in intricately structuring these environments for trade. Joining an emerging discourse which seeks to challenge prevailing assumptions about African cities, this project brings to the fore the changing experiences of urban space and the rich architectural history of Calabar, Nigeria. As a city with a

²³Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. xx.

long history of decentralized governance and aspirations for economic and religious autonomy, it provides a compelling case study for revealing historical congruencies in an era of economic deregulation and market idolatry. In the face of global initiatives to privatize space, entrepreneurially market cities, and decentralize municipal governments, urban space has become increasingly fragmented and divided. Bringing to light Calabar's urban history, this study seeks to contest the pervasive sense of newness in the literature on zoning technologies.

This project challenges deep-rooted assumptions in architectural discourse. Building on contemporary scholarship analyzing African cities, this study explores the history of the built environment in the context of an emerging Atlantic modernity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It covers the period in Calabar's history imprecisely defined as the "pre-colonial"—the era prior to formalized British colonial administration. It focuses on the period when Calabar was first established as a settlement, through the slave-trading era, and into the mid-nineteenth century with the advent of missionary settlements in 1846. The study's unit of analysis is the whole of metropolitan Calabar during this period, however, I don't simply conceptualize the city as an empty theater for the staging of events. Instead, I highlight the translocal and networked character of space in and through Calabar. In contradistinction to conventional understandings of African cities as primitive containers of traditional art, architecture, and culture, I emphasize the innovative spatial practices that have connected Calabar to global networks of exchange throughout its history.

Conventional art and archi-historical methods centered on Euro-American models have become increasingly inadequate to contend with the contemporary complexities of a relational and networked global system. Rapid technological decentralization radically challenges our established notions of socio-spatial relationships. Further, in the face of global initiatives to privatize space, entrepreneurially market cities, and streamline municipal governments, expectations traditionally associated with public space have fragmented and divided. Drawing insights from my fieldwork and Africa's urban history, my research intervenes in the epistemologies and methodologies of architectural and urban history in order to imagine a more culturally and ecologically just world. Rather than producing localized peripheral counter-histories, I investigate circuits of exchange and cross-cultural fertilizations which can unsettle traditionally bounded geographies. Bringing to light Calabar's architectural history, I contest the pervasive sense of newness in the literature on neoliberal zoning technologies as well as the chronic tendency to view Africa as spatially remote and in a perpetual state of dysfunction. During the time this study has been conducted, Nigeria in particular has struggled with the internationally visible struggles with the Ebola virus, the religious fundamentalism of Christian witch-hunters like Helen Ukpabio, and the Muslim jihadist group Boko Haram.²⁴ In 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls sparking the global outrage and the #bringbackourgirls movement.²⁵ Most recently, a group of attackers massacred thousands in the northern town of Baga, Kano. Media reports of hijacked oil tankers, ax beheadings, witch children, and black magic *juju* inevitably shape international perceptions of Nigeria.²⁶ In light of this, presenting a more

²⁴ Cumming-Bruce and Alan Cowell. "Ebola Could Strike 20,000 World Health Agency Says." *New York Times* [New York] 29 August 2014: A7. Oppenheimer, Mark. "On a Visit to the U.S., a Nigerian Witch-Hunter Explains Herself." *New York Times* [New York] 21 May 2010: A11. Ashkenas, Jeremy, Derek Watkins and Archie Tse. "Boko Haram: The Other Islamic State." *New York Times* [New York] 15 January 2015. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁵ Kristof, Nicholas. "Bring Back Our Girls." *New York Times* [New York] 4 May 2014: SR11.

²⁶ Polgreen, Lydia. "Nigerian rebels strike offshore oil rig." *New York Times* [New York] 19 June 2008. (Accessed June 15, 2015). Linning, Stephanie "Boko Haram releases video showing beheading of Nigerian Air Force pilot as

nuanced picture of the country is a scholarly challenge. This research, therefore aims to reconfigure the so-called Western canon in architecture and urban theory, but also to complicate negative perceptions of Nigeria in contemporary media.

1.3 *Lineaments*

This study proceeds upon distinctive contours. Its topography is animated by a bundle of themes that persistently resurfaced as I conducted my research. But much like Calabar's scattered urban geography is challenging at first to cognitively untangle, it is these recurring themes which eventually guide the argument and provide coherence. Some of these concepts are adaptations or negotiated versions of presuppositions I entered the field with; others are wholly new enterprises, ideas of which I had not anticipated, but ones which inevitably transformed the ways I made my way through Calabar's epistemological terrain.

Discerning architectural and urban theory is constituted through the act of pattern recognition—pattern recognition not so much as formalist configuration or shape, but as the detection of a kind of socio-spatial organizing logic. Renaissance theorist Leon Battista Alberti's treatise on the art of building, *De re aedificatoria*, used the term “*lineaments*” to describe the “precise and correct outline, conceived in the mind, made up of lines and angles” that ordered an architectural composition.²⁷ These were flexible abstractions conceived by the singular architect, though the same *lineaments* could be seen to exist in many different buildings. While Alberti's focus was on the autonomous conception of style and composition, distinctly separate from material, the “lines and angles” of this study are deliberately understood as intertwined with the material politics of place. The *lineaments* which cast this argument, like the enclaves of Calabar, may also seem like bounded entities, though it should be understood that they too are actually quite porous and interlaced. They're influenced by and can be applied to other contexts. These themes maintain the abstract and flexible quality of Alberti's *lineaments*, but directly contest their demiurgic sense of origin and autonomy.

This project is one concerned with narrative and discourse, particularly the discourse revolving around African urbanism. As Achille Mbembé has commented, talking about African cities rationally is a fraught enterprise. Caught up in apocalyptic representations and declensionist narratives, African cities are treated as chaotic environments impossible to understand. Mbembé writes “Africa so often ends up epitomizing the intractable, the mute, the abject, or the other-worldly.”²⁸ The scholarly literature related to African urbanism, however is growing in recent years.²⁹ Unfortunately, this literature tends to be bifurcated between authors proclaiming the inventiveness and unlimited potential of African cities, while the other proceeds

terror leader who was thought dead reappears.” *Daily Mail*. 2 October 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015). Horowitz, Mitch. “The Persecution of Witches, 21st-Century Style.” *New York Times* [New York] 4 July 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015). Glanfield, Emma. “Alleged black magic sex trafficking victim was 'cut with a machete during juju ceremony designed to scare her into secrecy.” *Daily Mail*. 26 September 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁷ Alberti, Leon Battista. *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988. 7.

²⁸ Mbembé, J.-A., and Sarah Nuttall. “Writing the World from an African Metropolis.” *Public Culture* 16.3 (2004): 348.

²⁹ Simone, AbdouMaliq. *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Duke University Press, 2004. Murray, Noëleen, Nick Shepherd, and Martin Hall, eds. *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City*. Routledge, 2007. Adjaye, David. *African Metropolitan Architecture*. Ed. Peter Allison. Rizzoli, 2011.

on the same narrative of Black Africa as an eschatological heart of darkness.³⁰ This isn't to say this dissertation is simply a rejection of these caricatured discursive poles, but rather occupies a qualified space between, tacking back and forth and critically interrogating these narratives. This study is actively situated at what Ananya Roy calls the "impossible space between the hubris of benevolence and the paralysis of cynicism".³¹ It is from this mobile, historically-situated position that I write, properly connecting Old Calabar to the circuits of exchange and "cartographies of affluence" that it has always maintained without nostalgically romanticizing the extreme forms of violence and inequality that are necessarily intertwined with that history.³² Keeping in mind David's Scott's argument about historical narratives in *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*, how we relate these narratives is often as important as *what* we relate. He writes, "the relation between pasts, presents, and futures is a relation constituted in narrative discourse."³³ This study considers the narratives and discourse relating to Old Calabar as contested and historically-situated spaces as much as the physical built environment itself.³⁴

The second theme addressed relates to the forms of architecture and urbanism analyzed. In contrast to conventional histories documenting the permanent monuments in a city's history, this dissertation explicitly focuses on decentralized networks of space, impermanent architectures, and historic forms of urban informality. What is interesting about Old Calabar as a case study for architecture and urbanism, but also a significant challenge, is that the political organization of southeastern Nigeria is historically decentralized and its building traditions and spatial practices utilize impermanent materials or are ephemerally performed. It thus depends heavily on different evidence other than preserved buildings and professionally-drawn plans. Diaries, memoirs, oral histories, and other ethnographic records form the basis for analyzing the city's spaces. Abdoumalig Simone speaks of "people as infrastructure" as a way of describing the non-physical platforms residents use to collaborate and reproduce life in African cities. These "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices" serve as a kind of networked infrastructure in contemporary Johannesburg.³⁵ This study provides a historicized version of "people as infrastructure" in Old Calabar. It builds upon new work studying the less permanent forms of architecture in West Africa involved in the slave trade.³⁶ As historians and designers, I argue we need to expand our vocabulary to accommodate the fragmentary, decentralized spaces endemic to places like southeastern Nigeria. They resonate, perhaps much more deeply, with the neoliberal spaces of contemporary cities than do the centralized boxes, towers, and castles which tend to make up our history books.

Third, this study explicitly challenges contained notions of space. Building on the work of a number of scholars with a processual, diasporic, and transnational understanding of space, the study of Old Calabar's urbanism reveals a city with a long history of mobile and networked

³⁰ Mbembé, J-A., and Sarah Nuttall, 348. Roy, Ananya. "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35.2 (2011): 223-238.

³¹ Roy, Ananya. *Poverty Capital: Microfinance and the Making of Development*. 2010.

³² Mbembé, J-A., and Sarah Nuttall, 356.

³³ Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. 7.

³⁴ Chrysler, C. Greig. *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism and the Built Environment, 1960–2000*. Routledge, 2003.

³⁵ Simone, AbdouMaliq. "People as infrastructure: intersecting fragments in Johannesburg." *Public Culture* 16.3 (2004): 407-429. 407.

³⁶ Nelson, Louis P. "Architectures of West African Enslavement." *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*. Vol. 21. No. 1. University of Minnesota, 2014.

spaces.³⁷ Understanding a port city with a history of slave trading and colonialism in these terms may seem like a straightforward enough endeavor, however the tendency to view these spaces as fixed containers of social activity existing peripherally from the core of imperial power persists. Like time, the definition of “the city” in this research is itself contested. What the boundaries and characteristics of the “urban” are is addressed in variety of ways. In discussing the postcolonial city of London, Jane M. Jacobs demonstrates how the “global and the local always already inhabit one another.”³⁸ Notions of core and periphery are destabilized, and the objective of the research then hinges on tracing the global in the particular. Greig Crysler further complicates this contemporary condition noting “the idea of the city as a self-enclosed object with its own “internal economy” is rapidly dissolving. He goes on, “The city now stretches across nations, just as migration and diasporic cultures extend nations beyond geographical territories.”³⁹ Old Calabar’s experience of the transatlantic slave trade provides a historical example of this diasporic condition. Paul Gilroy’s conceptualization of the Black Atlantic informs this study’s challenge to contained notions of space, but also in its avoidance of describing Africa in terms of an essentialist “authentic” other to modernity. Space and identities cannot be fixed and contained, but are instead unstable and mutable, “always unfinished, always being remade.”⁴⁰

Finally, this work aspires to fill gaps in the study of African cities and Old Calabar’s built environment. While the term “filling gaps” in scholarship should be treated with suspicion due to the incomprehensibly large scale of knowledge gaps, the intention here is to make enough connections to substantively draw Old Calabar into architectural discourse. The history, economics, politics, and culture of Old Calabar have been the focus of some exceptional scholarship, but many of these studies are surprisingly aspatial in their approach. Space is treated marginally or simply as a location for important people and events in history rather than as a power-laden process affected by larger socio-cultural forces. Moreover, few studies dedicated to the architecture or urbanism of Old Calabar are very general, not supported with visual or archival sources, and disconnected from the lively contemporary discourse about African cities. This study contributes to these debates by demonstrating that throughout its history novel spatial practices have linked Old Calabar to global networks of exchange.

1.4 Entanglements (*Kòmó*)

In addition to this bundle of themes and general intentions undergirding this study, the concept of *entanglement* resurfaces at various points. Entanglement is a word that has recently gained traction in critical theory circles to generally describe the contentious, unstable politics of space and the binding together of people, ideas, and things. To entangle, *kòmó* in Èfik, means to foul or involve someone in a complicated circumstance. It describes the competing and overlapping interests that constitute territory and their intertwined histories. At its core, it’s merely a spatial metaphor, but one that is particularly useful. Donald Moore has written that entanglement “suggests knots, gnarls, adhesions, rather than smooth surfaces. It is an inextricable

³⁷ Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Vol. 142. Blackwell: Oxford, 1991. Smith, Michael Peter. *Transnational urbanism: locating globalization*, 2001. Gilroy, Paul. *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

³⁸ Jacobs, Jane M. *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*. Routledge, 2002.

³⁹ Crysler, C. Greig. *Writing Spaces: discourses of architecture, urbanism and the built environment, 1960–2000*. Routledge, 2003. 202.

⁴⁰ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard University Press, 1993. xi.

interweave that ensnares.”⁴¹ Entanglement, then, can be used to analyze the multiple and differential relationships that constitute a space without reverting presuming to study them in isolation or reverting to a singular narrative about technological progress. It is used here in at least three senses.

The first is related to Duanfang Lu’s conception of “entangled modernities” in architecture. Building on the work of many scholars of the built environment who have explicitly set out to challenge universal, Eurocentric conceptions of modernity, entangled modernities instead emphasize how modernist architecture was variously adopted, modified, and contested in different parts of the world. Postcolonial studies have reimagined the bounded spaces of Western knowledge and its monolithic conception of history. Architectural modernity was not a unidirectional transmission of knowledge from a rational core to an irrational undeveloped periphery. Instead, it was a mutually constituted process that involved multiple hybridizations and adaptations of regional building traditions. The history of Old Calabar’s built environment is riven with examples demonstrating this relationship. The purpose of conceiving these entangled modernities is not to simply multiply narratives, but to “enfranchise other spatial rationalities”, recognizing them as legitimate spaces of knowledge production.⁴² This cross-cultural perspective is necessary to understand the complex encounters between African and European agents, especially in exchange-heavy sites like the port of Old Calabar. Old Calabar’s distinctive history as a point of trade which maintained territorial sovereignty and in which local building traditions dominated well into the nineteenth century provides a counterpoint to simplistic mono-causal narratives of the slave trade and imperial expansion.

The second conception of entanglement highlights temporal interpenetrations. Achille Mbembé writes persuasively about the differential speeds at which changes have occurred historically in the African context. Temporalities, in his words, “overlap and interlace”.⁴³ While the initial focus of this study was on contemporary forms of economic free trade zones in Africa, it is evident that these are not entirely new forms placed in the landscape, but that they resonate with previously existing forms of spatial and political organization. Likewise, embedded within the historical accounts of the spaces of Old Calabar are “shreds of futurity” which share similarities with the experience of the global present.⁴⁴ The sense of temporal entanglement discussed in this study is similar to Derek Gregory’s analysis of the “colonial present” or Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad’s “medieval modernity”, both of which unsettle linear historical narratives of progress.⁴⁵ In reading the accounts of European visitors to Old Calabar in the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, numerous examples highlight the differential experiences of space and time in the urban landscape. They provide evidence of historicized version of what Graham and Marvin have called “splintering urbanism”.⁴⁶ Moreover, the various ways in which these experiences were written about at the time and later in scholarly studies

⁴¹ Moore, Donald S. *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place, and Power in Zimbabwe*. Duke University Press, 2005, 4.

⁴² Lu, Duanfang, ed. *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*. Routledge, 2010. 24-25.

⁴³ Mbembé, J-A., and Steven Rendall. "At the edge of the world: Boundaries, territoriality, and sovereignty in Africa." *Public culture* 12.1 (2000): 263-264.

⁴⁴ Massumi, Brian. *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*. MIT Press, 1992. 105.

⁴⁵ Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Blackwell Pub., 2004. Alsayyad, Nezar, and Ananya Roy. "Medieval Modernity: On Citizenship and Urbanism in a Global Era." *Space & Polity* 10.1 (2006): 1-20.

⁴⁶ Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge, 2001.

tends to amplify these different experiences. An African slave trader's diary written in trade English from the eighteenth century, for example, at once describes lavish feasts held in imported wood houses with European traders as well as brutal sacrificial beheadings, slave raids, and witchcraft accusations (See Chapter 4)⁴⁷. This is not to suggest the history of Old Calabar is that of a static and timeless other or to establish equivalence between contemporary and historical practices. As Mbembé argues, it is not to say that these developments signal a backward movement or "everything today is simply a rerun of a scenario".⁴⁸ He continues, "In this intermeshing of temporalities, several processes co-exist; there are processes tending to make people view the world in increasingly like ways, and, at the same time, processes producing differences and diversities."⁴⁹ This study finds continuities in the cultural, economic, and spatial disjunctures which have occurred in Old Calabar's history.

Another sense of entanglement which this study shares is a sense of quantum entanglement or *Verschränkung*. Without delving too deeply into the theoretical physics of this concept, the boundary between objects and space has become increasingly understood as blurred. Discoveries in quantum physics over the past century have challenged conventional understandings of space and time. In short, it means that despite being separated in space by a great distance, subatomic particles can become intertwined and show surprising degrees of correlation.⁵⁰ Without the presence of an observer, they exist in an undetermined state of probability waves. While Einstein dismissed this concept and called it "spooky action at a distance", others have built on these insights.⁵¹ What at first sounds like magic, has been definitively verified through scientific experimentation. My intention in considering this quantum insight here is not to put forth a new theory of particle physics, but to re-enchant conventional constructions of space and modernity— something the certainty of modern architectural and planning discourse systematically ignores. The fact that things can occupy two positions at once confounds Newtonian physics and the idea that there is an abstract, observable, and rational universe beyond the subject. But as Duanfang Lu points out, Western modernity has never been completely disenchanted.⁵² In privileging Western epistemological assumptions, modern architectural discourse has effectively delegitimized the rationalities and knowledges of regional building traditions. Elsewhere, Chakrabarty has pointed out that a secular practice such as history "faces certain problems in handling practices in which gods, spirits, or the supernatural have agency in the world."⁵³ It is difficult to comprehend the architecture and planning history of Old Calabar without understanding how thoroughly infused it is with a logic of ghost worlds, leopard spirits, Divine Voices, and masquerades as much as it is economic or political forces. John and Jean Comaroff define occult economies as "the deployment, real or imagined, of magical means for material ends."⁵⁴ These economies have a long history in Calabar and

⁴⁷ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-century African Slave Trader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁴⁸ Mbembé, J-A. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001. 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁰ Schrödinger E; Born, M. "Discussion of probability relations between separated systems". *Mathematical Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* 31.4 (1935): 555–563.

⁵¹ Sanders, Laura. "Everyday Entanglement: Physicists Take Quantum Weirdness Out of the Lab." *Science News* 178.11 (2010): 23.

⁵² Lu, Duanfang, ed. *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*. Routledge, 2010. 24.

⁵³ Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press, 2009. 72.

⁵⁴ Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. "Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony." *American Ethnologist* (1999): 279.

resurface, as they do elsewhere in Africa, under the exacerbated inequalities brought about by contemporary global capital.⁵⁵ The temporal bounds of this kind of enchantment isn't limited to centuries past, but intimately inhabits the present moment. Likewise, the architecture of these supernatural assemblages exceeds the confines of purely formalist analyses. The politics of secrecy informing Old Calabar's built environment cannot be disentangled from these mythic, otherworldly, and "spooky" forces.

1.5 The Archives and an *Mbàkára* Ethnography

My research relies on a combination of methodologies and types of data. Ethnographic archival evidence forms the basis for most of my historical research, though I consciously integrate contemporary interviews, site documentation, and participant observation, particularly in Chapter 5 focusing on contemporary enclaves and free trade zones. I conducted two fieldwork trips to Calabar in 2010 and 2012. Archival work was conducted at the National Museum at the Old Residency on Government Hill. The structure itself, a story building prefabricated and shipped from the Glasgow iron firm Walter MacFarlane & Co. to Calabar in 1884, initially served as the British imperial headquarters, but has transformed into one of Calabar's cultural hubs regularly hosting scholars, students, and tourists (Figure 1.6). Located on a former colonial reservation, it now remains as preserved artifact of the era of British colonialism in Nigeria and symbol of the post-independence nation state of Nigeria. In order to contest what Derek Gregory calls the "amnesiac histories" of imperialism which are "inclined to gloss over the terrible violence of colonialism" archival data was crucial to this study.⁵⁶ However, it should be said that the archival material isn't treated as an assemblage of transparent artifacts objectively documenting the city and nation's past. Anthropologist Ann Stoler, in acknowledging the "epistemic anxieties" that come with an understanding of these structural limitations offers some methodological advice. Instead of treating archives as a "historical ballast ethnography" she calls for moving away from treating archives as an exercise of extracting truth to one which "cordon[s] off fiction from authorized truth."⁵⁷ In the context of scholarship discussing the architectural and urban history of Old Calabar, a city where there are very few preserved buildings from the era of this study, this insight is especially invaluable.

The archive itself, as an institutional site, is a paradoxical representation of power in the sense that it has meticulously documented, restored, and catalogued a plethora of fragments of the past, yet has necessarily left out so much in the process. As a site, "the archives" refer to both the building and the documents it contains. Achille Mbembé reminds us that the status and the power of archives derive from this "entanglement of building and documents."⁵⁸ As a study which is drawn to Calabar's long history of resistance to territorial colonization and struggles with the Nigeria's post-colonial federal government, even the title of the "National Museum at the Old Residency on Government Hill" contains within it the contradictions of Nigerian state. Torn between a search for post-colonial national identity, the preservation of indigenous culture,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 279-303.

⁵⁶ Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Blackwell Publishers, 2004. 10.

⁵⁷ Stoler, Laura Ann. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2009. 47.

⁵⁸ Mbembé, J-A. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. Capetown: David Philip, 2002. 19.

documentation of the slave trade, and a deep distrust of centralized forms of governance, the National Museum stands as an anxious site of curated knowledge.

The fact that electrical power was far from reliable at the museum was more than made up for by the museum's incredible staff. Head curator, Sunday Adaka, allowed me full access to the library (Figure 1.7). I was welcomed to study the museum's entire collection, even granting permission for items displayed in glass cabinets to be brought outside to be photographed when the power was out. In addition to these sources, this dissertation includes information contained in rare and antique books from archives like the Shomburg Center for the Study of Black Culture in Harlem, New York. The firsthand accounts of Calabar—journals, diaries, and memoirs from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite their ethnocentric positionality and troubling tendency to denigrate Calabar's traditional cultural as a means of justifying their own, provide invaluable insights to the city's urban history and deserve a much closer inspection from a socio-spatial perspective. As the historian David Lishilinimle Imbua highlights, too often these records are heavy-handedly dismissed by a generation of post-independence Nigerian scholars interested in sloughing off colonial legacies, emphasizing instead the primacy of internal, endogenous forces.⁵⁹ These tendencies are understandable and in many ways a necessary corrective to the epistemic violence wrought by centuries of Eurocentric commentary and scholarship discussing Old Calabar. But these accounts too hold their own biases and need to be contextualized and read critically. This contested field of knowledge production is as much the site of my research as the buildings in which this knowledge is contained. Understanding that our concepts of architectural and urban space necessarily pass through the lens of representation, Grieg Crysler argues that discourse itself is a space-making process “composed of social and geographic distributions of knowledge and power”.⁶⁰ Thus while the focus of this study is on the history and meanings of Old Calabar's built environment, it proceeds with a keen sense of how that process of knowledge production is embedded in particular social and institutional contexts.

While conducting this archival research, one item I found essential was a hand-held, battery-operated wand scanner I had brought in anticipation of frequent power outages. Museum staff and casual bystanders laughed and commented on my “*oyibo* technology”. *Oyibo* is the Yorùbá word for “white man”, but it more widely used in Nigerian Pidgin to refer to foreigners that are not black. In Ìgbo, it is derived from the term *oyi ibo*. Due to the fact that white people had difficulty pronouncing it, the phrase can sometimes be used in a mocking way. I was generally greeted throughout the city as *oyibo* or *mbàkárá*, the local Èfik term. *Mbàkárá* translates to “white man”, however, depending on the context, I found it could also be used in a more negative, sinister, or cautionary way—“why are you here?”, “you don't belong”, etc. Because *mbàkárá* can also mean “those who govern” it has a colonial resonance to it.⁶¹ Accepting this tension, I came to understand the work I was doing as a kind of *mbàkárá* ethnography, a study of Calabar by a white Western scholar which did not pretend to be detached from this historical legacy.

This said, it should be understood that ethnographic research cannot not be taken *prima facie*. In this sense, ethnography may not be considered a research method at all, but a political

⁵⁹ Imbua, David Lishilinimle. *Intercourse and Crosscurrents in the Atlantic World: Calabar-British Experience, 17th-20th Centuries*. Carolina Academic Press, 2012.

⁶⁰ Crysler, C. Greig. *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism and the Built Environment, 1960–2000*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 3-8.

⁶¹ Miller, Ivor. *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. xv.

act. The presence of the ethnographer in the situation being studied fundamentally alters the social dynamic and politics at hand. Though the ethnographer may allege “neutrality” by resorting to arsenal of techniques like claiming anonymity, remaining removed from the situation, or not getting caught up in the everyday politics of those being observed, it should be understood that such objective claims are a myth. The myth of neutrality is a reality with which the ethnographer must contend. The position of the ethnographer is automatically a privileged one. Further, the act of selecting/ editing what part of the collected data goes into the final research product to support its claims is also an act which muddies any claim to neutrality.

A central and multifaceted issue which any program of ethnographic research must contend with is the issue of access. Problems with accessibility occur at many levels when conducting any ethnography. The first regards the accessibility of the subject at the epistemic level. Access at the epistemological level involves Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s controversial claim that the “subaltern cannot speak.”⁶² Rather than viewing ethnography as an act of recovering previously inaccessible voices, a task which Spivak claims is an impossibility due to structural constraints, the ethnographer should instead consider a process of speaking with instead of speaking for the subaltern who is always already mediated by representation.

Despite these practical concerns and epistemic anxieties, ethnographic research remains a valuable tool for studying social relations and urban environments. Ultimately, these issues are unavoidable, and the most prudent way to contend with them is to be self-reflexive. By self-reflexivity, I don’t intend to convey a notion that ethnography should become self-centered research or an act of navel-gazing. As Spivak notes, “self-righteous shaming of fully intending subjects” is counterproductive.⁶³ By “self-reflexivity” I mean paying attention to structural limitations. What can and cannot be said? What is the position of the subject in relation to the researcher in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, or age? How does this influence the results? Qualifying claims with a serious consideration of these constraints shouldn’t result in theoretical paralysis, but a deeper understanding of how structures of power work. We often learn more from what is not said. It is with this bracketed understanding of this research method that I came to embrace my positionality as an *mbàkàrá* ethnographer.

My second trip to Calabar involved more structured interviews and surveys. I conducted these on the condition of anonymity. These personal interactions were invaluable for the data they provided and for tracing contemporary attitudes about the built environment, value systems, and politics at a variety of scales. This was useful material for the study of contemporary zoning and enclaving practices explored in Chapter 2. More importantly, though, my informants prompted me to ask different questions of my historical research in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. They forced me to reframe my questions, invert my priorities, and place myself in my work. One day at the museum library, after hearing me describe my research to a number of scholars and students, hearing me describe the history and significance of traditional Èfik walled compounds to respectful, a woman working there asked me bluntly, “What is all of this business about compounds?” She laughed. “Why are you so concerned about Nigerian compounds? Doesn’t Kim Kardashian live on a compound?” I paused. Having lived more or less without a television for the past few years, I was embarrassed I didn’t know the answer to her straightforward, though humorous question. She had made this observation while watching *Keeping up with Kardashians*

⁶² Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 271-313.

⁶³ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. 1.

at her home, on a compound, located on the outskirts of Calabar. I found myself later researching the fact that indeed, the Kardashians live on a sprawling compound in the Hidden Hills area of Beverly Hills, Los Angeles.⁶⁴ I thought of Anthony King's genealogy of the colonial bungalow and its global dispersion.⁶⁵ I thought of the privatized residential enclaves of California discussed by Mike Davis and Teresa Caldeira.⁶⁶ I had briefly resided in one of these "secessionary spaces" in San Diego.⁶⁷ What is the seemingly global allure of these privatized sovereignties, paradoxically premised on freedom and constraint?

1.6 Paradigmatic Spaces (*Ùfàn*)

Borrowing the concept of "paradigmatic spaces", I have organized the chapters investigating my research question around a series of spatial designations, or diagrams of spatial relationships that were exemplary during a given time period in Calabar's urban history. Spatial paradigms have long figured in the works of philosophers grappling with the experiences of modernity. The cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer interpreted the hotel lobby and the unemployment office of Berlin while Walter Benjamin studied Parisian arcades. Kracauer famously remarked, "Spatial images are the dreams of society. Wherever the hieroglyphics of society any spatial image are deciphered, there the basis of social reality presents itself."⁶⁸ Later, Foucault designated the panopticon as the diagram of modern disciplinary societies and Agamben controversially claimed that "the concentration camp is the biopolitical paradigm of the modern age".⁶⁹ This dissertation employs four spaces (*ùfàn* in Èfik) as representative of particular socio-historical relationships in Calabar—the compound, the masquerade, the offshore, and the zone (Figure 1.8). It could be argued these spatial paradigms have a tendency to obscure critical temporal dimensions in the interest of reifying space, or that we have moved on to a "postparadigmatic diaspora" altogether.⁷⁰ However, one need not to interpret these paradigms as rigid exemplars. The historical imbrication of these four models combined with a flexible application of their spatio-temporal boundaries, provide a useful matrix for understanding the architectural and urban history of Calabar.

These thematic chapters are arranged in chronological order, though it is important to not understand them as distinct, evolutionary phases. Each chapter shouldn't be understood as neatly packed era (*èyó*) in Calabar history. Clear Kuhnian paradigm shifts are difficult to locate

⁶⁴ Newman, Judith. "How the Kardashians made \$65 million dollars last year", *Hollywood Reporter*, February 16, 2011. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

⁶⁵ King, Anthony D. *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995.

⁶⁶ Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New Edition). Verso Books, 2006. Caldeira, Teresa. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000.

⁶⁷ Alsayyad, Nezar, and Ananya Roy. "Medieval Modernity: On Citizenship and Urbanism in a Global Era." *Space & Polity* 10.1 (2006): 7.

⁶⁸ Kracauer, Siegfried, "On Unemployment Agencies: The Construction of a Space" in Leach, Neil, ed. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge, 1997. 60. Huyssen, Andreas, "The Urban Miniature and the Feuilleton in Kracauer and Benjamin" in *Gemünden, Gerd and Johannes von Moltke eds. Culture in the Anteroom: The Legacies of Siegfried Kracauer*. University of Michigan Press, 2012. 216.

⁶⁹ Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford University Press, 1998. 181.

⁷⁰ Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000. 65-66. Caputo, John. *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, Indiana University Press, 1987. 262.

precisely.⁷¹ Instead, they each exemplify a particular historical conjuncture. The temporal designations are mere approximations. Subsequent paradigmatic spaces exist side by side, contesting one another in a palimpsest of spatial models as they do in contemporary Calabar. For example, today members of a gated Pentecostal church compete with the claims of another church which then clash with the associations made at a hotel complex or a free trade zone. Traditional housing configurations are interlaced with satellite cable and the city's tourism industry. These then stand in contradistinction to the traditional residential compound in the city's historic Duketown district, or the lots of the preserved prefabricated houses of the colonial era which stand next to them. They're intersected by other spaces, traversed, and superimposed. It is also important to not concretely understand these paradigmatic spaces as specific building types or singular examples. Instead, they should be read as flexible models of relationships—socio-spatial blueprints which can migrate to other times, occupy different geographies. The chapters that follow build on these insights. Each chapter begins with an encounter narrative from the time period examined introducing the spaces analyzed in that chapter. These spatial stories (*mbùk*) set the tone and contextualize the analysis which follows.

Chapter 2 shifts to Old Calabar's early pre-colonial period. It examines the era from the arrival of 1600-1729. The paradigmatic space analyzed is that of the traditional Èfik compound. This chapter discusses Calabar's very early history, the scholarship on this history, and the need for a comprehensive analysis of the city's urban form and territorial "organizing logics". The space of the traditional compound in the fifteenth and sixteenth century was an African symbolic landscape, central to everyday life, religious beliefs, and a site of commerce. At the time, southeastern Nigeria was home to various self-governing states such as the Ìgbo, Ìbibiò, and the Èfik. The traditional walled compound was conceived as an autonomous, privatized unit protected from the surrounding environment. Assemblages of compounds constituted a landscape of multiple sovereignties organized under an *èkpùk* (lineage) system with hierarchical chiefs. This chapter is first a compendium of the scattered work in the archives describing Old Calabar's "medieval" urban assemblages and secondly an argument about how these compounds operated as a form *protozoning* in which, despite the tremendous artistic and cultural institutions at work, the underlying logic of the spaces was premised on a market logic maintaining the autonomy of the individual compound and the actors operating through them.

In this chapter, the traditional compound is discussed as an actually existing physical artifact, but perhaps more importantly as a rhetorical construct-- an imagined space torn between European representations dismissing it as a primitive, mud-and-thatch technology and evidence of the uncivilized culture which it accommodated. This project draws on many written memoirs by early explorers, slave traders, and missionaries to Old Calabar, many of which are inscribed with ethnocentric assumptions and exaggerations. These accounts are referenced in the chapter discussing traditional compounds as well as Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. A short inventory of primitive afflictions ascribed to Old Calabar culture by these observers include: gruesome beheadings, cannibalism, whippings, slave raids, twin baby and albino sacrifices, poison ordeals, witchcraft, secret societies, leopard spirits, and women being buried alive. Old Calabar thus served as a violent landscape of reckless abandon desperately in need of morality, technology, and free trade. Despite these limitations, if read critically, these records are invaluable resources for constructing a history of Old Calabar's built environment. By virtue of the evanescent quality of materiality of these traditional compounds, Old Calabar doesn't have as many preserved sites or indigenous written or visual records as cities with more permanent architectural constructs. It

⁷¹ Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

is necessary then to draw informed conclusions about these spaces from this material and the scholarship discussing these spaces.

In contrast to this material, post-independence scholars tended to elevate the space of the compound to a unified symbol of Nigerian culture and evidence of Old Calabar's self-sufficiency as a vibrant trading port. Compounds served as important symbols of national heritage and the historical identity of Nigeria. Much like the early European accounts, though, these histories had their own blind spots and exaggerations. This material served as an important corrective for previous imaginings, but one which often painted an overly nostalgic and harmonic view of compounds, occluding the pressures and conflicts which ultimately constituted these spaces. Understanding this tension between early European and post-colonial imaginings of compounds helps bring a clearer picture of the socio-historical and symbolic meaning of these spaces.

Chapter 3 develops the concept of "masquerade" as a performed paradigmatic space. Focusing on the era from 1729-1805 dominated by the rise of the transatlantic slave trade and the simultaneous growth of the Ékpè secret society. The lineage system was transformed into an *ufok* (house) system, no longer based on ancestry. Larger compounds fragmented and alliances were to be found in a number of smaller competing compounds. Intrinsic to this development was the Ékpè secret society. Ékpè was a tremendous source of artistic and cultural heritage, but also one with tremendous powers to serve as a regulating mechanism settling disputes between competing wards and offshore traders anchored in the Calabar River. The intermixture of Ékpè's spiritual and economic registers produced a charged space of transaction and maintained Èfik territorial sovereignty well into the nineteenth century. This chapter traces the politics of secrecy which undergirded this performed space.

The next space I look at continues the discussion of Ékpè with a concentration on the paradigmatic space of the "offshore". The offshore is defined in this study as a complex assemblage of canoes, ships, prefabricated wood houses, missionary buildings, and colonial outposts intricately linked to the Atlantic world. Chapter 4 focuses on these offshore spaces in the period beginning in 1805. With the transition from the slave trade to the "legitimate" palm oil trade in the early nineteenth century, Old Calabar's urban environment underwent another transformation. The dispersed city regulated by Ékpè slowly became more centralized under the authority of strong kings like Great Duke Ephraim. The consolidation of space in Old Calabar was accompanied by the growth of satellite plantation spaces for the production of palm oil and the development of closer ties to European traders. The landscape became dotted with prefabricated houses shipped from Europe that served as symbols of power, but also as staging grounds for trade encounters. The offshore was a fluid, diasporic space connecting hinterland spaces, trading houses, and distant colonies. During this time, the influence of Ékpè waned and political power was centralized under a series of strong kings, particularly that of Great Duke Ephraim. Spatial paradigms clashed causing friction between traditional leaders and foreign agents. Toward the end of this phase Old Calabar's territorial sovereignty was fundamentally challenged and effectively displaced. Presbyterian missionaries, invited to establish the first European foothold on land in 1846, altered the urban landscape and paved the way for British colonialism at the end of the nineteenth century. Through a system of indirect rule, the British established colonial enclaves segregated from native settlements.

Under British rule, the development of Calabar's urban environment followed a pattern much more consistent with other colonial cities. Perhaps the most influential historiographical tradition in the study of colonial urbanism has been the "dual city" hypothesis emphasizing the profound differences between the modern European districts imposed upon or bordering

indigenous traditional settlements.⁷² While the dual city hypothesis described by others only applies only partially in the Calabar context, the British imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century systematically divided Nigerian territory and deployed infrastructure such as railroads and roadways to evacuate raw materials to Europe.⁷³ During this period the city of Calabar experienced a relative decline from its past as a bustling maritime port. Investigating this period requires the examination of a different set of archives and asking questions beyond the bounds of this dissertation. Instead, this study builds on and at times contests the work of other colonial city scholarship. It questions the narrative of Manichean struggles, instead emphasizing moments of hybridity, multiplicity, and entanglement. Rather than establishing a firm focus on distinct natives' quarters and colonial enclaves, this study concentrates on the diverse ways the fragmentary, networked, and decentralized spaces of pre-colonial Calabar prefigure contemporary neoliberal spaces. For these reasons, I return to Tinapa and present day Calabar in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 analyzes the history of what might be termed as neoliberal zoning strategies at work in contemporary Nigeria with particular focus on gated enclaves and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, the project which first brought me to Calabar and caused me to re-conceptualize the entire research project. The chapter analyzes “the zone” as a paradigmatic space. The focus here is on resort and residential enclaves, not the industrial and light industrial uses of export processing zones. Instead, these spaces involve more intimate forms of habitation intertwined with business and trade practices. I first examine the gated enclaves containing private residences, banks, hotels, and churches throughout Calabar. As spaces which attempt to establish their own jurisdictional constraints, they operate a micro-zones—smaller manifestations of development projects like Tinapa. I argue these enclaves share similar aspirations for autonomy and self-determination. I then give an overview of the political and economic transformations that have occurred in Nigeria since the establishment of Nigerian Export Processing Zone Authority in 1992. I then describe how, despite institutional resistance, the charismatic politician Donald Duke envisioned and made the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort a reality. Though because the Nigerian federal government, traditionally centered in the North, reneged on its promises to have the zone operate “duty free”, prospective clients pulled out and the corresponding customers have been slow to arrive. As Thomas Farole has written, “The underperformance of Nigeria’s free zone program can be attributed to a number of issues related to the adverse business environment (nationally and within the zone) and policy instability. Perhaps most important, the zones have suffered from a number of problems related to institutional conflicts.”⁷⁴ Zones like Tinapa are seen in this chapter as registers of the contradictions experienced by the Nigerian nation state after independence and byproducts of the country’s history.

Lastly, Chapter 6 provides an epilogue. “Emergent *Protozones*” re-examines questions raised throughout the rest of the study and considers the larger implications of the research. This

⁷² For case studies of the dual city hypothesis in colonial urbanism see Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1961. New York: Grove Press, 2007; Rabinow, Paul. *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989; Wright, Gwendolyn. *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; AlSayyad, Nezar, ed. *Forms of Dominance on the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*. Aldershot: Avebury, 1992.

⁷³ For a study of Nigeria’s experience of colonialism under British rule see Falola, Toyin. *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

⁷⁴ Farole, Thomas. *Special Economic Zones in Africa: Comparing Performance and Learning from Global Experiences*. World Bank Publications, 2011. 187.

examination of Calabar's urban history not only illuminates a comparatively neglected site of inquiry, but informs contemporary debates about neoliberalism and cities worldwide. In taking a historical perspective in analyzing Calabar's built environment, this study complicates linear assumptions about progress and backwardness in the scholarship on globalization and cities. The enclave zones in contemporary Calabar are not a new phenomenon or anomalous after-effects of neoliberalism, but spaces entangled in the spiritual and economic history of the city. Though the project seeks to describe instances of congruence between pre-modern and contemporary Calabar, my purpose is to describe how spatial conditions from various historical periods can co-exist in non-linear ways, competing and contesting one another. Ultimately, the aim of this study is to critically reflect on "zoning" by way of a situated historical analysis of the historic city of Old Calabar.



Figure 1.1. Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Nollywood film studio, Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2010).



Figure 1.2. Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Photograph by Oliver Etim Ekpenyong, 2010).



Figure 1.3. Map of Nigeria (Source: Map by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).

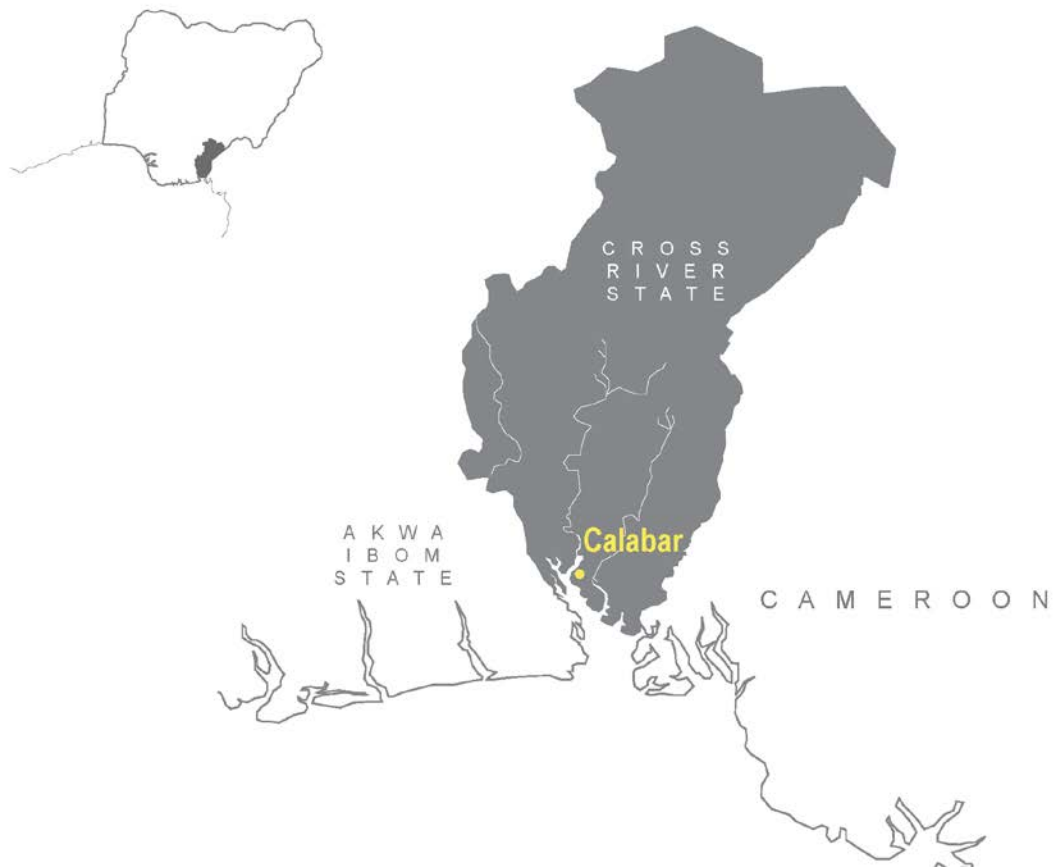


Figure 1.4. Map of Cross River State, Nigeria (Source: Map by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).

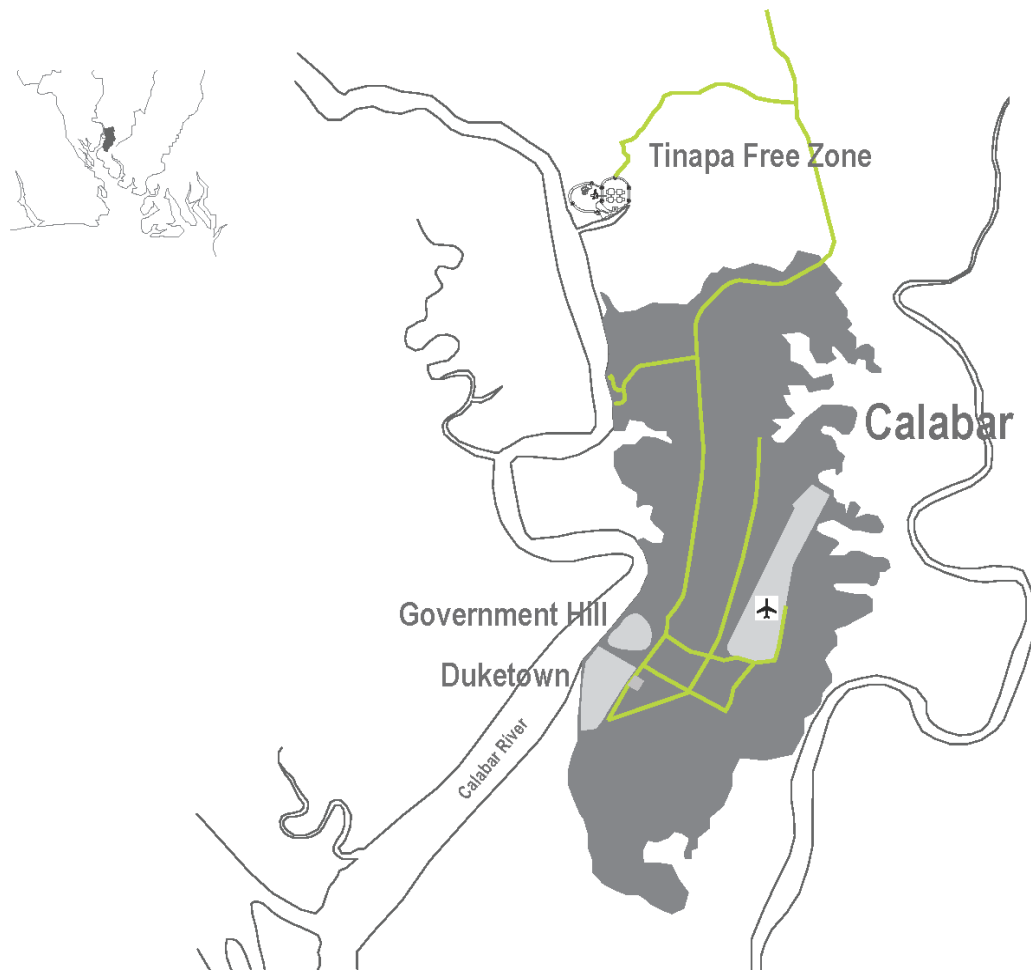


Figure 1.5. Map of Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Map by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).



Figure 1.6. National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2011).



Figure 1.7. Library archive at the National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2011).

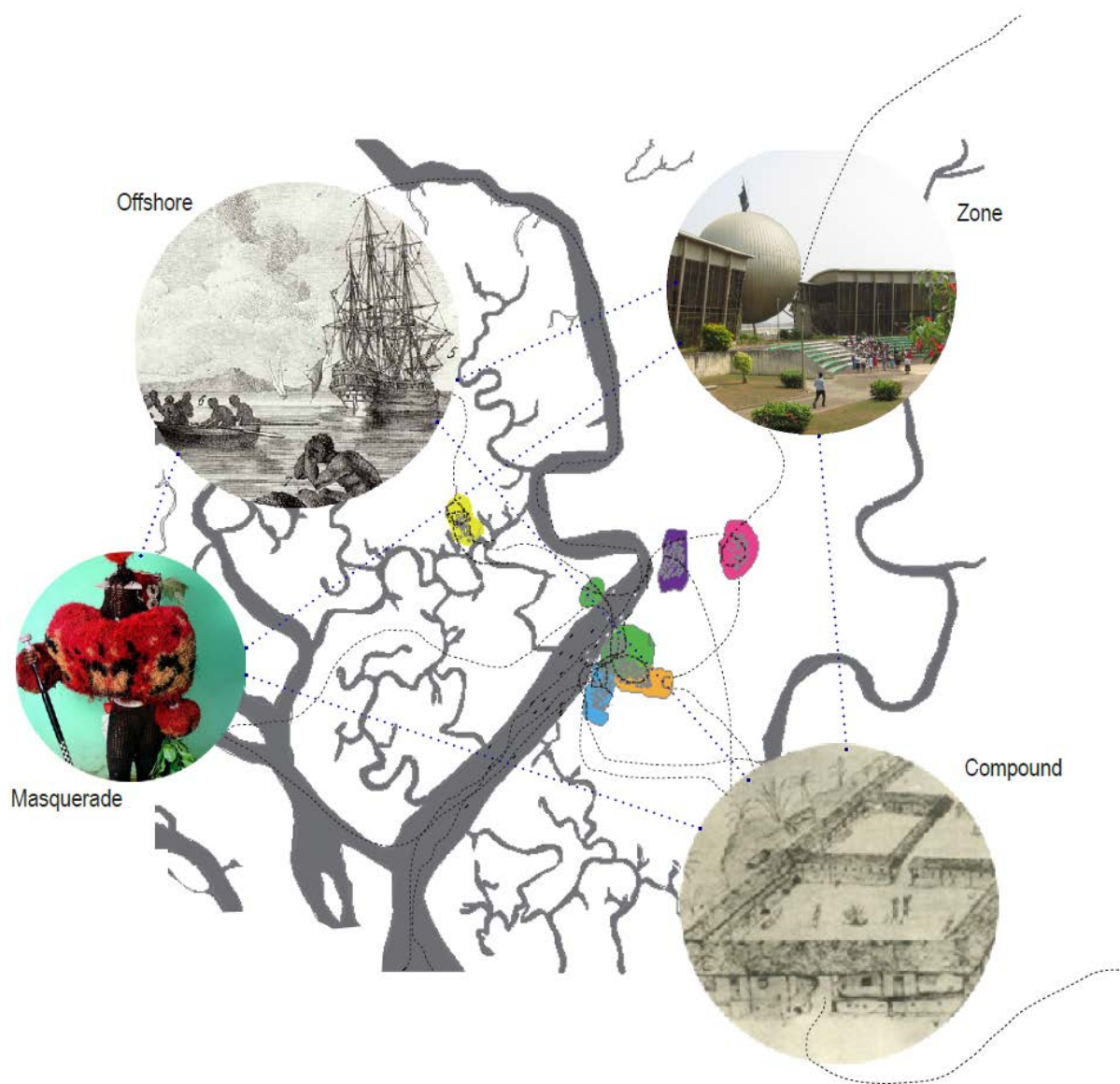


Figure 1.8. Four Paradigmatic Spaces- the compound, masquerade, offshore, and zone. Map, Old Calabar and its environs (Source: Joseph Godlewski, 2015).

Chapter 2- Compound

2.1 A True Relation

In June of 1668, eighteen year-old John Watts boarded the *Peach-tree* of London set for a slaving voyage to Africa's Gold Coast and Gulf of Guinea. Watts was one of the seamen employed on British docks in service of the triangular trade between West Africa, the West Indies, and London. Typical of this time, young crewmen, often cultural outsiders, signed contracts promising to supply labor for the next several months during which they experienced the rigid hierarchy and punitive discipline of the ship's social life.¹ The ship's assignment was to load slaves *en route* to Barbados to supply laborers to the emerging plantation economy and to return to Britain with raw materials such as cotton, sugar, and tobacco. After a brief stay on the Gold Coast, the *Peach-tree* "sailed to old Calabar in the Bith of Ginny" entering "the Cross River into Parrott Island".² Ready for embarkation after they had "taken in their Negroes", the ship master Edward Dixon decided to call up "the boatswain and three men more" including Watts, commanding them to "look out the copper bars that were left, and carry the on shore to try if they could sell them." As Watts and the other three men rowed towards the shore, a match for lighting their muskets fell into the water. The boatswain then commanded Watts on shore "to the first house to light our match... which he readily obeyed". After swimming just a few yards inland "he was seized on by two blacks" who brought him ashore and ripped off his clothes. Along with his apparel, they "cut off several pieces of his flesh, to his intolerable pain". What followed was a frenzied altercation between his shipmates and an incursion of many other natives. "The boatswain received a mortal wound in his groin" while the other two "adventured in the river endeavoring to escape the merciless hands of cruel infidels, but the Negroes with their swift canoes soon took overtook them, and brought them on shore" with Watts.

The story as retold by his uncle, Richard Watts, was published in London in 1672 as an essay with the lengthy and descriptive title "A True Relation of the Inhuman and Unparallel'd Actions, and Barbarous Murders, of Negroes and Moors, Committed on Three English-men in Old Calabar in Guinny". It continues in gruesome detail:

The Negroes took the boatswain out of the ship's boat; and instead of endeavoring at all to preserve life which remained in him, immediately they robbed him of it; one of them with a keen weapon cutting off his head before his companions' faces; and then they prepare for their rare banquet, while he was yet reeking in his blood; they in a barbarous manner cut off pieces of flesh from his buttocks and his thighs and his arms and shoulders, and boiled them on coals, and with a great deal of impatience eagerly eat it before their faces to our great astonishment. About fourteen days after, one of the company fell sick, and instead of being physicians to cure him, they were his butchers to murder him. They served him as they did the boatswain, cut off his head, and broiled and eat up his flesh and rejoiced exceedingly at this rich banquet. About ten days later after the third fell sick, whom they served in the same manner.

Beset with shock and despair at his dire circumstance, "the thoughts of their inhumane and barbarous actions surrounded him with fears and sorrow, hourly expecting to taste of the said

¹ Rediker, Marcus Buford. *The Slave Ship: A Human History*. New York, NY: Viking, 2007. 230

² Watts, John. "A True Relation of the Inhuman and Unparalleled Actions, and Barbarous Murders, of Negroes and Moors, Committed on Three Englishmen in Old Calabar in Guinea." *Harleian Collection of Voyages and Travels*. Vol. 2. London: Thomas Osborne, 1745. 512-517.

cruelty. Death did not seem terrible to him as the violent manner of it". He reasoned that he'd be pleased to die, "but not by the hand of infidels and barbarous monsters". Watts, however, was not to suffer the fate of his companions. Instead, by "the great God that is most compassionate in the greatest extremities had pity on him" and he instead spent the next several months in captivity. In that time, he learned that his captors had been provoked by "some unhandsome action of carrying a native away without their leave about a year before." It seems his abductors were seeking revenge against what they saw as an act of aggression by foreign intruders. After further details about his ordeal, Watts' account then proceeds to take note of several aspects of his captor' culture, practices, and customs, performing a kind of seventeenth century ethnographic study. Included in his record are details about their *Tata* language, monetized economy, food, geography, and architecture. Literary scholars note the value of Watts' and similar accounts but emphasize they should be read critically as drawing on the conventions of captivity narratives and romantic travel writing prevalent at the time.³ The veracity of the details should therefore be read in parallel with other accounts and scholarship from the region.

While this "true relation" correctly relates many pieces of information corroborated by later chroniclers and which are consistent with local cultural traditions, many aspects appear to be at least partially fabricated. Byrd claims the account was spurious while Northrup calls it a "fictionalized account" and that the people described in it are "figments of Watts's imagination."⁴ In particular, the report of cannibalism and the details conveyed about the *Tata* language seem to be inventions of Watts, wholly inconsistent with later records and regional traditions. Centuries later, traveler Count C.N. de Cardi reflected on the story, which he believed to be true, concluding "Since that date, as far as I know, no white men have ever been molested by the Old Calabar people."⁵ Slogar also casts doubt on the claims of cannibalism in the region, but suggests that such stories may have originated with indigenous cultures spreading rumors as a form of self-defense against slaving incursions.⁶ While the purported cannibalism is probably fiction—a product of a hyperactive adolescent imagination or a strategic form of myth-making—beheadings and human sacrifice certainly existed in the region at this time and continued to transpire well into the nineteenth century.⁷ These debates aside, this slaver's narrative offers a rare, albeit imperfect, glimpse into how the space of Old Calabar operated and was viewed at the time by Western observers. Whether "true" or figments of the imagination, Old Calabar was portrayed as both a vicious landscape of "barbarous monsters" and an established port trading with an intricate culture worthy of relating back to a European audience.

Understanding these controversies and rhetorical tensions, it is important to underscore details which appear to be accurate about Watts' narrative and consistent with scholarship about the region. After his abduction and the murder of his crewmates, Watts goes on to describe that he was presented to his master's King "whose name was *E-fn-me* King of the *Buckamores*".

³ Rudrum, Alan, Joseph Black, and Holly Faith Nelson, eds. *The Broadview Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Prose*. Vol. 2. Broadview Press, 2001. 764. Dolan, Frances E. *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

⁴ Byrd, Alexander X. *Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World*. LSU Press, 2008. 13-15. Northrup, David. *Trade Without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. 38n15.

⁵ Kingsley, Mary, Charles Napoléon Cardi (comte de.), and John Harford. *West African Studies*. London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1899. 566.

⁶ Slogar, Christopher. "Polyphemus africanus: Mapping Cannibals in the History of the Cross River Region of Nigeria, ca. 1500-1985." *Terrae incognitae* 37.1 (2005): 16-27.

⁷ Law, Robin. "Human sacrifice in pre-colonial West Africa." *African Affairs* (1985): 53-87.

Scholars believe to be Efiom Okoho, an ancestral *òbóng*, or leader, and cofounder of Duketown.⁸ Watts was then sold to “the King of *Ca-la-nanch* whose name was *E-fn-man-cha*” for a cow and a goat. The naming of kings lends credence to this part of his story. Likewise, the account of multiple kings who ruled over small-scale kingdoms accords with other written records and oral histories from the time which describe the region as home to many decentralized, or stateless societies. Historian Toyin Falola describes that before the onset of large-scale slave trade and colonialism, southeastern Nigeria was home to numerous self-governing, non-centralized societies such as the Ìgbo, Isoko, Urhobo, and Ìbìbìdò. Unlike the Hausa or Yorùbá for example, the exercise of government was decentralized.⁹ Watts’ account accords with other histories and provides evidence for the existence of this kind of political organization at the time.

Watts then goes on to remark on the temporary and makeshift quality of their buildings: “They have no holds, no castles, nor prisons; but for those they have taken until the next ship comes in, with withies [strong twigs] they fasten them to a pole.”¹⁰ British slaver William Snelgrave reports a similar improvised quality to the architecture of detention he witnesses in 1713.¹¹ These reports accord to similar comparisons made between the large centralized slave castles and royal palaces of the Gold Coast and the smaller-scale, dispersed, and temporary built environments of southeastern Nigeria.¹² Beyond these temporary penal arrangements, Watts comments on the organization and materiality of the houses of Old Calabar.

Of their Houses: Their houses are bigger or lesser, according to the family and number of wives every man enjoys (for every one hath liberty to have as many wives as he pleases; the ordinary men have two, three, or four; but the rich men and the King have many wives), set on scratches or posts covered with the leaves of a *Membo* (alias a Palm-wine) tree: the going is very low (not above three foot high) and within, it is not six feet high: in this room is their fire kept day and night, their lodgings joining to this room: every wife hath her several house or lodgings for her self (*sic*) and children.¹³

He writes that the king’s house is “larger and handsomer” than that of his “maidens”, commenting that “The whole people are as serviceable to their King, as we are to our Sovereign.”¹⁴ This description of the patriarchal power relations in these houses is consistent with later writings and oral histories documenting traditional (*èsét*) walled compounds or *ufòk* native to the region.¹⁵ These spaces were ruled by the *eté ékpùk* or agnatic head of the lineage group. Underscoring the power held by these *eté ékpùk* is Watts’ description of their burial practices of his captors. He explains that if a rich person dies, “they bury him with his copper bars about his neck, waist, arms, and legs” along with his personal belongings and “some of his servants’ heads”, sometimes three or four, sometimes ten or twelve.” Like other details from

⁸ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 18, 49.

⁹ Falola, Toyin (1999), *The History of Nigeria*, 23-27.

¹⁰ Watts, John, 771.

¹¹ Snelgrave, William. *A New Account of Guinea, and the Slave-trade*. [Ed.] Bible and Crown, 1754. “Introduction”, pages are unnumbered.

¹² Dmochowski, Z. R. "An Introduction to Traditional Nigerian Architecture." *Ethnographica: London* (1991). Lawrence, Arnold Walter. *Fortified trade-posts: the English in West Africa, 1645-1822*. Cape, 1969.

¹³ Watts, John, 770.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 771.

¹⁵ Hart, A. Kalada. *Report of the Enquiry into the Dispute over the Obongship of Calabar*. No. 17. Government Printer, 1964. Latham, Anthony John Heaton. *Old Calabar, 1600-1891*, 1973. 12-13, Orijì, John. *Political Organization in Nigeria Since the Late Stone Age: A History of the Ìgbo People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 63.

Watts' account, the description of sacrificial burials and the existence of domestic slavery are consistent with numerous historical documents from Old Calabar. These practices continued well into the nineteenth century.¹⁶ According to Watts and what can be adduced from oral histories of the region, the built environment of Old Calabar in the seventeenth century was composed of a loose network of thatched "houses" organized under a decentralized patriarchal political system headed by rich men and kings.¹⁷

Eventually, after spending several months in captivity he convinces *E-fn-man-cha* to sell him back to a visiting English merchant so that he may go home. He's taken offshore and "delivered on board for forty-five copper bars and iron bars." In the burial ceremonies as well as the monetary transactions mentioned by Watts, copper bars figure significantly. Subverting conventional understandings of the directionality of cultural diffusion, the economic historian A.J.H. Latham provocatively argues "Europeans utilized and copied an existing domestic currency".¹⁸ As many scholars have concluded, the beginnings of a thriving trading seem to have been established prior to European arrival.¹⁹

To summarize, from the account we learn the social-spatial organization of the region—small decentralized coastal kingdoms ruled by a sovereign ruler, living in hierarchically-sized, multi-room houses with low, thatched roofs. Families lived in the compounds along with servants. Even at this early date, there seems to already be evidence of an informal, copper-based monetary system as well. Watts' account, though riddled with specious claims, does seem to establish the presence of a small-scale trading community in the Old Calabar region in the middle of the seventeenth century. Contact with European traders was still sporadic and tense. Trade and communication was unpredictable and irregular and the social landscape at the time was contentious and unstable.

Watts' account transpires at the conjunction of many historical forces. First is the formation of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading in Africa which was formed in part to supply the rising sugar plantation industry in the Caribbean. Watts' ship the *Peach-tree* was poised for delivering slaves to Barbados before the "unparalleled" events took place. The transatlantic slave trade in Old Calabar was at this time in its nascent stages, but soon to become a major player in the Black Atlantic. "Inhuman" bodies such as those described by Watts were needed to drive the engine of the plantation complex. "True relations" such as this were critical in morally justifying the paradoxical "civilizing mission" of slavers and tradesmen like Watts. Further, cultural developments happening abroad colored these early representations of Old Calabar. London was recovering from the Great Fire of 1666 and architects like Christopher Wren were re-imagining the city in a more open and centralized plan less conducive of fire than the closely packed thatch structures. The Baroque style in art and architecture was sweeping Europe. In contrast, Watts' describes Old Calabar as scattered urban configuration of mud huts with a seeming absence of permanent "holds, castles, [and] prisoners". Old Calabar thus served as a bizarre moralistic and urban "other" to the mores and formal order of Europe.

¹⁶ Hart, A. Kalada. 1964. *Report of the Enquiry into the Dispute Over the Obongship of Calabar*, Official Document No. 17, Enugu: Government Printer. 36 paragraph 110.

¹⁷ Watts, John, 770-771.

¹⁸ Latham, A. J. H. "Currency, credit and capitalism on the Cross River in the pre-colonial era." *The Journal of African History* 12.04 (1971): 599.

¹⁹ Noah, Monday Efiog. *Old Calabar: The City States and the Europeans, 1800-1885*. Uyo, Nigeria: Scholars Press, 1980. Nair, Kannan K. *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria, 1841-1906: A Study of Power, Diplomacy and Commerce in Old Calabar*. F. Cass, 1972.

Beyond providing the first written account of Old Calabar, Watts' *True Relation* offers rare documentation of the socio-cultural milieu, albeit an imperfect one. It reveals the epistemic anxieties of early observers justifying their position as slavers and merchants in a land of "infidels and barbarous monsters." It offers a glimpse of the early decentralized political organization and built environments in the region. Far from a region free of conflict before the onset of the slave trade, Watts describes a charged field of economic, political, and social conflict. Temporally and spatially on the cusp between two periods—that of the earlier trans-Saharan slave trade to the north and east and the later transatlantic slave trade to the south and west—Watts' Old Calabar is a wild, frontier region geographically as well as temporally peripheral to established circuits of economic and cultural exchange. With these historical and discursive tensions in mind, it is necessary to look more closely at the paradigmatic space of this era, that of the traditional Èfik compound.

2.2 Traditional Èfik compounds

Situated in the densely forested tropical region of southeastern Nigeria, in an alluvial zone between the intricately winding Cross River and the Great Kwa River, lays the area known for centuries as Old Calabar (Figure 2.1). Intersected by small creeks, rivulets, and dotted with mangrove swamps, it is conjectured that at some point during the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, an assemblage of hamlets and small fishing villages on the Calabar River located about 30 kilometers from the Bight of Biafra slowly emerged from the rainforest to become one of the great trading nodes of the transatlantic slave trade.²⁰ The livelihood of those who settled in the area of the Biafran littoral from the beginning was primarily river-based, supported by fishing, farming, and trading. Small-scale tradesmen sold fish to up-river markets in exchange for palm oil and yams.²¹ According to oral tradition and many scholars, the population of these communities was comprised mostly of specialist fisherman, settling along the banks of the river and establishing the "Èfik polis".²²

The dates and ethnic composition of these settlements is a highly contentious issue.²³ Scholars have vigorously debated accounts of Old Calabar's origins. Complicating matters, recent archeological evidence from the Calabar metropolitan region suggests an even longer history. Carbon-dated terra cotta samples indicating a date from the fifth century A.D. upset an array of foundational myths surmising later origins.²⁴ Frustrated with what he called the "quasi-historical evidence" at hand, Hart went as far to characterize these accounts as riddled with self-interest, contradictions and a "great deal of improbabilities".²⁵ Like the story of Watts' ordeal, these histories must be read with these caveats in mind. Oral tradition states that originally the Èfik migrated from the Uruan in Ibibioland in the late sixteenth century.²⁶ They soon established Creek town (*Obiò Òkó*) on the edge of a creek linking the Calabar and Cross Rivers. After a

²⁰ Authors discussing early pre-colonial Calabar include Dike (1956), Forde (1956), Hart (1964), Aye (1967), Nair (1972), Latham (1973), Northrup (1978), Noah (1980), and Imbua (2012).

²¹ Latham (1973), 13.

²² Hart, 34 paragraph 104, 45 paragraph 129.

²³ Akak, Eyo Okon. *Efiks of Old Calabar: Origin and History*. Vol. 1. Calabar: Akaks & Sons, 1981.

²⁴ Eyo, Ekpo and Christopher Slogar. "Calabar Reconsidered: Archeological Evidence and Visual Culture in Cross River and Beyond." *Akwanshi: Journal of the National Museum Calabar*. Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 2007): 2-8.

²⁵ Hart. 1964. *Report of the Enquiry into the Dispute Over the Obongship of Calabar*, Official Document No. 17, Enugu: Government Printer. 37, 35.

²⁶ Hart, 27 paragraph 69, Latham, 9.

dispute, Old Town (*Obutong*) was founded to the southeast.²⁷ In the second or third decade of the seventeenth century, a group broke off and established Duketown (*Átàkpà*) to the southwest. The fissioning of these settlements was caused by internecine warfare and disputes between families.²⁸ Nair states that these settlements were “segmentary in nature and rivals in trade” while Nwaka refers to them as “splinter groups”.²⁹ Parallel to these migrations and divisions, Qua and Efut settlements were established to the north and south which also competed for markets, but which the Èfik generally dominated. In fact, Èfik control over the region was so domineering, their name is derived from the Ìbìbìò verb root *fik* meaning “to oppress”.³⁰ Even among Èfik groupings, disagreements and new alliances created a state of constant transformation. The small conurbation of settlements that emerged during this time can best be described as a “conglomeration of loosely-knit tiny republics” each of which operated with a degree of their own autonomy.³¹ From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, migrants moved between Delta communities, quickly seizing advantageous vantage points for trade.³² While there was a lot of urban activity happening in the region, Nwokeji underscores the small scale of these coastal city-states during the sixteenth century describing them as being “fledgling formations”.³³ These early settlements, close in proximity yet culturally and politically distinct, set the trajectory for later developments in the city’s urban morphology.

The basic living units of these communities-- traditional walled compounds—were centers of daily life, trade, and worship. In written and oral histories, compounds have also been variously called “houses”, “natives’ huts” and “yards”.³⁴ In Èfik, they’re variously called *ésìtokure*, *ésìt ùruà* (trade compound), or *ufok* (house). Composed of materials culled from the local forests, the mud, bamboo, and thatch construction of these compounds was a response to the ecology and humid climate from which they emerged.³⁵ They were impermanent structures in need of cyclical maintenance and adaptation. Because they were smaller scale, inexpensive structures which did not require imported or permanent materials, a large amount of time, or a hefty workforce, they required very little in terms of up-front capital investment or risk. Formally, compounds were low, single-story constructions. A visual display of this spatial

²⁷ Latham (1973), 9-12.

²⁸ Hart, 30 paragraph 81. Nair (1972).

²⁹ Nair, 5, Nwaka, 2.

³⁰ Simmons, Donald. “An Ethnographic Sketch of the Efik People” in Cyril Daryll Forde, ed. *Efik Traders of Old Calabar: Containing The Diary of Antera Duke, an Efik Slave-Trading Chief of the Eighteenth Century, Together with an Ethnographic Sketch and Notes*. Published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1956. 1. Simmons explains they were nicknamed this because they “prevented other Cross River tribes from establishing direct trade relations with European ships.” See also Latham (1973), 3, Hackett, 21, and Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 15.

³¹ Hart, 45 paragraph 129.

³² Dike, 20, 24-25.

³³ Nwokeji, G. Ugo. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. 23-24.

³⁴ European observers tended to call these configurations houses or natives’ huts, while the African slave trader referred to compounds and their internal courtyards as “yards”.

³⁵ Bassey, Nnimo. “The Architecture of Old Calabar” in S. O. Jaja, E. O. Erim, Bassey W. Andah eds., *Old Calabar Revisited*, Enugu: Harris, 1990. 124-125. Braide, T., and Mrs. V.I. Ekpo. “Notes on the Preservation of the Vanishing Monuments of Old Calabar” in S. O. Jaja, E. O. Erim, Bassey W. Andah eds., *Old Calabar Revisited*, Enugu: Harris, 1990. 140-141. Mabogunje, Akin L. *Urbanization in Nigeria*. London: University of London Press, 1980. 116.

pattern can be seen in an undated drawing of an Èfik compound housed at the Old Residency Museum (Figure 2.2). Compounds were rectilinear arrangements of rooms situated around open air courtyards known as *èsit èbiét* or *èsit esa* (Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4).³⁶ Open air courtyards functioned as spaces for receiving visitors, trading goods, storing livestock and agricultural produce, but also sites of religious and ritual practices.³⁷ Compounds were entered through one main gateway (*úsún*) which gave “physical security and physical control of movement into and out of the private spaces in the settlement.”³⁸ Compounds were compartmentalized spaces in which rooms were hierarchically sized and arranged according to social status. The space allocated for the master of the house was superior in size to those of his wives, children, and servants. Deep verandahs (*ètehé*) extended beyond the inner walls (*ibibené*) of the rooms lining the courtyard to ensure ventilation and protection from the tropical sun. Monolithically constructed benches lined the courtyards which were often slightly sunken into the ground (*isòñ*).³⁹ As enclosed spaces, compounds served as protection from weather, wildlife, enemies, and evil spirits, but also as a calibrated interface for exchange between compounds. The mud walls tended to be windowless and access to interior spaces of the compound was safely guarded.⁴⁰ This outer fence (*òkó*) served as a barrier to outside influence, but one that is best understood as selectively permeable.

Compounds were constructed by collective effort. Braide and Ekpo explain the sexual division of labor in the building process. The initial stages of setting up the structure, framing, roof (*ènyoñ ufòk*) and laying the thatchwork was performed by men while applying mud and finishing the interior and exterior surfaces was completed by women.⁴¹ Bassey cites the Èfik folklore classic *Edikot Nwed Mbuk, A Book of Stories*, for details regarding their construction using the native Èfik terminology.⁴² She writes:

To build a thatched house, the architect marks out the plan on the ground, full scale. Selected timber pieces called *mbói*, of about 50 mm (2 inches) in diameter, with sharpened ends, were driven into the earth along the marked lines. At the pitches, and at the eaves, forked timbers called *mfá* about 75 mm (3 inches in diameter, carried the main roof beams or *àtáràbàng*.

The raffia palm contributes more than the eaves in making the thatch (*nkanya*). It's (*sic*) “branches,” or *okoko* (*sic*), doubled as rafters and purlins; their splinters are used to mat the wall frames (as lath) to receive the earth (popularly called mud). The *okoko* (*sic*) is also placed on the finished roof to weigh down the thatch against the effect of strong winds. The floor of the house was, usually, rammed hard and polished with a charcoal solution, while the walls were finished with smooth clay, and then some were decorated with paints.⁴³

Each compound was erected using non-durable materials by a communal effort with a deliberate phasing of construction. When compounds disputed or created alliances, they changed form. Compounds often broke apart, fused with one another, or moved altogether. The construction process was easily repeated when maintenance or addition was required or in the event that a

³⁶ Bassey (1990), 125. Braide and Ekpo (1990).

³⁷ Braide and Ekpo, 138. Ajekigbe, Philip G. "Old Calabar Architecture: An Overview" in *State, City and Society: Processes of Urbanisation* (2002): 95.

³⁸ Dmochowski (1988), 76.

³⁹ Bassey (1990), 125.

⁴⁰ Simmons (1956), 68n 15, 74n 64, Buchan, 47.

⁴¹ Braide and Ekpo, 141.

⁴² Amaku, E. N. *Edikot nwed mbuk*. Nelson's Efik Readers Book, 1948.

⁴³ Bassey, (1990), 125. In the passage, the word “*okoko*” (meaning “a wild cat”) is improperly used to describe *okokok*, which signifies bamboo, branches, or the midrib of a palm wine leaf.

new compound was built. The ephemerality of compounds therefore allowed for a high degree of expedience and flexibility.

Unlike the relatively blank exterior walls, the interior surfaces of the compound, particularly those facing the *ésit èbiét*, were highly adorned surfaces. Women applied red soil to plaster the wall and floor using sea shell (*nkop*) and coconut shell. Then, using vegetable dye, the walls were transformed into communicative surfaces. Local women artists painted figures of “politicized animals” on the walls, wove and dyed mats, and carved hieroglyphic symbols on large calabashes and on the seats of stools.⁴⁴ Observing a compound in the 1840s, surgeon W.F. Daniell commented on their “constant purification and cleanliness” and noted, “The inner surface of the walls is adorned with curious and elaborate arabesque designs, in which red, yellow, black, and white pigments are blended, with all the artistic skill of native professors.”⁴⁵ The *ésit èbiét* of compounds during this era were carefully-crafted, inwardly focused zones of commerce and worship that served as symbolic landscapes clearly delineated from the surrounding urban geography and forest.

If the quadrangular mud walls and spatial arrangement of the compounds were the hardware, the software of the compound was the *ékpùk* or lineage-based social organization which informs the structure’s layout. Falola states that the family was a unit of production with the head of the compound organizing its members for economic functions.⁴⁶ The compound was an explicitly patriarchal system, headed by the eldest male.⁴⁷ Latham reasons that, because they lived so long in Uruan, it is safe to assume that the organization of Èfik culture was similar to Uruan Ìbìbìò.⁴⁸ In Ìbìbìò, the smallest social unit was the *idip* consisting of a man with his wives and children. Several *idips* made up an *ufok* or compound. A group of *ufoks* made up the extended family, or *ékpùk*. Èfik *ékpùk* has been described by Forde and Jones as “a group of patrilineal relatives tracing descent from a single male ancestor”.⁴⁹ A village, hamlet, or *obìò* was composed of several *ékpùks*. Although each *ékpùk* was self-governing under the authority of *eté ékpùk* or the lineage head, they were bound together in the village group by their common religion, secret society, and village council.⁵⁰ The institution of domestic slavery existed at the time and was integrated into the *ufok*. Historians have debated the severity of this form of slavery in contrast to the transatlantic type.⁵¹ Monday Noah prefers the term “bondservant” to describe this relationship.⁵² The term *ufok*, used here to describe the spatial unit of the compound should not be confused with the later use of the term meaning ward, or house system. These segments, or “wards” retained the Ìbìbìò name for a compound group.⁵³ This develops with the escalation of the slave trade in the eighteenth century and is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3. The

⁴⁴ *The Story of Old Calabar*, 75.

⁴⁵ Daniel, W. F. “On the Natives of Old Calabar”. *Journal of the Ethnological Society*, 848 (1846): 322.

⁴⁶ Falola, 24.

⁴⁷ Hart, 3 paragraph 10, 130, Nair, 12.

⁴⁸ Latham (1973), 12. See also Dike, 34.

⁴⁹ Forde, Cyril Daryll, and Gwilym Iwan Jones. *The Ibo and Ibibio-speaking peoples of south-eastern Nigeria*. Vol. 3. London: International African Institute, 1950. 72. Etuk, Ema S. “The Efik/Ibibio.” *Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Nigeria*. Eds. Marcellina Ulunma Okehie-Offoha and Matthew N. O. Sadiku. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996. 10. Hackett, Rosalind I.J., *Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989. 22-23.

⁵⁰ Latham (1973), 12-13, Forde and Jones, 71-75. Oriji, 63.

⁵¹ Sparks, Randy J. “Two Princes of Calabar: An Atlantic Odyssey from Slavery to Freedom.” *William and Mary Quarterly* (2002): 559.

⁵² Noah, 76.

⁵³ Latham (1973), 33.

other Èfik term for compound not be confused is *mbuaka* or *mbuaha* which denotes a mixture, as of liquids, or an assortment of goods or persons. Assemblages of compounds constituted a landscape of multiple sovereignties organized under an *èkpùk* (lineage) system.

The religion practiced in compounds was that of *ndèm Èfik*. Aye describes the religious situation prior to European contact as polytheistic, with various compounds worshipping several gods and goddesses to whom they “offered periodic animal and human sacrifices”.⁵⁴ As a society closely linked to the water, Hackett reasons that it is appropriate the *ndèm* were associated with water spirits. Missionary accounts speak of albino girls being sacrificed down the river from Calabar in honor of *ndèm*.⁵⁵ Individual families and houses had their own patron gods and goddesses, though the *òbóng* was the head of a college of priests, linking them to the supreme diety, *Ndèm Èfik*. Aye likens the *òbóng Èfik* to the Roman Pontifex Maximus. He possessed by “exclusive right” all of the religious and sacrificial secrets of the compound.⁵⁶ The nascent urban geography of the entire Cross River zone at this time was “an ethnological mosaic which was also politically fragmented.”⁵⁷ The *Ndèm Èfik* therefore operated as closely to what might be considered an integrating mechanism across these diverse and competing elements at work in early Old Calabar.⁵⁸

The organizing structures which did exist were often part of secretive and titled societies (discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4) where the knowledge preserved was intentionally coded and frequently oral in character. In a foreword to Ugo Nwokeji’s book *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra*, historian Paul Lovejoy elaborates on these methodological difficulties and adds to them the important point that in the context of writing on the uneasy history of slavery, it seems documenting certain events may not be desirable in some societies. There is a “wall of silence” in the Bight of Biafra about aspects of the past.⁵⁹ Complicating these matters, and reflective of the multi-ethnic character of this historically cosmopolitan city, scholarly work discussing Calabar’s origins and traditional architectural practices is riven with contesting spatial and temporal claims about issues of land ownership, migration flows, and political figures. How then does one begin to write the urban history of such a city?

Although the city of Old Calabar has garnered substantial scholarly interest, its architecture and urbanism is less studied. Nigeria’s diverse architectural traditions have been extensively documented and by a number of scholars, though the built environments of Old Calabar and its various ethnic groups are not included in these studies.⁶⁰ For example, the architectural historian Kevin Carroll classifies Nigeria’s ancient architecture into two main types—that of the forest and the savannah.⁶¹ He attributes rectangular architectural forms and courtyards with leave-thatched roofs to “forest buildings” and round forms and grass thatching for buildings in the savannah. The architecture of Old Calabar clearly fits the “forest building”

⁵⁴ Aye, Efiog Upkong, *Old Calabar through the Centuries*, Hope Waddell Press, Calabar, 1967. 28.

⁵⁵ Hackett, 29.

⁵⁶ Aye (1967), 28.

⁵⁷ AfIgbo, A. E. "Trade and Politics on the Cross River, 1895-1905." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 13.1 (1972): 23. See specifically 21-32.

⁵⁸ Hackett, 28.

⁵⁹ Lovejoy, Paul E., “Foreword”, Nwokeji, G. Ugo. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. xxiii-xxxiv.

⁶⁰ Carrol, Kevin, *Architectures of Nigeria: Architectures of the Hausa and Yoruba Peoples and of the Many Peoples Between--tradition and Modernization*. *Ethnographica*, 1992. 14-57., Dmochowski, Zbigniew R., and J. C. Moughtin. *The Work of Z.R. Dmochowski: Nigerian Traditional Architecture*. *Ethnographica*, 1988. Dmochowski (1991). Izomoh, S.O. *Nigerian Traditional Architecture*. Benin City: S.M.O. Aka & Brothers Press, 1994.

⁶¹ Carrol, 14-57.

mold, though the areas of southeastern Nigeria are left blank on Carroll's map.⁶² Historians Dmochowski and Izomoh make similar nationwide studies of Nigeria's building heritage but fail to include Old Calabar or the Èfik.⁶³

Comparatively, the traditional architecture of Old Calabar is most similar to that of the Ìgbo.⁶⁴ A number of factors explain this resemblance. The Ìgbo are a nearby ethnic group that have a history of trade, cultural exchange, and migration with the Èfik of Old Calabar. They share a similar rainforest climate, riverine environment, and non-centralized political organization. Both traditions created internalized courtyard environments surrounded by a walled complex of compartmentalized interior spaces. Ìgbo compounds, like Èfik compounds were privatized, securitized environments for trade and ceremonial activities constructed of local non-durable materials with short maintenance cycles (Figure 2.5). The largest difference in these two "forest building" cultures lies in the construction of their walls. The walls of Ìgbo compounds were primarily thick and made entirely of mud, while the compounds of Old Calabar were comprised of frame construction with mud applied. Additionally, Ìgbo compounds often incorporated a guard tower or *uno-aja* as a surveillance measure against approaching enemies (Figure 2.6).⁶⁵ Both cultures supported ephemeral architectural traditions, though the architecture of Old Calabar was perhaps even lighter and less concerned with the defensive quality of its built form.

It is these general outlines which frame our understandings of the traditional compounds of Old Calabar in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Physically comparable to the compounds of neighboring building traditions, the compounds were impermanent enclosures, flexibly arranged spaces utilizing local mud and thatch materials. They fundamentally differed from the monumentality and permanence of other coastal building traditions serving centralized states. Socially, compounds served as highly charged symbolic landscapes, autonomous zones of commerce, and the worship of water deities (*ékpènyòhng*). In the general absence of physical historical evidence, though, it is necessary to analyze the compound's discursive existence—as a rhetorical construction pulled between ethnocentric descriptions of a primitive building culture creating sites of barbarous, inhuman acts and nationalist discourses extoling the compound as a symbol of authentic Nigerian culture, free trade, cultural unification, and environmental co-existence. The discursive site of the compound is itself a contested space as integral to identity formation as the physical artifact.

2.3 The Historical Record

Much of the early history of Old Calabar prior to Watts is difficult to establish precisely. What is known is that as early as 1472, the ships of Captain Ruy de Sequeria, a Portuguese explorer, had anchored of the coast.⁶⁶ Efiog-Fuller documents Spanish and Portuguese

⁶² *Ibid.*, frontice.

⁶³ Dmochowski (1988), Dmochowski (1990), Izomoh.

⁶⁴ Richard W. Hull's mapping of major structural forms of precolonial African architecture associates "quadrangular forms surrounding and open courtyard" to the southern parts of present day Nigeria. Hull, Richard W. *African Cities and Towns before the European Conquest*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1976. For discussion of another West African compound, the Tokolor of Senegal and Western Mali are discussed in Bourdier, Jean-Paul and Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Drawn from African Dwellings*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996. 89-100.

⁶⁵ Izomoh, 50.

⁶⁶ Efiog-Fuller, E. O. *Calabar: The Concept and its Evolution*. University Press, Calabar. 1996. 1.

explorers visiting between that date and 1530.⁶⁷ With a vested interest in positioning trading sites the information is often densely detailed on the coastlines and increasingly sparse toward the interior. While there is very little documentation about the culture of Old Calabar at the time, it is possible to chart its cartographic emergence in the seventeenth century. A 1631 map by Hendrik Hondius depicts Africa as a “*Nova Tabula*”. Its land mass was populated with elephants and monkeys surrounded by ships and water serpents, but Old Calabar is not yet present (Figure 2.7). A decade later, a Dutch map locates *Callabry* in a line of coastal *entrepôts*, but little else beyond (Figure 2.8). As a *terra incognita*, Africa represented a space with unlimited economic potential to explorers. The European imagination graphically represented the continent as an untamed territory of cherubic black children hoisting elephant tusks. Africa and its new found ports comprised a frontier zone of heroism and primitivism.

While the accuracy of the geography depicted in these maps tended to increase with time, discovery was not a linear process. Ten years prior to Watts’ journey, the 1658 map *Nigritarum Regnum* plots the ports of “*Calabari*”, “*Bani*”, “*R. Carma*”, and “*Oud Calbari*” (New Calabar, Bonny, perhaps Ikot Abasi, and Old Calabar) (Figure 2.9). Forty years later, the French Huguenot sailor Jean Barbot attempted to more accurately map the towns in the Eastern Delta. As Ejituwu points out though, Barbot’s map of 1699 actually locates both the “Old Calabar River” and the “New Calabar River” on the Rio Real. In actuality, New Calabar is located much further to the west of Old Calabar (Figure 2.10).⁶⁸ This discrepancy aside, his *Collection of Voyages and Travels* documents trade transactions between his ship, the *Dragon*, and the peoples of the Atlantic coast of Africa. Unlike the earlier maps which merely located rivers and ports, Barbot’s account provides insight into their daily lives and customs of the people he traded with. He comments:

[The River] is well furnish'd with villages and hamlets all about, where Europeans drive their trade with the Blacks, who are good civiliz'd people, and where we get, in their proper seasons, as at New Calabar, all sorts of eatables, yams, bananas, corn, and other provisions for the slaves, which we barter there, as well as elephants teeth, and I believe have the greatest share of, of any Europeans.⁶⁹

This is a very different characterization than Watts’ spectacular account, for example. Moreover, he credits the inhabitants of the region as being “good civilized people”. While his map contained inaccuracies, it didn’t caricature the land or people as other contemporaries did. Many scholars have attributed this quote as one describing Old Calabar, though it may in fact be nearby Foko.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, it marks a different attitude toward this emerging port. Barbot, a French resident of England working for the French Royal African Company who made at least two voyages to ports on the Biafran coast in 1678 and 1682, presents a less sensationalist view than Watts’ 1668 tale, perhaps guided by the lure of new markets.

What is more compelling about Barbot’s 1699 map is that it is perhaps the first visual documentation of the architecture of Old Calabar. On the eastern edge of a channel in the Old Calabar River there rests a two-story structure with the label “The Grange, a pretty high

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁸ Ejituwu, N. C. “Old Calabar Rediscovered”, *The Multi-Disciplinary Approach to African History. Essays in Honour of Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa* (1997): 136.

⁶⁹ Hair and Jones, 677.

⁷⁰ Imbua for example, 144-145, incorrectly attributes remarks to Old Calabar when in fact he was describing Foko Hair, P. E. H., Jones, A., & Law, R. (Eds.). (1992). *Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa, 1678-1712*, Volume 2. London: Hakluyt society. 673.

building” and “at some distance are cottages of fishermen” (Figure 2.11). While inaccuracies of the map lend a degree of uncertainty in locating this structure, Ejituwu conjectures that it was a type of shrine indicative of the region which formed a nucleus of Old Calabar.⁷¹ At the turn of the century, Barbot’s writings and map confirm other records of small fishing villages and Watts’ account of a trading community, though not one terrorized by “barbarous infidels”.

Barbot’s brother James has a very different assessment than Jean Barbot and more in line with Watts. Of Old Calabar, he writes, “The town is seated in a marshy island often overflow’d by the river, the water running between the houses, where there are about three hundred in a disorderly heap...In their territories there are two market-days every week... to supply themselves with provisions and slaves, palm-oil, palm-wine, etc. there being great plenty of the last.”⁷² Whereas Watts was able to identify the names of few Calabar kings, decades later James Barbot correctly records the name of at least six.⁷³ Again the writings present bifurcated views of the region, represented at once as organized ports advantageous to commerce but also as a disorderly backwater cluttered with water-logged houses and alcohol-soaked traders.

Two other accounts from European traders during this era demonstrate the tendency to represent Old Calabar simultaneously as a space of reckless abandon and increasing levels of organized trade. Written records by slave-traders William Snelgrave and Alexander Horsburgh provide eyewitness accounts of the Old Calabar and indicate the transformations that were beginning to unfold in the early eighteenth century. Snelgrave, mentioned earlier as the trader who witnessed a boy tied to a stick waiting to be sacrificed, made at least two voyages to Old Calabar at the beginning of the eighteenth century. On his voyage to Old Calabar in 1704, he remarked that the “Natives are for the most part barbarous and uncivilized.” Similar to Watts, he provides a lurid story describing “a sad instance of Barbarity” in which a ten-month old child tied up and “hung up on the Bough of a Tree”.⁷⁴ On his 1713 voyage, after finding the boy tied to the stick, he describes in detail how he rescues the boy and brings him aboard a slave ship to be reunited with his mother. He tells her “I have saved your boy from being sacrificed” to which the ship rejoiced and greeted him with songs of praise before their hellish departure into the Black Atlantic.⁷⁵ Stories such as these perpetuate the “ignoble savage” stereotype present in writings of the time.⁷⁶ These bizarre rescue-cum-slavery narratives provided moral justification for the growing slaving enterprise and interest in the Biafran coast. Snelgrave’s self-acclaimed “most perfect history we have of that country” was paired with his map of the region (Figure 2.12) showing an increasing number of documented ports on the coast including the country of “Calbary”. The cartographic precision of maps such as Snelgrave’s signal a distinct shift from the maps of the previous century. Despite this tremendous growth in geographic and socio-cultural knowledge, the urge of traders and explorers to exoticize proved difficult to suppress.

In a less sensationalist record from 1720, Scottish supercargo Alexander Horsburgh purchased slaves in Old Calabar and kept a detailed ledger of his transactions.⁷⁷ Paying anchorage fees to a number of Cross River notables, his account provides another important

⁷¹ Ejituwu, 143.

⁷² Hair, P. E. H., Jones, A., & Law, R. (Eds.). (1992). *Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa, 1678-1712*, Volume 2, London: Hakluyt society, 693.

⁷³ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, 18-19.

⁷⁴ Snelgrave, “Introduction”.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Constantine, J. Robert. "The Ignoble Savage, an Eighteenth Century Literary Stereotype." *Phylon* (1960) (1966): 171-179.

⁷⁷ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, 21.

source for documenting the transformations occurring in Old Calabar in the early eighteenth century. Whereas Barbot mentions the names of six Èfik middlemen with whom he traded in 1698, Horburgh records twenty-six.⁷⁸ What Horsburgh's account indicates is the increasing quantity and organization of the slave trade in this emerging transatlantic port. While the elementary forms of exchange and individual meetings between European traders and kings were sufficient during the early phases of the Atlantic slave trade, it was increasingly in need of a mediating mechanism to manage its complexity. Historians Behrendt and Graham analysis of Horsburgh's transactions helps document "the rise of the Èfik as middlemen traders and documents as well the rise and fall of Èfik merchant families who resided at Old Calabar"⁷⁹ In 1720 the òbóngship (village head) of Creek Town resided perhaps in the Ambo family and the Ntiero and Eyamba wards may not have emerged yet. Creek Town remained the dominant settlement, a position in Èfik society they would lose first to Old Town by mid-century, and then to Duke Town by the 1770s.⁸⁰

As the documentation by European traders shows, Old Calabar's contact with the world-at-large was increasing. Historians note that by the 1700s a complex trading network was already well established in the Niger Delta area. It is important to understand the space of the compound at the beginning of the eighteenth century not as a purely "localized" form, but part of and constitutive of that vast network of cultural circuits. Lorena S. Walsh's book *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, for example, traces the journey of a group of slaves from West Africa to the Burwell plantations in Virginia. Stripped of their freedom, they carried with them their particular building traditions. She writes that in the New World, "The work and living spaces that the slaves fashioned for themselves often closely resembled the layout of a West African compound." She continues, noting that this process of diffusion reveals "elements of choice and continuity salvaged from a very different cultural tradition."⁸¹ The compound's ability to adapt to different conditions extended well beyond the spatial and temporal bounds of pre-colonial Old Calabar.⁸²

The scale and complexity of the slave trade in the first few decades of the eighteenth century had grown significantly since Watts' encounter approximately sixty years earlier. Increasingly there was a need for a mechanism to regulate trade between European traders and the growing list of Èfik middlemen. Likewise, a system for settling disputes between the various wards was necessary. The number of wards emanating from the early Creektown nucleus of a single ward quickly fissioned into two and by the time of Horsburgh's ledger there were between five and seven wards spread across Creektown, Old Town, and Duketown.⁸³ As Sparks argues, the fragmented landscape of compounds and competing trading houses required a "more centralized" authority to make trade more consistent.⁸⁴ While often portrayed as a primitive *terra*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁹ Behrendt, Stephen D., and Eric J. Graham. "African merchants, notables and the slave trade at Old Calabar, 1720: evidence from the National Archives of Scotland." *History in Africa* 30 (2003): 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸¹ Walsh, Lorena S. *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community*. University of Virginia Press, 2001. 20.

⁸² Morrill, Warren Thomas. *Two Urban Cultures of Calabar, Nigeria*. Diss. University of Chicago, Department of Anthropology, 1961. It is Morrill's hypothesis that Ibos adapted more readily to the conditions of late 1950s Calabar than did the Èfik. He argues one of the indices of community membership in Calabar, regardless of ethnicity, was the walled compound.

⁸³ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, 19.

⁸⁴ Sparks, 58-59.

incognita prior to the height of the transatlantic slave trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century, scattered evidence from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in conjunction with oral histories demonstrate that Old Calabar had in fact been a dynamic site of cultural and economic exchange before the presence of large-scale European trading. Old Calabar simultaneously represented a barbarous territory of “uncivilized” and “inhuman” acts, as well as frontier space with enormous commercial potential for the emerging global trade system.

2.4 The Higgedy-Piggedy Order

While accounts of those such as Watts, Barbot, and Snelgrave provide some of the few written records of Old Calabar’s geography and built environment during this time, most of the evidence of traditional Èfik compound lies beyond the temporal bounds set out in this chapter. The growth of the slave and palm oil trades during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in more documentation of these indigenous environments. While the paradigmatic space during the time of these records had shifted (and discussed in later chapters), the compound or “native hut” became an object of focus of European observers remarking on local customs. An influx of European slave traders, explorers, and missionaries contributed to a mounting reservoir of historical evidence detailing the people, customs, and geography of the region. Many of these accounts are not impartial and do not attempt to hide their political agendas or personal prejudices. While flawed, these accounts were pivotal in shaping Western perceptions about a distant culture deemed backwards and inferior. Many scholars have since interrogated these sources as Eurocentric and disparaging commentaries on an indigenous culture.⁸⁵ Another weakness of these sources is that the spatial dynamics of the places described are often incidental or anecdotal to economic, political, or religious concerns. Space is an epiphenomenon to the primary focus of these studies. Architectural and urbanistic characteristics are described in merely formalistic terms or focus on lurid descriptions of events that occur in these ostensibly contained spaces. As serious as these shortcomings are, they are not sufficient to completely dismiss these accounts. Instead, if read critically, they offer a valuable record of the people producing them as the environments they describe. Taken together, they should be read as spaces of encounter in their own right, traces of the entangled history shared by the observer and observed.

Early written accounts were concerned with establishing a sharp divide between civilization and what they witnessed along the western coast of Africa. It should be said that this was more an exercise of providing moral justification for their trading or religious mission than it was about scholarly curiosity. Traditional compounds or “natives’ huts” became discursive battlegrounds and theaters for all sorts of barbarous activities carried out by an inferior race. As Nwaka correctly observes the “heavy imprint of colonial history” on Calabar’s built environment, noting that early European observers “criticized the structure and pattern of settlements in the town, as low, mud-plastered, palm thatched and poorly ventilated houses grouped in small yards, separated by narrow, crooked, and dirty alley-ways.”⁸⁶ Evidence for this claim comes from a broad list of sources. Sailor Henry Schroeder, a contemporary of the local

⁸⁵ See scholars of the Ibadan School discussed in the following section.

⁸⁶ Nwaka, Geoffrey I. *Colonial Calabar: Its Administration and Development*. National Commission for Museums and Monuments at the Old Residency-Calabar, 1986. 1, 3.

slave trader Antera Duke (discussed in Chapter 3) described at length the “putrescent” conditions within the low “wickerwork” houses surrounded by walls during his visit in 1786.⁸⁷ He described the people of Old Calabar as “degraded beings... kept in the most abject mental darkness” inclined to publicly decapitate criminals and sacrificial pawns.⁸⁸ His vivid account also included descriptions of the fractious ways in which towns broke apart and new ones were created. Schroeder’s writes of the leader of Enshee Town (Henshaw Town), Tom Henshaw as a man of “martial enterprise, and independent spirit” who opposed the government of Duke Town and established his own.⁸⁹ While Old Calabar maintained indigenous territorial sovereignty during the period of the slave trade, intra-Èfik battles produced a sense of rivalry, instability, and impermanence in the urban landscape. To outside observers, this was evidence of a primitive, scattered city of “unenlightened minds”.⁹⁰

Nearly a century after Snelgrave’s slaving missions, on one of the final slaving voyages to leave Britain, the trader James Grant visited Old Calabar. In 1807 he wrote, “Calabar consists of a great number of low thatched houses, or huts, like those common on the coast, and is irregularly scattered amongst trees that a stranger may easily lose his way.”⁹¹ Consistent with remarks by slavers employing the tortured logic that their mission to enslave Africans was a means of saving them from “human sacrifices” and “barbarous exhibitions”, Grant describes the graphic details of a public decapitation of a woman in Old Calabar. Describing the bloody head, he writes, “when it is instantaneously pulled away by the rope, and, while yet warm, is tossed in the air, and played with like a ball.”⁹² Slavery, for these observers, was conveniently positioned as a lesser evil to the cruelty of this primitive culture.

The mixture of debased ritualistic spectacles, primitive building technologies, and lack of rationalized order were signs of an inferior cultural milieu in need of civilizing. Visiting Creektown in 1828, the blind traveler James Holman remarks “there is little interest to be found in a black town, the huts are all the same plan; and the streets rugged and narrow.”⁹³ Describing a meeting of Duke Ephraim’s wives in his compound, he writes that “about sixty Queens, besides little Princes and Princesses, with a number of slave girls who wait upon them” live in a “square formed of mud huts, with a communication from the back part of the house.”⁹⁴ He continues, “These people practice many other superstitious customs, equally dreadful, and I am persuaded that it needs but a recital of them, to prove how much they stand in want of the

⁸⁷ Butterworth, William [pseud. for Henry Schroeder]. *Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina and Georgia*. Leeds: Edward Barnes, 1822: 28-29.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹¹ Crow, Hugh. *Memoirs of the Late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool: Comprising a Narrative of His Life Together with Descriptive Sketches of the Western Coast of Africa, Particularly of Bonny, the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, the Production of the Soil and the Trade of the Country to which are Added Anecdotes and Observations Illustrative of the Negro Character*. London: Longmans, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830. 272. James Grant was a Liverpool trader on Crow’s ship. His narrated account appears in Crow’s memoir on pages 270-286. He notes that it “does not appear that our author [Crow] visited Old Calabar.” 270. See also Simmons, Donald C., ed. *Grant’s Sketch of Calabar*. Calabar: Hope Waddell Press, 1958.

⁹² Crow, 280.

⁹³ Holman, James. *Travels in Madeira, Sierra Leone, Teneriffe, St. Jago, Cape Coast, Fernando Po, Princes Island, Etc. Etc.* G. Routledge, 1840. 408. Simmons, Donald C., ed. *Grant’s Sketch of Calabar*. Calabar: Hope Waddell Press, 1958. 26.

⁹⁴ Holman, 363, Simmons (1958), 6.

benevolent instructions of Christian missionaries.”⁹⁵ In a less stereotypical account, the explorer Henry Nicholls details the materials and process involved of building a compound. He describes nearby Aqua Town as “composed of a number of low houses, supported by mangrove sticks, and covered over with bamboo laid across afterward with bamboo leaves.”⁹⁶ Similarly, Hutchinson remarked “The houses are built by forming walls of interlaced palisading, which are plastered inside and outside with mud, technically styled “wattle-and-dab.”⁹⁷ He continues, “The native architects have not yet arrived at the civilisation of a chimney”⁹⁸ and concludes by remarking, “The higgledy-piggledy order of architecture prevails throughout.”⁹⁹ While these accounts provide invaluable historical records of building practices in Old Calabar, details are often buried in exhibitionist layers of rhetorical bombast.

In the early nineteenth century at least two accounts discussed the courtyard structure of compounds. In 1830, the explorer Richard Lander compares the courtyards of Old Calabar with those of the Yorùbá. Consistent with earlier accounts, he describes, “The houses are built in an irregular manner, leaving very little room for the road between them, which at that time was exceedingly wet and dirty.” He continues, “The duke's house is situate (*sic*) in the middle of the town, and like the rest is built of clay. It consists of several squares, round each of which is a verandah, similar to the houses in Yarriba (Yorùbá). The centre square is occupied by the duke and his wives, the others being the abode of his servants and attendants, which altogether amount to a considerable number. Immediately opposite to the first square, which forms the entrance to his residence, stands a small tree, profusely decorated with human skulls and bones.”¹⁰⁰ In the 1840s, and taking a more negative stance, the surgeon W.F. Daniell commented that “The houses in Old Calabar, belonging to the middle and upper classes, are inferior in every point of view to those of any other nation in this part of Africa, not only in the firm and compact arrangement of the building materials, but in the appropriate style of architecture, which conjoins strength and solidity with neatness in execution.”¹⁰¹ Daniell is immediately drawing a distinction between the permanent architectures of other parts of Africa and the inferior dwellings of Calabar which are rendered as flimsy, loose, sloppy, and inappropriate.

Missionaries had a similar outlook on the architecture of Old Calabar, though their perspective was shaped not by the creation of markets, but the spread of the gospel. On his arrival in 1846, Reverend Hope Masterton Waddell stated “Duke Town presented but a poor appearance... The houses were low, mud-plastered, and palm-thatched, without windows, but each with a capacious door, leading into a small court-yard.”¹⁰² These houses were contrasted to the clean and upright quality of the mission houses being built (Figure 2.13).

⁹⁵ Holman, 391, Simmons (1958), 12.

⁹⁶ Hallet, Robin, ed. *Records of the African Association, 1788-1831*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1964. 200.

⁹⁷ Hutchinson, Thomas Joseph. *Impressions of Western Africa. With remarks on the diseases of the climate and a report on the peculiarities of trade up the rivers in the Bight of Biafra*. Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1858. 115.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 116.

¹⁰⁰ Huish, Robert. *The Travels of Richard and John Lander into the Interior of Africa for the Discovery of the Termination of the Niger*. John Saunders, 1836. 743-744. Anthropologist Percy Amaury Talbot makes a similar comparison in the early twentieth century remarking that the compound is “built much on the plan of the Roman house”. Talbot, Percy Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. Heinemann, 1912. 263-264.

¹⁰¹ Daniell, W. F.. “On the Natives of Old Calabar”. *Journal of the Ethnological Society*, 848 (1846): 322. Akak, Eyo Okon. *Efiks of Old Calabar: Origin and History*. Vol. 1. Calabar: Akaks & Sons, 1981. 60-61.

¹⁰² Waddell (1863), 243. Upon visiting Bonny years later, however, Waddell remarked that the houses there were “miserably inferior” to those in Old Calabar. 417.

Mary Slessor, now considered a kind of patron saint of Calabar for her role in eradicating the practice of twin baby (*àmanambà*) sacrifice, was taken to Duketown by the missionary Mrs. Sutherland in 1876. Slessor's biographer describes her first impression of a stagnant primitive society beholden to crude superstitions. He writes:

Mary found that it had not changed much since Hope Waddell's day. The family huts were still built around interconnecting yards and were decorated in the way in which he described. The backs of the huts were presented to the lanes and there was usually only one entrance to both huts and yards. This was guarded by watchmen to keep out human intruders and by charms to keep out evil spirits. In a corner of the main yard there was always a shrine dedicated to family ancestors with offerings of fruits and vegetables in front of it and the remains of the latest sacrifice—usually a chicken—hanging beside them. Naked children, goats, dogs, and chickens wandered through the yards so that they were usually dirty, stinking, and buzzing with flies. But the huts were relatively clean inside.¹⁰³

Another Slessor biographer described the architecture as “a collection of mud-dwellings thatched with palm leaf, slovenly and sordid, and broiling in the hot rays of the brilliant sun”. Continuing, “What a land she had to make her dwelling-place—a land formless, mysterious, terrible, ruled by witchcraft and the terrorism of secret societies; where the skull was worshiped and blood sacrifices were offered to jujus”.¹⁰⁴

Traveler Mary Kingsley, writing decades years later comments “these houses being erected haphazard among the surrounding native built houses did not lend that air of improvement to the town that they might otherwise have done if the chiefs had studied more uniformity in the building of the town, and arranged for wider streets in places of alley-ways many of which are not wide enough to let two Calabar ladies, (usually of noble proportions), to pass one another without the risk of their finery being drabbed with streaks of yellow mud from the adjoining walls.”¹⁰⁵

Of course, not all European accounts of compounds propounded such stereotypical views. In fact, some descriptions provide surprising comparative insights into the tectonics of construction, materiality, or spatial organization of the architecture they observed. In their position as an outsider, they were able to see what an insider might take for granted. Despite his disparaging description of Duketown's “poor appearance” and “crooked” and “dirty” passageways, the missionary Hope Masterson Waddell in 1846 who essentially describes the “paradox” of houses of Old Calabar as a precursor to the modernist “free plan” condition in which the exterior envelope of a building is liberated from structural constraints theorized by Le Corbusier decades later:

“Gentlemen” have usually houses in town as well as on their plantations, dividing their time between their trading and farming operations. The Calabar houses are well constructed, considering the insufficient materials employed, and well adapted to the climate and state of the country. They consist each of a quadrangular court-yard, surrounded by ranges of apartments, which all open into it, while one main gate, kept by a porter, opens into the street. No windows exist, except one little peep-hole in the gable at each end. An “aubong” has usually several of these yards opening into each other, for his servants, wives, and trade goods... The construction of a Calabar house exhibits a paradox. In other countries the walls support the roof, there the roof supports the walls. The explanation is simple. The roof rests not on the walls, but on the rows of strong posts which surround the house inside and out, and are fixed deep in the ground. The

¹⁰³ Buchan, James. *The Expendable Mary Slessor*. Seabury Press, 1981. 47.

¹⁰⁴ Livingstone, William Pringle. *Mary Slessor of Calabar: Pioneer Missionary*. Hodder and Stoughton, 1917. 23. “there social life was rooted in a tangle of relationships and customs as intricate as any in the world”. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Kingsley, Mary. “Old Calabar, Nigeria in the 1890s.” *Colonial Building Notes* 22 (1954): 14.

walls stand six feet within these, and very frail, such as might be called lath and plaster. Their hold of the ground is very slight, while the upright sticks are bound securely to the roof, so they cannot fall, though soon decayed at the foot.”¹⁰⁶

Writing at the turn of the century, missionary Hugh Goldie offers comparative, albeit orientalist description of the central courtyards of the compounds of Old Calabar. He writes:

The apartments are built in Eastern style, round a court or yard, without windows, each apartment opening into the court, and all having a common entrance from the street. In this manner court can be added to court, to provide the accommodation required, and a hundred or more may have their homes in the same premises. In almost every house there is a womens' (*sic*) yard, corresponding to the harem or zenana of the East. When the walls are finished, a clay bench is commonly formed along the bottom, inside, which, while it gives stability to the wall, forms a convenient seat or bed, as may be required.¹⁰⁷

A working definition of the “compound” concept in the West African context is provided by the British colonial official and anthropologist Charles Partridge whose detailed documentation of artistic traditions in the Cross River region during the early twentieth century is still referenced today. Partridge writes:

Compound is a word imported from Anglo-Indian parlance, in which it signifies “the enclosed ground, whether garden or waste, which surrounds an Anglo-Indian house.” In West Africa, however, it is applied to the yard or ground, whether rectangular, circular, or irregular, which the huts themselves surround. The fronts of the huts all opening into the central yard, their backs form the surrounding wall of the enclosure. When the huts are too few for this purpose, the gaps between are filled up with a high palisade of stakes or lengths of timber. There is generally one principal entrance to every compound, and many of the huts have between them and the next hut a small exit which gives ready access to the latrine or rubbish-heap in the adjoining bush; it is also used to escape an attacking enemy. There are no windows of any kind in the back walls of the huts that form the enclosure. In the central yard stand shrines and miniature huts erected to their deities; also a few palms and other trees; and here at night are kept the livestock. Sometimes the chief or head of the family lives in a hut built in the middle of this yard. Usually, however, he occupies one of the side huts, while the others are severally occupied by his wives, children, and other relations. Narrow lanes run between compounds, a collection of which forms a village or town.¹⁰⁸

This formal description, though short of analytical detail, provides insight into the privatized space created by the compound and a sketch of its social organization. Partridge spent three months as an Assistant District Commissioner in Calabar in 1902. We find that countless documents repeat the elements evident in Partridge’s description: a surrounding wall of enclosure, an internalized space surrounded by huts providing protection from a seemingly hostile exterior environment, organizing a kinship-based social hierarchy. While there’s a tendency in sources to view this family unit as a stable entity, Partridge is quick to acknowledge tremendous change circulating through these spaces. On Calabar he remarks, “the place is

¹⁰⁶ Waddell (1863), 325. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret famously argued the “Five Points for a New Architecture” in 1927. The implication of the “free plan” was that interior walls liberated from from their structural function, could be placed wherever required. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. “Five Points for a New Architecture.” *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th Century Architecture*, ed. Elrich Conrads. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970. 99-100.

¹⁰⁷ Goldie, Hugh., & Dean, J. T.. *Calabar and its Mission*. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1901. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Partridge, Charles. *Cross River natives: being some notes on the primitive pagans of Obubura Hill district, southern Nigeria, including a description of the circles of upright sculptured stones on the left bank of the Aweyong River*, Hutchinson, 1905. 172.

developing very rapidly, and old institutions and old customs are giving way to a new and better order of things.”¹⁰⁹

Most accounts, though not all representations of traditional compounds by pre-colonial observers tends to denigrate their materiality and the social organization contained therein. The “higgledy-piggledy order” therefore represented European perceptions of the architecture of Old Calabar. Littered with language about primitives and barbarians, these sensational and lurid accounts almost exclusively branded the indigenous built environment of Old Calabar as a backward other to English built propriety. Often intended to shock, these sometimes garish representations created a knowledge space of their own. In the absence of preserved monuments or visual documentation of the spaces of Old Calabar, the compound exists as a contentious rhetorical construction. After centuries, the power of these narratives persists. While they had a life of their shaping perceptions in abolitionist and Victorian Europe, they take on a second life as they’re refuted by a generation of post-independence scholars (including this study!) seeking to properly contextualize and frame their claims.

2.5 Self-sufficient Utopia

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain. Until that point, European accounts of the traditional built environments of the region had a tendency to distort, disparage, and misrepresent the “natives’ huts” as a backward, uncleanly, primitive technology in need of civilization and rationalization. In contrast, post-independence scholars made a concerted effort to re-legitimize their history and local customs. There was a hot pursuit of unifying ideas that could bring together the collective imagination of the country after years of colonial repression. Writing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a collective of scholars known as the Ibadan School of history presented a deliberate rejection of Eurocentric analytical perspectives, emphasizing instead the primacy of “internal forces” in the social and political history of the country. They fostered the use of oral histories, indigenous scholars, and a critical examination of European sources and documents in an attempt to undo the epistemic violence wrought by centuries of foreign literature predisposed to denigrate their culture.¹¹⁰ There was a decidedly nationalist air to many of these writings, some of which sought to resuscitate what was deemed as an authentic Nigerian culture. In aggregate, this scholarship tended to fashion what Hobsbawm and Ranger call an “invented tradition” establishing continuity with the past.¹¹¹ The traditional compound, upheld as an authentic spatial artifact native to Nigeria, became an important component in what Benedict Anderson terms the “imagined community” of post-independence Nigeria.¹¹² The compound became a unifying symbol for one of the most populous countries in Africa, one comprised of tremendous ethnolinguistic diversity and differential historical experiences of British colonialism. Writing about anticolonial stories, David Scott writes that “they have largely depended upon a certain (utopian) horizon toward which the emancipationist history is imagined to be moving.”¹¹³ This utopian horizon is evident in the

¹⁰⁹ Partridge, 30.

¹¹⁰ Uya, Okon Edet, “Old Calabar Studies: An Overview”, 202.

¹¹¹ Ranger, Terence O., and Eric J. Hobsbawm, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

¹¹² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Revised Ed.)*. New York: Verso, 1991.

¹¹³ Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Duke University Press, 2004. 8.

literature marshaling the compound as a unifying spatial concept in late twentieth century Nigeria.

Close readings of local cultures and their spatial practices were central to the construction of the emerging national imaginary in anticolonial and post-independence Nigeria. For instance, the opening chapters of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* take place in a pre-colonial Ìgbo compound much like one documented by Olaudah Equiano, in his native Ìgbo village as it existed before he was captured and sold into slavery.¹¹⁴ Outspoken Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti's resistance to the Obasanjo military regime in the 1970s emanated from his controversial bohemian compound, Kalakuta Republic, in Lagos.¹¹⁵ Summarizing his thoughts on this complex he commented, "The idea of creating a place open to every African escaping persecution began taking shape in this my mind. Was that my first pan-Africanist idea? Maybe. At any rate, that's how the idea of setting up a communal compound – one like Africans had been living in for thousands of years – came about."¹¹⁶ Compounds, in the newly minted state were markers of national identity and a link to the distant and distinctly non-colonial past. While variations of the compound are found in the diverse cultures across Nigeria, historically, it is especially prevalent in the non-centralized societies of southeastern Nigeria.

In the absence of existing structures from this period, the space of the traditional compound can be conceptualized as a discursive terrain pulled between the dismissive Orientalist proclamations of European observers and heroicized accounts by indigenous scholars. The pre-colonial Èfik compound is a literary construction, the traces of examples exist of the reverse. Scholars struggling to come to terms with Nigerian identity and local culture. Europeans casting it as a strange, frozen, other, underdeveloped, uncivilized. Really, both are fictions. What they are are flexible, adaptive, polycentralized environments with the ability to adapt to fluctuating social and economic demands. They were also spaces of exception which maintained a patriarchal social order. To be clear, they were often sites of beheadings, sacrifices, and domestic slavery. These privatized enclaves acted as spatio-temporal bridges between the epochs of the trans-Saharan trade complex and that of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The public area was where activities associated with trade take place, while the main entrance would control who entered and exited the compound. The walls were primarily protective, from enemies or evil spirits, but also allegorical of a certain world-view. Ìgbo societies were small and organized in self-contained villages or federations of village communities. Nigerian scholar Toyin Falola describes how the exercise of government, unlike the Hausa or Yorùbá for example, was decentralized. Members lived in the same compound and the head of the compound organized them for economic functions."¹¹⁷ The Ìgbo compound therefore was an idealized place and space of enclosure to clearly delineate territory, define the family, and protect from enemies. These pre-modern enclaves, perhaps unlike the slave *barracoons*, were premised on certain paradoxes of urban citizenship—subjects within them were simultaneously free and constrained. Assemblages of compounds constituted a landscape of multiple sovereignties organized under an *ékpùk* (lineage) system with hierarchical chiefs. There was no reason to build strong armies for the purpose of expansion. He notes, "The family was a

¹¹⁴ Equiano, Olaudah. *The Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or, Gustavus Vassa, the African*. New York, NY: Durrell, 1791. 14-15.

¹¹⁵ Moore, Carlos. *Fela: This Bitch of A Life*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009. 109. Achebe, Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, New York: Anchor Books, (1959) 1994. Specifically pages 13-14.

¹¹⁶ Moore, Carlos, 109.

¹¹⁷ Izomoh, 51.

unit of production. Members lived in the same compound and the head of the compound organized them for economic functions.”¹¹⁸ The Ìgbo compound therefore was an idealized place and space of enclosure to clearly delineate territory, define the family, and protect from enemies.

In the 1960s, architectural historian Z.R. Dmochowski conducted fieldwork in the newly independent nation of Nigeria to document its rich architectural traditions. Dmochowski was permitted to create the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA) in the northern city of Jos cataloging Nigeria’s building traditions. In addition to this museum, he composed a wealth of meticulously measured drawings and photographs seeking to survey the region’s diverse building customs. Part of this documentation was the Nigerian walled compound. Dmochowski’s work made tremendous strides in conveying the heterogeneity of Nigerian architectural achievements as well as establishing the grounds for future research on the country’s built environment.¹¹⁹ Hausa, Yorùbá, Bini, Ìgbo, and Jaba traditions are all precisely represented in his introductory publication on traditional Nigerian architecture, though numerous groups including the Èfik are excluded.¹²⁰ Despite differences in geography, social organization, and religious affiliation though, a formal reflection on Dmochowski’s work concludes that “compounds...surrounded by a high wall or fence” are a common element found in Nigerian house plans.¹²¹ While Dmochowski’s taxonomy of Nigerian architectural forms was a significant contribution to the study of Nigerian architectural history, reflection on the spatial practices of the regions, particularly compounding, had sporadically occurred prior. Using another Ìgbo example, he writes:

The house of Chief Oguba in Onitsha provides a fine example of the Ìgbo compound known as *iba*. It represents an example of functional planning satisfying three basic requirements of its inhabitants; religious, social, and domestic. The compound [is] built on a courtyard plan with [an] entrance gate. The entrance wall was designed as a colonnaded portico, richly ornamented with geometrical loam bas-reliefs and intricately carved doors.¹²² (Figure 2.14)

The architecture of Old Calabar, like that of the Ìgbo, consisted of buildings made of “wattle and daub” construction. The houses were erected by communal effort and each owner was, usually, his own architect. Calabar’s intercourse with Britain in the period prior to Britain extraterritorial incursion brought new materials, technology, and skills for construction purposes. This composite system of wooden strips and mud was flexible and expedient method for building walls and enclosing space. Because of the humid climate, the buildings had a rather short maintenance cycle. One advantage of this method is that walls made using this process allowed continuous ventilation.

In the decades following independence there was proliferation of scholarship on Old Calabar. The establishment of the University of Calabar in 1973 further abetted efforts to devote sustained scholarly attention to the region. Some of this work directly addressed the city’s building traditions, though due to its tendency to privilege heritage, it often replicated Eurocentric conceptions of historical preservation. In the relative absence of preserved traditional

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹¹⁹ Dmochowski, “Nigeria’s Architectural Achievement”, Zbigniew R. Dmochowski, and J. C. Moughtin. *The Work of Z.R. Dmochowski: Nigerian Traditional Architecture*. Ethnographica, 1988. 7-16.

¹²⁰ Okoye, Ikem Stanley. "Architecture, history, and the debate on identity in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (2002): 381-396. 384.

¹²¹ Dmochowski (1988), 7.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 24.

architecture, imported wooden houses and colonial compounds assumed a privileged position as artifacts worth saving. The tendency of this literature has been either utopian or nationalist in orientation, silencing historical conflict and focusing on discrete formal elements. In many ways, these postcolonial imaginings were a necessary corrective offering a necessary representational recalibration- a corrective to the rhetorical caricatures produced by European commentators in centuries prior. These ethnocentric accounts dismissed local traditions as heathen acts unworthy of serious study. But in the instance of postcolonial the literature devoted to traditional walled compound, the tendency was to extol the architecture as self-sufficient and organized around traditional family structures. As anyone who has lived in a family can attest, though, families are not entities without inner conflict. There are all sorts of disagreements, inefficiencies, fissionings. Families and households are fractious entities. In the post-colonial literature devoted to Nigeria's compounds, there was a tendency to venerate lineage descent and the family as a harmonic social unit.

In the case of Calabar, the importance Efiog Upkong Aye's 1967 book *Old Calabar through the Centuries* cannot be understated.¹²³ Aye's seminal text was a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature on the city as well as one of the first attempts to integrate oral traditions and theories about Calabar's early ethnic settlements. The book is an invaluable source about regional traditions and the Èfik language, but it is not without flaws. His take on the Palestinian origins of the Èfik, for example, has been refuted by many scholars and his readings or early missionary and trading accounts is often over-simplified. In one instance, he mis-transcribes the earlier quote taken from Daniel's 1846 text which originally read "The houses in Old Calabar, belonging to the middle and upper classes, are inferior in every point of view to those of any other nation in this part of Africa, not only in the firm and compact arrangement of the building materials, but in the appropriate style of architecture, which conjoins strength and solidity with neatness in execution."¹²⁴ Aye's transcription reads, "The houses in Old Calabar, belonging to the middle and upper classes, are *superior* in every point of view..." (Emphasis mine). Whether the word inversion was intentional or not is not the issue. Instead, it is this undercurrent of semantic transposition which is characteristic of late colonial and post-colonial scholars of Old Calabar.

In 1986, the National Museum at the Old Residency opened to the public with a seminar on the "History of Old Calabar". Included in the proceedings were two articles devoted to the city's architectural heritage from pre-colonial times to independence. While valuable compendiums for future research, the work by admitted non-experts in the field put forth over-simplified versions of the city's architectural forms. Nnimo Bassey's "The Architecture of Old Calabar", for example, classifies the buildings of the city into unification, fragmentation, and colonial periods. Indigenous unification was contrasted with later colonial fragmentation. Years later, Philip Ajekigbe imposed a similar periodization of architectural form as Bassey arguing each compound during the pre-colonial "unification" period "constituted a micro-unit capable of independent existence and expansion."¹²⁵ What exactly the compound was unifying is unclear and the question of independent existence has been undermined by many scholars who have demonstrated that these spaces were quite contentious and constantly in flux. Moreover, despite

¹²³ Aye, Efiog Upkong, *Old Calabar through the Centuries*, Hope Waddell Press, Calabar, 1967.

¹²⁴ Daniell, William Freeman, and R. G. Latham. "On the Natives of Old Calabar, West Coast of Africa." *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 848 (1848): 322. Akak (1981), 60-61.

¹²⁵ Ajekigbe, Philip G. "Old Calabar Architecture: An Overview" in *State, City and Society: Processes of Urbanisation* (2002): 95.

these disputes, they remained thoroughly networked and interdependent in the interest of trade. What is most problematic about this sort of classification is that by nostalgically privileging and elevating an era prior to European contact these scholars ironically remove indigenous agency from later periods of fragmentation, labeling Europeans as the sole catalysts of change. The spaces and inhabitants of later periods are branded as victims of foreign intervention which they certainly were not and as elaborated in later chapters.

Compounds are portrayed by Bassey as pre-colonial “unified” constructs that were “congenial to the people and sympathetic to the environment”.¹²⁶ Social life during this time is characterized as “communal” and slaves are euphemistically labelled “house helps”.¹²⁷ As described earlier, Bassey cites the Èfik folklore classic *Edikot Nwed Mbuk, A Book of Stories*, for details regarding the construction of compounds.¹²⁸ According to Bassey’s narrative, compounds were therefore the natural result of a strong connection between local cultural traditions and the environment. Further fusing this bond, Imbua later calls the families occupying these compounds “bio-social groups”. As rendered, these naturalized, unified entities are free of conflict and any of the “uncivilized” activities recorded by European observers. Compounds, it is argued are stable entities that become casualties to the spatial violence wrought by colonial intervention.¹²⁹ Bassey further draws this distinction citing Ruth Benedict’s classic anthropological text *Patterns of Culture*. She argues that architects during this era had a “real and positive relationship in which they lived.”¹³⁰ But Benedict was precisely against the kind of romantic utopianism displayed by Bassey and many of the postcolonial renditions of the traditional Èfik compound. Benedict famously argued against a return to simpler, archaic cultures in favor of understanding the rich diversity of cultural processes at work.¹³¹ Rendering compounds as simple homeostatic entities undermines an understanding of these spaces as riven with domestic disputes and internecine warfare. It is important to understand the space of compounds as contested and processural in nature.

While it seems that by definition a compound is an admixture of different, and perhaps conflicting elements or parts, this description doesn’t fit the sanitized version put forth by many post-independence scholars. Similar to Bassey’s stable rendition of the compound, Noah claims that the “homogeneity” of these spaces wasn’t challenged until they were “undermined by expansion” and “segmentation” associated with the rise of the slave trade.¹³² Tagging prior compounds as “homogenous” environments free of segmentation is misleading and obscures the socio-spatial dynamism, political conflict, and demographic diversity of this era. Associating the advent of segmentation and conflict with the arrival of slave traders is an oversimplification of the process already at work in the early phases Old Calabar’s history. Imbua, for example, argues, “There is no doubt that intertribal wars in the Cross River region predated the coming of Europeans.”¹³³ Further, the well-documented practices of human sacrifice and slavery are systematically unrepresented in the optimistic post-independence imaginings of the compound. Historian Robin Law comments on this tendency writing, “Human sacrifice is seen as self-evidently wicked, and therefore not congruent with the essentially sympathetic picture of pre-

¹²⁶ Bassey (1990), 125.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹²⁸ Amaku, E. N. *Edikot nwed mbuk*. Nelson's Eftk Readers Book, 1948.

¹²⁹ Nwaka, Geoffrey I. "Calabar, A Colonial Casualty." *Calabar Historical Journal I* (1976): 29-64.

¹³⁰ Bassey, (1990), 125.

¹³¹ Benedict, Ruth. *Patterns of Culture*. Vol. 8. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1934. 20.

¹³² Noah, 24-25.

¹³³ Imbua, 44.

colonial West African societies which these authors seek to project. The problem of human sacrifice is therefore both minimized and externalized, reducing the moral guilt and transferring it as far as possible onto non-African societies.”¹³⁴ While early European accounts often fixate on these violent practices, later scholars necessarily elide important socio-spatial dynamics when they provide sanitized histories which conveniently fit nationalist imaginaries.

In the same 1986 National Museum proceedings, Braide and Ekpo put forth “Notes on the Preservation of Vanishing Monuments of Old Calabar” in which they argue traditional compounds represent the “unadulterated social life in the sub-region”.¹³⁵ These vanishing monuments “hold the memories of the early beginning of this great nation.”¹³⁶ They urge the need to preserve traditional built environment which they argue acted as “autonomous and self-sufficient units”.¹³⁷ Such a claim, however, directly contradicts the conclusions of economic historian A.G. Hopkins who argued persuasively that during the sixteenth century, the economy was “by no means self-sufficient”.¹³⁸ Oral histories and economic historians of Old Calabar describe a web of exchanges that took place in a basic distribution system.¹³⁹ Rather than autonomous internalized spaces, compounds at this time are better understood as calibrated nodes in a network of small-scale trading states.

Reflecting on what he termed the “nativist” discourse critiquing Eurocentric literature on Africa, Kwame Anthony Appiah notes that such critique still ultimately “inhabit a Western architecture”.¹⁴⁰ Rather than taking an Afrocentric position preoccupied with legitimating ancient histories, he recognizes the multicultural and hybrid nature of African culture. On the whole, the scholarship of the post-independence era focused on the history of Old Calabar was a necessary corrective to its pre-colonial and colonial predecessors, but often gets caught in advocating essentialist readings of identity. Through the lens of these scholars, the traditional Èfik compound was elevated from a primitive and debased indigenous form to a naturalized, self-sufficient symbol of “national individuality” worthy of preservation.¹⁴¹ These accounts, stressing the unity, communalism, and self-sufficiency of compounds present a utopic vision of an indigenous built form. While in many ways, these representations served as a critical corrective to years of debasement by European commentators, the imagined compound overlooked the arrangement’s fluctuating and diverse identities as well as the tensions and violence which constituted it.

2.6 Conclusions and Transitions

Considering the record, it becomes evident that particular “attention to the historically and socially situated nature of discourse” is necessary when analyzing representations of the

¹³⁴ Robin Law, “Human Sacrifice in Pre-Colonial West Africa,” *African Affairs* 84, no. 334 (1985): 53-87. See particularly pages 70-72 on Old Calabar.

¹³⁵ Braide and Ekpo, 142.

¹³⁶ Braide and Ekpo, 161.

¹³⁷ Braide and Ekpo, 161.

¹³⁸ Hopkins, Anthony Gerald. *An Economic History of West Africa*, Columbia University Press, 1973. 108.

¹³⁹ Hart, 34 paragraph 104-105, Latham (1973), 6-7.

¹⁴⁰ Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992. 59.

¹⁴¹ Bennett, Bob, “The Development of Nigerian Architecture: The Early Post-Independence Era”, *New Culture*, New Culture Studios, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1979. 27-32.

traditional walled compound in Old Calabar.¹⁴² It is clear that Old Calabar had been socially and politically organized prior to the arrival of the first Europeans in the seventeenth century. In place was a small-scale, but functioning economy based on fishing and trade. Much has been written about the traditional Èfik compounds of pre-colonial Old Calabar, though tellingly, most of this documentation comes after the pre-colonial time period. Travelers, colonial officials, and anthropologists in the nineteenth century sought to document the space of the compound, often contrasting it to the “planned” forms of Western development (Figure 2.13, 2.15, 2.16). Because the literature describing the spatial dynamics of these configurations has been scattered, contested, and written for different purposes it has been difficult to get a precise understanding of how they worked. A number of mischaracterizations, evident in colonial and post-colonial writings about Old Calabar architecture and urbanism have thus unwittingly been repeated.

The imprecision in these descriptions cluster around three interrelated adjectives: traditional, unplanned, and decentralized. Early European accounts cast the space of Old Calabar as an unplanned zone of violence and death. The traditional built environments of Old Calabar were likewise described as primitive and backwards. In contradistinction, post-independence scholars viewed compounds as innovative, decentralized, and self-sufficient units. The compound was elevated to a national symbol. However, a less sanguine account is necessary in order to understand the socio-spatial dynamics of the compound. Though the compound has historically been pulled between discursive poles, it’s important to understand it not merely as a rhetorical construction, but a socially-constructed space unto itself.

Compounds were carefully choreographed zones of interface for the Èfik communities which migrated to the area in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Built of local mud and thatch, the space of the compound was internally-oriented, but porous. Surrounded by windowless mud walls and entered through a single gate, the inner courtyards of compounds served as complex sites of material and spiritual exchange. Compounds were privatized spaces which accommodated residential, commercial, and religious functions. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the structure of the compound was ill-suited for the increased contact by European traders engaged in the slave trade. The era of the traditional compound fostered exchange, though it was still irregular, unpredictable, and unsystematic. The efforts of a merchant elite would soon fundamentally change this space.

¹⁴² Crysler, C. Greig. *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism and the Built Environment, 1960–2000*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2003. 6.

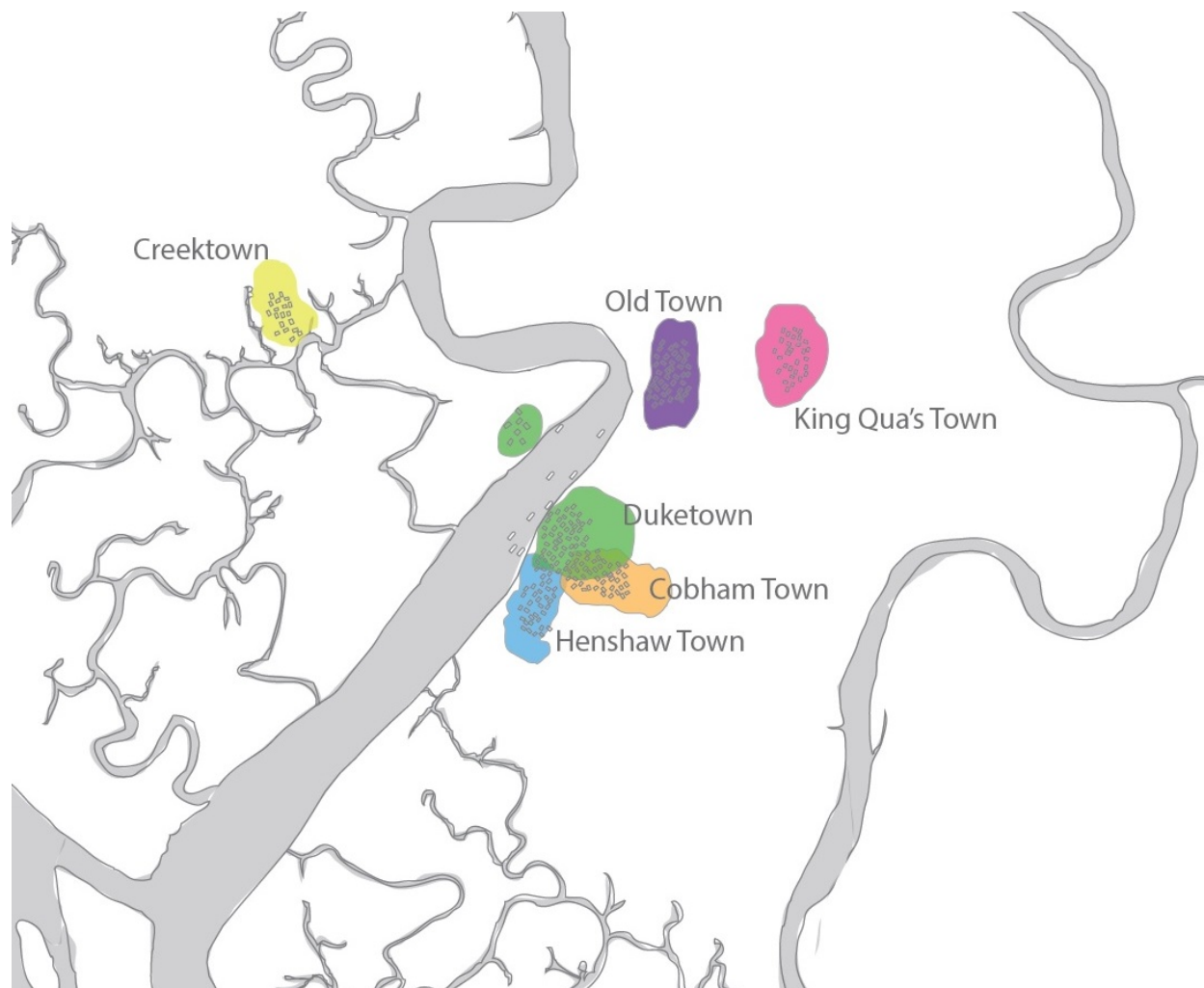


Figure 2.1. Diagram of Old Calabar and principal trading towns (Source: Joseph Godlewski)

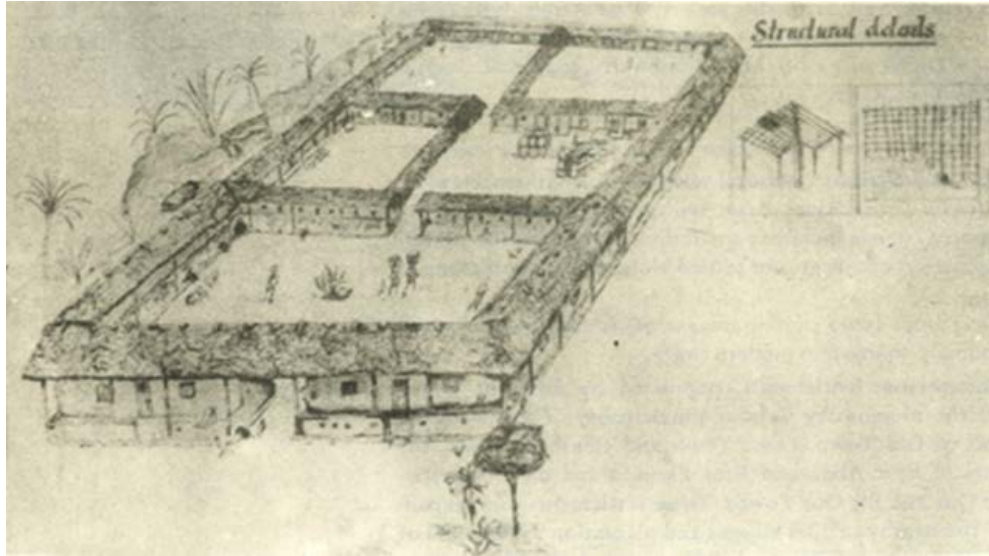


Figure 2.2. Traditional Efik compound, undated sketch (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).

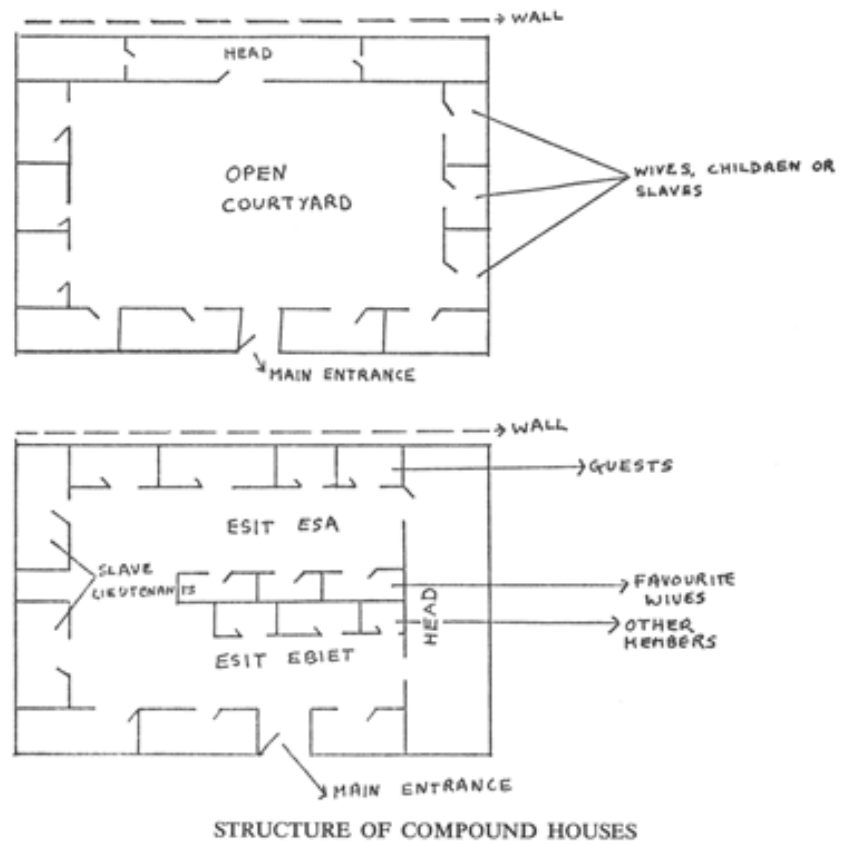


Figure 2.3. Structure of Compound Houses (Source: Nair, Kannan K. (1972) *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria 1841-1906*, 12.)

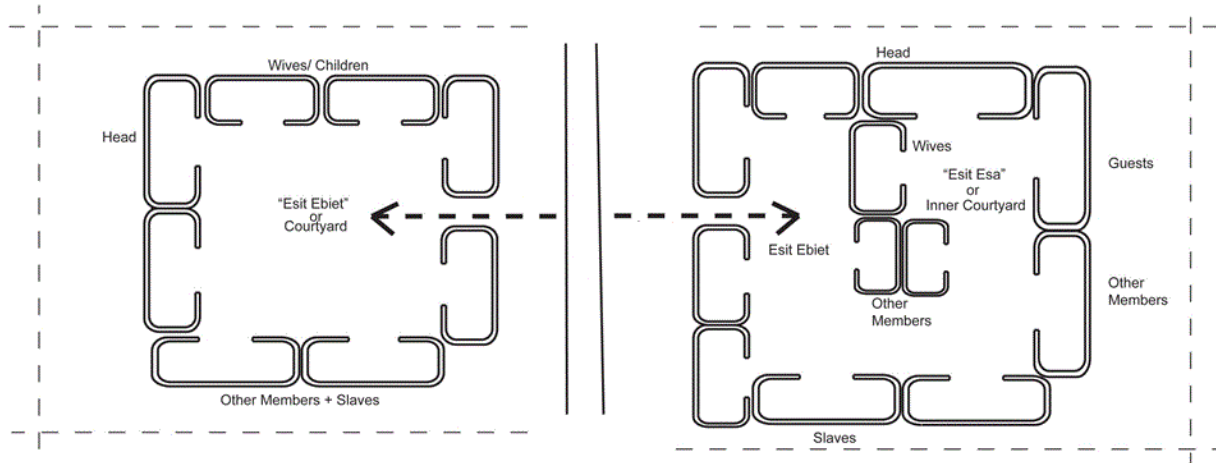


Figure 2.4. Structure of Compound Houses (Source: Godlewski after Bassey "The Architecture of Old Calabar" (1990) *Old Calabar Revisited*, 127.)



Figure 2.5. Traditional Igbo compound (Source: S.O. Izmoh (1994) *Nigerian Traditional Architecture*, 51.)



Figure 2.6. Awka Nibo Nise, Compound of Agubalu Ebe. Two-storey tower. (Source: Zbigniew Dmochowski (1990), *Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture: South Eastern Nigeria* v. 3.)



Figure 2.7. *Africæ nova tabula Nouvelle Afrique*, 1631. Relief shown pictorially. Decorated with sailing ships, fish and other animals. Verso pages numbered 621 and 624. Garson, Y. *Africa in Europe's eyes*, 24 (Source: Northwestern University Library.)



Figure 2.8. Map of Guinea, “Guinea - AmpliBmo. DoctiB.moq. Viro D. Nicolaotulp, Medecinae Doctori Reip. Amsterdamensis Senatori et Scabino, Medico et Anatomic celeberrimo, tab. hanc D. D. Guiljelmus Blaeu.” (1640-50)(Source: Blaeu, Joan & Guiljelmus). Old Calabar marked as “Calbray”.

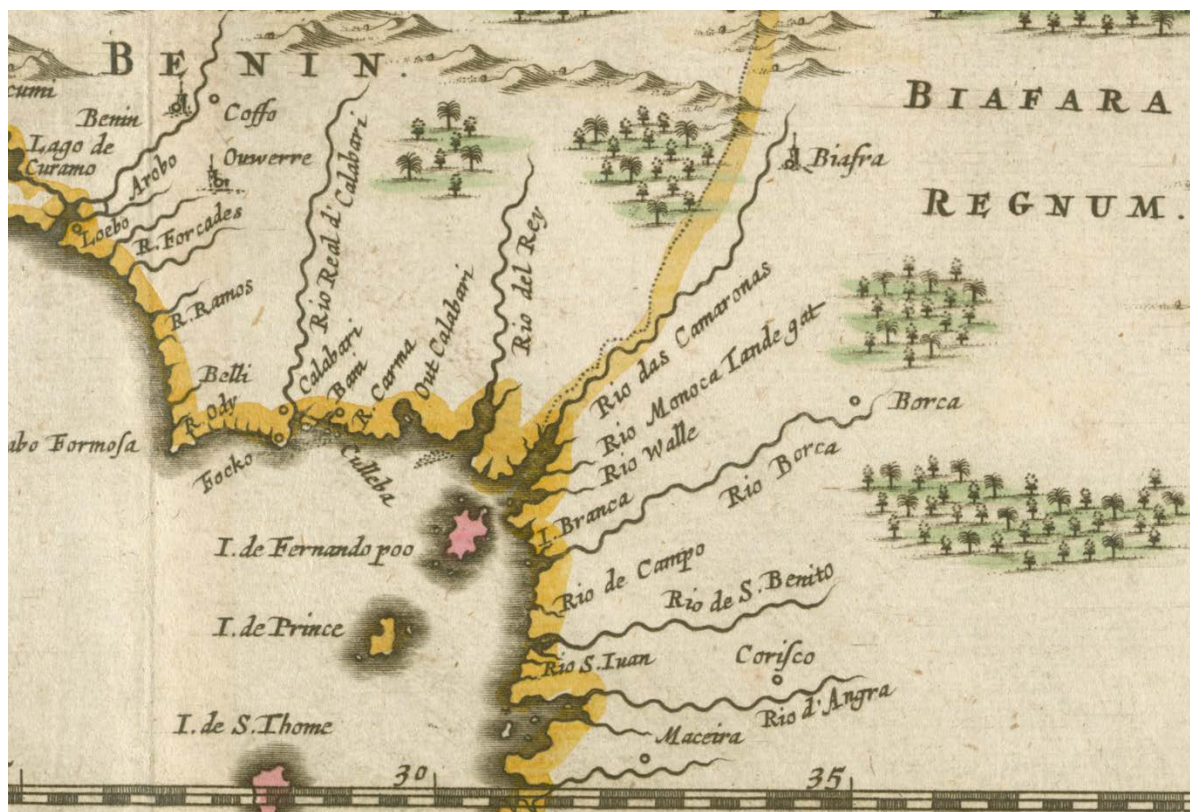


Figure 2.9. “Nigritarum Regnum” detail (1664)(Source: Apud Heredes Joannis Janssonii). Map by Jan Jansson, Amsterdam.

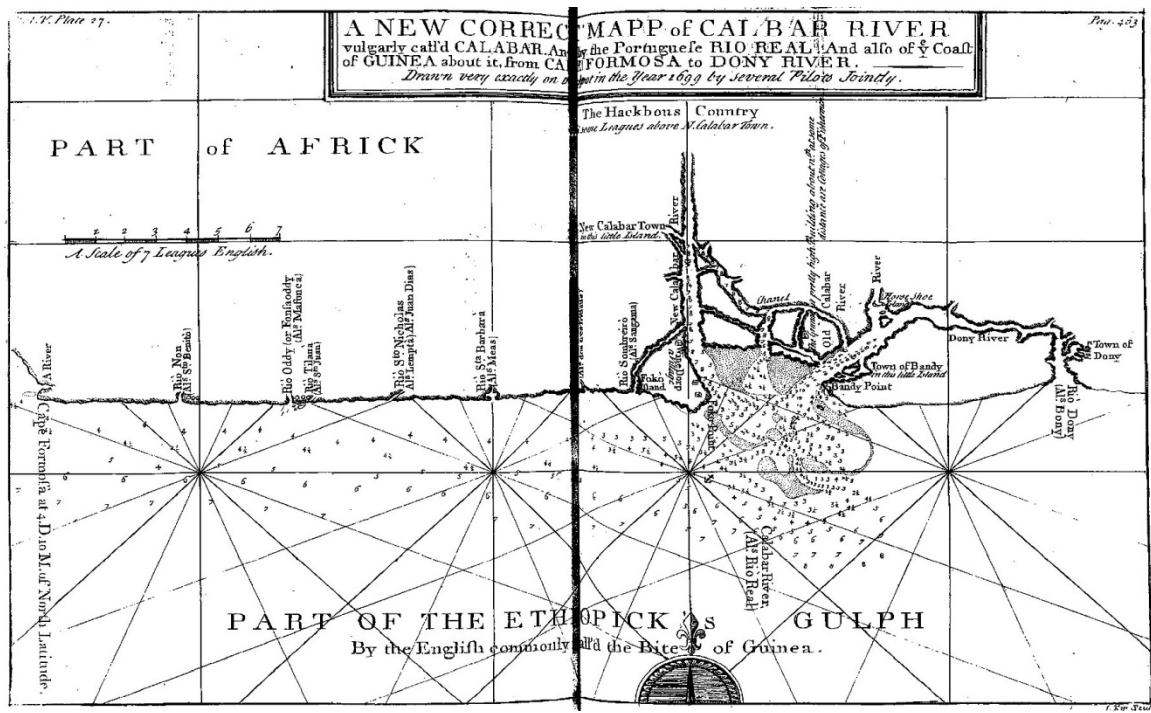


Figure 2.10. "A New Correct Mapp of Calabar River" (1699) (Source: Barbot, Jean. *An Abstract of a Voyage to New Calabar River, Or Rio Real, in the Year 1699*. Assignment from Messrs. Churchill, 1746).

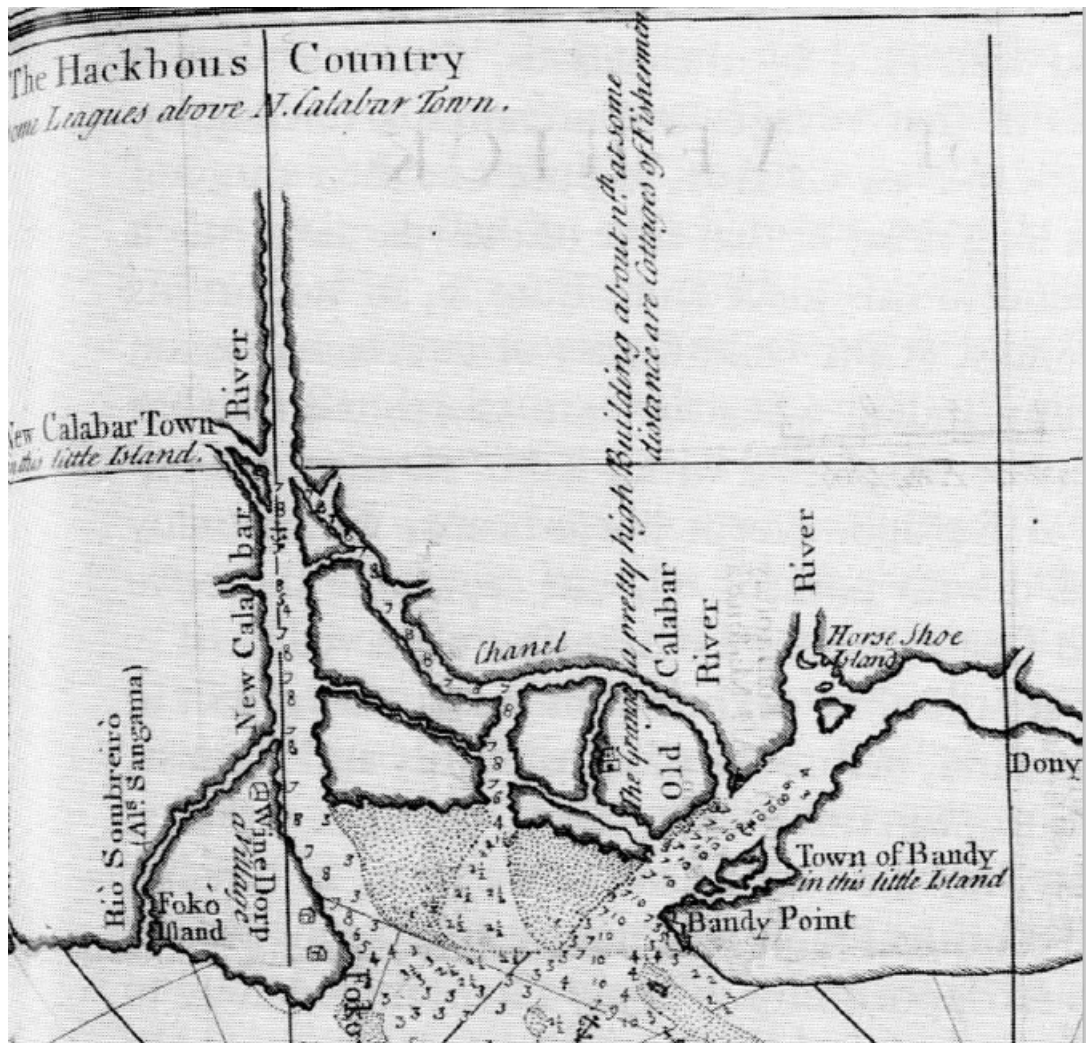


Figure 2.11. Detail of 'A New Correct Mapp of Calabar River' (1699) (Source: Barbot, Jean. *An Abstract of a Voyage to New Calabar River, Or Rio Real, in the Year 1699*. Assignment from Messrs. Churchill, 1746). "The Grange, a pretty high Building" and at some distance are "Cottages of Fishermen".



Figure 2.12. A New Map of that Part of Africa called the Coast of Guinea (Source: Snelgrave, William. *A New Account of Guinea, and the Slave-trade*. London: Printed for James, John, and Paul Knapton, at the Crown in Ludgate Street, 1734).

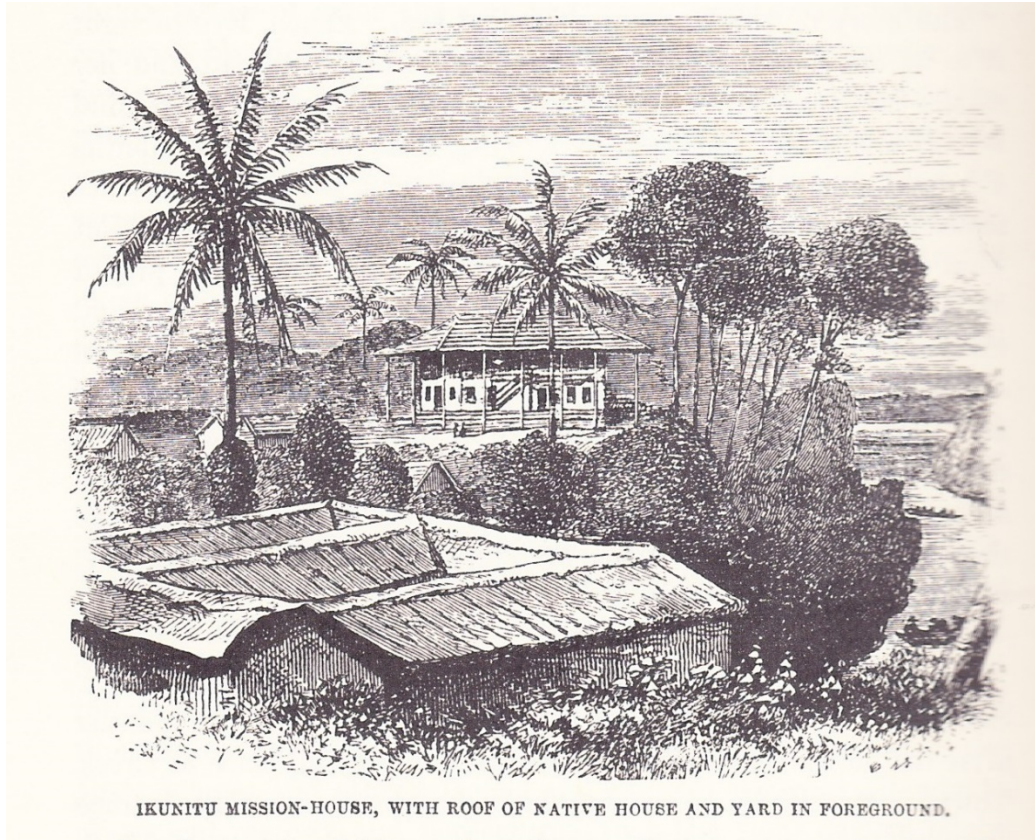


Figure 2.13. “Ikunitu Mission-House, with roof of a native house and yard in the foreground” (Source: Hope Masterson Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858*, 1863. 596)

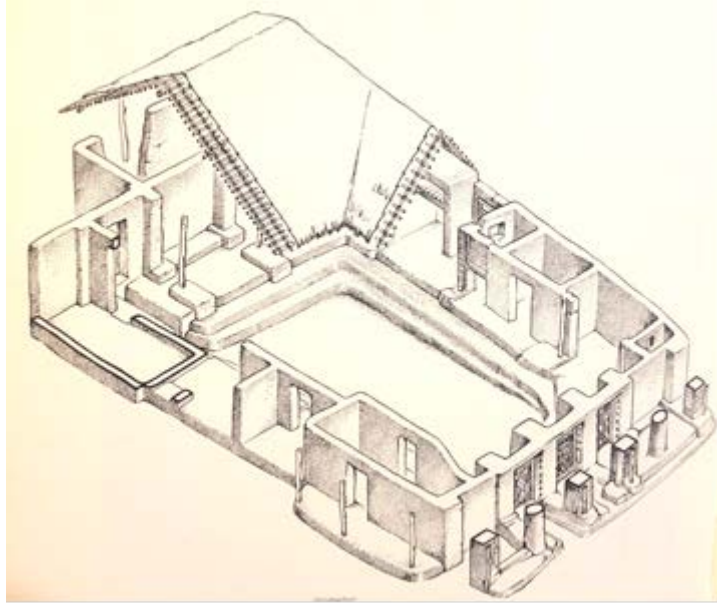


Figure 2.14. Compound of Chief Ogbua, Onitsha (Source: Moughtin, J.C. (1988) *The Work of Z.R. Dmochowski: Nigerian Traditional Architecture*, 24.)



Figure 2.15. Government Hill from Duketown, Old Calabar, Postcard To J. B. Scott from Bob, Old Calabar, 2 Feb 1903 (Source: Museum Victoria).



Figure 2.16. Natives' houses in close proximity to factory, Calabar, Nigeria (1908-1912)
(Source: National Archives in Kew CO 1069/41/219).

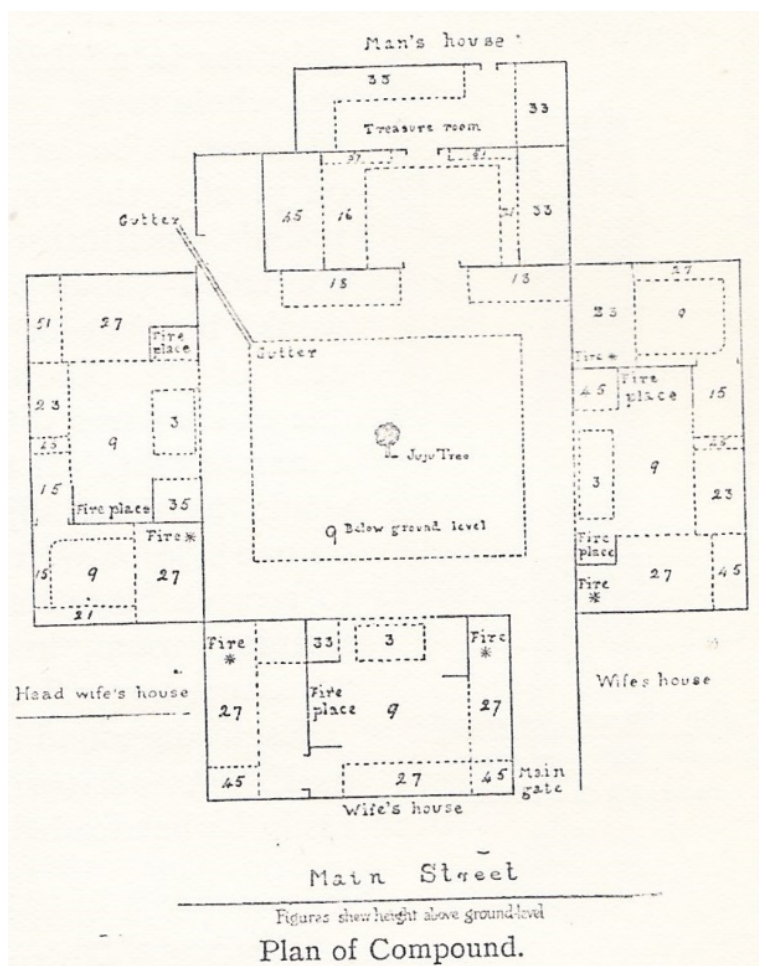


Figure 2.17. Plan of Compound (Source: Talbot, Percy Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. Heinemann, 1912. 263).

Chapter 3: Masquerade

3.1 Both God and Devil

In total, over 12.5 million slaves were exported from Africa in what has been called the largest forced migration in human history.¹ Integral to this enterprise was the willing participation in the slave trade by African merchant elites. Old Calabar was one of the most active West African ports in the trade. Between 1662 and 1837, Old Calabar exported approximately 200,000 slaves.² Before 1729, about 40,000 slaves were exported from its shores however from 1730 onward, this number dramatically increased.³ Just as John Watts had boarded a slave ship on a London dock in 1668, another eighteen year-old Englishman named Silas Told boarded one in Bristol sixty-one years later.⁴ The son of a physician, he could read and write and kept a diary of his travels and suffering at the hands of harsh slave captains.⁵ Due to family debt, he was forced into slaving and endured several beatings in the process. While both Watts and Told were young slavers, Told participated in the trade at a time in which Old Calabar's role in the transatlantic trade had completely transformed. Between the mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the quantity of Old Calabar exports had dramatically increased and its trading techniques had changed.

Latham remarks on the spectacular rise in slave exports from the Bight of Biafra during the eighteenth century.⁶ While trade during Watts' time was still sporadic, by the 1720s, regular shipments were being made with Bristol merchants dominating the trade. Behrendt and Graham argue that from the 1660s to 1720, an oligarchic Èfik merchant community maintained a ceiling on export trade, and thus did not increase annual shipments of slaves, produce, or provisions significantly.⁷ Though "By the first few decades of the 1700s Cross River merchants had created commercial networks to support trade with the three to five European ships a year that arrived to purchase enslaved Africans, produce, and provisions."⁸ The Old Calabar Told encountered was one which was fundamentally more robust and steady than the one experienced by Watts. His account therefore offers a glimpse of Old Calabar during this time period.

Late one evening in 1729, he heard a "universal shriek" among the slaves between the decks. On being asked what distressed them, the terrified cargo, "with wild confusion of mind, said, that *Egbo*, or the devil was among them." Told's story continues:

The next morning, when we came to open the hatches, to admit the air into their loathsome dens, and for the purpose of discharging their tubs, to our great surprize we found a number of them laying dead; upon

¹ *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. Web. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

² Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 48.

³ David Eltis and David Richardson. "West Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: New Evidence of Long-run Trends", *The Slavery Reader*, eds. Gad J. Heuman and James Walvin. 2003. 50.

⁴ Told, Silas. *An Account of the Life, and Dealings of God with Silas Told, Late Preacher of the Gospel...* Printed and sold, by Gilbert and Plummer; and by T. Scollick, 1785.

⁵ Tyermann, Luke. *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists*. Vol. 3. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1872. 279.

⁶ Latham (1973), 18.

⁷ Behrendt, Stephen D., and Eric J. Graham. "African merchants, notables and the slave trade at Old Calabar, 1720: evidence from the National Archives of Scotland." *History in Africa* 30 (2003): 56.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

hoisting up about eighty of them, we saved thirty-nine, and the rest, having irrevocably lost their breath in suffocation, the captain directed us to cast them overboard, which was instantly done, forty in number.” Who, or what was this *Egbo*-- this entity which could spark such apoplectic and lethal revulsion among captives already experiencing hellish circumstances? Slaving voyages such as this were increasingly commonplace.⁹

Later in Told’s account, we hear of his encounter with *Egbo* in an open space near the town of Old Calabar. He writes:

while we lay at Callabar, and just previous to our sailing, the captain sent me on shore armed, with two men, to what is called “Enforcement of Trade.” Accordingly I went on shore with a cutlass by my side, and in my hands two loaded pistols. When I arrived at the top of the hill, I heard an uncommon shrieking of women, and as I drew near a division of houses, I saw what (through curiosity) I had long wished to see, namely *Egbo*, a native, in a fine silk grass meshed net, so curiously made to fit him, that nothing but his hands and feet appeared; the net ended with a fringe, not unlike ruffles. This man is looked upon as both God and devil, and all stand in the most profound awe of him, from the highest to the lowest.

I stood to see the sequel of his caprice, and observed that in his hand he had a green bough, wherewith he was whipping the women’s posteriors, as they went naked, and chasing them out of one house into another; and as they were increasingly terrified, and considered it a heavy curse when *Egbo* struck them, therefore they fled from him as we would flee from hell flames. However, when he had satisfied himself by lashing the poor women, he came out through the middle of the court, and through the meshes of his net, I was discovered by him. Presently he advanced toward me, with full purpose to let me feel the full weight of his green bough; upon which I instantly drew my hanger, with a resolution to cut off his head. He then ran away and I saw him no more. Afterwards, I was visited by some of the chief men in the town, saying “*Baccareau*, you no fear *Egbo*?” I replied, “Not I, and that if he had offered to strike me I would have cut his head off.” At which answer they could not help laughing heartily, and then retired.¹⁰

Told’s question, “Who, or what was this *Egbo*?” is a telling one and his diary holds several insights into the cultural milieu from which it came. We’re provided the first documented sighting of *Ékpè* or *Egbo*, the entity to which caused the stir on the slaving ship months earlier. While Snelgrave’s account documenting his 1713 slave voyage mentions the “god *Egbo*”, Told’s record provides the first documented sighting of an *Ékpè* masquerade by a European observer. It also provides an unfiltered first contact account of this indigenous practice.

Egbo is an Anglicization of the Èfik word “*Ékpè*” literally meaning “leopard” or “a panther with spotted skin”.¹¹ *Ékpè* is an invisible preternatural spirit said to inhabit the forests near Old Calabar. The *Ékpè* society, or “leopard society” is a secret association and sacred institution. Because only members can see *Ékpè*, a visual surrogate is necessary for communicating with the uninitiated. In *Ékpè*’s place, a costumed masquerader known among the Èfiks as *Ídèm Íkwò* carries out the society’s dictates in the public sphere. The *Ékpè* society went on to fulfill a critical role in the eighteenth century as a regulating mechanism which organized the increasing slave trade in Old Calabar. Prior to the establishment of the *Ékpè* society in Old Calabar, trade and intercultural exchange was sporadic and volatile. Encounters were raw and unpredictable. An engraving from 1725 serves to demonstrate this shift. The images entitled *An Englishman Tastes the Sweat of an African* and *A View of Calabar* made just four years before Told’s encounter were among the first visual representations of the slave trade (Figure 3.1). In

⁹ Dobson, Austin, “Silas Told: Mariner and Methodist” in *The Living Age*. Volume 197. 1893. Boston: Littell, Son and Co. [etc.]. 300-306.

¹⁰ Told, 28-29.

¹¹ Aye (1991), 31.

this image taken from an eighteenth century French book about commerce, we get a depiction of the slave trade and the institution of slavery on the Calabar coast.¹² A European cargo ship wait docked in the Calabar River while slave traders dubiously taste the sweat of a slave to detect for diseases, or other health issues before making a purchase. While this looks like a pure European over African power relation, it is likely the institution of Ékpè soon altered this dynamic. Local initiates began to require European traders build trust and negotiate with local merchants before establishing commercial ties. Ékpè acted to mitigate tensions and was central to settling disputes between competing compounds as well as between African merchants and the growing offshore community of slavers. In the eighteenth century, Ékpè grew to become an intricate mechanism mediating commercial and cultural exchanges and normalizing trade relations.¹³

What Told was witnessing was not in fact Ékpè, but a ritualistic masquerade performed by *Ídèm Íkwò*, a messenger or “runner” for Ékpè. This costumed figure, dressed in *esik*, a multi-colored woven suit and symbolic feathers wrapped around his head, wore a bell around his waist to announce his approach and the presence of Ékpè’s authority (Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3). The first image of an Ékpè body mask was published in Talbot’s 1912 study, *In the Shadow of the Bush* (Figure 3.4). The anonymous *Ídèm Íkwò* carried a long whip with leaves attached which he used to lash the uninitiated and those who break Ékpè laws. Often accompanied by drummers, the masquerade transformed the space between compounds into a charged zone of interface between Ékpè and the uninitiated.¹⁴ *Ídèm Íkwò*, the proxy sovereign, effectively performs the boundaries of Ékpè’s jurisdiction. The masquerade dance (*nyóró*) was a performed space between the secrets of Ékpè and British traders, later missionaries, and colonists. It was also a spatiotemporal threshold or portal between life in the Èfík communities of Old Calabar and the spiritual realm of ancestors and wild sylvan deities.

Told’s description of wild figure revered as “both God and devil” violently whipping shrieking women is consistent with disparaging descriptions of Old Calabar customs at the time, though the institution of Ékpè quickly became a respected organization which prominent European merchants negotiated with. In his description, Told was impudent and aggressive toward what he deemed as a capricious and violent custom. Subsequent traders, however, went on to have tremendous respect for the institution, recognizing its importance in regulating matters of commerce. Due to the society’s power to collect debts, some Europeans even went on to become members.¹⁵ In the subsequent century, Europeans’ relationship with Ékpè continued to be a fraught one, wavering between self-righteous demonization, dismissiveness, and adulation. Nonetheless, it became an organizing force for the paradigmatic space of the masquerade discussed in this chapter.

As a slave port, Old Calabar was different than most active during the early eighteenth century. Rather than a strong central government warehousing bodies in large prison complexes, trade was organized by less formal and permanent means. The environment of Old Calabar was instead stitched together with a transient network of war canoes transporting goods and slaves between compounds, trading houses, temporary *barracoons*, and British slaving ships docked in

¹² Chambon, Joseph. *Le Commerce de l'Amérique par Marseille*. 1764.

¹³ Dike, Kenneth Onwuka. *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956. 33. Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, 33-34.

¹⁴ Ottenberg, Simon, and Linda Knudsen. "Leopard society masquerades: symbolism and diffusion." *African Arts Los Angeles, Cal.* 18.2 (1985): 37-44.

¹⁵ Latham (1973), 38. Imbua (2012), 22-23.

the Calabar River.¹⁶ This network was intricately linked to the circuits of exchange flowing through the Black Atlantic and the American plantation complex. A depiction of this offshore dynamic is found in a Nicholas Pocock painting from the 1760s. In it African and European traders can be seen shaking hands and loading canoes for transshipment to the Southwell Frigate waiting nearby (Figure 3.5). Old Calabar fundamentally differed from most other slaving ports and colonial cities in that Europeans did not establish territorial authority there for centuries.¹⁷ There were no slave dungeons or foreign forts—any of the markings of extraterritorial colonial permanence-- in the city at this time. Old Calabar’s architecture and urbanism contrasted that of the commercial slaves of the Gold Coast like Cape Coast Castle operating at this time (Figure 3.6). Instead, the ships and towns constituted a polycentric landscape governed by a hybrid form of British maritime finance and the Ékpè society. Told’s account describes the outward effects of an encounter with this performed and negotiated space, but does not elucidate its logic or secretive inner-workings.

Paul Lovejoy notes that in contrast to the Gold and Slave Coasts, the pattern of enslavement on the interior of the Bight of Biafra was much different than that at Old Calabar. Unlike the strong states of the Oyo and Asante, for example, the commercial centers of the Bight of Biafra thrived under decentralized conditions. Ports were run by merchants, not large centralized governments. Lovejoy summarizes, “The function of local governments was to regulate trade, not attempt to control it. Both politics and the economy were dominated by a merchant oligopoly.”¹⁸ In the absence of a strong centralized government, the Ékpè society served as a diffuse privatized governing body ruling over the urban landscape and coast of Old Calabar. The primacy of merchants over officials was the reverse of host states like Asante, Oyo, and Dahomey. Private enterprise was intertwined with state functions in ports operating in the Biafran coast at this time. Nwokeji points out that at times there did not seem to be a clear cut distinction between the two.¹⁹ The architecture engendered by these forms of political and economic organization was thus fundamentally different.

To put in perspective the differential spatial experience Old Calabar presented for an observer like Told, it is necessary to understand the historical context from which his encounter emerged. Besides the rise of the transatlantic slave trade and the concomitant era of colonial expansion which placed Told in Old Calabar, a number of cultural developments were transpiring. In architectural discourse, Colen Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus* was published in 1715, popularizing the symmetry and precision of the neo-Palladian style. Lord Burlington’s Chiswick House in London was completed the same year as Told’s Ékpè encounter. The Baroque era in music was on the wane, replaced with a renewed interest in classical hierarchy and clarity. Told’s Europe was one in the throes of Enlightenment thinking and the Age of Reason. Neoclassicist formalism dominated the arts, architecture and urbanism of the early eighteenth century. For Told, the informality and performance of the *Ídèm Íkwò* represented a

¹⁶ Northrup, David. *Trade Without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

¹⁷ Dike, 9. Dike comments that this situation bore a resemblance to the pattern of British enterprise in India. He notes, “Until the middle of the eighteenth century the East India Company was a purely trading body owning no Indian soil but the few square miles on which its main factories stood.” 7.

¹⁸ Lovejoy, 102.

¹⁹ Nwokeji, G. Ugo. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. 64. Nwokeji incorrectly attributes Falconbridge’s report of “officer boys” in Old Calabar during the second half of the eighteenth century. Falconbridge was referring to Bonny in this instance, however the larger point about private/state enterprises stands. 64n14.

bizarre and untamed inverse of this classical order. The performed space of Ékpè, however, was informed by a complex politics of secrecy, undetected by the young Told. Ékpè firmly established indigenous territorial sovereignty at a time in which trade grew exponentially and contact with Europeans became commonplace.

The traditional compound structure which dominated Old Calabar in the sixteenth and seventeenth century grew and was re-organized during this time, but the space produced by Ékpè soon superseded the compound and became the paradigmatic space of this era. Told's narrative offers a glimpse of the built environment at the time and Ékpè's role in it. Told is sent on shore on an "Enforcement of Trade" mission. Upon landing, he arrives at the top of a hill. Based on other records from the time, we can extrapolate that this is probably in or near the area of Old Town on the eastern shore of the Calabar River. The hill he ascended was probably that of present day Government Hill and the Old Residency. Settings such as the arrangement of houses between which the Ékpè runner performed and the court in which Told was eventually spotted by the masquerader became the spaces of encounter which ruled this era.

Sixty-one years after John Watts' experiences in the Cross River estuary, Told's account relates a fundamentally different space. Whereas Watts' purported story describes an area dominated by multiple small-scale kingdoms susceptible to random acts of violence and one-time vengeful acts upon foreigners, Told's describes a systematized, albeit decentralized ritual. Though his assessment of Ékpè role as "both God and devil" was not accurate, his assessment of its inseparable powers was insightful. Like quantum entanglement, Ékpè is able to occupy multiple positions at once. The Ékpè society emerged as intertwined spiritual and economic force in part to overcome these trade and power disparities and in part to settle social and spiritual conflicts in the growing metropolis of Old Calabar. What follows is not intended to be a complete account of this association nor is it a critique of its practices. It also isn't a celebration of a kind of historical subaltern urbanism derived from an "insider" knowledge obtained through membership.²⁰ It instead sketches the general outlines of the association based on historical sources and recent scholarship with a focus on Ékpè's "spatial agency" in the transatlantic diaspora of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.²¹

3.2 Ékpè Masquerade

As described earlier, the Ékpè secret society was a critical component of the social and economic life of Old Calabar during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Though portrayed as a crude superstition or generalized by European chroniclers as "witchcraft", the influence of Ékpè during this era was inestimable. Aye summarizes the powers of this traditional association, writing that Ékpè:

proved to be the source of supreme authority in all Èfik towns, and its institutions provided, in the past, the highest court whose verdicts transcended all else. Ékpè could take life and give it; it could condemn a whole town to a heavy fine and was promptly paid; it could punish offenders and could forgive; even kings and òbóns could never escape Ékpè laws and edicts. Its authority was sacrosanct and was above challenge."²²

²⁰ Roy, Ananya. "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35.2 (2011): 223-238.

²¹ Awan, Nishat, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. London: Routledge, 2011.

²² Aye (1967), 70-71.

The authority propounded by the Ékpè society served as an important “uniting link” to the previously scattered settlements.²³ This regularized the sporadic trade existing previously and made it more efficient. Practiced by several towns in the Cross River region, it served as an important spiritual and mediating mechanism between indigenous and European traders during the transatlantic slave (*ófin*) trade and early palm oil (*adan èyóp*) trade. Mbembe notes, much like dislocations and occurring on the continent today, the “crises of witchcraft” transforming the space of Old Calabar were a result of both economic forces and “major cultural realignments”—“religious and trading networks became inextricably entangled”.²⁴

Besides oral evidence, most of what is known about Ékpè in pre-colonial Calabar comes from the diary of Antera Duke and the memoirs of the travelers Henry Nicholls and James Holman.²⁵ Ékpè discourse, much like the writings devoted to traditional compounds, is split between ethnocentric accounts condemning it as a primitive cult with superstitious beliefs and violent practices and accounts extoling its value as a traditional cultural institution and venerating its innovative economic practices. Critical historical accounts, many of which were authored by slave traders and missionaries, often exaggerated the excesses of Ékpè.²⁶ Holman, for example, ghoulishly detailed Ékpè offerings to “evil” spirits, human decapitation, and public maiming, commenting that “it is scarcely necessary to observe that the Calabar people are extremely cruel.”²⁷ Hutchinson reported that “as late as 1856, twin children, albinos, “as well as those born without their upper teeth” were sacrificed in Old Calabar under the “despotic power” of Ékpè.²⁸

Documented cases of witchcraft accusations and counter-accusations exist throughout Old Calabar history. Witchcraft, or *ifót*, played an important role in resolving disputes in Old Calabar society, spectacularly manifesting itself during times of social and economic instability.²⁹ Some scholars, such as G.I. Jones, have speculated witchcraft was a complex means of relieving tensions at times of economic stagnation and contraction.³⁰ Latham, however, points out that a rise in witchcraft accusations in Old Calabar accompanied an expanding economy both in the 1780s with the rise of the slave trade and in the 1830s and 1840s with a rise in the palm oil trade.³¹ Hutchinson reported that “the mode of execution for those condemned of witchcraft by “Egbo authority” was “hacking the convicted with swords, knives, and cutlasses, till death puts

²³ Hart, 51 paragraph 144.

²⁴ Mbembé (2001), 71.

²⁵ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup. Hallet, Robin, ed. Records of the African Association, 1788-1831. London: Thomas Nelson, 1964. Holman, James. *Travels in Madeira, Sierra Leone, Teneriffe, St. Jago, Cape Coast, Fernando Po, Princes Island, Etc. Etc.* G. Routledge, 1840.

²⁶ Nair, 20.

²⁷ Holman, 395.

²⁸ Hutchinson, Thomas Joseph. *Ten years' wanderings among the Ethiopians.* Hurst & Blackett, 1861. 45, 6.

²⁹ Hackett, Rosalind IJ. *Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989. 36-39.

³⁰ Jones, G. I. "A Boundary to Accusations", Douglas, Mary, ed. *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations.* London: Routledge, 2013. 325.

³¹ Latham, Anthony John Heaton. "Witchcraft Accusations and Economic Tension in Pre-Colonial Old Calabar." *The Journal of African History* 13.02 (1972): 256. Latham writes, “But although G. I. Jones has suggested that the underlying tensions which provoke witchcraft accusations in the eastern areas of Nigeria today arise from a contracting economic situation, this was not true of Old Calabar in those days; its economy was in fact expanding under the stimulus of overseas trade. It was expansion which caused the tension, as successful business men acquired wealth and slaves, and therefore status, which contradicted their position in the traditional status system, based on age and place in lineage rather than wealth.”

an end to his suffering.”³² Common areas of focus in these accounts include the Ékpè practice of human sacrifice, the use of the *éserè* poison bean ordeal during witchcraft accusations, the suppression of slaves, and general ungodliness.³³ These historical records undoubtedly have scholarly value, though the focus of the following analysis concentrates on critically evaluating the constructive analyses of Ékpè during the eighteenth century with an emphasis on highlighting the society’s spatial practices. Ékpè is still practiced in the region and elsewhere, though its function is largely artistic and cultural.

While typically Ékpè has been studied by specialist anthropologists and historians of the region, its spatial practices have been overlooked by architectural scholars. Economic historians have been drawn to its role in the commercial exchanges between Europeans and African middlemen, while the craft, symbolism, and ritual of Ékpè has been resigned to the studies of cultural and art historians. Perhaps due to the scarcity of preserved architectural monuments, significant architects, or measured drawings or due to the difficulties of studying a secret society, the spatial practices of Ékpè have not been extensively examined. Existing studies provide invaluable insight into the institution of Ékpè, however their tendency to analyze it in specialized terms undermines the entangled diversity of people, practices, and spaces which constitute it.

A.J.H. Latham’s seminal 1973 text *Old Calabar 1600-1891 The Impact of An International Economy Upon a Traditional Society* is an example of this type of study which highlights another weakness of this approach.³⁴ The subtitle of the book reveals an assumption held in much of the scholarship on Old Calabar which is that while it may have been a complex “traditional” society, it was ultimately a static entity until the arrival of European traders. The traditional society is “impacted” like an innocent bystander hit by a moving vehicle of Western modernity. Economic and political change emanates from the European centers of power and indigenous customs like Ékpè adapt to accommodate the ineluctable logic of technological progress. “Mono-causal” explanations inevitably flatten the multiplicity of forces influencing historical change providing a distorted picture of events.³⁵ This singular understanding, however undermines the “inescapable hybridity and mixture of ideas” which constitute the diasporic space of the Black Atlantic and practices such as Ékpè.³⁶ The Ékpè society can be said to demonstrate Duanfang Lu’s conception of “entangled modernity” challenging teleological and unidirectional views of European “impacts”.³⁷ Rather than agency-less receptors, the Old Calabar merchant elite who were members of the Ékpè society were active participants in the formation of a mutually-constituted and dynamic urban commercial nexus.³⁸

³² Hutchinson, 54.

³³ Waddell (1863). Robertson, George A. *Notes on Africa: particularly those parts which are situated between Cape Verd and The River Congo: containing sketches of the geographical situations, the manners and customs, the trade, commerce, and manufactures, and the government and policy of the various nations in this extensive tract: also a view of their capabilities for the reception of civilization, with hints for the melioration of the whole African population*. Vol. 1. Printed for Sherwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster Row, 1819. 316.

³⁴ Latham (1973), 146-148.

³⁵ Afigbo, A. E. “Mono-causality and African Historiography: The Case of Efik Society and International Commerce,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* (1973): 117.

³⁶ Gilroy, xi. King, Anthony D. *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*, London: Routledge, 1995.

³⁷ Lu, Duanfang. “Entangled Modernities” Crysler, C. Greig, Stephen Cairns, and Hilde Heynen, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*. SAGE Publications, 2012. 231-246.

³⁸ Demissie, Fassil, ed. *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012. The essays in this volume similarly explore the built environment as a mutually constituted process in the context of colonial Africa.

While Ékpè is a traditional practice steeped in centuries of ritual, it's important to not understand it as a timeless institution. Like the compound which has deep historical roots in the region and tends to be cast as an unchanging and fixed entity, Ékpè is often characterized in terms of locally bound, sedentary tradition with a connection to a primordial past.³⁹ In fact, Ékpè was an incredibly inventive and malleable institution.⁴⁰ It has a long and fluctuating history of acclimating to specific political and economic pressures.⁴¹ Ottenberg and Knudsen note that despite the temporal resilience of particular Ékpè symbols and practices such as the body masquerade figure, they have spread and adapted to diverse set of cultures and localities beyond the bounds of particular localities.⁴² Similarly, Eli Bentor traces the flows of Ékpè's changing masking genres in southeastern across ethnic boundaries.⁴³ Ivor Miller's study of Ékpè's mercantile and educational relationship with British port cities as well as its cultural transmission across the Atlantic and recreation in Cuba's Abakuá society demonstrates Èfik Ékpè's "eclectic tradition reflecting the reach of their trade networks."⁴⁴ Ékpè was an active agent in transforming urban and rural spaces in diverse localities and time periods.

The origins of Ékpè's arrival in Old Calabar, like those of the founding of the city itself, is shrouded in uncertainty.⁴⁵ According to Aye, Ékpè had diffused from Ekoï and was instituted in Old Calabar as early as the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Noah suggests Ékpè's Old Calabar arrival early as the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ Thompson provides a more specific date claiming it was "bought from an Efut man around 1650."⁴⁸ Still others argue the most reasonable estimate, based on written records and oral histories to be in the middle of the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ The quarrelsome historiography of Ékpè is reflective of competing claims of ethnic identity and territorial rights in the region, forming a discursive space beyond the scope of this study. The spatial and temporal boundaries of Ékpè can best be described as negotiated, porous, and flexible. For this study, it is useful to note that many scholars agree that the institution arrived in Old Calabar sometime in the 1720s, in part as a response to the rapidly expanding slave trade.⁵⁰ Told's account from 1729, therefore, is the first written account by a European observer which describes the performed space of the Ékpè masquerade.

Ékpè permeated every aspect of Èfik society informing economic, legislative, and judicial decisions, enforcing the payments of debts, and performing religious functions. It judged important cases, issued laws, and protected the property of members.⁵¹ Collectively, it was able

³⁹ Bassey, Engineer Chief Bassey Efiog. "Foreword", Ivor Miller. *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*, University of Mississippi: Jackson, 2009. xviii.

⁴⁰ Ekpo, Ikwo A. "Ekpe Costume of the Cross River." *African arts* 12.1 (1978): 74.

⁴¹ Battestini, Simon PX. "Reading Signs of Identity and Alterity—History, Semiotics and a Nigerian Case." *African Studies Review* 34.01 (1991): 112.

⁴² Ottenberg and Knudsen, 37-44.

⁴³ Bentor, Eli. "Spatial Continuities: Masks and Cultural Interactions Between the Delta and Southeastern Nigeria." *African arts* (2002): 26-93.

⁴⁴ Miller, Ivor. *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*, University of Mississippi: Jackson, 2009. 6.

⁴⁵ Hart, 62 paragraph 175.

⁴⁶ Aye (1967), 70.

⁴⁷ Noah (1980), 30.

⁴⁸ Thompson, Robert Farris. *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*. New York: Vintage, 2010. 239-40.

⁴⁹ Latham (1973), 36

⁵⁰ Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup, 32.

⁵¹ Simmons, Donald, "An Ethnographic Sketch of the Efik People." In *Efik Traders of Old Calabar*, ed. Daryll Forde, London: Oxford University, 1956. 16.

to challenge the power of European merchants and was the prime reason Old Calabar was able to maintain territorial sovereignty and resist colonization well into the nineteenth century.⁵² As historian K.O. Dike has noted, it became an acknowledged fact that in the Niger Delta the “sovereignty of... African states was unimpaired by the presence of Europeans”.⁵³ By establishing a system of “comey”, or anchorage fees with British cargo ships, Ékpè simultaneously managed to prevent a European foothold on land and reaped the economic benefits of these payments. Merchants and families competed for comey which hastened a series of transformations within the social structure of the traditional compound (discussed later in this chapter).⁵⁴ Ékpè helped establish the terms of the fees and settle disputes between houses. To “blow Egbo” on another is a process in which members accused others of wrongdoings and thus suspended trading activities until the disagreement was settled.⁵⁵ In addition to these fiscal powers, Ékpè acted as a form “community police” with the disciplinary power to confiscate the property from the disobeying community members.⁵⁶ In contrast to Foucault’s rise of the centralized disciplinary power of the modern French state, Ékpè’s power was diffuse and fleeting.⁵⁷ Access to these powers, though, was competitive and exclusionary.

Often called a secret society, Ékpè operated more as a kind of freemasonry with each town having authority over its own lodge, variously called an Ékpè shed (*Efe*), Egbo house, or palaver house.⁵⁸ Appadurai and Holston’s observation that contemporary cities have increasingly become “a honeycomb of jurisdictions”⁵⁹ echoes the nineteenth century anthropologist Percy Amaury Talbot’s remark about the Cross River region-- “The whole country is honeycombed with secret societies.”⁶⁰ However, it was not a secret that the society existed, with lodges and masquerades occurring in plain sight, but the internal knowledge and decisions of the association were governed by a complex and coded “politics of secrecy”.⁶¹ In her analysis of transnational forms of freemasonry, Jossianna Arroyo argues secrets themselves are mediated spaces between the personal and the collective and structurally connected to the realm of political and social ethics. Arroyo argues secrets, hidden from view and oddly present, have always “figured as instruments of power”.⁶² Commenting on Ékpè’s dualistic characteristics, Davidson notes that membership was open to all men, despite ethnicity and closed in the sense that membership was by subscription and rank was carefully graded on seniority and wealth.⁶³ Ékpè was organized as a hierarchically-graded structure in which there were a set of negotiated initiation fees. Members

⁵² Imbua (2012), 35.

⁵³ Dike, 8. He notes that in the Niger Delta, “merchant adventurers made their sailing ships their home and with the exception of the baracoons (*sic*)... they had no foothold on African territory.” 9.

⁵⁴ Nair, 23.

⁵⁵ Behrendt, Latham, Northrup, 146, Crow, 282-283.

⁵⁶ Miller, Ivor, and Mathew Ojong. “Ékpè ‘Leopard’ society in Africa and the Americas: influence and values of an ancient tradition.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36.2 (2013): 267.

⁵⁷ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Random House LLC, 1977.

⁵⁸ According to Hutchinson, “The term “palaver”, derived from the Spanish “palabra” (talk) has a very extensive meaning. It signifies “dispute”, “controversy”, “argument”, or “reasoning”. Hutchinson, Thomas Joseph.

Impressions of Western Africa: With Remarks on the Diseases of the Climate and a Report on the Peculiarities of Trade Up the Rivers in the Bight of Biafra. Vol. 1. Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858. 119.

⁵⁹ Holston, James and Arjun Appadurai, eds., *Cities and Citizenship*, Duke University Press, 1999, 13.

⁶⁰ Talbot, Percy Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. Heinemann, 1912, 37

⁶¹ Arroyo, Jossianna. *Writing Secrecy in Caribbean Freemasonry*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 7, 101. See Miller, 5 on “secrecy”.

⁶² Arroyo, Jossianna. *Writing Secrecy in Caribbean Freemasonry*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 1, 7, 101.

⁶³ Davidson, Basil, *The African Genius*, 97.

of the society could purchase higher titles in exchange for power, influence, and privileges inside and outside of the society. The highest category of membership was that of *òbóng* or leader. The paramount *òbóng* title was that of *èyám̀bà* [*iyám̀ba*], the ruler or president of Ékpè followed by the vice president or *èbunkó* and *nyàm̀pkè* (Figure 3.4).⁶⁴ In 1805, Nicholls calls Egbo Young “Eyambo” the “principal chief and trader.”⁶⁵ The death of these dignitaries often signaled a period of political and spiritual uncertainty marked by elaborate funeral obsequies and witchcraft accusations. The number of grades, cost of membership, and extent of Ékpè functions has fluctuated over time.⁶⁶ If the earlier social structure of the traditional compound can be described as a collection of small aristocracies, Ékpè operated as a kind of plutocracy, dominated by wealthy merchants.⁶⁷

As historian Ivor Miller points out, in the absence of a centralized state, each of the dispersed semi-autonomous communities in Old Calabar had its own Ékpè lodge where matters concerning local governance were settled and secrecy figured prominently.⁶⁸ Each lodge had its own officials who presided over the different Ékpè grades and legislative decisions.⁶⁹ A simple, rectangular structure without windows and constructed with traditional mud and thatch techniques, the lodge was a space set aside in each village where members would meet to discuss matters privately (Figures 3.7 and 3.8). The interior of lodges was dedicated to Ékpè’s ritualistic chanting, secret ceremonies, and political debates. Access was only granted to initiates. The larger, outer room of the lodge was called the *ùfót efe*, while the smaller inner room was known as the *éták efe*. Outside the lodge, an Ékpè drum (*èkò̀m̀dò*) was used to summon members and signal important events. The Ékpè lodge, like the traditional compound, presented a relatively mute physical shell enclosing a covert and power-laden space rich in symbolism.

Thomas Hutchinson described the palaver house as consisting of “two parallel walls running parallel for about forty walls... In the farthest corner of the house is a private sanctuary into which none but the most privileged are admitted on occasion of Egbo meetings.”⁷⁰ Within the lodge, members gained access to the mystical Divine Voice of the leopard confirming the presence of Ékpè. The immaterial source of the Voice is the primary secret shared by members.⁷¹ Simmons’ ethnographic sketch describes the “roar of the leopard” as:

simulated by a secret noise-making apparatus called *mbok*. Whenever the Leopard men produce the noise they always curtain off the room with blue and white Ibo-dyed *ùkàrà* cloth and hang the leaf of the *Newbouldia laevis* tree on the curtain to prevent the entrance from unauthorized persons. Manipulators of the mechanism produce the tones of names, &c., thus enabling the mechanism to ‘talk’ in a manner analogous to drum signals. The apparatus (which is not a bull-roarer) is regarded as particularly sacred.⁷²

The resonant sound of the Voice or *úyó* is described as “a code name for the regenerative forces of the universal Mother who protects lodge members.”⁷³ Access to this Voice was a spiritual

⁶⁴ Hart, 54-55 paragraph 157.

⁶⁵ Hallet, 198.

⁶⁶ Ottenberg and Knudsen, 37. Imbua (2012), 22.

⁶⁷ Offiong, 52, Noah (1980), 25.

⁶⁸ Miller, 5-6.

⁶⁹ Hart, 52-53 paragraph 149.

⁷⁰ Hutchinson, *Impressions of Western Africa*, 119-120.

⁷¹ Miller, 55. “uyo Ekpe is all that is Ekpe. If we went a bit further we might say, “all that there are, is energy.”, Miller, 243n168.

⁷² Simmons (1956), 18.

⁷³ Miller, 219.

portal to a non-terrestrial space of otherworldly forces and forgotten ancestors. In 1805, the traveler Henry Nicholls viewed from afar an Ékpè lodge and described the sound emitted by an Ékpè performer as “very like a bear”.⁷⁴ Another charged symbol that is part of the lodge complex is the *Ítiát* Ékpè or Ékpè stone. This foundational stone is integral to initiation ceremonies and stepping on it signifies admittance into membership. The secrets relating to a particular grade are then revealed to the initiate thus beginning a lifelong learning process.⁷⁵ The charged space of the lodge, like that of the masquerade had the power to catalyze altered states of consciousness. The economic and political powers of Ékpè were necessarily entangled with these dynamic symbolic and mystical registers.

Understood in these terms, Ékpè may be understood as an absolutist entity with a clear mandate. Though as Ruel describes, “Ékpè itself is not a superordinate authority but instead serves to support the independent authority of each communities’ own representatives”.⁷⁶ Ékpè space fostered the political autonomy of lodges and while protecting its own power through ambiguous, camouflaged practices. A fundamentally exclusionary space, only initiates had access to the lodge and the secrets of Ékpè. Further, this knowledge was coded in a complex system of graphic symbols known as *nsibidì*. Miller defines *nsibidì* as system of “signs and symbols that are expressed through recitation, playing instruments, gesture, or drawn images.”⁷⁷ Attempts have been made to decipher and taxonomize the meanings of these *nsibidì* characters which are often drawn, painted, or dyed on fabric, but the purpose of these ideograms was keep outsiders away (Figure 3.9).⁷⁸ Ékpè lodges are sometimes adorned with elaborate *ùkàrá* cloth encoded with *nsibidì*. These densely-coded practices clearly indicated the presence of Ékpè, though their meaning remained a mystery to non-initiates (Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11). The exterior of contemporary Ékpè lodges, often quite austere, maintain this sense of secrecy and exclusion (Figure 3.12).

Ékpè masquerade of the sort described by Told and subsequently recorded by generations of observers and scholars functioned not only as a disciplining mechanism, but as a performed system of communication, richly layered in meanings. In 1828, traveler James Holman dismissively described the frenzied space created by an Ékpè runner moving between houses as “dreadful” and “superstitious” custom.⁷⁹ Based on oral histories, Hart instead described this space as one produced by a “supernatural representative” of a sylvan deity.⁸⁰ While the specific meaning is elusive to non-members, the dynamic movement of masquerade and performed *nsibidì* “evokes multiple messages and complex metaphors.”⁸¹

In contrast to object-based studies of African art, Fenton’s analysis of Ékpè masquerade and gestural *nsibidì* from the perspective of performance reveals the fundamentally processural and spatial qualities of Ékpè artistry.⁸² He argues the masquerade was a demonstration of wealth, power, prestige, and a marker of sacred space. As a performed esoteric knowledge system, it

⁷⁴ Nicholls, 203.

⁷⁵ Offiong, 52. Miller, 41.

⁷⁶ Ruel, Malcolm. *Leopards and Leaders: Constitutional Politics Among a Cross River People*. Vol. 23. London: Routledge, 2004. 253.

⁷⁷ Miller, 13.

⁷⁸ Miller, 13.

⁷⁹ Holman, 391-394.

⁸⁰ Hart, 52 paragraph 147.

⁸¹ Ottenberg and Knudsen, 95.

⁸² Fenton, Jordan A. *Take it to the streets: Performing Ekpe/Mgbe power in contemporary Calabar, Nigeria*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Florida, 2012. 65-66.

connected members of the secrets of Ékpè and ancestral spirits. Ékpè rituals thus produced a liminal zone of transition between spiritual and commercial life worlds. At a larger scale, they formed a temporal space between the eras of Old Calabar dominated by traditional compounds and that of articulated global commercial networks. In the place of permanent infrastructure and hulking centralized edifices as a demonstration of power, the space of Ékpè was quick, mobile, and malleable and its visual power rested in its performed and secretive practices.

3.3 An Avatar of Capitalism Unleashed

Arguably the most important powers of Ékpè were economic, namely its ability to act as enforcement mechanism for debt recovery. Several scholars have written persuasively about Ékpè's material commercial functions beyond its representational and symbolic value. Latham reasons that the Èfik had always had to deal with commercial credit, but with the advent of the external slave trade their economy had been "revolutionized".⁸³ The relationship between Old Calabar and the West was "essentially commercial" and that its associated socio-cultural changes were "side-effects" of this commerce.⁸⁴ Again, Latham problematically sees the impetus for change as a force emanating from the West and "impacting" a traditional society, though he nonetheless acknowledges that Èfik "produced a brilliant solution" by adopting the Ékpè society as an institution for governing bad debts. He concludes that Ékpè was therefore "a genuinely African capitalist institution of the elementary kind."⁸⁵

With a similar economic focus, historians Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson demonstrate how building trust with local merchant houses offered protection for European traders against the risk of defaulting on loans. Through a methodical scoring of archival documents relating to the slave trade, they show how an adapted form of British maritime financial practices mixed with the laws of Ékpè to facilitate the growth of trade in this part of pre-colonial Africa. Resonant with a neoliberal market logic, Lovejoy and Richardson argue Old Calabar and its system of merchants and middlemen acted as an example of "transaction cost economizing". They write, this practice "provides a graphic illustration of how, despite cultural and other differences at the "interface", financial and commercial innovations allowed cross-cultural trade to flourish in pre-colonial West Africa."⁸⁶ The evidence of rising slave shipments suggests that British merchants and African dealers in slaves were able to agree on forms of accommodation including pawnship that reduced the risks of advancing credit for the British and allowed African dealers to compete with other groups in the Atlantic world for British commercial capital.⁸⁷

Pawnship, a system in which individuals are held in debt bondage as collateral for loans, served as another mechanism for guaranteeing credit in this coastal economy.⁸⁸ As one observer

⁸³ Latham (1973), 29,

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁸⁶ Lovejoy, Paul E. and David Richardson, "Pawns Will Live When Slaves Is Apt to Dye": Credit, Risk and Trust in the Era of the Slave Trade" in *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa*, edited by Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003). 92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁸ Lovejoy, Paul E. and David Richardson, "Pawns Will Live When Slaves Is Apt to Dye": Credit, Risk and Trust in the Era of the Slave Trade" in *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa*, edited by Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003). 71-96.

noted in 1790, relatives were "always particularly anxious" about their fate and "seemed much distressed whenever they took up an idea that the ship would sail away with the pawns."⁸⁹ (Figure 3.1, particularly note 7). While contemporary perspectives of the "risk society" tends to universalize and exceptionalize the catastrophic dangers existing in the present moment—climate change, financial crisis, terrorism—Achille Mbembe correctly points out that any historical account of the rise of terror must address the global phenomenon of institutionalized slavery and the plantation complex.⁹⁰ Trust, pawnship, slavery, and their associated spaces were integral components of what might be termed a proto-risk society at work in Old Calabar. Latham, Lovejoy, and Richardson's analysis underscore the economic inventiveness of Ékpè and provide historical grounds for questioning assumptions embedded in contemporary neoliberal discourse, though in their exclusive focus on economic registers, they necessarily flatten the complexity of this ancient institution. Citing Adiele Afigbo, Imbua warns of "the danger of applying the so-called economic interpretation of history to a situation as complex as an actual human experience."⁹¹ Economic explanations of something as complex as Ékpè are inadequate for grappling with the dynamics of symbolic representations, belief systems, and human agency.⁹² Socially-produced space in these models is treated as a mere epiphenomenon of the teleological processes of modernization.

Recent analyses more seriously take into account these factors, considering Ékpè not simply as a creative, particularized response to the historical processes of capitalism, but as meaning-laden practice integral to a mutually-constituted global formation. Stephen Shapiro argues that institutions like Ékpè contest what he calls a "penetrative models of domination by foreign domination".⁹³ While still couched in Marxist terms of capitalist modes of accumulation and labor domination, and world-systems theory conceptualizations of the "semi-periphery" Shapiro's contribution is to recognize Ékpè as an "admixture of public and covert functions".⁹⁴ He writes that while Ékpè's "performativity had public functions, it was also 'secret' in the sense that they gained influence over the inland oracular authorities, who would provide captives to the African traders in human flesh through pronouncements of juridical slavery."⁹⁵ Oracles, spirits, dances, and coded rituals were as vital to the socio-economic landscape of Old Calabar as the exchange of copper bars, anchorage fees, and the calculation of profit. It is this reinforcing feedback loop between sacred and profane values which endowed Ékpè with its pervasive powers.

Anthropologist Stephan Palmié builds on this insight. Taking exception with Latham's economistic characterization of Ékpè as "an elementary capitalist institution", he complicates its social dynamic.⁹⁶ The creative powers to "moralize contractual ties" and "transform economic

⁸⁹ John Ashley Hall quoted in Lovejoy, Paul and David Richardson. "Letters of the Old Calabar Slave Trade 1760-1789." *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*. Eds. Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001. 89.

⁹⁰ Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage, 1992. Mbembé, J-A., and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15.1 (2003): 11-40.

⁹¹ Afigbo, quoted in Imbua (2012), 24.

⁹² Mbembé, (2001), 5-6.

⁹³ Shapiro, Stephen. "The technology of publicity in the Atlantic semi-peripheries: Benjamin Franklin, modernity, and the Nigerian Slave Trade" in Goebel, Walter, and Saskia Schabio, eds. *Beyond the Black Atlantic: relocating modernization and technology*. Routledge, 2006. 115-134.

⁹⁴ Shapiro, 129.

⁹⁵ Shapiro, 130.

⁹⁶ Palmié, Stephan. "Ecué's Atlantic: An Essay in Methodology." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (2007): 275-315. 287.

assets into sacred authority” lie in Ékpè’s fusion of symbolic and economic functions. He argues that “the numinous entity these associations worshiped may well have been an African avatar of the spirit of capitalism: what Ékpè offered to a rising African elite on the Cross River was an ideology capable of domesticating the savage forces unleashed by seaborne European merchant capital by harnessing them to distinctly local goals.”⁹⁷ Indeed, the spirit of Ékpè was known to be a trickster that would escape the lodge after the death of a chief and return to the bush. The only way to recapture was through elaborate funerary rites.⁹⁸ Ékpè leaders would request an elder woman from a ruling family to evoke the aid of ancestors in the recapturing the spirit.⁹⁹ These symbolic reenactments connected participants to primordial past while relieving tensions and coping with crises in the present. In moments of uncertainty, the Voice “became the source of certainty.”¹⁰⁰ Ékpè was thus a mobile spiritual entity, tacking between market and mystical worlds—at once a devious “avatar of the spirit capitalism” and an ancestral medium for “the regenerative forces of the universal Mother who protects lodge members”. Ékpè, in its marshalling of supernatural forces for material gains, acted as an “occult economy” of the eighteenth century slave trade.¹⁰¹

The case of Ékpè throws into question the presumed certitude and logic of markets, revealing the centrality and power wielded by secrets and spirit worlds. The flexibility demonstrated by Ékpè in this historical conjuncture does not suggest an agency-less immobile tradition being impacted by an inexorable alien force. Whether the force cast as the international economy, Western progress, modernization, or rationality, a unidirectional narrative is an incomplete one which systematically “delegitimizes other knowledges”.¹⁰² The case of Ékpè also doesn’t indicate the operation of an abstract economic exchange filigreed with an elaborate, though ultimately superfluous system of rituals and spatial practices. It instead provides historical evidence for the coexistence and material and spatial realities produced by seemingly incompatible registers.

Palmié argues Ékpè was “a body of 'local knowledge' impossible to localize in space and time; a structure that moves and is moved onward by the effects of the changes it wreaks upon the social and economic relations within the field through which it passes.”¹⁰³ This sense of entanglement is necessary to gain purchase on the paradigmatic space produced by Ékpè in the eighteenth century. To consider the socio-spatial artistry of Ékpè as an after effect or a surface appearance, quite literally masking the materialist processes of capitalist accumulation is an inadequate assessment which lacks imagination. In looking at the charged environment produced by Ékpè, it is evident that is impossible to disentangle this complex convergence of identity, spirituality, and economy. The space produced by Ékpè, while giving the appearance of being a wild, unplanned, performance is in fact a highly planned, carefully calibrated mechanism choreographed by a politics of secrecy.

⁹⁷ Palmié, Stephan. "Ecué's Atlantic: An Essay in Methodology." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (2007): 275-315. 287.

⁹⁸ Miller, 96.

⁹⁹ Miller, 96 citing Talbot.

¹⁰⁰ Miller, 222n15, citing Thompson, 243.

¹⁰¹ Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. "Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony." *American Ethnologist* (1999): 279-303.

¹⁰² Lu, Duanfang, ed. *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*. Routledge, 2010. 24

¹⁰³ Palmié, Stephan. "Ecué's Atlantic: an essay in methodology." *Journal of religion in Africa* 37.2 (2007): 275-316. 288.

The historical analysis of the eighteenth century slave-exporting state of Dahomey put forth by the economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi serves as a productive comparison to Old Calabar.¹⁰⁴ In *Dahomey and the Slave Trade: An Analysis of an Archaic Economy*, he views the centralized administration of the kingdom—comprised of royal palace complexes, autocratic rulers, and an organized army—as an example of “planned economy” acting in response to the market economy of the slave trade.¹⁰⁵ Polanyi’s study has been critiqued for its oversimplification of the dynamics of reciprocity and the faith it holds in the presumed redistributive powers of benevolent rulers. Considering these critiques and the decentralized nature of Old Calabar’s built environment and political structures, Dahomey is better understood as a contrasting case study.

Polanyi’s earlier text, *The Great Transformation*, though, provides an invaluable insight regarding the workings of market economies. The book is a landmark historical study the rise of industrial civilization in England in 1795 through the Great Depression. In it, he dispels the “stark utopia” of the self-adjusting “free market” arguing that it cannot not exist without annihilating the fabric of human society.¹⁰⁶ According to Polanyi, society develops response mechanisms to protect itself from the predations of the unrestrained market. Markets are “embedded” in society and attempts to disembed them are met with spontaneous forms of resistance. This “double movement”, or the struggles and counter-struggles around forms of rule, demonstrate that economic and social problems are inherently linked. Markets, in actuality, are dependent on an array of administrative efforts and a product of deliberate state action. Polanyi’s argument reveals the paradox: “While laissez-faire economy was the product of deliberate State action, subsequent restrictions on laissez-faire started in a spontaneous way.” He summarizes, “Laissez-faire was planned; planning was not.”¹⁰⁷ While this is a profound insight, the task of viewing the socio-spatial dynamics of Old Calabar-- an organization that seemingly “lacked” a state-- at first proves challenging.

Though Old Calabar “lacked” a centralized state, it did have a system for negotiating markets, value, and identity. Though not a centralized state like Dahomey, the Ékpè society fulfilled a panoply of state-like functions. It was modulated by a politics of secrecy which both enabled the conditions for a “free market” between traders on the shores of the Calabar River, as well as preventing the full-scale territorial colonization and destruction of Old Calabar cultural traditions. Regarding state and society relationships, Ékpè was a performed “both/and” rather than an artificially constructed “either/or” condition as it is presented in previous scholarly studies. These analyses, in their fixation on the economic—exchange values, goods transferred, currency, price fluctuations, credit, or the cultural—artistic traditions, linguistic, religious practices, historical figures—overlook how fundamentally intertwined these registers are in the zone of negotiation produced by Ékpè. Ékpè resists such compartmentalization. Not unlike the decentralized Aro’s use of supernatural oracles in commerce, Ékpè was able to “combine trading in spiritual and material goods.”¹⁰⁸

Thinking back to Palmié’s observation that Ékpè was capable of “domesticating the savage forces unleashed by seaborne European merchant capital”, Ékpè served an active

¹⁰⁴ Polanyi, Karl, and Abraham Rotstein. *Dahomey and the Slave Trade: An Analysis of an Archaic Economy*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, see specifically 9-23.

¹⁰⁶ Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007. 146.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰⁸ Northrup, 142. See also Nwokeji, 77-78.

protectionist role from predatory slavers in an urban environment free of defensive bulwarks and large-scale indigenous armies. Within Old Calabar, Ékpè performed an important role of mediating disputes between trading houses and between individual members. In sum, it was a mechanism which held together Old Calabar's disparate and competing forces.

Highlighting Ékpè's societal role should not downplay the willing participation of indigenous elites in the transatlantic slave trade. The history of Ékpè is not one of subaltern resistance or bottom-up rebellion. To romanticize Ékpè as an inventive and "self-organizing" capitalist institution glosses over the mass coercion, violence, and death necessitated by the global plantation complex which it was part of.¹⁰⁹ In this sense, Ékpè was simultaneously an embodiment of the "magic of the market" unleashed and a carefully-calibrated institution critical in the protection and identity-formation of both a rising merchant elite and to an emerging metropolitan community integral in the formation of the Black Atlantic. As a sacred social formation, it acted as counter-movement to the vagaries of the rising circum-Atlantic market. Ékpè marked a negotiated zone between market and society, sacred and profane, terrestrial and spiritual worlds. United by prestige and obligation, Ékpè and its members served as a critical protective mechanism against loss in the expanding eighteenth and nineteenth century slave market. In sum, this assemblage of architecture, rituals, people, institutions, and practices constituted the performed space of Ékpe in Old Calabar.

3.4 *Ufok* House System

The growth of the slave trade and the institution of Ékpè was accompanied by a transformation of the traditional walled compound. These changes differentiated the Old Calabar urban landscape from other trading ports at the time and figured significantly in the market fluctuations and shifts in commerce that happened during the eighteenth century and later. Previously, the compound was ruled by *ékpùk*, a kinship or lineage structure determined by agnatic descent. As a tightly-bound social unit in a physical structure made of ephemeral local materials, the traditional walled compound dominated the emerging landscape of seventeenth century Old Calabar. Shortly after the onset of larger-scale trading with overseas trading partners, the physical size and population of compounds changed. The *ékpùk* system was superseded by the *ufok*, or House system at this time. This "new coastal relationship" was based on principles of common interest and economy rather than family. Reflecting this shift, the word "*ékpùk*" soon disappeared from the vocabulary of the Delta.¹¹⁰

The precise origin of this transformation is uncertain, however scholars believe that it coincided with the rise in the slave trade and "grew naturally from the patriarchal character of the social organization" already existing.¹¹¹ Others claim this change was happening as early as the late seventeenth century.¹¹² In actuality, the shift was gradual with major changes coinciding with the rise of Ékpè in the 1730s. This change was paired with a multiplication of social groupings. Around this time, the original two lineage groups subdivided into six separate segments or houses—Cobham, Ambo, Henshaw, Ntiero, Eyamba, and Duketown.¹¹³ Other groups in this landscape of competing houses included Old Town as well as Qua and Efut

¹⁰⁹ Miller, 76.

¹¹⁰ Dike, 35. Basse (1990), 126.

¹¹¹ Nair, 12. Imbua (2012), 28. Hart, 46 paragraph 135.

¹¹² *The Story of Old Calabar*, 78.

¹¹³ Latham (1973), 33.

settlements. As Miers and Kopytoff observed, the process of segmentation at work in Old Calabar “challenged the very principle of a political center.”¹¹⁴

As an elementary point of clarification, it should be noted that “house” or *ufok* is in this context to designate a social structure, not a physical space. Whereas in the previous chapter, the term *ufok* was used to describe the spatial unit of the compound, here it is used to describe a new social system. Compounds continued to accommodate residential, trade, and religious functions in the era of the slave trade, but the social relationships within and between them fundamentally transformed.

The major change that occurred was the social composition of houses. During this period, houses became more inclusive, incorporating free citizens, slave members of households of free citizens, and strangers or persons who have done homage to the free head of the family.¹¹⁵ Simmons terms these subdivisions of the local community “wards” and notes that later accounts referred to them as “towns”.¹¹⁶ Waddell, for example describes the competing towns of Old Calabar in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ While the earlier *ékpùk* was not an entirely homogenous organization, it was a smaller and less diverse and less stratified unit than the emergent *ufok* system. The material hardware of walled compounds continued to exist, but what changed was their software. Put differently, compounds grew and aggregated, but the social relations which constituted them broke apart. The *Ékpè* society thus served as “uniting link” between the various compounds which were internally segmented and fragmented.

This shift was related to, but to but not caused by external forces. Much like the argument about *Ékpè* and its relationship to the rise of the slave trade, the development of the *ufok* should not be seen as a singular reaction or “adaptation” to the rise of the slave trade. Oversimplified accounts which single out one factor as “holding the key to an understanding of all mutations” inevitably flatten the complexity of historical change.¹¹⁸ Both Latham and Dike, in separate books claim the development of the house system was “direct result” of the trade with Europeans.¹¹⁹ However, like *Ékpè*, the emergent *ufok* had a pivotal role in transforming the trade environment as much as the presence of European merchants.

A related misunderstanding that plagues the research on the *ufok* system is one of period nomenclature. As discussed in the previous chapter, several scholars have termed this period the “era of fragmentation” in contradistinction to an era prior to European contact called the “era of unification.” Architectural historians, particularly Bassey, Braide and Ekpo, and Ajekigbe problematically draw a distinction between these eras. Bassey, for example, claims that it was the “entrenchment of the slave trade” which marked a turning point in the architectural development of the town.¹²⁰ In looking at the historical record, a more compelling argument can be made for reversing the nomenclature assigned by these scholars. The previous chapter enumerated the several ways in which the era of the traditional compound was neither static nor unified. It was instead marked by all kinds of mutations, internecine strife, violence, and fragmentation. The following period had this as well, though likening the period associated with

¹¹⁴ Miers, Suzanne, and Igor Kopytoff, eds. *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1977. 322.

¹¹⁵ Hart, 47 paragraph 135.

¹¹⁶ Forde, 122.

¹¹⁷ Waddell (1863), 251.

¹¹⁸ Afigbo, A. E. "Mono-causality and African Historiography: The Case of Efik Society and International Commerce," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* (1973): 117.

¹¹⁹ Latham (1973), 33, Dike, 34.

¹²⁰ Bassey (1990), 126.

the rise of the slave trade as the “era of fragmentation” is misleading especially after considering the tremendous unifying power of Ékpè.¹²¹ While the *ufok* superseded the prior *ékpùk* lineage system, it ultimately fell under the jurisdiction and integrating force of Ékpè. Characterizations of an era of “fragmentation” overlook the importance of Ékpè and propagate the unsupported notions that changes in Old Calabar society were mere adaptations to an emerging international economy emanating from Europe. Secondly, these characterizations repeat the idea that the pre-contact condition was one of stability, homeostasis, and self-sufficiency. As argued in this and the previous chapter, these were constructed myths supported by both ethnocentric literature and the indigenous scholarship produced in the post-independence era.

Lastly, in addition to more inclusive membership and social stratification of the *ufok* system necessitated a new configuration of power, particularly within the walls of the compound. As Nair explains, the house system “depended for its economic existence on corporate control of assets under the stewardship of the head of the house, who was called the *ètúbòm*. The *ètúbòm* was usually the oldest male of the lineage or house.”¹²² Powers ascribed to *ètúbòm* included control of all trade transactions conducted in the house and judicial powers in disputes among members of the house. The *ètúbòm* was the point of contact with European slave traders.¹²³ While power relations within the compound underwent these transformations, ultimately they fell under the jurisdiction of Ékpè which served to integrate and resolve disputes amongst competing houses and European traders. The *Ufok* House system, as competitive trading unit, was nested within the reign of Ékpè. Another way of understanding this relationship is that the *ufok* system was subsumed by the ascendancy of the Ékpè society.

The *ufok* of Old Calabar ferociously competed for shares of the overseas trade. The changing landscape was marked by trade rivalries and internecine warfare. In one particularly violent outbreak in 1767, members of families from Old Town fought families in Duketown in collusion with British traders.¹²⁴ In his book, *The Two Princes of Old Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey*, Randy Sparks eloquently relates the story of the Massacre of 1767. He writes:

In June 1767, six English vessels lay in the river at Old Calabar. All of the captains were seasoned veterans of the trade to Old Calabar and were no doubt aware of the festering dispute between Old Town and Duke Town. Given the actions of the Old Town traders, the captains' sympathies-and their economic self-interest-clearly lay with the traders at Duke Town. The captains conspired with the rulers of Duke Town to ambush their competitors from Old Town. The Englishmen invited the Old Town traders to board their ships where they would meet with the traders from Duke Town and attempt to settle their differences, with the captains acting as mediators. Three to four hundred men from Old Town, led by Amboe Robin John, Little Ephraim Robin John, and Ancona Robin Robin John, brothers of Ephraim Robin John, a principal "grandee" and later king of Old Town (who took the name Grandy King George), rowed to the English ships in ten canoes.¹²⁵

The massacre resulted in nearly 400 deaths, the kidnapping of Old Town dignitaries, and the eventual ascendancy of the Duketown ward. Large-scale breakouts such as this were rare. Battles

¹²¹ Udo, R.K. “Disintegration of Nucleated Settlement in Eastern Nigeria” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Jan., 1965), pp. 53-67

¹²² Nair, 13.

¹²³ Nair, 13.

¹²⁴ Sparks, Randy J. *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic odyssey*. Harvard University Press, 2009. 10-32.

¹²⁵ Sparks, Randy J. "Two Princes of Calabar: An Atlantic Odyssey From Slavery to Freedom." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59.3 (2002): 555-584.

between houses were usually of a lesser scale and regulated by the mediating mechanism of Ékpè. Nonetheless, the pattern of smaller-scale trading houses dominated Old Calabar's urban figuration.

Though the various ports and ethnic groups in the region shared a similar tradition of fostering non-centralized forms of governance and urbanism, considerable differences existed in the ways they developed the House system. Most prominently was the Canoe House system established in ports such as Bonny and New Kalabar. Miller and Sparks conflate the Èfik house system with that of the Canoe House.¹²⁶ Nair explains that the Canoe House system segmented far more into sub-divisions far more than the Èfik house. New houses were economically independent, but politically subordinate to the main house. Houses were smaller and more compact than those of the *ufok*. He conceives of the disparate social organizations of the region on a continuum, placing the Èfik house "half-way between the canoe house system of Bonny and the family organization of the hinterland."¹²⁷ This is an important distinction, for several scholars have pointed to the comparative efficiencies of the Canoe House as a reason why Bonny surpassed Old Calabar during this time period in part due to shorter anchorage time at their ports. Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup point out that due to the house structure at Old Calabar, senior captains of European slavers "might remain in ships moored in the Calabar River for up to twenty months." By contrast, at Bonny, ships were generally loaded in a period of two to four months. Canoe Houses were less covert, and the founders were often former slaves, a condition not possible in the *ufok* system and structure of Ékpè at Old Calabar.¹²⁸ To be sure, both urban economies were booming, but ships were eventually lured to the more favorable trading conditions offered at Bonny.¹²⁹

The competitive trading environment established by the emergence of the *ufok* House system in Old Calabar paired with the controlling influence of the Ékpè society. The complex assemblage of built and performed spaces constituted a charged field of commercial and spiritual transactions. The slave trade in Old Calabar was simultaneously met with forces of fragmentation and unification enmeshed in elaborate religious customs and symbolic rituals. To understand the experience of this emergent zone of action, scholars can turn to the a rare written record produced by an eighteenth century African slave trader in Old Calabar named Antera Duke.

3.5 The Diary of Antera Duke

A compelling eighteenth century source for understanding the urban dynamics of Old Calabar is the diary of the African slaver Antera Duke (Ntiero Edem Efiang) of Duketown. Antera Duke was prominent member in the Ékpè society who had learned English. His diary, written in pidgin trade English, offers a fascinating eyewitness account of the commercial and social life at the height of the slave trade in Old Calabar from 1785 to 1788. At the time of the diary Old Calabar was exporting 17,500 slaves per year.¹³⁰ The diary records transactions and

¹²⁶ Miller, 76. Sparks (2002), 40.

¹²⁷ Nair, 14.

¹²⁸ Latham, A. J. H. "Witchcraft accusations and economic tension in pre-colonial Old Calabar." *The Journal of African History* 13.02 (1972): 249-260. 249.

¹²⁹ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, 70-71. *Imbua* (2012), 41.

¹³⁰ Lovejoy, Paul and David Richardson. "Letters of the Old Calabar Slave Trade 1760-1789." In eds. Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*, 89-115. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001. 92.

events which can be corroborated with other historical documents as well as revealing the intimate thoughts of an African participant in the transatlantic slave trade.¹³¹ Many scholars have written about the historical significance of this document, but have treated urban and architectural space incidentally. Apart from being an exceedingly rare firsthand account of pre-colonial Old Calabar, its value in this study lies in its extraordinary documentation of no longer extant built environments and its descriptions of the spatialized rituals of Ékpè. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the spatialized elements of the diary and demonstrate how the paradigmatic space of Ékpè masquerade operated through specific historic examples.

The diary's author and the urban environment it describes sit in an uneasy historical position resisting easy distinctions between those who oppress and those who are oppressed. Like the institution of Ékpè which was both a complex cultural practice and a violent power-laden system which fed the eighteenth century slave economy, Duke's diary presents historians with a wealth of beautiful and horrible evidence of the trading environment in Old Calabar. P.E.H. Hair points out how "ingenuously innocent" Duke and his trading partners' views were "in relation to latter-day ideologies of anti-slavery and anti-"racist exploitation".¹³² Indeed, Antera Duke's impassive tone and deliberate descriptions of slaving environments, human trafficking, and violent ritualistic acts are unsettling to a contemporary reader. The purpose here is not to disparage the space of Duke's Old Calabar as an apocalyptic "zone of exception" nor is to exalt it as a kind of "subaltern urbanism" celebrating the virtues of African agency, entrepreneurialism, and self-organization.¹³³ Like the traditional compound and Ékpè masquerades, which exist as rhetorical construction torn between Eurocentric disparagement and heroic post-colonial imaginings, Duke and his cultural milieu exhibit a kind of doubleness. Hair writes that Duke occupied "a satisfying double role, that of an African notable who celebrated traditional wakes and feasts by ritually sacrificing slaves, and that of an up-to-the-minute African trader who donned "whiteman trousers" to drink tea and talk business with Liverpool ships' captains."¹³⁴ When reading these diary entries, this dualistic quality is unmistakable as is the sense that all aspects of society are tightly intertwined. It is impossible to disentangle the registers of economy with Old Calabar's religion, culture, or urbanism. All are one in a knot merging traditional practices with innovative commercial techniques. Hair reasons that the diary provides "insights into the *mentalité* of earlier black Africa--one where individual enterprise and communal will acted within a social code that engendered ferocious parochialism and intense cosmic beliefs, both of these functioning as psychological counters to an excessively hostile natural environment."¹³⁵ It is this doubleness and entangled quality which informs our reading of the diary.

As described earlier, the urbanism of Old Calabar in the late eighteenth century was decentralized in its organization. The principal trading families lived in the Creek Town, Old Town, Duke Town, and Henshaw Town and traditional compounds similar to, but smaller than those existing prior to the slave trade, dotted the landscape. Much of the activity in the diary transpires at Aqua Landing, the "big landing" at Duke Town beach which serves as an interface

¹³¹ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony J.H. Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 3.

¹³² Hair, P. E. H. "Antera Duke of Old Calabar: A Little More about an African Entrepreneur." *History in Africa* 17 (1990): 359-365. 359

¹³³ Roy (2011), 226-229.

¹³⁴ Hair, P. E. H. "Antera Duke of Old Calabar: A Little More about an African Entrepreneur." *History in Africa* 17 (1990): 359-365. 359.

¹³⁵ Hair, 359.

between the compounds and trading ships. Trade rivalries and domestic disputes between various *ufok* resulted in a tumultuous process of fissioning and fusioning of compounds across a scattered urban morphology. Merchants competed ferociously for local and long distance trade.¹³⁶ Also coming onto the scene at this time were a few imported wooden houses delivered by British merchants. This dispersed environment was stitched together with a complex and mobile network of canoes, holding pens, Ékpè rituals, and slave ships docked in the Calabar River. Several entries detail Èfik merchants traversing between yards and houses, boarding ships and canoes, and participating in ceremonial plays. Duke's diary provides a glimpse into this environment.

Typical entries were short but included several trading names, places, and social practices. In a diary entry from January 21st, 1785, Duke recounts that he went down to the shore of the Calabar River to advance goods to Captain John Savage of the of the Liverpool slaving ship *Liverpool Hero*.¹³⁷ Days later he wrote:

About 4 a.m. we were in Eyo Willy Honesty's house and we walked up to see Willy Honesty in his yard. He killed one big goat for us. Soon after that we walked up to see our town and took one great gun [cannon] to put in a canoe for two of Egbo Young [Offiong's] men to bring home to Aqua Landing. We went together to Henshaw Town and came back, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon we and everybody went to "dash" Eyo Willy Honesty's daughter... 1496 rods besides cloth, gunpowder, and iron. We "played" all day before night[fall].¹³⁸

What Duke is describing in his diary is the network of spaces, social ties, customs and ceremonies, which made up his particular socio-cultural milieu. In it we catch a rare glimpse into the mind of eighteenth-century African entrepreneur and a detailed document of his slave brokering activities with several English and African merchants.¹³⁹ In the passage, Eyo Willy's Honesty's house was a prefabricated wooden structure shipped from Europe and one of a variety of trading goods advanced to captains for slaves to be delivered at a later date in a practice called "trust trade".¹⁴⁰ Honesty's "yard" was one of the several traditional Èfik compounds which served as a node in this system of trade. These wattle and daub structures were, like the prefabricated houses, flexible, impermanent spaces, suggestive of the ever-shifting landscape of Old Calabar politics. Inter-ward conflict and market fluctuations in the face of an emerging Atlantic capitalism made for a contentious and unpredictable trade environment. In this environment they traded in copper bars and favors. An elaborate system of ritualistic practices were used to relieve tensions. In this entry, the phrase To "dash Willy Honesty's daughter" means that they gave her gifts and the phrase "We "played" all day" denotes he participated in a ceremonial form of Ékpè masquerade dancing and celebration. In the diary entry we have evidence of the ritual sacrifices (*úwà*) which were part of the trade and Ékpè. There are several examples of these rituals accompanied by "playing". Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup explain that the Èfik root *bré*, signifies "play". It important to examine these rituals as a violent and

¹³⁶ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 44-45.

¹³⁷ Behrendt, Stephen D., A.J.H. Latham, and David Northrup, *The Diary of Antera Duke: An Eighteenth Century African Slave Trader* (New York: Oxford University, 2010), 137.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹³⁹ Hair, P.E.H., "Antera Duke of Old Calabar: A Little More About an African Entrepreneur", *History in Africa*, vol. 17 (1990). 359-365.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 361. Hair notes that one Liverpool trader in 1769 kept a "Trust Book". See Simmons, Donald, "An Ethnographic Sketch of the Èfik People." In *Èfik Traders of Old Calabar*, ed. Daryll Forde, London: Oxford University, 1956. 1-26.

spectacularized component of Ékpè practice, but to not dismiss the entire practice of Ékpè or its participants as heathen murderers. In the place of the large scale infrastructure, the slave trade was governed by the performed space of Ékpè. References to Ékpè and evidence for the seamless convergence of commercial and religious practices are found throughout Duke's journal.

Diary entries include references to several important merchants' "houses" and "yards". There are references to the houses of Duke, Egbo Young Offiong's House, Esien Duke, and Eyo Willy Honesty. It is not possible to state with certainty when Duke uses the term "house" whether he means the traditional walled compound configuration described in the last chapter, the *ufok* system described in this chapter, or the prefabricated English houses described in this and the next chapter. From context, though, we can speculate as to differences. For example, Duke describes working on his "cabin" and employing a house carpenter (*úsò ufòk*) to install windows on his "house" which probably references an English house.¹⁴¹ He later references his "big house" and writes that he went on board Captain Patrick Fairweather's ship to "fetch his joiner to make windows".¹⁴² As described earlier, traditional compounds lacked windows. During this period, it was feared Ékpè secrets may be revealed to slaves who were integrated into the house system.¹⁴³ The windows, therefore, are probably additions to an imported wooden cabin that formed a part of his compound distinct from that of slaves. Whether they were constructed by traditional, modern, or a hybrid of the two technologies, the houses are only owned by wealthy merchants. There is no mention of other Old Calabar residents in the diary, and the houses of these traders act as internalized private meeting points for the Èfik and European merchants.

Duke does not specifically use the words "compound" or "traditional" in the diary, though it can be speculated that when he uses the term "yard" it describes the arrangements described in the previous chapter. Entries mentioning these yard spaces occur throughout the diary.¹⁴⁴ On January 30, 1785 Duke makes mention of his "little yard". He writes, "About 6 a.m. at Aqua Landing, a foggy morning. I went to work in my little yard. At the same time we and Tom Aqua and John Aqua joined together to catch men."¹⁴⁵ Duke's little yard was probably a smaller courtyard space in his compound. The compound was an admixture of traditional building techniques and an imported building from Liverpool. Despite records of periodic "slave raids" by Old Calabar's merchants, they mainly served as middlemen between hinterland slavers and European ships. This is the only instance in the diary of Duke and his associates actively seizing slaves.¹⁴⁶

The practice of "catching men" or slave raids (*isanunwo*) still existed at this time. In a fascinating account, the slave trader Isaac Parker, in search of protection from a violent ship captain asked to stay at the house of Dick Ebro in New Town [Duketown]. During his five-month stay he traveled upstream with Ebro and participated in nighttime raids in hinterland villages. He recounts, "we took man, woman, and child as we could catch them in their houses."¹⁴⁷ Sparks cites this as an example of the "zones of multiple interaction" operating in the

¹⁴¹ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 149.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 162n122.

¹⁴⁴ See for example *Ibid.*, 137, 139, 155, 183, 205.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁴⁷ *House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century* [145 vols: Wilmington, 1975], 73:126), see 124-37.

Atlantic world where Europeans and Africans sometimes “behaved in ways that an oversimplified view simply cannot explain”.¹⁴⁸

As a harbinger to later developments, it is essential to point out that the diary discusses several examples of imported wooden houses from Europe. In addition to entries describing Antera’s own house, Egbo Young Ofiong’s “Liverpool Hall” figures prominently.¹⁴⁹ He writes, “After 10 o’clock in the morning we “go chop” [had a meal] at Egbo Young house “Liverpool Hall”. Duke is careful to call out the owner of the house, but also its given title underscoring the importance of Liverpool merchants at the time.¹⁵⁰ Sailor Henry Schroeder describes the two story brick structure, which like the traditional compounds, was surrounded by a wall. Consistent with prior Orientalist accounts of Old Calabar architecture (described in Chapter 2) he comments that in contrast to the “mud-covered wickerwork houses”, Liverpool Hall “boasts architectural beauties”.¹⁵¹ Antera Duke feasts with captains for New Year’s dinner there in 1787 and 1788.¹⁵² The appearance of a prefabricated building from Liverpool on the shores of Old Calabar at this time is a register of the shifting Èfik cultural values and commercial ties in the mid-eighteenth century. Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup use shipping documents to demonstrate Liverpool merchants began to overtake Bristol’s position as the dominant trader in Old Calabar in the 1750s.¹⁵³ This was a marked shift from Told’s visit on a Bristol slaver in the 1720s.

Two additional entries in Antera Duke’s diary describe how Duke, Captain Fairweather, and several other Èfik merchants celebrate both Christmas at New Year’s Day at “Esien Duke’s new house”.¹⁵⁴ Fairweather, an important captain at the time, also transports a house for Duke Ephraim in 1785.¹⁵⁵ The trend of importing prefabricated, or partially pre-fabricated houses from Europe is a trend that continues to grow in this trading hub, but it seems they were still isolated phenomena in the 1780s. During this time, they served as prestigious nodes to the leaders of Èkpè much like the ships of important captains’ did. As symbolically charged and important as they were to Old Calabar’s emerging urbanism, it was the performed space of the Èkpè masquerade which still dominated Èfik cultural and economic life during Antera’s time. From the historical record, it seems such houses were fairly new to the Old Calabar urban landscape in the late eighteenth century though with very few mentions before Duke’s diary. The quantity of “English house” appearances in journals and memoirs continues to increase after this time. Several scholars have noted the significance of these buildings as symbols of prestige.¹⁵⁶ A more detailed discussion of these houses is in the next chapter where it is argued they begin to

¹⁴⁸ Sparks, Randy J. “Two princes of Calabar: An Atlantic odyssey from slavery to freedom.” *William and Mary Quarterly* (2002): 565.

¹⁴⁹ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 139, 143, 195.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁵¹ Butterworth, William [pseud. for Henry Schroeder]. *Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina and Georgia*. Leeds: Edward Barnes, 1822: 28. Schroeder has a tense run-in with Egbo Young at Liverpool Hall, but is ultimately shown around the house. He writes that “it was fitted up in English taste: its walls sported such pictures as Italy’s wandering tribes hawk through the principal towns in England: Faith, Hope, Charity, the seasons, the quarters of the globe &c.” 30.

¹⁵² Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 195, 217. Antera Duke writes, “I had 8 calabashes of Ekpe chop made, and at one o’clock we and all of the captains had [New Year’s] dinner at Egbo Young [Ofiong’s] house, Liverpool Hall.”

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 171, 173.

¹⁵⁵ Hallet, 199, 207-208.

¹⁵⁶ Basse (1990), 126-130, Braide and Ekpo 143, Imbua (2012), 69.

dominate the urban landscape and constitute important pieces in the paradigmatic space of the “offshore” in the nineteenth century.

Duke’s diary contains several short entries which reveal the complex entanglement of architecture, economy, and ritual. Èkpè’s supremacy during the time of Duke’s diary is undeniable and woven throughout the text. In another entry, Duke describes “Barr Room men”, beheadings, and making “play”. Antera writes, “Tom King John sent them to come and make “play” in honour of Duke Ephraim, my father and Egbo Young [Ofiong’s mother]. They cut one woman’s head off for Duke, and 7 men Barr room men were to be beheaded for my father. So they “played” all night.”¹⁵⁷ Citing a 1773 letter from Ephraim Robin John to a Liverpool merchant which used the phrase “Room of Irons”, Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup explain that the Èfik word for prison is *ufok úquàt*, literally translated “iron-bar house”. They reason that Barr Room men is probably a term for prisoners.¹⁵⁸ Further, they reason that Duke probably had not heard the term “barracoon” because the word wasn’t used frequently until the nineteenth century. A barracoon was a temporary barracks or holding pen for the confinement of prisoners. Prisoners could be those en route in the slave trade or those sacrificed in burial and honor rituals described by Duke. Like compounds, they were built of temporary local materials and often incorporated imported materials such as iron for prison bars. In an illustration from *The Illustrated London News* in 1849 and re-published in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* we get an approximation of what these structures looked like (Figure 3.13). While impermanent structures, these barracks were more formalized and systematic than the “withies” or strong twigs used to fasten slaves to poles described by Watts in 1668 or the “Negroe-Child tied by the Leg to a Stake driven in the Ground” described by Snelgrave in 1713.¹⁵⁹ The architecture of detention in Duke’s Old Calabar was informal but by no means unplanned.

Though some texts claim Old Calabar did not have barracoons, there are sources which clearly document their existence as late as 1828.¹⁶⁰ Singleton demonstrates that the experience of imprisonment in the Biafran Coast trade was different from that of the earlier Gold Coast trade.¹⁶¹ Another version of a temporary imprisonment environment was what might be called a “floating barracoon”. This was essentially a ship at sea holding slaves for an extended period of time before embarkation. Indicative of the small-scale and fleeting quality of these spaces is Falconbridge’s 1788 description of the stick and frame “temporary houses” built aboard slaving ships to store and keep slaves from leaping overboard.¹⁶² Another example of one of these mobile prisons include the one reported off Dahomey in 1739.¹⁶³ Absent the centralized detention technologies of the Gold Coast like slave castles, ports like Old Calabar built smaller, more adaptable holding pens to facilitate trade. Highly visible structures like forts and castles were particularly vulnerable to naval intervention during the period of abolition in the nineteenth century. The shift to the barracoon or “Room of Irons” was in part guided by local building

¹⁵⁷ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 202-203.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 129. See also 57. Another term for a prison in Èfik, *ufok mkpokobi* literally translates as “house of chains”.

¹⁵⁹ Watts, 771, Snelgrave, “Introduction”.

¹⁶⁰ Horlings, Rachel. “Calabar” in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage* eds. Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock. Greenwood Publishing, 2007. 92. Badgerly, James, Report on the old Calabar River, in Owen and Croker, 21 Feb. 1828, CO82/1 cited in Latham (1973), 48.

¹⁶¹ S Singleton, Theresa A. “The Slave Trade Remembered on the Former Gold and Slave Coasts.” *From Slavery to Emancipation in the Atlantic World*. London: Frank Cass, 1999. 159-160.

¹⁶² Falconbridge, Alexander. *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa*. London: J. Phillips, 1788. 5-7.

¹⁶³ Davidson, Basil. *The African Slave Trade*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1961. 105.

traditions and market pressures. These environments were part of the ritualistic trading environment Antera operated in.

In the earlier excerpt, the prisoners are beheaded “in honour of” Duke Ephraim. Beheadings and human sacrifice of various kinds were enmeshed in the practice of Ékpè. The funerary obsequies of Duke Ephraim were particularly extravagant. Documented in Duke’s diary and British sailor Henry Schroeder’s memoir, they describe the symbolically charged yet terrifying space created by Ékpè burial rituals.¹⁶⁴ Antera relates, “We got ready to cut heads off and at and 5 o’clock in the morning we began to cut slaves’ heads off, 50 heads on that one day.” He continues, describing the food and brandy they would drink and that they “must “play’ in every yard in town.”¹⁶⁵ Schroeder’s account, on the other hand, is less celebratory. He writes of the throngs of canoes and spectators gathered to witness the obsequies, interment rituals, and executions in honor of Duke Ephraim (Figure 3.14). He devotes several pages of his memoir to detailing a “dreadful series of human sacrifices at the funeral of a native chief”.¹⁶⁶ He writes:

The performance of this superstition appeared to me so singularly strange, and so unaccountably absurd, that if I had not been an eye-witness of the voluntary degradation to which my own species submitted, I should have doubted the relation of it by others; though that doubt would not have in the least invalidated the historical fact, nor exonerated the actors in this drama of human depravity from the charge of folly, superstition, and wickedness.¹⁶⁷

The fraught zone produced by the death of Duke Ephraim sparked violent emotions on the part of locals and outsiders. This negotiated space, situated between the spiritual, non-terrestrial space of Ékpè forces and the horrors of the Black Atlantic, was both sacred and depraved.

While many grisly practices certainly existed and were integral to the overall function of Ékpè, less bloody practices existed for mediating trade. Several entries in Antera Duke’s diary describe the fluctuating and itinerant space of Old Calabar’s coast. Several traders are depicted moving in canoes and boarding the ships of European traders. At times, they’re accompanied with Èfik dignitaries such as a *ndèm* priest (King Calabar). Duke writes:

“About 5 a.m. at Aqua Landing [Big Beach], a little morning rain. I had Captain Cooper’s carpenter work for me. Soon after I saw all the captains coming ashore to take us on board. All of us went with King Calabar on board Captain Fairweather’s ship to collect “comey.”¹⁶⁸

Collecting “comey” or anchorage fees was a distinctive characteristic of Old Calabar’s trading practices and arguably one of the reasons the port was surpassed by less fee-heavy ports like Bonny. Nonetheless, collecting comey kept European merchants offshore and generated capital for the merchant elite of Old Calabar. In this case, it appears the fees were used to pay a carpenter to work on Antera’s wooden house.

Elsewhere in the diary is evidence demonstrating Ékpè’s power to settle disputes. In Duke’s first entry from January 18, 1785 he writes:

¹⁶⁴ Butterworth, 50-68. For details on the ephemeral qualities of the interment ceremonies, see pages 64-65.

¹⁶⁵ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 189.

¹⁶⁶ Butterworth, 50.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁶⁸ Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup, 161.

About 6 a.m. at Aqua Landing, a fine morning. I walked with the Ékpè men to go to Ebutim's house. He "dashed" [gave] us 1 copper rod and 1 small case of bottle brandy. Soon afterwards all the Ékpè men went to the Ékpè bush to make bob about [discuss] the Egbo Young Ofiong and Little Otto palaver. Egbo young paid 1 goat and 4 rods and little Otto paid 4 rods. All the Ékpè men came down to Duke Ephraim's palaver house and joined together to put in money for 20 men. In all 64 men put in money, 45 from Duke's family, 19 from another family.¹⁶⁹

After Duke and other Ékpè men meet and transact at Ebutim's house, they head to the Ékpè bush to talk about a "palaver" or dispute between members. Though it's unclear what the dispute is about, they meet twice about it, once at the "palaver house of Duke Ephraim." Palaver houses in various towns figure prominently at this time as sacred sites for settling disputes and conferring with the spirit of Ékpè. Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup speculate that the passage probably refer to 64 men putting money for either 20 Ékpè initiates or 20 men slaves or money equal to the value of 20 men slaves.¹⁷⁰ At the time of the overseas slave trade, the Ékpè secret society produced a carefully-calibrated space dominated by wealth and prestige. This was a clear shift from the era of the traditional compound which was not as organized and arranged according to family ties.

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide historical evidence for the spatial transformations that transpired in Old Calabar at the onset of the transatlantic trade. This period witnessed a shift in the social structure of the traditional compound from one centered on the family to an expanded, more inclusive, and stratified *ufok* House system. This fragmentation was paired with the development of the Ékpè society which functioned as a multi-faceted integration mechanism that performed commercial and spiritual duties. Evidence from historical sources, particularly the diary of the slave trader Antera Duke offer a glimpse into this carefully-calibrated religious and commercial landscape. The performed space of the Ékpè masquerade acted as a space of mediation between European merchants, Calabar middlemen, and ethereal spirits. The ephemeral and non-centralized quality of this space offers a stark contrast to the rigid, concretized forms of architecture which tend to occupy our history books. The urban environment of Old Calabar, however, was about to experience yet another transformation coinciding with the abolition of the slave trade and the transition to a palm oil-based economy.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

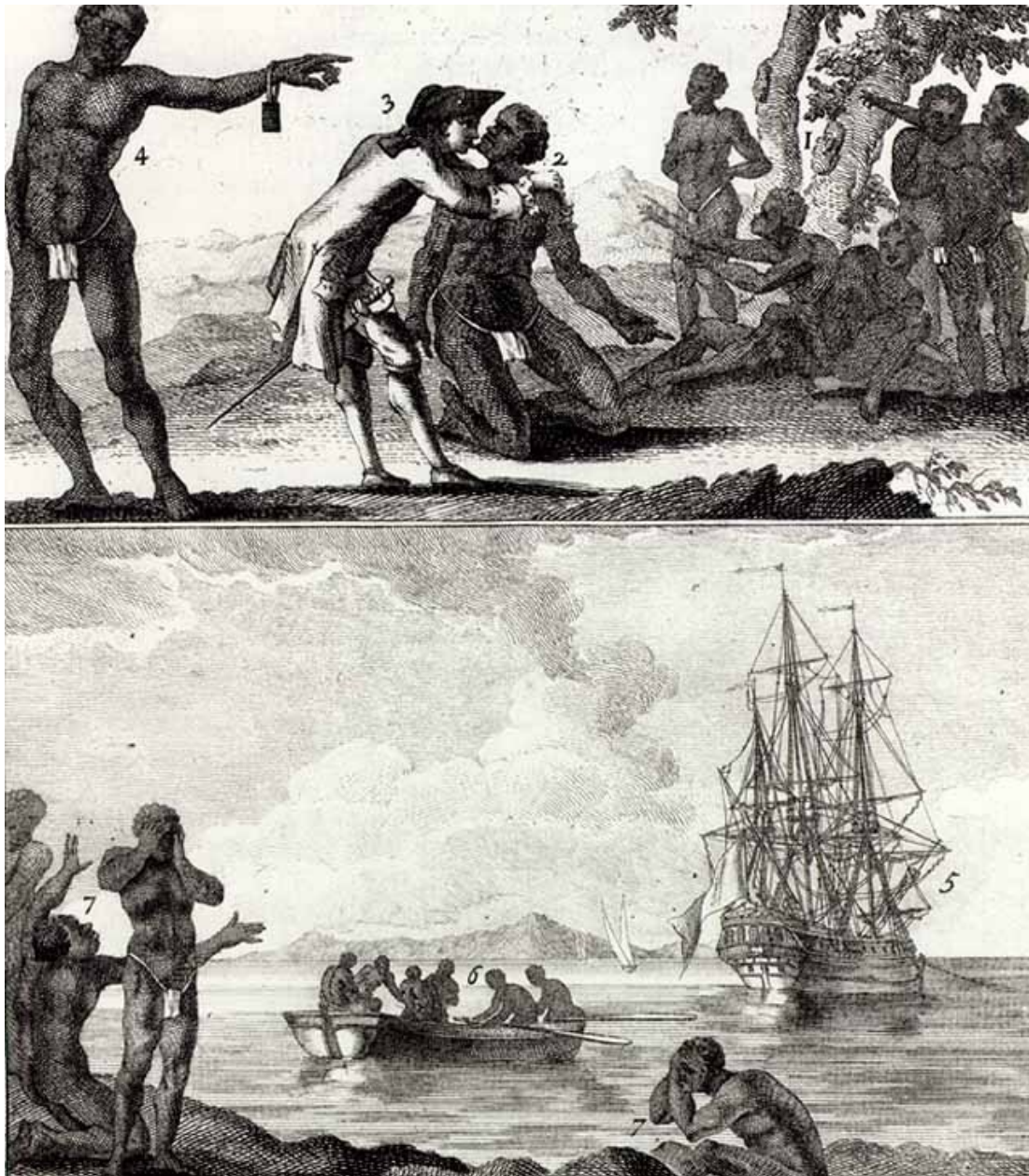


Figure 3.1. “An Englishman Tastes the Sweat of an African” and “A View of Calabar” (1725)
 (Source: *Le commerce de l’Amerique par Marseille*, 1764). Engravings by Serge Daget.

1. Negroes displayed for sale in a public market.
2. A Negro Slave being examined before being purchased.
3. An Englishman licking the Negro's chin to confirm his age, and to discover from the taste of his sweat that he is not sick.
4. Negro Slave wearing the mark of slavery on his arm.
5. Ship at anchor waiting for the completion of the Slave Trade.
6. Launch carrying purchased slaves to the Slave Ship.
7. Negroes on the shore who are wailing and shrieking on viewing their relatives or friends being taken away.



Figure 3.2. *Ékpè* (Egbo) Runner Umuahia (1930s) (Source: G.I. Jones Photographic Archive Southeastern Nigeria Art and Culture).



Figure 3.3. *Ékpè*, Calabar South (2005) (Source: Phyllis Galembo).



Figure 3.4. “Image” of Nkanda Grade of Egbo with Emblem “Ekabe Nkanda” (1912) (Source: Percy Amaury Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, plate facing 42).

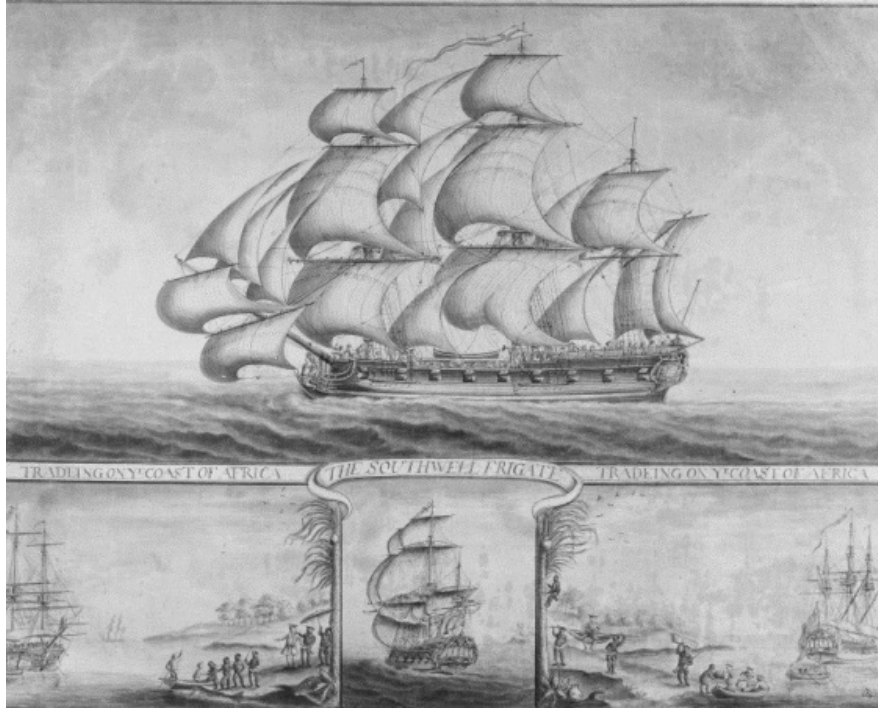


Figure 3.5. *The Southwell Frigate Tradeing on ye Coast of Africa* (c. 1760) by Nicholas Pocock. (Source: Bristol Museum and Gallery M669).

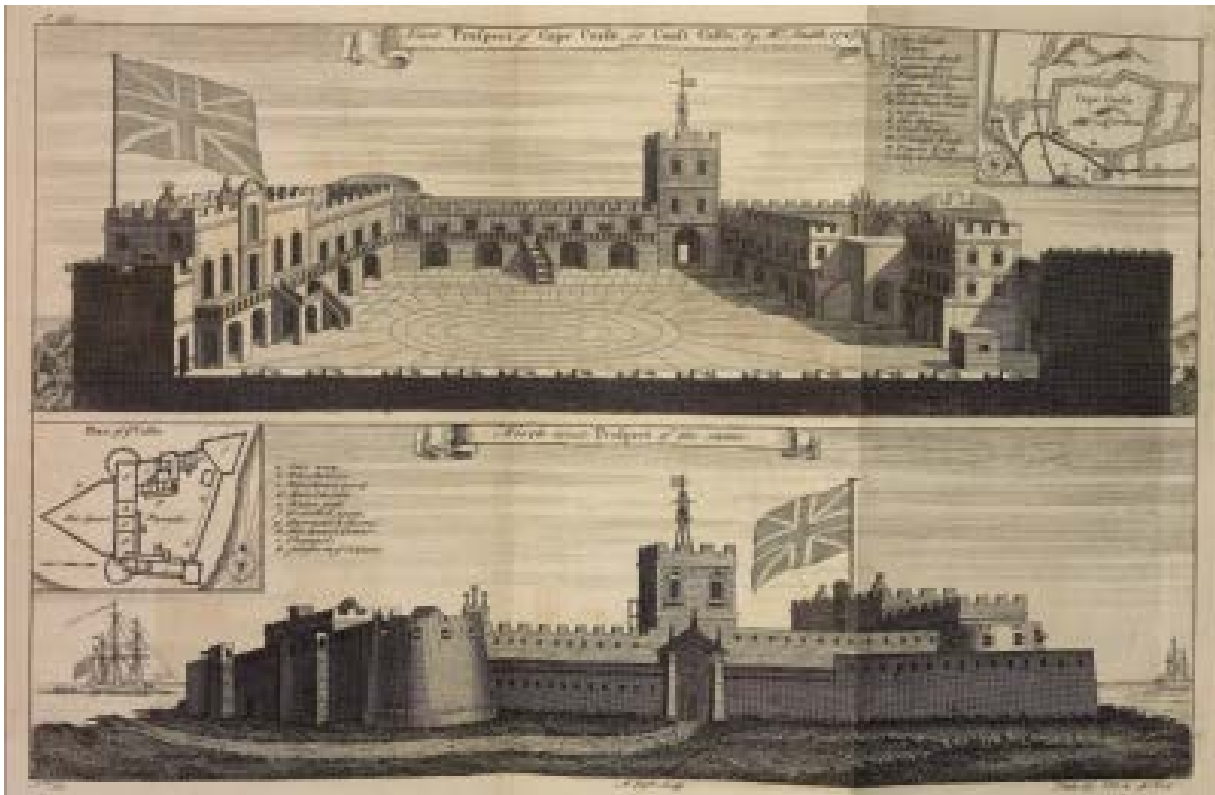


Figure 3.6. Cape Coast Castle, Gold Coast (1727) (Source: Tracy W. McGregor Library, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library).



Figure 3.7. Egbo House, Oban District (c. 1909-1910) (Source: National Archive, Kew CO 1069/57/22).

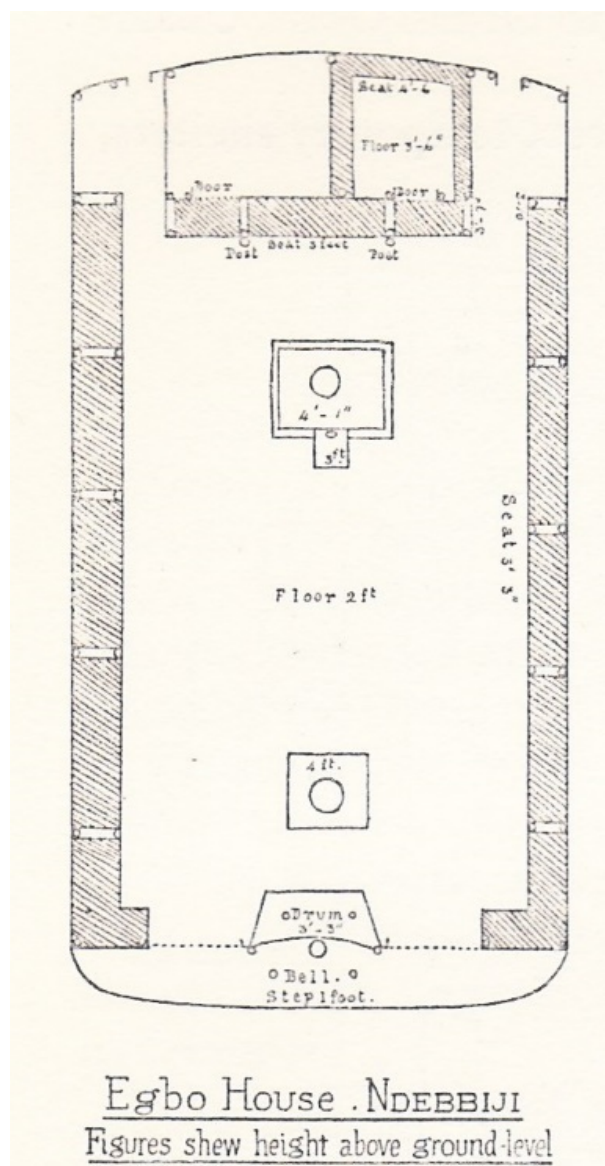


Figure 3.8. Egbo House plan, Ndebbiji (Source: Talbot, Percy Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. Heinemann, 1912. 263).

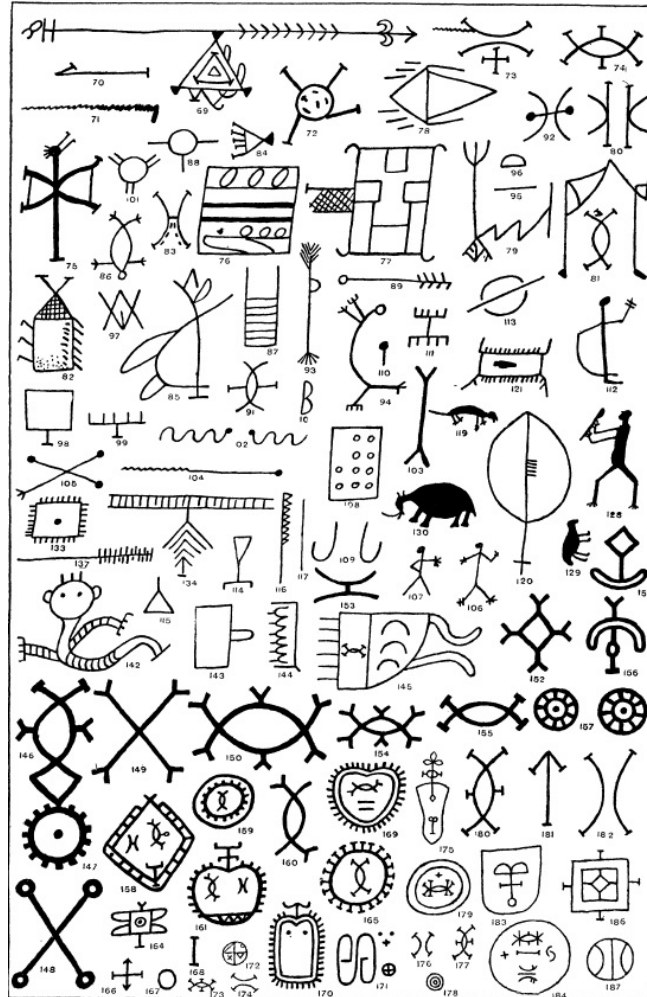


Figure 3.9. *Nsibidi* signs, 1911. (Source: Elphinstone Dayrell, “Nsibidi Signs with Their Meanings from the Ikom District, Southern Nigeria, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. XLI, 1911. Plate LXV.).



Figure 3.10. *Ûkára* cloth and palm frond blocking entrance into Qua Ejagham Kasuk Mgbe lodge, Calabar, Nigeria (2009) (Source: Photograph by Jordan A. Fenton, 2009).



Figure 3.11. *Ükára* banner blocking the entrance into the inner chamber at the Qua-Ejagham Nkonib (Ikot Ansa) Mgbe Lodge, Calabar, Nigeria (2008) (Source: Photograph by Jordan A. Fenton, 2008).



Figure 3.12. Entrance to Efe Ékpè Efik Iboku, Boco Street, Duketown, Calabar, Nigeria. (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 3.13. "Slave Barracoon, Sierra Leone, 1840s" (Source: *The Illustrated London News* (April 14, 1849), vol. 14. 237. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library).

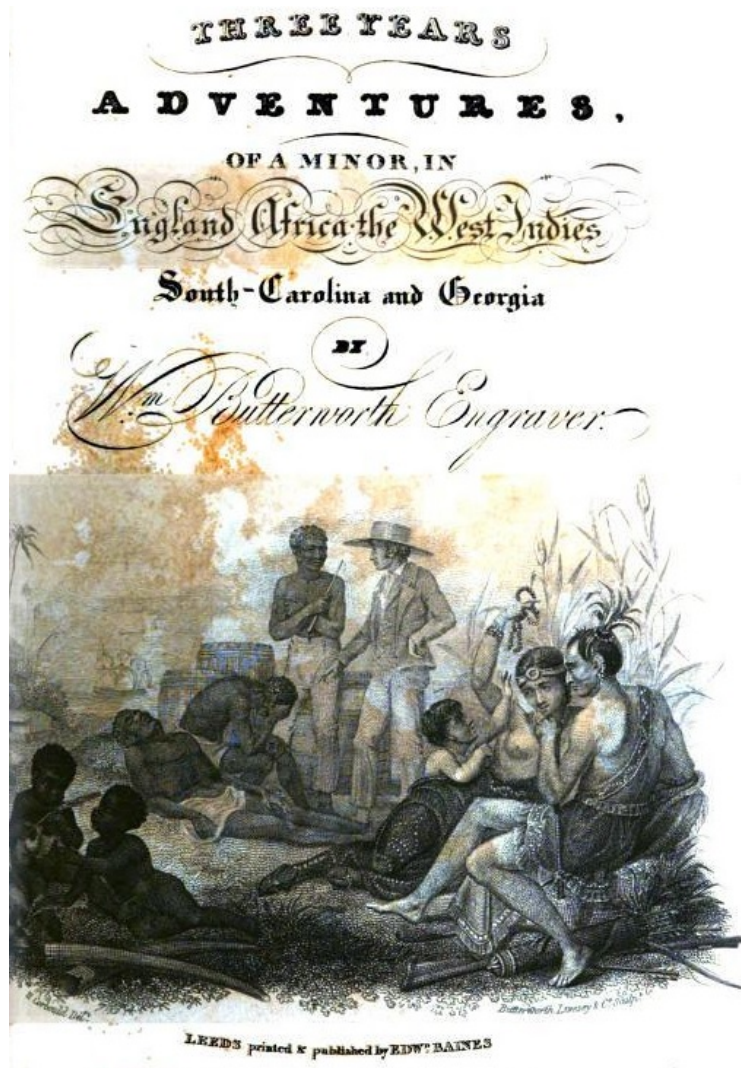


Figure 3.14. Frontispiece vignette, 1822 (Source: *Butterworth, William [pseud. for Henry Schroeder]. Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina and Georgia.*).

Chapter 4: Offshore

4.1 To increase their trade and do good for all Calabar

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the institution of slavery was being reassessed. Abolitionists argued slavery was a cruel and inhumane practice. Fuelled by both Enlightenment thinking and religious fervor, they argued slavery was an immoral act which needed to end. Horrid accounts by slavers and travelers were instrumental to the cause. Testimonies such as those by Isaac Parker, the slave trader who had participated in slave raids outside of Old Calabar in the 1760s were critical to exposing the atrocities of the trade. Powerful images depicting conditions on slave ships such as the *Brookes* documented the trade and served as visual propaganda for the abolitionist movement (Figure 4.1). At the same time, the demands of the Industrial Revolution required new sources for raw materials as well as new markets for manufactured goods. The transition to new manufacturing processes catalyzed a shift in Old Calabar from a slave-based economy to one built on palm oil. As Martin Lynn documents, the oil trade in Africa finds its beginnings in the Niger Delta area—first in Old Calabar and then in Bonny. By the 1840s, the business had spread to areas like Whydah and Badagry, and the Cameroons-Gabons-Angola area.¹

In a related development, efforts to explore Africa expanded. Maps of Africa had remained largely unchanged since the time of Barbot, depicting an ambiguous interior of a Dark Continent (Figure 4.2). Months after Antera Duke's last existing diary entry in 1788, The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa (commonly known as the African Association), was founded in London. It was a private association of British explorers committed to the exploration of West Africa. Notable members included John Ledyard, Mungo Park, and Henry Nicholls. The African Association specifically sought the origin of the Niger River and the location of the ancient city of Timbuktu. They were motivated by the abolitionist movement and construed their efforts as a means of gaining scientific knowledge about the people and continent they explored. Paired with this pursuit of knowledge was a concerted effort to find new markets. The group explicitly aimed to find new trading routes and methods of enacting free enterprise on the continent.

From 1804 to 1805, the explorer Henry Nicholls was posted in Old Calabar on a mission from the African Association.² During his stay in Old Calabar, Nicholls met with several Èfik kings (*èdídèm*) including King Eyamba III (Egbo Young Eyambo), Eyo Honesty, and Great Duke Ephraim. The account of his stay is indicative of an era of growing mutual respect between European and African traders, though his first encounter was tense. Nicholls writes:

On the 17th of January, at seven o'clock in the evening, we arrived in Old Calabar (Duke Town), when I immediately waited upon the principal chief and trader, Egbo Young Eyambo, and to my great mortification found myself very badly received. He wished to know my reasons for coming to his country; if I came to build a fort the same as on the Gold Coast, or if I came from Mr. Wilberforce. I observed I had

¹ Lynn, Martin. "Change and Continuity in the British palm oil trade with West Africa, 1830–55." *The Journal of African History* 22.03 (1981): 338.

² Hallett, Robin, ed. *Records of the African Association: 1788-1831*. London: T. Nelson, 1964. See "Nicholls 1804-1805", 191-210. [Reprint of Nicholls' second letter to the Association. Originally published in the Association's Proceedings, vol. 2 (1810), 406-414.]

come for neither of those purposes; that I had been sent by some great men in my country to endeavor to find out dye-woods and other things, to increase their trade, and do good for all Calabar.

He still appeared dissatisfied, and eyed me with a little ferocity, saying, if I came from Mr. Wilberforce they would kill me. In this temper of mind we parted; but I did not at all feel disheartened by my reception, hoping that when he had properly understood a letter which I had brought him from Captain Jones of Liverpool, he might feel better disposed to receive and assist me.

The next morning I again went on shore after saluting the town with eleven guns, the town returning five guns, and two other ships in the harbour five guns each, at the same time hoisting their ensigns and pendants. I called upon Egbo Young Eyambo (*sic*), who received me with every degree of politeness and attention. We then entered into a further explanation of my coming there, when I candidly told him it was to look at his country, and to describe the beasts, birds, fishes, and plants, and to write a book about it. This explanation so well pleased him that he shook me by the hand and promised me every assistance to go all over his territory and the neighboring kings, at to forward me with safety as far toward the interior as his people dare go without endangering their own safety. He then spoke of Captain Cook, part of whose Voyages he had got, and again expressed how happy he should feel in assisting me. I then left him in much better spirits than the night before.³

Nicholls found himself at first “very badly received” by Egbo Young Eyambo (King Eyamba III), the same Egbo Young frequently mentioned in Antera Duke’s diary. This was the same Egbo Young who pounced upon sailor Henry Schroeder in his house (See Chapter 3.5). Young was immediately suspicious of Nicholls who he believed was either there to build slave forts or to abolish the trade altogether. It is probable Young reasoned establishing European forts would upset Éfik control of the slave trade in the region and hence the hostility. Alternatively, he was suspicious of Nicholls may be involved with William Wilberforce, the renowned British politician and leader in the abolitionist movement. As Oku has argued it is clear Eyambo preferred slavery, eying Nicholls with “a little ferocity”, even threatening to kill him if he came on a mission from Wilberforce.⁴ Nicholls delivered a deceitful rejoinder, offering something more than a “white lie” when he related that he was only there to write a nature book and that he didn’t know Mr. Wilberforce. In fact, Eyamba III was keen to the events transpiring in England. His interaction with Eyamba III was tense and dishonest. Though these relations would soon improve, Eyamba III’s reign marks the end of a period dominated by Ékpè and the slave trade. The next king changes this, shifting Old Calabar’s commercial interests more toward the legitimate trade of palm oil (*adan èyóp*). Nicholls continues:

I then called upon Duke Ephraim another chief, and by far the greatest trader, who likewise promised me every assistance in his power, and offered me a house belonging to him to take up my residence in during my stay in Calabar, which I accepted.⁵

Great Duke Ephraim, the son of Duke Ephraim (discussed in Chapter 3) would go on to consolidate commercial power while transforming the landscape of Old Calabar in the early nineteenth century. Nicholls was impressed with Ephraim’s hospitality and used the opportunity to comment on the architecture of Old Calabar. Nicholls writes:

The principal traders’ houses are built of wood, brought out by the different captains from Liverpool, oblong, and thatched with bamboo leaves, which last very well two years. The house I reside in was brought out by Mr. Patrick Fairweather; was built in the year 1785, and still remains very good. A description of mine will suffice for all the rest, as they are all built on the same principle; this house is

³ Hallet, 198-199.

⁴ Oku, Ekei Essien. *The Kings & Chiefs of Old Calabar (1785-1925)*. Calabar: Glad Tidings Press Limited, 1989. 6.

⁵ Hallet, 199.

about twenty yards along, and thirty feet high, with a ground floor, a first floor, and a kind of cock-loft: the first floor contains two rooms, one I occupy, and the other by my attendants, and two small rooms in each wing for bedrooms. My room is about forty feet long, twenty-five feet wide, and fifteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high, and has been very handsomely finished. A covered gallery surrounds the porch; and as the contents of it, I am sure, will amuse you, Sir William, so I shall describe it; it sometimes puts me in mind of a drawing room in England.

I have two large pier-glasses, seven feet by four, elegantly gilt by and ornamented; twenty five ditto, from two and half to four feet; three large sofas, twelve chairs, two handsome escritoire desks, six tables, two large garde vines, on handsome marble side-board, and an immense quantity of glasses, china, and earthen ware; six paintings, and twenty large engravings, five clocks, and two musical ditto: and a pretty jumble of furniture it is...⁶

Nicholls describes an urban environment in transition. The story house (*ufoken yon*) Nicholls stays in is the one which was brought by trader Patrick Fairweather in 1785 and the same “Liverpool Hall” described by Antera Duke and Henry Schroeder twenty years earlier. Now apparently used by Duke Ephraim’s son, the house has begun to take on hybrid characteristics between the traditional Èfik compound structures described in Chapter 2 and the imported English type. The roofs of these structures, ill-suited to the tropical climate instead is thatched with bamboo leaves that are replaced every few years. The upper floor of these houses, borrowing an English shipboard name, was called a *dêk* in Èfik. Simmons notes the blend of European with the indigenous was apparent in the houses, language, as well as their dress which mixed traditional fare with gold-laced hats, silk sashes, and handkerchiefs.⁷ The principal traders’ houses began to populate the Old Calabar shoreline much more aggressively in the nineteenth century. Bassey notes “the overriding role of trade” in Old Calabar was underscored by the fact that many compounds and royal houses were built on or near the shore. Further, the residences of later elites such as King Duke, Yellow Duke, Prince Archibong, and King Eyamba V all were located between the beach (*ésùk*) and the Mission Hill.⁸

The preponderance of imported luxury goods within the house described by Nicholls is another change taking place at this time. The presence of industrialized goods coincides with an increasing demand for palm oil when it began to be used for candles, soap, and as a lubricant for the factories of the Industrial Revolution. Susan Martin notes that exports of palm oil to Britain rose rapidly from 112 tons per annum in 1807 to 23,467 tons per annum in 1847 with eastern Nigeria as a major supplier.⁹ Specifically, exports from Old Calabar totaled 1200 tons during the period of 1812-17, while in 1847 alone the amount shipped over quadrupled that to 5,217 tons.¹⁰ Braide and Ekpo specify that prefabricated houses “were ordered through the British trading ships and paid for in slaves or palm oil”.¹¹ Of course, the paradox of this era of transition was that the suppression of the overseas slave trade in fact fueled domestic slaveholding.¹² While

⁶ Hallet, 207-208.

⁷ Simmons (1956), 8-9.

⁸ Bassey (1990), 123. Original document presented as Bassey, Nnimo. *The Architecture of Old Calabar: paper presented at an International Seminar on the Story of Old Calabar, 28th July-August 1st, 1986.*

⁹ Martin, Susan, 28. See also Lynn, Martin. *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century*. Vol. 93. Cambridge University Press, 2002. McPhee, Allan. *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa*. No. 106. London: Routledge, 1926/1971. 30-31 cited in Lynn (2002).

¹⁰ Latham (1973), 151.

¹¹ Braide, Tonye, and Mrs. V.I. Ekpo. "Notes on the Preservation of the Vanishing Monuments of Old Calabar." *Old Calabar Revisited*. Eds. S.O. Jaja, E.O. Erim, and Bassey W. Andah. Enugu: Harris, 1990. 143.

¹² Nwokeji, G. Ugo. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. 181-182.

power increasingly became centralized under a smaller ensemble of powerful slave-owning rulers, spatially the footprint of this reign widened. Padoxically, power in this more diffuse environment was more central (*ìfót*). The introduction of an array of imported houses, farms, and plantations marked the era of the “offshore”.

While the foreign houses themselves were symbols of power and registers of shifting Èfik cultural values and commercial interests, the display of prosperity was largely contained. The wealth of merchants was accumulated and internalized despite having acquired a taste for things from the *obíò mbàkárá*—the “land of the white man”. Several accounts from the nineteenth century include long lists of items of European manufacture hoarded into these structures. Tables, chairs, earthenware, clocks, and paintings amassed to impress visitors and potential clients from abroad, yet the whole tended to “amuse” more than it did to influence. Nicholls ultimately dismisses the collection as a “pretty jumble of furniture”, yet the hospitality displayed by Great Duke Ephraim marked a transition from an era in which the urban environment was dominated by costumed and sometimes violent masqueraders and vagaries of the slave trade. Nigerian historian Monday Noah argues that during this period, “Wealth became the criterion for political power.”¹³ He continues, “This period might be said to have marked the beginnings of capitalism in the miniature kind, at least for Old Calabar, an era when the aristocracy of birth was replaced by an aristocracy of wealth.”¹⁴ While this claim is supported by the research of several economic historians, it risks becoming a narrative solely about the encroachment of Western capitalism missing the simultaneous cultural realignments transpiring at the time. As Evans and Rydén argue in their comparative analysis of port cities, trust in Old Calabar was developed between indigenous merchants and their European trading partners in a mutual process of acculturation.¹⁵ Similarly, Palmié contends the mail-ordered houses and “vast collections of Victorian bric-a-brac” serve as examples of the “assimilation of diasporic space into the categories of an imagined Africa.”¹⁶

Calabar notables after Eyamba III were much more favorable to inviting foreign interests on land, albeit for now, they were still limited guests and not allowed to temporarily rent space. Martin Lynn comments on local authorities’ refusal to allow traders inland, instead calling them a “semi-permanent communities of expatriates”.¹⁷ According to Latham, it isn’t until 1872 that Consul Livingstone was one of the first Europeans to live ashore and that he paid an “extortionate rent”.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the first years of the nineteenth century provide evidence of a tentative penetration of the interior by European observers. Under the guise of “increas[ing] trade” and “do[ing] good for Calabar” explorers like Nicholls worked hand in hand with wealthy merchants to produce a landscape conducive of fluid commercial transactions.¹⁹ Territorial incursions of these kinds sparked a pushback from indigenous leaders. Despite this circumspection, the nineteenth century posed a different environment for foreign interests. Rosalind Hackett succinctly summarizes, “The Èfik, epitomized by King Eyo Honesty, showed

¹³ Noah, Monday Efiog, “Political History of the City States of Old Calabar, 1820-60”, in Boniface I. Obichere, ed., *Studies in Southeastern Nigerian History*, edited by, Frank Cass, London, 1982. 66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵ Evans, Chris and Goran Ryden, “Contrasting Merchant Communities in the Early Eighteenth Century: Stockholm, Calabar and Charleston” in Jarvis, Adrian, and W. Robert Lee. *Trade, Migration and Urban Networks in Port Cities, c. 1640-1940*. No. 38. International Maritime Economic History Association, 2008. 33-48.

¹⁶ Palmié, Stephan. "Ecué's Atlantic: An Essay in Methodology." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37.2 (2007): 289.

¹⁷ Lynn (2002), 93.

¹⁸ Latham (1973), 110.

¹⁹ Hallet, 198.

the capacity to adapt internally, to ‘modernize’ without becoming ‘westernized’ or ‘Christianized’, working with instead of against.’²⁰ Though the chapter focuses on the influence of a few individuals, especially the reigns of Great Duke Ephraim, King Eyo Honesty II, and King Eyamba V, the story of the “offshore” is far from a personal history and instead a narrative of how those individuals are enmeshed in a web of socio-spatial relationships. The paradigmatic space of the offshore— defined as a network of ships, plantations, prefabricated wood houses, missionary buildings, and colonial outposts intricately linked to the Atlantic world. The offshore was a fluid, diasporic space connecting hinterland spaces, trading houses, and distant colonies. During this time, the influence of Ékpè waned and political power was centralized under a series of strong kings, particularly that of Great Duke Ephraim. The end of this period marked the end of Old Calabar’s territorial sovereignty as Presbyterian missionaries were invited to establish the first European foothold on land in 1846. It was under Duke Ephraim, though that Old Calabar would ascend to heights never seen again. Seven years later Eyamba III died and Great Duke Ephraim ushered in an era of consolidation, monopolization, and transition to legitimate forms of commerce.

4.2 Houses, Plantations, and Trading Hulks

At the time of Nicholls’ visit, Old Calabar was in the process of being socio-spatially transformed. Paradoxically, space was both actively consolidated and dispersed. On the one hand, power and form were amalgamating into identifiable imported nodes in the urban landscape. Accounts of large prefabricated houses like Liverpool Hall became more commonplace in records from the nineteenth century.²¹ The traces of this era are still found in present day Duketown. Though in a dilapidated condition, Chief Egbo Bassey’s House from 1886 still stands on the eastern edge of Boco Street (Figure 4.3-4.6).²² While few well-maintained examples remain in contemporary Calabar, images of some of these have been preserved in the National Museum at the Old Residency. The houses of Prince Edem Archibong at Offiong Street, Obong Eyo Honesty IX, and Chief Ekpo Udo Iko in Creek town are a few other examples (Figure 4.7-4.11).²³ These specters from a bygone era speak to the bustling sea trade which once was.

The diffuse power of Ékpè at the turn of the century was also being consolidated under the power of a smaller cast of Kings, most notably under Great Duke Ephraim, Eyo Honesty II, and Eyamba V. The scattered and constantly fragmenting landscape of traditional compounds that was regulated during the prior era of the masquerade was being transformed once again. The fluid and fissioning spatial processes evidenced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

²⁰ Hackett, 71.

²¹ Imbua, David Lishilinimle. *Intercourse and Crosscurrents in the Atlantic World: Calabar-British Experience, 17th-20th Centuries*. Durham, N.C: Carolina Academic Press, 2012. 69-70, Braide and Ekpo, 143-147, Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010, 161, Bassey (1990) 129, Ajekigbe, 96. Ajekigbe calls the prefabricated house type in Calabar a “luxury import and symbol of wealth and social status” though he imprecisely groups them into a long period of “fragmentation” from the late seventeenth century until the middle of the twentieth century.

²² Bassey (1990), 130. Bassey calls the building John Boco Cobham’s house. He writes, “The two-storey-building was erected in 1883 and has some interesting features, a double stairway at each end of the sitting room, leading to the bedrooms.” The 1883 belies the 1886 indicated on the entrance plaque.

²³ Braide and Ekpo, 144. They write, “The largest prefabricated chief’s house in Calabar was the three-storey high Prince Archibong’s house in at Offiong Square which was destroyed during the Nigerian Civil War.”

began to settle and stabilize. Now the charged space of the Ékpè Imperium with spectacular masquerades running between compounds, became marshalled under fewer titular and territorial kings. Whereas under Ékpè, power was more collectively distributed among members, during the nineteenth century, individual rulers held a larger sway. Concomitantly, the geography of the region became much less mysterious. Cartographic documentation displayed a higher degree of precision and provided more information about both coastal and inland regions. Comparing maps from the time of Nicholls visit with those of just a few decades later displays a much clearer understanding of the previously ambiguous interior. In 1823, a “Corrected Draught of the Callebar River” by sailor Edward Bold locates and names towns, islands, plantations, and navigation routes (Compare for instance the maps in Figure 4.12 or Figure 4.13 with the ambiguity of the Cary Map of 1805, Figure 4.2).

Ascending to power in 1814, just nine years after Nicholls had prophesized his greatness, by 1828 Great Duke Ephraim was “*Òbóng, Èyám̀b̀à* and sole *comey* [port dues] recipient and virtual monopolist of the external trade.”²⁴ In short, he was the most influential man in Èfik history.”²⁵ With the imperious grandeur of a Beethoven concerto, Great Duke Ephraim channeled the wealth of the Atlantic trade into his own dominion. He assumed sovereignty over Old Calabar at a time of tremendous socio-economic transition, namely the shift from the slave trade to the palm oil trade.²⁶ Perhaps the greatest Èfik trader of all time, he peopled the vast agricultural area of Akpabuyo to the east of Calabar with indigenous slaves purchased from the profits of his trade. There he established plantations which provided palm oil and agricultural crops, so much so Akpabuyo is often referred to as “*Èsìt Ìdìbí Èfik*”, the belly or store house of the Èfik.²⁷ While strengthening the power and reach of Duke Ephraim’s ward, historian Ebiegberi Alagoa argues Duke Ephraim’s strategy of colonizing the Qua River area for satellite farms and plantations also segregated city slaves from rural slaves, the latter of which generally exercised more freedom.²⁸ Nonetheless, the expanded footprint and centralization of power under Duke Ephraim was unprecedented in the history of Old Calabar.

During this time, Duke Ephraim amassed at least one other prefabricated structure imported from Liverpool. Citing oral tradition, Ekei Oku states Duke Ephraim’s house stood opposite Edem Street in Duketown where Prince Archibong Edem later built his house and which was subsequently burnt down during the Nigerian Civil War.²⁹ In 1828, traveler James Holman described his visit to Duke Ephraim’s house. He writes, “This wooden edifice stood by the side of the mud hut, in which by the bye, such was the force of habit, he preferred residing. In the English house there was a grand display of European articles”.³⁰ Two years later, two additional accounts from 1830 detail this newer house. The first is from Lander who writes:

²⁴ Latham (1973), 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁶ Robertson, George A. *Notes on Africa: particularly those parts which are situated between Cape Verd and The River Congo: containing sketches of the geographical situations, the manners and customs, the trade, commerce, and manufactures, and the government and policy of the various nations in this extensive tract: also a view of their capabilities for the reception of civilization, with hints for the melioration of the whole African population.* Vol. 1. Printed for Sherwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster Row, 1819. 312-320.

²⁷ Oku, 29. Latham, however, argues against this point claiming that the area is not very fertile. He did so not so much to produce oil or even food, but to strengthen the power of his house or ward. 129-132.

²⁸ Alagoa, Ebiegberi J. "Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar." *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1971): 566. Waddell, for example, visited the plantation at the Duketown farms in 1850 and remarked that the slaves there were “more or less free”. 476.

²⁹ Oku, 17.

³⁰ Holman, 364. Holman became blind in 1810. Despite his blindness, he traveled around the world from 1827-1832.

After a short time, they were desired to go up stairs (*sic*) into his best room, and they accordingly ascended about thirty or forty wooden steps, and entered a spacious apartment, when the sight that presented itself was of the most extraordinary description. The room, which was about thirty feet in length, by about twenty in breadth, was literally crammed full of all kinds of European furniture, covered with cobwebs and dust about half an inch thick. Elegant tables and chairs, sofas of a magnificent description, splendid looking-glasses, and prints of the principal public characters of England, as well as views of sea and land engagements, set in handsome gilt frames, beautifully cut glass decanters, and glasses, glass chandeliers, and a number of other things, too numerous to mention, were all mixed together in the utmost confusion. A handsome organ attracted the notice of Lander, and a large, solid brass arm-chair, which from an inscription upon it, appeared to be the present of Sir John Tobin of Liverpool. The inscription, or rather raised characters upon it were, "Presented by Sir John Tobin of Liverpool, to his friend Duke Ephraim," and vain enough is the chief of his present. He exhibits this chair with the rest of his presents to the people, or any stranger who may happen to visit him, and allows them to feast their eyes, as he imagines, on the goodly sight, but such are his care and pride of them, that he will not allow them to be touched by any one, and his attendants are not permitted to approach them, even for the purpose of cleaning off the dust which has accumulated since their first arrival. The whole of this miscellaneous assemblage of goods, are presents which have been made to the duke by merchants of Liverpool, as well as French, Spanish, and Portuguese traders, and are the accumulation of a considerable length of time.³¹

Writing in the same year, Captain James Grant's account of Old Calabar describes the urban morphology as consisting of "a great number of low thatched houses, or huts, like those common on the coast, and so irregularly scattered amongst trees that a stranger may lose his way." He contrasts this with the "good wooden house" of Duke Ephraim, which was a prefabricated structure, produced in Liverpool and delivered on an earlier vessel manned by Grant.³² This comparative Orientalist lens repeats the rhetorical strategies described in Chapter 2 when several missionaries and Victorian travelers contrasted the upright character the mission houses with the mud and thatch indigenous to the region (See specifically Chapter 2.4 "Higgledy-Piggledy Order"). This wooden house described by Grant is different than Ephraim's Liverpool Hall chronicled by Nicholls and others. This new structure, shipped over three decades later. Grant also describes the duke's compound which was surrounded by a high mud wall, within which no one has access without Ephraim's permission. The compound housed his two hundred wives, each of which had their own house.³³

Grant's description of the interior of Duke Ephraim's house, much like that of Nicholls gives a vivid impression of the privatized setting in which such Atlantic' encounters would take place: "This house or palace is stocked with numerous clocks, watches, and other articles of mechanism, sofas, tables, pictures, beds, porcelain cabinets &c. of European manufacture; most of which are huddled together, in confusion, amongst numerous fetiches (*sic*), and in a state of decay, from disuse, carelessness, and want of cleaning".³⁴

In another account from 1841, the surgeon W.F Daniel described the urban landscape of Old Calabar. He writes:

³¹ Huish, Robert. *The Travels of Richard and John Lander into the Interior of Africa for the Discovery of the Termination of the Niger*. John Saunders, 1836. 741-747.

³² Crow, Hugh. *Memoirs, of the Late Captain Hugh Crow, of Liverpool: Comprising a Narrative of His Life, Together with Descriptive Sketches of the Western Coast of Africa; Particularly of Benny... Comp. Chiefly from His Own Mss.: with Authentic Additions from Recent Voyagers & Approved Authors*. Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, & Green, 1830. 272. Grant's account of Calabar appeared within Crow's book on pages 270-286. See Chapter 3 for discussion of wooden houses.

³³ *Ibid.* 274.

³⁴ Crow, 275. See Palmié, 311-312.

The most remarkable architectural structures, however, which attracted the attention of the stranger, are the massive wooden houses of the more powerful chiefs. Most of these mansions were constructed either in Clarence Town (Fernando Po), or Liverpool, and transhipped (*sic*) from thence in detached pieces, accompanied by European carpenters, who generally paid the forfeit of their lives in erecting them. They are built of planks overlaying each other, which from the obliquity of their position, afford better facilities for the transit of rain. As regards size, they are a happy medium, and are of a proportionate altitude, most of them having a limited view of the circumjacent objects. The rooms are, in many instances, elegantly fitted up with all the gorgeous and luxurious furniture of European habitations.”³⁵

Like others before him, he follows the same pattern of distinctly contrasting the traditional houses he described.

Another important development during this period was that the inland and offshore networks established during the slave trade began to expand and mature. Plantations (*inwáń*) for cultivating palm oil were established and massive trading hulks began to appear in the waters of the Calabar River (Figure 4.14). The river (*àkpá*) and beach markets (*ésùk ùruà*) became intense, fluctuating nodes of international commerce at this time. The economy diversified into the production of not just palm oil, but also sugar cane and cotton. Networks of canoes (*ùbum*) transported goods and people from the hinterland to these mobile trading posts connected to the Atlantic diaspora. As Northrup elucidates:

The rise of the legitimate trade in palm oil in the nineteenth century is often described as following (or due to) a decline in the overseas slave trade. In fact in the most important oil producing region, the Bight of Biafra, the palm oil trade expanded well in advance of any decline in the slave trade and the suppression of the slave trade occasioned no marked increase in the rate of palm oil export growth. It would appear that the direct and indirect effects of the slave trade in this region had created economic conditions which enabled its small farmers to respond so rapidly to external demand for palm oil.”³⁶

Part of the mobile infrastructure supporting this transformation were massive trading hulks (*ùbum mbàkára*) moored in the Calabar River. Not unlike the traditional compounds native to the region, this architecture displayed characteristics of impermanence and continual transformation. A painting housed at the Old Residency captures the fervent activity surrounding these hulks (Figure 4.15). Ships dock near Duketown beach as runners rush to capture supplies and load them into nearby canoes. Meanwhile, offshore the activity is just as frenetic. Martin Lynn writes of “an oil ship... covered from stem to stern with a roof of which the rafters are bamboo and the covering palm branches... [which] effectually keeps out both the sun and rain. On deck there is much business going forward, making or tightening [*sic*] oil puncheons, boiling or straining oil, and as there are both the white crew and the black crew probably forty in number...”³⁷ Adams writes, “It is the practice in Calabar, Bonny, and Benin, for vessels to have roofs over them, constructed with mats, which are rendered impervious to the rain, thereby preventing ... anchored off the coast”.³⁸ Supporting these floating factories were a network of canoes transporting goods

³⁵ Daniel, W. F. (1846). “On the Natives of Old Calabar”. *Journal of the Ethnological Society*, 848, (1846): 322. Coincidentally, this is the same account which was mis-transcribed by Old Calabar historian E.U. Aye and discussed in Chapter 2.

³⁶ Northrup, David. "The Compatibility of the Slave and Palm Oil Trades in the Bight of Biafra." *The Journal of African History* 17.03 (1976): 353-364.

³⁷ Lynn (2002), 92.

³⁸ Adams, John. *Remarks on the country extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo: including observations on the manners and customs of the inhabitants...* G. & WB Whittaker, 1823. 234.

and people. Documented in engravings by later missionaries and explorers, canoes of kings often contained temporary mobile tents (Figure 4.16-4.18. See also 4.14). Due in part to the marshy riverine geography of the region, these canoes also served an important role in the commerce and connection of the pre-colonial environment.³⁹

The houses, plantations, and trading hulks actively participated in the production of the diasporic space of the offshore. The crispest example of this entangled space, however, comes from an analysis of King Eyamba V's Iron Palace.

4.3 King Eyamba V's Iron Palace

Architectural history has a tendency to fixate on certain buildings, re-telling stories about the formal virtues of isolated projects, classifying them and cross-referencing, often without properly situating them in their cultural context or examining the power relations they engender. Following this pattern is the history of Old Calabar's famed "Iron Palace" built for King Eyamba V in 1843. The prefabricated wood and iron structure, made by the iron merchant William Laycock, was publically exhibited in downtown Liverpool. Displayed at Oldhall Street prior to the construction of the famed Sailor's Home, it was used for advertising purposes and charity benefits before being shipped to Old Calabar.⁴⁰ It was featured in an article in *The Builder* magazine shortly after its exhibition and subsequently published in several popular journals (Figure 4.19).⁴¹ The palace was destroyed in 1864 though a few remnants remain today in Duketown.⁴² Despite its demolition, historians of the region and other commentators have elevated the palace to iconic status in Old Calabar.⁴³ Why is this the case?

The importance of the Iron Palace lies not in the architect who designed it, its construction, or client, but the socio-spatial assemblage it was part of. While the house was impressive enough to display to ogling Brits, the design was derivative of earlier buildings discussed in this study like Egbo Young's Liverpool Hall or Duke Ephraim's house. In relation to Great Duke Ephraim, Eyamba V's political and commercial capacities were commonplace despite holding the titles of king and òbóng. In fact, it can be argued King Eyamba was known more for his personal shortcomings and the decline of Old Calabar during his reign. Waddell decried Eyamba V as a "specimen of rare vanity" parading before large mirrors bedecked in feathers, beads, and brass rings.⁴⁴ Later scholars such as Nair argue he "believed in confirming his position and did so by hypocritically stimulating the loyalty of others on purely opportunistic grounds."⁴⁵ Later scholars, however, contest these depictions characterizing his bravado as part

³⁹ Smith, Robert. "The Canoe in West African History." *Journal of African History* 11.4 (1970): 515-533.

⁴⁰ *The Builder*, 171. Imbua, 70. Hutchinson, 117. Whitford, 293-294 "Those who recollect Prince Albert's visit to Liverpool in 1846, when he laid the foundation stone of the Sailors' Home, will doubtless remember just before that time, a strange-looking iron house temporarily put together on that site. It rejoiced in two-stories, was surrounded by a wide verandah, and attracted curiosity from it differing so much from our street houses. It was taken to pieces, shipped out to Old Calabar, and erected... it was gutted, partially destroyed, and abandoned, as is customary; and the then usual human sacrifices were made about it; but still its iron walls exist."

⁴¹ *The Builder*, May 13, 1843. 171

⁴² Braide and Ekpo, 142. Oku, 42. "What remains of it as a relic is a pillar which is no in safe-keeping in the shrine of Ekpe Efik Iboku in Eyamba Street." Nair reports that it may be seen in front of the *ndem* Èfik shrine in Calabar, 108n2.

⁴³ Braide and Ekpo, Bassey (1990), Ajekigbe, Oku, Aye (1967), Imbua (2012), *Story of Old Calabar*.

⁴⁴ Waddell (1973), 245.

⁴⁵ Nair, 77.

of a complex diplomatic strategy.⁴⁶ Two landmark foreign policies were instated during King Eyamba V's reign. First, along with his rival Eyo II, he signed a treaty in 1842 abolishing the slave trade in Old Calabar. Secondly, beginning in 1843, he invited missionaries to establish outposts on Old Calabar territory.⁴⁷ In fact, the landmark letter sent to the Jamaica Presbytery formally inviting missionaries to Old Calabar mentions the king's house. Quoting the received letter Waddell writes, "At a consultation of the chiefs, held this morning at the king's house, it was settled... that the land will be at your service to, to make such establishments on as you may see proper".⁴⁸ Reversing years of established policy in the region, Eyamba's efforts are indicative of a changing trade atmosphere in the middle of the nineteenth century. The house was part of an emerging complex amalgam—the offshore-- an integrative, negotiated, and socially produced space of encounter. Comprised of competing trade houses, mobile shipping hulks, war canoes, and hybridized architecture, it is difficult to fully understand solely through a formal-symbolic lens.

Historians of the built environment discussing the Iron Palace have not provided a particularly nuanced reading of Eyamba V's rule, instead relying on conventional formalist perceptions. Braide and Ekpo, for example, simply characterize the palace as "statement of social prestige".⁴⁹ The Iron Palace, it seems, has risen to prominence by virtue of its reproducible visual and written documentation and the sheer discursive momentum this material has provided for later scholars. Oddly, the Iron Palace has gone on to become the most discussed architectural monument in the history of Old Calabar. So the story of the Iron Palace is not one about great architecture or great men in history. Instead, its importance lies in what it reveals about forms of representation and conventional archi-historical modes of analysis focused on iconic buildings. The Iron Palace is less a formal monument and better understood as a trace of entangled material, spatial, and power relationships.

Like the figure of the traditional walled compound, the Iron Palace is a source of national identity and heritage despite its demolition and remaining traces existing nearly entirely in textual form. Several accounts refer to the palace as a "hallmark, treasure, and pride" of Old Calabar and one of its "prized antiquities".⁵⁰ As such, it exists in a discursive space pulled by Eurocentric commentators and post-independence scholars seeking to preserve Old Calabar's built heritage. What is interesting in this case is that, as a structure with European origins, foreign travelers in the nineteenth century tend to disparage it and note its "curious" appearance in its new context. Likewise, post-independence scholars with a penchant for authentic Nigerian identity have embraced the building. In the post-independence literature, there is not a single critique of the Iron Palace or the wooden English houses as a form of cultural imperialism. It instead is cited as an example of local building heritage and the need to preserve the "vanishing monuments" in Old Calabar.⁵¹

The Iron Palace functioned as the residence and royal hall for Eyamba V (Edem Ékpènyong Ofiong Okoho) during his reign which lasted until 1847, but for the purposes of this study, it instead serves as a staging ground for the encounters in the physical and discursive spaces surrounding it. The project is emblematic of the closing of the era demarcated in this

⁴⁶ Oku, 44-46.

⁴⁷ Waddell (1973), 208-209.

⁴⁸ Waddell (1863), 206.

⁴⁹ Braide and Ekpo, 143.

⁵⁰ Imbua (2012). 70, 47. Oku, Aye (1967).

⁵¹ Braide and Ekpo.

study as the “offshore” just prior to the arrival of Scottish missionaries. If Nicholls’ stay in Old Calabar indicated the dawn of this era of the offshore, the Iron Palace marks its end or transition to a fundamentally different configuration of power. Considering Patrick Fairweather brought Duke Ephraim’s house to Old Calabar in 1785, the Iron Palace therefore demarcates a solid 50 years of continuous pre-fabricated house transactions. After its destruction, the space of Old Calabar quickly ushered in an era of missionary and colonial construction.

Formally, the project was reminiscent of the “English houses” which preceded it in Old Calabar. Like other prefabricated structures brought to Old Calabar, it was built of wood frame construction, though Eyamba’s palace was clad with iron plates painted a light stone color to resist solar heat. Originally conceived as an all-iron structure, eventually in many parts “wood had to supplement iron as the material for construction” as a cost-cutting measure.⁵² Placed as if hovering above the landscape, the house was raised approximately seven feet off the ground with piles of hardwood leaving space for storage and bedrooms. Symmetrical in plan with a forty feet by fourteen feet central hall, the house shares the spatial organization of Georgian and neo-Palladian houses at the time but with a balcony space and verandah surrounding the core. Colin Davies has thus called it “a Palladian palace of corrugated iron”.⁵³ The plans presented in *The Builder*, like the drawings in the influential neo-Palladian texts of the time, are clear of any sense of adaptation or change which necessarily took place in these contexts (Figure 4.20). In fact, the house, like its predecessors, was integrated into Eyamba V’s larger traditional compound complex in Duketown.⁵⁴ Waddell describes Eyamba in the inner courtyard of his complex “among heaps of trade goods, surrounded by native traders, and the door kept by men armed.”⁵⁵ The “blend of the European with indigenous” is apparent in the architecture, decorative arts, dress, and feasts of Old Calabar merchants.⁵⁶

The second floor, or *dêk*, is described as a grand, un-partitioned state room which is “extremely airy and handsome” lighted by thirteen windows. The dimensions of the building footprint at sixty feet by forty feet are quite similar to those of Duke Ephraim’s house reported by Henry Nicholls nearly forty years earlier.⁵⁷ Like Duke Ephraim’s house, it was brought to Old Calabar by Liverpool merchants and was “extremely well furnished with sofas, tables, mirrors, and a canopied “bed of state”.⁵⁸ At roughly 4000 square feet and costing an impressive £1200 to £1400, phrasing the house as a “palace” seems apt, though the awkward tendency of commentators to simultaneously praise and deride the building is consistent across many written accounts.⁵⁹

The idyllic rendering accompanying the 1843 *The Builder* article devoted to the palace presents a picture of a large three-story residence placed on an oblique in a foreign context (Figure 4.21). The orientalist representation depicts the building’s edifice as an alien object

⁵² Bassey, “Colonial Architecture: The Case of Calabar, Nigeria”, *New Culture*, New Culture Studios, Vol. 1, No. 10, 1979. 29. *The Builder*, 171.

⁵³ Davies, Colin. *The Prefabricated Home*. Reaktion Books, 2005. 49.

⁵⁴ *The Story of the Old Calabar: A Guide to the National Museum at The Old Residency, Calabar*. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 1986. 97. Braide and Ekpo, 144.

⁵⁵ Waddell (1863), 246. Hope Masterson Waddell feasted in the palace, 245-249.

⁵⁶ Simmons, 9.

⁵⁷ Hallet, 208.

⁵⁸ Nair, 77. Citing Waddell, Journals.

⁵⁹ Paterson, Alexander D. *The Anglo American: A Journal of Literature, News, Politics, the Drama, Fine Arts, Etc.* Vol. 1. EL Garvin & Company, June 10, 1843. 168. Depending on the calculation used, £1300 in 1843 equals £105,000- £3.94 million in 2011 British Sterling.

placed in an exotic tropical environment. The palace is shown as a product of European industry and progress set in a landscape of picturesque mountains and palm trees populated by some scantily clad native figures. There's a tension in the prose and images dedicated to the building—at times exalting its beauty and rationality, and at other times treating the “curious” object in a primitive land with circumspection. Before the house was delivered, it was put on display to the public in Liverpool. The history of the Iron Palace as told by *The Builder* magazine is as follows:

Some time ago, a handsome house of wood was sent from this port, for the use of a rival prince on the same coast, which, when erected, became, like the British constitution, the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the (African) world. On this, King Eyamba determined to be *nulli secundus* in the accommodation of his royal self and his three hundred and twenty wives (for his majesty equals King Solomon himself, both in his zeal for building and in his love of the fair sex), and resolved to have a palace built, superior not only to the wooden house, but to anything ever seen on the coast of Africa. With this design, his majesty gave the order of the house just completed by Mr. Laycock, which is a great curiosity, even in England, and which will certainly cause his majesty to be the best lodged prince on the Guinea coast, when it arrives at its destination.⁶⁰

In the article, it's predicted that the palace will “cause his majesty to be the best lodged prince”, yet at the same time it is a “great curiosity even in England”. The previous “handsome house of wood” was similarly described as the admiration of the *parenthetical* African world. The client, King Eyamba is portrayed as a zealous sex-crazed prince with 320 wives who lives, to borrow a phrase from Mbembe “*apart from the world*”.⁶¹

Several postcolonial analyses of orientalist world exhibitions have been performed detailing the multifarious ways “primitive cultures” were displayed in modern spaces.⁶² The Iron Palace can be read similarly, though spatially the relationship is inverted. Here, the symbol of progress is exported and “enframed” by a presumed primeval condition.⁶³ Much as the exhibition of the palace served as a form of advertising in Liverpool before shipment, the Iron Palace may be read as a billboard announcing the virtues of industrial progress and consumerism to the traditional context in which it was placed. As one commentator wrote, the palace “must make the native beholders feel their own inferiority as regards ingenuity and skill, and dispose them render willing homage to the name of England.”⁶⁴ Such an understanding, though, oversimplifies the role indigenous merchants played in constructing this image as well as the multifarious ways forms like the Iron Palace were adapted and hybridized by Old Calabar locals. Such a reading supports a penetrationist model of European imperialism which, as argued in the previous chapters, the compound and Ékpè masquerade challenged. The etching accompanying Hope Masterton Waddell's description of the palace is similar to that of the one in *The Builder*, though the view is in elevation (Figure 4.22). The often prolix Waddell says very little about the palace, noting “the king's iron house was at the center of town.”⁶⁵ By doing so, he sets a clear contrast

⁶⁰ *The Builder*, 171.

⁶¹ Mbembé, J-A., and Sarah Nuttall. "Writing the world from an African metropolis." *Public culture* 16.3 (2004): 348.

⁶² For example, Çelik, Zeynep. *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontation: Algiers Under French Rule*. University of California Press, 1997. Morton, Patricia A. *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000. Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. With a new preface. University of California Press, 1991.

⁶³ Mitchell, see specifically “Enframing”. 34-62.

⁶⁴ Limbird, John, ed. *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*. Vol. 7. Printed and Published by J. Limbird, London: Aird and Burstall, 1845. 222

⁶⁵ Waddell (1863), 243.

between the central wooden European houses and the peripheral low, mud-plastered and windowless houses of Duketown.⁶⁶ Emphasizing this centrality is the placement of the British colonial flag on the roof of the building, which is particularly noteworthy considering the colonial apparatus would not take hold in Old Calabar for decades. The flag is a metonym for good trade relations rather than an omen of foreign territorial sovereignty.

Despite this understanding, the Iron Palace may still be dismissed as a Western imposition on a traditional landscape or an example of what Marshal Berman terms the “modernity of underdevelopment”.⁶⁷ In it, the envious non-Western subject aspires to and mimics the “genuine” modernity of Europe, perusing instead a “fantasy of modernization” with all of its superficial trappings. Taking this perspective, though over a century later, tropical modernists Fry and Drew sneered at the placement of King Eyambo’s (*sic*) Iron Palace within what they saw as a pre-modern, polygamous culture of Calabar. Concentrating on Eyamba’s many wives and budget constraints, they write “Then, as now, overcrowding due to lack of funds would appear to be one of the chief concerns”.⁶⁸ Mark Crinson notes “its status for Fry and Drew seems to be both as a positive precedent for technological advancement and as a negative example of a collusion between western technology and pre-technocratic society, not democratic and certainly not monogamous.”⁶⁹ Critical readings revealing the diverse ways asymmetrical power relations are constituted in projects like the Iron Palace are necessary for moving beyond mere formal analyses.

Another way of understanding the Iron Palace is by tracing what the motivation for constructing such a structure was. It might be said that the Iron Palace was borne of the aggressive trading environment in Old Calabar in the mid-nineteenth century and an inferiority complex on the part of Eyamba V. Eyamba V had been the King and Èyámbà of Old Calabar since the death of Great Duke Ephraim in 1834 and in the time following between, Eyo Honesty II had risen to King of Creek town. As described earlier, Eyo’s house was a “beautiful residence”, so The Iron Palace for Eyamba V was a clear attempt to surpass the grandeur of the house of his fierce competitor King Eyo Honesty of Creek town. Michael Vlach describes the story of the Iron Palace as a case of “architectural one-upmanship”.⁷⁰ The two leaders of these rival ports “waged a competition with European architectural forms in the hopes of attracting more trade and eventually establishing political hegemony over the region.” Vlach sees the rivalry as one motivated by a mix of prestige and self-esteem.

These characterizations, however, overlook the complex ways in which British merchants were forced to adapt to the laws of Ékpè and negotiate with indigenous merchants in order to facilitate trade. Focusing on visual signs of power, they overlook more pervasive forms of power occurring in the everyday built environment. Moreover, they inhabit a nostalgic and paternalistic view of modernity that operates through the dictates of rationality and centralized planning and governance. Jiat-Hwee Chang’s analysis of colonial power structures in Singapore persuasively

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁶⁷ Berman, Marshall, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York: Penguin, 1982. See particularly Part IV “Petersburg: The Modernism of Underdevelopment”. 173-248.

⁶⁸ Fry, Maxwell, and Jane Drew. *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones*. London: Batsford, 1964. 82.

⁶⁹ Crinson, Mark. *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2003. 136-137.

⁷⁰ Vlach, John Michael. "The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th-Century Vernacular House Type." *The Journal of American Folklore* 97.383 (1984): 14.

argues for attending to the ways power is spatialized, moving beyond formalist understandings.⁷¹ Chang cites Arindam Dutta description of the inadequacies of a “linear theme of power-display-knowledge” and his argument that the “formalist frame is patently inadequate for understanding the informal skeins of power.”⁷² Reading the Iron Palace and the imported houses of Old Calabar simplistically as “local symbols of wealth” and “evidence of social prestige” constrains power into a linear relationship.⁷³ It flattens the entangled vectors at play in the constitution of the space of the offshore. Rather than a mutually constituted relationship, the houses are read as object-signs projecting meaning to observers. “Power-display-knowledge” understandings also unnecessarily bound this complex, diasporic space of interaction literally to the frame of the house.

Latham provides an economistic reading of Eyamba V, denying the potential for a more complex analysis of the king, his architecture and power. He instead flatly characterizes Eyamba V as a derivative ruler and profligate spender. He writes that “attempting to ape the (Great) Duke’s prestigious display overstrained his more limited means” and in 1846 he went bankrupt.⁷⁴ One of Eyamba V’s creditors imprisoned him on board his ship, where he died in limbo offshore in 1847.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the house and all of its property was locked and left to decay. It was forbidden for intruders to enter the premises.⁷⁶ Eyamba V’s successor, Archibong II decided years later to destroy the famed palace (Figure 4.23). His destruction of the Iron Palace in 1864 defies a straightforward economic interpretation. Commentary on it sheds light on another aspect of this entangled relationship—that of the symbolic power wielded by religious beliefs. Upon the death of Eyamba V and the subsequent destruction of the Iron Palace. Thomas Hutchinson, an Anglo-Irish explorer characteristically disparages the ceremonial rites of Old Calabar. He writes:

Everything in this once magnificent house was, on my visit to it, in a state of ruin and decay; for his majesty died a few years after it had been constructed.

This condition of affairs may be explained by the fact, that there exists amongst the people of Old Kalabar, as amongst the majority of the heathen nations in Western Africa, a silly superstition, that when a man dies he requires the spirit of all that belonged to him in this world: his wives, slaves, clothes, chattels, and furniture, for the use in the unknown world to which he has gone...

I have been since informed that in a few hours after its fall there was not a single piece of its structure to be found on the site of its former location: for the inhabitants all acted as so many turkey buzzards; and the earliest bird of course picked up his choice of the best worms.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Chang, Jiat-Hwee. *A genealogy of tropical architecture: Singapore in the British (post) colonial networks of nature, technoscience and governmentality, 1830s to 1960s*. University of California, Berkeley, 2009.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷³ Braide and Ekpo, 143.

⁷⁴ Latham, Anthony John Heaton. *Old Calabar, 1600-1891: The impact of the international economy upon a traditional society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973. 80.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 80. Waddell, 274. “Though Eyamba stormed at first, when he found the cabin-door locked on him, he sat down and cried, when he saw the Kroomen appear with a chain. He... ordered his people, who were raging round the ship in their canoes, to be quiet, and sent for his friends.”

⁷⁶ *The Illustrated London News*, June 22, 1850, 437. The author writes, “The custom of the country is, that any great personage dying, all of his property is locked up and left to decay. I went to the house, and looked in at the window, and to my surprise, saw large mirrors, English chairs, tables, &c.—in fact, the appearance of an English drawing room. This was the house of the last King, made of iron, and sent out from Liverpool at his desire. It is instant death to those who dare to enter it, by the laws of their country.”

⁷⁷ Hutchinson, Thomas Joseph. *Impressions of Western Africa: With Remarks on the Diseases of the Climate and a Report on the Peculiarities of Trade Up the Rivers in the Bight of Biafra*. Vol. 1. Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858. 118-119.

Hutchinson's account is unabashedly dismissive. The "once magnificent house" is now found "in a state of "ruin and decay". The funeral rites are cast a "silly superstition" practiced by the local inhabitants who are described as ravenous "turkey buzzards". Though much like the "silly superstition" of Ékpè and the communal construction of walled compounds, these spaces were rich in symbolism and not mere irrational epiphenomena to the dictates of capital accumulation. Aye explains that sacrifices to the *èyámbà* were made because in Èfik tradition it was believed that the *obíò ékpó*, known variously as "ghost land" or "land of the dead" was an extension of earthly life.⁷⁸ Like the compound and the masquerade, these imagined spaces served as important sites of cultural and economic exchange, instrumental to the practices of identity formation in the region. Like Hutchinson, Waddell paints an unfriendly picture of the "horrid proceedings" surrounding Eyamba V's death recording ritual sacrifices, "slaughter" and "the screams of victims".⁷⁹ Twentieth century accounts tend to oversimplify the palace as one "built on pride, destroyed by superstition!"⁸⁰ But dismissing these practices outright as irrational delusions or a "reign of terror" fails to understand their spiritual significance and simultaneously ignores the mythical dimensions of Western rationality. These reductive accounts cannot make sense of sacrifice and spiritual afterworlds or their necessity to maintaining the social order of a functioning trade environment. What is necessary is to produce a reading in which, as Chakrabarty argues, "the category "capital" becomes a site where both the universal history of capital and the politics of human belonging are allowed to interrupt each other's narrative."⁸¹

Indigenous oral histories get closer to this directive, describing the fate of the Iron Palace quite differently. The Hart Report describes the events surrounding King Archibong II's decision to destroy it in the following terms:

King Archibong II had dreamt and seen the hapless Eyamba homeless and a wanderer, and the dead man had requested that the King in his dream to cause his iron palace to be destroyed so that he could have a house to live in the other world. Accordingly the devoted Archibong II promptly caused the house to be pulled down; and so the Antiquities Commission of today was cheated out of what would have been a beautiful national monument.⁸²

In this reading, the palace destruction is understood as both a conciliatory sacrifice and a loss of a national monument. Elsewhere, Oku explains that the house was transformed into a "spirit house" when it was deliberately set on fire and Hackett explains that in Èfik tradition, it is believed the *obíò ékpó* is an "extension of earthly life".⁸³ Dismissing the actions of King Archibong II as those of a madman or jealous successor inadequately contends with the mystical registers that were entangled with the socio-spatial economy of Old Calabar. Akjekigbe explains that the palace served as a "tourist attraction" before its destruction, but notes that whether the remains of the palace were "completely buried or scattered is still a mystery today."⁸⁴ Oku,

⁷⁸ Aye (1967), 48. Hackett, 40-41.

⁷⁹ Waddell (1863), 336-338.

⁸⁰ Bassey, Nnimo, "Colonial Architecture: the Case of Calabar, Nigeria". *New Culture: A Review of Contemporary African Arts*, vol. 1, no. 10. September 1979. 29.

⁸¹ Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press, 2009. 70.

⁸² Hart, A. Kalada, *Report of the Enquiry into the Dispute Over the Obongship of Calabar*, Official Document No. 17, Enugu: Government Printer, 1964, 36 paragraph 111.

⁸³ Oku, Ekei Essien, *The Kings & Chiefs of Old Calabar (1785-1925)*. Glad Tidings Press Limited, 1989.42. Hackett, 40. For Èfik burial rituals, see Hackett, 40-42.

⁸⁴ Ajekigbe, Philip G. "Old Calabar Architecture: An Overview" in *State, City and Society: Processes of Urbanisation* (2002): 96.

however, claims remains of a pillar from the palace are in safe-keeping at the lodge of the Ékpè Èfik Iboku (Figure 3.12) on Eyamba Street, Duketown, across the street from where it once stood.⁸⁵ Aye states the palace stood on the immediate site opposite the front of the present Duketown Church.⁸⁶ The site has remained empty and has since become a mini-football field (Figure 4.24).

The famed Iron Palace of King Eyamba V offers valuable insight into the spatialization of power in mid-nineteenth century Old Calabar. Though destroyed, its traces remain one of the most prominent heritage monuments from the city's history. Upon inspecting its tangled past, the attention it has attracted is better understood. Prior analyses have fixated on the formal properties of the structure and its role as a symbol of prestige without adequately attending to structures of power. The palace's destruction, likewise reveals registers of meaning that cannot be contained by modernist paradigms in which space is considered a static thing unto itself. Cornel West argues the challenge is to understand architecture as a set of "power-laden cultural practices, deeply affected by larger historical forces... but also as practices with their own specificity and social effects."⁸⁷ As such, the palace can be understood as part of an assemblage of real and imagined spatial practices. The prefabricated iron framework is entangled in a knot of written artifacts past and present, as well as the mystic "ghost land" occupied by Eyamba V after his death. The sacrificial destruction of the palace coincided with the arrival of Presbyterian missionaries in Old Calabar and a period in which the ever-changing space of the city would be fundamentally transformed once again.

The final two sections of this chapter present what might be considered a counterpoint to the historical evidence and intentions of this study thus far. Concerned with the diverse ways Old Calabar's pre-colonial environment historically adapted and mutated, this dissertation has focused on the qualities of decentralization, impermanence, and informality to set it apart from other studies of architecture and urbanism in post-colonial contexts. The next two sections in this chapter briefly examine the early stages of what may be seen as a more typical formal pattern of colonial development featuring extraterritorial penetration of the interior by foreign parties, first by missionaries and later by the British colonial administration. In the coming decades, the foreign population grew and the presence of imported European structures multiplied. Colonial enclaves containing mission houses, church yards, administrative residences, court houses, and prisons were built. Transportation and sanitation technologies were implemented. The urban fabric, while not completely divided, developed characteristics which approximated a segregated "dual city" arrangement. Church steeples and bungalows dotted the slopes of Mission Hill and Government Hill. While the process of urban development followed an arguably much more normative colonial pattern at this time, it is instructive to examine it as it relates to the ideas of zoning explored in earlier chapters. Just as biased accounts shed light on the protozones of earlier eras, the preponderance of colonial records of Old Calabar help. Nonetheless, this period leaves an indelible mark on the architecture and urbanism of contemporary Calabar.

4.4 The Arrival of Scottish Missionaries

Before his death, King Eyamba V had set in motion at least two policy shifts which would profoundly change Old Calabar after his death. Guided in part by commercial interests, he

⁸⁵ Oku, 42.

⁸⁶ Aye (1967), 48.

⁸⁷ West, Cornel. "Race and Architecture", *Cornel West Reader*. Basic Books, 1999. 457.

first set out to abolish slavery in Old Calabar. The second was his and Eyo Honesty II's request sent to Presbyterian missionaries to establish outposts in Old Calabar territory. With this invitation, on April 10, 1846, the *Warree* anchored at the mouth of the Calabar River. In the same year, Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah* oratorio heralding heavenly ascension premiered in England. It was the belief of the kings of Calabar that in addition to the word of god, missionaries would promote commerce, education, and agricultural skills among their people. Likewise, Europeans sought to create a literate elite amongst the Calabar people who could foster the palm oil trade. The Irish clergyman, Hope Masterton Waddell, led the mission of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland from its prior station in Jamaica to the shores of Old Calabar (Figure 4.25). From this date until his death in 1895, Waddell preached the gospel and kept meticulous records of Old Calabar customs. In his diary, he writes:

To day (*sic*) we all take up our abode on shore + dedicate ourselves + our residence to God. It is the first house ever built or inhabited by white men in Calabar or on hundreds of miles of this coast. The traders in the river confine themselves to their ships, and our coming to reside here is an era in the history of the country.⁸⁸

The mission was invited to build schools and teach the Calabar people to read and write in trade English. Western education was prized by local elites, not so much for learning the gospel, but for trading purposes. From the very beginning, commerce and the missionary initiative were intertwined. Upon arrival, it was in the trade compound of King Eyamba V that some of the first meetings between Calabar locals and Waddell's missionary team took place. Eyamba V donated some of his own buildings for use as missionary schools, the first of which was opened in May of 1846 in Duketown.⁸⁹ This warm reception, however, was soon frustrated when it became evident that church teachings were antagonistic to many local customs. The schools, mission houses, and churches that were established were intended to evangelize, in the words of missionary Samuel Edgerly, the "degraded and heathen people" of Old Calabar.⁹⁰ The initial promise of technical and agricultural training on the part of the missionaries was surrendered in light of limited funding. Missionary buildings sought to create the greatest impact by the least expensive means.⁹¹ As a result, they had to incorporate indigenous building practices into the construction of their missions despite their low regard for Èfik customs. Mission houses incorporated thatch or were informally established in the confines of already existing compounds.

Though at times they were forced to adapt to local cultural and climatic concerns, missionaries became intolerant of Èfik customs, particularly the practice of Ékpè, and a contentious relationship soon developed.⁹² The already contested space of the offshore became more combative as missionaries and Ékpè dignitaries ideologically battled. During this time, the distinction between indigene and settler started to erode as the new religious beliefs upset the regulating effects Ékpè had established between European and local traders. Historian Emmanuel Ayandele summarized the triumph of the missionary enterprise:

⁸⁸ Hope Waddell diary, June 4, 1846 MS7739, f. 63, National Library of Scotland. See Behrendt, Stephen D., Anthony JH Latham, and David Northrup. *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 255.

⁸⁹ Imbua, 84.

⁹⁰ Edgerley cited in Ayandele, E.A. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*. Ibadan: Longman, 1966. 23.

⁹¹ Nair, 67-68.

⁹² Hackett, 67-69.

It may be said that between 1850 and 1875 there was a kind rehearsal of Nigeria's later history in Old Calabar. Statistically, converts who numbered 200 in 1851 were over 1,671 in 1875, and stations rose from three to five with twenty-three outstations in the period. Politically, Èfik sentiment and inclination became more and more British; *Pax Britannica* was *de facto* virtually established. In fact as early as 1856 the missionaries saw Old Calabar in terms of "a free British Colony". On the social and cultural side the missionaries won more conquests: slaves gained more freedom and European form of marriage and inscribed graves were successfully introduced.⁹³

The task of establishing free enclaves in foreign territory was propelled by a colonial mentality on the part of missionaries and converted indigenes. The necessary changes in the built environment brought about by missionaries were accompanied by a characteristic denigration of indigenous urban forms. As noted in Chapter 2, a conscious set of oppositions colored the writings and sermons of the missionaries. On inspecting the urban configuration of Old Calabar, Waddell commented, "There was hardly anything like a street, and the passages between the houses were narrow, crooked, rugged, and dirty."⁹⁴ Waddell's characterizations should not to be taken for granted. In his words, his mission from God was to "make darkness light and crooked things straight."⁹⁵ In an etching from his memoir, the righteous uprightness of the mission house is set in contrast to a native house and yard in the foreground (Figure 2.13). The mission house, however, was more than a symbol of power and cultural difference. It was rendered as a sanctum to which Èfik could flee to escape tribal obligation imposed by tribal leaders.⁹⁶ It served to protect as much as it did to exert power.

In another image from Waddell's memoir, the serene verandah of the Creektown school house, the first to be constructed by Europeans, frames a pair of children and the transforming native towns of Old Calabar (Figure 4.26). Imported wooden frame buildings were used as mission houses, churches, schools, and hospitals.⁹⁷ Within just a few years of their arrival, missionaries had erected a house for services in Creektown, followed by similar establishments and a European cemetery on Mission Hill south of Duketown. Like the prefabricated houses of local traders which preceded them, they conveyed an image of power and served as registers of the changing values in the Calabar landscape. Despite obvious visual and material differences with the architecture native to the region, the relationship was not as clear cut as it appears in the images. Europeans and converts inevitably became entangled in the newly established zones of Presbyterianism. Moreover, the confrontation between the newly established missionary nodes in Ékpè territory was often quite fractious.

At times, missionaries more egregiously overstepped the physical boundaries created by their religious establishment, aggressively trespassing into sacred Ékpè spaces. In one incident, Reverend Samuel Edgerley entered an Ékpè temple and kicked an Ékpè drum. In another, he entered the shrine of *Anansa*, the titular guard of the town, and broke a symbolic egg and imagery. Incensed, the town rose up in arms and marched to the Mission House in Duketown. Rather than negotiate with authority of Ékpè, the Mission House declared itself independent from Ékpè law, with naval support.⁹⁸ The mission house was conceived of as a "cell of

⁹³ Ayandele, E.A. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*. Ibadan: Longman, 1966. 26.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁹⁵ Waddell (1863), 229. In Èfik, the term *ùkwán* has the same dual connotation of being not straight as well as morally wrong.

⁹⁶ Ayandele, 25.

⁹⁷ Braide and Ekpo, 144-145.

⁹⁸ Miller, 28. Ayandele, 23. Nair, 103-104.

civilization” and a refuge from “traditional environment[s].”⁹⁹ Revealing the friction between spatial paradigms, the arrogant acts of exception carried out by missionaries upset the balance of power in Old Calabar.

The confrontations between missionaries and Ékpè, however, were not always as direct. They often involved a slower change of consciousness in converts, before manifesting themselves. As Imbua points out, Waddell in particular preferred a policy of “concentrated evangelism” zealously preaching the virtues of deliverance from sin within the confines of schools and compounds, rather than open air sermons.¹⁰⁰ The proselytizing space produced by these independent enclaves and their inhabitants extended well beyond their physical boundaries, disrupting the power relationships previously established by Europeans traders and the Ékpè society. For example, missions created spaces to preach against the injustices of domestic slavery. They fomented social unrest and compelled slaves to escape their masters. Plantation (*Ìnwáń*) spaces in the hinterland then acted as hideaways for runaways and a stronghold from where slaves organized a series of revolts against the Duketown gentry. The Order of the Bloodmen (*Nkà Íyìp*), a group of slaves who formed a blood covenant in solidarity against the abuses of Ekpe, formed in the Akpabuyo plantations in 1850. As Waddell writes, “their objects being to resist the encroachments and oppressions of the Duke Town gentry.”¹⁰¹ During the Bloodmen Revolt of 1851 slaves challenging the practice of immolating slaves at the funerals of noblemen reportedly raided plantations, stormed Duketown, and threatened to burn it down.¹⁰² Nair is careful to point out that the revolt was not necessarily a revolutionary demand for freedom, but a call for the end of some of Ékpè’s more egregious practices against slaves. He also notes that these changes were already in motion prior to missionary activity and that evangelism may have been one of many factors sparking social change in Old Calabar at this time.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, by 1856, the scorned practices of human sacrifice, twin baby killing, and the poisonous bean ordeal had been eradicated throughout Calabar. Like the knot of written artifacts and myths surrounding King Eyamba V’s Iron Palace, traditional walled compounds, or the performed space of Ékpè masquerade, the processes and meanings and these new zones exceeded their seemingly clear boundaries.

In the decades leading to the establishment of British colonial rule, missionaries dutifully document the establishment of schools, mission houses, and churches, and the slow transformation of the Old Calabar mental and architectonic landscape (Figure 4.27-4.28). Unlike the comparative dearth of material relating to Calabar’s built environment prior to their arrival, visual and written evidence detailing the spatial practices of missionaries are plentiful. The memoirs of Waddell as well as Alexander Robb, William and Louisa Anderson, Hugh Goldie, and Mary Slessor provide valuable insight into this critical period of Old Calabar’s socio-spatial transformation.¹⁰⁴ Just as the trading networks established during the slave trade expanded to meet the demands of legitimate trade, so too did the era of early missionary work in Old Calabar

⁹⁹ Waddell quoted in Nair, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Imbua, 101.

¹⁰¹ Waddell (1863), 476.

¹⁰² Dike, 156. Nair, 48-51.

¹⁰³ Nair, 50-51.

¹⁰⁴ Waddell (1863). Robb, Alexander. *The Gospel to the Africans: A Narrative of the Life and Labours of the Rev. William Jameson in Jamaica and Old Calabar*. Edinburgh: A. Elliot, 1861. Marwick, William. *William and Louisa Anderson: A Record of their Life and Work in Jamaica and Old Calabar*. Edinburgh: A. Elliot, 1897. Goldie, Hugh and J. T. Dean. *Calabar and its Mission*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1901. Livingstone, William Pringle. *Mary Slessor of Calabar: Pioneer Missionary*. Hodder and Stoughton, 1917.

set the stage for the era of British colonialism in the latter half of the eighteenth century. While not always in accord, missionary representatives and the later colonial administration actively worked to loosen the territorial stronghold of Calabar chiefs and the Ékpè society.¹⁰⁵ Missionaries, like the spaces they established and the performed space of Ékpè which preceded them, acted as mediators between local chiefs and European agents. The charged space of the offshore expanded with the advent of missionary activity, but it was also fundamentally reconfigured. Sovereignty, which had resided in the hands of local elites for centuries was challenged by the new territorial presence of a new form of concentrated evangelism. Propelled by their divine faith, missionaries established spaces for embracing the grace of God and spreading the gospel.¹⁰⁶ As some of the first European territorial installations in Old Calabar, they served as safe havens for missionaries and converts from the political and juridical influence of Ékpè. They served as thresholds spaces between the terrestrial life of sin and salvation in the afterlife. The churches and mission houses of Old Calabar were anticipatory staging grounds for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The dual proselytizing and commercial presence appeared in popular literature distributed in the colonial metropole. In an image from *The Illustrated London News* from 1873 (Figure 4.29), we catch a glimpse of Duketown and Henshaw Town viewed from the Calabar River. At least two shifts can be detected from the decades prior to the arrival of foreign missionaries. The author notes 2000 inhabitants in Duketown and describes how European traders “buy palm oil of the negroes” located in Creektown.¹⁰⁷ Trading hulks rest moored in the Calabar River beside palm oil factories on the water edge. In comparison to the image of Old Calabar from the same publication in 1850, a few differences can be noted (Figure 4.14). First, in both images we see a mission house perched on the hill overlooking Duketown. The 1873 image reads: “Here the missionaries preach to them, and teach them to read the Bible; which dealings, in both cases, are better at any rate than the slave trade, once the great business of Old Calabar.”¹⁰⁸ Secondly, and in contrast to the image from 1850, the houses of Duketown grouped in the valley below the mission house are rendered perhaps more accurately in the sense that they lack the solidity and punched windows indicated in the earlier image. What is not visible in these panoramic shots is the presence of Ékpè which previously and still animated the transactive coastal space, regulating trade, setting taxes, and fighting for its survival, pushing back against the pressure of unbridled colonialism. Spatial paradigms collide in this serene setting. This entangled relationship, however, is impossible to capture through mere formal analysis. Clearly delineated etchings of mission houses European houses cannot convey the charged field of relationships set in motion by the missionary presence.

The urban landscape continued to transform in 1897 when the Duketown Presbyterian Church began construction. Completed and consecrated in 1904, it featured a central masonry

¹⁰⁵ Ayandele, 94. Falola, 28-29. Imbua, 85-86. Miller, 27-28. Miller quotes Waddell who wrote, “the Egbo [Ekpe] Society was originated and maintained, not to repress crime, but to render its members absolutely irresponsible for their conduct toward their dependents.” Miller continues, “An invited guest, Waddell became exasperated when he realized he could not act in Calabar society without the permission of an Ékpè council. Statements like these were used to garner military force to suppress Ékpè and install British law.”

¹⁰⁶ Ayandele, 4. “Christian missionaries, fired by their the idealism of a faith to which they ascribed, rightly or wrongly the enlightenment, progress and technological achievements of their countries, perceived no wisdom in compromising with indigenous customs and institutions: the new wine of European Christianity had to be put in into new bottles.” 4.

¹⁰⁷ *The Illustrated London News*, October 18, 1873. 376

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 376.

spire with a clock. In appearance, it resembled a pared down version of Gothic revival popular in nineteenth century England (Figure 4.30).¹⁰⁹ The specificities of the site are noteworthy for at least two reasons. First, situated at the corner of Boco Street and Edem Street, the fenced in churchyard plot sits adjacent to the former site of King Eyamba's Iron Palace (Figure 4.24) and the Efe Ékpè Èfik Ìbòkù (Figure 3.12). It was Eyamba V who initially invited missionaries to the area, but it was the Ékpè society who had to contend with the disorienting effect of foreign religious beliefs on an urban population it had organized and controlled since the early eighteenth century. Also visible from the entrance of the church looking out to the marina were a number of traditional compounds and prefabricated houses such as that of Chief Egbo Bassey (Figure 4.24). Secondly, the church and nearby school house built in 1901 were located in the center of Duketown. Missionaries were not shy about establishing a strong presence enmeshed in the dense urban fabric of native settlements. Unlike the later colonial establishments which attempted to create separate European reservations, missionaries remained spatially proximate. In this way, Duketown continued to develop as it had for the last hundred years as a layered palimpsest of traditional architectural forms with imported set pieces of European manufacture. Traders' houses, churches, and mission houses intermixed. Despite Waddell's rhetoric critical of the poor appearance of Old Calabar's traditional built environment, construction in these areas continued unabated in an effort to make crooked things straight.

After Waddell's death, this piecemeal tendency continued as his successors built a teaching hub-- the Hope Waddell Institute-- north of Government Hill in the area known for centuries as Old Town (Figure 4.37). A transatlantic assemblage of people and materials, the new complex housed a school, chapel, cemetery, workshops, teachers' houses, and houses for converts. Technicians from the Church of Scotland prefabricated the structure dedicated to the mission industrial school and had it shipped to Calabar in 1894. The two-story building measured 110 feet long by 50 feet wide and was assembled by Presbyterian mission carpenters and students under the supervision of first Superintendent of the school, Reverend Risk Thompson and the aid of laborers employed from Accra.¹¹⁰ In 1904, bungalows built of masonry and raised on piers were added (Figure 4.31). Facing the Calabar River, the buildings formed an edge enclosing a quadrangular outdoor space for missionary work.¹¹¹

The establishment of missionary enclaves in Calabar's urban fabric transformed the space of the offshore. As an invited enterprise and one which necessitated the participation of local subjects, the evangelizing enterprise was not a one-way imposition. Guided by spiritual as well as commercial forces, the missionary spaces in Old Calabar resisted simple classifications. Despite imagining themselves as free colonies, they were sites of friction and the encounter of clashing belief systems. Missionary spaces served as transitional zones between earthly existence and the transcendent realms of heaven. In the decades following the arrival of Scottish missionaries, the development of Calabar's urban environment arguably followed a pattern much more consistent with other colonial cities. British imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century systematically divided Nigerian territory and deployed infrastructure such as railroads and roadways to evacuate raw materials to Europe.¹¹² During this period Calabar experienced a relative decline from its past as a bustling maritime port, but continued as a site of commercial transaction and cultural exchange.

¹⁰⁹ Bassey (1990), 135. Nnimo Bassey remarks the church has the qualities of "sub-Gothic" architecture.

¹¹⁰ Imbua, 75. Braide and Ekpo, 145.

¹¹¹ Imbua, 75.

¹¹² Falola, Toyin. *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

4.5 Colonial Enclaves

The abolition of the slave trade and the transition to trade in raw products were two defining aspects of Euro-commercial relations during the nineteenth century. Old Calabar and its environs were enmeshed this economic transformation. In 1851, the British captured Lagos and established a consulate, beginning a process that led to the conquest of Nigeria.¹¹³ After the long period of slave trade and the abolition of slavery in the U.S. in 1864, British commerce and its colonial *entrepôts* transitioned to a period of legitimate trade. In 1884, the Berlin Conference effectively parceled out the continent to European powers, conferring the protectorate of Nigeria on Britain. It wasn't until 1886, though, that the Royal Niger Company was established in London. The aim of the company was to gain monopoly control over the export of palm oil from the Niger Delta and further inland, and the import of manufactured goods from Britain. Trade brought more Europeans to Nigeria and led to major socio-political reorganizations of its diverse societies. While missionary endeavors in Old Calabar were outwardly premised on moral grounds, the civilizing mission of *Pax Britannica* was more vested in the economic and scientific benefits of its colonial outposts. The colonial city served as a terrain of experimentation in botany, sanitation, medicine, manufacturing, and warfare. But as Fassil Demissie argues, "More than steamboats, machine guns, cameras, and other material objects of colonialism, architecture and urbanism made the empire visible and tangible."¹¹⁴

By the 1890s, the Royal Niger Company had monopoly control of the export of palm oil from ports such as Lagos and with it a growing infrastructure to house colonial elites and accommodate the administration of extraction. Rowell, Marriott and Stockman argue persuasively that the contemporary dominance of Shell, the largest producer of oil in Nigeria, is a historical consequence of Britain's colonial legacy. They trace a similar geographic pattern of extraction between the Atlantic Triangle slave economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and what they call the "new Atlantic triangle" connecting flows of gas, oil, and money in and out of Nigeria to the United States and Britain.¹¹⁵ Further, it was during the colonial administration that companies like Shell set up the massive infrastructure necessary for extracting Nigerian crude. The economic gains to be reaped from Nigeria were potentially massive.

To administer its African territories, particularly Kenya and Nigeria, the British relied on a system of indirect rule. The ideological assumption was that British and Nigerians were culturally different and the best way to govern them was through institutions which they themselves had invented. British authorities ruled through native chiefs or traditional authorities who came to be regarded as integral to colonial apparatus. These ideas and others were developed in Sir Frederick Lugard's book, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, a handbook on the justification and implementation of indirect rule.¹¹⁶ As Mamdani argues, the introduction of indirect rule sought to co-opt traditional power structures into the British colonial project deploying regional variations across the newly created state to reflect different types of

¹¹³ Falola, 44.

¹¹⁴ Demissie, Fassil, ed. *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*. London: Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. 6.

¹¹⁵ Rowell, Andy and Marriott, James and Stockman, Lorne, *The Next Gulf: London, Washington and Oil Conflict in Nigeria*. London: Constable, 2005. 51-54.

¹¹⁶ Lugard, Frederick D. *The Dual Mandate in British West Africa*. Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922.

indigenous political organization in a kind of “decentralized despotism”.¹¹⁷ Akin Mabogunje’s classic study of Nigerian urbanism was one of the first to comparatively study the effects of these policies on cities which often had a long history prior to colonial occupation. Moving away from conventional representations of traditional urban forms, he viewed the city as economic entity and was critical of theories which placed undue emphasis on the idea that cities were simply central locations which provided services to surrounding areas.¹¹⁸ Instead, he viewed the city as a complex resultant of multiple socio-economic factors with different urban patterns emerging from cities with varied histories. Urbanistically, indirect rule necessitated building fewer and less expensive buildings to control a larger indigenous population as well as actively keeping these populations distinct. Sites for European residences were chosen on the basis of distance from native quarters and higher elevations which were seen as conducive of cooling breezes and ventilation in tropical climates. A more developed, formalized planning mechanism which would involve the movement of native settlements, however, was considered politically inexpedient.¹¹⁹

The economic objectives of British rule were to make Nigeria financially self-sufficient, produce raw materials, and consume manufactured goods. Essential to the attainment of all objectives was modernized transportation and communication services. As important as Nigeria was within the region, not a single railway line connected it with other African countries. This uneven deployment of infrastructure in many ways presaged the type of “splintered urbanism” described by Graham and Marvin in that it effectively “bypassed” colonial subjects.¹²⁰ The policy of actively segregating the native population from colonial administrators, though, had to adapt to urban conditions in which they were implemented.

Historians of African cities have classified patterns of development and the role of colonial policies on these patterns.¹²¹ In the Nigerian context, a useful distinction is made between dual cities and hybrid cities. The ancient Muslim city of Kano, for example, displays characteristics of a dual city. In 1903, the British divided Kano between the ancient walled city and the new city outside of the walls. The new city was further subdivided by race into European townships and strangers’ quarters or *sabon gari*. These areas housed migrants from southern Nigeria.¹²² Northern cities such as Kano generally followed a stricter policy of segregation. Here, Europeans had to comply to policy, whereas in Southern provinces they were persuaded to comply.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Mamdani, Mahmood, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

¹¹⁸ Mabogunje, Akin L. *Urbanization in Nigeria*. London: University of London Press, 1980. See particularly 116-120. See also Nwaka, Geoffrey I. “The Colonial City: Image and Reality.” *The Calabar Historical Journal*, Volume 1, Number 2 (1976): 23-40.

¹¹⁹ Nwaka (1990), 65. Nwaka, Geoffrey I. “Calabar, A Colonial Casualty.” *The Calabar Historical Journal I* (1976): 29-30.

¹²⁰ Graham, Stephen and Marvin, Simon. *Splintering Urbanism- Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*, London: Routledge, 2001.

¹²¹ O’Connor, Anthony. *The African City*. London: Routledge, 2007. Freund, Bill. *The African City: A History*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. For the French colonial dual city, see Wright, Gwendolyn. *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

¹²² Njoh, Ambe J. *Planning Power: Town Planning and Social Control in Colonial Africa*. London: University College Press, 2007.

¹²³ Olukoju, Ayodeji. “The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria.” *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities Since the 19th Century* (2003): 266.

In Nigeria's Southern Provinces, physical separation was also implemented, though in more hybridized manner. Uneven processes of development existed in parallel and closer in proximity. Geographer Matthew Gandy explains how this took shape in Lagos:

From its earliest development as one of the leading centers for trade and commerce in West Africa, Lagos was imprinted with a persistent and striking disjuncture in living standards between European elites and the African majority. Successive colonial administrations from the middle of the 19th century onwards failed to tackle the problems of overcrowding, disease and inadequate urban infrastructure. The British colonial administrators sought to transform the port into the Liverpool of West Africa' yet attempts to improve urban conditions were hampered by lack of financial support from the British Treasury, regional political instability and wider economic perturbations affecting the price of commodities such as cotton oil and palm oil.¹²⁴

Gandy continues, "The disjuncture in living standards between colonial elites and the African majority in Lagos was always extreme. European villas with wide verandahs and sweeping gardens contrasted the congestion of the 'African quarter'. While the advanced gas, electricity and street lighting of the high-class commercial and residential districts compared favorably with the colonials' homelands."¹²⁵ Colonial administrators thus implemented indirect rule differentially in cities across Nigeria.

During this time, Calabar competed with Lagos for political and economic supremacy. As a port city with a history of decentralized forms of governance and urbanism, it is understandable that Calabar's urban development resembled Lagos more than Kano. Similar to Gandy's analysis of Lagos, historian Geoffrey Nwaka offers a cutting analysis of colonial Calabar arguing the "anti-urban" policies of the British administration neither anticipated nor approved of the growth of cities. He describes the pattern of development promoted by the early colonial administration as chaotic, haphazard, and *ad hoc*.¹²⁶ Joseph Uyanga similarly argues that under British rule, older traditional towns were hardly interfered with and any planning which was implemented happened in piecemeal fashion with very little coordination.¹²⁷ As a city that had developed a robust trading community and for years had been associated with Europeans, Calabar was a natural choice for the headquarters of the Oil Rivers (later Niger Coast) Protectorate in 1885.¹²⁸ Traders, explorers, and missionaries had collected information relating to the culture, economy, and geography of the region (Figure 4.32). An ordinance establishing European Reservations went into effect in major towns throughout the colony in 1902 and in 1904, the name of Old Calabar was shortened to Calabar.¹²⁹ In 1915, Lugard passed the Town Council Ordinance which created European Reservations and in 1917, the Township ordinance No. XIX was passed which made segregation compulsory in Nigeria. But even before Lugard's decree, Old Calabar witnessed a policy of segregation expressed by the existence of European and Native settlements, hospitals, and cemeteries.¹³⁰

Evidence of British intervention in the urban landscape of Old Calabar was soon apparent. In the 1880s, an area between the settlements of Duketown and Old Town known to

¹²⁴ Gandy, Matthew. "Learning from Lagos." *New Left Review* 33 (2005): 44.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹²⁶ Nwaka (1990), 63.

¹²⁷ Uyanga, Joseph. "Historical and Administrative Perspective on Nigerian Urban Planning." *Transafrican Journal of History* 18 (1989): 161.

¹²⁸ Nwaka (1990), 63-65.

¹²⁹ Njoh, 73.

¹³⁰ Nwaka, (1990), 65. *The Story of Old Calabar*, 148.

harbor leopards was cleared of brush. The British Colonial Office imported prefabricated houses, bricklayers, joiners, and a plasterer for the purpose of developing the new area known as Government Hill.¹³¹ Within a few years numerous government establishments were constructed.¹³² Raised story buildings with verandahs sat atop the hillside with a commanding view of the Calabar River. A plan of the Township of Calabar drawn by British officials in the early twentieth century provides some of the clearest documentation of the urban fabric and the new colonial interventions (Figure 4.33). Colonial infrastructure including buildings, roads, drainage ditches, lighting, and gardens were developed unevenly across the Calabar landscape.

Anthony King's account of the bungalow as "the footprint of capitalism" provides particularly vivid insights into the spatial manifestation of the colonial administration in Nigeria. King writes:

The essential feature of a township is that it is an enclave outside the jurisdiction of the native authority and native courts which are relieved of the difficult task of controlling alien natives... When laying out the townships, each compound... was to be enclosed by a live hedge, mud wall or substantial fence...¹³³

The regulation of health was an integral function of these enclaves and often seen as justification for segregation. The compound area was surrounded by a non-residential area "to segregate Europeans so that they were not exposed to attacks of mosquitoes infected with germs of malaria or yellow fever." King concludes that much of the modern form of West African towns can be seen to "derive from the bungalow-and-compound-idea."¹³⁴

A prime example of this type of development is the Old Residency constructed in 1884 (Figure 4.34. See also Figure 1.6). Similar in construction to King Eyamba V's Iron Palace and other prefabricated houses owned by traders in Duketown, the cast iron structure was shipped from Macfarlane and Co. Iron Works in Glasgow. Surrounded by a defensive wall, brick canalization, and a guard house, the manicured lawn and carefully preserved gas lamps presented an interiorized environment distinct from its immediate surroundings.¹³⁵ As a two-story structure, the Old Residency technically was not a bungalow, though it manifested the objectives of British colonial urban policy at the time. Bassegy explains that colonial builders thought that by raising the habitable rooms above the ground they were safe from malaria which they believed was caused by the bad air near the ground.¹³⁶

Prefabricated buildings like the Old Residency projected an image of power, acted as a sanctuary for colonial administrators, and experimented with modern techniques in prefabrication and ventilation. As foreign as they seemed in the landscape, British houses were not entirely alien technologies unilaterally imposed on the city. They were built of the same techniques and materials as the already extant imported European houses of local traders and missionaries. But they also unwittingly mimicked the scattered, expedient, and enclaved qualities of the traditional architecture already existing in Old Calabar. While The Old Residency operated as a colonial enclave, it did so while taking on aspects of a traditional Èfik compound.

¹³¹ Bassegy, 145.

¹³² Braide and Ekpo, 166. *The Story of Old Calabar*. 145.

¹³³ King, Anthony D. *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995. 215-216.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹³⁵ Bassegy (1990), Braide and Ekpo, Ajejekigbe, 97.

¹³⁶ Bassegy, Nnimo. "Colonial Architecture: the Case of Calabar, Nigeria." *New Culture: A Review of Contemporary African Arts* Vol. 1, No. 10. (September 1979): 29-30.

Examining the plan, the presence of patterns common to colonial development elsewhere are evident; however a number of parts deviate from this configuration (Figure 4.35). The boundaries of the Township, the location of various native settlements, buildings, as well as the European Reservation are indicated on the plan. The boundaries of the quarters, though clearly marked, were less defined in practice. Native settlements inhabited Government Hill and European houses are found in Duketown. A photograph taken on Mission Hill looking toward Government Hill indicated the agglomeration of native thatched structures and colonial story buildings intermixing on the slope ascending north from Duketown (Figure 4.36). Nwaka points out that the kind of zoning imagined by Lugard could not be established on the ground because native settlements and European areas were already abutting each other. Attempts to legislate an order to the plan, subdividing native settlements into smaller wards were frustrated.¹³⁷ Boundaries were fuzzy in practice, constantly negotiated and redrawn.¹³⁸ Ayodeji Olukoju goes further, arguing the policy of urban segregation at Old Calabar was an utter “farce.” Facilities which housed natives such as the prison and African quarters were all within the so-called European Reservation.¹³⁹ Indeed, inspecting the plan the remnants of a dual city layout can be detected, but is undercut by the presence of structures for natives within the bounds of the Government Hill territory. The boundary of Duketown seeped up the hill and contained native compounds and colonial story structures. District Officers Quarters, a Masonic Hall, “Experimental Gardens”, and “Economic Gardens” occupied parts of Duketown while Married Officers Quarters were located in Leopards Town. Other colonial installments were located in neither the European nor native settlement. The barracks at Akim Town was located at the eastern edge of the township and a “Lunatic Asylum” and Target Rifle Range were located at the southern edge abutting Henshaw Town. Evidence was lacking of the required 440-yard gap, or neutral zone between European and African settlements. While not as explicitly embedded as the missionary houses and churches, colonial structures in Calabar did not strictly abide by segregationist logic. The designation of separate quarters in Calabar was at best an approximation.

A significant portion of Government Hill was dedicated to what can best be described as resort-like recreational facilities (Figure 4.37). The plan of the European reservation indicated space allocated for a golf links, tennis courts, a croquet lane, and parade and sporting grounds (Figure 4.38). Recreational facilities were placed in close proximity to the formal government houses, administrative offices, and police and military barracks. Consistent with the English landscape tradition, the layout of neatly trimmed lawns and verandahs were placed in a picturesque setting with winding, criss-crossing paths. A tram line cut across the reservation connecting a military installation with Queen Beach. The pattern of these so-called “self-

¹³⁷ Nwaka, Geoffrey I. “Colonial Calabar: Its Administration and Development.” *Old Calabar Revisited*. Eds. S.O. Jaja, E.O. Erim, and Bassey W. Andah. Enugu: Harris, 1990. 65. Note the superimposition of 45 Roman numerated wards in the plan of Duketown, Cobham Town, and Eyamba Town. Only buildings of European manufacture seem to be indicated as black in the plan. Native settlements are treated as white blocks intersected by streets with periodic European houses and factories.

¹³⁸ Bassey, 65. Nwaka (1976a), 36. Nwaka writes, “In 1913, Lugard ordered a ‘plan’ of the town be drawn showing the European Reservation, the Native Location and the existing buildings. The purpose was to ensure the sanitation of the European Reservation and to establish the necessary B.F.Z. (Building Free Zone) segregating Europeans from Africans. The result was an unending juggling with (*sic*) the boundaries which rarely complicated the planning process without establishing any pattern.” 36.

¹³⁹ Olukoju, Ayodeji. “The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria.” *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities Since the 19th Century* (2003): 273.

contained architectural complexes” were repeated in nearby outposts like Itu, Uyo, and Eket.¹⁴⁰ In practice, however, these zones were anything but self-sufficient. One of the ironies of these amenities set apart and contrasting nearby native settlements is that they required constant maintenance and support, usually carried out by the indigenous population. For example, a photograph from the British Museum documents a colonial official accompanied by his young caddy on the golf links in Calabar (Figure 4.39). This kind of European-native relationship regularly occurred within the confines of Government Hill. Moreover, in order for the system of indirect rule to function, it required a supporting cast of native political agents and staff. Originally recruited from Lagos, the Gold Coasts and Sierra Leone, eventually English-speaking natives were educated in mission schools. At a time when the British aimed to strengthen the administration but lacked adequate staff, the system of appointing African political agents was indispensable.¹⁴¹ The clarity expressed by the plan of the reservation is belied by these entangled relationships.

The fiction of the European Reservation was that it was seen as an island of modern society, hygienically distinct from the context in which it was set. It was seen as zone of order, commerce, leisure, and cleanliness—a corrective to the narrow passageways and crooked hovels of the native settlements which had upset European observers since the era of the slave trade. The administration and layout of the zone, however, was as scattered and *ad hoc* as the architecture and urbanism which preceded it and its boundaries were just as porous. Moreover, these configurations were not unlike the traditional compound configurations found in the area. Despite changes in scale, materiality, and tectonics, they attempted to create smaller, scattered enclaves of order and commerce, across the Calabar landscape. An image of temporary prison set up by the British administration in the 1880s provides visual evidence of this (Figure 4.40). Reminiscent of the improvised slave barracoons utilized during the Old Calabar slave trade, it established a penitentiary compound composed of mud and thatch. In contrast to the centralized slave castles of the Gold Coast, the prison architecture of Old Calabar was smaller, less centralized, and more expedient. The police and judiciary functions had informally been carried out by members of the Èkpè society, many of which were recast as native agents by the colonial administration. The exclusivity and expediency of traditional Èfik society adapted to and was continued by the British administration in a different form.

Also during this time, commerce and trade were refashioned. The method of mooring ship hulks in the Calabar River slowly transitioned to the installation of more permanent factory facilities owned by European trading firms. The smooth transaction of goods from Old Calabar and the hinterlands necessitated the establishment of factories onshore.¹⁴² The robust implementation of infrastructure by trading firms paralleled and was aided by the colonial regime. Less transitory prefabricated structures composed of a mix of wood and corrugated zinc, rather than docked ships, began to line the water edge. In the plan of the city, at least four major clusters of factories can be noted along the shoreline (Figure 4.35). European factories and warehouses constituted a thin zone unto itself, lying just beyond the border of areas designated for native settlement and Government Hill. The image from Welsh explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley’s memoir probably depicts the grouping of European factories adjacent to

¹⁴⁰ Braide and Ekpo, 145.

¹⁴¹ Nair, 203-210. *The Story of Old Calabar*, 149.

¹⁴² Imbua, 71.

Henshaw Town with the cliffs of Mission Hill serving as a backdrop (Figure 4.41).¹⁴³ To the north, the area from the Cliff House in Eyamba Town to the base of Government Hill housed several facilities including those of Elder Dempster. Queen Beach housed at least a dozen factories including the African Association, Mission Beach, Fort Stewart, and Millerio. Further to the north, the Patterson and Hope factories sat adjacent to Old Town. Braide and Ekpo note that by the twentieth century big commercial firms like John Holt and Elder Dempster had “large compounds” along the river with compartmentalized spaces housing their agents’ residence (Figure 4.42), office, shop warehouse, and workshops.¹⁴⁴ The top floor contained living quarters while the ground floor was usually dedicated to shops and storage (Figure 4.43). The backyard served as a workshop and warehouse for assembling wooden casks and storing palm oil and other trade goods.¹⁴⁵ The previous offshore system of canoes and trading hulks transitioned to a system of European factories lining the coast.

As in the case of the colonial reservation, the factories and trading houses of Calabar were not exclusively European entities. Segregating populations was seen by foreign merchants as a hindrance to commerce. Olukoju relates:

The solicitors of a Calabar-based firm explained that the custom of trading factories in Nigeria was to have a large number of indigenous employees resident on the premises. If a European trader arrived at a factory with produce—and this was quite common—after trading hours, it was customary to spend the night on the beach.¹⁴⁶

Colonial experiments at this time tested new environmental technologies, planning measures, and trade arrangements, but it was also a period of rapid advance in tropical medicine.¹⁴⁷ These endeavors were necessarily intertwined. The Thompson Yates Laboratory sanitation expedition saw the proximity of European factories to native settlements as a scourge to be eradicated. Malaria and yellow fever were understood to be transmitted by mosquitoes harbored in unsanitary tropical environments. Maps and photographs documented the location of native huts and dug-out canoes which were seen to attract anopheles mosquito larvae (Figure 4.44 - Figure 4.45). The 1901 plan of Duketown drawn by the team proposed the construction of streets and a newly reserved foreshore in an attempt to remedy to the situation.¹⁴⁸ The report noted that innumerable larvae were found in the native villages, but were also “found in fire buckets and other vessels inside the houses of Europeans.”¹⁴⁹ Despite concerted efforts, boundaries between factories, native settlements, and natural features intermixed. As with the attempts to spatially compartmentalize the city along race and class lines, plans to eradicate disease through segregation were difficult to implement in the administrative, economic, and geographic context of Calabar. Nonetheless, the colony served as a laboratory and register of the state of tropical science. Enclaves established by the colonial administration at the turn of the twentieth century joined the network of competing offshore spaces.

¹⁴³ Stanley is famous for his search for the explorer David Livingstone in present day Tanzania. The line, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume,” is attributed to Stanley.

¹⁴⁴ Braide and Ekpo, 146.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁴⁶ Olukoju, 266.

¹⁴⁷ Curtin, Philip D. "Medical knowledge and urban planning in colonial tropical Africa." *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa* (1992): 235-55.

¹⁴⁸ Boyce, Rubert and C.S. Sherrington, eds. *The Thompson Yates Laboratories Report*, Volume 3, Part 2, 1901. London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1902.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

The legacy of colonialism in Calabar, however, runs deeper than the physical appearance of architectural fragments lodged in the urban fabric. Colonial planning policy remained in place until Nigeria was granted independence in 1960. The combination of missionary activity and colonial policy implemented in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has had a profound impact on Calabar's urban fabric, but it is a mistake to construe either of these endeavors simply as imperialist penetration or the universal spread of capital. The spaces of encounter that emerged at this time involved complex processes of feedback, hybridization, and overlap. Foreign installations mixed and adapted to the local socio-political and geographic context, and traditional spatial practices recalibrated to the constraints established by foreign agents. The post-independence era struggled with processes set in motion during this time, but also grappled with a new set of challenges in Calabar's built environment. The next chapter examines the multifarious ways historical spatial paradigms resurface in the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort project.

The aim of this chapter has been to trace the spatial transformations coinciding with the rise of the palm oil trade in Old Calabar in the first half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. The paradigmatic space of this period was the offshore. Defined as a network of ships, plantations, prefabricated wood houses, missionary buildings, and colonial outposts, it intricately linked the port of Calabar to the Atlantic world. The offshore was a fluid, diasporic space connecting hinterland spaces, trading houses, and distant colonies. During this time, the influence of Ékpè waned and political power was centralized under a series of strong kings, particularly that of Great Duke Ephraim. It later morphed to include European installations deployed by missionaries and the colonial administration. Space at this time simultaneously consolidated under fewer sovereigns and expanded to cover a wider footprint. As an era of collaboration and conflict between European and African traders, the offshore existed as a threshold space of encounter between the Atlantic and the interior of Black Africa. The transient, polycentralized spaces of the offshore offer a stark contrast to the forms of architecture which are typically studied by architectural historians. With the arrival of Presbyterian missionaries and the first European foothold on land in 1846, indigenous territorial sovereignty was challenged for the first time in Calabar's history. Despite the clarity of spatial relationships evidenced in plans, etchings, and photographs of the architecture from this time, the boundaries created were porous and riven with socio-political tensions. These zones of encounter produced hybrid environments and friction between competing spatial paradigms. The urban environment of Calabar in the late twentieth century was to experience yet another transformation in the postcolonial era.

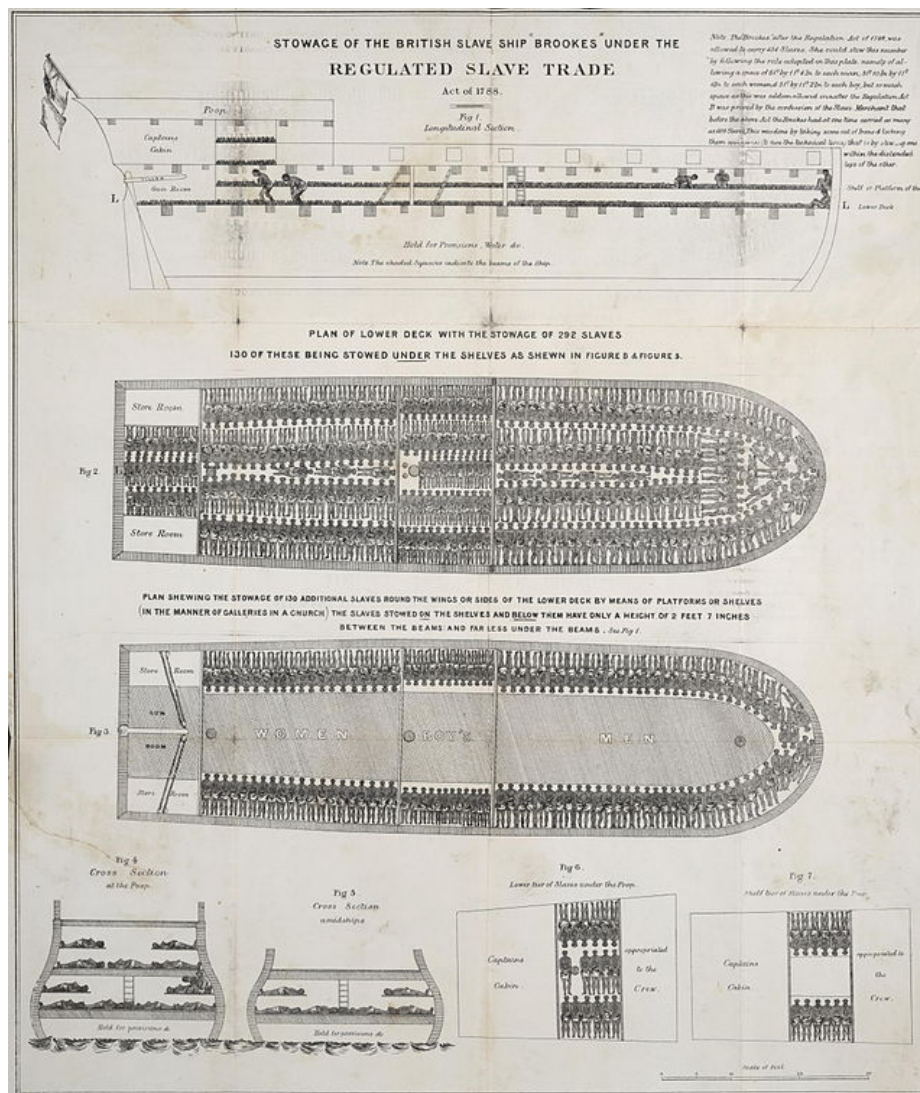


Figure 4.1. "Stowage of the British Slave Ship 'Brookes' under the Regulated Slave Trade, Act of 1788"(1795). (Source: Broadside collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (Portfolio 282-43 [Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-44000]).



Figure 4.2. Detail of "A New Map of Africa, from the Latest Surveys." (Source: London: John Cary, 1805). Note the mythic "Mountains of Kong" and largely absent interior geography of the continent.



Figure 4.3. Exterior of Chief Egbo Bassey's House at 19 Boco Street, Duketown Calabar (1886)
(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 4.4 Exterior of Chief Egbo Bassey's House at 19 Boco Street, Duketown, Calabar (1886)(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 4.5. Entrance to Chief Egbo Bassey's House at 19 Boco Street, Duketown, Calabar (1886)(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 4.6. Interior of Chief Egbo Bassey's House at 19 Boco Street, Duketown, Calabar (1886)
(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 4.7. Prince Archibong's House, Duketown, Calabar, undated photograph (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).



Figure 4.8. Entrance to House of Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar, undated photograph (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).



Figure 4.9. Interior of House of Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar, undated photograph (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).



Figure 4.10. Interior chandelier in Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar, undated photograph (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).



Figure 4.11. House of Chief Ekpo Udo Iko, Creek town, Calabar (1898) (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar, Nigeria).

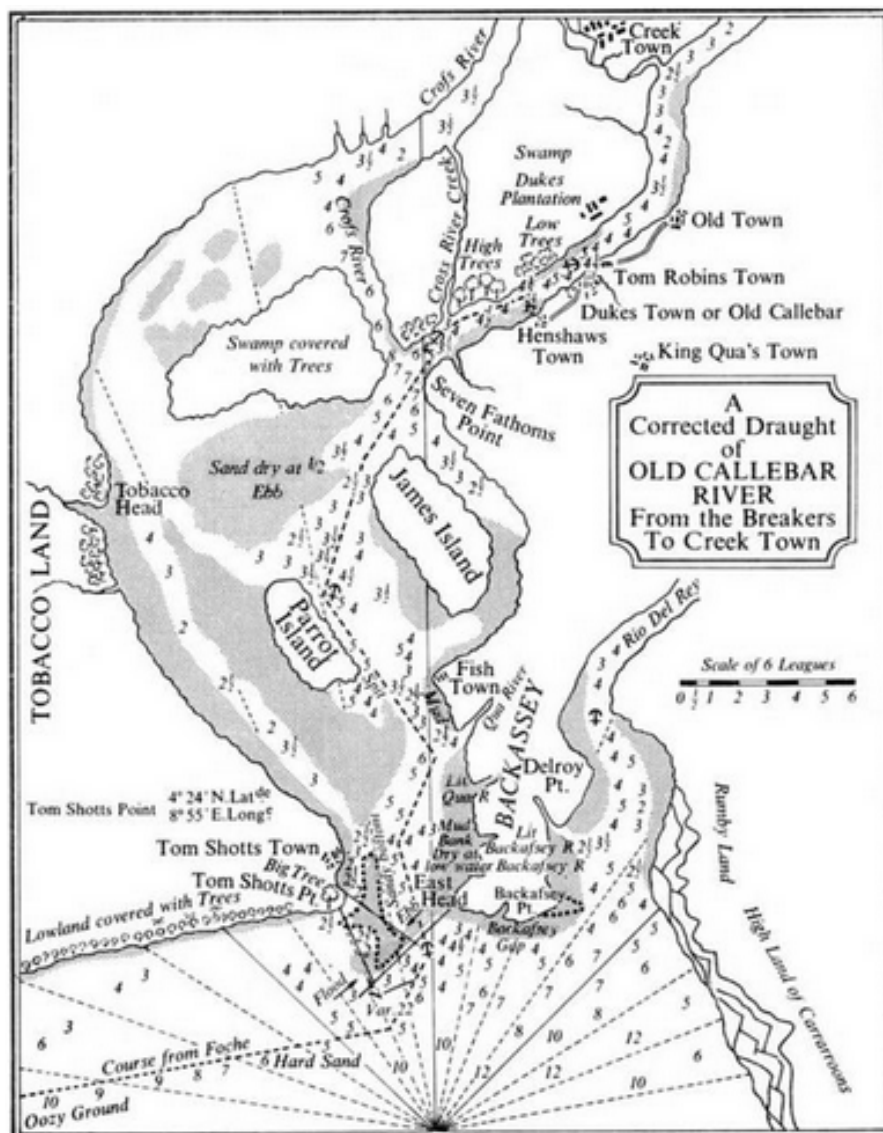


Figure 4.12. “A Corrected Draught of the Old Callebar River: From the Breakers to Creek Town” (1822) (Source: Bold, Edward. *The Merchant's and Mariner's African Guide*, 1822).

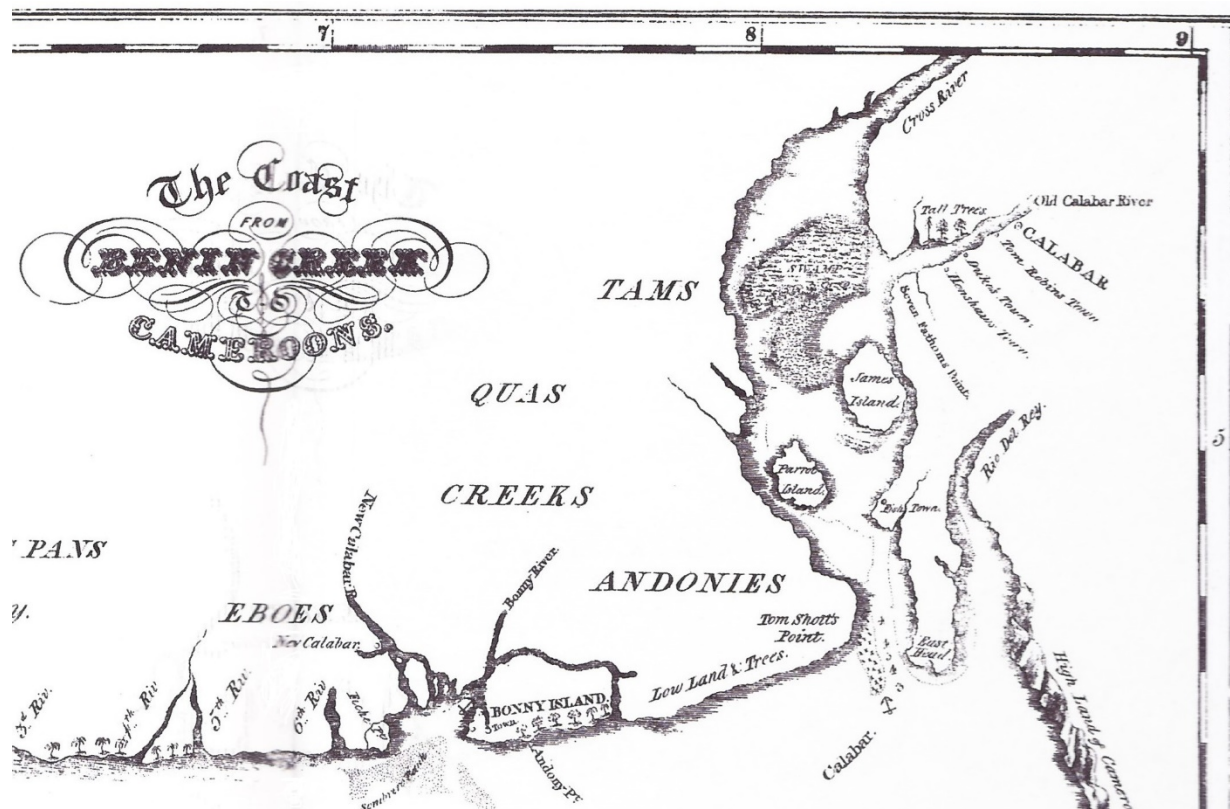


Figure 4.13. Detail of "The Coast from Benin Creek to Cameroon (1830). (Source: *The Memoirs of Captain Hugh Crow: The Life and Times of A Slave Trade Captain*, G. & J. Robinson, Liverpool).



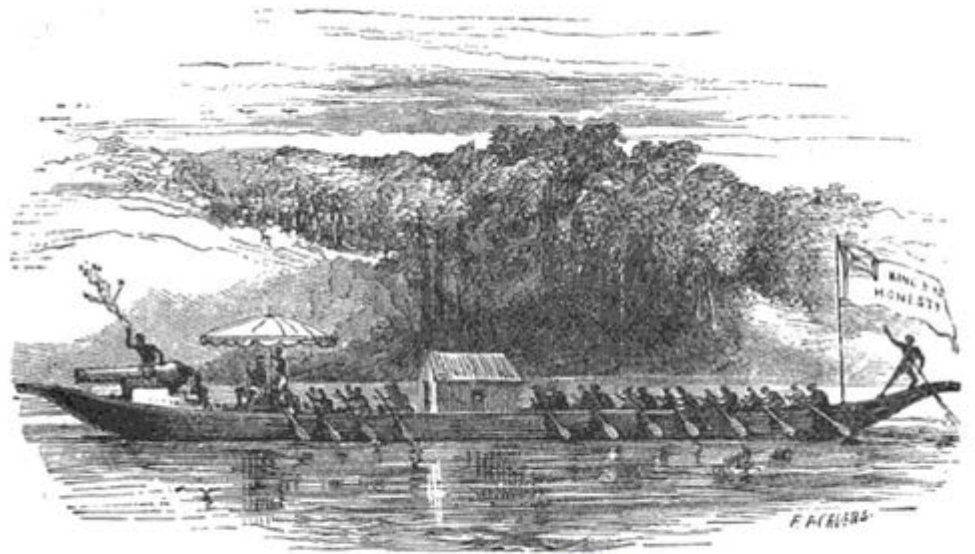
Figure 4.14 “Ephraim Town, with Old Calabar—King Eyo’s Canoe.—Her Majesty’s Steam-Sloop “Rattler” Saluting.” (Source: *Illustrated News of London*, June 22, 1850, pg. 437).



Figure 4.15. *Old Calabar Port*, painting by John Hughes, (c. 1880) (Source: National Museum, Calabar, Nigeria)

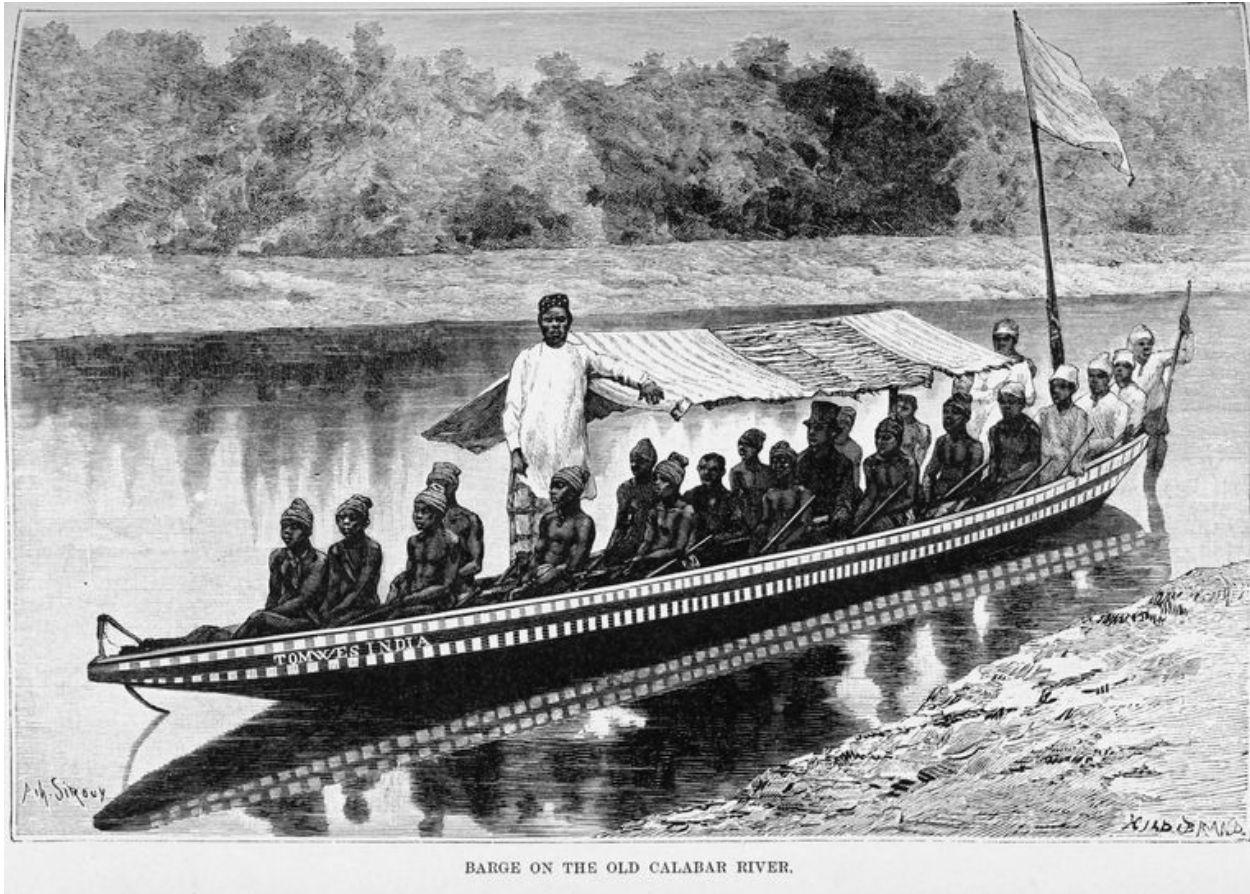


Figure 4.16. “Mangrove Forest”, (1863) (Source: Hope Masterson Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858*, frontispiece).



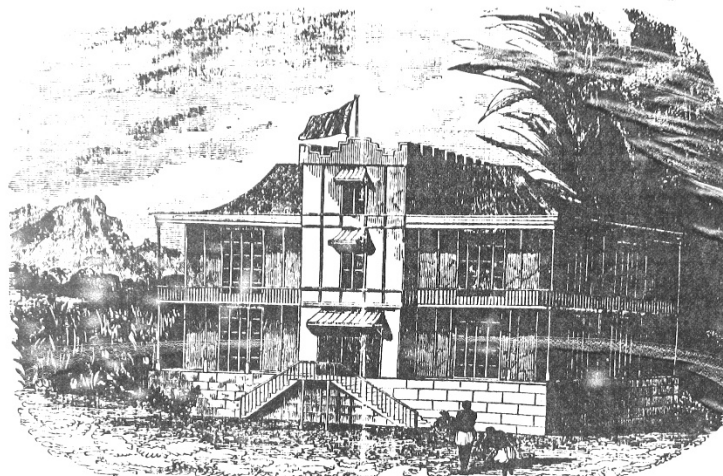
King Eyo's State Canoe.

Figure 4.17. King Eyo's State Canoe (Source: *Calabar and Its Mission*, Hugh Goldie, 1890. 153).

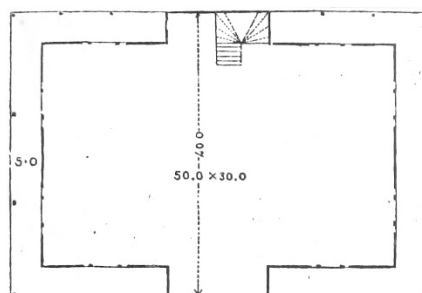


BARGE ON THE OLD CALABAR RIVER.

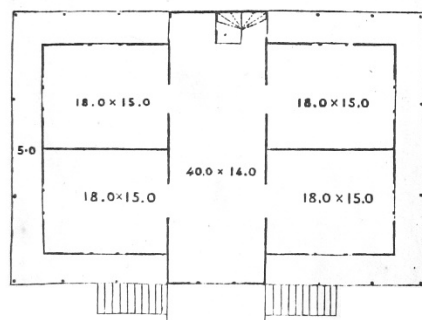
Figure 4.18. "Barge on the Old Calabar River" (Source: *The Earth and its Inhabitants*, vol. Elisée Reclus, 1892. Facing 340).



THE IRON PALACE OF KING EYAMBO.



UPPER FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

It gives us great pleasure to have the first privilege of presenting to our readers the view and plans of the much-talked-of iron palace for the African king. Of its style, as of the style of many things that pass before us, we must be tender in our remarks; things of much more pretension, however, are less to our taste than this, and are infinitely more obnoxious to the canons of sound criticism. Style comes first in most cases instead of last; it is regarded as the procreative instead of the emanative principle. Construction in its modes and material, climate, requirements, are the first consideration, and of these style is born, and by them fed and nourished; but, now-a-days, the first question is, what style shall we build in? and any answer is tolerable but—the rational style.

IRON HOUSES.

REBUILDING OF POINTE-A-PITRE.

On Thursday, Mr. Laycock, iron merchant of this town, opened to public inspection the curious palace of iron and wood which he has built for King Eysambo, one of the African princes on the Calabar river, with whom our Liverpool captains trade for palm oil and other produce of the African coast. The history of the building of this structure is as follows:—Some time ago, a handsome house of wood was sent out from this port, for the use of a rival prince on the same coast, which, when erected, became, like the British constitution, the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the (African) world. On this, King Eysambo determined to be *nulli secundus* in the accommodation of his royal self and his three hundred and twenty wives (for his majesty equals King Solomon himself, both in his sex) for building and in his love of the fair sex, and resolved to have a palace built, superior not only to the wooden house, but to any thing ever seen on the coast of Africa. With this design, his majesty gave the order for the house just completed by Mr. Laycock, which is a great curiosity, even in England, and which will certainly cause his majesty to be the best lodged prince on the Guinea coast, when it arrives at its destination.

The following account of King Eysambo's palace we take from a contemporary:—

“THE IRON PALACE OF AN AFRICAN KING.—The palace of King Eysambo, of Old Calabar, built of plate and panels of iron, upon a wooden skeleton merely, by Mr. William Laycock, iron merchant, of Oldhall-street, was on Friday opened to public exhibition (for the benefit of the charities) in the open space near the Post-office. The structure consists of two stories and an attic. The first floor contains a centre hall, 40 feet by 14, and four rooms, 18 feet by 15; the whole ten feet high. The second floor is thrown into one grand stateroom, forming the royal audience chamber, 50 by 30, extending to 40 in the recesses, and lighted by thirteen windows. It is extremely airy and handsome, and is twelve feet in height. The attic is one apartment, extending over the entire building. The ceiling and walls of the hall of audience are richly decorated by Mr. Dodd, of Bold-street, and on the walls are placed a number of Jennings and Bettridge's splendid pictures, in papier maché, which will certainly astonish the natives. More of these are to follow: one of the lower rooms is to be rendered absolutely gorgeous; and those who visit the palace once will be induced to go again, from the circumstance that embellishments of the first order will be gradually added to the attractions of the palace. When in Africa the building will be placed seven feet clear above the ground, on piles of hardwood, leaving space for stoves and bedrooms, the whole being designed rather as a state or business palace than as a domestic residence. It is surrounded by a balcony and verandah, and will be painted a light stone colour to resist the solar heat. King Eysambo, we understand, is an intelligent African, able to speak and write English in very fair style.”—*Liverpool Times*.

Figure 4.19. “The Iron Palace of King Eyambo” (sic). (Source: *The Builder*, 1843, May 13, 1843, 171).

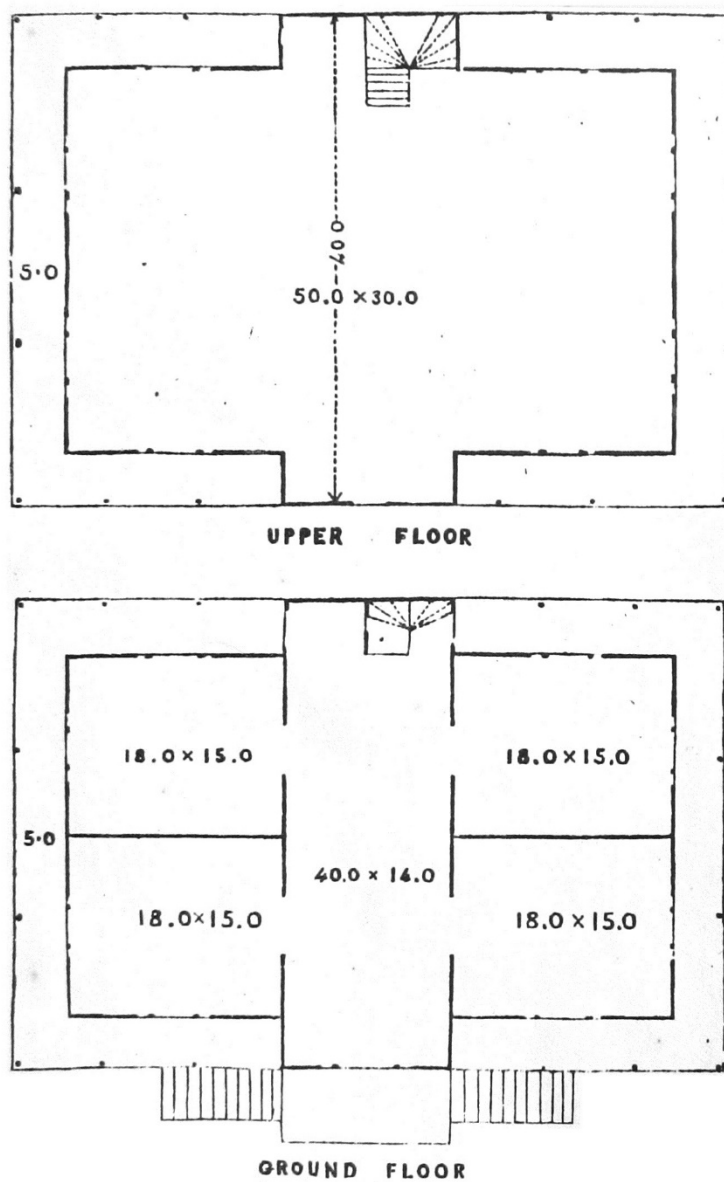
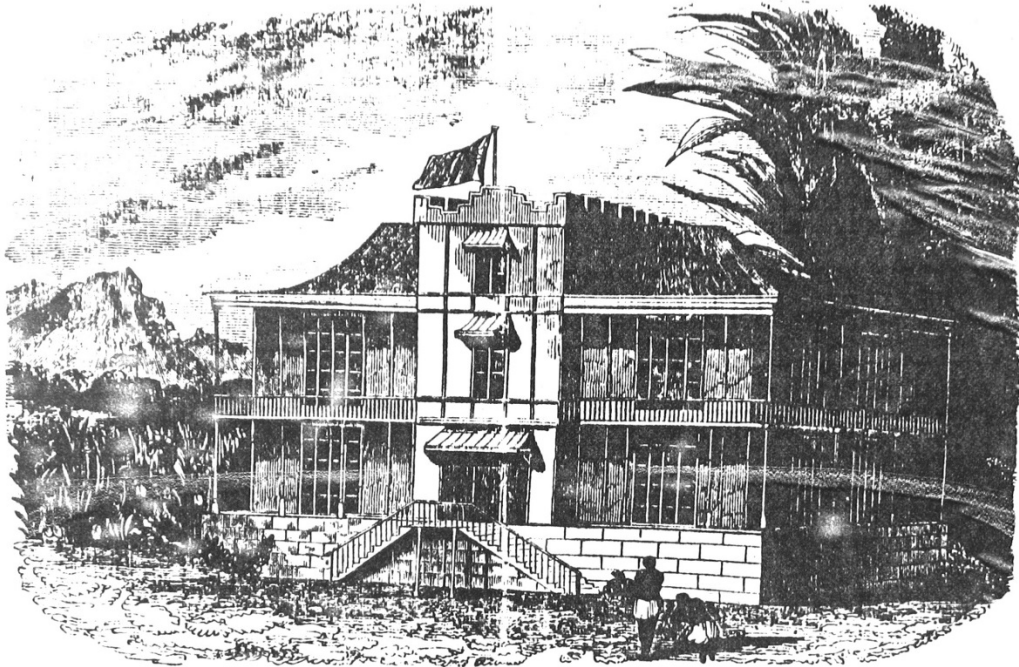
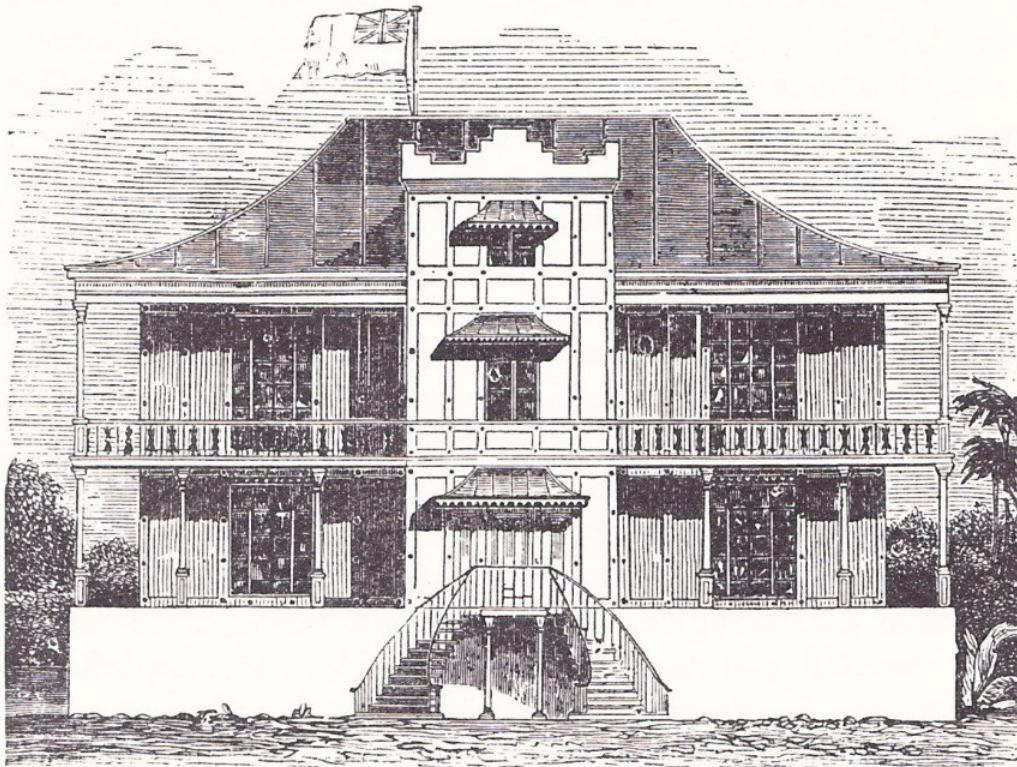


Figure 4.20. Floor plans of King Eyamba's Iron Palace. (Source: *The Builder*, 1843, May 13, 1843. 171).



THE IRON PALACE OF KING EYAMBO.

Figure 4.21. “The Iron Palace of King Eyambo” (*sic*). (Source: *The Builder*, 1843, May 13, 1843, 171).



KING EYAMBA'S IRON PALACE.

Figure 4.22. "King Eyamba's Iron Palace". (Source: Hope Masterson Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858*. 243)

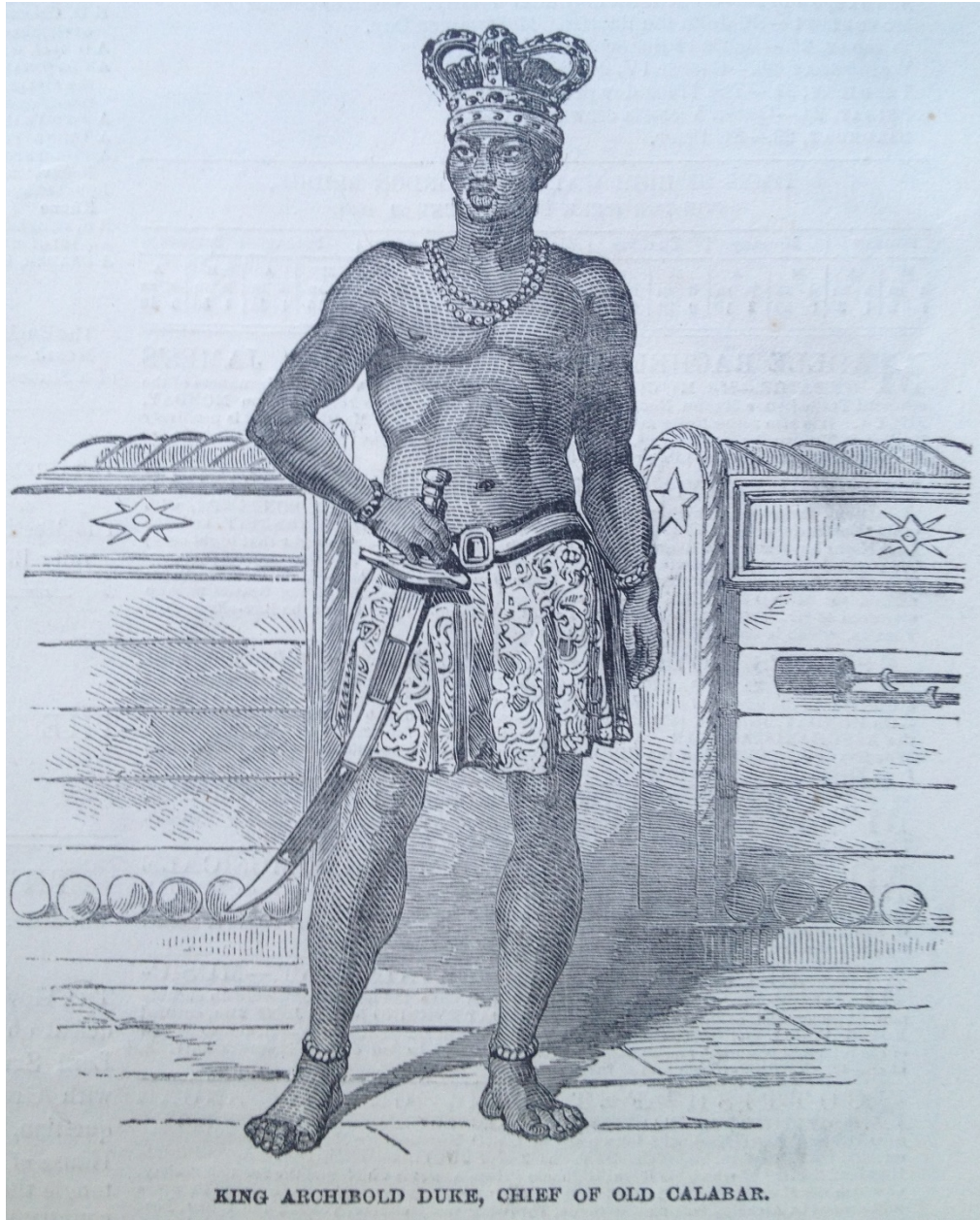


Figure 4.23 “King Archibold (sic) Duke, Chief of Old Calabar.” (Source: *Illustrated News of London*, June 22, 1850. 437).



Figure 4.24. Site of King Eyamba V's Iron Palace. Chief Egbo Bassey's House in the distance. Corner of Edem Street and Boco Street, facing northwest toward Duketown marina, Calabar, Nigeria (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).

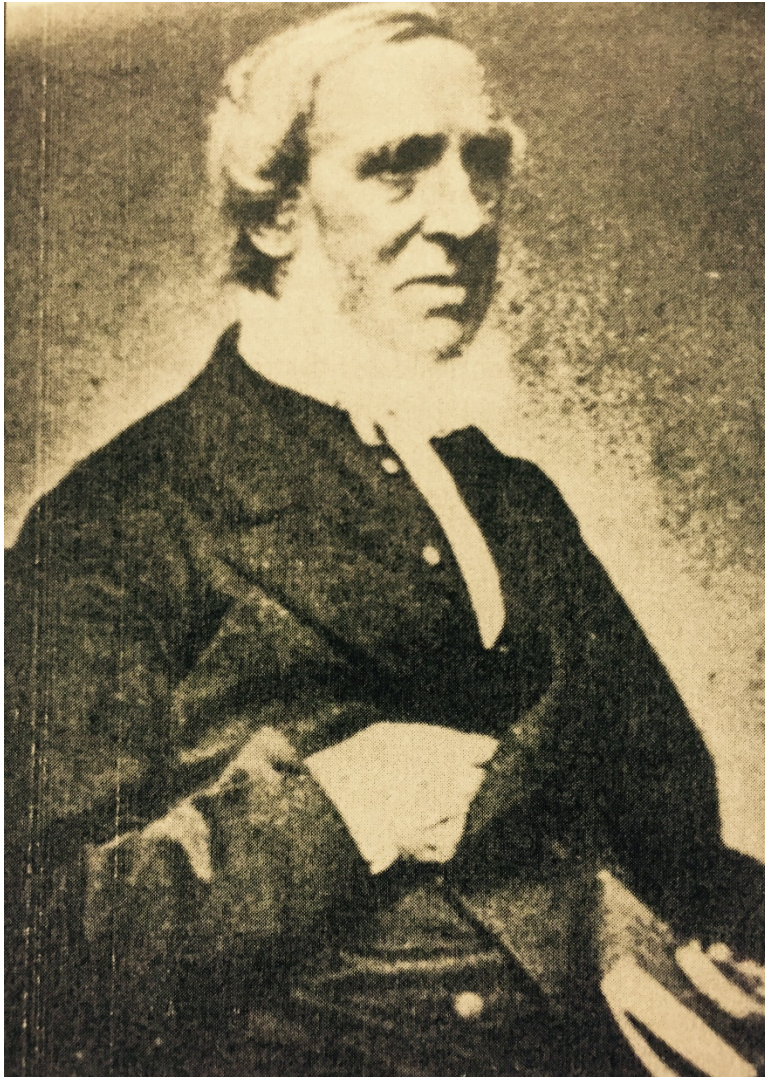


Figure 4.25. Hope Masterton Waddell (Source: *Hope Waddell Training Institution: Life and Work (1894-1978)*, 1986).



Figure 4.26. Creek Town School-house, cemetery, and church, from the mission-house door (1850s) (Source: Hope Masterson Waddell, *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858*. 598)

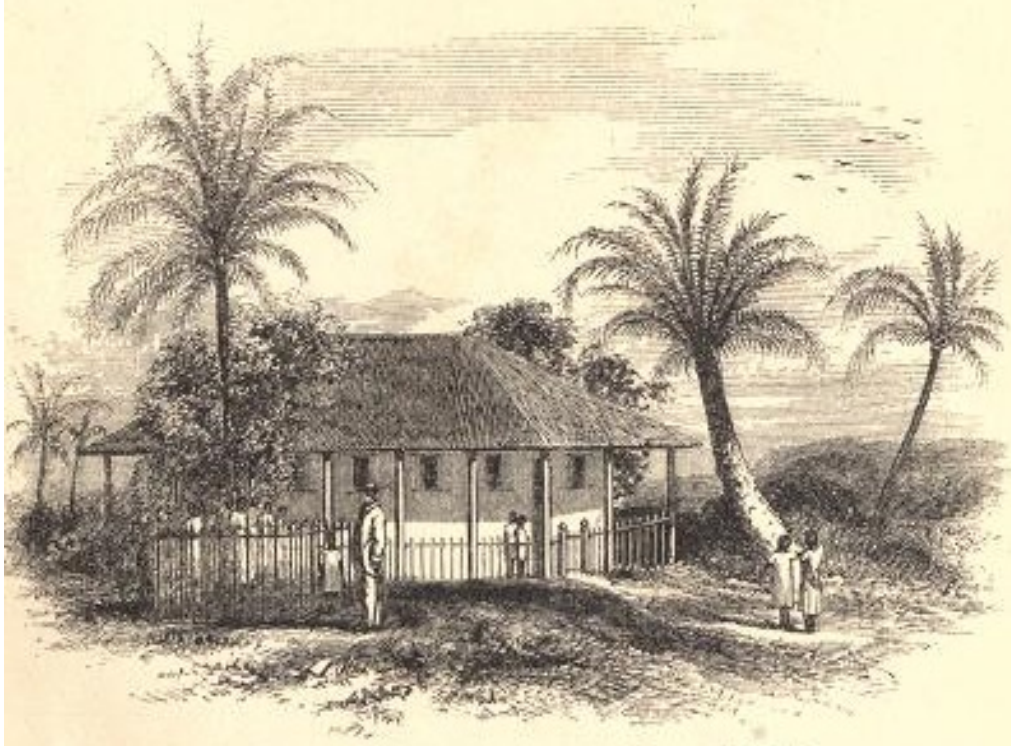


Figure 4.27. The Missionary School and Graves at Creek Town, Old Calabar” (1850s) (Source: *The Gospel to Africans*, Alexander Robb, 1861. Frontispiece).

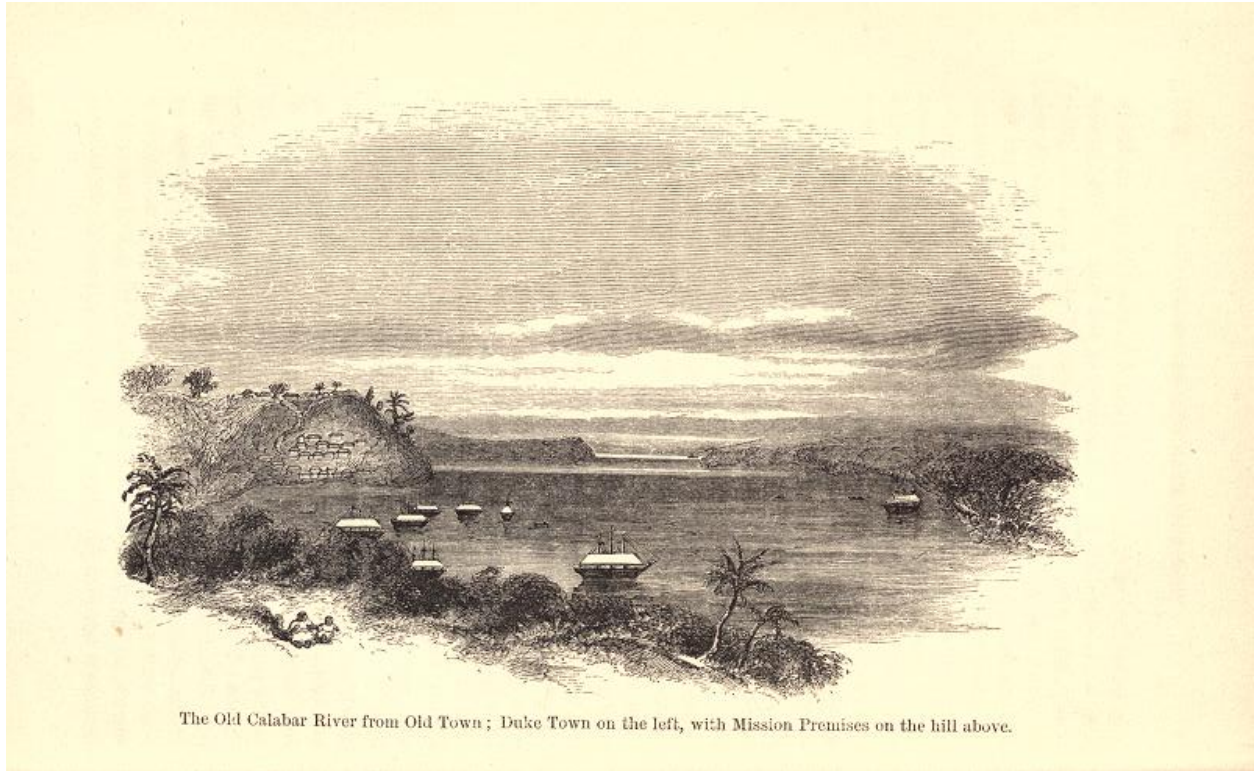


Figure 4.28 The Old Calabar River from Old Town (1850s) (Source: *The Gospel to Africans*, Alexander Robb, 1861. 248).



Figure 4.29. Old Calabar, West Coast of Africa (1873) (Source: *Illustrated News of London*, October 18, 1873. 376).



Figure 4.30. Duketown Church, Corner of Edem Street and Boco Street, facing southeast, Calabar, Nigeria (1904) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012). Construction of the church began in 1897 and was completed in 1904.



Figure 4.31. Bungalow at Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, Nigeria (1904) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).

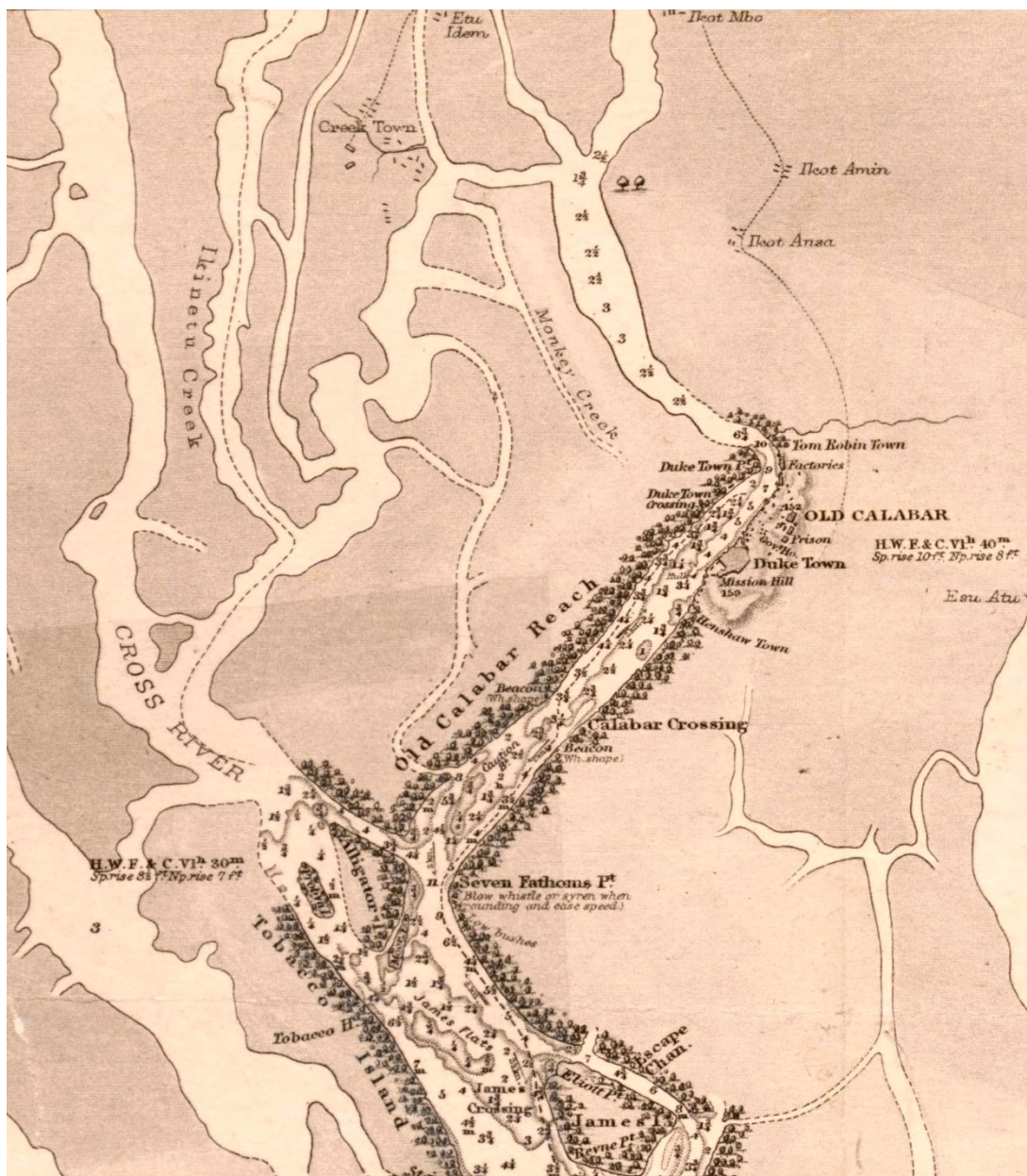


Figure 4.32. Detail of Map 'Africa - West coast. Approach to Old Calabar [now in Nigeria] surveyed by... ..': map. Originally enclosed in a Colonial Office letter, 25 July 1908. Calabar (1890-1908) (Source: The National Archives, Kew, MFQ 1/410/8).



Figure 4.33. Detail of "Plan of Calabar" (1911-1920) (Source: National Archives, Kew, MPGG 1/129. Extracted from CO 583/87. Plan of Calabar, detail, 1911-1920).



Figure 4.34. Government House, Old Residency, Old Calabar (1890-1905) (Source: The British Museum, Af,A51.31).

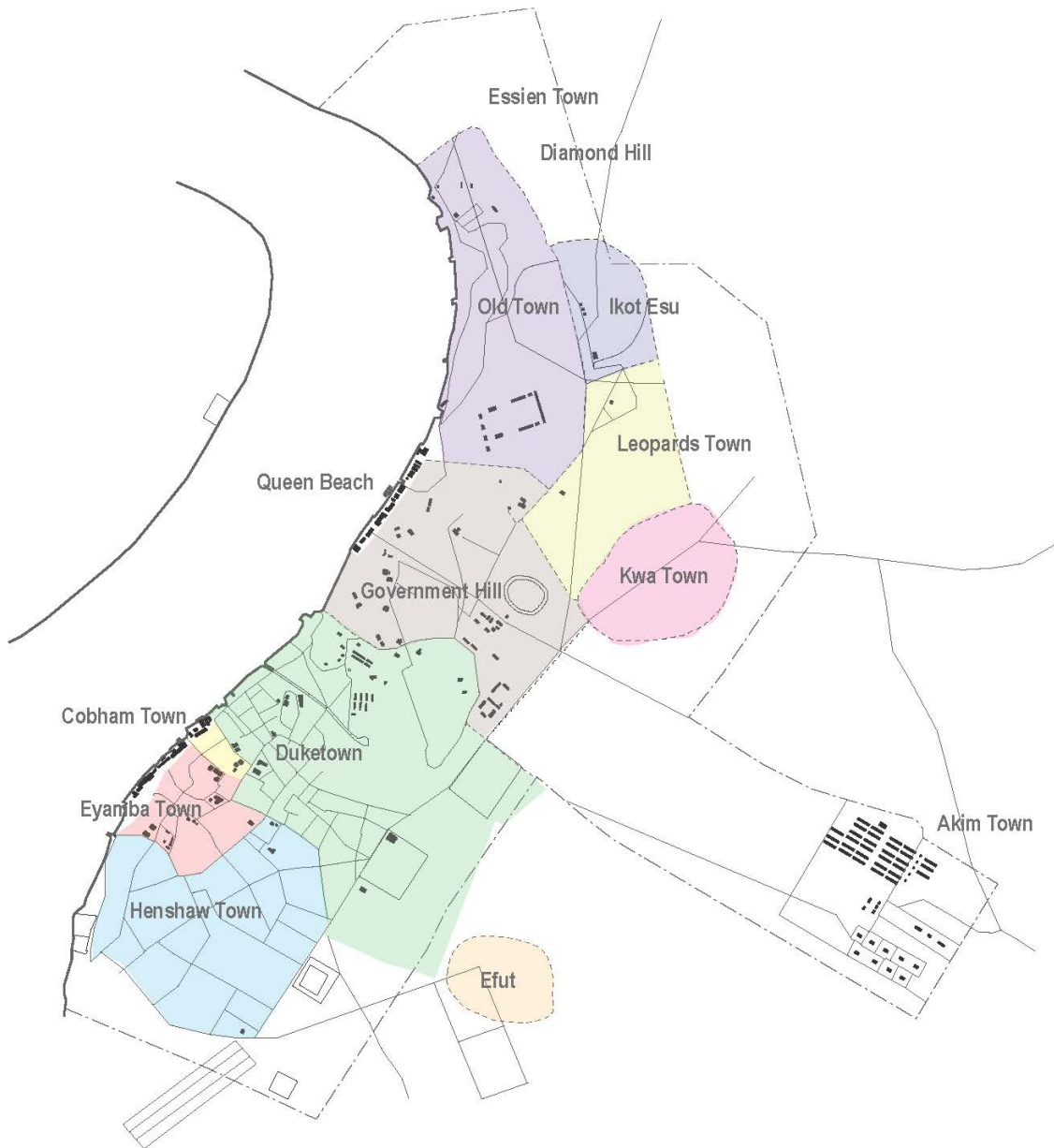


Figure 4.35. Diagram of “Plan of Calabar” (1911-1920) (Source: Diagram by Joseph Godlewski based on National Archives, Kew, MPGG 1/129. Extracted from CO 583/87. Plan of Calabar, detail, 1911-1920).

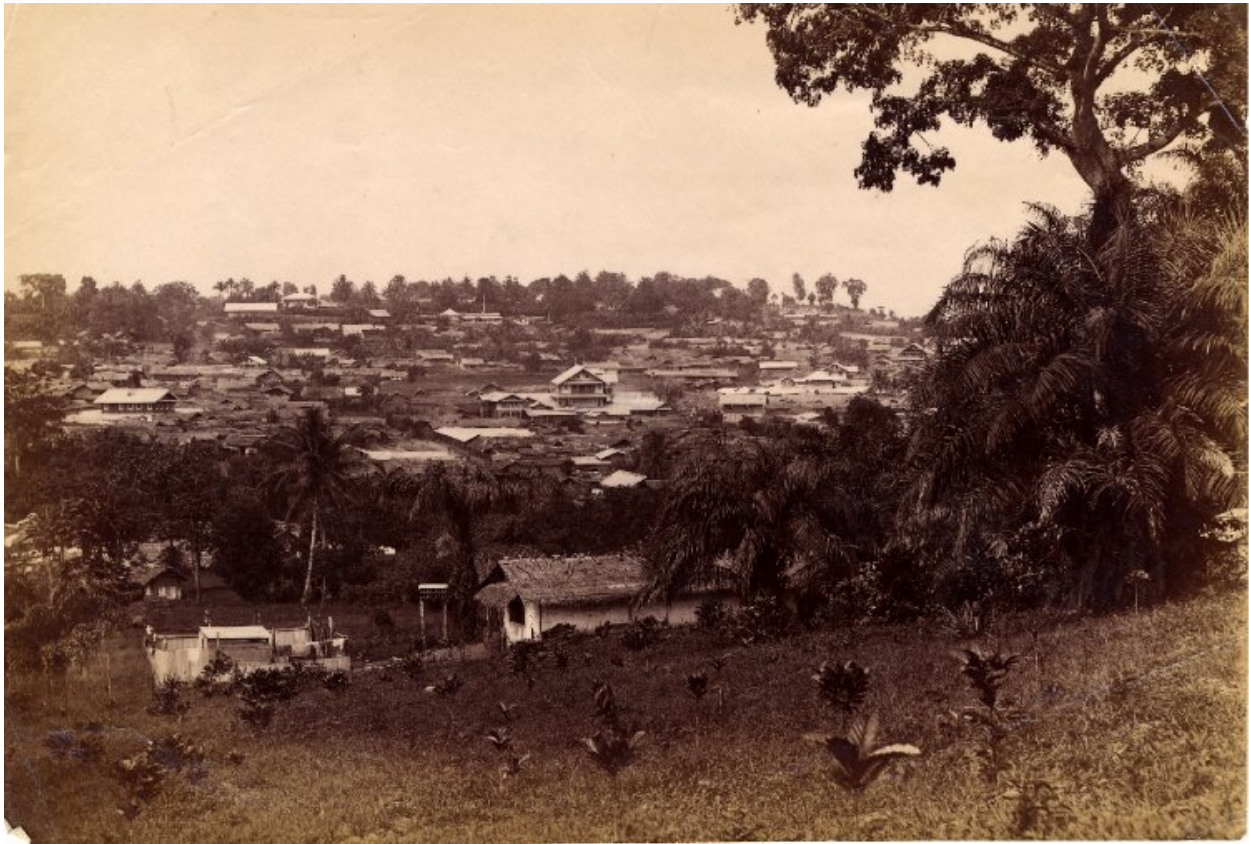


Figure 4.36. Native Settlement, Old Calabar. View of Government Hill from Mission Hill (1890-1905) (Source: The British Museum, Af,A47.7). View of native town of Old Calabar showing a settlement of thatched rectangular shelters and corrugated iron shelters with two to four stories.

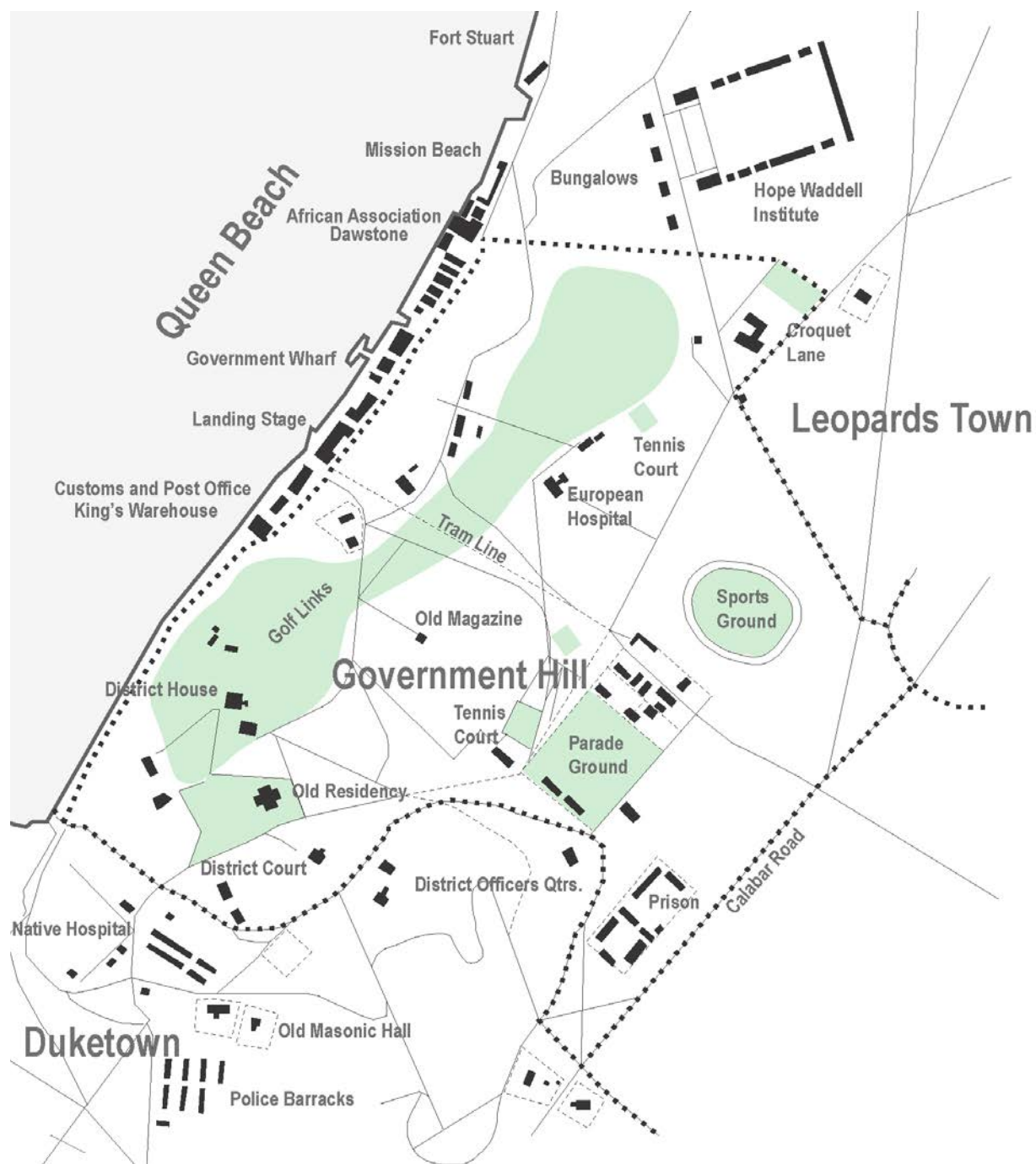


Figure 4.37. Diagram of Government Hill, Calabar (1911-1920) (Source: Diagram by Joseph Godlewski based on National Archives, Kew, MPPG 1/129. Extracted from CO 583/87. Plan of Calabar, detail, 1911-1920).



Figure 4.38. Tennis Courts at Government House, Calabar, with the Provincial Secretariat Buildings in the foreground (1909-1910) (Source: National Archives, Kew, 1069/57/4).



Figure 4.39. Golf, Old Calabar (1890-1905) (Source: The British Museum, Af,A50.140). Picture of a man on golf course in Calabar. Young caddy holding his golf-clubs at right.



Figure 4.40. Temporary Prison, Old Calabar (1890-1905) (Source: The British Museum, Af,A51.18). Picture of the temporary prison in Calabar showing a line of men standing in the compound. European man at the head of the line. Some prisoners in white prison uniform at center. Local troops at the end of the line. Gate in fence at rear has notice saying "SILENCE". Mud building with thatched roof and several doors at right.

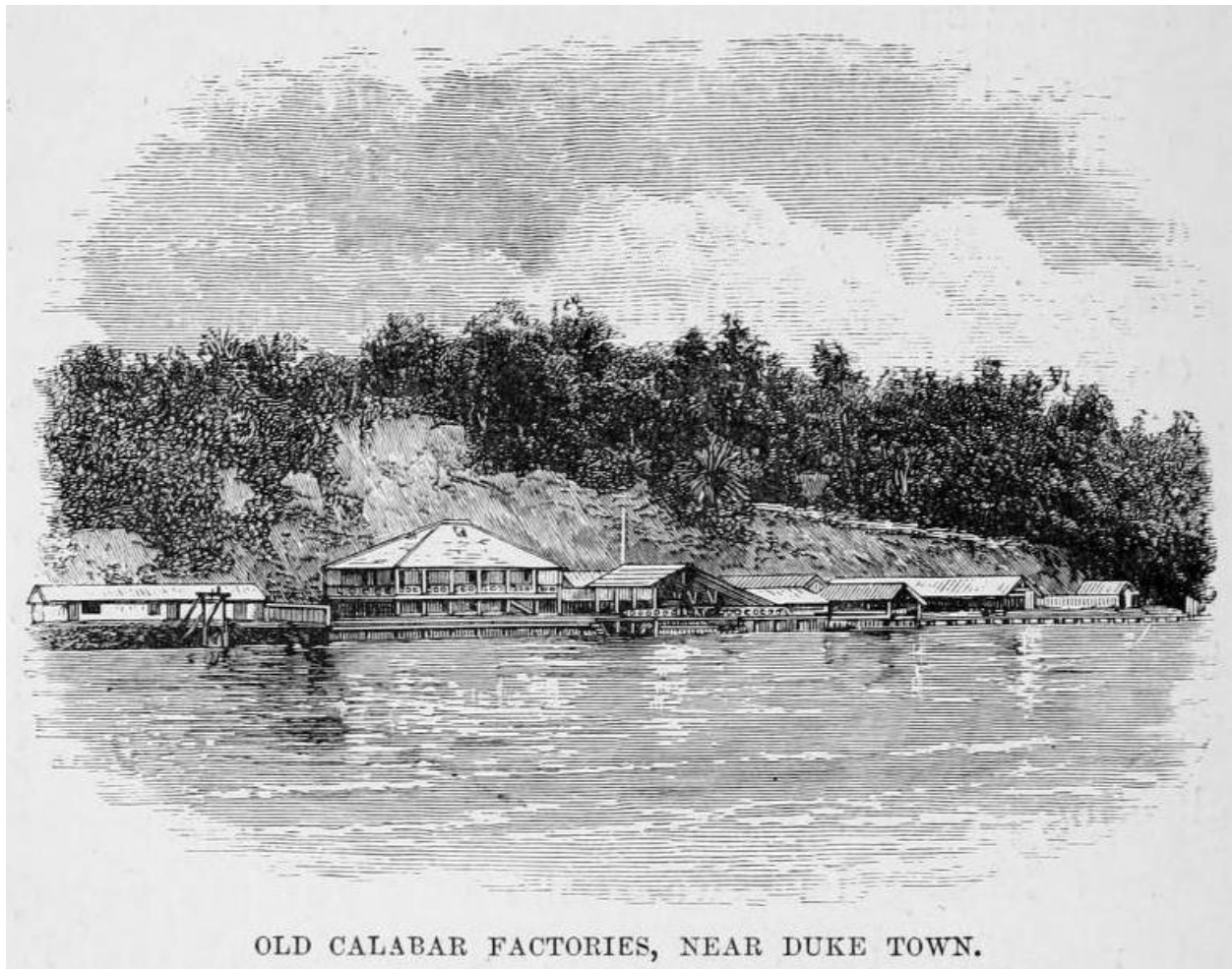
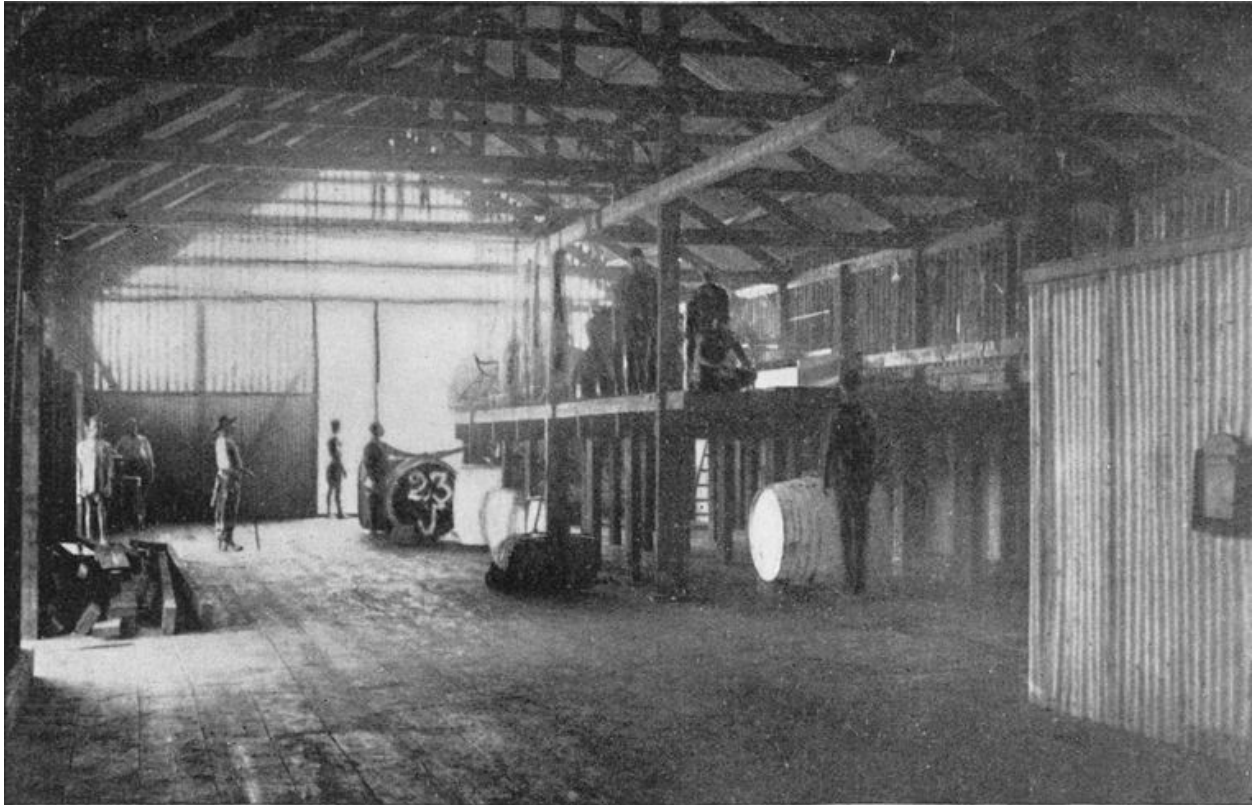


Figure 4.41. Old Calabar Factories, Near Duketown (1885) (Source: Stanley, Henry Morton. *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration*, Volume 1. London: S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885. 232).



Figure 4.42. Interior of Miller Brothers' Residential Premises at Old Calabar (1895) (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar). The trading agent Powls was killed during the attack on the British trading expedition to Benin in 1896.



INTERIOR OF PALM OIL FACTORY, OLD CALABAR

Figure 4.43. Interior of Palm Oil Factory, Old Calabar (1895) (Source: National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar).

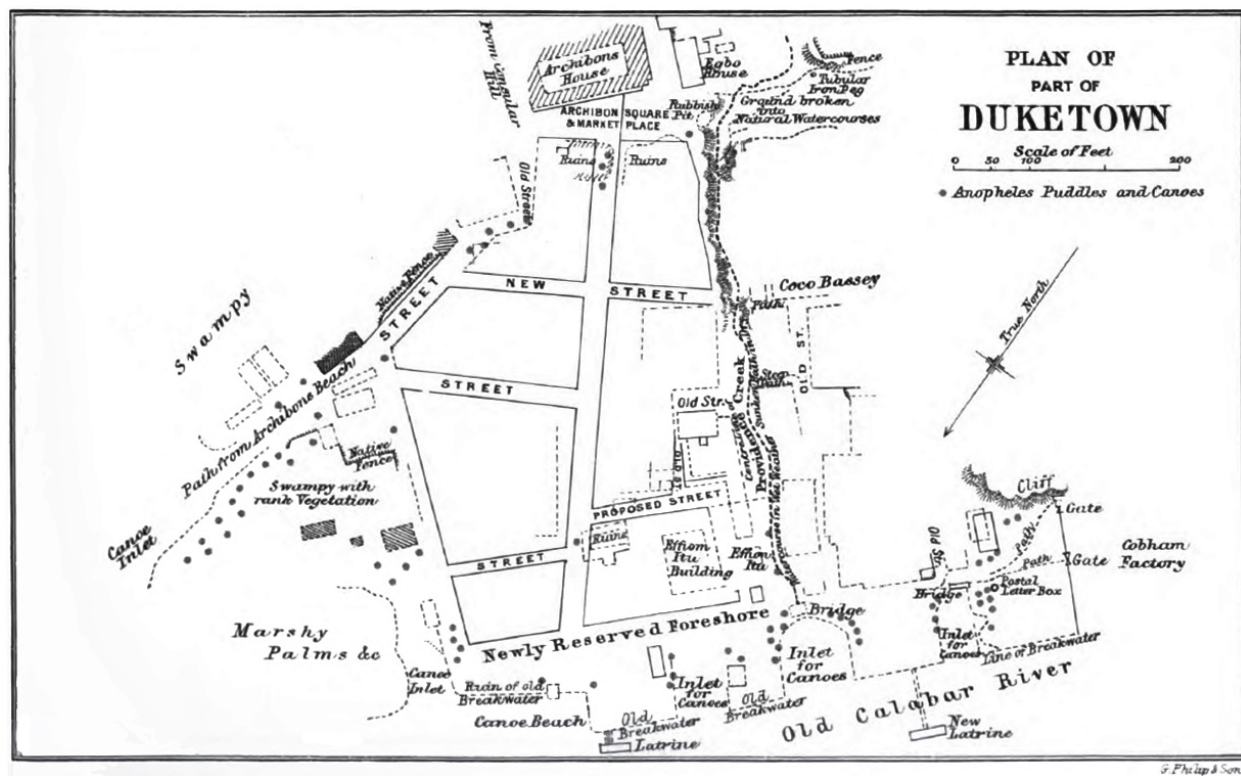


Figure 4.44. Plan of Part of Duketown showing Anopheles Puddles and Canoes (1901) (Source: Boyce, Rubert and C.S. Sherrington, eds. *The Thompson Yates Laboratories Report*, Volume 3, Part 2, 1901. London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1902. 269).



Figure 4.45. Portion of the Foreshore at Old Calabar (1901) (Source: Boyce, Rubert and C.S. Sherrington, eds. *The Thompson Yates Laboratories Report*, Volume 3, Part 2, 1901. London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1902. 233). The unused dug-out canoes are more or less full of water containing *Anopheles* larvae. On the right is the factory of a European trading firm; the native huts are built close up to its walls.

Chapter 5- Zone

5.1 Big White Elephant

In 1995, the international spokesperson for the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in southern Nigeria, Ken Saro-Wiwa, was brutally executed by federal military authorities. Saro-Wiwa's memoir, *In the Shadow of a Saint*, written by his son details his father's final moments including two botched attempts to release the gallows that day. Eventually, the third attempt was successful. It was reported that the execution was videotaped and caused the military dictator Sani Abacha to cheer like a sports fan when he saw Saro-Wiwa finally drop through the trap door.¹

Saro-Wiwa had been an outspoken critic of the Abacha regime and the oil industry that comprised 80% of the country's export revenue.² The conflict between this ethnic minority and the repressive Nigerian government had been going on for decades in the culturally diverse Niger Delta, but Saro-Wiwa had succeeded in bringing their plight global attention.³ He was instrumental in drafting the Ogoni Bill of Rights which documented the environmental violence enacted on Ogoniland by multinational oil companies, particularly Royal Dutch Shell, under the watchful eye of the federal government. Invoking Ogoni culture and tradition Saro-Wiwa called for autonomy, self-determination, and a share of the oil revenues in the face of the increased fiscal centralization of the federal regime. Despite the protestation of global leaders like Bill Clinton, Nelson Mandela, and John Major, Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists were ruthlessly imprisoned and hung.⁴ One of the strategies Saro-Wiwa had employed to debatable effect was a reinvention of Ogoni culture and a "quasi-mythic reading of the past" in order to construct a strong indigenous identity and territorial claims.⁵ Like the rhetorical construction of the compound as a space of primordial national identity, the space of indigeneity premised on Ogoni traditions was set against the corrosive effects of what Michael Watts has referred to as "petro-capitalism".⁶

The daughter of Saro-Wiwa, Noo Saro-Wiwa grew up enmeshed in these struggles against environmental degradation, state violence, and the erasure of indigenous rights and identity. Born in the Nigeria of the 1970s and raised in England, she presents a different perspective on Nigerian politics than her father or the many commentators discussed thus far in this study. Noo Saro-Wiwa, who was educated in English boarding schools and spent summers in Nigeria, is a hybrid subject personally attached to the struggles of Nigerian people. Neither strictly a "local" nor an "outsider", her memoir *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* is one of an expatriate revisiting her homeland as a tourist.⁷ Her Nigerian encounter

¹ Wiwa, Ken. *In the Shadow of a Saint*. Random House, 2000. 174. See also Hunt, J. Timothy. *The Politics of Bones: Dr. Owens Wiwa and the Struggle for Nigeria's Oil*. Random House LLC, 2013. 345-346.

² "Nigeria's Military Leaders Hang Playwright And 8 Other Activists". *Deseretnews.com*. Deseret News Publishing Company. 11 November 1995.

³ Rowell, Andy and Marriot, James and Stockman, Lorne. *The Next Gulf: London, Washington and Oil Conflict in Nigeria*. London: Constable, 2005.

⁴ Watts, Michael. "Resource curse? Governmentality, oil and power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria." *Geopolitics* 9.1 (2004): 68-69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁷ Saro-Wiwa, Noo. *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*. Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2012.

narrative holds the promise of destabilizing the tendency of the literature examined thus far to speak in either overly negative or sanguine terms. Unlike the memoirs of slave traders or missionaries who had an interest in disparaging and demonizing the customs of Old Calabar or post-independence scholars like her father, who elevated indigenous culture with the explicit purpose of establishing political unity, Saro-Wiwa brings with her a politics of position different from many of those previously cited. As a female expatriate, her prose is coming from a fundamentally different place than that of my description of Tinapa (Chapter One), John Watts' tale of cannibalistic compound dwellers (Chapter Two), Silas Told's encounter with an Ékpè masquerader (Chapter Three), or Henry Nicholls' description of the English houses of Old Calabar's merchant elite (Chapter Four). Despite their differences and separated by centuries, each description was a narrative of encounter. Each one had a story about what I have called the paradigmatic spaces of Calabar. What can be learned about the contemporary paradigmatic space of the free trade zone from Saro-Wiwa's perspective?

Her memoir traces her four-month journey through Nigeria—her first trip back home since before the execution of her father. Her narrative drifts between nostalgic reminiscing, harsh critique, and acerbic wit aimed at the country's inefficiencies and persistent corruption. She talks about growing up in England in “a paradise of Twix bars and TV cartoons”, pokes fun of Nigeria's Pentecostal “prayer warriors”, points to Lagos as proof that “the theory of free competition as a social regulator doesn't work”, and speculates that the country has eschewed a fully industrialized economy in preparation for a future civilization that will inevitably be brought back to basics after a catastrophe.⁸ Since its publication in 2012, her book has received generous critical acclaim. Saro-Wiwa has been praised for her ability to be open to “the passion, wit, and ingenuity of her homeland.”⁹ As if citing the nineteenth century traveler Thomas Hutchinson (Chapter 2.4), one contemporary critic described Saro-Wiwa's impression of Nigeria as “the higgledy-piggledy way of living that was far too intimate for one brought up in Britain's home counties.”¹⁰ One of the many stops she describes in the book is to Calabar and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort (TFZR), the struggling development venture described in the opening chapter of this dissertation (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2).

Her description of the laid back and relatively well-maintained atmosphere of Calabar is consistent with most contemporary news reports and guide books. Even an untrained eye can see the unmistakable shift in environments when traveling from Lagos to Calabar, for example. When arriving in Calabar, one gets a distinct sense of relief. Musically, one can contrast the militant, fist-pumping Afrobeat rhythms of Feli Kuti's Lagos with the relaxed, joyous High Life melodies of Chief Stephen Osita Osadebe's Calabar. Unlike the Nigerian pits of despair, unplanned chaos, or sites of fundamentalist uprisings portrayed in the media, Calabar fashions itself as a well-maintained and peaceful tropical getaway. Located just west of the Niger Delta where Saro-Wiwa's father and MOSOP's efforts were concentrated, Calabar marks a distinct contrast. Rather than the violent petro-capitalism of the Niger Delta, Calabar's economy is oriented toward universities, public administration, and tourism. The University of Calabar is located on a large compound east of the international airport (Figure 5.3). Evoking the city's cultural heritage, the gate surrounding the Calabar Municipal Government is adorned with a staff-yielding an Ékpè masquerader (Figure 5.4). Tourist attractions include markets, botanic gardens, and the Calabar Drill Monkey Ranch. It also boasts a museum dedicated to the history

⁸ Saro-Wiwa, 4, 285, 302, 303.

⁹ “Books and Arts: Madmen on the Ground; A Memoir of Nigeria.” *The Economist*. January 7, 2012: 77.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

of the slave trade in the marina and Duketown. Another tourist destination, the site of the National Museum holds a plethora of antiquities and archival documents. Located on the river's edge, it contains numerous remaining examples of the imported English houses discussed in the previous chapter. Immediately apparent upon arrival are the city's spotless streets, aromatic tropical air, abundant civic pride, and festive ambience (Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6).

Saro-Wiwa describes Calabar as “the one place where Nigeria can exhibit itself to the world without shame” though her account isn't without criticism.¹¹ With characteristic delays and inefficiencies, things move on “Africa time” at the hotel she stays at in Calabar.¹² She also describes a particularly tense encounter in which she was slapped and smeared with oil by a second-rate masquerade dancer.¹³ These costumed imposters are prevalent in the streets, particularly at times of the Christmas celebrations, in order to get money for photos with tourists. The masks they wear are of an inferior quality and they're untrained in the ritualistic dances of the Ékpè society (Figure 5.7). After escaping from the masquerader, she makes her way to the Tinapa resort complex by way of a motorcycle in search of food.

She arrives at the much-talked about Tinapa free zone and resort hungry and in anxious expectation. Her experience, however, was not much unlike my own described in the introductory chapter. She too soon realizes there is little to see at Tinapa besides vacant shops (Figure 5.8). The restaurant she expected had not yet opened. Lastly, she notices construction still being worked on despite the fact that the development was supposed to be completed years prior, summarizing:

It had cost the government and investors nearly \$350 million so far. Three million visitors were supposed to be traipsing through here eventually, parking their SUVs, staying at the hotel, and generating \$2.5 billion in revenue. It was hard to imagine at all. Harder still was envisaging those notoriously corrupt customs officers tolerating the idea of duty-free trading.¹⁴

She relates a similar feeling of loss when she realizes that “the development—7,000 square meters of it—was tenantless.”¹⁵ She stands similarly in awe of the King Kong gorilla atop the Nollywood entertainment complex and pokes fun at its “muddled cultural references.”¹⁶ Like Augé's “non-places”, spaces which do not integrate with earlier places, her impression of Tinapa is of something which does not fit the existing order.¹⁷ It has landed, like an alien craft, in a remote African rainforest. Further, the aspirations of the project were at odds with what was possible in the current political-economic environment. She reflects on the predicament: “The intention was grand, but I couldn't envisage Lagos-based Nollywood directors dropping their laptops and flying to Calabar to edit their shaky-cam productions in Tinapa's state-of-the-art

¹¹ Saro-Wiwa, 206.

¹² *Ibid.*, 211.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁷ Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe. London and New York: Verso, 1995. 77-78. “If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The hypothesis advanced here is that supermodernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which unlike Baudelairian modernity, do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified, promoted to the status of 'places of memory'.”

editing suites.”¹⁸ While at Tinapa, Saro-Wiwa sees a construction worker working and she asks him what he thinks of the place.

With a skeptical shake of the head, he branded the project a scam. ‘You cannot carry money from government like that,’ he said. ‘You must put it through something first.’ The ex-governor Donald Duke, for all of his virtues, was as corrupt as the others, the man claimed. Tinapa was his Big White Elephant, an excuse to build a project and collect kickbacks.”¹⁹

The idiom of the “white elephant” -- a possession which requires a significant amount of care and upkeep beyond its value—is one which comes up repeatedly when discussing Tinapa.²⁰ In her book Saro-Wiwa writes:

This top-down approach to boosting Calabar’s economy seemed hollow. I’d heard Nigerian politicians’ endless talk about theme parks, tourist resorts, shopping malls and their ‘trickle-down’ effects on the economy. But there’s no such thing as ‘trickle down’ in Nigeria – money trickles upwards and evaporates on contact with air. I couldn’t see how Tinapa’s tax-free retail would stop six-year-old kids selling bananas on a weekday instead of attending school, or stop toddlers like the girl in the village next door to Tinapa playing barefoot and unclothed among chickens.²¹

Reflecting on Tinapa’s “concrete wilderness”, she monolithically deems the project as a failed “top-down” measure to boost the economy.²² This label, however, fails to grapple with the complex historical tensions undergirding this free trade zone. What does top-down mean in the context of southern Nigeria? The consensus when asking people about this term in Calabar is associated with the heads of the corrupt heads of the Nigerian state, not local businessmen trying to make a profit.

While short on analysis of Tinapa’s planning and architectural form, Saro-Wiwa correctly diagnoses the lynchpin of the development. After initially agreeing to allow the project to collect revenue duty-free, the federal government reversed its decision after Tinapa was built. In an article from 2007, an anonymous staff member at Tinapa remarked, “Customs have been preventing us from selling. They say we have to pay duty. That’s why no one else has opened. Meanwhile our rent is running but our patience is running thin.”²³ Customs in Nigeria is notorious for corruption and synonymous with the federal government which is run principally in northern Nigeria and the capital of Abuja. The planning difficulties of Tinapa aggravate historical, cultural, and religious tensions between Nigeria’s northern plains and the riverine tropical south. Memories of the atrocities suffered at the hands of the military regime during the Biafran War as well as stark religious tensions between the Muslim north and Christian south makes cordial business dealings challenging. So the difficulties related to the planning and implementation of the TFZR are not merely the result of poor advertising, insufficient products and services, or corrupt customs agents, but structural burdens with deep roots.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁹ Saro-Wiwa, 230-231.

²⁰ For example, “TINAPA, not a white elephant, says Egbas” *The Niche: Soul of A Nation*, August 31, 2015 (Accessed June 15, 2015) or Shirbon, Estelle. “Nigeria’s Tinapa: New Dubai or White Elephant?” *Reuters*. December 26, 2007. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²¹ Saro-Wiwa, 231.

²² *Ibid.*, 231.

²³ Shirbon, Estelle, “Nigeria’s Tinapa: new Dubai or white elephant?” *Reuters*, December 26, 2007.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/12/26/us-nigeria-tinapa-idUSL1718592420071226> (Accessed June 17, 2015).

Ultimately, Saro-Wiwa's reflection on the country of her birth is a well-written and thoughtful meditation that moves beyond many of the tropes of literature on contemporary Nigeria. It is critical of development efforts that rest solely on the powers of the free market to achieve their ends. In the end, though it fails to persuasively contextualize what propels the faith in these efforts and understand the complex social, spatial, and historical forces at work in Calabar and sites like Tinapa. Part of this misreading is due to her superficial reading of the city's history. For example, she reads the English houses, furniture, and mirrors purchased during the slave trade simply as "symbols of prestige" and remarks that Èfik chiefs at the time "didn't bother to learn the technologies that produced these foreign products".²⁴ Like the nineteenth century European observers and their post-colonial counterparts, she offers no alternatives and relies on easy explanations of causes and simplistic narratives of mimicry. Tinapa, for Saro-Wiwa is yet another failed venture and example of the country's "trickle-up" economics. To others, this is far from the truth. Instead, they cast Tinapa as a brilliant idea "sacrificed at the altar of politics."²⁵ Like the clunky economic readings of Ékpè masquerades or the Orientalist denigrations of traditional compounds and English wooden houses discussed earlier, her reading shuns complications.

In the end, Noo Saro-Wiwa's story relates a frustratingly stereotypical view of Calabar. In its snarky reportage, it fails to deal with the complexity of Tinapa's zoning strategy, relying instead on truisms like "money trickles upward". Her story, as others before it, fails to speculate as to *why* things operate the way they do in Nigeria. As another Nigerian author, Chiamanda Ngozi Adichie, shrewdly notes "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."²⁶ In order to challenge this tendency, it's necessary to examine the multifarious and contradictory socio-spatial forces intersecting in places like Tinapa. In what ways do the emergent *protozones* discussed in earlier chapters resurface and intersect there?

5.2 Re-examining Calabar

When I arrived in Tinapa in 2010, I was prepared to study the architecture and planning practices of a particular free trade zone in Nigeria. I expected to examine the spatial politics of a contemporary condition with events unfolding around me. As I described at the beginning of the dissertation, when I experienced the seeming failure of the project I was disappointed. Like Saro-Wiwa and many other commentators, I was struck by the profound emptiness and lack of commerce taking place in a space created at such a tremendous cost. It wasn't generating nearly the revenue nor attracting the crowds of cosmopolitan boutiques and foot traffic it had anticipated. Was this all there was? Originally, I had been drawn to Tinapa by an interest in architectural configurations built in free trade zones. From my observation, these arrangements could only be built by ingesting a hefty cocktail of greed and a faith in markets. Despite several documented failures, I was interested in studying how free trade zones had become emblematic of a particular form of globalization and specifically how these spaces were articulated in an African context. How and why did the architecture of these zones make its appearance?

²⁴ Saro-Wiwa, 208.

²⁵ "TINAPA, Not a White Elephant, Says Egbas." *The Niche: Soul of A Nation*. August 31, 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁶ Adichie, Chimamanda. "The Danger of a Single Story." *TED Ideas Worth Spreading*, 2009. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

While simplistically understood as a scam or a top-down planning initiative in popular media, Tinapa is frequently defended or celebrated by Calabar residents. The clunky labels of “top-down” or “neoliberal” development simply do not capture the complexities of the constraints, aspirations, and complicated history of the region. Talking with residents at a bar in a compound off of Murtala Mohammed Highway, one woman relates, “Tinapa simply never got a chance”.²⁷ Another derisively pleads the federal government in Abuja should “mind their business”.²⁸ Locals consistently associate Tinapa with “freedom”, “independence”, “tourism”, and “the future”.²⁹ “Look at Dubai. Just a few years ago it was an empty desert, now look at it! That could be Calabar!”³⁰ Local newspapers and business journals, years after the project had been written off by many critics, steadfastly trumpet the potential of the resort facility.³¹ Similarly, in 2011 Governor of the Cross River State, Liyel Imoke, highlighted the “sense of ownership” and “economic empowerment” the infrastructure of Tinapa provided.³² Nigerian scholars tend to explain Tinapa as an “enterprise with enormous future promise” and a “powerful engine for economic growth”.³³ According to its many supporters, it was not the fault of a risky investment strategy, but the systemic failure of the state which hindered Tinapa from blossoming as advertised. Further, unlike other zoned development projects in the global South, the zone did not incite the same furor over human rights abuses or economic injustice. Why is this the case? Looking at the long and contentious history of Calabar’s urban environment sheds light on this predicament and the mentality of Calabar residents. A number of comparisons can be drawn between the emergent *protozones* previously examined and the zone-- Calabar’s contemporary paradigmatic space. In what ways does it act as an entangled knot, an “inextricable interweave that ensnares”?³⁴ In what way does it challenge the monolithic narratives of the spread of modernity or market forces corrupting the global South? In what ways do the paradigmatic spaces of Calabar past and present converge, bundle, and entangle at Tinapa?

After looking at the long history of architecture, urbanism, and political economy in the region, it became apparent that similar sovereignty arrangements had been enacted for centuries. Scholars focusing on the economic and political organization of the region have described its spaces as autonomous, decentralized, informal, *ad hoc*, and impermanent. Toyin Falola has characterized Nigerian societies before the onset of British colonialism as autonomous, independent states. A.G. Hopkins stresses that trade and the idea of the market have long been vital to the region.³⁵ Historian K.O. Dike has characterized Aro settlements throughout the

²⁷ Anonymous. Interview. 20 December 2011.

²⁸ Anonymous. Interview. 17 December 2011.

²⁹ Anonymous. Interview. 9 December 2011.

³⁰ Anonymous. Interview. 21 December 2011

³¹ *Nigerian Chronicle* and Cross River State’s *Ministry of Finance (MOFI) News* are packed with articles about the future of Tinapa.

³² Imoke, Liyel. “Potentials of Creative Industry in an Emerging Economy.” *Nigerian Chronicle*. December 14-December 20, 2011: 28.

³³ Okereke, Dominic. *Africa's Quiet Revolution Observed from Nigeria*. Paragon Publishing, 2012. 532. Eja, E.I. “Tinapa Business Resort: A Strategy for Sustainable Rural Livelihood in Cross River State, Nigeria.” *International Journal of Business and Management* 4.6 (2009): 125.

³⁴ Moore, Donald S. *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place, and Power in Zimbabwe*. Duke University Press, 2005, 4.

³⁵ Hopkins, A.G. quoted by Imbua, 15.

hinterland as “free cities”.³⁶ Delving deeper into Old Calabar’s history, the foregoing chapters have traced similar patterns through the paradigmatic spaces of the compound, masquerade, and the offshore. Indeed, these spaces have demonstrated, in diverse ways, the tradition of demarcating decentralized private zones for the promotion of commercial activities. What is critical, however, is that each of these cases has demonstrated that the premise of economic autonomy was only achieved through a complex interweave of social, spatial, political, and spiritual factors. The presumption of autonomy belies the contested politics and multiple influences organizing these fragmented zones. Emergent *protozones* were instead carefully crafted environments charged with processes, symbolism, and meanings that exceeded their clearly delimited boundaries. Today zones continue to exceed their boundaries and produce friction. Rather than being smooth, inwardly-focused entities, they are contentious, interconnected spaces. Their boundaries are porous and promote the interaction of diverse agents. Understanding the contemporary urban fabric of Calabar and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort through this lens yields a fundamentally different and richer reading than one narrowly focused on planning success and failure.

The argument put forth in the previous chapters contends that precolonial spatial configurations resonate with the free trade zones of today. The stagecraft necessary to maintain zones of autonomy, though, has been diverse, complicated, and has had a long and contentious history. Dating back to the earliest settlements in the sixteenth century, the processes of *protozoning* preceded British conquest in Old Calabar. Planning policies established by the British colonial administration have, of course, also had an impact on contemporary Calabar. Colonial urban policies tended to be of a makeshift and *ad hoc* nature ill-suited to the demands of rapid urbanization. Certain handed down policies, however, precipitated Calabar’s decline from a bustling port to a tropical backwater. First, the decision to relocate the headquarters of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1906 to Lagos severely diminished Calabar’s administrative importance. Secondly, favorable conditions created by colonial administrators for European factories catalyzed the replacement of Èfik middlemen as commercial intermediaries in a city with a long trading past.³⁷ The city’s decline as a port continued with the creation of Port Harcourt in 1913 and the removal of the bar in Lagos.³⁸ Though proposals were made to install a railroad to expedite the transport of goods from the hinterland through Calabar, the plans were abandoned (Figure 5.9). In 1916, a railway terminus was opened in Port Harcourt and even more trade was diverted from Calabar ports.³⁹

As industry and commerce declined, Calabar transitioned to a city which instead was known for civil service, schools, and healthcare services.⁴⁰ Despite its governmental identity, tension continued between the colonial regime and the people of Calabar. In 1929 the Aba Women’s Riot, organized by market women in Calabar and Owerri, protested the taxation policies directed at them.⁴¹ Vexed colonial development continued in Calabar with civil servants acting under the supervision of planning boards until 1960 when Great Britain granted Nigeria

³⁶ Dike, Kenneth Onwuka. *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956. 39, 45. See also Nwokeji, G. Ugo. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 79.

³⁷ Nair, 255-265.

³⁸ Nair, 259.

³⁹ Nair, 259.

⁴⁰ Imbua, 150

⁴¹ Mba. Nina Emma. *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.

full independence.⁴² Soon after, the southeastern provinces of the newly established nation believed their interests were not being served by northern-dominated Federal government, and the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra attempted to secede. Thrust into the ensuing Biafran War, Calabar became a site of conflict between Biafran and Nigerian military forces. After the war, there was an influx of residents from the north and subsequent rise in Calabar's informal sector.⁴³ In 1969, a Hungarian-Nigerian team was commissioned to the master development plan of Calabar which included provisions for government funded housing estates.⁴⁴ At the same time, there was a rise in churches which became sites of sanctuary for refugees abandoning their homes and villages. Prayers for protection and deliverance as well as a yearning for more spiritual power were essential to these congregations. In all, twenty-two new religious organizations are known to have originated in Calabar in the 1970s.⁴⁵ In recent decades, the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal churches, in particular, has contributed to the "competitive religious space" of Calabar today.⁴⁶

Further destabilizing the city, the oil boom and bust of the 1970s set Nigeria's economy into a tailspin. Partially as an effort to stabilize and unite the country, the federal capital was moved north from Lagos to Abuja in 1991. Lawrence Vale argues that the shift implied both a rejection of the existing capital and a postcolonial desire to leave a colonial port city in favor of a centrally located plateau.⁴⁷ The topological centrality was intended to generate a unified Nigeria identity; however, in the eyes of Calabarians, the shift also signaled a transfer of money and power to the Muslim north. Despite these developments, remnants from the era of the offshore remain in Calabar. Traditional compounds, now mostly covered with zinc metal sheets, intermix with colonial story structures, European factories, and missionary buildings. Due to Calabar's reduced economic state in the twentieth century, many of the buildings remain in a dilapidated state and have been re-appropriated as informal living arrangements or governmental buildings.

The city has also expanded with the population growing substantially since the end of the Biafran War. The population of the Calabar metropolitan area was estimated in 2006 to be about 400,000 people, or roughly the size of Oakland, California.⁴⁸ Census figures, however, are

⁴² Sule, Richard Olu. *Urban Planning Administration and Environmental Health Criticality*. Calabar: Thumprints International Company, 2007. See particularly 35-43 on "The Colonial Experience". Geoffrey I. "Calabar, A Colonial Casualty." *The Calabar Historical Journal I* (1976): 29-64.

⁴³ Olukoju, Ayo. "Nigerian Cities in Historical Perspectives." In *Nigerian Cities*, eds. Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004. 11-46.

⁴⁴ Tesco-Köztí Consulting Engineers, *Survey and Development Plan of Calabar, Nigeria*. Calabar, Nigeria, 1973. Moravánszky, Ákos. "Peripheral modernism: Charles Polónyi and the lessons of the village." *The Journal of Architecture* 17.3 (2012): 333-359. Moravánszky provides a sharp reflection on the transnational movement of planning ideas between Africa and Hungary in the 1970s. Of the planner Charles Polónyi, he writes, "Working on the periphery of socialism and capitalism, in countries in transition, he refused to view colonisation merely as a victimizing process and noticed the dangers of destructive tendencies operating under the surface to control the post-colonial as well as the post-socialist periphery." 333.

⁴⁵ Hackett, Rosalind I.J. *Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989. 119.

⁴⁶ Offiong, Essien A., and Ekwutosi E. Offiong. "The Emergence and Growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Calabar, Nigeria." *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities* 2.5 (2012): 347.

⁴⁷ Vale, Lawrence. *Architecture, Power and National Identity*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2008. 160. The section titled "Abuja: Nigeria's Washington, D.C.?" examines the challenges and identity politics involved in the planning a capital complex in Nigeria that aimed to be "ethnically neutral". 156-174.

⁴⁸ Ottong, Joseph G., Simon O. Ering, and Felix U. Akpan. "The Population Situation in Cross River State of Nigeria and Its Implication for Socio-Economic Development: Observations from the 1991 and 2006 Censuses." *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (2010): 36-42. *National*

notoriously controversial in Nigeria. Adeline Ideke contends that that Nigeria's developmental problems are inextricably intertwined with census politics. Historically, numbers have been inflated or purposely underestimated with the knowledge that population determines the share of national revenues.⁴⁹ One study of the city noted most Calabarians disregard the census numbers and believe the population of the city is actually 3 million people.⁵⁰ Whatever the exact count is, Calabar has developed a reputation as one Nigeria's safest and cleanest cities and is known for its Calabar Carnival celebration during the month of December (Figure 5.6).⁵¹

Examining the sprawling plan of Calabar today, the city stretches to the north and south squeezed between the Calabar and Qua Rivers (Figure 5.2). The postcolonial era has given rise to rapid urbanization and the development of roads, bridges, memorials, and education and recreation facilities.⁵² Calabar Road and Murtala Mohammed Highway are well-maintained and utilized roads that run along the north-south spine of the city. Together with Ndidem Usang Iso Road, they form a highly trafficked (by car and foot) commercial loop. Though there are larger spaces of congregation that might be considered public space by Euro-American standards, such spaces are largely exceptions. Watt Market in the Central Business District on the edge of Duketown and U.J. Esuene Stadium located on the site of a former colonial sporting ground are a few examples of public spaces of interaction in Calabar. Most public activity and evidence of the shared social realm of the city is along major roads. There, informal traders' markets intermix with more permanent commercial establishments.

Traces of some of the city's original settlements such as Duketown, Henshaw Town, and Big Qua Town are apparent in the plan, though housing and commercial developments have filled in the previously less dense areas (Figure 5.2). Converted from its function as the colonial headquarters, Government Hill houses the National Museum, a library, and other government buildings. Margaret Ekpo International Airport separates the densely populated area of Big Qua Town and Calabar South. Roads connecting the airport to destinations such as Tinapa, Government Hill, and the University of Calabar (UNICAL) effectively bypass these districts. The former agricultural areas of Esuk Utan and Ikot Omin are located to the north.

The urban density of Calabar is organized by walled plots containing residential compounds and the gated commercial and government complexes. The dominant spatial strategy of the contemporary city is undoubtedly the private gated enclave. Not unlike the urban fabric of Lagos where planner Tunde Agbola observed, "strong assertions of territoriality were made through the building of fences of various types", adjacent compounds clearly delineate property boundaries.⁵³ As a continuous urban fabric, walled compounds designated for residences, banks, hotels, and churches constitute in Calabar what Appadurai and Holston call "a honeycomb of jurisdictions".⁵⁴ Each property presents a veneer of formalized security and compliance with

Population Commission. 2006. Population and Housing Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Cross River State Priority Tables, Volume 1. 2010.

⁴⁹ Ideke, Adeline, I. Eme, and I Okechukwu. "Census Politics in Nigeria: An Examination of 2006 Population Census." *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2015): 47-72.

⁵⁰ Fenton, Jordan A. *Take it to the Streets: Performing Ekpe/Mgbe Power in Contemporary Calabar, Nigeria*. Diss. University of Florida, 2012.

⁵¹ Andrew, Esekong H., and Ibok Ekpenyong. "Promoting culture and tourism in Nigeria through Calabar Festival and Carnival Calabar." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 3.3 (2012): 287-294. Carlson, Amanda B. "Calabar Carnival: Trinidadian Tradition Returns to Africa." *African Arts* 43.4 (2010): 42-59.

⁵² Ajekigbe, 98.

⁵³ Agbola, Tunde. *The Architecture of Fear: Urban Design and Construction Response to Urban Violence in Lagos, Nigeria*. Ibadan: IFRA and African Book Binders, 1997. 3.

⁵⁴ Holston, James and Arjun Appadurai, eds. *Cities and Citizenship*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. 13.

municipal regulation, though residents ultimately abide by their own rules. Evidence for this can be found in all parts of the city, from the gritty neighborhoods of Calabar South, to the historic center of Duketown, and the edges of Big Qua Town. Calabar, like São Paulo or Los Angeles, is a “city of walls”.⁵⁵ The main activities of daily life take place in private enclaves. As environments which attempt to establish their own jurisdictional constraints, free or dismissive of municipal regulation, they operate a micro-zones—smaller manifestations of development projects like Tinapa. Though micro-zones are endeavors that aren’t formally incentivized by the state as Tinapa and projects like it are, these enclaves share similar aspirations for autonomy and self-determination.

In one case located in the city’s historic Duketown district (now commonly called Bayside), spatial paradigms overlap. Residential activities are organized in a traditional compound structure with a small entrance off Boco Street (Figure 5.10). The family has lived there for seven years and inherited the structure from an elder family member. The father remarked that what he appreciated most about the house was that it was safe and “let you be”.⁵⁶ Masonry construction mixes with thatch to cover the secondary spaces off of the main courtyard known as an *ésìt èbiét*. Though thatch roofs had been banned by the municipal government for fire safety concerns, most residents turn a blind eye to the statute, recognizing that the thatched spaces are cooler than those covered with zinc sheets.⁵⁷ Despite the concerted efforts of the Town Planning Department in Calabar, city residents of lower socio-economic status are generally not compliant to building regulations.⁵⁸ In the background loom the dilapidated remnants of a nineteenth century imported wooden house. One resident noted the structure had been abandoned years ago, but that no one will tear it down. The compound has access to satellite television. Residents of the compound, like many Calabarians, enjoyed discussing popular American television shows (Figure 5.10- compound in Duketown). Beyond the basic formal pattern of a securitized perimeter wall and entrance gate of some kind, residential compounds display a high degree of material and stylistic variety across the city. Some contain masonry story buildings while others are single story complexes (Figure 5.11 and Figure 5.12). Within their gates, compounds remain the informal centers of daily life for most Calabarians.

Another residential compound in Esuk Utan (*ésùk útán* translates as sandy beach) is located on a government housing estate on former agricultural land, and the compound is now privately owned and rented to its tenants. In the 1970s Esuk Utan was converted to low density residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Formerly a peripheral area to Calabar it has now merged with the urban agglomeration to the south.⁵⁹ The family that lives on the compound informally constructed the gates encircling the inner buildings on the site (Figure 5.13). Originally just a house, it has grown to include a chicken shed, goat pen, small gardens, and space for parking. The father works as a civil servant on a municipal compound near the central

⁵⁵ Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)*. Verso Books, 2006. Caldeira, Teresa. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 2000.

⁵⁶ Anonymous. Interview 10 December 2011.

⁵⁷ Sule, 389.

⁵⁸ Offiong, Victor E, Raphael A. Offiong, and Ititia A. Ekpe. “Socio-Economic Characteristics of Property Owners and Level of Compliance with Building Regulations in Calabar, South-Southern Nigeria.” *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)* Volume 1, Issue 1, (2014): 26-32.

⁵⁹ Atu, Joy E., R. A. Offiong, Devalsam Imoke Eni, Eja Iwara Eja, and Obia E. Esien. “The effects of urban sprawl on peripheral agricultural lands in Calabar, Nigeria.” *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2012): 68-76.

business district and the mother works at a hotel. The eldest son runs an independent car service transporting the tourist community for hotels he has brokered deals with. As a side job, he farms and tends livestock on the family compound. He explains that the taxes and fees involved in formally registering his car are too high. As with his compound, he associates the mobility of his business with “independence” and “freedom.”⁶⁰ With a similar disregard for regulatory compliance, the family sells the eggs, livestock, and produce grown on the site despite city ordinances which prohibit it. Similar in scale and organization to the residential compound located in Duketown, the Esuk Utan residence operates internally under its own authority but strategically networks within a constellation of similar small-scale sovereignties. Though residents value the independence these associations permit, they admit that these arrangements leave them potentially vulnerable to the vagaries of market conditions and scams. Common sights throughout the city are houses or commercial buildings spray-painted with the phrase, “This house is not for sale” (Figure 5.14). The tag, seen throughout Nigeria, is intended to prevent 419-scam artists posing as property owners from selling properties to unsuspecting buyers.⁶¹

Walled compounds service a number of activities beyond housing. City residents typically move from residential compounds to the gated tracts of their place of employment. Banks, hotels, schools, and civil service jobs are located in gated enclaves. The architecture of these properties is often militaristic. High concrete walls punctured by heavy metal gates and surmounted with barbed wire surround rectilinear masonry buildings. Depending on the building type, they often contain classical Western themes like pedimented facades or monumental columns. Much like residential compounds, the interior of these enclaves also contain traditional mud or thatch elements. In another example, the gates of the Calabar Municipal Government Headquarters are adorned with images of an Ékpè masquerader. Like the compound of King Eyamba V or in the informal prisons of the British colonial administration, these complexes mix local and foreign building traditions.

The degree of security at these properties also varies by building type. Government complexes and banks often have armed guards that monitor access to the interior of the tract. Banks often utilize several layers of security to maintain a safe environment for employees and patrons (Figure 5.15). The premise of formalized security, though, does not always guarantee formalized transactions within. For example, on one visit my intention was to exchange American currency for Nigerian naira. After getting through the entrance gate and crossing the small parking lot, my bag was checked several times by a guard brandishing a machine gun. I then went through a metal detector to get inside the building. After a long wait in line I expressed my desire to exchange currency. Instead of calculating the exchange, the teller paused and explained I could get a better deal with a Muslim money changer. After reading my confused look, she took out a piece of paper and wrote two figures down. “If you exchange with the bank, this your official (higher) rate. If you wait here, someone will come and exchange your money at this (lower) rate.”⁶² After reviewing the numbers, I took her advice and decided to wait. Within a few minutes a Muslim trader came through the metal detector and offered me the promised rate. The idea of subverting rules or getting around official channels is prevalent in Calabar. As with haggling with informal street traders, it’s apparent the first number is never the real number. The gated enclaves within which these transactions take place construct an elaborate image of

⁶⁰ Anonymous. Interview 20 December 2012.

⁶¹ Dixon, Robyn. “I Will Eat Your Dollars”. *Los Angeles Times*. 20 October 2005. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

⁶² Anonymous. Personal conversation. 20 December 2011.

authority which is then systematically subverted. Of course the incident at the bank was indeed safe, though the existence of another set of codes behind the formalized and performed façade of these complexes is a recurring urban theme in Calabar.

At another gated enclave containing a hotel, bar, and Chinese restaurant, the image of formality is regularly undermined (Figure 5.16). Signage advertises the paradisiacal Mirage hotel beyond the boundary of the enclave to nearby street traffic. As the name suggests, the enclave presents an illusory experience. Nested within the walls of the complex is another gate at the entrance of the main building. The architecture of the hotel is made up of a solid masonry mass, stepped windows, and brightly colored stucco accents. Quoins and classical columns mix with modern glazing. Exterior security is less tightly patrolled than a bank, but the interior presents a guard and several staff workers. The bar on the property features an open verandah and musical entertainment. One evening I was sitting at one the bar tables and realized I was the only male patron. After a discussion with one of the women, it became apparent that everyone other than me was a prostitute (*ìdíok àkpàrà*). She explained that she, like many others, fled the oil violence of the Niger Delta in search of job opportunities in Calabar. Since the city lacks an adequate economic base, many can only find lower end jobs in the tourism industry.⁶³ “Calabar women” as they’re popularly known both feed and are minimally supported by the tourism industry. The influx of patrons during the Calabar Carnival Festival is, in part, drawn by the prostitution industry.⁶⁴ Like law-abiding and securitized image projected by the gated hotel enclave, the easy-going and hygienic atmosphere portrayed by Calabar’s tourism industry is supported by an illicit and dispossessed network of sex workers.

Existing in parallel and in tension with enclaves of clandestine prostitution are the countless private church compounds throughout city. Sundays are important social and religious days in Calabar as they have been since the first Presbyterian missions were established there in the mid-nineteenth century. On these days, residents leave their residential compounds and attend services at one of the various church congregations. While the city is known for its religious pluralism, a large segment of that diversity is comprised of competing Christian ministries of various denominations.⁶⁵ With the rise of Pentecostalism in recent decades, this competition has only grown fiercer. Pentecostalism fuses promises of wealth with fears of the demonic spirits. Congregations amplify these beliefs and utilize a variety of marketing strategies in order to garner a wider audience. Inge Ligtoet’s study of uncertainty and spiritual insecurity in Calabar contends that at times of rapid modernization and economic insecurity, Pentecostal churches provide coping mechanisms to believers. She writes, “Pentecostal churches have taken up these uncertainties and, more specifically the fear of it, and made it central to their church discourse,” explaining it as the works of the devil or the consequences of witchcraft.⁶⁶ Private church compounds therefore function as threshold spaces between physical and metaphysical life worlds fueled by a dual faith in a provident God and malevolent spirits. Compounds are zones of

⁶³ Anonymous. Interview. 17 December 2011.

⁶⁴ Eja, E.I, and Violet Asuquo Effiom. "Environmental Implications of Tinapa Business Resort Development on the Catchment Communities, Nigeria." *Journal of Environment and Earth Science* 4.2 (2014): 73-77.

⁶⁵ Hackett, Rosalind I.J. *Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989.

⁶⁶ Ligtoet, Inge. *Fear and Faith: Uncertainty, misfortune and spiritual insecurity in Calabar, Nigeria*. MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2011. 89. Ligtoet provides contemporary Calabar as a productive case study building on the work of the Comaroffs (1993) and Geschiere (1997) and their studies of witchcraft and modernity. She argues, we should not only “attribute spiritual insecurity to modernity, but there should also be room for linking it to... historical and traditional expectations. 18.

interaction for a variety of real and supernatural agents contending with malevolence in all forms. In these churches, charismatic preachers are sought out to ward off accused witches and sorcerers (*ifóti*), prostitutes, and the evils of traditional indigenous belief systems such as Ékpè.⁶⁷ The staging of spectacular witchcraft deliverance sessions are central to the services of these churches.⁶⁸ As performed, evangelical churches consciously and unconsciously reenact the negotiated space produced by Ékpè in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They also replay tensions exhibited by the competing sovereignties of establish by mission houses in the nineteenth century and the space of Ékpè authority.

Perhaps the most well-known of these Pentecostal preachers is Helen Ukpabio, the head of the African Evangelical franchise Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministries based in Calabar. Liberty Gospel church is situated within a compound located in Big Qua Town just off of Ndidem Usang Iso Road (Figure 5.17). The centralized church sits within a larger compound complex guarded by church staff and surrounded by open air congregation spaces. Like hotel and other commercial compounds, the church compound advertises its message beyond the bounds of its gated property line using signage and billboards. Since the liberalization of the Nigerian economy in the 1980s, Pentecostal churches have utilized roadside signage and advertising to construct social visibility, market personalities, and mobilize support for charismatic churches.⁶⁹ More recently, however, the church utilizes video, film, and new media platforms to circulate its message to a burgeoning diasporic community of followers. Popularly known as a “witch hunter”, Ukpabio and the church have garnered controversy for their practices, particularly those aimed at witch-children who reportedly suffer scarring and maiming from the deliverances.⁷⁰ Though cast as the prime villain in a documentary film, *Saving Africa’s Witch Children*, Ukpabio’s church is not an isolated African phenomenon, but one linked in a growing transnational network of parishioners.⁷¹ In 2012 Ukpabio was invited to a ministry in Houston, Texas for “12 Days of Battling in the Spirit of Freedom”. An advertisement for the event asks attendees if they’re possessed by mermaid spirits or other evil spirits, if they suffer from incurable diseases, or other maladies (Figure 5.18). In response to complaints about Ukpabio’s aggressive practices, her local Akwa Ibom state government adopted a law against accusing children of witchcraft. In response, Ukpabio went on the offensive suing the state government. As explained by the *New York Times*:

In the lawsuit, Ms. Ukpabio alleges that the state law infringes on her freedom of religion. She seeks 2 billion naira (about \$13 million) in damages as well as “an order of perpetual injunction restraining the respondents” from interfering with or otherwise denouncing her church’s “right to practice their religion and the Christian belief in God, Jesus Christ, Satan, sin, witchcraft, heaven, and hellfire.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Jordan Fenton’s study of of Mgbè/Ekpe power in contemporary Calabar notes that the demonizing language used by Christians to contest local culture has sparked religious disputes that have infiltrated Mgbè/Ekpe lodges. “Because of such disputes, Ekpe/Mgbè markers of space have become internally contested.” 74.

⁶⁸ Horowitz, Mitch. “The Persecution of Witches, 21st-Century Style.” *New York Times* [New York] 4 July 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

⁶⁹ Ukah, Asonzeh F-K. “Roadside Pentecostalism: Religious advertising in Nigeria and the marketing of charisma.” *Critical Interventions* 2.1-2 (2008): 125-141.

⁷⁰ Oppenheimer, Mark. “On a Visit to the U.S., a Nigerian Witch-Hunter Explains Herself.” *New York Times* [New York] 21 May 2010: A11.

⁷¹ *Saving Africa’s Witch Children*. Channel 4, 2008.

⁷² Oppenheimer, Mark, A11.

The lawsuit was eventually dismissed, though the events illustrate the contested politics of a particular constellation of sovereignty and space nested within Calabar's urban fabric. Ukpabio and preachers like her act as the sole sovereigns of their demarcated territory, situated at the threshold between physical and metaphysical realities. Ukpabio, like Ékpè, acts as an intermediary between real world constraints and supernatural spirits. Pentecostal preachers like Ukpabio challenge the authority of competing jurisdictions, regardless of scale. Virtual platforms extend the sovereignty of the church ruler, entangling distant audiences and malevolent spirits. Rosalind Hackett writes that the synergy between a church leader and his or her website serves as "both *portal* onto the wider world of the organization, but also as endpoint, in that all roads lead back to him [or her] and the center of operations—the alpha and the omega."⁷³

The preceding examples are just a few of the diverse enclaves that make up the urban fabric of Calabar. Like the small-scale competing sovereignties of Old Calabar's trading past, they informally establish rules with their clearly delineated boundaries. They presumably operate autonomously, though in practice are supported by invisible networks. These networks are comprised of diverse agents-- informal traders, clandestine sex workers, charismatic preachers, and evil spirits. The largest and most discussed enclave in Calabar, however, is the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort discussed at the beginning of the dissertation and the start of this chapter. (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2). Located about 10 kilometers north of the metropolitan center and connected by Murtala Mohammed Highway, the complex shares formal and operational similarities to the compounds and gated complexes of contemporary Calabar, but also performs in ways similar to *protozones* analyzed in previous chapters. Situated as an enclave in the region of Odukpani known for its rubber plantations, Tinapa was conceived as an ambitious tourism hub when it opened in 2007. It has since struggled to meet the high expectations set by investors and Calabarians. While extraordinary in size, Tinapa fits the unmistakable spatial pattern evident in the urban fabric of contemporary Calabar as well as the emergent *protozones* from the city's past.

5.3 Tinapa as a Zone of Entanglement

Noo Saro-Wiwa's flat reading of Calabar and Tinapa didn't seriously contend with the city's tangled history and politics, settling instead for a stereotyped view and a simplistic negative assessment. Rem Koolhaas's analysis of what he called Lagos's "self-organizing" urban form suffered from similar issues, though he arrived at the inverse conclusion—"Lagos is not catching up with us. Rather, we may be catching up with Lagos..."⁷⁴ Both accounts of these Nigerian cities made similar closed pronouncements, focusing on discrete formal elements in isolation without asking why the urban conditions they analyzed appeared as they did. They refused to understand the cities they visited as relational products of complex historical struggles for power and identity. In my initial encounter with Tinapa, I risked making the same mistakes. Considering the foregoing analysis of Old Calabar's emergent *protozones*, the following analysis aims to produce a more dynamic reading of the entangled historico-political forces at play in the space of Tinapa.

In the 1990s, Nigeria enacted a series of measures to liberalize their economy. Part of the effort to strategically improve the investment climate involved the creation of free trade zones. In 1992 the Nigeria Export Processing Zone Authority (NEPZA) was established to achieve this

⁷³ Hackett, Rosalind I.J. "The New Virtual (Inter) Face of African Pentecostalism." *Society* 46.6 (2009): 501.

⁷⁴ *Lagos/Koolhaas*. First Run/Icarus Films, 2003.

aim. Integral to the process of global economic integration, economic zones were built with the aim of enhancing economic growth and development of export oriented manufacturing in the non-oil sector of the economy and for attracting foreign direct investment.⁷⁵ During this time, however, the country made billions of dollars in oil revenue. Oil provides 20% of Nigeria's GDP, 95% of its foreign exchange earnings, and about 65% of its budgetary revenues.⁷⁶ It had earned almost \$350 billion in oil revenues over the last three decades (1965-2000) yet per capita income has declined by over 15 percent from 1975 to 2000. In this same time period, the number of people living on less than one dollar a day more than quadrupled from 19 million to nearly 90 million.⁷⁷ The apparent disjoint between the spaces of wealth and poverty, however, requires further reflection on Nigeria's pre-colonial and colonial past. By historicizing the processes of economic enclaving in the Nigerian context, this analysis of Tinapa intends to de-naturalize and frustrate the conception of a frictionless "free market" space operating independently from society, zonally contained. It instead theorizes these spaces as necessarily regulated by particular administrative technologies.⁷⁸ It challenges the modernist notion of inexorable linear progress and highlights the fragmentary and precarious quality of the freedom of the agents therein. The focus is on how historico-political power relations are inscribed in the built environment. Historical research has already begun to reveal a rich constellation of cultural translation and knowledge production at the site of these particular "colonial encounters,"- situations where Africa is not, in Mbembé's terms, an "incomparable monster, a silent shadow" or "mute place of darkness."⁷⁹

As evidenced by archival documents and contemporary media, both the traditional compound and Tinapa are dualistically pulled by commentators hoping to either denigrate or celebrate their respective spaces. Traditional compounds tended to be rendered as primitive, unplanned spaces and evidence of a "higgledy-piggledy" order by European observers, while post-colonial scholars claimed compounds were natural outgrowths of the bio-region and self-sufficient symbols of national identity. Likewise, Tinapa has been both belittled as an all-too-familiar Nigerian "white elephant" and embraced as a local development opportunity in the face of flawed federal fiscal policies.⁸⁰ In a 2010 report, CNN's Marketplace Africa interviewed the Managing Director of Tinapa, Basse Ndem. In the interview Ndem makes the same comparison between Tinapa and Dubai many Calabar residents make. The report relates, "Dubai wasn't built in a day."⁸¹ Citing the Dubai example again in another report, Ndem described how Calabar has the potential to be seen as investment oasis.⁸² The arrangement of sovereignty, however, is

⁷⁵ *Nigeria Export Processing Zone Authority*. Web. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

⁷⁶ Igbinovia, Patrick Edobor. *Oil Thefts and Pipeline Vandalization in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Safari Books Ltd., 2014. 4.

⁷⁷ Sala-i-Martin, Xavier, and Arvind Subramanian. "Addressing the natural resource curse: an illustration from Nigeria." *Journal of African Economies* 22.4 (2013): 573.

⁷⁸ This builds on Polanyi's renowned argument discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Polanyi writes, "To allow the market mechanism to be the sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society." Polanyi, Karl, *The Great Transformation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1954. 73. See also Hart, Gillian. "Denaturalizing Dispossession: Critical Ethnography in the Age of Resurgent Imperialism," *Antipode*, Vol.38, No. 5 (2006): 977-1004.

⁷⁹ Mbembé, J-A. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001. 9.

⁸⁰ Shirbon, Estelle, "Nigeria's Tinapa: new Dubai or white elephant?" Reuters, December 26, 2007.

⁸¹ Purefoy, Christian. "Tinapa Failing?" CNN Marketplace Africa Video. 22 April 2010. Online video clip. *YouTube.com*. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

⁸² Economic Lifelines Nigeria. "Uncovering Tinapa". 13 February 2014. Online video clip. *CNBCAfrica.com*. (Accessed June 17, 2015).

fundamentally different in Tinapa. Because the zone ultimately answers to the federal government, the endeavor is precariously placed. Tinapa, like the compound, is both a rhetorical triumph and tragedy. It is at once a form of subaltern urbanism and cause for Afro-pessimism.

Marketing materials still tout the economic benefits of Tinapa. While it's been proven the resort is delivering on its economic projections and without a major policy change in Abuja, there is little prospect that its state of stagnation can be reversed. Residents remain steadfast that the project can work. Also not discussed in the marketing material are the negative consequences of mega projects like it. In fact, the location of the resort in the Cross River State has caused a series of environmental and social problems such as loss of farmland, water pollution and forest resource depletion. The influx of traffic has damaged surface and groundwater sources in the area.⁸³ Social problems such as prostitution, inflation and increase in rental value have also been noted by residents in the area.⁸⁴ Negative impacts aside, describing Tinapa as project without precedent and to evaluate it only in binaric terms (success/failure, positive/negative impacts) prevents understanding it as the result of a complex historical process.

The design of Tinapa did not explicitly reference the architectural heritage of southeastern Nigeria or the city of Calabar. It looked to malls and resorts existing globally for inspiration. Nonetheless, examining the plan of Tinapa, it strongly resonates with the traditional walled compound endogenous to the region (Figure 5.19). Deciphering whether or not this was perhaps a subconscious design influence is not the intention of the following analysis. Instead it is to draw attention to the socio-spatial similarities between the spatial paradigms of Old Calabar and recast it as a product of a number of historico-political forces.

Tinapa's spatial organization is internalized, compartmentalized, open to the sky, and protected from the exterior environment (Figure 5.20- illustrator plan). Encircled by a 4-meter tall, 5.8-kilometer long masonry wall, Tinapa takes on the form of an expansive walled compound north of the city (Figure 5.21- perimeter wall). The non-rectilinear form of the zone's wall is different than the edge condition of compounds, though the internal rectilinear arrangement of rooms is similar. The engaged edge of the compound is replaced by an internally fragmented composition of programmatic pieces at Tinapa. Similarly, the traditional compound's communal *ésit èbiét* is replaced by the axial arcades present at Tinapa. In each case, though, the formal image a self-contained environment is preserved.

The simplicity of the plan and security technology at Tinapa, however, is belied by much more complicated factors. While a formal comparison with the Èfik walled compounds may seem like a straightforward exercise, it doesn't take into consideration the complex negotiation of values that inform the creation of the zone. As with other *protozones*, the space appears to demarcate clear inside and outside spatial relationships. But considered socio-spatially, the zone is in fact interlaced by a number of agents. The zone participates in a number of real and imagined spaces which exceed its boundaries. As evidenced by the historical analysis in Chapter 2, compounds were fractious environments subject to adaptation. They fragmented and fissioned to the fluctuating market environment. Surrounded by windowless mud walls and entered through a single gate, the inner courtyards of compounds served as complex sites of material, but also spiritual exchange. Boundaries were negotiated by external forces and carefully choreographed to maintain a seeming autonomy under the sovereign compound chief. Assemblages of compounds constituted a landscape of competing sovereignties. Likewise, zones

⁸³ Eja, Eja, and Violet Asuquo Effiom. "Environmental Implications of Tinapa Business Resort Development on the Catchment Communities, Nigeria." *Journal of Environment and Earth Science* 4.2 (2014): 73-77.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

like Tinapa are governed by administrative and market forces beyond their boundaries. They are subject to

Traditional walled compounds were claimed by a generation of post-independence scholars as symbols of the imagined community of Nigeria. Walled compounds served as timeless icons to unify the newly established nation state. Free trade zones, created under the national banner of NEPZA, however, aim to challenge state sovereignty and claim a level of autonomy and self-determination. Speaking of economies of violence in the Niger Delta which threaten the existence of Nigeria, Michael Watts has suggested that it is “not the imagined community of Nigeria as a modern nation but perhaps its reverse: the unimagining or withering of a particular sense of national community.”⁸⁵ Of course, free trade zones and vigilante groups are different things utilizing different means to achieve their ends, though their claims of autonomy are similar. While the impetus of privatized developments may signal a weakened attachment to the Nigerian state, their proponents aren’t “unimagining” Nigeria. Instead, they are actively imagining membership in a different community—that of the cosmopolitan jet-setting elite. In countless conversations with residents of Calabar, the capital of Abuja was cast as the villain, and privatized developments in Dubai or Johannesburg were cast the model to replicate. Locals view ostentatious buildings as synonymous with development and social prestige as evidenced by the long history in Calabar of importing prefabricated houses from Europe.

The compound-like planning of Tinapa resembles aspects of traditional walled compounds while seeking acceptance by a community beyond national boundaries. Other aspects of the layout, however, resonate with the master planning of Abuja. Vale’s study of the design of Abuja describes the measures that were taken to preserve the idea of national unity into the new capital.⁸⁶ The monumentality, symmetry, and axial spatial relationships set up at Tinapa has more in common with the capital than it does with the urban layout or Old Calabar or even the colonial reservation. The reference seems counter-intuitive considering the aspirations of Tinapa and the animosity harbored toward the federal government, but. The comparison between Abuja and Tinapa seems to hint at the loose relationship between architectural form and meaning. Meaning is not derived autonomously, but relationally. Similar forms can mean different things in different contexts. But perhaps more importantly, it signals the differences in scales of sovereignty at work in the two projects. While Abuja could be centrally planned with the aid of federal funding and law, Tinapa’s funding and viability was exposed to greater risk by a changes in the market environment and adjustments in federal zoning policy.

The construction of Tinapa necessitated clear-cutting a rainforest to accommodate its remote location (Figure 5.22). This sub- or anti-urban placement with regards to Calabar’s city “center” resonates with the scattered distribution of compounds employed for centuries by the smaller “decentralized” societies of the Èfik, Ìgbo, Aro, and Ìbìbìò native to southeastern Nigeria.⁸⁷ Like Ken Saro-Wiwa’s crusade for autonomy and self-determination against the injustices of the Nigerian state, Tinapa’s development strategy is one guided by “empowerment” paired with a decidedly anti-state, anti-tax sentiment. Roadside signs in Calabar, seeking to

⁸⁵ Watts, Michael. “The Sinister Political Life of Community. Economies of Violence and Governable Spaces in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.” *Niger Delta Economies of Violence Working Paper No. 3*. Institute of International Studies. University of California, Berkeley (2004): 134.

⁸⁶ Vale, 160.

⁸⁷ Northrup, David. *Trade Without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. For a discussion of how this arrangement might have developed as a defensive mechanism in the context of the slave trade see Klein, Martin A. “The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies.” *The Journal of African History* 42.01 (2001): 49-65.

correct this attitude, urge residents to “GET THE HINTS: Pay Your Urban Development Tax” (Figure 5.23). Tinapa captures this spirit. Rather than a neoliberal mentality that has arisen in the past few decades, the impetus for Tinapa has decidedly pre-colonial roots. Both the zone and the traditional compound are inwardly focused enclaves nested within larger, differentiated fields.

Traditional compounds operated as protected nodes in the humid rainforests of the region, while Tinapa is intended as a “duty free” space for the free flow of capital within the national jurisdictional space of Nigeria. Tinapa is imagined as a frontier zone, like the American West (Figure 5.24). While handicapped by the fiscal policies of the federal government, Tinapa aspires to be a space of commerce and interaction like the walled compound. Like the traditional walled compounds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ikeyi notes this “semi-autonomous zone” operates with “quasi-independent law-making and administrative powers”.⁸⁸ While both of these configurations operated as interiorized environments, each maintained and relied on a modulated connection to the exterior. Compounds required the goods of other compounds and European traders. Similarly, Tinapa seeks the fluid commercial capital of cosmopolitan jet-setting elites. Like the single entry to the traditional walled compound, a private security gate manned by an armed guard greets visitors to the complex acting as a social filter (Figure 5.25). Compounds and zones are selective and fundamentally exclusionary spaces. As in the case of the micro-zones in Calabar, however, this image of security is selectively porous. Perhaps due to the low attendance of patrons, the gate is easily entered.

Similarities to spatial configurations in precolonial Old Calabar suggest Tinapa is the product of processes of socio-cultural formation much longer than previously thought. This is not to say that the imprint of British colonialism is not felt in the complex. Just as remnants of the colonial administration are parts of Calabar’s urban landscape today, the imprint of colonial planning tendencies can be detected at Tinapa. As discussed in Chapter, missionaries and colonial officials enclaved enclaves of “European civilization” first the time in Old Calabar in the mid-nineteenth century. The establishment of separate European and native settlements marked a strategy of segregation intended to divide the population for safety and hygienic purposes. Like Tinapa, colonial officials cleared brush for the establishment of a resort-like reservation. Established in the 1880s, Government Hill displayed the characteristics of a European Reservation with recreational amenities and green spaces connected with criss-crossing paths (Figure 4.37). The Old Residency, which now houses the National Museum, was an imported building placed in a gated compound with neatly-maintained grass and drainage system (Figure 5.26). Tinapa shares this sensibility, creating a walled oasis. The exurban location of Tinapa, connected only by a single road to the rest of the city, more emphatically pursues its strategy of spatial isolation (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2). The colonial administration struggled with its strategy of segregation. Native settlements constantly encroached on European territory and vice versa and administrators maintained only a few satellite installations at the edge of the city. Tinapa, in this sense, projects an image of a colonial dual city only imagined by underfunded colonial planners.

Lastly, nested within the space of Tinapa, its craft village provides another object of analysis to trace Calabar’s spatio-historical congruencies. Located on the southern edge of the resort behind the Tinapa Lakeside Hotel, the craft village is comprised of a group of round huts with conical thatched roofs selling souvenirs and artwork (Figure 5.27). Among other products, miniature Ékpè masqueraders are available for purchase by tourists. What at first appears to be

⁸⁸ Ikeyi, Nduka. "Export Processing Zones and Foreign Investment Promotion in Nigeria: A Note on Recent Legislation." *Journal of African Law* 42 (1998): 224.

an innocuous display of the commodification of “local” African culture evokes a different set of historical comparisons. As the close examination of the architecture of Old Calabar revealed, the traditional compounds of southeastern Nigeria were rectilinear formations. As documented by Dmochowski and Carroll, round huts are an architectural form native to the northern savannah region of Nigeria, not the tropical south (Chapter Two).⁸⁹ Perhaps chosen by Tinapa designers for formal interest rather than historical accuracy, round huts house the “crafts” at the resort complex. The traditional forms and materials are set in distinct contrast to the “modern” ones on the site. Performing a similar binaric display as the nineteenth century colonial exhibitions, the craft village can be viewed as a case of self-orientalizing architectural form. Timothy Mitchell’s *Colonising Egypt* provides a compelling account of imperialism in nineteenth century Egypt integrating a rigorous theorization of representation’s role in constructing and maintaining colonial power relations. Rather than distinct processes separated by geographic distance and cultural difference, Mitchell conceives of the experience of modernity and colonialism as co-constitutive. While the imperial world order was unfolding, there was an attempt to re-order Egypt to appear as a world “enframed.”⁹⁰ “Egypt was to be ordered up as something object-like. In other words, it was made picture-like and legible, rendered available to political and economic calculation.”⁹¹ In the case of the Tinapa craft village, the round huts are staged and set in contrast to the globalized progress exhibited by the concrete, glass, and steel of Tinapa. The agents behind this enframing are not colonial administrators, but the local subsidiary of the construction firm Julius Berger. The craft village is represented, like Old Calabar’s traditional compounds were by European observers, as a world frozen, museumified in the past. In cases such as King Eyamba V’s Iron Palace, representation was always set in contrast to the mud and thatch natives’ houses.

Like the imported houses of the era of the palm oil trade, Tinapa indeed functions locally as a symbol of wealth and aspiration, but to end the analysis there is to offer an inadequately incomplete picture. Just as Arindam Dutta describes the inadequacies of a “linear theme of power-display-knowledge”, reading Tinapa simplistically as “evidence of social prestige” constrains power into a linear relationship.⁹² It flattens the entangled vectors at play in the constitution of the zone. Rather than a mutually constituted spatial relationship, Tinapa is read by observers like Saro-Wiwa as a “top-down” emplacement much like the wooden houses of centuries prior. “Power-display-knowledge” understandings of Tinapa, however, unnecessarily bound the complex, diasporic space of the zone to the architectural form at a single point in time. They fail to recognize Tinapa as a zone of entanglement resonating with many moments simultaneously. The combination of Tinapa’s modern forms, large size, and peripheral location in relation to metropolitan Calabar, evokes the *champs d’experience* or experimental terrains deployed in other colonial outposts.⁹³ The exclusionary entrance practices and surveillance

⁸⁹ Dmochowski (1991) and Carroll (1992).

⁹⁰ Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt: With a New Preface*. University of California Press, 1991. 18.

⁹¹ Mitchell, 19. The whole project was built on establishing this abstract, constructed order and depicting it as an uncontested objective fact. The point is not that there existed some sort of misrepresentation (as argued by Marx), but that this “world-as-exhibition” promises a truth that lies outside its world of material representation. In this sense, Mitchell’s book provides a necessary colonial extension of Benjamin’s *Arcades* project.

⁹² Braide and Ekpo, 143.

⁹³ Rabinow, Paul. *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989; Wright, Gwendolyn. *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. 12. For a reflection on the “expansive botanical gardens for experimenting with economic plants” in Old

techniques of this spatio-economic laboratory support this reading. However, as an indigenous endeavor with spatial resonances to traditional architecture from region, it challenges penetrationist models of Western imperialism and the spread of neoliberal policy from the global North to the South.

It is ultimately insufficient to write off resort zones existing globally as the “dreamworlds of neoliberalism” or the spatial byproducts of a fanatical market logic.⁹⁴ While they can cynically be viewed as neo-colonial constructions cast upon former colonial contexts, this does not contend with the complex and historicized particularities of place which are necessarily entangled in these projects. Aspects of these views are undeniably correct, though they offer an incomplete picture. Upon closer inspection, Tinapa is better understood as a zone of entanglement co-constituted by real and imagined agents locally and from afar. Not unlike Ékpè in the eighteenth century, it creates an exclusionary translocal space. It is not a “non-place”, but a space that has emerged from centuries of tradition and cultural interaction. Tinapa seems to suggest historical continuity, rather than rupture. It is constituted by a complex feedback involving highly contextualized autochthonous development and outside agents rather than a sort of imposed, abstract, neoliberal project cast from some distant node. The history of “free cities” in the region challenges the novelty of zones like Tinapa. Moreover, the perceived “failure” of projects like Tinapa reveals the fiction of frictionless zones of commerce set apart from external forces. Instead, zones are dependent on a nexus of market and administration forces beyond their seemingly clear boundaries.

5.4 Provisional Conclusions

This chapter opened with Noo Saro-Wiwa’s reflections on the city of Calabar and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort. It argued Saro Wiwa’s expatriate positionality and sharp prose offered a promising alternative to the fraught narratives which opened the previous chapters in this dissertation. While informative and witty, her account was short of analysis. It didn’t grapple with the complex historical forces informing the people, places, and events she narrated. It relied on simplistic narratives of mimicry and shunned complications. Most importantly, Saro-Wiwa’s memoir failed to speculate why things operate the way they do in Nigeria. Her account may suggest that the giant ape sitting atop the film studio at Tinapa is only a big white elephant, but I contend there is much more to the story. Tinapa and the enclaved environments of contemporary Calabar reveal the vulnerability of such sovereignty arrangements. At the same time, they are products of a long history of historico-political forces. They challenge monolithic narratives about the spread of Western modernity to peripheral areas of the global South, and they bring into sharp relief the elaborate narratives necessary to maintain premise of spatial and juridical autonomy. As common features in the urban landscape, these zones and micro-zones are the paradigmatic space of contemporary Calabar.

Looking at the work of several scholars of the region, it has been argued Calabar and other cities in southeastern Nigeria have a long history of decentralized forms of politics and urbanism. Analyzing the urban fabric of contemporary Calabar, vestiges of these historical patterns are evident. Many of the city’s original settlements have expanded and densified to

Calabar, see Mockler-Ferryman, Augustus Ferryman. *Imperial Africa: The Rise, Progress and Future of the British Possessions in Africa*, Volume 1. London: Imperial Press, Limited, 1898. 312-313.

⁹⁴ Davis, Mike, and Daniel Bertrand Monk, eds. *Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2011.

accommodate for waves of population growth. The dominant spatial strategy of the city is the private gated enclave. Similar to the traditional compounds endogamous to the region, they establish small-scale sovereignties and spatially organize the daily activities of urban residents. The city is comprised of compounds containing private residences, banks, hotels, government buildings, and churches constituting a continuous urban fabric of internalized environments. Each compound operates on its own system of rules, regulations, and social values. These systems often conflict, compete, and produce social friction. Churches demonize prostitutes, traditional belief systems, and witch children, while Tinapa struggles to compete in a network of cosmopolitan resort complexes. Layered systems of security project and image of formalized safety and compliance, however this formality is often subverted by a parallel system of unwritten codes and exceptions. Zones like Tinapa are registers of the contradictions experienced by the Nigerian nation state after independence and byproducts of the country's history.

In an effort to disrupt ostensibly well-defined categories of colonial, postcolonial; liberal and neoliberal; freedom and subjugation, this chapter has employed both a historical and contemporary perspective of Calabar's urban dynamics. Fully aware of the "particularly tricky" endeavor described by Michael Watts of "finding some originary point of development," this chapter has nonetheless heeded Frederic Jameson's injunction to "always historicize."⁹⁵ Not to be construed as an attempt to de-emphasize historical change or suggest a slick continuity between disparate historical periods, it rather calls into question the *telos* implied in their periodization. Similar to Roy and AlSayyad's theorization of "medieval modernity," this chapter questions the "sense of newness" which persists in the analyses of neoliberalism.⁹⁶ Borrowing from Gregory, it is an attempt to "reconstruct a different cartography of power"⁹⁷ by mapping contemporary and colonial spaces, contesting "amnesiac histories," without "gloss[ing] over the terrible violence of colonialism," the erasures of which "are not only delusions; they are also dangers."⁹⁸

There are a number of potential drawbacks to a historical comparison of this sort, to which I'll try to briefly address. First, the application of the term "neoliberal" with its blanket-like polysemic character has a tendency to flatten, or render equivalent disparate and diverse geographies. The discussion of zoning technologies, though generally a neoliberal technology of rule, should be understood as taking on different characteristics in different contexts. Emphasizing locality, Ikeye argues for example that the location of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) away from the mainland in China was informed by "the desire to isolate local Chinese from foreign capitalists."⁹⁹ But Aihwa Ong differentiates between the spatializing dynamic articulated by neoliberalism in East Asian environments "where the state tends to be robust and centralized," and Africa where the state is "weak and dispersed."¹⁰⁰ The peculiarities of a particular country may also be relevant. In short, context matters though over-arching "themes" can be detected across diverse spatial articulations.

⁹⁵ Watts, Michael. "Alternative Modern: Toward a Cultural Geography of Development, in S. Pile, N. Thrift, and K. Anderson, M. Domosh, (eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, Sage, 2003. 436-437.

⁹⁶ AlSayyad, Nezar and Roy, Ananya, "Medieval Modernity," 16.

⁹⁷ Soja, Ed. "Inside Exopolis: Scenes from Orange County," in Michael Sorkin, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992. 122.

⁹⁸ Gregory, Derek. "Foucault's Laughter," in *The Colonial Present*, 2004. 10.

⁹⁹ Ikeyi, Nduka. "The Export Processing Zones and Foreign Investment Promotion in Nigeria: A Note on Recent Legislation." *Journal of African Law*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1998. 223.

¹⁰⁰ Ong, Aihwa. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. 2006. 18.

A second potential danger of this historical methodology is to focus too narrowly on the urban as a “theater of capitalist accumulation and exploitation”¹⁰¹ Mike Davis’ work on “evil paradises” can be said to be characteristic of this vein. In contradistinction to line of reasoning, Mbembé argues that seeing African cities in this way points to an important failure--“the failure to speak of the city on terms that warrant comparison with other cities in the world.”¹⁰² Though the imprint and resonance of colonial legacies on Nigeria’s contemporary urbanism are emphasized in this chapter, it does not ignore the emerging and lively debate on African cities by theorists such as AbdouMaliq Simone, Janet Roitman, and Filip De Boeck. Simone notes “seeing African cities only in terms of their colonial and postcolonial relationships...often makes it difficult to see how “modern” “innovative,” and “resourceful” they may actually be. It may also preclude a fuller understanding of the multifaceted ways in which they are engaged with the larger world.”¹⁰³ Even a history of the colonial period emphasizing the extraterritorial impacts of Western rule on a dominated terrain acknowledges, like A.G. Hopkins’ *An Economic History of West Africa*, that the so-called “traditional” society was not eliminated and that “export expansion involved a certain amount of social change.” Both expatriate and indigenous contributions were necessary for the completion of the “open economy.”¹⁰⁴

Lastly, the implied continuity between the colonial past and neoliberal present runs the risk of legitimizing a notion of a relatively stable, unchanging “reality” across centuries in Nigeria. The congruency may suggest an Orientalist timeless quality and buttress a common-sensical notion of “the way things have always been.” That is not the intention of this chapter. Rather, the purpose of focusing on these economically critical nodes in Nigeria is to highlight their historical centrality in a dynamic global system and speculate what they mean in terms of citizenship and how “the conduct of conduct” is governed. When considered according to market logic, these spaces aren’t “dysfunctional” at all, however their location within a “crisis of the contemporary African state” does point to their “impoverished sense of citizenship and subject.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, the focus on these spaces is an attempt to rethink the geography of empire, dismantling their impossibility, enabling comparison rather than immobilizing it.

Though it exhibits continuities with prior spatial arrangements, Tinapa is not spatial evidence of a society incapable of changing. It also not proof of the inevitable march of foreign neoliberal forces taking over an authentic African society. Instead, it is more productive to consider both forms as “spaces of exception,” enclaves existing within the normalized boundaries of territorial rule, yet juridically existing outside of them. One of the fundamental differences between these spatial configurations is the way space *operates*. To clarify this distinction, anthropologist Fernando Coronil writes:

If under “colonial globalization” (by which I mean the mode of integration of colonies to the global economy) direct political control was needed to organize primary commodity production and trade within restricted markets, then under neoliberal globalization the unregulated production and free circulation of primary commodities in the open market requires a significant dismantling of state controls previously oriented toward the protection of national industries. Before, the exploitation of primary commodities took

¹⁰¹ Mbembé, Achille and Nuttal, Sarah, “Writing the World from an African Metropolis,” *Public Culture* 16 (3), 2004. 356.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁰³ Simone, AbdouMaliq. *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. 18.

¹⁰⁴ Hopkins, 295.

¹⁰⁵ Watts, Michael, “Black Gold, White Heat: State Violence, Local Resistance and the National Question in Nigeria,” in Pile, S. and M. Keith, eds. *Geographies of Resistance*. New York: Routledge, 1997. 64.

place through the visible hand of politics; now it is organized by the ostensibly invisible hand of the market in combination with the less prominent, but no less necessary, helping hand of the state.¹⁰⁶

In other words, there has been an obfuscating shift from “the visible hand of politics” to the “invisible hand of the market.” Paradoxically, it is space, an ostensibly transparent fluid or simple stage set for all things political, which hides the “repressed topographies of cruelty,” Mbembé speaks of. As Edward Soja famously perceived, “We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology.”¹⁰⁷ Further, he comments that “these new geographies are what now push us away from the centers of power, and this peripheralization is played out in many spatial scales, from those little tactics of the habitat to the strategic discourses of global geopolitics.”¹⁰⁸ Nigeria’s free-trade zones can be seen to operate strikingly similar in their extractive economic functionality yet fundamentally different in the way space has come to mask rather than reveal history. If we’re willing to accept that the period of economic liberalism was also a period of high colonialism, how are we to think about the spatial constructs of neoliberalism?

The zones and micro-zones of contemporary Calabar seem to suggest historical continuity, rather than rupture. They subconsciously re-enact sovereignty arrangements from earlier periods in the city’s history—precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial. At the same time, they serve as staging grounds and thresholds to real and imagined spaces beyond the confines of their walls. Zones are produced by the interaction of their diverse inhabitants rather than a sort of imposed, abstract, neoliberal project cast from some distant node. The history of “free cities” in the region challenges the novelty of zones like Tinapa and provides evidence for a longer process of cultural production than one invented to meet the demands of contemporary global capital. Moreover, the perceived “failure” of projects like Tinapa reveal the fiction of frictionless zones of commerce set apart from external constraints. Instead, the perceived autonomy of zones and the free markets contained therein are maintained by elaborate narratives and administrative measures.

¹⁰⁶ Coronil, Fernando. “Towards a Critique of Globalcentrism: Speculations on Capitalism’s Nature,” *Public Culture* 12.2 (2000): 363-364.

¹⁰⁷ Soja, E. W. *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall. 1989.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

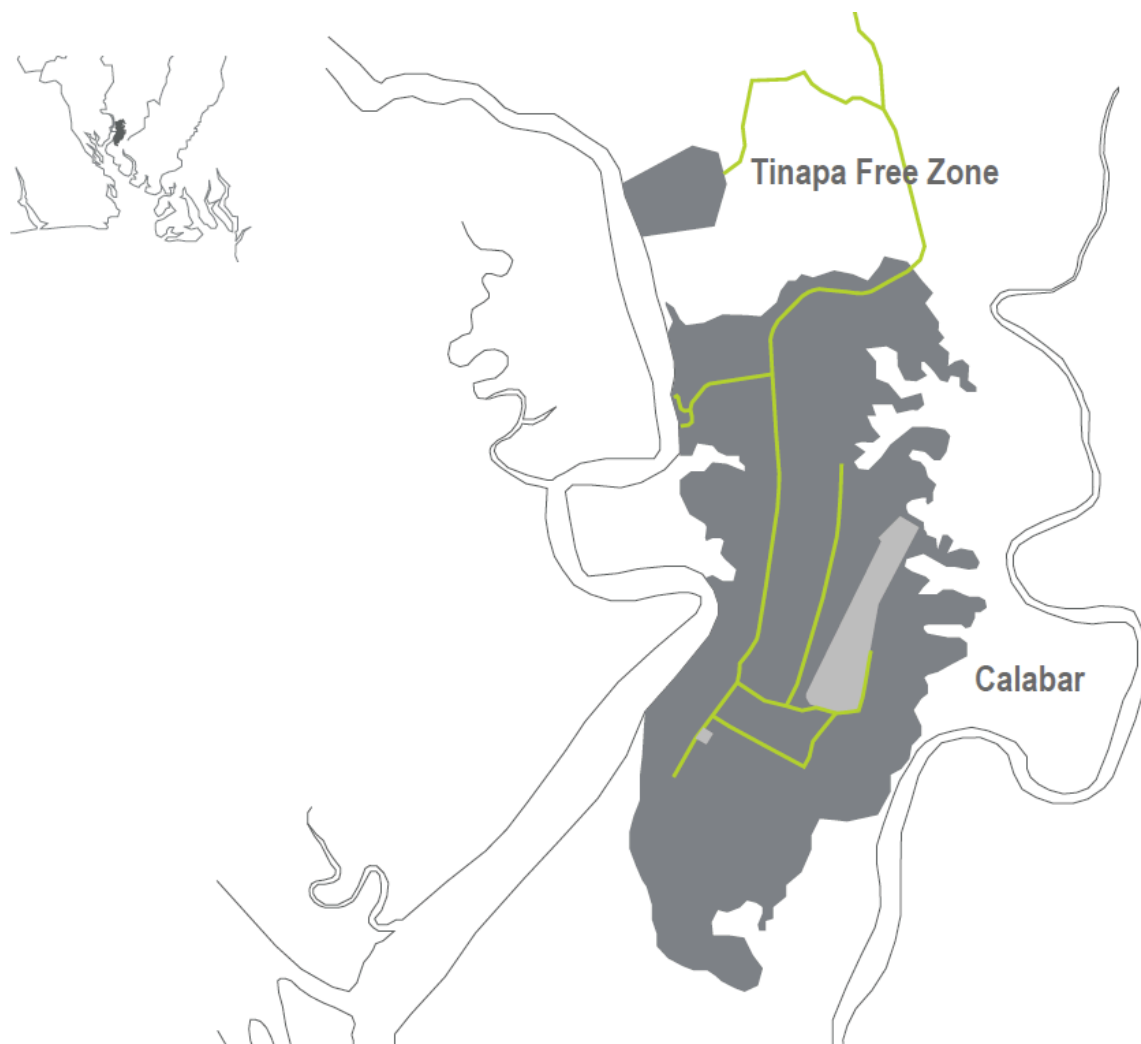


Figure 5.1. Map of Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2015) (Source: Diagram by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).



Figure 5.2. Aerial Map, Calabar, Nigeria (2015) (Source: Diagram by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).



Figure 5.3. Entrance to the University of Calabar (UNICAL), Calabar, Nigeria (2010) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2010).



Figure 5.4. Calabar Municipal Government Headquarters, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.5. “The Nation’s Paradise”, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.6. “Freedom Band”, part of Calabar Carnival Festivities, Calabar, Nigeria (2012)
(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.7. “Ékpè” masquerader outside of compound, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012). Contrast with authentic Ékpè masquerade costumes in Chapter 3.



Figure 5.8. Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).

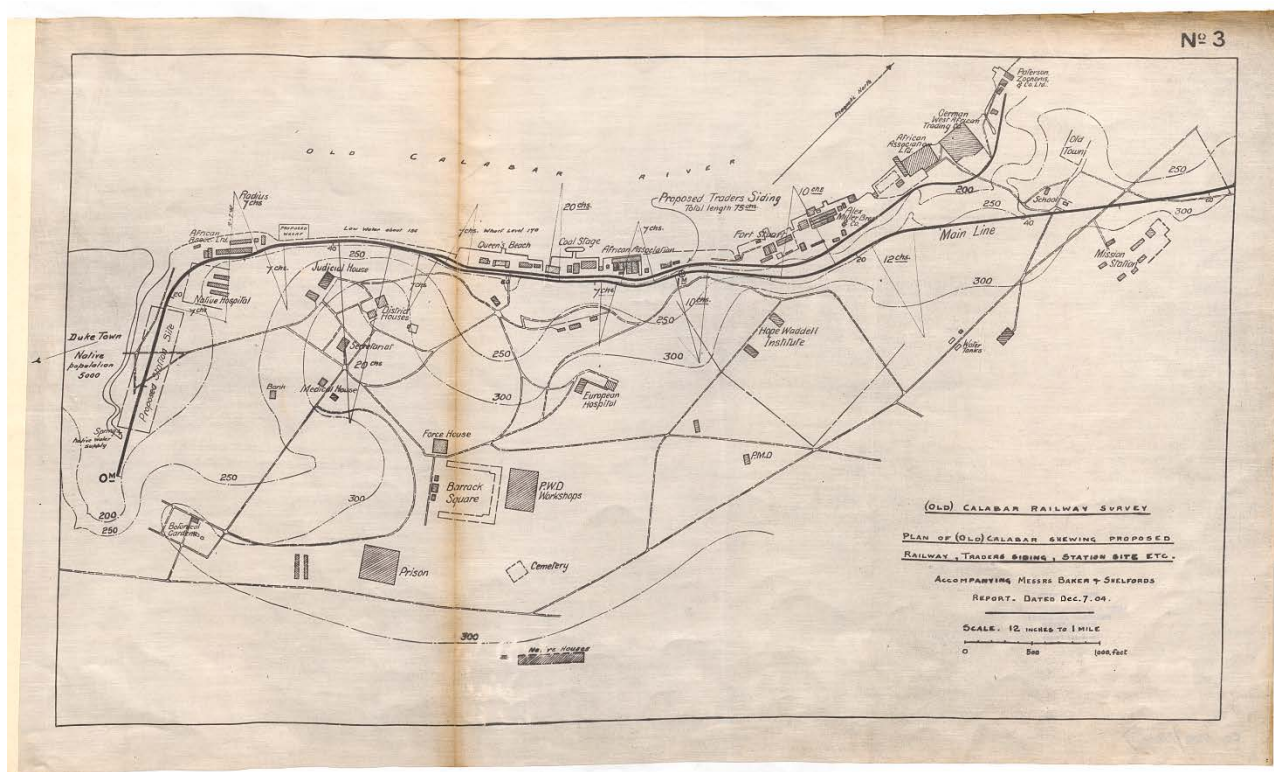


Figure 5.9. (Old) Calabar Railway Survey (1904) (Source: National Archives, Kew, MPGG 1/41). Plan of (Old) Calabar Showing Proposed Railway, Traders Siding, Station Site, Etc. Accompanying Messrs. Baker and Shelfords Report Dated December 7, 1904. Old Residency labeled as “Secretariat” on plan.



Figure 5.10. Contemporary Compound. Mix of traditional, colonial, and contemporary technology (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.11. Contemporary Residential Compound, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.12. Contemporary Residential Compound, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.13. Contemporary Residential Compound, Esuk Utan, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.14. “This house is not for sale”, commercial building, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.15. Contemporary Bank Compound, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.16. The Mirage Hotel Compound, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.17. Palace Temple, Liberty Gospel Headquarters, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).

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- Unsuccessful life with disappointments
- Financial impotency and difficulties
- Facing victimization and lack of promotion
- Stagnated life with failures
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Date: 14th - 25th March, 2012

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Figure 5.18. “Marathon Deliverance” advertisement, Liberty Gospel Church, Houston, Texas (2012) (Source: Mehta, Hemant. “Helen Ukpabio, Nigerian Witch Hunter, Sues Her Critics for £500,000,000.” *Patheos*. September 2, 2014. (Accessed June 15, 2015)).



Figure 5.19. Plan of Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2015) (Source: *Tinapa Business Resort and Free Zone*. Web. (Accessed June 15, 2015).

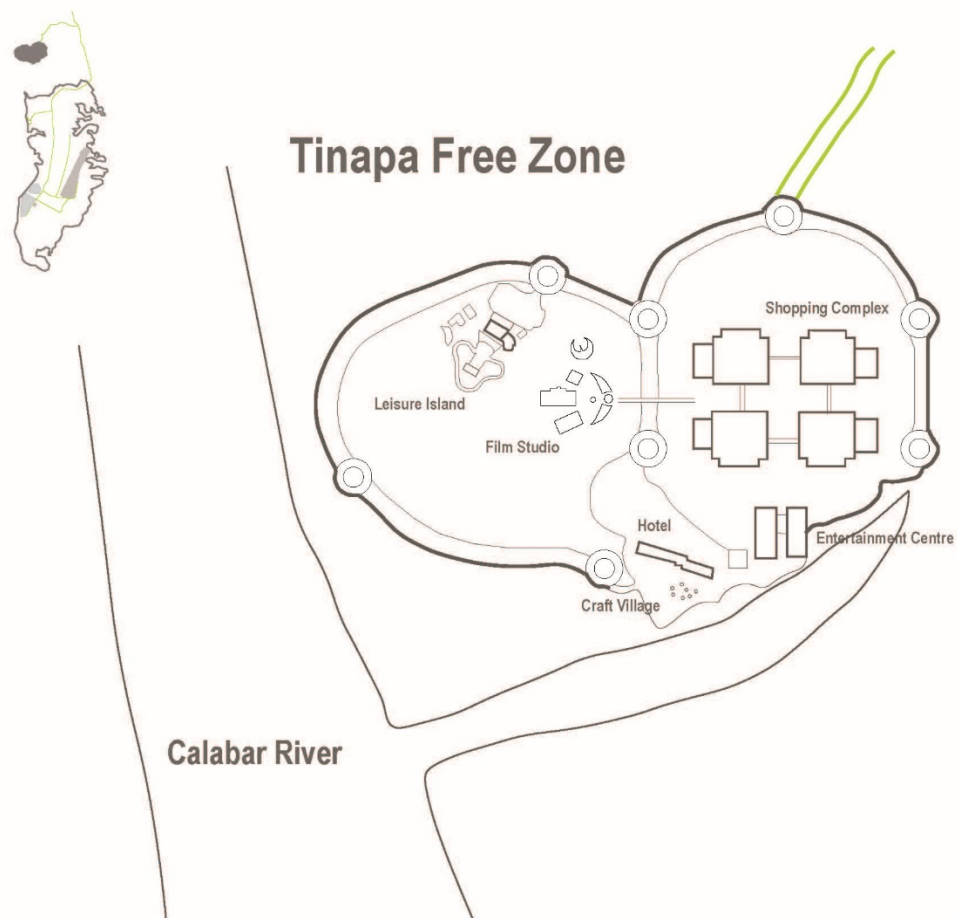


Figure 5.20. Plan of Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2015) (Source: Diagram by Joseph Godlewski, 2015).



Figure 5.21. Masonry perimeter wall, Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012)
(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.22. Amber Resort hotel (forest beyond), Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.23. "Get the Hints: Pay Your Urban Development Tax", roadside sign, Calabar, Nigeria (2010) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2010).



Figure 5.24. Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.25. Entrance gate and wall, Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012)
(Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.26. Exterior of National Museum at the Old Residency, Government Hill, Calabar (1884) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).



Figure 5.27. Craft Village. Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, Calabar, Nigeria (2012) (Source: Photograph by Joseph Godlewski, 2012).

Chapter 6: Emergent *Protozones*

6.1 Emergent *Protozones*

Calabar is a city of continual fragmentation and transformation. The history of Old Calabar's fluctuating urban landscape challenges hidebound characterizations of African cities as spatially distant and timeless entities, disconnected from the world at large. Far from existing in a homeostatic condition, the history of the spatial politics of Old Calabar has witnessed internecine warfare, competing trade houses, and fraught encounters between foreign, local, and otherworldly agents such as those associated with the Ékpè society and Christianity. This history provides an empirical case study for contesting the notion of the city as a bound entity containing a backwards and primitive culture disconnected from the global system. Building on ongoing discourse which seeks to challenge prevailing assumptions about African cities, this project has brought to the fore the changing experiences of urban space and the rich architectural history of Old Calabar. The negotiated urban spaces of Old Calabar can be understood as socially-produced, material, and processural sites of encounter and conflict. Further, the mobile and urban spaces making up the city's urban fabric since its beginnings in the sixteenth century have been linked with diasporic and transnational flows of people, capital, and culture. It has been argued that these fragmented and networked architectures prefigured the architectural spaces of neoliberalism existing globally today. Theorizing emergent *protozones* and networks of architectural form, this dissertation has explored the history of the built environment in the context of the Atlantic modernity of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As a port city with a long history of decentralized political structures and urban formations, Old Calabar presents a different building tradition than the conventionally understood canon of architectural history. While the term “decentralized” (or “lacking centralized”) is often used to characterize Old Calabar's formal organization, this dissertation argues that instead the spaces of Old Calabar are best understood as being actively involved in a polycentralizing process. After Appadurai, this phrasing emphasizes that the spatial dynamics of the city are not a “trait geography” held in a static state, but are constantly changing. Spaces fission, fuse, and multiply. This phrasing also recognizes that Old Calabar has historically been composed of multiple, competing sovereignties, with smaller-scale centralized forms over time. Old Calabar's history of scattered, fragmented, ephemeral, and mobile urban forms present a unique and compelling case study in contradistinction to conventional architectural histories focused on larger-scale and more permanent monumental forms. As historians and designers, we need to expand our vocabulary to accommodate the fragmentary, polycentralized spaces endemic to places like southeastern Nigeria. They resonate, perhaps much more deeply, with contemporary forms of networked architecture than do the centralized boxes, towers, and castles which tend to make up our history books and theory anthologies. However, studying this condition is not without methodological challenges and requires an expanded research repertoire on the part of the historian.

Due in part to the challenges associated with studying ephemeral forms of architecture, this dissertation has relied on archival personal accounts of the spaces examined and on reconstructed histories written centuries later in Nigeria's post-independence era. This literature tends to be torn between distinct discursive poles. On the one hand, accounts by European explorers, slave traders, and missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth century describe Old

Calabar as organized on the “higgledy-piggledy order”—a primordial, underdeveloped, and “crooked” space in need of European Enlightenment and rationalization. To these observers, Old Calabar was a static theater of primitive afflictions—crude rituals, slavery, beheadings, human sacrifices, cannibalism, and terroristic secret societies. On the other hand, post-independence authors attempting to overturn these stereotyped representations positioned Old Calabar as a naturalized, homeostatic site for markets, local cultural traditions, and a preservation-worthy source for national pride. In these accounts, slave traders were cast as entrepreneurial middlemen occupying the space of compounds, *Ékpè* masquerade, and imported houses—all of which served as unifying symbols of cultural identity. This dissertation has argued that both of these polarized characterizations are exaggerations, each with their own conscious and subconscious political aims. However, like many stories, aspects of these narratives are not necessarily incorrect. It is this entanglement of the true and untrue, worldly and spiritual, global and local, which characterizes the history of Old Calabar. The narrative space produced by the fraught accounts in memoirs, travelogues, and local histories form yet another object of analysis which must be examined when considering the history of Old Calabar’s built environment.

While these are invaluable textual sources, the characteristic demolition of the property of great trading leaders after their death during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Old Calabar presents a challenge for scholars tracing the history of the city’s built environment. Though scholarship exists documenting Old Calabar’s multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan history as a trade port, it often neglects the centrality of architecture in the process of articulating the city’s political and cultural values. For example, the architectural form of “traditional compounds”—rectilinear, multi-room, “wattle and daub” complexes—appears in numerous written sources though often in dualistic terms. European accounts from the period tend to denigrate and exoticize them, while postcolonial scholars idealize them as unified, communal spaces. Preserved sites or visual documentation of these historical formations often do not exist. It is therefore necessary to understand textual accounts not merely as rhetorical constructions, but contested material spaces in themselves.

Complicating matters, the ensemble of spaces constituting Old Calabar’s urban context has often been described as autonomous, decentralized, informal, ad hoc, impermanent, and thus difficult to grasp by conventional means from the standpoint of the architectural historian. The presumption of autonomy, however, belies the contested politics and multiple influences organizing these fragmented zones. This dissertation has contended there are historical congruencies in these spatial disjunctures. Incorporating indigenous and European forms, these hybrid spaces of encounter served as instances of what Duanfang Lu has called “entangled modernities” challenging diffusionist models of progress emanating from Western centers to non-Western peripheries. It has examined the dynamics of destruction and renewal from a variety of intertwined perspectives in the context of Old Calabar during the slave trade and its transition to a palm oil economy. Recent experiments with zoning in Calabar are at once very different in scale and materiality, yet resonate with the city’s trading history and tendency to eschew centralized forms of governance.

Free trade zones are conventionally understood as neoliberal spatial organizations which emerged and spread in parallel with global economic transformations in the 1970s and 1980s. This study has challenged this perception with case studies from the historicized periphery in Old Calabar. Borrowing the concept of paradigmatic spaces from Kracauer and others, it has historicized these spatial configurations through the analysis of a series of spaces in Old Calabar—the compound, the masquerade, the offshore, and the zone. Each of these spaces was a

site of intense socio-cultural and economic transactions. It has been argued that the compound, masquerade, and offshore functioned as a form of *protozoning* prefiguring contemporary zones existing globally and in Calabar. As a city with a distinctive, and what some call decentralized and fragmented urban geography, this project has drawn connections between contemporary zoning strategies and these historical socio-spatial constructs, or *protozones*. These *protozones*, which were loosely tied together by secretive juridical systems and cultural codes, can be seen as a precursor and as potential anticipatory diagrams for the splintering forms of urbanism emerging globally today. These emergent *protozones* served as critical interfaces, spatially negotiating difference as well as serving as platforms for the exchange of goods. Each had its own materiality and physical structure while organizing distinctly different social structures. *Protozones*, like their contemporary manifestations, are organized by visible and invisible codes—architectural hardware and software.

This dissertation was organized chronologically by the spatial paradigms which dominated the city during specific historical eras. Each of the paradigmatic spaces was expressive of and enabled a particular commercial system. Not merely adaptations or reflections of the socio-economic order, the architectures actively participated in and produced spaces of exchange. As Old Calabar's architecture changed shape over the centuries, so did its economies. While the city's precise origins are contested, it began as a grouping based on small-scale fishing where the traditional walled compound served as an interiorized symbolic landscape for living, working, trading, and worshiping. This changed with the advent of the overseas slave trade and the emergence of the Ékpè secret society. During this period, the performed space of the Ékpè masquerade served as a zone of interface negotiating between European traders and African middlemen, members and non-members. With the abolition of the slave trade, Old Calabar was able to quickly convert the networks it had established during the slave trade to ones based on palm oil. This period witnessed the rise of the prefabricated wooden house imported from Europe and the expansion of local plantations. Despite this close relationship between foreigners and local traders, Old Calabar maintained its territorial sovereignty well into the nineteenth century. Today the economy of Calabar is one based on tourism, universities, and governmental administration. Projects such as the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort, while not developmental success stories, serve important cultural and symbolic roles.

While it is tempting to associate these spatial paradigms with distinct phases of development, the case studies examined included moments of overlap and contestation between. Compounds competed with one another, missionary houses clashed with the space of Ékpè, Conflicts arose between native and European settlements and boundaries eroded. The spaces created were not autonomous containers for the universal push of capital, but rather staging grounds for battles over values. The temporal and spatial boundaries were blurred. At each historical moment in Old Calabar's history, different aspects of zoning were prioritized. The zones and *protozones* of the city served as interfaces between different groups, but also as portals or thresholds between life worlds—spatially and temporally. While the appearance and representation of zones may suggest a clear inside-outside relationship, the lived reality of these spaces reveal that they were sites of transition, intermixture, and association. Emergent *protozones* linked the forested regions of the interior with the trade routes of the Atlantic, while also connecting economic spaces of exchange with those of mythic spiritual entities.

The dissertation began with my personal encounter with the empty Tinapa resort complex. Unlike other free trade zones existing globally, this resort project didn't generate the social unrest and protest due to the disinvestments in social infrastructure which tend to

accompany duty-free zones. Quite the contrary, residents blamed the corrupt federal government and its request to collect taxes for the project's failure. This encounter caused me to re-conceptualize the entire project. A historical perspective was taken to gain purchase on the motivations and enthusiasm for such projects. This examination of Old Calabar's urban history not only illuminates a comparatively neglected site of inquiry, but it informs contemporary debates about neoliberalism and cities worldwide. In taking a historical perspective in describing Calabar's built environment, this study complicates linear assumptions about progress and backwardness in the scholarship on globalization and cities. The enclave zones in contemporary Calabar are not a new phenomenon or anomalous after-effects of neoliberalism, but spaces entangled in the spiritual and economic history of the city. It was not the intention of this study to extol the historical spaces of Old Calabar as models for future cities, nor is it to malign contemporary Calabar and free trade zones as backward, "unprogressive" spaces of exception beyond rational comparison. Instead, it has examined in detail the spaces of Old Calabar in order to speculate on the future of cities. This study hasn't turned a blind eye to Nigeria's struggles or reduced the urban dynamics of Calabar to a kind of naturalized, agent-less, and de-historicized "self-regulating system" as Rem Koolhaas and the Harvard Project on the City conceives of Lagos.¹ In contrast, it exhibits the dynamic transactions between the social structure and its agents-- the real and imagined architecture of a particular Nigerian city. While the term "emergent" can be associated with scientific theories of self-organization in complex systems, it has been used here to stress that *protozones* had resulted from an active historical process of coming into being.

The oldest form of *protozoning* analyzed was that of the traditional walled-compound. Dominating Old Calabar's landscape from the earliest fishing villages and arrival of Efik migrants from the Uruan region in the seventeenth century, compounds served as interiorized zones protected and set apart from the existing coastline and forests. Compounds housed a lineage-based social structure in compartmentalized rooms around a central outdoor courtyard. Composed of local mud, thatch, and mangrove posts, these single-story wattle and daub structures provided a less permanent built environment than the centralized trading kingdoms to the west. The impermanence of these structures afforded the constantly fissioning and fusing social groups of the region a degree of flexibility in their built environment. The continual process of fragmentation and movement displayed by the Èfik of Old Calabar contests the image of Africa as a static and timeless entity. Despite this dynamism, European observers instead conceived of Old Calabar as a disordered and mysterious landscape, home to a litany of uncivilized practices, including their seemingly disorganized built forms. The compound served as a theater of barbarity to justify the institution of slavery or the missionary enterprise. As if to reverse hundreds of years of epistemic violence, a generation of post-independence scholars conceived of compounds as symbols of national identity, primordial traditions, and self-sufficiency. Compounds continued to dot the landscape in later centuries; however, changes in Old Calabar society toward the end of the seventeenth century necessitated new spaces of exchange.

Once the overseas slave trade escalated in the eighteenth century, the spatial paradigm that emerged was the performed space of the Èkpè masquerade. The space produced by the masquerade dance was informed by secret codes determined by the Èkpè society. Discussed in detail in the diary of the slave trader Antera Duke, these spaces existed in the era from 1729-1805, dominated by the rise of the transatlantic slave trade and the simultaneous growth of the

¹ Godlewski, Joseph, *CLOG*, 2014. 59.

Ékpè secret society. The lineage system was transformed into an *ufok* (house) system, no longer solely based on ancestry. Larger compounds fragmented and alliances were to be found in a number of smaller competing compounds. Intrinsic to this development was the Ékpè secret society. Ékpè was a tremendous source of artistic and cultural heritage, but also one with tremendous powers to serve as a regulating mechanism settling disputes between competing wards and offshore traders anchored in the Calabar River. Though Old Calabar lacked a centralized state, it did have a system for negotiating markets, value, and identity. The Ékpè society fulfilled a panoply of state-like functions. It was modulated by a politics of secrecy which both enabled the conditions for a “free market” between traders on the shores of the Calabar River, as well as preventing the full-scale territorial colonization and destruction of Old Calabar cultural traditions.

After the abolition of the slave trade, Old Calabar quickly transitioned to an economy centered on the palm trade. This change coincided with a shift in spatial paradigm from the masquerade to the offshore in the early nineteenth century. With the transition from the slave trade to the “legitimate” palm oil trade in the early nineteenth century, Old Calabar’s urban environment underwent another transformation. The dispersed city regulated by Ékpè slowly became more centralized under the authority of strong kings like Great Duke Ephraim. The consolidation of space in Old Calabar was accompanied by the growth of satellite plantation spaces for the production of palm oil and the development of closer ties to European traders. The landscape became dotted with prefabricated houses shipped from Europe that served as symbols of power, but also as staging grounds for trade encounters. Despite its conventional physical appearance, analyses of houses such as King Eyamba V’s Iron Palace reveal the mutually-constituted and diasporic quality of the space of the offshore.

The composition of the offshore changed with the arrival of Scottish missionaries in 1846. Old Calabar’s exclusive territorial sovereignty effectively ended and the space of Ékpè was fundamentally challenged. Spatial paradigms clashed. Within the confines of newly established churches and mission houses, missionaries preached the gospel and cultivated unrest. Missions also prepared Old Calabar for the implementation of British colonial rule. Colonial officials built an enclaved European Reservation on Government Hill. Though premised on indirect rule and the spatialization of difference, the intended segregation was not as complete. Nonetheless, the inherited legacy of colonialism continues to be felt in Calabar’s built environment.

Lastly, neoliberal zoning strategies at work in contemporary Nigeria were examined with a particular focus on contemporary Calabar and the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort. The focus was on resort, residential, commercial, and religious enclaves with more intimate forms of habitation intertwined with business and trade practices. Gated compounds in Calabar form a continuous urban fabric of private enclaves with their own logics of rule. Similar to the traditional walled compounds native to the region, these enclaves appear as autonomous entities but, in fact, compete and interconnect in diverse ways. The premise of impenetrability and security associated with enclaves is undermined by informal and illicit networks of agents. I gave an overview of the political and economic transformations that occurred in Nigeria during colonial rule, the period of post-independence, and since the establishment of the Nigerian Export Processing Zone Authority in 1992. I then described how, despite institutional resistance, the charismatic politician Donald Duke envisioned and made the Tinapa Free Zone and Resort a reality. Though because the Nigerian federal government, traditionally centered in the North, renege on its promises to have the zone operate “duty free,” prospective clients pulled out and

the corresponding customers have been slow to arrive. Zones like Tinapa are seen as registers of the contradictions experienced by the Nigerian nation state after independence and as byproducts of the country's history.

Though the central argument of this study contends a degree of continuity exists between contemporary architectural and urban configurations and their pre-colonial predecessors, this is not to suggest the architecture or culture in the region is somehow timeless or unchanging. On the contrary, what this dissertation argues is that these spatial constructs are deeply rooted cultural logics. To say these are colonial impositions or neoliberal inventions is a crude oversimplification. Such an assumption fails to recognize the city's tangled historical experience of markets. Insensitive to the history of building traditions and social organizations in the region, contemporary accounts of Nigeria's zoning program overestimate the novelty of these interventions and their potentials for development. Free trade zones are a global phenomenon and the free trade logic driving their construction is seductive; however it resonates in some places more than others.

When I began my analysis, it was an interest in the built environment of special economic zones. As I conclude this work, my focus is drawn to the historical patterns of space-making in southeastern Nigeria and their similarities to contemporary enclaved urban configurations transpiring globally. Despite radical changes in the socio-political organization, economy, and culture of Calabar over the past few centuries, a core of spatio-organizational tendencies resurface at particular points in history. At the heart of contemporary neoliberal planning practices in Calabar exist shreds of the city's past. Imported wooden houses from the colonial period mix with traditional compounds and satellite technology. Economic zones feature compounded traditional craft villages, and inhabitants go home to small-scale gated communities originally built as part of a 1960s and 1970s public housing programs posed in the newly independent nation state. While this dissertation was organized chronologically by the spatial paradigms, the passage from one period to the next, however, did not necessitate the replacement or canceling out of prior spaces. Instead, these spaces overlapped and intersected one another producing friction. Spatial paradigms intermixed in unpredictable ways.

The aim of this dissertation has been to challenge this model using a specific historical example outside of one of the conventionally-understood centers of theory production. The intention is not to discredit the rich tradition of Western scholarship theorizing the built environment, but to illuminate the productive potentials that shifting the center of theory both geographically and historically can have for generating a more fluid, interconnected, and relational understanding of space. Is it possible that by decentering our point of reference, we can generate theories more reflective of the dynamism and rich diversity producing the global built environment?

Contemporary accounts of globalization emphasize transnational flows of people, capital, and ideas. Within these narratives, context is eschewed in favor of the logic of connection and flows of transnational capital, but it is important to underscore from which direction these flows occur—from the center to the periphery. The postcolonial urban theorist Ananya Roy suggests that 21st century theorizations must disrupt and de-center these categories. She argues for “dislocating the Euro-American centre of theoretical production; for it is not enough simply to study the cities of the global South as interesting, anomalous, different, and esoteric empirical cases.”² In her view, Roy posits that the center of theory-making must move South in order to

² Roy, Ananya. "The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory" *Regional Studies* 43.6 (2009): 819-830. 820.

recalibrate the geographies of authoritative knowledge. Historically, spaces in the global North are interpenetrated by those from the global South. Relying on these outmoded theoretical models is inadequate for understanding the interdependent dynamics of global flows and disruptions. Moreover, it is pedagogically inadequate to study the peripheral, sidebar courses on “non-Western architecture”. To do so miscalculates the diverse ways centers and peripheries are mutually constituted.

Analyzing the architecture of Old Calabar sheds light on the multifarious ways early modernity was constituted. Challenging the teleology put forth by dominant narratives of neoliberalism and globalization, the networked architectures of Old Calabar pose a productive alternative imagining. For example, examining the performed space of Ékpè masquerade demonstrated that the maintenance of zones of commerce required a complex infrastructure managing the market risks of the slave trade. Evidence from historical sources, particularly the diary of the slave trader Antera Duke, offered a glimpse into the space of mediation between European merchants, Calabar middlemen, and ethereal spirits. The architectures of Old Calabar confound contemporary conceptualizations of the risk in three fundamental and interrelated ways. First, the act of historicizing unsettles the stubborn sense of novelty in this fraught concept. Positioning risk in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century challenges the persistent sense of newness associated with the risk society. Secondly, conceptualizing risk at the peripheries of empire rather than the center forces us to think of the complex ways risk is constituted. Hybridized ways of creating access to credit and mitigating risk in the face of the uncertainty of the burgeoning slave economy proved mutually beneficial for both British merchants and indigenous traders in Old Calabar. Lastly, tracing risk through decentralized spatial configurations in this shifting urban environment suggests risk mitigation occurs in a range of environments and emerges from diverse and varied cultural traditions.

So what is at stake in this act of archiving and historicizing these spatial configurations? Why does this matter? It demonstrates that the act of cordoning off sovereign zones of commerce distinct from their surroundings is not a wholly new enterprise. It thus questions the universal history of capital. The examination of these ostensibly autonomous entities reveals they are quite porous, interdependent, and intersected by diverse agents. Though they seemingly produce smooth spaces for transactions, they also produce socio-political friction. This study shows how deeply ingrained the ostensibly neoliberal conceptions of *habitus* are in the context of Calabar. Nigerians on the Biafran coast didn't suddenly become ultra-independent, individualistic, entrepreneurial, and suspicious of any mechanism which seeks to centralize space, power, and resources. It wasn't some evil hoisted on them by structural adjustment programs, a shift to flexible accumulation, or even the experience of British colonialism. These of course played a part, but writing off these developments as relatively recent phenomena is a scholarly misstep that covers up the entangled histories of these places. *Protozones* have instead been produced by various socio-economic and mystical forces. The confluence of these fluctuating circumstances has shaped the built environment in Old Calabar. This dissertation has provided a case study for theorizing architecture and urbanism from the historicized periphery. Expanding our vocabulary to reflect the networked and impermanent spaces in Old Calabar can provide a more productive way of understanding the spaces of contemporary globalization. It is the historicized periphery rather than contemporary center that marks the terrain of the architectural theory of the future.

Lastly, I have argued that spatial paradigms are useful mechanisms for tracing transformations in Old Calabar society. They have served as mental constructs for understanding the socio-political dynamics of a particular port city in southeastern Nigeria. Similar to

Benjamin's arcade or Foucault's panopticon, they serve as diagrams of power and the spatial intersection of particular socio-historical forces. Like four architectural models placed on a desk, they give texture and form to spatial relationships, crystalize organizational hierarchies, and provide scale. In the end though, as with all models, they are fictions. They run the risk of being read as discrete, bound entities. As abstractions, however, they're incapable of expressing the unbound and destabilizing qualities of space. How does one represent the conflicting values, invisible forces, connections to imagined futures, or beliefs that catalyze the construction of these models? As models, they objectify and oversimplify the inescapably social quality of space. They cannot account for the friction that occurs between them. It follows that they run the risk of repeating the fiction of zones as self-contained and frictionless environments for the free trade of goods.

To conclude, it's necessary to collide these models into one another, disassemble them and reveal they're not autonomous containers at all, but composed of heterogeneous and conflicting fragments, processes, and meanings. The spaces they seemingly enclose are charged with competing values. Like the narratives opening each chapter in this study, these emergent *protozones* are fictive formations containing my own hopes and aspirations, but also my own prejudices, distortions, and oversights. I'm inevitably entangled in these constructed spaces. To not expose these paradigms as necessarily incomplete spatial literary devices would mean succumbing to the danger of a single story. Just as traditional compounds were both actually existing spaces in Old Calabar and an invented tradition which supported the imagined community of Nigeria, the paradigmatic spaces I've sketched out here were both material realities and rhetorical constructions necessary to tell a particular architectural and urban story. They contain both true and untrue elements. Like zones, the boundaries of these *protozones* are porous, constantly negotiated, recalibrated, and exceeded. While zones project an image of autonomy and clear distinctions between inside and outside, this study suggests that massive amounts of active agents, material resources, energy, and elaborate narratives are necessary to maintain the fiction of zones past and present.

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Af,A51.18. Temporary Prison, Old Calabar (1890-1905)

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MFQ 1/410/8. Detail of Map 'Africa - West coast, Calabar (1890-1908)

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Un-numbered. Interior of Miller Brothers' Residential Premises at Old Calabar (1895)

Un-numbered. Traditional Walled Compound (undated)

Un-numbered. Prince Archibong's House, Duketown, Calabar (undated photograph)

Un-numbered. Entrance to House of Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar (undated photograph)

Un-numbered. Interior of House of Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar (undated photograph)

Un-numbered. Interior chandelier in Eyo Honesty IX, Duketown, Calabar (undated photograph)

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Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms¹

Èfik

Introduction:

Èfik (Ìbìbìò *fik*)

Eribọp

Èyó

Kòmó

Mbàkára

Mbùk

Oyibo (Yorùbá), *oyi ibo* (Ìgbo)

Ùfàń

Compound:

Àmanambà, àmanaibà

Átàkpà

Àtáràbàń, àtáràbàńg

Awka (Ìgbo)

Èbiét

Ékpènyòń, ékpènyòńg

Ékpùk

Ènyoń ufọk

Èsién

Èsét

Èsít

Èsít èbiét

Èsít esa

Èsítokure

Èsít ùruà

Èteché, ètehé

Iba (Ìgbo)

Ìbibené

Idip (Ìbìbìò)

Ìsòń

Mbói

Mbuaka, mbuaha

Mfá

Ndèm

Nkanya

Nkop

English

to oppress (Èfik-Ìbìbìò)

architecture

epoch; era; time; period; age; generation

to entangle; foul; knot

white man; a European

story

white man (slang)

space or interval between objects; gap

twin; twin children

Duketown

main roof beam

gatehouse

place; house; venue

reference to *ndèm*; a water divinity

family; clan; blood relation

roof

yard; outdoors

tradition; antiquity

heart; interior; inside

interior courtyard

inner yard; private court

compound

trade compound

verandah; covered walk

Ìgbo compound

wall

smallest social unit

floor of a house; ground

timber pieces

mixture, as with liquids or goods

forked timber

a water divinity

thatch; roof mats

sea shell; clam

¹ Aye, Efiang Upkong. *A Learner's Dictionary of the Èfik Language*, Vol. 1, *Èfik-English*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1991. Goldie, Reverend Hugh. *Dictionary of the Èfik Language*. Glasgow: Dunn and Wright, 1862. Miller, Ivor. *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi, 2009.

<i>Nsidung</i>	Henshaw Town
<i>Obiò</i>	town; village; land
<i>Obiò Ókò</i>	Creektown; lit. “the other town”
<i>Obutong</i>	Old Town; an early Èfik settlement in Calabar
<i>Òkó</i>	a fence; hedge; barrier
<i>Ókókók</i>	bamboo; branches, midrib of a palm wine leaf
<i>Úkwáñ</i>	crooked; not straight; uneven; morally wrong
<i>Uno-aja (Ìgbo)</i>	guard tower
<i>Úsón, úsún</i>	entrance; doorway
<u>Masquerade:</u>	
<i>Bré</i>	play; have fun
<i>Èbunkó, èbòñkó</i>	vice president of Ékpè
<i>Efe</i>	shed; hut
<i>Èkòmò</i>	drum
<i>Ékpè, Egbo (Anglicized)</i>	leopard
<i>Éserè (éserè bean)</i>	Calabar bean possessing a powerful narcotic poison
<i>Èsìk</i>	the overalls worn by <i>Ídèm Íkwò</i>
<i>Eté</i>	father, term of respect
<i>Eté ufòk</i>	master of the house
<i>Éták efe</i>	smaller, inner shrine in a palaver house or shed
<i>Ètúbòm, eté ùbóm</i>	captain of a canoe; head of house or family
<i>Èyámbà, iyámba</i>	paramount Ékpè grade
<i>Ídèm</i>	masquerade, mask
<i>Ídèm Íkwò</i>	Ékpè masquerade
<i>Ìfót</i>	witchcraft; sorcery
<i>Isanunwo</i>	predatory raid; marauding expedition
<i>Ítiát Ékpè</i>	Ékpè stone; foundational stone used in initiation
<i>Ndèm</i>	tutelary deity of the Èfik
<i>Nsìbidì</i>	secret writings of Ékpè society
<i>Nyàmpkè</i>	important Ékpè grade
<i>Nyóró</i>	masquerade dance
<i>Òbón, òbóng</i>	chief; leader; master
<i>Ófin, ófn</i>	slave
<i>Ufòk</i>	house
<i>Ufòk mkpòkòbi</i>	prison; lit.: “the house of chain”
<i>Ufòk úquàt, úkwàk</i>	prison; lit. “iron bar house”
<i>Ùfót efe</i>	larger, outer room in a palaver house or shed
<i>Úkára</i>	large cotton cloth, used as a curtain in Ékpè
<i>Úsò ufòk</i>	house carpenter
<i>Úwà</i>	sacrifice; offer as a gift
<i>Úyò</i>	Voice; code name the Divine Voice

Offshore:*Adan èyóp*

palm oil

Àkpá

river

Dèk

English deck; second floor of a house

Èdídèm

king

Ékpó

ghost; apparition; spirit

Ésìt ìdíbí Èfik

the belly; storehouse of the Èfik (Akababuyo)

Ésùk

seashore; beach

Ésùk ùruà

beach market

Ìnwán

plantation

Nkà Íyìp

The Order of the Bloodmen

Obìò ékpó

the town of ghosts; lit. "land of the dead"

Obìò mbàkára

European country; lit. "land of the white man"

Ówo ùruà

merchant; trader

Sabon gari (Hausa)

strangers' quarters

Ùbum, ùbóm

canoe

Ùbum mbàkára

a ship; vessel

Ufọken yọń

story house

Ùfót

central

Ùkwán

not straight, morally wrong.

Zone:*Ésùk útán*

sandy beach

*Ìdíok àkpàrà*prostitute; street woman (*ìdíok*- evil; wickedness)