The Influence of the Kingship Institution on Olojo Festival in Ile-Ife: A Case Study of the Late Ooni Adesoji Aderemi

by

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Abstract

In this paper an attempt is made to examine the mythic narratives and ritual performances in olojo festival and to discuss the traditional involvement of the Ooni of Ife during the festivals, making reference to the late Ooni Adesoji Adéremi. This paper also investigates the implication of local, national and international politics on the traditional festival in Ile-Ife. The importance of the study arises as a result of the significance of the Ile-Ife amidst the Yoruba towns. More so, festivals have cultural significance that makes some unique turning point in the history of most Yoruba society. Olojo festival serves as the worship of deities and a bridge between the society and the spiritual world. It is also a day to celebrate the re-enactment of time. Olojo festival demands the full participation of the reigning Ooni of Ife. The result of the field investigation revealed that the myth of Olojo festival remains, but several changes have crept into the ritual process and performances during the reign of the late Adesoji Adéremi. The changes vary from the ritual time, space, actions and amidst the ritual specialists. It is found out that some factors which influence these changes include religious contestation, ritual modernization, economics and political change not at the neglect of the king’s involvement in the local, national and international politics which has given space for questioning the Yoruba kingship institution. Therefore, this paper draws upon the strength of phenomenology and indigenous hermeneutics; it is justified in the words of Olupona “that is the researcher explore paradigms and modes of interpretation that are explicitly embedded in the tradition one is studying. Because these traditions are interpretative, our understanding of them should be taken into consideration how they provide meaning to those who encounter them”. The scholar will highlight the interpretative meanings within these traditions and incorporate them into the largest discussion of African experience[1].

Keywords: Olojo, Festival, Ooni, Ritual, Myth, Politics

Introduction

Ọlọjọ festival is one of the annual festivals celebrated in Ile-Ife. Ọlọjọ as a spectacle provides a good understanding of Yoruba myth, history, belief and the ceremonial significance of Ile-Ife. It is a ritual which captures the religious and socio-cultural core value of the sacred city of Ile-Ife[2], and its annual celebration renews the people’s belief and as well serves as the civil faith of Ife people rooted in belief in the sacredness of kingship institution. The festival is about the hero Ògún, a personality with enormous wealth and political powers.

The mythic narrative of Ile-Ife as center of Yoruba civilization and universe is considered in the context of a ritual practice of renewal of people’s faith. Ọlọjọ festival’s prime relevance lies in the full participation of the reigning king.

Myth of Ọlọjọ Festival

Ọlọjọ festival evokes the myth of the journey of deities into Yoruba land. Ògún led the deities and parted way for them to reach their destination. Ògún as a warrior fought for the people of Ile-Ife and created their cosmogony. Ọlọjọ’s rituals are the link with ideology of Ife existence, and his cooperative effort with Ṣránmiyàn, the cultural hero of Ife who is also a warrior and a king in a Yoruba community, Oyo.

The shrine of Ògún at Òkè-Mògún, in the Centre of Ife, is the place where Ògún descended into the underworld, and this is where it is worshiped. A respondent claimed that Ọlọjọ may be synonymous to Ṣránmiyàn, another warrior, and the Ọọni because they are the direct son of Oduduwa[3]. Although the connection between the three mythic figures (Ògún, Ṣránmiyàn and Ọọni) is not as straight forward as the respondent says, it provides a template for understanding the complex relations between the three figures firmly rooted in Ife cosmology.

Ògún is known for his competence in iron technology, which was to create tools for other deities to perform their roles on earth. In this wise, Ògún is often called ‘Osin Imole’ (leaders of deities). He creates in the belief of the people the cutlass for farming, the hunting weaponry and the war equipment for battle; his leadership and his warrior-like personality is to be associated with the monarchy and as the being regarded as one of the Ọọni who reigned in Ile-Ife. Ṣránmiyàn, though unlike Ògún in character, is the Yoruba deity who expanded the kingdom of Ife to the East and as far as Benin kingdom. Ṣránmiyàn founded the ancient Oyo Empire, giving birth to the modern Yoruba civilization. Ògún, the focus of Ọlọjọ, is called Ògún Ereja,(Ọgún of market) meaning through him the kingship is linked to market economy[4].
Ọlọjọ festival began with the third Ọ翁 of Ìfe known as Ògún. The exert date of the origins of the festival is yet to be determined but could be dated back to the 11th through the 15th century. The celebration usually takes place in the mid October which means it is celebrated in the ninth or tenth month of the lunar calendar. The four days of Ọlọjọ festival start with Ìlàgún, the animal sacrifice to Ògún; Òkè-Mògún proper, the king’s first visit to Ògún shrine; and Òkè-Mògún Keji, the king’s second visit to Ògún shrine.

The Ọ翁 (king of Ìfe) appears after several days of seclusion and denial, communing with the ancestors and praying for his people. This is to make him pure and ensure the efficacy for his prayers. The Ọ翁 later appears in the public with Are crown (king’s Crown), which is believed to be the original crown used by Odudua to lead a procession of traditional chiefs and priests to perform at the shrine. Ọlọjọ serves as the biggest festival on cultural calendar of the Ìle-Ife people. All Ìfe indigenes at home and abroad always come together to worship Ògún, the progenitor of Ìfe ‘Odaye’ (Ìfe at the inception). Ọlọjọ festival has remained popular in Ìle-Ìfe because of its myth and history. It connotes the year specially blessed by Olódùmarè. Ọlọjọ festival is done every year in Ìle-Ife for the king to perform his duty and renewal of oath.

Ọlọjọ Ritual Performances

Ọlọjọ ritual starts with picking of date done by the calendar keeper, chief Eredumi the priest of Òrùnmìyàn. The chief priest in charge of the festival ceremony determines the most favorable time for the festival in the month of October. A key informant said that, the exact data for Ọlọjọ, as opposed to the Ìfe festivals that are determined by the appearance of the new moon, is determined by the position of the sun, indicating that Ọlọjọ festival is a solar ceremony. Chief Eredumi, an Ògún priest, announces the actual data of the festival to the public. Ọlọjọ comes up every year during the month of October, after Luwo festival (a festival done in remembrance of the only female Ọ翁).

Oral tradition suggested that luwo’s tenure was marked by monumental achievements, especially in the area of landscape and architecture designs, of Ìfe. Luwo made it clear that her foot paths and surrounding environment must be paved with pottery sherd. The priest of Òrùnmìyàn fixed the data for the festival through the divination of ‘Obi dida’ (throwing of kolanut). Once the date is fixed, there is no turning back. It is also confirmed that at the approach of the festival, the Ọ翁 hear the voice of an invisible drum from the spirit and immediately come home from wherever he is at the time, so as to be in seclusion with the spirits for the seven days that precede the festival.
A week before the commencement of Òlọjọ festival, the king begins his own ritual by going into seclusion and performing private prayer. Òlọjọ festival starts with the daily sacred enchantments of Ôgún and Qrànmiyàn called ‘Gbújúre! Gbújúre! Gbújúre!! ebo re a fin, etutu re da…..’ (May your sacrifices be accepted). Various women from the household of Ôgún, especially from Akògún compound, gather in the evening to sing the praises of two war deities Qrànmiyàn and Ôgún, and remind the people that the festival is approaching. The shrine of Ôgún is decorated with palm fronds (mariwo) to signify the commencement of the festival, while women from Eredumi compound would, three days to the commencement of the festival, do the spiritual cleansing of the palace[6].

Ritual Specialists and Ritual Process

Ọọni of Ifè taking the center stage mediate the relationship between the dead and the living. The Ọọni of Ife, who appear in the public with Are, the special beaded crown and leads procession of tradition chiefs and priests to performs renewal of oath to Ógún and visits some places of historical significance like past Ọọnis’ graves and compounds and Aje shrine. Osogún the chief priest of Òlọjọ festival celebration and in this capacity provides the necessary materials need for the ritual performance. He leads the ritual process, with other performing chiefs following him. He dresses in red regalia, which symbolizes power, and appears in the shrine of Ôgún with sword of authority. Notable chiefs directly associated with Òlọjọ festival, include Akògún and Obawara. They each have specific roles to play during the festival. Chief Eredumi, a descendant of Ọọni Qrànmiyàn is not just a great warrior but also the calendar keeper, in charge of data picking for Òlọjọ festival. He is also the priest of Qrànmiyàn. The Akògún of Ife is war-like in character. He is in charge by tradition to remind the king of the commencement of the festival, through an invisible drum known as Aluja[7]. Òbajo is in charge of the decoration of Òkè-Mogún shrine during Òlọjọ festival. He answers to the clarion call of Osogún during the festival and smashes the head of the dog used for sacrifice.

Òlọjọ festival is a four-day event. The first day, which is normally a Friday is called Ilágún day. The second day, being Saturday is called the first visit to Òkè-Mogún while the third day being Sunday, is the grand finale for merry-making. The last day is Monday which is the second Òkè-Mogún. Early in the morning of Ilágún day, a search party from Oba’s place goes out to hunt for two dogs that will be sacrificed. In the pre-colonial days, the search party will have done so at mid-night and the captured dog is tied to the pole and brought to the palace. The manner of the captured dog reflects the personality of Ógún, a violent deity, who claims his human victims violently without warning this being so whether be it in hunting, in war or in accidents on the road. One informant, who is a member of the raid team, explains why the dog was being captured from the street- to indicate the public nature of the festivals. In the pre-colonial era, the sacrificed victim could have been human victims. They would have empowered themselves with some traditional medicine, juju and herbs bathing and be able to perform magic and invocation[8].

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The Oṣógún dressed in red regalia, lead the procession to Ókè-Mògún. He moves to first the Ọọni palace with his entourage, among whom is a man carrying a leather bag containing some instrument of sacrifices and knives. Some chiefs led by Lowa, head of the palace chiefs, was waiting in the palace for the arrival of Oṣógún and when he arrives they hand over a small pot of medicine, as a message from the Ọọni that the Oṣógún should proceed to Ókè-Mògún and make the sacrifice to Ògún. The Oṣógún then, invokes Ògún and prays for the Ọọni as follow: ‘‘Kábìyésì, Aláse, Ekeji Òríṣà (king, owner of sacred power, second only to God), may you reign long, may you conquer your enemies’’.

Next Oṣógún calls on Ṭhajio to come with a club and smash the head of the dog. The dog, a victim, is then tied and the club is held above the head. With one blow, he smashes the head of the dog. The victim dies before it is tied to the Ògún trees for disembowelment. With a sharp knife, the dog’s stomach is cut open so that the bowel and intestines are visible through the gaping hole and the blood flows out over the stones and entrance to the shrine. The king’s emissary offers hen and red palm oil to complete the ritual by Oṣógún. Plenty of oil is poured on the dog and hen, and with the kola nut, prayers are offered for the king, his subject and the entire city.

Findings further revealed that offerings are made to both Ògún Ode (Ògún at the exterior) and Ògún Ile (Ògún at the interior) who is believed to be keeping vigil on the house and its occupants). For this reason, the expression that “Ògún Ilé la a kòkò bọ, ki a lee r’ẹsẹ bọ t’òde” (we have to propitiate the Ògún inside so as to have the peace of propitiating the Ògún at the entrance of the house) is made. The Oṣógún offers dry fish, kola nut and dog. The cutting of the dog was so different from the Ògún Ilé inside the main shrine. The second dog is killed, only the blood is shed and the head of the dog is offered as sacrifice to the deity while the rest of the body is taken by people to eat in their various homes.

After the sacrifice, the Oṣógún opens the tip of the two snail shells and pour the snail slime on the hand of the chief because Ògún is known as the hot-tempered deity. The snails’ liquid represent the ẹrọ which is antidote to dangerous and hot occurrences.

After the ilàgún, people make merry, dance and sing praise to the deity. The houses of all the chiefs associated with the festival are filled with visitors from far and near who have come to celebrate with them. The next pilgrim to Ókè-Mògún is the next day of ilàgún, the day always witnesses the large crowd of people, Ọọni of Ilé-Ifè wearing the beaded ‘Are’ Crown to Ókè-Mògún re-enacts the myths of his power. There are some special outstanding groups which always surface during Òlọjọ festival. Olupona puts them into categories which include Sòòkò (they are the male members of the royal family) princes who usually dress in ‘Agbádá’, and hat with fringe of thread covering their faces. The dressing of the Sòòkò as seen by Olupona shows their strong tie to the Ọọni and their divine right to the throne.
The second group are the medicine men (ẹléṣinjé) and women who protect the king during the festival from evil forces that may harm him. The medicine men display the power of their medicine. They guide and ensure that rain does not fall while the Ọljọjọ is in process. They publicly displayed their ‘àfọṣe’ (animal horn made of medicine) and they whispered some incantation to stop the rain and the women behind them shout ‘Ewe’ (leave).

The third group is the palace servants, referred to as Lókolóko in Ọljọjọ festival. They serve as traditional police and bodyguard to the Ọjọ; they also controlled the crowd with their whips around and scare people away during the ritual process. Half of their body is paint with white lime (Ẹfun) and red camwood (Osùn).

They perform some spiritual activities like carrying Ebo (sacrifice) from the palace to Òkè-Mógún and awaiting the arrival of Oṣògún and Ọjọ. The drummers also follow them with heavy gong and bell named Òsíriγì.

The last groups include the hunters, drivers, and blacksmiths. They all carry their association’s banner, showing the symbol of what the association is about. The drivers also carry their own banner, and the ‘Ègbé Ọmo Odùwà’ (OPC: Oduduwa People’s Congress) is not left out.

In the afternoon people are in the palace court, awaiting the king’s arrival with the Are crown. A royal drum, the Òsíγì, reverberated in the inner court yard; the crowd immediately stood to welcome the king. Wearing the Are crown covering his face, Ọjọ emerges from the inner palace with his entourage. His assistance carried the sword and some ladies, each holding white a pigeon in their hand. Once the crowd gazes on the crown, they greet the Ọjọ and with a barrage of prayer ask for good health and as well curse their enemies, since the ‘Arè’ was believed to be powerful[11].

Ọjọ flaps the beads of the crown to gaze the face of the crowd. Ọjọ leads the crowd and the chiefs to the shrine and Ọjọ dishes out prayers to the people ‘Arè á gbè ó ’(Arè will help you). Various chiefs including Ọtún Ife, Òsi Ife, Modèwà, the palace chief and the priestly Ìsòrò, prostrated themselves in front of the Ọjọ, acknowledging his authority as divine ruler. They also represent the ruling class in the community. At the arrival of Ọjọ in the Ọgún shrine, Oṣògún then marks the sword with Efùn representing the consecration and acknowledgment of the Ọjọ’s visit to Ọgún’s home. The sword is returned to the Sòókò, Ọjọ and Oṣògún struck sword and lock fingers, signifying the authority given to Ọjọ that He will always overcome his enemies, symbolising the ultimate power of the Ọjọ over all mortals in the kingdom and also signifying that the people have to meet under the patronage of Ọgún.

After the visit to Ôkè-Mògùn, Ọợni visits oja Ifè, where the goddess of Ajé (goddess of wealth) is situated. Ọọni controls the spirit of the four walls of Ifè, by summoning the spirit that regulate the Ifè universe at a T-junction and makes his presence felt by the evil ones who want to negate his prayers. He appeals to the witches for a successful year.

The goddess of oja Ifè ‘Ajé’ is important in the gender discourse and the contestation of the public space. When men occupy the ritual and public space, the women occupy the market place\cite{12}. In the Yorùbá culture, the market place is a public centre where deliberations are made. People come in close contact with each other on daily basis and it is an avenue to exchange pleasantries as well as where women gossip. Businesses are conducted in that arena and are mostly dominated by women. In the present dispensation, men are also contesting for space in the market place. Men perform business activity in this arena and there is a space for the men in the administrative arms of the market.

Ọọni returns to the palace and removes the Arè on his head till the following year. The third day is always known as a break. The fourth day of Ọlọjọ is called Ọkè-Mògùn keji. The king also visited the Ògùn shrine with oríkògbófo cap (head does not go empty). He repeats all the rituals done the previous visit. The Oṣògùn leads the Ọọni in a circle around the Ògùn shrine, and they strike each other’s swords, exchange pleasantries, and pray for the coming year.

In the last phase of the ritual, the Ọọni visits his patrilineal house at Ìlàré quarters. On his way out, he meets with some elders of his own royal lineage to pick the official date for Edi festival. Ọọni then moved round the quarters and royal houses related to him, who awaited his arrival; he stopped at intermediaries to acknowledge the greetings of the people and to accept gifts offered to him. Ọọni greeted the members of the specific Royal Houses, who had decorated their compounds with the royal insignia: a crown and horsetail flywhisk. They had erected sign post stating the name of their royal household: Ògbórú Olódò, Ògbórú Adejokin. Although, these houses share the same royal king relationship with the king as a co-member of Ògbórú lineage and kinship, they do not represent the direct descendants of the house of Olúbùse.

The last destination of the Ọọni is his family house, Ògbórú Olódò Olúbùse. The elder women wearing the same uniform known as aṣọ ẹbi (the same traditional cloth) honor the Ọọni by singing praises of the King and his lineage. Ọlọjọ festival recognizes the divine powers, that, there are some forces that regulate human affairs and the control of the universe. Olojọ recognized some principal deities by paying homage to their various shrines. These agents are progenitors of the world and the kinship institution.
The Celebration Of Qọọọọ Festival Under Adesoji Adérēmí

This part starts by giving a brief history of Oba Adésọjí Adérēmí and the practices of the Qọọọọ festival under their regimes, highlighting his early life, education, and ascension to the throne. It also investigates the influence of his personalities on the celebration of Qọọọọ festival in the wider scope of the political arena and in the spiritual governance of the society.

Titus Martins Adésọjí Tadenikawo Adérēmí 1 was born on November 15, 1889 into a royal family of Ækúí compound in Ilé-Ifè. His early life revolved around his mother Adékúnbi who hailed from ipetumodu, because his father Gbadebo died in 1897 when he was eight. Adésọjí Adérēmí’s history would not be complete without reference to his maternal side in ipetumodu. When Prince Adérēmí was Ten years old he was trained as a Babalawo (Ifa priest).[13] The early life of prince Adérēmí changed towards Western Education in 1899 with the advent of the European missionary who brought Christianity and western education to Ilé-Ifè. Adérēmí started his primary education at St. Philip Ìyékéré, Ilé-Ifè in 1901[14]. Adérēmí was a bright student during his time; he was offered a teaching job after his education at the same school for three years. During this time, He wanted to be sent to St Andrew’s College Òyó, but his mother wouldn’t agree on the conditions of living far from her[15].

He then left teaching and worked with the Nigerian Railway Service in 1909, where he had a distinguished career. While at the railway service, he started as a staff of the Engineering department before being transferred to the Traffic department where he served as a clerk. He also worked for many European firms and merchandise. He furthermore served as produce agent for John Holt Limited as well as other companies like the African Trading Company, in various locations of Nigeria. He traded in kola nut, cotton, cocoa and palm-kernel in Ilé-Ifè and neighboring towns. He expanded his business into other spheres, especially principally in the transport trade[16].

Prince Adérēmí’s growing wealth and popularity made Qọmi Oba Ademiluyi the, reigning king, suspicious and jealous of Adérēmí. Adérēmí used his leisure time to tell stories about the town and offered people kolanut and beer. He was a modern man of the world and had interest in Yorùbá history and Ifè society as a whole[17]. Adérēmí was highly influential among Yorùbá businessmen. This might have given him an upper hand to the throne of the Qọmi after the death of Ademiluyi. The death of Ademiluyi Ajagún on June 24, 1930, created a leadership vacuum in the ancient city of Ilé-Ifè, which was later filled by the newly crowned Adérēmí. He was installed in September, 1930. He was chosen over the lesser educated rivals, Prince Adewoyin from Lafogido ruling house and Prince Adedere from Giesi house. As Qọmi, he was instrumental to the establishment of Oduduwa College in Ilé-Ifè and later the establishment of two feeder primary schools. In 1947, Adérēmí was also a member of the Nigerian Legislative Council[18].
The first eighteen years of King Adérêmí in Ilé-Ifè witnessed tremendous socio-economic progress in the ancient city of Ilé-Ifè, in an atmosphere of relative internal peace and cooperation with the colonial authorities. He was named a first-class Oba because of his considerable influence in politics under the British colonial indirect rule. He used his power to reject premier of the region, Samuel Ladoke Akintola, sensing the premier did not have the support of the majority members of the House of Assembly.

The influence of King Adésojí Adérêmí might have given him such an edge in politics as to make the British council install him as the Chairman of Council of Obas and the Governor of Western region. Adérêmí was known to be a very good custodian of culture and religious traditions and one who had great interest in the kingdom of Ilé-Ifè, even in times of internal rivalry and dispute. He was able to hold the society together and still participated greatly in the religious traditions. Adérêmí adhered to the tradition of the royal rituals even in the face of divergent views, western culture and changes in the face of the religious activities. The changing face in the religious activities witnessed the introduction of foreign religions and Western culture.

Ọlọjọ festival allows the king to perform his royal rituals and his spiritual duty to the society. The continuity of the festival was important to the king, not minding its changing face.

The next part of this work shows the participation of Ọmi Adésojí Adérêmí in Ọlọjọ festival. How was Oba Adérêmí able to hold his office as both the political and religious leader of the region? How was his participation in the ritual performance of the festival? What was the influence of his political position on the traditions of Ilé-Ifè Kingdom?

**Adérêmí’s Influences on Ọlọjọ Festival**

Ọlọjọ ritual performance under Adésojí Adérêmí for the first 10 years of Adésojí’s reign was filled with royal and spiritual involvement. Adésojí Adérêmí performed his royal rites immediately after his ascension to the throne in 1930. The ilagun (vigil), which marked the beginning of the festival, was done in the midnight and on the next day, he performed his first visit to Òkè-Mògún and offered prayers to the gods of the land on behalf of himself and the city. He wore the Are crown to the shrine of Ògún called Òkè-Mògún and carried out all necessary activities in the shrine. He later moved to the centre of the town and sat on the chair where all the chiefs paid homage to him. Furthermore, He visited the Òrìṣà Ajé shrine (the goddess of wealth) at Ojà Ijè (Ifè main market) and offered prayer on behalf of the community, to improve the socio-economic indicator of the society as the strong pillar which the society stands for\(^{19}\).
In the course of this research, none of my respondents gave me an instance where Adërêmí did not pay homage to Òkè-Mògùn shrine with the Are crown. Even on the eve of his death, he still performed his spiritual duties to the society. The festival witnessed changes overtime in space and time, due to the king’s personality and western exposure. The field work showed that, the date of the festival was constant during the reign of Adêsoji Adërêmí. The ilàgùn was still in the midnight until 1936 when William Bascom studied Ǫlọjọ festival during his stay in Africa. This period witnessed a change in the ritual time. However, King Adërêmí in the mid of his reign, changed the time of ilàgùn from midnight to late afternoon, a respondent said the change in time came as a result of the erroneous belief of people that human beings were the sacrificial objects. Adërêmí sought to correct this assumption by changing the time from midnight to afternoon when people could observe the ritual rites and objects themselves.

Also, in 1960, when the partisan party politics was introduced, serious diverse opinions and version emerged among the people of Ifè. Consequently, the night vigil (ilàgùn) became an excuse for lawlessness and vengeance. Adërêmí therefore decreed that the time of the ilàgùn should be shifted from night to late afternoon[20]. In addition to this, Adërêmí saw himself in a long-drawn battle with the Ifè Divisional and District Councils over the allocation of forest reserves in Ifè to Aderawo Timber Trading Company, a company in which the Oba had interest. This crisis really threatened the position of Adêsoji Adërêmí as the king. By and large, the position of Adërêmí in the national and local politics was also a threat to his religious participation.

In addition, there arose a coalition government which brought about division among the political leaders in the region and ‘Operation Wet e’ (operation burn it down - political activities done by party activists to oppose Akintola’s administration) which brought tension among the indigenous leadership across the region. Adërêmí thought the situation was under control but resorted to the ban of Adêsoji Adërêmí so as not to cross paths with NNDP. Any traditional ruler caught in the act was sent on exile. This gave traditional rulers no power in politics because they presumably had influence in corruption and election malpractices. The election of 1965 was massively rigged with the help of traditional rulers of which the Ọọni of Ifè was part[21].

As a king who was involved in the entire political crises, there was a need for security check, and coming out in the night for the Ǫlọjọ ritual rite, Ilàgùn, amidst this problem was not safe. Consequently, it was very clear that the security of King Adërêmí during this period cannot be guaranteed, basically due to his involvement in national and local politics. The implication of this development was that, the position of the king could be questioned, regardless of who he was since he had paraded their office as an ordinary citizen. Involvement in politics had made many kings equal with the politicians in the political arena, notwithstanding their kingship status.
Apart from the observed changes in the ritual time, there were some other noticeable changes among the ritual specialists. Ọbajio who acted as assistant to the Oṣògún of Ifè, acted as the club man in charge of the sacrificial dog at Òkè-Mògún. From the report given by Bascom in 1938, the Ọbajio designated a boy to act for him as a club man because of his Christian religion. Bascom also reported on another club man who was reluctant to carry out his own responsibilities too because of his religion. The chief wanted to maintain a dual position, as a chief and also a Christian, a phenomenon which Mbiti described as religious concubinage. The religious structure in Ilé-Ifé had changed from a single structure to a multi religious society, with the advent of the European missionaries who brought Christianity along with their western culture, and the society has created a space to accommodate people from different cultural backgrounds.

However, there were some extreme cases where the club men thought they would be punished with their new faith for adhering to the voice of the gods, which they saw as ‘idol’ worship. Even then, they still participated in the ritual by giving their support to the king because of their oath of office, regardless of the new faith they professed. Ọoni Adéremí visited the Ogun shrine with Arè crown and Lókolóko on his visit. The Ọoni Adéremí was the first Oba to take his first daughter, Tejumade Adéremí, to Òkè-Mògún shrine and He also took his foreign friends to the Ọlọjọ shrine with some colonial police to providing security. This however, was against the ritual of the festival, which did not approve participation of women in the ritual rite during the festival. Research work revealed that Tejumade Adéremí, married to Alakija, was said not to give birth. Until the eve of Tejumade Alakija’s death, she was survived by only one daughter, Mrs Toyin Akomolafe, who was not famous to the public as expected, considering the status of her mother. A respondent, who elected to be anonymous, made it clear that Toyin was an adopted daughter of Alakija. A check through the brochure of Tejumade Alakija’s burial service showed that no kids were mentioned to have survived her.

The barrenness of Tejumade Alakija was attached to the fact that, she broke the taboos of the festival which do not allow women’s participation during the ritual rites in the shrine. In fairness to her, however, her barrenness might not have been as a result of the breaking of taboos, because there are lots of women in the society who have never entered the shrine of Ogún and are unable to bear children. Seun Arasanmi, one of my respondents, made it clear that during Adéremí’s reign, deities are the pride of the king. As one of the first class Obas in Yoruba land, Adéremí wanted to show his influence as the spiritual head of Ilé-Ife, king of all Yoruba kings. Biodun Adediran (1991) believed that the political influence of Adéremí among Yoruba people induced the white men to confer on him the position of Chairman of Council of Obas, a position which no Yoruba king has since occupied till this present decade.
The implication of this was that, the white men used that avenue to elope with some of the relics in the kingdom to Europe, some of which were said to have spiritual backing and could have been help in the progress of European society. Adérémi’s praise name is in fact Oba ajibóyínó sélèrì (the king who goes into agreement with the white men). Adérémi believed the king had rulership over all the religions in his territory and must be in support of the performances of all religions, including Òlọjọ festival, and such could bring together the gathering of people of different religious faiths. Aworele, my informant, told me that Òlọjọ festival does not allow differences in religion as both Christian converts and Muslims are allowed to participate. Oluwona acknowledged that the study done by Bascom on Òlọjọ in 1937 under Adérémi, witnessed the presence of some Muslim Imams and Christians as well as representatives of kings who had dispersed from Ifè kingdom, like Orangun Ile-Ila to establish their own kingdoms.

Adérémi’s desire was to turn the festival into a national festival, and get all Yorùbá kings to be present, the foreigners and Ifè indigenes at home and abroad, and any visitor. Indeed, as Mr Amos, another informant said he used to come from the village with his family to watch the festival. Adérémi put an end to gender superiority in the festival by opening up the space to both male and female participants. But in the midst of all the changes done, the ritual space still remains, although time, role performance, and gender participation were affected.

Òlọjọ festival in the early reign of Oba Adérémi was a secret event which was done in the midnight and involved only the priests and the strong members of the host families involved in the ritual process. However, the face of Òlọjọ festival changed after 10 years of Adérémi’s reign and this was confirmed by some of my informants and writers like Bascom. Òṣòni Adérémi tried to make the festival a national event, by opening space even to all other Ifè settlements, like the Origbo towns, and other neighboring towns like Ifẹtẹdo and Oke-Igbo. One of my respondents, Mrs Rachael, revealed that after she got married to an Ifè man, her relatives in Ifẹtẹdo usually come once in a year to celebrate with them the Òlọjọ festival.

In the midst of the civil war in Ifè (Ifè/Modákéké crisis), and several other political crises, which normally resulted in the abandonment of many rituals and sacrifices, Òlọjọ festival was still massively celebrated. There is no doubt that the reign of Adérémi was successful with some outstanding achievements. Despite the national and local crisis which occurred during his period, he regarded Òlọjọ festival as the core of his kingship authority. The high chiefs, Isòrò and lesser chiefs all participated and renewed their oath of office to him.

He was a good politician, elder statesman, true traditional king, who loved tradition and cultural heritage. His death in 1980 brought another Òṣòni into office, but his impact cannot be easily forgotten in the history of Yorùbá and national politics. He used his status as a king to take active responsibility in the Òrísà cult and took proper care of the entire groove in the ancient town during his reign.
In conclusion, *Adërêmi* was very influential and was able to command the respect of other Yorùbá Obas. This has reflected in Ọlọjọ festival, when various Yorùbá Obas usually visit the Ọọni to honor and celebrate with him during Ọlọjọ festival. Apart from serving as a unifying event, it also serves as its only sacred identity among the people of Ilé-Ifè. The ancient *Are* crown which serves as the sacred identity and which at the gaze moves the people to respect the Oba’s sacred role and receive his sacred blessing must be witnessed every year. The continuity of the ritual performance of Ọlọjọ festival depends on the active participation of the Ọọni in the royal ritual; if the Ọọni refuses to perform his kingship function, the sacredness in the festival disappears and the festival turns into a mere tourist attraction, for the ritual activities are gradually changing.

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