

About the Book

Professor R.A. Olaoye committed most of his over three decades of teaching and research career toward interrogating the changing contours of African indigenous science, technology and economic development especially since the pre-colonial epoch. Olaoye's key focus was to understand the diverse nature and values of indigenous techno-scientific ideas and to show how they contributed to the socio-economic, cultural and political development of the Nigeria societies prior to the advent of European colonialism. This book provides an especial historical analysis of the corpus of issues that undergird the field of Indigenous science, technology and economic transformation particularly from the repertoire of Professor R.A. Olaoye intellectual sagacity and scholarship over the years. Drawing from rich history of different Nigerian societies, this book demonstrates the *how* and *why* of the various forms, nature, values and challenges associated with the development of indigenous and technology in Africa. From the caboose of history, this book argues that the pursuit and realisation of Africa's sustainable techno-scientific development and industrialization will remain largely a mirage until the enormous potentials that abound in indigenous science and technology across communities in Africa are optimized and prioritized.

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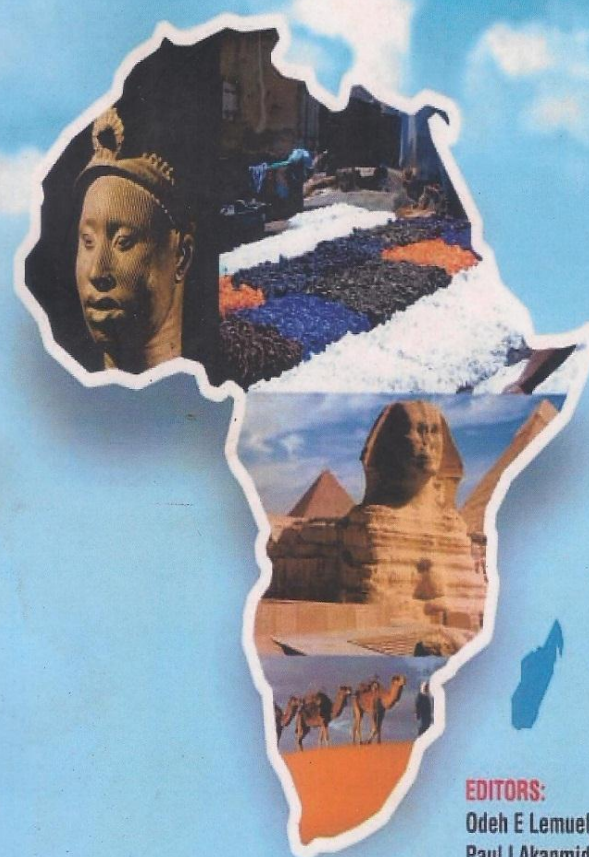
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HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA

HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA

Essays in Honor of Professor Raimi A Olaoye



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CHAPTER 1

**Professor Olaoye Raimi, a Historian and Administrator:
Engaging Discourse through the Mirror of his Works**

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Introduction

Over the years, African scholars have neglected the memoirs or biographies of their heroes. They did not attach much importance to the life of individuals, development, geographical influences and the effects on their society role models to the next generation. Rather, most scholars have focused their attention largely on the political, economic and religious activities. While doing this, the activities of Europeans in Africa were given prominent attention. Where appreciable efforts were made on individual memoir or biography, they were often presented as epitaphs or tributes after the transition of those individuals. This sheer academic negligence has denied Africans the great experiences and exploits of Africans in different sectors of human endeavor. The European colonialist to some extent capitalized on this major shortcoming to foist on African the European historical ideas. This largely explains why Europeans explorers, colonialists, soldiers, religionists, missionaries permeated the scenes of Africa historical discourses before 1945.¹ Consequently, many African memoirs and their great achievements were lost. For example, the life histories of great hunters, fishermen and women, warriors, diviners (Babalawo) etc, were hardly documented. Paucity of early historical ideas that were known and documented on Africans was done by early Islamic writers such as al-Bakri, al-Sharif al-Idrisi, Ibn Khadun, Ibn Battuta, Ibn al-Faqui al-Hamadhani among others and later European explorers, missionaries and traders, such as Mungo Park, Hugh Clapperton, William Balfour Baikie, Charles Robert Burton,

CHAPTER 2

The Place of Spiritual Weapons in Ilorin Warfare in the Nineteenth Century

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Introduction

Africa's belief in spiritual element and its efficacy found extensive expression in her warfare. The traditional religion, which had been the source of faith in most pre-colonial African societies, gave the people strong belief in gods, deities, spirits and ancestors in determining the affairs of the living. In pre-colonial Yorubaland, belief in spirit, magic and metaphysics was an important factor in the social, political and economic life. Indeed, among some African people's spiritual elements were invoked to take up abode in specific things or persons whenever they were considered to be beneficial. An important metaphysical element in most traditional societies was the role played by deities, which were manifested in different forms. Because of their special role as representatives of the pure spirit, deities are worshiped and approached for assistance at critical periods, particularly in defence of the community during war and protection for the warriors in the battle field.¹

In warfare, metaphysical weapons involved incantations, invocations, and the use of spirit to attack the opponent. Metaphysical element was a potent offensive and defensive weapon during warfare in pre-colonial Yorubaland² and was inherent in Yoruba traditional life and society. The Yoruba have firm belief in the reality of the unseen spirits and in the use of magical arts to control the phenomenon of nature, the physical and mental worlds. Magic is used by the Yoruba to secure contact with the invisibles; and to seek favour from the unseen spirits through the use of charms, incantations and sacrifices.³ During war, magical practices are often displayed in winning and in surviving.⁴ Thus, magical practices, invariably are not peripheral but central elements in Yoruba warfare. These include charms, incantations, masking and masquerading, war songs and dance, carvings, and modeling etc. They involved artistic activities, which later function in

two ways: as means to pre-conceived idea and as agents to arouse emotions.

Meanwhile, even though the Islamic faith had a strong influence on the belief system of the people during the precolonial Ilorin, after the establishment of the emirate, Yoruba metaphysical elements were not completely eradicated in her warfare efforts.

Yoruba Deities in Warfare

Sometimes the survival or destruction of a tribe after a natural calamity is attributed mythically to the intervention of a deity identifiable in a particular instrument that helped in preventing or causing the calamity. In this sense therefore, a deity could play both offensive and defensive roles. The Yoruba for example reverences *Ogun* as the deity of war and iron. Following this, they pay special homage to *Ogun* (Yoruba god of iron) in times of war and people who work with iron tools such as hunters, barbers, butchers, and blacksmiths held him in high esteem of honour and worship.⁵

There is further a recognized kind of hierarchy among the deities in their relation with God and human beings. This is more clearly stated by Idowu in his description of the Yoruba divinities. According to him, the first among the Yoruba divinities in the hierarchy is the *Orisa-nla*. He is known as the supreme divinity in Yorubaland as well as the great or arch-divinity. It is sometimes said that he is the father of all the other deities.⁶ He acts as God's deputy before all other deities. Some other deities recognized in Yoruba belief include *Orunmila* who is believed to be God's deputy in wisdom and knowledge. He is sought during divinations; *Ogun* recognized to be the owner of iron and steel, very strong in perfecting human labour as well as reputable for helping in times of war; *Sango* is the manifestation of God's wrath. Of particular significance in Yoruba belief and indeed in most African societies is the deity known as *Esu*, characteristically regarded as devil because of her function in vexing and testing the sincerity of men before God.⁷ The trio of *Ogun*, *Sango* and *Esu* are important deities which the Yoruba always appeased and invoked during battles.

Yoruba Spirituality and Preparation for War

In military perspective, Yoruba trust in the use of metaphysical weapons began with adequate preparation for every campaign through

divination. An essential aspect of pre-war activities was to consult the *Ifá* (oracle). This was necessary to ensure that the right decisions were taken concerning the war. The war leaders consulted priests for divine guidance before embarking on the campaigns. The typical Yoruba army was, thus, invariably accompanied by a contingent of priests and traditional doctors. While in camp, the *Ifá* (oracle) was regularly consulted every morning.⁸ An ancient Oyo King, who relied heavily on oracular guidance was *Alaúfin Ajaka*. Tradition has it that he had a retinue of powerful medicine-men in his service as he prosecuted his expansionist wars with as many as 1,060 of his chiefs and princess.⁹ In Ibadan, there was the example of *Balógun Ibikunle*, who was the commander-in-chief of the Ibadan army during the *Ijaye* war. He was known to have consulted the *Ifá* (oracle) regularly; for this purpose, he had a special spiritual stool.¹⁰

Ifá divination evidently played a significant role in the process of establishing several kingdoms all over Yorubaland. For instance, it is recorded in Old Oyo tradition that every second year, the *Alaúfin* launched a military expedition under a member of the royal family. The commander always took along with him a *Babaláwo* (diviner) to serve as his counselor. Such a diviner also took with him *Ifá* accessories such as *Opele*, *Iroke*, *Ogere Ifá* and *Opon Ifá*. Usually, before setting out, the commander would consult the *Ifá* (oracle) for advice. At the end of every successful campaign, offerings were made to the gods and deities for their assistance. In cases where a new settlement was to be founded, the oracle was consulted concerning the site, size and destiny of the new community. The oracular response was usually based on a specific *Odu Ifá*, which specified the ritual sacrifices to be offered and the customs to be adopted by the inhabitants of the new settlement.¹¹ Even when individual hunters, aggrieved princes or banished army commanders or chiefs decided to establish new settlements, the same process of *Ifá* divination was adopted. This was why most Yoruba towns had *odu-Ifá* which established them.

Important *Ifá* divinations in the military circle in precolonial Yorubaland were *Oyeku* (long life) *Ose* (success), and these had impact on the warriors' accomplishment and the founding of new communities. For instance, *Ose-míjì* was the *Odu Ifá* used to establish Ibadan, apparently because of the city's military disposition. In line with Yoruba tradition, when Lagelu established Ibadan, he consulted the oracle and

Ose meji was divined for the city. Therefore, Ibadan was regarded as the hometown of *Ose*.¹² It is presented in part as:

Eriwo yà! Àyà gbó Àyà
tó
Àyà je.

This Ifá divination is represented as follows:

I	I
II	II
I	I
II	II

The above *Odù* of *Ose* implies victory, success or accomplishment in the mission being embarked upon. *Ose* means to overcome, to be victorious or to be triumphant. *Ose* on the right and *Ose* on the left implied total victory. If it came up during divination, the diviner then casts twice more to inquire whether it came with *ire* (good) or *ibi* (bad). If it was *ire*, there were verses which indicated it, and if *ibi*, there were also verses. Thus, any time the diviner asks how the day was going to be and the *Ose-meji* with *ire* came up, it would indeed be very good, but if it came with *ibi*, it was a strong warning to be careful. In both cases, the advice of the *Ifá* priest must be strictly followed.¹³ However, the basic message in the *Odù* was that life is a mixture of victories and defeats which was represented *Ose* (success) or *Okanran* (difficulty or challenges).

Spirituality in Ilorin Warfare

Yoruba cultural influence and the migration of groups to Ilorin enhanced traditional practices in the city before the establishment of the emirate. Indeed, it was revealed that the success of the Islamic evangelism within Ilorin metropolis and its environs was partly facilitated by the efforts of some former practitioners of the traditional religion who, having accepted Islam became keen in giving spiritual support to its evangelism. A sterling example was the turbaned scholars in Ilorin, popularly known as *Makondoro*,¹⁴ who were actively involved in Islamic evangelism in and around Ilorin city.

In few areas outside the metropolis of Ilorin emirate, masking and masquerading (*egúngún*) were used in wars as spiritual weapons. In such communities, masquerades were part of the security and law enforcement agents. They were used to punish offenders by either

banishing them from the town or to prescribe the appropriate sacrifices to be offered by anyone who violated the norms in order to appease the gods or the ancestors. For instance, in Oro, an Igbomina town then under Ilorin emirate, the *Egúngún Páká* was used to banish offenders from the community. In one such incident, a man named Abisi Ogun was said to have given his friend an herbal substance after which the man died. It was later confirmed that Abisi actually poisoned his friend. Consequent upon this incident, Abisi was sent out of Oro with the use of *Egúngún Páká*. In a related incident, a man known as Baba Ijesa, after violating the rule of the society, was banished from Oro using the same procedure.¹⁵

Thus, it was this security function that underscored the significance of masquerades in pre-colonial military organization of pre-colonial Yoruba communities. Examples of masquerades that were associated with warfare include *Alápánsánpá* of Ibadan, *Abobiakuro* of Edun abon and *Onimogala* of Moro to mention a few. These masquerades usually incorporated into their *ago* or *ceku* (costumes) dangerous charms like *áfòse* or *àwíse*, which is normally put in deer horn; *oruka-ere* (charmed ring) and *epe* (curse), which are put in cylindrical wooden containers, called *apó*.¹⁶ The *Oloje* in Ilorin was reported to be strong practitioners of the masquerade elements of the traditional religion. The ancestor of the *Oloje*, one Omololu is reported to have come to Ilorin from Old Oyo after a royal tussle and his failure to secure headship of his community. Omololu, on account of his spiritual powers, became a formidable force in Ilorin warfare and pitched his station somewhere in the outskirts of the town along IlorinKaiana road. Other areas outside the metropolis where traditional practices were popular include Ojugbede, Awe, Alagogo, Yowere, Odegiwa, Ipaye/Mejida, Ilota and Kere.¹⁷

In view of this prevalence of the traditional worship and practices, the spiritual element became quite visible in Ilorin military and its weapon system, particularly in the early Nineteenth Century. Evidently, Yoruba spiritual weapons used by Ilorin warriors included *áfòse*, *ipè*, and *isújú* (for hypnotism and command). Others were herbal bullet proofs like *asaki ibon*, *afobon* and *ayeta* (charms that protects warriors against bullets). Spiritual weapons like *egbè* and *áfèrè* (charms for invisibility and disappearance) helped the users to disappear at will. *Isújú*, similarly used to conceal the user's physical presence from the enemies, while *eyin-lo-lobe so*, ensured that the enemies missed their mark. All these

were used by the bearer for protection against enemy attacks and to make him invincible. Some of the offensive metaphysical weapons were *Òdògùn If'jú*; supernatural means of inflicting blindness on the enemy; *apeta* (invocation shooting on the enemy), amulets-bindings such as those worn around the waist, neck and arm, known as *ifúnpá*, and *ìgbàdí*.¹⁸

Ilorin's geo-ethnic factor as a location between Yorubaland and the northern part of what later became Nigeria, as well as a city, which attracted different groups in the Nineteenth Century, played a prominent role in its access to and use of metaphysical weapons of various kinds. Ilorin's proximity to the Old Oyo and several Yoruba communities gave her access to some of the metaphysical weapons enumerated above, even though with time, the influence of Islamic religion discouraged her people from most of the traditional practices.

Furthermore, the personality of *Ààrè* Afonja as a military leader, who achieved independence for the city, as well as populating it with people from neighbouring communities, attracted spiritual military weapons to the town. These settlements include Kanla, Oke-Suna, Ganmo, Elerinjare, Idofian, Oke-oyi, Ibare, Igbon, Reke and Iresa. However, by this act, Yoruba inhabitants with the paraphernalia of military, culture and tradition including their metaphysical element contributed to Ilorin's weapon system.

The *Kákánfò* himself relished the efficacy of spiritual weapons as an important ingredient in fortifying him as the commander-in-chief of Oyo army. By tradition, the title (*Kákánfò*) was given to the most distinguished military personality in the empire, and thus, further fortifications and empowerment were always carried out on him to render him invincible in keeping with the requirements of position he occupied. For instance:

Like the *Ìlàris*, at the time of his assuming office, he (*Kákánfò*) is first to shave his head completely and 201 incisions are made on his occiput, with 201 different lancets and specially prepared ingredients from 201 viols are rubbed into the cuts, one for each. This is supposed to render him fearless and courageous. The *Kákánfò* always shaved, but the hair on the inoculated part is allowed to grow long, and when plaited, forms a tuft or a sort of pig tail.¹⁹

Thus, *Kákánfòs* were generally very stubborn and obstinate. They have all been more or less troublesome, due, it is supposed, to the effect of the ingredients they were inoculated with. In war, they carry no weapon but a baton known as the "king's invisible staff".²⁰ With this type of preparation, *Kákánfò* Afonja was spiritually well armed and this was consolidated by the *Ààrè*'s continued search for greater powers in the period. It can therefore be argued that the spiritual element in Ilorin military began in the period of *Ààrè* Afonja.

After the *Ààrè*, the spiritual component continued to feature in Ilorin wars of survival, consolidation and expansion. For instance, evidence of metaphysical and spiritual weapons were given in the accounts of the military escapades of *Balóguns Gambari*, *Alánànmú*, *Ajikobi*, *Maiyaki*, *Oju-ekun*, *Zarumí Ogbondoroko* and other warriors in Ilorin in the Nineteenth Century.²¹ For instance, One Yusufu Baale, the ancestor of the present *Alánànmú* family, was a great warrior, renowned for his special whip which he used against his opponents.²²

Yusufu always beat the enemy with this whip before capturing them, hence, he received the name *Alana-mu*, which literally translates as "beat and capture the enemy". The Baale, who had just arrived in Ilorin from Reke, before the *Eleduwe* war, also put his herbal medicine to test by preparing a concoction, which healed the wound inflicted on Shitta, one of the sons of Sheik Alimi during the war against the Oyo-Borgu forces at the battle of Ita-kudimo.²³

A similar metaphysical instrument was the *Kaho*, a special charm-coated horn, usually blown to weaken the enemies and to make them defenceless. *Kaho* was particularly popular with, and a specialized military weapon of the *Mayaki* (*Maiyaki* or Warrior) family of Ilorin. This weapon, the horn, is said to date back to the period of Sheik Alimi, and was fundamental to *Maiyaki*'s war efforts. The progenitor of the *Mayaki* Muhammad Sambo was said to have migrated with the Sheik to Ilorin. They are said to have come from Gobir in Kebbi area.²⁴

Another notable personality was Danmurogo, a renowned and powerful Balogun Gambari, who was said to have powers with which he spoke with spirits at the Sobi Hills in the outskirt of Ilorin, he was feared by many people due to his spiritual powers.²⁵ Furthermore, *Zarumí Ogbondoroko*'s progenitor, Janju, migrated to Ilorin from the north (origin not specified) but settled first at Edidi, from where he moved to

Ilorin. Janju was initially an entertainer of the Ilorin authority with magic to turn to different forms. With time, his magical gift found application in military enterprise, where he joined the Emir's army in several battles and as a devout soldier, got rewarded with the title of *Zarumi Ologbondroko*, whose role was to first lead the cavalry out at any given battle.²⁶ These people brought their skills and powers to bear on the Ilorin army at various times and have become immortalised as great warriors, who contributed to the making of the Ilorin emirate.

Because the town comprised many groups with different religious backgrounds, especially before the *Jihad*, it was not impossible to find traditionalists, who believed in the efficacy of charms and employed them as fortifications during warfare. Indeed, the potency of spiritual weapon in Ilorin wars came to the fore during the hunter revolt in the early Twentieth Century in the Oke Moro area of the emirate. It also proved effective during the revolt against British taxation in the 1950s, popularly known in Ilorin as *Poun Meji La'osan*. A cross-section of respondents comprising blacksmiths, traditional title-holders and aged people in Ilorin made the following submission in respect to spiritual weapons used by Ilorin warriors in the Nineteenth Century.

Common Spiritual Elements in Warfare

Àjesára- special preparations taken to fortify the soldiers. Such preparations were made with different ingredients consisting of herbs, concoctions to increase the physical strength of a warrior and to also give him spiritual powers.

Arína - this was used to spiritually defect dangerous preparations, already embedded in the location by the enemies. These might include harmful elements such as charms, invocations and other related items that could affect the warrior.

With *Arína*, one could easily detect these dangerous items and avoid them or use other powers to render them harmless.

Afeeri - a charm used when the army or soldier was about to be overpowered by the enemies; this would make a warrior to become invisible to the enemies.

Pètupètu - a charm used by a soldier to change to different forms usually into animals to either intimidate the enemy/opponent or

disguise during battle. Normally, the warrior who turned into a more powerful animal would carry the day.

Àfòse - was used for commanding the enemy to do the bidding of the bearer.

Egbé- for disappearing from the battle field and appearing at a different location. This was usually used when the soldier was about to be overpowered.

Ilèrukànmì- was used to command the ground to take the warrior to an elevated place or bring him down from the high locations like trees, mountains.

Kànàkò- was used to shorten distances during battles to catch up with an escaping enemy or to escape from a dangerous location.

Òpá-Ogun - war staff signified the war insignia, which represented the identity of the Ilorin army. Thus, it was usually a specially prepared staff with charms and wrapped in white garment and carried to the warfront.

Ilù-Ogun - special war drum made with certain spiritual elements and used to initiate the battle.

Òrùka- rings of various sizes were fabricated by the *Àsúde* smiths and used for different purposes, including battles. These rings were broadly categorised into four, according to the materials used for their production. These were *Oruka Ide*, *Oruka Baba*, *Oruka Oje* and *Oruka Kúsanrín*. All these rings could be used for combat during warfare, depending on the choice of the user. The rings were prepared by *Àsúde* smiths made available to the users, who then added further herbal preparations that would give the desired spiritual powers. In this regard, traditional charismakers were the chief patrons of the *Àsúde* smiths.²⁷

Òrùka was not only popular with the Yoruba, but also among different groups in pre-colonial Nigeria. In Ilorin, the Yoruba populace believed in its efficacy as protection, fortification as well as weapons of attack against their enemies. When the ring was finally ready, it could perform different functions ranging from making the bearer to become

invincible, it could make the bearer's body impregnable to weapons like machete, swords and other piercing weapons, it be used to hit the opponent and make him fall; this was popularly known as *Orikaaliruó*. A ring could also be used to detect dangers ahead in an intended campaign; in this sense, it played the role of both warning and protection. Meanwhile, in the array of rings fabricated by the *Aside* smith, the *Kusanrin* was the most sought after because of the efficacy of herbal preparations on it.

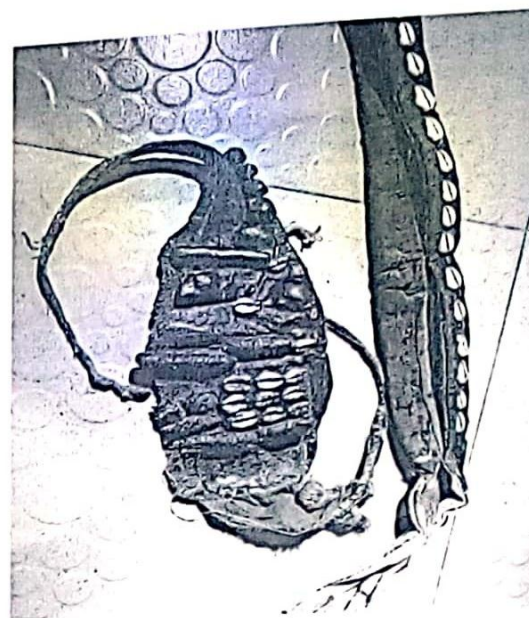
Adó-gourd made of brass, bonze or copper and was of different sizes. *Ado* was a container with some powdery herbal preparation known locally as *ebu*, which was intended to give the bearer extra strength and power when used. Sometimes, a warrior could drop some portion of the powdery content on his palm and swallow to give the desired effect, or the entire gourd could be swallowed with its content to give permanent effect.

Edan- a mini human statue prepared with herbal condiments used for attacking an opponent in battle. It could be sent to attack the person physically or the statue itself could be attacked so that the effect would be on the person whose spirit was used to prepare it.

Àbbà- is a U-shaped structure used to clip or tie the the opponent spiritually. *Àbbà* worked in the same way as *Sekeseke*, which was a chain-like weapon used to tie or trap an opponent and prevent him from running away. This same mechanism was used in *Emu*, which was also employed to capture the opponent. Technically, the trio of *Àbbà*, *Sekeseke* and *Emu* were instruments used by smiths to perform similar functions. Spiritually however, they were used to capture the enemy without being physically present; instead, some invocations and incantations were involved. This is buttressed by the popular Yoruba incantation: *sékéseké mu, àbbà mu, èmú kí mú nkàn tí lágbèdè*, which simply translates as nothing could escape the grip of the blacksmith, once these three instruments were available.

Bànte- charmed underwear used by the warrior.

Gbérioko- Magical Vest and various incantations.



Examples of amulets used by warriors for fortification in precolonial Yorubaland



Bante-Warrior's charmed under-wear

Charms worn on the neck by warriors



Igbadi- Charmed waist-band

Source: Pictures were taken by the researcher during field work.

Influence of Islam on Ilorin War Efforts

The Islamic religious became quite a strong factor in Ilorin wars after the establishment of its emirate especially from the period of Emir Abdulsalam (1823-1842). Meanwhile, certain injunctions from the Quran govern the conduct of warfare in Islam. Fundamentally, the Muslims were expected to defend the fold of Islam, but not to attack other groups if they were not first attacked. Indeed, most of the wars fought by Prophet Mohammad were defensive wars to protect the congregation of Islam. For instance, in *Surat Bakarah*, Quran Chapter 42, Verse 190, Allah says: "And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors."²⁸ It is perhaps in line with this provision that Islam became a strong consideration in Ilorin's war efforts particularly during the wars of expansion. Investigations revealed that before the outbreak of the Jihad, Islamic scholars in Ilorin lived in scattered settlements in such places as Oke-Suna, Ikokoro, Ojagboro, Akalanbi, Agbaji, only hearing of one another.²⁹

However, from the arrival of *Sheik Alimi*, Muslim scholars in Ilorin began to unite, particularly, in the course of practising the religion. Meanwhile, the scholars neither carried swords nor lances or other weapons of war. They were rather engaged in spiritual activities to protect Islam and to promote the spread of the religion to other parts of Yorubaland. Their efforts were mainly geared towards giving spiritual supports to the warriors through fervent prayers for the success of the Ilorin army. Islam thus became a strong factor in the Nineteenth Century Ilorin society in the bid to ensure the practice of the religion in its pristine form and this was extended to its environs through her wars of expansion.

It must be emphasised that religion played a prominent part in the zeal with which people joined the Ilorin army in the early Nineteenth Century. For example, within six years of *AlSalih's* stay in the town, *Afonja's* influence declined considerably because most of the slave-soldiers he used to sever Ilorin from Old Oyo switched allegiance to the Muslim scholar and his sons, *Abdulsalam* and *Slitta*. This shift of loyalty could not have been unconnected with the freedom which Islam preached at the period. After *Al-Salih's* death in 1823, it was easier

therefore for Abdulsalam to turn Ilorin into an Emirate, of course with the support of Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba Muslims, led by Solagberu.³⁰

The slave-soldiers must have been enthusiastic about the establishment of an Emirate in Ilorin for two main reasons: firstly, to consolidate their freedom from slavery; and secondly to be free to practice the Islamic faith. As contained in *Uthman Dan Fodio's Bayan Wajub, Al Hijira Ala-L-Ibad*, the Muslim slave's participation in the Islamic revolution in Ilorin should legally confer on them their freedom.³¹ Religious considerations thus swelled up the Ilorin army after Afonja's demise as wars of consolidation and expansion were embarked upon.

Furthermore, migration on the basis of religion had positive impact on the city's military as some of Ilorin warriors of the period were attracted to the town by Islam through Sheik Alimi. For instance, Ajia Gajo was a migrant from the vicinity of what later became Sokoto. Gajo and his younger brother, Kure Ahmeeda, were members of the entourage which accompanied Sheik Alimi to Ilorin. The two brothers lived at *Ile Olayomi* near Balógun Fulani's residence before they moved to Gambari area and settled in a place subsequently called *Ita Ajia*, where their descendants continued to live.³²

Gajo, who was a principal lieutenant of Ali Balógun Gambari and an accomplished warrior was appointed *Ajia* by Emir Abdulsalami. When he died, he was succeeded by Kure, his younger brother. However, by the time Kure died, there was no direct male descendant of his or of *Gajo*, his late brother, who was of age to assume the title of *Ajia*. The title was therefore, conferred on Opele, who was a Yoruba in-mate of *Ajia* Gajo's household.

Opele came to *Ajia* Gajo in Ilorin at the instance of *Esinkin Agbenawo-Oju-egun* of Omu-Aran. As an in-mate of the household, Opele was faithful to *Ajia* Gajo. He was also a dependable lieutenant to the *Ajia* in battle.³³

These two attributes endeared him to the entire *Ajia* household and stood him in good stead for appointment as the *Ajia* Opele in succession to *Ajia* Kure Ahmeeda. The title since remained with the Opele lineage while Kure Ahmeeda family, retained the title of Kure.

Usman Ajikobi, migrated to Ilorin as a follower of Sheik Alimi from Iseyin, he was also a steadfast follower and got rewarded with the Balógun Ajikobi title.³⁴ The progenitor of the *Maiyaki* also came with the Sheik and participated in many battles, having migrated to Ilorin from Kebbi area. Yesufu Alánámú, migrated to Ilorin from Old Oyo, first settling at Reke before eventually joining the army being raised by Emir Abdulsalami to face the joint Oyo-Bariba insurgents, who were making frantic efforts to re-capture Ilorin.³⁵ Zarumi Ogbondonroko's progenitor, Janju, migrated to Ilorin from the north (origin not specified) but settled first at Edidi, from where he moved to Ilorin.³⁶

Muhammed Yahaya, popularly known as *Oju-Ekun*, was another military man of great valour and strength, who is said to be of Kanuri stock from Borno. He migrated to Ilorin via Kuwo, from Old Oyo and also participated in many battles. From his name, *Oju ekun n seje*, which translates as "one whose face is terrifying like that of a lion",³⁷ there is no gainsaying that his military expertise was one of the high points of the early period in Ilorin. These people used their military skills to assist the Ilorin army at various times and became immortalised as great warriors, who contributed to the making of the Emirate.

Apart from the migration of military personalities to Ilorin in the period, there was the influx of Islamic scholars who contributed to the city's military enterprise on one hand and scholarship on the other hand. For instance, *Al-Illori* in his work titled *Lamhatul-'l-Ballur*, emphasises the mass importation of 'Ulamā from Katsina, Kanuri, Sokoto, Gobir and Borno areas to Ilorin during the period of Sheik Alimi and his sons Abdulsalam and Shitta. These scholars contributed greatly to Ilorin war efforts and the propagation of Islam through the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies. Indeed, *Al-Illori* classified the following individuals as first generation scholars in Ilorin: Sheik Abubakr Bube who was of Gobir descent and arrived Ilorin around 1828; Sheik Ibrahim Qabru-'l-'Ullum (popularly known in Ilorin as *Kuburu Karatu*, which means: the "Pit of Knowledge"). He arrived Ilorin during the reign of Emir Shitta around 1842; Sheik Ibrahim Al-Attār (Baba Turare) from Oyo-Ile, who settled in Ilorin around 1870; Sheik Ibrahim Bature Al-Akdazi came to Ilorin during the reign of Emir Abdulsalam; Sheik Badmus Ibn Musa Al-Arbaji (*Agbaji*) arrived Ilorin during the era of Emir Shitta.³⁸

With the widespread practice of the Islamic religion in Ilorin and Yorubaland, the role of Quran in warfare became very prominent in the Nineteenth Century. Faith-based weapon became a formidable element in Ilorin military as Muslim clerics were approached for spiritual guidance and support during campaigns. Verses in the Holy Quran were drawn to assist in Ilorin's offensive and defensive warfare. The belief of Muslims is that the Quran is a complete manual for mankind to use in all aspects of life. Thus, Ilorin relished this position by employing Quran chapters and verses to fortify her warriors.³⁹

Physical instruments of war such as clubs, swords, spears, arrows, lances and so on, were sometimes immersed in substances prepared with Quran texts to increase their potency on the enemies. This was in addition to prayers that were organised by scholars specifically to seek Allah's favour in any prospective battle. Such prayers were offered fervently by Muslim *Ummah* (congregation) before every encounter, and were continued throughout the campaign. It needs to be emphasised that most military leaders believed in the efficacy of this Islamic spiritual element in warfare, in spite of other weapons and accoutrement of war in their possession. To this end, Quran texts were sometimes written on leather, papers or other similar surfaces like leaves, clothes and wrapped, and were either fastened to the body of horses, weapons, or kept in the pocket of the warrior himself for protection. All these point to the level of reliability of the warriors on the Quran as a spiritual weapon in warfare.⁴⁰

Indeed, the war standard carried by the war leaders is said to bear very strong spiritual significance. The staff, an elongated piece made of wood or metal with a wrapping of white cloth at the top, was the symbol of war command. It also symbolised the leadership of the war commanders in battlefield.⁴¹

This staff is said to have also contained Quran verses and chapters inscribed on its top and wrapped in white cloth, all aimed at giving divine guidance, protection and victory to the warriors in their encounters.

Quran chapters and verses, the warriors believed, also served as back-up to their physical weapons. Thus, warriors used bindings, amulets and other related items with spiritual content as protection

during encounters. This inter-dependency between warriors and Muslim clerics also enhanced the level of socialization among the diverse groups in Ilorin at the period. Muslim clerics thus became important aid to the warriors and were prominent in the city. It has been emphasised, for instance, that Muslim charms were also highly prized by Yoruba warriors in general. Indeed, it was for this reason that *Ààrè* Afonja had to establish connections with as many different categories of people within the *Alaàfinnate* as possible, particularly, the Muslims, and to endeavour to obtain their help in the subversion of the *Alaàfin*'s power. It is also possible that Afonja was interested in contacts with the Muslims of Nupeland. Furthermore, some Muslims from *Oke-Imole*, Ilorin, also claim that their ancestors came from Old Mali to settle in the town.⁴²

Apart from spiritual element of warfare, Islamic religion equally featured in the production of talisman; spiritual water (*hantu*), which involved the writing of Quran verses either on wood (*wala*) or other similar surfaces and rinsed in water to be drunk to fortify the warrior. Fig. A, B and C immediately following this section shows relevant items used by Ilorin scholars. Few examples of verses from the Holy Quran used to fortify warriors for offensive and defensive purposes were *Surat Al-Fathia*, *Al-Baqara*, *Qursiyy*, *Al-Nas*, *Al-Falaq*, *Quraish*, *YaSin*, and *Qaf*. The full texts of few of the Quran chapters are captured below. Sura 1, (*Al-Fathia*) reads:

Bismillahi r-rahmani r-rahim—In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most mercifull

Allhamdu lillahi rabbi l-'alamin—All praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds

A-rahmani r-rahim—Most beneficent, most merciful *Maliki yawmi d-din*—King of the day of judgement *Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in*—You alone we worship, and to you alone turn for help

Ihadinā s-sirat al-mustaqim—Guide us (O Lord) to the path that is straight

Sirāt al-ladina an'amta 'alayhim gayril magd?bi 'alayhim walād dāllin—The path of those You have blessed, Not of those who have earned your anger, nor those who have gone astray

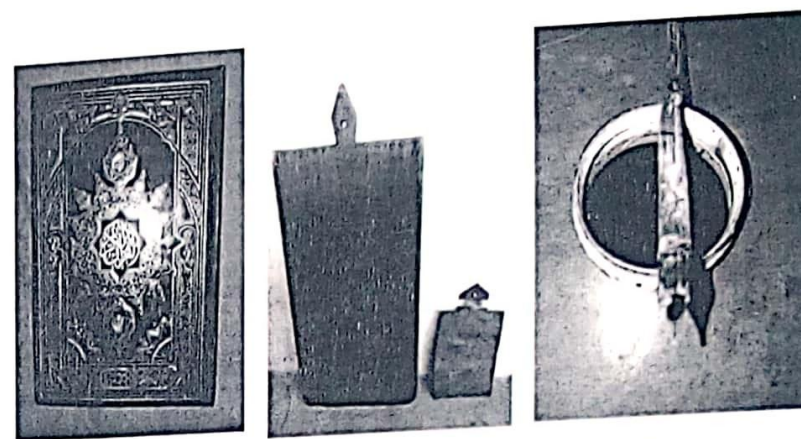
Sura 113 (*Al-Falaq*) reads:

Bismillahi r-rahmani r-rahim—In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most mercifull

Qul-audhu bi rabbil falaq—Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of rising day
Min sharri ma khalaq—From the evil of what He has created
Wa min' sharri ghushiqin idha waqab—And the evil of evening darkness when it overspreads
Wa min' sharri naffa thati fil u'qad—From the evil of sorceresses who blow incantations on knots
Wa min' sharrihasidin idha hasad—From the evil of the envier when he envies
 Sura 114 (*Al-Nas*) reads:

Bismillahi r-rahmani r-rahim—In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful
Qul-audhu bi rabbil naas—Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of men
Malikin naas—The King of men
Ilaahi naas—The God of men
Min sharri waswasas khannas—From the evil of him who breathes temptations into the minds of men
Alladhee yuwaswisu fee sudururin naas—Who suggests evil thoughts to the hearts of men
Minal jinnati wa naas—From among the jinns and men
 Sura 105 (*Al-Fil*) reads

Bismillahi r-rahmani r-rahim—In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful
Alam tarakayfa fa'alarabuka bi as'abil fili—have you (O Muhammed (Peace be upon him) not seen how your Lord dealt with the Owners the Elephants? [The elephant army which came from Yemen under the command of Abrahan Al-Ashram intending to destroy the *Ka'bah* at Makkah
Alam yaj alkaydahun fi tajlili—Did He not make their plot go astray
Wa'arsala alayhim tahiran Aba'bila—And sent against them birds, in flocks
Tar mihim bi'jaratin min sijjilin—Striking them with stones
Sijjil
Faja alahun ka'asfin maakulin—And made them like an empty field of stalks (of which the corn has been eaten up by cattle)⁴³



- A - the Holy Quran believed to provide complete protection by Muslims scholars.
 B - wooden and metal slate for inscribing texts from the Holy Quran.
 C - Locally made ink (*Tadawa*) used by Muslim scholars.

Source: Pictures were taken by the researcher during field work.

There was also fortune-telling (*iwose*) which Muslim spiritualists employed to inquire about the likely outcome of any proposed campaign so as to make necessary preparations. Portions of the Quran were also inscribed on paper or other soft surfaces and wrapped, then tied to war garment, weapons or kept in the warriors' pocket for protective purposes. This was popularly known as *tira* generally in Yorubaland but in Ilorin it was specifically referred to as *asiri*, which indicated that it was not every Muslim cleric that had knowledge of the secret for making such spiritual items.

Another important aspect of Islamic influence on Ilorin military and her society in the Nineteenth Century was the strengthening of the mosque as both a place of worship as well as a center of unity. Indeed, all sections of the Muslim congregation were represented in the Ilorin

mosque. These included the royalty as epitomized by emir, Imams and chiefs; the warriors as typified by the *Balóguns* and other military personalities; and the citizens. Thus, the mosque provided a formidable platform for increased solidarity among the various sections of Ilorin society, particularly, after the establishment of its emirate. This had positive impact on Ilorin's ability to institute the *Sharia* within its metropolis as well as to extend its influence to new areas. According to Jawondo, there was mutual respect and understanding among the principal officials of the mosque. At any occasion, be it political, social or religious, they were always together and did things in common and for a common interest.⁴⁴

The Ilorin military benefitted from this cohesion.

Buttressing this relation between the mosques, the leadership and the warriors in Ilorin, Ferryman in 1889, reported a colourful procession of the emir of Ilorin and his chiefs to the *Jummat* Central Mosque. According to him, "a number of men on foot armed with flintlocks, moved ahead, then followed a crowd of gaily-dressed chieftains, mounted and carrying spears and then the Emir himself.... attended by an immense bodyguard of functionaries on foot".⁴⁵

Crowder similarly maintains that the mosque became a strong, united and focused organ of governance in Ilorin Emirate until the infiltration and its eventual conquest by the British in 1897.⁴⁶

Islam therefore provided strong basis for the Ilorin military to thrive as it also enhanced the political and social interaction among its inhabitants. This was largely facilitated by the feeling of brotherhood and trust, which the faith emphasised among its adherents.

Conclusion

Spiritual and metaphysical elements were no less important in the weapon system of the Ilorin military in the Nineteenth Century as they were in most part of Yorubaland in the period under review. Indeed, as physical weapons were gathered by various groups in the town, so were spiritual arsenals. Ilorin profited immensely from being a location where several cultures converged and this brought a significant impact on her military system and strategies. Thus, Yoruba traditional belief in spirits and metaphysics was critical in Ilorin military, particularly in the early days of her break-up from the Old Oyo Empire. Groups such as Hausa,

Fulani, Nupe, Kanuri, Bariba and Gobir contributed to the spiritual weapon system. At the establishment of the emirate system in Ilorin, Muslim clerics became another veritable tool to the spiritual weapons through the use of texts from the holy Quran to increase the potency of physical weapons and to protect the warriors. This multifarious spiritual arsenal contributed to the success of Ilorin army in the pre-colonial period.

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