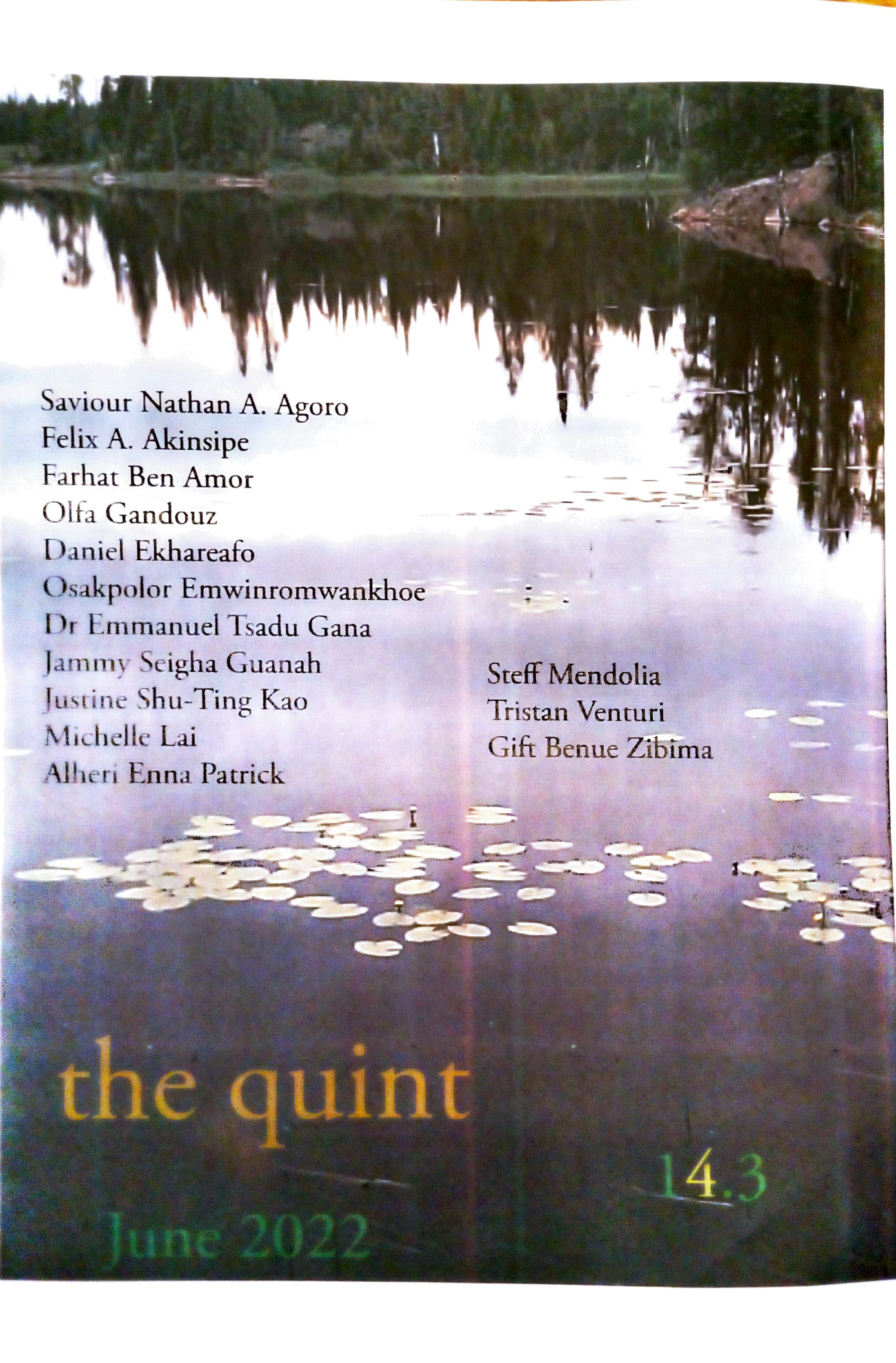




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EDITORIAL

It is June, and a chilly summer in the North has begun. The birds have returned, but they have not brought with them the warmth that Northerners crave after their long winter. Accordingly, this, *the quint's* fifty eighth issue, offers readers with travel fever opportunities to escape to exotic locales via authors from Nigeria, Tunisia, Saudia Arabia, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada.

Felix A. Akinsipe's "ÌRÈMÒJÉ PERFORMANCE IN ÒGBÓMÒŞÓ LAND" begins our June offerings. Akinsipe documents Ìrèmòjé, the ritual farewell to the hunter, among Ògbómòşó communities of South Western Nigeria. Deeply embedded in the traditions of Ògbómòşó land, Ìrèmòjé is a vital component of Yoruba culture. Next, Saviour Nathan A. Agoro and Gift Benue Zibima investigate Elechi Amadi's comic vision. In *Pepper Soup* (1977), *Dancer of Johannesburg* (1978) and *The Woman of Calabar* (2002), Amadi combines language that is predominantly pidgin with themes of love and happy endings that benefit all the characters. Then, Osakpolor Emwinromwankhoe and Daniel Ekhareato's "The Rhetoric of National Unity: The Unity of the Elite and the Dilemma of the Poor" discusses the rhetoric of national unity by examining two classes that make up the Nigerian society – the elite and the poor. Drawing on literature modeling, this paper finds the social elite are united in their state capture and their continued marginalization of the poor. Following, in "Evaluating the Potential of the Azhili Eggon Cultural Festival as a Platform for Identity Projection and Cultural Integration," Emmanuel Tsadu Gana and Alheri Erna Patrick consider the efficacy the Azhili Eggon cultural festival in Nasarawa State as a tool for cultural integration and a marker of cultural identity.

Then, Olfa Gandouz's "Staging Cultural Transformations in Eugene O'Neill's *The*

Iceman Cometh" investigates the relationship between tradition and transformation in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* (1939) with special focus on Theodore Hickey who visits Harry Hope's Saloon and parodies Christ while playing the role of a preacher endowed with the mission of saving saloon dwellers from their delusions. Following, Justine Shu-Ting Kao's "Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*: Jane's Escape from Entrapment and Quest for Life and Love" finds that Jane's story reads like that of a forsaken child with post-traumatic stress and traces the trajectory of Jane's trauma via the situations of entrapment in which she finds herself. Next, Farhat Ben Amor's "The Vanishing Line: separating 'discipline' from 'anti-discipline' in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*" demonstrates how Golding's novel blurs the boundary between 'discipline' and 'anti-discipline' until the line separating these notions becomes hardly detectable. Amor demonstrates how the English schoolboys parody the 'discipline' they were taught at school, while the Derridean notion of 'contamination,' corrodes their differences. Completing the offerings of this issue's articles, Jammy Seigha Guanah's "Trends of Citation and Referencing in Communication Research Journals in Nigeria: A Citation Analysis" uses a citation analysis approach design to investigate how referencing was carried out in the articles published in the *Journal of Communication and Media Research* (JCMR), and *The Nigerian Journal of Communication* (TNJC).

Film reviews are also housed in this issue. Michelle Lai's film review, "The Power of a Baby Face" revisits Alfred E. Green's *Baby Face* and finds the film not only subverts gender and class stereotypes but also shows that America has complicated dynamics that may only tolerate women in power temporarily. According to Lai, *Baby Face* is a stark reminder of the challenges women face when rising to the top. Steff Mendolia's "Antonioni's *Il Deserto Rosso* Is Relevant to Love in Our Times" argues that this 1964

film directed by Michelangelo Antonioni captures a human-all-too-human struggle to contend with yearning for love during times of tremendous scarcity. In "Imagining Reality: A Review of Paolo Sorrentino's *The Hand of God* (2021)," Tristan Venturi points out that *The Hand of God* is an important departure from Sorrentino's cinema being (predominantly) one for men, because this film confers much of its mystical aura to its female characters.

No issue of *the quint* can be complete without its creative component. We are delighted to present three new, splendid poems by Jefferson Holdridge. Stuart Matheson's photographs of the Precambrian Shield record how intimate and often surprising graffiti has become on the Precambrian Shield in Northern Manitoba. As the North turns to open water and life at the lake, here is good reading and interesting viewing. Anticipating the crisp autumn days ahead, *the quint* will be back in September with more reading.

Sue Matheson

Editor

Precambrian #2



Stuart Matheson

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ÌRÈMÒJÉ PERFORMANCE IN ÒGBÓMÒŞÓ LAND

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Abstract

One of many traditional performances, *Ìrèmòjé*, the hunters' sacred ceremony for a dead hunter, is still protected and performed today. This paper investigates and documents the peculiar practices of *Ìrèmòjé* among Ògbómòşó communities of South Western Nigeria, recording the uses of songs/chants, music, and musical accompaniments. Costumes, make-up, and props in *Ìrèmòjé* performances are also recorded. Oral interviews and field work experiences were primarily and heavily relied upon, especially direct interviews with the hunters and participant observation at many of the hunters' ceremonies. This study finds hunters to be a vital constituency in Ògbómòşó land and concludes that the *Ìrèmòjé* will continue to be performed.

Key words: *Ìrèmòjé*, Hunters, Performance, Ògbómòşó land.

Introduction

Ìrèmòjé is the generic name for the hunters' performance at the funeral of the deceased

which includes dances, chants, music, and other events. Ajuwon (1981) observes that "*Ìrèmòjé* ni ó wà fún orò íşpa ode tí ó bá kú" [*Ìrèmòjé* is the ritual for the farewell for the hunter that dies] (p. 8). Akinsipe (2020) remarks that "at inception, the hunters' performance was generally known and called *Ìrèmòjé* before a distinction was made and *Ìjálá* was carved out as the name for the entertainment/social aspect of it while *Ìrèmòjé* retained for the sacred part" (p. 168). *Ìrèmòjé* is also known as *Ìpà Ode* or *Ìpadé* (the fortification of a dead hunter for transition), and is interchangeably used for these terms across Yorùbá societies. Its practise takes place in the form of typical African total theatre performance.

Ògún, the Yorùbá god of iron, is believed to be the originator of *Ìrèmòjé*. Ajuwon (1981) says that "Ògún ló ni orin *Ìrèmòjé*" (p. 2): that is "Ògún is the owner of *Ìrèmòjé* songs". He also affirms that

Nígba ayé Ògún, a maa de igbè, Ògún lágbára, ó sì lóògùn bii àròni. Ode paraku ni. Fún idárayá àti igbádùn ara rẹ̀ tàbí ti àwọn omo-leyin rẹ̀, Ògún a maa sun Ìjálá, şugbón ní àkókò tí nńkan burúkú bá sele gège bii ofo tàbí àdánù kan, Ògún ni àwọn orin arò tí maa n ko láti fi kédùn ohun àjálù naa. (Ajuwon, 1981.p. 2)

[During his lifetime, Ògún hunted for animals in the bush. Ògún was powerful, had charms to the fullest. He was a great hunter. For his personal pleasure and those of his followers, he chanted *Ìjálá*, but in the time of calamity, sorrow or lost, Ògún had some dirges that he sang to commensurate the calamity.]

Alagbe (2006) concurs with Ajuwon, when he says "Ìgbàkúùgbà ni Ògún tí ó dà
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Ìrèmojé ti ó ò ṣíṣà sílẹ́ maa n kó o" (p. 108): that is [Ògún who originated Ìrèmojé which later became known as *ijálá* chanted it at all times]. Ògún, was said to engage in singing/chanting and dancing to amuse himself especially after a hard day's job. He will stay among children and his devotees to sing and dance at his leisure. Alagbe (2006) emphasizes that

Nìgbà ayé ré gégé bílì itàn àróbá tí Ògún bá múra láti lo ighò oḍe orin ìrèmojé yí ló maa n sun fún àwọn omódé. Yòò maa kí wón lókòòkan: ighà miràn bí o bá wà lóde àrìyá, ó maa n sun ìrèmojé yí láti dá àwọn olùwòran lára ya. (pp. 107-108)

[During his life time according to the oral history, when Ògún was preparing to go for hunting, he chanted ìrèmojé for children, he praised them one by one, and sometimes when he was at a party he chants ìrèmojé to entertain his audience].

Ajuwon (1980) also points out that in relation to Ìrèmojé dance "[t]he god Ògún himself is said to have invented the style, either for worship or social dancing. When skilful dancers perform Ìrèmojé today they resurrect an otherwise forgotten dance-form for the enjoyment of all present. What interests the dancers most, however, is the hope that their dance is pleasing in the sight of Ogun, whom they are honouring" (p. 69). Ògún's style of singing and dance is peculiar, being poetic and like a chant. This makes *Ìrèmojé* distinct from other poetic/chants of the Yorùbá people like the Èsà and Èkún (vaw).

Ìrèmojé is usually referred to as "*Àrè lúpá Oḍé*" — the performance for disengaging of the hunter from hunting and transitioning him into the world beyond. It is a rite of passage designed to allow the dead hunter to rest peacefully. In the world beyond, the hunter may continue hunting with the dead. According to the hunters' chant, *Ìrèmojé* takes place only at the night:

Ìrèmojé kí í s'orin ighà-kúùgbà,
Orin tá i i kó lósàńń.
Àń lóru ní. (Àjùwón, 1981 p. 9)

[Ìrèmojé is not a song for every time
It is a song not sung in the noon
Except in the night].

They also sing:

Ìrèmojé kí í s'orin ighà-kúù-gbà,
Kí í s'orin tí à à gbòdèdè eni kó
Orin tí à à kó nìgbà tò bá s'òro fún oḍe ní. (Àjùwón, 1981 p. 9)

[Ìrèmojé is not a song for every time
It is not a song normally sang in the comfort of one's compound
But a song of difficult time for the hunters]

Àlágbe (2006) captures the essence of *Ìrèmojé* in the following passage:

Ìrèmojé je orin ti ó wà fún idágberè fún oḍe ti ó ti kú àti páapáa tí lo, ó

re orin ti àwon egbe ode fi ni yo, owo ode, ti o ku ninu egbe ode, ayé kí ó
 lé darapọ̀ mọ̀ egbe re, àní egbe ode orun. Ní sọkí, a ó rí pé orin ta á ní ko,
 lákòókò ti ó bá sòro fún ode ni. (p. 110)

[Ìrèmójé is the song of farewell for a dead hunter; more so, it is a song the
 hunters' guilds use to disengage the dead hunter from the activities of the
 living hunters so that he may join the hunters' guild of the world beyond.
 In short, it is a song usually sung at a difficult time for the hunters].

Ìrèmójé rites are usually performed from about 10.00 pm to about 4.00 am. After
 the death of a hunter, a day is picked for his *Ìrèmójé* (severance from human activities and
 transition into the world beyond). The announcement is made and well publicized to
 attract a crowd. All the hunters' guilds around are informed, and hunters from within and
 around his community usually turn out in large numbers. When performed, generally
 accepted organizational patterns are maintained in *Ìrèmójé* rites as is typical of many
 Yorùbá peoples' activities. For example, in relation to the hunters' performance, apart
 from dialectal differences and peculiarities of the types of drums used in specific Yorùbá
 communities, the performance styles are largely the same. The hunters across the Yorùbá
 land see themselves as one, and they obey one rule. They sing:

Ode Ìbàdàn, ode Èkòó;
 Kòde má dale ode
 Ode Èkiti, ode Òyó;
 Kòde má dale ode

Ode Ìjèsà, ode Ègbáá;
 Kòde má dale ode
 Ode Èkiti, ode Ondò;
 Kòde má dale ode

[Hunters from Ìbàdàn, hunters from Èkò (Lagos);
 No hunter should betray another
 Hunters from Èkiti, hunters from Òyó;
 No hunter should betray another
 Hunters from Ìjèsà, hunters from Ègbá;
 No hunter should betray another
 Hunters from Èkiti, hunters from Ondò;
 No hunter should betray another].

Ògbómòṣò, Land

References to Ògbómòṣò land in this paper include all the surrounding towns and villages
 of Ògbómòṣò, like Ìrẹ̀ṣà Pupa, Àjàwà, Ìkòyí, Igbón, Ahó, Jàbàtá, Fájé and Másiṣá which
 are strongholds of the hunters in which the hunters' guilds are well organised. The people
 themselves call the combination of these places "Ògbómòṣò land", that is, Ògbómòṣò
 and its environs. In Ògbómòṣò land, the hunters cooperate with one another, irrespective
 of any rancour among their kings. There is a popular saying among them that "ode ò yàto,
 igbó kan nàá l'ode ní de"—hunters are the same because they hunt in the same forest.
 The hunters often come together to hunt at intervals. They are also members of a central
 union. Its executive, which meets on an *ad hoc* basis, contains a representative from each
 community. Accordingly, information is easily passed around all the guilds in a very
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short time enhancing their solidarity

Ogbomoso is one of the ancient Yorubá towns, a city in Oyo State, in the South Western part of Nigeria. The majority of its people are Yorubá. According to many of the hunters interviewed in the course of the study, including those from outside Ogbomoso land communities, Ogbomoso is one of the most highly respected and notable towns. The origin of the town is rooted in the history of its hunting expeditions. Adegbite (2017 p. 7) points out that "Ogbomoso sprang up as a hunting camp but later assumed a military status due to the military might of her early settlers". The age long tradition of hunting that gave birth to Ogbomoso land has been kept intact and is still very much in practice all over the land till today so much that almost every street has a well organized hunters guild

The place we call Ogbomoso today is located between Igbon and Iresà and is surrounded by four ancestral kings. Aresà on the axis of Gabasi [East]; Onikòyi on Yàmà [West]; Olugbon on the axis of Ariwá [North] and Timi on Gúsù [South] respectively. That is, the four Obas covered the South, North, East and West of the Ogbomoso region. (See Plate 1 on the following page). Although Ogbomoso is thought to have been founded by Ogunlola in the mid 17th century, Adegbite (2017) observes that Aálé, the first settler in Okelérin, one of the three different settlements that existed in Ogbomoso before the arrival of Ogunlola, was actually the founder. He was said to be

[a] powerful hunter, who was of Nupe origin but previously lived in Igbon, first pitched his tent in the area that became Ogbomoso today. He went from Igbon on hunting expedition to a hill where elephants were found in

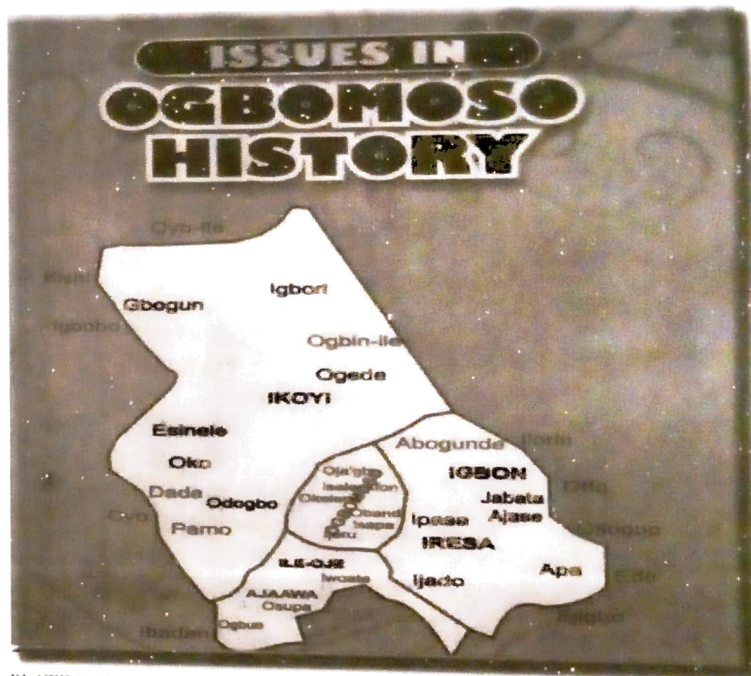


PLATE 1: Showing the map of the study area with the neighbouring towns. Photo culled from Adegbite (2017).

abundance. He later made the hill his settlement around 1611 (Adegbite, 2017, p. 7)

In Oyerinde's account of the history of Ogbomoso,

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Ogunlola who was of the Ibariba descent was said to have come to Ogbomoso in pursuit of his hunting profession. On arrival he stayed under Ajagbon tree (still by the side of the palace) and used the branches for hanging gears. This happened in the middle of the seventeenth century where the whole place was a thick jungle. He was an expert archer and a very brave hunter. Ogunlola and his wife Esuu, built their hut by the side of the Ajagbon tree and lived there. Unknown to him there were other settlers around. They were Budo bale Oke Elerin. (as claimed by Adegbite), Budo bale Ijeru and Budo bale Isapa. (Overinde, 1934 p. 26).



PLATE 2: Showing the signpost in front of Òkè Elérin Community Hall, Ògbómòsò clearly stating "The genesis of Ògbómòsò".

After some time, Ogunlola realized that he was not alone in that environment. He noticed smoke oozing from some nearby locations. He took courage and approached these places and discovered other hunters. The first one named Aale at a site now called Oke-Elerin quarters, the second called Onsile at the site now known as Ijeru quarters, the third Orisatolu at Isapa quarters and the fourth Akande quarters. The descendants of the first three of these hunters are still today the Bales of Oke-elerin, Ijeru and Isapa quarters respectively. There is no more Bale Akande. (Wikipedia)

Today, Aale Street still exists in Ògbómòsò at Òkèlérin. The inscription placed at the entrance of Okelerin Community Hall, Ògbómòsò bears the addendum "The Genesis of Ogbomoso Land", indicating that the people continue to believe that Ògbómòsò began or originated from there. (See Plate 2).

Of the three hunters, Ogunlola became historically prominent and was given credit for founding the town. It was he who rallied the other hunters together by forming the *Egbé Alongo* (Alongo Society):

Ogunlola, after the discovery of these hunters, took the initiative to invite them to form the Alongo Society. The Primary objectives of the society were: Defence against Sunmoni (slave prowler) raids, Group hunting of wild animals, and mutual assistance. At the take off of the society, Ogunlola was made the chairman. After each day's hunting, they retired to Ogunlola's hut where they were treated to beans and other meals and were served with sekete wine brewed by Ogunlola's wife from fermented guinea corn. They also engaged in discussing current affairs and planning. Later, other settlers

came and built their huts and thus formed the nucleus of a small village.

Ogunlola's hut became the place for settling disputes and other matters.

He, Ogunlola had the final say. (Wikipedia)

At this point, Ogunlola became the head of what Olorode (2010) describes as "a Republic or Federation of 'civil' interests comprised of hunters, farmers etc. that was about 700 years ago" (p. 2). Ogunlola continued to be an interim leader of these settlements until he was arrested and detained in Oyo for killing a man. This incident occurred when Oyo was experiencing a terrifying attack by the Ibàribá people led by the dreaded warrior, Elemosowho. Ogunlola pleaded with the Alááfin to be allowed to challenge Elemosowho in battle. His request was granted, and he succeeded in killing Elemosowho and freeing Oyo.

Alaáfin was so impressed by Ogunlola's prowess that he, the Alaáfin, requested him to stay in the capital Oyo-Ile instead of returning to his settlement. Ogunlola politely declined saying "Ejeki a ma se ohun" meaning let me stay yonder". His majesty, the Alaáfin, granted Ogunlola's wish to return to his settlement. Later, travellers passing to and fro, used to refer to the settlement as of him who beheaded Elemoso meaning "ido eni ti o gb'Elemoso" This was later contracted to Ogbomoso. (Wikipedia)

Ogunlola returned to his former settlement referred to as Ògbómòṣò (the term coined from the war scene where Ogunlola fought and killed Elemosowho as "ido eni ti ó gb'Elemosowho" or "ògbòrí Elemosowho"). Ògbómòṣò means "here is the settlement of he who beheaded Elemosowho." At this time, Ogunlola also earned the title "Shoún" for telling the Alaáfin to allow him "stay yonder". He was invited by many kings to assist in wars against

their enemies and face other challenges. For example,

Oba of Alapa sent for Sohun (i.e. Ogunlola) when they are being faced with the terror of a wild giant animal. His wife this time around followed him to Apa and as fate always [had] it, Sohun conquered and killed the animal. Oba Alapa demanded from Sohun [what he wanted] as compensation and his wife asked the king to give her husband another wife from his household so as to make them become in-laws. This was granted by the king and this trend [enlarged] Sohun's coast as he became friends with the people of Alapa, Onikoyi, Olugbon and Aresa. (Olorode, 2010, p. 34)

Ogunlola became more successful in battles and grew to be greater and more respected among the people and the warriors. Accordingly, Ògbómòṣò became one of the safest places to live in among the Yoruba settlements. People ran from the many war-ravaged settlements of the Yorubá land to stay under Shòún's protection. Ògbómòṣò, surviving the Muslim Fulani onslaught, of the 19th century, "attracted many Oyo refugees and became one of the largest Yoruba settlements" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ogbomoso>). During the Fulani wars, many towns and villages, about 147, were deserted while their people took refuge in Ògbómòṣò. Ige (2014) also asserts that Ògbómòṣò was "ready to accommodate migrants" who ran there for safety (p.12). Welcoming refugees helped the speedy enlargement of the town.

Ogunlola "was consequently made the head of the settlement. His compound by the Ajàgbon tree then became the Shòún's palace and a rallying point for all Ògbómòṣò citizens". (Oyerinde 1984, p. 30) The Shòún trained warriors from all these neighbouring villages to fight together against their enemies. Ògbómòṣò, because of its strategic

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location, quickly grew, and its people were renowned warriors.

Since then, the Sòun's dynasty has been established in Ògbómòṣò, and they rule under the title of Baálè. In 1952, when the Ògbómòṣò District Council changed the title of the Baálè of Ògbómòṣò to Sòun of Ògbómòṣò with the approval of the Western Region Government. The existing five ruling houses, as represented by the descendants of Kumoyede son of Jogioro and grandson of Sòun Ogunlójá, were officially recognized. (<https://www.ogbomoso.net/about-ogbomoso/soun-dynasty>).

Ìrémójé performance in Ògbómòṣò land

As Akinsipe and Babarinde-Hall (2018) point out, "rites are sets of formal religious ceremonial procedures undertaken and accepted by a group of people or community as a way of doing things. The entire Yorubá people's lives are shrouded in series of rites especially of birth, marriage, and death" (p. 118). Like all the Yoruba peoples' rites, Ìrémójé performances contain unwritten patterns of events and follow a set of unwritten rules, recognised across the Ògbómòṣò communities. Four stages are observed in the these ceremonies: there are the first rites, and then the funeral celebration, followed by the second rite and the final rite.

The First Rite

Generally referred to as *Ìrú Èpá*—erecting the effigy or fortifying the effigy—the first rite usually begins at any time from 10 pm when it is dark. The senior hunters and the Chiefs among the hunters gather at the house of the deceased. After preparations that fortify them, they open the deceased's house and enter the charm's (strong) room, taking along any of the dead hunter's sons who are knowledgeable about the belongings of dead man or who are also hunters like him. They go through the charms one by one and



PLATE 3: Showing the long shot of *èpá qdè*.

begin to separate those whose significance and purpose is unclear. After sorting out the ones whose use they can vouch for, they gather the rest together for passage to the dead hunter to take away. They move these to the backyard of the house. In the backyard, a hole is dug where a stick that is shaped like a crucifix is firmly fixed into the ground. They attach palm fronds (the symbol and cloth of *Ògún*) to the stick and hang most of the charms on it. Then they dress the stick with the late hunter's hunting cloth (*Gbéri*), using the vertically crossed part as a shoulder blade. Some of the remaining unknown charms remain attached to the cloth, and at the top of the stick they put the hunter's cap. Also attached to the cloth are the bones and skins of the wild animals that the hunter had killed. Everything is carefully placed to create the effigy of the late hunter. Some special knots of the palm fronds are made on the cloth. (See Plates 4 and 5 on the following page)

Other hunting materials of the hunter are brought before the *Èpà* (effigy). They include his hunting basket, calabash, cutlass, hoes, and knives. The children also make provision for hot drinks (usually schnapps), a goat, a calabash of water, and a pot to accompany and complete the ritual materials. (See Plate 5). All senior hunters are gathered around the set up and the chiefs among them are made to pour libations. Each will hold a cup of the hot drink, sip a little and pray. After the prayer each hunter pours the drinks three times at the base of the effigy and drinks from the rest. He then passes it to another person, with the left hand, who does the same till all of them have prayed. The drink is topped intermittently so that it is not finished. Some of the prayers they say are translated as follows:

Oládèjò, Àdìgún, (name of the deceased)

You have gone to join the ancestral hunters

Go and rest and stop hunting

Let your children have peace and your children's children

Let not people die one after the other

From today stop hunting on earth

Join the hunters in heaven

All the battles you faced while on earth

As you are dead now let them stop.

Your *èpà* is made today.

So, do not hunt with the living again

Start hunting with the dead

As early as possible reincarnate through one of your children

Do not allow this community to scatter

Oládèjò, Àdìgún,

You heard what was said, go and rest

Don't allow problems come among your children

Don't allow problems come among your family

Don't allow problems come among relations

Don't allow problems come among the community

Don't allow problems come among us (hunters)

Don't allow problems come among the hunters' guild

Oládèjò, Àdìgún,

Your children have prepared your *èpà*



Plate 4: Showing the close up shots of *èpà oḍe*.



Plate 5: Showing the other materials present at *iró èpà*.

Help them not to encounter problems
 Help us the living hunters to succeed
 Let us kill animals and not humans
 You did not kill human being while alive
 Let us not turn our guns against each other
 (Sample taken at Fájé, Ògbómòṣó, December 30th, 2017.)

The hunters address the dead directly, because it is believed that the dead hunter is present at the rite listening and watching everything being done. It is, therefore, believed that as they carry the *Èpà* into the forest, the dead hunter will follow them to receive it and so will not return again to the community (world) for any reason.

The Funeral Celebration

This is referred to as *Àyọyọ Èpà Òkú* – the celebration of the *Èpà* for the dead (the funeral celebration in honour of the dead). It generally features *Aré Oḍe* or *Aré Ògun* – the hunters' entertainment or Ògún's entertainment. This last stage of the funeral commences precisely at midnight. It usually takes place in an available open place at the hunter's house or at a location that is very close to the late hunter's house where the people are already gathered and waiting while the *Ìrò Èpà* was going on. The space for the celebration of the *Èpà* is constructed to create a square form. Within its parameters, the *Ìjálá* musicians set up their instruments. They are seated along one side of the square, while the senior and Chief hunters occupy the front side and the rest of the people (the audience), comprised of the deceased's families, relations, neighbours, and well-wishers fill the remaining L shape that is left vacant.

The *Èpà*, now covered in an *agbádá* (an ordinary native cloth of the late hunter) is

brought into the space. It is positioned so that the sightlines from it into the performance area are unobstructed—set in front of and to the right side of the senior/Chief hunters' seats as shown in the diagram below:

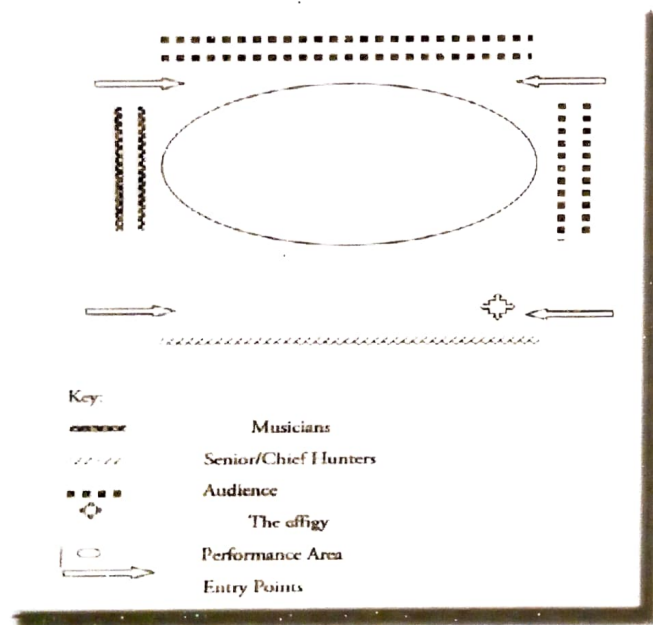


PLATE 6: Showing the set of the performance arena for Îrèmojé performance



Plate 7: Showing the *Èpa* in public now covered with *agbádá* (an ordinary cloth of the dead hunter)

As soon as the stage is set, the funeral celebration begins, usually in the following order:

a. Opening Dance

At the social and the sacred performances of the hunters, there is usually an introduction. Before the chants and any other thing happens, a solo dancer opens the floor with musical accompaniments. This sets the stage for the evening's performance. It is at this point everybody gathers and settles, noting that the programme has commenced. The dancer generally goes around the space and greets the people present, prostrating

himself before the elderly ones, the notable/senior hunters (*Agbà Ode*), and the hunters' Chiefs/executives (*Olòyé Ode*) who are present. This is known as *Ìjúbà* (homage paying) in the Yorùbá worldview. It is believed that homage must be paid to the living and the dead, and the elders must be revered before any activity can be performed successfully.

The dancer then goes to the middle of the performance area and begins his dance. The dance starts slowly and gradually gathers momentum. Some people may join him in the dance and anybody among the audience who wishes can give money to the dancer (which they throw at him, paste on his forehead or drop on the ground in front of him) as a mark of appreciation. After a while, especially when all the performers (other hunters, singers, chanters, musicians and celebrants) are settled and ready, the dancer leaves the stage amidst clapping and admiration from the people, but he does not forget to greet people again, especially the elders/senior hunters as he did before the commencement of his dance.

b. The *Ìrèmojé* Chants and Music

As soon as the dancer departs, the chants begin. The chanters also start with *Ìjúbà* asking for the permissions of the elders to take proper control of the floor. The homage goes first to the Supreme Being *Olódumare*, the elders (seen and unseen), the herbalists, past hunters, present hunters, past *Ìrèmojé* *Ìjálá* singers, senior singers, and very special witches and wizards. One example of this homage follows:

LAMIDI Ni me pé mo júbà lówó, éyin okúnrin,
 Ìbà lówó, éyin obinrin,
 Ìbà 'yáá mi Òṣoròngà.
 Òpoki, Eḽḽḽ, osùn.

Omií gbóná ò sè mu kilokilo
 Agbada nílá nì wón fí mu po
 Ewùrè dúdú a b'ámú reḽeḽeḽe,
 Lóde 'òn 'yáá mi
 Agùntàn dúdú a b'ámú reḽeḽeḽe,
 Eran-an 'yáá mi ni.
 Adie, òkòkó dúdú, a b'ámú reḽeḽeḽe,
 Eye, 'yáá mi ni
 Eye, a ba 'pá hé
 Eye, a beṣeṣe he
 Eye, a beṣe, méjèjèjì hẹ́hẹ́hẹ́...
 Àjé kan è é roṛò
 Kó jewùrè dúdú
 Àjé kan è é roṛò,
 Kó sì jẹran funfun
 Oṛàn àjé onu Ayi, ó dimùlẹ́
 A à kíí báńi tan
 Orin la fi gbè
 Orin la fi ko,
 Orin Ìyá mi toto, n ó sè 'bà re,
 Ìyá mi toto, n ó sè 'bà re,
 Ò lépo nílẹ́, è méjè ròfó,
 Egbe Ìyá mi toto, n ó sè 'bà re,
 Lile Ò lépo nílẹ́, è méjè ròfó,

Egbe Ìyá mi totò, n ó sè 'bà rẹ,

Lile Ọ lẹpo nílẹ̀, ẹ mẹjẹ ròfọ̀,

Egbe Ìyá mi totò, n ó sè 'bà rẹ (Ajuwon, 1981 pp. 90-91)

[I pay homage to all men

Homage to all women

Homage to my Osoronga (witchcraft) mothers

People with crimson legs

Hot water that cannot be hurriedly drunk

Who drink palm oil in a big bowl

Black goats with heavy belly

In my mothers' compound

Big sheep with heavy pregnancy

Are my mothers' meat

Black native chicken with heavy pregnancy

Are my mothers' birds

Birds with one hand

Birds with one leg

Birds with both legs...

No witch can be so fierce

That will eat a black goat

No witch can be so fierce

To eat a white meat

The case of witches and big sheep is only known to the initiated

We don't talk about it

We chorus with it

We sing with it

Song My dear mothers, I will salute you

My dear mothers, I will salute you

You have palm oil at home but choose to
prepare vegetable soup with blood

Chorus My dear mothers, I will salute you

Lead You have palm oil at home but choose to
prepare vegetable soup with blood

Chorus My dear mothers, I will salute you

Lead You have palm oil at home but choose to
prepare vegetable soup with blood

Chorus My dear mothers, I will salute you]

Such songs and chants are also integral parts of the hunters' music. *Íjálá* is essentially a verbal art. It thrives in poetry/chants peculiar to the hunters and distinct from other forms of Yorùbá poetries and chants.

c. The Display of the Charms

During *Ìrèmọ̀jẹ* performance, the display of charms takes place. Hunters generally accord themselves the prestige of being the greatest custodians of charms in Yorùbá land. They proudly say, according to Chief Ògúnlékè, "ká má purọ́ oḣe ló lòògùn" (without lying hunters are the owners of charms). The charms are needed for protection against spirits,

wild animals and many dangerous monsters that inhabit or parade the forest. In part, the *lèrènjé* performance is about removing the powerful charms of the dead hunter.

The display of charms session involves one or two hunters who perform the act of cutting their bodies (tongues, necks, stomachs and so on) with knives, cutlasses and other sharp objects. Their performances also include the swallowing of metal and dangerous items without any harm or injury to the actors. These acts express the fact that the hunters are still very powerful medicine men.

d. Pantomimic Session

In this part of the performance, the hunter recounts the tasks, methods, *oudeals* and successes or disappointments encountered in the course of hunting. This takes the form of dramatic enactment or pantomime as no dialogue is employed. Most often a supporting song with instrumentation accompanies the action. The hunter acts out various encounters in the forest until game is successfully shot down or lost. Ajáwún (1980) states,

The dramatic essence of *lèrènjé*, however, lies in the extensive use of gestures to act out the ideas. This use of improvised drama in the performance recalls past actor heroes whose fame is itself preserved in oral tradition, as in the *léré*. (p. 69)

This type of enactment is also found in the *lójá* performance. Ajayi (1998) asserts that the 'lójá dance-style is highly reminiscent of the hunter in action—semi-crouched, alert, and acutely hunting an animal in the forest' (p. 197).

e. The Dance

This phase of the *lèrènjé* performance is its main session. During it, many willing hunters come into the arena to dance. It is usually not a performance by a group, for each hunter does his own dance. The hunters' dance (*lójá Ode*) also called the *Ogún* dance (*lójá Ogún*) replicates *Ogún's* prowess and style of dancing by his devotees. *Ogún* is said to have been a great dancer who chanted and danced to amuse himself. Before his demise, he instructed his followers to continue dancing to remember him. This dance exhibits his dual nature and characteristics as a god of creation who could become destructive. Like the hunters' chant, which illustrates and emphasizes the points being made by the chanter, *lójá Ode* is also competitive. Each dance is expected to demonstrate its dancer's skill and dexterity being above those of the other dancers. Because the need to outdo the other dancers is paramount, these dances are individualistic in nature. Space is usually cleared for each dancer to display his mastery of the steps. Even in a group dance, these dancers do not dance in uniformity. 'They dance simultaneously, yet independently' (Drewal, 1997, p. 216).

The dance is generally accomplished bare-footed, with the standing posture involving slightly bent knees and the trunk bent forward being earth bound. The dancer's hands are held loosely by the sides of his body and flung into different positions as the dance progresses. The dance is performed more by shoulder and foot movements. One leg takes up the dance actions flicking forward and backward in quick succession, while the other leg supports the body. A shift of the legs can be made in such a way that the legs alternate the actions. These movements are fast or slow, depending on the tempo of the music. Generally, the music begins slowly and gradually increases in tempo until the climax of the performance is reached. Accordingly, the dance also increases in tempo.

following the music's pattern.

Apart from the short flicking movements of one of the legs, one leg at times may take a sustained elaborate slide outwards, moving the dancer suddenly from one spot to another. This can be repeated two to three times or more, taking the dancer around the dancing arena. A return via the other leg may follow or the dancer may simply go into another movement entirely. When the leg is not leading the movement, the shoulder does. The dance alternates between strong and sustained actions, being indicative of Ògún's sometimes violent and sometimes gentle nature. The shoulders are jerked forward and sideways.

At times the dancer hops around and takes many sudden turns in any direction without notice. When in native dress like the Agbádá, the dancer uses the cloth as an extension of himself. It is held and thrown about during the course of the dance. The dancer's head is often stable, only following the body wherever it goes but generally not initiating any of the movement. The dancer relates to whatever prop he is holding whether it is the apàrù – the fly whisk, cutlass, or the gun, as the case may be.

Second Rite

This is the rite called *Orò Èpà* (the rite of Èpà). It is meant to determine who carries the Èpà and to which location. These decisions are made by the casting of kola nuts (obi). The rite usually commences at 3.00 am. The chanting, singing, dancing, and drumming is halted. Every person present, adult and child, is commanded to be awake and alert. The *Agbada* on the Èpà is removed to reveal it as it was in the backyard. People then are required to make "prayer requests" with any amount of money and drop before the Èpà. It is believed that the dead hunter (who is present and transitioning to the world beyond) will carry their requests to the appropriate quarters. Outstanding and great demands are

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expected to be made at this time. For example, barren women are encouraged to seize this opportunity to ask for a baby and those whose marriages are not doing well may ask for peace in their homes.

The senior members and Chiefs among the hunters then gather round the Èpà, removing their shoes and commanding everyone else to do so. A bowl of water is provided and inside it a bitter kola (*orogbo*) and a kola nut are placed. Some of the water is sprinkled on the floor in front of the Èpà, and using the kola nut, the devotees begin to ask the Èpà whom he wants to be his carrier:

Oládèjò, Adigun.

Your children are demanding that you stop hunting in this world

And they have done all necessary rites

Now, who do you want to carry your Èpà among them?

Here, the kola nut is broken into four parts and used to ask the question as they begin to mention the names of the children one by one as follows:

Is it Ògúnniyi you want to carry you to your destination?

The broken kola nut is thrown on the floor and observed. The answer is "yes" when two of them are face down and the other two face up. When the answer is "no", the same process is repeated mentioning another name. This divination process can proceed as far as the grandchildren while the casting of the kola nut affirms who is to be the carrier.

When the carrier is confirmed, the process of asking which location or destination the hunter would like to be taken to rest begins. "Is it your farm at Adùn you want to rest?" Different places are mentioned until one is confirmed. Immediately one is confirmed

there is shouting of joy and praise of *Oḡn*. Drums roll and the firing of guns take place. The chosen carrier picks up the effigy and proceeds towards the confirmed destination followed by the senior and chief hunters. It is said that he who carries the effigy must not look back during the journey. Also nobody must meet them on the way. This is probably why this ceremony is done at such a late hour. As well, the chants that accompany the carrier will make any one approaching flee.

The Final Rites

The final rite is the actual *ḡpa*—the final disengagement of the dead hunter from hunting and all other human activities. This is the stage occurs when the *ḡpa* arrives at the final resting place chosen by the hunter. According to Chief *Oḡnmodéde*, the *Ọlọdpe* of *Aṣeṣé Papa*, at a particular *ḡmope* ceremony, a very young boy was chosen to carry the *ḡpa*. On the way, the boy told them that he could see some hunters all in their hunting clothes moving ahead of them. Though the elders could not see anything like that they knew that the late hunter's dead friends must have attended the ceremony with him. It is believed that as soon as the *ḡpa* is positioned in the place that he chose, he will never return to the community or harass anybody in the family and the community.

Conclusion

ḡmope, the hunters' sacred performance is deeply embedded in the culture and traditions of (Ogbomosho) land. The cultural functions of the hunters' performance make it almost impossible to eradicate. The tolerance the performance has for other religions is also an advantage which will prohibit its elimination.

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Now, as if always, a seamless garment

Now, as if always, a seamless garment.

Gloria

The music of one sphere to another's thrum
So there's an African dance to Ave Maria
A ballerina pirouetting to an African drum

Gloria

As if for the dances the music had been meant.

Weaving ballet, break and modern dance
Or crawling like a beetle on the belly
Button of the world, animals among men
Baffled by pollution on a paper boat
Camels in the snow, penguins in a sea
Of sand, an elephant in an urban trance
How long will they be able to float.

Each dancer has a disability, one eye
Missing, another has short legs, one
Man wants a dress to dance for pleasure
Another's breasts are too big, they said
Then all the come to dance, all for one