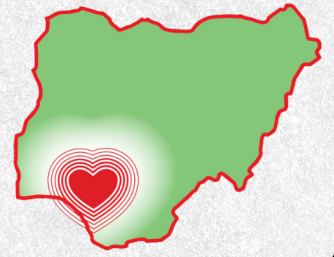


# With love, from Edo



2ND EDITION

Koyo!!<sub>[Benin]</sub> Obokhian!!<sub>[Esan]</sub> ABEE!!<sub>[Afemai]</sub> Hello!!<sub>[English]</sub>



## PUBLISHER'S SCRIPT

### IN THIS ISSUE

- History of Portuguese Slave Traders in Benin City
- The Rain Doctor- Myth or Folklore
- The Portuguese are back- Not as Slave Traders or Colonial Masters



### Our People Say...

“The goat that belongs to everybody will die of hunger.”

“Eagle wen land for ground drink water with pigeon, nor mean say the pigeon na en mate”



[An eagle that lands to drink water with a pigeon does not become the mate of the pigeon.]

### The Falling Naira is a Glass Half-Full

The news of the plunging naira in the forex market to ₦827/\$ (an all-time low) rattled investors, riled manufacturers, upset traders and jolted importers. But to those in the tourism and hospitality space, we see this as an opportunity to dig deep and take advantage of the new global wave of revenge tourism.

Revenge tourism is a term coined to explain how the pent up savings during the pandemic era is being unleashed across the globe especially in exquisite tourism destinations like The Bahamas, Seychelles and The Virgin Islands. Empirical data from the leading transit airports in the world showed a surge in passenger traffic to record levels in 2023. Heathrow airport, the leading global transit hub reported 7 million passengers in June 2023 compared to less than 2 million in the same period in 2022.

For some perspective, it is important to note that the total passenger traffic at Heathrow airport in June was more than the total number of passengers (domestic and International) recorded by all 32 Nigerian airports in 2020.



### A Volatile Currency is Good News for Tourism

A falling naira translates into more naira for the dollars that are spent by the visiting tourists. For example, if you visited Lagos or Benin City in 2019, you would have gotten ₦425 for every dollar. In July 2023, a visiting tourist will get ₦875 for every dollar even though he will buy fewer goods. In the tourism industry competitive devaluation by countries is atimes used to foster their comparative advantage. For example, recently we saw the South African Rand fall to its lowest level R19/\$. But Instead of wailing about it, the South Africans immediately pivoted and showcased Cape Town's seafood restaurants and Robben Island's prison where Mandela was held for 27 years to attract tourists. South Africa is a leading destination in Africa for international tourists and visitors.



A similar trend is playing out in Ghana where the Cedi was in a free fall (GHS11.36/\$1) but tourism has taken off. This publisher script today is emphasizing the notion that every cloud has a silver lining and that every dog will have its day in the sun. The naira will come back to its prime in the not too distant future but Edo state tourism is here to stay.

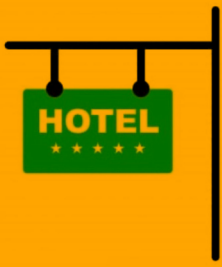
In this special edition of With Love, From Edo we feature the intricacies of alternative meteorology (rain doctors). We also feature the beautiful history of the Portuguese interaction with the Benin aristocracy as far back as 1471 (15th century).

The concept of showcasing the unique aspects of Edo culture and rich history is with a view to taking our readers “Back to the Future”. I can assure you that this special edition is as interesting as it is exhilarating. But as they say, **reading is believing.**

with love,

*Obeki*





## HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE SLAVE TRADERS IN BENIN CITY

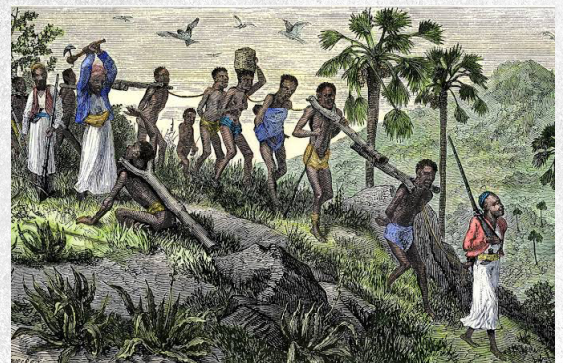
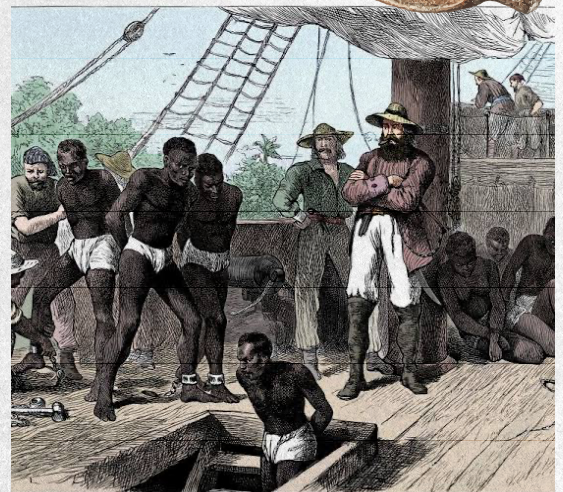
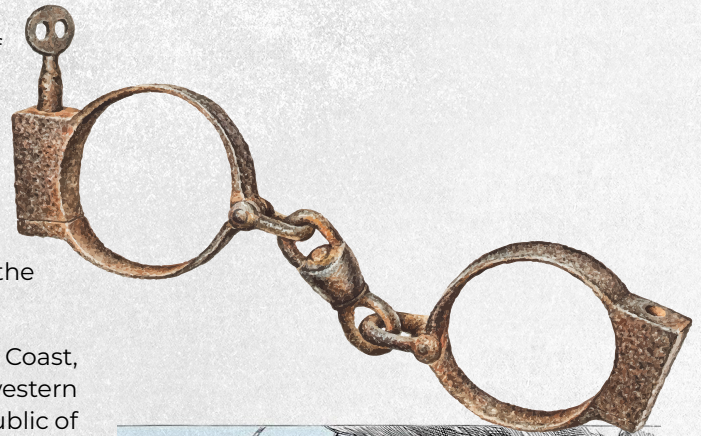
The era of the transatlantic slave trade in Edo State is a dark and tragic chapter in the history books of the State. The U.S Library of congress shows that by 1471 Portuguese ships had sailed into the Niger Delta. Their Soldiers aided Benin leaders in their wars. The Portuguese language was even spoken at the Oba's court. Gwalto the port of Benin became the depot to handle peppers, ivory and slaves in exchange for coral beads and textile imports from India. Portugal, according to the report, may have been the first European pioneer to import cowry shells, which were the currency of the far interior.

The Portuguese initially bought slaves for resale on the Gold Coast, where slaves were traded for gold. For this reason, the south western coast of Nigeria and neighbouring parts of the present –day Republic of Benin (not to be confused with the Kingdom of Benin) became known as the “Slave Coast”. When the African Coast began to supply slaves to the Americas in the last third of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese continued to look to the Bight of Benin as one of its sources of supply. By then they were concentrating activities on the Angolan coast, which supplied roughly 40 percent of all slaves shipped to the Americas throughout the duration of the transatlantic trade, but they always maintained a presence on the Nigerian coast.

The Portuguese monopoly on West African trade was broken at the end of the sixteenth century, when Portugal's influence was challenged by the rising naval power of the Netherlands. The Dutch took over Portuguese trading stations on the coast that were the source of slaves for the Americans. French and English competition later undermined the Dutch position. Although slave ports from Lagos to Calabar would see the flags of many other European Maritime countries (Including Denmark, Sweden, and Brandenburg) and the North American colonies, Britain became the dominant slaving power in the 18th century. Its ships handled two-fifths of the transatlantic traffic during the century. The Portuguese and French were responsible for another two-fifths.

As we now begin to trace our history and culture as sources of comparative advantage for tourism we will emphasize these historical milestones to preserve the role of our forefathers as points of sale of our culture across the global markets.

It is not just the Portuguese foray into Gulf of Guinea that is important. Other European Nationals like the British and the French leading on the conference of Berlin in 1884 for the partitioning of Africa needs to be flagged as noteworthy signposts in our journey to trace our history, folklore and culture.





# THE RAIN DOCTOR - MYTH OR FOLKLORE

In Edo State, there is a fascinating myth or folklore surrounding the concept of rain doctors or rain priests. Some argue that the skills employed in controlling weather are mythical while others believe that it is real.

As a student at Edokpolo Grammar School and a sprinter, I always looked forward to our inter-house sports celebration. It was usually a resplendent event, with the students clad in their sports attires in the different colours representing each house. In all, there were four houses and the competition was always fierce. The top prize for the 100 metres dash and 4/100 relay was a cash haul of 100k and 500k respectively. Whilst it was an event to look forward to, there was a little snag. The event is usually scheduled for the month of April. This also coincides with the beginning of the rainy season in the Bight of Benin. On many occasions, just after the march past, the clouds gather, followed by a storm and the anguish of the students and revered guests which includes the chiefs and leaders.

Therefore with time, we were told that the rains were called by the rain doctors who are native meteorologists. For a student population made up mainly of Christians and a few atheists, this was a no no. It was suggested that we elicit the services of a sorcerer to stop the rains.

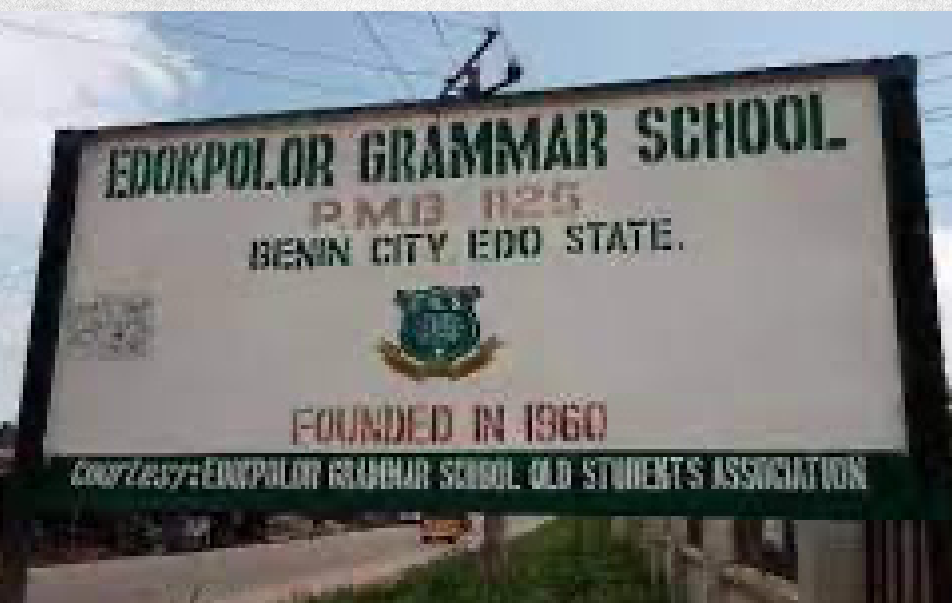
## Osagie the Sorcerer Intervenes

The students implored the school authorities to seek Osagie's assistance. After much persuasion and persistence by the students, the school authorities accepted their plea and engaged the services of Osagie. Osagie arrived at the upper Lawani Street venue of the inter-house sports event and after chanting some incantations, the sky cleared, and the sun shone brightly, casting a golden glow upon the field. The students cheered and their spirits were lifted by the remarkable turn of events.

## Could this have been magic or was it just a coincidence?

For some, it is a myth while others overtime confirmed their forefathers have testified that it is in fact very true and possible. However, if it is a proven fact that it is possible to stop the rains, then why are the big festivals held in December? Could it be because of the festive season or to avoid the rainy season altogether?

In modern times, as scientific understanding of weather patterns and meteorology have advanced, the influence and role of rain doctors may have diminished. However, their existence and the beliefs associated with them continue to be part of the cultural heritage and folklore of Edo State.





# THE PORTUGUESE ARE BACK:



## NOT AS SLAVE TRADERS OR COLONIAL MASTERS

600 years after the first voyagers and navigators came to West Africa and in particular Benin City, they are making a big comeback.

In the fifteenth century, the merchants were in search of gold and slaves along the Gulf of Guinea and the Gold Coast (Ghana). But now, they are in Nigeria to bridge a yawning infrastructure gap. Firstly, by building a deep sea port and secondly the rehabilitation of the widely used East-West, Benin-Sagamu autobahn (expressway) that serves as a major route for trade distribution. The Portuguese who had been economic laggards of the European Union have finally revived their fortunes and are emerging as new superstars in the world's largest free trade zone. In the years of hibernation, the Portuguese had been virtually absent in Africa and non-existent in the Nigerian economic picture.

Therefore, the question that jumps to mind of anyone is why the sudden resurgence of interest of the Portuguese and moreso why the Edo connection. It is not just a coincidence that the rekindled interest of Portugal in Nigeria and the resuscitation of Portugal as an economic powerhouse in Europe are happening at the same time. Portugal's GDP has grown by 22.08% to 6.69% in 2021-22. The new generation of Nigerians barely know anything about Portugal except for Cristiano Ronaldo (CR7) at Real Madrid before moving to Saudi Arabia and Bernado Silva the Manchester City ball finishing magician. They hardly link Portugal to African history and their cultural heritage. They do not know that many words in Nigerian vernacular have their origin in the Portuguese language. Words like Esete (plate), Kuyere (spoon) or Tobele (tumbler) are clear examples.

This article is an attempt to situate the relevance of the game changing effect of the ground breaking of the Edo State Deep Sea Port by the State Governor and the Portuguese company (Mota Engil Africa), the cultural links and the rich history of a people that are ever so proud of their heritage.

The regime of the offspring's of the original European slave traders to Edo State as providers of project finance is an interesting point of inflection in a country like Nigeria and Edo State which is in dire need of an economic breakthrough. It is interesting that 3 decades after the award winning block-busting series "Roots" by Alex Hailey, the Edo State tourism digest is featuring and emphasizing the importance of slave trade in attracting both diaspora and other visitors back to Africa.

The renewed interest in the history of slaves and the huge population of their descendants in the United States and the Caribbean is catching on across the globe. Many superstars like Stevie Wonder, Wesley Snipes, Oprah and others have started tracing their ancestry back to the mother continent. With the advancement in DNA technology, it is now possible to even determine the tribe of your extraction in Africa.

It is for this reason that we see the Portuguese connection in Africa as a major breakthrough.

### DID YOU KNOW??



1

The Benin Port Project has commenced with the emergence of Mota Engil Africa (a Portuguese company) as the preferred bidder

2

The Benin City Mall is now at 75% completion stage

3

Reforms in the creative sector, attract Nollywood film-makers to Benin



# ENTERTAINMENT

## QUIZ

1 Who is Burna Boy's grandfather ?  
Hint: Initials B.I.

2 What is Johnny Drille's real name ?  
Hint: Same last name with the famous actress Osas

3 What famous international footballer (the GOAT) played in the Ogbé Stadium ?  
Hint: From Brazil

Answers are in the word puzzle

## WORD PUZZLE

FROM THIS EDITION

L	U	E	S	O	R	C	E	R	E	R	O	R	R
S	E	J	I	N	O	D	I	N	O	S	N	E	B
L	S	I	U	T	O	G	H	I	S	T	O	R	Y
A	E	O	C	Y	T	I	C	N	I	N	E	B	U
V	U	O	M	E	T	E	O	R	O	L	O	G	Y
E	G	R	H	S	L	A	V	E	T	R	A	D	E
M	U	A	I	R	L	N	A	I	R	A	O	H	O
A	T	O	U	R	I	S	M	S	R	O	R	I	O
S	R	S	L	C	V	K	I	N	G	D	O	M	L
T	O	R	R	A	I	N	D	O	C	T	O	R	Y
E	P	I	R	E	L	E	P	O	V	R	C	I	A
R	L	S	I	M	P	O	R	T	E	R	S	B	D
S	E	O	O	D	C	U	R	R	E	N	C	Y	O
B	G	O	R	A	D	O	H	G	I	N	H	O	J

SLAVE MASTERS  
CURRENCY  
SORCERER  
TOURISM  
KINGDOM

HISTORY  
NAIRA  
RAIN DOCTOR  
PORTUGUESE  
BENIN CITY

SLAVE TRADE  
IMPORTERS  
METEOROLOGY

# EVENTS

**The Oto Uromi Festival (Esan)**  
**July/early August**

To appease the land of Uromi so as to produce good harvest

**The Ekaba Ekpe Festival**  
**August**

Traditional new yam festival celebrated by the people of Irrua in Edo State

**The Eho Festival**  
**Mid September**

Occasions for paying homage to ancestors in every family unit



## LINGO

Esan ⇌ English

Obulu

Thank you

🔊 📄 🔄