

Ilorin Centre of Learning Edited by S. A. Jimoh



Ilorin:

CENTRE OF LEARNING



A PUBLICATION TO MARK THE
11th
ANNIVERSARY
of
His Royal Highness
Alh. (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu Gambari, CFR
The Emir of Ilorin.

edited by
S. A. JIMOH

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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION TO MARK THE 11TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTALLATION OF HRH,
ALHAJI (DR.) IBRAHIM SULU GAMBARI, CFR, THE
11th EMIR OF ILORIN.

Edited by
S. A. JIMOH

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Preface

All over Nigeria, Ilorin is recognized as a Centre of Learning, *Ilu afa*, from where Islam and Islamic Scholarship spread to most parts of south-western Nigeria. It has produced great scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies and, of recent, scholars in various areas of western education. These efforts have not been adequately documented although a few books have been written on the history of this great Islamic emirate. The need was felt, therefore, to examine this very important area and document the salient factors in the growth and development of Islamic and western education in Ilorin. Our fear is that most of the significant stakeholders who can provide first-hand information are dying and we may soon lose all the primary sources of useful information which we need to document for posterity.

There was this more immediate motivation: the desire to publish a book in honour of the 11th Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu Gambari, who will be 11 years old on the throne of his forefathers on the 11th of November, 2006. We believe that as a sound scholar and a lover of education himself, this retired Chief Judge of a Court of Appeal is eminently deserving of this little tribute.

The present work has twelve chapters. In chapter 1, H.I. Salihu and I.A. Jawondo examine some of the views on the origin of Ilorin and end the chapter with a look at the Alimi Dynasty in Ilorin. In chapter 2, I.A. Jawondo presents an overview of traditional education in Ilorin, stressing that what happened in Ilorin was quite similar to what happened elsewhere, except that Islam influenced the principle and practice of traditional education in Ilorin. Chapter 3 examines the arts and crafts in Ilorin. Here also, Abdulrasaq Oniye tries to establish the link between Islam and the traditional arts and crafts of Ilorin.

Three chapters (chapters four, five and six) are, quite understandably, devoted to the themes of Islam, Islamic

scholarship and Arabic Literature. Z.I. Oseni traces the growth and development of Arabic and Islamic education in Ilorin and chronicles the numerous Islamic scholars according to whether they remained in Ilorin, they moved out of Ilorin or they came from elsewhere to settle in Ilorin. In chapter 6, Ali Ajeturmobo focuses on the great Islamic scholars of Ilorin who took Islam and Islamic Scholarship to Southern Nigeria, particularly the areas west of River Niger. In chapter six, R.D. Abubakre examines the contributions of Ilorin scholars to Arabic literature, with particular emphasis on Arabic praise poetry. He also presents a list of 45 scholars who have produced significant literary works in the last 200 years.

The earliest efforts by the colonial government to provide western education in Ilorin resulted in the establishment of the Ilorin Provincial School, Ilorin, in 1914. It was this school that was later moved to the present site of G.S.S. Ilorin where it transformed several times over from an elementary school, to a middle school, then a Provincial Secondary School and finally to a Government Secondary School. Among the old boys of this great school (which will soon be 100 years old) is the ninth Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji (Dr.) Zulkarnaini Gambari, Aiyelabowo V, father of the present Emir, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu Gambari. This is the story told in chapter seven by Shehu A. Jimoh.

Chapters eight and nine complement each other. In chapter eight, A. Y. Imam examines the contributions of Muslim Societies and Organizations (especially Ansarul-Islam Society) to the development of western education in Ilorin Emirate. A.L. Yahaya complements this in chapter nine by examining the contributions of the Christian Missions, beginning with the establishment of St. Barnabas Primary School in 1917.

As Medinat F. Salman points out in chapter ten, what happened to female education in Ilorin was quite similar to the experience in other parts of the old Northern Region. Ignorance,

early marriages and the conventional beliefs about the role of the woman as only a home maker accounted for the initial negative attitude to female education in Ilorin. Happily, this is becoming a thing of the past.

The first community school to be established in Ilorin is the Ilorin United Primary School which was opened in January, 1944. In chapter eleven, Toyin Akanbi presents a vivid account of meetings, fund raising and other activities that culminated in the establishment of the school. He also highlights the subsequent contributions of the Ilorin Descendant Progressive Union, the emirate community and individuals to the development of western education in Ilorin emirate.

The last chapter of this book examines the technology of Ilorin. In it, A.G.F Alabi and Y.A. Abdulkareem present the salient aspects of the old and (by today's standard) crude technology of tanning, pottery, weaving, iron mongery etc and give a guideline that could assist would-be investors in deciding on what industrial outfits they can establish in different parts of the emirate.

As you would readily appreciate, each of these chapters is elastic and important enough to be the subject of a whole book. We do not claim, for even one brief moment, that this book has told all the story. We have only tried to point out the great gaps that still exist in our knowledge in this area, and if our modest efforts succeed in challenging others to challenge us by carrying out further investigations, our objective would have been partly achieved.

For now, however, please do us a favour: open the next page ... We assure you of a grand and glorious adventure.

Shehu Jimoh
Editor

Foreword

It is a privilege and special honour for me to be invited to write the foreword to this book which was put together primarily to honour a great jurist and eminent scholar, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu Gambari, CFR, the 11th Emir of Ilorin who will be 11 years old on the throne of his forebears on the 11th of November, 2006. His Royal Highness is naturally excited and visibly emotional about this great historical occurrence and so are we in the University of Ilorin because there will never be another 11-11! We congratulate His Highness on this achievement and pray Allah to grant him many more years of useful service to humanity.

The University of Ilorin is committed to academic excellence. This is why, for instance, over the years, we have supported the research efforts of members of the University Community as much as available resources would permit. Our support for the present work, therefore, is only in line with our tradition of promoting academic excellence and supporting any research endeavours that would extend the frontiers of knowledge and move the society forward. I thank the Senate Research Committee that critically examined the proposal for this work and recommended some financial assistance. I also commend Professor Shehu Jimoh, Dean of Student Affairs, who thought out the idea in the first place. We in the University of Ilorin are proud to be associated with this history.

Our contribution to the research that culminated in this work of scholarship is another evidence of our belief in the collaboration that must exist between town and gown. Over the years, a cordial relationship has existed between University of Ilorin and the Ilorin Community and we are anxious to sustain this relationship. I believe that this cordial relationship accounts in part for our ability to sustain our tradition of unbroken academic calendar, particularly in the last ten years.

I commend the editor and the contributors for a job well done. I hope you will find this book an invaluable addition to your library collections.

Professor S.O.O. Amali, OFR
Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin
27/10/2006.

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Acknowledgment

When we started this project only a little over a month ago, we all convinced ourselves that it was worth our while. However, we were sceptical if much could still be achieved within the very limited time available to us, considering that this book was meant to commemorate the anniversary of the Emir's installation on November 11 and the book had to be ready before then. We most probably would not have been able to achieve the little we have achieved in putting this book together if not for the goodwill, support and cooperation of some people. We thank them all.

In particular, we thank HRH, the Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu Gambari who readily appreciated the idea and pledged his full support. We equally express our thanks to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor S.O.O. Amali and his team of principal officers for accepting the recommendation of Senate Research Committee to give some financial support to this project.

Apart from the publications we consulted, much information also came from some individuals we interviewed. They include Alhaji Yahaya Popoola (late Madawaki of Ilorin) who I had the privilege of interviewing over fifteen years ago, the late Wali of Ilorin, Alhaji A.M. Oniyangi and Alhaji Abubakar Lah, the Shettima of Ilorin. We are also grateful to the other individuals, colleagues, school principals, ministry officials, old boys of the school, etc who made useful data available to us.

Finally, I am grateful to Mr. Muritala Adi for typing and retyping several editions of the manuscripts.

May Allah reward you all abundantly.

Shehu Jimoh
Editor.

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ILORIN EMIRATE: ITS PEOPLE AND POLITICS

1

Hassan A. Salihu

And

Ibrahim A. Jawondo

Some Views on the Origin of Ilorin

This chapter deals with the situation in Ilorin before and after the *jihad* with particular reference to the origin of the people of Ilorin. Their socio-political and religio-economic life is also examined.

One tradition has it that Ilorin was a virgin land before the 17th century. Another states that Ilorin had been first inhabited sometime before the 17th century by a certain Baruba hermit of whom not much is known except that his place of abode thence became known as Baruba, perhaps to immortalize him. From being one Baruba man's abode, Ilorin transformed into a Yoruba settlement with the incoming of a certain Ojo Isekuse from Gambe near Oyo-Ile and Eminla successively in the 17th century. They were known to be itinerant hunters who erected transit camps at the point of a legendary rock on which they sharpened their iron and other hunting implements and from where the town allegedly got its name *Ilo-Irin* ('Ilo' means sharpening; 'Irin' means Iron)¹.

Another tradition holds that Ilorin was derived from ILU-ERIN, meaning the town of elephants. This tradition states that the founder of Ilorin was a certain Ayinla from Oyo-Ile (perhaps the same Ojo) and that he sojourned in Ilorin to hunt elephants. This tradition became popular when, in 1824, an elephant was killed on the outskirts of Ilorin at a place called Oko-Erin. Commenting on this, Jimoh(1994) believes that

killing of an elephant is not sufficient evidence to justify the claim that the word Ilorin was a derivation of ILU-ERIN; rather, Ilorin was derived from *Ilo-Irin* just as Osogbo was derived from *Oso-Igbo*².

In addition, although the killing of an elephant on the outskirts of the town to some extent erases the doubt as to whether elephants existed in the area, it raises more questions than answers. For instance, no information was given about the hunting prowess of Ojo Isekuse or Ayinla who is claimed to have come to Ilorin to hunt for elephants either in the history of Ilorin or that of Old Oyo. Even if we assume that he was a great hunter of elephants, could he have been the only one interested in hunting at Ilorin? That not many hunters hunt (or hunted) for elephants at Ilorin could be suggestive of the fact that the elephants were not in large number in Ilorin and as such, it could not have attracted popular usage. This perhaps made some scholars to believe that the only single elephant killed in 1824 must have strayed into Ilorin. This tradition is not likely to be the origin of the term Ilorin because the killing of an elephant happened long after the establishment of the town and indeed the emirate system in Ilorin.

However, it is important to also stress that the mere presence of the much-talked-about rock at Bamidele compound in Ilorin on which the hunting implements were said to have been sharpened is not also sufficient an evidence to hold tenaciously to the tradition that links the origin of the name "Ilorin" to the sharpening of iron. Many things need clarification. For instance, there is no evidence to show how many hunters were within the area or the population in general that could have warranted the popular usage of the word *Ilo-Irin*, nor is there any evidence to show that within the time Ojo was in Ilorin, he took to the profession of sharpening iron which might have eventually made the usage *Ilo-Irin* popular.

Apart from Ojo who is claimed to have sharpened his iron implements on the rock, there is no record of any other hunter who came to that place for that purpose, which perhaps might have popularized the usage of the term *Ilo-Irin*. It may not be out of place to suggest that the word *Ilo-Irin* might be a derivation from one of the Baruba words, since Ojo himself met the Baruba family there. The likely Baruba word is *Ironi*, that is, alligator pepper, which is indispensable among the Baruba people as warriors and charm makers.

It must also be noted that there were other rocks and rocky places and hills in and around Ilorin and beyond where such activities could also have taken place. What then could have made that of Bamidele compound unique and popular over and above others? Therefore, the pre-eighteenth century history of Ilorin is like a jig-saw puzzle with many of its parts missing. To adequately reconstruct this history, archaeologists, linguists, anthropologists and other researchers need to lend a helping hand in enriching our knowledge on the history of Ilorin at this period to avoid over-dependence on inadequate sources.

These situations and others relating to inadequacy of information might have compelled Johnson to conclude that Laderin, the grandfather of Afonja, was the builder of Ilorin as a Yoruba settlement. But records have it that in the early part of the 18th century Laderin became a noticeable personality in Ilorin, thus he could not have been the builder of Ilorin. After his death, Pasin, the son of Laderin was said to have openly and courageously, challenged *Bashorun Ga'a* (1754-1774) for being despotic in the administration of Oyo Empire. He was, however, killed by the men of *Ga'a* who pursued him to Olla where he was granted refuge³. The position of Baale Ilorin allegedly occupied by Laderin as a chief in the Oyo Empire was said to have been successively occupied by Pasin, Alagbin and Afonja who were his descendants⁴. Afonja rose from *Baaleship* to the exalted position of *Aare-Onakakanfo* (commander-in-

chief of the army) of Oyo empire during the reign of Alaafin

Abiodun Adegolu (d. 1789)⁵. Afonja's appointment led to a constitutional crisis. Consequently, Afonja declared himself independent of Oyo authority and used Ilorin as his base. This is the origin of the reference to Ilorin as *Ilorin Afonja*⁶. At this point, it is important to stress that the era of Afonja in Ilorin marked the very beginning of a quasi occupation of Ilorin by Yoruba overlords. Even then, the control was sectional. Afonja was only controlling his soldiers, members of his family and some Yoruba who left Oyo to join him in Ilorin for security reasons. In the view of Danmole (1980), the presence of Afonja in Ilorin attracted to Ilorin the Yoruba and Hausa merchants and Fulani pastoralists who needed security of life, property and livelihood.⁷

Afonja and his assorted groups for whom he provided leadership were located at Idi-Ape quarter. The earliest Muslim group was located at Okesuna, which was a *ribat* under the leadership of Al-Tahir nick-named Solagberu. The origin of Solagberu is differently reported. According to Jimoh (1984), he was a Beri-Beri man, while Johnson reports that he was a Yoruba man. However, judging from the Islamic name (al-Tahir), Solagberu is likely to be a Beri Beri man. His long stay in Ilorin and close interaction with the Yoruba as well as his popular Yoruba name (Solagberu) must have informed the confusion. The settlement is believed to have been founded in the 17th century before the arrival of Solagberu that provided the leadership. The leadership must have been conceded to him for his piety and erudition. A certain Ela who succeeded Ojo Isekuse was said to be the leader of the Yoruba at Okelele. Usman Olufadi inherited the leadership of the pastoral Fulani while Bako was the head of the Hausa at Gambari⁸.

The different groups at this time lived independently of one another. The leaders of the different groups governed their subjects without recourse to one another. However, there is

evidence which suggests economic and social interdependence among the different groups. For instance, as we have noted, the presence of Afonja in Ilorin as a generalissimo must have no doubt strengthened the security in Ilorin and thereby brought about relative peace and harmonious coexistence. Besides, Solagberu the Muslim leader of Okesunna was said to have assisted Afonja, the *Aare Onakakanfo*, in the making of charms. Furthermore, as Ilorin was an 'entrepot' through which the trans-Sahara trade route passed to Oyo, the different groups must have interacted economically. The men of Solagberu were said to have militarily assisted Afonja in his earliest military expeditions⁹. Danmole (1980) is of the opinion that the proximity of the settlements of the Fulani and the Hausa is suggestive of close interaction as opposed to the total independence of the different quarters presumed today¹⁰. The above claim is corroborated by Jimoh (1994) who refers to the settlement as semi-autonomous¹¹.

Ilorin, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was largely populated by adherents of African Traditional Religion. This could be substantiated by the assertion that Shaikh Alimi could not remain in Ilorin on his first visit because it was a land full of idolators¹². Like other African Traditional Religionists, the people must have believed in the existence of the supernatural being (God) who created them and things in their surroundings.¹³ They believed that He watched over their activities and rewarded or punished them as the case may be. Thus, they evolved means of approaching, worshipping and appeasing Him¹⁴.

Consequently, some took to worshipping objects of nature like Asa River, Sobi Hill and other mountains and rocks, baobab trees, land and forest and other such physical phenomena. There were the ancestral worshippers who venerated the tombs of the ancestors and deified them. There were the *Egunun* and *Igunnu* masquerades too. Some

professionals worshipped gods that were spiritually conceived as having connection with their occupations. For instance, most farmers worshipped the goddess of land and fertility (land, river); the hunters worshipped the god of iron (*Ogun*), just as did the blacksmiths. There were also Spirit (*Oro*) worshippers who worshipped the spirit of twins, triplets, etc.¹⁵

Traditional worshippers worshipped primarily to appease gods so that they might escape their wraths, which can come in the form of droughts, sudden deaths, illnesses, etc. With time, their needs included security of their territories from enemies and other calamities, safety of lives and property, victory at wars and peaceful co-existence in the society. The objectives of worshipping the gods by the adherents of African Traditional Religion include to seek from them provision and protection of wives, children and riches, attainment of progress for the community and the individuals, in business and other endeavours. With expectation that their wishes would be answered, strict discipline was maintained among the people of the society to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods. Some taboos were woven around the gods and goddesses to inculcate the spirit of oneness and more importantly, morality and respect in the youth. It is astonishing to note that sacrifices of all kinds relating to traditional worship are still observed at remote road junctions, outskirts of the town, along farm routes and on farmlands.

By the seventeenth century, a group of Muslims had emerged in Ilorin but they were too few to make any appreciable impact. It is also plausible that some Hausa slaves who were Muslims in the old Oyo empire as well as the Yoruba Muslims might have found their way into Ilorin to escape the persecution from the Oyo authorities which had no tolerance for Muslims. This perhaps, explains the establishment of *Oke-Sunna* in the seventeenth century as a Muslim settlement headed by Solagberu. The establishment of *Oke-Sunna* outside the main

settlement confirms the dominance of African Traditional religion in Ilorin in the 17th century.

The people of Ilorin were lovers of music. During ceremonies like marriage, naming, burial and religious occasions, musicians were always present. The musicians were at first comedians who entertained the public. They later turned themselves into praise singers who eulogized families, lineages, clans and individuals. Up to 1823 the musicians were fed and given farm produce by their patrons. By 1910, valuable personal belongings were added. Such ceremonies and festivals were characterized by pomp and pageantry. All sorts of local alcoholic drinks and palm wine were served to people. Yoruba, the language of business was also the language of the musicians. The performing musicians were usually from the lower class of the community. The society saw them as lazy individuals who could not work for their earnings¹⁶. At this juncture, it is important to stress that with the introduction and acceptance of Islam and western education respectively in Ilorin, all the enumerated activities of the Ilorin people were modified.

As a result of the unilateral declaration of independence by Afonja from the Oyo authorities, it was clear that war was imminent between Afonja and Oyo authorities. This situation compelled Afonja to look for military and spiritual aids in preparation for the war. Consequently, according to Johnson, Afonja invited the Fulani Muslim priest named Alimi (Al-Salih) to Ilorin to act as his priest¹⁷. Afonja invited Shaikh al-Salih having heard about his spiritual efficacy and his ever-growing *Jama'a* particularly from his deputy the *Aare Onakakanfo*, Teyeje, the Baale of Ogbomoso, who had hosted Shaikh Alimi. According to Jimoh (1994), Shaikh Alimi buried some charms in Ogbomoso and prayed that Ogbomoso should never be subdued militarily¹⁸. The test of the efficacy or otherwise of the charms and prayer is beyond the scope of this

work. The need for this kind of spiritual assistance and numerical strength of the Jama'a and perhaps other reasons unknown to history, informed the invitation of Shaikh Alimi to Ilorin.

Consequent upon the invitation, al-Salih and his Jama'a arrived Ilorin about the beginning of the 19th century and met the 'four semi-autonomous settlements which confederally formed Ilorin of that time': the Yorubas at Idi-Ape, the pastoral Fulanis headed by Olufadi, Hausa/Nupe/Baruba settlement at Gambari led by Mallam Bako and the Oke-Sunna settlement headed by Solgberu (Tahir) who, as reported by Jimoh (1994),

...traveled extensively as an itinerant Mallam covering a vast area of the northern provinces of Yorubaland and he eventually made Ilorin his permanent base... Together with (his) compatriots, Solagberu built up Oke-sunna as an exclusive community of Muslims in Ilorin before the arrival of Shehu Alimi. The reputation of Oke-sunna as a Mini-centre of Islamic tradition attracted many other migrant Muslims from different parts of Yorubaland, especially from Gbanda, Kobayo, Agboho, Kuwo and Kobe.¹⁹

The Oke-sunna Muslims received Shaikh al-Salih and his multi-lingual and multi-ethnic Jama'a enthusiastically and sensationally too, and his stay was made pleasant, interesting and fruitful. They gave him support and showed a high sense of respect for him. As a Muslim brother, al-Salih felt free in their midst and demonstrated his high intellect and wide experience in the different fields of Islamic science such as jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis of *Jalalayn* especially of the second half of the Qur'an which no one else had in Ilorin²⁰. He

was highly revered by the Jama'a. Afonja, the chief host, also received and accommodated the august visitor warmly. Within a short time, he lavished gifts on al-Salih and his Jama'a and the relationship between Shaikh A-Salih and the Muslim hosts quickly became so cordial, that

...leaders of all the communal groups accepted his (Al-Salih's) spiritual superiority and subordinated themselves to his leadership for centralised congregational Jumat prayer which was held at Ori-Oke... The Shehu thus became the first chief Imam of Ilorin²¹.

In response to Afonja's call for spiritual and military assistance, Shaikh Salih assisted him with a combined spiritual and military might of himself and his Jama'a. Thus, the combined forces of Afonja and the Jama'a successfully crushed the dreadful Oyo army and won many military campaigns to Igbominaland, conquering Kanla, Ganmo, Elehinjare, Idofian, Ibare, Igbon, Iresa, Ilobu and a host of others²².

It should be noted that the joint military expedition turned out to be a blessing for Islam as the conquered places and people later formed part and parcel of the Emirate and Islam was firmly established in those places through the activities of the district heads and the Ilorin itinerant scholars²³.

As a result of the strong alliance between Afonja and Shaikh Alimi, the population of Ilorin swelled tremendously²⁴. Different people flocked to Ilorin for learning and spiritual guidance, trade and/or security. By this time, two groups had emerged: the Muslims (who were in the majority) and the idolators (who were in minority). Both groups were intolerant of each other until the religious crisis between Muslims and traditionalists, which claimed the life of Afonja. Consequently, the Jama'a established the Emirate system in Ilorin under the leadership of AbdulSalam, the eldest son of Shaikh Alimi²⁵.

The Alimi Dynasty

The Alimi dynasty is one of the dynasties that were created as a result of the introduction of Islam into the Nigeria areas in the 19th century. In this section, attention is directed at examining the establishment of Alimi Dynasty in Ilorin otherwise known as Ilorin Emirate. In doing this, a historical analysis of the establishment of other dynasties before it in Islam, in Africa, and in Nigeria is considered.

As a result of the migration of prophet Muhammed b. Abdullahi and his companions to Medina, Islam became firmly established in *Medina* and consequently an Islamic government established. After the death of the prophet, the four orthodox caliphs -Abubakar, Umar, Uthman and Ali - strove hard to extend the frontiers of Islam to Asia, Europe and Africa. However, with the exit of the caliphs who ruled over the Orthodox Islamic Caliphate, there emerged successive classical caliphates named after either a tribe or an individual. There were the *Umayyad* and the *Abbasid* dynasties in the Middle East²⁶ and the Ottoman Empire in Asia. In North Africa or the Maghreb were the *Kharijites*, the *Aghlabids*, the *Idrisids*, the *Fatimids*, the *Almoravids*, the *Almohads*, the *Marindis*, the *Hafsids*, and the *Zayanids* dynasties²⁷. In West Africa we had Mali and Songhai empires in succession and Kanem Borno empire²⁸. The 19th century Jihads also created some Islamic dynasties - Sokoto caliphate, Masina Empire and Tukolor Empire²⁹. Out of the 19th century Jihads, that of Shaikh Usmanu Danfodio produced a lasting effect on the spread and establishment of Islamic government in modern Nigeria.

With the establishment of Sokoto caliphate in 1809, various other local *Jihads* were undertaken either with or without permission from the Shaikh. However, successful Jihadists linked up with the caliphate for recognition and acceptance. Before the colonial conquest and administration of

Nigeria, fourteen Emirates were under the Sokoto caliphate. The emirates and their flag-bearers were: Katsina (Mallam Umar Dallaji), Kano (Mallam Suleiman), Zaira (Mallam Musa), Hadeja (Mallam Sambo Digma), Adamawa (Modibo Adama), Gwambe (Mallam Buba Yaro), Katagum (Mallam Zangi), Segu-Massina (Ahmad Labbo), Bagharmi (Mallam Muhammad), Daura (Mallam Ishiaku), Bauchi (Mallam Yakubu), Jamaare (Mallam Sambo Lei), Borno (Mallam Goni Muhktar who was driven back by Shaikh Al-Kanemi) and Ilorin Emirate (Shaikh Salihu Alimi).

The name Alimi Dynasty is derived from the name of Shaikh Alimi as the Ottoman Empire was also derived from Usman, one of the earliest rulers of the Ottoman Turks who consolidated the gains of the Ottoman Turks. The progenitor of Alimi Dynasty was Shaikh Al-Salih b. Muhammad b. Janta of the Torodbe tribe from Mali. His grandfather, Janta came into Gobirland in the retinue of Jakolo. He later settled at Bunza near Birnin Kebbi which later came under Gwandu Emirate and is now the capital of Kebbi State, where he gave birth to Muhammed Zubair, the father of Shaikh Al Salih (Shehu Alimi).

Al-Saliu began his educational activities early enough at Bunza with scholars around him and later he moved out to acquire more knowledge from prominent scholars of that time such as Shaikh Jibril b. Umar, a celebrated Agades scholar who traveled the length and breadth of Agades and Gobirland, teaching and preaching. At every journey Shaikh Jibril b. Umar took along with him some promising scholars among his students. Shaikh Al Salihu was one of those students who demonstrated unreserved interest for knowledge and incomparable intellect. Al-Saliu as a student might have benefited from Futa scholars too because he was said to have sojourned in Futa before he came back to Gobirland to see Shaikh Usmanu Danfodoyo who was his mate at Shaikh Jibril

b. Umar's school, for more knowledge and blessings, having heard of his piety, erudition and supremacy in Gobirland³⁰. Much of the bio-data of this great personality is lost into the past as a result of lack of documentation either personally by him or his students.

Shaikh al- Salihu came about the title al-'alim (Alimi) in Ilorin. Upon his arrival in Ilorin, he met a number of Islamic scholars who had laid the foundation for Islam and Islamic scholarship. However, while in their midst Shaikh al- Salihu demonstrated his proven intellect, piety and experience. These qualities won him the title *al'alim* from other scholars. Consequently, he became revered by all and sundry and people made recourse to him not only on religious matters but also judicial, social, political, and economic affairs. At this point it was clear that he was preferred as a religious and political leader. Rather than taking political leadership in addition to religion, he preferred one of his sons to take up the political responsibilities. Shaikh Alimi must have been influenced by the example of Shaikh Usmanu Danfodiyo who after the conquest of Gobirland, divided the caliphate between Shaikh Abdullahi Fodiyo his brother and Shaikh Muhammed Bello his son.. Shaikh Alimi therefore invited Abdulsalam and Shitta his two sons to Ilorin. Abdulsalam took up political responsibilities and he became the first Emir after the death of Shaikh Alimi (1823-1842) and was succeeded by Shitta (1842-1860). The descendants of these two Emirs formed the lineages that inherited the Alimi Dynasty.

Ilorin since inception has witnessed eleven emirs - Abdulsalam (1823-1842), Shitta (1842-1860), Zubair Ayelabowo (1860-1868), Aliyu (1868-1891), Momoh (1891-1896), Suleiman (1896-1915), Shuaib Bawa (1915-1919), Abdulkadir (1919-1959), Sulu Gambari (1959-1992), Aliyu Abudulkadir (1992-1995) and Ibrahim Sulu-Gamabari, 1995. Emir Ibrahim Sulu Gambari is the eleventh Emir of Ilorin

installed on the 11th of November 1995.

Alhaji Ibrahim was born into the family of Alhaji Sulu Gambari, the ninth Emir of Ilorin and Aisha Bolanta Abdulkadir. He was first exposed to Quranic leaning. At school age he attended Native Authority Primary School, Omu-Aran between 1953 and 1956. He immediately proceeded to Offa Grammar School, Offa, for secondary education till 1960, a year after his father became the ninth Emir of Ilorin. He traveled to London for further studies, and in 1967 he obtained LL.B., BL and LL.M. By 1968 after the completion of the Nigerian Law School programme he became a solicitor and advocate³¹.

As a lawyer, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari worked in private chambers including that of H.O. Davies between 1968 and 1976. By 1976 he was appointed solicitor General and Permanent Secretary in the then Gongola State. After a year of acting he became a substantive Judge of the Borno High Court in 1978 and was there till 1983. Between 1983 and 1995 when he was appointed the eleventh Emir of Ilorin, he was the presiding Judge of Court of Appeal in Ibadan and Lagos at different times³².

Since appointment as the eleventh Emir of Ilorin he has been striving hard to uplift the socio-economic and religious-political standard of Ilorin Emirate in particular and Kwara State in general. He shows much interest in peace and tranquility, scholarship and the welfare of all and sundry.

The Emirate Council

Upon the appointment of Abdulsalami as the first Emir of Ilorin by the *Jama'a* and the recognition of his office by the Gwnadu authorities, some religious and political appointments were made to consolidate the religious and political gains of the nascent emirate. Imams were appointed from among the Fulani (called Imam Fulani), from the Malians (called Imam Imale)

and from the Gobirawa (called Imam Gambari). The occupants of these positions are charged with religious responsibilities.

The political position created by AbdulSalam was that of the Balogun. Ilorin has four Baloguns representing the four principal quarters in Ilorin. These are Balogun Fulani, Balogun Garmbari, Balogun Ajikobi and Balogun Alanamu. They were warlords who saw to peace keeping and the defence of the territorial integrity of the Emirate. The occupants of these religious and political positions form the principal officers of the Emirate, which is the advisory council to the Emir on Emirate affairs. The membership, which started with the Imams and the Baloguns, came to include Magaji, Baba Isale, Daudus and some other stakeholders.

From inception till date, the reigning Emir has always reserved the right of appointing any member of the emirate council whenever there is a vacancy. The procedure is that the families that are entitled to such a vacant position vie among themselves within the family. If they are able to agree on a consensus candidate such a candidate will be presented before the Emir for ratification. However, if such clan or family is unable to present a candidate, all the legal heirs apply directly to the Emir who, after wide consultations, appoints one of the candidates into the position. The Emir turbans them and spells out their traditional roles in the emirate council. The appointees are always loyal to the Emir who appointed them.

It is important to stress here that the criteria for appointment into the various positions vary from one family to another and from one position to the other. For instance, to be an Imam, one must be convincingly knowledgeable in Arabic and Islamic Studies; other considerations are subjective. In the case of Balogun, Magaji and Daudu, age and wealth play prominent role in the decision as to who is to be appointed. Although there appears to be a procedure whereby the second in command becomes substantive holder of the post, this is sometimes

abandoned. Some families rotate the position among themselves but money and influence of the candidates usually change the arrangement. However, on the whole, any person vying for any of these positions must be a Muslim, an indigene belonging to the family, he must be patient, honest, helpful, trustworthy, of good character and must have been participating in the affairs of the society. Good relationship with the Alimi dynasty is an added advantage.

The emirate council is the apex body in the Ilorin Emirate polity and is responsible for the smooth running of Ilorin Emirate. It selects an Emir when the position is vacant, gives advice to the reigning Emir, supervises the happenings in the various quarters, serves as middleman between the Emir and the masses on the one hand and as middleman between the state government and the Emirate people on the other hand.

The council is responsible for settling disputes between and among Ilorin Emirate villages, communities, families and prominent indigenes in the name of peace and tranquility. It also takes dossiers of indigenes worldwide and honours them at appropriate time, with appropriate titles. The conferment of honorable titles started in Ilorin during the reign of Emir AbdulKadir (1919-1959) when he conferred the title of *Madawaki* on Alhaji Yahaya Popoola (now late) and the title of *Waziri* on Alhaji Muhammed Ajelaagbe Gobir (now late, 1955). The system continues till date.

Whenever there is trouble or instability of any kind, disasters etc. the Council usually organizes prayers, which have always been effective in calming situations.

In a nutshell, the council stands for anything that ensures religious, political and socio-economic development of the Emirate and its people in particular and the state and the nation in general.

Conclusion

Today, Ilorin is a cosmopolitan city inhabited by different peoples that have fused to become Ilorin with a distinct culture, tradition and language. Thus, Ilorin is neither north nor south, neither Hausa nor Yoruba; rather, it is an independent geographical entity with a distinct history and culture. It however, has religious and political alignments with the north. This unique feature of the Emirate, in our view, should be a sign of strength as the resources of the many social and ethnic groups that have formed Ilorin are there to be exploited for the benefit of the Ilorin people, irrespective of the places they might have migrated from. We should focus on what unites us by maximizing the locational advantage which nature has freely conferred on the Emirate. The potentials of Ilorin and its people are indeed very great.

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TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN ILORIN EMIRATE

Ibrahim AbdulGaniyu Jawondo

2

Introduction

Every society, however simple or complex, has its ways of inculcating the societal values, customs and traditions in the minds of the young ones to ensure continuity. These values are usually codified into objectives which are achieved through different activities designed for the younger ones from their childhood to adulthood. In this section, attention is directed at the philosophy of Ilorin traditional education and the varying activities designed to achieve it. Although the scope is 'Ilorin Emirate', it nonetheless covers the pre-emirate period to date.

Traditional Education Explored

Traditional education is the transmission of elements of culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication.¹ It is also a mode of thought or behaviour which is continuously followed by a people from one generation to another.² It could also mean a set of customs and usages which are viewed as a coherent body of precedents that influence the present.³ Fafunwa (1974) observed that :

Nigeria consists of many ethnic groups and societies each with its own culture and tradition; they all have common educational aims and objectives. But methods differ from place to place, chiefly because of social, economic and geographical imperatives.⁴

In Ilorin, traditional education is geared toward realizing the society's dreams and aspirations of producing a

highly responsible individual who would be able to recognize and practise what is good and distinguish it from the bad and act appropriately as situation demands without necessarily being forced after the initial training. It also aims at giving its recipients an acceptable means of livelihood. Hence, like in other parts of Nigeria, traditional education in Ilorin emphasizes 'social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values'.⁵ Various methods are employed in achieving these, chief among which are observation, imitation, participation and practice in all the socio-political, economic and religious activities of the society.

The Practice of Traditional Education in Ilorin

In making a child physically fit for the challenges ahead, at infancy, the child is introduced to a series of physical training activities ranging from stretching and folding of the limbs in the right directions, to toasting the child up at every time of bath by the mother. At a later stage, say, age two, a child imitates his elders in jumping and running, climbing things above his height and dancing. These physical exercises continue from infancy to adulthood through a number of activities appropriate to each stage.

In character training, the child is first taught good toilet habit by the mother. If a straddled baby urinates on the back of its mother, such a baby is tenderly patted on the buttocks to show that the action is wrong. This continues until the child learns either to cry out or squeeze his body whenever he wants to urinate. It must be stressed at this point that character training is not the responsibility of the child's parents alone; rather it is the responsibility of all members of his family and household, his extended family, his kindred and his neighbourhood⁶. The child is also taught at an early age not to receive gifts from an elder or anyone. He is also not to eat or shake hands with the left hand,

because this is associated with dirtiness. He is not allowed to use the right hand for any dirty thing unless circumstances demand so.

The child is also taught good manner of addressing the elders and his age mates. He learns the forms of greeting at different occasions and periods. The child is discouraged from packing rubbish with his hands, sitting on a pounded-yam mortar, sitting by the door way during eating, playing with sand at night, sweeping at night and so on. Through superstitions and taboos the younger ones are made to conform with societal norms.

Character training is top-most in the mind of every Ilorin adult. This is because a child is seen everywhere as an ambassador of his household and whatever he does, whether good or bad, is believed to be a reflection of his family. Thus, 'the absence of any other aspect of education is tolerable as long as good character prevails'.⁷ Intertwined with character training is the inculcation of utmost respect for elders and members of a play group. At the age of two, a child is taught how to greet elders by kneeling down. It is important to note here that unlike in a typical Yorubaland where men prostrate and women kneel, both men and women greet elders by kneeling down. However, when the Emir is being greeted, the men crouch with clenched right fist while the women kneel and bow their heads saying all together or individually as the case may be '*SHEHU! SHEHU!! SHEHU!!!*'. On the other hand young children of the same age range exchange verbal greetings and/or hand shakes.

In the area of cognitive development, the people of Ilorin are of the belief that at birth a child has a complete and sound brain, and that the extent to which he/she is exposed to challenging situations will determine how brilliant he/she becomes. Thus, a number of activities are designed to awaken the cranium capacity of a child. For instance, at infancy, varying songs are sung to the hearing of the child, especially when

crying, to calm him/her down. The songs could be the cognomen of the parents, their race/tribe or that of the child. The child grows to sing these songs and dance to them. These carefully and meaningfully phrased cognomens are used interchangeably by elders, especially women, to respond to the greetings of their younger brothers or sisters or offsprings. Example of Ilorin city cognomens is reproduced, in part, below:

*Ilorin Garin Alimi, Ilu tobi toyi kolegungu
rara, Esin legungungu ile won Okosi loro
be....⁸*

Literally it means,

*Ilorin the city of Shaykh Alimi is, in spite of her
big size, free of masquerades; rather horses
and spears are their masquerades...*

With Islamic education, the usual hunters' music (*Ijala*) gave way to the learning of short Quranic verses and Hadiths and Islamic songs through rote learning. All these are means to prepare the child intellectually for adulthood.

The child is also exposed to numbers through counting of objects.⁹ Like the Yorubas,¹⁰ Ilorin has names for different fractions¹⁰ such as *Odindi* (whole), *Eyo*, (pieces) *Idakan* (one fraction) *Idameji* (two fractions e.t.c.). All these they come to recognize as they grow up through interaction with their parents and other adults in the society.

Vocationally, the people of Ilorin had some occupational activities some of which have survived till the present day. They include farming, hunting, blacksmithing, weaving, pottery, dyeing, leatherwork and trading¹¹. Most of these professions, except farming, run along family lines although they sometimes admit 'outsiders' as apprentices. Since children are always close

to their parents, they observe and imitate the professions of their parents at any given time.

Apart from all these professions which are also open to females, they are also specifically and necessarily trained on greetings, cleanliness of the home and environment and how to cook different kinds of food using minimum resources. Females are also trained to take care of younger children by bathing and feeding their brothers and sisters at home.

In a nutshell, the aim of traditional education in Ilorin was (and is) to develop the child physically, mentally, morally, technologically and spiritually in order to be useful to himself and his society.

Aspects of Traditional Education in Ilorin Emirate

Politically, the families of the Emir, Baloguns, Daudus, Magajis, and Imams provide special training for their offsprings. They inculcate in each child the qualities expected of him or her to be able to function effectively as befits nobility. Legal heirs are expected to be physically fit, intellectually sound, patient, simple, honest, eloquent, perseverant and widely experienced.

From birth to childhood the parents continue to guide and guard the prospective legal heir from hardship and dangerous ventures. They seclude him from the rest during play, at school and restrict his outings or send him out of town. Such a child is trained on listening and speech making skills, eating habit and other forms of training that would make him a distinguished person from among the honourables. More importantly, such a child is given sound and authentic history of his town, dynasty, clan, family, and others that are of importance to him, which could be instrumental to him in attaining and maintaining a position of authority.

Occupational Training

Ilorin is highly blessed with numerous occupations. This is as a result of the heterogeneity of the people and the cosmopolitan nature of the town. The major people that inhabited Ilorin-Sudanese, Malian, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba and others brought their occupations with them; so also have other itinerant merchants and travelers. All the occupations have been domesticated in Ilorin. Some are peculiar to certain tribes, families and individuals, while others are general. For instance, the Fulani essentially keep livestock, the Nupe are experts in groundnut oil extraction and frying of groundnut cake (*kulikuli*). The Hausa are essentially mat makers, well diggers, embroidery and rope makers. The Yoruba are popularly known for hunting, pottery, mud-house building and leather works. The general ones include farming, commerce and cloth weaving. It is important to stress that the initial professional boundaries have been demolished, hence, the diffusion of the professions. All the tribes share profession with one another.

Names of some compounds, areas and families in Ilorin are direct reflections of their occupation. For instance, there are *Ile Olokoide* (brass smith), *Ile Alagbede*, (blacksmith). We have *Ile Oloko*, *Ile Agbegi*, *Ile Olopatiro*, families who were originally wood carvers. *Ile Olomo* (mud layers), *Adabata* (makers of shoes/sandals), *Ile Asileke* (bead makers), *Ile Olori* (makers of shear butter), *Ile Olowu* (Wool spinners), *Ile Eleni* (mat weavers), *Ile Alawo*, *Ile-Onipanmo*, and *Ile Onisona* (tanners and leather workers). Others include *Ile Aladi* (makers of local pomade), *Ile-Olosun* (makers of body powder), *Ile Olokun* (rope makers), *Ile Alapata* (butchers), *Ile Onikoko* (potters), *Ile Oniyangi* (stone breakers), *Ile Oluode* and *Ile Amode* (hunters), *Ile Katibi* (Arabic/quranic writers).

The training period for these professions usually covers the period of childhood. Offsprings of the professionals are

usually exposed to the working environment from the age of ten and continue to learn through observation. By age thirteen to fifteen the learner is allowed to practice from simple to complex

And between age fifteen and twenty he is allowed some free practice under the watchful eyes of his parents or 'master'. The child gets his freedom, if he wishes, after marriage. However, times and modernity have affected this system. Today, a period of two to five years is spent learning most of these trades especially by apprentices from outside the family. Family members too obtain their release and graduate as soon as they have reached acceptable level of competence.

Weaving

Weaving was and is still one of the major occupations learnt by the people of Ilorin. However, it should be noted that the contact of a child most especially with the weavers while at their workshop was not brought about by sheer interest; rather, a troublesome child was always referred to the weaving workshop (*Idi-Ofi*) where he was effectively checked for his excesses. Weaving (cloth) was and still is the profession of some families in Oke-Male quarters but presently some of their trainees have carried it into every nook and cranny of Ilorin town and beyond.

There are ways cloth weaving can be learnt. The child is taught how to roll thread of different colours and kinds, design pattern for different cloths as may be desired by the customer, and handles the weaving instruments with care. He is also exposed to calculation of amount of yarns that would be enough for certain types of cloth from preparation to completion. An apprentice is taught how to bring to use silk materials, repair damaged weaving instruments and how to improvise in case of urgent need. Endurance and truthfulness are parts of the manners required by this profession. It is important to stress that

men no longer enjoy the monopoly. A greater number of young girls now learn weaving and take it up as a means of livelihood and many still take the buying and selling of weaving products as a lucrative venture.

It is important to note that most of these traditional occupations have given way to modern occupations, either as a result of death of experts and/or materials or preference for modern skills. Thus, we have a number of indigenes who go into motor mechanics, electrical and electronics work, tailoring, driving, bricklaying, gold smithing and others.

Conclusion

Ilorin, which is believed by some to have started with hunting has moved from poverty to buoyancy through a well-designed and comprehensive traditional education geared towards the development of the indigenes in such a way that they would be useful to themselves and to community in all ramifications. The presence of different crafts, occupations and trades brought about division of labour and specialization and this consequently enhanced commercial activities. Ilorin therefore became a centre to which merchants flock to obtain some of these products.

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