

Jeremiah "Jerry" Egbe Ifie Collection

Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory (PASP)

Department of Classics
University of Texas at Austin

Collection Summary

Creator: Jeremiah Egbe Ifie

Title: Jeremiah "Jerry" Egbe Ifie Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1978-2003

Bulk Dates: 1978-1997

Abstract: The materials of Jeremiah "Jerry" Egbe Ifie representing his research as a professor of classics at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and as a Visiting Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. The collection includes scholarly publications (offprints), correspondence, course materials, cassette tapes, and monographs.

Quantity: 2 boxes; 67 items (4.0 linear feet/4.0 cubic feet).

Call Number: PASP 2013.06.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information:

Donors: Jerry Ifie, Lesley Dean-Jones, and Thomas G. Palaima.

Donation Date: 2005

Processing Information:

Item level inventory and finding aid.

By: Sarah A. Buchanan

Date: June 2013

Arrangement

Research Material, 1996-2003	(group 1)
Teaching material, 1996-1997	(group 1, subgroup 1)
Professional material, 1996-1997	(group 1, subgroup 2)
Students' material, 2002-2003	(group 1, subgroup 3)
Publications, 1978-2003	(group 2)

Index Terms

Persons

Adelugba, Dapo
Buchanan, Sarah
Clark-Bekederemo, J.P.
Dean-Jones, Lesley
Ifie, Jerry
Palaima, Thomas
Onayemi, Folake

Organizations

Brooklyn College
Temple University
University of Ibadan
University of Pennsylvania
University of Texas at Austin

Publications

Museum Africum: West African Journal of Classical and Related Studies
Nigeria and the Classics: Ibadan Journal of Classical and Related Studies (New Series)
Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies
The Phrontisterion: Magazine of Hoi Phrontistai (The Classical Association)
Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria (CAN)
Review of English and Literary Studies (RELS)

Subjects

African mythology
Ancient peoples from:
 Niger Delta, Nigeria
 Rivers State, Nigeria
Comparative mythology
Compiling
Greek mythology
Izon (language)
Myth-Recording
Ozidi Saga (Ezon people)
Roman empire (North Africa)
Romano-African epigraphy
Tarakiri (Ezon) people
Translating
Urhobo (language)
Urhobo mythology

Places

Austin, Texas
Bendel State, Nigeria (Kumbuwei District)

Bomadi Local Government, Nigeria
Brooklyn, New York
Delta State, Nigeria
Ibadan, Nigeria
Rivers State, Nigeria
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Document Types

Article reprints
Cassette tapes
Journal issues
Letters
Departmental memos
Paperback books
Photocopies

Creator Sketch

Jeremiah "Jerry" Egbe Ifie (April 22, 1942 – December 16, 2004) was a Classical scholar, poet, and playwright who collected myths from Izon land in Nigeria and researched the culture, literature, and languages of the Nigerian people. As Senior Lecturer (since 1982) at the University of Ibadan, Department of Classics, Ifie taught the history and myths of the Izon and the Urhobo peoples as well as Greek and Roman Historiography, Drama, and Philosophy. In 1996 and 1997, Ifie was a Visiting Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Department of Classics (then chaired by Dr. Thomas G. Palaima, who extended him the invitation), teaching Classical and African Mythology and Beginners Latin. He was married to Ranti(?) and had two college-age children. Several of his students returned to study at the University of Texas at Austin in 2002 and 2003 and they began academic careers of their own. Until his death from an auto crash along Benin-Ore road, he was an active scholar, teaching and publishing works on the playwright J.P. Clark-Bekederemo and on comparative Greek and Urhobo mythology.

Dr. Ifie was born at Bolou Apelebiri in Bomadi Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, where he was educated at various schools. "Ifie" means *time* in the Izon language; his father was Chief J. W. Ifie (of the Izon) and his mother was of the Urhobo, and Ifie was raised a Christian. Prior to completing his undergraduate studies, Ifie completed Teachers Certificates in 1963 and 1966. He graduated with a B.A. Honours Classics in 1972 and received the Corinth Prize and Sir James Robertson Prize in Classics from the University of Ibadan. Ifie received his Ph.D. from the University of Ibadan on June 16, 1976; his thesis was titled, "Studies on the Romano-African Municipal Aristocracy of the Maghreb under the Principate." He continued as a Lecturer in the Department of Classics (Ibadan) from 1976-1982, when he was appointed Senior Lecturer there. Dr. Ifie was made a Fellow of the Order of Esenaebe College (Alumni Association) in 1981, during the Silver Jubilee of his alma mater. During this time he taught courses at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels including Latin 100-400, Greek and Roman Historiography, Historical Background to the New Testament, and Latin Literature, and he supervised graduate students.

Dr. Ifie received several research grants in 1976 - 1979 from the University of Ibadan to collect myths from Izon land inhabitants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, an endeavor that involved recording, compiling, and translating the Izon myths for an English-reading public. His 1977 field trip, "Intertribal marriage and national unity," was funded during the university's 1977-78 session. He conducted interviews throughout 1980 - 1990, with parts published through those years, visiting as well the Ekpetiama clan in Rivers State, Nigeria. Around 1990, Dr. Ifie was involved in an accident resulting in a broken limb and dislocated spine, from which he recovered. He served as journal editor of *Nigeria and the Classics* in the early 1990s, published by the Department of Classics, Ibadan.

An ancient historian by training, Dr. Ifie studied the culture, literature, and languages of his people, the Izon and Urhobo, and published several articles on Romano-African history. He was known as a specialist in the Roman Empire in North Africa, Classical and African mythology, the anthropology of native African cultures, and Izon poetry, literature, myth, and religion. His *A Historical Background to the New Testament* discusses Greco-Roman societies between 320 B.C. to about 140 A.D. Dr. Ifie's work as a playwright includes the original works

The Paradise of the Mother (1988), and the three-part *Ayabare / Obaro / Enimuaketa, Don't Kill My Mother* (1992, 92, 94), which were staged at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan. As Egbe Ifie, he was a published poet, creating several collections of poems and epigrams in Izon and English.

In addition to serving as Senior Lecturer, Ifie was also Acting Head of Classics at the University of Ibadan (1994-95). He served as President of the Classical Association of Nigeria in 1995. Upon the recommendation of Prof. Dapo Adelugba (Theatre Arts, Ibadan), who had spent a sabbatical leave at Texas in 1974 (with Prof. Gareth Morgan), Ifie made acquaintance with Prof. Thomas G. Palaima of the Classics Department, University of Texas at Austin. Prof. Palaima (then Dept. Chair) arranged Ifie's appointment as a visiting Lecturer at UT for the summer and fall semesters of 1996. Dr. Ifie also gave successful lectures at Brooklyn College (hosted by Prof. Roger Dunkle), Temple University (Prof. Martha Davis), and University of Pennsylvania (Prof. Joe Farrell) (Oct. 7-9, 1996), and attended the Classical Association of the Atlantic States (CAAS) meeting (Oct. 11-12 at Lafayette College). In December, Ifie briefly returned to Nigeria to preside over his mother's funeral ceremony, at a time when the University of Ibadan was effectively closed due to a national strike between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Nigerian government (the six month strike commenced in April 1996; see Reference). Reflecting the success of his teaching, Ifie's appointment at UT was extended through the spring of 1997. During each of his three terms at UT, Prof. Ifie taught "Classical and African Mythology" (78 students in fall 1996), an innovative course that was co-sponsored by the Classics Department and Center for African and Afro-American Studies, with the College of Liberal Arts (of which Dr. Sheldon Ekland-Olson was then Dean, and whose Nigerian college roommate helped make Ifie's acquaintance). He also gave invited talks to the Plan I Honors program, the Anthropology Department, and the UT Classics Department. During his stay in Austin, Dr. Ifie transcribed and translated into English eight African myths, consulted the corpus of Ovid and materials on Egyptology through the UT Libraries, and conducted research to expand his dissertation work on aristocratic Romano-African epigraphy for later publication.

Upon his return to Nigeria, Dr. Ifie authored a play *A Garden of Dreams* in honor of his UT colleagues Mary Hellen Craig and Thomas Palaima, which was presented publicly on August 27, 1997 in Ibadan. His students, Olakunbi O. Olasope (spring 2002) and Tosin Adekannbi (spring 2003) returned as Visiting Researchers (doctoral candidates) to UT Austin. Dr. Folake Onayemi has published commentary about Ifie's editorial work.

Reference: Ifeanyi Onyeonoru, "Ch. 2: Human Capital in Nigerian Universities: The Presence of the Past and the Thrust of the Future" (pp. 31-63) in *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience* (Ed. Joseph Kenny), Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008. <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-11/CH2.htm>

Scope and Content of the Records

Scholarly publications, correspondence, course materials, cassette tapes, and monographs are included in the 67 items that comprise the Jeremiah "Jerry" Egbe Ifie Collection (1978-2003)

of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory. The bulk of the items reflect Ifie's scholarship in Classical and African mythology while professional material adds context to the research material.

The first record group, **Research Material** (44 items), is comprised of three sub-groups.

The first subgroup consists of teaching materials (7 items) from Dr. Ifie's courses taught at the University of Texas at Austin, 1996-1997. Included are article printouts, a course packet (readings), and a syllabus for CC 304C (Summer 1996).

The second subgroup consists of professional materials (34 items) also from Dr. Ifie's appointment at the University of Texas at Austin, including Curricula Vitae and forms and communications between the Classics Departments in Austin, Texas and Ibadan, Nigeria (32 items); these materials are copies from the UT Classics Department Chair's "Lecturers" record series. Also included are two cassette tapes used by Dr. Ifie. Also included are Lesley Dean-Jones' letter and photos, and Dr. Ifie's poem "An August Tune for Classics."

The third subgroup consists of Ifie's students' materials (3 items) including letters written regarding their study periods at the University of Texas during 2002 - 2003.

The second record group, **Publications** (23 items), includes offprints of Ifie's articles, print copies of journal issues with Ifie's work, paperback books, and Ifie's manuscript of *Living African Myths from Nigeria*. These are arranged in order of publication date and source.

Provenance

The publications were placed under the custody of Dr. Lesley Dean-Jones by Jerry Ifie. Dr. Dean-Jones then donated the materials to PASP under the custody of Dr. Thomas G. Palaima in 2005.

Related Material

Thomas G. Palaima Papers
Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory
Department of Classics, University of Texas at Austin
<http://www.utexas.edu/research/pasp/>

Department of Classics, University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria
<http://arts.ui.edu.ng/welcomeclassics>

Related Scholars (of Izon land): Robin Horton, Kay Williamson

Organization of Records

The Ifie collection is arranged in folders placed within archival storage boxes. The material is shelved on existing cabinets in the PASP offices.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Article proofs, Manuscript, Paperback books (5 items)

- Box 1.5 Egbe Ifie, "A Peep Into Urhobo Psychology," forthcoming in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2, (1992): 29-34.
Article proof (1 item)
- Box 1.5 J.E. Ifie, "J.P. Clark-Bekederemo, Nigerian Culture and the Arts," *Review of English and Literary Studies*, 3,2 (1986): 91-106.
Article proof (1 item)
- Box 1.5 Egbe Ifie, *Living African Myths from Nigeria*, 100 pages.
Manuscript (1 item)
- Box 1 Egbe Ifie, *A Historical Background to the New Testament*, U. of Ibadan, Nigeria 1987.
Paperback book (1 item)
- Box 1 Egbe Ifie, *A Cultural Background to the Plays of J.P. Clark-Bekederemo*, Ibadan, Nigeria: End-Time Publishing House, 1994.
Paperback book (1 item)

Article offprints, Journal issues, Paperback books (18 items)

- Box 2 J. Egbe Ifie, "The Pre-Roman elite of the Maghreb," *The Phrontisterion: Magazine of Hoi Phrontistai*, 6 (Sept. 1976), 41-58.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "The Romano-African municipal aristocracy and the imperial government under the Principate," *Museum Africum*, 5 (1976), 36-57.
Article offprints (2 items)
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie and L.A. Thompson, "Rank, social status and esteem in Apuleius," *Museum Africum*, 6 (1977/78), 21-36.
Article offprints (2 items)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "The Aristocratic Class in Urhoboland and Roman Africa: Contrasts and Similarities," *Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria* [also vol. editor], 1 (1978), 1-8.
Journal issue (2 items)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "Berber resistance to foreign domination in late antiquity," *Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria*, 2 (1979), 82-93.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "'Our happiness died with the Vandals' Kingdom": A paradox?," *Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria*, 3 (1980), 1-15.
Journal issue (1 item)

- Box 2 Egbe Ifie, "Jesus," *Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria*, 6 (1983), 43-60.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "Dreams in Latin Literature," *Proceedings of the Classical Association of Nigeria*, 8 (1989), 57-77.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J. E. Ifie, "Notes on Ezon Religion and Culture in the Ozidi Saga," *Orita*, 12,1 (June 1978), 66-81.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J. Egbe Ifie, "Nature and Symbolism in Six Sacred Dirges from Kumbuo Wei Districts in Bomadi Local Government Area of Bendel State, Nigeria," *Orita*, 14,2 (Dec. 1982), 140-153.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "The Tarakiri Ezon and their Gods in the Ozidi Saga," *Orita*, 15,2 (Dec. 1983), 87-104.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "Death and After Life in Ezon Religion: The Evidence of Kumbuwei Clan," *Orita*, 19,2 (Dec. 1987), 73-89.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "Marriage with the Gods in Nigerian and Greek myths," *Orita*, 26,2 (Dec. 1995), 61-77.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "The Imagery of Fire in the Oresteia of Aeschylus," *Nigeria and the Classics*, 1,1 (Jan. 1994), 1-27.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 J.E. Ifie, "Desertion in Greek and Nigerian Myths," *Nigeria and the Classics*, 1,2 (June 1994), 60-80.
Journal issue (1 item)
- Box 2 Egbe Ifie, *Kemefiere the Ogress: The Myth in Ezon and English* (compiled and translated with an introduction), Ibadan: Moba Printing & Publishing Co., 1988.
Paperback book (1 item)
- Box 2 Egbe Ifie, *Enimuaketa: Don't Kill My Mother Part III: A Play*, Ibadan: End-Time Publishing House, 1992.
Paperback book (1 item)

Dr. J.E. Ifie, "Ch. 8: Izon Culture, Language and Literature: The Religious Ambience," in *Teaching Nigerian Languages: Experiences from the Delta* (eds. Rose O. Aziza and E. Nolue Emenanjo), Warri, Nigeria: Loewa Publishers, 1993 (pp. 95-111).

Box 2

Paperback book (1 item)