E-ISSN: 2997-948X
American Journal of Religious, Culture, and Archaeological Studies
https://semantjournals.org/index.php/AJRCAS

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The Antiquity of Elile Village in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (1255-2025)

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Abstract: *This study examined the antiquity of Elile village in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria between 1255-2025. Elile village is a beaconing force in the historical landscape of Obolo nation in Nigeria but not much was known about this ancient and the oldest village in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area. Using oral histories and traditions, artefacts, archaeological evidence recorded by previous researchers, archival and colonial records, interviews, field observations and published works of other researchers, the study investigated how the Elile people participated in the aged-long migration movement of the entire Obolo people from Ancient Egypt to Cameroon and later to Nigeria where they settled in their ancestral home between 855AD and 1255AD and adapted to the Atlantic trade and Christian missionary waves in the 1450s. Elile had ancient fishing and farming practices that had sustained the economy of the community from generation to generation. The original and authentic name, ILILE was firmly maintained in the traditional title of the village head of Elile to show the historical root and the antiquity of the community.The paper argued that the peaceful coexistence, gentle dispersal process and trade networks allowed the community to retain its linguistic prowess , cultural outfits, religious identity and fittingrelevancy across Nigeria. Ultimately, the findings showed that Elile village played a major role in shaping the history,tradition, culture, religion and politics of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area and had served as a melting pot and a pointer of great antiquity to the Obolo people in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria. The historical evidence on the antiquity of Elile village could serve as an archival chart and evolutional precursory for the preservation of ancestral heritageand development of cultural edifice in Africa.*

Keywords: Antiquity, Ancient Egypt, ILILE, archaeological evidence, AHADI-ILE, Izong-Elika, Eastern Obolo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

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1. Introduction

1.1. It Origin, migration and settlement

Elile is the oldest ancient Obolo village in the present Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The archaeological radio-carbon dating confirmed settled Obolo presence in coastal locations like **Elile,** Emeremen and Emen Umaan between 855AD and 1255AD. These settlements were fully established centuries before the Ibibio migrated from Arochukwu into the hinterland"[1]. Thus, Elile people had settled in their present abode at about the time of the early settlement of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta between 855AD and 1255AD. The relics and archaeological structures including the clay core (*Izong Elika*), the Mahogany, Iroko trees,

artefacts and the official traditional title of the village head of Elile "ILILE" were there to prove that Elile was an ancient village and one of the oldest in Obolo land.

Although, the archaeological radio-carbon dating of Iko, Okoroiti and other villages in Eastern Obolo could not be accessed as at the time of this historical account and review, their settlement dates were equally ancient. Interestingly, the settlement date of Elile was based on the report of Prof John H. Enemugwem (a renowned historian) in his 2008 article on Oral Data and the Reconstruction of Eastern Obolo History published in the Lagos Historical Review (Vol.8, pp.79-90). Besides, oral account placed the migration history of the Obolo people from Cameroon between 700AD-1200AD and they were the first settlers in the Eastern Niger Delta[2][3][4]. The time of the early settlement of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta was also recorded by.Going by the archaeological radio-carbon dating and settlement date of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta of Nigeria, it is correct to assert here thatElile (ILILE) was part of the Obolo ancient nuclear group and homogenous entity that migrated from Egypt through River Nile to Cameroon and to their present location in Nigeria and was part of Obolo ancient settlements of ritual testimony(etip izong me izong ge Obolo)[5].The settlement of Elile in Eastern Obolo occurred several centuries before the Portuguese ever reached what is now known today as Nigeria[6].Elile was among the Obolo people that had contact with the Portuguese along the Quo Ibeo River and early missionaries along Okwaan Obolo River in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. They were among the Obolo people of the Eastern Nigeria to trade with Manila of different sizes as the medium of exchange with the Portuguese in the late 15th century especially between the late 1470s and 1480s[7][8].The trade relics: hybrid artworks, melted trade brass, cannons, manilas, glass beads, salt cellars and brass spoonsfound in the family museums (Isi-Ebikaan) were also strong evidence of the antiquity of Elile. Besides, in ancient day before 15th century, Harry Eto and Ayi-Ekaette Idiok-Akpanfrom Elile had settled for fishing expedition in Emereoke and established a shrine (Isi-Ebikan) in Emereoke 1 (Otuako). The relics including the local canon (Etikirik, which signified conquest and encounter with the Portuguese) were there to speak about the existence of the ancient people of Elile in Emereoke before the arrival of other fishers and settlers. The shrine is presently situated near late Chief Marcus Uko's house in Emereoke 1. This could explain why 'Harry Eto' is attached to the official title of the village heads of Emereoke 1 to indicate the antiquity of Elile as the forebear of Emereoke 1in Eastern Obolo[9] **(***Extract of the proceedings and recommendations of Monday Talick Panel in Customary Court Okoroete, 1982*).

Another evidence of the antiquity of Elile was seen in the report of Dame Edna Adagogo-Brown (2022) on Queen Kampa of Opobo Kingdom in the Eastern Niger Delta: The Founder of Kampa Town 1881- 1900 published in Kashere Journal of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Vol. 4(1) that read thus: "In 1881, Queen Kampa led a military and trading expedition against the nearby Ibuno (Ibeno) people. After the expedition, she chose not to return immediately to Opobo Town. Instead, she purchased land from the **Elile people** in the Eastern Obolo territory and stayed there to establish her own town known as Kampa "[10]. According to HRH N.L.A IRARON JP"[11], Elile is a deity as well as an ancient Obolo Town of ritual testimony. Additionally, the account of Odimi, 2019 confirmed Elile as part of the Obolo 21 ancient settlements of ritual testimony (Etip Izon ge me Izon ge Obolo). These historical evidences also pointed to the antiquity of Elile.

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative historical research approach to examine the antiquity, historical development, cultural identity and continuity of Elile Village in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study relied on multiple sources of historical evidence in order to reconstruct the history of the community and examine its place within the wider history of the Obolo people. The major sources included oral histories and traditions, interviews, archaeological evidence, artefacts and relics, archival and colonial records, field observations, and

published works of other researchers.

Oral historical evidence constituted an important source of information for the study. Oral accounts were obtained from community elders, traditional authorities and persons with knowledge of the history, traditions and institutions of Elile and neighbouring Obolo communities. These accounts provided information concerning migration, settlement, ancestral relationships, traditional institutions, kingship, religious practices, cultural festivals, fishing settlements and the historical dispersal of Elile people. Oral testimonies were considered alongside documentary and material evidence in order to establish historical connections and continuity.

The study also examined archaeological and material evidence associated with Elile. Particular attention was given to archaeological structures, the clay core known as Izong Elika, artefacts, relics, traditional objects and other material remains identified in the historical account. The reported radio-carbon dating of Obolo settlements between 855 AD and 1255 AD was used as an important chronological reference in discussing the antiquity of Elile. The study further examined traditional titles, shrines, family museums and other surviving cultural materials as evidence of historical continuity.

2.1 The Original Nomenclature, Etymology and Royal Heritage of ILILE

Historically, the name Elile is a phonetic corruption of the original and authentic name, ILILE, which translates to "old and big." This descriptive meaning powerfully reflects the antiquity of the village and the profound historical footprint left by the ILILE people as one of the earliest inhabitants of the Eastern Niger Delta region. The traditional title borne by the village head—Ilile—directly mirrors this ancient meaning, providing undeniable proof that Elile is a community of immense antiquity and stands proudly among the oldest settlements in the entire Obolo nation.

This prestigious traditional stool and title currently occupied by HRM Uboon Harry John Etetor, who reigns as Ilile IX of Elile continue to hold high authority and antiquity. This foundational identity was permanently preserved and officially reflected in the traditional title of the village head—that is also the current clan head of the Okoroete Clan and the Paramount Ruler of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area—officially designated as **ILILE IX**. The royal title ILILE **IX** served as a living institutional link to the community's ancient origin, affirming that while the name had evolved in common usage to Elile, the traditional stool firmly maintained its historical root as ILILE.This finding was of great historical significance because the continuity of this royal title bridged centuries of history and served as a living testament to the ancient root, cultural sovereignty, and enduring legacy of the ILILE people in the Eastern Niger Delta of Nigeria.

2.2 Location of Elile in Eastern Obolo LGA

Elile is an indigenous riverine community located in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, with the **postal code 534206.**It is a settlement linked through regional infrastructure projects like the Okoroete-Elile-Amadaka-Kampa road network. Elile is bounded on the northeast by Ikot Inyang Okop in Mkpat Enin LGA, on the east by Okoroete, on the south west by Otunene, and on the west by Amadaka.

The traditional and ancient boundary separating **Elile** and **Amadaka** is fundamentally anchored by the riverside landmark historically known as **Agan Njim Iriin** (Elile ancient fresh fish settlement). This vital geographical feature is widely recognized and referred to as **Utiak Creek**, serving as a natural demarcation line. Utiak Creek distinctly divides the territory of Amadaka from Elile. The land boundary is delineated by several live stikes planted continuously—beginning from Isi-ama Oron, extending through Ibot Ekpat and past the Samuel Spiritual Church in Elile, and terminating directly at Utiak Creek.

This traditional boundary was formally reaffirmed and sealed years ago through a mutual agreement between both villages. The process brought together village elders and clerics from both Elile and Amadaka, driven by the leadership and facilitation of Hon. Samuel Samuel Nteogwuijah during his tenure as the Councillor representing Ward 3 (Elile and Amadaka) in the Eastern Obolo

Local Government Council in 2009[12]. The ancestors and the living legends from both villages had celebrated Hon Samuel for his unifying life-force and feat.

Elile people had lived in Utiak several centuries ago and established fresh fish settlement (Agan Njim Iriin) and started a Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion (formerly Niger Delta Diocese, now defunct).For centuries, Elile people had been farming on the Utiak land.

Also, there is an ancient river that divides Ikot Inyang Okop in Mkpat Enin LGA and Elile in Eastern Obolo LGA. There is also a stream at Emem Aka that divides Elile and Okoroete along Okoroete-Elile road. The road that links Elile with immediate villages is called Okoroete-Elile-Amadaka-Kampa road[13]. Over the years, the fertile land of Elile had yielded stable harvests of annual and perennial crops as well as economic trees that had drawn traders and merchants constantly to the village.

2.3 Elile Ancient and modern Settlements

Elile village did not originate or migrate from any other village in Obolo land but was part of the original ancient Obolo settlements that migrated from ancient Egypt to Cameroun and to Nigeria and settled between Quo Iboe and Imo River estuaries in Akwa Ibom Gulf line on the Gulf of Guinea[14].For purpose of clarity, Elile people were foundersof Ibot- Obolo, Isi-Ndon, Otuako, Utiat (Agan-Njim Iriin), Ama-ama, Otuawa and Emen-Ntia between Quo Iboe and Imo River estuaries in Akwa Ibom Gulf line along the Gulf of Guinea. The Elile people are still there in Ibot-Obolo (now Opulom) and Okoroutip and they speak Elile dialect though they are currently in Ibeno LGA of Akwa Ibom State. Like George Murdock once said that in the absence of historical confirmation, linguistic evidence is enough to establish an ancestral lineage between people of the same stock[15]. Besides, Agan Njim Iriin (Elile ancient fresh fish settlement) located at Utiat is Elile settlement. Other Elile ancient and modern settlements include: Ntutun Aboh, Okorosiki, Isibok, Egep-ile, Ego Nkrika, Inyong Oron, Okoro Okprukpu, Ubomichip, Okoro Okpong, Ibot Ekpat, Isi-amaoron, Izon Mbaban (Samuel Spiritual Ground). The community is further delineated into:Garden, Havillah (where there is gold) and London. Ebon Efiat (the point of the bitter kola tree) is also Elile ancient settlement that harbours the Elile ancient synagogue of '**Nkwukwu Akasuk'** shrine. The priesthood lineage and the relics are still there to speak.

2.4 Elile as mother town and point of ancient dispersal

Elile was the point of dispersal for other ancient villages in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. Oral history pointed out that sub-group of Ibioete in Ikpa Ibom, Okorobilom in Amazaba of Eastern Obolo were from Elile. Also,sub-group of Egile and Ekede Emayork in Andoni migrated from the ancient village of Elile and the similarities in their cultural festivals and rituals are strong evidence. For instance, Obolo oral historiography by HRM Uboon (Rt Hon, Elder) Harry John Etetor, Ilile IX, village head of Elile and Paramount Ruler of Eastern Obolo LGA; aged 85[16], confirmed that Elile was the point of dispersal for the people of Ibot–Obolo (Ibeno), Okorobilom in Amazaba, (Eastern Obolo) and this evidence is reflected in their dialects. The Elile – Ibot Obolo – Okorobilom ancestral connects and linguistic synopses werealso established in line with the assertion of George Murdock who held the view that "in the absence of written records, linguistic relationships provide by far the dependable evidence of historical emergence and connections. This means that Elile-Ibot- Obolo–Okorobilomdialect is an inseparable connection among the descent people from Elile and when this linguistic cord between the descent people from Elile is struck, the unquenchable lineage and dependable linguistic contiguity in a distinct people of Elile is made conspicuous, inseparable and annexable.

For emphases, the oral history of Elile pointed out that part of Odok-ire sub-group of Ibioete (Ikpa Ibom, Mkpat Enin), Egile, and Ekede Oke-Ama (Andoni) are from Elile and the similarities in their celebration of Elile Day or cultural festivals (Nzokpo) and rituals are strong evidence of their ancestral originality and connectivity[17]. This could explain that Elile tradition is inborn and can be displayed by the descent people from Elile wherever they find themselves. Also, Elile cultural festivals are classic and clarified during cultural displays and where there are cultural similarities

with the Elile people, history can be conspicuously connected and origin can be permanently traced and retrained. So, when culture and tradition are not connected between ancient and modern people, a missing link can be created in history.

2.5 Language and Linguistic relationship

In Obolo east and west, there are six major dialects in the Obolo language, namely: Ataba, Unyeada, Ngo, Okoroete, Iko and Elile/Ibot Obolo. Elile is the only village in Eastern Obolo LGA that has a distinct dialect of the Obolo language[18]. The lexicon statistics of the original Obolo language revealed that most of the words used in the Obolo Bible originate from Elile: eg *Ikup* (Amen), *Okumegwum* (the living God), *Ilip* (oak tree), *Ogbouuruk* (fountain or spring), *Ibot-Ejit* (soul), *Ibot-mgbolo* (hail stone), *Nkorok* (cave), *Akpabin inyong* (firmament), *Mkpata* (bier) etc.A remarkable linguistic feature of the Elile (Ilile) dialect is its status as the sole Obolo variant that incorporates the letter "V," thereby encompassing the complete set of letters found in the English alphabet. This phonetic distinction is actively preserved in native terminology, most notably demonstrated in the word "Viat," which translates to "spoil" or "destroy." For emphasis, Elile dialect has great similitude with the Ibot Obolo dialect in Ibeno and Okorobilum dialect in Amazaba, Eastern Obolo and there is inseparable linguisticconnection among the descent people from Elile.

2.6 Yok-Obolo festivity and the link to the mother-town of Elile

On the image, powers and functions of *Yok-Obolo* (Obolo national deity), Ejituwu (1991:6) wrote thus:" *Yok-Obolo* was the spirit or soul of Obolo, the founder of the nation; and as such he was regarded as the most senior of all the ancestors. However, oral tradition said that no sacrifice or ritual can be done to the (*Yok-Obolo*) ancestors in ALABIE (Agwut Obolo) in Obolo land before the colonial era and formal European contact with the Obolo people without an official visit of the *Yok-Obolo* high priest (Oban-Yok) companied by the elders of the shrine and representatives of the Obolo National Council (ORU) to the ancient city of Elile in the Eastern Obolo. According to two undisputed witnesses: Chief Owen Iduk of Okoroete, who died at the aged 83 in 2024[19] and HRM Uboon (Rt Hon, Elder) Harry John Etetor, Ilile IX, village of Elile and Paramount Ruler of Eastern Obolo LGA; aged 85, emissaries from the *Yok-Obolo* shrine were always sent to arrive an ancient Obolo Town of Elile at night to fetch an important sacrificial item from the AHADI-ILE shrine in Elile prior to the annual *Yok-Obolo* festivity. From these accounts, the *Yok-Obolo* High Priest by inspiration madeincantation during the annual sacrifice using the unique Elile dialect. The significance of these ancient spiritual mission and assignment were: (i) that Elile is ancient and the AHADI-ILE was regarded as one of the senior ancestors in Obolo land (ii) that the image of the founding fathers or ancestors of Elile must be invoked to assure dignity, longevity and prosperity of Obolo land during the festivity of *Yok-Obolo* (iii) that the ancient clay-core (*Izong-Elika*) was part of the ritual items needed for the ritual ceremony to *Yok-Obolo* and that this spiritual element must be placed before the Yok-Obolo shrine else the most senior ancestor in Obolo land will NOT accept the sacrifice. These testimonies confirmed the antiquity and significance of Elile not only in Eastern Obolo but also in the entire Obolo nation. As earlier stated, HRH N.L.A IRARON JP, confirmed that Elile is a deity as well as an ancient Obolo mother town of ritual testimony[20]. These testimonies confirmed the antiquity and significance of Elile not only in Eastern Obolo but also in the entire Obolo land.

2.7 History of Churches in Elile (1913-2026)

Quite a number of Elile people believe in the existence and reality of God Almighty (the creator of heaven and earth) although few still believe in the traditional deity. Thus, the advent of Christianity was seen as a threat to the traditional position and devotees of *Yok-Obolo*, Ofiokpo and AHADI-ILE yet several churches had been established in Elile from 1913 to 2026. The first church in Elile wasNiger Delta Diocese (NDD) though defunct. NDD started atAgan njim irien (Utiak), Elile in December, 1913 with Theophilus Idiokakpan Etetor (Dede Igoni), Daniel Uroaka as founding fathers while Rev. Timothy Jaja of blessed memory was the foundation pastor.

The Evangelical Christian Church (ECC), Elile was founded in 1930 at Ibot Ekpat, Elile by Bishop Sai Daperi with Christian Uroaka and family as foundation members. In 1945, the Evangelical

Christian Church (ECC), Elile at Ibot Ekpat metamorphosed into African Church of Nigeria (defunct) with Joshua Uroaka, Dandison Uroizong of blessed memoryas founding fathers[21][22].

The Lutheran Church of Nigeria Elile was started at Inyong Oron in 1949 by Dee Randolf Uroizong, Hezikiah Uti Uroizong and Dandison Uroizong and Dee Ishmael (Ukpatu) Ikwutene as the first Church Agent which his son Elder Eitigwun Ukpatu took over from him. Elder Eitigwun Ukpatu served voluntarily as church agent and lay preacher for 38 years (1957-1995) when he officially left the Lutheran Church of Nigeria for Greater Evangelism World Crusade (GEWC), Elile[23].Papa Manfred Gwunireama Ukombo was the first indigenous teacher and head of the defunct Lutheran Primary School, Elile.The Samuel Spiritual Church Elile came later in 1956 through Festus Aquan. Mr Solomon Akara Ukwakeyen brought the St. Andrew's Christ Army Church Elile in 1964. The Apostolic Church, Elile was planted onthe15th July, 1989 by Pastor Festus Walter Isaac who was the Church Caretaker with Sunday Akpan (Alias Sunday Annang), Deaconess Esther Sampson, Deaconess Mercy Thomas, Elder Ogoronte Ibiweri (Obonna), Elder Emmanuel Ephraim Ukpatu, Late Elder Phillip Aquan's family and others as foundation members. Greater Evangelism World Crusade Church (the mother church in Akwa Ibom State) was founded in Elder Etitigwun Ukpatu's house in 1995. The foundation members included: Elder Clarine Ukpatu, John Ukpatu, Charles Urang, Mrs Eunice Evans John, late sister Mbozo Evans John, Awajima Etitigwun Ukpatu and Ugbana Etitigwun Ukpatu. Foundation pastors were: Elder Paul Reuben, Late Pastor Awajichere Festus and Pastor Israel Urang. The Qua Iboe Church Elile was founded in 1992 (now changed to United Evangelical Church) by Rev. Augustus Ukanukomoh with Sunday Christian Uroaka and family and Friday Christian and Bassey Evans John as foundation members. The Assemblies of God Church Elile was established on Sunday 5th July 2020 with three members Bro Phillip Slyvanus Aquan, Caroline Austin and Enemitop Anthony Ukpatu. Other new churches in Elile included: The Redeemed ChristianChurch of God, Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel) and Deeper life Bible Church[24].This narrative on the development of churches and Christian faith in Elile would never be complete without the mention of the contributions of Smith Ukie and Hezekiah Unenene to the modern day Christianity which had paved the way for the establishment ofsome of these churches in Elile.

2.8 Elile identity tablets

Family Structure and Descent

From time immemorial, traditionally and originally, Elile village in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area has three families, namely: - (i) Etetor's Royal family (ii) Okorosiki family and (iii) Isibok family. These three (3) families had been in existence from time immemorial i.e. from the inception of Elile. (Records in the High Court of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, dated 3/11/2011).Presently, the three families are ruled by their family heads namely: HRM Harry John Etetor (Ilile IX) of Etetor's Royal family, Chief Isotuk Ephraim Ukpatu of Okorosiki family and Chief Charles N. Ikanetip of Isibok family.Governance structure of Elile included: Council of Chiefs, headed by the Village Head, Elders, Village Council, Youth and Women. In Elile, the family descent is patrimonial. 'When the father died, the first son inherits his property and assumes the fatherly role in the family. He takes care of everyone and everything in the family even the marriage rite of a father will be inherited by him. However, the chieftaincy succession could shift from the first born depending on prevailing circumstances in the family. Most times, the first son is by nature expected to take charge of the family while inheritance are shared amongst the children of the deceased. This is dependent on the family.

Age Grade System in Elile

Age grade system (Otuogbo) had long been in existence in Nigeria and in Africa, and had been recognized and used by Elile ancient leaders to champion social, cultural, political, infrastructural and economic development of local communities, families and units. Age grades are strongest social apparatus among communities and one of the prominent socio-cultural mechanisms for peace and enforcement of social justice.

Traditional symbols

Although Christianity had wiped away some of the Elile ancient identities and symbols, one can still find these traditional tablets in Elile: symbols of Isi-izong (ancient altar), Iwang-Egbe (Obolo ancient symbolic shrub), ISI-EBIKANN (god of the compound or Obolo ancestral images used in venerating their ancestors), relics of *Ofiokpo* (Obolo ancient festival), artefacts and family museums. Other core traditional labels of the people include: accent, songs and dancing style, marriage items/rites, age group system (Otu-Ogbo), dressing culture, fishing culture and festivals, Obolo cuisine and the Obolo objects which were developed, preserved and celebrated from ancient were found in Elile.

Ancient shrines and Deities

The central deity in Elile before the advent of Christianity **Abhadi-ile** (central god of the land) existed as the central deity of the community until late 1980s when Christianity had taken firm root in the community. However, Elile had established Isi- Nchicha and Isi-amarungshrinesat the ancient Elile settlement called "Ikpoon". The temples of these shrines and the priesthood lineage are still alive. As already stated, there was an ancient synagogue of 'Isi- **Nkwukwu** Akasuk shrine in Elile (located at Ebon Efiat Elile)'. The priesthood lineage in Elile and the relics are still there to speak. The Elile people believed in so many divinities (Isi-Awaji or Isi-Izong). Among the lesser divinities or deities found in the village were: (a) The *Yok Obolo* otherwise regarded as the greatest deity of Obolo land (b) *Oke-* divinity in charge of ocean and other water bodies (c)*Uga-Awaji-* the goddess mother in charge of child deliver (d) *Eweitaraba-* the god of war (e)Izong ama- the god of the land (f)*Isi-Ebikan-* Image of the ancestors, they believed was their protector and close helper. The priest in charge of these deities was called 'the Oban-Yok'. Until the advent of Christianity; these deities were revered in Elile village. The people believed these deities help to protect them and likewise giving those aids in fishing expedition (g) Elileartefacts include: wood sculptures "*Atakriko and Okpot"* to mention but a few. The wood sculptures also served as musical instruments for worship of the Almighty God. The Supreme Being (God) was designated in Elile as "Abhadi or Okanene" which is the supreme deity of Christian religion while the "Ebikan" was designated as the deity of the traditional religion. The traditional religion was still being practiced in Elile but sizable number had been converted to Christianity.

Political participation and Academic Performance

Elile had produced outstanding political figures and chairmen of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area, namely: (a) Chief Evans John Etetor, Obolo County Council (1960), President of the Customary Court, Okoroete (1973) and member of the Ikot Abasi Local Government Council Caretaker Committee, where he served as Supervisory Councillor of Agriculture in 1983, (b) Hon Chief Harry John Etetor, first executive chairman of Eastern Obolo Eastern Obolo Local Government Area (1997-1998) caretaker chairman (2002-2003), Elder Rowland Aquan, Supervisory Councillor of Works (1997-1998) and Hon Pastor John Ukpatu, caretaker chairman of Eastern Obolo Eastern Obolo Local Government Area (2003-2004) as well as numerous Councillors , Supervisorsand Personal Assistants to the Governor of Akwa Ibom State namely: Hon Solomon Kingston Nte, Hon. Ephriam Ukpatu, Mr. Philip Rowland Aquan, Mrs Christian Awajima, Mr Migbana John, Elder Ineme Appolus, Mr Micah Nteile among other appointees of government[25]. Elile had produced a former member of the Cross River State House of Assembly (1983) in the person of Hon Chief Harry John Etetor and a serving member of Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly (2023-2027) in the person of Hon (Mrs) Selinah Isotuk Ukpatu, chairman House Committee on Women Affairs (who hopefully was nominated to continue as the house member till 2030).

In the academic world, Elile had produced many Professors, Associate Professors,Senior Lectures in different universities across the globe including many PhD holders, Master's degree holders and more than eighty (80) graduates of different fields and disciplines, not counting the numerous undergraduate students from Elile in different universities across the globe. Elile is big in size and also big in content.

Cultural outfit

The Elile culture outfit include: (a) Ofiokpo (Ancient Government in Elile),(b) Bonsweare – Foreign (borrowed from Yoruba) (c) Nbakat – Indigenous (d)Ikodikpa – Women culture (e) Udoo – Women culture (f) Owuogbo (Foreign, borrowed from Opobo Town, Ibani kingdom) (g) Nwaotam/Uke – borrowed from Opobo Town (h)Otuiko (Women culture) (i) Ikwut – borrowed from Oron (j) Uzi-Izong (k) Ntam (l) Nbuku, (m)Atan-Egbe (n) Ngala (o) Ekang (p) Nzokpo (q) Out Emen Ugong (r) Iko-otu- women culture and a part of marriage rites.

2.9 Elile Kingship list

The Elile kingship list were: (i) Chief Eneyork Usen Ebge, Ilile I (ii) Chief Etetor Usen Egbe, Ilile II (iii) Chief UkwakeyenEtetor , Ilile III (iv) Chief Idioakpan Etetor, Ilile IV (v) Chief Uroaka Ukombo, Ilile V (vi) Chief Obidiah Uraoka Ukombo , Ilile VI (vii) Chief Willison Eshiet Ukombo, Ilile VII (vii) Chief Peter Aquan, Ilile VIII (ix) HRM Harry John Etetor, Ilile IX. The village head, Okaan- ama ruled for life-time and after his demise and burial, then another Village Head was nominated or elected by the royal family, Etetor's Royal House and presented to the Family Heads and elders of the village for confirmation and acceptance. The kings were designated to be 'the Okaan-ama' village head of Elile with the title ILILE. The present village head of Elile is His Royal Majesty, Uboon, Rt Hon, Elder Harry John Etetor, ILILE IX who is also the clan Head of Okoroete Clan and doubles as the Paramount Ruler of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Absolute dating of Elile kingship

To assess the relative chronology from a detailed analysis and synthesis of the kingship list and periodization of rulership in Elile, it was important to establish the reliability of the kingship sequence in Elile using relevant events of the past. Such events include: Pre-colonial history (period of early migration and settlement of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta) , Colonial history ((Period of the slave trade, Atlantic trade, Era of Lord Lurgard and establishment of Yok-Obolo at Egwede and movement of Yok-Obolo from Egwede to Agwut Obolo and post-colonial history and past events in Eastern Obolo, Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria. According to E. J. Alagoa, 1976,[26] "When the reliability of the relative chronology has been determined, absolute dates could then be attached to specific actor, institutions and other events on the relative chronology to establish the absolute dating of oral tradition[27]. Absolute dating of oral tradition relied on linking remembered historical or cultural narratives to externally verifiable, calendar-based chronological markers.

Table 1. Absolute dating of Elile Kingship List and calendar-based chronological markers

S/N	NAME	PERIOD OF REIGNS	PROMINENT EVENTS DURING THEIR REIGNS	CONTEMPORARIES
**	**Unknown Kings	855 AD - 1200AD	The period of early entering of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta but the names of Obolo King and Elile (ILILE)King and Leaders who ruled in this period of early settlement were lost in antiquity.	**Unknown (the ancestral oral traditions and the primitive reigns of Elile (Ilile) ancestors in the Eastern Niger Deltawere not kept
1	Chief Eneyork Usen Egbe (ILILE I)	1201-1400 13th to 14th century	Chief Eneyork UsenEgbe (Ilile I) ruled Elile during the period of Ijo ancestral ORU (The Kumoni-Oru Era of about 700AD-1200AD) and the early settlement of the Elile people in Eastern Obolo between (855AD-1255AD)[1] before the Ibibio migrated from Arochukwu into the hinterland. Interregnum gap of reign between Chief Eneyork Usen Egbe (ILILE	King Oranmiyan of Ile-Ife KINGDOM,1190AD, Henry III (1216-1272)King Gbaraun I, who ascended the throne in 1372,

			I) and Chief Etetor Usen Egbe (ILILE II) was 50 years about three (2) generations ie 25 years per generation	
2	Chief Etetor Usen Egbe (ILILE II)	1401-1500 15th century	The year 1500AD was 526 years ago and marked the final year of the 15th century. Chief Etetor Usen Egbe (Ilile II) ruled during this period of early contacts with Portuguese during the Atlantic trade in 1472	Oba Ewuare of Benin, 1440AD
3	Chief Ukwakeyen Etetor (ILILE III)	1501-1600 16th century	Chief Ukwakeyen Etetor (Ilile III) ruled during the period of the establishment of Yok-Obolo at Egwede (Ejituwu, 1991:21).	Chief Unyatobo, son of Alama, 1605 (Source: Ejituwu, 1991:21).
4	Chief Idiok-Akpan Ukwakeyen Etetor (ILILE IV)	1601-1700 17th century	Chief Idiokapan Ukwakeyen Etetor (Ilile IV) ruled during the period of early contacts with European traders during the Atlantic trade .The period of expansion of Oyo Empire in Nigeria, the death of Oba Ehengbudu of Benin, the reign and political reforms of King Nna Biget, period of the visit of the French explorer, John Barbot to Dony Town, 1699 Period of the establishment of Coastal ports like Bonny, Old and New Calabar,	King Ogbolikana of old Asarama, King Nna Biget, John Barbot of France
5	Chief Uroaka Ukombo (ILILE V), d. 1897 [21]	1701-1890 18th century	Chief Uroaka Ukombo (Ilile V) ruled during the period of the joint establishment of the Wesleyan Church by Elile and Amadaka, 1843, Period of Andoni-Bonny Treaty, 1846, the period of a prolonged war with the Kingdom of Ibani (Bonny Civil War) over the control of hinterlands trade, 1869 and the period of Ibeno-Jaja War of 1881 and Oil Rivers Protectorate, 1885 up to the period of the birth of Lord Frederick Lugard in 1858	King Otuo Ogbolakan, Okaan - Obolo II and Okaan Ama Unyeada Kingdom (1770-1849). King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891)
6	Chief Obediah Uroaka Ukombo (ILILE VI), d. 1946 after the death of Lord Frederick Lugard in April 11, 1945 (25yrs)	1891-1950 19th century	Chief Obediah Uroaka Ukombo (ILILE VI), ruled during the period of invasion of the York Obolo shrine at Agwut-Obolo in 1904 to the period of the establishment of the Federation of Nigeria and the Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 to the time of the Native Court, 1931 and the Era of the Obolo County Council during the 1950s	Chief John T. Ikuru of Ikuru Town) (d. 1947 Herbert Macauley who died on May7, 1946; King S.P.U Ogan (Ado VIII, d. 1946 NB: Dee Ishmael Ikwutene of Okorosiki had led the village in the absence of the village head before Chief Wilson Eshiet Ukombo (ILILE VII) was crowned as substantial village head
7	Chief Wilson Eshiet Ukombo (ILILE VII) (ruled for 4yrs) before the death of	1951-1970 20th century	Chief Wilson Eshiet Ukombo (Ilile VII), ruled during the NCNC era of 1959 and Nigeria Independence, 1960 to the period	Bar Dapa Pepple, Warimie Jaja of Opobo. NB: After the death of Chief Wilson Eshiet Ukombo (Ilile

	the internationally celebrated world middleweight boxing champion, **Dick Tiger**		of Nigeria Civil War and the invasion of Okoroete Town in Eastern Obolo on 31st March, 1968	VII), Dee Daniel Uroaka took charge of the village. Upon the death of Daniel, Chief Evans John Etetor took care until Chief Peter Aquan was crowned in 1974
8	Chief Peter Aquan (Ilile VIII), Inaugurated 1974; (ruled for 20 yrs) d.1994 before Ken Saro-Wiwa who was executed by hanging on November 10, 1995	1971-2000 20th century	Chief Peter Aquan (Ilile VIII) ruled after the time of the Biafra rebels surrendered to Nigerian Army to the period of the reign of General Sani Abacha as Head of State and Commander -in- Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (November 17,1993), Chief Aquan died before the creation of Eastern Obolo LGA in December 4, 1996	*Chief Marcus Uko of Emereoke I, d. 1993 *Chief Festus Eze Pepple of Kampa * HRH Lot Ayuwu Iraron (Edeobolo I) 1911-1996 NB: Chief Ijah Frank Ikanetip (aka Idiagbo) of Isibok had led the village in the absence of the crowned village head before HRM Harry John Etetor (Ilile IX) of Elile, was officially inaugurated as village head in January, 2014.
9	HRM Harry John Etetor (Ilile IX) of Elile, Inaugurated as Village Head in January, 2014; Clan Head (February, 2016) and Paramount Ruler of Eastern Obolo LGA (February, 2017-Date). Ruled as King of Elile from January, 2014 to date	2001- Date 21st century	HRM Uboon Harry John Etetor (Ilile IX) of Elile ruled during the: -Period of the concert featuring of 25,275 coral singers at Christmas Corals Festival at Akwa Ibom Stadium, Uyo (December 13, 2014) -Period of taking over of OML 13 by Sterling Global Petrochemical company, 2016 - Period of obnoxious remapping of Obolo Land in Akwa Ibom State by Governor Udom Emmanuel, 2022 - Period of emergence of Senator Godswill Akpabio as Nigerian Senate President, 2023 to date	HRM Owen Ukafia d. 2014, HRM Ahta (Hon) Edet Okon Isemin, (Ahta Oro, VII) and former Paramount Ruler of Mbo LGA, died on April18, 2021

** Unknown: period of early settlement of the Obolo people which Elile (Ilile) was prominent

2.10 Landholding in Elile

The landholding regulations in Elile had been practiced by the community from time immemorial and it stipulated thus:

2.10.1 Communal landholding

2.10.1.1 The landholding in Elile Community in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State is a communal landholding;

2.10.1.2 Upon payment of a token, indigenes (particularly males) are allotted parcel(s) of land for development and this act had been practiced and handed down to the community by forbearers.

2.10.2 Allotment and revocation of land title(s)

1. Persons whose parcels of land allotment titles are above 3 years are given specific period to develop such parcel of land or face revocation of their allotment titles.

2.10.3 Encroachment on allotted parcel of land

2. No person is entitled to claim or encroach on parcel of land already allotted to another person except such allotment title has been revoked by the community and such parcel of land is allotted

by the community to that person.

2.10.4 Transfer of Title

3. i. Where a person has been allotted a parcel of land by the community, title of such allotment shall be transmitted to the children of such person on grounds that:

ii. The title to such allotted parcel of land is/has been developed.

iii. Where a person has been allotted a parcel of land by the community and he dies without developing such land the children of such person(s) are entitled to develop such parcel of land allotted within three (3) years or face revocation of their allotment title.

iii. The children referred to in paragraph (iii) above are the biological/adopted children of such an allottee.

iv. Where such allottee has no biological/adopted children to develop such undeveloped parcel of land, such parcel of land shall revolve back to the community.

(D) Allotment of Extra plot

Any person(s) who has need for an extra plot or parcel of land must show evidence of the development of the plot of land already allotted to him by the community within the space of two (2) years

(i) If the community deem it fit to allocate extra plot to such person, he shall made a certain payment to the community for the extra plot and such money paid on the extra plot shall be receipted for by the community. The extra money paid on extra plot is subject to review based on negotiation and the prevailing economic situation in Nigeria.

(ii) The extra plot(s) receipted for by the community is irrevocable but revocable on conditions stated above

(ii) Claim of farmland(s)

Where a person cultivates on a parcel of land not allotted to him/her by the community, he/she shall not claim title to such land. When the parcel of land is allotted to another person to build house(s) or taken by the village for the purpose of communal development, the person or persons who were cultivating on the said shall cease to operate on such parcel of land and shall not claim such land.

(iii) Enforcement of Regulation(s)

When an allottee fails to develop an allotted parcel of land within the stipulated period and where undeveloped parcels of land have been illegally transferred to successors, the community takes reasonable steps to reclaim such allotted parcel of land. However, there are traditionally held family lands whose inhabitants are mainly members of such families.

2.11 Elile Ancient fishing practices

In the primitive era, Elile people crossed rivers and creeks for fishing by means of rafts made from logs of cock wood (*Musanga cercropicides*) locally called '*Uzi-Uno'* which was modified to (*Uzi-Ofiik),* small-hand paddled canoe and a small local house canoe used mainly for 'hooks and lines' fishing business locally called (*Uzi-Ukook*) which had the shape of a pickup van but with less capacity than the local fishing house boat (*Uzi-Ofo*) which was a large local fishing boat used for enduring fishing voyage in the pre-colonial days or large house-boat for long distance fishing expeditions and transportation of fishers, crew and fishing equipment to new fishing settlement and to the permanent fishing grounds. These ancient canoes were used for mangrove swamp fishery done in swamps and on mudflats with the aid of crude fishing instruments that supplied the needed oyster (*Evie)* and periwinkle (*Ntutut*) to the people and the brackish/estuary fishery done primarily in rivers and creeks in Elile. Dominate species caught with these crude craft and gears were: *Tympanotonus fuscatus* (periwinkle, *Ntutut*), *Periopthalmus barbarus* (mudskippers, *Ala*) and *Crassostrea tricolorata (*Thais, *Igbut), Tilapia zilli (*tilapia, *Ikop), Nematopalaemon hastatus (*crayfish, *Ikot), Penaeus spp (*shrimp, *Ikem), Crassostrea virginica (*oyster, *Evie),* and *Callinectes spp* (swimming crabs,

Uka)[28,29]. Besides, Elile also participated in multi species fishery in the sea. As modernization sets in, the local house canoes were modified into giant wooden canoe (*Uzi-Agalaga* or *Uzi-Ngelenge*), non-motorized canoe (*Uzi-lek-Okwaan*) and motorized canoe (*Uzi-Ebizi*) modeled in the form of Nembe boat and Ghana boat and propelled with a horse power (HP).

Fishing materials and methods of the Elile people included: channel trap (*Oket*), wooden screen (*Enwen*), V shape fish fence (*Edek*), wooden enclosure (*Oloro* or *Olot* or *Edek-Ete*), fishing pole (*Uti-onyima*), fishing float *(Adunu):* paddle (*Urang*), spear (*Otunwa* or *Arang*), knife (*Oge*), anchor (*Ilima*), head rope (*Igboo*), basket (*Okwun*), fishing trap (*Ekoon, Nkata*), *Nfufan* (sedative leave that attracts tilapia and mudskippers), nets of different types (*Nzin*) fabricated into several forms-traditional beam trawl (*Uduut* or draw-to-me)[28], hand or scoop net (*Ukpuuk*), cast or throw net (*Nzin Utop*) and several types of gill nets- *akara, seniseni* or *nzin okpongbo*, bonga fish net), *soconobi* (*nzin okot*), *nzin ngigan*, *kpooi* (*nzin anah),sanyan, toroteme* based on target species. The fishing techniques used in Elile included: hand-gathering, flounder tramping, noodling, spearfishing, trapping, angling and netting. Canoe and net were the most critical items of the artisanal fisheries of Elile. Several creeks and creeklets and fishing grounds (OKOLO-IKAN) in Elile where fishing expeditions were carried out included: *Emen Edek Ikan, Otu-ita, Edidim, Ntitibi, Emem-ntia, Inyong-Iyion-Ile, Inyong-Iyion-Iza, Emen Utiat, Inyong Akasuk, Agan Asuk Okoro-okpurupku, Asuk-Okorosiki, Asuk-Isibok, Asuk- Okorokpong, Asuk-mission and Asuk-Nfeek.*

Elile people also involved in fisheries related activities and production of fishing accessories such as: weaving of thatch (*Aga*), fishing mat (*Enwen*), basket (*Okwun*), racket (*Akasi*), fish trap (*Nkoto*). Construction and fabrication of nets, hooks, local fishing ropes/poles, floaters, fuel wood collection, and fish processing and marketing were prominent with the female fisher-forks.

The traditional fishing methods practiced for centuries by the Elile people served as the primary economic, cultural and ecological foundation for a typical riverine community of the Niger Delta. This ancient occupation sustained families long before modern economic changes and meltdown. The significance of Elile ancient fishing practices were enormous[29]: (i) enhanced food security and provided major sources of daily animal protein for local households, rural livelihood and indigenous trade (ii) created a steady stream of revenue (income) that supported family development for centuries (iii) defined the daily life, cultural identity, socio-economic heritage, and aged-long traditions of riverine people of Nigeria (iv) and passed down fishing festivals and rituals, vital technical fishing skills, specific fish-breeding grounds, sea navigation techniques, and gear-making knowledge from generation to generation.

3. Results

The historical evidence indicates that Elile represents one of the ancient Obolo settlements in the present Eastern Obolo Local Government Area. The reported archaeological radio-carbon dating places settled Obolo presence in coastal locations including Elile, Emeremen and Emen Umaan between 855 AD and 1255 AD. This chronological evidence, together with oral traditions, archaeological structures, artefacts, relics and the continuity of the traditional title "ILILE," provides an important basis for discussing the antiquity of the community. The evidence also connects Elile with the wider movement and settlement history of the Obolo people in the Eastern Niger Delta.

The oral and material evidence further associates Elile with ancient settlements and fishing outposts in the surrounding region. Trade relics, including brass materials, manilas, glass beads and other objects preserved in family museums, are presented in the manuscript as evidence of historical contact and commercial activity. The account of the Emereoke fishing settlement and the survival of the Isi-Ebikan shrine also demonstrate the geographical extension of Elile's historical presence beyond its present settlement.

The preservation of the original name ILILE in the traditional title of the village head provides an important element of historical continuity. The manuscript explains ILILE as meaning "old and

big" and connects the name with the antiquity of the community. The continued use of the title ILILE, including the present designation ILILE IX, demonstrates the survival of a traditional institution through successive generations.

The analysis of the sociopolitical and economic structures of Elile further underscores its status as an ancient mother town within Eastern Obolo. The socio-cultural mechanics of the community, particularly the age-grade system (*Otuogbo*) and patrimonial family structures (Etetor's Royal, Okorosiki, and Isibok families), have served as enduring mechanisms for governance, social justice, and infrastructural development over centuries. This internal stability enabled Elile to function as a major point of dispersal for descendant groups such as the Ibioete, Okorobilom, Egile, and Ekede sub-groups. The preservation of shared cultural practices, such as the *Nzokpo* and *Ofiokpo* festivals, alongside the survival of a distinct Obolo dialect incorporating phonemes unique to the region, offers compelling linguistic and anthropological proof of Elile's deep historical roots and far-reaching influence across Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Spiritual and religious evolution in Elile reflects a continuous synthesis between ancient ancestral traditions and early European encounters. Prior to the introduction of modern Christianity, the community served as a critical ritual sanctuary for the broader Obolo nation. The requirement that emissaries from the national *Yok-Obolo* deity visit the *AHADI-ILE* shrine in Elile to retrieve essential ritual elements, including the ancient clay core (*Izong-Elika*), highlights the foundational spiritual authority attributed to Elile's ancestors. Following early European trade contacts in the 15th century, the community gradually integrated Western influences, as demonstrated by the establishment of early Christian missions beginning in 1913 at Utiak (*Agan Njim Iriin*). Rather than erasing the community's identity, the advent of Christianity operated alongside surviving traditional institutions, family museums (*Isi-Ebikaan*), and historical relics, preserving the community's ancestral legacy while expanding its sociopolitical reach.

Furthermore, the economic and political continuity of Elile demonstrates its enduring relevance from the pre-colonial era into the modern era. Historically anchored by sophisticated estuarine and brackish-water capture fisheries—utilizing specialized indigenous craft (*Uzi-Ofo*, *Uzi-Ukook*) and custom gear—Elile's traditional agrarian and maritime practices provided the economic foundation for long-distance trade and regional settlement expansions. This foundational strength translated into modern political and academic achievements, as evidenced by the community's leadership roles in regional administration, local government governance, legislative representation, and academic scholarship. In addition, the strictly enforced communal landholding regulations and historical boundary demarcations, such as Utiak Creek, illustrate a long-standing tradition of legal and territorial administration. Together with the absolute chronology of the *ILILE* kingship lineage, these socio-economic and institutional frameworks confirm Elile as an essential custodian of Obolo cultural heritage and a key historical marker in the Eastern Niger Delta.

4. Conclusion

Elile (Ilile) is the oldest ancient Obolo village in the present Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The antiquity of Elile were evidenced in the following proofs: (i) the reported archaeological radio-carbon dating between 855AD and 1255AD(ii) archaeological structures, clay core (*Izong Elika*), artefacts and relics, the official traditional title of the village head of Elile "ILILE"(meaning old and big) and the confirmation of Elile as part of the Twenty-one (21) Obolo ancient settlements of ritual testimony (Etip Izon ge me Izon ge Obolo) (iii) evidence of the existence of the ancient people of Elile in Emereoke axis in the 15th century before the arrival of other fishers and settlers and the attachment of Elile name 'Harry Eto' to the official title of the village Heads of Emereoke 1(Elile ancient fishing outpost) (iv) the evidential assertion that Queen Kampa purchased her land from the Elile people in the Eastern Obolo territory (v) the successes of Yok-Obolo festivity that predated the colonial era and formal European contact with the Obolo

people andthe link to the mother-town of Elile (vi) the establishment of churches in Utiat-Elile in the 18th century and (vii) the existence of the ancient people of Elile and their established roots and ancestral tentacles wherever its people are domiciled. Furthermore, the history of Elile village in Eastern Obolo LGA of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria served as a powerful case study on the preservation of ancient identity across generations. The narrative of Elile village proved that this ancient community is a vital custodian of prehistoric antiquity that kept ancestral memories alive in a rapidly changing world. Again, the significance of this seminal account revealed that: (i) the reported archaeological evidence of the carbon-dating between 855AD and 1255AD underscored the fundamental truth about the antiquity of Elile. Thus, the archaeological and archival evidence revealed that Elile village is ancient and unique in culture and tradition. Elile served as a living archive and their preserved dialect and archaeological artefacts are enduring proof of the antiquity of Elile village in Eastern Obolo LGA of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (ii) the dispersal of other villages from Elile allowed for wider preservation and global adoption of ancestral tradition and dialect and served as a composite process of cultural synthesis and identity of Elile in the ancient and modern Obolo society. (iii) Elile unique dialect, culture, tradition and public figures have all contributed to its distinct character, making Elile a truly special ancient place in Nigeria (iv) the study exposed historical ties between the Elile people, their roots and extensions (v) the identity of Elile lies not in its geography but in content and collective resilience of its people and generational continuity in local custom and tradition (vi) the influx of missionaries and Europeans merchants in Elile in the 1450s had influenced the belief system and served as a stepladder for greater opportunity for Elile progenies. (vii) by analysing the colonial tax records, this study demonstrated how Elile preserved their generational transition kingship structure from generation to generation. This indicates sustainable monarchical survival and relevance of Elile in ancient and modern Obolo society. (v) the distinct Elile dialect was kept from generation to generation without dissolving or absorbing vocabulary from neighbouring groups. This is a testament to Elile linguistic stability and cultural continuity. (vi) the age-group system indicated a unified community with shared tradition, leadership and social values (vii) the relationship with neighbours displayed how the village secured peaceful existence and cooperative ties with surrounding villages for several centuries (viii) the history of landholding portrayed the living legend of ancestral prominence, legacy and courage to inculcate communal spirit among the younger generation. (ix) Elile had ancient fishing and farming practices that had sustained the economy of the community from generation to generation. Finally, Elile village played a major role in shaping the history, tradition, culture, religion and politics of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area and can serve as a melting pot and a pointer of great antiquity to the Obolo people in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria.

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