



Towards Understanding Ibadan Traditional and Religious Systems Before and After the Advent of Christianity

Olukunle Gabriel ABIOLA

*Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies, Lead City University,
Ibadan, Nigeria*

oluabiola2000@gmail.com, +2347054527031

Adebayo Ola AFOLARANMI, PhD

*Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies, Lead City University,
Ibadan, Nigeria*

afolaranmi.adebayo@lcu.edu.ng, +2348055159591

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8057-137X>

Abstract

Long before the colonial interruption or the advent of Christianity in Ibadanland, the Yoruba people had been exhibiting their republican nature by relentlessly subverting their kingship institution through civil disturbances and rebellions. This made some groups of people to settle in what is now known as Ibadanland after the fall of Oyo Empire. This paper aims to briefly introduce the readers to the traditional and religious life in Ibadanland in the nineteenth century, the time of the advent of Christianity in the city, the political and administrative setting, and the religion of the people of Ibadanland on the eve of the advent of the Christian religion. The paper adopted historical research design to achieve this as systematic literature review was done on some literature about Ibadanland. It was found out that Ibadan people were traditional worshippers with *egúngún* (masquerade) and *Okebadan* as the major religious festivals of the people. Islam came before the Hinderers led some people to introduce Christianity to the people. Ibadanland has had a well-established traditional political and administrative system of Baale-in-Council that later metamorphosed to Olubadan-in-Council. There has been an almost seamless succession plan to the throne of Baale, now Olubadan, of Ibadanland. Olubadan has become the symbol of unity in Ibadanland as other institutions are mere agents of unity or catalysts for concretizing that unity. As recommendations, the strengths and the weaknesses in the traditional and



religious life of Ibadan people and administrative systems are to be revisited in the light of the advent of Christianity and modernization in the city.

Keywords: Advent of Christianity in Ibadanland, Egúngún (masquerade), Ibadan political and administrative system, Ibadan Traditional and Religious Systems, Ibadanland, Okebadan, Olubadan

Introduction

Ibadan is the capital of Oyo State. It is made up of mainly Yoruba-speaking people. It is the largest indigenous city in Nigeria (Adelekan, 2016). Ibadan city is the area occupied by the five 'urban' local government areas established in 1991, namely, Ibadan North, North East, Ibadan North West, Ibadan Southeast and Ibadan Southwest. Other additional rural local government areas that also constitute Ibadanland are Oluyole, Egbeda, Ona-ara, Akinyele, Lagelu, and Ido. The population of Ibadanland is about 4,004,316 (Ibadan Population 2024).

This paper aims to give a short introduction to the traditional and religious life in Ibadanland in the nineteenth century, the time of the advent of Christianity in the city, the geographical setting, the political and administrative setting, the economy, the social life, and the religion of the people on the eve of the advent of the Christian religion. The impact of Christianity on the traditional and religious system of the city will be explored as it is obtainable in this twenty-first century based on some recommendations at the end of the study.

Ibadan on the Eve of the Advent of Christianity

Unlike other towns deliberately founded and planned, Ibadan was a town of circumstance. The attributes of the founder of the site and stance of founding are all circumstantial and unprecedented. The town was founded three times and it was at the third attempt that constituted Ibadanland today. The founder, Lagelu-Oro Apata Maja, an appellation, was a popular warrior who out of zeal for war, left his town, Ile-Ife, to settle at a neutral ground between the forestland near Ijebu and Egba



and the grassland near Oyo (Tomori, n.d.). The area belonged to nobody and because of this neutrality, it was referred to as Eba-Odan, a place near grassland or Ebadan (for short) and Ibadan eventually. Before Lagelu arrived there, and because it was a no man's land, all kinds of people – vagabonds, outcasts, refugees, fugitives, runaways, touts, truants, delinquents, etc. made the place their abode and it suited them. As soon as Lagelu arrived, he was made the leader. The settlement expanded gradually and became popular. People streamed in and life was bustling (Awe, Ogundeji, & Ajayi, 2010).

Most historians have agreed that Ibadan's recorded history should be put at about 1820 and that the present settlement as we know is the third site. Ibadan was the kingpin of Yoruba warfare in the 19th century. Ibadan became a clear safe place for many people after the fall of the Oyo Empire. Ibadan benefited from the influx of refugees through a purposeful assimilatory system. Although the refugees came in discernible groups, they could not withstand the military strength of the first group led by Lagelu Oro-Apata Maye (Awe, Ogundeji, & Ajayi, 2010). Ibadan's geopolitical system and political economy are indisputably the product of that history already but lives and factors of ecology, geography, and culture. These as summarized hereunder have contributed to the phenomenal growth of the metropolis:

- i. Ibadan's military proneness building and sustaining an empire;
- ii. Blend of Ibadan metropolis and rural populace as the same people;
- iii. Toughness and ruggedness of the people;
- iv. Vegetational advantage-between forest and savannah;
- v. Locational modality;
- vi. Adequate water supply;
- vii. Expanse of land and well-organized traditional system;
- viii. Large population;
- ix. Security – physical and psychological;
- x. Ecological balance; and
- xi. Hospitality of the people of Ibadan to strangers and settling.



Livestock were kept in Ibadan to augment the income from earned farming activities. They also engaged in the activity of making livestock available for sacrifices and rituals during various festivities such as Egúngún, Oke-badan, and Ileya. Given the above factors that are conducive to sustainable growth and development, Ibadan metropolis has grown into a "megalopolis" which can be called a city-state by all standards.

The Nature of the Traditional Religion in Ibadan (especially the Egúngún Worship and Festival)

No one can precisely determine the religion of the settlers, but Akinyele (2011) reported that Lagelu brought masquerade (*egúngún*) from Ile-Ife. Masquerades were also identified with warriors and wars as they were used as strategies for victory apart from entertaining warlords. Consequently, it became a way of life, a ritual, a cultural festivity celebrated annually for about two weeks around June during the rainy season when food was plentifully available.

It was during this ceremony one year, when a masquerade was performing in the market that his clothes were accidentally stripped off giving opportunity to women and children to see his face, that trouble erupted. This was a taboo that could not be concealed. Ibadan was in trouble. Sango, the Alaafin of Oyo, getting to know, summoned other traditional rulers to war against Ibadan. For three years, Ibadan was besieged and the war raged on until Ibadan was devastated. Thus, it was recorded that the masquerade myth that was broken and destroyed in the first Ibadan settlement (Akinyele, 2011). It is believed that the spirit of the dead especially the old ones linger on and lives with their people. Therefore, children born after their death are named Babatunde or Iyabode, meaning, 'father or mother comes back'.

Yoruba people also believe that when old people die, they are no longer human but superhuman. Their death at old age has earned them super-humanity. Of course, they are not gods or divinities, but revered like gods. It is believed that they have more power and can help and support people, give people favour, plead on people's behalf, support people's



endeavours, and defend them. These ancestors, heroes and heroines, and popular leaders are designated as '*ara orun*' meaning dwellers from heaven and they visit people occasionally as masquerades. Masquerades remind people that the ancestors of the people do not forget the people. They mimic the ancestors to give the impression that he is not just a masquerade but a real ancestor or father. The family of the ancestor jubilates amidst pomp and pageantry, eats and drinks, and makes merry during the festivity. The masquerade then advises and prays for all members of the family far and near. This festivity referred to as ancestral worship, has come to stay and is an annual event in Ibadan today as in any other Yoruba town. People from villages and hamlets come to town to jubilate.

Egúngún (masquerade) is a masking tradition used in the performance of funeral rites for the dead to ensure their perfect peace at rest (Akande, 2019). These rites are performed to curry the favour of the dead and make them happy with their survivors. Apart from using them as a strategy by warriors, masquerades entertain the living. They are used to rid the community of evil, like outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, measles, smallpox, and other diseases and disasters. They are also used against witches and other evil powers. Masquerade performances have become a consecrated festive reunion of the living and the dead and have turned out to be an annual festival. Each family clan has its own masquerade and they have different names. Notable among them are *Ajofoyinbo*, *Alarinjo*, *Ajangila*, *Ayelabola*, *Gelede*, *Atipako*, *Afidielegee*, *Alapansanpa*, *Eleeko*, *Dariagbon*, *Ferebiekun*, *Oloolu*, etc. They have their different drummers and dance *bata* or *gangan* drums.



Figure 1: *Egúngún* (Source: Akande, 2019)



At the festival, masquerades emerge from their sacred groves (*igbo igbale*) putting on a specially built costume (*ago* or *eku*) made of pieces of cloth and or palm leaves. The costume could be part of the clothes of the dead ancestor, a symbol of the presence of the old man. They conceal their human features under their costume. The identity of the costume carrier (*a-ru-eku*) must be properly concealed, otherwise, the myth will be broken (*awo a ya*). *Oloolu* masquerade was used mainly to carry ritual materials before going to war while Alapansanpa followed warriors to war. Today *Oloolu* is used for ritualistic purposes, specifically to avert an outbreak of diseases, appease the gods, and bless the traditional rulers. Wherever he visited they presented him with gifts of money, cloth, kola nuts, etc.

Okebadan Olomu oru (a hill goddess whose breasts are like clay pots) is another popular festival in Ibadan (Solaja & Olayiwola, 2021). The survivors of Ebadan – Ibadan after the war settled on a hill near Eleyele. They were mainly the children of Lagelu. On the hill, they found plenty of '*oro*' (a kind of fruit) and plenty of snails. They took the fruits and snails as food while they used the snail shell for taking pap. They were so comfortable on the hill that they settled permanently there and lived on oro and snails. Thus, Ibadan indigenes are referred to as:

Ibadan omo ajorosun

Omo ajegbinyo

Omo afikarahun fori mu

Meaning/translated

Ibadan who eats *oro* for super

Who eats snails to satisfaction

Who uses snail shell to drink pap

The settlers believed that the hill had been benevolent to them, for they depended on it for a daily supply of food, otherwise, they would have died of hunger. As such they revered the hill and worshipped it as their benefactor and saviour. They believed that it also protected them and their children from danger. When Lagelu died, he was buried there. The hill became popular and an object of worship. After a prolonged stay on the hill, it became apparent to look for a bigger space convenient for their



expansion. They, therefore, moved down the hill and settled at 'Ori yangi' but never forgot nor abandoned the hill that had preserved them. They enthusiastically worshipped the hill also because their father was buried there. Today, *Okebadan* is worshipped annually in Ibadanland. On such a day, there should be no smoke from cooking or burning, to reverence the goddess of the hill (Solaja & Olayiwola, 2021). Everybody is expected to do their cooking before and such foods are of beans series - *moinmoin*, *alapa*, *ekuru*, *eko*, and other foods which do not need warming before eating. Anyone who flouted this injunction was manhandled and his property destroyed or burnt. *Ori yangi*, where they settled permanently, became the centre of Ibadan city today according to history. It is there the first indigenous market began, called Oja Iba, Basorun Iba Oluyole's market. The worship of *Okebadan* and *Egúngún* has become a prominent feature in the religious life of Ibadan despite the incursion of Christianity and Islam. Incidentally, people who profess to be Christians or Muslims join the African Traditional Religionists to worship the gods, goddesses, and other divinities. Every year during the festival, undevoted Christians and Muslims participate in the rituals claiming that Christianity or Islam does not prevent them from participation. Such people disguise in the song/ditty:

Awa o soro ile wa o/2ce
Igbagbo/Imale kope ...o ye
Igbagbo/Imale ko pe ka wa ma soro
Awa o soro ile wa o

Meaning:

We shall perform our traditional rites/2 ce
Christianity/Islam does not prevent us
From performing our traditional rites
We shall perform our traditional rites (Ajayi, 2015)

Islam in Ibadanland

The date of entry of Islam into Ibadan cannot be fixed precisely because it was unannounced and unplanned like the founding of the city itself. The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in the Northern part of Nigeria in 1804



and the fall of the Oyo Empire under Afonja spearheaded the spread of Islam to various parts of Yorubaland including Ibadan. Adherents of Islam scattered all over, bringing their religion. The few Muslims who entered Ibadan could not practice the religion openly as their knowledge of the Quran was limited. There was the African Traditional Religion (A.T.R.) with the worship of Egúngún, Okebadan, and other deities. Therefore, their voice was not heard. It was also indicated that some Islamic scholars came from Hausaland through Ilorin during the reign of Oluyedun, the Aare-Ona-Kakanfo. Some also came during the reign of Basorun Oluyole. However, there was a man called "Igun Olorun" or Abdulahi Gunnugun at Ayeye who preached Islam and consequently became the first Imam of Ibadan. One can, therefore, rightly say that Islam reached Ibadan before Christianity. This reminds one of one of the songs that people sang then:

Aye la ba ifa

Aye la ba imale

Osan gangan ni igbagbo wole de

Meaning:

Ifa came at creation

Islam came at creation but

Christianity came much later (Ajayi, 2015)

As people accepted Islam, more conversion took place though slowly. But what gave it prominence was the conversion of Osundina, the Balogun (third-ranked senior war chief). It was said that Osundina went to war with the turban on his head. It was through Osundina that the first corrugated roofed mosque in Ibadan was built. He was called Momodu (Mohammed) (Alabi, 2021).

At its inception, Ibadan acquired a cosmopolitan culture (Layiwola, 2015). Its population comprised Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, and Ife peoples and groups from other areas in Yorubaland. By the time the government was stable, the majority of the settlers in Ibadan had been the Oyo elements. Unlike older Yoruba towns, Ibadan offered a lot of scope for individual achievements. This attracted a lot of people to the city.



Another reason for the cosmopolitan character of Ibadan was its location at the border zone between forest and grassland (Mabogunje, 1961). It, therefore, developed as a commercial centre and received goods from the coast, Yoruba interior, and other areas in Yorubaland. Traders from Ijebuland, Egbaland, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Ijaye, Hausaland, and Nupeland all converged at Ibadan to exchange their products (Awe, 1973). By 1831, the population of Ibadan was around 100,000 and the city further expanded by embracing some of the deserted Egba towns in the neighbourhood (Adeboye, 2003). The people of Ibadan were farmers, craftsmen, and warriors. The cream of the society was made up of professional warriors who made Ibadan proud and for mixable power in the nineteenth century Yoruba politics. Ibadan, therefore, grew from a war cramp to a metropolis, the capital of an empire, which comprised such groups as the Ekiti, Ijesha, Ife, etc. By the time the British came in 1893, Ibadan had already developed into a highly urbanized settlement (Awe, Ogundeji, & Ajayi, 2010).

Ibadan Political System

The first system of government established in Ibadan was military leadership (Fourchard, 2003). This was the prevailing situation at that time where most people were warriors. The whole of Yorubaland, including Ibadan, was at war in the nineteenth century. In fact, Ibadan and Ijaye were the principal combatants. So, everybody was in a state of preparedness for war. However, the leadership of Ibadan was all military. Among the most notable leaders and early rulers was Iba Oluyole (1837-1847). He was a man of vision and he determined to transform Ibadan from a military settlement into a great town. He gave public duties to some of the military leaders. He also brought more areas to Ibadan. Through conquest due to his brilliant performance and exploits, Ibadan is praised as the home of Oluyole (Adeboye, 2003). Ogunmola (1864-1867) was another powerful warrior and a great administrator. He was an impartial judge and made several reforms. One can say that Latosa (1871-1885) was the most aggressive of all Ibadan leaders in the nineteenth century. He made many people the whole of



Yorubaland fear Ibadan. He attempted to conquer the whole of Yorubaland but was halted by the Ekiti Parapo alliance of nearly all Yoruba states which resisted Ibadan imperialism (Adeboye, 2003).

The Yoruba had been exhibiting their republican nature by relentlessly subverting their kingship institution through civil disobedience and rebellion. It had to do with the Yoruba monarchical system that often produces rulers who would violate the Yoruba's acceptable standards of right and wrong.

According to Akinyele (2011), of the seventeen kings who reigned in Oyo from the end of the sixteenth century (when Atiba brought the government back to Oyo-Ile after the exiles until the end of the eighteenth century only four kings (Abiba, Obadokun, Ajagbo and Amuniwaye died natural deaths) of the rest not less a despot or exhibiting some unacceptable moral weakness. Also, when Owo town installed a very rich prince named Arilekelasi as their king and in his behaviour, he defied traditional limitations, a revolt by Ondo chiefs and prominent citizens forced him to commit suicide in about 1845 are many examples in Yorubaland (Akinyele, 2011).

According to Akinyele (2011), in the blood of a good number of Yoruba people, there seems to flow an inbuilt, shock-proof inability to condone evil in governance. That quality inspired the group that settled in Ibadan after the fall of the Oyo Empire and dictated the new system of government. This is, therefore, an essentially Yoruba phenomenon that reached practical fulfilment in Ibadan which requires inspirational and courageous leadership which is called the Ibadan traditional system or the Ibadan dream.

Ibadan Administrative System

There had been two distinct chieftaincy lines that could succeed to the Baaleship of Ibadan by the beginning of the twentieth century (Adeboye, 2003). These lines are the Balogun (military) line and the Baale (civil) line. Another line – the Seriki line – that was made of some war chiefs was a helper to the Balogun line. The military and civil line succeeded alternatively which promotion was from the lower titles to the higher



ones. They started from the bottom to the top via promotion. This system ensured that there were minimal succession disputes in Ibadan. It also meant that only the very top became the Baale. Iyalode line was made up of female chiefs who could not become Baale but were in charge of women's affairs in the city (Adeboye, 2003).

From the first Baale and ruler of Ibadan about 1820 to 1929, that is, from Lagelu to Baale Oyewole Foko, there have been twenty-three (23) Baales in Ibadanland. The Obaship started in 1930 with Olubadan Abasi Alesiloye 1930 (Layiwola [eds], 2015).

Arrival of the Christian Missionaries to Ibadan

Revd David and Mrs Hinderer arrived for missionary work during the reign of Baale Olugbode in 1853. Ibadan traditional council received the first missionary team of Ibadan in 1852 (Ajayi, 2015). On 16th May 1851, Revd Hinderer while at Osiele village on Abeokuta–Ibadan Road decided to make his first exploratory missionary journey of Ibadan by joining a group of travelers who were traveling to Ibadan (Jimoh, 2014). His team included:

- (1) Mr. Daniel Olubi from Abeokuta – the first African priest in Ibadan
- (2) Mr. James Ojo Okuseinde of Abeokuta
- (3) Mr. Daniels Marsh a Sierra Leonian school teacher
- (4) Mr. C. Phillips a Sierra Leonian
- (5) Mr Dalley
- (6) The horse which he rode, gave rise to the famous slogan “*Esin to sikeje lo mu igbagbo wo Ibadan*” i.e. a horse is the seventh of them that brought Christianity to Ibadan.

The entourage thereafter proceeded to the palace of Baale Ope Agbe. They were given a rousing welcome by the Baale and his principal chief namely Ibikunle Balogun, Ogunmola Otun Balogun, Osundina Osi Balogun Olatunbosun Areago. After disclosing the purpose of his visit, Chief Osundina stoutly opposed but Ogunmola supported the missionary request (Ajayi, 2015).



There and then the Baale and his chiefs went into a caucus meeting and decided to consult the Ifa oracle at Ogboni House, Bashorun Market as to the purpose of the visit and propriety of accommodating the first white man in Ibadan. The Ifa oracle brought good results that the white man would be a blessing and bring a lot of fortune to Ibadan if allowed to carry out his plan of establishing a gospel mission in the town. Based on the outcome of Ifa oracle divination, Chief Olatubosun Areego was mandated and assigned the task of providing accommodation for the entourage which he satisfactorily did by lodging them in his house. Thus, the age-long-rooted traditional hospitality and friendliness of Ibadan people were amply demonstrated in the warm and organized reception accorded the Revd Hinderer and his team by the Ibadan traditional council.

Inspired by the warm reception accorded him as his entourage during his visit, the missionaries started work in earnest. They practiced Christian love and charity. They accommodated Ibadan children in the mission house. The children of Ibadan warlord, Olunloyo, became the first to move into the mission house. This was F. L. Akinyele who later became a bishop. There was enlightenment and the socio-cultural development of Ibadan with the arrival of the Revd Hinderer. New types of buildings and environments were introduced. The first storey building in Ibadan and its environment was built in 1855 at Kudeti by the missionaries, it was through them that corrugated iron sheets were introduced to Ibadan Figure 2 shows this building. They also introduced European dresses and others to Ibadan. There were so many achievements in the socio-economic development in Ibadan with the arrival of the missionaries.



Figure 2: Hinderer's House (Source: Oyefeso, 2022)

Ibadan Traditional System, Structure and Functions

The Olubadan is at the head of the entire system. He is the ruler and the paramount authority in Ibadanland. He is the custodian of the tradition and culture of the people. He is the symbol of the unity of Ibadanland. He is the final authority in all matters concerning the customary practices of the people and carries responsibilities for the peace and progress of the land (Albert, et al, 1995).

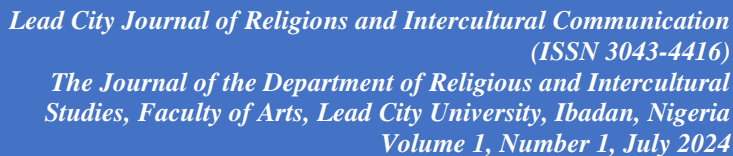


Akinyele (2011) quoted High Chief YB Ogundipe (before he ascended the throne of Olubandan) who said that. He said, “The whole of Ibadan and its environs belong to the Olubandan. To him belongs the stretch of the land within the metropolis and all the local government councils surrounding the city. He is the paramount ruler in the entire area. I am happy that our brothers and sisters in these areas accept the paramountcy of the Olubadan. They have not allowed dissidents any room to operate.” Figure 3 is the pictorial traditional staff of Olubadan as conceived by the late Chief J.A. Ayorinde (Awe, Ogundeji, & Ajayi, 2010).

The traditional chieftaincy system that produces the Olubadan of Ibadanland – Otun and Balogun lines has twenty-three (23) steps on either ladder in a promotional system unless there is an exceptional grave circumstance (Akinyele, 2011). Originally, the Otun line was the civil line while the Balogun line was the military line. The third line is the Seriki line expectedly by for the young militant. The Iyalode line was created to take care of the interest of women folk in the community. The Iyalode has also grown to have 23 ring ladders. However, the system does not allow a woman to become Olubadan. A person in the military or civil line must go step by step in system of the chieftaincy promotion to reach the throne of Olubadan as shown below.

The traditional system may be categorized into five divisions:

- i. Traditional chiefs including high chiefs
- ii. Baales (village heads)
- iii. Honorary chiefs
- iv. Professional and Artisan chiefs
- v. Religious chiefs



39



The traditional chieftaincy system that produces the Olubadan of Ibadanland consists of two approved lines – OTUN and BALOGUN – each having a 23-step run on either ladder that forbids supersession unless there is any calamity. The Otun line was the civil line while the Balogun line was the military line.

The Seriki line is meant to be the youth group within the Balogun line. Anybody aspiring to be a traditional chief must be a Mogaji at the bottom of the ladder

The Mogaji title is the bedrock of the Ibadan traditional system, the very foundation on which the superstructure of the system is expected to rest for the peace progress and patriotic contribution of every Ibadan household to the substance of a system that becomes the envy of other areas of Yorubaland.

The Baale Chieftaincy

All villages (big and small) in Ibadanland are headed by a Baale who is assisted in the traditional management of the village by subordinate chiefs usually chosen from among indigenes of the village in a system similar to the one operating in the city. The number of village chiefs ranges from five to ten nominated by the Mogaji in the family clan in the city. An Ibadan man must belong to a family in Ibadan and must also have a village or farmstead to which he belongs (Alabi, 2021). The appointment of Baale will be formally approved by the Olubadan of Ibadanland. The Baale takes responsibility for the administration of the village in order to maintain the peace, progress, and development of the village (Albert, et al, 1995).

Honorary Chieftaincy

Honorary chieftaincy titles are usually conferred on persons as a mark of honour in appreciation of such persons' contribution to the progress and development of Ibadan. The Olubadan-in-Council will approve honorary titles often due to consultations. Professional/artisanal chieftaincy titles were given to the leaders of professional groups on occupational groups in recognition of their contributions to the development of Ibadanland.



It includes all professional groups including businessmen, farmers, drummers, blacksmiths/artists, etc. They are given titles like Babalaje, Iyalaje, Baale Onilu, Baale Agbe, and the like. Most of the title holders must be able to contribute their quota in the progress of Ibadan whenever the need arises especially mobilization of their members for important occasions in the development of the town (Albert, et al, 1995).

Religious Titles

Traditional religion was in vogue before the advent of Islam and Christianity in Ibadan. During that era in most parts of Yorubaland, there are deities as many as the number of days in a year. There are recognized heads for each group of adherents of each deity. Ritual performances were indispensable activities in the traditional era of Ibadan before a market could be set up in Ibadan. This was to pacify their ancestors and for the sustenance of the market. Akinyele (2011) quoted Balogun Y.B. Ogundipe who said that there are sixteen recognized traditional festivals in Ibadan, but only three are regarded as pre-eminent. For these three, there are recognized traditional chiefs for their observance.

- i. **Oke-Badan:** A festival observed in commemoration of the challenges of life overcome at the inception of the city during the various wars. It is usually observed by the youth with the singing of vogue and abusive words to create fun. Boke is the spiritual head of the festival and is usually the direct descendent of Lagelu, the legendary founder of Ibadan. It is usually celebrated after the observance of *Ose Meji*.
- ii. **Ose Meji:** Ibadan's Ifa oracle is usually observed in the second week of March. The worshippers are headed by the Araba. The Ose Meji shrine is at Oja-Oba Ibadan. This is the place where the rituals will be performed for the person who has been elected Olubadan. He will stay in the shrine for three days before his enthronement as Olubadan. He will go to the installation ceremony from the *Ose Meji* shrine with Chief Araba.



- iii. **Egúngún** Festival: During this time, the masquerade and mascots of the warriors-families and other homesteads perform on various days for a fortnight usually in June. The most eminent of these masquerades are the ones said to have led military exploits during the Ibadan military enterprise such as *Oloolu*, *Alapansanpa*, and *Atipako*. The traditional chief in charge is Olori Alagba.

Additionally, the Olubadan-in-Council usually recognizes and approves the appointment of Chief Iman of Ibadan as the traditionally recognized head of the Muslims. The Olubadan-in-Council also recognizes and approves the appointment of Baba-Isale Onigbagbo of Ibadanland as the head of the Christians. Likewise, Olubadan-in-Council recognizes all bishops of Christian communities in Ibadanland irrespective of their sects and denominations.

The structure and organization of the traditional system in Ibadan described below is usually adopted in the Ibadan villages. Because of the military nature of the Ibadan chieftaincy system, it operated as a military aristocracy such that until 1946 only chiefs in the Balogun line became Olubadan. The change in the form of diarchy took place when Oyetunde as Otun Olubadan became Olubadan. Since 1946, the Balogun and Otun lines began to rotate alternately on the promotional ladders as shown below with the Mogaji at the very last bottom.

Table 1: The Promotional Ladder

Egbe Agba (Civil Line)	Egbe Balogun (Military Line)
Aota	Laguna
Lagunna	Aare Ago
Aare-ago	Ayingun
Ayingun	Asaju
Asaju	Ikolaba
Ikolaba	Aare-Alasa
Aare-Alasa	Agba Akin
Agba Akin	Ekefa
Ekefa	Maye



Maye	Abese
Abese	Ekarun Balogun
Ekarun Olubadan	Ekerin Balogun
Ekerin Olubadan	Ashipa Balogun
Ashipa Olubadan	Osi Balogun
Osi Olubadan	Otun Balogun
Otun Olubadan	Balogun

(Source: Akinyele, 2011)

The following who are now called high chiefs constitute the Olubadan-in-Council, the pre-eminent advisory council of the Olubadan. This traditional council usually meets weekly or fortnightly to consider issues of tradition, customary, and other chieftaincy matters. The council operates based on consensus but the Olubadan has the final say on all issues.

Table 2: Oludadan-in-Council

Otun Line	Balogun Line
1. Otun Olubadan	Balogun of Ibadanland
2. Osi Olubadan	Otun Balogun of Ibadanland
3. Ashipa Olubadan	Osi Balogun
4. Ekerin Olubadan	Ashipa Balogun
5. Ekarun Olubadan	Ekerin Balogun
6. Iyalode of Ibadanland	Seriki of Ibadanland
7. - - -	Ekarun Balogun

(Source: Akinyele, 2011)

It should be noted here that the number is not even so that there would be no tally in any decision-making process.

Impacts of Christianity on Ibadanland

The advent of Christianity has many impacts on the development of Ibadanland (Ajayi, 2015). Among them are establishment of many primary and secondary schools in the city. Ajayi (2015) listed some of these primary schools as established by Christian missions: St. David's



School, Kudeti (1853), St. Peter's School, Aremo (1865), and St. Paul's School, Yemetu (1869). These three schools were established by the Church's Missionary Society (CMS). Other Christian missions like Wesleyan Methodist (1888), the Roman Catholic (1895), the Baptist (1906), the Salvation Army (1921), the Seventh-Day Adventist (1926) and other missions. Ajayi (2015) continued to list some of the secondary schools established by Christian missions. These included: Wesley College (Methodist, 1905), Ibadan Grammar School (Anglican, 1913), Ibadan Education Training Centre (1948). Moreover, the Christian missions revolutionized the language of Ibadan people – Yoruba – by studying the language and developing some literatures in language (Ajayi, 2015). These innovations brought remarkable changes to the lives of the people of Ibadanland, and by extension their religious, economic, social, and political lives.

Conclusion

It should be clear from the analysis of events of the history of Ibadan that there is only one symbol of unity in Ibadanland, which is the OLUBADAN. As far as Ibadan is concerned, all other institutions are mere agents of unity or catalysts for concretizing that unity. It is the lack of realization of that fact by some indigenes and settlers alike that occasionally causes a ripple that never lasts. Like all human endeavours, the Ibadan traditional and religious system embodies within it some areas of weaknesses and areas of strengths. It is essential to identify such critical areas of weaknesses and strengths that require elucidation. The strengths and weaknesses of an entity may be foundational, fundamental, or organizational. As it has been observed from the historical accounts of Ibadan. The fundamental basis of the Ibadan traditional system is that it is antimonial and republican.

Recommendations

These issues need to be highlighted for necessary reform:

1. The recruitment system involves the Mogaji title which is the fundament of the Ibadan traditional system: the procedure of



recruiting Mogaji which is the representative of a clan component (*Agbo-ile*) comprises many families with the same and common heritage. Anybody chosen as Mogaji will represent the family clan in the Ibadan traditional council system.

2. Need for a specific code of conduct: the present system abhors corruption whereby wealth and the ability to play ball with authority are the qualifications. Anybody who will be appointed Mogaji must be a responsible and diligent member of the family. The Mojajis represent the compound in the Ibadan traditional council in the urban city. There must be a complete departure from the present procedure which must be sanitized and devoid of corruption.
3. The relationship between the Mogaji and Baale: the relationship between the Mogaji and the Baale. According to Ibadan tradition, any person or family who does not belong to a compound in the city and a village in the rural area is not a confirmed indigene of Ibadanland. Each family clan includes a Mogaji in the city and a Baale in the village. Therefore, there must be unity between the Mogaji and Baale in the same clan or lineage as against what is happening currently.
4. Anybody aspiring to be Mogaji which is the bedrock of the traditional system in Ibadanland must have a certain level of education preferably not less than a West Africa School Certificate and must be gainfully employed. Similarly, he must not be involved in any criminal activity. Most importantly, he must be acceptable to all members of his family lineage whom he wants to represent.
5. Befitting palace: it is a matter of joy that a betting palace which is adjudged to be one of the best in Africa has been constructed by the Council of Ibadan Indigenes and was commissioned by the Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde on July 10, 2024 (Ajia, 2024, July 10).
6. The recruitment system involving the Mogaji title: the appointment to the position of a Mogaji should not be more than



thirty-five years at the time of the appointment. This is because of the long ladder to reach the Olubadan cadre.

7. The two promotional lines should be revisited: it is recommended that the ladder to the throne of Olubadan should be shortened so that it will not take long before a Mogaji becomes an Olubadan.
8. Record keeping: there should be proper record keeping of minutes of meetings, names of compounds (*agbo-ile*), numbers and categories of chiefs, and the like.
9. External relations: other kings and chiefs, local government council heads, state government officials and the federal government should have proper and cordial relationships with the Olubadan and his chiefs.
10. Public relations: the activities of the Olubadan should have good publicity and image building in and outside of Ibadan.

References

- Adeboye, O. A. (2003). "The City of Ibadan" in G.O. Oguntomisin (ed.). *Yoruba Towns and Cities*. Vol. 1. Ibadan: Bookshelf Resource Ltd (pp. 7-19).
- Adejuwon, J.O. (1963) "Farming and Farmlands in Ibadan, Western Nigeria", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London.
- Adelekan, I. O. (2016). "Ibadan City Diagnostic Report: Working Paper #4." *Urban Africa Risk Knowledge*.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a02c4e9ed915d0ade60daac/Urban_ARK-IBADAN_CITY_DIAGNOSTIC_REPORT-07032016_2_IOA.pdf
- Ajayi, S. A. (2015) "Christian Missionary Enterprise in Ibadan: 1851-2000." in D. Layiwola (ed). *The City State of Ibadan: Text and Contexts*. Ibadan: Institute of African Studies.
- Ajia, J. (2024, July 10). Olubadan Coronation: Makinde Unveils Ultra-modern Palace. *The Punch*. <https://punchng.com/olubadan-coronation-makinde-unveils-ultra-modern-palace/>
- Akande, Abiodun Olasupo (2019). "Ará Òrun Kìn-in Kin-in: Òyó-Yòrùbá Egúngún Masquerade in Communion and Maintenance of Ontological



Balance [†] *Genealogy*, 3(1): 7.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3010007>

Akinola R.A., (1963). "Ibadan Region". *Nigerian Geographical Journal* Vol.6 No1.p106.

Akinyele T.A. (2011). *Ibadan Traditional System Reform and Regeneration*. Ibadan: KAJIN Publishing.

Alabi, Wasiu Ogunboye (2021). The Urban-Rural Interface in Ibadan, 1900-1999. A thesis in the Department of History, the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

<https://pgsds.ictp.it/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/1470/alabi.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Albert, Isaac Olawale, et al (1995). *Informal Channels for Conflict Resolution in Ibadan, Nigeria*. IFRA-Nigeria.

<https://doi.org/10.4000/books.ifra.705>

Awe B.A. (1973) "Militarism and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Country: The Ibadan Example". *J.A.H.* IXVI,

Awe, B. (1967). "Ibadan, Its Early Beginnings", in P.C. Lloyd et al. (eds.), *The City of Ibadan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 11-13).

Awe, B, A. P. Ogundeji, & A. S. Ajayi (2010). *Oba (Dr) Samuel Odulana Odugade 1: The 40th Oludadan of Ibadanland: A Biography*. Ibadan: Tafak Publishers.

Fadeyi, Olufunke Omotayo (2010). *From Obscurity to Celebrity*. Salem Media Nigeria Ltd

Falola T. (1984) *The Political Economy of a pre-Colonial African State: Ibadan, 1830-1900*. Ife: Ife University Press.

Falola, T. (2012). *Ibadan Foundation Growth and Change, 1830 – 1960*. Ibadan: Bookcraft.

Falola, Toyin and Ann Genova (eds.) (2006). *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. Rochester, NY, University of Rochester Press.

Folorunsho, C.A. (1998) "The History and Anthropology of Habour Mobilization of Agricultural Production among the Yoruba" *West African Journal of Archaeology*. 28:2. P70

Fourchard, L. (2003). Urban Slums Reports: The case of Ibadan, Nigeria. *Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*. Institut Francais de Recherche en Afrique (IFRA).

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Ibadan.pdf



- Guyer, J. (1997). *An African Niche Economy: Farming to feed Ibadan 1968-1988*. London: Edinburgh University Press.
- Guyer, J. (1997). *An African Niche Economy: Farming to Feed Ibadan, 1968-1988*. London: Edinburgh University Press
- Ibadan Population 2024. World Population Review.
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/ibadan-population>
- Ibadan South Diocese (2003). *The Cathedral Church of Saint David Kudeti Ibadan*. Ibadan: Polygraphic Venture Ltd.
- Ilori, C.O. (1962). "Economic Organisation of Traditional Markets in Yorubaland". *Nigerian Agricultural Journal*. Vol. 4. No 2.
- Jimoh, D. I. (2014). First Generation Christians in the Era of Yoruba Wars: The Experience of Ibadan Converts. *VUNA Journal of History and International Relations*, 2(1): 150-160.
- Layiwola D. (ed) (2015). *The City State of Ibadan: Text and Contexts*. Ibadan: Institute of African Studies.
- Lloyd, P.C. (1951). "The Yoruba Lineage" *Africa* Vol. XXV. P236
- Mabogunje, A.L. (1961). "Ibadan Black Metropolis", *Nigeria Magazine*, 68.
- Ojo, O. (2008) "The Organization of Atlantic Slave Trade in Yorubaland, Ca 1777-Ca1856". *The African Studies* 41.1:77
- Olaniyi R. (2015) "Economic History of Ibadan" in D. Layiwola (ed). *The City State of Ibadan: Text and Contexts*. Ibadan: Institute of African Studies.
- Oyefeso, Folu (2022, July 14). The birthplace of Christianity in Yorubaland - The Hinderer house, Ibadan. <https://www.foluoyefeso.com/post/the-hinderer-house-and-the-birth-of-christianity-in-yorubaland>
- Solaja, Oludele Mayowa and Adesina Abass Olayiwola (2021). Oke-Ibadan Festival and the Ethnography of Aboke people of Ibadan. *Yoruba Studies Review*, 5(1.2):1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.32473/ysr.v5i1.2.130119>
- Tomori, M. A. (n.d.). Ibadan History from Lagelu Era and the Impact of Political Crisis in the Nineteenth Century.
<https://macosconsultancy.com/Publication/IBADAN%20HISTORY%20FROM%20LAGELU%20ERA%20AND%20THE%20IMPACT%20OF%20POLITICAL%20CRISIS%20IN%20THE%20NINETEENTH%20CENTURY.pdf>