NAME; AMARERE ONOME

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CHAPTER 15

Among the people that composed of the Niger- Benue and plateau areas of Nigeria are the following ethnic group; jukun, igala, igbira, idoma, tiv, birom. The diversity of ethnic and linguistic group is nowhere higher in Nigeria than in plateau region where some two hundred and fifty tongues are spoken. They were just as poisedto resist interference from within their own rock-rimmedplateau neighbors as a result of which the plateau region was populated by ‘mushroom republics’ which were far from united internally. Among west African peoples, it is fashionable to claim Arabic or sometimes Egypt as original home, the tradition usually being that a mighty magician king named kisira was driven out of Arabia by the prophet and he founded a succession of pagan states throughout the western sudan.from the various origin myth and their versions, the following facts can be said to have emerged or been established, they are; that the jukun, chamba, bataof the middle and upper benue valley are related. That they all originated in the east and entered Nigeria through the country between mandarra highland and lakechad. That upon entry, the migratory stream or band broke up, one moved westward to the upper gongola valley and the other band migrated southwards to the middle and upper benue basin and later westward to the lower gongola valley etc.

THE IGALA

The early history of this (igala), chiefdom, it is not possible in the view of the absence of record and diversify of legends, to write other than with reserve. The second essential point to note in the reconstruction exercise is that the igala identify the history of their nation with the history of the royal crown. The igala country which originally belonged to Akpoto had the first wave of immigrant about the twelfth century led by Amina, a zaria princess and warrior who fought her way to idah with hausa and nupe followers.

THE IDOMA

Idoma is conveniently divided into north-eastern and south-western halves which are socio-political units and civilization. There is a part composed of doma and keana kingdom of which the former was reputed to be over seven hundred years old, the subgroup of idoma was sometimes referred to simply as the Alago or Arago kingdom of Doma.

THE TIV

The tiv are semi-bantu group living on both sides of the benue river about two hundred kilometer from its confluence with the River niger. Tiv and Akiga has managed to synthesize the vast number of legend and origin myths gathered from all part of Tivland with great diligence and care over a period of almost twenty years.

THE BIROM

The birom is a federation comprising of the birom, irigwe and ankwe etc. Attention is however paid to analysis on the birom and the Ankwelargely to avoid confusion since birom history and sociopolitical lifestyle can be generalized, to a lesser or greater extent, to the bulk of plateau peoples.

Indigenous political system, one of the major hypothesis of this study is the dependence of indigenous political system on historical and environmental experience of people. They are categorized into three namely; centralized political systems, mixed political system, non-centralized political system.

The jukunconfederacy, can be described as a theocratic confederation that is, a confederation founded on religion and the conception that the king is the representative of the gods. Jukun constitution provided for a number of check and balance; a result oriented administration, the foremost check on the Aku ever becoming autocratic was the fact that he was judged by results, provision for an over bearing prime minister, needs for harmonious relationship with the retinue of cult priests.

The federated system of the igala, one thing the igala shared with the jukun from whom their kingship has frequently been cited by student of comparative ethnography as an example of human gods which are under African monarchies.

Mixed political system of the Igbira and Idoma, whereas the jukun and igala had Indigenous systems that were centralized to greater or lesser degrees, igbira and idoma had mixed political systems. The subgroupoperated under the same ethnic are; Igbira panda-centralised, Igbiratao- non-centralized, Northern idoma- centralized, southern idoma-non-centralized.