

ISLAM IN OYO AND ITS DISTRICTS IN  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

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ABSTRACT

This work describes the history and development of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. In short, the work is an attempt to see in what way Islam had moulded the history of the people of Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century.

The first chapter describes the beginnings of Islam in the area until the period when the religion became stagnant as a result of the fall of the Old Oyo Empire. In this way, we are able to see the various difficulties militating against Islam in the area in the early period.

In chapter two, we discuss the survival and growth of Islam in the area after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire. The forces, external and internal, responsible for this stage of Islamic growth are discussed in this chapter. Thus we are able to see a clear picture of how Islam surmounted the initial difficulties generated by the decline and fall of the Old Oyo Empire and how it eventually established itself strongly alongside the age-long traditional religion.

Chapter three deals with the expansion of Islam during the increasing influx of Christian missionaries into Oyo and its districts. In this chapter, the difficulties facing the missionaries and their effects on the expansion of

Christianity and Islam are discussed. Furthermore, the challenge of Christianity and the reaction of the Muslims to the challenge are examined. In this way, we are able to see why Islam became the dominant religion in the area in the nineteenth century.

In chapter four, we examine the status of Islam in the period when the area, known as Oyo and its districts, was brought within the web of Western civilisation. In this way, we are able to see the influence of British rule on the expansion and development of Islam in the area in the period between 1894 and 1900.

The religio-social significance of Islamic institutions in the area in the nineteenth century is examined in chapter five. The influence of the institutions on the growth of Islam and how they provided a universal link with the Muslim world are clearly shown in this chapter.

The people of Oyo and its districts had been greatly influenced by the traditional religion before the influx of Islam. Thus, in the last chapter, we turn our attention to examining the influence of Islam on the traditional background of the Muslim community. In this way, we are able to see the interaction of the traditional religion and Islam among the people of Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century.

Since Islam constituted a strong force and became the

dominant religion in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, we conclude by examining the extent of its success among the people of the area in this period.

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CERTIFICATION PAGE

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ag.	Acting.
A.U.D.	Ansarudeen.
B.S.O.A.S.	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
C.M.I.	Church Missionary Intelligencer.
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society.
Corres.	Correspondence.
D.O.	District Officer.
E.I.	Encyclopaedia of Islam.
Encl.	Enclosure.
E.R.E.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
Gov.	Governor.
H.S.N.	Historical Society of Nigeria.
I.F.A.n.	L' Institut Francais D' Afrique Noire.
J.H.S.N.	Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria.
J.R.G.S.	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society.
N.A.I.	National Archives, Ibadan.
N.J.I.	Nigerian Journal of Islam.
N.U.D.	Nuwairudeen
N.Y.C.	National Youth Corps.
O.D.	Oyo Division.

O.T.	Old Testament
Oyo Prof.	Oyo Province.
P.P.	Parliamentary Paper (British).
P.	Private Paper.
R.C.	Roman Catholic.
S.B.R.	Sierra-Leone Bulletin of Religion.
Sec.	Secretary.
S.I.M.	Sudan Interior Mission.
S.U.M.	Sudan United Mission.
U.I.L.	University of Ibadan Library.
W.A.I.S.E.R.	West African Institute of Social and Economic Research.

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GLOSSARYARABIC WORDS:

Ḍhān	The call to prayer.
al-qiyāma	The Day of Judgement.
Ḍaqīqa	Eighth-day naming ceremony according to Muslim rite.
bidʿa	Innovation; new ideas and practices contrary to the sunna of the Prophet.
ghuṣl	Complete ablution.
ḥadīth	Traditions of the Prophet.
ḥalāl	That which is allowed, permitted or permissible.
ḥarām	That which is prohibited.
hijra	The migration of Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.
ḥisāb	Divination from figure given by handful of earth thrown down, and hence from figures given by dots made at random.
Ḍīdu'l-fitr	The festival following the month of <u>Ramaḍān</u> ; the festival for breaking the fast.
al-Ḍīdu'l-Kabīr	Greater Beiram which is usually celebrated on the 10th of <u>Dhu'l-hijja</u>
or	
Ḍīdu'l-aḍḥa	
Ḍidda	The period of probation incumbent upon a woman after divorce or the death of her husband during which she may not remarry.

jabr	The right of matrimonial restraint accorded to the father or his representative.
jamā'a	Council of elders; village assembly.
juma'a	(Friday) congregational prayer.
Kafā'a	The doctrine of equality in marriage.
mawlidu'n-nabī	The Prophet's birthday.
muqaddam	A leader in a Tijāniyya <u>tariqa</u>
naṣiḥa	Advice, open homily or sermon.
qāḍī	Judge
qibla	Direction to which Muslims turn in praying (towards the Ka'ba).
ribāṭ	Monastery; Frontier post manned by pious men.
rūḥ	Vitalising spiritual principle.
ṣadāq	(Bridal) dower.
ṣadaqā	Voluntary alms, offering.
shahāda	The confession or articles of faith.
Shari'a	Islamic law; the canon law of Islam. In African languages it generally means judgement. Thus we have the Yoruba derivative word <u>ṣerīà</u> meaning judgement.
Shi'a	A Muslim sect.
aṣ-ṣirāṭ u'l mustaqīm	The straight path.

Sunna	The model behaviour or tradition of the Prophet; one of the foundations of Islamic jurisprudence, hence employed for the custom of Muslims.
tafsīr	Explanation, exegesis, commentary (usually on the Qurʾān).
ṭalāq	Divorce.
ṭarīqa	Ṣūfī Order.
tawḥīd	The doctrine of the divine unity or oneness (of God).
Umma	Religious Community.
walīma	Ceremony marking either consummation of marriage compact or successful completion of certain stage of Qurʾānic education; party; banquet.
waʿz	Preaching.
wird	A litany task or special prayer generally recited at the end of certain ritual prayer.
Yā Sīn	A <u>sūra</u> of the Qurʾān believed to be efficacious in incantation.
yawm uḥl-jumuʿa	Friday.

HAUSA WORDS:

alkālī	Judge (Compare Arabic word for 'judge' - <u>al-qādī</u> ).
Lādān	Muezzin; the caller or announcer of the hours of prayer.
Līmān	Leader of ritual prayer; political head of Muslim community. Compare the Arabic word for this leader: ( <u>al-Imām</u> ) Note also the word <u>līmān</u> as the leader of the ritual prayer is known in Central Sudan.
Mālām	Cleric; lettered man; learned Muslim. In all probability, the Hausa word and its variants for the cleric are taken from the Arabic word for 'teacher', <u>mu'allim</u> .
nā'ibī	An assistant Imām.
Sābon garī	New town especially quarters inhabited by southerners. In Yorubaland, the area inhabited by the Hausa is called <u>Sābo</u> and in this case, the word means the quarter of the 'aliens'. (The word ' <u>sābo</u> ' means ' <u>new</u> ' and the word <u>garī</u> means ' <u>town</u> ')
sūnā	A name
wankā	Washing, employed for the ceremony of joining Islam. Compare the following statement: <u>an yi masā wankā</u> : he has become a Muslim.

YORUBA WORDS (ORIGINAL AND LOAN)

Àlúfa	A cleric; a lettered Muslim; a learned Muslim.
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- Àalè** Concubine.
- Àbàjà** A type of Yoruba facial marking.
- Abólúwòdì** This is the title of Iyá Àgan, a woman in Egúngún cult, who undergoes certain rites and is allowed to go into the groves, and to see the Egúngún dress and undress without being harmed in any form.
- Aborè** Chief Priest of Yoruba traditional religion.
- Aborìṣà** The votaries of Yoruba traditional religion.
- Adiẹ-ìràṅà** The fare-fowl in Yoruba traditional religion.
- Agbádá** A Yoruba flowing garment.
- Agbèrè** Amulet preparation in Oyo and its districts. It is commonly used to refer to adultery.
- Agidà** Yoruba word for emigrant slaves from Brazil and Catholic Mission.
- Ajà** Whirlwind which is believed by the Yoruba to contain spirit or spirits (cf. ìjì or ìgì).
- Akéúkewèé** Class of mālams with the knowledge of Arabic, Yoruba, Islam and Christianity. They can be aptly regarded as Muslim apologists or Muslim controversialists.
- Akí** The Yoruba returning freed slaves from Sierra-Leone.
- Aláàfin** King; one who owns the palace; (the title of the king of Oyo).

- Ààaríra** Yoruba Muslim word for the Here-After.
- Àtájánnà** Heaven, Paradise (This is taken from Arabic word, al-janna).
- Àtúkímbà** This is part of the insignia of office for Yoruba Muslim officers such as the Chief Imām and the Paràkòyí.
- Arẹmọ** This is the crown prince in Yorubaland. The title is conferred upon the eldest son of the sovereign in a formal manner. He is the heir-presumptive.
- Arọ́kin** The traditional chronicler, historian, or rhapsodist in the palace of a Yoruba king.
- Aşípa** One of the Oyo Mesi, the seven king-makers of Oyo.
- Aşọ-Òkè** Oyo traditional cloth.
- Ataare** Alligator pepper.
- Àtíngà (Sémiò)** Witch doctors.
- Àyànmọ** Predestination; destiny.
- Baálé** Head of certain clan or compound.
- Baálẹ̀** Head of certain town or village.
- Bàbá Àdífíni** Male patron of religion (Islam).
- Babaláwo** This is the generic title given to the diviners in Yorubaland who are connected with the cult of Òrúnmìlá. Literally it means "father of the cult" or "father who is versed in the mystery".

- Babalódsà** Chief Priest of Yoruba traditional religion: Literally, it means "Father in divinity (worship)".
- Balógun** Commander-in-Chief of the veteran warriors. It is also a title of one of the Muslim officers in Yorubaland.
- Bàtá** A special drum for the worship of Šàngó, the god of thunder and lightning.
- Bẹ̀bẹ̀** This is a festival akin to a jubilee or golden age of a king's reign. It was a common festival in the prime days of the Old Oyo Empire.
- Bẹ̀rẹ̀** Special grass which was usually used for the construction of the court of Aláàfin in the days of the Old Oyo Empire.
- Dàdàáńì** The Yoruba word for the announcer or caller of the hours of prayer. This is, in all probability, taken from the Hausa word for the caller of the hours of prayer, lādań. Compare the Arabic word, mu'adhhdhin', for the caller of the hours of prayer.
- Dòpòmi** This is <sup>the</sup> Yoruba word for Dahomey and this is the form that is used to refer to a Dahomean in Yorubaland.
- Eésù** A sūra of the Qur'an.
- Egúngún** One of the spirit-gods worshipped in Yorubaland. This is popularly known as masquerade.
- Èṣù** A Yoruba divinity who is primarily a "special relations officer" between heaven and earth, the inspector-general who reports regularly to Olódùmarè on the deeds of the divinities and men,

and makes reports on the correctness of worship in general and sacrifices in particular. (Compare Èṣù called "Satan" or "Devil" in English language. In Yoruba theology, Èṣù is depicted as so versatile a character that one must be wary of what one says about him. He has often been commonly called the "Devil" or "Satan". The Yoruba "Èṣù is certainly not the Devil of our New Testament acquaintance, who is an out and out evil power in opposition to the plan of God's salvation of man).

Ètùtù	Expiatory sacrifice.
Èḃọ	Sacrifice.
Ègà	A type of bird in Yorubaland.
Èhá	Confinement; curfew; seclusion; (of women) especially among some Yoruba Muslims.
Èhìn-Iwà	After-Life; Here-After.
Ènikẹ̀jì	One's counterpart in Yoruba traditional religion.
Èrù-iyàwó	Articles (of various types) of a prospective wife in Yorubaland.
Gàá	The name for Fulani quarters in Yorubaland. (Cf. Sābo, the name for Hausa quarters in Yorubaland).
Gánnà	This is the Yoruba word for Ghana.
Gìgìì (Gìrì-gìrì)	A simple rectangular mosque in Yorubaland marked out with branches, stones, broken bottles or low mud wall. It is usually a prelude to a full-fledged mosque. Moreover, it usually marks the inception of Islam in a place.



- Gíwá Secretary or head of an association in Yoruba social set-up.
- Haáyà Verses of the sūra of the Qur<sup>ān</sup>.
- Hāntúrú Amulets written on slates (wàlǎà).
- Ìbòwó Dowry in a Yoruba marriage compact.
- Ìdána Betrothal.
- Ìdílé Yoruba traditional lineage.
- Ìdìndí A Dahomean.
- Ifá (Ọ̀rúnmílà) This can mean any of the following: A geomantic form of divination; the oracle deity; and it is in this connection that Ifá earns the name Ọ̀rúnmílà.
- Ifà-lòmọ A child in Yorubaland who is believed to be a gift from a tutelary divinity. This type of child is usually named on the sixth day.
- Ìjì (Ìgì) Whirlwind which is believed by the Yoruba to contain spirit or spirits (Cf. Àjà)
- Ìkóbì The first part of bride-price in a marriage compact in Yorubaland. This usually goes to the mother of the prospective wife.
- Ìlǎrí Officials, male and female, in the court of the Aláàfin of Ọyọ with partings on their heads.
- Ilée-Kéwí Qur<sup>ān</sup>ic school (madrasa).

- Ìmómù Leader of ritual prayer; the head of Muslim community. (This Yoruba loan-word is, in all probability, taken from the Arabic word for the head of ritual prayer, Imām. (Cf. the word Lèmómù).
- Ìpònrí Destiny or predestination in Yoruba traditional belief.
- Ìrókò African teak or swamp mahogany.
- Ìró-Ifá A conical bell made of horn, ivory, or wood. It is one of the instruments for Ifá divination.
- Ìsanlélórí The second part <sup>of</sup> bride-price in a Yoruba marriage compact. This usually goes to the father of the prospective wife.
- Ìtú-yìgì  
(Ìtú-yìjì) Islamic system of divorce.
- Ìwẹfà These were eunuchs and lordlings of the court in the days of the Old Oyo Empire.
- Ìyá-Àdìínì Female patron of religion (Islam).
- Ìyẹ̀ròstun Divining powder. This is one of the instruments for Ifá divination.
- Jàkúta The original solar divinity in Yorubaland whose attributes, powers and qualities were subsequently assumed by Šàngó (a deified Aláàfin of Oyo, a thunder divinity).
- Jùjú One of the Yoruba words for the traditional medicine. (It was originally a French word and in this context it means "toy" or "plaything". Thus the name can be regarded a misnomer in this context).

- Káfírí An infidel; an unbeliever. (This is taken from the Arabic word, kāfir)
- Kakańfò The king's chief warrior.
- Kálámù A type of pen. (This is taken from the Arabic word, qalam).
- Kiriyó Yoruba word for Creole, the name of the early Christian in Yorubaland. "Kiriyó", in this sense, is a word used by the Muslims in the early days to ridicule both Christianity and its votaries.
- Làdááńì The announcer or caller of the hours of prayer. (This word is taken from the Hausa word for the announcer of the hours of prayer, Làdān).
- Làáńl-ńlẹ́ Henna ceremony during Yoruba Muslim marriage ceremony. This practice crept into Yoruba Muslim culture from Hausaland.
- Lẹ̀mọ̀mù Leader of ritual prayer; political head of Muslim community. (This word is taken from the Arabic word, Imām).
- Mọgbà (magbà) The priests of Şangó, the thunder divinity in Yoruba traditional religion.
- Mónááfíkí A traitor, an apostate. (This is taken from Arabic word for a traitor, munāfiq).
- Mósálááşì Mosque. Place of prostration. It is borrowed from Arabic word, musalla and Hausa word, masallachi.
- Nòńsíà Advice; open homily or sermon. (This is taken from the Arabic word for open homily, naşihā).
- Ođúduwà The common eponymous progenitor of the Yoruba.

Ògbóni	A Yoruba secret politico-religious cult.
Ògún	The god of iron in Yoruba traditional religion.
Olódtumare	This is the principal name of God in Yoruba traditional religion.
Olókun	A sea spirit.
Olóólà	One who specialises in circumcising new babies in Yorubaland.
Olorì	Wife of a king or a person of note in Yoruba traditional community.
Olúwa	This is a name of God in Yoruba traditional religion.
Onitáfusírù (Onitẹ́fusírù)	Qurʾān commentator ( <u>mufassir</u> ). (The word is taken from the Arabic word for explanation, exegesis, commentary on the Qurʾān, <u>tafsīr</u> )
Onitírà	An amulet-writing cleric.
Oniwàásí	A preacher, or a deliverer of homily. (This is taken from the Arabic word for homily, <u>wafz</u> ).
Òdḡtṅ	Yoruba native medicine.
Òrí	Sheabutter.
Orí	Yoruba physical head; the essence of personality; the personality soul in man. This is believed to be that which makes a person a person, and without it, a supposed person is not a person <u>per se</u> .
Orí-inú	The internal head; the inner person. The essence of personality. That which makes a person a person.

- Oríkì Special name in Yorubaland apart from the ordinary or common name.
- Òrìṣà A divinity; a deity; a minister of Olódùmarè in Yoruba traditional religion. The word is a corruption of an original name Orìṣẹ̀ - "Head-source".
- Òrìṣà-ńlá The arch-divinity, the head of the Yoruba pantheon.
- Orò This is one of the spirit-gods worshipped in Yorubaland. Literally, it means a bull-roarer or a bull-whizzer or a bull-ring. In Yoruba traditional religion it designates the spirit of the deceased.
- Orógbó Bitter kola.
- Orórí Graveyard of a deceased.
- Ọ̀ṣugbó An Òrò-cult; a politico-religious body. The name ọ̀ṣugbó is most common in Ijebu-land.
- Owó-orí (Owó-ìyàwó) Bride-price; betrothal or marriage money.
- Owí jíjẹ Jealousy in a Yoruba polygynous home.
- Ọ̀dún-Káyó-káyó The Muslim festival of plenty or the festival in which everybody, Muslim and non-Muslim, eats to the fullest. It is the first event of the Islamic calendar and marks the beginning of the Islamic new year.
- Ọ̀fọ̀ Yoruba spoken magic word; incantation.
- Ọ̀lẹ̀tẹ̀lálúfa A flowing garment usually worn by a Yoruba Muslim.

- Ọlórún This is a name of God in Yoruba traditional religion. The name Ọlórún is the one commonly used in popular language. It appears to have gained its predominating currency in consequence of Christian and Muslim impact upon Yoruba thought; it is the name used mostly in evangelistic work and in literature. It occurs in ejaculatory prayers like Ọlórún gbà mí ò - "Deliver me, O God!" or in answer to salutations for example, È ò jìire bí? A dúpé lówó Ọlórún. "Have you risen well (this morning?)" "We thank God".
- Ọlọṣà A lagoon spirit. Moreover, a thief or a robber is also called ọlọṣà in Yorubaland.
- Ọmọplé Members of the lineage.
- Ọpèlẹ The servant of Ifá. It is one of the instruments for Ifá divination.
- Ọpón-Ifá Divining tray in Yoruba system of divination.
- Ọrányàn The common openymous progenitor of the people of Ọyọ and its districts and the founder of the Old Ọyọ Empire.
- Ọrọ A ghost, fairy.
- Ọrun Heaven or Paradise in Yoruba traditional belief where Ọlódumare and the Ọrìṣà are believed to have their habitation.
- Ọrun-iná (ọrun apáádì) Hell of fire; bad heaven.
- Ọsanyìn The tutelary divinity of medicine in Yorubaland.
- Ọṣṣùn A riverine female divinity.

- Ọya A Yoruba goddess or female divinity, wife of Ẓàngó.
- Ọyọ̀ Mèsì Literally, this means the Ọyọ̀ that know the correct answer; the council of seven elders or the seven kingmakers in Ọyọ̀.
- Fáàdì Yoruba word for Catholic Mission.
- Paràkọyí In the days of the Old Ọyọ̀ Empire, this was the official in charge of markets and traders, especially long-distance traders. He later assumed politico-religious headship of the Muslim community. However, when Islamic knowledge began to take root in Ọyọ̀ and its districts, his erstwhile position as the religious head of the Muslim community was supplanted by the Chief Imām.
- Pélé A type of Yoruba facial marking.
- Sááfú Yoruba word for rows.
- Ẓàngó A deified Alááfin of Ọyọ̀; the god of thunder.
- Sàró This is the Yoruba form of the word Sierra-Leone. The word is also used to refer to a Sierra-Leonean. (Cf. the word Ghana and its Yoruba form, Gánnà).
- Sàrùní Chief of the Calvary.
- Sérikí Next in rank to Balógun, the Commander-in-Chief of the veteran warriors.
- Ẓònpònná A Yoruba divinity that is believed to be Lord of the open (Olóde), "the destruction that wasteth at noonday", the divinity whose main scourge is small pox. In short, the divinity is a dreadful reality to the Yoruba.

- Súná According to custom or tradition; bad or good name. The word is taken from the Arabic word, sunna - 'custom, practice and sayings of the Prophet' and Hausa word, sūnā - 'a name'.
- Tàdàà A type of ink.
- Tápà Yoruba word for a native of Nupeland.
- Tàfùsífirù  
(tẹ̀fùsífirù) Explanation, commentary, exegesis (usually of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān). The word is taken from the Arabic word, tafsīr meaning explanation or commentary on the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān.
- Tésibfiyù  
(tẹ̀sùnbàà) The Muslim rosary.
- Tírà Yoruba word for writing; amulet. Compare the expression 'onitírà' - "an amulet-writing cleric".
- Wàláà Broad wooden slate.
- Wáàsi Open-air preaching, homily. The word is taken from the Arabic word, waʿz - 'homily'.
- Wírìdí A litany task, generally recited at the end of certain ritual prayers. The word is taken from the Arabic word, wird - 'A litany task'.
- Wòlímọ̀ Ceremony marking consummation of marriage or completion of certain stage of Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic education. The word is taken from the Arabic word, walīma - 'nuptial ceremony'; 'party'; 'banquet'.
- Wónkà Ritual ablution of conversion; Yoruba word for the ritual washing involved in the ceremonial act of allegiance to Islam. The word is taken from the Hausa word, wankā which simply means 'washing'.



Yàasin

A sūra of the Qur<sup>ān</sup> especially efficacious in incantation.

Yìdì

A Muslim festival; a place in the open field where Muslims celebrate some of their festivals. The word is taken from the Arabic word, ʿīd meaning 'festival'.

Yìgì (yìjì)

The Islamic sadāq (marriage payment by the husband to the wife which becomes her legal property). This is the name from which the Muslim wedding derives its name iso-yìgì, divorce being termed ìtú-yìgì, 'untying the yìgì compact'.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

I am conscious of the fact that of all religions in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, Islam occupied a very significant position. There can be no doubt that many books have been written and published on the secular history and traditional religion of the people in this area. It is also obvious that very many books have been published on the Christian missionary impact on the area, but as far as I know there has been no work specifically written on the history and development of Islam in the area. However, as a history of Muslims in Nigeria, this work, in a way, would complement some previous works dealing with the activities and impact of the Christian Missions in Nigeria. The most notable among such works are those by J.F. Ade. Ajayi: *The Christian Missions in Nigeria*, (London, 1965); E.A. Ayandele: *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, (London, 1966); J.B. Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba 1888-1922*, (Oxford, 1964) and Joseph Akinyele Omoyajowo: *Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria*, (Ibadan University, Ph.D. Thesis 1971). It is my view that an evaluation of the Nigerian past will benefit

greatly from a more balanced appreciation of the impact of both Christianity and Islam on the people of Nigeria.

The work can also be said to be complementary to works such as those of E. Bọlaji Idowu: *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief*, (London, 1966); J.O. Lucas: *The Religion of the Yorubas*, (Lagos, 1948); E.G. Parrinder: *African Traditional Religion*, (London, 1954), *West African Traditional Religion*, (London, 1961) and Joseph Ọmọṣade Awolalu: *Sacrifice in the Religion of the Yoruba*, (University of Ibadan Ph.D. Thesis, 1971). I believe that, to appreciate fully the effects of the interaction of religions in Nigeria, and Yorubaland in particular, the three major religions together with their impact on the people of Nigeria should be examined.

Furthermore, this work will further our understanding of the development and impact of Islam especially in the West African periphery of the Muslim World. This work is limited both in scope and time to a very compact group, and it thus contrasts with the exercises undertaken by J.S. Trimingham: *A History of Islam in West Africa*, (Oxford, 1965) and his book, *Islam in West Africa* (Oxford,

1972). However, the work falls a little bit in line with those of G.O. Gbadamosi: *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, (University of Ibadan Ph.D. Thesis, 1968); J.F. Hopewell, *Muslim Penetration into French Guinea, Sierra-Leone and Liberia before 1850*, and the recent studies which Monteil and Ivor Wilks undertook about the history of Islam among the Wolofs and Ashanti respectively. This type of close historical study of the different Muslim groups will enable us understand better the impact of Islam on the people of West Africa as a whole.

The work describes the origin and development of Islam in Oyo and its districts a subject that has hitherto not been seriously studied, and which has suffered remarkably from guesswork, conflation and vagueness. The people of the area occupied a significant position in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century, and as the majority of them had embraced Islam and are constituting a very conscious and dynamic body with diverse connections, it is obviously expedient to try and understand their past experiences, developments, ideas, hopes and aspirations.

The subject of the research is limited to this area because it is a common conviction that research can be

more effectively and efficaciously carried out if the area of the investigation is not too vast. Even here, we cannot claim that we have seen every part of the area.

However, a good number of the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts were visited. Moreover, questionnaires were distributed to some research assistants who conducted their investigation at places where they were born or have worked as mālams and are therefore, well known and loved by the people. Their acquaintance with the Muslim officials, Chief Imāms in particular, enabled them, no doubt, to collect easily and fully relevant and valuable information for the work. It remains for me to add that I conducted personal interviews with very many renowned and knowledgeable Muslims in the area.

This work deals with the history of the Muslims inhabiting the present Oyo North Division and Oyo South Division in Oyo State. It has been considered more useful in this work to deal with Yoruba Muslims in this area, who, on the whole, have a peculiar pattern of Muslim history and development. Reference has been made to the history of Yoruba Muslims in other parts of Yorubaland only where this has been considered relevant to a proper grasp of the

historical development of Islam in the area.

I am aware of the fact that in order to understand in the context of religious beliefs and practices, it will be expedient to enter into the thought patterns and emotional warmth of its members; for, there is always the great jeopardy of projecting one's own religious feelings into the "imagined - feelings" of the votaries of other religions with the result that irrational value judgements are sometimes made. In the light of this, I have, therefore, endeavoured to allow the Muslim community of Qyq and its districts to speak for itself and have tried to present the materials as they have been passed on to me so that readers can personally enter into the thought and appreciate the practices and beliefs of the community.

My approach in this work has been largely religio-social, and little attention has been given to the political and economic developments of the Muslims. Other writers, I hope, will embark on the study of these aspects and enrich our present knowledge of the subject. Apart from personal interviews conducted with knowledgeable individuals, I have also consulted Muslim, Christian and Government sources as the bibliography indicates. The conclusions which are drawn from these sources will serve

as a strong platform for new questions that will generate further investigation.

The work contains many Yoruba words, modern and ancient. While modern Yoruba is easily adaptable to modern orthography, the poetic ancient Yoruba words are not so easy. However, the modern orthography has been strictly followed in this work with the exception of some place and personal names. The words carry appropriate tone marks for the purpose of easy reading and apprehension.

The Arabic words in the work are given the transliterated form. However, a separate glossary is prepared for the detailed meanings of the words. The full meaning of technical words other than Arabic are contained in this glossary.

It is worth noting that religion is never to be held as an abstract thing, rather it should be seen as something practical and meaningful for those who practise it. We ought to observe how its practice affects the level of consciousness of the people. This is why the study of Islam in such an originally traditional centre as Oyo and its districts is very important. It is important because it reveals the people's Islamic view and the way they reacted to it in various circumstances of their lives in

the nineteenth century.

Moreover, it is pertinent to note that the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century gives us a clear picture of the reaction of the three groups of people: missionaries, administrators and traders. For the people of this area, the first group was by far the most important, not only because it preceded the two others, but also because it was closest to the people.

The approach followed in this work will enable us to identify correctly the features of Islam, appreciate its peculiar problems and assess its successes and failures in the area in the nineteenth century.

Finally, it is important to appreciate the fact that the history of the penetration of a religious culture into an area is essential as a means towards understanding its present-day manifestations.

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Ibadan.

1977.



XLI

PART ONE: (HISTORY)

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## CHAPTER ONE

1.0

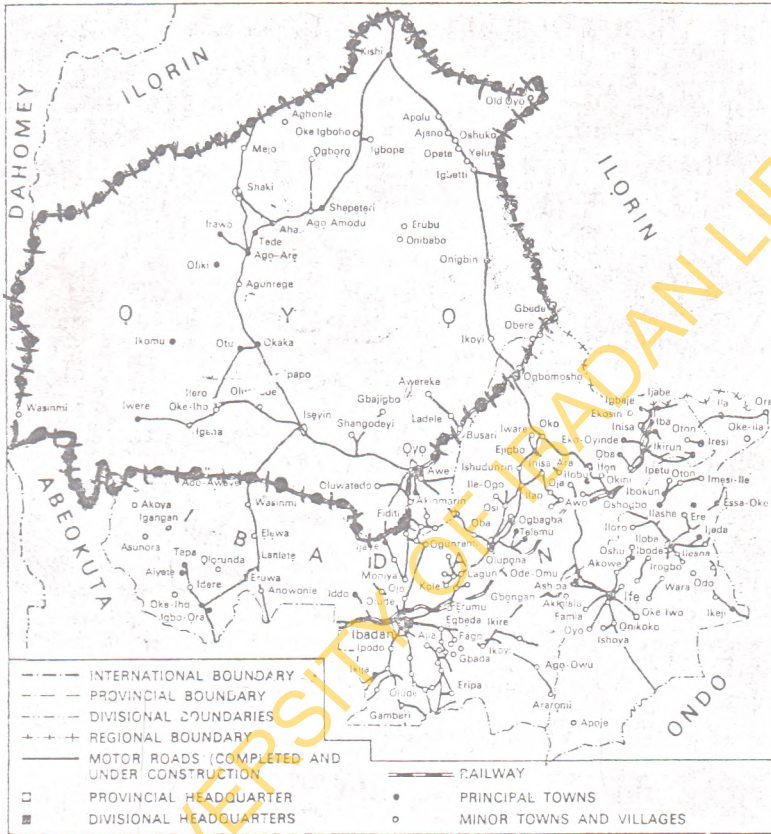
### ISLAM IN OYO AND ITS DISTRICTS FROM ITS INCEPTION TO 1836

#### 1.1 Oyo and its districts before Islam


##### 1.11 Ethnic history:

In the nineteenth century, the people of Oyo and its districts lived mostly in the area which constitutes the present Oyo Division.<sup>1</sup> They constituted a distinct extended family group within the sub-group of the Yoruba called the Oyo.<sup>2</sup> The Yoruba can be divided into a number

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1. During the British occupation of Yorubaland, the country was broken into divisions. This took place in the early part of the present century. Oyo Division was created in 1914. See map 1 on 1(a) p. below, For further details concerning the administrative divisions in Yorubaland in the twentieth century, see: Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria, 1894-1934. London, 1973, 177-214pp.
  2. Strictly speaking, not all the people called the Oyo were related on the basis of dialectal similarity. Moreover, it is pertinent to note here that the classification of peoples by linguistic groups is what most people mean by the tribes of some countries. In this way, we can refer to them as "The Oyo-dialect speaking people of Yorubaland". Only the people of Oyo and its districts can claim direct eponymous ancestry. Concerning the fact that the Oyo are a sub-group of the Yoruba, see Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, Lagos, 1973, 16p. See also Oboli, H.O.N. An Outline Geography of West Africa, London, 1975, 116p.



Oyo Province, 1914-34

N.B.  Oyo Divisional Boundary

Map 1: Oyo Province, 1914-1934.

of sub-ethnic groups - the Oyo, the Egbas, the Egbados, the Ijebu, the Ekiti, the Ondo, the Akoko, the Ijesa and the Ikalẹ. It is the common belief of the historians that the Oyo, for a considerable period of time, constituted the core of the Yoruba. From the point of view of geographical location, the Oyo occupied the open derived savanna to the North West of Yorubaland.<sup>1</sup> This sub-ethnic group, by the nineteenth century, contained a substantial number of Yoruba towns especially Oyo, the metropolis of the Old Oyo Empire.<sup>2</sup>

While the Oyo included the people in the present Oyo, Ife, Ibadan, Osun Divisions, the people of Oyo and its districts in particular are the people inhabiting the present Oyo Division.

The people of Oyo and its districts constituted a distinct group with common eponymous progenitor,

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1. For further details about the geographical location of the Oyo, see Owoade, Ayo. "The States of the Guinea Forest", History of West Africa, Ministry of Education, (Audio Visual Section), Ibadan, 11p, September - Term 1974/75. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.
  2. See below, map 2 on 2(a)p.

Oranyan,<sup>1</sup> within the sub-ethnic group, the Oyo. The people are the so-called descendants of Oranyan, and the cream of his conquering army. They have always retained their loyalty more or less to the successors of Oranyan, their common father, even where the revolutionary wars left them no longer united under one head as in the days of Šangó<sup>2</sup>

1. Oranyan is believed to be the founder of Old Oyo. Furthermore, it is the general belief that his period of reign is cloaked in timeless pre-history. For further details concerning the founder of Old Oyo, see Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire, 10, 11, 13-14; 15-22, 26-7pp. et passim; N.A.I. Oyo prof.2/3, File No. 203: "Versions of Yoruba Kings", by Adesoji Aderemi, the Oni of Ife, 1931. Here he refers to Oranyan in the full form as Oranmiyan and maintains that he was the youngest son of Odua (Oduduwa), the eponymous progenitor of the Yoruba; qv, Atanda, J.A., op.cit., 3p. About the history of Oyo after Oranyan, see N.A.I. Oyo Prof. 4/6, File No. 275/1918. History of Oyo from Aafin, Oyo, August 1918. See also Hodgkin, T. Nigerian Perspectives, London, 1969, 62-4pp.
2. Šangó was the third Aláafin of Oyo who was deified after his death. He is worshipped in Yorubaland today as the god of thunder and lightning.

than to those of Abiodun. There has always been among them a bond of sympathy and union, apart from what they have in common with the other components of the Oyo-dialect speaking people and the rest of Yoruba tribe. The towns and villages in this group owed allegiance to the Aláàfin<sup>1</sup> largely because their rulers regarded the Aláàfin as their blood relation. In fact, some of these towns and villages were founded or ruled by princes from Old Oyo owing to disputes over succession or other grievances.<sup>2</sup> The towns

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1. The position of the Aláàfin among the people of Oyo and its districts is seen in the description of the oba by the British officials in the late nineteenth century. In a number of their despatches to London in this period and the early part of the twentieth century, as well as in the treaties signed with the Yoruba chiefs towards the end of the nineteenth century, these officials described the Aláàfin (Aláàfin) as 'King of Oyo and Head of Yorubaland'; q.v., Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire, 2p. On page 5 of the same book, he refers to the Aláàfin as the 'Head of the Oyo people' in the original context. See also "A dictionary of the Yoruba Language." Ibadan, 1969.
  2. Despite the disputes or grievances, peace was often made between them and the Aláàfin with whom they quarrelled, or alternatively they might be friendly with his successor. In any case, the feeling of kinship soon made a break-away prince owe allegiance to the capital.

and villages<sup>1</sup> remained closely inter-related in war and peace, and manifested a remarkable degree of uniformity in their historical development. It is these settlements that constituted the core of the Yoruba sub-group called the Oyo and the Yoruba at large. This work is concerned with the Yoruba resident in this area which functioned as the political headquarters of the Old Oyo Empire for a long time.

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1. In this connection, the following towns and villages can be mentioned. Old Oyo (Oyo'le): (This has lain in ruin since the fall of the Old Oyo Empire), Saki, Oke-Iho, Iganna, Ayetoro, Ofiki, Irawo-Owode, Okaka, Otu, Irawo'le, Şepeteri, Igboho, Igbeti, Kisi, New Oyo (Agod'Oyo), Awe, Fiditi, Iseyin, Ilora, Akinmorin, Ikoyi, Ago Aro see N.A.I. "Oyo Province Annual Report", 1923, Para. 174; Abimbola, W., 'The Ruins of Oyo Division', African Notes, Vol. ii, 1, October, 1964.

Unlike most of the towns and villages in the Oyo Empire, the towns and villages mentioned here were not integrated into the Empire by virtue of military conquests but on the basis of blood relationship. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.

The Oyo developed their own dialect, culture and traditions. In spite of the unity<sup>1</sup> in the culture of the Oyo and the Yoruba in general, there were some distinctive traits which marked out the people of Oyo and its districts from the rest of the Oyo.

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1. The basic unity in the culture of the Oyo and the Yoruba at large is seen in the role of Ife as the ancestral home, the cradle, of the Yoruba. In popular belief, the Yoruba were descended from Oduduwa of Ife; and practically, every important Yoruba ruler. (See Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 5p.) In this book, Johnson relates how the Yorubas are said to have sprung from Lamirudu, one of the kings of Mecca whose offspring were: Oduduwa, the ancestor of the Yorubas, the kings of Gogobiri and of the Kukawa, two tribes in the Hausaland. But he goes on to say that only the two latter nations, Gogobiri and the Kukawa, have the same distinctive tribal marks on their faces and recognised each other as of one blood. Thus, it is difficult to give a definitive conclusion about the Meccan origin of the Yoruba which, in my own opinion, is cloaked in timeless pre-history. See also Idowu, E.B. "The Religion of the Yoruba," in Gangan. Ibadan, issue No.6, 10-11pp., 6 October, 1975. There is the recent work by Biobaku, S.O. "Origins of the Yorubas" in Lugard Lectures, Lagos, 1955 in which he tries to trace the Yoruba ancestry. He pursues a suggestion by S. Johnson (op.cit., 3-5pp.) that the Yoruba came from the East particularly, Mecca. This does not, however, invalidate the Yoruba belief of a common ancestry or of their popular belief that Ife was their ancestral home, the cradle of Yoruba creation and civilisation according to one Yoruba myth of creation. Concerning the tradition that Oduduwa was the progenitor of the Yoruba, see Idowu, E.B. Olódùmarè, God in Yoruba Belief, 12-29pp.; Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire, 32p.



First, there was the role of Old Oyo<sup>1</sup> as the cradle of the people of Oyo and its districts. It is the common belief of historians that these people were descended from

In addition to common descent, the Oyo, and the Yoruba at large, had another bond of unity in their common language. The standard Yoruba language was invented in the last century; but the various Yoruba dialects were mutually intelligible and were, in fact, variants of one language. Concerning this bond, see Ajayi, J.F. Ade.: "How Yoruba was reduced to Writing" in Odu, 8, October, 1960; Atanda, J.A., op.cit., 5p; "Report of the Yoruba Orthography Committee", Ministry of Education, Ibadan, 1969. 1-54pp. Of special relevance to our present work are the following bonds of unity: Yoruba culture and traditional religion. The culture of Oyo and its districts, and the Yorubaland at large, was basically urban and agrarian. The people lived in cities and large conglomerations, and their "urbanity" manifested itself in various aspects of their life such as politics, economic set-up, religious ways of life, languages and ethical behaviour.

1. Old Oyo town was given different names by different sets of people during the period of the Old Oyo Empire. In the area, they called Old Oyo, 'Oyo-Orò' meaning, literally "Oyo-Word". The significance of the suffix, "Word", does not allow for historical analysis. (Interview with the present Aláàfin of Oyo, in his palace, December, 1973). They also called it Oyo-Ajàkà, meaning "Oyo of Ajàkà". The Hausa and the allied groups called it 'Katunga'. See Niven, C.R. A Short History of Nigeria, London, 1957. 66p. See also Hodgkin, T., Nigerian Perspectives, London, 1969, 46-7pp. The British people called it 'Eyeo' or 'Awyaw'. Concerning the following names, see the following books: Johnson: S, op.cit., 150p.; Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire, 10, 11, 13-14pp. et passim.

Oranyan, the youngest son<sup>1</sup> of Oduduwa; and practically every important ruler in Oyo town and its districts.

Another distinctive feature of the people of Oyo and its districts which marked them out as a distinct group in Yorubaland can be seen in their local beliefs in certain divinities<sup>2</sup> and in their traditional practices. As said earlier, the basis of Yoruba traditional religion was the age-long common Africanness, but with regard to details the traditional religion of the people had some peculiarities. For example, peculiar to the people was

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1. Concerning the relationship between Oranyan and Oduduwa, see the following: N.A.I.; Oyo Prof. 2/3 file No. 203, 3p. Here the present Oni of Ife, Oba Adesoji Aderemi used the abridged form of Oduduwa; Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 8p.; Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire, 32p.
  2. The divinities are called ministers of Olódùmarè by Idowu in his book - Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief, 57-100pp. These, according to the traditional belief of the Yoruba, serve the will of Olódùmarè in the creation and theocratic government of the world. They serve as intermediaries between man and God. While they serve as mediating ministers and not ends, there are some quarters in Yorubaland where they are regarded as ends in themselves. And when they are turned to ends, their devotees become idolatrous. Such a situation is almost always a prelude to priestcraft.

the belief in and worship of Şàngó and Qya.<sup>1</sup> Şàngó was a deified Alááfin of Qyọ who assumed the powers and qualities of Jákúta, the original divinity of sun and thunder. In Qyọ today, there is the day called Qjọọ-Jákúta, meaning, 'the day of Jákúta'. And in fact, today in Qyọ and its districts during the worship of Şàngó, sacrifice is made first to Jákúta, then to Şàngó.

Şàngó and Qya his wife were worshipped all over Yorubaland but the original home of the divinities was Qyọ.

Another distinctive feature of the people was the office of Pàràkđyi.<sup>2</sup> The office was originally a commercial one

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1. The information on Şàngó and Qya was collected from the surviving priests of Şàngó, the Mogbà, in Mogbà quarters in New Qyọ. Of special importance for us here is the fact that the worship of Şàngó and Qya first began among the people of the area and it was very much later, especially when the Old Qyọ Empire was created that, through contact, the Yoruba and other ethnic groups within the Empire embraced the worship of Şàngó and his wife Qya. In short the area was the diffuse centre for the worship of Şàngó and Qya in Yorubaland. For further details concerning Şàngó and Qya, see the following. Idowu, E.B. Olóđumare, God in Yoruba Belief, 91-3pp.; Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 34, 149pp.; Ladipo, Duro, Opera, Oba Ko So (The King did not hang), Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. (Occasional publication No.10) 1-117pp., 1968; Darmola, O. and A. Jeje, Awón Asà àti Òrìsà Ilè Yoruba, Ibadan, 1968. 236-240pp. See Hodgkin, T. Nigerian Perspectives, 84-6pp., and Johnson, S., op.cit., 34p.
2. Interview with the present Pàràkđyi of Qyọ town, Alhaji Aşiru, December, 1973. According to Alhaji Aşiru, the name of the first Pàràkđyi was Yesufu Alanamu, one of the earliest Muslim converts in Old Qyọ town.

and the holder of the office featured prominently well in the Old Oyo Empire. The holders of the office in other parts of Yorubaland derived the title from the original holder of the office in the area. More will be said about the holder of this office later in this work.

#### 1.12 The traditional social system.

With regard to the social set-up in the towns and villages of Oyo and its districts, there was almost perfect uniformity.

The society was divided into age-sets and lineages. Kinship solidarity was a prominent feature in the social set-up. The kinship principle extended beyond actual relatives. It extended beyond the boundary of the group which acknowledged common interests and loyalties.

The society was guided by a norm of conduct constituted by a system of unwritten or oral laws and sanctions. The principle of seniority reinforced the principle of authority and obedience on certain rather well-defined lines. Thus the people of Oyo and its districts in a large community were not only accustomed to co-operate, but also to defer to the views of a certain class of persons. It was a society largely ruled by custom in which the element of

individual judgement and initiative was very small. The society was conservative in its outlook and tended towards the stereotyping of attitudes, behaviour, practices and, even, ways of thinking.

The elders of the society were looked up to with unquestioning obedience by the younger folk. This facilitated the task of getting the content of the various codes accepted, and did a lot to reduce heterodoxy to a minimum with regard to the changes required in the various codes to suit altered conditions. Thus it is true to say that before the influx of the British colonial rule, no change had any chance of being adopted which did not commend itself to the elders of the community.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.13 The traditional political system.

Within its own geographical area, the set of people inhabiting Oyo and its districts developed its own political organisation. The area was the source of power and directives in the days of the Old Oyo Empire for the seat

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1. For further details about the social set-up of the Yoruba, see Okediji, F.O. and O.O. Okediji (eds.), The Sociology of the Yoruba by Fadipe, N.A. *et passim*. See also Peel, J.D.Y., Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba, Oxford, 1968, 19ff.

of the government was there. There lay the palace<sup>1</sup> of the Alááfin, and with him in this area were his blood relations.

The system of government was monarchical. The political structure was hierarchical with the õba at its apex and the Alááfin of Oyo as the supreme head. Within the political set-up, there was a balance of power and authority. That is, there were checks and balances to prevent tyranny or despotism. In this connection, the role of the council of elders was very important.

The õba in this area had some sacerdotal<sup>2</sup> qualities. He was regarded as the vicegerent of God. His subjects called him Aláṣe èkejì ọ̀rìṣà meaning "The commander, the second in rank to the divinity." The sacerdotal qualities of the õba were evident in the sceptre affixed to his crown. The sceptre served as a warning that the õba should not be tyrannical for he was not an absolute ruler but derivatively divine and ruled on behalf of one who was "Wholly other".

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1. See Ojo, G.J.A. Yoruba Palaces, London, 1966, 46-8pp.

2. For further details concerning the sacerdotal qualities of Yoruba õba in Oyo and its districts, see Balogun, K. "Sacred Kingship and Gerontocracy in Old Oyo Empire, A Study of an African Traditional Political System" (Ph.D. Ibadan, 1975).

La

Of all the ọbas and baálès in Ọyọ and its districts, the Aláàfin of Ọyọ occupied a unique position. He was regarded as the supreme head. Thus, in the colonial era, the British officials described him as "King of Ọyọ and Head of Yorubaland".<sup>1</sup> He lived in confinement, ààfin, and not easily seen. Thus, his subjects declared: "Író l'á ñgbó, ojú kò tó Aláàfin", meaning "we hear sound, eyes do not see Aláàfin". He could only be seen through intermediaries just as a son in Yorubaland would approach his father through intermediaries concerning important issues.

The ọba had many chiefs who helped him in the general administration of the town. First among these was the 'Baş̀prun', the leading member of the highest council of chiefs. Next was the Balógun. He was the officer in charge of war. He was usually a man of valour who should see to the welfare of the royal household and the town in general. Next was the Pàràkòyí.<sup>2</sup> He was originally an officer in the

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1. See above, f.n. † on 4p.

2. Originally the title, "Pàràkòyí, referred to the traditional leader of the guild of long distance traders. He functioned in this capacity in the Old Ọyọ Empire before the influx of Islam. The title later became associated or confused in various places with leadership in the Muslim communities. In this connection, see Gbadamosi, G.O. The Growth of Islam... and Ajayi, J.F. and Michael Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa, London, 1974, Vol.2, 142p.

court of the Aláàfin of Oyo in the days of the Old Oyo Empire. He was the officer in charge of markets and traders, especially long distance traders. Others were the baálés, the traditional compound heads. They were responsible to the chiefs, who in turn would report to the oba.

Of special importance, with regard to this work, was the integration<sup>1</sup> of quasi-religious bodies such as the Ògbóni<sup>2</sup> and the Orò.

The Ògbóni secret society was a prominent feature of the political life of the people. It is claimed to have originated in Ile-Ife,<sup>3</sup> the ancestral home of the Yoruba.

The executive officer of the society was the Ògbóni proper. The great majority of the initiates were merely associate members or camp followers. This executive

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1. See Williams, M., "The Atinga Cult among the South-Western Yoruba: A Sociological Analysis of a Witch-finding Movement" in W.A.I. S.E.R., 1952.

2. See Williams, M., "The Yoruba Ògbóni Cult in Oyo", Africa, XXX, 1960, 364-5pp. See also Johnson, S., The History of the Yoruba, 22, 77pp.

3. See Idowu, E.B., Olodumare... 24p.



consisted mainly of old men. There was usually a woman member of the executive.

The Ògbóni could take strong and suitable action in dealing with any menace to the social or political order. It had attached to it other organisations - the Èlùkù and the Orò (bull-roarer cult). The closely related Èlùkù and Orò organisations executed their judgement in the case of felons and other law-breakers. In special cases, however, such as political offences, executions could take place in the Ògbóni lodge. The hardly differentiated Èlùkù and Orò societies which, together, were in turn hardly differentiated from the Ogbóni as regards personnel, instilled fear into the hearts of the women-folk.

The Ògbóni also had its social and convivial side. Individual members of the executive took it in turn to entertain the remaining members. The installation of officers provided an occasion for feasting and drinking.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For further details about the political system of the Yoruba, see: Fadipe, N.A., The Sociology of the Yoruba, London University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1940. See also Okediji, F.O. and O.O. Okediji (eds.), The Sociology of the Yoruba by Fadipe, N.A., Ibadan, 1970, 198-224pp., Articles by Lloyd, P.C. especially "The Traditional Political System of the Yoruba", South-Western Journal of Anthropology, 10, 4 Winter 1954; Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire, 1-28pp.; see also Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 40-78pp. See also J.D.Y. Peel, Aladura..., 24ff.

1.14. The traditional religious beliefs.

In the pre-Islamic times, the people of Oyo and its districts believed in one Supreme Being whom they called Olódùmarè, Olórun or Olúwa. In addition to this belief, they worshipped divinities such as Òrìṣà-ńlá<sup>1</sup> Odúduwà, Ifá, Èṣù, Ṣàngó, Ogún, Ṣọnpọnnọ, Oya, Egúngún and Orò.<sup>2</sup> There was also the belief in spirits,<sup>3</sup> ancestors and in the power

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1. Today Òrìṣà-ńlá is called different names in different places in Yorubaland. He is the arch-divinity. He is called either Òrìṣàfunfun or Ọbatálá in some places in Yorubaland; Òrìṣà Olúfón in Ifón; Òrìṣà Ọgíyán in Ibadan, Òrìṣà-ńlá in Oyo. For further details about Òrìṣà-ńlá, see Idowu, E.B., Olódùmarè: 71-5pp. Here Idowu calls Òrìṣà-ńlá the supreme divinity of the Yoruba. See also Lucas, J.O. The Religion of the Yorubas, 89-97pp.; Idowu, E.B. African Traditional Religion: A Definition, London, 1973, 161, 169, 171pp. et passim.
  2. The definite number of these divinities is not easy to fix. The only source available to us on this question is the body of Yoruba oral traditions. For more details about the divinities in Yorubaland, see Delano, I.O., The Soul of Nigeria, London, 1937. 175-186pp. According to oral evidence, it has ranged from 201 to 1,700 (q.v. Idowu, E.B. Olódùmarè, op.cit., 67-8pp.) Idowu leaves the question at this: "The Orìṣà is a legion, for they are many". Thus we see that the exact census of the pantheon no one is now able to tell. Besides, no work has yet been able to list all the divinities.
  3. For details concerning spirits, see Awolalu, J.O. Sacrifice in the Religion of the Yoruba, 39-45pp.

of magic, medicine, witchcraft and sorcery.

The body of Yoruba beliefs permeated the whole fabric of the life and culture of the people of Oyo and its districts. Ifá<sup>1</sup> and other divinities were consulted everywhere in the area by all the people during the critical situations of their lives. The taboos<sup>2</sup> were essentially what the "divinities" hate; and the festivals were mainly

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1. Another name for Ifá is Ọrúnmílà. Ifá is held to be alien to the Yoruba. It is believed that Ifá probably came from Nupe. Concerning this belief, see Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 32, 47pp. See also Idowu, E.B. Olódumare, 34, 77, 101, 112pp. et passim. Here, Idowu maintains that while Ọrìṣà-ńlá is the deputy of Olódumare on earth in his creative and executive functions, Ọrúnmílà (Ifá) is His deputy in matters pertaining to omniscience and wisdom. Here also he gives the full form of Ọrúnmílà which he says can be either Ọrun-l'ó-mo-à-ti-là - "Only Heaven knows the means of salvation" or Ọrun mo-òlà (òòlà) - "Only Heaven can effect deliverance". See also Lucas, J.O. The Religion of the Yorubas, 69-86pp.; Daramola, O. and A. Jeje, Awón Asà àti Ọrìṣà Ilẹ̀ Yòrùbá, 197-214pp.; Oduyoye, Modupe, The Vocabulary of Yoruba Religious Discourse, Ibadan, Day Star Press, 1971. 30, 93-100pp.
2. In Yoruba language the word is called akíṣeé, meaning "We don't do it". The word refers to the prohibitions of the divinities.

celebrations in honour of these divinities<sup>1</sup> and the deceased ancestors.<sup>2</sup> Security and protection were expected from these "divinities" whose favours and goodwill were solicited through the medium of medicine, magic and sacrifices made by their priests. Moreover, artistic works such as carving of different kinds were inspired by concepts of these divinities and were largely switched

1. Traditional festivals abounded in Oyo and its districts. Among these were: Ogun festival in honour of Ogun, Şangó festival in honour of Şangó, Egúngún festival in honour of a deceased ancestor, Orò festival in honour of a deceased ancestor. Orò was a common festival in Iseyin, a district of Oyo town. This is seen in the praise-name of the people of Iseyin:

Iseyin Orò

Omo Ebeđi

(Iseyin that belongs to Orò)  
(The child of Ebeđi).

Here, Ebeđi is believed to be the founder of the town and had been connected with the Orò from time immemorial. Examples can be multiplied on festivals in the area.

2. Concerning the connection between the ancestors and the Egúngún festivals, see Idowu, E.B. Olódùmarè, 191-4pp. Here he says the Egúngún and Orò cults are means of demonstrating, in a concrete way, the belief that those who depart from this earth continue in existence elsewhere and are actively "in touch" with those who are still here.

towards their service.<sup>1</sup> Thus, possibly, the single most important factor in the lives of the people in the area, important because of its pervasive and determinant value, was the body of traditional beliefs and worship.

When Islam came, it had to reckon with the traditional background of the people. Some of the traditional factors such as common language, urban set-up, the traditional social system and the traditional political system were to assist the spread and development of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. Others such as the panoply of Yoruba religious beliefs were, in some cases, as will be seen later in this work, of dubious significance for Islam. Moreover, new factors such as Christianity, Western European values and British rule later gained influx into the situation. It will be seen later in this

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1. See Cordwell, J.N. Some Aesthetic Aspects of Yoruba and Benin Cultures, (Ph.D. North Western University, 1952). He shows how figurines and artistic works are inspired and oriented towards religion. See also Hull, R.W. African Civilization before the Baturee, London, 1971, 149-168pp.; see Otto, R.O. The Idea of the Holy, London, 1973, 65-71pp.

work<sup>1</sup> how Islam spread and grew amidst these challenges and changing scenes.

### 1.2 The influx of Islam into West Africa.

In the 100 years following the hijra (622-722) there was a considerable expansion of the Arabs<sup>2</sup> out of Arabia

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1. See below, chapter 3, et passim.
2. Although this expansion has sometimes been regarded as great religious expansion, it was, in fact, a political expansion motivated by economic rather than religious factors. On this issue see: Hitti, P. History of the Arabs, Macmillan, 1963; Brockelmann, C. History of the Islamic Peoples, London, 1964; Lewis, Bernard, The Arabs in History, London, 1968; Brockelmann has it that the Arabs were able to create

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into places such as Syria, Iraq, Persia, Central Asia and along the coast of North Africa and even into Spain. And from North Africa, Islam spread across the Sahara to the Western Sudan and even partially into the Guinea Forest States. Islam spread in many ways in West Africa. Among these may be recognised the following: spread through peaceful settlement of Muslim merchants, through trading activities or nomadic movement of cattle rearers in the open savanna zone.

Furthermore, Islam spread through diffusion or dispersal of population following forcible invasions such as that of Almoravids on the Ancient Empire of Ghana<sup>1</sup> and the Moors on Songhay<sup>2</sup> Empire.

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an Empire. See also Atiyah, E. The Arabs, Lebanon, 1968; Macmichael, H.A., A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, London, 1922; Gibb, H.A.R. Studies on the Civilisation of Islam, London, 1962, 1-134pp.; Dujarric, G. L'Etat Mahdiste due Soudan, Paris, 1899; Antonius, G., The Arab Awakening, London, 1938, London, 1946; Van Ess, J. Meet the Arab, London 1943. This discusses the contact of the Iraqians with the Arabs. Hourani, A.K. Syria and Lebanon, Oxford, 1946. Here we have the contact between the Syrians and the Arabs. The following books discuss the North African encounter with the Arabs: Knight, M.M. Morocco as a French Venture, New York, 1937. Mellor, F.H. Morocco Awakens, London, 1939; Usborn, C.V., The Conquest of Morocco, London, 1936.

1. The Almoravids conquered Ghana by 1076 A.D.
2. Songhay fell in the hands of the Moors in 1591 A.D.

In the eleventh century, Tasina, a Lamtuna leader went on pilgrimage to Mecca and on his return proclaimed a Jihād on the followers of the traditional religion who resided in Senegal river area. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yāsīn (d 451/1059), the head of the Almoravids, used his men of ribāt<sup>1</sup> to launch a Jihād on the Ancient Empire of Ghana. Moreover, the Jihād<sup>2</sup> of Shehu ‘Uthmān ḍan Fodio (1754-1817) in Hausaland can be cited .

Islam spread in some parts of West Africa through established missionary organisation. Here again the

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1. Men of the ribāt or ribāt dwellers are called al-Murābitūn. The Murābitūn Movement had begun among the militant Muslim tribes of the Berbers of the Sinhaja. The word al-Murābitūn is derived from the Arabic word ribāt which means a sūfī monastery. European writers use the word Almoravids to refer to the al-Murābitūn.
  2. Here it is important to note that the diffusion of new concept of Islam and the preaching of a "forerunner," Jibril ibn ‘Umar, inspired the revolt of ‘Uthmān ḍan Fodio, a tōrōdo cleric, in 1804 against the ruler of the traditional Hausa state of Gobir. The impetus of the movement was such that it spread over vast stretches of Central Sudan beyond regions of highly developed State systems (Hausa, Yoruba, and Nupe) to lands of unco-ordinated small traditional groups in the plateau regions of Bauchi and Adamawa. (See Kritzeck, J. and W.H. Lewis (eds.), Islam in Africa, New York, 1969, 17, 26-7pp.).



activities of the Almoravids in the Ancient Empire of Ghana can be cited. Yahya succeeded Tasina, a Lamtuna, who died in 1023. Yahya went on pilgrimage to Mecca and brought with him a famous preacher, 'Abd Allāh ibn Yāsīn. 'Abd Allāh began to preach Islam among the Goddala. Suddenly Yahya died, and 'Abd Allāh felt unsafe. He therefore retired to a ribāt where he began to train the preachers who were supposed to preach Islam among the Berber tribes. However, this fact should not be over-emphasised. It is important to note that the Muslim missionary organisation in West Africa cannot, in any way or form, be compared to the Christian missionary organisation. While most of the Christian missionaries were sponsored by the Missions<sup>1</sup> abroad, those Muslims who chose to teach, preach and spread Islam in West Africa were few and the few were not sponsored

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1. Here we may note the following Missions: the C.M.S., the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Catholic, the S.I.M. and the S.U.M.

by any International Organisation.<sup>1</sup> Missionary work was mostly done on private basis. In addition to missionary activity, Muslim missionaries in West Africa undertook some private work such as Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>anic teaching, divination and amulet preparation. The missionaries intensified missionary work later as a result of the rivalry between them and their Christian counterparts.

The influx of Islam into West Africa was very significant. Through Islam, the people of diverse ethnic groups and languages found a common bond of allegiance to a central authority. Ability of Muslims to read and write and to communicate over long distances made them valuable in advising the rulers of the Ancient Empires of West Africa. Through the holy pilgrimages to Mecca, and as Muslims, some of the rulers of the Ancient Empires belonged to the larger body politics of the Muslim world and this would make it possible to establish international relations. As more and more West Africans went on pilgrimage to Mecca, more and more Arabs and Egyptians came to visit West Africa. This meant not only culture-contact, but commercial-contact as

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1. Here, we can compare the situation in East Africa. Here, there was no established missionary organisation until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and whatever missionary activities had been born were the outcome of their rivalry with the Christian missionaries and were not sponsored by any International Organisation.

well. The educational value of Islam was tremendous. Some rulers employed Muslim interpreters to record events in Arabic language and to communicate with more distant rulers on behalf of the rulers. As a result of the influx of foreign Muslims into West Africa, Arabic writing and learning were introduced.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3 The influx of Islam into Nigeria

Islam entered Nigeria from two directions: from the North into Kanem-Bornu, the area which forms the present North Eastern State of Nigeria; and from the West into Hausaland, parts of the present North Western, North Central and Kano States of Nigeria. In both directions, it followed the caravan trade routes that existed from North Africa through the Sahara into the Western and Central Sudan.

It will be expedient here to consider the method adopted by merchants with regard to the introduction of Islam into Nigeria. As they passed along the trade routes, merchant settlements were formed in which some of the foreign traders and craftsmen remained with their indigenous customers, intermarried with them and formed separate

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1. For further details about the influx of Islam into West Africa see the following: Owoade, Ayo, "Islam in West Africa up to 1800" in History of West Africa (1000-1800), 20-22pp.; Trimmingham, J.S., A History of Islam in West Africa and his book Islam in West Africa; Ajayi, J.F.A. and Ian Espie (eds.), A Thousand Years of West African History, 44, 113-130, 264-265pp. et passim; Davidson, B., The Africans, London, 1969. 211-224pp.; Schieffelin, H.M., The People of Africa, Ibadan, I.U.R., 1974. 74-98pp.; Niven, C.R. A Short History of Nigeria, 4, 25, 35, 44, 46, 50, 75pp. et passim; Fage, J.D., Introduction to the History of West Africa, Cambridge, 1961 34, 35, 52, 53-54, 69, 83-4pp. et passim. Oliver, R. and J.D. Fage, A Short History of Africa, London, 1972. 72-74, 76-7, 81-4, 86-92, 93-7pp. et passim; Hunwick, J.O., "Islam in West Africa", A.D. 1000-1800" in Ajayi, J.F. Ade, and Ian Espie 113-131pp.; Smith, H.F.C., "Islam in West Africa" in Ibadan No. 15, March, 1963.

organisations. They practised their religion publicly, and soon made an impact on their hosts through their religious devotions, supernatural healing power, ability to make both women and cultivated land fertile and in averting the dangers of witchcraft and sorcery which were, more often than not, dreaded by the traditional societies among whom they settled. From among such settlers would emerge teachers and preachers of Islam who, through their strict Islamic practices, coupled with their mystical powers, were regarded as holy men. They were often believed by the community in which they lived to possess the attribute of baraka,<sup>1</sup> a power by which they could bring blessings upon the ruler and his subjects. They soon became mediators in both secular and religious matters and finally endeared themselves to the rulers who eventually led their subjects in embracing Islam by slow progress.<sup>2</sup>

With the introduction of the camel into North Africa towards the end of the Roman control of that area, travelling

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1. Balogun, I.A.B. "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria" in N.J.I., Ile-Ife, Vol. 1, No. 1, 38p., June, 1970.
  2. Lewis, I.M., Islam in Tropical Africa, Oxford, 1966, 20-3pp.

southwards into the interior of the continent became relatively easier than hitherto. This facilitated the movement of the North African merchants across the Sahara into the Western and Central Sudan. They travelled along three main routes.<sup>1</sup>

- (i) From Morocco through Mauritania into the Senegal basin, and also through Taghaza and Taodeni into the Niger bend.
- (ii) From the area between Tunis and Tripoli through Ghandames into Katsina and Kano; and also through Fezzan into the Chad area.
- (iii) From Egypt and Cyrenaica through Fezzan into Kanem and the Chad area; and also from Egypt through Darfur and Waday into Kanem-Bornu area.<sup>2</sup>

After the thirteenth century, a steady decline set into the Kanem Kingdom. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Kanem dynasty was forced to move westward into Bornu, taking

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1. See Balogun, I.A.B. "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", 38p.
  2. Fage, J.D., An Introduction to the History of West Africa, Cambridge, 1962, 11p.

Islam with it and consolidating its new State with it as well. The dynasty was re-established in Bornu by the Safawa<sup>1</sup> and by the time of Mai Idris Alawma (1570-1602), the Kingdom had again become powerful, having diplomatic links with North Africa and the Ottoman Sultanate. The influence of Bornu in this period extended westwards again into Hausaland and southwards into the Benue basin as far as Kwararafa. The application of the shari'a and the administration based on it were intensified, and the common people increasingly became Muslims.<sup>2</sup> In point of fact, Islam became the State religion in Bornu during the reign of Mai Idris Alawma and some neighbouring States accepted it.<sup>3</sup>

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the power of Bornu began to wane as a result of the onslaught from the Tuaregs in the North and the Jukuns in the South.

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1. Balogun, I.A.B., "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", 38p.
  2. Fage, J.D., An Introduction to the History of West Africa, 36p.
  3. Trimingham, J.S., A History of Islam..., 36p.

Though this decline continued into the eighteenth century, Bornu still retained its importance as a centre of Islamic culture during this period.<sup>1</sup> At this period also, the Fulani emigrants from the West started to increase in number and expand within the Bornu State. Their intermittent attacks on small tribes within the State increased the already prevalent political insecurity which the inhabitants had experienced.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new threat to the stability of the State emerged in the rapidly growing power of the Fulani in Hausaland under Shehu Uthmān dan Fodio.

Moreover, Islam reached Nigeria through Senegal basin. Islam continued to make peaceful spread aided by the efforts of the Soninke tribe of Old Ghana and the Dyula (Wangarawa) traders who went about in pursuit of Kolanuts. In addition to trade in Kolanuts, they preached Islam. Consequently, the ruler of Jenné embraced Islam at about 1200 A.D. followed by

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1. Balogun, I.A.B., "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", 39p.
  2. Trimmingham, J.S., A History of Islam..., 124p.

all his subjects, with the result that Jenné "became the greatest Muslim metropolis in the Western Sudan".<sup>1</sup> Traders from Jenné gradually moved into Timbuktu which, from the thirteenth century, also grew eventually into both a commercial and great religious centre, later supplying both the Western and Central Sudan with learned men who left marks of their Islamic heritage.

In the fourteenth century, the Dyula (Wangarawa Mandigo) traders brought Islam into Hausaland. It first reached Kano during the reign of 'Alī Yaji (1349-85) and later Katsina (1380-1430).<sup>2</sup>

In the fifteenth century, Islam was taken seriously. The ruler who actually gave Islam a strong footing in Hausaland was Muḥammad Rimfa, king of Kano (1463-99). Katsina itself could not be said to have accepted Islam seriously until the reign of Ibrāhīm Maje (1492-1520). Some other parts of Hausaland were not exposed to the influence of the Muslim traders and preachers until much

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1. Trimingham, J.S. A History of Islam..., 31p.
  2. Johnston, H.A.S., The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, O.U. P., 1967, 10p.



later. The people in these places remained as adherents of the traditional religion. Examples of such places were Zaria, Zamfara, Gobir and Yauri.

After the Wangarawa traders had introduced Islam into Hausaland, it came to the turn of the Fulbe of the Tokolor tribe to carry further the Islamisation of the area. With the activities of the Fulbe, the Muslims of Hausaland became acquainted with the Qurʾān, the hadīth and the fiqh. Later, Fulani missionaries added books on tawhīd and Arabic grammar.

During the reign of the next ruler, Muḥammad Rimfa (1463-99), more Fulani missionaries poured into Hausaland and settled down to preach and teach Islam. This reign also witnessed a number of Muslim dignitaries who visited Kano and Katsina. For example, the Kano Chronicles inform us of Sharīfs from Arabia who visited Kano during this time. Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqit of Timbuktu, the grandfather of Aḥmad Bābā, also "visited Kano and other towns of the Sudan."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Balogun, I.A.B., "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria" in N.J.I., Ile-Ife, Vol. 1, No. 2, 38p., January-June, 1971.

From this time onward, both Kano and Katsina were increasingly becoming not only important commercial centres but also great seats of Islamic learning.

From the eleventh century, in the case of Kanem, and the fourteenth century, in the case of Hausaland, when Islam entered Northern Nigeria; until the end of the sixteenth century, it had a steady progress, especially among rulers and town dwellers after passing through the initial struggles with the traditional religion.

This period was a period of syncretism. The abuses against Islam during this period were not confined to the rulers alone; the common people, as well as some of the ‘Ulamā’ were equally guilty. The common people were accused of introducing innovation (bid‘a) into their practice of Islam thereby altering and adulterating the principles of the religion, and their 'venal mā̀lams' proclaimed such illegal innovations to be legitimate.<sup>1</sup>

From this confused and corrupt situation, ‘Uthmān ḍan Fodio was able, through his preaching and teaching, to

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1. Balogun, I.A.B., "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", .  
39p.

collect<sup>a</sup>/group of Muslims around him to form a community out of the wider Muslim community that existed in Hausaland during the second half of the eighteenth century. This community contained not only the Fulani who were of the tribe of ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio, but also the Hausa and the Tuareg.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the situation had reached a stage at which the knowledge of Islam was widespread enough and the Hausa states were corrupt enough to make Islamic reform welcome.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio appeared as the Islamic reformer, and eventually launched a Jihād in Hausaland, he was able to secure enough support that granted him victory and helped him to lay the foundation upon which the stabilisation and further spread of Islam within Nigeria were laid.

Different scholars have given different opinions about the Jihād<sup>2</sup> of ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio. Some gave political reasons while some advanced economic reasons. However, the Jihād fighter

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1. Balogun, I.A.B., "Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", 40p.

2. The Jihād of ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio covered the period between 1804 and 1810.

themselves as well as their descendants claim that it was 'a Holy War against the polluters of the Faith'.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever opinion anyone may hold, however, the obvious fact about the Jihād is that it welded the Hausa States, which had previously been antagonistic to one another, together into one solid unit under the Shari'ca and added to them new areas where no States had previously existed.<sup>2</sup> In point of fact, the Jihād was a formal attempt to convert Islam from the level of personal beliefs to one of communal law, an attempt to shake off the remnants of the traditional customs and to create a theocratic Empire where Islamic customs and practices would prevail.<sup>3</sup>

The Jihād did not stop with the Hausa States alone, rather it continued eastward into the Bornu Kingdom. The Jihād also pushed southwards and incorporated Nupeland as well as Ilorin in Yorubaland. It was partly due to the fortitude of the Yoruba and partly due to the forest of

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1. Lewis, I.M., Islam in Tropical Africa, 409p.
  2. ibid., p. 408p.
  3. Balogun, I.A.B., Penetration of Islam into Nigeria", 40p.

this area, unfamiliar to the Fulani warriors, that a stop was put to the continuation of the Jihād.<sup>1</sup> This, however, could not stop the already prevalent spread of Islam into the southern parts of Nigeria.

#### 1.4 The influx of Islam into Yorubaland.

As a matter of fact, Islam had already been known to the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria even before the Jihād of ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio. For example, speaking about the introduction of Islam into Yorubaland, El-Masrī says:

"The important thing to note about the spread of Islam, however, is that it had already become a factor in the country before the Fulani Jihād of 1804. By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, Islam had gained a foothold even as far south as the coast, where European travellers bore witness to the flourishing state of Muslim communities".<sup>2</sup>

Islam reached Yorubaland by way of the desert to the north of the country or, to be more precise, by way of Hausaland. There have been Muslims south of the Sahara in Bornu and Hausaland from the "eleventh and twelfth centuries

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1. For further details concerning the Jihād of ʿUthmān ḍan Fodio, see Balogun, I.A.B., The Life and Works of ʿUthman Ḍan Fodio, Lagos, 1975, and Hiskett, M., The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of Usman Dan Fodio, London, 1973.

/Shehu

2. El-Masrī, F.H., "Islam in Ibadan" in The City of Ibadan, (ed.) by Lloyd, P.C., Mabogunje, A.L., Awe, B., Cambridge, 1967.

Islam originally entered Yorubaland, like in the North, through the efforts of Muslim traders. When the Jihād stopped, the peaceful penetration of Islam southwards, particularly into Yorubaland continued. Hausa missionaries from the north settled in cities like Oyo, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode and Lagos and engaged in preaching Islam and teaching the Qur<sup>ān</sup> to the people. The Hausa missionaries were later joined by Yoruba missionaries from Ilorin. In course of time, there developed indigenous Muslim scholars from these areas who continued the activity of preaching and teaching Islam in other parts of Yorubaland.

Islam had actually spread in several ways in Yorubaland. The Yoruba who had occasion to sojourn for a period in communities where it flourished, returned home as professed converts to the faith and with a power to convert others commensurate with their social and political influence in their own communities. In addition, Hausa traders in Yorubaland, whether itinerant or resident, have claimed their own share of converts.

To start with, the groups of Muslims in Yorubaland were small and scattered but by the time a Chief Imām for

a town was appointed, very often a Hausa, Fulani, or Nupe, Islam was well established.

Here it is important to note that not all the early missionary efforts of Muslim missionaries in Yorubaland have been of a peaceful nature. As a result of Fulani domination<sup>1</sup> during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and of the policy of conquest adopted in the interests of the faith, whole communities (of which the Yoruba capital, Oyo, was one) were made to embrace Islam.

#### 1.5 The beginnings of Islam in Oyo and its districts.

Concerning the beginnings of Islam in Oyo and its districts, a student of history obviously finds himself in a subtle situation. The exact date of the influx of Islam into the area can scarcely be fixed with precision<sup>2</sup> since

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1. It was the intrigues of a Muslim mālam, Alūfa Alimi, with Afonja, Alāāfin's governor of Ilorin (the most northerly of large Yoruba towns), that led to the fall of the Alāāfin's authority, the sack by the Fulani of the Old Oyo and the establishment of a Muslim dynasty of Ilorin.

2. Abdullah Muhammad ibn. Massanih. Shifā'rubā fi tahrīr fugaha' Yorūba. The author and this work were mentioned by Muhammad Bello in Infāqu'l-Maisūr 8p. See also Bivar, A.D.H. and M. Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: Provisional Account" B.S.O.A.S., xxv, 1962. Smith, H.F.C. "Arabic Manuscript: Material relating to the History of the Western Sudan" Supplement to Bulletin of News, H.S.N. iv, 2, 1959.

See

the inception of Islam in almost all parts of Yorubaland was "unplanned" and "unannounced".

The early history of Islam in Oyo and its districts is not known in detail. However, it is apt to note that the proximity of this area to the Muslim North,<sup>1</sup> and the fact that Old Oyo later became an emporium visited by many traders from different parts of the world combined to influence the influx of Islam into this part of Yorubaland.

The people of Oyo and its districts had contact with the Muslim North both in war and peace time through the activities of soldiers, immigrants, emigrants and, above all, traders. This varied interaction effected intermingling of peoples, ideas, concepts, aspirations, religions and culture - an intermingling which favoured the influx of Islam from the neighbouring Muslim areas into Oyo and its districts and Yorubaland at large. It is the common belief that the people of Oyo and its districts constituted the first set of Muslims in Yorubaland.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See map 1 on 1(a)p; map 2 on 2(a)p.

2. The people of this part of Yorubaland were found mostly concentrated in North West of Yorubaland. See map 1 on 1(a)p. See also Gbadampsi, G.O. The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 8p.



The inception of Islam into Oyo and its districts was connected with one Nupe priest who, according to Johnson, admonished Alááfin Ajiboyede (1562-1570) as early as the Igboho period.<sup>1</sup> The story has it that after the festivities marking the Bẹbẹ festival,<sup>2</sup> the king's first son died and the nobles and all subjects in the State came to commiserate with the king on his loss. But instead of being appreciative of this kind and humane gesture, the

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1. The Igboho period dates back to the sixteenth century. See Ajayi, J.F. Ade. and Michael Crowther. History of West Africa, 142p. During the Oyo's occupation of Igboho, four kings reigned there, they were: Egungunaju (1534-1554), Ormpoto (1554-1562), Ajiboyede and Abipa (1510-1588). See Appendix IV 557p. for the reigns of these kings. See also Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 161-5pp.
  2. The Bẹbẹ, according to Johnson, is akin to a jubilee or golden age of a king's reign. It lasts for three years, and during this period liberty of speech and action is granted to everyone, high and low, rich and poor throughout the Kingdom, without any fear of being accused of sedition or treason. No riot or fighting is to be heard of anywhere. All provocations must be suppressed while the Bẹbẹ lasts, for no one is to be prosecuted during that period. All is peace. See Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 163p. Compare Awolalu's account in his thesis: (Sacrifice in the Religion of the Yoruba, 343p.) that the festival is "to the memory of all preceding kings from Qduduwa downwards." On such occasions, two human beings were offered and their blood mingled with those of innumerable animals. Slaughtered and poured down for the king and his courtiers to have a religious dance upon it, and this part of the ceremony was regarded as the highest.

king ordered the nobles to be slain, because according to him, they were only feigning condolence. He alleged that their hands "smelt of food recently partaken" when he (the Aláàfin) was undergoing a strenuous and agonising period of mourning and fasting. At that time, a Muslim priest from Nupeland called "BABA KÉWÚ" sent his son "BABA YÌGÌ"<sup>1</sup> to point out to the king that it was immoral and callous for the king to kill human beings as he liked. The messenger came and rebuked the king saying: "This is a sin against God who took away the life of your son". The account of this incident concludes by indicating that: "The king pondered seriously over this message and became convinced of his tyranny". He convened an assembly of the Oyo citizens and publicly asked their pardon for his "unjust acts". Though we are not told that Aláàfin Ajiboyede and his successor, Abipa, embraced Islam as a result of this, but it was highly probable that the messenger, Baba Yìgì, wielded influence<sup>2</sup> in the court of the Aláàfin and among the people

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1. While the name Baba Yìgì can mean "father of success" it could also be a name in consequence of the man's participation in Islamic form of marriage called "yìgì".
  2. Concerning the introduction of Islam into Yorubaland, see below, The Ifá Poem, Òtúá Méjì in Appendix I, 535-544pp.

of Oyo and its districts in general as a recognised man of God, man of justice, piety and uprightness, the virtues seen in his downright and fearless condemnation of the wickedness and gory act of Aláàfin Ajiboyede.

The earliest Muslim groups in the area were slaves. They were nominal Muslims as they were not allowed by their traditional overlords to practise Islam openly. In this connection, the observation of Gbadamosi is apposite. It is his view that the early Yoruba Muslims worshipped secretly but he further holds that in the seventeenth century, mention was made of Muslims in Yorubaland.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Gbadamosi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 8p. The period of the beginning of Islam in the area can also be determined, with some degree of correctness, by the following Yoruba song:

Ilé la bá 'fá.

Ilé la bá 'mòle.

Osán gangan ni igbàgbó wò'lé dé.

(We met Ifá at home.

We met Islam at home.

But it was in the afternoon that

Christianity gained its inroads).

See also Appendix I on 535-544pp.

Concerning the song above, the following points are significant. The Yoruba are a singing people. In their singing, which comprises songs, lyrics, ballads, and minstrelsy, they tell stories of their past, the circumstances of their present, and their hopes,

In about the year eighteen hundred, significant things happened in the history of Oyo and its districts and Yorubaland at large. About this period, Clarke,<sup>1</sup> during his travels and explorations in Yorubaland, noticed the

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aspirations and fears of the future, both immediate and remote. According to Idowu, in his book (Olofinmarè, 10p.): "if all that a Yoruba clan has ever sung could be collected, there is no doubt that a fairly accurate history of that clan could be built up". The songs of the Yoruba are permeated with their beliefs. A good many of the songs are ancient and fixed in character. Of these are the hymns used at worship and which are, therefore, parts of the cults. This category includes also the epics and the tales of history which have been reduced to poetry. These are all informative and meaningful for our purpose. Moreover, the order of song above suggests to us the idea that while the traditional religion of the people appears to be cloaked in timeless beginning, Islam was next to it while Christianity came very much later. Thus we see that in the area, Islam was introduced before Christianity. The truth in this is further seen in the interior location of the area which eclipsed it from British influence for a considerable length of time. It is the common belief, among the historians, that Oyo, as a result of its being situated in the interior, had contact with the white men very late but had contact with the peoples of the North very early. It was only in the nineteenth century that she had contact with the white man, unlike Lagos and Abeokuta which are situated at the coast, a location which produced early contact with the Europeans.

<sup>1</sup> See Atanda, J.A. (ed.) Clarke's Travels and Exporations in Yorubaland, 193p.

influx of some Fulani<sup>1</sup> into Northern Sudan. They were said to be under the direction of one of their leaders who, impelled by fanatical religion, subjugated many of the heathen tribes. They reached Qyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, in the status of nomads and cattle-rearers.

The Fulani, the next largest group to the Hausa of Northern Nigeria, who are now scattered in many parts of the interior of West Africa are believed to be a mixed people who entered Hausaland as wandering herdsmen in the thirteenth century.

Being a pastoral people, they were allowed to feed their sheep and cattle wherever they liked and generally lodged outside towns and in tents or hastily erected huts.

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1. While the ruling and aristocratic Fulani (known as the 'Town Fulani') and a second group (the 'settled Fulani') had long abandoned their nomadic habits, inter-married, and become more or less assimilated to the Hausa in language and appearance, a third group of the Fulani, the 'Cow Fulani', still preserve their original customs, habits and appearance. For further details about the Fulani, see Oboli, H.O.N. An Outline Geography of West Africa, 114-5pp. See also Atanda, J.A. (ed.) Clarke's Travels ..., 193p. cf. Akinjogbin's "A Chronology of Yoruba History, 1789-1840" Odu: University of Ife: Journal of African Studies Vol. 2, No. (2), 1966.

They found the fodder of the savanna region of this area of Yorubaland of immense value for their cattle ranching. The descendants of this set of Fulani are found in the area till today.<sup>1</sup> While some of them engage in settled life and trading, some remain as cattle-rearers and are highly ubiquitous.

It was further noted that towards the close of the eighteenth century, the position of Islam was already such that the Yoruba were propagating Islam afield to Porto Novo and Dahomey.<sup>2</sup> By 1840,<sup>3</sup> it became evident that there was some degree of islamisation in Yorubaland. Before the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in 1835, evidences show that there was a tinge of Islam. Ajayi agreed with Akinjogbin that before the collapse of the Old Oyo, there were

1. Today they are found in such quarters as Sābo, Gàa in the area and Yorubaland at large.
2. Compare the statement by Johnson, S. in his book: (The History of the Yorubas, 26p.) that "Mohammedanism" (Islam) which many now profess was introduced only since the close of the eighteenth century. See also Parrinder, E.G. The Story of Ketu, Ibadan, 1956. 33p., where he says that Islam was introduced in the later half of the eighteenth century.
3. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 9p.

already a few Muslims in major towns<sup>1</sup> like Oyo, Ikoyi<sup>2</sup> and Iseyin. Moreover, during this period there were itinerant and ubiquitous Muslim preachers ministering to the little Muslim communities, preparing amulets for and trying to influence leading rulers and warriors.

1. See Ajayi, J.F. Ade. and Crowder. History of West Africa, 142. He also noticed that there were a few Muslims in Ogbomoso, Iwo and Kuwo during this period. See above, map 1 1(a)p.
2. Ikoyi in Oyo South had a peculiar pattern of Muslim history as regards the origin of Islam in the place. During my field work, I held an interview with the present Chief Imām of the town, 'Abdu'l-Bāqī (See below, Appendix III) from whom the following information was collected: Ikoyi was one of the oldest towns in the Old Oyo Empire. She was almost as old as the Old Oyo herself. The introduction of Islam into Ikoyi was both "unplanned" and "unannounced" and appeared to be cloaked in mystery. The beginning of the religion in this place was predicted by Ifá whom Idowu, in his book: Olódùmarè, 75p.), refers to as the deputy of Orisha-ńlá in matters pertaining to omniscience and wisdom. Ifá or Ọrúnmìlà was worshipped by almost, if not all the towns and villages in Oyo and its districts. Ifá was an important divinity in Ikoyi in the nineteenth century. By then, it was called 'IFÁ IKOYI' and there was usually a yearly festival in honour of this divinity. During such a festival, it was customary to divine for the king and the town at large. It was during one Ifá festival that one of the babaláwo in the town divined for one of the earliest Onikoyis that before the next Ifá festival, one of his wives would be delivered of a Muslim female child and that the child should not be instructed at all in the traditional way. He gave the following as the signs

During the field work, I met one of the members of the Alokolodo royal family in Iganna, in Oyo North, in August, 1975. He is by name Alhaji Lasisi Ayinde. He said, out of all the four ruling houses: Etielu (Baya house); Agunloye, Ajimoti and Alokolodo, it was the Alokolodo that embraced Islam first. During this time, and before the collapse of the Old Oyo, Alokolodo was the ruling oba when one Muslim diviner called Yusufu Amuda eventually reached Iganna with some Muslim entourage. The Àrẹ̀mọ̀<sup>1</sup>, this time, was Adigun who, on the instruction of his father, allowed Yusufu Amuda and his entourage to stay at the quarters of the Alokolodo family. They were given a plot of land to build a house upon and a little

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of identification: small head-tie which would be found on her head, small skin of animal and umbilical cord which would be coiled round her arm representing the Muslim rosary (tèsíbiyù or tèsùnbaà). Not quite long, the child was born and all the Muslim signs predicted by the Ifá were found on her. She was given a Muslim name, Nana. Ifá's case was vindicated and the Onikoyi and his subjects became more tenaciously adhered to this tutelary divinity as a result of the efficacy of his prediction. The Onikoyi then invited a learned Muslim from a place called Adodo near Old Oyo to bring Nana up in the Muslim way. The mālám later married Nana who bore him four children. See Appendix I on 535-544pp.

1. The Àrẹ̀mọ̀ is the Crown Prince. The title is conferred upon the eldest son of the sovereign in a formal manner. See Johnson, S. The History of the Yoruba, 47p.



later they were given another plot of land for the erection of a mosque. They wielded influence in the town, for Yesufu in particular proved his mettle in terms of amulet preparation and divination in general.<sup>1</sup> He was said to be a source of power and succour for the ruling Alokolodo. During the field work, I met some of the surviving descendants of this Muslim diviner. The present Chief Imām, Busari Akanji Arọmọsaye, is a surviving descendant of the pioneer of Islam in that town. This Imām further said that, a little later, some members of the Pàràkọyí from Old Oyo later joined Yesufu Amuda and they constituted the nucleus of the Muslim community in the town.

In Şaki, Tede, Aha, Şepẹteri, Igboho, Igbẹti and Kişi in Oyo North, there were cases of the influx of Muslim diviners into the king's court and in the

1. The people of Oyo today call amulet making, divination and the like isẹ agbẹrẹ, meaning literally, "the work of whore, harlot, prostitute". Here, this meaning should not be interpreted from the point of view of sexual dealings but on the basis of the itinerary involved in the work. It is also called isẹ ààjọ, meaning, "the work of anxiety, solicitude or care" a meaning that should be interpreted on the basis of the anxiety of the inquirer. It is also known as isẹ àlufa, meaning, "the work of a Muslim cleric".

houses of military officers. They were said to be a source of power for the kings and military officers and formed part of the nucleus of the Muslim community in each of these places.

The truth as regards amulet preparation and divination<sup>1</sup> can be established here in terms of the African idea in respect of now and the future. The practice of amulet preparation and divination was common amongst the Yoruba before the coming of Islam. There were mediums and diviners. They were specialists who belonged to the category of the medicine-men. In their profession, they also dealt with the living-dead and spirits. The main duty of mediums was to link human beings with the living-dead and spirits. Through them, messages were received from the other world, or men were given knowledge of things that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to know. For example, through a medium, a person might be directed to find a lost article or to know the one that stole his goods. The nature of the future could also be revealed by the medium. There were also medicine-men

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1. For details about preparation of amulet and divination, see Mbiti, J.S. African Religions and Philosophy, chapter 15.

who medicated pegs for the gates of a new homestead, and who also combated witchcraft<sup>1</sup> and magic by preventing their action. So, the people who were already used to these specialists readily accepted Muslim mediums, diviners and medicine-men as close substitutes and they voluntarily patronised them. Next is the basic fact of human existence all the world over. It is just that man, everywhere, wants to get the best out of life and he hates being limited in his effort to penetrate the future and to plan adequately. This is why men divine. They want to know the divine will and to be assured of success in their enterprises, of longevity, prosperity and increase in life. Thus, in all probability, the early Muslim medicine-men, mediums and diviners enjoyed a significant patronage of the people of Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century.

By the nineteenth century<sup>2</sup>, there was also an Ifá divination<sup>3</sup> chant which, if the omens that pointed to it

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1. In this connection the following Yoruba saying is apposite: Olódún l'okó àjé, meaning, "A medicine-man is the head of a witch."
  2. Gbadamosi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, Chapter 1. See also Appendix I, 535-544pp.
  3. Recall here the circumstances surrounding the origin of Islam in Ikoyi. See above, f.n. 2 on 45-6pp.

were correct, enjoined the inquirer to educate his child in the Muslim way and several persons reportedly embraced Islam.

It is also in Crowther's narrative that Ọyọ Muslims from Iseyin and Dada<sup>1</sup> played a prominent part in the destruction of his town Oṣoogun in 1821.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, several Yoruba recaptives were Muslims on arrival in Sierra-Leone in the 1820's.<sup>3</sup> Thus we see that Islam reached Ọyọ and its districts before the fall of the Old Ọyọ Empire in 1835. This view can be further ascertained

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1. Dada is now completely desolate and is called Ahoro Dada. It is a village under the new Ọyọ and is situated on Sābo road. The village sprang up together with Taku and Agbaakin.
  2. Ajayi, J.F.A. 'Samuel Crowther of Ọyọ' Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade, (ed.) P.D. Curtin, Madison, 1967.
  3. Peterson, John, Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra-Leone, 1787-1870, Evanston, 1969, 164p. We shall see, later in this work (chapter 2), how these Yoruba recaptives from Sierra-Leone, known as the Akus, helped Islamic resurgence and entrenchment in Ọyọ and its districts after the fall of the Old Ọyọ. It was about this time that Captain John Adams saw, at Ardra, sometime in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, a group of local Muslims at worship and he noted that the adherents of Islam were many. "These were", according to him, "generally dressed after the Moorish (Berbers) fashion with large loose trousers (sic), short shirt and sash". See Captain Adams, J. Remarks on the country extending from Palmas to the River Congo, London, 1823, 78, 220-1pp. (cited in Gbadamosi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 10p.

by the fact that as the career of the Muslim preacher, al-Ṣāliḥ Alimi, shows, Islam was already well established at a few centres even before Afonja's rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Islam played a very important role in Afonja's military revolt. It was allied to three other factors each with military implications. As said earlier, the leading Yoruba warriors believed in the potency of Muslim amulets and consequently frequently patronised Muslim priests and amulet-makers.<sup>2</sup> There were prominent wealthy traders among the Yoruba Muslims in general, and they were very important concerning northern trade in horses.

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1. Gbadamṣi, G.O., The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland; also Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr (alias Ōmṣ Kokoro) in his history of Ilorin (cited in Gbadamṣi, op.cit., 12p.) states that al-Ṣāliḥ Alimi stayed three months in Ogbomṣṣ, a town not far from Ikoyi in Ōyṣ South end, and a year at Ikoyi. The Chief Imām of Ikoyi confirmed this but maintained that al-Ṣāliḥ Alimi was not the pioneer of Islam in Ikoyi but the learned Muslim, whom the Onikoyi, Nana's father, invited from Adodo. He went further to say that during the one year sojourn of al-Ṣāliḥ Alimi (called Alūfa Alimi in Ōyṣ and its districts) engaged in dynamic missionary activities and was able to increase the population of Muslims in Ikoyi. Gbadamṣi also maintains the thesis that al-Ṣāliḥ met some thriving Muslims at Ikoyi. See Gbadamṣi, G.O., op.cit., 10p.
2. See above, 47-9pp.

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Most significant of all were the Muslim Hausa slaves recruited for their skills in the care of horses and without whom the size of the Calvary force of Qyq could not be sustained. Afonja was able to recruit all the three groups to aid his rebellion.

We have seen the various dates when Islam was supposed to gain entry into Qyq and its districts. Now, let us examine the mode of the entry of Islam into each of the towns and villages in the area before the fall of the Old Qyq in about 1836.

In many of the large towns in the area, there were at least some sprinklings of Muslims. However, larger and firmer communities existed in a few towns. According to Gbadamosi,<sup>1</sup> there was a large and firmer Muslim community in Igboho, a town to the north-west of Yoruba-

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1. Gbadamosi, G.O. The Growth of Islam, 11p. It is the popular belief in this town that the Holy Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān reached Igboho through Buremo, the son of Alufa Ya. (Interview with Alhaji Mustapha Oladaja, Aṛe of Igboho, Oke Afin, Igboho, Alhaji Salimonu Ajila, the present Chief Imam and the son of Abudu, one of the earliest Muslim converts. Interview was also held with some members of the Muslim community, Igboho, August, 1975). Gbadamosi, (quoting from Ajayi and Crowther, Africa Remembered) holds that one Muslim was found in the court of the oḅa of Igboho in the sixteenth century. In all likelihood, and on the basis of the belief of the Muslim community of Igboho, the Muslim might be Alufa Ya mentioned above.

land. A town of some sizeable population,<sup>1</sup> Igboho, had a fairly extensive section, called Mōlaba, completely settled by Muslims.<sup>2</sup> These Muslims who were also known as "Mōlaba" or "Mōlawa" were of considerable number<sup>3</sup> and they had their quarter and rustic central mosque in their own area.

See Gbadamōsi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 11p.

1. Crowther, in 1841, mentioned this town as one of the 'principal towns in the country of the Yoruba'. q.v. Shon, J.F. and S. Crowther: Journals of Rev. J.F. Shon and Mr. S. Crowther of an Expedition on the Niger, 1841, London, 1842. Bowen, T.J. estimated around 1850 that the population of Igboho was 20,000 q.v. Bowen, T.J. Adventures and Missionary Labours in the Interior of Africa, 1849-1856, Charlestown, 1857. 218p.
2. The introduction of Islam into Igboho was associated with the efforts of Alūfa Ya. He was believed to come from Oyo'lé during the period of Oyo-Igboho in the sixteenth century. He was said to learn Islam and Arabic very early in Ilorin.  
  
Some of the earliest converts were: Asani and his son, Buremo all of Iya quarter, Sule of Ayetoro quarter, Abudu of Ajila quarter, Oke Aafin, Sanni and Amodu of Molaba quarter, Aliyu of Boni quarter; Abanda-Waki of Modeke quarter and Arannibanidebe, a settler who hailed from Iseyin in Oyo South. Others were: Abū Bakr Bello, Abibu and Asinta. The descendants of Alūfa Ya also formed part of the coterie of Muslims in this period. Among them were the following people: Buremo, Suberu, Ali and Adebunmi.
3. There were seventy homesteads at Mōlaba, it is believed. If there were an average of five people for an homestead, this number would be, at least, about three hundred and fifty. q.v. Gbadamōsi, G.O., op. cit.

Similarly, in Iseyin, in Oyo South, there was an established Muslim community. Most of the Muslims were settled at Oke Baba Dudu and Ijemba<sup>1</sup> where they practised Islam. According to Johnson, the early Muslims hailed from Songhay or Mali area and were credited with the introduction of Islam to the people here. Prominent among them were the Kanuri and Idindi Muslims.

Above all, in Old Oyo, the metropolis of the Old Oyo, Islam was fairly well established. Alufa Yigi<sup>2</sup> was identified as one who introduced Islam into this town.

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1. Interview at Iseyin with the Muslim community at Iseyin including the present Chief Imām, Jamiu and Ijemba Muslims in particular, August 1975. Notable informants were: Alhaji Yaya of Ijemba quarter, Alufa Wahidi Muritala of Imām's quarter. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Interview with the present Chief Imām, Tafa and Ratibi Imām, Agunpope, Alufa Sherifu, November 1975. "Alufa Yigi" was "a white man" 'Yoruba: (èniyàn funfun, Lárú-báwá ni).



Alùfa Yìgì, according to Gbadamòsi, was of Arab descent<sup>1</sup> who reached Oyo probably during the reign of Aláàfin Ajagbo (1650-1658).<sup>2</sup> The Arab had stayed in the palace, it is said, on the request of Aláàfin, and it was around him that the young nuclear Muslim community thronged.

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1. See Gbadamòsi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 13p.
  2. Interview with the present Chief Imām of Oyo and the present Aláàfin of Oyo, Alhajì Lamidì Olayiwola Adẹyẹmi III. This Aláàfin was the sixteenth, according to Johnson; whilst Ajiboyede was the thirteenth. It is doubtful if both sources refer to the same person. Johnson's Baba Yìgì was Tapa and he went back. Whereas this other source maintains that "Alùfa Yìgì" was a white Arab who settled and later became an Imām. Moreover, some in Oyo, including the present Aláàfin, traced the origin of Islam in Oyo to Prince Atiba. The present Aláàfin maintains that Prince Atiba was rascally and ubiquitous. Eventually, he left Oyo for Ilorin where he gained proficiency in Islam and Arabic. Later, he came back to Oyo with the first Pàràkòyì, Yesufu Alanamu, his cousin, to launch Islam. The association of Atiba with Islam is not without some tinge of truth. Gbadamòsi, in his thesis cited above, said he (Atiba) and Pàràkòyì were well disposed towards Islam. This can be seen in one of the praise-songs for Atiba. This praise-song (oríkì) was collected by S.O. Babayẹmi from Sule Ajeniyi, an arókin, a rhapsodist, from Oyo now living in Iseyin. The praise-song was translated by Ajayi, in Ajayi, J.F. Ade. and Michael Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa, Vol. II, 144p., as:

The size of the nuclear Muslim community was probably small, but it thrived and was considerably reinforced by the ingress of other occasional Arabs and the Hausa slaves and men who were brought to Oyo.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently then, Islam was established before the collapse of the Old Oyo in Old Oyo, Kishi, Igbeti, Igboho, Iganna, Ikoyi and Iseyin.<sup>2</sup> These were market towns in the hinterland. In this connection, it is important to recall, at this juncture, that Old Oyo town developed into an emporium where many trade routes<sup>3</sup> from the North converged. The market towns provided a milieu where Islam thrived well.

"Atiba whose folly was so great  
That he went to Ilorin to learn wisdom  
Aladeleye!  
It was the wisdom of others  
That Olukewu relied upon  
Atiba did not know that Ilorin wisdom  
was unbecoming  
He did not know that Fulani wisdom was useless."

Atiba was also said to spend some time as a hostage in Ilorin in the mid 1820s. During this time, he might be influenced by Islam but no one is sure that he accepted Muslim name.

We find it difficult to credit Atiba with the origin of Islam in Oyo for evidences, as noted earlier, show that the influx of Islam dates back earlier than the period of Atiba's settlement in Ilorin.

1. Gbadamasi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 13p.
2. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.
3. See above, map 2 on 2(a)p.

A certain Alùfa Idindi, from Dahomey, was credited with the introduction of Islam into Kişi.<sup>1</sup> Among the earliest Muslim converts in Kişi were: Asinta, Lawani, Amodu, Tatabu, Sanni and Asani, all of Onilu quarter. The next place to embrace Islam in Kişi was Oloyoyo quarter. Here, Baba Iya, who hailed from Iseyin, was notable. Next was Teefa quarter. Among the earliest converts were: Hisa, Abu Bakare and Alege who later became the Pàràkòyí.

The introduction of Islam into Igbèti<sup>2</sup> was said to be due to the efforts of one Sanni Qlajide. He settled at the court of Onigbèti (later Imām's quarter). He was an ubiquitous trader who carried his trade to Ilòrin. He dealt in traditional cloths (asò òkè) and he eventually arrived at Igbèti where there were many weavers of traditional cloths. Alongside his trade, he propagated

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1. Interview with the jamā'a, Kişi, August 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Interview with the jamā'a, Igbèti, August 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

Islam and it was from among the weavers of traditional cloths that the first set of converts came. Among them were the following people: Salami Oguntona of Agbèdè quarter, Şanusì Agboṣṣa of Oloro quarter, Gbadamṣi Adeyemi of Abosanto quarter and Saliu of Alagbaa quarter.

Islam reached Igboho<sup>1</sup> through Hausaland and Ilorin. One of the notable Muslim missionaries in the town was Àlùfa Ya. He and his son, Buremṣ, arrived in the town very early during the period of Oyo-Igboho in the sixteenth century. Buremṣ brought the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān to Igboho, and during his stay in Igboho he had the following sons: Kuranga, Dogo, Suberu and Ali. Added to these Muslims were the earliest converts such as Asani of Iya quarter, Abudu of Ajila Compound, Sanni of Molaba quarter, Aliyu of Boni quarter and Abanda-Waki of Mṣṣṣṣ Compound.

The introduction of Islam into Şaki<sup>2</sup> was said to be due to the efforts of one Idindi (a Dahomean) called Saliu

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1. Interview with the jamā<sup>c</sup>a, Igboho, August 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Interview with the jamā<sup>c</sup>a, Şaki, August 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

(the first Imām and Onitafusirū of Şaki). On his arrival at Şaki, he settled at Asunnara quarter. He arrived at Şaki with the following items: The Qurʾān, prayer skin, kettle, slate and rosary. He came in the company of four of his Qurʾān students. He and his students propagated Islam from one end of Şaki to the other; and as a result of their missionary and teaching activities, they were able to convert the following people: Sadiku of Oke-Oro quarter. He was the first Muslim convert who later became the Balógun Imple. Others were: Abudu Arogunte of Imple fé aláafia quarter (formerly called Abudu quarter), Musa of Onikeke quarter, Abiba of Isaleḡ Ola and Amḡdu Adeḡḡun of Agbḡdeḡ quarter.

So far, it has been made clear that largely, in consequence of the proximity<sup>1</sup> of Qyḡ and its districts to the Muslim North, a good deal of Islam in the period before the fall of the Old Qyḡ was based in the area.

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1. For further details concerning how proximity to the Muslim North influenced the influx of Islam into Nigeria as a whole, see Al-Ilūrī A.A. al-islām fī naijiriya wa ʿUthmān ibn Fūdī, Cairo, 1953. et passim.

The early Muslim communities in Oyo and its districts were composed of Yoruba and non-Yoruba such as Idindi, Molaḡa, Molaḡa, Hausa, Bornu and Tapa Muslims. In these diverse communities, many of the Hausa were, in fact, slaves,<sup>1</sup> obtained through war and trade<sup>2</sup> and were expected not merely to carry out domestic functions but also to take care of the horses.<sup>3</sup> There were some free born. Those who had sound knowledge of Islam and Arabic were, however, held in high esteem in the society

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1. See Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 193-4pp. See particularly, Lander, R. and John: Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger: with a narrative of a voyage down that river, 2 vols., London, 1838 and Adams, J. Remarks on the Country extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo, 21-2pp.
  2. See Arnet, E.J., The rise of the Sokoto Fulani, Kano 1922, 16p. See also Adams, J. Remarks on the Country extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo, London, 1832, 80p. "Slaves on the Hausa Nation are brought to Ardrah, the Eyeo (European reference to Oyo) trader and then sold..."
  3. See Ajayi, J.F. Ade. "Narrative of Samuel Ajayi Crowther". Africa Remembered, 299p., f.n. 20. He stresses the military importance of their role as stablemen. Johnson, in his book: (The History of the Yorubas, 193p.), adds that they were "employed as barbers, rope makers, and cow-herds" (cattle-rearers).

for their learning, piety and ability to prepare powerful, effective and efficacious amulets. It was these learned men who conducted teaching, led prayers in the capacity of Imāms and helped to nurture the infant religious life of the Muslim community.

In spite of their low or, at best, middling social position, some of the well versed mālams felt bold enough to launch attack against erring political heads.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest Muslims organised themselves under their Imāms. In some towns in Oyo and its districts, particularly, in Igboho and Oyo, some active role was performed by the Pàràkòyí in the organisation of the nascent Muslim community. The active role of the Pàràkòyí in the leadership of the early Muslim community may have been due to his position as the "TOLL COLLECTOR"<sup>2</sup> which exposed him

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1. See above, 39-41pp.

2. In some Yoruba towns, this was the chief function of the Pàràkòyí *q.v.*, Blair, J.H. Intelligence Report Abeokuta, 1938. For a different interpretation, see Agiri, B.A., "Development of Local Government in Ogbomoso, 1850-1950", (M.A., Ibadan, 1966), 92-3pp. He believes it meant the officer running errands. Thus he breaks the word into two: Pàrà Ikoyi, meaning "Go often to Ikoyi". Here, while I agree with Agiri as I have agreed with some of my informants in Pàràkòyí's lineage in the area, that the title originally meant the officer running errands, however, I find it difficult to

to and invested him with some authority over strangers and long distance traders. He continued to exercise this active role until his leadership was later superseded by that of the Imām.<sup>1</sup>

1.6. Islamic stagnation.

1.6.1 Conflicts with the traditional society.

The existence in the society of the Muslim communities was bound to create some tension. This was easily the case

subscribe to the view that his activity by then was limited to only Ikoyi. This is evidently not the case. The first Pàràkòyí, Yesufu Alanamu, was a Muslim. He was a strong and brave uncle of Atiba and stayed in the king's palace most of his time. He reached Qyọ from Ilorin very early and particularly before the fall of the Old Qyọ. According to my informants, he ran errands for the Alááfin, and was charged with the responsibility of collecting market tolls. He functioned in this capacity in almost all places included in the Empire and not only in Ikoyi as evidences have shown. Thus, I suggest that instead of breaking the word Pàràkòyí into two, as Agiri has done in his thesis, the word could be broken into three in order to appreciate fully, the nature and magnitude of the role of Pàràkòyí within the Empire. Pààrà-ko--eléyí or Pààrà-ko-eyí, meaning, "Go often-to meet-this. This is an interpretation that does not limit the role of Pàràkòyí to just one town but as many as were contained in the Old Qyọ Empire. That this title was later associated or confused with leadership of Muslim communities might be an evidence of respect for Yesufu Alanamu, the first Pàràkòyí, one of the earliest Muslims in Qyọ and its districts.

1. While the Imām should be somebody well informed with



when Muslims became over-zealous in the cause of their faith or were engaged in organised iconoclasm.<sup>1</sup> For example, in Igboho, trouble broke out shortly before the

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regard to Islam and Arabic, Pàràkòyí may just be a common Muslim. His erstwhile supremacy in the Muslim community in the area was based on his early connection with Islam and not on his knowledge of Islam and Arabic and he enjoyed this only until the Muslims were able to secure learned Muslims who could lead them in prayers. However, the post is still recognised in the area and can be regarded today as the Muslims' spokesman in the palace. For the meaning and the role of the Imām in the Muslim community, see E. I. Imām, 196f. And originally in the area, while the natives were usually the Pàràkòyí, the foreign learned Muslims were usually the Imāms. However, very much later, the Muslim converts in the area sent their sons to Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos and Ayetoro, in Oyo North, which later became a very important Islamic stronghold, for Arabic and Islamic education. It was not until this time of quest for knowledge by the Muslim sons of the area that they had natives as Imāms. The present Imāms in Iseyin and Ikoyi are natives. See below, Appendix III, 552-3pp.

1. In the earliest period of Islam in the area, while the Aláàfin granted Islam some religious freedom, those conservative followers of the traditional religion, especially those who earned their living through the practice of the religion, were a staunch source of opposition. The people in this category were: the priests (Yoruba abòrè or babaláwo), traditional drummers such as bàtá drummers (bàtá was a special drum for Sàngó), and the carvers of the paraphernalia of the traditional religion. They realised a huge sum of money each time the traditional festival was celebrated. Thus, for fear of being thrown out of job, they attacked Muslim missionaries and converts and advised the converts to relinquish Islam, a foreign religion. They remained unconvinced, unsubmitive,

collapse of the Old Oyo<sup>1</sup> between the Muslim community of the town and the followers of the traditional religion, especially those who earned their daily bread by the active practice of the religion. There was a time in the town when a Muslim group, organised through Àlùfa Ya, pulled down the shrines and destroyed the paraphernalia of the traditional religion. This was regarded as an act of vandalism and desecration. In consequence, the Muslim converts in the town were ruthlessly persecuted by the provoked and conservative followers of the traditional religion. One Àlùfa Gidi was marked for an organised iconoclasm in the town. In Oyo, the capital, and some other towns in the area, Àlùfa Kokewukobere together with

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aggressive and highly conservative. And up till today in the area, there is a burning rift between the Muslim community and the surviving followers of the traditional religion. See below, Appendix II, 545-7pp.

Here, Saki, in Oyo North, is the best example. There is at present a conflict between the Muslim community and the devotees of Egúngún. It is interesting to note that the conflict has developed into litigation and the case is now pending in the high court in Oyo. See also Appendix II, 545-7pp.

1. Interview with the jamā'a of Igboho, August, 1975. See the Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

his retinue was persecuted as a result of their ardent approach to the religion and the practice of iconoclasm. The priests of Şàngó, the Mògbà, were said to feature prominently in this attack.

The Islamic ferment which was going on at the time was also very significant. The area, and especially the metropolitan town, Oyo, witnessed a fairly intensive amount of Muslim evangelisation and reformist preaching. In Oyo, there were "no less than five holy men, two or three of whom were Arab Emirs who spread the dogmas of their faith amongst the inhabitants, publicly teaching their children to read the Qur'ān".<sup>1</sup> Two of these active Muslim preachers were particularly notable. The first was an Arab, Muḥammad ibn Haja Gumso<sup>2</sup> who stayed right in the palace of the Aláàfin. More notable was the second Muslim, al-Şāliḥ,<sup>3</sup> otherwise known as Alimi<sup>4</sup> especially in Oyo. He travelled extensively in this area,

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1. Lander, R. Records - Vol. 1, 279p.
  2. Ibid. See also, Clapperton, H. Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccato, London, 1929, 230p. He describes Ibn Gumso, whom he met in Sokoto, as "an influential and trusted official". Last makes no mention of him: q.v., Last M. Sokoto Caliphate, Longmans, 1968.
  3. See Ahmad b. Abī Bakr Ta'liif Akhbār al-qurun min Umara bilād Ilurin.
  4. He may well have been so called because of his reputation for Islamic and Arabic knowledge and piety.

particularly to Qyq, Iseyin and Şaki.<sup>1</sup> He stayed in Qyq and its districts for some years.<sup>2</sup> If he did not preach Islamic reform, he so moved and taught in the area that he was very much revered for his piety and

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Schacht supposes that the name is derived from al-Azim, q.v., Schacht, J. "Islam in Northern Nigeria," Studia Islamica, viii, 1957. But he gives no other basis for this supposition than in Northern Nigeria that the letter Z is pronounced as an emphatic L.

1. Ibid. This document only mentions his having been to Ikoyi. But oral evidences are in support of the fact that Alimi made an ubiquitous missionary activity in Qyq and its districts. (Interview with the present Alááfin of Qyq, Qba Lamidi Adeyemi III and Qyq Muslim community, December, 1973, March 1974, August 1975 and November 1975).
2. Ahmad Abī Bakr, Taʿlif Akhbār al-qurun min Umara... He spent one year at Ikoyi.

learning. According to some tradition, he was driven out of Oyo by the Aláàfin<sup>1</sup> but he continued his travel in the northern part of the Empire.

The intensive and reformist Islamic activity caused considerable concern and aggravated the hidden tension between the Muslims and the traditional authorities in the Old Oyo. Lander was informed everywhere between 1825 and 1826 that so intensive and successful was the Muslim activity that the followers of the traditional religion were more than alarmed. Consequently, they went, all in a body, to their monarch threatening him with the loss of his Empire if he persisted in tolerating the religious principles broached by málams.<sup>2</sup>

The upshot of the Islamic ferment in the area was

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1. Interview with the present Aláàfin and other aged courtiers in Oyo, December, 1973. The present Aláàfin stated what was a fairly popular belief. It has not been easy to determine which Aláàfin this was (see below, Appendix IV, 556-560pp. for the list of the Aláàfin). It may have been either Abiodun or Aole, since the expulsion took place before the 1797 rebellion of Afonja against Aole; g.v. Akinjogbin, I.A. "A Chronology of Yoruba History" in Odù.
  2. Lander, R. Journal of an Expedition... 277-9pp.

violent. The Aláàfin massacred such of the mālams as could be gathered into the palace.<sup>1</sup> Only Ibn Gumso managed to escape naked to Sokoto.<sup>2</sup> This gory situation generated terror in the minds of the Muslims and rendered them embittered against the entire traditional set-up. But they only had to be painstaking and wait for a favourable turn of event.

#### 1.62 Imperial crises:

Apart from the opposition staged by the followers of the traditional religion, there were some other forces in the Old Oyo Empire militating against Islam and which almost shattered the religion to extinction in the area.

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1. Lander, R. Journal of an Expedition... 277-9pp.
  2. Ibid. Ibn Gumso informed Lander that he owed his life to one of the wives of the Aláàfin, who planned his escape. The name of the particular wife (olorì) is not known and is not given by both Ibn Gumso and Lander. That this wife planned his escape could be a result of his status in Oyo and its districts as a Muslim medicine-man who practised divination and prepared efficacious amulets in addition to his missionary work and was greatly patronised by the people.

These forces are stated below:

1.621 The attack of Apomu

The first in the series of crises in the Old Oyo Empire was the rumpus between Old Oyo and Apomu which can be dated back as 1793.<sup>1</sup> This time, Aláàfin Aole (1805-1811) attacked Apomu, a town in the present Ife Division,<sup>2</sup> and consequently broke his coronation oath. The rampage that ensued after this attack adversely affected both the Old Oyo and the status of Islam in the area.

1.622 Afonja's rebellion and the fall of the Old Oyo Empire.

The politico-constitutional rumpus in the Old Oyo soon reached a climax with the rebellion of governor Afonja.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Gbadamosi, The Growth of Islam..., 18p.

2. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.

3. Concerning Afonja's rebellion, see the following: Forde Daryll P.M. Kaberry, West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth century, 39-44pp.; Ajayi, J.F. Ade. and Crowder (eds.) History of West Africa, Volume 2, 129-166pp. In Ajayi's article, "The Aftermath of the fall of the Old Oyo," he maintains the thesis, contrary to the view of some writers, that Islam had not yet become a major factor in Yoruba affairs, and was not responsible for the collapse of the Kingdom. This could be true because, as already noted, the revolt was, originally, a politico-constitutional one. It was later, as a result of Afonja's alliance with Alimi, whom Ajayi describes as "the most respected and most

The events involved in this revolt are too well known to require more than the brief narration necessary here for the elucidation of the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, Oyo reached the apogee of its strength, and in the second half was one of the most powerful and wealthy Kingdoms in Africa.<sup>1</sup> After this period, Oyo began to witness a period of decline. The fall of the Old Oyo with the resulting movement of populations, wars and political rivalries among successor states, dominated the history of the Yoruba people in the nineteenth century before the establishment of British rule. The crisis was so tense that it had significant consequences for the people of Oyo and its districts and Yorubaland at large.

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feared Muslim priest", that the revolt began to have some religious undertone. See also Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire, 28-44pp.; Ayandele, E.A. The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 10, 40pp.

1. Forde, Daryll and P.M. Kaberry, West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century, 39p.



While the Oyo Empire was in the arena of politico-constitutional throes, governor Afonja, the Àrẹ̀-òṅà Kakaṅbò, rebelled against the authority of the Aláàfin in about 1797.<sup>1</sup> The rebellion was signalled by the tribute which he withheld to Oyo and the arbitrary snatch of independence.<sup>2</sup> During this time, his forces were in no way significant in terms of military acumen and numerical strength. These forces were stationed at Ilorin,<sup>3</sup> his home town, which he made the base of his rebellious

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1. This was within the "first phase of Afonja's revolt", to use Akinjogbin's phrase. q.v. Akinjogbin's I.A., "The Prelude to the Yoruba Civil Wars of the 19th century", Odù, 1 (new series), 2, January, 1965.
  2. Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 193p. He was not alone here. Opele, the Balẹ of Gbogun withheld tribute as well. q.v. ibid. The people of Gbogun were later attacked by the people of Oyo in a war called Gbogun war. (Interview with the present Pàràkdyí, Oyo, Alhaji Aşiru), December, 1973; November, 1975.
  3. The city and district of Ilorin lay to the south-east of Old Oyo. See Johnson, H.A.S., The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, Ibadan, 1967, 141p. See above, map 1, on 1(a)p.

operations.

Important for our work here was the way the rebel cast about for support to strengthen his forces, at least, numerically. He badly needed a force that could match those of his overlord, Aláàfin, if he was to maintain, intact, the independence he had arbitrarily granted Ilorin. More crucial, however, was the advancing force of Ojo Agunbambaru, a son of Başorun Gaha.<sup>1</sup> He moved in from Ibariba with a formidable army and set off for Ilorin.<sup>2</sup> Afonja was driven by this army to a crucial and subtle situation. He needed all resources to equip his army in terms of skill and number and he endeavoured to force all alliance with the Muslims and the Hausa, mostly slaves, in the Old Oyo Empire. In this respect, he won the support of al-Şālih Alimi a man who was familiar with Oyo

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1. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 94p.
  2. Johnson infers that Ojo opposed Afonja because the latter's father was "one of those who swelled" Oyabi's army for the over-throw of his father, the Başorun Gaha". If this inference of Johnson was correct, then Ojo was not fighting for the Aláàfin out of total and pure allegiance to Aláàfin but partly out of sentiment and in a bid to take revenge on Afonja who rose against his father some time earlier. Be that as it may, Ojo's army emerged to subdue Afonja's army. It is true that Başorun Gaha left an indelible black mark behind in the history of the Old Oyo Empire. He was believed to be

and its districts and was well known and respected among the people in this area.

The alliance of Afonja and al-Ṣāliḥ, to use the words of Gbadamṣi,<sup>1</sup> "was a master-stroke of considerable significance." At least in the interim, he successfully withstood the Aláàfin's forces which were under the leadership of Ojo Agunbambaru.<sup>2</sup> More important, however, especially for our work, was that the alliance produced and emphasised a crucial change in the original character

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a callous and ferocious prime minister who had an ignominious death. The following Yoruba saying is apposite here:

Ení bá láyà kó sè'kà  
Bí o bá ranti ikú Gáhà  
Sọ òótó.

(He who is brave, let him commit wicked acts,  
 If you remember the death of Gáhà,  
 Tell the truth).

1. See Gbadamṣi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 22p.
2. See Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 194p.

of the rebellion. The originally political crisis continued but was now integrated with religion. Thus, the original politico-constitutional rampage became diluted with Islamic ferment and the agitation of the time.<sup>1</sup> As religion became an issue in the rumpus, local Muslims,<sup>2</sup> from the point of view of religion, threw in their lot with Afonja and Alimi against the Aláàfin.

Earlier, a reference was made to the fact that the leading Yoruba warriors believed in the potency and efficacy of Muslim amulets.<sup>3</sup> In consequence, they frequently patronised Muslim priests, amulet-makers and diviners. There were prominent wealthy traders among the Yoruba Muslims and they were important concerning trade

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1. The first Pàràkòyí of Ọyọ, Yesufu Alanamu, as will be seen later in this work, organised this type of Islamic ferment during Atiba's bid to regain the erstwhile subject-towns which had granted themselves arbitrary independence.
  2. Muslim slaves were encouraged to revolt and join the rebellion, as freemen, in a special task force called the jamā'a. See Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 193-4, 197-9pp., and Ajayi, J.F.Ade. and Michael Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 143p.
  3. See above, 48-9pp.

in horses. Most significant of all were the Muslim Hausa slaves recruited for their skills in the care of horses and without whom the size of the Calvary could not be sustained. Afonja was able to recruit all the three groups to aid his rebellion.<sup>1</sup> They trooped into Ilorin from the nearby towns and villages and settled at Oke-Suna quarter, constituting a sizeable Muslim force for Afonja.

Alimi was the most respected and most feared Muslim priest. Afonja's own celebrated military valour, allied with Alimi's famous magic powers,<sup>2</sup> made the rebellious army virtually invincible. Later, a wealthy Yoruba Muslim trader joined Afonja probably for personal rather than any religious reasons. But the leading Yoruba Muslims, as a minority group, stuck together and when Solagberu settled at Oke-Suna he was able to win the support of fellow Yoruba Muslims. Thus, we have a Muslim force, under Solagberu, which formed part of the entire

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1. Ajayi, J.F. Ade., and Michael Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 143p.

2. Ajayi and Crowder, ibid., 143p.

jama'a of Alimi.

As time went on, Alimi invited down to Ilorin his two sons, 'Abdul Salām and Shitta. He did this on the insistence of Afonja, his host.<sup>1</sup> Later, when the opposition against Ilorin became increasingly terrible, Ilorin solicited and won the military support of the Sokoto Jihād fighters.<sup>2</sup> It was largely through this two-fold Muslim support, internal and external, that Afonja was able to execute his rebellion, making himself and his followers at Ilorin free from the overlordship of the Aláàfin.

The success of Afonja, however, was transient. It was his aspiration to establish his own political authority

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1. Interview with the present Aláàfin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III and the present Pàràkòyí, Alhaji Aşiru. See the Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Lander, R., Journal of Expeditions..., 96-7pp. For example, Oyo sought the aid of a "Manjia", q.v. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 201p. Tradition varies concerning who secured the support of the Sokoto Jihād fighters, Alimi or his son, 'Abdul Salām. Probably they both did at various points in time; one thing we know for sure is that 'Abdul Salām was the first emir, a fact which signifies that he secured help and authority from Sokoto. Last has it that 'Abdul Salām communicated Sokoto as to the legality of castration and received a fatwa on this in 1829; q.v. Last M. Sokoto Caliphate, 29p.

at Ilorin and probably beyond to the territories of the Alááfin; but no less ambitious were, to use the phrase of Gbadampsi, "the victory-flushed jamā'ca of Alimi". The jamā'ca of Alimi struggled seriously for political hegemony. Thus, the erstwhile union of the religious zealots was strained.

Afɔnja soon discovered that he was no longer in control of the situation in Ilorin. The loyalty of the jamā'ca became increasingly channelled towards Alimi. They behaved with indiscipline and committed excesses which estranged the non-Muslim friends of Afɔnja who were seeking power within the traditional Qyɔ system but were confronted with an Islamic community at Ilorin with a new ideology challenging the very foundations of that system. He refused to embrace Islam or even to relinquish the paraphernalia of the traditional religion.<sup>1</sup> Afɔnja was regarded a kāfir, an unbeliever or infidel, who was not qualified to possess the allegiance of the Muslims. He tried to force the jamā'ca to submission but they turned against him and destroyed him.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ajayi and Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 143p.

2. See Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas; see also Bakr, Aḥmad Abī: Ta'lif Akhbār... It is very hard to agree with H.A.S. Johnson that Afɔnja assuredly

The fall of Afonja did not immediately ensure the supremacy of the Sokoto forces under Alimi and his two sons. The local Muslim forces which, under the leadership of Solagberu, had championed Afonja's cause were still considerable, and could draw on reinforcements more readily than the Jihād fighters from Sokoto. After the fall of Afonja, the local forces began to resent the growing power and raids of the Sokoto forces. Equally odious were the religious puritans within the followership of Alimi who ridiculed the Muslim followers of Solagberu for the bid'a present in their practice of Islam.<sup>1</sup> This internal religio-political rumpus soon burst out and the two sides **resorted** to war. In the ensuing battle, the Sokoto Jihād fighters proved stronger and victorious. They killed Solagberu and firmly established their political hegemony in Ilorin. Alimi died soon after the death of Afonja.

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embraced Islam. Yoruba and Ilorin sources, according to Gbadamosi, in his thesis, (The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba) prove otherwise. The consensus is that he died an adherent of the traditional religion. See Johnson: H.A.S. The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, 141-3pp.

1. Bid'a is an Arabic word which literally means, "innovation". For further details on bid'a, see E.I. Articles on bid'a.



It was his son who took the initiative in thrashing Solagberu who had tried to assert Yoruba Muslim control.

From Ilorin, the Muslim force, under 'Abdul Salām, launched a series of wars not only against the Oyo Empire but also against the surrounding areas. The militancy of the Ilorin Jihād reached its zenith in Yorubaland when, sometime between 1821 and 1830, Aláàfin Oluewu was made to come over to Ilorin to perform the ceremony known as "tapping the Koran"<sup>1</sup> in order to become a true Muslim. This was done by Ilorin to assert its political supremacy over its former overlord, the Aláàfin.

It was 'Abdul Salām who succeeded in keeping Ilorin independent and with the support of his brother attempted to expand Ilorin power and Muslim influence in Yorubaland. He eventually won the blessing of Sokoto Caliphate and became the first emir.<sup>2</sup> Ilorin thus developed from a rebellious province of Oyo into a frontier post of Fulani Jihād. The first obvious effect of this rebellion was the establishment of Ilorin as a Muslim citadel or in the words

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1. See Johnson, S., The History of the Yoruba, 258-9pp. This implies conversion to Islam.
  2. Ajayi and Crowder, History of Islam in West Africa, Vol. 2, 144p.

of Gbadampsi, 'Muslim stronghold'. Ilorin was formerly a small village and, in the course of the revolt, attracted a large number of Muslims from outside and inside the Oyo Empire. The Muslim group later became the dominant power in Ilorin. The restored monarchy at Old Oyo was unable to regain the loyalty of the rebellious chiefs even in the face of the Fulani menace from Ilorin.<sup>1</sup>

On their part, the Fulani, by the process of "divide and rule", made general reconciliation impossible. They presented Islam, not as a radical force subverting the Yoruba way of life, but as the new enlightenment that the leaders could use in their new state-building operations. Several not only became allied with Ilorin but were also attracted to Islam. Notable among these was Prince Atiba who spent time at Ilorin thinking, it is said, of learning

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1. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 217-219pp. Herman-Hodge, H.B. Gazetteer of Ilorin Province. London, 1929, quoted by Ajayi in Ajayi and Crowder History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 144p. Here Ajayi refers, in particular, to Eleduwe war in which Alááfin Oluewu and leading members of both the Oyo and the Ibariba army perished.

wisdom from the Muslims before he realised that Fulani wisdom was useless to him. Meanwhile, large numbers of people were deserting the capital and the surrounding to revive the former glories of the monarchy. They also went south to seek refuge in Ilorin or else to flee southwards. Several of the war leaders went to find new homes and new ambitions to the south. Atiba<sup>1</sup> himself, ambitious to resuscitate the erstwhile glories of the monarchy, also went south to a village called Ago-Oja near his mother's home. There, initially as a friend and ally of Ilorin, he organised a task force like the jamā'a and established some authority over the Epo district. When Aláàfin Oluewu died in war in about 1835, Atiba sought the support of the rising generation of war chiefs and the Qyọ Mèsì<sup>2</sup> to get himself appointed Aláàfin so as to make a new

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1. Interview with the present Aláàfin, Qba Lamidi Adeyemi, December 1973.
  2. In Ajayi and Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 145p., Ajayi calls "the Qyọ Mèsì", "the Qyọ Misi". The correct form is "the Qyọ Mesi" which is the council of elders. This means "the Qyọ who know the correct answer". See Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 70p. and Atanda, J.A. The New Qyọ Empire, 16, 19, 21, 24, 40pp. et passim. The name "Misi" has no linguistic connotation in Yoruba language. They were regarded by Johnson as "the first class of noblemen

start at Ago-Qja.<sup>1</sup> And, in fact, after some interregnum which followed the death of Oluewu and the eventual desertion of the Old Qyo, Atiba, the son of Abiodun, was appointed the new Aláàfin in about 1837.<sup>2</sup> Later, we shall take up his reign in connection with the resurgence of Islam in Qyo and its districts in the period between 1837 and 1859.

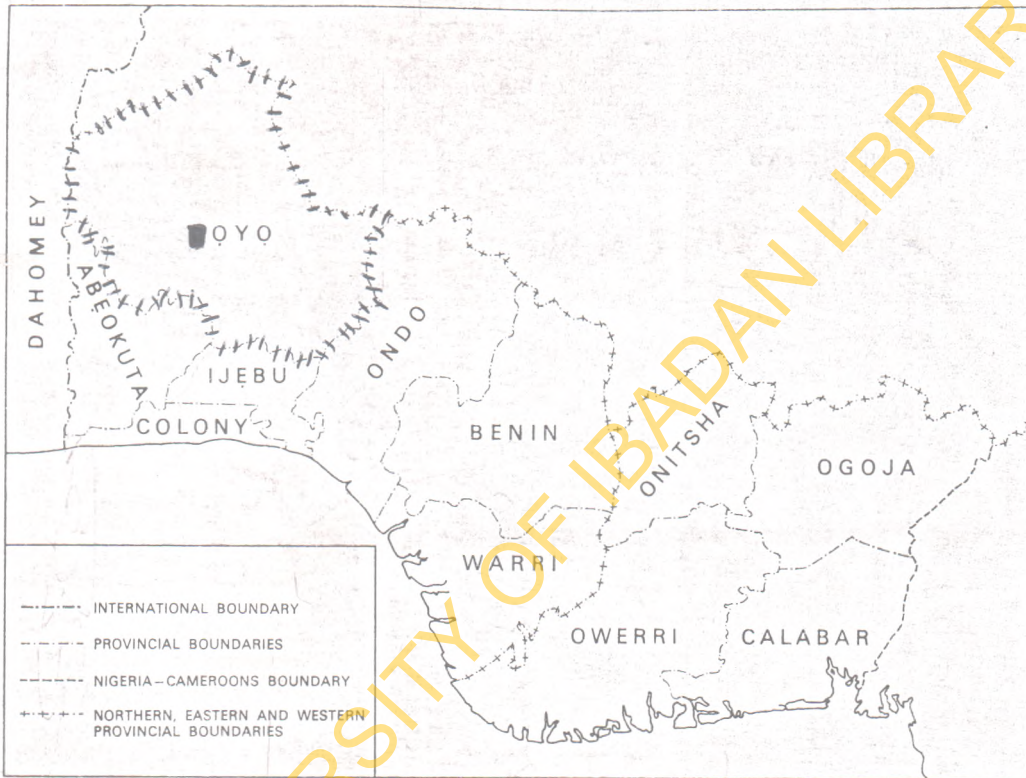
1.63 Population movements and their impact on the Muslims and their religion.

The fall of the Old Qyo produced a serious and complex population movements. The emergence of Ilorin as an independent non-province town to be reckoned with politically had meant the evacuation of Muslim leaders

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consisting of the most noble and most honourable councillors of the state." In Qyo till today, they are the king-makers and they are seven in number with the following hierarchical order: The Qsqrn, Agba-akin, Samu, Alapinni, Lagunna, Akinniku and Aşipa.

1. Ago-Qja is the Present or New Qyo. See below, map 3 on 82(a)p.
2. See Atanda, J.A. The New Qyo Empire, 4Op.



The Town of New Oyo

Map 3: ■ Location of New Oyo

from the rest of Yorubaland including Oyo and its districts. The integration of a religious issue into the originally Imperial conflict encouraged a significant number of ardent Muslims from the area and other areas in Yorubaland to flee and join, at Ilorin, the forces of both Alimi and Solagberu in an attempt to send the Aláàfin to his knees. Those Muslims who came from Oyo and its districts included Hausa and Fulani, some of whom were in servile position.<sup>1</sup> Most of the Muslims had fled famous towns such as Igboho, Igbeti, Kishi in Oyo North and Ikoyi in Oyo South.<sup>2</sup> Several other towns and villages were

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1. There were many Hausa slaves in Oyo, and Yorubaland in general, - such as to call forth a protest. From Muhammad Bello, in his "Infāq-al-Maisūr", these are better presumed, with some degree of justification and correctness, to be Muslims. Johnson, S. (The History of the Yorubas, 193-4pp.) and Lander (Journal... 143ff.) suggest that the opportunity for looking and securing booty and of earning their freedom might have induced the Hausa domestics to rise against their masters and rally round the Muslims in Ilorin. Though this argument is highly plausible, at the same time, we should not lose sight of the Muslim religious zeal which dominated the first decade of the nineteenth century. This was the zeal which generated the intense Muslim activity (See above, 70-72pp.) and which made Yoruba free-born Muslims rally round the same standard as the Hausa slaves.
  2. See Ajayi and Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 145p.

destroyed and evacuated. According to Ajayi, over fifty thousand people were involved in the whole exercise in the Empire.<sup>1</sup> But as the area was directly affected by the war, one can postulate that majority of the evacuees came from Oyo and its districts.

Some of the dispersed Muslims and others took asylum in Ilorin or in towns and villages that came under Ilorin hegemony. Others began to live in hill top settlements in the Upper Ogun area or in the major towns of Ibarapa and Epo, southern provinces of the Old Oyo Kingdom, which could be defended against the attack of Ilorin. These included Isẹyin and Oke-Iho. Some people found a new lease of life among neighbouring Yoruba people like the Egbado, Egba, Ife, Ijebu, Ijesa and Ekiti. The dispersal of the people in this area was so widespread that Ajayi described the situation as OYO DIASPORA.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen how the fall of the Old Oyo forcibly generated what Ajayi refers to as Oyo diaspora. The fall,

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1. See Ajayi and Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 145p.
  2. Ibid., 147p.

coupled with the consequent diaspora, produced a depletion in the statusquo of the Muslims not only in terms of the numerical strength of the Muslims but also in terms of Islamic and Arabic knowledge. This was simply so because the fleeing of the persecuted Muslims necessarily included a lot of the more ardent and knowledgeable ones.<sup>1</sup> The loss was almost permanent because the dispersed Muslims settled down in their new abode, which, as previously noted, passed into the hands of new overlords.

Moreover, as religion became an issue in the rebellion, the over-zealous Muslims and the Jihād fighters constituted, inevitably, an extremely serious and fundamental challenge to the political supremacy of Oyo. Added to this is the fact that the success of the rebellion encouraged the Muslims to use their new citadel of Ilorin as the base from where they launched incessant wars and raids against various towns in Oyo and its districts. The more such successful raids there were, the more the Muslims and Hausa slaves were instigated to rise in

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1. Oral tradition collected at Oyo, particularly at Pàràkòyí's quarter and Aàfin, Işeyin, Igboho, Şepeteteri and Igbeti.



rebellion and flee to Ilorin. The situation created a deep and painful sore in the minds of the surviving adherents of the traditional religion and thus they were ready to take revenge. They opposed and fell upon the Muslims, local and alien, in order to uphold the disintegrating power of the Aláàfin, the royal preponderance of Oyo and the desecrated traditional heritage left behind by their ancestors. The reaction was widespread and protracted.<sup>1</sup> It was due largely to the fear of Ilorin, a fear which echoed down to the late 1820s and beyond.<sup>2</sup> The flight of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts to Ilorin as well as their persecution at the hands of the conservative followers of the traditional religion were concurrent. The two developments crippled Islam, both in size and stature, in Oyo and its districts.

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1. Lander, R. Records ..., Vol. 1, 277-279pp. Lander observed that "in some cities they were roughly handled by the people".
  2. Ibid., the Aláàfin in 1826 appealed to Lander to free him from his over powerful Muslim subjects.

Some Muslims, including the first Pàràkòyí, and others from the royal house worshipped secretly<sup>1</sup> and were able to surmount the problems that were generated by both the collapse of the Old Qyọ Empire and the resultant political assertion of Ilọrin.

There were some Hausa mālàms in places like Qyọ,<sup>2</sup> Iseyin and Şaki. But these Muslims had to battle with a problem more dimensional than that emanating from the numerical and intellectual depletion of their ranks. Hemmed in their localities, and deprived of some of their leaders, they failed to summon the necessary courage to sustain their faith. Furthermore, a thick cloud of suspicion was cast over the Muslims by the non-Muslim Yoruba, especially the adherents of the traditional religion who earned their living through an active

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1. Interview with the present Pàràkòyí, Alhaji Aşiru, a descendant of the first Pàràkòyí, December 1973, November, 1975.
  2. In Qyọ, Clapperton noted that he "was given an account of the religion by a native of Bornu, a Muhammedan, and a slave of the Caboceer of Jannah". q.v., Clapperton, H. Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo, 51p.

practice of the traditional religion. The adherents of the traditional religion involved in this persecuting exercise were found in and around the capital city, Oyo.<sup>1</sup> The Muslims were suspected as secret collaborators with Ilorin or as being subversive of the established order.<sup>2</sup> They were also held responsible for the raids and devastations in the area and Yorubaland at large. Thus they were under "irksome restraint"<sup>3</sup> and the preaching and teaching of Islam to children of the inhabitants were suffered only on the pain of death.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Lander, R. Records ... Vol. 1, 279-280pp. Lander stated that the mālams were "looked upon with the greatest suspicion".
  2. Richard and John Lander... Journal..., Vol. 1, 68p. He, for example, notes that "the very prevalent notion was that the fellatahs are ... spies from Sokoto".
  3. Lander, R. and J.: Journal..., Vol. 1, 138p.
  4. Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, g.v., Lander R. and J. Journal..., Vol. 1, 280p.

Indeed, the tendency was to restrict the operations, enthusiasm and the dynamism and, above all, the zeal of the Muslims within Oyo and its districts.

Another effect emanating from the rebellion was that Muslim establishments fell alongside the towns that were sacked, deserted and destroyed.<sup>1</sup> As towns like Igboho, Ikoyi and Oyo fell or were deserted,<sup>2</sup> the Muslim communities in the towns fell or were scattered. Faced with security problems, they fled to nearby areas which could afford protection. Where there was favourable atmosphere, they forged new settlements.

By 1836, then, the picture of Islam among the people of Oyo and its districts was largely a sombre one, showing considerable depletion and disarray. In truth, Islam in the area, after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire

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1. Lander and Clapperton record the stories of woe and devastation caused by the rebellion; q.v., Lander, Journal of Expedition, 96-7pp. Clapperton, Journal of Expedition, 204p.

2. For details about <sup>the</sup> collapse of these towns, see Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, chapters 7 to 14.

in 1835,endeavoured to recreate itself, outgrow strong, almost invincible local discrimination, recover and re-organise itself and,above all,build its stature and strength.

Concerning the resurgence of Islam in the area, Islam had four avenues open to it. First, there was the basic Yoruba attitude of religious toleration which finds its finest expression in the sociological and religious view of the people that the Yoruba *o*ba was "the father of all"<sup>1</sup>. This might also be the product of Yoruba's concept of God's universality. They use the title '*o*ba' for God and earthly king. The importance of the 'Universal God' in the religious view of the Yoruba is well expressed by the words of Idowu in his article "The Religion of the Yoruba" in a magazine called Gangan. In this article, Idowu says:

"In the religion of the Yoruba, God is the prius of all things". Islam seized this belief and used it during the period of its resurgence in *Oyo* and its districts.

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1. The Yoruba *o*ba is usually the patron of all the religions embraced by his subjects. His approach to religion is necessarily syncretistic. Christians, Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion converge in his palace to discuss issues that may bring progress and stability.

Secondly, we must not lose sight of the fact that religion is basic to the existence of the Yoruba.<sup>1</sup> Thus the people of Oyo and its districts could not withhold, for long, the religious vacuum generated by iconoclasm which resulted from the rebellion of the early nineteenth century. It was this vacuum that Islam carefully filled and here, it reaped a fine reward.

Thirdly, the depletion which Islam suffered in the area was, to some extent, an immense accession to Ilorin, an accession from which Islam in this area, and Yorubaland at large, was later to gain immense support once Ilorin itself got settled and became well established. The same Ilorin which had been so richly fed by the Yoruba and Hausa Muslims became, in spite of its charge of political masters, a nourishing source for the regeneration of Islam in Oyo and its districts, and in Yorubaland as a whole.

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1. With regard to the importance of religion among the Yoruba, Idowu declares in his book, Olódumare, 5p. : "the key note of their life is their religion. In all things they are religious. Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principle of life for them. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to

Lastly, the very disruption into which the Muslims of Oyo and its districts were forcibly thrown was later to prove advantageous. As will be seen later in this work, the fleeing Muslim refugees from the sacked towns in the area, and Yorubaland at large, became, as it were, agents of Islamic dissemination in their new places of abode.

The period of the rebellion in the Old Oyo can be regarded a milestone in the history of the origin and development of Islam in Oyo and its districts. A second phase began in 1837 when Alááfin Atiba began a work of political resurgence in New Oyo<sup>1</sup> and Islam began to be resuscitated.

be the interpreters of the will of the Deity. Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joys and troubles, it is the Deity who is in control".

1. Concerning the political status of New Oyo during the days of the Old Oyo Empire, see above, 81-2pp. During the days of the Old Oyo Empire, it was called Agó Qjà meaning "Market Camp". With the occupation of Agó Qjà by Atiba and his entourage after the fall of the Old Oyo in about 1837, Agó Qja was renamed Agó d'Oyo, meaning "Agó has become Oyo". It is also known as Oyo tuntun (the new Oyo) or Oyo t'óní (the present Oyo). The site of Old Oyo town has lain in ruin since the fall of the Empire. The exiled Alááfin,

## CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE PERIOD OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE AND  
CONSOLIDATION, 1837-1895.2.1 The period of Islamic resurgence, 1837-1859.2.11 New urbanisation and the status of Islam.

The first two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the disruption and depletion of the ranks of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts and in Yorubaland at large. The situation was so tense that all around the hopes of resuscitation seemed blurred. The greater part of the area was in considerable disarray and confusion as a result of the chain of wars which ravaged towns and villages. There was the belief that the root cause of these troubles could be traced to the

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Adeniran Adeyemi II (1945-1956) visited the site during his reign with some town officers and courtiers in 1946. He was said to come back with the observation that the site, since the fall of the Old Oyo, has remained in utter desolation and has become the abode of mysterious spirits.



Muslims and their religion.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Muslims in this area of Yorubaland were suspected as collaborators of Ilorin and Afonja. However, despite these militating factors, the status of Islam was improved. The southward advance of the Ilorin into Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, incurred a decisive set-back. It was halted in 1840 when the militant Ibadan routed its forces at Osoybo.<sup>2</sup> From this time on, Ibadan constituted an

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1. It will be recalled here that, according to Ajayi, Islam was not responsible for the fall of the Old Oyo Empire. Instead, he maintains the thesis that the sudden collapse of the Oyo monarchy and widespread rebellion were a culmination of a deep-rooted and long-standing struggle for power between the Alaafin and various groups of supporters on the one hand and lineage chiefs, provincial rulers and military leaders on the other. This view can be corroborated by the revolt of Basorun Gaha, who later incurred an ignominious death, and that of Governor Afonja. See Ajayi and Crowder (eds.) History of West Africa, Vol. 2, 141-3pp. See above, 69-71pp.
  2. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 285-9pp. See also Awe, Bolanle, The Rise of Ibadan... as a Yoruba Power in the Nineteenth Century, D.Phil., 1964, 126-7pp.

invincible problem for Ilorin. It steadily repelled Ilorin and kept it at bay. Ilorin found a way out of the predicament by channelling its military endeavours to Ekitiland, yet it was to meet Ibadan there. The suppression of Ilorin by more powerful forces such as those of Ibadan meant that Islam was ceasing to constitute a threat to Oyo and its districts. Islam could settle and work towards achieving a recognised position. The two major features in the period between 1837 and 1895, concerning the history of Islam in the area, were how Islam was resuscitated and <sup>how it</sup> reconstructed itself out of the bewilderment and predicament of the previous decades, and how it eventually established itself in the area.

The resurgence of Islam was the major feature of the period between 1837 and 1859. This was naturally preceded by political rehabilitation which was mainly the work of Prince Atiba and his supporters. The political rehabilitation involved the settlement of mass of people cast adrift by the incessant wars and raids of the previous decade. This involved two main processes. Firstly, it involved the integration of the refugees into

towns in which they had been allowed to take shelter and protection. This was the case in places such as Kişi, Igbeti, Igboho, Şepet̄eri, Tede, Aha, Oke-Iho and Iganna in Oyo North. It was also the case in Awę, Işeyin and Ikoyi in Oyo South.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the rehabilitation project involved the resettlement of Oyo and the founding of new towns such as Akinm̄orin, Ilora and Fiditi in Oyo south.<sup>2</sup> It is pertinent to recall, at this juncture, that immediately after the fall of the Old Oyo, Prince Atiba, ambitious to revive the erstwhile glories of the monarchy, went south to a village called Aḡo-Oja, near his mother's home.<sup>3</sup> He was later made the Aláàfin<sup>4</sup> in this place.

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1. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.
  2. Ibid., interview with the present Aláàfin of Oyo, December, 1973.
  3. See above, 81-2pp.
  4. After an interregnum which followed the death of Aláàfin Oluewu and the eventual desertion of the Old Oyo, Atiba, the son of Abiḡdun, was appointed the new Aláàfin in about 1837. He recovered as much as possible of the royal property. He enlarged the new capital by entreating and forcing the people of the neighbouring towns to come and settle with him in the new capital. See Johnson, The History of the Yoruba, 279-281pp. See also Oyo Divisional records file OD. 352. List of all the Old ruined villages near Oyo whose people are now settled in Oyo town is in "Alaḡin (Aláàfin) to the District Officer, Oyo, 22 December 1936; see also Forde, D. and, P.M. Kaberry (eds.) West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century, 45p.

There and then he took over his new settlement and renamed it Oyo. He invited the Old Oyo aristocracy and surrounding villagers to swell the population, and he endeavoured to regenerate the monarchical set-up of the administration of Old Oyo.<sup>1</sup>

As new towns sprang up, the older ones were expanded. Each town tried to become as large and powerful as possible, often destroying the surrounding villages so as to gather large populations together at one defensible spot. By the 1850s, when missionaries were visiting and describing Yoruba towns, the populations of towns such as New Oyo, Iseyin, Saki, and Igboho and others in the area were usually reported as ranging from twenty to over sixty thousand.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Johnson, op.cit. 274-284pp. See also Aláàfin of Oyo: Oba Adeyemi, Lamidi Olayiwola III, Oyo Chieftaincy Institution and Modernism, Ibadan, Sketch Publishing Company, 1975, 13-17pp.
  2. See Ajayi and Crowder (eds.), History of West Africa Vol. 2. See also Missionary Evidence summarised in Mabogunje, A.L. "Urbanisation in Nigeria", Economic Development and Cultural Change, Chicago 13 (4): 413-438, July, 1965.

In the work of political rehabilitation, the Aláàfin enjoyed the support of the Pàràkòyí<sup>1</sup> and that of some of the surviving towns in Oyo and its districts. Most of the towns here were ancient. Some of them, such as Šaki, Igboho, Kiši, Işeyin, Ikoyi, contained the remnant of the citizens of the ancient Oyo and the members of the royal family, and so preferred to be placed under the direct control of the new Aláàfin.<sup>2</sup> With time, the new

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1. The Pàràkòyí helped Atiba considerably during the latter's endeavour to recreate the lost identity of the Old Oyo. He helped the latter in many wars such as the following: Owu, Lasinmi, Kanla, Gbodo, Pole and Igaga. See Johnson, S. The History of the Yorubas, 197-222pp. The Pàràkòyí had a good knowledge of native medicine which helped him during the wars. His name was Yesufu but he received the nickname "Alánàmú" as a result of his military virtuosity. The virtuosity is well explained by the following praise-names:

Yésúfù Alánàmú,  
Ò gefòn rebi ìjà  
Pàràkòyí pà kan  
Òkan sá lo.

(Yésúfù Alánàmú,  
 One who flogs and captures,  
 One who rides buffalo to the war,  
 Pàràkòyí kills one,  
 One runs away).

More important, with regard to the part played by Pàràkòyí this time, was the Islamic ferment which he undertook each time a town was defeated. This helped the rehabilitation of Islam during this time.

2. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 282p.

Alááfin, Atiba, regained the allegiance of the rest of the ancient towns and villages in Qyq and its districts. The work of political rehabilitation covered almost a decade. Its problems, both internal and external, were to perpetuate trouble for the newly resettled and founded towns mentioned above.<sup>1</sup> But as this process went under-way, Islam regenerated itself and even began to play a significant role in the solution of the problems of general rehabilitation.

Şaki, one of the ancient towns in Qyq and its districts, maintained a stable position amidst the debris and boulders of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. This is not to say that it was not affected at all by the various wars and intrigues which ravaged the area during this period but the fact is that, the wars and intrigues did not doom Şaki to extinction. It functioned as a haven of refuge for many refugees from the war of the previous

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1. These new towns were founded during the long reign of Alááfin Atiba, circa. 1837-1859. See above, 96p. See also map 1, on 1(a)p.

decade. The refugees swelled its population considerably.<sup>1</sup> Among the diverse refugee population in Şaki were some Muslims who subsequently joined the very few Muslims who had been left in the town to organise the infant Muslim community. This time, the Şaki community was built up during the reign of Aláàfin Oluewu.<sup>2</sup> The community comprised local Muslims such as Alúfa Asumo Ismaila,<sup>3</sup> his father and a host of others mentioned earlier in this work.<sup>4</sup> Numbered among this community were immigrant

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1. Refugees fled to Şaki from towns such as Old Oyo, Kíşí, Şepeteri, Iganna, Ofiki, Okaka, Ago-Are, Irawo Owode, Aha, Tede, all in Oyo North. Refugees also came from Işeyin and Ikoyi in Oyo South.
  2. Interview at Şaki with the Chief Imām, Lawani and his jamā'a, August 10, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  3. Ibid. According to the Chief Imām and his jamā'a, Alúfa Asumo was omọ ojó méjọ (that is, he was born a Muslim and was named in Muslim way on the eighth day).
  4. See above, 57-9pp.

Muslims from the neighbouring towns and villages that were forced to leave their places of abode for safe places in consequence of the wars of the previous decade. From Old Ọyọ town (Ọyọp 'lé) came people like Mọmọ<sup>1</sup> and his retinue, while Àlùfa Yesufu fled from Kìşì.<sup>2</sup> Àlùfa Mumuni of Okaka<sup>3</sup> and the entire members of his family came from Gbangba whence they had been driven by the Dahomey wars. Some immigrant Muslims such as Àlùfa Suta, an Idindi, and his retinue were refugees from Dahomey area. Though these Muslims were small in number and of diverse origins, they constituted a Muslim community in Şaki. The young community of Muslims had its open

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1. Mọmọ held the post of Sarumi in Old Ọyọ. When he arrived at Şaki, the ruling Okere of Şaki erected for him and his retinue a house at Aganmu quarter of the town. He later became the Balógun Imọle in the town. (Interview with the Chief Imām and jamā'a, Şaki, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).
  2. Àlùfa Suta settled at Losi street in Şaki. This remains till today as the quarter of the family of the immigrant. (Interview with the Chief Imām and jamā'a, Şaki (ibid)).
  3. The ancient towns Ofiki, Okaka and Ago-Are originally belonged to one town, Ofiki. Separation came with the Dahomey wars. And since then, there had been three separate towns: Ofiki, Okaka, Ago-Are, instead of the original town, Ofiki. (Interview with the elders in each of the towns in August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence). See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.



congregational prayers in a small fenced sandy enclosure called gìgìì.<sup>1</sup>

Many other Muslim refugees came to Şaki from other parts of Yorubaland and they helped, in a large measure, to organise and establish the Muslim community in that town.

In some cases, in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1837 and 1859, the Muslim refugees were integrated into the established Muslim community already existing in the town. The ancient town of Işeyin is illustrative of this point. In Işeyin, Islam had become a religion to be reckoned with. It is pertinent to note, here, that Alufa Alimi, on his coming to this town and before reaching Ilorin, had met there a community of Muslims.<sup>2</sup> In the arena of general confusion and disarray which engulfed the area at the time of rebellion and wars,

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1. This is usually in form of rectangle marked out with branches, stones, broken bottles, or low mud wall. For further details about gìgìì, see Trimmingham, J.S., Islam in West Africa, 70p. Gbadamşsi calls it 'gìrìgìrì or Gìgìì where 'gìgìì' is taken as an abridged form of 'gìrìgìrì'.

2. See Gbadamşsi, G.O., The Growth of Islam, chapter 1 et passim.

Iseyin, like Şaki, had remained firm and unscathed. This was not by accident but as a result of the fact that the town had very strong natural and artificial defences.<sup>1</sup> It remained impenetrable to a lot of attackers. The town, during the crucial period of the early nineteenth century, proved a welcome haven of refuge for the people fleeing from the fear and the annihilation of the wars.<sup>2</sup>

Among the Muslims who took political asylum in Iseyin were the people called Jemba who, in fact, had long been Islamised in their former domicile,<sup>3</sup> Jemba-ile or Ahoro-

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1. Some refugees from Şepeteri in Oyo North took refuge in Şaki during this time. (Interview with the traditional elders in Şepeteri, August 11, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence). See also sketch No. 3836, Tuesday, May 25, 1976. "A daily Sketch spotlight on Şaki - the town of warriors", 17-21pp.
  2. Iseyin was well fortified by mountains. One and the most important of these is "Iyanla", a mountain that is there till today. It remains as one of the objects of worship for the followers of the traditional religion in Iseyin. (Compare the mountains in Iganna, Oke-Iho and Igbeti. Mount Igbeti was of immense help to the inhabitants of the town during the period of incessant wars of the early nineteenth century). Moreover, the town was fortified by two walls (the outer one was about 24 kilometres) and well kept trenches. Carter, during his visit to Iseyin in 1893, was very well impressed by this fortification, q.v. p.p. 1893-1894. Report by Carter on the Interior Expedition C. 7227. This report (NAI) is later cited as pp. (private Paper) C.7227.
  3. Interview with the Ijemba community, Iseyin, August 6, 1975. The present Chief Imām, Alufa Jamiu, testified to this. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

Jẹmba.<sup>1</sup> On reaching Işeyin, they established an Ijẹmba quarter and considerably strengthened the Muslim community in that town. New mosques, such as the "Mosalaşi Alálíkimbà"<sup>2</sup>, were built in the quarter to cope with the demands of the growing Muslim population. The community, however, remained united. The oldest mosque in the town was improved upon. It was repaired, extended and used as the central mosque<sup>3</sup>

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1. The location of this original domicile remains unidentified. However, it is held by the surviving Ijẹmba people that it is "on the way to Şẹpẹtẹrì". Yoruba: ("l'ónà Şẹpẹtẹrì"), ibid.
  2. According to the present Imām of Işeyin, Alhaji Jamiu, the jamā'a in general and the Ijẹmba Muslim community in particular, ~~the~~ mosque was the first to be built in Ijẹmba. It was estimated to take about 100 worshippers comfortably at the same time since it is affirmed that it has 20 rows (Yoruba: sááfú) and that each row could take 8 people at a time. Another variant of Alálíkimbà is Alálùkimbà. The word 'Alíkimbà or Alùkimbà' refers to a type of cap worn by Muslims. It forms part of Islamic or rather Muslim culture or civilisation (Interview with the present Pàràkòyí of Qyọ, December, 1973. March, 1974, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).
  3. This is known as masjīd jāmi' in Arabic language.

for the observance of the juma<sup>ca</sup>. A result of communal effort, this central mosque was the seat of the Chief Imām.

The situations in towns such as Igboho, Igbeṭi and Kiṣi were comparable to the situations in Ṣaki and Iṣeyin. The towns, like Ṣaki and Iṣeyin had very strong natural defences and proved a welcome harbour of refuge for the war affected people. Muslim refugees found their ways to each of these places at different points in time and helped in the process of Islamic reconstitution in the towns. This was done in collaboration with the original Muslim community in each of the towns. Thus, in towns where Islam had been introduced and was fairly well rooted, the Muslim refugees naturally merged with the already existing Muslim community. The process of integration should be viewed as a matter of course. The community was already established in each of these towns, and the immigrants had no alternative but to accept the existing leadership.

Earlier<sup>1</sup>, we have noted how Atiba made Agṣ-Qja (New

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1. See above, 81-2pp.

Qyọ),<sup>1</sup> where he had lived for some years, the new seat of government. Atiba sent for the members of the Qyọ-Mèsi and other officials who had fled from Old Qyọ to Kişi, Igboho, Igbeṭi and other areas in Yorubaland. Those who cared to come were confirmed in their offices, those who did not were replaced. He enlarged the new capital by entreating and forcing the people of the neighbouring towns to come and settle with him in the new capital.<sup>2</sup> While Atiba was struggling for political rehabilitation his uncle, Yesufu Alanamu, the Pàràkọyí, was struggling for both political rehabilitation and Islamic reconstitution. Many towns were attacked, defeated and integrated into Qyọ community. Many of these captives were made to embrace Islam. In truth, the Pàràkọyí strove greatly to give a new vigour and direction to both the Muslim community and Islam during the reign of Aláàfin Atiba. In the period of Islamic

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1. See above, map 3 on 82(a)p.

2. Johnson, S., The History of the Yoruba, 281p. Qyọ Divisional Office Records, File O.D. 352. List of all the old ruined villages near Qyọ whose people are now settled in Qyọ town is in Aláàfin to the District Officer, Qyọ 22 December 1936.

resurgence, the Pàràkɔyí made use of some of the Muslim Hausa slaves whom he was able to bring from Old Qyɔ. With the settlement and enthronement of Atiba as the Aláàfin, Qyɔ became a cynosure for the people, refugees and non-refugees, traders and non-traders, Muslims and non-Muslims, from both far and near. In short, it became a tourist centre. Many Muslims, refugees and others, trooped in from the surrounding villages to swell the population. Some of those Muslims in Old Qyɔ eventually gained entry into New Qyɔ. With Yesufu Alanamu as the organisational head, and one learned Muslim Hausa slave<sup>1</sup> as the acting Imām, Qyɔ became, once again, the headquarters of Islam and traditional politics in Qyɔ and its districts.

Now, let us examine the status of Islam in the towns established by the shifting population of refugees. We have seen how Muslim refugees came from the surrounding

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1. Interview with the present Pàràkɔyí of Qyɔ, Alhaji Asiru, and the present Aláàfin of Qyɔ, Alhaji Lamidi Adeyemi III, December 1973, March 1974 and November 1975. The name of this Hausa slave is not known. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

areas that were being deserted or devastated and settled in the ancient towns of Kişi, Igboho, Igbēti, Şaki and Işeyin. We have also seen how the Pàràkdyí, Yesufu Alanamu, in collaboration with some Muslim Hausa slaves undertook the work of Islamic reconstitution in New Qyọ. Thenceforth, the Muslim communities continued to expand and grow. Abiba, on the advice of Yesufu Alanamu, his uncle, invited some learned Hausa Muslims to New Qyọ to take up the leadership of the Muslim community.<sup>1</sup> The general peace which followed the rampage of the first two decades of the nineteenth century afforded the Muslim community in each of the towns in Qyọ and its districts an opportunity to expand and grow at an alarming rate. The dynamic activity of the Muslims alarmed the various separate traditional authorities in Qyọ who knew very well from their past experiences what a cataclysmic force Islam could be. Thus the traditional priests and the local authorities fell upon the Muslims. They troubled the

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1. Interview with the present Aláàfin of Qyọ, *ibid.*, December 1973. According to him, it is from the line of the Hausa resident in Qyọ that the Chief Imām is elected till today. They are found today in Imam's quarter, Qyọ. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

Muslims sorely, and they tried on several occasions to pull down their mosques at Agunpopo and Pàràkdyí quarters.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, however, the community stood firm and strong. The question of the reaction of the followers of the traditional religion to Islam and the Muslim communities in the area will be examined, in detail, later in this work.

Amidst the great concourse<sup>2</sup> of people who resettled New Oyo between 1837 and 1840 were a few individual Muslims. For some time, owing to the prevailing suspicion and unpleasant conditions of war, many worshipped secretly. In this period, Islam was not officially recognised.

A further step in the process of Islamic revitalisation in Oyo and its districts in the mid-nineteenth century can be seen in the building of the central mosque at Oke-Afin in Oyo. Here, the Pàràkdyí and the Muslim learned Hausa took the lead. They spoke to Aláàfin Atiba about this. In reply to the request, Aláàfin Atiba gave

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1. Interview with the present Pàràkdyí of Oyo, Alhaji Aşiru, December 1973, March 1974 and November 1976.
  2. It has been shown that this great concourse of people comprised not only refugees from Oyo areas but also adventurers and victims of vicissitudes from all parts of Yorubaland and of the founding of Ibadan in about 1829. See Awe, Bolanle, The Rise of Ibadan...,



out an extensive plot of land at Oke-Afin. In addition to this, he gave the Muslims £50 (present Nigerian ₦100). With this money, and some communal effort, the mosque was built. It could provide accommodation comfortably for about 300 people at the same time.<sup>1</sup> The *mā̀lāms* among the Hausa conducted classes in the mosque before the establishment of Qur'ānic schools for the community. There were central mosques in the ancient towns such as Kī̀ṣi, Igbēti, Igboho, Ṣaki and Iṣeyin. Each of the towns in which there was a central mosque became a spiritual rallying point for the Muslims in the

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Chapter III, *et passim*, 81p. "Almost every Yoruba town lost a son to Ibadan".

1. See below, plate 1 on 110(a)p. Interview with the present Chief Imām, Alhaji Tafa, and the present Pàràkòyí of Oyo, Alhaji Aṣiru, March 1974, November 1975. Later in the twentieth century, both Aláàfin Lawani Agogo Ija (1905-1911) and Aláàfin Adeniran Adeyemi II, the father of the present Aláàfin (1945-6), strove to improve the condition of the Muslims and the central mosque. The conversion of Lawani Agogo-Ija to Islam was a landmark in the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the twentieth century. He tried to prevent Christianity and Western values to rob Islam of its vigour and cream. He did this in cash and kind, but his step towards Islamic theocracy in this area was checked by the ardent and conservative followers of the traditional religion. Aláàfin Adeniran Adeyemi followed his footsteps in this case, but he too was not allowed to establish Islamic theocracy in the area. Interview with the present Aláàfin, see also Gbadamṣi, G.O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland,

110(a)



Plate 1: The central mosque, Qyq.

neighbouring villages.<sup>1</sup> While those in the villages observed the daily prayers in their villages, they were expected to come to the central mosque in the town for the observance of the jumā'a every Friday afternoon.

2.12 Migration from across the seas and its impact on the Muslim population and Islam

Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1837 and 1859 was further reconstituted by a considerable migration from across the seas. During this period, there was the return to West Africa of the emancipated Africans. From 1837 to 1842, more than 500 freed slaves had been returned to Nigeria from Sierra-Leone. Most of these

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136-202pp. Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire: A Study of British Indirect Rule in Oyo Province 1894-1934, Ph.D. Ibadan, 1967, chapter 4.

1. This was the case because, during this time, the Muslims in the villages were not large enough to build a central mosque and to appoint Chief Imāms.

returning freed slaves were indeed Anglican Christians. The sponsors of their liberation were white missionaries who saw the hope of christianising West Africa in the return of these slaves not only to Liberia and Freetown but also from the latter to other parts of West African Coast.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the white missionaries appealed to and eventually prevailed on the British government to effect the abolition of slave trade and the return of the black slaves to their various domiciles in West Africa. The project was made easy by the thriving oceanic trade that grew as these immigrant colonies expanded. Partly in consequence of the promotion of the return-movement, and partly as a result of the flourishing coastal trade, the liberated Africans returned to Yorubaland.

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1. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 45p. Concerning the abolition of slave trade, it is pertinent to recall and praise the dynamic efforts of William Wilberforce.

Some of the Àkús<sup>1</sup> in Sierra-Leone were Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Among them were those who had embraced Islam even before their capture and exportation as slaves. Some of them who survived the arduous experience overseas clearly remembered their domiciles in Yorubaland and were anxious to go home.

While they were still in Sierra-Leone, there was great anxiety amongst them to return to Yorubaland. Crowther, who hailed from Oṣoogun, a district of Oyo, was aware of this anxiety. Applications were received from every direction, from the Muslims and followers of the traditional religion, to be employed as labourers and

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1. The Yoruba emancipated slaves in Sierra-Leone were called the "AKUS" by the virtue of their manners of greeting such as the following: E e kú, oo kú, the manner of greetings by the Yorubá elders; E kú ilé, or E kuile the Yoruba manner of greetings on a return-journey; E kú àárọ, "Good morning", E kú àsán, "Good afternoon", E kú alé, "Good evening; E kú odún, e kú iyèdún, "Happy new year". Examples can be multiplied in this case. The "Akus", however, belonged to the various sub-ethnic groups of the Yoruba. See Koelle: Polyglotta Africana, C.M.S., 1856 and Ajayi, J.F. Ade., The Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1840-1891, 25p. This manner of greetings "E e kú, E kú" continues till today in Yorubaland especially in Oyo and Egba areas.
  2. Fyffe, C., A History of Sierra-Leone, Oxford, 1962, 187-215, 228pp. et. passim; Peterson, J.E. A Study

servants in Badagry.<sup>1</sup>

The urge and anxiety to return to Yorubaland could be a result of their wish to be free from the problems, political and otherwise, which bombarded them in Sierra-Leone. According to Fyffe, their interaction with the others in Sierra-Leone was not an enjoyable one;<sup>2</sup> and they must have felt almost ostracised not only by the zealous evangelists but also by the high-handed white administrators. The two groups were less concerned about the Àkú Muslims than about the nuclear community that was to act as the agents for the propagation of Christianity and dissemination of Western values.<sup>3</sup> In this milieu, the Àkú Muslims kept closely to themselves at their two main centres: Fourah Bay and Foulah Town.<sup>4</sup> When the opportunity to return to Yorubaland set in,

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in the Dynamics of Liberated African Society, 1807-1870 (Ph.D. North Western, 1963, 293-7pp. Two of the most distinguished Àkú Muslims in Sierra-Leone were Muhammad Sanusi and Savage who were leaders of reform. Bassir affirms with reference to modern times that the Àkús in Sierra-Leone are mostly Muslims; q.v. Bassir, O. "Marriage Rites among the Àkú in Freetown" in Africa, 24, 3, July, 1954. See also Proudfoot, L. "The Fourah Bay Dispute: An Àkú Faction Fight in East Freetown", Sierra-Leone Bulletin of Religion, 4, 2 December 1962.

1. Ajayi in his book, Christian Missions in Nigeria, holds that many of these Àkús embraced Christianity, and some retained their traditional religion, See page 25 of this book. See also C.M.S. CA2/0316, Crowther's Journal especially the Journal for the Quarter Ending March 25, 1845.
2. Fyffe, C., A History of Sierra-Leone, 186p.
3. Ibid.
4. These two groups of Àkú Muslims were reported to have been distinct.

they were quite understandably anxious to avail themselves of this.

Earlier, it has been pointed out that the sponsors of the exodus of the slaves from the house of bondage overseas were Christians and Christian missionaries. They were lukewarm concerning the idea of encouraging the return of the Akú Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. They feared the conservatism and the ardour of the two groups concerning the question of submission to Christianity. The missionaries "were to make the country good first".<sup>1</sup> Thus they employed every available possibility to forestall the Muslim schemes as much as possible. There were stories of victimisation which some people, among whom was the Duke of Wellington, brought back about the batch of Sierra-Leonean emigrants in Badagry.<sup>2</sup> However, it is worth noting that, while the Christian hesitation was said to centre around both the Akú Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion,

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This is obvious in their manners of dressing. See, Eyffe, C., *op.cit.*, 34p. Up till today, the Akú Muslims in Sierra-Leone keep closely to themselves. For further details, see Proudfoot, L. "Mosque Building and Tribal Separation in Freetown" in *Africa*, 29, 4, 1959. Compare the original Ogbóni cult in Ife during the period of Orelueré and Odúduwá. See Idowu, *Olódumare*, chapter 3, 24p.

1. C.M.S. CA2/O316, Crowther's Journal for the Quarter ending March 25, 1845.
2. See Gbadamosi, G.O., *The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland*, 48p.

it was, no doubt, directed particularly to the latter whom the Christians were fond of describing as "pagans".

In any event, the Àkú Muslims were not tied to the apron string of Christianity and Christian missionaries. There were amongst them some militant leaders who, through thick and thin, translated the hope and aspirations of this mass exodus to a reality. Shitta Bay<sup>1</sup> and Muḥammad Savage organised their own groups for the return. Muḥammad Savage, the headman of the Àkú Muslims at Fourah Bay, brought ships, and at least fifty of his own people sailed back home in a group.<sup>2</sup> Some made private arrangements. In consequence of both private and group efforts, the home-yearning Àkú Muslims entered Yorubaland and found it to be their homeland from where they had been taken as slaves. In the coast of Nigeria, especially in Badagry, there were a considerable number of these Muslims, some of them, according to Crowther's testimony, possessing copies of the Arabic

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1. G.M.S. CA2/0316. Crowther's Journal...

2. Fyffe, C., A History of Sierra-Leone, 228p.



Bible<sup>1</sup> given them by the overzealous and ambitious Christian missionaries in Sierra-Leone.<sup>2</sup>

Another group was led by Salu Shitta.<sup>3</sup> He had gathered his family together with his one year old son and left Waterloo in 1831 for Fourah Bay in Sierra-Leone.<sup>4</sup> Here, the older Shitta was made the Chief Imām of the Muslim community of the town. In 1844, he decided to leave Sierra-Leone for Nigeria in a bid to join the Àkú Muslims. Thus he led a group of about fifty of his

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1. C.M.S. CA2/0316, Crowther's Journal for the Quarter ending September, 25, 1845. Some of these were said to tell Crowther, in a proud manner, that if they, the Sierra-Leone Muslims, could not read the Arabic Bible none could except people from the East, that is, people from the birth-place of Islam, Arabia and the places long islamised.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/0316, Crowther's Journal for the Quarter ending June 25, 1854. See also his Journal for the Quarter ending September 25, 1845.
  3. This is the father of Shitta Bay who built the famous masjid in Lagos. See Gbadamsoi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., Chapter 3. See also Losi, J.B. History of Lagos, Lagos, 1914 - article on "Shitta"; Euba, Titilola. "Shitta Bay and the Lagos Muslim Community, 1850-1895 (Parts I and II)" in N.J.I., Ile-Ifè, Vol. 2, No.1, 21-31pp., July 1971 - January 1974 and Vol. 2, No.2., 7-16pp. June 1972 to June 1974.
  4. Lagos Weekly Record, May 19, 1894.

followers, with their families, to Badagry in 1844.<sup>1</sup> It was, in fact, a happy reunion with the rest of the deported Àkú Muslims and Badagry became a diffuse centre from where the Àkú Muslims dispersed to the hinterland of Nigeria.

Lagos also served as a significant deporting centre during the colossal exodus. This was naturally so for it served as the headquarters and the chief port of the country. Here, there were two distinct groups - the Sierra-Leonean group and the Brazillian group. The former was commonly known as the Sàró Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Lagos, like Badagry, became a diffuse centre for the dispersal of the Àkú Muslims to the other parts of Yorubaland, far and near. And as slave-raiding, slavery and slave-trade reigned supreme in Oyo and its districts before the abolition of slave-trade, one can naturally expect that the emigrants included a considerable number

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1. Lagos Weekly Record, May 19, 1894.

2. Sàró is a borrowed word in Yoruba language. It is the abridged form of the word Sierra-Leone. It is a neologism. Compare the Yoruba words: "Gànná" coined from the word, Ghana; "Dòòmí" from the word, Dahomey.

of people from the area.<sup>1</sup>

The Brazillian group,<sup>2</sup> better known as Àgudà,<sup>3</sup> came to Lagos a little later than the Àkú Muslims. The first group of repatriates was said to have arrived around 1840.<sup>4</sup> Their number steadily increased from 1237 to 1800 particularly from 1847 onwards after the guarantee of security and encouragement received from one Tapa Oṣodi.<sup>5</sup>

1. Here again, it is pertinent to recall the case of Ajayi, who was captured as a slave in Osoogun in Oyo North but later became the first African Bishop with the name: Bishop Ajayi Crowther. See above, chapter 2, 50-1pp.
2. There are evidences about the life of these Muslims in Brazil up till today. See Johnson, H.H., The Negro in the World, London 1910, 94-5pp. "These Muslims" he says, "speak a dialect of Yoruba, and have taken part in some slaves' revolts". Compare the plight of the Yoruba in Cuba in Nigerian Magazine - numbers 36-40, 14-24pp. article by Bascom, R.
3. According to Gbadamosi, the Yoruba loan-word "Àgudà" primarily refers to the Brazillian group. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam... 150p. May I add that the word has various shades of meaning. While it may be difficult to speak away the thesis of Gbadamosi on this word, the popular usage of the word among the Yoruba today is with reference to the Catholic denomination which they call "Ijo Àgudà" or "Ijo Paàdi".
4. N.A.I. CSO 1/1. Moloney to Holland Bert, July 20, 1887.
5. Ibid. Here, as noted by Gbadamosi, there is a modicum of exaggeration. One could feel like subscribing to the thesis of Gbadamosi on the ground of "population-explosion" which plagues Lagos today. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 51p.

Though considerable in number, their numerical status was never on the same footing with that of the Sierra-Leonean group.<sup>1</sup> Among notable Muslim families in this Agudà group were: Pedro, Martin, da Silva, Tiamiyu Gomez, Salvador and Agosto.<sup>2</sup> They settled mainly at Bangboşe street, in Lagos, where they erected their own masjids such as the ones at Olosun and Alagbayun quarters.<sup>3</sup> They featured prominently in the dispersal of the group from the coast to their original domiciles in the interior of Yorubaland.

Some of the Muslim repatriates, after a short stay in Badagry and Lagos, soon remembered their former towns and villages in the interior, and after some earnest enquiries, succeeded in translating this yearning to a reality. Thus the Muslim repatriates were to be found, though in meagre numbers, in towns such as Ibadan,<sup>4</sup> Oyo

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1. See Gbadamosi, The Growth of Islam..., 51p.

2. Ibid., 51p.

3. Ibid., 51p.

4. N.A.I. CS01/1. Glover to Sheppard. September 7, 1871. There were at Ibadan: Atere, Abudu Kadiri Rufayi and Sulemonu. In 1885, Hinderer noted that there were about sixteen Sierra-Leone emigrants in Ibadan; g.v., C.M.S. CA2/021. See also Hinderer's Journal, June 30, 1855.

Iṣeyin, Ikoyi, Oke-Iho, Iganna, Şaki, Igboho, Igbeti and Kişi.<sup>1</sup>

A significant issue here is the historical significance of the Muslim repatriates for the cause of Islam in Oyo and its districts. First, their return to some towns and villages in the area meant the inflation of the Muslim population in each of the towns and villages. The increase in population naturally and immediately generated the necessity for the building of new mosques, expansion of the existing ones and the expansion of the venues of open or festival prayer such as ‘Īdu’l fitr grounds or, more often, the construction of new ones. This was the case in Oyo, Iṣeyin, Şaki,

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1. Interview with the present Aláàfin of Oyo, and the present Pàràkoyi of Oyo December 1973, March, 1974 November 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence. The fact that the towns were urban centres in the heart of Yorubaland and that some of them such as Oyo and Şaki were market centres could make one think that the emigrants easily located them as their original homes. Another favourable factor for the emigrants is the fact that the towns constituted the core of Yorubaland and were well known by the Yoruba in any part of Nigeria. Here again, we see that the location of the towns in this area could not prove an invincible hard-nut for the emigrants compared to the situations in other obscure areas of Yorubaland especially those areas that did not come under the sovereignty of the Aláàfin during the era of the Old Oyo Empire. See Atanda, J.A. The

Igboho, Igbēti and Kiṣi.<sup>1</sup>

Another significant point is the value of the Muslim repatriates to their religious group. This was significantly out of proportion to their number.<sup>2</sup> Among them were traders and artisans such as carpenters, masons, tailors, designers, architects and bakers.<sup>3</sup>

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New Oyo Empire, chapter 1. It is pertinent to note as well that many more of these Muslim repatriates did not rejoin their people in the hinterland but simply remained around the coast especially in Lagos, Badagry and their environs. The two major reasons that can be adduced for this step were that some could not locate their original homes and that some were born abroad and were not used to the lives in the rural areas.

1. Interview with some aged Muslim, the arókins, and the oba orbaálẹ in each of the towns. The present Alááfin of Oyo was particularly interviewed in this connection. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
2. This parallels the influence of the Christian repatriates; q.v., Ajayi, J.F.A., The Christian Missions in Nigeria, 51p. It is worth noting, however, that while their Christian counterparts introduced Christianity, Samuel Ajayi Crowther was an example here, the Muslim repatriates did not introduce Islam into the country. Rather, they helped in revitalising the existing religion.
3. Interview with some old Muslims, the arókins, and the oba orbaálẹ in the Muslim concentrated towns in the area. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

Their technical skill was of immense help to the Muslim community. There were instances in Oyo and its districts when the skilled men out of these repatriates undertook the building of mosques in the Muslim concentrated towns and villages. This was especially so in Oyo, Ikoyi, Osoogun, Tede and Saki.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of the Muslim repatriates was, as a matter of fact, felt more quickly in their immediate environment, such as Lagos, Badagry and Ijebu areas. But a little later, their influence became widespread and the most significant and lasting of this widespread influence was their dissemination and promotion of Western values among the Muslims. They were also purveyors of such Western values as they had been impelled to imbibe during their sojourn overseas. As a result, they emerged, in their home territories, as the vanguard of the reformation and modernisation movement which promoted the cause of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the era of Christianity and British rule.

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1. Interview with some aged Muslims, the arókins and the oba or baalé in each of these towns. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

Of special importance is the role they played in transforming the obnoxious, and conservative attitude of the Muslims in this area and Yorubaland at large towards Western education. Muslims all over Yorubaland were initially opposed to Western learning because of its Christian domination and modicum.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim repatriates, as a result of their contact with their Western overlords in overseas, strove to improve on the conservative attitude of the Muslims in the area to Western form of learning. They, in a large measure, helped in modernising and up-dating Islam which was

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1. See below, chapter 3, 190-1, 214-233pp. See also Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., and his article, "The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria, 1896-1926" in J.H.S.N. Vol. IV, No.1, December, 1967.



hitherto cloaked in rigidity and legality.<sup>1</sup>

In the period between 1837 and 1859, it can be easily seen how Islam in Oyo and its districts was revitalised by two forces from different directions. From the coast, particularly from Badagry and Lagos, there was the group of Muslim repatriates. They were more literate in English or Portuguese than in Arabic; and they were traders and artisans rather than propagators of the religion. From the interior of Yorubaland,

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1. It is pertinent to mention here the views of Mbiti concerning the age-long conservatism of Muslims not only in Yorubaland but also in Africa at large. It is his view that;

"If Islam is to survive and contribute seriously towards providing direction and guidance to modern Africa's search for new values, foundations and identities, it must surely not only convert people but be ready itself to be converted by modern man, that is to be 'modernised' and 'updated'. If it fails to be so stretched, or if it is too rigid or legalistic to be bent into the changing shape of our world, then Islam will remain not only a statistical giant but also a religious anachronism in the new Africa".

Thus we see that concerning the plight of the Muslims in Yorubaland today, the Muslim repatriates deserve perpetual praises from their co-religionists. It is worth noting that today, Islam is almost at par with Christianity along the paths of "modernity". See Mbiti, J.S. African Religions and Philosophy, 254p.

especially, the Qyq-speaking areas of Yorubaland, there was the larger group of Muslim refugees. Among these were: Muslim missionaries, professional Alufas and learned men. The two groups put their respective talents and erstwhile experience at the service of their co-religionists among whom they moved. As these two groups came in, Islam in Qyq and its districts was revived and given new and dynamic vigour and directions. Muslim communities were set up in the area especially in Qyq, Işeyin, Ikoyi, Oke-Iho, Iganna, Ago-Are, Şaki, Şepeteri, Igboho and Kişi.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.13 The influence of the Muslims in the royal courts.

The reconstitution of Islam in Qyq and its districts occupied the attention of the Muslims in this area in the first half of the nineteenth century. In view of the protracted wars of the period, and more importantly, in view of the former disruption and unpopularity of Islam, this rehabilitation was a noteworthy achievement in the history of Islam in the area. As a result of this achievement, the Muslims in the area became recognised by the society. As a matter of fact, they made a

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1. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.

phenomenal impact in the society during this period. Some possessed certain merits which qualified them to hold offices in the traditional theocratic government headed by the traditional *obas* and *baálès*. In *Oyo*, which owed some of its troubles to Islam and *Ilorin*, Yesufu Alanamu was the *Pàràkòyí*,<sup>1</sup> and Atiba (who established *Agòd'Oyo* in 1837 and reigned from 1837 to 1859) was favourably disposed towards Islam.<sup>2</sup> As a

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1. See above, 10p. Concerning the development of the office of the *Pàràkòyí*, see Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 275-7pp. and 280p. According to Johnson and the present *Pàràkòyí* of *Oyo*, Alhaji Aşiru, Atiba once owed his life to him. This was not necessarily a consideration for his holding this office but because Atiba and the *Pàràkòyí*, Yesufu Alanamu, were blood relations. (Interview with the present *Pàràkòyí* of *Oyo*, December, 1973, March, 1974 and November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 277p. It is possible that Atiba did take a Muslim name under *Ilorin* pressure. While this might be so, we do not know, for sure, the Muslim name. What we know is that he was ubiquitous, rascally and learnt Islam and Arabic in *Ilorin* ever before the fall of the Old *Oyo*. Moreover, during the uprising in *Oyo*, he undertook a temporary sojourn in *Ilorin*. (Interview with the present *Alááfin* of *Oyo*, December, 1973, August, 1975, November, 1975).

result of Atiba's tight connection with the Pàràkòyí, and his ambition to rehabilitate the dispersed subjects of the Aláàfin and re-establish the lost sovereignty, he welcomed many more of the politically talented Muslims to his administration. Of special importance was the Islamic ferment undertaken by the Pàràkòyí in this period. Through him, many Muslims became influential in the court of the Aláàfin. This was the case in other urban centres in the area such as Işeyin,<sup>1</sup> Şaki, Şepşetèri, Igboho, Igbèti and Kìşì.

Moreover, the rulers in each of the towns and villages in Qyọ and its districts often invited the leaders of the Muslim community or the towns in general on crucial occasions such as times of revolts, wars, outbreak of diseases and drought. They held prayers or rendered such forms of help as were necessary or required by the society. In this case, the Pàràkòyí<sup>2</sup> was usually the first to be summoned and it was his duty to summon such Muslim leaders as might be of help in such cases. The Chief Imāms and the Muslim diviners in each

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1. Of all the big centres of Islam in Qyọ and its districts, Işeyin had the largest number of Muslim ọbas. (Interview with the present Aşeyin of Işeyin, August, 1975).
  2. The office of the Pàràkòyí in other towns in the area sprang from that of the Pàràkòyí of Qyọ.

of the towns in the area were usually held in high esteem in this regard. The situation in Iganna during this period is true of most of the towns in the area. Here, the first Muslim missionary and diviner, Amuda Yesufu, wielded great influence in the king's court during the reign of Şabiganna Alokolodo as a result of his sound knowledge of magic and medicine.<sup>1</sup> In each of the palaces of the ɔbas in the area were kept such Muslim diviners as could be of help whenever the ɔbas or the towns incurred unhappy situations. Many of them were found in the palace of the Aláàfin Atiba during his work of political rehabilitation. They continue to wield influence in the court of the Aláàfin of Ọyọ<sup>2</sup> till today.

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The other Pàràkọyí in respective courts of their ɔbas also enjoyed royal influence. They were the intermediaries between the Muslim communities and the royal courts. (Interview with the Pàràkọyí in each of the Muslim towns in the area, August, 1975). See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

1. Interview with some of the descendants of the Şabiganna Alokolodo, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
2. Interview with the present Aláàfin of Ọyọ, December, 1973. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

2.14 The role of the itinerant and ubiquitous mālams.

The activities of the itinerant and ubiquitous mālams in the work of rehabilitating Islam in Oyo and its districts were also very significant. The largest and most prominent group of these was that of the Yoruba-speaking mālams from Ilorin or from the neighbouring centres of Islam. They were to be found all over the big centres of Islam in the area. The proximity<sup>1</sup> of the area to Ilorin was a strong reason responsible for their influx into this area. Travelling at their own expense from one town to the other, they preached and taught about Islam.<sup>2</sup> A few of them, such as "White Arabs",<sup>3</sup>

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1. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.
  2. Many missionaries such as Crowther and Bowen met a number of them during their missionary endeavours in Yorubaland. See particularly Bowen to Taylor, February 28, 1852. Here Bowen describes some of his own encounter with Ilorin Muslims.
  3. See Gbadamasi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 65p. For further details on the role of itinerant and ubiquitous mālams, see El-Masri's article on 'Islam' in "Religions in Ibadan" in Mabo-gunje, A.L. and Bolanle, A. The City of Ibadan, 249ff.

hailed from outside Nigeria. Greater in number were the Hausa and the Fulani groups of mālāms many of whom were to be found in Qyq, Işeyin, Oke-Iho, Iganna, Agq-Are, Şaki, Igboho, Igbeti and Kisi.<sup>1</sup>

During the process of reconstitution, Islam in Qyq and its districts showed certain remarkable features. First, Islam in the area followed the principles of Islam as laid down by Prophet Muḥammad. The Muslims observed the five fundamental pillars of Islam,<sup>2</sup> and believed in the fundamental principles of Islam. Here, the issue of pilgrimage to Mecca need not be over-

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1. Igboho, Igbeti and Kisi were, of all the towns in Qyq and its districts, the nearest to the Muslim North, especially Ilorin. Since Ilorin was formerly within the Old Qyq Empire, before its fall, the possibility of having Ilorin Muslims in the big towns of the area before the fall of the Old Qyq may be difficult to deny.
  2. The pillars of Islam are as follows:
    - (i) Shahāda (Articles of faith)
    - (ii) Salāt (Obligatory ritual prayer)
    - (iii) Zakāt
    - (iv) Sawm (Fasting)
    - (v) Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

For further details about the pillars of Islam, see Gibb, H.A.R., Mohammedanism, 36, 42-4pp. Here, Gibb describes the shahāda as the outline of a credo and maintains that it is so taken by Muslims. See also the Qurʾān, sūra IV, V: 135; Rauf, M.A., Islam-Faith and Devotion, Lagos, Islamic Publication Bureau, 1974,

emphasised for, except in Lagos,<sup>1</sup> there were a few pilgrims yet in the area and Yorubaland at large.

## 2.15 The beginnings of Islamic knowledge.

Islamic knowledge in the period between 1837 and 1859 would appear to have been limited to the circles of itinerant mālams and teachers who had performed the commentary<sup>2</sup> of the Qurʾān or established piazza schools.

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12-15pp.; Doi, A.R.I., The Cardinal Principles of Islam, Lagos, Islamic Publication Bureau, 1974. 37, 141-156pp.; Abdul, M.O.A., Islam as a Religion: Faith and Duties Book one, Lagos, Islamic Publication Bureau, 1975, 41-71pp.

1. Burton, R.F., Abeokuta and the Cameroons, London, 1863, Vol. 1, 8-10pp. Burton on his visit to Lagos, met and mixed a little with the Muslim community among whom he found "several who had pilgrimaged to Meccah". Many of these had also travelled over land to Tripoli enroute to Mecca. Concerning pilgrimage in Oyo and its districts, it was only in the twentieth century that it received serious attention from the Muslims. Among those who made pilgrimage to Mecca that time was Aláàfin Adeniran Adeyemi II (1945-1956).
2. This is the interpretation of the Qurʾān. It is an important science in its study. It is known as tafsir (exegesis). In Yorubaland, one who engages in the exegesis of the Qurʾān is called Onitafusírú. His function is especially prominent during the period of fasting.



The depth or quality of their knowledge can scarcely be measured now partly in consequence of the paucity of their own literary productions. These schools were to be found mostly in the large towns such as Oyo, Iseyin, Ayetoro,<sup>1</sup> Oke-Iho, Saki, Igboho, Igbeti and Kisi, where there were mālams who attracted to themselves pupils from even outside their own towns. At Iseyin, as was reported in 1858, there were large numbers of Muslims who could "read Arabic, and there were schools where it was taught".<sup>2</sup> Some of the Arabic teachers in Iseyin hailed from Bornu.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ayetoro, in Oke-Iho district, later became a stronghold of Islam and Arabic knowledge and its status was almost at par with Ilorin. There were many foreign mālams there and many of their local Muslims learnt Islam and Arabic in Ibadan and Ilorin. (Interview with the Muslim community, Ayetoro. August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).
  2. C.M.S. CA2/051, Hollinghead's Annual Letter, Iseyin, February 28, 1958.
  3. Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 70p.

The dissemination of knowledge was mainly through study at the feet of these learned mālams. There were elementary Qurʾān schools called Ilèè-kéwú where, of course, the Qurʾān, which was divided into sixty parts,<sup>1</sup> was memorised in well drawn out stages,<sup>2</sup> some of them being marked by a party.

#### 2.16 Open-air preaching.

Open-air preaching was organised by the mālams, both foreign and local. The oniwáási<sup>3</sup> and the onitáfusíírù<sup>4</sup> also played an important role. They undertook many activities in the work of Islamic rehabilitation in Oyo and its districts.

In this connection, mālams such as Alúfa Akewugberu, Alúfa Kokewukobere, Alúfa Kewulere were prominent.

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1. These parts of the Qurʾān the Yoruba Muslims call eésù and the verses they call haáyà.
  2. The party referred to here is known among the Yoruba Muslims of Oyo and its districts as wòlímò.
  3. The word, oniwáási is from the Arabic word waʿz. Compare the word nasiha (Yoruba: nòhsìà) which means 'advice' and 'open homily'.
  4. The onitáfusíírù, is pronounced differently in different places in the area. While in some places he is called Onitáfusíírù, in other places he is called Onítèfusíírù. It is pertinent to note that

They undertook the open-air preaching in collaboration with their pupils and others, and made their impact to be felt in Oyo, Iseyin, Šaki, Igboho, Igbēti, Kiši and other big towns in the area. Their dynamic activities really gave new vigour and directions to both the Muslims and their religion in this period. They helped in the organisation of the Muslim communities in the area. Some of them became the Chief Imams and supplanted the Pàràkòyis as the leaders of the jamā'a. Other Muslim officers were chosen for the effective revitalisation of Islam in the area.

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the jamā'a, as well as the persistent followers of the traditional religion, became enlightened further about the religion. This was usually corroborated by the following songs:

- (i) Bí o bá májé 'mòle,  
Jé 'mòle a kirun.  
A níjé Jimò lásán  
Kò gbé ní dé àlùjánnà,  
Bí o bá májé 'mòle  
Jé 'mòle a kirun
- (ii) Iwo tóojé 'mòle  
Máse bá káfirí soré  
Nitoripé kò dé 'kùn rẹ.
- (iii) Èsìn ìmòle,  
Èsìn aláfià,  
Aláafià fún onísé,  
Muhammòdu  
Enití a fi èsìn náà rán.

An examination of the nature and condition of Islam and the Muslim communities in Qyo and its districts in the period between 1837 and 1859 shows how much the latter and the former achieved by way of organisation and reconstitution. However, despite the achievements of Islam as analysed so far in this work, there is still some modicum of hope that Islam in the area could still develop stronger roots and generate wider tentacles at least before the influx of its rival,

- (i) (If you are a Muslim,  
Be a practising Muslim,  
Mere bearing of the name  
Jimoh,  
Does not lead one to Paradise.
- (ii) You, who are a Muslim,  
Do not befriend a kāfir (pagan),  
Because it is not in the heart  
of his hearts.
- (iii) The religion, Islam,  
The religion, of peace  
Peace be unto Muḥammad,  
The purveyor of the religion).

Interview with the jamā'a in each of the big towns in Qyo and its districts: December, 1973, March, 1974, August, 1975, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

I mean Christianity, into the area.

## 2.2 The period of Islamic consolidation, 1860-1895.

### 2.21 Mosque-building projects.

Earlier in this chapter, we have seen how, in the reign of Alááfin Atiba (1837-1859), Islam was getting established in the ancient towns of the area, and in the new towns that were being resettled or founded.<sup>1</sup> The period of Atiba's political rehabilitation and the Muslim Islamic resurgence was naturally succeeded by the period of Islamic consolidation. During this period 1860-1895,<sup>2</sup> the position of Islam in the area was very well entrenched. An obvious important manifestation of the entrenchment during this time, and in each of the towns and villages in this area, is seen in the numerical expansion of the Muslim community. Once the Muslims had been allowed to establish, each Muslim community started to entrench and expand its position. The number of Muslims in each town increased considerably

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1. See above, 96p.

2. The successors of Alááfin Atiba were: Adelu (1859-1876) and Adeyemi Alowolodu I (1876-1905). Though they were not reported to embrace Islam but they were said to be favourably disposed towards the religion.

and this was usually seen during festivals such as 'idu'l-fitr and al 'idu'l-kabir<sup>1</sup>

In tune with this numerical expansion of the community, there was a reasonable increase in the number of mosques built and used by the community. During the reign of Aláàfin Atiba (1837-1859), there were three mosques in Oyo: the central mosque<sup>2</sup> at Oke Afin market, the Pàràkòyí mosque at Pàràkòyí quarter and the râtìbí mosque at Agunpopo quarter.<sup>3</sup> During the reigns of Aláàfin Adelu and Aláàfin Adeyemi Alowolodu I, there were, in addition to these three mosques, no less than ten<sup>4</sup> mosques though they were of

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1. There were no reliable statistics on this, but observation during festivals could tell.
  2. See above, plate 1. on 110(a)p.
  3. Interview with the jamā'a, Oyo, December 1973; March 1974 and November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  4. Ibid.

rustic simplicity, built of mud, palm leaves, palm fronds and grass.<sup>1</sup> This was also the case in the other big towns such as Işeyin, Ikoyi, Şaki, Igboho, Igbęti and Kişi.<sup>2</sup> In this period, there was no figure by which to calculate. Only Lagos and a few other towns in the coast had this opportunity.

The case of Işeyin, which is fairly well documented, amply illustrates the growth of Islam in the area and in the ensuing years after the period between 1837 and 1859. In June 1878, when it was visited by Reverend James Johnson, Işeyin was recorded to have had barely twelve mosques.<sup>3</sup> Some seven years later, Reverend J.B. Wood

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1. During this time, the use of corrugated iron sheets was unknown in the hinterland of Yorubaland except in the coast especially Lagos. See The Lagos Times, September 14, 1881. Grass, called 'Bere' was in vogue even for the construction of the palaces of the Alááfin and the other ọbas in the area. About Bere grass festival, see Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 49, 98pp. See also Atanda, J.A. The New Oyo Empire, 3-4, 25, 27, 198-202pp.
  2. See Colonial Report Annual, 1887, 1891. The Lagos Weekly Record, 1896.
  3. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to secretary, C.M.S. June 20, 1878. This time, one of the prominent secretaries of the C.M.S. was Reverend Henry Venn. See Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, Grimley, J.B. and E.R. Gordon, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria, Michigan, 1966, 38, 290, 328pp. Webster, J.B., The African

actually counted seventeen mosques in the town.<sup>1</sup> Despite the frequent fire outbreaks which destroyed mosques, houses and the king's court in the 1880s, the number of mosque in Iseyin still stood, at least, at sixteen in 1893 as Sir Gilbert Carter noted during his visit to the town in that year.<sup>2</sup> During the tenure of office of Chief Imām Egborongbe, the ninth Chief Imām of the town, the central mosque was pulled down and rebuilt into a larger one roofed with corrugated iron sheets.<sup>3</sup> The central mosque rebuilt in each of the big towns in Oyo and its districts was not merely

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Churches among the Yoruba, 3-8, 191-2pp. et passim.  
 See also Ajayi, J.F., Christian Missions in Nigeria  
 and his thesis Christian Missions and the Making of  
Nigeria 1841-1899, (Ph.D., London, 1958). See also  
 Ajayi, W., A History of Yoruba Mission (C.M.S.) 1843-  
1880. (M.A. Bristol, 1959).

1. C.M.S. G3A2/04, Wood to Secretary, C.M.S. Annual Report, 1885.
2. P.P. C722, 12p.
3. Interview at Iseyin with the Muslim community, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.



to accommodate the increasing Muslim community but also served as a manifestation of its growing status in such an originally traditional milieu as the area. This development was not confined to Iseyin but was also evident in other towns and some big villages in the area. In these cases, there are no regular or very precise statistics. The rebuilding of the central mosque, the construction of more rátìbí mosques<sup>1</sup> and other contemporary evidences constituted a testimony to this general expansion in the area in the period between 1860 and 1895.

#### 2.22 Muslim associations and their impact on Islam.

Another step towards the project of Islamic consolidation in Oyo and its districts this time was the formation of Muslim associations. This stemmed from the social background<sup>2</sup> of the Yoruba Muslims in this area.

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1. The compound mosques were known in the area as rátìbí mosques and the Imāms in charge of the mosques were called rátìbí Imāms.
  2. See Okediji, F.O. and O.O. Okediji (eds.), The Sociology of the Yoruba, chapter 7.

There was a proliferation of the associations in each of the big towns in the area. Here is a list of the associations: Egbé Alásàlátù,<sup>1</sup> Egbé Owónikókó, Egbé Imòlẹ, Egbé Anábìlónìgbà, Egbé Onìṣẹ́nlá, Egbé Aráṣogbálẹ, Egbé Arówóṣayé, Egbé Bòmọ̀dédkú, Egbé Aríkẹ̀úṣplá, Egbé Kéúlerè. Egbé Arówótakéú and the like.<sup>2</sup> In Oyo and its

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1. There were stories in Ago Arẹ, in Oyo North, of how some wives of the followers of the traditional religion voluntarily eloped and married Muslims as a result of the activities of the associations. During this period, the activities of members of the associations were exclusively the affairs of men and the members strove greatly in the work of consolidating and expanding Islam. Today in the area, the activities of the association have become the affairs of women. (Interview with the Muslim communities in Otu, Okaka, Ago Arẹ, Tede, Aha, in Oyo North, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).
  2. Egbé Owónikókó: 'Association of money is that which matters'; Egbé Imole: 'Association of Muslims'; Egbé Anábìlónìgbà: 'Association of the Prophet has the time'; Egbé Onìṣẹ́nlá: 'Association of the worker of great things' (reference to the Prophet); Egbé Aráṣogbálẹ: 'Association of those who have clothes in abundance'; Egbé Arówóṣayé: 'Association of those who have money in abundance'; Egbé Bòmọ̀dédkú: 'Association of the young that should not die'; Egbé Aríkẹ̀úṣplá: 'Association of those who rejoice in Arabic'; Egbé Kéúleré: 'Association of Arabic is advantageous'; Egbé Arówórakéú: 'Association of those who have money to demand Arabic knowledge'. Proliferation of the associations reached out to the present century in furtherance of the work of Islamic entrenchment in the area. Among such later associations were: Ansarudeen (AUD), Nuwairudeen (NUD), Giyasudeen, Sabatudeen

districts, the associations were very old, probably dating back to the period of Old Oyo and Oyo-Igboho.<sup>1</sup> They were organised very simply under the leadership of one called giwá.<sup>2</sup>

The aims and aspirations of the associations were fundamentally alike: to effect contact and unity amongst the Muslim communities anywhere in Oyo and its districts;

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Ègbé Imómù; 'Association of Imāms (both Chief and compound Imāms)'; Ègbé Alhajis: 'Association of the Alhajis'. (Interview with the Muslim community in each of the Muslim towns and villages in the area. December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

1. Interview with the present Pàràkbyí and Aláàfin of Oyo, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. For the period of Oyo-Igboho, see above chapter 1, 39p.
2. The word giwá means 'the head' or 'secretary'. The word was not originally a Yoruba word but a loan-word in Yoruba language.

to foster mutual help and understanding; to spread and develop Islam through the process of propagation and conversion. In pursuit of these aims, they engaged in series of dynamic activities. They participated fully and actively in whatever social activities any of their members was involved, such as naming ceremony, marriage ceremony, one marking the successful completion of a course and funeral rites. Moreover, the associations normally turned out en masse on the occasions of Muslim festivals. By this mass turn-out, the associations procured colour, glamour and gaiety to their social engagements.

The associations were not merely inward looking. They, as groups of able youngmen, often endeavoured to play active part in the religious life of the entire Muslim community. Whenever the central mosque was being rebuilt, or the ḥīd ground was being cleared or extended or when Muslim festival such as the mawlidu'n-nabī (the celebration of the Prophet's birthday) was planned or there was a dire need for labour or money within the Muslim community, it was customary of the associations

to donate generously towards the progress of Islam and the Muslim community. They did more than enough concerning the physical entrenchment of Islam in the area in the period between 1860 and 1895. Their dynamic religious activities constituted some sort of cynosure for non-Muslims, who were, as a result, attracted to Islam. As a result of their dynamic activities, the Muslims of Oyo and its districts constituted a religious group to be reckoned with and no one dared talk of ridiculing the Muslims not to think of routing the religion.<sup>1</sup> Their contribution to the cause of Islam was, by no means, small. More will be said about the the associations later in this work.

### 2.23 The growth of Muslim scholarship:

Another important aspect of the consolidation of Islam was the growth of Muslim scholarship. This may be aptly appreciated if one avoids being unduly influenced by the reports of Christian missionaries such as A.F. Foster and James Johnson or those foreign arm-chair investigators and casual travellers who were rather fond of depicting Yoruba Muslims as ignorant, superstitious "followers of the false prophet".<sup>2</sup>

There was a proliferation of Muslim scholars, and one remarkable feature of this increase was the noticeable number of local Muslim scholars who hailed from <sup>the</sup> big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts. In the previous decades, Islamic knowledge had been almost the responsibility of itinerant and ubiquitous foreign mālams or the resident aliens. Similarly, leadership of the Muslim community in some towns such as Oyo, Saki, Igboho, Igbeti and Kisi was virtually in alien hands. But it was remarkable that among the new sets of scholars there emerged a larger number of local men, who had learnt Arabic and Islam abroad and, on returning home, had set up as preachers and teachers. The scholars, together with others, were eminent as the Muslim educators who raised the standard of the prevailing

1. Interview with the Muslim communities in Oyo, Iseyin, Saki, Igboho and Kisi, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
2. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 197p.

Islamic and Arabic knowledge. The case of Işeyin is illustrative of this point. In Işeyin, there were Işeyin scholars such as Àlùfa Aliyu,<sup>1</sup> Mọnmọdu Ẹgbẹron-  
gbe, Àlùfa Mọnmọdu of Imale-falafia<sup>2</sup> who, after they had been educated abroad, probably in Ilorin or far north, returned to Işeyin as towers of learning. Many of such scholars also came from Ayetoro, a district of Oke-Iho. This time, Ayetoro developed into a big centre of Islamic and Arabic learning. The local scholars educated many others, far and wide, and helped to strengthen both the physical and spiritual status of Islam in the period between 1860 and 1895. More will be said on Muslim education later in this work.

#### 2.24 Further entrenchment of the Muslims in the royal courts.

A step further in the work of Islamic entrenchment this time can be seen in the relationship between the

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1. Interview with the jama'ca, Işeyin. August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Ibid. He was believed to be the man of God. Yoruba : Eni Olórun)

Muslims and the traditional political rulers. It has already been noted how, in the previous decades, the Muslims could count on some of their co-religionists within the political set-up in towns such as Qyq and Işeyin. In the period, 1860-1895, a most striking feature of the consolidation of Islam was the further entrenchment of Muslims in the political set-up of many of the towns in Qyq and its districts, and the corollary movement towards the inauguration of an Islamic theocratic state.<sup>1</sup>

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1. This was a matter of course in the history of Islam everywhere in the world. See Nasr, S.H. Ideals and Realities of Islam, London, 1966. 97-118pp. See also Mandudi, A.A., Islamic Law and Constitution, Lahore, 1960, 2-10pp.

About Islamic Law generally (Sharī'a), see the following: Schacht, J., An Introduction to Islamic Law, Oxford, 1964 and his book: The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence, Oxford, 1967. See also Coulson, N.J., A History of Islamic Law, Edinburgh, 1964, 9-61pp., Fyze, A.A., Outlines of Muhammad Law, Oxford, 1955; Millot, L. Introduction al l'etude du droit Musulman, Paris, 1953. The Muslim communities in Qyq and its districts strove to influence the various royal houses in the area to replace the original traditional theocracy with Islamic theocracy by working mosques into the courts of the kings (see above, plate 2 on 147(a)p), and by praying for the king and the entire town in the court every Friday shortly before the juma'a prayer. Despite their endeavours to translate this ambition to a reality, there was no efficacious result. The followers

In Iṣeyin, up to 1895 there was no Muslim Aṣeyin.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there is evidence to show how Muslim political influence at Iṣeyin was felt especially in the court of Aṣeyin. Even Aṣeyin, Adeyemi Afẹmiagba-joye, who was believed to have been a great friend of the Christian Mission<sup>2</sup> obtained the services of "a very respectable, polite and hospitable elderly Mohammedan

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of the traditional religion were hostile to it and the British powers who came later in the century adopted the "indirect rule" system of government on the basis of the traditions and customs of the people and not on the basis of Islam even though, by then, Islam had become well entrenched in the area. See: Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire. In this book, Atanda holds that "through the 'indirect' rule system of government, the Aláàfin was able to re-establish the Empire" and unlike in the days of the Old Oyo Empire, Aláàfin himself was subject to the final authority of the British powers. It was as a result of respect for traditions and cultures of a new set of people, and mostly for administrative convenience, that the British powers adopted this system of government at the inchoative stage of their occupation of the area and Yorubaland at large.

1. Adeleke, Wale, Iwé-Itàn Iṣeyin, Iṣeyin, 1964, 7p.
2. C.M.I., 1892, 6. See also Adeleke, Wale, Iwé Itàn Iṣeyin, 7p. This Aṣeyin, indeed, gave another prince for Christian instruction but this prince soon quitted it all. The Aṣeyin did this in order to satisfy his Christian subjects for, in Yorubaland, as said earlier, a king is regarded the patron of all the religions operating in his town.



as a teacher to one of his princes."<sup>1</sup> His successor, Adeyanju Ologunebi, though, not a Muslim, was no less pro-Islam and pro-Muslim. The king's priest, by name Noo,<sup>2</sup> and the Aseyin himself joined in the customary Muslim fast of 1881.<sup>3</sup> This Muslim political influence was not limited to just Iseyin, it was the case in the other big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts. This was naturally so because the Muslims were in the majority in the towns. The oba in each town respected them and tolerated their religion in order to maintain an unbroken and untainted loyalty of his Muslim subjects. This was well expressed in the appearance of the oba on important festival days of the Muslims and the Muslims' visit to the palace on such occasions. The culmination of the political influence of the Muslims is seen, as mentioned earlier in this work, in the erection of mosques in the courts of the Aláàfin and the other obas

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson, Journal for June 20, 1878.
  2. C.M.S. G3A2/02 A.F. Foster, Journal for the Half year ending June 1881.
  3. C.M.S. G3A2/01, A.F. Foster: Journal extract for the half year ending; December 1880. See also C.M.S. CA2/040, Foster to sec. C.M.S. May 14, 1874.

and the practice of calling on the obas in their courts every Friday, shortly before the juma'a prayer to offer prayers for the obas, their various officers, the courtiers, and the town as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Here again, the situation in Iseyin can be mentioned. The Reverend Foster, the C.M.S. pastor resident in Iseyin, often reported that seldom did he visit the Aseyin without meeting in his court, either by accident or design, the Imām (Chief) and some Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Without doubt, the influence of the Muslim community continued to grow at the court and among the chiefs<sup>3</sup> even though the Aseyin had not yet formally embraced Islam. Similarly, development was taking place in other towns like Şaki, Igboho, Igbeti and Kişi.<sup>4</sup> The Muslim political influence helped, in a large measure, the entrenchment

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1. See above, f.n. 1 on 147p.
  2. C.M.S. G3A2.03, A.F. Foster, Journal Extract for the year ending 1883.
  3. Bishop Oluwole found, in 1894, that the "present king and many of his chiefs are more favourable towards Mohammedanism" (Islam) q.v. C.M.I. 1894, 682p. Bishop Oluwole spent a week in Iseyin during his first confirmation tour in 1894.
  4. Interview with Muslim community in each of the towns above. August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

of Islam in Oyo and its districts. There were stories of how some obas, princes, princesses and courtiers, became favourably disposed towards Islam or even embraced Islam as a result of their having been declared predestined Muslims by Ọrúnmilà (Ifá).<sup>1</sup> This also enhanced the status of Islam in this period

## 2.25 Sufism and its impact on Islam.

Another factor which aided the entrenchment of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1860 and 1895 was sufism.<sup>2</sup>

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1. It is pertinent to recall here how princess Nana of Ikoyi was predestined a Muslim by Ifá. See above, 45-6pp. This was not limited to Oyo and its districts, but widespread in Yorubaland. In this connection Gbadamosi has it that, in Iwo, Ede and Ikirun in Yorubaland, there were those who became Muslims as a result of their having been declared predestined Muslims by Ifá before their accession to throne in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 124p. (g.v. pp. C7227. 28p.) and Appendix I below, 537-546pp.
  2. About sufism in general, see the following books: Arberry, A.J., An Introduction to History of Sufism, London, 1942; Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, Cambridge, 1921 and his book, The Mystics of Islam, London, 1963. See also Gibb, H.A.R., Mohammedanism chapters 8, 9; Watt, M. The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī, London, 1970, 38-42, 54-63pp., and his book, Islamic Surveys: Islamic Philosophy and Theology,

It is the common belief that sufism reached Yorubaland in about 1820 onwards. The only prominent sūfī order<sup>1</sup> in Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, in the nineteenth century was the Tijāniyya Fraternity. The sūfīs in Oyo and its districts followed Ahmad ibn Muḥammad at-Tijānī (1737-1815),<sup>2</sup> the founder and the Shaikh of the Tijāniyya Fraternity.

The Tijāniyya order or tarīqa had local agents or Ālufas known as muqaddams<sup>3</sup> who enrolled, trained and

Edinburgh, 1962, 119-121pp. About Sufism in West Africa, see Trimingham, J.S. Islam in West Africa, 88-100pp.; Boer, De. History of Philosophy in Islam, London, 1970. In this book, Boer discusses the sūfī life of Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd.

1. Though the Qādiriyya tarīqa, named after ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (1077-1166), spread to Northern Nigeria it was not a prominent order in Yorubaland. It was the tarīqa followed by ‘Uthmān dan Fodio. See Trimingham, J.S., Islam in West Africa, 95p.; Gibb, H.A.R. Mohammedanism, 105p.
2. Trimingham, J.S. Islam in West Africa, op.cit., 97p.
3. A Yoruba sūfī leader is called mūkādāāmū. (Interview with the present muqaddam of Otu, Alhaji Azeez of Ile Bale Ayilola, Otu, August 7, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

initiated new members, collected dues and organised the collective dhikr.<sup>1</sup> All these helped to entrench Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1860 and 1895.

In the nineteenth century, the people of the area did not have any link through their clerics to the founder and Shaikh of the order, Ahmad at-Tijānī. Their leaders were the ordinary clergy leading their ignorant

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1. Ritual was centred around dhikr, performed alone and in congregation. At initiation, the aspirant (murīd) **swore** an oath of allegiance, received a rosary, and was allocated litany 'tasks' (awrād, singular, wird - Yoruba: wirīdī) to be recited.

Dhikr as a method for the cultivation of the divine presence was almost unknown to the Tijāniyya sūfis in Oyo and its districts. It was thought of as individual or collective praises of God and the Prophet. At the congregational sēance [Arabic: hadra - an abridged form of hadrāt Allāh (or an-nabī), 'the presence of God (or the Prophet) under the leadership of the local muqaddam, litanies and invocations were chanted in rhythm. They were supposed to concentrate thought, feeling, and action upon God, or more commonly, the Prophet, for they believed that mystical union with God was exceptional and that it was better to seek to attain contact with Muhammad. See Trimmingham, J.S., Islam in West Africa, 97ff.; Gibb, H.A.R., Mohammedanism, 105ff.; (Interview with the jamā'a, Iseyin, Oke-Iho, Ikoyi and Otu. August, 1975. (See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

co-religionists in prayer and teaching them their religious duties. However, account must be taken of the fact that a few were well versed in the doctrine and rules of their order, while some were genuine mystics. Furthermore, the ordinary member did not know anything about the mysticism upon which his order was based, attachment had an important bearing upon his moral life. Injunctions of the clerics had little effect in inducing observance of the moral code of Islam, but admittance to the Tijāniyya order might give a new orientation to the life of an individual.

The clerics of the Tijāniyya order stressed observance of positive precepts as well as of prohibitions such as smoking and drinking, lying and corruption, and an initiated member felt that he belonged to a religious élite. The order had exercised an important missionary and political role in Qyq and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, in the nineteenth century.

## 2.26. The spread of Islam in the rural districts.

Quite understandably, attention has been concentrated on a consideration of the multi-sided growth of Islam in the established communities of the big towns in Qyq and

its districts. The development of Islam, was however, not limited to the older centres of Islam. An inseparable feature of the growth of Islam in the big towns was the spread of the religion to the adjoining districts of the big towns. As a matter of fact, it was the established Muslim communities of the big towns that nurtured the younger ones in the surrounding villages.

From the established centres in Qyq, Işeyin and Ikoyi, Şaki, Islam spread to the small towns and villages in Qyq South.<sup>1</sup> In Awe, Akinmqrin, Ilqra, Jobele and Fiditi for example, Islam was established through the agency of local learned Muslims from Qyq, Işeyin and Ikoyi. In Şepqerı, Aha, Tede, Aq, Ago Amodu, Irawo-Ile, Irawo Owode, Ofiki, Okaka,<sup>2</sup> Islam was established through the agency of local learned Muslims

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1. Interview with the jamā'a in the big towns in the area. December 1973, March, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. See above, map 1 on 1(a)p.

from Kişi, Igbeti, Igboho, Şaki, Iganna and Oke-Iho. Thanks also to the efforts of non-indigenous Muslims such as Ālūfa Kōkewukobere, Ālūfa Kewulere, Ālūfa Akewugberu who stationed at Oyo, and Ālūfa Kabasira who came somewhere from the North. Many of the children of Muslims in the big towns went to Ilorin and Lagos in pursuit of Islamic and Arabic education. They subsequently returned to their area as dynamic propagators of Islam in the outlying districts.

So far was the situation of Islam and the Muslim communities in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1837 and 1895. Contemporaries were greatly impressed by the development of Islam during the period between 1860 and 1895. Here, the observations of some people and papers on the state of Islam in Yorubaland in general will <sup>further</sup> throw light on the position of

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1. Interview with the jamā'a in Awẹ, Akinmōrin, Ilorin, Fiditi, Sẹpẹteri, Aha, Tede, etc., August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.



Islam in the area in this period as there are no available documents directly containing such observations on this area of Yorubaland. Thus, as early as 1878, James Johnson who exhibited a good deal of interest in Islam, praised the dynamism of the Muslims and their spirit of self and mutual help; adding that "Muslims have covered the country with mosques (and) their number is very large and steadily increasing".<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, according to Ajayi: "By 1878 the new Oyo was reported to have at least twelve mosques. Koranic schools were spreading. The occasional Islamic scholar from Ilorin or further north spent a few years with different Islamic communities, teaching the imams, improving their knowledge of Islamic theology, law and traditions, and generally, helping to organise the communities along Islamic lines. Oyo migrants from these centres helped to spread some of this Islamic knowledge and influence to other parts of Yoruba country".<sup>2</sup>

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, Annual Letter of James, Johnson 1978.
  2. Ajayi, J.F.A., "The Aftermath of Old Oyo" in History of West Africa, Vol. II. 147p. See also Mabogunje, A.L., Urbanisation in Nigeria, 94-5pp.; Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, chapters 2 and 3. et passim.

The editor of The Lagos Times in 1881 gave a graphic expression to the status of Islam in Yorubaland in the following high sounding words: "Yoruba Mohammedanism walks, trots, and gallops about with the vigour, nobleness and energy of independent manhood."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, another newspaper, observed very aptly "silently but eloquently, Mohammedanism is declaring itself a power among us".<sup>2</sup> As the people of Oyo and its districts were among the first set of people to embrace Islam in Yorubaland,<sup>3</sup> the observations of the people and papers above can be taken to be apt illustrations of the status of Islam in this area of Yorubaland in the nineteenth century.

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1. The Lagos Times, September 14, 1881.

2. The Lagos Observer, September 3 and 24, 1887.

3. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 8p.

3.0 THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM IN OYO AND ITS  
DISTRICTS IN THE ERA OF CHRISTIANITY,  
1875-1900

3.1 The rise of Christianity in Yorubaland.

The Muslim community of Oyo and its districts, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, like the rest of its communities in West Africa at large, was in a serious transition. In this period, what distinguished this community from others was that it faced the perplexities and opportunities of modernity as heirs of a unique tradition. The community was characterised by a faith, Islam, and a great past. What happened to the community and its faith when Christianity gained access into the area is the subject of this chapter.

This section of the work will be brief on the history of the penetration of this force into Oyo and its districts since it is no part of this work to recapitulate the history of the influx of Christianity into the area. The points discussed here are those necessary for the elucidation of the history of the

expansion of Islam into the area between 1875 and 1900.

It is generally believed that Islam gained access into Yorubaland before Christianity and that, to the people, the two religions are entirely new faiths. Here again, the following Yoruba saying is apposite:

Ilé la bá 'fá,  
Ilé la bá 'mòle,  
Osán gangan ni igbàgbó wolé dé.

(We met Ifá<sup>1</sup> at home,  
 We met Islam at home,  
 But it was late in the day that  
 Christianity arrived.)

There is a variant to this song. The variant goes thus:

Ayé la tá 'fá,  
Ayé la bá 'mòle,  
Osán gangan ni igbàgbó wolé dé.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ifá or Ọ̀rúnmìlà is a divinity in Yoruba traditional pantheon. In the saying above, it stands to represent Yoruba traditional religion at large.
  2. The variant portrays no difference. This also gives us the picture of the successive introduction of the three religions into Yorubaland.

(We met Ifá in the world,  
 We met Islam in the world,  
 It was late in the day that  
 Christianity came in).

The two sayings, taken together, signify the fact that of the three religions practised in Yorubaland, Christian faith is the most recent. Moreover, it is worth noting that while the towns in the coast of Nigeria had contact with the white men very early, the hinterland of Yorubaland had contact with them very late. For example, it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that white men began to explore Oyo and its districts for the purpose of religious and political expansion.

Records show that Christianity gained access into Yorubaland in 1842 through Badagry.<sup>1</sup> The leader of this missionary effort was the revered Thomas Birch Freeman, the energetic and indefatigable superintendent of the

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1. Concerning this, see Awolalu, J.O., Sacrifice in the Religion of the Yoruba, 346p. See also Federal Republic of Nigeria N.Y.C. lectures: "Palm Oil Trade, Missionaries and the Beginning of Britain's informal Empire in Nigeria". 68p.; Oduyoye, Modupe, The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland, 1842-1888. Ibadan, 1969, 22ff.

Methodist Mission at Cape Coast. Urged by the pioneering success of the Methodist in Yorubaland, the local Committee of the C.M.S. in Sierra-Leone sent out Reverend Henry Townsend on January 4, 1843.<sup>1</sup> Both Freeman and Townsend, one after the other, were very warmly received both by the liberated slaves,<sup>2</sup> the paramount chief of the Ègba, Şodęķę, and his chiefs. The main C.M.S. Mission was led by Reverend C.A. Gollmer, whose retinue were Townsend and Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He arrived in Yorubaland in 1845.<sup>3</sup> The attempt of the missionaries to proceed to Abęokuta for evangelical purpose was forestalled by the sudden death of Şodęķę and they were constrained by the prevailing circumstances to stay in Badagry improving the life of the nascent community of Christians there. Concerning the experience of the missionaries, it is recorded that there was no hostility in the overt sense but the hold of the traditional religion on the people was very firm.

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1. Awolalu, J.O., Sacrifice..., 346p.

2. The emancipated Akú slaves who were repatriated from Sierra-Leone are meant here.

3. Awolalu, J.O. Sacrifice..., op.cit., 346p.

The persistent followers of the traditional religion had welcomed Christian missionaries not because they wanted Christianity, but because they were weak and poor compared to the adherents of Islamic religion and they hoped that the missionaries could attract some trade back to the town.<sup>1</sup>

From the statement above, two important things can be deduced. Firstly, the coast of Nigeria served as a diffuse centre from where Christianity spread to the hinterland of Yorubaland. Secondly, we know that both the traditional religion and Islam were very deeply entrenched before the influx of Christian missionaries.

At this juncture, it is worth noting that the people who advocated the introduction of Christianity into Yorubaland were not members of the traditional society but the westernised liberated slaves<sup>2</sup> who felt

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1. Ajayi, J.F. Ade., Christian Missions in Nigeria, 34p.

2. See above, chapter 2, 111-124pp.

that they were missing in Nigeria the sort of Western education and Christian companionship which they used to enjoy in Freetown. Moreover, they wanted their people to benefit from the light they had got abroad. In this connection the words of Sam. Epelle are apposite:

"The slave trade had its favourable repercussions in Nigeria, for with the establishment of British Colonies in the West Indies and Sierra-Leone (Freetown), Negroes who had imbibed European culture at first hand returned as educational, commercial and government pioneers to enlighten their brethren."<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries were therefore invited and they came. Those who received them with gladness were the ex-slaves and some others who were close to and influenced by them. They were scattered all over the towns and villages in Yorubaland especially Lagos, Badagry and Abeokuta. The Christian-slaves, who were of Ijebu origin, however, were not favourably received by their people, for they were

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1. Grimley, J.B. and G.E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria, Michigan, 1966, 37p.



regarded as people who had no regard for tradition. They felt that once the missionaries and their African supporters got in, they would disrupt the traditional beliefs and organisations. This was why the Awujale, the ọba of Ijebu, "sent messages from time to time to the Ondo, Ijaw, Ẹgba and Ibadan urging them to drive away the supposed greatest enemies of Yorubaland, the missionaries and their followers, from the country."<sup>1</sup> Wherever the ex-slaves had good footing, Christianity was established. Between 1843 and 1846, Christian stations were established in Badagry and Abeokuta. And by 1851, after the British had suppressed slave trade in Lagos, the block between Lagos and Abeokuta was cleared. Missionaries now had unrestricted movement between Lagos and Abeokuta in the hinterland. It was also reported that "the fetish priests had taken alarm at Shodeke's eager welcome of Christian missionaries and in their jealous fear of losing their own power had poisoned him"<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact..., 35p.
  2. Walker, F.D., The Romance of the Black River, C.M.S., London, 1931, 55p.

Mission houses, churches and schools were erected, and the children of the soil were sponsored to read abroad. Sermons were preached and converts were made. The people paid particular attention to Rev. Ajayi Crowther whose mother was one of the first batch to be baptised in Abeokuta. On February 5, 1848, "Another account of that first company of converts was a priestess of Ifá and four of Crowther's own nieces who were baptised at the same time".<sup>1</sup> But the account added:

"Though the people vaguely recognised a supreme God, whom they called Ọlórún' and to whom, they enlightened Shodẹkẹ, had built a small temple. The worship of the city centred round deities such as Ọrunmíla, (the god of wisdom), Ọgún, (the god of iron), Ẓango, (the god of thunder) and perhaps a powerful spirit believed to dwell in the Olumo rock and worshipped in the largest of its caves. Sacrifices were consistently offered and the people held the gods in awe..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Walker, F.D., The Romance of the Black River, 55p.
  2. Walker, F.D. ibid., 56p.

This was an indication that the traditional worship was very deeply ingrained and that those who seemed to have accepted the new faith found it difficult to sever connections entirely from the traditional worship.

### 3.2 Early Christian missionary enterprise in Oyo and its districts and its impact on the expansion of Islam

So far about the history of the penetration of Christianity into the coast which constituted the bed-rock from where Christianity flowed to Oyo and its districts and other parts of Yorubaland. Now, let us examine how Christianity gained influx into Oyo and its districts and its impact on the expansion of Islam in the area in the second half of the nineteenth century.

It has now been established that Christianity reached the hinterland of Yorubaland from the coastal towns such as Lagos and Badagry. Between 1852 and 1857, Oyo and some other big towns in the area such as Iseyin and Saki received missionaries. There were Baptist and C.M.S. missionaries. The Catholic Church in Oyo was founded by the travelling Rev. Father Baudin

and Howley of blessed memory in 1884.<sup>1</sup> The Methodist Mission also came very much later. All these Christian agencies competed vigorously with Islam and the traditional religion in Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus the expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by the rise of Christianity - an important force which was rapidly and effectively making its influence felt in other parts of Yorubaland.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Muslim community in Oyo and its districts grew both in size and stature. In the society, the community was entrenched among the royal, administrative and military classes, just as much as it had become popular with the rich and fashionable traders. In organisational set-up, each community developed a hierarchical and complex

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1. Priestly Ordination, Oyo, 1965, 13p.

system which harnessed, for its benefit, the resources of both the elderly and important Yoruba Muslims and the rising generation of local scholars. However, the structure retained considerable amount of flexibility. It admitted and promoted the services of alien *mālam*s without raising any apartheid feelings. Above all, it encouraged a great measure of individual enterprise. While there was some contact among the communities in each big town, each developed on its own; and within each one, there was ample scope for everyone to teach, learn, preach or serve in any way.

These features distinguished the Muslim community of Oyo and its districts from that of its rival religious community. The Christian missionaries in the area, and Yorubaland at large, depended mostly on International Organisations; and as a corollary, there was a great lack of the spirit of self-help. The leadership of the Christian community was foreign both in personnel and ideas. This system of organisation produced a good deal of quarrel and racial acrimony between the Europeans and

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1. See above, 23-4pp.

the Africans in the church.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the structure and societal position of the Muslim community afforded it a positive advantage over Christianity in Qyq and its districts. It afforded Islam a colossal opportunity to grow considerably in the area, vis-a-vis Christianity. This growth often struck the Christian missionaries; and some of them during their evangelistic tours and campaigns, felt how powerful this influence could be in the area. In this regard, the situation in Iseyin can be cited. This town was often visited by the C.M.S.<sup>2</sup> and Baptist missionaries such as Townsend and Bowen, who were both ambitious and zealous to establish their religion, Christianity, in this area and in fact in Qyq and its districts in general. The evangelical tours made by Bowen to this town were hardly successful chiefly

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1. See for example, the contrary views and policies personified in Townsend and Henry Venn about the place of the educated African clergy within the set-up of the C.M.S. about the middle of the nineteenth century. This wrangle led to the removal of Bishop Ajayi Crowther as the Bishop of the Niger Mission in 1890, an event that generated considerable racial acrimony within the Christian Church. It, however, marked the inception of the "purge" of Africans from the Niger, and the triumph of the policy of European control and dominance. For further information, see Ajayi, J.F.A. Christ Missions..., 174-189pp.
  2. The C.M.S. is also known as the Anglican Mission.

because before the advent of Christianity, Islam was very deeply ingrained and the town had become a strong Muslim centre. When Bowen's messengers arrived at the court of the ōba of Isēyin, they found no less than about 100 Muslims in attendance.<sup>1</sup> But the ōba of Isēyin, like most ōbas in Yorubaland, maintained the policy of open-mindedness and apparent support to all religions. This was necessarily so because, as said earlier in this work, to enjoy the allegiance of all his subjects the ōba must present himself to all and sundry, as the patron of all the religions in his town. Connivance at any religion or religious group could cause disruption, secession and eventual collapse of the reign of such an ōba. Thus, concerning the religions in any Yoruba town the ōba is on a subtle ground and needs to tread warily. Little or no wonder then that when the ōba of Isēyin was approached by Townsend in 1856, he had little reservation in granting permission

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1. Bowen to Bro. Taylor, December 1851, in correspondence of the Missionaries of the Southern Baptist Covention, Yoruba Mission, 1850-1890 in microfilm in the Lib. of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. This correspondence is later cited as Bowen's correspondence.

to the solicitous missionary to erect a missionary station; but when Rev. G.F. Buhler, on the strength of this permission, came along in April to establish there he incurred, despite the welcome of the oba, a stiff opposition from the Muslims, whom he found to be "very angry" when they were told about his arrival.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, before his arrival, they had tried to prevent settling down at Iseyin<sup>2</sup> and "it was, therefore, spread everywhere that we should no more come to Iseyin".<sup>3</sup> This stiff opposition, on the part of the Muslim community in the town, undermined the work and

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1. C.M.S. CA2/024, Buhler's Journal for the Quarter ending June 25, 1856.
2. C.M.S. CA2/068, Maser's Journal for the Quarter ending June 25, 1856. It was noted that the Muslims, for example, had cleared away the trees which were used to demarcate the plot given to the Christians, and to have "buried a powerful charm to kill us when we passed over it."
3. C.M.S. CA2/068, Maser's Journal for the Quarter ending June 25, 1856.



any potential success of the missionary; and such was the situation that in 1858 a resolution was passed by the C.M.S. in Abeokuta to abandon the station<sup>1</sup> at Iseyin. As a result of this abandonment, missionary work in Iseyin and its environs was abandoned for some years. In this milieu, Islam had ample chance to expand and the Muslim community in the area continued to grow in size and stature day in day out and uninterrupted. The situation in Iseyin was similar to that in other big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts such as Kishi, Igbeti,<sup>2</sup> Igboho, Şaki and Ikoyi. In each of these towns, the Muslims were vehemently reactionary to the inception of Christianity and were prepared to suppress Christianity and uphold Islam on point of death. Their conservatism accelerated and solidified this reactionary

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1. C.M.S. CA2/051. Holinhead to Sec. C.M.S. June 28, 1858. One opposing voice to this resolution appeared to plead against it, saying that he knew that Iseyin and the people knew him, and that "even the ignorant Mohammedans (sic) desire it". The basis of his supplication that the Muslims even his "ignorant" ones want Christian evangelisation is difficult to gain any subscription, if not for its illogicality at least in the face of the practical experience of the Christian evangelist at Iseyin.

2. See map 1 on 1(a)p.

measure against Christian missionaries and Christianity. However, the Christian missionaries were able to make some impact in recently islamised towns where there were just handfuls of Muslims and a veneer of Islam. Among these were towns such as, Fiditi, Ilora, and Akinmopin.<sup>1</sup> Towns and quarters where overseas native Christians, I mean the Àkú Christians, were mostly concentrated the missionaries enjoyed some degree of support and tolerance.

Such Muslim influence and reactionary measure can be easily overloaded and stretched to explain the failure of Christian missionaries to establish Christianity in some towns and villages in Oyo and its districts in the late nineteenth century. However, without exaggerating the fact, it is worth noting that it was not always that the Muslims successfully exerted their influence to forestall Christian missionary enterprise. There were stories of how the Muslims in the big centres of Islam in the area rallied round to exert their influence with Muslim Sierra-Leonean emigrants, the Àkú Muslims, with a view to getting Christian missionaries out of the towns and villages. The Muslims called the Christian missionaries intruders

and hated them and their religion.

3.3. The difficulties confronting the early Christian missionaries and their impact on Christian advance and the expansion of Islam.

The first difficulty to confront the early Christian missionaries in Qyq and its districts was climatic. The tropical climate constituted one of the odds against which the missionaries had to struggle heroically. Generally, the physical environment played a vital role in Qyq and its districts which lie within the tropics, where the sun is almost overhead throughout the year. It is the belief of some geographers and African historians that the effect of the intensity of direct solar radiation in the tropics on the white who had just come from a temperate climate without adequate head protection, has been responsible for the sun-stroke from which they so frequently suffered. This is, however, attributed by some to the effect of ultra-violet radiation and by others to infra-red. This, any way, has not been proved by medical science of Western orientation. The climatic problem gave rise to brevity

of the service of most of the missionaries in this period. The Rev. A. Scott Patterson gave the following estimate in his address at the Association Conference (the fore-runner to the Nigerian Baptist Convention) in 1915: 'During these 65 years Southern Baptists, in obedience to Christ Commands, have sent about 60 missionaries to the African field... Of the 60 missionaries some 24 have died on the field or after leaving the field from the effects of the climate: 22 have had to leave the field on account of ill-health, due (owing)<sup>1</sup> to the climate, and today we have about the same number of missionaries.'<sup>2</sup>

The area is situated at the fringe of the forest zone. Thus two types of vegetation are available in the area - the open grassland in the interior and the tropical forest at the border. The tropical forest at the border produced an obstacle to European influx. This was a physical obstacle of a different type owing to heavy amount of rainfall. This phenomenon had side effects of natural calamities such as epidemic of insects or fungal pests. The early Christian missionaries in Oyo

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1. The word in parenthesis is mine.

2. Groves, C.P., The Planting of Christianity in Africa Vol. 1, London, 1948, 12p.

and its districts, like those in any other part of Nigeria, easily fell victims to such diseases on their entry into the tropics and they had to wage constant warfare against them. In 1897, Sir Ronald Ross was said to have made a remarkable achievement in the medical field by his 'revolutionary discovery that part of the malaria parasite's cycle is passed in the Anopheles mosquito'.<sup>1</sup> The parasite of sleeping sickness was discovered to be carried by a species of tse-tse-fly. If any one had to control the disease, he must learn to control the insect vector. The influence of malaria was so rampant and its presence dreadful that it decided the fate of the enterprises undertaken by the early white men, by causing heavy mortality among the Portuguese pioneers, and it was rightly called "the African fever" and earning the West Coast of Africa, the detestable and terrifying description of "The White Man's Grave".<sup>2</sup>

The role played by malaria in the history of Christianity in Africa and especially South of Nigeria

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1. Groves, C.P., The Planting of Christianity..., 2p.
  2. Ibid., 12p.

was very significant. The Niger Expedition, justified on Christian principles but equally a heavily sponsored great imperial excursion for the acquisition of British influence in West Africa in the early 1840s, later proved a devastating failure. The expedition was almost a total disaster. No fewer than 136 of the 145 Europeans who had taken part were struck with malaria and within a short time, 40 had died.<sup>1</sup> And of 158 Africans who took part, only 11 took ill while none died. This episode added another epithet to the "White Man's Grave". The Rio Nun was called "the Gate of the Cemetery".<sup>2</sup> Thus it was later concluded that for reasons of climate and of expense, a large part of the missionary staff had to be Africans.

Another natural difficulty that confronted the early Christian missionaries was the unnavigable nature of most of the African rivers. The Niger and the Benue are characteristically punctuated with large and jagged rocks on both sides and falls or bends at some points. The boats or vessels of early missionaries occasionally

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1. Geoffrey, M., The Missionaries, 1973, 85p.

2. Ibid., 85p.

faced turbulent waves too. Mungo Park had lost his life on the Niger. The Niger delta opens to the sea in a multitude of creeks and rivers.

Language barriers and custom variations also presented a problem to the early Christian missionaries. The missionaries were very zealous and enthusiastic to preach and teach Christianity, and if possible to supplant Islam and the age-long traditional religion. But it was unfortunate that the missionaries did not understand and could not speak Yoruba language while the local people did not understand and could not speak English. It was a problem in both ways, and the situation retarded the potential progress of Christianity for a very long period but created an avenue for Islam to develop wider tentacles. The problem was partially solved with the emergence of native pastorate when Oyo sons and daughters were sent to Mission Schools in places such as Oyo, Lagos, Abeokuta and Topo to be trained as translators, interpreters, professional teachers and vernacular preachers. Gaining a knowledge of the language and customs of the people occupies a good deal of the time and attention

of a missionary during his first one-to-three years on the field.

Slavery and the slave traffic were among these factors and were interrelated with other factors. Livingstone wrote, "Naturally it was the divorcing of superfluous wives, and the freeing of slaves that formed the greatest difficulty for the missionaries - it meant nothing less than breaking up a social system developed and fortified by long centuries of custom".<sup>1</sup> The practice of slavery in Nigeria was a part of the problem. The capture and sale of slaves for commercial purposes constituted a more publicised problem. But both were condemned by <sup>the</sup> early missionaries as being unchristian and this posed both a cultural and an economic problem. This was a considerable hinderance to a ready acceptance of the Gospel.

Associated with the slave traffic was constant intertribal war and distrust, though slavery was certainly not the only cause of this. The sources of conflict were many. In this connection, the following observations are

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1. Livingstone, W.P., Mary Slessor of Calabar, New York, n.d. 26-7pp.



pertinent:

"The Fulalas<sup>1</sup> had been victorious in the Eleduwe War (1830) which opened the Yoruba country of Nigeria to Islam... The Fulalas brought the Koran and the Prophet of the sword... The War of 1830 reduced to dust and ashes many beautiful towns in Yoruba country. It brought several new kings and warriors to Yoruba towns - Kumi to Ijaiye, Ayo to Aberno, Oluyole to Ibadan, and Atiba to the new Oyo. Jealousies among the Yoruba warriors led the country into inter-tribal combat more bitter and destructive than the Fulala War".<sup>2</sup>

For fifty years or more after this war, travelling was often perilous and difficult. In this connection, Duval's observation is opposite.

"Because the Baptist Mission staff was small and wars were almost constant in the interior, the work at Ogbomoso had not been visited for a long time, but now on account of some trouble in the church there, Brother Smith towards the end of 1885 made a visit to that city... To get permission to travel and protection in the way for the first twenty five miles he had to pay £5 (present Nigerian ₦10) in goods to the Abeokuta chiefs. The rest of the two hundred miles was free with the exception of paying tolls at various points along the roads"<sup>3</sup>

1. In all probability, the Fulani are meant here.
2. Grimley, J.E. and Robinson, G.E., Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria..., 278p. q.v. Howell, E.M. "Nigerian Baptist Leaders and Their Contribution" (Doctoral Dissertation, South West Baptist Theological Seminary, 1956), 20p.
3. Duval, L.M., Baptist Missions in Nigeria, S.B.C. 1928, 112p.

All this sometimes made it impossible to carry the Gospel to new places as well as to revisit villages where small Christian groups had been established.

Crowther and others<sup>1</sup> found that through wise and diplomatic approaches it was possible to gain permission from even the Muslim ruler to witness among his people, but the response to the Christian message in the Muslim quarters of northern Yorubaland was far short of encouraging.<sup>2</sup>

There were some other factors militating against the introduction of Christianity into Nigeria during this period. One of them was the difficulty of winning older people to Christ. There were reports of how older

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1. Grimley, J.B. and Robinson, G.E., Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria..., 278p.

2. Ibid., 278p.

people remained adamant and unpersuaded by Christian missionaries. It was reported that one chief in Yorubaland declared to the Wesleyan missionary J.J. F. Halligay: "When we get old we do not care to change our religion, and I shall die believing in the gods my fathers trusted. But my children and my people, they are young, and will like a new religion, and will do as you say. Let them follow the white man".<sup>1</sup> Age-long religion, loyalty to forefathers, the conception that the white man was a stranger and an intruder, polygyny, requirements of education, or training in the catechism before acceptance into the church, tribal unity, and other things may have been involved in this negative response. Since Islam was propagated by black missionaries and since it had many things in common with the traditional religion, one would be justified to say that Islam did not incur this kind of difficulty during this period. Thus it had enough opportunity to expand.

Nigerians acted as units: a clan, village, family

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1. Interview with Wesleyan Community, Oyo. November 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

and so on. They considered all white men to be "brothers". Hence, the fact that white traders were, by virtue of their colour, identified with missionaries was often in itself hazardous to the spread of Christianity. In this connection, the use of European drinks in trade with the Nigerians can be mentioned. Intoxicating drinks were used in Nigeria before the white man brought his more patent varieties. When missionaries preached against this, it produced both confusion and opposition, because white men brought them and now white men opposed them. In this milieu, Islam fared well because the Qur'an condemns wine and by analogy (qisās) all other intoxicants, apart from wine, are condemned. (See sura 2: 219). No Muslim, on point of death, should deal in or take alcohol. As a result of this injunction, Muslim missionaries did not experience the sort of confusion and opposition that affected Christian missionaries at the inception of their operation in Nigeria. Here again, Islam spread almost undisturbed while Christianity did not have any substantial following.

Priests of the traditional religion were sometimes quite willing for Christianity to exist side by side with them, their beliefs and practices. More often, however,

they used their considerable influence to oppose and stamp it out. Sometimes this opposition emanated from jealous and dishonest priests who saw their means of livelihood and their status of importance in danger of being lost. No doubt, there were others who were sincere in their beliefs and thought Christianity to be somewhat heretical to their local religion and certain teachings of Christianity to be in conflict with their culture. The priests played substantial part in stirring up enmity and bringing about persecution of the Christians in many places. In this situation, Islam, which had been well entrenched before the influx of Christianity, continued to grow almost uninhibited.

It was often difficult for the animistic people of Nigeria to understand a religion that opposed amulets and fetishes. In this connection, Duval says:

"At the foundation of all their religion there seems to be a dread of evil; that there are spirits everywhere and in everything; and it is necessary to appease or counteract the influence of these for fear they will do some harm. Thus, at the bottom of their religion is the idea of sacrifice or amulets. It was not uncommon, therefore, for these animists to look upon the Bible and other objects connected with Christian worship as fetishes or charms having special powers. They often

considered baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other forms as magical".<sup>1</sup>

Since Islam allowed the practice of medicine both in the local and Muslim ways, the Muslim missionaries did not experience this type of problem.

In some places in the country, especially those places far away from the coast, there were reports of how white missionaries were not allowed to come in or pass through. Some villages had been attacked and destroyed for allowing white man to enter. While the problem halted Christian advance, Islam continued to develop wider tentacles and win more converts.

Christian morals and ethics, as taught by the early missionaries, were, in some cases, in conflict with the beliefs and practices of the people. The conflict between Western Christian ethics and the traditions and customs of the people frequently led to the discipline of church members. Such discipline was sometimes correctly interpreted and sometimes not. There were also occasions of falling away or serious offences committed by the agents of the church. Immorality usually led to the dismissal

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1. Duval, L.M., Baptist Missions in Nigeria, 34p.

of agents and thus weakened the staff and dealt a strong blow to native confidence in the church. In this situation, the fact of Islamic adaptability to African values offered Islam enough opportunity to expand at an alarming rate.

Also related to this conflict between Christian ethics, as understood by missionaries, and traditional ethics was the problem that sometimes arose over secret cults. Secret cults were often a sign of influence and status. Some of their practices were not acceptable to the Christian concept of morality. This made it necessary for some to choose between being a Christian and accepting the honour of belonging to such a cult. Others attempted to live a dual life with inner conflicts. Islam had successfully condemned association with secret societies long before the influx of Christianity. Thus, when Christianity came, the issue of secret cults did not constitute any serious threat for Islam.

With the problems so far enumerated, Christianity was not able to make a significant impact in most parts of the interior of Nigeria. For a considerable length of time, the Christian missionaries were kept at bay; only the few fearless ones amongst them were able to come to

the interior to preach Christianity. The problems delayed European contact with Oyo and its districts for a very long time. While towns in the coast of Nigeria such as Lagos and Badagry had contact with the Europeans very early in the eighteenth century, the people of Oyo and its districts smelt the air of British influence only in the second half of the nineteenth century. The situation created for Islam and the Muslims enough ground to expand. The expansion of Islam was partially checked by the native pastors trained by the white missionaries. They were part of the people and were used to the situations in the tropics. The problems that rendered early Christian influence nil in the interior were not so serious for the native pastors. They understood Yoruba very well. Hence they could teach and preach Christianity among their people with relative ease. They had natural immunity against tropical diseases which were hazardous to the nature of the white people. They were not seriously affected by the bite of tse-tse fly. As a matter of fact, they were at an advantage over their white counter-parts in almost all aspects of the religious life of the



people. However, the fact of their success should not be over-emphasised. It is worth noting that before the emergence of the native pastors Islam had become well entrenched and the Muslims had become very influential. There were also problems of finance and struggle for hegemony between the native pastors and their white counter-parts. In this milieu, Christian missionary activities did not yield any appreciable results whereas Islam continued to expand at an incredible rate.

#### 3.4. The challenge of Christianity and the reaction of the Muslims.

As the Christian missionaries saw Muslim communities expand and grow in influence, they became very envious and concerned, all the more so as their conversions in the fields were, by their own estimates, relatively insignificant compared with those of their Muslim counter-parts. Islam spread in an inverse ratio to Christianity. The Christian missionaries could not make

any appreciable progress among the Muslims, since they were very reactionary,<sup>?</sup> conservative and seldom potential Christians. This was particularly true of the C.M.S. and the Baptist which were, today in Oyo and its districts, the oldest and easily the largest and most widely dispersed of the different Christian missionary agencies in Yorubaland at large and Oyo and its districts in particular. It was these two Christian missionary agencies, and especially the C.M.S., that expressed most concern about the Muslim position. But it is essential to realise that the hostility constituted by the C.M.S. was regarded by the Muslims as representative of the attitude of all Christians.

In 1875, the concern of the Christians about the growth of Muslim influence came to a climax.<sup>1</sup> This year, a Christian plan was, through the efforts of Rev.

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1. The Christian concern at poor evangelical yield, particularly among Muslims, was obviously a universal one, affecting areas outside Yorubaland such as other parts of Africa, India, China and Turkey. This general concern was the driving force behind the summons in 1875, of the Edinburgh Conference which discussed the general issue of Christian Missionary work in Muslim areas. A report of the proceedings and resolutions of this conference was published in the *Muslim World*, 1, 1911, 59-66pp. See also Stock, E., History of the C.M.S., Vol.3, London, 1899, 133ff.

James Johnson,<sup>1</sup> formulated to challenge Muslim expansion and position in Yorubaland, a plan that eventually affected the Muslim community of Oyo and its districts. First, there was to be a shift of emphasis in the duties of the local ministers whose role was now to be cast more in the mode of missionaries than of pastors. This would step up evangelical work by Christian Missions in a country dominated by non-Christians and especially by the conservative and uncompromising Muslims.

In addition to increased evangelical venture, there was a greater need, it was felt, for native clergy specially trained, and particularly in Arabic language in order to be better equipped to fight and discuss with the Muslims. The Yoruba Muslims in any part of

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1. The Rev. James Johnson was to have attended the 1875 Edinburgh Conference where it was resolved to have "a special mission of Mohammedans"; and he was appointed as its superintendent, subject to the supervision of the local finance committee, (q.v. C.M.S. SA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. January 18, 1877). Thus the chief agent of the new deal was to be the Rev. James Johnson. Dr. E.A. Ayandele, in his work: "Biography of Rev. (later Bishop) James Johnson", has it that J. Johnson was, however, not formally appointed, largely as a result of some politics in the Yoruba Church Mission. Indeed nobody was. But this notwithstanding, he evidently showed interest and enthusiasm in the missionary work among

Yorubaland, it was argued,<sup>1</sup> were not to be thought of as being "altogether ignorant of the contents of their books"; and consequently it would be helpful to missionary work if some local missionaries were knowledgeable in Arabic and could read the Qurʾān. This knowledge would give them access to intelligent Muslims. Proficiency in, and indeed accurate knowledge of this language was vital since the Muslims criticised the current erroneous English translations of the Qurʾān.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of getting these trained men, some local clergy should be selected to acquire proficiency in Arabic language. It was expected that

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Muslims in Yorubaland. He soon detailed out to the secretary of the C.M.S. what the Yoruba Mission could do, and in fact did, about the situation.

1. C.M.S. CA2/056, J. Johnson to Secretary C.M.S. April 29, 1875.
2. It is the general belief of some scholars that the popular English word, "almsgiving" does not give the accurate meaning of all that is involved in the Arabic word zakāt. Thus they hold that the word zakāt should be preferred to its English translation.

this measure would assist the local Christian evangelists and controversialists, if not to gain more souls or silence or refute Muslim disputants, at least to earn for the Christian missionary the respect of the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> As a corollary to the availability of local clergy versed in Arabic, there should be supplies of Arabic-Yoruba texts of Christian religious literature for the Muslim population.<sup>2</sup>

But the greatest reliance was placed in the literacy provided by the Mission. Literacy had been offered as a handmaid to missionary work among peoples not literate in English. Since the literacy offered to the people the possibility of trade and employment with European firms and so on, converts and the adherents of other religions wanted to be literate in English. The popular clamour for literacy, (mò kò, mò kà), therefore presented the Christian Missions with what they would have designated a DIVINELY provided

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, J. Johnson to Secretary C.M.S. April 29, 1875.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056, J. Johnson to Sec. C.M.S. March 6, 1876.

opportunity for close contact and evangelisation among the people. In the urgent task of intensifying missionary work, this glorious opportunity was indeed to be fully utilised. As for the Muslims, James Johnson stressed that "our desire is to get as much as we can of our religion into Mohammedan scholars before they leave school" <sup>1</sup> (later referred to by the Muslims in Oyo and its districts as sùkúù baba wa tí ìbè l'òrun àti iyá wa tí ìbè l'òrun, meaning, "The school of our father in heaven and our mother in heaven").<sup>2</sup>

Thus the chief elements of the Christian concern were: intensified evangelism, trained local clergy, literacy in English language and the production of Christian literature into Arabic-Yoruba texts. They constituted essentially the core of Christian attempts

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, J. Johnson to Sec. C.M.S. March 6, 1876.
  2. The Lord's prayer, "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come..." constituted one of the major items to be learnt in the Mission School. Thus the Muslims, in a derisive way, referred to such school as 'The school of our father in Heaven and our mother in Heaven'.

to counter Islamic propaganda and progress. The ideas were mainly derived from the Rev. James Johnson and persisted with little modification,<sup>1</sup> right down to the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> They constituted the substances of "the spiritual sword" which the Christian church must freely use to counter the expansion of Islam.<sup>3</sup> It yet remains to be seen how the Yoruba Muslims in Oyo and its districts experienced the practice of this policy, "the free use of the "SPIRITUAL SWORD" or what can be called: "EVANGELICAL SWORD".

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1. The 1896 C.M.S. Conference in Lagos agreed that "Medical Missions" which have already proved a successful auxiliary in Mission work in the east be also employed in Yorubaland among the Muslims. Nothing particularly significant came out of this resolution to employ "charms". A resume of this conference was published in "Lagos Standard", March 4, 1896. The report quotes the resolution cited here.
  2. In 1896, 1902, 1908 the various C.M.S. major meetings upheld these ideas. See C.M.S. 1896 Conference already cited; Nigeria and Yoruba notes, 1896, No. 25, Vol. III, July 1896; Western Equatorial African Diocesan Conference 1902, London, 1903; and Report of the First and Second Synods of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, 1906-1911.
  3. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec. C.M.S. March 6, 1876.

In offering this challenge, the Christian Church, particularly the C.M.S. which was the most forward challenger, could rely on its potential resources. It could, as a corporate body, meet to discuss and review and devise measures and means for the charge. It could also draw upon the experience and knowledge of its foreign sponsors who also had men among Muslims in other lands. It also had, within its fold, many men interested in evangelism among Muslims. Among them were: A.B. Foster, R.S. Oyeboḍe, I.A. Braithwaite, I. Oluwole and W.A. Smith to mention just a few. Above all, there was the favourable trend of prevailing circumstances - the advent and establishment of British power and the growth of overseas trade which, prima facie, helped to buttress the position of Christianity.

On the other hand, the Yoruba Muslims in Oyo and its districts and Yorubaland at large were, at the time, hardly cognisant of this planned Christian strategy against them. They had, however, long appreciated the rivalry between themselves and the "people of the book"<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ahlu'l-Kitāb. This was the Qur'ānic description of the Jews and Christians since they possessed certain divine books of revelation such as Injil, Tawrāt and Zabūr. Although these books were, according



whom they often locally referred to as kiriyo<sup>1</sup> or káfirí. One weakness which militated seriously against the progress of the Muslims in this situation was that they were not as organised as their challengers were, nor could they draw very much upon Islam for support.

It is not clear whether the C.M.S. or other Christian agency seriously took up the issue of training local clergy in Arabic. Some clergymen, however, developed an interest in Arabic and exerted themselves to become cursorily conversant with it. James Johnson for example, resumed his studies of the language.<sup>2</sup> Some others took the advantage of the availability of local resources to study Islam and some Arabic under the tutorship of

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to Muslim belief, transmitted in a falsified form, their possessors were in a more privileged position than the followers of the traditional religion. For more information, see particularly Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān 2: 75; 3: 71, etc. See also E.I. article on "Ahlu'l-Kitāb".

1. It is the rather opprobrious term by which the Yoruba describe "Christians". Many of the early Christians in Yorubaland were called "creoles". The term is also used for the returned emigrants from Brazil. q.v., Abraham, R.C. Dictionary of Modern Yoruba, London, 1958.
2. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec. C.M.S., April 29, 1875.

bilingual Muslim teachers such as those from Ilorin, Hausaland and some trained-abroad local Muslim teachers.

In Lagos, for instance, Idris O.A. Animasaun was for some indefinite period in 1896 the teacher in Arabic to a group of European and local clergymen.<sup>1</sup> Classes were held twice or thrice a week. Thus some people like Rev. M.S. Cole, the Rev. James Johnson, Rev. A.J. Ogunbiyi, Rev. M.T. Ajayi later emerged with some proficiency in Arabic. Thus later, Lagos served, for some period of time, as a diffuse centre from where clergy trained in Arabic reached other parts of Yorubaland for the purpose of teaching and preaching Christianity to the Muslims in the language understood by them.

It was this small number that formed the coterie of Christian lettered men who began and continued the tradition of translating and publishing a few Christian

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1. Animasaun to Blyden, 1896, in correspondence relating to the appointment of Blyden as agent of Native Affairs in the Library, University of Ibadan.

tracts specially meant for the Muslims. For example, the Rev. T. A.J. Ogunbiyi produced 'Àsàrò Kùkùrì', its English version, 'Tracts for Muhammadans,' and 'Àwón Òrò Olórun' containing the Lord's prayer, the 'Ten Commandments' and a few scriptural texts both in Yoruba and Arabic.<sup>1</sup> Others produced similar small pamphlets, such as 'Àwón Ìmàlè, which contain stories of some Muslim converts and 'Ìtàn Mómódù, which is a sketch of the life of Prophet Muhammad. Certainly, the most notable literary production was the Yoruba translation of the Qur'ān by the Rev. M.S. Cole, which was indeed a feat. These works, however, found little favour with those for whom they were meant. Even the Yoruba Qur'ān moved right down to the early part of the present century "very slowly" among the Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The address of Bishop Oluwole to the third session of the second synod of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, May 1911, in proceedings of the Third Session of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa
  2. See the 1906 Synod Report of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa.

It is worth noting here that the connivance of the Muslims at the works was, to some extent, in tune with fairly general connivance, even among the Yoruba Christians, of the Yoruba translations prepared by the Christian Missions. The Bible in the local language was, for example, initially neglected just as other translated books and tracts were.<sup>1</sup> For, although these translations into the local language were often made only by dint of hard and intelligent work, they still made negligible impression on a people who placed greater value on English and works in English. The neglect of the Muslim tracts, however, had the extra reason that the Muslims regarded them as biased, prejudiced and religiously strategical. As a matter of fact, the books necessarily tended to be so because of their religious rather than literary motivation. Here again, one should not connive at 'conservatism' as one of the characteristic features of a Yoruba Muslim. A Yoruba Muslim was particular about his religion and not anything that could turn his

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056 James Johnson to Sec. C.M.S., January 30, 1878.

mind away from this faith. His conservative attitude to new developments made him think that any interest had in the tracts written by Christian clergy could eventually lead to conversion to Christianity. Thus the Muslims adopted the policy of creating a religious gap between themselves and the votaries of other religions so that Islam might not be jeopardised by external forces. In this situation, the Christians could not boast of any immediate success in their use of "spiritual sword" among the Muslims.

Ardent evangelical work among Muslims, however, involved more than the production of pamphlets or tracts. It necessarily involved a persuasive policy. Earlier, the conservative attitude of the Muslims was pointed out. To win such<sup>a</sup> set of people to other faith, the Christian missionaries must have to appeal to the inner conscience of the Muslims and be able to persuade them convincingly to embrace Christianity. They would either let the Muslims see the advantages Christianity has in stock for them or highlight the banes in their continuing patronisation of Islamic faith. It was in the course of this attempted persuasion that keen disputation arose

with the Muslims on various aspects of ethics and theology. In Şaki, Işeyin, and Qyq of the 1880s for example, some Christian missionaries were reported to have had keen interest in the theological controversies which were occasionally "warm" as was the one on whether the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān or the Bible was the Word of God. In this connection, A.F. Foster can be mentioned. Throughout the period of his stay in Işeyin, he regularly carried his evangelism to the Muslims. Regularly did he visit Ijamba quarter which was the most predominantly Muslim area in Işeyin.<sup>1</sup> There was scarcely any Muslim communal gathering in Işeyin and other big centres of Islam in Qyq and its districts that he did not attend. Prayer and religious meetings were held in the mosque or in the court of the qba of Işeyin; and even non-religious gathering to arrange for the reconstruction of a burnt-down mosque. On such occasions, he sought and found an opportunity not only to propagate, in a vehement manner, his Christian faith to them<sup>2</sup> but also to refute, in like

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1. C.M.S. G3A2/01, A.F. Foster, Journal Extract for the half Year Ending December 1880.
  2. C.M.S. G3A2/01, A.F. Foster, Journal Extract for the half Year Ending, June 1880, entry for August 15, 1878.

manner, Muslim preachers and admonish the Muslims "to return from their false prophet (Prophet Muḥammad)<sup>1</sup> to the true Saviour Jesus Christ". One of such occasions was in the month of Ramadān when the Muslims of Iseyin gathered early in the morning of August 12, at the central mosque in order to recite their tafsir. The Rev. Foster visited the Muslim community there very early in that morning. He narrated this experience: "I was kindly received by the priest<sup>2</sup> and also the others. A stool was offered to me. I sat at the entrance of the mosque.<sup>3</sup> We have conversation in religious purposes for about half an hour, the mosque was crowded with people

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1. The words in the bracket are mine.
  2. This must have been the Imām. He is often, but erroneously, regarded by others as "priest".
  3. This must have been the central mosque which was, and is still, at Ijamba quarter, Iseyin.

about 100 souls".<sup>1</sup> The tafsīr was, however, soon begun by the Muslim preacher, still the missionary stayed back, patiently listening to the exposition of the forty-ninth sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān.<sup>2</sup> He heard the preacher as he warned the jamaʿa against hard and improper treatment of their slaves for such a treatment was against the tenet of Islam. Secondly, he (the preacher) encouraged them to be dynamic in their profession. They should show seriousness of purpose in their profession and present themselves as worthy ambassadors of Prophet Muḥammad and the totality of Muslims all the world over; and thirdly, he warned them about using their wives in a rough and indecent manner. They were their strong and immediate partners and their role as a stable source of succour to

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1. C.M.S. G3A2/01, A.F. Foster, Journal Extract for the Half Year Ending, June 1880, entry for August 15, 1878.
  2. The Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān is generally the basis of Ramadān religious exercise. The interpretation is of course, done with the aid of the popular commentary by the Jalalain (ʿallāma Jalālu'd-dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Maḥallī and Jalālu'd-dīn ʿAbdu r-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr as-Suyūṭī).



man should be appreciated. They were of weak flesh and hence objects of pity. Therefore, they should be treated accordingly. At the end of this, he found little forum to utter any word and had to leave. But the following morning he was there again, in earnest, to talk with the Muslims on the forty-ninth sūra. When granted the opportunity, he endeavoured to rebut the Muslim discourse, and tried to impress it on them that "they are lost in their false religion". These disputations were often occasions which generated a good deal of public interest. There were also occasions when the Rev. Foster visited individual Muslim converts in their respective houses in open places. On such occasions, both secular and religious issues were usually discussed. Such occasions usually brought together many people of different religions and these usually afforded the Christian missionaries the opportunity to pursue their evangelical mission vigorously. Such was the keen interest and excitement of these open-air Christian-Muslim dialogues that the encounters were sometimes pre-arranged, each side sharing its own full support of

men and books.<sup>1</sup>

The open-air disputations went on almost everywhere, in towns and villages, in front of churches, mosques and private houses - in fact everywhere where any interested and zealous Christian and Muslim converged. There was almost invariably in such places warm argument with Muslim young men on a lot of points including "rūhu'l-lāh",<sup>2</sup> and "tawhīd",<sup>3</sup> the doctrine of the unity or oneness of God. It is the belief of Muslims in general that God is one and is without any partner. Prophet Muḥammad, though held in great esteem, was no more than a messenger of God (rasūlu'l-lāh). God did not beget, neither was he begotten. This is the concept of tawhīd. It is this

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1. Interview with Mogaji Imple, Qyo, Alhaji Sule Shewu (about 45) December 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. During the interview, he retrospected how, in his childhood days, he and others used to attend such theological arena.
  2. This is the classic question as to whom the prophecy by Christ (q.v., John 14, verse 16) concerning the "Comforter" (Greek: Paraklētē), "Spirit of God or Truth" (rūhu'l-lāh or rūhu'l-quds) refers; whether to the Holy Ghost as the Christians maintain, or to Prophet Muḥammad as the Muslims do. Today, it is still a burning issue among Christians and Muslims.
  3. The importance of this concept lies in the following

concept of tawhīd that forms the basis of the argument of the Muslims with the Christians on the question of rūhu'l-lāh. For the Christians, rūhu'l-lāh was the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth promised to the disciples by Jesus Christ before his final ascension into heaven. This "Spirit of Truth" forms a component part of the Christian Trinity and descended on the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. It was also regarded as the "Spirit of Enlightenment". For the Muslims, the enigmatic Mathematics of the Christian concept of Trinity was illogical and untenable. It was hazardous to their concept of tawhīd. Thus each time there was open-air disputation between Muslims and Christians, the latter would always maintain that rūhu'l-lāh did not signify the Christian "Spirit of God or Truth" or the "Holy Ghost" contained in the

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Muslim saying:

Olórún kan ló yẹ ká sìn pèlú òdodo,  
Oun nàà sì ni Aálà,  
Kò ní orogún,  
Èrúurẹ̀ ní wólíì Mòhómòdù,  
Ojísé rẹ̀ sì ní.

(Only one God should be worshipped with uprightness,  
This is Allāh,  
He has no rival,  
Prophet Muhammad is His servant  
He is also His messenger).

Gospel according to Saint John chapter fourteen but the advent of Prophet Muhammad. On the basis of this argument, they held the view that the chain of prophets had been exhausted with the coming of Prophet Muhammad, hence Prophet <sup>Muhammad</sup> could be regarded as the seal of the Prophets meaning that there should be no more prophets after him. The disputation that arose on the issues of tawhīd and rūhu'l-lāh was so warm that it continued to trickle down to the present century.

The range of these disputations sometimes extended beyond simple arguments on theology to the history and development of the religion and its role in the world. The disputations were conducted not only in the open-air meetings but also anywhere the missionaries could seize opportunity. As a matter of fact, wherever Muslim influence was perceived and encountered, there was the place to direct the full charge of Christian missionary artillery. The mere mention or sight of fasting Muslims, their amulets, anything bringing to the limelight Muslim influence was a good occasion. There were stories of how Christian evangelists visited and preached to some traditional rulers in the towns in which Islam had been

well established. Though not Muslims, but as they had known of Muslims in and around their courts, these traditional rulers were reported to have referred, in rather glowing tones, to the favour of celebrated Muslims who were very much alive to their religious activities. Thus the Christian missionary ventures with the traditional rulers did not yield any immediate result.

The uncompromising attitude of the traditional rulers in the big centres of Islam such as Saki, Iseyin, Ikoyi and Oyo was said to render some Christian missionaries so disgruntled that they started to deride Islamic activities and interaction with the traditional rulers. Earlier in this work, it has been pointed out that the Muslims were able to gain influence in the royal courts as a result of their knowledge of divination and amulet preparation. Many traditional rulers and other Muslims, and non-Muslims, believed in the efficacy of Islamic amulets and patronised the Muslim medicine-men. The feeling of insecurity in the wicked world trickled on. People were eager to know the content of their present and the future. As a result, Muslim medicine-men were besought each time there was an impending doom. Thus in the houses of the traditional

rulers and others, Islamic amulets were hung in conspicuous places. The Christian evangelists used this avenue to deride Islam and upgrade Christianity with a view to luring traditional rulers, their subjects - Muslims and non-Muslims - to Christianity. They pointed to those amulets, making it plain that it was by those expensive means that the Muslims deceived non-Muslims.

The challenge of the Christian missionaries procured little or no success. Islamic amulets in Yorubaland were not strange to the Yoruba, for they were both Islamic and Yoruba oriented. The Yoruba regarded Islamic amulets as a mixture of Yoruba and Islamic systems and regarded them as very efficacious as the pure local ones. Despite the opprobrious challenge of the Christian missionaries concerning Islamic amulets, the traditional rulers and others continued to patronise the Muslim medicine-men. This was necessarily so because the Christian missionaries did not have a quick solution to the people's state of insecurity in the wicked world and they had no substitute for the Islamic amulets.

The theological disputations between the Muslims and the Christian missionaries continued and trickled down to the early part of the present century. However, it is doubtful if these theological disputations won over Muslims to Christianity. Failure was to be expected. Winning an argument or a debate was quite a different issue from winning a soul. The experience of the Catholic clergy Rev. Father Baudin and Howley of blessed memory in Oyo in 1884 proved this beyond any doubt.<sup>1</sup> In the course of their settlement at Oyo in 1884, they sought out some of their local "friends" one of them being a chief in Aláàfin's court and a Muslim. The latter soon introduced some argument by asking the clergymen: "Why do you hate Muhammad?" Their long detailed reply only invited from the chief and the crowd which had begun to throng "a multitude of questions and assertions" which generated further argument and dis-

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1. During the interview held in December 1973 with some Catholic members of Oyo, I was told that Aláàfin Adeyemi Alowolodu personally requested the Catholic Mission in Lagos to send missionaries to Oyo to check the unlimited expansion of Islam.

cussion ranging from the Yoruba traditional institution and Islamic tolerated institution of polygamy (polygyny) to theology especially the status of God and the relationship of Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad and the angels to God. After the apparently interminable discussion, "the chief rose up to accompany us out"<sup>1</sup>, said the clergymen. The clergymen were not able to convince him but left him to his inner conscience.

The typical reaction of the Muslims to Christian activities was a re-affirmation of their conviction that Islam is the best religion. At times they became very particularistic by saying that Islam was the best of all religions in the world, being a religion of peace, a religion of submission to the will of God. They proved this to the Christians that while they hated Prophet Muhammad, they, the Muslims, recognised all prophets, Christian and Muslim, right away from Adam to Prophet Muhammad. This implies that they recognised and respected Christian men of God and prophets such as Adam, Noah, Moses, Samuel, David, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ.

The holy books such as the Bible, the Psalms and the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān were also given their due prominence in the sphere

1. Priestly Ordination, Qyq, 13ff.



of religion. So, the Muslims argued that if they should, on the basis of Islamic tenets, give due regard to Christian values such as are mentioned above, whereas Christians did not regard Islamic values as such, then Islam, without mincing words, was better and more accommodating than the particularistic Christianity. By this, and other arguments, did Muslims fight and defeat Christian missionaries who were not able to achieve any considerable success amongst the Muslims for a long time.

Sometimes, however, the reaction of the Muslims was one of aggression, opprobriousness, conservatism, withdrawal and rebuff. The Muslims were admonished by their elders and mālams to avoid all conversation and interaction with the kiriyo (Christians) who were portrayed as "enemies of the Truth".<sup>1</sup> Even when, in some cases, any enthusiastic Christian preacher wanted to force such a dispute, he was kept off at a pertinent distance either by an attitude of silence or by a reply "such as left him no room to doubt he was not with his company".<sup>2</sup>

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, Annual Letter of James Johnson 1875.

2. Ibid.

The theological disputations were, however, only part of the general evangelical work of the Christian missionaries. Normal organised evangelism continued, the Baptist, C.M.S., Catholic and Methodist missionaries went from house to house preaching Christ and Christianity to those who might care to listen. The foreign missionaries made use of those they were able to train in the seminaries in the coastal towns such as Lagos, Badagry and in Abeokuta as interpreters and translators. The use of tracts, written both in Yoruba and Arabic, continued. And in this connection, Christian endeavour was aided, directly or otherwise, by British rule.<sup>1</sup> Legally, they were promised "complete protection", "assistance" and "encouragement" in some treaties signed by the British and

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1. Ayandele, E.A., "The Mode of British Expansion in Yorubaland in the second half of the nineteenth century: The 'OYO EPISODE' in Odu, 3, 2, January 1967. He illustrates here his thesis that in Yorubaland, the Christian missionaries were the pathfinders of British influence, the people who "prepared the way for the governor, exploiter and teacher". (See also his book, The Missionary Impact..., chapter 2). This is true, no less than the fact that the Government to non-Christian, as will be explained further in this chapter, appeared pro-Christian.

local chiefs as was the case in Oyo<sup>1</sup> in 1888 and 1893 respectively. Occasionally, a few top Government officials would throw in their influence. Moreover, the Christian Missions often tried to take advantage of the British pacification of the country to accelerate and extend the work of evangelism. Such occurred in Oyo and its districts in 1895<sup>2</sup> when Oyo was bombarded by the British. But without official help, they carried on their evangelical activity especially among the Muslims. Evangelical activity was intensified by interested missionaries such as James Johnson, A.F. Foster, I.A. Braithwaite, James Okușeinde and A.W. Smith so that

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1. See a copy of the 1888 Treaty with the Aláàfin of Oyo in Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., Appendix, Section 'A', 301-2pp.; and for the events leading to the treaty, see Johnson, S., The History of the Yorubas, 571-6pp.

Article 5 of the Treaty with Oyo, February 23rd, 1893. For a copy of this Treaty, see pp. C7227. See also Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., Appendix Section 'C', 304-5pp. Cf. Article 4 of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce made at Abeokuta on January 18, 1893. By this, the Egbá authorities were to afford complete protection and every assistance and encouragement to all ministers of the Christian religion. See Appendix I of Carter to Ripon, October 11, 1893 in pp. C7227. The 1893 Treaty with Oyo, cited above has identical wording with this (Abeokuta) Treaty.

2. For more details about the bombardment of Oyo, see Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., 56ff.

Christianity could make impact on the Muslims in the various Yoruba towns.<sup>1</sup>

With or without the help of the British Government, the ardent Christian evangelisation among the Muslims produced no commendable immediate effect on the generality of Muslims in Oyo and its districts. Despite the years of persistent Christian efforts and of the fact that the growing influence of the British was felt all around,<sup>2</sup> Iseyin, for instance, remained a preponderantly Muslim town yielding very insignificant ground to the Christian influence. The Mission station had been allowed to settle but their influence was evidently small and negligible. In 1893, after 20 years of dynamic Christian activity, all the Christian missionaries appeared to have won no more than 20 souls.<sup>3</sup> Saki and Ikoyi offered no better prospects and by all

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson's Annual Letter, 1875.
  2. See Ayandele, E.A., The Mode of British Expansion... for a treatment of how the British Conquest of Oyo illustrates the Christian missionaries as "secular imperial agents".
  3. P.P., C7227.

accounts, Oyo, until 1908 and even beyond, remained what Meville Jones described as "A HARD SOIL" to Christian evangelical venture.<sup>1</sup> In the area cited, the position of the Muslim community, as already noted,<sup>2</sup> improved as Islam expanded and gained favour of the common people, chiefs and obas.

As a matter of fact, a good deal of this activated missionary work would appear to have achieved little more than generating an equally animated reaction on the part of the challenged Muslims. "Our activity has provoked their own", reported James Johnson. "They were never warmer in the defence of their religion".<sup>3</sup> On the perpetual topical issue of the person of Jesus Christ, for instance, the Muslims, in spite of all Christian assertion to the contrary, insisted on the validity of Muslim teaching as "they cease not to reiterate the

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1. N.A.I. C.M.S. (Y) 3/1 No. 10. In a detailed report on Oyo Districts submitted to the Executive Council, Lagos, Meville Jones deplored the fate of the church in Oyo: "It shows no signs, or very few signs of growth, if it is growing at all... This Yoruba country is a hard soil".
  2. See above, chapter 2, 127-9, 148-9pp.
  3. C.M.S. CA2/056. Annual Letter of James Johnson 1875.

sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān that says, "He (God) begetteth not Nor is He begotten." They did not regard Jesus Christ as the son of God for such a belief was held detrimental to the person of God and, particularly, the unity or oneness of God. Jesus Christ and other Christians, they contended, should have no more than the status of servants in relation to God. Prophet Muḥammad was not the son of God but His messenger and servant (resūlu'l-lāh) and (ʿAbdu'l-lāh). On the platform of this belief, all Muslims were regarded as servants of God.

The futility of ardent Christian endeavour among Muslims and the latter's opposition and animated reaction were demonstrated best in the event at Şaki in Qyq North. A strong Muslim centre, Şaki seemed to the Christian propagandists a promising area for invigorated Christian evangelism. Some Baptist missionaries were reported to have struggled to plant the Gospel there;

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1. This is sūra al-ikhḷās. Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān 112: 3 makes this clear statement. The absolute unity or rather oneness of Allāh (tawḥīd) is, of course, a fundamental principle of Islam. See also E.I. Articles on tawḥīd. It is the popular belief that this subject, at-tawḥīd, constitutes the essence of Islam as it deals with the nature of the living God.

but these were repelled by the overt categorical statements of the Şaki people that "we are already Muslims".<sup>1</sup> The popular professions made meagre impression on the Christian evangelists; for it was reported that some years later, a new set of Christian missionaries ventured into the town and boldly commenced teaching and preaching. After some successive days of open-air teaching and preaching, they were ejected from the town by the Muslims who felt greatly attacked and insulted. Missionary work there had to be temporarily abandoned. Some years later, the Christian Missions breathed some fresh air of hope about their erstwhile futile efforts in Şaki. Thus a little later, some enthusiastic C.M.S. missionaries went to Şaki to preach to the people. Some modicum of success was achieved among the followers of the traditional religion whom the Christian missionaries gave the opprobrious title - "Heathens".

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1. Interview with Muslim jamā'ata, Şaki, August, 1975. During the interview, they maintained unequivocally that the Christians in Şaki today were countable.

Muslim reaction, in each of the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts where Christian missionary activity was on, was very evident. The Muslims became intolerant and organised a house to house visit of the church attendants and were endeavouring to win them away from Christianity.

Discussion, preaching and baptism, no doubt, constituted the chief elements of Christian propaganda; but possibly, their most potent instrument of propagation lay in their schools.<sup>1</sup> In the school, the Christian Missions had an enviable magnet to attract all, especially non-Christians, to the Christian way and outlook. At the beginning, the educational charm did not produce any immediate effect among the Yoruba Muslims in Oyo and its districts. This was consequent upon the fact that they were apathetic towards the Christian-spon-

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1. Saint Andrew's College, Oyo was established by the C.M.S. in 1896 for the training of professional teachers and vernacular evangelists. In 1895, this college was located at Osoybo. The college did not produce professional teachers but amateurs who looked to the priesthood as their ultimate profession. For more details about the Training Institute, see Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact..., 130, 293-4pp.



sored Western education. It has already been noted how, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Muslims in places like Işeyin, Şaki and Ikoyi unanimously wanted no Christian teacher. The reaction of the Muslims towards the Christian-sponsored Western education is buttressed by the observation of James Johnson. After a tour of the important Yoruba Mission stations and schools, he reported: "The Muhammadans show no desire for the education that may be had at our schools".<sup>1</sup>

In general, in the far interior there was little inducement to seek Christian-sponsored Western education. Traditional contempt for "the people of the Book" lingered on, and the chiefs in Oyo, Işeyin, and Şaki preferred to hand over slaves to the missionaries to be 'spoilt' rather than to part with their own children. Time and again, many chiefs complained that education was of no use to them because, once educated, their children would run away to Lagos. In subsequent years, as our knowledge of the Oyo and Işeyin situations reveals, the chiefs were to regret that their advertent unkindness to the unprivi-

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056 James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. January

whom  
 leged children/they handed over to the Christian Missionaries  
 resulted in the social advancement of the children, many  
 of whom later became council clerks, ministers of religion  
 and wielders of strong socio-political influence in the  
 independent Nigeria of the present century.

Christian Missions were, to a certain degree, disappointed in their schools which could not fulfil completely the moral and spiritual purpose they expected of them. In a way, they defeated their own ends because the Christianity in their elementary schools could not strike deep roots in the absence of an intellectual development that could match the principles of the new faith. Their converts could not accept the Bible in the simple manner the Christian Mission expected. The masses were not ready for the moral programme of the missionaries; rather, in effect, together with other agencies, Christian Missions destroyed the high morality of the indigenous religion without succeeding in replacing it with Christian morality. Manifestations/which they did not bargain for were the results of the education they gave. Sexual morality in Nigeria as a whole began earlier among the so-called Christians

than among the followers of the traditional religion and Islam and was common among the African Staff. The Mission pupils became arrogant, disrespectful and dishonest. The Muslims who were opposed to Western education had no cause to regret; but most of the parents who were favourably disposed towards it regretted that they ever allowed their children to be 'educated' in the Western way.

Nor were the school children interested in the vernacular education, the real object of the Mission schools. Outwardly, the pupils conformed to the compulsory routine of worship at school but only wanted English education. Outside the school, the children neglected the vernacular Bible and Literature. In this milieu, Islam, which had become securely entrenched before this period, continued to expand almost undisturbed.

Surely, the advantages<sup>1</sup> of Western education were

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1. Cf. the situation in Epe, in the coast where the Commissioner, M.R. Menendez, and Dr. O. Johnson took time off in 1895 to speak to the leading and influential Muslims "on the advantages of education and advised them to send their children to school". About this, see The Annual Reports of Lagos Church Missions, 1895-6. 12-13pp.

described, analysed, quantified and dilated upon to the die-hard Muslims and others. Many Christian evangelists, some of whom were trained in Saint Andrew's College, Qyp, in their own veiled interest, solicited Muslim parents to send their children "to our schools".<sup>1</sup> The C.M.S. trained missionaries from Saint Andrew's College, Qyp and a host of others were distributed all over the big towns in Qyp and its districts to appeal to the local and Muslim parents to send their children to Mission schools. They used tracts, valuable gifts and health facilities to convince the conservative parents. The Baptist Mission, in addition to the use of schools as a means of propagating Christianity, erected dispensaries, maternity centres and other health centres where local and Muslim patients, male and female, old and young, and pregnant mothers received instructions on Christianity in addition to the basic medical treatment. Anyone who failed to respond favourably to the instructions or one who failed to submit to conversion was reportedly denied

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056. James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. July 29, 1875. See also his Annual Letter of 1874, entry for August 26.

of medical treatment. In this way, some were won over to Christianity and no wonder that of all Christian Missions in Qyq and its districts today, the Baptist Mission is the most prominent.

Since the Muslims remained very adamant, conservative, aggressive, uncompromising and unyielding to Western education, the Christian missionaries continued to use pleadings. It was when the Muslims and others came to realise the glistering advantages of Western education that they began to release their children en masse for Western education.

The results of the pleadings of the Christian evangelists to Muslim parents in the second half of the nineteenth century were, to some extent, productive. Some Muslim children were to be found in Christian schools. This was particularly so in Qyq. Here, Christianity was fairly well established and there were concentrated Christian schools in which, indeed, some Muslim children were to be found. The evangelists trained at Saint Andrew's College, Qyq between 1896 and the end of the nineteenth century were able, through persuasion, to attract pupils from both the traditional and Muslim folds.

The Catholic Mission, founded in 1884, whose station was at Oyo also recruited some pupils<sup>1</sup> from among the local people and the Muslims. They, however, wanted only the English language.<sup>2</sup> The availability of the Muslim children in the Mission schools is significant only in that it indicates some Muslim preparedness to try and receive some Western education at the hands of their Christian sponsors. This indication is not, however, to be over-emphasised but should be properly viewed

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1. Priestly ordination, Oyo, 13p.: "Evolution of Catholicism in Oyo 1884 - Education of Oyo sons and daughters". First batch of girls: Flora Ladepe, Labisi, Rosalia Gbenle and Mrs. Koleosho were sent to Abeokuta Convent for studies. First batch of boys: Joseph Adefinhan, Eugenio Adeoye, Joseph Erufa, Carlos Jolasun, Joannes Ladokun, Leonis Bashorun and Bashorun were sent to Lagos, while Francis Fagbemi was sent to Abeokuta. Joseph Goro, Joannes Monje, Antonio Ojo and Emilio Aliheri were sent to Topo.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056 James Johnson's Annual Letter of 1875. See also his Letter to Sec. C.M.S. January 30, 1878. In their desire for only the English language, the Muslims were one with many others who wanted the Christian bait but were unwilling to get hooked. In short, the Muslims wanted to enjoy the best of two worlds - knowledge of English and fanatical-zealous adherence to their religion, Islam, without submitting to Christian conversion. For both, however, instruction in English and christianisation were found to be inextricably interlaced in that age. There is this difference in the situation, that the Muslim were particularly being sought after as part of the general plan to combat Muslim progress.

in the context of the persistent attitude of the entire Muslim population. In Iseyin, for example, for all the ardour as well as long and permanent stay of the missionaries of both the C.M.S. and Wesleyan Missions, the Muslims seemed to have yielded little to Christian educational advances. In 1893, when the Governor, Sir G. Carter, visited the town, he was surprised to find that, inspite of the C.M.S. and Wesleyan activities, there were only six school children.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Muslims in Şaki, Otu and Ikoyi still actively forbade their children to attend the Christian schools almost as much as the Christian missionary struggled to persuade them to send their children to the Christian-sponsored schools.<sup>2</sup> It was really a tug-of-war between the Christians and the Muslims. The tug-of-war subsided only very recently, and in a partial manner not completely.

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1. P.P. C7227, 11p.

2. The Annual Reports of the Lagos Church Mission, 1895-6.

Most Muslim children went to Muslim local or piazza Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic schools organised by the local mālāms. For example, among the Muslim children of school age in Iṣeyin, a far greater percentage preferred the Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic schools. In the second half of the nineteenth century, such schools multiplied with bewildering rapidity. Ayetoro, in Oyo North, emerged as a citadel of Islamic knowledge where many of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts were trained as mālāms during this period. In Iṣeyin, there were said to be about 55 such schools with a population of about 1500.<sup>1</sup> Thus the percentage of Muslim pupils attending the Mission schools<sup>2</sup> was, up to the end of the nineteenth century, extremely meagre.

At a time when the economic and socio-political changes ravaging the Yorubaland as a whole rendered the value of Western education very crucial, the persistence

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1. Interview with the Muslim jamā'a, Iṣeyin, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence • Yoruba version: Awon ilé Iwé wa tó Àrùndínlógóta, Awon Omo wa tó wà ní bẹ̀ tó èédégbẹ̀jọ.
  2. The unpopularity of the Mission schools with the Muslims in the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts was very clear to the Christian Missions as well as to the Government. It became an object of concern for the latter.



of Muslim conservatism, apathy and opposition to the increasingly valuable commodity requires some examination and explanation. The activated zeal<sup>1</sup> on the part of some Christian evangelists may have been responsible, in some degree, for the continuity of the Muslim attitude of opposition even to this intrinsically beneficial segment of Christian endeavour. But the Muslim attitude evidently sprang from more basic factors. It is worth noting, at this juncture, that Christian-sponsored Western education was evidently viewed as a delusion designed to lure Muslim children from the straight path.<sup>2</sup> Muslim attendance of the Christian-sponsored schools was taken as a hazardous, ominous and a calculated attempt by culturally proud Christian evangelists to ruin Islam from its very foundation and superimpose Christianity on Islam. Muslim children

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1. There were instances when Christian ministers pressurised Imāms to encourage their fellow Muslims to send their children to "our schools" q.v. C.M.S. CA2/056, Annual Letter of James Johnson, 1874.
  2. The Muslims believe they follow sirātu'l-mustaqīm (the straight path) q.v. sūratu'l-Fātiha. The straight path here is that of those whom Allāh has favoured and not the path of those who earn God's wrath nor of those who go astray. Cf. this book; Morgan, K.W. Islam the straight path, New York, 1958.

attending such schools would, to some extent, miss the basic education provided in the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>anic schools which were planned to bring them up in a distinctly Muslim way of life. Such children, it can be argued, could still take the advantage of the Muslim nursery schools since they could attend them in the evening on returning from Mission schools. Apart from this fact, they were always under the pruning influence of the home which was drawn upon to balance or even nullify whatever influence the Mission school might infuse in them during the school hours. The fact that the Muslim home tended to nullify Christian teachings dismayed the ardent and zealous ones amongst the Christian missionaries. "The effect of our school gospel teaching", it was bemoaned, "on some of our Mohammedan friends continued to be nullified at home".<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, it was by no means easy for the Muslim children to attend both the Mission and Muslim schools. Similarly, the combination of Christian teachings in the school and Muslim mode of life at home and in Muslim piazza Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>anic schools was not an easy task. A child hung between two markedly different

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. July 29, 1875.

teachings, as those of Christianity and Islam, would obviously be left more embarrassed and confounded than ever. In this connection, let us examine the question of the Sabbath in Christian teachings as contained in the fourth commandment in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 5 verses 12ff.:

"Observe the Sabbath Day,  
to keep it holy,  
as the Lord your God commanded you.  
Six days you shall labour,  
and do all your work;  
but the seventh day is a sabbath  
to the Lord your God;  
in it you shall not do any work,  
you, or your son, or your daughter,  
or your manservant, or your maid servant,  
or your ox, or your ass, or any of your  
cattle, or the sojourner who is within your  
gates, that your manservant and your  
maidservant may rest as well as you".

Working on the Sabbath Day was regarded a monstrous sin by the Jews and this issue generated a tense conflict between the Jews and Jesus Christ in the New Testament era. In Christian schools, the ten commandments received great prominence. Moreover, it was inculcated in the pupils that there should be no work on Sundays, instead there should be perfect rest as ordained by God.

The embarrassment and confusion for Muslim children who attended Christian-sponsored schools arose from the fact that, at home and in Qur'anic schools, they were given new values different from what is contained in Deuteronomy chapter 5 verses 12ff. For Muslims, there is no injunction in the Qur'ān as to this effect. The only injunction which can be cited here is concerning the Friday congregational prayer. In this connection, the Qur'ān speaks thus:

"O ye who believe!

When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation, haste unto remembrance of Allah and leave your trading.

That is better for you if ye did but know. And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allāh's bounty, and remember Allāh much, that ye may be successful.

But when they spy some merchandise or pastime they break away to it and leave thee standing.

Say: That which Allāh hath is better than pastime and than merchandise, and Allāh is the best of providers." (sūra 62 verses 9-11).

The injunctions in this section of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān give us the picture of the importance of the Friday prayer in Islam. The injunctions here imply that the prayer must, by all means, be observed and that no Muslim should be prevented, by one thing or the other, from observing the obligatory prayer. God is the ultimate source of all things and if this is admitted, then He is the all-sufficient to provide us with all our needs. Thus, Muslims are enjoined not to allow the ephemeral mundane issues constitute a disturbance concerning the observance of the prayer. The passage quoted above does not imply that the whole of Friday should be kept devoid of any work. Muslims could work before and after the period earmarked for the prayer. The important thing is the period of the prayer; whereas in the Bible, it is stipulated that the whole of Sunday should be earmarked for complete rest. The Muslim children who attended Christian-sponsored schools were open to two values: the Christian injunctions on the Sabbath and the Islamic injunctions on the observance of Friday congregational prayer. The two injunctions are not similar. Hence, <sup>the</sup> Muslim children in the Mission schools could not avoid being rendered all the

more embarrassed and confounded in the world of practical religion. There were reports of how some Muslim children attending Christian-sponsored schools reached home during the mid-year break and they refused to go to the market to buy and sell on Sunday when their fathers sent them<sup>1</sup> because of the Christian regard for Sunday already instilled into them.<sup>2</sup>

Soon, the Muslims came to realise that a great hazard lurked in the systematic exposure of their children to Christian doctrines and values as a result of their attending the Christian-sponsored schools. Some Muslim children in <sup>the</sup> Mission schools were put, to use the words of James Johnson, "under Christian guardianship".<sup>3</sup> Muslim children in <sup>the</sup> Mission schools like others, were constrained to attend the Mission church service, Sunday

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1. Interview held with Muslim jama'ca in the big centres of Islam in Qyo and its districts, December, 1973, August, 1975 and November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S., July 29, 1875.
  3. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S., January 30, 1878.

schools, and participate in other essentially religious activities which the school planned in collaboration with the Mission. To the Muslims, this was plainly religious indoctrination about which their enthusiasm was completely nil.

There was, as a matter of fact, some legal protection afforded to non-Christians against this religious indoctrination. Under the operation of the Education Ordinance of 1887, no child in a government-aided school could receive religious instructions to which the parent or guardian objects, or could be forced to be present when such instructions were given at school.<sup>1</sup> The indication provided by W. Howell, one of the inspectors of the Mission schools, was, however, that only a few Muslims were aware of this legal right or took advantage of it to withdraw their children from religious classes.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This was Ordinance No.3, passed by the Local Legislature on May 30, 1887. It was particularly referred to in colonial Report Annual, 1887, Lagos 32p.
  2. Proceedings of the C.M.S. 1900-1910, London, 1901, 72p.

In this situation, Christian missionaries reaped some fine reward, at least, for some time before the awareness of the Ordinance on the part of the Muslim parents. Later, however, the greater majority either left the children for all classes in the schools or simply hedged them in with the instruction that they should not attend the Mission schools.

In any event, whatever legal protection might be issued against compulsory attendance of classes for religious instructions in these schools, there was virtually none against the all-pervading Mission schools. The religious tone of the schools might, to some extent, have been appreciated in the light of the time; but it did not make consequent religious exposure less resentful to the non-Christian pupils and parents. The Muslim parents and pupils who were cut in this position found the Christian education too much of a mixed grill about which they felt sullen and resentful.

The religious indoctrination which the Muslim children<sup>the</sup> in Christian-sponsored schools underwent proved to be only a short step to utter conversion to



the Christian faith. Today, many names of former Muslims, who were converted at school, can be reeled off to the dismay of the steadfast Muslims. Some of such people were found in Oyo, Iseyin and Saki. The number of Muslim pupils and people who took this line of action was certainly less than that which attended the Mission school. Indeed, it was probably small. But the conversion of Muslim children and people generated, among the Muslims, considerable irritation. For example, in Lagos, when a certain Yoruba Muslim girl, Jemi, aged about 10, wanted to change to the Christian religion on November 15, 1887, this generated a great rampage within the Muslim family. With the girl's instigated insistence on conversion, the issue was only "resolved" by a mutual repudiation of filial relationships.<sup>1</sup> Thus, conversion of Muslims to Christianity often aroused passions as Islam, in clean-cut terms, denounces apostasy.<sup>2</sup> Here, it is important to note that it was the

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1. The 6th Report of the Lagos Church Missions, 1887, 22p.

2. It is mentioned in various verses of the Qurʾān. See particularly Qurʾān, sūra 2, v. 217.

question of conversion that compelled the Muslims to react as much against Christianity as against Western education which it sponsored. Basically, it was the outraged feeling of the Muslims<sup>1</sup> which, at a time, compelled them to discipline such of their young ones as associated with the Christians. It was soon noticed by the observant Rev. James Johnson that "the young Mohammedans were scolded, flogged and prevented by their elders and priests (sic) from attending Christian schools and churches and even conversing with their Christian friends on religion".<sup>2</sup> The Muslim irritation and reactionary<sup>3</sup> stand at the conversion or the hope of conversion of their children was contributory to the solidification of the Muslim attitude.

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1. The Muslims, in 1896, were reported to burn down the Anglican Church at Iya Alamu, Qyo, in consequence of the apathy they had for Christianity and Christian-sponsored education. This was rebuilt very much later. (Interview with the church elders of Anglican Church, Iya Alamu, Qyo, December, 1973, November, 1975).
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. September 24, 1875.

It is worth noting that, though Christian-sponsored education was shunned generally by the Muslims for reasons enumerated above, it will be erroneous to connive at the fact that its acceptance in some places in Oyo and its districts threatened the status of Islam and the totality of Muslims in the area. This was especially true of Oyo where Christian evangelisation <sup>was intensified</sup> [as a result of the opening of Saint Andrew's College, Oyo for the training of professional teachers and vernacular preachers,<sup>1</sup> and, in 1884, the fact that the Catholic Mission received a formal invitation from the Christian inclined Aláàfin Alowolodu I (1875-1905) to check the traditional and Islamic influence in his domain. However, it is interesting to note that despite the intensive Christian missionary activity in Oyo and its districts in the late nineteenth century, Islam was

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1. Records have it that Aláàfin Adeyemi Alowolodu I sent two delegates to Lagos to ask the Catholic late Bishop Chaune to send off his missionaries to this country - Oyo. The first batch of Catholic missionaries that came to Oyo reportedly mounted the horses sent by the Aláàfin. The first batch of missionaries to come to Oyo were those formerly at Abeokuta Station. (Interview with the present Rev. Father in charge of St. Mary's Catholic Church and School Aşogo, Oyo). See also Memorandum, 1895, by Father E. Nanger.

the dominant religion in the area. It spread in an inverse ratio to both Christianity and the traditional religion. While, in the colonial era, the Ijebu shifted to Anglicanism because this was "considered the true religion of the conquerors"<sup>1</sup> there was no similar rush to "the religion of the conquerors" in Oyo.

Another aspect of <sup>the</sup> Christian challenge, which eventually had negative influence on Christianity but which created ample opportunity for Islam to expand, was the introduction of a completely new set of values. The Christian convert was not only expected to accept a complete new faith but develop a new set of values, or rather a different conscience. It was the time it took to develop this different conscience that caused the protracted delay in acceptance into the Mission. It was into this spiritual vacuum that Islam stepped, ready to uphold spiritual exercise - the daily prayers<sup>2</sup> -

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1. See particularly Webster, J.B., The African Churches..., 104p. See also Niger and Yoruba Notes, Vol. V, No.75. September, 1900, 21p.
  2. About the Islamic daily prayers, see E.I. Articles on Salāt.

in sharp contrast to the Mission catechumen classes.<sup>1</sup> In point of fact, while the white Christian missionaries could not adapt themselves to the traditional environment to which they ministered, the local Muslim missionaries had a good reward for their activities by the virtue of their adaptation to the traditional milieu to which they were ministering. Little or no wonder then that, up till today in Oyo and its districts Islam is the dominant religion.

The Christian missionaries introduced the system of 'one man one wife' (monogamy)<sup>2</sup> in place of the age-long and socio-economic conditioned traditional practice of polygamy (polygyny). Whether right or wrong, almost all the

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1. In established churches, a catechumen class is a class where a minister of Christian religion or clergyman prepares some candidates, after the rite of baptism, for the rite of confirmation. While a full-fledged clergyman, not a deacon, can undertake the rite of baptism, the rite of confirmation is the sole responsibility of the bishop. Note the following local expressions: Igbówólélóri àlufá, referring to the rite of baptism and Igbówólélóri bisógbù, referring to the rite of confirmation.
  2. Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact..., 335p. The practice of 'one man one woman' is still held very crucial to Christianity in the Anglican Church. In this connection, the Reports of the Proceedings of the Annual Synod of the First session, 7th Synod

missionaries of all denominations in Nigeria during the nineteenth century stood firm in not accepting either husband or wife in a polygynous union as members of the church. Thus, in effect said to the wealthy and influential people in a village, "You cannot be a member of the church". The missionaries preached this new set of values as part of Christianity. They held the view that Christianity was against the practice of polygyny. Before a convert could gain the status of a full-fledged Christian he must, in addition to the rite of baptism by the Reverend, and the rite of confirmation by the bishop, embrace the practice of 'one man one wife'. This new value, monogamy, as introduced by the Christian missionaries, afforded Islam a safe atmosphere to develop wider tentacles at the expense of Christianity. With regard to the practice of

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of the Owerri Anglican Diocese Published in Daily Times: The Independent Newspaper, No.21, 312, August, 9, 1976, 36p.) can be cited: "The Solution to childlessness or having only female children in a Christian family does not lie in the taking of a second wife but in continued prayer to God with faith for his (sic) grace and mercies". Note also the following reports of the reporter, Chigozic Ozim, on the issue. "Anglican Church now frowns at polygamy, it is one man one wife". "The Anglican Church will not tolerate members who take to polygamy, as a solution to childlessness". "The Synod upheld the principle of one man one wife, for better for worse as the basis of the Christian family".

polygyny, in my own view and unlike other customs and institutions, it (not to be confused with marriage) is unique in Yoruba society because it bears no religious or "heathenish" tincture. Some have suggested that possibly the missionaries should have used a different approach other than they did on this problem. The Christian missionaries went wrong to have introduced monogamy instead of upholding the age-long African practice of polygyny. In fact, it is the general belief among the Christian writers that the issue of polygyny constituted the present difficulty of the missionary because it was a basic part of the social system. They went wrong in the sense that the practice is more of a culture than religion. In European countries, the socio-economic situation is conducive to monogamy rather than polygyny; whereas in Africa, and Yorubaland in particular, the socio-economic situation favours polygyny rather than monogamy. The white Christian missionaries did not bother to study the socio-economic basis of the practice of polygyny in Yorubaland, and in Oyo and its districts in particular, before they rushed

into the conclusion that monogamy should necessarily be one of the features of Christianity in the area. Moreover, it is not a moral issue either. It is this fact, more than anything else, that explains the best and apparent conviction with which cultural nationalists defended the institution in the last century.

A close study of the arguments of both the exponents and opponents of polygyny in Nigeria, and Yorubaland in particular, leaves one with the impression that neither on scriptural, nor on rational, nor on hypothetical basis was the attitude of the Missions defensible. In any event, the Christian missionaries went about in Oyo and its districts to preach monogamy alongside the basic tenets of Christianity. Islam, on the other hand, did not oppose polygyny, and represented Islam with its first real challenge. The Muslim missionaries approved of polygyny with the proviso that a man should not have more than four wives, and all should be treated on the basis of equity according to the principles of Islam.

The positive attitude of the Muslim missionaries to polygyny afforded Islam the opportunity to develop wider tentacles among the followers of the traditional religion.



Islam thus spread rapidly at the expense of the Christianity. Christian missionaries regarded Muslims as conservative people who would never yield to Christianity despite their intensive evangelical activity. Refusing to unveil the advantages of Islam, they believed its success was due to the low moral standard (with specific reference to polygyny) which it tolerated. However, secular writers<sup>1</sup> such as E.O. Morel and clergy such as J.F. Schon, T.J. Bowen, and Canon Isaac Taylor, along with Blyden, were prepared to admit to its potency - especially its COMMENDABLE ADAPTATION TO AFRICAN LIFE. A few admitted that its moral system was different but equal to that offered by Christianity. Others patronisingly felt that it was lower, but the highest to which Africans could aspire. In any event, at the initial stage of Christianity in Oyo and its districts, no substantial progress was made, whereas Islam spread with bewildering rapidity. A statistical record<sup>2</sup> in the first two decades

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1. See Webster, J.B., The African Churches..., 99p.

2. Ibid., 98p.

of the present century is a testimony to this effect.

TABLE 1

RATIO OF CHRISTIANS TO MUSLIMS IN  
IBADAN, OYO AND OGBOMOSO IN WESTERN  
NIGERIA FROM 1900-1920

CHRISTIANS		MUSLIMS	RATIO
PROTESTANT	ROMAN CATHOLIC		
23,000	1,000	106,000	1 : 4

A general survey of the Christian challenge to Islam in the period up-to 1900 shows, indeed, that, as James Johnson put it, the "Waters were troubled".<sup>1</sup> But, evidently, Islam had, by and large, held its own both in the preponderant and new centres of Islam in Yorubaland<sup>2</sup> and Oyo and its districts in particular. Islam, in its spread and growth among the Yoruba of Oyo and its districts, had become solidly based<sup>upon</sup> and anchored in Yoruba social and organisational structure. It had

1. C.M.S. CA2/056. Annual Letter of James Johnson, 1875. He possibly meant that the Muslims were roused, or shaken out of all complacency.
2. Cf. also the futility of the Christian endeavour among

gained appreciable support from the people of note in the nineteenth century Yoruba society - the affluent, the elders, the chiefs and the obas. Having this sound status in the society, Islam in the area did not yield ground or accept inducement to make it succumb easily to another system of faith.

Largely because of their strong status in the community, the Muslims often displayed considerable pride and confidence in their professed faith. Compact and well backed, they held that they had a religion, a system of faith, that was self-sufficient and which should not be relinquished. It was a Christian missionary who bore an eloquent testimony to this:

"As elsewhere, so in Abeokuta, he (that is, the Mohammedan) claims to be in possession of the last, best and truest revelation of God's will given to man.<sup>1</sup>

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Muslims elsewhere. Right up to 1914, Groves notes that for all the exertions of various Christian bodies in North Africa, "Sound conversions" to Christianity were few. Groves, C.P., The Planting of Christianity in Africa, Vol. 1, 118ff.; Vol. 3, London, 1955, 161-2pp. See also Stock, E., History of the C.M.S. 454ff.; Vol. 3, 512-536pp.; and Vol. 4, 115, 124pp. Stock, in these works, reviews the invigorated challenge of the C.M.S. among Muslims in North Africa and the Sudan.

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1. Niger and Yoruba Notes 1894, No.1, Vol. 1, 30-2pp.

The Muslims, consequently, tended not only to look down upon the persistent followers<sup>1</sup> of the traditional religion but also to hold themselves superior to the Christians.<sup>2</sup> On occasions, as Rev. C. Gollmer found to his surprise, this Muslim sense of superiority induced them to seek his conversion, and that of other European Christians, to Islam.<sup>3</sup> The confident belief of the Muslims made the situation in Qyo and its districts fall in line with what appears to have been a general experience that Islam was unyielding to another rival system,<sup>4</sup> although there were certain local factors which made this particularly so in the area.

The persistent growth of Islam in the area had

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1. Cf. the memorable words of the ubiquitous Àlufa Kokewukobere who dismissed the followers of the traditional religion as "ègbin" (filth). (Interview with the jamā'a in/ big centres of Islam in Qyo and its districts, December, 1973, March 1974, August, November, 1975).
2. Ibid.
3. Report of the Select Committee on Africa of 1865. (Parliamentary Papers, 412, 412-0, 241, 248pp.). To the Christian missionary Gollmer, "Mussulmans (sic) are our decided enemies" - as he declared to the same parliamentary committee.
4. Ibid.

various effects on the Christian challengers. Some held the view that Christian evangelism would be more profitable if shifted to the areas which were relatively recently islamised<sup>1</sup> such as Fiditi, Ilora, Akinmorin and the rural districts in general.<sup>2</sup> Many more, however, were undaunted; people like M.T.E. Ajayi, A.W. Smith, and Bishop Tugwell continued to advocate open confrontation with Islam.<sup>3</sup> Right down to 1908 and 1911, the Rev. A.W.

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1. Niger and Yoruba Notes, 1896, No. 25, Vol. III, July 1896, 6p. This document carries a report of the meeting of the Anglican clergy in Ibadan in 1896.
  2. See map 1 on 1(a)p.
  3. The 1902 Conference of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa was, to a large extent, dominated by a concern about the growth of Islam in Yorubaland. In a powerful episcopal address, Bishop Tugwell focussed attention on this issue, which, to him, was "a matter of great anxiety, of profound regret, sorrow and humiliation". The same tone was taken by M.T.E. Ajayi and others in their speeches. For all this, see Report of the Western Equatorial Africa Diocesan Conference, Lagos:1902, London, 1903.

Smith and S. M. Abiodun easily succeeded in persuading the C.M.S. Diocesan Conferences to pass the motion that "the rapid growth of Muhammedanism in Yorubaland calls for serious consideration and prompt action on the part of the church."<sup>1</sup>

Some clergy tried to explain off the futility of their missionary endeavour among the Muslims by a recourse to certain theories which discredited Islamic faith. Indeed, in the attempt to project their religion and counter the advance of Islam, many of the Christian evangelists went out of their way to discredit the other religion of which they had, at best, an imperfect knowledge. Thus, we are made to know that the "Yoruba Muslim priests maintained themselves by deceits and charm making";<sup>2</sup> their religion was the "greatest obstacle to the progress of civilisation and to all that

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1. Report of the Proceedings of the Third Session of The First Synod of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa 1908, (Exeter, 1908). See also C.M.S. Proceedings 1909, London, 1910, 29-30pp.

2. C.M.S. CA2/028, Annual Letter of D. Coker, December 2, 1877.

is pure, holy and noble and Christian of which the world knows".<sup>1</sup> "Islam was as stagnant as it was obstructive to progress".<sup>2</sup> "It discourages free labour"<sup>3</sup> "its concept of sin was an external parasite, for it is a sin for any Muhammadan to be a farmer".<sup>4</sup> A great deal of this denunciation was of one piece with the age-old mutual recrimination between the

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1. Report of the Lagos Diocesan Conference, 1902, 20p. This was part of the episcopal charge delivered by bishop Tugwell. Cf. the view of the 1896 Ibadan clergy meeting that Christianity was "Confronted everywhere by the obstinate and sullen force of retrograde Islam".
  2. A certain Rev. M.J. Luke delivered a fatuous sermon at Breadfruit Church, Lagos on December 7, 1886 in which he declared: Ìsìn Ìmòlẹ̀kò sẹ ire kan ní ilẹ̀ wa, kò kó àwọn ènìá láti sẹ ara wọn lí ohunkóhun". (Islam has done no good in our country, and has not taught the people anything whatsoever). This is reported in the 5th Annual Report of Lagos, Church Missions for the year 1886, 14p.
  3. Ajayi, M.T.E. (Rev.): "Christian Missions to Muslims" in Report of Western Equatorial Africa Diocesan Conference, 1902, London, 1903
  4. Ibid.

followers of the two religions in any part of Oyo and its districts where they confronted each other.<sup>1</sup>

The bias and prejudicial treatment of Islam and its adherents manifest in certain declarations and publications of the Christian clergy in Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, did not, however, altogether prevent some Christians from appreciating certain aspects of Islam in African, especially Yoruba, society. Some of the missionaries, in clear tone, appreciated the absence of racial politics and clerical hierarchical organisation among the Yoruba Muslims. The following factors, some felt, gave Islam what was aggrievedly missing in Christianity of the late nineteenth century: prominence to the Umma and freedom from any crippling racial wrangles. All Muslims were one and equal before Allāh and under the banner of Islam. There were some Islamic principles that taught and upheld oneness and equality of the Muslims within the Umma. Islam in Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland

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1. Religious clash or open controversy generated this recrimination.



at large, had been taught and preached by Muslims themselves, young and old, paid and unpaid, and on the basis of their own originality. The propagation of Islam was done without demanding or receiving any foreign aid or directives. The Muslim teachers had taught without formally receiving pay from parents. The religious men preached about gratis at their own expense whilst the community, by itself, erected many mosques everywhere out of its own local resources.<sup>1</sup> What the Rev. James Johnson candidly expressed in 1878 after his travels in Yorubaland only succinctly put what many others were later to find and appreciate. On that occasion he declared:

"One thing impressed itself very forcibly on my mind during my travel and it is this that African and Yoruba Mohammedans manifest

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1. The Lagos Weekly Record, August 26, 1893. The Christian editor, quite aptly, describes the African Muslim in these words. "A Muslim African develops into a mosque erecting, self-reliant, propagandist. He describes the Christians as "house-builders" and ~~appon-string~~ saints". Note that, up till today in Oyo and its districts the erection of new mosques and the renovation of the existing ones are in most cases carried out on the basis of Muslim communal efforts.

a superior capacity over African or Yoruba Christians to spread the religion they respectively believe... and this, notwithstanding, the disadvantages and ardour (sic) of learning to read in Arabic".<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim attitude of self-help and self-reliance deeply impressed some of the Christian men and agents. They bemoaned the non-availability of it among the Christian converts.<sup>2</sup> Their converts, in addition to being relatively meagre in numerical strength, were heavily dependent on others, be it on their clergy or their home Missions, for various forms of support and direction of their own local affairs. Thus the Christian clergy constantly endeavoured to ginger their followers to imitate the Muslims concerning their features of self-help and self-reliance. Their self-help, James Johnson stressed in 1875, "is a lesson for Christian emulation;

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056. James Johnson, Annual Letter of 1878.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056, Annual Report, 1880, of James Johnson. He, for example, bemoaned the fact that the Christian population of Abeokuta was one set against the increase of class fees from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  strings of cowries. In contrast, the Muslims freely supported their teachers and religious leaders, albeit, in no organised form.

and has been the subject of many addresses".<sup>1</sup> In 1896, the C.M.S. Conference in Lagos also noted the attraction exerted on Christians by the Yoruba Muslim "system of priesthood, its method of maintaining it and its self-propagating power".<sup>2</sup>

But, possibly, what impressed the Christians most about Islam in Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, was its "AFRICANNESS". In a sharp contrast to the Christianity in their midst, they appreciated that Islam was less intolerant of African customs (polygyny in particular). It, to some extent, allowed polygyny and made use of local airs. Islam in Oyo and its districts made no serious attempt to uproot the traditional religion in its entirety with a view to establishing Islam per se, I mean Islam in its pristine and unalloyed form, but to integrate Islam with the traditional religion by way of the common law of

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1. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. March 6, 1876.
  2. Resume of the C.M.S. Conference, 1896 in Lagos Standard, March 4, 1896. By "its system of priesthood", the Conference probably meant the (Alufas)

reciprocity and graduality. Thus, in the area one can speak of Islam in Yorubaland different from Islam in Arabia in some respects, whereas the Christian missionaries endeavoured to introduce and establish in the area Christianity as taught, preached and practised in its original home abroad. There was no recognition and tolerance for the age-old, traditional background of the people. In this situation, Islam continued to expand at the expense of Christianity. Islam made no serious attack on the traditional African society; nor did it manifest any desire to establish, as the Christian converts were wont to do, an "Imperium in Imperio".<sup>1</sup> It lived more closely than Christianity with the followers of the traditional religion whom it tactfully sought to convert.<sup>2</sup>

The tolerance or preservation of certain African customs and practices, had, as a matter of fact, gingered some people to declare Islam as the "Religion

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1. See Church Missionary Gleaner, 1898, People looking for protection against established authority, according to Bishop Oluwole, sought out the Mission and offered themselves for protection.
  2. C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec. C.M.S., March 6, 1876.

of Africa". In 1893, the editor of The Lagos Weekly Record struck this point. He reported the speech which the Reverend I. Oluwole made in England,<sup>1</sup> the essence of which has since been echoed by others in other parts of Yorubaland. The editor prefaced his statement with a profuse, if superfluous, apology for being "caught singing the praises of Islam" and pleaded that he was compelled to speak the truth. He agreed with the Reverend Oluwole that with reference to Yorubaland, "Islam had become indigenus..., it has allied itself to, and become a part of, and a power in Africa."<sup>2</sup>

The three aspects of Islam in Oyo and its districts which impressed the Christians in the area - its organisation, spirit of self-help, and Africanness - were, up to a point, rosily conceived, for, the Muslims in the area had received some nurture from outside the area especially from Ilorin, the post-old Oyo Empire stronghold

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1. The Rev. I. Oluwole, the assistant Bishop of Western Equatorial Africa, made the speech at Exeter Hall which he ended with an impassioned appeal for foreign missionaries "to occupy the Yoruba country where a considerable number of the people are Moslems (sic) and several of the crowned heads and princes of the royal blood are devotees of Islam"; q.v., "Our Islamic Prospects", in The Lagos Weekly Record, August 26, 1893.
  2. The Lagos Weekly Record, August 26, 1893. The indigenisation of Islam in Africa is also well appreciated by

of Islam,<sup>1</sup> and Nupeland. Besides, it was Arabic, a non-Yoruba language, that was the language of worship (prayer) and scholarship. However, these reservations could, and did not, vitiate the essential truth.

As the Christians appreciated these aspects of Islam, they started to formulate their ideas about how their church could be organised. They were assertive about African ability to propagate and direct the faith of his choice. Also, they affirmed the need for reservation of essentially African and religious customs within that faith; and also stressed the need to be rid of racism and the clergy. They endeavoured to stimulate the others in their group to a ready acceptance of the enviable aspects of Islam.

The ideas were potentially catalytic within the church in Oyo and its districts. Of course, it can be veritably said that the events within the church stretching from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the early

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many others. See particularly Trimingham, J.S., A History of Islam 232p. et passim, Morel, E.D., Nigeria, its Peoples and Its Problems, London, 1912, pp.214ff. Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 2nd ed., London 1888, 35p.

1. Concerning <sup>the</sup> Islamic status of Ilorin, see above, chapter 1, 91-2pp; chapter 2, 130p.

part of the present century were causative of the internal ferment which later produced the emergence of the African Church Movement.<sup>1</sup> But this is an essentially "Church-centric" view, taking meagre account of the entire Yoruba society of Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, and of the intercourse in that society of various groups and ideas.

The contributory role of Islam to the emergence of African Church Movement, through the channel of the keen and rosy Christian appreciation of certain aspects of Islamic religion in Yorubaland, is yet to be more fully appreciated. The spurring agents in this regard were particularly the Christian leaders such as Ajayi

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1. Christian historians such as Ajayi, Ayandele and Webster have, for example, emphasised the importance of the Crowther's episode in this respect. For an analysis of these events within the Christian Churches, see particularly: Webster, J.B., The African Churches among the Yoruba..., 42-91pp. Turner, African Independent Church, Vol. 1, Oxford, 1967, 5p.

Crowther,<sup>1</sup> James Johnson,<sup>2</sup> Mojola Agbebi<sup>3</sup> and Edward Blyden.<sup>4</sup> These people had taken special interest in Islam, and were especially moved by its spread and

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1. Ayandele, E.A. (The Missionary Impact..., 118p.) has drawn attention to the "impetuous and relentless... effort" of Ajayi Crowther to push the missionary frontier even northwards to the Muslims on the Niger. But even in Yorubaland, he has taken special interest in evangelism among the Muslims with whom he engaged in disputes after he had given them copies of the Arabic Bible. Stock speaks of Crowther's plea for shrewd and tactful approach towards non-Christians q.v. Stock, E., History of the Church Mission Society, Vols. 2, London 1899, 458-9pp. It is pertinent to recall here that Ajayi Crowther was a slave boy who hailed from Oşogun in in Oyo North but later returned to his home country and became the first African Bishop.
  2. For further information about him, see the 2 articles on him by Ayandele, E.A., "An Assessment of James Johnson and his place in in Nigerian History, 1874-1917" parts I and II in J.H.S.N., 2, 4, December 1963; and 3, 1, December 1964.
  3. Webster, J.B., The African Churches..., 99p. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact... 254-6pp. This rather fiery "Nationalist" was the leader of the Native Baptist Church.
  4. The influence of Blyden within the Yoruba Christian community has been analysed. See particularly Ayandele, The Missionary Impact..., 217-219pp. He places his influence within the perspective of that of James Johnson. See also Webster op.cit., 65-6; 99ff.



growth in Yorubaland. In their various plans to check the growth,<sup>1</sup> they had moved closely with the Muslims and come to cherish this "Africanness" of Islam. Their ideas gained ground within the church.<sup>2</sup> It was not devoid of significance that the Yoruba African Church in Oyo and its districts was developed to bear certain traits observed by the Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Christian gentlemen, obviously all, believed that Christianity was the best form of religion for Africa. Even people like Blyden felt that Islam was only a stage in the religious evolution of Africans towards this ideal. See Blyden to Wikinson, November 17, 1891, published in Lagos Weekly Record, December 3, 1892.
  2. Webster, for example, showed how "the Niger Purge" (that is, Crowther's displacement), African Leadership, Blyden and foreign forms loomed large in United Native African Church thinking; q.v. Webster, The African Churches..., 69-89pp.
  3. Webster, op.cit., 47, 99-100, 100-111pp. In spite of some prevalent Christian scorn of Islam, as will be pointed out shortly in this section, the African Churches endeavoured to replace Islam as the preserver of TRADITIONAL VALUES. They thus adopted local airs, individual efforts, polygyny and even what they conceived to be the Islamic mode of propagation: preaching, baptism and teaching. See also, Coleman: J.S. Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Berkeley, 1958; 174-8pp. "The African Churches" Nigerian Magazine, 7(a) December, 1963.

The African Church attitude was a synthesis bolstered by a unique contribution. Mojola Agbebi and J.K. Coker believed, like the missionaries, that Yoruba conversion to Islam was a tragedy; but like Blyden, they were impressed with its adaptability. They sought to emulate its methods<sup>1</sup> and believed that the Yoruba could be as effective in proselytising for Christ as for Mohammed (sic) if the apostolic method used by Muslims replaced the society method.

The African Church was disturbed by the lowering of moral standards among converts to Islam and Christianity. One of the attractions, especially for the youth who worried under the multiple restraints of the traditional religion, was the greater moral freedom which the new religions offered. The older and more conservative turned to Islam as the less disruptive and the most likely to uphold the familiar moral structure.

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1. See Agbebi, "Our Islamic Prospects", Lagos Weekly Records, August 26, 1893; Agbebi, "The West African Problem", in Spiller, G. (Compiler), 'Papers on Interracial Relations 347-8pp. Agbebi in Lagos Standard, April 16, 1902; Coker, J.K., The African Church 7-9pp.; Sorinolu, J. to Coker, J.K. August 16, 1905, and Ijaiye Youngmen (abroad) to Coker, J.K. June 4, 1919. Coker papers; Coker S.A. Yoruba News, June

The African Church sought to replace Islam as the preserver of the traditional structure, of which polygyny constituted the core. Agbebi and Coker believed that where missionary work had been intense and European supervision effective, there Islam developed the fastest.

The railway line running from Lagos to the North divided the Yorubaland into two unequal parts. Located on and to the west of the railway, the missionaries had been at work in the cities of Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomoso since the early 1850's.<sup>1</sup> Conversions had been slow and results meagre - 90,000 Christians by 1921. West of the railway, where Europeans had been hardest at work for the longest period, Islam had advanced four times<sup>2</sup> as fast as Christianity in Ibadan -

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22 and 29; 1924. Concerning the spread of Islam, see Southern Nigeria Civil Service List, London, 1909, 38, 57, 73-4, 106, 109pp. For a modern attitude resembling that of the African Churches, see Trimmingham, J.S., The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa, London, 1953.

1. See Webster, The African Churches...97p.
2. See above, Table 1 on 246p.

Oyo and three times as fast in Egba. European supervision meant austere discipline which kept the majority outside the church, prolonged the spiritual vacuum, and created Muslims. African supervision even in the Mission was more lax, brought more people into the church and forestalled Islam. However, the effect of African supervision, as pointed out earlier, should not be over-emphasised, for despite the growth of African Church Movement in Oyo and its districts Islam had since remained the dominant religion.

The challenge posed by Christianity also had significant effect on the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts and Yorubaland at large. By its offer and monopoly of Western education, the Christians possessed a strong instrument against the Muslims. Though Islam was able to maintain its ground generally, yet this Christian lure of letters effected, in the course of time, a loop-hole in the armour of the strong-man.

The Muslims, however, benefited from the Christian challenge. It will be recalled that the Muslims were roused to a great defence and propagation of their faith.

In the course of persistent Christian challenge, they began to gain a considerable acquaintanceship with some Christian Literature, especially the Bible and the Psalms of David. This was particularly true of the Muslim mālams who often searched the Christian Scriptures for their argumentative significance.<sup>1</sup> This eventually led to the birth of a special class of mālams called 'AKÉÚKÉWÈÈ' who were fairly proficient in Arabic and Yoruba. The class later produced a number of works on Islam and Christianity.

It will be erroneous to connive at the advantage which Muslim attendance of Christian-sponsored schools had for the totality of Muslims in Oyo and its districts. It had its own good effects on the Muslim

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1. One remarkable feature of the counter arguments mounted by a good number of Muslim apologists was the facile reference to Biblical texts. See for example, C.M.S. G3/A2/04, Journal of Charles Philips from June to August 1887, where a Muslim teacher in Ondo quoted the Old Testament text to support a point. The ubiquitous Alufa Kokewukobere were reported to do similar thing in some parts of Oyo and its districts during his evangelical tour of Yorubaland.

community. Those who were not converted to Christianity constituted an important group among the Muslims in the area. They had learnt about Christianity, at first hand, so to say. In point of fact, and on the basis of the testimony of the Christians, the Muslim pupils showed some knowledge of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> But their significance lay more in the fact that, as people who had gained some degree of Western education, they constituted the torch-(light) purveyors of the new civilisation to the other Muslims. Their influence was, in the 1900's, gathering accretion and was particularly apparent in the next two decades as pioneer founders of various Muslim literary societies such as the A.U.D., N.U.D. and a host of others. These societies were chiefly concerned with the leavening influence of Western education and modernity among the Muslims in Oyo and its districts.

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1. See C.M.S. CA2/056, James Johnson to Sec., C.M.S. July 29, 1875. See also Reports by Rev. (later bishop) A.W. Howell, the Diocesan Inspector of Lagos Districts Schools. It is said that Muslim pupils often did better than the Christians in Bible Knowledge.

Moreover, the educated Muslims were the new leaders of the Muslims in the area in a good number of ways. They soon gained access to some English literature on Islam by which they came to know more about their religion than when their knowledge of Islam was only gained by learning Arabic the difficult and tortuous way. Edified by this knowledge, they were in a position, possibly, better than that of the age-old māḷams, to enlighten their less privileged associates on the principles of Islam in general. Their leadership was based on literacy in English and Arabic and on the proper grasp of Islam.

At this juncture, it will be expedient to note that inspite of the rivalry between the Muslims and the Christians, the socio-religious interaction existing between them, however, was, by and large, kept polite and decent. There were scattered incidents of manifest intolerance which can be attributed to some ardour and passion on both sides. But these were rare. Normal courtesies were exchanged and if the Muslims remained adamant, conservative and assertive about their religion and faith, the evidence reveals that

they betrayed no general personal ill-will or fanaticism. The Christian men, clergy disputants, such as there were, often bore testimony to their being heartily welcome by the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> For example, after a tour of the Yoruba Missions in 1887, W. Allen reported that "the Muhammedans (sic) at Abeokuta as at Lagos,.. appear to be friendly disposed and devoid of that fanatical spirit which characterised them in the Turkish dominions."<sup>2</sup> This report might also be pertinent concerning the interaction between the Christian clergymen and the Muslims in some parts of Oyo and its districts especially in recently islamised places such as Fiditi, Ilora and Akinmopin<sup>3</sup> and a host of other places in the area.

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1. C.M.S. CA2/069, Meakin's Half Yearly Report ending March, 1860. See also C.M.S. 3A2/02, Report on the Yoruba Mission by W. Allen, 1887.
  2. C.M.S. G3A/02, Report on the Yoruba Mission by W. Allen, 1887. He often relates how he was offered kola nuts and other gifts by the Muslim leaders and influential men.
  3. See map 1 on 1(a)p.



The general absence of spitefulness which, in point of fact, can be so easily generated by militant and ardent evangelism, was in part due to the display of courtesy and a sense of moderation by both sides; but it was due, in greater degree, to the restraint imposed by Yoruba traditional culture which not only disapproves of extremism but smugly allows religious co-fraternity.<sup>1</sup> The religious co-fraternity, indeed, had its basis in the age-old family solidarity. In Yorubaland, allegiance goes first to family solidarity, then to religious solidarity. The practice springs from the fact that, in the country the former preceded the latter in the history of the Yoruba. Religious differences were not allowed, in most cases, to disrupt the age-long family solidarity. It is essentially this cultural factor which explains the tolerant and kind

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1. Cragg correctly writes that among the Yoruba there is "inter-religious fraternity"; q.v. Cragg, K., "West African Catechism" in Muslim World XLVIII, 3, July 1958. See also Trimmingham, J.S., Islam in West Africa, 129, 222p.

attitude of the chiefs, Muslim<sup>1</sup> or not, and of the common people in their transaction with others.<sup>2</sup> It also goes to explain some peculiar Yoruba socio-religious features: the religious mutual existence of the votaries of the local religion, Islam and Christianity under the same roof and within the same family and lineage,<sup>3</sup> and some spirit of co-operation noticeable not only between the votaries of Islam

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1. Daniel Olubi was obliged to comment on "the kindness of the Mohammedan head Chief (the Arẹ), to us and our religion" q.v. C.M.S., CA2/075, Daniel Olubi, Journal Extract for the Half Year Ending December 1879
  2. Sir W. Macgregor once wrote that the Yoruba "might serve as a model of politeness to any people in Europe" q.v. Macgregor "Lagos, Abeokuta and the Alake" in J.A.S., 3, 12, July, 1904.
  3. Cragg, K. (in "West African Catechism") ably speaks of "a surprising degree of Muslim-Christian interpretation" among the Yoruba. Truly as he says, "different individuals in one family belong to different faiths with... mutual respect and tolerance". See for example, how the Alhaji A.B.I. Kukoyi, describes how Muslims and Christians are together in his family q.v. The Truth, August 4-10, 1961. The palaces of the obas in Oyo and its districts constituted in the nineteenth century, a meet evidence as regards this inter-religious fraternity. It will be recalled that a traditional oba in Yorubaland is a patron of all religions in his town. Thus, the Yoruba saying: "Oba, o ni gbogbo esin - "The king, of all religions". Thus in the palace of any Yoruba king, the inter-religious fraternity is usually a feature. The religious co-existence

and Christianity<sup>1</sup> but also between Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. The festival days constitute an immense testimony to the inter-religious fraternity in Yorubaland.

So far is the history of the expansion of Islam in the era of Christianity. Right away from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present time, Christianity had constituted itself as a rival religion, in cut-throat competition with Islam to claim the souls of the people. As a result of the challenge posed by Christianity, the Muslims became more alive to their religious responsibilities, adjusted their conservative attitude and legalistic approach to their religion. Thus, in Oyo and its districts in the

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is true of some other places in the Western Sudan, as pointed out in other studies. See particularly, Trimingham, J.S. Islam in West Africa: Monteil, V.L. Islam Noir, Paris, 1964, 198ff.

1. The Lagos Times, October 12, 1881. The paper records Muslim-Christian co-operation at Bazaar sales. This was the case in some parts of Yorubaland.

second half of the nineteenth century, the Muslims made greater progress among the local people than the Christian missionaries.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM IN THE ERA OF BRITISH  
RULE, 1894-19004.1. British occupation of Oyo and its districts.

In this section, we shall examine the impact of British rule on the expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the late nineteenth century. When discussing the expansion of Islam during the nineteenth century, we have been confronted with increasing penetration of British power into the Muslim territory. Here again, may I add that the section will be brief, since it is no part of the work to recapitulate the history of the way the area called Oyo and its districts was brought within the web of Western domination and civilisation.

Until the last decade of the nineteenth century, British had no contact with Oyo and its districts. Before this time, the activities of the British were confined to the coast. It will be expedient to recall here the various difficulties<sup>1</sup> of the early Christian missionaries in Oyo and its districts, and Yorubaland at large, that halted Christian advance. The difficulties

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1. See above, 175-189pp.

did not only constitute a hinderance for the influx of Christianity but also prevented early contact between the British and the people of Oyo and its districts.

#### 4.11 Missionary enterprise and the pacification of Yorubaland.

In 1894, the British began to establish their influence and authority formally in Oyo and its districts. But prior to this time, was a period of informal influence during which the way was paved for the later formal control. A brief examination of the period of informal influence is essential for a proper grasp of the events that succeeded it.

As in other parts of Yorubaland, the process of British influence and expansion in Oyo and its districts owed a lot to the Christian Missions.<sup>1</sup>

Christian missionaries first introduced British ways

1. Concerning the role of the missionaries in fostering British influence and expansion in Yorubaland, see Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact..., chapter 2 and "The Mode of British Expansion in Yorubaland in the second Half of the Nineteenth Century".

of life into Yoruba society. It was they, who largely provided the initial link between the Yoruba chiefs and the British Government.

It is in this connection that Ayandele says the following:

"Missionaries were the pathfinders of British influence. It was a role they could not have escaped partly because of the political environment in which they found themselves, partly because of their patriotic instincts and partly because it was the logical outcome of their activity".

Further, he says:

"The Missionary African or European was the conveyor of British influence in a subtle but sure manner".<sup>1</sup>

In the task of fostering British influence in the period just referred to, the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) were the foremost. It is pertinent, at this juncture, to point out that the majority of them were of Yoruba origin - Daniel Olubi, Samuel Johnson, Abraham Faşina Foster, to mention the most prominent ones. Hence, it will be erroneous to

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1. Ayandele, E.A., The Missionary Impact... chapter 2.

hold the view that they consciously advocated that the Alááfin, or any other Yoruba ruler for that matter, should be superseded in authority by the British. But they believed, like their colleagues elsewhere, that the Yoruba society could derive enviable benefits from European civilisation generally.<sup>1</sup> What is more, their Mission being Anglican, they naturally came to believe that the British civilisation was to be preferred to any other in Europe. Thus, they earnestly wished that British influence be established in their country.

The desire of the missionaries to have British influence established in Oyo and its districts, and other parts of Yorubaland, came at a time when the political milieu in Yorubaland generally required some degree of external aid to be peaceful. As has been pointed out earlier, the fall of the Old Oyo Empire had resulted, inter alia, in the struggle for power among a number of Yoruba States.<sup>2</sup> The result was a

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1. Atanda, J., The New Oyo Empire..., 45p.

2. See above, chapter 1, 69-82pp.



series of wars, the last of which had broken out in 1878.<sup>1</sup> From the look of things, there appeared to be no possibility of putting the wars to an end through internal arbitration.<sup>2</sup> Yet it was exigent, at least for the Aláàfin and his subjects of the Oke Ogun area, to end this war. The Dahomeans started a series of raids on the Oke-Ogun area in 1881.<sup>3</sup> The Aláàfin and the Oke-Ogun people could not gather enough force to check the Dahomeans. Only the Ibadan were capable of achieving this feat. But they could not render any help as long as the Kiriji war continued. The problem, then, was where and how to get a peace-maker who would help to bring the Kiriji war to an end.

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1. Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., 46p.
  2. Reasons for the impossibility are contained in Atanda, J.A., The Search for Peace in Yorubaland, 1881-1893; Irving and Bonnar Graduate Prize Essay for 1966.
  3. For more points on the nature of the Dahomean menace, see Atanda, J.A., Dahomean Raids on Oke-Ogun Towns, 1881-1890: 'An Episode in 19th Century Yoruba-Dahomey Relations', Historia, III, April, 1966, 1-12pp.

It was at this time that the missionaries became the most useful in offering suggestions concerning the ways and means by which the problem could be solved. Shortly after the first of the Dahomean raids in 1881, Abraham Faşina Foster, the C.M.S. agent in Işeyin, initiated a move from that town in October, 1881, asking the Alááfin to consult the British Lagos Government to help in putting an end to the Kiriji war.<sup>1</sup> The Alááfin readily agreed to this suggestion. He then invited A.F. Foster, and later the Rev. D.O. Olubi and Mr. (later the Rev.) Samuel Johnson, who were the C.M.S. agents in Ibadan, to advise him on how to approach the British Lagos Government. Their advice resulted in the Alááfin's writing to the Lieutenant-Governor, who was then the head of the administration in Lagos, soliciting British aid in putting an end to the Kiriji war.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries served as the Alááfin's clerks in writing the letter

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1. C.M.S. G3/A2/02, Journal of A.F. Foster for July-December, 1881, entries for October 3, 4, 5 and 7.
  2. For details, see Atanda, J.A., The Search for Peace...

and undertook to send the letter to Lagos.

Even when the appeal to the British Lagos Government did not immediately bring the desired result,<sup>1</sup> the missionaries continued to urge the Alááfin and other Yoruba rulers to endure in requesting the British Lagos Government to intervene so that the war could be brought to an end. The chiefs, anxious for peace, persisted as the missionaries had advised. By 1886, the British Lagos Government found it possible to intervene.<sup>2</sup> And between that date and 1893, it succeeded in ending the Yoruba wars.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Reasons for the initial failure are contained in Atanda, J.A., The Search for Peace...,
  2. Perhaps, the most important reason why the British Lagos Government found it possible to intervene confidently in 1886 was the awareness that such intervention was likely to be successful; for the Rev. J. B. Wood of the C.M.S. had prepared the ground for success by his efforts, in 1884 and 1885, to seek a solution to the problem of ending the war. Details of Wood's efforts are in Atanda, J.A., The Search for Peace..., op.cit.
  3. For the details, see Atanda, J.A., The Search for Peace..., op.cit.

Possibly, to contemporary history writers, the most significant effect of British intervention in the Yoruba wars was that the British brought the wars to an end. As a result, they proclaimed, chaos gave way to peace, warriors left the camps for their homes to live settled lives, families were reunited and the like.<sup>1</sup> In retrospect, however, the most significant effect of British intervention in the Yoruba wars was that, through this intervention and consequent upon it, British domination was established over Oyo and its districts and the other parts of Yorubaland. It was entrenched by the 1888 and 1893 Treaties<sup>2</sup> with the Alááfin of Oyo respectively.

#### 4.12. British domination of Oyo and its districts.

The British domination of Oyo and its districts assumed a full swing with the establishment of British authority through the dynamic activities of jingoistic

1. For example, see The Lagos Weekly Record, 'The Expedition to the Interior', leading article in the issue of March 25, 1893.
2. See above, f.n. 2 on 215-216pp.

Captain R. Bower. He was appointed the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner at the end of 1893<sup>1</sup> and eventually he was successful in bombarding Oyo in 1895. And since 1895 to the mid-twentieth century, the British had assumed an effective occupation of Oyo and its districts and, in fact, Yorubaland as a whole. With the bombardment of Oyo, in 1895, Captain R.L. Bower was able, in unmistakable terms, to tell the Alááfin that his duty as Resident and Travelling Commissioner was the establishment of British authority and not necessarily the enhancement of the Alááfin's traditional authority per se. Thus for the first time ever, Oyo and its districts began to experience a policy of Imperium in Imperio. And from 1895 onwards, Oyo and its districts came under the web of Western domination and civilisation.

#### 4.2. Islam and British rule.

##### 4.2.1 Islam and the Pax Britannica.

Before the establishment of British authority in

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1. Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., 52p.

the area, the Muslims had been living under the traditional rule. They were, of course, trying to acquire political power and influence.<sup>1</sup> But in the interim, they tolerated traditional rule since it granted them freedom of worship.<sup>2</sup> This experience must have predisposed the Yoruba Muslims in Oyo and its districts to accept British rule which was essentially to them another non-Muslim Government. Events later showed that the Yoruba Muslims in the area and the rest of Yorubaland as a whole not only accepted British rule, but were also ready to cooperate with it to settle some problems that plagued their area. Eventually, the relationship that was established between the Muslims and the British Government was essentially one of incredible friendliness and cordiality. On the one hand, the British treated the Muslims with considerable respect, deference and understanding. On the other hand, the Muslims saw in the Government an impartial and helpful

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1. See above, chapter 2, 146-151pp.

2. Ibid.

administration which they respected and with which they were ready to work. An attitude of mutual respect and help was built up over the years between 1886 and 1900.

At the inchoative stage of the British occupation of Oyo and its districts, the contact between the Muslims and the new rulers was rather rough if not definitely unpleasant. However, this situation did not last long. The Muslims realised the importance of the Pax Britannica,<sup>1</sup> the 'Peace of Britain' or the 'Crown Peace', forged by the British, for the expansion of Islam in the area. With the British occupation of the area, there was general peace. The Yoruba wars that had formerly plagued the area and Yorubaland at large had ceased. Thus, ~~the~~ Muslims now had time to bother <sup>their</sup> about religion. The cessation of the Yoruba wars and the resultant Pax Britannica afforded Islam some air of freedom to expand with little or no hinderance.

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1. Cf. The significance of the Pax Romannia, the 'Peace of Rome', for the expansion of Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World. For details about this, see Frend, W.H.O. The Early Church, London 1971, 1ff.

Thus, it will be wise to hold that the Muslims cooperated with the new rulers as a result of the advantage they derived from the Pax Britannica venture. The Pax Britannica in the area continued with little or no inhibition because any threat to the peace of the area was, however, to be averted if possible by the presence of Government policemen or soldiers or any other step that could preserve the well-being of all and sundry in the area. In this milieu, Islam as a successor to the traditional religion of the people, and as a Scripture religion which was well entrenched before the advent of Christianity, continued to expand almost unrestrained.

#### 4.22 Islam and Western education.

More momentous events were yet to take place which drew the Muslims and the Government closely together. First, there was the issue of the establishment of Western education among the Muslims in the area. On this issue, the Government was, more than ever before, very helpful to the Muslims and the Muslims were fully appreciative of Government concern and action. This was because the issue was of great significance not only in



the history of the relationship between the Government and the Muslims in the area and Yorubaland at large, but also in the history of the growth of Islam generally. Thus, it will be pertinent to deal with this issue in some detail.

It has already been pointed out how Muslim apathy and opposition to the Christian-sponsored Western education persisted for a long time. The attitude caught the attention of the Government in a rather indirect way.

By 1867, the Government was already showing its deep concern regarding educational development when it started to make available certain amount for the upkeep and education of the children of the emancipated African slaves especially the *Àkú* slaves from Sierra-Leone who had returned to Yorubaland, their original domicile. In 1872, the Government widened the scope of its educational involvement by making some token grants of ten pounds (the present Nigerian twenty naira) each to the three Missionary Societies - the C.M.S., the Baptist and the Wesleyan Methodist, by way of aiding them in their educational programme. The interest of the Government

towards education continued and increased as the Government became more and more entrenched. But it was soon discovered that attendance at these schools was not increasing as steadily as could be expected; it was indeed, far short of the number of children of school-going age.<sup>1</sup> A significant event later took place in Lagos which subsequently affected Muslim education not only in Yorubaland but also in the whole of Nigeria at large. At the instance of the secretary of State for the Colonies, a Committee of the Board of Education was set up in July 1889 to look into the problem of increasing attendance in schools in Lagos.<sup>2</sup> The Committee discovered that it was the Muslims who stood aloof from the Christian-sponsored schools and kept down the number of pupils. It thereupon made some recommendation to the

1. See Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 266p.
2. N.A.I. CS01/1, Lord Knutsford to Moloney, April 19, 1889. See also M.W. Walsh: The Catholic Contribution to Education in Western Nigeria, 1861-1926. (M.A. London, 1950, 166-8pp.)

Government concerning how the Muslims could be made to share in the educational undertaking. Thus, from 1889, the problem of Muslim abstention from Mission schools in Lagos came to the knowledge of the Government.

It was recommended, therefore, that the Government should, in a meeting with the mālams and Muslims elders, impress on the Muslims the advantages of Western education and the insufficiency of Qurānic education only. Secondly, Christian-sponsored schools were to be induced by an offer of fifty pounds<sup>1</sup> (the present Nigerian one hundred naira) to include Arabic language in their curriculum with a view to making their schools more attractive and useful to the Muslim pupils and parents. Thirdly, the Muslims should be asked to incorporate into their own schools' curriculum the teaching, in English, of the three R's - Arithmetic, Reading and Writing, which constituted the basis of Western education in the early period.

The recommendations came to mean that the British

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1. Gbadamsoi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 267p.

Government was interested in the affairs and progress of the Muslims but, indeed, they were in a rather superficial manner. The word 'superficial' is used here because some of the prescriptions were by themselves implausible, based, as they were, on small knowledge of the local situation. For, there were but a very few people who knew Arabic language and English enough to be useful and acceptable as teachers in either of the Mission or Muslim schools respectively. There was the more elaborate issue as to whether or not both sides, in spite of Government financial aid, would not regard the novel introductions in their schools' curriculum as devices which would eventually hamper their own religious and educational programme. In my opinion, it is very likely that the Muslims in Nigeria equated Europeans with Christians<sup>1</sup> in consequence of their concern for Western education which the Christian missionaries introduced and was later encouraged and intensified by the Europeans.

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1. Kenny, J.P. (Father) "Towards Better Understanding of Muslims and Christians" in N.J.I., Ile-Ife, Vol. 2, No.1 51p. July 1971 - January, 1972.

Be that as it may, the recommendations, at least in the interim, were accepted and made the bases of Government policy on Muslim education in Yorubaland and Nigeria at large.

The first Governor to execute this policy was Sir C.A. Moloney. He was, without any tinge of qualm, very much interested in educational work and especially in the Muslim aspect of the problem. On the strength of these recommendations, in the same hope of securing thereby a larger attendance in the schools from among the Muslim population, he offered to the Christian schools special financial inducement for proficiency in Arabic.<sup>1</sup> He also discussed with the Muslim leaders and encouraged them to extend the scope of the curriculum of their schools.<sup>2</sup> From all accounts, his efforts not surprisingly, met with scarcely appreciable success. No Christian school offered or could offer Arabic language,

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1. Colonial Report Annual 1892, Lagos, No. 31, 7p.

2. N.A.I. CSO1/1, Carter to Knutsford, April 30, 1892.

and the influential Muslims were tired of modifying their traditional school system along the novel lines suggested by the Government. In Oyo and its districts, especially at the close of the nineteenth century, the three suggestions met with little success and the Mission schools in the area were not able to make any significant impact on the Muslim population.

Since there had yet been little improvement in the issue of making Nigerian Muslims accept Western education, Government concern continued. The succeeding Governor, Sir G.T. Carter, showed special interest in the Muslim community; and on this issue, he accelerated his efforts though, at first, only along the lines laid down by his predecessor. Shortly after his arrival in the colony as Governor, the Lagos Muslims called on him to pay their homage and welcome him to Lagos. The Governor seized this opportune meeting to broach afresh the issue of Muslim accepting Western education and extending their curriculum. "I impressed upon them", he said, "the advantage of being able to secure a Government grant for their schools and the obvious benefits which must accrue to the rising generation from a knowledge of

English and the elementary subjects usually taught in English schools".<sup>1</sup> The meeting only started off yet another series of public meetings with the Muslim community in Lagos on this issue,<sup>2</sup> either to encourage them to send their children to Christian schools or with the offer of Government financial aid to induce them to re-construct their own schools in lines similar to those on which the Christian schools were operated.<sup>3</sup> But as usual, the suggestions only excited "suspicion and resistance in the minds of Mohammedan priests".<sup>4</sup>

The Government persistence and disquisitions with the Muslims in Lagos also reached the other Muslim areas in Yorubaland. Thus, the Mission Schools in Oyo

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1. N.A. CSO1/1, Carter to Knutsford, April 30, 1892.

2. Colonial Report Annual 1892, 25p.

3. Acting Governor Denton to Marques of Ripon, September, 29, 1893 in Colonial Report Annual, 1892.

4. Ibid.

and its districts such as the Saint Andrew's College and the primary school therein contained some handful of Muslims. The Catholic school situated at Aşogo, Oke-Afin in Oyo also continued some Muslim pupils. However, significant was the fact that the Muslim schools which the Muslims began to establish right from the close of the nineteenth century onwards made use of some aspects of the three recommendations of the Government. The schools were established by the Ahmadiyya Mission, Anwārū'l Islam Movement of Nigeria (the former Ahmadiyya Movement of Nigeria) and the A.U.D. societies. The parent bodies of the societies operated in Lagos, and the Muslim schools in Oyo and its districts followed the pattern laid down by the Muslim schools in Lagos. Thus, today in Ahmadiyya College, Agege, A.U.D. Grammar School, Isolo and A.U.D. Grammar School, Şaki, the students were taught, in addition to Arabic and Islamic studies, the 3R's in conformity with the wish of the Government as arrived at by the Committee of the Board of Education in July 1889.



However, the fact that the Government educational recommendations of 1889 were adopted by the Muslims in Qyo and its districts should not be over-emphasised. In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that Islamic consciousness and the air of suspicion and resistance lingered on in a good number of Muslim quarters.

More significant was the gradual awakening of the Government to the real objections of the Muslim community to Western education. Sadly enough, these objections had not been investigated before, and consequently Government policy had failed to supply the expected result. But in the course of the series of Government-Muslim meetings, the Government came to appreciate the Muslim stand more clearly. It was on Sir Gilbert Carter that it first dawned that the core of Muslim apathy was in connection with religion rather than otherwise. Government offer of financial aid, he came to realise and admit, "could not banish their prejudices against the religious question which, in their minds, a knowledge

of English involved".<sup>1</sup> It was clear that it still seemed to the Muslims that to encourage them to go to Christian-sponsored schools was to ask them to apostatise; and to advise them to initiate the reconstruction of the traditional system of Muslim schools was to generate their fears of bringing their school under the influence of Christian teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Government realisation of the Muslim position pre-disposed Carter to modify Government policy. In a despatch<sup>3</sup> to London, he stressed his conviction that "the initiative would have to come from the Government. A proper school must be established with competent teachers who should be Mohammedans". In other words, the Government must take the bold step of establishing a school with Muslim teachers for the Muslims.

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1. N.A.I. C501/1. Carter to Knutsford. April 30, 1892.
  2. N.A.I. C501/1, Carter to Knutsford, April, 30, 1892. Encl. 1: The Report of Mr. Sunter, the Inspector of schools.
  3. NAI CS01/1, Carter to Knutsford, April 30, 1892.

Carter went ahead with the execution of this major modification of policy. He initiated several discussions with influential Muslim officials and elders and particularly, Muhammad Shitta," with a view to persuading them to support the placing of at least one Muhammadan school under the Board of Education."<sup>1</sup> Details of this scheme were not set out; but it was plain that by being under the Board of Education, such a Muslim school would have to conform to 1887 code, receive grants and introduce new subjects. If this was done, Carter was convinced, such a school would serve as a power which, eventually, would practically induce many of the 50 odd Muslim schools in Lagos to receive Government aid and extend their curriculum in the direction desired.<sup>2</sup>

Government desire was partly met on June 15, 1896 when a Government school was opened. It opened with 40 boys and 46 youngmen<sup>3</sup> under the direction of the principal Idris Animaşun assisted by two teachers

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1. NAI CS01/1, Carter to Denton, June 1, 1893.

2. Ibid.

3. They were slightly older people.

recruited from Sierra-Leone on a salary of £2.10s. (the present Nigerian ₦5.00) a month each.<sup>1</sup>

In the school, due prominence was given to Arabic and Islamic studies. According to the reports of the school which were compiled by the headmaster, Arabic was taught and translated into Yoruba. Islam was also taught. The pupils, the reports often added, made progress in these subjects. Classes were held only five days in the week, Saturday to Wednesday from 9.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. for the boys, and for the young men, 11.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. There were no classes on Thursday and Friday for obvious religious reason.

The opening of the school in June 1896 was hailed by the Government at the time as marking, "indeed", a new era in the history of Lagos when the most conservative elements of the Muslim population have concluded to enter into competition with the Christians

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1. Blyden to Colonial Secretary, Minute Paper, May 11, 1896... Correspondence: Blyden, see also Lagos Standard June 10, 1896, reporting proceedings of the Legislative Council.

in their efforts to acquire Western leaning.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim town of Epe in the west which had for long remained practically adamant to Christian evangelisation and their Greek gifts<sup>2</sup> drew up a petition which it presented to the acting Governor Captain G.C. Denton, on the occasion of the tour of the latter in Epe in June 1898.<sup>3</sup> In that petition, the Epe Muslims, at the inspiration of the influential Buraimo Edu and under the leadership of their Chief Imām Uthmān Audu and Kujaniya, the Muslim Bale, requested the Government to establish at Epe a Muslim school, "conducted on similar lines to the one which was established in Lagos in 1896".<sup>4</sup> Denton acted on the petition and the result of his action was the official opening of a Government-

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1. McCallum to Chamberlain, September 22, 1897 encl... Report by the Colonial Secretary. Denton Colonial Report Annual, 1896. The report went further to describe the opening of the school as "the most important event connected with education..."
  2. Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 211, 227pp.
  3. NAI CS01/1 enclosure in Denton to Chamberlain, June 11, 1898.
  4. Ibid.

Muslim School in Èpẹ on November 10, 1898 by the Governor in the presence of all Èpẹ Muslims and at least six leading Muslims from Lagos.<sup>1</sup>

Given, however, the enthusiasm displayed by both the Government and the local Muslim population at the close of the nineteenth century, it was to be expected that more of the elementary schools would have been built in the Muslim towns in Yorubaland which had, by 1896, come under the British Government. In September 1897, there arose the issue of establishing, in the other parts of Yorubaland, especially in Ibadan, a similar Government-Muslim school. Blyden, after consultation with the leading Lagos Muslims, pointed out that welcome as the idea was, no suitable teachers were available. In the circumstances, it was suggested that Ibadan parents be encouraged to send their children to Lagos;<sup>2</sup> or alternatively, more teachers could be recruited from

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1. NAI CSO1/1, Acting Governor, Captain G.C. Denton to Chamberlain, November 19, 1898.

2. Blyden, to Colonial Secretary September, 25, 1897 in Correspondence: Blyden.

Sierra-Leone. The Governor preferred children to be taught in their own towns where their parents resided<sup>1</sup> in spite of the observation of Blyden that there were four children from Ilorin in the Lagos Muslim school.<sup>2</sup> As for recruitment which might have solved the problem, the Governor was silent. As a result, the whole issue of having a similar school in Ibadan lapsed. While there is evidence of verbal request from Ijebu-Ode, which Blyden forwarded in writing to the Governor in April 1899,<sup>3</sup> there was no similar request from any of the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. The apathy the Muslims in this area had for Christian-sponsored Western education continued almost unabated. Thus, with regard to the expansion of Islam in the area under British rule in the nineteenth century, one can rightly say that, unlike Islam in Lagos and Epe, Islam in Oyo and its districts until the close of the nineteenth century was unstretched,

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1. McCallum to Colonial Secretary, September 28 1897. Correspondence: Blyden
  2. Blyden to Colonial Sec. October 5, 1897, Correspondence: Blyden.
  3. NAI CS01/1, Denton to Chamberlain, April 14, 1899. See also Minute Paper 1936, in NAI, CS026.

too rigid and legalistic to be bent into the changing shape of the contemporary world. In that period, it remained a statistical giant but a religious anachronism in the new Nigeria. In short, Islam in Oyo and its districts in this period was more or less in its pristine and unalloyed form. A significant change came only in the early part of the twentieth century with the establishment of Muslim schools by Muslims societies. They were patterned almost on the Lagos and Epe Government-Muslim schools.

At the same time, the onus of responsibility should not be borne entirely by the Muslims in Oyo and its districts. It will be pertinent to note here that, after 1899 no more Government-Muslim schools were established. An obvious explanation was the drying up of the enthusiasm of the Government.<sup>1</sup> The enthusiastic acting Governor, Denton, was superseded in 1899 by the new Governor, Sir W. MacGregor. On settling down to his post, he was chiefly pre-occupied with the problem of local administration. Besides, if indeed the whole purpose of Government effort was to induce the Muslims to embrace Western education, it can be argued that the

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1. Gbadamosi, G.O., The Growth of Islam..., 288p.



way had already been clearly shown. In any case, Blyden himself, the livewire of Muslim educational activity, resigned from his post of Agent of Native Affairs in 1899; and the office, which had given considerable attention to Muslim issues, was replaced by a Council of Native Affairs whose administrative duties were as wide as its composition. In other words, then, by the beginning of the twentieth century, Government concern about Muslim education, if not Muslim welfare, in Yorubaland waned at least for a while, becoming mingled with the general administrative concern. No wonder then that Oyo and its districts, and most parts of Yorubaland, remained untouched by a synthesis of Western and Muslim systems of education for a considerable length of time. In this situation, the Muslims in Oyo and its districts gained positive advantage over Christianity for Islam continued to grow in its original context. Unlike those in Lagos and Epe, the Muslims in the area, being untouched by Government-sponsored educational values remained very conservative and held the Christians with great suspicion. Any attempt to lure their children to Christian-sponsored schools was challenged as a way to lure their children

to Christianity. There were no Government mediating activities as in Lagos and Èpè. In this way, the Muslims had ample opportunity to develop wider tentacles. The situation lingered on until the early part of the present century when the Muslims came to realise the secular benefits which Western education could supply.

So far, we see that the failure to extend this imaginative experiment to Işeyin, Oyo, Şaki and other big centres of Islam in the interior would, in part, explain the limited response of these areas to Western education.

Serious attempts to synthesise Western and Islamic systems of education in Oyo and its districts were made by Muslim societies and sects in the present century. The attempts provided the Muslims with their first practical experience in the management of schools along Western lines. They faced the problems of organisation, staff, equipment and the like. The Government-Muslim schools in Lagos and Èpè were of considerable help because they served as older sister schools to those in the interior for quite a long time. Many ideas were

borrowed from them.

While the Government's role in promoting the cause of Western education among Muslims in the era before 1900 can hardly be gainsaid, it has been pointed out that there was within the Muslim community, in the 1890's, the stirrings and ferment which facilitated Government's effort in the educational field. The internal stirrings had been assisted by the actual demonstrated success of the Government-Muslim Schools. Thus, even though Government's help eventually stopped, the impulse towards the acquisition of Western education lingered on and it was further consolidated by the increasing number of educated Muslims who remained Muslims despite their attendance of Christian schools.<sup>1</sup>

However, it would be erroneous to think that all the Yoruba Muslim Communities had completely abandoned their erstwhile apathy towards Christian-sponsored Western education. The educated Muslim themselves

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1. See above, 220-240pp. See also Gbadamasi, G.O., The Growth of Islam, chapter 5, 228p.

were to experience some uphill task persuading their fellow Muslims to establish their own schools, where Islam and secular subjects could be taught. A few British junior officers occasionally remonstrated with the Muslim elders to reform their piazza schools. To such remonstrations, As F.C. Fuller, the Resident in Ibadan reported,<sup>1</sup> "Allāh will teach us the right way" - an answer on which he sarcastically commented: " I regret to say that so far their prayer has not been answered". Evidently, the tradition of the past still held a very strong grip over many Muslims in Oyo and its districts and in Yorubaland at large; and evidence abounds to show the popularity of the traditional Muslim schools up till the present time.

4.23. Islam and the administrative policies of the British Colonial Government.

In general, British rule in Oyo and its districts had, to some considerable extent, aided the expansion of Islam in the late nineteenth century. The traditional

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1. Report of the Year, 1900 on that portion of the Lagos Hinterland under the control of the Resident of Ibadan, 27p.

state of equilibrium which had been established between Islamic and pure Yoruba traditional societies continued throughout the centuries. The advent of British rule loaded the scales very more effectively against the traditional societies than at any other stage of their history. The revolution, which came only at the close of the nineteenth century, aided both the consolidation and the expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts.

The immediate effect of British control was, as pointed out earlier, peace (Pax Britannica) brought to the people who had been living in a perpetual state of insecurity, harassed by wars or the raids of the previous decades. This gave the Muslims the opportunity of generating wider tentacles and improving upon their erstwhile veneer Islam embraced long ago.

Here again, it is worth noting that the new rulers did not take drastic measures when they took up the leadership from the Aláàfin. Through the policy of "indirect rule",<sup>1</sup> the local and Muslim chiefs

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1. The "indirect rule" policy was grafted on the common law and tradition of the people. For details about this, see Atanda, J.A., The New Oyo Empire..., 85-9. 116, 249-253pp.

that were already at the helm of affairs in the court<sup>1</sup> were allowed to carry on but were subject to the overall control of and ratification by the new rulers. Thus, the Muslim chiefs were allowed to continue to wield influence in the community and this eventually led to the islamisation of many followers of the traditional religion. Moreover, it is important to note that British rule ended the era of forcible islamisation,<sup>2</sup> if any before, but its effects led to its consolidation or its spread to the traditional quarters.

The establishment of British rule in Oyo and its districts gave an impetus to Islamic propagation in two principal ways: through the social revolution brought about by the impact of Western values upon the traditional structures, and through factors which facilitated the work of Islamic agents. The imposition of a new system of rule, the spread of new educational ideas and economic impact weakened the traditional

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1. For more details concerning the Muslim influence in the court, see above, chapter 2, 127-9pp.
  2. It is popularly held that it was the forcible islamisation in the early part of Islamic propagation in Yorubaland that made the Yoruba give the name

authorities. Religion and society are so tenaciously bound together that any change in social life means a weakening of religious authority. The introduction and spread of Western education through the endeavours of Christian agents and British powers respectively displaced the age-old traditional initiation systems and this left the youth without defence against the new religions of the Book; Islam and Christianity.

Mundane forces weakened the power of the traditional religious knowledge and the traditional cults and their agents, especially the priest (abore), were often held in derision. The deflection of the youth from the age-old traditional knowledge, the emphasis laid on materialistic values, and the deterioration of the hereditary religious authority, prepared the way for the acceptance of Islam, especially among the common people, whilst the 'new men', taught in Christian-sponsored schools, were attracted by Christianity.

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'imble to Muslims. The word 'imble' can be expanded to read : imò ti ó le - 'knowledge that is difficult'. Here, the analysis has no pertinence with the adherents who are normally called Muslims. Thus, it will be proper to give the name 'imble' to Islam rather than Muslims on the basis of the fact that Arabic was, at the initial stage of Islam in

Secondly, the conditions accompanying British rule such as ordered government, peaceful co-existence between tribes, free markets, freedom of movement and religion, and rapid development of means of communication constituted a great catalyst to the diffusion of Islam right away from the close of the nineteenth century to the present time. This worked in two ways. On the one hand, young men were attracted to leave their villages to work in urban centres such as Şaki, Işeyin, Oyo where they came under the influence of Islam. Many immigrant settlements such as those of the Hausa and Fulani had Muslim orientation. On the other hand, the new conditions facilitated the movement of Islamic agents. Thus Muslim preachers could travel from one town to the other, and one village to the other, under the banner of the Pax Britannica

Yorubaland used to preach Islam and this language many were reported to find extremely difficult. Moreover, since Islam is a religion of the Book quite different from the people's local non-scripture religion, the people might find the religion very difficult, hence the name 'imble'!



to preach Islam. In this situation, Islam secured enough air of freedom to expand. The new orientation given to Qyo and its districts by British rule attracted many Muslim traders from the North<sup>1</sup> who contributed greatly to the expansion of Islam in Qyo and its districts in the nineteenth century and later.

Moreover, the policies of the British Government facilitated the work of contact agents and modified background conditions in such a way that many became more favourably disposed towards Islam. In the early days of the British occupation of the area, government officials showed special consideration for Muslims as people of a higher civilisation and often despised the followers of the traditional religion with opprobrious adjectives such as the following:<sup>2</sup> 'primitive',

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1. Concerning the trade routes within the Old Qyo Empire and which continued to be in use after the fall of the Empire, see above, map 2 on 2(a)p.
  2. Idowu, E.B., African Traditional Religion ... 109ff.

'savage', 'native', 'pagan', 'heathenish', 'barbaric', 'idolatrous', 'fetish', and 'animistic'. At times they referred to them as people without God or people who had been abandoned by the true God. In this connection, the following sayings are pertinent:

Diedrich Westermann,<sup>1</sup> a foreign investigator of African traditional religion says:

"The high god is, as a rule, not the object of a religious cult and is of small or almost no significance in practical religion. People acknowledge him, but neither fear nor love nor serve him, the feeling towards him being, at the highest, that of a dim awe or reverence."

Further, he says:

"He is the God of the thoughtful, not of the crowd."

What Westermann is saying, in essence, about the traditional religion of the Africans is seen in his following statement. "The African God is a deus incertus and a deus remotus: there is always an atmosphere of indefiniteness about him..."<sup>2</sup> Baudin;

1. g.v. Idowu, E.B., African Traditional Religion.., 144pp.

2. Ibid., 141p.

another foreign investigator, says the following on the African concept of God:<sup>1</sup>

"The idea they have of God is most unworthy of His Divine Majesty. They represent that God, after having commenced the organisation of the world, charged Obatala with the completion and government of it, retired and entered into an eternal rest, occupying Himself only with His own happiness; too great to interest Himself in the affairs of His world, He remains like a negro king, in a sleep of idleness."

These, and other sayings, did the foreign investigators use to deride the Africans and their traditional religion. The Muslims were given some regard as people of higher civilisation who embraced a scripture religion almost comparable to Christianity and who had almost the same concept of God whom they called Allāh. So, the Muslim chiefs found in the court of the obas were respected, and thus they were able to wield influence in the society. The regard given to the Muslims by the British officials gave Islam a positive advantage. They employed <sup>the</sup> Muslims in subordinate administrative positions which brought them into close contact with the outward features of Islam, enhanced the prestige

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1. Idowu, E.B., African Traditional Religion..., 144p.

of adherence to the favoured religion, and furnished the Islamic agents with facilities for the exercise of propaganda and various forms of pressure.

Brought, all of a sudden, into contact with Western values and faced with the decay of their age-long traditional religion, many of the followers of the traditional religion felt the need for adherence to a system which would integrate life in a new era of dynamic revolution, but they were not necessarily willing to pay the price which would bridge the gap dividing them from their British rulers, and felt intuitively that Islamic culture corresponded more to their needs. It will be recalled that, in the second half of the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup> Christianity was introduced into Qyp and its districts. Thus Christianity and Islam were in cut-throat competition to claim the souls of the followers of the traditional religion. In this case, the successes of Islam were

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1. See above, 167-175pp.

very striking. Many traditional quarters<sup>1</sup> which were regarded as the impregnable domain of the traditional religion or open to the progress of Christianity had been won over to Islam. The positive advantage which Islam gained over Christianity in such traditional quarters was also due to the Islamic system of adapting its culture to the local milieu which was earlier referred to in this work as the AFRICANNESS<sup>2</sup> of Islam.

Here again, it is worth remembering that despite the remarkable progress of Islam in Oyo and its districts, hundreds of villages were a mixture of the followers of the traditional religion, Muslims and Christians. The breakup of the traditional religion was apparent everywhere in the nineteenth century, as was the fact that the abandonment of their traditional religious heritage was only partial and that the springs of conduct of those who have joined one or other of the two available universal religions were still that of the old traditional heritage. In short, up till today in Oyo and its districts either ambivalence or syncretism still forms one of the features of Islam in the area. Festival days stand a sure testimony of this ambivalence in Yorubaland as a whole. In Yorubaland today, traditional festivals are observed not only by the persistent followers of the traditional religion but also by the Christians and the Muslims.

So far is the history of the expansion of Islam in the age of revolution under the influence of British rule. Islam began to spread in Yorubaland after the British occupation and C.H. Robinson wrote of its rapid progress in 1895: "In this contest for the souls of the Yoruba in general the percentage of Christian gains was about 5 per cent of those of Islam." This rate of expansion was popularly held to be attributable to one or more of these factors:

1. In this regard, the Mogbà and the Alápinni quarters, that were celebrated for the worship of Sangó and Egúngún respectively, were reported to have been won over to Islam.
2. Trimingham, J.S., A History of Islam in West Africa..., 231p. See above, 242-263pp.

The historical fact of the subjection of the northern Yoruba by the Fulbe, those who became converts acting as agents to their local associates

The geographical location of the Yoruba on the Niger highway in a **region** where there was no thick forest.

The political disunity and inter-tribal wars in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century.

The staleness and fatigue which characterised the Yoruba traditional religion and its insufficiency as a basis for life in the age of revolution when the area had to face the perplexities and opportunities of modernity.

The disruption of the equilibrium of the traditional life through the impact of the West Urban Yoruba changes from raw culture to mixed sophisticated culture.

The nature of their tradition, economy, density of population, economic specialisation and the vast urban agglomerations which developed independently of British influence as a result of their defensive organisation

The hierarchical nature of the Yoruba social and political set-up.

The fact that Islam was adaptable to African environment and its suitability to Africa under conditions of marked change.

Concerning Islam in Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century, two or more of these factors combined to make Islam in the area strong enough to be able to meet the challenge posed by Western civilisation brought by British rule. In short, up till today in the **area** Islam is the dominant religion and continues to spread and grow amidst ~~the~~ challenges and <sup>the</sup> changing scenes of modern times.

PART TWO: (INSTITUTIONS AND ACCULTURATION)

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## CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN OYO AND ITS DISTRICTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The three major factors that constituted Islamic institutions in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century were: Muslim organisational set-up, Muslim festivals and Muslim education. Let us look, in turn, at each of the factors in so far as each of them contributed to the growth of Islam in the area.

5.1 Muslim organisation.

The influx of Islam into Oyo and its districts did not produce, immediately, a dynamic religious affair from the converts. This was consequent upon the fact that the area was originally a traditional milieu. The foreign Muslims and the indigenous ones, at first, worshipped secretly<sup>1</sup> in order to avoid the onslaught of the followers of the traditional religion. Thus nominal Islam lingered on for quite a long time in the area. However, the access of Yesufu Alanamu<sup>2</sup> (later Paàkòyí) into the Aláàfin's court and the favourable disposition of Atiba<sup>3</sup> towards Islam combined to produce a favourable turn of event for the Muslims and their religion.

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1. See above, 41p.

2. See above, 13-14pp, 108ff.

3. See above, 55-6pp.



Both Yesufu Alanamu and prince Atiba belonged to the royal lineage and they helped to save the coterie of Muslims in the area from their initial life of isolation and the antagonistic role of the followers of the traditional religion.

As more and more local people were won to Islam a necessity to worship openly arose. Thus the people began to erect rectangular form of mosque known as giigi in different localities for the purpose of worship. Nearly each family had this; and it was customary this time to find only the members of that family worshipping there. It was a common feature in almost all the villages in the area. In towns every compound had its mosque. The compound mosque was not easy to find since it was generally a room in a house or court and, or a raised square in the street. In some villages the square had a fence of reeds and shelter on one side to provide shade. It was often very small and was usually marked for congregational prayer. Only the Imām (rátibí Imām) could enter the square and the rest ranged themselves behind him. Mosques, this time, were built of mud and thatched roofs. In point of fact, they were of rustic

simplicity containing just a handful of the faithful.

The open air giigii and the compound mosques helped, in a large measure, the practice and especially the mobility of Islam in Oyo and its districts before the fall of the Old Oyo empire in 1835. There were such venues of worship in Old Oyo, Kisi, Igbeti, Igboho, Saki<sup>1</sup>, Ikoyi and Iseyin<sup>2</sup>. Without mosques in these towns Islam would have suffered in the area.

A significant thing occurred in Old Oyo during the reign of Abiodun Adegoolu whose reign was between 1775 and 1805<sup>3</sup>. Though he did not embrace Islam, he encouraged as many of his sons and subjects as were favourably disposed towards Islam. This might be a result of the influence which his son, prince Atiba, and his cousin, Yesufu Alanamu wielded in the court. During his reign, he gave the Muslims both moral and financial support in their task of erecting

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1. Today in Saki, there are eighty five mosques including the Friday mosque. There is no document in which the statistics can be got. The number here is the result of the counting exercise I undertook in August, 1975 during the field work.

2. See map 1 on 1(a)p.

3. See below, Appendix IV, 556-560pp.

the central mosque<sup>1</sup>. It was completed during his reign. It was so spacious that it could occupy about three hundred worshippers worshipping at the same time. In all probability, it was only in Old Oyo that the central mosque was built while the other towns and villages had giigii and some compound mosques. The mosques were used to the advantage of the Muslims at least that they helped to entrench the Muslim communities of the area as groups of people to be reckoned with.

Islam became dynamically mobile after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire, especially during the era of Islamic resurgence and consolidation. Mosques of different types were multiplied ranging from giigii to the central mosque. In New Oyo, during the reign of Atiba (1837-1859), mosques such as the Pàràkoyí mosque, the compound mosque at Agunpopo quarter and the central mosque<sup>2</sup> at Oke-Afin were built. Similarly in Iseyin, Moṣalaṣi Alálíkímba was built to cope with the demands of the growing Muslim population. The community, however, remained one. It repaired and widened the oldest mosque and used it as the central mosque. It

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1. The present Alááfin of Oyo told me when he was interviewed in December, 1973 that Alááfin Adeniran Adeyemi II visited the site of the mosque in Old Oyo during his brief tenure of office (1945-6).

2. See above, plate 1 on 110(a)p.

served as the seat of the Chief Imām. This was also the situation in Kiši, Igbēti, Igboho, Şaki and Ikoyi during this time. Thus, in towns where Islam was fairly well established, Islam became a mobile phenomenon. The mosques helped to nurture and activate the Muslim community in each of the big towns in Oyo and its districts. Of special importance was how the mosques served as factors of cohesion and unity within the various Muslim communities. It will be recalled that in the early period of Islam in the area, the practice of the religion was curtailed by the anti-Islam attitude<sup>1</sup> of the followers of the traditional religion. But the reign of Atiba ushered in a new era for Islam. His reign generated a dynamic cultic practice of Islam in the area. During this time, Islam settled down to its basic liberal attitudes on religious issues and persecutions were only flitting and sporadic incidents.

In the reign of Aláàfin Atiba, the Muslims regarded themselves as Sunnī<sup>2</sup>. They were sincere Muslims following

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1. See above, 62-8pp.

2. Immediately after the death of Prophet Muḥammad, the Muslim community broke into two. Majority of them were Sunnī (ahlu's-sunna, 'the followers of the sunna') and accepted the caliphate of the first four Caliphs. Abū Bakr (d634), ʿUmar (d644), ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (d656), and ʿAlī ibn Abī Talīb (d661) while the second group, the Shīʿa

the fundamental principles of Islam.

Each compound mosque had its Imām who led the daily prayers except the Friday prayer. Each Friday mosque had its Imām (Chief Imām) who led the Friday prayer and read the homily standing on a block of wood. This time, in Oyo and its districts, Friday prayer was not observed in villages except in the big centres of Islam. The big towns which had Friday or central mosques constituted spiritual rallying points for those in the outlying districts. However, once such villages were able to produce some learned Muslims and were rich enough to build central mosques they were allowed to worship in their places under their own Chief Imāms. The liturgical set-up of the Muslims in the area so helped the resurgence and consolidation of Islam in the area that the followers of the traditional religion were more than alarmed.

In the Old Oyo, the Muslims were not old enough to produce <sup>any</sup> significant organisation. This was a product of a later period. In point of fact, it was only in the period of Islamic resurgence and consolidation that the Muslims made serious attempts to organise themselves. In

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rejected the caliphate of the first three Caliphs and believed that 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib was the true Caliph after Prophet Muhammad.

the Old Oyo, the leadership of Islam rested with the Pàràkòyí<sup>1</sup>. But from 1837 onwards, the leadership of the community rested with the Imām or Chief Imām as he came to be known in a few places in Oyo and its districts. This time, in the area, the leadership of the Imām was important in many regards. First, this was the office which, thanks to the cumulative knowledge of Islamic institutions, came to supplant the earlier leadership of the Pàràkòyí. Henceforth, the office of the Pàràkòyí remained a comparatively junior one among the Muslim communities of the area. The Pàràkòyí, instead of his religio-political statusquo became a political officer who served as an intermediary between the Muslim community and the royal house<sup>2</sup> in each of the big centres of Islam in the area.

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1. See above, chapter 1, 61-2pp.
  2. Interview with the present Pàràkòyí Oyo, Alhaji Aşiru. December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. It was the duty of Pàràkòyí to transact the business that might involve the oba, the town as a whole and the Muslim community in each of the big centres of Islam in the area. This role is well expressed in the Pàràkòyí's direct saying:

Işee Pàràkòyí ni láti şe àbójútò àwọn imòle  
lódòọ oba, ijoye àti ilú ní àpapọ.

By tradition that was being re-constituted in this period, the office of the Imām was not, as was wont to be the case elsewhere and especially also in the towns during the period of the Old Oyo Empire, a temporary and elective office possessing only the religious significance of leading the various Muslim congregational prayers<sup>1</sup>. The office of the Imām in Oyo and its districts, from 1837 onwards, became a permanent and institutionalised one which had both religious and political significance for

(It was the duty of Parakōyi to see to the well-being of the Muslims before the king, chiefs and the town as a whole).

This was necessarily so because Islamic knowledge was not a prerequisite for the post of the Parakōyi. He was chosen on the basis of the following: long period of conversion and direct ancestry from the first Parakōyi in each town. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

1. In this connection, the Friday prayer called yawmu'l-jumu'a which literally means 'day of gathering' (See the Qur'ān - 62:9-10 and E. I. jumasa; Jeffery, ed., Islam: Muhammad and his religion, S. A., 1958), idu'l-fitr prayer and al-'idu'l-kabir prayer can be mentioned. While the first is usually observed in the central mosque, the last two are usually observed in the open fields known as yidi in Yorubaland. Note that the Yoruba word, 'yidi', is taken from the Arabic word for festival, 'id'.

the Muslim community. Holding his office for life, the Imām<sup>1</sup> was the head of the Muslim community. He conducted the traditional congregational prayers and he directed, in conjunction with other titled officers mentioned below, all the affairs of the Muslim community<sup>2</sup>. In essence, the Imām was within the Muslim community of each of the towns in this area what the ōba, or baalè' was, within the traditional society. He, however, did not possess any of

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1. E. I. Articles on "Imām":, The Hausa word for Imām is Līmān. In Yoruba language he is called Lēmōmù or Imōmù.
  2. The Chief Imām performed functions such as marriage, burial and naming. He usually featured prominently on festival occasions. On each occasion, he received gifts. Other Imams, compound or lesser Imams, were subordinate to the Chief Imām and had to obtain his permission in advance to perform marriages, burials and other functions pertaining to the affairs of the Muslim community. For further details on the function of the Imām, see E. I. article on 'Imām' and Trimingham J. S. Islam in West Africa. 68ff.



the sacerdotal aspects of Yoruba kingship<sup>1</sup>. Thus a Chief Imām was checked in any attempt to establish and superimpose an Islamic theocratic state over the time-honoured traditional theocratic state.

There was also for the Muslim community some tenuous, but significant, organisation designed to assist the Imām in the manipulation of the affairs of the community. At its simplest, this organisation comprised, in addition to the office of the Imām, those of <sup>the</sup> Onitáfusiírù (or Onitèfusiírù)<sup>2</sup>. Like the office of the Imām, these offices were held for life. To qualify for the Onitáfusiírù a candidate was expected to possess considerable knowledge of Islam and other relevant studies. Next were the muezzins<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Here, the active role of the ōba in the practice of traditional religion is in mind. The ōba was the custodian and guardian of the traditional heritage of the ancestors. It was his duty to guard jealously against any forces that might relegate the traditional heritage to the back-ground. For further details on the sacerdotal aspects of Yoruba kingship, see Balogun, K. Sacred Kingship and Gerontocracy in Old Oyo: et passim.
  2. As mentioned earlier in this work, Onitáfusiírù is a Yoruba loan-word which, literally, means "he who does the Qur'ān commentary". Tafsīr means 'commentary' or 'exegesis'. The Onitáfusiírù is the mufassir. See above, chapter 2, 134p and the glossary, XXVIIIp.
  3. In Yorubaland,<sup>a</sup> /muezzin is called 'Làdàáni' or 'Dàdàáni'

(Arabic; mu<sup>3</sup>adhhdhin). The office of the muezzin was voluntary, even in large towns, but he received alms at festivals. He generally led the responses after the Imām, in a loud voice, so that those at a distance could hear. Any adult Muslim could function as the muezzin but those Muslims who possessed some knowledge of Islam and sonorous voice were usually at an advantage. Only mosques in large towns had minarets and the muezzin called the prayer from beside the mosque.

With regard to the political role of the Chief Imām, he was helped by the following officers<sup>1</sup>: the Pàràkòyí, Òtún Imòle, Òsì Imòle, Balògun Imòle and Mògàjì. They

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1. See below, plate 3 (RIGHT) on 326(a)p., the present Pàràkòyí, Oyo: a descendant of the first Pàràkòyí, Yesufu Alanamu. There seemed to be one lineage of the Pàràkòyí in the whole of Oyo and its districts. The three long tribal marks called 'pélé' in Yorubaland are the marks to identify the Pàràkòyí almost everywhere in Oyo and its districts today.

Òtún Imòle was another close officer to the oba. It was his duty to see that the oba was in good condition of health and should report each day, the condition of the Pàràkòyí. He was the liaison officer between the royal lineage and the Pàràkòyí. In this connection, it is important to note that apart from the basic meaning of the Arabic word Islam, 'submission', 'surrender' and 'obedience', the word also means 'peace' in the literal sense. This signifies that one can achieve real peace of body and mind only through submission and obedience to Allāh. Such life of obedience brings peace of the heart and establishes real peace in the society at large. Thus, in Oyo and its districts, peace in the royal household was taken with utmost concern.

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PLATE 3:  
Muslim officers in Oyo: Otun Imole, Alhaji Sadiku Awayewaserere,  
a descendant of the first Otun Imole (left); the present Parakoyi,  
Alhaji Asiru, a descendant of the first Parakoyi (right).

were expected to be present in the king's court<sup>1</sup> shortly before the Friday prayer to pray for the ōba and the town or village as the case may be. The result of this was that they were able to wield influence in the court and consequently, they helped to entrench Islam in the towns where they were present in the traditional organisational set-up.

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It was regarded significant for the well-being of the town in general and for the Muslim community in particular. No wonder then that a liaison officer between the royal household and the Muslim community was chosen in the nineteenth century. (Interview with the present Ōtun Im̄ole, Oyo, Alhaji Saka, Awayewaserere, and the present P̄arakōyi, Oyo, Alhaji Asiru, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. (See Bibliography: Oral Evidence). See above, plate 3 (LEFT) on 326(a)p., the present Ōtun Im̄ole, Oyo, a descendant of the first Ōtun Im̄ole.

M̄oḡaji was the general messenger of the jamā'a. He was expected to have some modicum of Islamic knowledge because he could be asked to act for the Imām on occasions such as funeral, marriage and naming. (Interview with the jamā'a, Oyo, December, 1973, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

1. Interviews with the Chief Imāms in various communities at Kiṣi, Igbeti, Igboho, Saki, Iseyin, Ikoyi, Oyo. December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

While the post of Onitáfusiírù was based on Islamic knowledge, there was less regard for this with regard to the other offices mentioned above. The titles were bestowed mainly for reasons of long period of conversion, age, status, royal influence, piety and total devotion to the welfare of the Muslim community. However, the Balógun<sup>1</sup> Imòle was expected, in addition, to have courage and strong character. He was expected to serve as a quintessence of all that a courageous Muslim should be in the face of onslaught from any quarters.

Concerning this organisation, the following observations need be made. First, in quite a number of towns, such as Kìsì, Igbeti, Igboho, Sàki, Iseyin, Ikoyi and Oyo, the top offices such as those of the Imām and the Onitáfusiírù were, by the unreserved courtesy of the community, still being held by non-natives<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Balógun, in Oyo military set-up, is an abridged form of Baba ní ogun meaning "Father in war". He was more important than the town oba during wars. Moreover, to be appointed the Balógun, one must possess the virtues mentioned above.
  2. The first Chief Imām of Kìsì was Àlùfa Idindi who hailed from Dahomey. In Igboho, Abu Bakare Adebunmi, the first Chief Imām, was not a native of Igboho, but hailed from Iseyin. One Saliu, an Idindi from Dahomey, was the first Chief Imam and

In Oyo, up till today, the post of the Chief Imām is still being held by the Hausa<sup>1</sup>. In Kīṣi, Igbēti, Igboho, Saki, Otu and Iseyin the posts of the Imāms were held by learned Muslims from Ilorin, Hausaland, and some parts of Dahomey<sup>2</sup>. In Oyo, a non-Oyo mālam, Ālūfa Kokewukobere was the first Onitáfusiírù, and he remained so for many years. He was reported to move the whole area by his preachings which he usually corroborated with Muslim songs. It was not until Ayetoro, a district of Iseyin, emerged as a strong-hold of Islamic knowledge that local Muslims were trained and succeeded to the offices of the Imāms already dominated by alien learned Muslims. Ayetoro later grew as a diffuse

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the first Onitáfusiírù in Saki. He began his Qurānic exegesis in his mosque at Asunnara quarter (the present central mosque in a place now known as Adabo quarter). In Igbeti, one Ālūfa Busura from Ilorin started open-air lecture and tafsīr. See below, Appendix III and Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

1. Interview with the present Imām of Oyo, the present Alāafin of Oyo and the head of the Hausa community in Oyo Alhaji Ibrahim Kano, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. The Hausa lineage maintained an unbroken succession right away from the nineteenth century to the present day despite the versatility of the indigenous Muslims with regard to Islamic education during the present century. See below, the circumstances responsible for the influx of the Hausa mālams into New Oyo. See also Bibliography: Oral evidence.
2. Interview with jama'ca in places mentioned above, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

centre from where indigenous mālam̄s spread to other places in Oyo and its districts. Many of the local Muslims in this town acquired Islamic knowledge from Ilorin, far North and Ibadan earlier than those in other parts of Oyo and its districts. Furthermore, the availability of the non-natives or migrated Muslims in the administrative set-up of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century is an overt reflection of how much of the concept<sup>1</sup> of the equality and the universality of the single community of all believers had been embraced by the Muslim community. At the same time, the incident translated the meagreness of the indigenous learned men to a large class of learned Muslims who could properly fill the offices and perform, in a correct and efficacious manner, the functions attached to the offices.

Secondly, the Muslim institutionalised organisation in Oyo and its districts in this period was at its inchoative stage. In point of fact, it was from this that

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1. The Islamic concept of equality and the universality of the Umma is well enshrined in the pillars of Islam such as the pilgrimage to Mecca and the congregational prayers. See above, chapter 2, 131-2pp.

source was borrowed the title of Balógun<sup>1</sup>; more importantly, it was the Oyo traditional pattern and rules that surrounded the election and the tenure of these offices<sup>2</sup>. There should be no alarm about this influence. It was consequent upon the fact that the first set of Muslims in Yorubaland at large came from this area<sup>3</sup>; and at the initial stage of Islam here, there were not many Muslim mālams who could rightly

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1. About the functional role of the Balógun in the traditional military set-up see f.n. 1 on 13p. This is in tune with the nature of the political development in the new towns of this period q.v., Biobaku S. O., Egba and their neighbours, 1842-1872, Oxford, 1957, 43p. et passim. See also his thesis, The Egba State and Its Neighbours 1842-1872. (Ph.D. London, 1951). He maintains the thesis that Oyo titles were borrowed in Abeokuta. It is very hard to subscribe to his thesis as the oral and contemporary evidences given by the Oyo arókins (Oyo chroniclers) were against it. The surviving descendants of the first Pàràkòyí maintain, as noted earlier in this work, that New Oyo was the diffuse centre for the post of Pàràkòyí in the whole of Yorubaland. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence. (Interview with the present Pàràkòyí, Oyo, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975).
  2. The nomination or election of the Chief Imām, the Pàràkòyí, Otun Imòle, Òsì Imòle and Balógun was usually ratified by the ruling oba in each town. However, the election of the Chief Imām's auxiliary officers, an assistant Imām (Yoruba náíbí. (It is taken from the Hausa word nā'ibī), rātībī Imāms, Onitáfusíírù, Oníwáásí and muezzin, was the functional role of the Chief Imām and the jamā'a.
  3. See Gbadamosi G. O. The Growth of Islam, 8p.



introduce them to Islamic institutions per se. Thus, during the period of Islamic resurgence and consolidation, the Muslims in the area reinforced or established Islam in their places of abode on the basis of their own conventions and erstwhile experiences.

In its organised and jealosuly guided form, in the era of Islamic resurgence and consolidation (1837-1895), the community endeavoured as much as possible to, and did, perform corporate functions. Regardless of whatever quarter rátíbí mosques did exist, the Muslims together erected and worshipped at the central mosque<sup>1</sup> (moşálaási<sup>2</sup> gbogboogbò).

The period of <sup>Islamic</sup> consolidation (1860-1895), in particular, witnessed some other organisational tentacles which were generated by Islam. Prominent among these were the Muslim associations formed by the community of Muslims in each of

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1. See above, chapter 2, 109-111pp about the first set of mosques in Oyo and its districts after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in 1835. Even where the central mosque was still of rustic simplicity, as the one in Oyo during the reign of Alááfin Atiba (1837-1859), worshippers came from the town and its outlying districts to worship. Today in Oyo there are over 150 mosques including the Friday mōsque.
  2. This is a loan-word in Yoruba language. The original Arabic word is musallā. See glossary, XXVIIPP.

the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts. In this connection, it is worth remembering that the associations were proliferated and some even date back to the prime days of the Old Oyo Empire.<sup>1</sup> They helped Islamic resurgence and consolidation after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in 1835.

They were organised very simply with their main official being the giwá<sup>2</sup>. Two types of office converged in him. He was both the president as well as the secretary of the association. This was because, this time, there were not many learned Muslims who could direct the affairs of the Muslim community. It was in his house that <sup>the</sup> meetings of the association were normally held. The meetings were irregular, dictated mainly by the needs of the community from time to time.

The objectives and the aspirations of <sup>the</sup> associations were fundamentally uniform: to engender contact and co-operation among the Muslim members; to foster mutual help and understanding; to expand and develop Islam through the process of propagation and conversion. The aims and

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1. See above, chapter 2, 142-5pp.

2. Concerning the meaning of giwá in Yoruba language see above, glossary, XXVp.

aspirations of the associations can best be appreciated in the light of the condition of Islam during the ensuing years after the reign of Alááfin Atiba. The Muslims, this time, aimed and aspired aright in this period in order to prevent the religion from being crippled to extinction by various wars of the early decades of the nineteenth century and the surviving force of the anti-Islam movement of the ardent followers of the traditional religion. In pursuit of their aims and aspirations, they embarked on a series of dynamic activities. They engaged themselves fully and actively in whatever social activities any of their members was involved such as funeral ceremony, ceremony marking the end of a course<sup>1</sup>, marriage ceremony<sup>2</sup> and enthronement of titled Muslims officers<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, it was customary of the association to turn out in multitude on the occasions of

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1. It is worth remembering here that the Yoruba refer to this as 'wólímò'. It is the Arabic walíma which means 'banquet', 'party'. It has reference to 'nuptial party' which is known as walímatu'l-'urs. For further details about this, see Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 172-3pp.
2. The Islamic marriage ceremony is known as yigi in Yorubaland. It also means bride's dowry. See above, glossary, XXXIIIp.
3. See above, 322-330pp.

Muslim festivals. By the colossal appearance, the associations procured colour and gaiety to their social activities and consequently constituted some sort of cynosure<sup>1</sup> for those of their associations who were still loyal to the traditional religion. The associations, in this manner, helped, in an appreciable measure, the consolidation and the expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the second half of <sup>the</sup> nineteenth century.

Next was the dynamic force constituted by the able young men among the Muslims community in each town or village. They, in a large measure, helped to establish Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period following the reign of Aláàfin Atiba (1837-1859). They were dynamic and

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1. It is worth remembering that in Ago Are, in Oyo North, a good number of the wives of the followers of the traditional religion either eloped to or were seduced by the members of the associations as a result of their dynamic and attractive activities. See above, chapter 2, 142p. Moreover, it is worth remembering that the development of the associations was a reflection of the underlying social impact of the Yoruba. Yoruba associations are usually identified by the same dresses in which they usually appear on important and public occasions. The Muslims adopted this feature and used it to influence a good number of the wives, even some men, in the area in the nineteenth century. See Johnson, S. The History of Yorubas, Part 1, 110p. See also Davidson Basil: The Africans: An Entry to Cultural History, 91-109pp. In this work, Davidson analyses the features of African secret societies in general.

enthusiastic concerning Muslim progress. On festival occasions, and whenever the central mosque was to be built or being rebuilt or when there was need to clear old ḥīd ground or erect new, they usually turned out in a massive form to contribute their quota towards the progress of Islam. With regard to financial aid, the associations<sup>1</sup> constituted a ready source of help. However, this fact did not preclude other rich individuals within the Muslim community from financial involvement in connection with the organisation of the community. The cases of Irawo Owode, Otu, Oke-Iho, Iseyin and New Oyo<sup>2</sup> illustrated this fact. The central mosque of each of these places was erected this time with the active involvement of the societies in each of the towns. Of special importance was the role of the associations during mawlidu'n-nabi<sup>3</sup> festival celebrated in commemoration of the birth day of Prophet Muhammad. On this day, the associations usually appeared in the same dresses traversing the whole length and breadth of the town and with Muslim songs in praise of Prophet Muhammad. Their activities on

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1. One of such associations was "Egbe Olówólayemo" - "The society of he who is rich is that which the world reckons with".
  2. See above, chapter 2, 102-111pp.
  3. This is called mólúdi nobiù in Yorubaland. It is known as ojo ibi Anabi. See the glossary, XVIIIip.

such occasion, had produced the conversion of some followers of the traditional religion in Oyo and its districts.

However, the associations were essentially little organised, social and dynamic groups. They were later to share the social platform with the Muslim educational-oriented societies of the mid-twentieth century which were better organised but still had identical socio-religious policies. In conclusion, sufficient it is to say here that, had it not been the emergence of the associations in the area in the nineteenth century, Islam would have been crippled by its rival force constituted by the anti-Islam movement of the ardent and over-zealous followers of the traditional religion and would have existed in the area a little more than a veneer. This fact can be best appreciated if readers recall that Oyo and its district constituted a dynamic traditional area before Islam gained access into the area. The ardent opposition constituted by the anti-Islam movement of the followers of the traditional religion, right away from the inception of Islam in the area, can also be mentioned in this regard.

## 5.2 Muslim festivals.

Muslim festivals also played a significant and dynamic role concerning the cause of Islam in Oyo and its districts

after the fall of the Old Oyo in 1835. On festival occasions the associations mentioned above were very prominent. The colour and gaiety which they usually gave to Islam on these occasions helped to entrench Islam in Oyo and its districts.

Essentially, four main festivals were being observed by the Muslims in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, namely: odún káyókáyó,<sup>1</sup> mólúdí nobíu and the festivals of the month of Ramadān: odún itunu ààwè<sup>2</sup> and odún iléyá<sup>3</sup>. Let us look, in turn, at each of these festivals with a view to bringing out how the observance of the festivals contributed to the consolidation of Islam in the period between 1860 and 1895.

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1. This is the first event of the Islamic year which comes up in the tenth of Muharram. It marks the beginning of the Islamic new year. The Hijra calendar begins from this day. Cohered with this festival, this time of the Islamic year and in some towns in the area, were some traditional practices bordering on those of the purely Yoruba societies. See Trimmingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 76p. See also N.A.I. Oyo Prof. 6/15, File No. C.3/29: "Kayokayo Festival: Mohammedan".
  2. This festival is called ‘id u’l-fitr in Arabic language.
  3. This is called al ‘id u’l-kabīr in Arabic language. It is usually observed by Muslims on the 12th of Dhu’l Hijja. For further details concerning Muslim festivals in general, see E. I. articles on Muslim ‘ids. See also Nadel, S. F. Nupe Religion, London, 1970, 239-244pp.

So far is the list of the Muslim festivals which were celebrated in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. Now, let us look, at the way each of them was observed and the role each played during the period of Islamic consolidation in the area.

During the first event of the Islamic year, which the Muslims in the area called 'odún káyókáyó'<sup>1</sup>, it was customary of the Muslims to eat plenty of food.

During the festival, the two significant events by which the Muslims in the area attracted non-Muslims to the religion were: the excessive eating of all types of meal and the lighting of local torches or confines. The events of the festival usually began right away from the cool of the day till very late in the evening. During this time, everyone ate all he possibly could and it was the practice also to invite poor people from the Muslim, traditional and

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1. Odún káyókáyó literally means 'the festival of plenty' or 'the festival in which everybody eats to the fullest'. The full form of the word káyókáyó is kí á yó, kí á yó, meaning 'to be full, to be full'. It remains for me to add here that the káyókáyó festival is dying out. Today in Oyo and its districts,



Christian religious groups to participate. The involvement of the poor people in the festival, especially the eating aspect, was regarded as a sadaqa, a thing that could ensure plenty in the ensuing year. It was just that no one must go empty that night.

The káyókáyó festival was, in terms of its social significance, similar<sup>1</sup> to the iléyá festival, including the state procession to the mosque, with all its display of royal splendour and evoking the same festive mood of a large city bent on enjoyment. But the royal display occupied only a brief phase on the morning of the New Year's Day. However, the enjoyment had a new emphasis on youth and moral licence.

On the eve of <sup>the</sup> New Year, the Muslim girls came in little groups while the boys and young men were formed into companies, each composed of an age-grade association under its leader. In Oyo and its districts, and, in fact,

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and, in fact, in Yorubaland at large, it is not as prominent as the other festivals mentioned above. It is now being given more concern by Muslim elders than the Muslim youths.

1. The festival was usually succeeded by the iléyá festival. Thus, the feet of the rams killed during the iléyá festival were usually preserved and reserved for use during the festival.

in Yorubaland and at large, the social aspect of the festival was much more pronounced than the religious aspect.

There was usually a mock battle<sup>1</sup> during the festival. In this connection, the boys thrust and threw the torches<sup>2</sup> to one another, age-group fighting age-group, not seriously but keenly and with marked excitement. It needed skill to catch the wildly flying firebrands or to parry those aimed at you. Nor were narrow escapes uncommon, and first-aid treatments for burns constituted a regular aftermarth of the káyókáyó festival. The excitement of the fight, moreover, was matched by the openly erotic excitement provoked by the occasion. The girls would keep to the dark areas in the town, but the youths threw torches in their direction to surprise and terrify them. Though there was plenty of teasing and joking, the language of the ceremonial was never obscene<sup>3</sup>.

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1. The description here was mainly collected from the field. The word 'battle' has been chosen advisedly. All informants describing the usage emphasised that it was more or less 'like a war' until very recently when the mock battle of torches was meant quite seriously.
  2. This aspect of the festival is known as námù in the area and Yorubaland at large.
  3. The prelude to the káyókáyó festival, as discussed above, was not always so tame.

The permitted aggression of the torch festival is repeated on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. During this time, the relationship between one member of the family and the other became more cordial and joking. The institution of joking relationship played a clearly defined part in Yoruba social life. Such joking relationship obtained between grand parents and grand children, between cross cousins; between a man and his elder brothers' wives; between a man and his uncles' wives or, in short, between one Muslim and the other and between Muslims and non-Muslims. The active partners in this relationship were always young people; older persons ceased to engage in joking relationship or engaged in it only as passive partners. Whenever an active partner in the relationship met his playmate, he would highly beat him or her with a stick until the victim appeased the assailant with a small gift of money<sup>1</sup>. Boys and young men would visit the home of a playmate, tie his(her) hands and feet with a grass rope, until once more a small ransom was procured. Throughout the káyókáyó festival, this play went on. Everywhere, boys were seen armed with sticks or carrying the grass ropes handy; and whole bands of them would swagger

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1. This is similar to the social aspects of the traditional festivals in honour of Egúngun, Ògún, Sangó, Orìsànlá, and Okebèdan in Yorubaland.

along the streets looking for their playmates among the girls and women, shouting at them, brandishing their sticks, and trying to seize them with unequal success. The 'passive' partners were allowed to evade the punishment, to retaliate, and even to cheat. Quite a few of the older men when they were caught by their young assailants, did not usually pay the required ransom, but merely pressed their fingers into the hands of their 'playmates', as though handling over a coin, and escaped by this ruse. The women and girls in the market sat behind their waves with sticks or grass ropes ready in case a playmate tried his extortions on them. In all this, there was no serious note, it was fun, and nothing else, taken in good part by everyone. In point of fact, the festival usually gave colour and gaiety to Islam whenever it was celebrated in Oyo and its districts. No wonder that non-Muslims in the area could not help joining their Muslim associates each time the festival was celebrated<sup>1</sup>. Throughout the play, another motif was also visible. The less active one would often be aided by his friends, and during the festival

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1. According to the jamā'a in each of the big towns in the area, there had been instances when some embraced Islam on this occasion. This was particularly so in Otu, Sepeteri and Saki. (Interview with the jamā'a in each of the towns August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidences).

youths were seen everywhere walking in pairs and holding hands, two friends facing together the adventures of the day. Thus the torch festival became a multiple occasion for many social relationships governing the life of the people: age-grade solidarity, political allegiance, kinship bonds and friendship.

Concerning the religious aspect of the festival, as celebrated in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, the following points may be mentioned: The pious among the Muslims fasted for one to three days and some, especially the aged ones, prepared for the festival by short fast<sup>1</sup>, ritual washing and a purge to purify the body. The special prayers which usually accompanied the festival were particularly important. They were held in all mosques, compound and central, in each of the towns in Oyo and its districts. As the first event of the Islamic year, worshippers during such festivals offered prayers of thanksgiving to God for the previous blessings received and more were asked for against the ensuing year. During this time, prayers of praise were also said in memory of Prophet Muhammad and his Companions

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1. They called the fast, aawe arugbo, meaning, 'the fast of the aged'. In Islam, it is regarded supererogatory.

especially the first four Caliphs<sup>1</sup>. The káyókáyó festival had spread widely in the area and today occurs even in villages where the followers of the traditional religion are in the majority.

The festival in commemoration of the birthday of Prophet Muḥammad was very prominent in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. Most prominent in the celebration of this festival was the association called 'Alásàlàtù'<sup>2</sup>. The association comprised able-bodied young men. It had special uniforms and did a lot to give colour and gaiety to Islam during the period of Islamic consolidation in Oyo and its districts.

The association attracted both Muslims and non-Muslims, not only by their attires but also by their religious songs such as the following:-

1. Asalátù f'ónsè nlá,  
Asalátù f'ónsè nlá,  
Alaafia f'ónsè nlá,  
Enití o mu èsìn asela wá,  
Aní sínú ayé,  
Àsàlàtù f'ónsè nlá.

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1. The first four Caliphs are regarded as the rightly guided Caliphs especially by the Sunnī group of Muslims. For more details about them, see above, 320p.
  2. See above, chapter 2, 142p.

2. Eyin elébo,  
E wá wo 'sé Aálà,  
Lódò awon onímòle.
3. Alùjanna ni ilé wa,  
Alùjanna ni ilé wa,  
Eyin tí e kò tí e kò se èsin,  
E bèrù ojò alukiyamò,  
E bèru Aala,  
E bèrù onísénlá
4. Awa lomo Alúfa ilé Iyaláje,  
Awa lomo Alúfa ilé Iyaláje,  
Enití kò mò wá,  
Kó jade wá wò wá,  
Kò mò di ariyanjiyan,  
Bi a bá lo tán,  
Àsalátù sálámù,  
Láilàilàlahù.

1. (Blessings on the doer of mighty works<sup>1</sup>,

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1. The name, 'the doer of mighty works', in the opinion of the Muslims in the area is not clear. In point of fact, prophet Muḥammad is meant but the Muslim would dare not oppose the view that Allāh is an incomparable Doer of mighty works. That Muḥammad is meant in the song above is seen in the following expression: E sálámò fun on'sé ñlá which means, 'give praise to the Prophet'.

Blessings on the doer of mighty works,  
 Peace unto the doer of mighty works,  
 He who vouchsafed the religion of salvation,  
 Into the world,  
 Blessings unto the doer of mighty works).

2. (You offerers of sacrifice,  
 Come out and watch,  
 Come and witness the work of Allāh,  
 Amongst the Muslims).

3. (Al-janna is our home,  
 Paradise is our home,  
 Those of you who are stubborn to religion,  
 Fear the Day of Judgement (al-qiyāma),  
 Revere Allāh,  
 Revere the Doer of mighty works).

4. (We are the children of `Alūfa of `Iyālājé compound,  
 We are the children of `Alūfa of `Iyālājé compound,  
 One who does not know us,  
 Should come out and see us,



To avoid argument,  
 When we leave,  
 Prayer, peace (as-salāt, as-salām),  
 There is no other God, but Allāh).

The Muslim songs and dances constituted some sort of cynosure for many people in the area and especially during the era of Islamic consolidation. The colossal appearance of the members of the prayer group, when they came out, the sensational rhythm and symphony of their songs and dances, and the beauty of their attires, combined to influence both <sup>the</sup> Muslims and <sup>the</sup> non-Muslims in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century.

The popular itunu àawè and iléyá festivals promoted the cause of Islam, in a large measure, during the period of Islamic consolidation. The occasions were usually ones of great felicity. They were usually marked by variety of food, clothes, Muslim songs and prayers which were usually conducted in the open. All these combined to produce an influence which was felt in the Muslim and the non-Muslim quarters in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. On these occasions, towns and villages were usually thronged with animals which were usually eaten by the Muslims and non-Muslims.

With regard to the itunu àawè festival, the appearance of the new moon was very significant. This was usually and

anxiously awaited by the Muslims and <sup>the</sup> non-Muslims. While the anxiety of the Muslims was consequent upon their mood to see the fast end, that of the non-Muslims was a result of the social significance of <sup>the</sup> new moon in the area. Its appearance was usually welcome with bursts of firing, beating of drums, in some places, and general felicity. All these helped to produce contact between <sup>the</sup> Muslims and the non-Muslims with the result that some even became attracted to Islam.

The two festivals involved prayers on ḥid grounds which were usually located at the outskirts of the town or village as the case may be. It was here, under the auspices of the Chief Imām and his lieutenants, that prayers and addresses were given. Important for our purpose here is the fact that, on such festival occasions, the children of non-Muslims usually attended the festival prayers on ḥid grounds in the same clothes with the children of the Muslims. Moreover, the Muslim associations usually influenced their non-Muslim associates on such occasions.

For a full appreciation of the significance of the festivals concerning the consolidation and expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, the following points will help our understanding. The Yoruba society of Oyo and its districts, in the nineteenth

century, was made up mainly of two religious faiths - the traditional religion and Islam. The followers of the two faiths were; the followers of the traditional religion and Muslims respectively. In the same family and under the same roof, there might be people holding diverse religious beliefs. One interesting and notable fact, this time, was that the religious differences did not, in any way, snap the mutual understanding and cordial relationship among the members of the same family or community. When, for example, the Muslims were celebrating their festivals, every member of the family and well-wishers, not minding their own religious convictions, rallied round and gave support to their Muslim brothers and sisters. They visited their Muslim relations and partook of the animals slaughtered to mark the festival occasion concerned. The Muslim brothers and sisters too usually made sure that they sent pieces of the animals to their neighbouring non-Muslim friends and relations who received them with joy and thanks and prayed that the next annual festival might be celebrated on a grander scale and by all of them together<sup>1</sup>. In return, the Muslims also participated

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1. There were greetings such as the following:

E kú odún,  
E kú ìyèdún,  
 †

in the traditional festivals. They had no qualms about taking part in such festivals<sup>1</sup>. They felt that they belonged first to the group before the religious divisions took place.

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Aseyí ó se amodún o,  
A ó pé jú se ti amodún o,  
Tomotomo tayataya tokotoko  
Omo tuntun lanti lanti,  
Ní iwoyi amodún o.

(Happy and prosperous new year,  
 We wish you many happy returns of the day,  
 The next festival will be celebrated by all,  
 Together with children, wives and husbands,  
 New bouncing babies,  
 In the ensuing year).

1. Among such festivals were the following: festivals in honour of Šango, Ogun and Egúngún. Some overzealous Muslims usually ridiculed those of their co-religionists who took part in traditional festivals as kāfir and sycretists who should be laid off from the 'community of the faithful'. Moreover, in point of fact, the product of the interaction among the followers of the traditional religion, Islam and Christianity was syncretism or ambivalence. Be that as it may, this phenomenon has come to stay and has become an invincible part of Islam and Christianity in Yorubaland. As long as kinship solidarity continues to count in Yoruba society, syncretism, as a religious phenomenon, will continue to plague Islam and Christianity in Yorubaland.

So, the family tie was stronger than any other ties that might exist in the society. Religious differences did not generate any breach to family solidarity. The interaction helped the consolidation and expansion of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1860 and 1895.

Moreover, it is worth noting that such an interaction existed not only between <sup>the</sup> Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion, but also between <sup>the</sup> Muslims and the Christians especially when Christianity gained access into the area towards the close of the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. However, the impact of such an interaction on the expansion of Islam in the area was less significant than that produced by the interaction between <sup>the</sup> Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. This was so because both Islam and Christianity, being religions based on the Holy Scriptures<sup>2</sup>, the followers of each of the religions thought that their own faith was the best. This was a case of particularity which endured and trickled down to the present century with the result that in some towns in the area, enmity reigned supreme between the Muslims and the Christians.

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1. See above, chapter 3, 167-175pp.

2. The bases of Islam and Christianity are the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān and the Bible respectively.

### 5.3 Muslim education.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Muslims in Oyo and its districts experienced some tinge of Qur'anic education. To have a proper understanding of the historical development of Muslim education in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, it will be necessary to discuss first the common features<sup>1</sup> about Muslim education in West Africa. Anywhere in the Muslim world, the Qur'an serves as the basis for both Islamic law and Muslim education. This is necessarily so because Islam, as a religion, is not merely a creed; it is a way of life, a life to be lived. This was the position of Muslim education in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. In this area, in the nineteenth century, Muslim or Islamic education was the same as Qur'anic education. Be that as it may, Muslim education promoted the cause of Islam in the area especially in the period after the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in 1835.

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1. See Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa 158ff. Here Trimingham observes that, in addition to the natural atmospheric training of a Muslim child in his environment, there are the narrower, consciously directed, Qur'anic and circumcision schools. See also Babalola, E. O. Islam in West Africa, Ibadan, 1973.

Most Qurʾānic Schools in the beginning were held in the mosques. Soon after, Muslim education began to move out of the mosque and it came to be carried out mostly in the mālam's residence. This was the case in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century as we shall see later in this section.

A typical Qurʾānic school in the Muslim world at large is run in the following ways: The mālam is seated under a tree, or in his parlour, or verandah or in his porch surrounded by volumes of the Qurʾān and other Islamic works like those on aḥādīth, especially those of al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim. At some distance to the mālam, but near enough to be within the reach of the teacher's vigil and long cane, are some 10 to 40 pupils who either squat or stand in a semi-circular form round the teacher. With most of their bodies shielded by the broad wooden slates<sup>1</sup> they hold proudly before them, they chant different verses of the Qurʾān, presenting an impressive confusion that looks, in no small measure, like a re-enactment of the Tower of Babel<sup>2</sup> episode, except that in this case, the pupils are all speaking different words of the same tongue. A Qurʾānic

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1. These are known as walāà among Yoruba Muslims.

2. See Genesis chapter 11.

school is in progress. In some cases, as in many other trades and professions, the teacher is assisted by one of the pupils who is either the brightest or the oldest or both.

As early as the third year of life<sup>1</sup>, Muslim children are expected to start the first stage of Qur'anic education. At this stage, the pupils learn only through repetition and by rote<sup>2</sup> the shorter sūras of the Qur'ān. Any pleasure derived from the system at this stage lies solely in the choral recitations which often assure a sing-song pattern. The pupils appear to enjoy reciting these verses to themselves in their homes and at play. The method of teaching is basically like this: the teacher leads the individual or group by giving the model of the verse to be learnt and the pupils recite this after him. He does this very many times over until he is satisfied that the pupil or the class as a whole, as the case

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1. Opinions of writers vary on the school age of Muslim children. In this connection, Trimingham says ages may vary from six to eighteen. In Oyo and its districts, observation has showed that while some children began to attend Qur'anic school at the age of three, others started very late - All depended on the degree of zealousness each parent had for Islam, See Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 159p.
  2. Learning by rote is known generally as 'verbalism' See Farrant, J. S. Principles and practice of Education. London, 1975, 116, 129pp.



may be, has mastered the correct pronunciation. Then the pupil is left on his own to continue repeating this verse until he has thoroughly committed this into memory. This verse is then linked with the previously memorised verses, and in this way the pupil gradually learns by heart the whole sūras of the Qur<sup>ān</sup>. A sūra at a time is written on his wooden slate which has been scrubbed to smoothness with the help of some coarse-feeling leaves, after which it is painted with white clayey substance. The ink<sup>1</sup> which the teacher uses in writing the sūra on the slate is extracted from certain leaves which are boiled until they exude their coloration which becomes thicker and darker the more the leaves are boiled.

The Qur<sup>ān</sup> is divided into 114 sūras. Pupils, at what we may call the 'primary or elementary' level of the system, are expected to commit one or two of these sūras into memory often beginning with the short sūras. Most of the sūras in these two parts are those he would most need for his daily prayers<sup>2</sup>.

From this, the pupil proceeds to the next stage at

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1. This type of ink is known as tādāā among Yoruba Muslims.

2. The teaching of formula necessary for the observance of the daily prayers began right away from home; and those converted to Islam began the learning of the formula in the feet of the rātībī Imāms right away from the day of conversion.

which he learns the Arabic alphabet.

This stage<sup>1</sup> lasts from about six to eighteenth months<sup>2</sup> depending again on the capabilities of individual pupils. Once the spelling pattern is properly grasped, the pupils can read off-head<sup>3</sup> any texts written in the Arabic language. This stage is usually the final stage in the acquisition of the reading skills.

The teaching of writing begins at different times in different schools. Some pupils begin learning how to write Arabic characters as early as the first stage of the system. Others do not start until much later, say when they are learning alphabet. This is generally a very slow, painstaking

1. This stage, according to Jimoh, is known as 'Ajitu' in Ilorin. He does not give us how the name came to be associated with this stage of Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic system. See Jimoh, S. A. A critical appraisal of Islamic Education 39p.
2. Ibid, 39p.
3. The system of reciting passages from the Qur<sup>ā</sup>n off-head is known among Yoruba Muslims as 'ológeere'. The Yoruba-speaking people of Ilorin also call it, 'ológeere'. See Jimoh, S. A., Ibid 39p. See also Babalola, E. O. Islam in West Africa. 76p.

and rather rigorous process during which the teacher writes the model of a verse on the writing board and the pupil copies this out several times over below the teacher's model. The pens<sup>1</sup> are made mostly from reeds or guinea-corn straws which are carved until they taper off towards the end forming a nib-like shape.

This is the point where many people think Qur'ānic education ends. But this is only the end of what we may regard as the elementary level of the system. The next stage involves more than this elementary stage. However, the elementary stage is a stage every Muslim must pass through if he is to be able to pray and perform other religious duties since the salāt, the birth and death rituals, marriage and other religious ceremonies are usually performed in Arabic.

The 'higher' or 'secondary' level of the system has a much more diversified and deeper curriculum. The pupil begins by learning the meanings of the verses he had committed into memory. The teacher does his best to explain the Arabic texts. But this is usually far too deep for the young minds and in many cases, too deep for the

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1. This type of pen is known as 'kalamu' (Arabic qalam) in Yorubaland. Thus the word kalamu is a loan-word in the language of the people. This is obviously a product of acculturation.

teacher's also. Apart from knowing the meaning of the verses of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān, the pupil is also introduced to other works such as the Traditions of the Prophet or the 'sunna' of the Prophet. The narration method is largely used and repetition is still employed to the maximum.

The course of study at this level includes ṣarf (grammatical inflexions), nahw (syntax); mantiq (logic); hisāb (arithmetic); al-jabr wa'l-muqābalaḥ (algebra); al-ma<sup>c</sup>na wa'l-bayān, (rhetoric and versification); al-ḥiq (jurisprudence), al-aqā'id (scholastic theology); at-tafsīr (commentaries or exegeses on the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān); ilmu 'l-<sup>c</sup>usul (treatises on exegesis, and the principles and rules of interpretation of the laws of Islam); al-aḥādīth (the Traditions of the Prophet and commentaries thereon). These are regarded as different branches of learning and it is not often that a teacher attains perfection in all the branches. A scholar/who is famous as being well informed in al-ḥiq may be relatively weak in al-hisāb. This is why, at this stage of his education, the student of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic system receives instructions from many mālaḥms<sup>2</sup>.

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1. See Jimoh, S. A. 'A Critical Appraisal of Islamic Education....' 40p.
  2. This system is comparable to the systems in use in the secondary schools and other higher institutions of learning of our days.

At this stage, the student makes up his mind concerning the area in which he wishes to specialise. This marks the inception of the university level. Having chosen his area of specialisation, he then proceeds to the university or continues at home learning from well-informed local specialists. By this time, the student has acquired some considerable proficiency in Arabic and is able to read and understand, and interpret many of the works of <sup>the</sup> earlier writers in his field of specialisation. At the end of his studies, he receives a certificate<sup>1</sup> empowering him to practise either as a teacher, an Imām, an alkālī (Arabic al-qādī)<sup>2</sup>, as the case may be, depending on his field of specialisation.

Moreover, a study of the historical evolution of Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic education in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century is considered incomplete without considering the philosophy of Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic education in general. In the light

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1. Compare the certificates issued to graduands from secondary schools, universities and schools of law in the modern time.
  2. There was no judiciary system in which the post of al-qādī existed in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. This was so because the area was not an Islamic theocratic State. Only the areas of Northern Nigeria that embraced Islam long ago had al-qādīs (Judges). And here, the judges are called alkālīs.

of this statement, the following points are worth noting. In Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic schools, there are no rigidly codified rules, the types of which the pupils in the final formal schools are compelled to conform to. However, there are a few conventionalised ways of demeanour which guide the pupils and the teachers. Although the periods of the classes are vaguely fixed, the teacher does not treat late-coming as a grave offence. He is ready to pardon a late comer if he is convinced that his lateness was as a result of some engagement at home. The teacher himself would declare a holiday if some religious obligation (such as a burial or marriage ceremony) has to take him away from home. In point of fact, Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic education at the elementary stage is, to use the words of Plato, "a sort of amusement"<sup>1</sup>.

The teacher<sup>2</sup> regards himself as a custodian of the pupils, his duty being primarily to train them to be good citizens (that is, to be good Muslims). The class-room atmosphere is relaxed as ever, but the teacher does not 'spare the rod entirely'. Whenever he comes, he does

1. q.v. Jimoh, S. A., "A Critical Appraisal of Islamic Education", 41p.

2. The teacher is at <sup>times</sup> / a Muslim diviner and a medicine-man.

so with a fatherly levity and caution. It is not done as to portray cruelty but to show an attempt to reform the pupil. When a pupil is absent as a result of ill-health, the teacher usually visits him and sometimes applies some treatment. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil is generally intimate and personal all through.

The school week starts on Saturday and ends on Wednesday<sup>1</sup>. There is no bell to call the pupils to school; nor is there a fixed uniform. The exact times the classes begin vary from area to area, and from teacher to teacher. In most parts of Oyo and its districts today, there are usually three sessions a day: morning, afternoon and evening. The morning session generally begins about 8.00 a.m. and ends about 10.00 a.m. The afternoon session lasts from 2.00 p.m. to about 4.00 p.m. The third session lasts from about 7.30 p.m. to about 9.00 p.m. When the child is old enough to learn a trade on the job, the hours of schooling are reduced and the afternoon session is cancelled.

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1. This is necessarily so in preparation for the Friday prayer, juma'a (Interview with the malams in the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts, December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

The fees are paid in cash and kind. There is no fixed amount as this varies from teacher to teacher. The teacher collects the 'fees' from <sup>the</sup> pupils for writing their new lessons on their wooden boards at the end of the school week. This does not usually amount to more than a few kobo. The teacher also receives some gifts (often in the form of sadaqa) such as grain, meat, cooked foodstuff, cloths or clothes and a praying mat. Offer of gifts is usually a feature of Muslim festivals.

Helping at some onerous activities is considered part of the pupil's duties to his teacher. During the month of Ramadān, the older pupils accompany their teacher to his preaching ground, usually a busy and conspicuous part of the streets in the town or village as the case may be. There, it is their duty to get the place lit and the chairs arranged and to treat the audience to melodious Muslim songs and poems<sup>1</sup> in praise of Prophet Muḥammad.

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1. Examples of such Muslim songs are as follows:

1. E wá gbóro,  
E wá gbóro,  
Óró Aálá o.



2. E wa gbórò,  
E wa gbórò,  
Orò Anabi.

3. Anabi lonigba,  
Eyin keferi,  
E panu mo.

4. Monmodu rasululaa,  
E ba ni yin in,  
E wa gboro,  
Onise nla.

5. Anabi elésin asela,  
Anabi elésin alaafia,  
Anabi iranse Aala,  
Oun ni iyin ye fun.

1. (Come and hear word,  
 Come and hear word,  
 The word of (Allāh).

- 
2. (Come and hear word,  
Come and hear word,  
The word of the Prophet (Muḥammad).
3. (The Prophet (Muḥammad) is the author of time,  
You, unbelievers (kāfirs),  
Keep your mouths short.
4. (Muḥammad rasūl u'l-lah,  
Praise him,  
Come and hear word (of),  
The worker of wonderful acts).
5. (The Prophet of religion of salvation,  
The Prophet of religion of peace,  
The Prophet the Messenger of Allāh,  
It is He who deserves praises).

In some schools, pupils are expected to go out on Thursday nights to beg for alms<sup>1</sup>.

On festival occasions such as the ‘īd u’l-fitr, al-‘īd u’l-kabīr and mawlidu’n-nabī (the Prophet's birthday anniversary), the pupils commonly present some dramatisations based on the life of the Prophet. Both in theme and texture, these 'plays', according to some writers, are very similar to the Roman liturgical plays of the Middle Ages and the Medieval miracle plays that succeeded them.

The greatest day in the life of the Muslim student is the day he performs the 'walīma'<sup>2</sup>. Initially intended as a modest ceremony at which the Muslim students graduate from school, this has now been integrated into the culture of the people; and in Oyo and its districts, it is now celebrated as one of the activities marking a couple's wedding banquet. However, it still retains its original religious overtone. The 'walīma' can take place once the Muslim has gone through the level designated as the 'primary'

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1. Interview with the mālāms in the area. December 1973, March, 1974, August, November 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

2. q.v. Jimoh, S. A. "A Critical Appraisal.." 41p.

or 'elementary' level above. The graduand takes his slate to his teacher who designs it for him. On one side of the slate, he writes a sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān; and on the other, he draws a rectangular figure in which he weaves a number of geometrical patterns, no doubt, also bearing some religious symbolism<sup>1</sup>.

On a fixed day, the graduand, with his decorated slate in his hand, tours the houses of his teacher, his in-laws and his own parents and relatives in an entourage of friends and some relations. At each station, he reads the sūra written on one side of the slate as though to convince his hearers that he has truly 'completed' the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān. At the end of the 'recitation', he is given presents. On this occasion, a ram or cow, bought by the graduand, is usually slaughtered at the teacher's house. The teacher could keep back as much as half of the slaughtered animal. In addition to this, he (the teacher) is given grain, millet, some money, a turban and a flowery and lavishly embroidered native attire<sup>2</sup>.

This is only one (and by far the most elaborate) of the ceremonies that punctuate the pupils course of study

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1. Jimoh, S. A., "A Critical Appraisal..." 42p.

2. This type of attire is known agbádá or ole tẹ̀l' Alùfa in Yorubaland.

from the first stage through graduation. For instance; after a student has successfully memorised the first eésù<sup>1</sup>, he procures a hen or cock for the teacher in form of the graduation present. The teacher sanctifies this before it is shared among the pupils and some other people in the vicinity.

So far are the common features true to Muslim education in almost all parts of the Muslim world. Now, let us quantify and analyse how much of the education the Muslims in Oyo and its districts were able to acquire in the nineteenth century.

There was no full-fledged Islamic education among the coterie of Muslims in Oyo and its districts before the fall of the Old Oyo in 1835. In point of fact, it was in the period of Islamic consolidation, that is, in the

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1. Eésù in Yorubaland refers to a sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān. The verses the Yoruba call haáyà Jimoh refers to a sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān as 'isu'. The words isu and eésù are a reference to one sūra of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān, the dialectal differences notwithstanding. See Jimoh, S. A., "A Critical Appraisal..." 42p.

reigns of Alááfin Adelu (1859-1876) and Alááfin Adeyemi Alowolodu I (1876-1905)<sup>1</sup> that some tinge of Muslim education began to take root. The period prior to the reigns of these kings was engaged in the propagation, tendering and resuscitation of Islam in Oyo and its districts; diversified projects too great to allow for any considerable Muslim education. The little that was, was dominated by the settled or foreign Muslims<sup>2</sup>.

Muslim education in the period between 1859 and 1894 formed an integral part of Islamic development in the area. This may be properly appreciated if one were not unduly influenced by the reports of missionaries such as A. F. Foster and James Johnson or those of the casual travellers or the stay-at-home investigators who were rather fond of portraying Yoruba Muslims as ignorant and superstitious "followers of the false Prophet"<sup>3</sup>. Such observations must be treated with some qualm largely because they came from

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1. However, in 1786, Landolpher met in the Benin area, some ambassadors from the Inland Kingdom of 'les Ayeaux' (Oyo?) who 'savaient ecrire et calculeren arabe". (Memoires du Capitaine Landolphe). Paris, 1823: ii, 86p. q.v. Biobaku, S. O. (ed.), Sources of Yoruba History, 1p.
  2. See above, chapter 3, 196-240pp.
  3. See above, chapter 3, 250-3pp.

people on ivory towers who were prejudiced and were little or not qualified to pontificate on Muslim education. Although, initially, the amount of knowledge possessed by the generality of the Muslims in the area was limited, the level of their knowledge of Islam and Arabic language increased over the years. This enabled them to attack Christian controversialists and earned <sup>them</sup> respect from informed quarters in Oyo and its districts. This increase of knowledge was naturally evidently less among the laity than among the "clergy" which demonstrated a definitive growth of scholarship.

In the period between 1860 and 1895, there was a proliferation of Muslim scholars and one remarkable feature of this was the noticeable number of indigenous scholars amongst them. In the previous decades, scholarship had been almost exclusively monopolised by the itinerant and ubiquitous mālams or the resident "aliens" usually from Ilorin and its environs, far North and Dahomey (Idindi land). Similarly, the leadership of the Muslim community in some places was virtually in "alien" hands. But it was remarkable

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1. Interview with some mālams in the area. The later Akéúkewé group of missionaries emerged from these quarters. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence. See also Moloney, Alfred "Notes on Yoruba and the Colony and the Protectorate of Lagos, West Africa", J. R. G. S. V., 12 1890.

that, a little later, there emerged a number of local men who had trained "abroad" in places such as Ilorin, Sokoto, Bornu, and Ibadan. And, on returning home, had set up as preachers and teachers adopting the common features of Qur'ānic education as mentioned earlier in this section<sup>1</sup>. A good number of such scholars hailed from Kiṣi, Igbeṭi, Igboho, Ṣaki, Ayetoro<sup>2</sup> and Iseyin. The local scholars<sup>3</sup>, together with others, were eminent as the Muslim educators who raised the level of the prevailing knowledge of the Muslims in the area. The case of Iseyin had been noted earlier in this work<sup>4</sup>. Here, there were Iseyin scholars

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1. See above, 356-369pp.
  2. Here again, it is worth remembering that in the nineteenth century, Ayetoro, a district of Oke-Iho, emerged as a stronghold of Islam.
  3. In Kiṣi for example, there were local scholars such as Abudu Baki, and Tijani Yayi who later became the sixth Chief Imām; there was Asani of Molaba quarter in Igboho. He started tafsīr and open-air lecture in Igboho and later became the second Chief Imām. He was one of the first set of converts in Igboho. See below, Appendix III, 548-9pp. In Saki there were local scholars such as Alūfa Agbongbo and Alūfa Badiyu who started tafsīr in Saki. Interview with the jama'ca in each of the towns mentioned above in August, November, 1975. See Bibliography. Oral Evidence.
  4. See above, chapter 2, 132-4, 139-141pp.



such as Àlùfa Aliyu, Mòṃòdu Egberongbe and Àlùfa Monmodu of Imale f'alafia who, after they had been educated abroad, probably in Ilorin or far North, for many years, returned to Iṣeyin as towers of Muslim education educating many others from far and near.

In their role as educators, the local scholars endeavoured as much as possible to raise the general level and tone of religious activity. Under the influence of Mòṃòdu Egberongbe and Àlùfa Aliyu in Iṣeyin, for instance, was initiated that which later became customary: the use of JALĀLAIN<sup>1</sup> as tafsīr to the greater edification of the Muslim community. The scholars also helped the various communities in introducing Muslim ceremonies mentioned earlier in this work<sup>2</sup>. In Oke-Iho, for instance, it was the fifth Imām, Abudu Raḥmān Ajani<sup>3</sup>, alias Arikewusola, who began the mawlidu 'n-nabī there. This was possibly partly because of the influence which the scholars enjoyed and partly because the Muslim scholars were knowledgeable in the Qur'ān, Exegesis, Ḥadīth Literature, Theology, Islamic Law

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1. This is Yoruba Jalélù or Dalélù.

2. See above, 337-351pp.

3. See below, Appendix III, 552p.

(Jurisprudence) and History, in addition to Arabic Grammar and Poetry. The local teachers in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century assumed the characteristics of the Muslim teacher as described earlier in this section<sup>1</sup>. The pupils here were not different in behaviour from the pupils described above<sup>2</sup>. The local Muslim teachers began their teachings in their houses and later in the houses and mosques together, using Yoruba as the medium of teaching.

There was an obvious proclivity for each local community to appoint the local scholars as the Onitafusiiru, even as the Imām wherever possible. In this connection, examples can be multiplied. However, sufficient it is to say here that Alufa Aliyu of Iseyin became the Onitafusiiru while Momodu Egberongbe<sup>3</sup> later became the Chief Imām of the town.

It will be useful to emphasise here that, in spite of the increase and the role of the local scholars, non-indigenous scholars were still very much received and they enjoyed as much respect as their local counterparts. The case of Oyo and Iseyin will probably illustrate this point best. Many non-Yoruba scholars still came and went. They

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1. See above, 362-3pp.
  2. See above, 354-368pp.
  3. See below, Appendix III, 552p.

held open air preachings (wa'z) and conducted classes which were attended by all, irrespective of their ethnic affinity. In Oyo and Iseyin, foreign scholars such as the renowned and ubiquitous Ilorin Muslim evangelist, Muhammad Salisu, alias Alufa Kokewukobere, Alufa Jibril, alias Kafahimta, and Alhaji Muhammad al-Wazir of Bida were <sup>very</sup> much welcome, loved and respected. They were everywhere welcome and respected by the local Muslims since they functioned in the society as Muslim-diviners, amulet-makers, educators, and preachers who were helping to solve the problems of individual Muslims and raise the level and tone of religious life and knowledge. Others were Alufa Busura, from Ilorin, who started open-air lecture in Igbeti and Salisu<sup>2</sup>, an Idindi from Dahomey, who later became the first Chief Imām of Šaki.

The presence of the local and "alien" scholars signified emphasis on scholarship and the mutual contribution of wide range of scholars. In effect, it marked out Kiši,

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1. The nickname emerged from his frequently asking, in Arabic, his audience whether they understood his preaching, ka fahimta or ma'aqul?. See Gbadamosi, G. O. The growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 111p. Cf the sayings of teachers in the modern time: "Do you understand", "I hope you are following me"; "Do you get me", "I hope it is clear", "Clear", "Understood".
  2. See below, Appendix III, 548-9pp.

Igbeti, Igboho, Saki, Ayetoro, Iseyin, Ikoyi and Oyo as important centres of learning. In the organisational control of the Muslim community, however, the influence of the "alien" scholars generally seemed to have been giving way to that of indigenous men. The major reason that could be adduced was the fact that the indigenous scholars understood best the local Muslim community in which they lived. In short, they with the laity belonged to the same cultural milieu<sup>1</sup> which, in point of fact, formed, in part, the basis of the organisation of the Muslim community<sup>2</sup>.

Evidently then, there was considerable growth within the Muslim community - growth in numbers, spiritual life and knowledge in the late nineteenth century. These facts produced certain important changes and tension within the community itself. The growth in Islamic and Arabic knowledge, for example, generated a breach within the community between the literary men whose aspiration was to reform and purify

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1. This system is well expressed in the Yoruba saying: Omo ina laaran si'na - meaning, literally, that "it is the child of fire that is usually sent to fire". This system can be compared to the Anglican policy of "Vennism" or "Native Pastorate", which Ayandele calls "Ethiopianism" in his book, The Missionary Impact, 177-237pp.
  2. See above, 316-338.

the practice of Islam on the one hand, and on the other hand, the more conservative group which desired to adhere to the old established, but sometimes misleading, ways. Regardless of the lapse of time, the two camps still survive up till today in the area. The breach was evident in the big centres of Islam such as Kisi, Igbeti, Igboho, Ayetoro, Oke-Iho, Iseyin, Ikoyi and Oyo<sup>1</sup>. However, such a split between the reformist literary wing and the conservatists did not always end in the victory of either side.

In addition to the elementary Qur'anic education in the houses of the local teachers, there was also some education gained from open-air lectures. As the Ramadān approached, there started in the big centres of Islam, such as Saki, Iseyin and Oyo, the series of customary open-air lectures during which learned Muslims, "local" and "alien", expounded the Qur'an<sup>2</sup>. The exposition was often done with the aid of the Ḥadīth, the Jalālain, the commentary of the two Jalāls which had become widely revered throughout Yorubaland<sup>3</sup>. Some of the trained abroad indigenous scholars

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1. Interview with the jamā'a in the big centres of Islam in the area. December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975.
  2. Interview with the jamā'a in each of the towns mentioned above. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  3. See Gbadamosi, G. O. The Growth of Islam, 114p. See also. chapter 3, 203-4pp.

in the area attended some of the open-air meetings organised by the non-indigenous scholars and were evidently struck by the free and sometimes erroneous interpretations which some teachers gave to the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān.

Some of them embarked on <sup>the</sup> current belief and practice and they insisted that the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān was all adequate and opposed the use of the Ḥadīth and the Jalālain<sup>1</sup>. The doctrine of 'the all-sufficiency of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān was new to the Muslims in Oyo and its districts who knew no other important tafsīr of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān than that of the Jalālain. The doctrine was not a thing to be easily ignored. So distinguished was their learning, and so forceful and devastating were their lectures that the doctrine shook both Islam and its followers in the area and eventually split the community into two camps: that of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān (Alālūkuraáni) under the leadership of 'trained-abroad' indigenous scholars and that of the Jalālain (Oníjálélù) or opposers of the 'trained-abroad' local scholars.

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1. Interview with the Mógàjí imole, Oyo. Alhaji Sule Shewu, Pàràkòyí Quarter, Oyo. December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1973. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

More important here, than anything else, was the way in which Muslim education promoted the cause of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the period between 1860 and 1895.

To quantify and analyse correctly how far Qur'anic education had promoted the cause of Islam in the area in this period, we should appreciate the fact that the basic aim of Qur'anic education is to make its recipients good Muslims and in Islam, being a good Muslim is synonymous with being a good citizen. As the child grows up, he comes to understand the right modes of behaviour and develops, from his teacher's examples and precepts, the faculty for divorcing 'bad' from 'good'.

Education acts as an agent of stability in the society<sup>1</sup>. As the child grows up under the system, he comes gradually to learn to fit himself into his adult roles. The system thus contributes to making Islam what it is - a way of life, and not only a way of life but a particular way of life to be lived. It is not a system where it is possible to believe one thing and act another.

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1. See Ottaway, A. K. C. Education and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Education, London 1970, chapters 5-9. Jimoh holds the same view. See his article, "A Critical Appraisal of Islamic Education", 43p.

The truly educated Muslim must integrate his knowledge with his conduct. In this way, Qur'ānic education ensures a smooth transition from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood. The Muslim is never totally "out of his roots" -- never, that is, totally denied of that which is, essentially, for a healthy development.

One of the tacit objectives of the Qur'ānic system of education, as any keen observer may appreciate, is to train the rulers of the community. As mentioned earlier, the Imāms and the Onitafusiirū could only assume office on the basis of their Islamic knowledge. Almost all the aims of <sup>the</sup> Qur'ānic system were achieved in the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century, largely by the help of the non-indigenous scholars and partly by the help of the 'trained-abroad' indigenous Muslims. In this way, many of the children of the indigenous Muslims in each of the big centres of Islam in the area were brought up in the Islamic way through the system, and they later emerged as dynamic and ubiquitous propagators of Islam on the platform of organised evangelisation. The "born-to-Islam" groups of Muslims in Oyo and its districts were also contributory to the consolidation of Islam right away from the late nineteenth century down to the present time.



Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic education witnessed a significant incident in the period between 1895 and 1900. Earlier<sup>1</sup>, mention has been made of the history of the entry of Christian missionary educators and British powers into the area. Their advent gave the Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic system in the area new orientation and the two systems together Jimoh describes as "old Wine in a new Skin"<sup>2</sup>.

The discussion in the foregoing sections<sup>3</sup> represents the nature of Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic education as it was in its unalloyed and unsnapped form. This was the situation before the influx of the Christian missionaries and British powers. With the advent of the Christian missionaries and the British colonialists<sup>4</sup> came also a big crisis for Muslim

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1. See above, chapter 3,
  2. Jimoh, S. A. "A Critical Appraisal of Islamic Education", 45p.
  3. See above, 354-380pp.
  4. See Ottaway, A. K. C., Education and Society, 60-78pp; Ghadamosi, G. O., "The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria", J.H.S.N., I iv, 1, December, 1967; See also Atanda, J. A. The New Oyo Empire, 235-87pp; Fafunwa, Babs: The History of Education in Nigeria, London, 1974, Crowder, Michael, West Africa under Colonial Rule, London, 1970, 372-386pp; Wilson, John: Education and Changing West African Culture, London, 1966, 54-98pp. Burns, A. History of Nigeria., 249-260pp.

education in Oyo and its districts.

The employment of people as clerks raised the question of the development which produced the clerks namely, Western education. It was introduced by the Christian Missions who had established themselves in various parts of Oyo province during the second half of the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The expansion of Western education took effect only when the Christian Missions themselves had better facilities for expansion<sup>2</sup>. For, like its introduction, the dissemination of Western education and proliferation of formal schools were both carried out, in the main, by the Christian Missions. But with the bombardment of Oyo in 1895<sup>3</sup>, the British powers gained access into the situation and gave full strength and vigour to the educational policy of the Christian Missions.

With the entry of <sup>the</sup> Christian missionaries and the British powers into Oyo and its districts, the skills given by the traditional Islamic education seemed to be of little or no

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1. Atanda, J. A. The New Oyo Empire... 235p. See also map 1 on 1(a)p.
  2. Ibid, 236p.
  3. See above, chapter 4, 280-1pp. See also Atanda, J. A. The New Oyo Empire..., 45-85pp.

help in the modern world of commerce, industry and improved agriculture. The administrative machinery was also gradually becoming more and more diversified and sophisticated, and this thrust greater demands on the natives as it required slightly different sorts of skills. The change they were being called upon to make was not one requiring the natives to change their Yoruba or Arabic for English. It was also to involve their own way of life as will be pointed out very soon.

The crisis then was - should Muslim education be allowed to continue unaltered, or should it acclimatise to Western influences? In point of fact, in the course of the years, the two things had happened. In Oyo and its districts, in the nineteenth century, education was carried on in one type of school. The number of purely private schools run on traditional lines was then very large. The number of such schools was estimated to be over 300<sup>1</sup> in Iseyin town alone. This was so because the Muslims held some reservation about Western education which, to them, had some Christian undertone. The Muslims, this time, were

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1. Result of the census activity done in Iseyin in August, 1975 during the field work.

hostile to the Christian missionaries and the British powers together with their educational policies. They called the Christians either kiriyo or káfirí. Any Muslim who committed the mistake of embracing Christianity instead of upholding Islam was regarded a káfirí or monáfiki<sup>1</sup> whom should be dissociated with. Such a person was no more regarded a member of the faithful, but an apostate.

However, the hostile and conservative attitude of the Muslims did not endure for long. In this connection, thanks to the efforts of enlightened Muslims such as the Ákú Muslims<sup>2</sup> from Sierra Leone and the Agùdà Muslims from Brazil some of whom were part of the Muslim community and who cleverly and patiently enlightened their Muslim associates about the immense advantage associated with Western education and about the insufficiency of only Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic education. As years rolled by, the Muslims began to learn from the children of <sup>the</sup> Christian converts who, as a result of Western education, had reached very high and enviable positions. In this way, their wish to see their children in high positions and their belief that

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1. This is derived from the Arabic word 'munāfiqūn'.

2. See above, chapter 2, 111-125pp.

their children would constitute a stable source of strength and succour for them in the later part of their days on earth combined to produce the Muslims' favourable disposition towards Western education in recent years. In this connection, Islam reaped a fine reward. Had it not been that the Muslims allowed Western education alongside <sup>the</sup> Qur'anic system of education, though relatively small in quality and quantity, Christianity would have stood a constant source of danger to Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century and later. In point of fact, the dynamic involvement of the Muslims in Western education post-dated our period. It was the present century that witnessed the unreserved and unbiased welcome which the Muslims gave to Western education<sup>1</sup>.

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1. In this connection, the following statements made by Dr. 'Kola Folayan, Ondo State Commissioner for Education are apposite. According to him: "Islam is not a religion of ignorance and darkness, as some ignorant people tended to think in the past. Because Islam means knowledge and light. It established schools, mosques and educational institutions, literary and scientific societies in its crusade throughout the ages. Islamic community makes learning easy by providing the students and teachers with food, accommodation, medical and financial assistance. Also I know that Islam makes provision for all types of education - spiritual or moral, social, scientific or technological". To the Ondo State's branch of the National Joint Moslem (sic) Organisation in Akure, the Commissioner said: "You must give serious consideration to the practical ways and means of really promoting Islamic and Arabic Studies so that there could be more cross fertilisation between western and oriental forms

In Oyo and its districts today, and in addition to the traditional schools of Islam, there were two other types of schools in which Qur'ānic education is being carried on. First is the rung of 'semi-formal' institutions which combine elements of both the formal and the informal. In such schools, Arabic and Islamics (but these two only, unfortunately) are now taught intelligently and meaningfully with adequate methods and equipments. There are such schools in almost every street in Oyo, Iseyin, Saki and Kişi, most of them run by Muslim societies. The schools are housed in self-contained buildings, and the blackboard, desks and chairs as well as the pupils' uniforms are overt indications of the "marriage of convenience" between the traditional and the formal. The schools are also divided into 'classes' or 'forms' as in the formal schools.

The period between the 1940s and now witnessed formal institutions run on Western patterns. In this connection, Muslim societies and sects such as the

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of education for the advancement of knowledge and benefit of humanity". The address was delivered on the occasion of the launching of the State's branch of the National Joint Moslem (sic) Organisation in Akure. The report of the address is contained in Daily Times, "Merits of Islam spelt Out" Monday, August 16, 1976.

Ansarudeen, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (the present Anwāru'l-Islām Movement) and the Ahmadiyya Mission<sup>1</sup> of Nigeria can be mentioned. The step towards Islamic modernism has, in the present century, saved Islam from the cultural pride posed by Christianity<sup>2</sup> and the mess of existing as a statistical giant but a religious anachronism in modern Yorubaland. Finally, it has generated an atmosphere in which Islam could develop wider tentacles and grow more wings than those of the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>.

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1. See Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission: A short sketch of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam; Lagos, 1973. 34-42pp; Fisher, H. J. L., Ahmadiyya, Oxford, 1963.
  2. The cultural pride of Christianity is an offspring of the age-long racio-technological pride of the white people, the propagators of Christianity in the so-called under-developed nations of the world.
  3. The view above can be ascertained by the fact that, up till today in Oyo and its districts Islam exists as the dominant religion.

## CHAPTER SIX

6.0 THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM UPON THE TRADITIONAL  
BACKGROUND OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY.6.1 Muslim progress and conflicts with the traditional  
society.

The historical background of Islam in Oyo and its districts has been discussed; an attempt can now be made to describe not only the nature of the relationship between the nascent Muslim community and the traditional society but also the impact of Islam upon the traditional background of the Muslim community.

The growth of Islam in Oyo and its districts had, as a matter of course, been attended by conflicts with the traditional society in the area. Attacks were made on the Muslims as they endeavoured to spread and expand Islam. Even when Islam became fairly well established, the Muslims were attacked whenever they tried to make the public calls<sup>1</sup> to prayer, erect mosques and conduct worship openly<sup>2</sup>. However, in the face of these obstacles, the Muslims established their community, practising their faith according to their own understanding.

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1. The Muslim call to prayer is known as ādhān. See E. I. Article on ādhān. See also, Trimmingham J. S. Islam in West Africa. 71, 157pp et passim.



After the period of Islamic entrenchment (1860-1875)<sup>1</sup>, the Muslim community in Oyo and its districts began to grow in size and stature. It was in the course of this growth that the Muslim community witnessed a greater degree of conflicts with the traditional society and these were, in truth, the "CONFLICTS OF GROWTH"<sup>2</sup>.

1. See above, chapter 2, 136-157pp.
2. One central theme of many Ifá poems, especially the epic poems, is conflict - conflict between Orunmila and his children; conflict between priests of Ifá: conflict between supernatural powers and the powers of men; conflict between Yoruba traditional religion and either Islam or Christianity. The most relevant in this tradition of conflict are the poems contained in Otúá Meji dealing with the inevitable conflict between Yoruba traditional religion and Islam. According to Wande Abimbola, in his article, "The Literature of the Ifá cult" in Biobaku, S. O. (ed.), Sources of Yoruba History, "This must have occurred at the time of the latter's propagation in Yorubaland". See also his book - Ijinlè Ohùn Enu Ifá, Apá Kinni Glasgow, 1968, 134-8pp., and Daramola, O. and A. Jeje. Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba., 197ff and the Ifá poem on the introduction of Islam into Yorubaland in Appendix I, 537-544pp. See also Abimbola, W. Ijinlè Ohùn Enu Ifá Apa keji. Glasgow, 1969. Some of the poems relating to the conflict between Islam and Yoruba traditional religion depict Islam as faith embraced by former slaves of Ifá who were brought up by Ifá but who later deserted him. Some people are regarded as bearing an irrevocable curse upon their own heads and are therefore doomed to a life-time of trouble. Some poems in this class depict Muslims as thieves who enter the city gates at night and steal the people's foodstuffs. Other

The numerical expansion of the Muslim community after the period of resurgence (1837-1859)<sup>1</sup> naturally produced great anxiety on the part of the votaries of the traditional religion. This was so because, during the period of Islamic consolidation<sup>2</sup>, many of the influential persons within the traditional society were won to Islam. Some of them were key people such as the Alokolodo royal family of Iganna in Oyo North, and some other members of <sup>the</sup> royal family in places such as Şaki and Ikoyi. In Oyo, the die-hard leaders of the traditional religion, especially some of the devotees of Şangó, became

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poems in this category depict Muslims as a leisurely sect who wear grand clothes everyday and look everywhere for free gifts. Such grand clothes the Yoruba call Ole tele Alufa - meaning "A lazy man follows a Muslim cleric". They give it this name because such clothes are usually flowing ones and also because Muslims are fond of begging for alms. The poem contained in Appendix II below depicts the violence with which Islam possibly entered Yorubaland. It tells of the exploits of one Alukaadi (Arabic al-qādi) who was so wicked that he reduced the town in which he was living to ruins and destroyed himself in the process. Alukaadi was probably one of the Jihād fighters who featured prominently in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century.

1. See above, chapter 2, 93-137pp.
2. See above, chapter 2, 136-158.

Muslims under the influence of the first Pàràkòyí, Yesufu Alanamu<sup>1</sup>. Sons of the die-hard leaders of the Orò-cult were won and converted to Islam<sup>2</sup>. Those of the followers of the traditional religion who earned their living by the active practice of the traditional religion were seriously embittered against the growth of Islam at the expense of the traditional religion. Such people were the priests<sup>3</sup>, the traditional drummers<sup>4</sup>, who usually made heavy amount of money during the traditional festivals in honour of the tutelary divinities, the traditional singers, who sang praise-songs for the divinities, and the kings who were

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1. Interview with the Muslim jamā'a, Oyo, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Interview with the Muslim jamā'a, Iseyin, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  3. The priests were the people known as abore "worshipper of divinity", babalórìsà, babalóòsà, "father in divinity (worship)".
  4. These were the onibátá. They were the drummers of a type of drum called bátá. Bátá was a popular drum for Sàngó. (Interview with Ayan family and Mogbà. Oyo, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975).

regarded as second-in-command<sup>1</sup> to the divinities. The sculptors of the paraphernalia for the worship of the tutelary divinities did not stand aloof in the attack. Most odious to the followers of the traditional religion was the practice of organised iconoclasm embarked upon by some of the Muslim missionaries, especially those who were overzealous about Islam. Not long, the followers of the traditional religion came to realise that the traditional heritage left by the ancestors was at stake and every possible means must be employed to salvage the situation by forestalling the missionary activities of the Muslims. The Muslims experienced stiff opposition from a good number of <sup>the</sup> traditional quarters and the derated social position of the converts sometimes insured them and their colleagues against the possible hostile reaction of their fellow traditional religionists. Such protests, as were evinced, were overwhelmed by the acclamations of the larger number of people who flocked to Islam with such prominent people. But this was not always the case. The conversion to Islam

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1. Here, it is pertinent to recall the Yoruba expression concerning the status of Yoruba oba. Oba aláṣe èkẹjì òrìṣà, 'King, second in command to the divinities'. See above, chapter 1, 12p.

of personalities, more or less well placed and especially the conversion of those who have been more deeply engulfed in the traditional customs occasioned serious, and at times fatal, conflicts with the traditional society. The stronger the attachment of such people to Islam, the more furious was the reaction of their associates<sup>1</sup> who were still loyal to the indigenous religion. The popular view in the local quarters was that the expansion and growth of Islam meant the undermining of the position of the traditional worship and institutions. The conversion of notable people amongst the followers of the traditional religion proved, in many places, to be a constant source of veritable tension and rampage between the Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. The conflicts often followed high incidences of conversion, especially mass conversion, and organised iconoclasm.

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1. During the interview with the Muslim community, Oyo, in November, 1975, it was related how, for example, during the reign of Alááfin Adelu (1859-1876, a certain man from among the Mogbà, the priests of Sàngó, became a Muslim convert. This sparked off a new rift that, nevertheless, did not compel the man to apostatise.

Particularly illustrative here was the experience of Àlùfa Kokewukobere<sup>1</sup>, the veteran and ubiquitous Muslim preacher. In each of the big centres<sup>2</sup> of Islam in Oyo and its districts, Àlùfa Kokekukobere preached both in the mornings and evenings in the course of his stay in the area. He proved to be a versatile preacher, fearlessly denouncing the persistent followers of the traditional religion and the Ògbóni cult as vermin - "ègbìn lẹ̀ jẹ̀" - and encouraging all to embrace Islam, the religion of peace and the way of salvation and paradise. He composed songs embodying his message. In this way, his fame spread far and wide. Within a very short time, during his stay at Oyo and Iseyin, very many people trooped to him for the ritual ablution (wónká) of conversion<sup>3</sup>. His

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1. Interview with the jamā'ā in each of the big centres of Islam in the area, December, 1973, March, 1974, August and November, 1975. He toured the whole of Yorubaland and Dahomey in the company of his junior brother called Younger Kokewukobere at Abeokuta. See Gbadamosi The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 323p.
  2. Interview with the jamā'ā in the big centres of Islam in the area. December, 1973, March, 1974 August and November, 1975. See Bibliography. Oral Evidence.
  3. This was virtually the ceremony of joining Islam. The new convert was thoroughly bathed, taught the shahāda (the Muslim profession (article) of faith) and the five pillars of Islam. See Arnold: The preaching of Islam, London, 1913. Demombynes, G. Les Institutions Musulmanes, Paris, 1953. The new convert was often given new or fresh clothes to wear

success made the persistent followers of the traditional religion in Oyo and districts, and Yorubaland at large, least comfortable. On several occasions, the devotees of Sàngó and the "Oyo-Ògbóni" came down in formal formation to challenge him, his group of assistant preachers, audience and Muslim catechumen. There were no physical conflicts but there were threats and profuse incantations<sup>1</sup>. In any event, the Muslims remained steadfast always chanting their shahāda in their usual tune. The Ògbóni and the Mogbà soon gave up the unequal struggle, leaving the Muslim class undaunted and apparently invigorated. The preacher continued preaching and converting more people from among the followers of the traditional religion. There was also the case of another versatile preacher called Kabasira. He moved all and sundry

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and was given a Muslim name (Yoruba: súná from the Arabic word, sunna). Henceforth, he was often guided by a malam, compound Imam or an Àlufa. This was really a rebirth or a regeneration of life.

1. The incantations here are the Yoruba ofò which are known in Yorubaland to be magical. The Yoruba believe in the power and efficacy of the 'spoken word'. So, when these are said, they believe that their wish, as contained in the ofò, will come to reality. For further details about Yoruba ofò, see Olatunji, O. The Characteristics of Yoruba Oral Poetry: Ph.D. Ibadan, 1971., et passim, Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 7.40 96pp. et. passim

in Fiditi by his oratory preachings, miracles, and mass conversions<sup>1</sup>. His activities in Fiditi so moved the followers of the traditional religion that an appeal was made to the Resident at Oyo. The Resident, who invited him for questioning, was insulted and he, Kabasira, reportedly disappeared in a miraculous way.

As the two preachers, Alùfa Kokewukobere and Alùfa Kabasira, won over a multitude of people to Islam, they evoked the wrath and passion of the persistent followers of the traditional religion. In Oyo, Alùfa Kokewukobere experienced an open confrontation organised by the notable members of the Ògbóni cult. Moreover, in Iseyin he was assailed by the olórò<sup>2</sup>, the members of the Orò cult, as they all saw how he literally depleted their ranks. Furthermore, it is clear from the similar experiences of other propagators of Islam such as Alùfa Kuranga of Iseyin and Arannibanidebe that the open confrontations were not peculiar to both

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1. Interview with the Muslim jamā'ā, Fiditi, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. The origin of Iseyin was connected with the deified spirit of ancestor called Orò. Thus the people of Iseyin were usually greeted "Iseyin Orò, omo Ebedi", meaning, 'Iseyin of Orò, the child of Ebedi'.



Àlùfa Kokewukobere and Àlùfa Kabasira or any single Muslim community in Oyo and its districts.

The conflicts, consequent upon the conversion into Islam of a multitude of the followers of the traditional religion from the traditional ranks, did not necessarily resolve the issue between the two sides. They were followed by more confrontations as the Muslims grew in confidence. In Şaki, for example, the Muslims were sorely troubled by the abòrìṣà<sup>1</sup>. They enjoyed harassing the Muslims-especially their former associates that had been converted - flogging them, stripping them of their turbans and sometimes even of their dresses. These harassments and confrontations were sometimes tolerated. But sometimes, they were too hard to bear<sup>2</sup>.

Particularly illustrative here was the incidence of the rampage between the Muslims and the abòrìṣà in Şaki. On many occasions, the followers of the traditional religion

1. The abòrìṣà here were the votaries of the traditional religion. The head of the abòrìṣà was known as abòrè.
2. Interview with Muslim jamā'ā in each of the big centres of Islam in Oyo and its districts in December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

had harassed the Muslims. The pressure was so much that the Muslim Okere of Şaki, Oba Ladigbolu Jimoh Monmo, was said to make a firm stand and ordered later that Muslims were no longer to be persecuted<sup>1</sup>. On many occasions, the Muslims had to go to the Okere to lodge protests about their insecurity in the town. The abòrisa in Şaki went to the extent that the Muslims in the town were hedged in by certain rules. The rules were to be kept by the Muslims even on point of death. The rules were: firstly, on the occasion of Şangó festival, Muslims should not have their lights on in the market places. Secondly, during any traditional festival in the town, Muslims should remove their shoes as a mark of respect for the divinity concerned and the devotees of that divinity at large. Thirdly, Muslims, on the occasion of any traditional festival, should not meet the devotees of the divinity concerned with their umbrellas on. Fourthly, on traditional festival occasions, Muslims should not penetrate riding bicycles. Lastly, on no account should any Muslim penetrate when the devotees of a divinity congregated celebrating a festival

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1. Interview with the Muslim jama'ca Şaki, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

in honour of their tutelary divinity. The Muslims were said to be making sincere efforts to observe the rules. The situation became worse when the abòrìṣà connived at the only rule given by the Muslims that when prayers were going on in the mosque, traditional drumming and singing should stop. The conflict involved here was so serious that it lingered on until it eventually developed into a serious litigation<sup>1</sup>.

It has been pointed out how the conversion of many followers of the traditional religion, especially the notable ones amongst them, generated a considerable threat to the position of the followers of the traditional religion. But a more dimensional threat to <sup>the</sup> traditional society lay in the new scale of values which Islam was introducing into the society through its adherents. However, this impact should not be over-emphasised. **The changes that ensued from the meeting of cultures, or simply from acculturation, were dynamic in nature.** Islam and African cultures have a reciprocal influence. As it spread among the people in Oyo and its districts, Islam was conditioned by their

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1. Interview with the jama'ca Şaki, August, 1975. See the Bibliography: Oral Evidence. The case is pending in Oyo High Court till today.

outlook and customs<sup>1</sup>; but Islam in turn changed these outlook and customs.

The adoption of Islam in the area led, in time, to a profound reintegration of the cultural life of the people. What must not be forgotten is that throughout this process Islam, as a religion based on Scripture, that is as a revealed religion, must remain true to type. Many elements were, indeed, assimilated, but the clergy, in some cases, had to compromise with <sup>the</sup> irreconcilable practices through force of circumstances awaiting a reformer to mobilise public opinion against them. The given data of Islam, its dogma and rules, its distinctive apprehension and insight into the totality of existence, cannot theoretically be denatured, though understanding and practice may modify the direction. The crisis, Islam faced, of losing its true identity was averted by the law books in the hands or memories of the clerics. A considerable time-lag elapsed before the Islamic conception of life seeped through; but when it did, the culture evolved into something new, in harmony with the Islamic ideal, yet

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1. It is in consequence of this fact that every Muslim society varies in its understanding and practice of Islam. Thus we can also talk of Islam of different localities in the world - Islam in Yorubaland, Islam in Nupeland and Islam in Arabia. Here, we mean Islam as practised in Yorubaland, Nupeland and Arabia.

truly Yoruba. The readjustment of social life to the new ideal, that is, the Oyo Islamic transformation, proceeded naturally. The Muslim community based, not on blood relationship, but on religion, became a reality, with its leaders, norms of behaviour, and communal rituals.

## 6.2 Islam and the traditional religious beliefs.

### 6.21 Belief in God.

Islam influenced many spheres of the traditional life of its adherents. The first to be discussed here is the influence of Islam on the people's conception of the Supreme Being. Before the introduction of Islam, the people in Oyo and its districts believed in the Supreme Deity known as "Olódùmarè"<sup>1</sup>, "Olórun"<sup>2</sup>, and "Olúwa"<sup>3</sup>.

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1. This name "Olódùmarè", as the name of the Deity, stands above every other name. In the Yoruba myth of creation, as contained in Idowu's book Olódùmarè, chapter two, He is the 'Prime Mover' or the 'Unmoved Mover' of things by whom the origin of our inhabited earth was commissioned.
  2. The word "Olórun" can be broken into three 'component parts O-ní-òrun, meaning 'One who owns the skyey-heaven or simply "The owner of the skyey-heaven".
  3. The name "Olúwa" can be broken into three component parts o-ní-iwa, meaning "one who owns existence or being" or, in short, "The owner of existence or being".

healers or nature doctors. Europeans, and the British in particular, used to call them witch-doctors<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes, on the side, they may be sorcerers as well<sup>2</sup>. If so, they are understandably discreet about it, just as a modern doctor is he who describes or operates against the law.

In Oyo and its districts, fear of witchcraft<sup>3</sup> and sorcery increased greatly in consequence of the spiritual insecurity caused by the adoption of Islam or Christianity and counteraction became an important function of the traditional priests and medicine-men. In many places, including the area, when

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1. In the second half of the present century, some witch-doctors called "The ATINGA" or the "SEMIO" visited Yorubaland and dealt seriously with a lot of the Yoruba witches and sorcerers. See Oyo Prof. 2/3 C226 D. O. to Resident. Note the full form of the word 'SEMIO', Se mi wo - meaning 'Deny me if you can'. They were said to be well versed in native magic and medicine. They troubled witches in Yorubaland during their witch-hunting activities. A lot of the witches were said to make open confessions to them.
  2. The following Yoruba expressions are illustrative of this point: Olé ní mo esé oléé to lori apáta - "It is thieves that can trace the footsteps of fellow thieves on the rocky escarpments"; Omo ina láá ran sí ina - "It is the child of fire that is usually sent to fire".
  3. For further details about witchcraft and sorcery, see the following: Oyo Prof. 2/3, C226: Witchcraft Oyo Province, D. O. to Resident, Oyo Province report on witchcraft in the Oke-Iho-Iganná - Iseyin Area. December, 1950. Omojayowo, Akin, Witches, Ibadan, 1974;

Witches in the Oyo Province, December, 1950. OMOJAWO, AKIN

asked what were the functions of the medicine-men, the first answer to be given was 'to counteract witches', followed by: 'to heal', 'administer', 'swear medicine', 'interpret dreams' and the like. The Muslim clergymen, however, were unable to do this, consequently the 'medicine-man'<sup>1</sup> became a necessity for the Muslim society. Witches must be smelt out before their victims could be cured. The mystery cults were important for this purpose; and when they broke up through Islamisation, the dispossessed priests continued to perform these functions.

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Davidson, B. The Africans, 121ff.; Awolalu, J. O. Sacrifice in the Religion of the Yoruba; Idowu, E. B. African Traditional Religion, 175-6, 179pp, et passim; Evans - Pritchard, E. E. Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Asande, 21-134; 148-251pp.; Thomas, Keith, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 435-570; 587-615pp; Webster, Hutton, Magic: A Sociological Study, 373-400; 401-432, 433-473pp. et passim; Warwick, M. G. Sorcery in its social setting; Manchester 1965; Crawford, J. R. Witchcraft and Sorcery in Rhodesia, Oxford, 1967; Middleton and E. H. Winter, Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa, London, 1963; Reymolds, B. Magic, Divination and Witchcraft among the Bertse of Northern Rhodesia, London, 1963, chapter 2 and 3 et passim, Kiev, A. (ed.). Magic, Faith and Healing, 174ff.

1. In this connection note the Yoruba expression: Olóògùn l'okò àjé - "Medicine-man is the subduer of witches".

### 6.25 Islam and the life cycle of man.

Now, let us examine the influence of Islam on the life cycle of man. Beliefs in connection with the nature of man and his destiny, now and after death, play a significant role in people's outlook on life. At the present time they are in a fluid state, even among the long islamised<sup>1</sup>. The traditional strata in which they are embedded are very tenacious and a few Islamic conceptions which might take their place have been introduced with the exception of beliefs concerning the after-life. The personality of man is a sphere to which Islam in Yorubaland, in spite of the importance of its belief in the survival of human personality, has little to contribute, though Islamic philosophy, which is utterly unknown, has ideas of the soul having much in common with those of the Yoruba. Eventually, in Oyo and its districts, these ideas disintegrated when Western values gained access into the situation, though trickling on in the lore of dreams and witchcraft and thereby drained the colour out of religious life.

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1. See Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 56p.



Now, let us examine the traditional beliefs concerning the nature of man. Ori is the word for the physical "head". To the people of Oyo and its districts, however, the physical, visible Ori was believed to be a symbol of ori-inu<sup>1</sup> - "the internal head", or "the inner person". This was regarded by the people as the "essence of personality". In their traditional belief, it was the ori that ruled, controlled and guided the life and the activities of a person.

The ori which was regarded as the essence of personality, the personality soul in man, was believed to derive directly from Olódùmarè whose sole prerogative it was to put it in man, because He was, according to the belief of the people the One Inexhaustible Source of being. This means that, apart from Him man could not be alive. The people were aware of the fact that "in Olódùmarè they lived and moved and had their being, and that they were indeed His offspring".

What made for the individuality of each ori was its quality. Generally, a prosperous person was called

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1. "Ori-inu" is not the same as Yoruba okan - "heart", or emi - "breath". It is simply the essence of personality which makes a person a person; and without it, a supposed person is not a person in the pure sense.

Olóríí 're (Olórí rere) - "One who possesses good orí" while one who was unfortunate in life was described as Olórí burúkú - "One who possesses a bad orí". This is more than saying that a person is "lucky" or "unlucky". It is a matter which was inextricably bound up with the person's destiny<sup>1</sup>.

A person's destiny was known as ipin-orí - (Iponrí). "The orí's portion or lot". It is usually abbreviated as ipin - "Portion". But sometimes, as a result of the connection between orí and ipin, destiny was loosely designated orí, which made ipin and orí synonymous in popular speech of the people. In this connection, they had the saying: Orí burúkú ko gbo ọsẹ - "A bad orí cannot be rectified with soap (by washing)". What this means strictly is that a bad portion which is already allotted to the orí cannot be rectified with medicine. Of an unsuccessful person was said, Orí inú rẹ ló ba t' ọde jẹ - "It is his internal orí that spoils the external one for him", that is, the bad quality of his orí reflects on his external activities.

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1. For further details about this belief, see Idowu, E. B. Olódumarè, 71ff, 169ff.

Orí, in its totality, was regarded by the people as an object of worship. There are two reasons for this. First, since ori was regarded the essence of personality, it must be kept in good condition so that it might be well with the person. Secondly, one must be on good terms with it, so that it might favour one. In support of the first reason, the people sometimes spoke as if the ori was all that it was necessary to worship. An Odù<sup>1</sup>, 'Ose-'Túrá', speaks in rebuke of Olóyòó (Aláàfin) tí ó f' orí araa rẹ̀ s' ilẹ̀ tí ó mbo idi àdó: sugbón orí níi 'gbe 'ni, àdó ọ̀ gbe 'ni: ńjẹ orí l'a bá bo tí à bá f'orisa s' ilẹ̀: "Olóyòó who neglects his own ori and makes offering to àdó:<sup>2</sup> but it is the ori that favours one, àdó does not; it is rather the

1. See Idowu, E. B. Olódùmare, 172p.

2. Ibid., 172p. In addition, note the following Yoruba saying:

Orí l'a bá bo,  
Tí a ọ̀ bá f' orisa sílẹ̀,  
Nítorí orí níi gbe ni,  
Orisa kíi gbe ni.

(It is ori that should be worshipped,

orí that should be worshipped and òrìsà left out". Islam, when it came, did not see any reason while orí or òrìsà should be worshipped. In this regard, the Muslim converts were discouraged from worshipping orí rather, they should worshipping Allāh, the Creator and Sustainer of all.

Before the coming of Islam, the end for which a person was made was inextricably bound up with his destiny. They believed that man's fortunes or otherwise on earth had been predestined by Olódumare. According to the general conception of the people, a person obtained his destiny in one of three ways: One kneels down and chooses one's destiny: This they called À-kunle-yan - "That-which-is chosen-kneeling"; or one kneels down and receives one's destiny. This they called À-kunle-gbà. "That-which-is-received-kneeling"; or one's destiny is affixed to one. This they called À-yan-mó - "That which is affixed to one". This, in short, was a trimorphous conception of destiny the sustaining motif of which was that the person who was

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Rather than the òrìsà (god),  
 For it is orí that favours one,  
Òrìsà does not).

coming into the world must kneel before the High Authority, who was Olódùmarè for its conferment. Whatever was thus conferred was believed to be immutable and became one's portion or lot throughout life. That was what the person went into the world to fulfil. Concerning this phenomenon, the "Gate-keeper" ('On'íbodè') usually played a significant role. After the conferment of destiny <sup>the</sup> on individuals, the Gate-keeper would then come and seal it. The destiny thus became highly immutable. When Islam came, it was the third way, À-yàn-mó, that it mostly upheld. There was a saying among the Yoruba Muslims of Oyo and its districts: Àyàn-mó ò gb' óogùn meaning "That-which-is-affixed- to-one cannot be rectified with medicine". They also had the saying: Kàdàráa re ni meaning "It is your lot". This made the Muslims to enhance the belief of the Muslim converts that whatever destiny was thus conferred was unalterable and became one's portion throughout life. However, there was some modification<sup>1</sup> of the concept

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1. See Idowu, E. B. Olódùmarè, 176-182pp.

in the traditional quarters that destiny could be altered<sup>1</sup>; but this did not gain any appreciable support in the Muslim quarters. In this connection, the argument of the Muslims was that God is an ever-present reality; He is unchanging and immortal hence His work must also be so. Such orientation given to the traditional concept of destiny the persistent followers of the traditional religion regarded a snap on the nature of God and His work. The traditional belief itself is nothing short of inconsistency. The people, alongside their idea of modification, held God to be an ever-present reality, active in the universe and that destiny as conferred by Olódùmarè and sealed by the Oni'bodè (the Gate-keeper) could not be altered.

The question of "the after-life" occupied a significant position in the belief of the people before the introduction of Islam. What becomes of man after death? This, again,

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1. It was the belief of the people that destiny could be altered for the worse by Omo Ar'ayé - "Children of the World; by one's character, by the machinations of one's counterpart (Enikeji) and that an unhappy lot might be rectified if it could be ascertained what it was by the aid of the oracle-divinity, Orúnmilà.

is a question which has haunted every religion all down the ages. "After death, what is a poser on the face of life itself?" And all religion, each in its own way and according to its conception of the essential constitution of life, has found an answer. To the question, the people of Oyo and its districts were definite in their answer before the coming of Islam.

In the local belief, death was not regarded as the end of life. It was regarded only as a means whereby the present earthly existence was changed for another. After death, therefore, the people held that man passed into a "life beyond" which was called Ehìn-Ìwà - "After-Life". The Ehìn-Ìwà, was of more vital significance than the present life, however prosperous this one might have been. They spoke of Ehìn-Ìwà tí' s' egbon òní - "After-Life which is the superior of Today (the present)". Whatever was done in the present life, therefore, must be done with the regard to the great future: Nítòrí Ehìn-Ìwà l'a se nse òní l'óore - "It is on account of After-Life that we treat Today hospitably (that we make a good use of the present and do not abuse it)". It was held that in After-Life, those who have finished on earth go on living. This belief was prominent

in the traditional religion of the people before the coming of Islam. On this, Islam made no significant impact.

The aged ones among them looked forward with longing or dread in anticipation of what might be awaiting them in the life where they were believed to fare according to their deserts. It was a common occurrence to hear the aged saying Mò nre'lé - "I am going Home" or Ilé ti yá - "I am ready for Home" meaning that they are prepared to die and enter into After-Life. When an ageing person was heard talking abstractedly by himself, it was generally believed that he was talking to his associates or relatives who had gone before him<sup>1</sup>. If asked, he himself would sometimes confirm that. The people said of such aged people that they no longer heard of the things of earth, their discussion being with those on "the other side". In this connection, Islam had little or nothing to contribute

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1. In this connection the following Yoruba sayings are apposite: Awon babaa mi npe mi - "My ancestors are inviting me"; Won ni ki nmaa bo "They say I should come over". In the belief of the people, the real paradise was the re-union with their deceased kith and kin at the Here-after.



except that it corroborated the conception of a life beyond through the doctrine of judgement which will be discussed soon.

Connected with the belief in After-Life were the burial and funeral rites. They were observed with varying details from place to place. The rites were such as make it plain that the survivors believed strongly that the deceased was only making a journey, though a final one, into another life. Immediately a person died, the first rite was to slay a fowl which was called Adie-irana<sup>1</sup> - "The fare-fowl". This was meant to make the road easy and clear for the deceased. When the corpse was laid in state, a yam meal was prepared and a portion of it placed at the

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1. The following Yoruba saying is apposite with regard to the phenomenon of death: Adie irana kii se ohun ajegbe - "Fare-fowl is not something that can be taken with impunity". This is to say that, for individuals life here on earth is not interminable. Death is a necessary and unavoidable end of man. The following Yoruba saying is also apposite:

Ayé l'ojà,

Orun ni'lé,

Ni'lé ayé,

Kò sèni tí kòní kú,

Ayé lojà.

foot of the bier: this was food for the deceased. During the actual burial, the children and relatives of the deceased gathered round, each of them bringing clothes, fowls or animals. The body was wrapped in all the clothes which were meant for the deceased person's use in the next world. Messages were also sent through the deceased to their own folk who had gone before.

The officiant now descended into the grave and performed the rite of slaying a victim, splitting the kolanuts and placing certain articles, including food and condiments beside the body. The rite was known as Bíba òkú ya' hùn - "Entering into a covenant with the deceased".

Several days after the burial, there was another rite known as Fifa eégún òkú wo'lé - "Bringing the spirit of the deceased into the house". By this, it was believed

(World is a market,  
Heaven is home,  
In the world,  
No one will avoid the pang of death,  
World is a market).

that, the survivors would again be able to have intimate intercourse with the deceased. The rite took place at night when all lights had been put out. As a result of it, a shrine was made in one corner or at the foot of the central wall of the house; this was a specific meeting-place between the deceased and his children.

There was also **communion with the ancestors.**

It will be recalled that this was a manifestation of an unbroken family relationship between the parent who departed from this earth and the survivors. Death does not write finis with regard to the filial relationship between the deceased ancestors and their children. Rather, the filial intimate relationship was only, as a result of death, translated to the next world.

The next question now is, where is it, this After-Life? The real traditional belief of the people on the matter of After-Life, however, was that there was a definite place, other than this earth, where the deceased used to go. This, they called Òrun, meaning "Heaven", or "paradise", where Olódùmarè and the Òrìsà were believed to have their habitation.

With reference to After-Life, they spoke of two places. The first one was Ibi Rere, Ibi Funfun, Ibi Baba Eni - "Good Place", "White Place", "Our Father's place", and the second was Ibi Búburú (Burúkú), Ibi Apáàdì - "Bad Place", "place of postherds" - "This was believed to be a celestial rubbish - heap, like the midden-heap of every village, where broken pots were thrown; or it may be compared to a kiln where there were charred fragments of pots, hot and dry<sup>1</sup>.

The deceased were allocated to either of the two places by the deciding factor of judgement by Olódùmarè. Olódùmarè was noted for impartial and just judgement<sup>2</sup>. It was their belief that sinners could not evade punishment and that judgement attended every form of sin. They often said of one who suffered devoid of relief, Ìwàa rè l' ónf' iyàá jeé - "It is his character that brings affliction upon him"; or A kò mò ohun tí ó ti se tí Olórún nífi iyà

1. Idowu, E. B. Olódùmarè, 197p.

2. The following Yoruba saying is apposite here. Elésè kò ní ló láì jiyà - "Sinners would not go unpunished".

owóò rẹ̀ jẹ́ - "We do not know the reason why Olódùmarè afflicts him".

But the judgement which the people feared most was the one which was believed to await every person at the end of life on earth, involving the agony of dying, and then in After-Life when the definitive verdict of Olódùmarè would be pronounced and effected with the utmost despatch.

So far concerning the traditional conception of the people of Oyo and its districts on After-Life before the coming of Islam. Now, let us examine the influence of Islam on the conception. When a person died, whether a male or female, it was customary that male persons should wash such a person. With the coming of Islam, the practice changed. In Islam, it was customary that a male person, called Bàbá Àdííni<sup>1</sup> should wash a male deceased and the female deceased should be washed by "Iyá Àdííni"<sup>2</sup>. After the ritual of washing, the corpse should be laid flat on a mat with his or her head oriented towards the

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1. Bàbá Àdííni means - "Male Patron of deen" or "Male Patron of religion", (Islam).

2. Iyá Àdííni means - "Female Patron of deen" or "Female Patron of religion", (Islam)".

gibla<sup>1</sup>. The corpse, according to tradition, was usually buried inside the house of the deceased or that of the family<sup>2</sup>. The traditional burial and funeral rites were supplanted by Islamic rituals. The role of the traditional priest was taken over by the Chief Imām and those of his jamā'a who possessed some knowledge of the Qur'ān. The practice of slaying a fowl called Adiè-Ìràṅà - "The fare-fowl" - was discouraged as bordering on sacrifice to the deceased ancestors. It will be recalled that Islam

1. Qibla is the direction towards Ka'ba when Muslims are praying.
2. The following song is apposite here:

Babaláwo yíó sun'lé,  
Alùfa yíó sùn'ta,  
Igbagbó kò rí'bi sùn.

(A father of the cult will sleep [be buried] in the house,

An Alùfa will sleep [be buried] outside,

A Christian has no where to sleep (be buried).

discouraged sacrifice to <sup>the</sup> divinities, spirits and ancestors as incompatible with the principles of Islam. This was replaced by sadaqa. The practice of offering things such as food, clothes and kola nuts was also discouraged. This was replaced by gifts to the Chief Imām and his jamā'a who came to officiate. And instead of <sup>the</sup> messages which were usually sent through the deceased to the folk who had gone before, the Chief Imām and his jamā'a adopted the method of praying for the deceased quoting extensively from the relevant portions of the Qur'ān. The occasion usually involved giving some warnings to the survivors to be mindful of the Here-after and amend their ways. Remembrance of Prophet Muḥammad was also a feature of the prayer.

The practice of entering into covenant relationship with the deceased - "Bíba' òkú ya' hùn" - was also discouraged. The practice of bringing the spirits of the deceased into the house - "Fífa eégún òkú wo' lé" - had no place in Islam. It was done by the people for the purpose of worship. This was regarded by <sup>the</sup> Muslims as a contradictory practice to their belief in the unity of God. Only Allāh, and He alone, should be worshipped and not <sup>the</sup> divinities, spirits or ancestors.

The continuous tradition or eternity of the African

life was snapped, for the possibility of reward and punishment, of members being consigned to different quarters of purgatory and eventually to heaven or hell, means that families may be separated. In this connection, everything connected with the belief in the ancestors was discouraged. The cults of Egúngún and Orò which were a means of demonstrating, in a concrete way, the belief that those who departed from this earth continue in existence elsewhere and are actively "in touch" with those who are still here was snapped. The Egúngún and Orò guilds were regarded as secret societies bordering on idolatory and therefore incompatible with the doctrine of the unity of God.

With regard to the venue of After-Life, Islam did not differ too much. The only modification it brought was with regard to terminology. Like the traditional belief, <sup>the</sup> Muslims believed that there was a definite place other than this earth where the deceased went. The Muslims called it al-janna<sup>1</sup> where Allāh and his angels were believed to dwell a life of unending and uninterrupted bliss.

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1. Paradise is Yoruba Alujànnà, Nupe Alijena and Mande ALJENE. In each case, the word means "Heaven". Note the Yoruba Muslim song:



Islamic ideals which all people acquired relate to the next life. These were: the examination as to whether one is a Muslim or a follower of the traditional religion, reckoning up of good and bad deeds, Day of Judgement (al-qiyāma), and heaven and hell; all of which were basic in the early teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

With reference to After-Life, the Muslims also spoke of two places. The first one was Alujāna, a term which replaced the Yoruba Ibi rere, Ibi Funfun, Ibi Baba Eni - "Good Place", "White Place", "Our Father's Place"; and the Yoruba Ibi Bùburú (Burúkú); Ibi Apáàdì - "Bad place", "place of postherds", were replaced by the term Ibi Iná - "Hell of Fire". In this connection Idowu says:

"It seems that the notion of Ibi Iná - "Hell of Fire" is not originally Yoruba and has been introduced by Islam and Christianity".<sup>1</sup>

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Ópopó Mókà mó roro,  
Alujāna ni ilée wa.

(Streets of Mecca, very clean  
Al-janna is our home).

In this case, Mecca, the spiritual rallying point for the observance of Islamic pillar called Pilgrimage, is likened to al-janna, the Mecca of heaven. Cf the Jerusalem of earth and that of heaven in Christianity. Here, both the physical and spiritual sides of Islam and Christianity are in mind.

1. Idowu, E. B. Olódumare, 197p.

This view should not be over-emphasised here. Before the coming of either Islam or Christianity, the Yoruba had the notion of destruction with regard to fire. And it was likely that the Muslims used the medium to introduce Bad Place, Ibi Iná - "Hell of Fire". The Yoruba also had the notion of destruction in hell. However, with regard to the two places, the Yoruba and the Muslims differed only in terminologies and not in the nature of the two. The Yoruba Ibi Rere - "Good Place" or the Muslim Al-janna - "Paradise" or "Good Heaven" was regarded a place with eternal bliss prepared for those whose work on earth was good. And the Yoruba Ibi Apaadi - "Bad Place" or the Muslim Ibi Iná - "Hell of Fire" was regarded by the Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion as a place where the wicked people would gnash their teeth, wail and travail eternally like a woman suffering from the pang of childbirth. Each of the two abodes was regarded a celestial rubbish heap, like the midden-heap of every village, where broken pots and other odds and ends were thrown.

Concerning the question of judgement and the judge, there were points of similarity. In the beliefs of the traditional people and the Muslims, the deceased were

allocated to either of the two places by the deciding factor of judgement by Olódùmarè or Allāh. To the traditional people and the Muslims, God was an impartial Judge. It was the conviction of the Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion that sinners would not go unpunished and that judgement attended every form of sin. Yoruba sayings on those who suffered without relief had been discussed earlier in this section<sup>1</sup>. On the same issue the Muslims had the following sayings: Aalà má mú wa - "May Allāh not afflict us"; Qwó Aalà ló tẹ́ - "He is being afflicted by Allāh", E ó jẹwó èsè bọ bá d'`alaaríra "You would confess your sins in the Hereafter".

The judgement feared most by the votaries of the two religions was the one which was believed to await every person first at the end of life on earth, involving the agony of dying, and then in After-Life when the final verdict of Olódùmarè or Allāh would be pronounced and executed. The Muslims used these to exhort the recently converted Muslims among them. They would quote frightful examples of persons whose ends on earth were tragic in consequence of their bad character. Some of them had appeared to evade the consequences

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1. See above, 464-5pp.

of their actions; but as the end of their lives drew near they had been visited by certain adversities like wretched blindness or losses of favourite children, and had ended finally with miserable deaths<sup>1</sup> and unceremonial burials. There were some of them who had been stung by so much remorse and appalled by the anticipation of what might be awaiting them in the Hereafter that, during their death-throes, they had voluntarily made detailed confessions of their past wickedness<sup>2</sup>. Such were the exhortations and warnings used by the Muslim preachers on the occasions of Friday prayer, 'Īd prayers and open-air lectures. The

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1. Note the Yoruba saying: Ó kú 'kú èsín - "He died ~~an~~ ignominious death".
  2. The witches were noted for such confessional statements. In this connection, the following Yoruba saying is apposite: Ajé nàà kà - "The witch made confessional statements". This, in short, is an earthly realisation of the consequence of sin. It also serves as a prefiguration of what would happen to the witch in the Hereafter. Moreover, it is pertinent to note the following Yoruba saying, Mò dà jù pé o, ilé ayé yìí ni kálukú ti máa gberè èsè - "(Know for sure, that it is in this world, that everybody will reap the consequence of sin)".

Qur<sup>ān</sup> and Traditions were always used to corroborate the exhortations. In this connection, Islam reaped a fine reward.

Apart from these regular elements of Islamic eschatology, a further belief concerning the presages of the Day of Judgement or the Last Day, al-qiyāma, surrounding the name Mahdī<sup>1</sup> remains to be mentioned. This belief, by throwing up men who claimed to be the Mahdī, has left its mark on the plane of Islamic history. In the revolutionary milieu of the nineteenth century, characterised by the formation of Islamic theocratic states, devastating wars, and penetration of Western powers and Christian missionaries, conditions became favourable for such manifestations, but they were limited in scope and effect and did not win the masses. For the last forty years, active manifestations have been almost absent<sup>2</sup>; and though, the Mahdī has not

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1. The phenomenon of Mahdī expectation did not constitute a feature of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. It might be a feature, though unpopular, of Islam in the area in the mid-twentieth century onward when the Ahmadiyya Mission of Nigeria and the Ahmadiyya Movement of Nigeria gained access into the area. Concerning the present day Mahdī expectations in the African setting, see Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 229p.; Hodgkin, T. "Mahdism, Messianism and Marxism in the African Setting", in the University of Ibadan, Library, 1970, (unpublished manuscript).
  2. Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 62p.

died out it is not an important phenomenon in Islam as practised in Oyo and its districts and West Africa<sup>1</sup> at large. It does not even seem that those who became members<sup>2</sup> of the Ahmadiyya Movement of Nigeria (the present Anwāru'l-Islām Movement) in Oyo and its districts in the twentieth century took seriously the belief in Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad al-Qādiānī (d. 1908)<sup>3</sup> as the 'Messiah-Mahdī'. This does not mean that the members in this area of Islamic world did not believe in this article of faith<sup>4</sup>, but that there was no over-zealousness about it in the area in the nineteenth century.

### 6.3 Islam and the political set-up.

A remarkable feature of the history of the Muslim community in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century was its relationship with <sup>the</sup> political authorities. An important

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1. Trimmingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 62p.

2. One of the present members of the Ahmadiyya Movement of Nigeria in Oyo is Alhaji Animaṣahun. (Interview with him and other members of the sect in December 1973, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence).

3. See Gibb, H.A.R. Mohammedanism, 127p.

4. Guillaume, A. Islam, 127p.

consideration in this regard was the attitude to the Muslim community in Oyo and its districts to those of their fellow Muslims who took up political offices. The community neither forbade nor encouraged any Muslims to take up such titles within the society. Such Muslims as did become obas or chiefs in the area did so with little or no reference to the Muslim community<sup>1</sup>.

To such Muslim title-holders, the attitude of the community was generally ambivalent or syncretistic. On the one hand, the community tended to frown at such Muslim title-holders who inevitably performed the "traditional" acts of their offices<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the Muslim community still approved of whatever support such Muslim titled-men rendered to Islam<sup>3</sup>: support against persecutors.

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1. This point formed part of the reasons why the Muslims were not able to establish an Islamic State de facto in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century. And even today in the area it is 'traditional State' rather than 'pure Islamic State'.
  2. Muslim title holders should come to the palace during the celebration of the festivals in honour of the traditional gods and ancestors. Moreover, during the traditional coronation of obas and chiefs, they were expected to be present and perform their traditional roles.
  3. See above, chapter 2, 146-8pp.

support in cash or in kind for the building or rebuilding of mosques. Moreover, it will be recalled that in the nineteenth century, especially during the era of Islamic consolidation (1860-1895), the Muslim community in each of the towns in the area started the practice of praying for the oba, regardless of his original traditional religion,<sup>1</sup> and the town in general in the palace of the ruling oba every Friday shortly before the juma'a prayer<sup>2</sup>.

In spite of their support of Islam, and possibly because of the tepid nature of their faith, Muslims holding traditional titles within the traditional society or the so-called "pagan" society were hardly ever made officers of the Muslim community.

The Muslims recognised and were loyal to the traditional political authorities regardless of their

1. Oyo; a case study - Despite the fact that the Alááfin, by virtue of his position in the town, was a traditional figure, he should not fail to welcome his Muslim subjects each Friday they came to the palace to pray for him. Thus religions constituted some sort of deterrence to despotism or tyranny in the traditional politics.
2. See above, chapter 2, 149-150pp.



faith. The attitude is permitted by the Shari'a<sup>1</sup> as long as such authorities did not proscribe or threaten the practice of Islam. Besides, the general growth of the Muslim community was accompanied also by the growth of its political influence. As a result, it was neither prudent nor possible for the nascent Muslim community to disregard the traditional political set-up. With the political authorities, the Muslim community in Oyo and its districts fostered some relationship on the platform of loyalty to and mutual recognition of the traditional political set-up.

The most obvious relationship was in connection with the iléyá festival. The practice became so established in most towns in the area that the political head usually provided the sacrificial animal for the use of the Muslim community at this festival<sup>2</sup>. Precisely, how this festival came to be

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1. See Gbadamosi, G. O. The growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 332p. In this connection, the Ogbóni cult (the council of elders or a political body appointed to rule the town) was an exception.
  2. This was also the case on <sup>the</sup> traditional festival occasions. In this connection, the festivals in honour of the Orisa such as Sàngó and Ogún and those in honour of the ancestral spirits such as 'Egúngún' and Orò can be mentioned.

established may be difficult to determine whether it was originally a paternalistic gesture by the political head, or a symbol of the social recognition of the Muslim community and their religion. Once the practice became entrenched, and customary, it tended to consolidate further the connection between the Muslim community and the rest of the society.

The Muslim community in each of the big towns in the area also established the custom of making a courtesy call on the political head during this important festival. The call took place on a fixed day when the Muslim were formally received at the court. They prayed for the oba, the chiefs, the welfare of the town and exchanged gifts with the political head. The practice had been introduced and developed by the Muslim community over the years. The result today is that in some towns like Oyo, Iseyin, Ikoyi and Saki it has become an established tradition called "Gbàgede - oba". On the appointed day, the Aláàfin would sit outside his court in full regalia flanked by his eminent court and town officials<sup>1</sup> such as the Kudèfu, the Agunpopo,

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1. Adeyemi, Lamidi Olayiwola. Oyo Chieftaincy Institution and Modernism, 15p. See also Balogun, I. "Sacred Kingship and Gerontocracy in Old Oyo Empire, et passim.

the Ogigimagi, the Ologun, the Ladilu and those of the royal family conferred with titles<sup>1</sup> such as the Atingisi, the Mọgaji Iyaji, the Arole oba, the Olusanmi. The entire Muslim community of Oyo would have resolved itself into various groups. They would, in turn, come before the royal presence gaily dressed, and with some, especially the Muslim officers such as the Paràkòyí and the Balógun, on horsebacks; each group would then dance forward to pay homage, pray for the Aláàfin and the other royal officials present and exchange gifts. The "Gbàgede-oba" has become one of most popular days in Oyo Muslim Calendar.

At the time of the mawlidu'n-nabī festival, the Muslim community did what can be regarded as the annual divination<sup>2</sup> and sacrifice<sup>3</sup>. On this occasion, the community, on the basis of an ancient but religiously revered text<sup>4</sup>,

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1. Adeyemi, Lamidi Olayiwola. Oyo Chieftaincy..., 15p.
  2. Concerning divination in the Islamic sense, see above, 419-420, 426-431pp.
  3. Sacrifice here should not be viewed in the traditional sense but as offered in accordance with the principles of Islam.
  4. Gbadamosi, G. O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 334p.

predicted, through a leading *mālām*<sup>1</sup>, the events, dangers and blessings of the ensuing year<sup>2</sup>. The ceremony was either done in the *oba*'s court and/or in the central mosque. What concerned the entire society, and the political head in particular, was that this prediction was for the town as a whole and the prescribed sacrifices were the responsibility of the *oba* or chief. Almost invariably, the sacrifices were offered in the Muslim way, indicating further the nature of the close relationship.

They were "festival relationships" so to say, and lingered on to the present century in *Oyo* and its districts.

Similarly, general among the Muslim community of the area was the role which was given to the political head in the process of installing chief officers of the Muslim community. Such muslim officers as were involved here were: the '*Pàràkòyí*', the Chief *Imām*, the '*Òtún Imòle*', the '*Òsì Imòle*', and the '*Mògàji*'. Wherever a candidate was agreed upon by the Muslim community, it used

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1. *Gbadamosi G. O.*, The Growth of Islam..., 334p.

2. Ibid, 334p.

to be customary in the area to present him to the ruling oba. In many towns, if not all in the area, such an important officer was turbaned and installed in the court and in the presence of the ruling oba himself.

The ceremonial practice grew with times, probably started as a matter of courtesy, or astute policy, it became, in the course of years, a strong link binding the political head first, with the Muslim officers and second, with the Muslim community in general in working and cohesive relationship. The practice generated the common saying that 'oba l' nfi 'nii je' - "It is the oba that enthrones one". The oba's function in this connection was largely ceremonial involving no religious rites. In a way, it was analogous to his role in the traditional society.

Although this function of the oba in the affairs of the Muslim community was actually honorific and essentially devoid of power, it had, in certain circumstances, developed into an active participation and meddling in the whole process of the appointment of Muslim officers in the area. Where the oba himself was forceful in nature, or where he was a Muslim, as in Iseyin, and some other places in the

area, situations arose when the ọba tried to exercise a doubtful right of approval of candidature or the equally doubtful right of direct nomination<sup>1</sup>. The result of this was not often a happy one; for, with the involvement of the ọba, the dispute about the succession to the office of the Imām in many towns in Oyo and its districts acquired new dimensions and complexities. This was the type of problem that adversely affected the Muslim community of Oyo in the reign of Aláàfin Adeniran Adeyemi II (1945-1955)<sup>2</sup>. It was his son, Aláàfin Olayiwola Adeyemi III, that later resolved the problem.

In-between the festivals, and installation ceremonies as already pointed out, the Muslim community tried to maintain good relationship with the local political authorities. However, they were discouraged by Islam and knowledgeable Muslims from finding solace in time of trouble from the members of the Ògbóni society because of their traditional

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1. Interview with the jamā'ca, Iseyin, August, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Interview with jamā'ca, Oyo. December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

non-Islamic leanings<sup>1</sup>. Ògbóni<sup>2</sup> (Ògbó-Eni) - "The old people" signifies a council of elders<sup>3</sup>. Originally it consisted, primarily, of the aged and influential persons in the town. It was a political body, or a body of men appointed to rule the town, their number was limited. Its aim was to carry out the civil government of the town, to suppress arbitrary rule and watch oppression, robbery, violence, murders, stealing, so common in those days. At first, only those invited could join the secret group. The society might choose a head, but as a whole, the baálè or head chief was the ruling head. The society became unacceptable to <sup>the</sup> Muslims when the members began to use certain signs and watchwords to recognise their fellow members. This was regarded alien to Islam. The esotericism of Islam was not considered enshrined in the physical recognition of the Muslims.

The society also stood condemned in the Muslim quarters because the members used some kind of bead and

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1. Interview with the jamā'ā, Oyo, December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.
  2. Despite the negative view of the Muslims to the Ògbóni cult, the members, at a point in time in Abeokuta, functioned as arbitrators for the Muslims on some issues. See Gbadamosi, The Growth of Islam..., 337p.
  3. See Oyo prof. 1/9 File No. 1512: Ògbóni Cult. See above, chapter 1, 14-15pp.

dress for the purpose of easy identification. This was no more than idolatry in the sight of the Muslims. Moreover, the entry qualifications of the society were considered incompatible with the principles of Islam. To gain access into the society, one must be of notable family or must have done some noble work to help the town. In short, membership was non-hereditary. Slaves and the outcasts were not allowed in, whereas in Islam, the oba and his subjects, the noble and the otherwise, the free-born and the slaves, the black and the white, the aged and the young, men and women are equal before Allāh, the Creator and Sustainer of all. The society was especially odious to Muslims because the members regarded themselves sacred. This obviously was not the case judging from their wicked acts and gross injustice in the town. So, Muslims encouraged the Muslim converts to disregard them in time of conflicts and seek the arbitration of the Qurʾān rather than the arbitration of the idolatrous, secret, non-Islamic Ògbóni cult. For the Muslims, only fraternity with Allāh could save one rather than communion and communication with the secret societies.

However, they turned to the local political authorities other than the members of the Ògbóni society in times of



conflicts with the adamant and conservative non-Muslims. Moreover, in times of internal unrest and disputes, they turned to the society's political authorities for arbitration<sup>1</sup>. On such occasions, the fact that the political authorities were not Muslims did not appear to be significant. In Šaki, Iseyin, and Oyo, for example, there were occasions when the oba together with his officers arbitrated for the Muslim communities<sup>2</sup>. That the Muslims accepted their arbitration and rulings was largely because they felt the rulings were fair enough, but the significant point here was the working relationship and the implicit confidence between the Muslim community and the traditional society.

The attitude of the Muslim community of Oyo and its districts and the resultant relationship between the community and the traditional political authority, whether Muslim or not, is significant for a number of reasons. First, this was a clear proof that Islam in the area was

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1. Gbadamosi, G. O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 337p.

2. Interview with the jamā'a in those areas in December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

far from attempting to establish an Islamic theocratic State - "Imperium in Imperio"<sup>1</sup>. Entrenched and growing strong, among the people, Islam could not, of course, but seek to transform the old society whose values it inevitably criticised or had even already conflicted with. However, the desired transformation of the society was to be gradual and devoid of any violence. It was to be achieved not through withdrawal from that society, but by the process of contact and introduction of change from within the society. In short, if the ultimate objective of Islam in Oyo and its districts was a radical change of the society, its approach, in so far as the relationship with the political head was concerned, was an evolutionary and friendly one.

In this approach, the choice of cause of action was no less significant. Political power and influence seemed to have helped Islam a good deal. Even at the earliest stages, the Muslim community always had some members who were near the seats of political (as well as military) power and influence.<sup>2</sup> As the Muslim community expanded, it

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1. Gbadamosi, G. O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 338p.

2. See above, chapter 2, 146-150pp.

depended for its growth and security on the political influence of the powers that be, whether Muslim or not. It was this inherent proclivity of Islam in this area or, indeed, of Islam in general, to secure political power ultimately that explains a good deal of the attitude of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts towards political authorities in the area.

This attitude of close and friendly relations towards the political powers yielded beneficial results for the cause of Islam in the area. Only in exceptional cases did any of the rulers exhibit any hostile attitude towards the Muslims<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, some of them adopted Islam by various means. This was particularly the case in Iseyin<sup>2</sup>. The net-result of this was that, given the Yoruba basic cultural tendency to respect authority of rulers and elders, the cause of Islam received a considerable boost from the association<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, it was for Islam an insurance of incalculable advantage. It ensured further protection and

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1. Interview with the jamā'ca in each of the big centres of Islam, in the area. December, 1973, March, 1974, August, November, 1975. See Bibliography: Oral Evidence.

2. Interview with the jamā'ca, Iseyin, August, 1975.

3. Gbadamosi, G. O. The Growth of Islam in Yorubaland, 339p.

subsequent growth. It also vouchsafed prospects for further entrenchment with the possibility of effecting the desired changes in the society.

#### 6.4 Islam and the social structure

##### 6.41 Social life.

With respect to the social activities of the people, the impact of Islam was by no means meagre. First, the social life of the people. Before Islam, the focal point of the town layout (as can be seen today in Oyo and Saki) was the large compound (Yoruba: gbàgede) where the palace of the oba was. The rest of the town was divided, in an orderly manner, into quarters and 'compounds' (agboolé), compact towards the centre of the town, more spaced out towards the walls. The quarters had their own chiefs, probably selected from certain lineages, who might, in some towns at least, be designated high chiefs', and advised the oba. They were responsible for matters within the quarter as was the compound head (baalé), usually the most elderly man there, for matters within the compound. When Islam came, it did not effect much change except that where a

quarter was predominately Muslim, the role of the compound chiefs or compound heads was supplanted by that of the Chief Imām or compound Imām. But where there were Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion, the settlement of matters within the quarters was usually the joint-work of both the high chief and the Imām. And in the case of settlement effected by the Imām, the Qur'ān was usually made the deciding factor, while the deciding factors for the high chief were traditional materials such as cultclass, a symbol of the orisa called Ogun, and sand from the graveyard (oróri)<sup>1</sup> of the deceased ancestors.

Traditionally, a compound was a complex of single-storey buildings, made up of mud brick and rectangular with overhanging thatched leaves, arranged in a series of courtyards, and surrounded by a wall, the residence of a lineage (idile). Bascom, Fadipe, Schwab and Lloyd<sup>2</sup> give figures ranging from 15 to over 1,000 for the population of the compound in different parts of Yorubaland. In any compound, there were members of the lineage (omoolé), their wives (members of their fathers' lineage), and strangers.

1. See above, 415-416pp.

2. Peel, J. D. Y. Aladura, 25p.

Often, all the members of a lineage did not live in the same compound; and today, some of them will live in large towns like Şaki, Oyo, Iseyin, Ikoyi permanently on the lineage farmland, at a hamlet some miles away. When Islam came, it had nothing to contribute to the organisation and nothing did it subtract from it.

The lineage formed the basis of <sup>the</sup> traditional structure. It was distinguished by special names for its members, food, tabus, special tutelary divinities to be worshipped and was characterised as all the living descendants of the founder; its members had its land in common. When Islam came, the Muslims gave new orientation to the basis of <sup>the</sup> traditional social structure of the converts. For the Muslim converts, the lineage was no more the basis of <sup>the</sup> traditional structure, but the Umma. Every Muslim was expected to pay allegiance to the Umma - the community of Muslims - and no more to the lineage in order to secure the unity which Islam was out to forge among the Muslims irrespective of colour, race or place of origin. The traditional tabus were replaced by the Shari'ah and the worship of tutelary divinities was replaced by the worship of one God, Allāh. The Muslim converts were also discouraged from observing the traditional festivals

in honour of the tutelary divinities. Those who joined in the celebration of such festivals were regarded as lax-Muslims and were called kāfirs and munāfiqs.

#### 6.42 Marriage and divorce.

The people of Oyo and its districts considered it a sin to humanity if one should fail to procreate. Thus marriage was accorded great importance in their social set-up.

Polygyny<sup>1</sup> formed a conspicuous feature of the institution of marriage in Oyo and its districts. In the area, and Yorubaland at large, the institution of marriage was a product of the economic, and socio-political circumstances of the indigenous society. Essentially an agrarian society, there was plenty of land for everybody. Standard of living was more uniform than it is now; there was no social or economic reason to make birth control a

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1. While polygyny was a prominent feature of the institution of marriage in the area, it is worthwhile to note that this was, at the same time, restricted by factors such as wealth and physical build. Islam stressed a husband's duty to support his wife and his tendency to free women from agricultural work. Consequently, where it had had this effect, polygyny was largely a luxury, depending on wealth and prestige.

rational proposition. With a very high infantile mortality, there was need for a multitude of wives, to ensure a large number of children, who, in turn, would ensure adequate productivity by the family. On reaching manhood, a child would have his own farm and slaves and thus increase the economic potentiality of the family. Socially, parents were very keen on having a large number of children so that at death, expensive and elaborate obsequies, lasting many days, weeks or months might be observed, a custom to which a good deal of importance was attached, as it meant that parents buried in such a manner would occupy a high position in the world beyond. Moreover, the number of wives a man had corresponded with his social status and no man, however, wealthy, would be regarded as a social and political figure if he did not add wife to wife. In short, the number of wives one had was a fairly accurate index of wealth and prestige. This was why it was the obas, baales and chiefs who usually possessed the largest number of wives, some being reported as having over four hundred<sup>1</sup>. Among the people,

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1. In this connection, the following Yoruba saying is apposite: Gbogbo obinrin ni iyawo oba - "All women are king's wives". Oba 'oko gbogbo aye - "The king, the husband of all". Women of all colours, shape / heights are usually found in the court of a Yoruba king.



polygyny was regarded a way of being fair to women by providing husbands for all women. The idea of an unmarried woman which now exists among the Christian élite was nil in the traditional society. There is some truth in the following syllogism by a leading member of the African Church:

"The celibate is selfish and lives for himself. The monogamist is better, he serves the other although to the exclusion of all others. The polygamist (polygynist) is the best, because he lives a life of sacrifice for providing homes for others, more or less comfort, they say, for himself".<sup>2</sup>

Customary tabus also tended to justify polygyny. Possibly, the strongest case for polygyny was the fact that it guaranteed an incredibly high moral tone in the traditional society. As a general rule, sexual misconduct was almost nil in the traditional society. The rarity of sexual irregularity was not due only to the fear of punishment, in many cases death, by the society for offenders, or the permanent disgrace attached to sexual

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1. The word in parenthesis is mine.
  2. Ajala, Ayo, "African communion: Its aim and objects", The African Church Chronicle. April - June, 1936.

lapses, but the satisfaction of the sexual urge derived from multitude of wives. It may be observed here that, in the traditional society children were not weaned until after two or three years, and throughout that period, physical coition with the wife was, by custom, forbidden. Moreover, sexual copulation was often forbidden during pregnancy. Customs sought to avoid adultery and prostitution by providing legitimate alternatives. In such circumstances, plurality of wives was the only way out. The high and enviable sexual morality that prevailed in the traditional society was upset by Western civilisation and its conception of monogamy. But with regard to this institution, Islam was very careful to study the reasons behind the institution and the Muslims adapted themselves to the situation accordingly. Thus polygyny<sup>1</sup> remained a feature of both the traditional religion and Islam in Oyo and its districts. With the adaptation of Islam to the age-long institution, Islam reaped a fine reward and spread in the area in an inverse

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1. Though Islam allows polygyny, but it limits the number of free women taken as wives at any one time to four and that each of them must be treated with utmost equity. Each should be given sufficient food and, if possible, provided with separate quarters.

ratio to Christianity<sup>1</sup>. In this milieu, the Christian missionaries enviously regarded the Muslims as worse than "pagans" (followers of the traditional religion). They also believed that the success achieved so far among the followers of the traditional religion was due to "the low moral standard (with specific reference to polygamy) which it tolerated"<sup>2</sup>. However, at the same time, some among the Christian missionaries such as J. F. Schon, T. J. Bowen and Canon Isaac Taylor and a secular writer called E. D. Morel were prepared to admit the potency of Islam - especially its commendable adaptation to African life.<sup>3</sup> The advantage which Islam had over Christianity on the issue of polygyny can further be seen in the fact that up till today, the institution continues to pose problem for <sup>the</sup> Christians because the institution exists as an invincible part of Yoruba culture.

Concerning the regulations relating to marriage in Yorubaland at large, it is important to bear in mind that they vary considerably among different localities according

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1. Webster, J. B. The African Churches among the Yoruba, 99p.
  2. Webster, J. B. The African Churches among the Yoruba, 99p.
  3. Ibid, 99p.

to the tenacity of custom and the strength of Islamic culture towards change. In some cases, a modus vivendi is arrived at. In Oyo and its districts, the practice before Islam was that marriage was patrilocal. The girl was offered for sale and the parents dominated the affair. Little or no opportunity was given to the girl concerned. In fact, marriage by then was more or less a commercial transaction. With the introduction of Islam, there was a significant transformation. The girl's consent was required before the conclusion of the marriage contract. However, there was still the matrimonial restraint (jabr) with the utmost rigour. This right in Islam belongs to the father, or in default of him, his eldest, or testamentary guardian. Custom may modify these regulations; thus among the people of Oyo and its districts after the death of the father, his brother, not his eldest son, had the right of jabr. According to Islamic law, the future of the divorcee or widow is in her own hands<sup>1</sup>, but in the area this might be decided by the family of her deceased husband.

The main disparity between <sup>the</sup> local custom of the people and Islamic law is found in the categories of permitted and

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1. Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 164p.

forbidden. People who embraced Islam long ago like the Kanuri in the North, observe strictly the Islamic categories of forbidden persons and even kafā'a (marriage equality) regulations<sup>1</sup>, but difficulties arise with infant Muslim community such as the one in Oyo and its districts over questions of affinity. In the area, they considered first cousin marriage to be incestuous, for cousins were regarded as brothers and sisters, but Islam encouraged marriage with both cross and parallel cousins<sup>2</sup>. This practice did not gain ground among the people but was widespread among the old Muslim community of the North<sup>3</sup>. Islam thus affected rules on exogamous marriage by its preference for in-marriage which did not gain ground among the Muslims in Oyo and its districts. Muslims everywhere in the area married women from <sup>the</sup> traditional quarters for the intention was that they should become Muslims. But it was considered forbidden for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim. Such a step was

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1. Trimmingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 164p.
  2. "Alī ibn Abī Tālib, the fourth Caliph and the cousin of Prophet Muḥammad, married Fāṭima, the daughter of the latter.
  3. Trimmingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 165p.

considered no less than apostasy and anybody who attempted this was called a kāfir.

Concerning marriage contract, the local marriage in the area was chiefly an arrangement between two families and not between two individuals. It was characterised by the payment of a bride-price (Yoruba: owó-iyawó, owó ori) as guarantee of stability and compensation to the wife's family for the missing of one of its members. When Islam came, the practice was different. The practice introduced by Islam involved two individuals, whilst the purpose of marriage money (Yoruba: owó-iyawó) assumed a different significance. In this connection, Trimmingham says, 'sadāq is analogous to sale-price', and the conditions are similar to those attached to sale, for when a woman marries she sells part of her person. The form is the same as any other contract, with offer and acceptance, before witnesses. Sadāq is legally the property of the wife and there would appear to be grounds for conflict here since its adoption to the exclusion of custom would undermine the social significance of marriage money. However, in Oyo and its districts, the difficulty had been circumvented. The sadāq

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1. Trimmingham, Islam in West Africa, 165.

was introduced into the local bride price system of payment by the bride groom to the bride's relations. Two aspects were significant: removal of the woman to another family and a payment to her for the loss of her virginity. It was not made incumbent on <sup>the</sup> future husband to pay all the bride price at once but the amount must be announced and a minimum sum (in addition to the legal sadāq) paid; the remainder could be paid at intervals or only at the dissolution of the marriage. There was also the practice of paying a dowry. This was, as a rule, remitted by the future husband to his future wife.

Here is the general pattern in the area. When a man wished to contract a consort marriage, he transferred animals, goods, and money (Yoruba: idána) to the bride's family. At intervals, he helped such family on farm plots. The bride price involved was usually handed over in two parts: the first, when the contract was definitely concluded. This was called ikobi. It usually went to the mother and the rest. Shortly before the marriage day, the next item was usually paid to the father and this was known as isanlélóri. This could be paid when the husband took the possession of the wife. Apart from the bride price, the husband should provide

his wife with a dowry (Yoruba: ìbòwó or ìdòkan) the main portion of which should be sent during the day preceding the consummation; and the rest (articles, of various types, of the wife - erù iyawó) during the following week. The dowry was the wife's personal property. If she obtained a divorce, the 'bride price' must be returned; but she retained the dowry. When the husband repudiated his wife, the bride price was generally retained or generally acquired by the wife's family.

So far about the general pattern of the local system of marriage in Oyo and its districts before the advent of Islam. Now, let us examine the Islamic mode of marriage as introduced to the people. At the people's Islamic marriage (ìsoyìgì), there were three chief features: the traditional bride wealth remitted to the bride's family (called owó-iyawó or owó-orí - 'betrothal money'); the essential Islamic payment, yìgì from which Muslim marriage derived its name, divorce being termed ìtú yìgì - 'untying or loosening the yìgì contract'; and finally, sadāq, dowry given by husband to wife.

A common feature of marriage in the Muslim world is what is known as secondary marriages. First among these is slave-wives. According to Islamic law, a free woman may not



be taken as a concubine, nor may an owner marry his own slave<sup>1</sup>. Strictly speaking, this law was not adopted by most of the Muslims in Oyo and its districts. They took both free women and slaves as wives provided they satisfied their sexual urge as well as their preferential scale of beauty. They were also indiscriminate concerning concubinage. Adherence to such a law could be traced to the old community of Muslims in the long-islamised North and not to an infant community of Muslims like the one in Oyo and its districts.

With regard to widow inheritance, many people in Yorubaland do not regard marriage as being dissolved by death. Consequently, conflict may arise between local custom and Islamic law when the future of the widow comes to be decided. Islam rules that widows are free to marry whom they please; but local custom may rule that, at marriage the wife has broken with her own family and joined that of her husband, the bride-price being the compensation for her loss to that family. When her husband dies, she continues to belong to his group and return to her family would involve restitution of the bride-price. The brother of the deceased is responsible

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1. Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 168p.

for her protection and has the duty of raising up children to him, therefore he does not need to marry her. When Islam gained influx into Oyo and its districts, the normal Islamic law was preached but turned down by the local custom of the people so that local system of widow inheritance was adopted by the Muslims in Oyo and its districts. Though Islamic pressure was against the custom, but many in the area practised it. They accepted the widow into the brother's household. This was considered a legal custom, but as a matter of fact, it is illegal according to Islamic law since it involved no fresh contract and no sadāq. Inheritance followed customary rules and no complications emerged on the score. The common practice in the Muslim world is that a cleric who already has four wives will waive his claim to the widow in favour of another brother, or he may divorce one of his wives and have a contract ceremony performed with a token sadāq. This was rare among the Muslims of Oyo and its districts since it was their custom that marriage ceremony can never be repeated.

Marriage by gift is found among the Kanuri and Hausa who have introduced it among the Yoruba<sup>1</sup>. A man

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1. Trimingham, Islam in West Africa, 170p.

wishing to honour a cleric or seek an alliance with an influential person or even get rid of an unmarriageable daughter, orders his daughter to be prepared and then announces before witnesses the name of the man to whom she is gifted or simply names him Muḥammad whatever his real name. Then he sends her over to the man as a form of alms (sadaqa) together with sadaq. Since it is the bridegroom who should pay the sadaq, this form of marriage is not correct unless he turns it over to his unexpected bride as her dowry. This type of marriage did not win general acceptance among the Muslims of Oyo and its districts, but was adopted by some rich people among them.

The people of Oyo and its districts were converted to Islam within the last hundred years and therefore were little influenced by Islamic marriage regulations. The oḅa, chiefs and the wealthy, farmers and traders amongst them did not observe the maximum of four wives. Custom and position wholly regulated their marriages, even the Islamic ceremony of offer and acceptance being often omitted, and their legality depended upon the correctness of customary observances.

We shall now examine the impact of Islam on the local marriage ceremonies among the people of Oyo and its districts. In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that there was a fusion of both the traditional and the Islamic ceremonies in the area. The Islamic ceremony could be performed before the custom rites would commence, or vice versa. The ceremonies were celebrated to mark the transference of the bride to the bridegroom's residence. Islamic elements in the rites were: the henna ceremony (Yoruba: laálì lílé; Arabic: hinna) bathing of the bride, (iwe iyawó), her veiling, and the walima (called wòlímò by the people of Oyo and its districts) feast<sup>1</sup> after which she was taken to the bridegroom's house. They are only mentioned as Islamic elements only because they are traditional in the Islamic circles in most lands. In actual fact, they are not necessarily introduced by Islam: henna usage, for example, reached the Sudan long before Islam.<sup>2</sup>

The festivities usually lasted seven days for a virgin and from one to three for a widow or divorcee. During

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1. Trimingham, Islam in West Africa, 172p.

2. Ibid, 172p.

the period, women were usually trilling, drumming, singing and dancing. Then the bride was veiled. The following day, the contract ceremony was performed, at which the Alufa announced the terms in the correct Islamic form and led the recitation of the Fātiha, for which he received a fee (called owóo-fáátíhà). That night, the practice was also that old women should conduct the bride secretly to the house of the bridegroom (called ilé oko iyawó). On such occasion, the bridegroom was expected to stay off the house for some time until the wife would have settled down. This custom was presumably a means of avoiding dangerous attendant on a transition period. Today, it remains very important especially in the outlying districts. Neither the bridegroom nor the wife should be left alone and the Alufa was employed to supply protective 'medicine'. In Yoruba traditional religion, as well as Islam, pre-marital sexual copulation is considered forbidden. Both Yoruba traditional religion and Islam stress virginity. In Oyo and its districts, these marriage customs were observed only when a woman married for the first time. Special ceremonial was also a feature of the bridegroom's first marriage. If the bride was a widow or divorcée the ceremonies

were usually simplified, involving little more than contract ceremony and the legal walīma in the bride's house.

Concerning the institution of marriage in Yorubaland at large, one can, on the platform of the submissions so far, conclude that the attitude of the Yoruba Muslim in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century was not markedly different from that of the illiterate non-Muslim Yoruba. Moreover, the customs governing reciprocal behaviour of both sides of the nuptial relationship, together with members of their kith and kin during and after courtship, were the same for the Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. One chief disparity was the substitution of the Muslim <sup>priest</sup> for the Ifa (Orūnmilà) priest for the purpose of ascertaining whether a match was desirable for a girl or not prior to her parents' agreement or disagreement. The priest was also brought in to witness and bless the marriage compact.

Concerning the impact of Islam on the traditional system of dissolution of marriage,<sup>1</sup> the following points will

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1. This is called talāq in Arabic. Technically, it means the repudiation of wife by the husband. However, in Oyo and its districts the repudiation of wife by the husband was not common. The common practice was the initiation of divorce by the wife as a result of lack of care, ill-treatment, polygyny, impotency and childlessness.

help our understanding. Before the coming of Islam, the indigenous people had no ceremony about dissolution of marriage. When a wife was caught in a sexual lapse or any other form of moral laxity, the husband referred the case to the family head, compound head or the high chief. The case was <sup>at</sup> times referred to the ruling o<sup>o</sup>ba who usually designated his aremo (heir-presumptive) to preside over the case. When the husband had made up his mind to divorce the erring wife, any of the arbiters present did not usually force the husband contrary to his decision. Though he could be admonished to reconsider the case. Where appeals failed to effect reconciliation, the wife was bound to go out of the man's house immediately with mere words of mouth: "I divorce you".

When Islam came, it introduced a measure which helped to safeguard the position and the interest of women and prevent arbitrary expulsion of wives from their conjugal homes. In this respect, the former role of the family head, compound head or high chief was supplanted by the Imām and the jama'ca. With the introduction of Islam, it became difficult for the husband to eject the erring wife anyhow <sup>at</sup> and any time and especially by the mere utterance, "I divorce

you" In Oyo and its districts, before an erring Muslim wife could be finally condemned and ejected from her matrimonial home, she must undergo a period known as ‘idda<sup>1</sup> during which reconciliation might be effected through the arbitration of the Imām and the jamā‘a. The period of ‘idda usually lasted three menstrual months. During this period, she must not be denied of normal care. It was a period earmarked to reform the wife in anticipation of possible forgiveness on the part of the husband. But where reconciliation could not be effected during the period, the wife must go out of the conjugal home. It is important to bear in mind that in Oyo and its districts, the system helped, in a large measure, to preserve many matrimonial ties that might have been shattered as a result of one form of offence or the other. This system was later adversely affected by the policy of "indirect rule", the adoption of native law and custom by the British, and the establishment of native courts in the colonial period<sup>2</sup>. Today, in the

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1. For more details about ‘idda, see Levy, R. The Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge 1969, 106, 117-8, 122, 191, 335pp. et passim.

2. See above, chapter 4, 273-314pp.



area, divorce system among the Muslims has been badly affected by the court - system of divorce. This must be so because the Muslims were not successful in their attempt to turn the area <sup>into</sup> an Islamic theocratic State. In short, the Muslims in Oyo and its districts were not able to establish an "Imperium in Imperio".

#### 6.43 Naming and circumcision.

The Muslims were able to influence the traditional system of naming and circumcision. Events such as name-giving, initiation at puberty, marriage and death were not merely stages in the life of an individual, but were regarded by the people as affecting the pattern of social life, causing the community to take special precautions in the form of traditional rites in order to safeguard its equilibrium. Though Islam was slow to influence the structure and functions of family and kinship relationships, it gave the events a decisive imprint, and its practices relating to them were essential of what the people called "ònàa ti imòle" - 'the Muslim way of life', as distinguished from ònàa ti ilèe wa, 'the traditional way of life'. The

blending of Islamic usage with local practice produced the usual parallelism.

Before the coming of Islam, it was customary for the mother of a new baby to remain indoors until the day of name-giving. During this period, she must observe all the tabus connected with the lineage of her husband. If she was married to a husband who hailed from Okò lineage, she was not expected to eat the bird called ega. Thus the Yoruba saying: Okò won ò gbodò jeran ega "Okò must not eat the meat of ega". She could be forbidden to eat food with salt. She could be taking lizard or only vegetables depending on the type of tabus connected with such a lineage.

During the period between the day of birth and that of name-giving, the baby should be studied if it had any celestial name such as Dada, - "Baby with tuft on his head when born"; Aina - "Baby girl with its umbilical cord coiled round its neck when born"; Ojo - "Baby boy born with its umbilical cord round its neck"; Ige - "Baby who left the mothers' womb with legs first", Kehinde and Taye - "twin-babies".

Every Yoruba name has a character and a significance of its own. No child is given a name without a cause; and

that cause is not the bare inevitable one that a child must be born before it can receive a name<sup>1</sup>. Everyone of the names is almost invariably a sentence, or a clause, or an abbreviation of a sentence, which can be broken into component parts. Besides, the name must tell some clean story, whether it be of the circumstances surrounding the baby's birth, the state of the parents' or family affairs when it is born, or a remarkable event in the town or the general world into which it is born<sup>2</sup>. These common features of Yoruba name-giving ceremony were in vogue in Oyo and its districts before the coming of Islam.

The official was always the head of the family usually the grandfather, and in the absence of this, the father of the husband of the wife who was delivered of a baby. It was either of these two who should determine what name or names should be given to the baby.

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1. In this connection, note the following names: Táiwò. This name is, in full, Enití-ó-wa-to-ayé-wò - "He who came to taste the world"; Oluseyi. This name is, in full, Oluwa-se-eyí. - "God did this"; Adégòkè. The name, in full, is Adé-gun-òkè - "Crown ascended the top".
  2. In this connection, note the following names: Abiódún, the full form of which is A-bi-si-ódun - "That which was born on the occasion of the periodical festival"; Adélajà - the full form of which is Adé-la-ijà - "Ade that settled a dispute".

The day of name-giving varied according to the type of baby born. For male baby, the naming ceremony usually came up on the ninth day, for female baby it was on the seventh day and for twins it was usually held on the eighth day. In some cases, babies were named on the sixth day<sup>1</sup>. On such occasions, materials such as cooked rat, alligator pepper, salt, water, sugar-cane, bitter kola, kolanuts, honey were used to conduct prayer for the baby. Each of them was significant for the life of the baby. They signified things such as longevity, happiness, defeat of enemies and, in short, signified peace and success during the baby's span of life.

Apart from the normal or celestial name as the case may be, the child also received a special name called oriki which could be used to appease him whenever he was

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1. The baby who received its names on the sixth day was known as IFA LOMO - "The child is a gift". This happened when the baby was believed to be given by a tutelary divinity. In this connection, divinities such as Orisa-nlá (the Yoruba arch-divinity), Osun (a riverine divinity) and Orisa-oko (fertility divinity) can be mentioned.

offended and was weeping<sup>1</sup>. After that day, the curfew to which the mother had been subjected to since automatically ceased.

1. In Yorubaland, oríkì together with orilẹ̀ (praise name of a lineage) are usually used as lullaby to send a restless child to sleep.

Àjíkẹ̀, okoò mi, olóó mi,

Ará Ìla àjọ́,

Ará inú odi,

Omọ ọ̀sejogbo dàgba,

Omọ iyálóde wele,

Omọ agúnbí adé,

Omọ opa pinpin lóri esin,

Omọ Isọlá,

Aláyà ló lè gbé 'lé nlá,

B' ọ̀ò láyà,

Koro ní í lé omọ ojo lọ,

Omọ ọ̀rófó a mọ lẹ̀sẹ̀ bí ọ̀roro,

Omọ ọ̀rófó a mọ lẹ̀sẹ̀ bí iyawó.

(Ajike, my husband, my lord,

Child who hails from Ìlá,

Child who hails from a walled city,

The customs of circumcision and excision were anterior to the introduction of Islam into Oyo and its districts. Both were practised by the majority of people in the area. These were usually done at the early child-hood; but where performed at puberty, they formed part of the rites of initiation whose purpose was to bring to birth the complete social individual.

With regard to the influence of Islam on local customs of name - giving and circumcision in Oyo and its districts, the following points are important. When Islam came, it combined both the local and the Islamic systems of name-giving and circumcision. The practice of

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Child of woman of note,  
 Child who is as regular as crown,  
 King's child who is well arrayed on a horse,  
 Child of Isola,  
 It is a brave person that can reside in a  
 big house,  
 If you are not brave,  
 It is the eery sound that usually sends  
 away the child of a coward,  
 Child of a decent bird called òrófó  
 whose feet are very clean,  
 Child of a decent bird called orofó,  
 whose feet are as clean as those of  
 bride).

mother keeping indoors<sup>1</sup>, until the day of name-giving approached, lingered on but the practice of observing certain local tabus was discontinued. The fact that Yoruba name was significant and illustrative of certain circumstances in the lives of the baby and its parents continued. Thus in addition to Islamic (sunna) names, the baby was given its true name, celestial or secular, and the special name (oriki) was not left out as being unIslamic.

However, the role of the grandfather or the father of the husband of the mother in the exercise was taken over by the Chief Imām and his jamā'a. The chief officiant was the Imām who, together with the symbolic food items mentioned above, used the Qur'ān and the Hadīth for the exercise. The Chief Imām or the Muslim

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1. This was probably adopted to protect the life of the child so that it might not die before the name-giving day. The Yoruba do not usually like a situation in which a baby dies before it takes name. In this connection the following Yoruba saying is apposite: Aláinikananse omo tí kú ní ojòo suná - "A useless baby that usually dies on the name-giving day".

officer concerned started the work of bringing up the baby in the Muslim way by reciting the Islamic Article of Faith (shahāda - "The confession of Faith") into his ears.

In the traditional practice, gifts given to the baby were usually kept by the mother until it grew old. When Islam came, such gifts were usually taken away as a form of remuneration for the work done by the Chief Imam and his officiating jamā'a. This was permitted by the Muslims since their officers were not usually paid officials. They relied on gifts from the jamā'a on festival and other jocund occasions. Furthermore, Islam made impact on the day of the ceremony. Instead of the varying days according to the type of baby in the local practice, Islam introduced the system of giving a baby name on the eighth day. The eighth day was the great festival when the baby, regardless of its sex or type, was named. It was believed that it was commendable custom to give the child a name, shave the hair off its head<sup>1</sup>, give alms to the poor (sadaqa), and

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1. Despite Islamic prescription, the Yoruba Muslims in Oyo and its districts were constrained to exercise some restraint. They usually waited to examine if a new baby would turn out to be Dada (A baby with tuft or tufts on his head when born). In Yorubaland, the hair of such a baby is shaved only after the necessary sacrifice has been offered.



offer an animals as a sacrifice.

In the case of circumcision and excision, it will be recalled that the customs antedated the introduction of Islam to Oyo and its districts. Islam sought to destroy the traditional religious associations with which the rite was closely bound up.

These rites were never supernaturalised in Islam<sup>1</sup>. They were not mentioned in the Qur<sup>ān</sup> and jurists regarded the Ḥadīth material as very weak<sup>2</sup>. The Risāla of Ibn Alī Zaid, followed by the people in the area and West Africa at large, says that circumcision is obligatory (wājib)<sup>3</sup> and excision (khifād)<sup>4</sup> commendable. The effect of Islam was to desacralise circumcision. The knowledgeable ones among the Muslims related stories of how Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) had circumcised himself after receiving a mandate

1. Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 161p.

2. Ibid, 162p.

3. Ibid, 162p.

4. Ibid, 162p.

from God, and how one of his wives excised a Negro concubine of whom he was too fond. Through such stories, the learned Muslims in Oyo and its districts represented the rites as being ordained by God <sup>and</sup> not practise merely because the ancestors did them. The custom was therefore transformed from the traditional milieu into an Islamic purification rite. Usually the Muslim clergyman was not involved<sup>1</sup>, though in some towns in the area he performed the operation, accompanying it with prayer incantation which brought Islam into the erstwhile transition rite.

The school in the sacred grove had a deep psychological effect upon the young. Its destruction by Islam, devoid of any substitution of an equivalent institution could leave the youths without guidance and training as to their place and function in the society. Although Islam has no real equivalent, it has the rite of circumcision, initiation into manhood, and the Muslim convert was not subject to the taunt of the "uncircumcised". Where performed at puberty, circumcision embraced two aspects in that it

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1. Up till today in Oyo and its districts the role of one who circumcises babies (Yoruba: *olóólà*) remains very important. The role of the Muslim cleric in this regard is not marked at all.

opened the way for both the sexual and social life. It was the rite of circumcision - initiation since it conferred upon the youths adult - Muslim status as shown by the fact that he could join in ritual prayer and keep the fast. Moreover, it was regarded as an initiation into the community of Muslims (Umma) and not merely a recognition of change of status in the local community.

#### 6.44 Will and inheritance.

Concerning the local practice of will and inheritance, Islam made some impact when it came. It will be recalled that the lineage was the basis<sup>1</sup> of the traditional social structure of the people in the area. The practice in the area was that while the agnatic lineage was maintained, the cognatic descent groups were disregarded. The practice was that personal property went to a man's sons and lineage property (or the use of it) to a man's younger brothers. Women were not accorded any position of honour in the local system. She

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1. See above, 489-491.

did not even have complete disposal to her fortune. She was regarded inferior to man in all aspects of <sup>the</sup> local life. This was the situation when Islam reached Oyo and its districts. With the coming of Islam, the local system was given an Islamic transformation. To start with, the practice of dividing the property by the local people was taken over by the Muslim jamā'a especially in the Muslim quarters. More important was the liberation effected for women by Islam. A woman's right to own personal possessions is recognised in Islamic law<sup>1</sup> and islamisation has often made a difference of women in this way. They were allowed to inherit from their parents but with the proviso that a woman's own share should be half that of man.

#### 6.45 The position of women.

A step further to liberate women from the age-long traditional status of inferiority - complex is seen in the attitude of the Muslims to the system by which women were confined indoors during festivals involving certain rituals

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1. On this, see Trimingham, J. S. Islam in West Africa, 177p.

which women were forbidden to see. It was generally believed that women gossiped a good deal and that they were incapable of keeping any secret<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this, they were usually precluded from rituals which required secrecy. On such occasions, only men could come out to participate in the worship; women were kept indoors. Among the festivals in which they were, by custom, prevented from participating actively can be mentioned Oro<sup>2</sup> and Egúngún<sup>3</sup>.

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1. In this connection the following Yoruba saying is important: Obinrin ò ní gògòngò - "Female person does not have voice-box".
  2. In Yorubaland, women are forbidden to see Oro. It is generally believed that if a woman sees Oro, she will surely die. In this connection the following Yoruba sayings are apposite:

(i) Awo Egúngún l' obinrin lè se,  
Awo Gèlèdè (Egúngún in Egbado, Ogun State)  
L' obinrin lè mò,  
B' óbinrin bá f' ojú k' Oro,  
Oro á gbé e.

(It is in the cult of Egúngún  
that female person can participate,  
It is the cult of Gèlèdè that  
female can know,

If a woman should see Orò,  
Orò will seize or devour her).

- (ii) Ó ti b' Orò lo,  
Atinúké ti b' Orò sawo lo,  
Obìnrin ò m' Orò,  
Atinúké ti b' Orò sawo lo,  
Obìnrin ò m' Orò,  
Ó ti b' Orò lo.

She has followed (been seized by) Orò,  
 Atinúké has followed (been seized by) Orò  
 Female person does not know Orò  
 Atinúké has followed (been seized by) Orò  
 Female person does not know Orò  
 She has followed (been seized by) Orò).

3. With regard to Egúngún cult in Yorubaland, there are some women designated "Abólúwòdì", "Iyá Agan" or "Iyá Ato" who undergo certain rites and are allowed to go into the groves, and to see the Egúngún dress or undress. Each paramount chief in Yorubaland has an Abólúwòdì. In order to secure entry into this special class, a woman who has passed the child-bearing age, / that is a woman who has attained the age of menopause, has to procure a rat (eku), fish (eja) sheabutter (Orí), bitter kola (orógbó), snail (igbín), palmoil (epo pupa), and alligator pepper (ataare) to perform a ritual act

When the Orò festival was being celebrated in the area, women were kept indoors and all possible holes and crevices in the walls were blocked lest women be tempted to peep and thence be caught by the Orò. They derived satisfaction in keeping indoors and in preparing enough food for themselves and for the members of their family. Moreover, in some places, there was the exchange, among women, of food thus prepared. The boys ran errands carrying food from one home to the other.

When Islam came, the Muslims regarded such treatment as meted out to women on the occasions of Orò and Egúngún festivals as nothing short of enslavement. They would recognise no curfew which was imposed for reasons of traditional worship. Neither did they place any premium on the other traditional and social tabus. But, possibly, the strongest of the new ideas was the setting at nought of all divinities and their appurtenances, regarding Allāh as One the only true and real God of the whole universe.

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which exempts her from coming into harm even when she comes close to the Egúngún in any form. There are also women who usually sing the praises of the Egúngún and those who had at birth certain marks generally associated with Egúngún. They play conspicuous roles during Egúngún festivals.

This was strongly evident in their songs. Many and popular were the short songs which mocked and derided the dummies to which the followers of the traditional religion prayed for help and protection. To the Muslims, they were not more than helpless and lifeless effigies or phantoms, which, it used to be said, could not even raise their hands or feet in their own defence.

In this section, we have seen how the new values introduced by Islam generated conflicts between the Muslims and the followers of the traditional religion. Moreover, we have seen how Islam was able to adapt itself to some traditional beliefs and practices of the people in so far as such beliefs and practices did not conflict with the principles of Islam. Concerning the conflicts sparked off by the introduction of a new set of values, it would be erroneous, however, to view the relationship between the expanding community of Muslims and the larger traditional society as merely one of a series of conflicts. Arresting as these conflicts were, they were more truly conceived as ripples in the otherwise generally calm and peaceful atmosphere in which both Islam and the traditional religion peacefully co-existed. The phenomenon can be perceived not



only in the same town or village but in the same family<sup>1</sup>. It is in this context that one can consider what Islam did in the society of Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century.

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1. See above, chapter 5, 350-4pp.

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C O N C L U S I O N

Islam in Oyo and its districts has, behind it, a long history even though its very beginnings are cloaked in a fog of secrecy and ignorance. The materials relevant to this early facet of Islam in the area have so far been very meagre. Before the Jihād, it was possible that the Kingdom of Oyo, the most northerly of the Yoruba States, had adopted the practice of writing in Arabic from its islamised neighbours to the North. But the Arabic records of Oyo, if they existed at all, have not survived. For practical purposes, the history of the people of Oyo and its districts up to the nineteenth century is the history of a wholly-non-literate people. The construction of the history of such people in the absence of any kind of written documentation on which conventional history depends, presents obvious problems. Thus it has not been very possible to provide here more than a mere outline of the history and features of Islam in the period before the Jihād.

In the subsequent period, however, the sources available both in written and oral forms are more diverse and considerable. As contained in the footnotes and bibliography, the sources consist of records left by

literate neighbours of and visitors to the area and Yorubaland at large. To the north of Oyo and its districts, as has been observed, were peoples literate in Arabic, and individuals from these areas certainly visited and lived in Oyo and other Yoruba towns. Yet, the amount of contemporary Arabic documentation of Yoruba history so far recovered is negligible. For contemporary written evidence we are almost entirely dependent upon European nations - Portuguese, Dutch, French and English - who, from the late fifteenth century, established contacts, by sea, with West African Coast which forms the southern end of Yorubaland.

Here again, it is worth remembering that the knowledge of the Europeans concerning Yorubaland was for a long time, extremely limited geographically. Some first-hand accounts of the Coastal States are available - of Ijebu from the early sixteenth century, and of Lagos from the eighteenth century. But Europeans did not penetrate into the interior and gain first hand knowledge of the other Yoruba States until very late. The earliest substantial first-hand account of the interior is that of <sup>a</sup>Commander, who visited Oyo only in 1826. As the nineteenth century progressed, the amount of first-hand documentation steadily increased. Important in this process was the penetration of Christian missionaries into

the interior, initiated by the visit of T. B. Freeman to Abeokuta in 1842, and the establishment of an official British presence in Yorubaland, beginning with the placing of a resident consul at Lagos in 1852.

The sources mentioned so far above are largely incidental and indirect. However, within the limits provided by the sources, a bolder attempt can be made to construct the history of the growth of Islam among the people of Oyo and its districts in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Jihād and its aftermath obviously constituted a watershed in the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts. In truth, of the States in Yorubaland, the area was the most hit because there resided the Aláàfin with whom Afonja was in direct conflict. Rather than enhancing the status of the Muslims in the area, it initially exerted rather tragic effects. It rendered the Muslims in complete disarray and confusion. In truth, the incident threatened the very position of the Muslims in the area. They mostly came under a sombre situation and for quite a long time, they could worship only in secret as individuals. The erstwhile freedom of religion became lost in the perplexities generated by the rebellion. Though forcibly shaken, Islam, however, remained unbroken. As the people of Oyo and its districts

settled down under the leadership of Alaàfin Atiba (1837-1859), whose base of operation was located in New Oyo, the Muslims under the auspices of <sup>the</sup> Pàràkoyí, Yesufu Alanamu, embarked on a project of rehabilitation, surviving, to a considerable extent, the tragedy, prejudices, rigours, predicaments, dilemma, homelessness and oppositions of the previous decades.

The survival and growth of Islam henceforth constituted a major feature in Oyo and its districts in the middle of the nineteenth century. In truth, certain erstwhile developments such as crude system of worship and the time-honoured leadership of the Pàràkoyí gave way and were supplanted by new developments. As noted earlier in this work, the new developments must be so. While the two old developments gave way, other traditions such as adaptation to local conditions and the scheme of indigenisation of Islam were allowed to trickle on. New developments were evident. This is well expressed in the inauguration of the office of <sup>the</sup> Imām, a development consequent upon the influx of non-indigenous Muslim scholars into the area. Moreover, it was obvious that the Muslim community was adopting some social traditions while at the same time making its own

social and political impact.

In the resurgence of Islam in the area, a remarkable role was played by external forces. From outside, Sierra Leone and Brazil in particular, came the sustaining support procured by the overseas Muslims and the various mālams and teachers from Ilorin, and far North helped to improve on the level of knowledge and worship, and earned for the Muslims considerable respect. But more significant was the staunch support found within the society itself. The abatement of the threat constituted by Ilorin, the people's attitude of toleration and hospitality regardless of faith, race or colour, the system of inter-marriage, the royal connection which the Paràkoyí had and the consequent conversion of the social and political élites in Oyo and its districts combined to work in favour of the Muslims. And the Muslims themselves exhibited a considerable degree of earnestness, adaptability and tact in their endeavours to establish their community.

The Muslim community developed separately in each town in the area, although those in the important large towns tended to wield some influence over those in the rural districts. In all of them, however, certain common traits can be observed as regards their organisational

setting, beliefs, ideas and cultural identities such as their festivals and education (Qurānic education).

Shortly after its period of recuperation from the wars of the previous decades, the Muslim community of Oyo and its districts received great challenges from the new forces of Christianity and British colonial rule which had some stimulating effects on the position of <sup>the</sup> Muslims. Christian endeavours notwithstanding, Islam, instead of waning to the lowest ebb continued to wax stronger and the Muslims emerged as a body to be reckoned with by the British powers in particular. Above all, they came to accept some Western ideas and values, notably Western education. Here again, we must not lose sight of the part played by overseas Muslims that resided in Oyo and its districts in the era of Islamic resurgence.

It is a combination of the new devices in Islam in the area together with the rapid growth of Islam, in size and status, that marked out the turn of the nineteenth century as the era when Islam in the area reached a high watermark in its social and political development.

In the course of its development, Islam had been exerting considerable influence on the rest of the life and history of the people of Oyo and its districts. It

had widened the scope of its connections and enriched the content of its culture. Altogether, it had procured an elevating civilisation as an alternative to the "colonial" Western civilisation ushered in at this period. The Muslim civilisation was particularly impressive and attractive since it better conserved African values and dignity. Moreover, since the Muslims in the area combined both Islamic and some Western ideas they offered to the society a cultural synthesis richer than anything hitherto available.

However, from the beginning of the twentieth century till now, the Muslims were to feel the adverse feedback done by the changing scenes of the age. The establishment of the native law and custom under the banner of Lugard's policy of "Indirect Rule" effectively and efficaciously inhibited any attempt to introduce Islamic Law or Islamic theocratic state de facto which Islam had presaged. Moreover, the monopoly of Western education, which Christianity had initially enjoyed put the Muslims at some disadvantage in the wake of the new élite.

Concerning the disadvantageous position of the Muslims, they have begun to rectify the situation by forming various literary societies. The most notable



among them were the Ansarudeen and the Nuwairudeen. There were also the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (modern Anwaru'l-Islām Movement) and the Ahmadiyya Mission which were trying to bridge the gap between the Muslims and the Christians in the matter of Western education. The societies and sects emerged in Oyo and its districts in the 1940s. They have constituted a dynamic force actively prosecuting both the reform of Islam as practised in the area and the cause of the Muslims in Yorubaland and Nigeria as a whole. In truth, they have ushered in a new era of Muslim history in the area and their over-all impact today should not escape our apt and correct estimation.

Finally, there was an impressive attempt to indigenise Islam in the area and relieve it of its status quo as a foreign or imported religion. Such an attempt was a product of a much - discussed social process: 'culture-contact' or 'acculturation'. While it may be difficult to boast of complete indigenisation of Islam, the stage reached in this project in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century should not be under-estimated. The success of the Muslims in this connection was due to the adaptability of Islam and the Muslim missionaries to

African life. Such adaptability to the African milieu can best be illustrated by the nature of Islam and the attitude of the Muslims to the institution of polygyny. It has been noted that such adaptability to African milieu so helped the cause of Islam in the area that missionaries from both the established churches of the nineteenth century and the African churches of the present century became precariously envious of Islam and its propagators. As a matter of fact, this process and the resultant indigenisation of Islam combined to render it a statistical giant in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century and later. However, the project of indigenisation of Islam in the area should not be over-emphasised. It should be viewed on the basis of reciprocal relationship. The apt description could be that the traditional religion of the people accommodated Islam and Islam itself accommodated the traditional religion. However, since Islam is a religion based on Scripture, a standard religion like either Judaism or Christianity, it discouraged, as much as possible, the Muslim converts from persisting in those aspects of the traditional religion that were incompatible with its principles as contained in the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth and the law books of the Muslim scholars.

APPENDIX ITHE IFÁ POEM, ÒTUÁ MEJÌ RELATING TO THE INTRODUCTION  
OF ISLAM INTO YORUBALANDq.v. ABIMBOLA, WANDE,Ijinlẹ̀ ohùn Enu Ifá Apá Kejì: Àwọn Ifá Nlànla,

Glasgow, 1969, 96ff. All that this poem connotes is that Islam is an offshoot of <sup>the</sup> traditional religion. It is difficult to over-emphasise this point, thus it is better to have it at the fact that Islam reached Yorubaland very early and influenced some votaries of the traditional religion and in this case, the devotees of Òrúnmìlà who perhaps saw Islam as a better and simpler religion embraced it as an apt change of religious environment. The poem can also be taken to mean one of the ways by which the Yoruba give the origins of some cosmological phenomena. Compare the Yoruba myth of the origin of the created order (see above, chapter 5, 419-420).

Wutuwutu yaaki; (à nfi eléyíí sín àwọn imòle jẹ̀ nipa  
kèwúu wọn tí ndún létí ẹ̀ni tí kò gbò  
kèwú).

Wutuwutu yàmbèlé;

Ká sùré pátá pirá,

Ká fèwù aláàrì fonkun amódi;

Lékèélékèé, eye imole (awon imole fèràn aṣo funfun bi  
aṣo ara eye tí nje lékèélékèé).

Bó bá sí lóri opotó,

A bà sóri òrombó,

A maa fi gbogbo ara kéwú cléwú kiri;

A díá fún Orunmila,

Ifá n̄sunkun̄ oun ò romo bi

Won ni ebo ni o waa ru,

O si ru u:

Won ni o reku meji oluwere;

Ko reja meji abiwegbada;

Obidi meji abedo lukeluke;

Ewure meji, abamu redere

Einla meji to fiwo sosuka

Gbogbo re na a lo ru

Igba ti Orunmila o ko o bi,

O bi Ganmbi (Oruko omo imole)

Igba ti o tun bi,

O bi Kalitu (Oruko omo imole)

Igba ti o tun bi,

O bi Daudu, (Oruko omo imole ni eyi naa)

Eyi ti somo ikeyin won lenje lenje

Iku kò pa wòn,

Àrùn kò se wòn,

Igba ti wòn dagbà tán

Orunmila kó won ní didá owó

Wòn mò on dà:

Ó kó won létite alè,

Wòn mò on tè,

Ó kó won ní òkarara ebo

Wòn mò on ha,

Nigbà tó dojò kan

Ni wòn bá ré agbádá babáa won,

Wòn ré gele iyáa wòn;

Wòn wọ agbada naa,

Wòn sì wé gele naa sori bantutu

Wòn na igi merin silẹ nibuunbuu (awon imole a maa na igi

silẹ bayii lati

fi se mosalaaasi. Eyi

ni a npe ni giigii).

Wòn waa kó sí àarin awon igi naa

Wòn nşenu, wujewuje;

Wòn nforii kanle,

Wòn ndide

Wòn si nnaro

Bàbáá wón sá nwò wón ni  
 Wón n̄s̄e b̄ē l̄ē marùnmarùn lójoojúm̄o  
 Ó wáá r̄ántí Ifá  
 Tí awon awo o r̄ē k̄i fun un,  
 Kò bá wón jà.  
 K̄ēk̄ē kiní yìí nwò wón lara  
 Igba tó ya  
 Wón wáá mú un bíi s̄ē  
 Ó di wip̄ē  
 Bí enikan bá n̄so om̄o lórúko,  
 Awon om̄o m̄eteeta yìí ó lo sibe  
 Bí okú kú fun enikan,  
 Wón a r̄ans̄e p̄e wón.  
 B̄ē ni awon om̄o nááa se  
 Tí wón fi ndara gbogbo  
 Igba tí wón dagba tán,  
 Tí awon nááa bimo,  
 B̄ē náa ni awon om̄o won n̄s̄e  
 Ijò ni wón n̄jò,  
 Ayo ni wón n̄yo,  
 Wón ni b̄ē ḡēḡē  
 Ni awo awon n̄s̄enu rerē p̄efá.  
 Wutùwutù yáákí,

Wùtùwùtù yambèlé;  
 Ká suré pátá pirá;  
 Ká fèwù àlààrì fonkun amodi;  
 Lékeélékéé eye imòle  
 Bó bá sí lóri opotó,  
 A bà sóri orombó,  
 A maa fi gbogbo ara rẹ kẹwù eléwu kiri;  
 A diá fun Orunmila,  
 Ifá nsunkun oun o romo bi.  
 Wón ní ó káàki mòlẹ  
 Ó jare,  
 Ebo ni ó se  
 Ó gbọ riru ebo  
 Ó ru  
 Ó gbọ eru atukesu  
 Ó tu,  
 Ó gbọ ikarara  
 E bo ha fun un  
 Ire meta la wa nwa  
 Awa nwowoo,  
 Awa nwomo,  
 Awa nwa atubotan aye

(Wùtùwùtù yáàkí (parody of Arabic sounds by Muslims and non-Muslims who do not know Arabic);

Wútùwútù yámbèlé (mimickery of Arabic sounds by  
Muslims and non-Muslims who do not know  
Arabic);

To run very swiftly,  
And use fanciful dress to remove mucus of indisposition  
Cow Egret (*Bubulcus i ibis*), the bird of Muslims,  
If it flies from fig tree,  
It rests on orange tree,  
It goes about with strange white interlocks;  
Cast Ifá for Òrunmila,  
Ifa was crying of not having child.  
He was asked to offer sacrifice,  
And he offered it.  
They asked him to buy two prescribed rats;  
He was asked to buy two prescribed fish;  
Two hens with big livers;  
Two big goats.  
Two prescribed animals with fearful horns.  
All he offered.  
When Òrunmila would first bear,  
He borne Gánbí (a Muslim name).  
When next he would bear,  
He bore Kálítù (a Muslim name)



When next he would bear,

He bore Daudu (a Muslim name),

The last born.

They did not die,

They were not attacked by diseases.

When they grew up,

Ọrúnmílà taught them the divination systems by hand

(Here the following systems are meant:

Dídaobi - 'Casting the Kolanut; Èrindìnlógún -  
The sixteen"),

They mastered it

He taught them geomantic system of divination,

They mastered it,

He taught them how to offer sacrifice,

They mastered it,

He taught them how to offer sacrifice,

They mastered it.

One day,

They took the flowing garment of their father,

They took the head tie of their mother;

They wore the flowing garment,

They also put on the headtie in a funny way,

They laid down four sticks crosswise.

They stayed in the middle of the sticks,

They were whispering;

They were touching the ground with their heads,  
They were rising.  
They were kneeling,  
They were standing.  
Their father looked on  
They were doing these five times daily.  
He remembered Ifá  
Which his priests cast for him,  
He did not fight with them.  
Little by little they became addicted to this thing.  
Later,  
They made it a point of duty.  
It happened  
That if anyone had a naming ceremony to perform,  
These three children would go there.  
If any one had a funeral ceremony to do,  
They would send for them.  
Thus the children behaved,  
That they surprised people,  
When they reached the age of maturity,  
That they too had children,  
Their children behaved likewise.  
They began to dance,  
And to rejoice;

They said it was exactly

Their priest invoked Ifá with good mouth.

Wútùwútù yáákí (mimickery of Arabic sounds by Muslims  
and non-Muslims who do not know Arabic);

Wútùwútù yámbèlé (mimickery of Arabic sounds by Muslims  
and non-Muslims who do not know Arabic),

To run very swiftly;

And use fanciful dress to remove mucus of indisposition

Cow Egret (*Bubulcus i ibis*) the bird of Muslims,

If it flies from fig tree,

It rests on orange tree,

It goes about with strange white interlocks;

Cast Ifá for Òrunmilà,

Ifá was crying of not having child.

They said he should worship soil spirit,

He did it

It was sacrifice he offered.

Sacrifice was prescribed for him,

He offered it.

He heard of the pang of devil,

He pacified.

He heard of sacrifice,  
The sacrifice was accepted  
It is three-fold favour we want;  
We are looking for money,  
We are looking for child;  
We are looking for the Hereafter.

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APPENDIX IITHE IFÁ POEM, OTUÁ MEJÌ RELATING TO THE CONFLICT  
BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE YORUBA TRADITIONAL RELIGION IN  
THE EARLY PERIOD OF ISLAM IN YORUBALAND.

N.B.: This poem was collected from Mr. Adejare of  
Beesin Quarter, Oyo, q.v. Biobaku, S. O. (ed.)  
Sources of Yoruba History, 58-9pp.

Igbunwó-mejèèjì-o seé gbèrù-sàjà;

A diá fun Alukaáadi,

Omo Aála

Ní ojoojumó tí Alukaáadi bá jí

A sò wí pé òun ó pa igba écyan

À fi bí ó bá sí pa igba náá kó too dawo duro

Bó bá pa won tán

Yoo sí gba ogun ilée won

A a ní 'igba peré ni ngó pa,

Alukaáadi;

Igba peré ni ngó pa,

Alukaáadi'

Dièdiè ilú ndeyo

Ni awon tó kù ní ilú bá meéjì kéeta

Won lo oko alawo,

Àwón lè sègun Alukáádí báyii?  
 Ni wón da ifá sí  
 Wón ní ebo ni kí awon ó wa á rú,  
 Wón sì rú u.  
 Èsú ló di àgbó  
 Mo ló di àfakàn,  
 Ó ní ta ló rú?  
 Ta ni ò rú?  
 Wón ní gbogbo ará ilú ló rú  
 Àfi Alukáádí nikan ní ò rú  
 Ni Èsú bá di atégun  
 Ó tè lè Alukáádí,  
 Ló bá gba orí lowó o re

(The two-elbows-cannot-lift-you-a-load-to-the-ceiling;

Cast Ifá for Alukáádí,

The son of Allāh.

Everyday whenever Alukáádí woke up,

He would promise to kill two hundred people

And until he finished killing the two hundred

He would not rest,

After killing them,

He would carry their belongings away

His usual song was:

"I will kill only two hundred Alùkáádí".

'I will kill only two hundred,

Alùkáádí',

Little by little the town was becoming desolate

Then the remaining inhabitants of the town

Added two cowry-shells to three,

And went to a priest of Ifa for divination.

Could they possibly conquer Alùkáádí?

That was what they cast Ifá upon:

They were asked to make sacrifice,

And they made it.

Then Èsú said:

It is time, let us go,

I said it remains for us to mention to whom we are going.

Èsú asked who made sacrifice and who did not

They said all the inhabitants of the town made sacrifice  
except Alùkáádí who did not.

Then Èsú turned himself into wind

And pursued Alùkáádí

And relieved him of his head).

APPENDIX III

THE  
LIST OF/CHIEF IMĀMS IN SOME TOWNS IN OYO AND  
ITS DISTRICTS FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE  
PRESENT DAY

I. KISI.

1. Alufa Idindi (an Idindi from Dahomey)
2. Seriki Sango
3. Iya
4. Bello
5. Aliyu of Iyalode Quarter
6. Tijani Yayi of Isale Imole Quarter
7. Jibrila of Tege Quarter
8. Jomoh of Tege Quarter
9. Abdul Kareem of Agoro Quarter, the present Chief Imām.

II. IGBETI.

1. Sanni Olajide
2. Sanusi, the present Chief Imām.

III. IGBOHO.

1. Abu Bakara Adebunmi (from Iseyin). He settled at Boni Quarter.
2. Asani of Molaba Quarter (The Muslim convert in Igboho).
3. (Years of interregnum) Aminu of Ilorin.



4. Aliyu of Boni Quarter (He hailed from Aiyetoro in Oke-Iho).
5. (i) Musitafa, the son of Abu Bakare Adebunmi, the first Chief Imām.  
(ii) Ali of Ayetoro Quarter and a descendant of Asani, the second Chief Imām
6. (i) Salimonu Ajila of Boni Quarter - the present Chief Imām I.  
(ii) Lawani Ogunfade of Modeke Quarter - the present Chief Imām II.

N.B.:

There are at present, as in Fiditi, two Chief Imāms in Igboho. The situation cropped up as a result of certain conflict on the location of market. The conflict dates back to the period of the fifth Chief Imām, Mustafa. The case is still pending. It began as a commercial conflict but was later infused with religious ferment which broke the Muslim community in the town into two camps under the leadership of two Chief Imāms.

IV. SEPETERI.

1. Bello of Imām's Quarter.
2. Gbadamosi
3. Abdul Aḥmad, the present Chief Imām and son of the second Chief Imām.

V. SAKI.

1. Saliu of Asunnara Quarter (an Idindi, a Dahomean)
2. Amadu of Agbede Quarter.

3. Musa of Isale Onikeke Quarter.
4. Sadiku of Oke-Oro Quarter.
5. Gafata Aliyu Adigboro (a Hausa).
6. Gbadamosi (alias Aberesola) of Konki Quarter.
7. Garuba of Isale Onikeke Quarter and son of the third Chief Imām, Musa.
8. Alhaji Lawani Iyanda, the present Chief Imām.

VI. AHA.

1. Yesufu Ajagbe
2. Sanni Alao
3. Sanni Alabi
4. Sanni Adeleke
5. Alhaji Lawani, the present Chief Imām.

VII. TEDE.

1. Sunmonu Onisona of Abandawaki Quarter.
2. Garuba of Imām's Quarter, Saki Road.
3. Alhaji Abudu Salami, the present Chief Imām.

VIII. AGGARE.

1. Ile-Olawo
2. Alhaji Sulaiman, the present Chief Imām.

IX. IRAWO-ILE.

1. Abibu.
2. Lawani Aremu.

3. Alhaji 'Abdul Salām, the present Chief Imām.

X. IRAWO OWODE.

1. Lawani
2. Alhaji Abū Bakr, the present Chief Imām.

XI. OFIKI.

1. Tijani Abegunrin of Sendo Quarter.
2. Tafa of Ojanjan Quarter.
3. Busari (from Iseyin)
4. Asiru, son of Tijani Abegunrin, the first Imām.  
He hailed from Sobaloju Quarter.
5. Tijani Bolaji, the present Chief Imām.

XII. OKAKA.

1. Alūfa Gambari ( a Hausa)
2. Rufai
3. Sanni Ajijolaku
4. Salami Olarewaju of Balogun Quarter
5. Fasasi of Olukosi Quarter
6. Raufu Baba, the present acting Chief Imām.

XIII. IGANNA.

1. Yesufu Amuda - the founder of Islam in the place.  
He hailed from Old Oyo.
2. Seedu, brother of Yesufu Amuda the first Chief Imām.

3. Muritala Ajao
4. Busari Akanji Arowosaiye of Sepeteri Quarter.
5. Alhaji Salawu Moboluwaduro, the present acting Chief Imām.

#### XIV. OKE-IHO.

1. Abrahimo Bibilari
2. Haruna Iyanda
3. Aibu Adisa
4. Sanni
5. Abudu Ramoni Ajani (alias Arikewusola)
6. Yusau (Yisau) Akanbi.
7. Alhaji Muḥammad Niala.
8. Alhaji Abudu Karimu Akano, the present Chief Imām

#### XV. ISEYIN.

1. Momodu of Idiose Quarter
2. Idrisu Momodu
3. Aparo of Adabo Quarter
4. Olokun family
5. Daiyero family in Ijemba Quarter
6. Oye in Ijemba Quarter
7. Sule of Oke Ola Quarter
8. Liasu of Ijemba Quarter
9. Momodu Egberongbe of Olokun family
10. Lawani Alalukimba (Alalukimba).

11. Layiwola of Adabo Quarter
12. Busari of Ijemba Quarter
13. Musitafa of Adabo Quarter
14. Saminu of Oke-Ola Quarter
15. Raji Ajirin of Idi Quarter
16. Short interregnum
17. Jamiu of Olokuta Quarter, the present Chief Imām.

XVI. IKOYI.

1. Sule (a prince)
2. Aliru
3. Alhaji Imoru
4. Alhaji Abudu Baki, the present Chief Imām who claimed to be related to Sule, the first Chief Imām.

XVII. OYO (AGO D'OYO).

1. Aliyu Ajokidero
2. Abu Bakare
3. Sule
4. Badaru
5. Silikifuli
6. Asimi
7. Aliyu Odunlami
8. Tukuru
9. Alhaji Oyibi
10. Short interregnum.

11. Alhaji Mustapha, the present Chief Imām.

Note: All the Imāms hailed from the Imām's Quarter of the town. It is pertinent to recall here as well that they were related individually and severally to the learned Hausa Muslims invited to Oyo by Aláàfin Atiba during his reign (1837-1859).

XVIII. AWE.

1. Amadu of Aarin Ago Quarter
2. Aliyu
3. Monmodu Raji
4. Jimoh
5. Abudu Karimu, the present Chief Imām.

XIX: AKINMORIN.

1. Jinadu
2. Alhaji Salami Jinadu, the present Chief Imām and the son of the first Chief Imām.

XX. ILORA.

1. Salami Folahanmi
2. Alhaji Lasisi Iyanda, the present Chief Imām.

XXI. FIDITI.

1. Sanni
2. Suberu

3. Interregnum
4. Yesufu
5. (i) Alhaji Bamgbade, the present Chief Imām I.  
(ii) Alhaji Jimoh Sanni, the son of Sanni, the first Chief Imām and the present Chief Imām II.

Note: The breach here centred around the complaints of the indigenous Muslims that Alhaji Jimoh Sanni was an alien in Fiditi. In truth, as confirmed by the jamā'ia, his father hailed from Ilorin though he was born at Fiditi during his father's stay in this place. And since then, the descendants of Sanni have remained there. He was said to be retained as the Chief Imām II as a mark of respect for his father, Sanni, the founder of Islam and the first Chief Imām in Fiditi.

APPENDIX IVLIST OF THE ALÁAFINS OF OYO FROM THE DAYS  
OF ORANYAN TO THE PRESENT DAY

While the dynastic succession here is mainly based on the work of Johnson (in his book: The History of the Yoruba cited above) the dates are based on the materials found in a Yoruba Newspaper, Imole Owuro: The Independent Paper Vol. XI, No. 378, 1971; Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III: Oyo Chieftaincy Institution and Modernism cited above.

I. THE FOUNDERS OF OYO AND ITS DISTRICTS:

1. Oranyan: It is the consensus of historians that the period of his reign is not yet known for certain but remains cloaked in timeless prehistory. Sufficient it is to say here that he was the grandson of Oduduwà, the reputed founder and ancestor of Yoruba race whom Johnson describes as mythical personage.
2. Ajuan alias Ajaka, 1042-1077.
3. Sàngó (English Shango) or Olufiran, 1137-1177. Both Johnson and Hodgkin in their books cited above describe him as the fourth King of Yoruba, the son of Oranyan and the brother of Ajaka who was the author of the misfortunes that doomed.



him to destruction during his reign.

4. Ajaka reigned the second time, 1177.

II. THE PERIOD OF GROWTH, PROSPERITY AND OPPRESSION:  
HISTORICAL ALAĀFINS.

5. Aganju, 1177-1300.

6. Kori, (1300-1357): this time Kori was a child. His mother Iyayun acted for him as a regent. She wore the crown, and put on the royal robes, and was invested with Ejigba, the Opa ileke and other royal insignia, and ruled the Kingdom until her son was of age. It was during this reign that Timi was sent to Ede and not in Sàngó's reign as was hitherto supposed (See Yoruba Reading Book).

7. Oluaso, 1357-1497

8. Onigbogi, 1497-1512

9. Ofinran, 1497-1512

10. Interregnum, 1512-1534.

III. THE ALAĀFINS OF OYO IGBOHO OR OYO-GBOHO IN THE  
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

11. Eguguoju, 1534-1554

12. Orompoto, 1554-1562

13. Ajiboyede, 1562-1570.

14. Abipa or Oba Moro, (the ghost catcher) 1570-1588.

IV: A SUCCESSION OF DESPOTIC AND SHORT-LIVED ALAÁFINS.

15. Obalokun Agana Erin, 1588-1650

16. Ajagbo, 1650-1658

17. Interregnum 1658-1660

18. Odarawu, 1660

19. Karau, 1660-1665

20. Jayin, 1665-1676

21. Ayibi, 1676-1698

22. Osinyago, 1698. He was a worthless, avaricious and shortlived Alaafin.

23. Ojigi, 1698-1732

24. Gberu, 1732-1738

25. Amuniwaye, 1738-1742

26. Onisile, 1742-1750.

V. THE ALAÁFINS BETWEEN THE PERIOD OF THE ATROCIOUS BASORUN GAHA AND PEACE LOVING ALAÁFIN ABIODUN, ALIAS ADEGOOLU.

27. Labisi, 1750

28. Awonbioju or Oduboye, 1750

29. Agboluaje, 1750-1772

30. Majeogbe, 1772-1775

31. Abiodun, alias Adegoolu 1775-1805

VI. THE ALAÁFINS IN THE PERIOD OF REVOLTS.

32. Aole surnamed Arogangan 1805-1811.

- 33. Adebo 1811.
- 34. Maku 1811
- 35. Interregnum 1812-1817.

VII. THE ALAĀFINS FROM THE RISE OF THE FULANI TO POWER TO THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE OLD OYO

- 36. Majeotu - (Note the symbolic reference of the name to the sombre situation in the Old Oyo Empire during this time), 1817-1818).
- 37. Amodo 1818
- 38. Oluewu Kobilape 1818-1835
- 39. Interregnum 1835-1836.

VIII. THE ALAĀFINS FROM THE PERIOD OF ATIBA'S PROJECT OF POLITICAL REHABILITATION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

- 40. Atiba, 1837-1859 - It was during his reign that Islamic resurgence went side by side with political rehabilitation. Pàràkòyí of Oyo, Yesufu Alanamu featured prominently during this time.
- 41. Adelu, 1859-1875. His reign witnessed some aspects of Islamic consolidation.
- 42. Adeyemi Alowolodu, I, 1875-1905. During his reign Islam had completely survived the predicaments precipitated by the wars of the previous decades and had become well established

in Oyo and its districts.

43. Lawani Agogo-Ija, 1905-1911. He was the first Alááfin to embrace Islam. His conversion was a land mark with significant consequence in the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the present century.
44. Siyanbola Ladigbolu I, 1911-1945.
45. Adeniran Adeyemi II, 1945-1955. He followed the footsteps of his predecessor, Lawani Agogo Ija, by submitting to Islamic conversion. He performed the hajj before his abdication which resulted from the political rumpus of 1956.
46. Gbadegesin Ladigbolu, 1956-1970. He was said to promote the cause of Islam in Oyo and its districts, in cash and kind, in his capacity as the pivot on which all his subjects together with their religions revolved. However, there is no record or tradition that he embraced Islam.
47. Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III, 1970 to the present time. He was a Muslim Alááfin, the son of the exiled Alaafin Adeniran Adeyemi II. He had been to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage and was reported to be of immense help to the cause of Islam in his dominion.

APPENDIX VTHE TWELVE MONTHS OF THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

1. Muḥarram
2. Ṣafar
3. Rabī'ū'l-awwal
4. Rabī'ū'l-ākhar
5. Jamāda'l-ūlā
6. Jamāda'l-ākhirā
7. Rajab
8. Sha'ḅān
9. Ramaḁān
10. Shawwāl
11. Dhu'l-qa'da
12. Dhu'l-Hijja.

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## I PRIMARY SOURCES

Documented information directly relevant to this topic, "Islam in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century", is meagre; and a good deal of the available historical material is only marginally useful. At this juncture, it will be expedient to sound a note of warning that any research worker in this field will, therefore be advised to develop very wide tentacles in his quest for relevant material.

### A. MISSION RECORDS:

Some Christian Missions and missionaries often developed interest and enthusiasm in the spread of Islam in their area of operation, and the records, journals and letters of such Missions and missionaries I have found immensely useful for my research. However, it is expedient to note here that caution is very essential with regard to the use of some of these materials as they may be based on one <sup>of information</sup> form ~~or~~ the other. Of these records the ones found relevant and useful are:

#### (i) Church Missionary Society: Yoruba Mission Records

These records are particularly valuable for my research work. They are the ones dealing with

post - 1840 period and are classified into two Groups:

- (a) CA2: Yoruba Mission; 1842-1880
- (b) G3A2: Yoruba Mission 1880-1914

These are available in microfilm in the University of Ibadan Library.

There are also some Mission papers in the National Archives, Ibadan - C.M.S. (Y) 1/5-4/1.

These contain a few letters, minutes and reports of some committees.

(ii) Wesleyan Mission Records:

A few of these records are available in N.A.I. where they are classified as W.M.M.S.

(iii) Baptist Mission Records.

The records of the Mission occasionally found <sup>useful</sup> for this work are the Baptist papers, notably Correspondence of the Missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention; Yoruba Mission, 1850-1890:

This is available in microfilm in the University of Ibadan, Library.

- (iv) Relatively more accessible, however, are the printed missionary records, which often drew upon the written



records. I used the following records:

- (a) The Church Missionary Gleaner, 1845-1914.
- (b) The Church Missionary Intelligencer, 1890-1899.
- (c) The Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, 1908-1914.
- (d) The Niger and Yoruba Notes 1895-1904.
- (e) The Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, 1902-1914.
- (f) The Annual Report of the Lagos Church Mission, 1894-1917.
- (g) A report of the Missionary work in Muslim Area published in The Muslim World, 1911.

(v) Catholic Mission Records:

- (a) Priestly ordination, Oyo, documented by the Catholic priest, McCOY, OWEN and printed in Ibadan in 1965. The record contains the history of Catholic Mission right away from its inception in the nineteenth century in Oyo and its districts to the present century. This record is available in the Catholic Mission House, Oyo.

(b) A Memorandum by Father E. Nangor, 1895. This record contains the history of the influx of Catholic Missionaries into Oyo and its districts. This is available in the Catholic Mission House, Oyo.

(vi) Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission Records:

A short sketch of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Lagos, 1973

B. GOVERNMENT RECORDS.

(i) Oyo Provincial Papers:

These papers are very useful for they contain direct records, kept by the Administrative Officers, of the history of the people of Oyo and its districts, their traditional religious practices such as Ogboni cult, Egungun and Orò festivals, witchcraft and sorcery. Of particular importance is the fact that the records contain the history of the relationship between the Muslim community and Colonial Government in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Besides, they are as detailed as possible, being contributed to by the officials at the various levels - District, Divisional

and Provincial.

The papers are available at the National Archives, Ibadan, where they are classified as Oyo Prof. series. The materials used in this work came from various files under Oyo Prof. 1, Oyo Prof. 1/9, Oyo Prof. 2/2, Oyo Prof. 2/3, Oyo Prof. 4/6.

(ii) Chief Secretary's Office Records:

Until British authority and Native Administration were well entrenched in the interior of Lagos, the Colonial Secretary (Later the Chief Secretary) to the Government, Lagos, directly handed the affairs in that area. Thus, in the early years, a number of despatches from this Office to the Colonial Office, London dealt with matter in Oyo and its districts. And even after Native Administration assumed a full swing, the Chief Secretary's Office remained final arbiter on matters arising in any locality in the country.

Thus, matters on Native Administration which are directly or indirectly relevant to our work abound in the records kept by this office.

These records are classified as 'C.S.O.' series at the National Archives, Ibadan. The ones found useful in this category are:-

- (a) C.SO 1/1 Series: These contain despatches from Lagos to London and vice versa.
- (b) CSO 1/8 Series: They contain instructions to Governors.
- (c) CSO 26 Series: They are mainly the Government files. They contain Intelligence Reports in various files. Moreover, they contain Memoranda and Letters from the Resident's Office Oyo, to the Chief Secretary's Office, Lagos, and vice versa.

(iii) Divisional and District Office Records:

Although most of the Records dealing with the events in Oyo Province, whether at Provincial, Divisional or District level, are contained in Oyo Provincial Papers and the Chief Secretary's Office Records, both of which have already been referred to, a few other records are to be found elsewhere. For example, there are such records at the National Archives, Ibadan, catalogued differently from the 'Oyo Prof.', and the 'C.S.O.

Series. There are also such records at some of the Divisional or District Headquarters in the Province. The records of the Divisional or Districts Headquarters are serialised under 'Oyo Prof.' and are occasionally useful.

In the Local Divisional Offices, some files have proved quite helpful in giving details of local rifts and the background to such.

Useful materials in this category of 'scattered records' have been got from the following: Oyo Divisional Office, Oyo. The relevant files are classified as 'O.D.' series.

(iv) Court Records:

Those used are in the High Court, Oyo.

(v) Government Publications and Periodicals:

These are available at the National Archives, Ibadan or at the Africana Section of the Library of the University of Ibadan, I indicate in parenthesis where I have read them as 'NAI' or 'UIL'. British Parliamentary Papers (at the U.I.L.).

+ C.2982. Papers relating to the occupation of Lagos (1862).

Report from the select Committee on State of British settlements on the Coast of Africa (1865).

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C5144, (Continuation of C4957). Further correspondence relating to the war between native tribes in the interior and the negotiations for peace conducted by the Lagos Government (1887).

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(vii) Annual Reports (Printed, at the N.A.I.).

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1899-1909.

Lagos Blue Books, 1897-1908

Lagos Official Handbook, 1897-1898

(viii) Government Gazettes (at the N.A.I.).

The Gazettes found relevant to this work are the ones which were published by the Lagos Government between the 1890s and 1905. Lagos Government Gazette, 1903 was particularly useful

C: PRIVATE PAPERS (P)

- (i) Owolabi, E. A. Ogun awon baba wa, Osogbo n.d.
- (ii) Alááfin Papers, available in the palace of Alááfin. Òkè-Áfin, Oyo. These papers contain valuable information on both the secular and religious history of Oyo and its districts. Moreover, they contain valuable petitions and reports from the whole of Oyo and its districts. The local administration in Oyo and its districts is also contained in these papers.
- (iii) Aseyin Papers, available in the court of Aseyin, Iseyin.
- (iv) Òkèrè Papers, available in the court of the Òkèrè, Saki.

- (v) Onigboho Papers, available in the court of Onigboho, Igboho.
- (vi) Onigbeti Papers, available in the palace of the Onigbeti, Igbeti.
- (vii) Onikoyi Papers, available in the court of Onikoyi, Ikoyi.

The papers contain useful information on the history and religions of the people in the various towns. As most of the obas are illiterates, their secretaries were of immense help as regards the extraction of useful information from these papers.

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IV: ORAL EVIDENCE

The importance of oral evidence, when properly handled, as source material for historical writing has been so much discussed<sup>1</sup>, that there is no need to defend this type of source material here. It is only essential to state, at this juncture, why such a source becomes indispensable to this work. Indeed, it is veritably inevitable in a work of this nature where written evidence is, by and large, scanty as compared with any work on the Christian missionary activities like the ones undertaken by African historians such as Ajayi and Ayandele.

Moreover, it will be useful to note that the majority of the dramatis personae in the events which took place in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century were illiterate. In so far as the illiterate majority kept any record of the events of the period, they did so in their memory.

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1. For example, see Vansina, Jan, Oral Tradition; a study in Historical Methodology, translated by Wright, H. M. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

Oral evidence occupies a significant position with regard to the history of Islam in Oyo and its districts in the era of British occupation of the area (1895-1900). And since, as has been rightly argued by Professor Ajayi, "the Colonial period was not a mythical situation in which 'a race of gods and heroes' communed "with naughty mortals" but a real one in which Europeans and Africans dealt with one another as human beings"<sup>#1</sup>, then not only the views of the British Administrative Officers, but only those of the obas, chiefs and their subjects must find their proper places in a work of this type. In this connection, oral evidence becomes a primary source in finding out the views of these obas, chiefs (Muslim and non-Muslim) and their subjects.

Moreover, I discovered that the Muslims in Oyo and its districts do possess a remarkably high sense of history. In each Yoruba community of Oyo and its districts which I visited, the people cherish a knowledge of their beginnings and development. This has, in a large measure, facilitated the collection of raw historical data. This sense of

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1. Ajayi, J. F. Ade, 'The Continuity of African Institutions Under Colonialism'.

history explains while there was not only a number of already published local works on the history of Islam but also a considerable number of manuscripts on this subject. These manuscripts were sometimes prepared in readiness for my interview.

I engaged in field work in the course of preparing this work, interviewing as many people - Muslims and non-Muslims, obas, chiefs and commoners - as necessary as possible. But for a 'premature' interview in December 1973, my field work was done in March, 1974; August, November, 1975.

I visited a large number of Muslim communities in Oyo and its districts, sometimes more than once, in order to collect and verify evidence relating to this work<sup>1</sup>. In a letter to them, I always informed them before hand about the purpose and date of my visit. On arrival, there was, more often than not, need for a further explanation of the purpose of my visit, myself and sponsors.

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1. Vansina (ed.), The Historian in Tropical Africa, Oxford, 1964.

My movements and my interviews during the field work were greatly facilitated by a tape-recorder and a camera respectively. Both of these were provided by the authorities of both the University of Ibadan and the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

In my interviews, either with Muslims or non-Muslims, obas, chiefs or commoners, I have adopted the same method. First, there was a preliminary interview during which I explained to my prospective informant the purpose of my work, making elaborate statements on the topic on which I desired information namely: The beginnings, expansion and the development of the Muslim in Oyo and its districts in the nineteenth century, that is from its inception to the time of Alááfin Adoyemi Alowolodu I (1875-1905). At this stage, I did not give out specific questions. This was to prevent preconceived answers, as I preferred improptu answers at time of main interview<sup>1</sup>. This preliminary interview was

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1. I preferred improptu answers for political reasons. The younger generation in most of the towns formerly under Oyo did not (and still do not) wish to retrospect the memory of the sovereignty of Oyo, which served as both the political and religious centre in the nineteenth century Oyo and its districts. Thus, I anticipated the fear that if I revealed at the preliminary stage the full implication of my work to the Chief Imam and his jamā'a, some of whom, belong to the older generation, their views might be influenced by the younger folk who might have heard of my proposed interview before the date scheduled.

concluded by stipulating a date for the main interview, which in most cases, took place a day or two later.

On the appointed date, I called again to conduct the main interview: It is interesting to note that in the majority of cases where the informant was the Chief Imām, the religious head of the Muslim community, his jamā'ā usually surrounded him at the interview. Sometimes, older than the Chief Imām himself, the jamā'ā helped to remind the Chief Imām of points which he could not remember properly. Of course, when the Parākoyí or the Chief Imām gave the account correctly, one heard the sign of acquiescence from the jamā'ā.

Within a short time, people relaxed. I listened to the story told me, with very few interruptions. When there was some considerable pause, I threw a few questions to clarify what had already been said. Otherwise, I managed to lead them on to fresh topics. Open meetings with Muslim elders could be twice or thrice.

During the interview, the informants might ask for my erstwhile experience. Soon enough, I found the people enthusiastic and co-operative particularly as they came to

know about my academic leanings, my interest in the community and my knowledge of Arabic and Islam. (I was often called mālam, Alùfa and Abudu). They were especially interested in the fact that I belong to the same tribe with them, Yoruba.

This was often followed by "unofficial" interviews with individual Muslims and non-Muslims in their private homes. A good deal of interesting detail sometimes emerged here, especially from the women folk who remembered praise-names and other interesting data fairly well.

The questions I asked at the main interviews varied slightly in wording to suit the particular locality and community. But in content, they were all centred on the following sub-topics:-

1. The relationship of the town or village with Oyo in the days of the Old Oyo Empire, I mean before 1835.
2. The introduction of Islam into each of the towns or villages in Oyo and its districts.
3. The growth of Islam in each of the towns and villages of Oyo and its districts from its inception to 1835.

4. The fall of the Old Oyo Empire and its effect on Islam.
5. Atiba and the founding of New Oyo.
6. Political and Islamic rehabilitation and consolidation in New Oyo and its districts during the reign of Alááfin Atiba.
7. The expansion of Islam in the era of Christianity and British rule.
8. Islamic Institutions: Organisation, Festivals and Education.
9. Traditional beliefs and practices.
10. The impact of Islam on the traditional beliefs and practices.

In addition to these, questions were asked about matters which arose during the course of the interviews. One such matter concerned the relationship between the Muslims and the Christians, the Christians and the followers of the traditional religion.

In most cases, I tape-recorded the answers given to my questions by my informants. After the interview, I played back the tape to assure the informants that I had recorded exactly what was said during the interview(s). I later



wrote out in notes what was recorded. Thus, I was able, in most cases, to record and quote where necessary the exact words of my informants. In the latter period of my field work, when the power of the tape recorder waned, I adopted the method of writing down on the spot. In this case it was not possible to write the exact words; but I usually read over to the informant what I put down to ensure that I had his points correct.

In most cases, the veracity of the information is not difficult to establish. As pointed out earlier, the informants usually included the *Parakoyi*, the Chief Imam and the *jamā'a*. Here, the dictum that 'Many heads are better than one' is apposite. However, the statement of an informant was not taken as genuine just because he was a Muslim official or a learned Muslim. Adequate cross-checking, as far as possible, was done.

In most cases, the interview was conducted in Yoruba, the mother-tongue of both the interviewer and the informants. However, there were a few, such as the *mālams* in Muslim schools, and the secretaries to the *obas*, who chose to speak in the English language.

My informants sometimes included local rhapsodists (*arókins*, in the court of *obas*), relations of Muslims and

others who, by age or connections, might have some relevant information to give. The chiefs and elders - above 55 were the most helpful.

While I generally gave free scope to my informants, there were topics on which I often had to ask for their evidence. They included the various itinerant mā̀lams, their duties (which I tape-recorded), relations with non-Muslims, pilgrimage, fasting, mosques and the like.

I sojourned with Muslims for most of the time during my tours of Oyo and its districts. Often, I was a guest with the Chief Imām, or with any other Muslim (officer) as fixed for me by the jamā`a.

Based in one town, I visited other neighbouring towns and villages conducting my interviews. In this respect, Oyo, the headquarters of Oyo South, and Saki, the headquarters of Oyo North can be mentioned.

Besides official work, it was, indeed, a very useful and interesting experience; a horizon-widening opportunity to move so closely with the Muslim communities of Oyo and its districts, some of whom I have not hitherto the opportunity to meet.

During the field work, there were sometimes some problems. In this regard, two can be mentioned: First,

there was some problem in fixing dates. This problem of chronology, I tried to solve by making reference to fairly fixed chronologies; age-grades; lists of obas (See above, APPENDIX IV, 556-560pp.) and lists of Imāms (See above, APPENDIX III, 548-555pp.). Moreover, I often had to supplement or even correct these by making use of the records in the files of the local administrative offices. But even by these methods, only approximate dates could be arrived at.

Secondly, it was not always easy to obtain information about the traditional background and connections of some Muslims, especially the prominent ones amongst them. There is an overt reticence about this. Though gossip and private discussions could be revealing here, these had severe limitations for historical purposes. However, disputes among Muslims often exude a good deal of material on this aspect, and reports of these, which are available in various government and private records, can be useful. But even here, there is some obvious need for wariness in handling such materials.

Generally, however, some valid story can be pieced together by a careful use of oral and written evidences.

Below is a select list of the places I visited, the people interviewed and the time they were interviewed.

KISI, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abdul Kareem, the Chief Imām of Kisi, of Agoro quarter.
2. Alhaji Raji, the Senior muqaddam of the Tijāniyya order of Teifa quarter.

IGBETI, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Sanusi Alabi, the Chief Imām of Igbeti, of Imām's quarter.
2. Alhaji Bello Akanni, the Balogun Imole of Igbeti of Ago Are quarter.
3. Alūfa Salemi Ajibowu of Ajibowu quarter.

IGBOHO. August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Salimonu Ajila, the Chief Imām I, of Boni quarter.
2. Alhaji Lawani Oguntade, the Chief Imām II, of Modeke Quarter.
3. Alhaji Mustafa Ladoja Oyebimpe, Are Oke Afin Igboho.

SEPETERI. August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abdul Ahmed, the Chief Imām of Sepeteri, of Imām Quarter.
2. Alhaji Liasu Adebayo, of Parakoyi Quarter.

SAKI, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Lawani Iyanda, the Chief Imām of Saki, Imām Quarter.
2. Alhaji Fasasi Takada, Oniwaasi, of Isale Ola Quarter.
3. Alhaji Balogun Monmo, the Balogun Imole of Saki, Isale-Ola Quarter.
4. Alufa Salami Adebisi, the Seriki Imole of Saki, Ogidigbo Quarter.
5. Alhaji Mubasiru, the son of the Chief Imām.

AHA August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Lawani, the Chief Imām of Aha, of Imām Quarter.
2. Bello Oyetunde, a Muslim elder, of Oloko Oba Quarter.

TEDE, August, 1975.

1. Alūfa Abdul Salām, the Chief Imām of Tede, of Imalefalafia Quarter.
2. Alūfa Tijani Oladoyin, the Chairman of the Muslim Community of Tede, of Oladoyin Quarter.

AGO ARE, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abdul Salami, the Chief Imām.
2. Mālām Abdul Yekeen, of Madrasa. Nūr Shahāda Islāmīya, Ago-Are.
3. Alhaji Lawal, Sarumi Imole of Ago-Are, of Iya Mogba Quarter.
4. Alūfa Mustapha, Parakoyi of Ago-Are, of Akewe Quarter.
5. Alūfa Imo, Oniwaasi, of Iya Asa Quarter.
6. Alūfa Jamiu, Oniwaasi, of Iya Asa Quarter.

IRAWO ILE, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abudu Salami, the Chief Imām of Irawo Ile.
2. Mustapha, Muslim Association Leader.
3. Tijani Agesin, Muslim Association Secretary, of Agesin Quarter.

4. Jimoh, Muslim Association leader of Ogboye Quarter.

IRAWO OWODE August, 1975

1. Alhaji Abū Bakr, the Chief Imām of Irawo Owode
2. Alhaji Lasisi, Balógun Adiini of Irawo Owode.
3. Alùfa Bello, Otun-Imole of Irawo Owode.
4. Lawani - the Pàràkòyí of Irawo Owode.

OFIKI, August, 1975.

1. Alùfa Tijani Bolaji, the Chief Imām of Ofiki; of Jagun Sende Quarter.
2. Alùfa Mustapha, Muslim Association Leader, of Aluko Quarter.
3. Alùfa Alaka Ojeleye, Muslim Association leader.
4. Alùfa Salami Fatoyinbo, Muslim Association leader.
5. Situ Sulola, Muslim Association leader.
6. Lawani Awuje, Muslim Association leader.

OKAKA, August, 1975.

1. Alùfa Raufu, Baba, the acting Chief Imām of Okaka.
2. Abudu Kadiri, the Pàràkòyí of Okaka.

3. Raji Akorede, Muslim Association leader.
4. Amuda Mejiosukiile, Muslim Association leader.
5. Busari Ogundeji, Muslim Association leader.
6. Ibrahim Adeyinka, Muslim Association leader.

IGANNA, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Salawu Moba-Oluwaduro, the acting Chief Imām and his father, the retired old Chief Imām.
2. Àlùfa Lasisi, Muslim Association leader, of Kabiye Quarter.
3. Alhaji Aminu, Muslim Association leader.
4. Iya Selia, Muslim Association leader, of Onilu Quarter.
5. Adegbite, Muslim Association leader, of Mògají Imole Quarter.

OKE-IHO, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abdu Karimú, the Chief Imām of Oke-Iho.
2. Mālām Kassem Owonifaari, of Bode Quarter.
3. Alhaji Alawiye, of A. U. D. Primary School, Eyede Oke-Iho.
4. Alhaji Mālām Arowolo, of A.U.D. Primary School, Ayetoro, Oke-Iho.



5. Alùfa Salami Barani, Dàdàní (Muezzin) and Arówáàsí, of Seriki Quarter.
6. Alùfa Rasheed Akinsola, Muslim Association leader.
7. Alùfa Saka, Muslim Association leader.
8. Alùfa Murana, Muslim Association leader.
9. Alhaji Salau Olorunlowo, Muslim Association leader.

ISEYIN, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Jamiu, the Chief Imām of Iseyin, of Olokuta Quarter.
2. Mālām Raimi Ahmed of Arabic Training Institute Ekure Quarter, Iseyin.
3. Mālām Waidi Raji of Arabic Training Centre, Oluwole Quarter, Iseyin.
4. 'Abdul Wahabi, Imām A.U.D. Ijemba Quarter, Iseyin
5. Alùfa Fasasi, Imām Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (present Anwarū'l-Islām Movement) of Lalubi Quarter, Oke-Eyin, Iseyin.
6. Alùfa Salami, of Lalubi quarter, Oke-Eyin, Iseyin.
7. Alhaji Asiru Balogun, the proprietor, N.U.D. Primary School, Iseyin and Arabic Training Centre, Oluwole Quarter, Iseyin.

8. Alhaji Alaka, proprietor, A.U.D. Primary School Iseyin.
9. Alhaji Mustapha Adeleke, mālām in A.U.D. Primary School, Iseyin.
10. Alhaji Abdulahi, the first Alhaji in Iseyin.
11. Salau, Muslim Association leader, of Agbobamu Quarter, Iseyin.

IKOYI, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abudu Baki, the Chief Imām of Iseyin and the great grand child of the first Chief Imām, Alūfa Sule.
2. Alūfa Yusufu, Haibi, the deputy Chief Imām, of Pandoro Quarter, Ikoyi.
3. Alhaji Hanafi, the muqaddam of the Tijāniyya.
4. Mālām Shewu, the leader of the Arabic pupils and students.
5. Alūfa Gani Adebayo, Imām Ahmadiyya Mission.
6. Mālām Ali Ihiwanudini, Muslim Association leader.

OYO (AGOD'OYO) December, 1973, March, 1974, November, 1975.

1. Alhaji Asiru, the Pàràkòyí of Oyo, of Pàràkòyí Quarter, Oyo.

2. Alhaji Sadiku Akangbe, (alias Awaysawerere), the Otun Imole of Oyo, of Parakoyi quarter, Oyo
3. Alufa Raji, the Osi Imole of Oyo, of Parakoyi Quarter, Oyo.
4. Alufa Salami, the Balogun Imole of Oyo, of Oke-Balogun Quarter, Oyo.
5. Alhaji Sule Shewu, the Mogaji Imole of Oyo, of Parakoyi Quarter, Oyo.
6. Alhaji Akintunde, Imām, A.U.D. Oyo, of Parakoyi Quarter, Oyo.
7. Alufa Abdul Wahabi, Imām, Ahmadiyya Mission, Oyo of Parakoyi Quarter, Oyo.
8. Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi Keta. The Alaafin of Oyo.
9. Mr. J. A. Erufa, the Secretary to the Alaafin of Oyo.
10. Alhaji Animaşun, member of A.U.D. Society, Oyo of Oke-Isokun Quarter, Oyo.
11. Alhaji Karimu, Sarumi Imole of Oyo, of Oke-Afin Quarter, Oyo.
12. Alhaji Amusa, Public Sermon Announcer, of Imām Quarter, Oyo.
13. Alhaji Adisa, an Arabic teacher at Abiodun Atiba High School, Oyo.

AWE, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Abudu Karimu, the Chief Imām of Awe, of Aarin-Ago Quarter, Isikan, Awe.
2. Alufa Bello, Alaga, the Chairman of the Muslim Community of Awe, of Onilamole Quarter, Awe.
3. Jimoh (alias Onilegogoro) Muslim Association leader of Komu Quarter, Awe.
4. Mustapha Kulu, Muslim Association leader, of Asoju Quarter, Awe.
5. Mustapha pupa, Muslim Association quarter, Awe.

AKINMORIN, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Lasisi Iyanda, the Chief Imām of Akinmorin.
2. Mr. Michael Olarogba, an aged Muslim apostate (His Muslim name was Sadiku). He was formerly a Muslim before he got converted to Christianity. He is an aged man, about 90 years old, with rich knowledge of the history of Akinmorin in general. He was a sojourner in the house of Jinadu, the first Chief Imām who introduced Islam into Akinmorin.

ILORA, August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Lasisi Iyanda, the Chief Imām of Ilora, of Ologunmo Quarter, Ilora.
2. Salami Folaranmi, the father of the present Chief Imām of Ilora. He is an aged man with wealth of knowledge concerning the history of Ilora in general.
3. Alufa Salawu Ajala, Onitafusiirù of Ilora.
4. Alufa Ibrāhīm Adekunle, a Muslim elder, of Gbelekale Quarter, Ilora.
5. Mālām Amusa, leader of a piazza Qurʾānic School of Olukotun Quarter, Ilora.
6. Alufa Karimu (alias Olore-nile) leader of a piazza Qurʾānic School, of Are-Onilu Quarter, Ilora.
7. Alufa Buraimo, leader of a piazza Qurʾānic School, of Idiomo Quarter, Ilora.
8. Alufa Salami and Lamidi, leaders of Piazza Qurʾānic Schools, all of Balogun Quarter, Ilora.
9. Alufa Isiaka, leader of a Piazza Qurʾānic School of Gborun Quarter, Ilora.

FIDITI: August, 1975.

1. Alhaji Bamigbade, the Chief Imām I of Fiditi.
2. Alhaji Jimoh Sanni, the Chief Imām II.
3. Alhaji Jimoh Mustapha, the Onítáfusírú of Fiditi.
4. Alúfa Abdul Azeez, the Muezzin (Dadaáni or Ladaáni).
5. Alúfa Gbadamosi, the Chairman A.U.D. Fiditi.

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