

**FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON IGBOMINA,
C. 1750-1900**

By

ABOYEJI, ADENIYI JUSTUS

97/15CA020

(B.A. (2001), M.A. (2006) HISTORY, UNILORIN)

BEING

**A Ph.D THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA**

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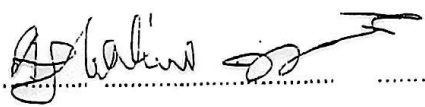
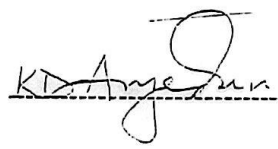
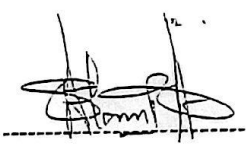
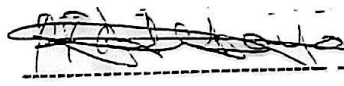
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UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA**

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned Internal Examiners, hereby certify that ABOYEJI. Adeniyi Justus (97/15CA020) has satisfactorily effected all necessary corrections pointed out to him during the Oral Examination of his thesis entitled "Foreign Influence on Igbomina, C.1750-1900" held on 06/03/2015 and recommended that he be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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Postgraduate Coordinator		14/05/2015

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the custodian of **all Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Might, Counsel, Reverential Fear (Isaiah 11:2)** and the *Donor* of the '*pen of the ready-writer*' (*Psalms 45:1*), through our Lord and Saviour, **JESUS CHRIST.**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Title Page	i
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Content	vii
Glossary/List of Abbreviations	ix
List of Maps, Tables and Appendices	xi
Abstract	xii

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Justification of the Study	4
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Scope of Work	5
1.5 Conceptual Clarification	7
1.6 Research Methodology and Problems	9
1.7 Literature Review	14
1.8 Geographical Description	26
1.9 Historical Background	36
Notes and References	53

CHAPTER TWO: IGBOMINA BEFORE THE 18TH CENTURY

2.1 Introduction	64
2.2 Igbomina Traditional Institutions Prior to the External Influence	65
2.3 <i>Foreign</i> Incursion into Igbomina Prior to the 18 th Century	78
2.4 Era of the Dominance of Oyo Empire	79
2.5 Structure of Oyo Administration–Ajele System	81
2.6 Weakness and Collapse of Oyo	85
2.7 Influence of the Collapse of Oyo on Igbomina	86
Notes and References	92

CHAPTER THREE: 18th CENTURY FOREIGN INFLUENCE: NUPE INCURSION

3.0	Introduction	97
3.1	The Nupes	97
3.2	First Phase of Nupe Incursion into Igbominaland, 1733-1795	102
3.3	Second Phase of Nupe Incursion, 1833-1897	105
3.4	Structure of Nupe Administration in Igbominaland	106
3.5	Nupe Influence on Igbomina	112
	Notes and References	120

CHAPTER FOUR: 19TH CENTURY FOREIGN INFLUENCE: ILORIN CONQUEST AND IBADAN RAIDS, AND A POSTSCRIPT OF THE 20TH CENTURY

4.0	Introduction	125
4.1	Igbomina in the Context of the 19 th Century Yoruba Civil Wars	125
4.2	Rise of the Ilorin/Fulani and Structure of Administration on Igbomina	134
4.3	Ilorin-Fulani Influence on Igbomina	147
4.4	Ibadan's Expansionism and Structure of Administration in Igbomina	150
4.5	Ibadan Influence on Igbomina Institutions	159
4.6	POSTSCRIPT: Igbomina in the 20 th Century	161
4.7	British Colonialism and Influence	163
4.8	Impetus to the Incessant Military Invasions and Conquests of Igbomina	167
	Notes and References	174

CHAPTER FIVE: ASPECTS OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN IGBOMINA

5.0.	Introduction	180
5.1	Igbomina's Reactions to Foreign Influence	180
5.2	Implements of War	187
5.3	Igbomina Women in Warfare	193
5.4	Igbomina Inter-group Relations and Influence	196
5.5	Traditional Religious System	236
	Notes and References	239

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION **248**

	Notes and References	262
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	263
	LIST OF MAPS, TABLES AND APPENDICES	274

GLOSSARY/LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- 1) A. D. O. -Assistant District Officer
- 2) Agannigan -Name given to Ibadan Marauders in Igbominaland
- 3) Agbaasin -A goddess brought from Ile-Ife by Olusin
- 4) Ajele -Political Agent under the Oyo and Ibadan pre-colonial administration
- 5) Ajia -A minor war Chief under the Ilorin Emirate Administration
- 6) Alaafin -Title of (Oba) King of Oyo
- 7) Awoji -Religious soul of Iwoland/Iwo Kingdom goddess
- 8) B.O.P -Balance of Power
- 9) Babakekere -Middleman (economic/commercial)
- 10) Balogun -War Chief Title
- 11) D.H. -District Head.
- 12) D. O. -District Officer
- 13) Ekitiparapo -Ekiti/Igbomina Confederacy during the Kiriji War
- 14) Ekun -Province
- 15) Emir -Head of an Emirate. E.g. Ilorin Emirate.
- 16) Esinkin -A distinguished war leader
- 17) Etsu -Head of the Nupe Dynasty/potentate.
- 18) Griot -Members of a caste of professional oral historians(as in the
Mali Empire)
- 19) H.R.H -His Royal Highness
- 20) Ibid -Same as above
- 21) Igbona -Abridged form of Igbomina (in colonial records) Igbito/Ilu -
Council of Chiefs (Community)

- 22) ILORPROF -Ilorin Province Report File
- 23) Iwofa or Iwefa -bond or indentured servants
- 24) L.G.A -Local Government Authority
- 25) N.A. -Native Authority
- 26) NAI -National Archives, Ibadan
- 27) NAK -National Archives, Kaduna
- 28) Oba/Baale -Village Head/Chief of Provincial Settlements/Provinces
- 29) Ogba -Nupe Residents who served as link between the Nupe potentate and the subject people.
- 30) Ogbo -A type of early traditional club or cutlass which possesses magical powers (that knows the way to the bank of the Niger) believed to have led Igbomina migrants
- 31) Ọlọbà -The Head of Ọbà
- 32) Oloogun - Members of Warrior group
- 33) Oluawo -Head of the diviners
- 34) Olupo -The Head of Ajase-po
- 35) Olusin -Head of Isinland
- 36) Oniwo -Head of Iwoland
- 37) Oniwonate/Olusinate-Territories under the Oniwo/Olusin
- 38) Orangun -The Head of Ila
- 39) Orile/Oriki -Cognomen
- 40) RNC -Royal Niger Company
- 41) V.A.C. -Village Area Council
- 42) V.G.C -Village Group Council
- 43) W.W. -World War (I & II)

LIST OF MAPS, TABLES AND APPENDICES

List of Maps

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | A Map of Nigeria Showing Kwara and Osun States; Home of the Igbomina | 30 |
| 2. | A Map showing all the Igbomina Villages and Towns in their Local Government Areas; 2013 | 31 |
| 3. | Map of Yorubaland in the 19th Century | 126 |

List of Tables

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Table One Showing Igbomina Groups by Origin/Migration | 50 |
| 2. | Table Two Showing the Population of the Ilorin District; 1916 | 142 |
| 3. | Table Three: Changing Phases of the Political Aims and the Character of the 19th Century Wars by Akinjogbin | 153 |
| 4. | Table Four: South Omu Court and Council; 1948-1949 | 210 |
| 5. | Table Five: North Omu Court and Council; 1948-1949 | 211 |
| 6. | Table Six: Population and Annual Salaries of the Four (4) Village Areas in Isin; 1924 | 211 |
| 7. | Table Seven: Estimate of World Population in Millions According to Continents | 257 |

List of Appendices

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Appendix I: Pictures showing Ìgbómìnà's Traditional 'Ogbo'. | 274 |
| 2. | Appendix II: Names of Igbomina Towns and Villages in Kwara and Osun | 275 |
| 3. | Appendix III: Major Chieftaincy Titles in Pre-Colonial Igbominaland. | 277 |
| 4. | Appendix IV: The Influence of 'Ori' on the Life Attainment of an Individual as Elucidated in the Hierarchical Order of the universe. | 278 |
| 5. | Appendix V: The Genealogical Tree of Mu'azu Yissa, Etsu Patigi, Compiled in 1900. | 278 |
| 6. | Appendix VI: A figure showing some types of European firearms during the 19 th Century Yoruba Civil Wars. | 279 |
| 7. | Appendix VII: A Picture of the Esie Steatite Stone Images (Archaeological Figures). | 280 |

ABSTRACT

This study examined about 150 years of the Igbomina history, from mid-18th century, when the unprecedented tranquillity hitherto enjoyed in Igbominaland from inception became interrupted by a series of military encounters with the Ijesa, Benin, Edo, Oyo (17th Century), Nupe, Ilorin, Ibadan (19th Century) and briefly the British (20th Century). The Igbomina entered the most harrowing epoch during the colonial era when she found herself under both local and foreign influence. Primarily, this study examined the nature, style and extent of foreign influence on pre-colonial Igbomina, while its specific objectives include: i) the central role of foreign influence on Igbomina, as it is today, in alignment with the underlying esoteric law of ‘Cause and Effect’; ii) factors responsible for the incessant military molestations of the Igbomina; iii) the short and long term consequences of such relations; and iv) a reconstruction of African History through a more comprehensive documentary historical research, thereby filling a gap in Igbomina history.

Both primary and secondary sources of information (oral tradition, personal observation, archival documents, library materials, theses and dissertations) were employed to ensure objectivity, and reflect the multi-cum-inter-and trans-disciplinary approach to modern historical studies. Vis-à-vis the customary problem of authenticity and limitation of oral tradition, this study has straddled into other related fields such as archaeology, linguistics, science, geography, statistics, etc.; realising that traditional historical sources alone, now prove inadequate to provide acceptable answers to all that bugs the mind of man about his past.

The findings of the study revealed that:

- i. Igbomina, as it is today, is a product of three significant factors: Geography, History and the Character of its people;
- ii. the economic urge was a most vital impulse responsible for the incessant assaults on the Igbomina by foreign powers;
- iii. the devastating consequences therefrom, even over a century later, yet remained indelible throughout Igbominaland. The enormous physical dislocation evident by 1900 left no single Igbomina settlement on its pre-18th century site;
- iv. Igbomina is, on its own, an entity. This study has thus contributed to the vast ocean of knowledge in the emerging sub-field of History dubbed as “Igbomina Studies”.

The study concluded that although foreign influence on Igbomina might have been very devastating, however, for how long do we over-emphasise how foreign influence has undermined Igbomina; seeing that others have broken loose from same/similar experience? The recommendation of this work challenges the Igbomina to spew out the bitter pill and forge ahead boldly, like their legendary ancestors, to embrace a glorious future in the embryonic Igbomina State.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know no way of judging the future but by the past.¹

The “Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State” in a submission to the 2014 National Conference in what is captioned “*Freedom Charter of Igbomina People 2014*” described the Igbomina or Igboona as one of the major sub-groups of the Yoruba nation. Other notable Yoruba sub-groups include: Akoko, Awori, Egba, Ekiti, Ibolu, Ife, Ijebu, Ijesa, Ijumu, Ilaje, Ilorin, Ondo, Owe, Oyo and Yagba. Although many of the dialects are comprehensible all over the Yoruba country, a handful of them are so esoteric in character that they admit into conversation only those born into them. Igboona (Igbomina), as the Movement claimed, belongs to the easily comprehensible Yoruba dialect.²

The Igbomina have always had it good, enjoying their primordial sovereignty. However, like any other society, of course, Igbomina is never an island on its own. The Igbomina began the peregrination into her draconian days when successively from around the 17th Century to the 20th, the Ijesa, Edo, Benin, Oyo, Nupe, Ilorin-Fulani, Ibadan, and the European (British) imperialists took their turns of real or alleged, abortive or successful, power plays on the once-fabled ‘*powerful*’ Igbomina. It has, all the time, been the case of shifting from one imperial potentate to another, each of which had always left its appalling viral toxicities upon the Igbomina over the years. This seems to have negatively affected the psyche of the once *fabled* ‘*powerful*’ Igbomina people. In spite of the fact that ever since, all the efforts, reactions and responses of the Igbomina have not translated into *uhuru*, reactions to the loss of this primordial sovereignty have neither been rescinded nor relented among the people.

This struggle has continued unabated. Nothing seems to satisfy the yearning pangs of this people other than the restoration of their right to self-governance. An example of this undying conflagration is the current *“Freedom Charter of Igbomina People, 2014”* a submission to the 2014 National Conference by the Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State, 2014. As succinctly put in that submission:

*The bond holding the Igbomina race together manifests in our common origin, language, culture, worship, values, institutions and aspirations. This unbreakable or unbendable bond stands as our strength in the pursuit of our liberty, independence, self-sufficiency, total freedom from marginalisation, economic waste and deprivation, political subjugation and self-determination. This bond is also the bedrock for our unity...and keeping alive ‘Asepo Omo Igbomina’ and ‘Omo Ibile Igbomina’, the twin socio-cultural associations that connect the Igbomina people all over the universe.*³

The Igbomina versions of the Conference on the Constitution Review/National Conference, especially the last one held at Iwo on November 2nd 2013, decided, in clear terms, among other things that, *“...in the event of states creation, the Igbomina people of Kwara and Osun States be constituted into a political unit to be known and called IGBOMINA STATE”*.⁴

Igbomina is a frontier Yoruba state, standing right in the middle position as gateway between the north and south of Nigeria, a position, which has made it a focal point in the struggle for power among the different imperial powers through the ages. It has also rendered it an area of plural cultural interactions over the years.⁵ Hence, for Igbomina, socio-political relations and interactions with her neighbours hardly have been exciting or favourable. Her history has been pre-occupied with that of constant military molestations. Hitherto, economic activities serve as prelude to the chains of unending raids, conquests and political hegemony on Igbomina.

The term ‘foreign influence’ as used here refers not necessarily to the British but also to the Oyo-Nupe-Fulani/Ilorin-Ibadan overlords, among others, all of whom antedated the British conquest.⁶ However, specifically, the Nupe-Fulani potentates were the instruments the

British utilised for the effective implementation of their own grotesque colonialism and/or imperialism. The pre-British imperial administrative system became the model upon which the British colonial administrative system was eventually predicated. No wonder, some of those potentates even outlived the British.

This study is an extrapolation of the interplay of history and the esoteric law of cause and effect on the Igbomina. How and why the once acclaimed indomitable Igbomina could have been subjected to such a harrowing and protracted political subjugation over the centuries undoubtedly deserves serious attention. And that explains the central aim for this study. Precisely, this study elucidates the traumatic experience of the Igbomina in relation with its many neighbours.

Basically, this study is carefully and intrinsically partitioned into six chapters. While chapter one deals with the general introduction to the study, chapter two explores the history of Igbomina before the 18th century. This presents the Igbomina traditional institutions prior to the era of external influence, the socio-political and economic base, and the early phase of *foreign* incursion into Igbomina prior to the 18th century especially, the era of the dominance of Oyo Empire, the structure of Oyo administration (i.e. the Ajele system), the weakness and collapse of Oyo as well as the influence of the collapse of Oyo on Igbomina. Chapter three focuses on the foreign influence that came with the Nupe incursion and style of administration during the 18th century. Chapter four preoccupies itself with the influence from Ilorin domination and Ibadan raids of the 19th century as well as the British colonialism of the 20th century, as postscript. The prevalent chaos and upheaval, which raged throughout the Yoruba country during that century are appraised. Chapter five addresses the aspects of change and continuity occasioned by the incessant military disturbances on the Igbomina. How the Igbomina reacted and responded to foreign influence, their implements of war, the role of Igbomina women in warfare, Igbomina inter-group relations and influence (political, social and economic) are discussed. Chapter six presents the general conclusion of the study.

1.2. Justification of the Study

Igbomina history is appealing for a number of reasons. Igbomina, although only a sub-group of the Yoruba race, which in turn is only a fraction of Nigeria and West Africa, is in itself an ethos and an entity. Yet, for long, Igbomina, with its non-centralised polity, remained of limited interest that attracted little or no historical attention other than as a mere appendage of mega states like Oyo or even just an outpost of the Ilorin Emirate, which kept it under its subjugation and control.⁷ Perturbed by this lack of interest of Africans about their history, Johnson observed that the educated natives of Yoruba are well acquainted with the history of England and with that of Rome and Greece, but of the history of their own country (people) they know nothing whatever?⁸ The need becomes even more pressing now than ever before, to bring to historical limelight a society that has been neglected. Afigbo has described this precarious situation as *historical irrationality*.⁹

The justification for this work is hinged upon the following rationales: One, it is particularly regrettable that since the inception of African, Nigerian or Yoruba historiography, greater attention has been given by the historian to the highly centralised societies, known as the mega-states to the neglect of the so-called non-centralised polities¹⁰ or mini-states such as Igbomina. Two, although increasing scholarly works are being carried out, especially in recent times on Igbomina, prime emphasis has been directed towards colonial history—political, economic, socio-cultural, among others. Obviously, this is because of the availability of a plethora of archival, library materials, among others Three, there is an urgent need for a more down-to-earth documentary study on pre-colonial Igbomina. As such, this work hopes to fill a gap in Igbomina history. Four, this discourse also hopes to widen our scope of Igbomina history back into the more distant pre-colonial past, of which written records are scarce and oral evidence fast going into oblivion. This is because most of the elderly ones interested in the preservation are dead and distance too is telling more and more on the reliability and authenticity of the versions that have been hitherto preserved.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

“Foreign Influence on Igbomina, C. 1750-1900”, one may say, is an attempt to understudy a period of about one and a half centuries of the Igbomina history. The *primary aim* of this study is to bring to focus the *Foreign Influence on Igbomina* from about the second half of the 18th century to the era of British official flag-off of the principle of *effective occupation* in 1900. The *specific objectives* of this study include:

- i. the central role of foreign influence on Igbomina as it is today, in alignment with the underlying esoteric law of ‘cause and effect’;
- ii. Factors responsible for the incessant military molestations of Igbo mina by her various foreign imposters; and
- iii. the short and long term consequences of such relations;
- iv. a reconstruction of African history through a more comprehensive documentary historical research, thereby filling a gap in Igbomina history and contributing to the vast ocean of knowledge in the emerging sub-field of history that may be dubbed as *“Igbomina Studies”*.

1.4. Scope of Work

Probably at no time in the history of the Igbomina was their survival so seriously tried and threatened as it was during the turbulent era of insecurity between c. 1750 and c. 1897¹¹

It would be overly ambitious, if not pragmatically impracticable for anyone to attempt a study of foreign influence on Africa, Nigeria or Yorubaland as a whole in a study of this sort. The researcher has, therefore, chosen one important sub-group of the Yoruba—the Igbomina as a case study. This study is designed to cover a period of about 150 years. It covers the era when the relative tranquillity hitherto enjoyed by the Igbomina since inception was disturbed by a series of military encounters by:

- i. the Ijesa, Benin and Edo (17th century),¹² but especially

- ii. the Oyo Empire during the 17th-18th centuries, particularly under the 'intrepid' Alaafin Ojigi;¹³
- iii. Nupe particularly under the notable Nupe Etsu: Jubril (1744-1759), Maijia II (1769-1777) and Mua'azu (1759-1769, 1789-1795);¹⁴
- iv. Ilorin especially after the counter coup d'état against Afonja in C. 1823;¹⁵
- v. Ibadan (Agannigan) marauders and their expansionist invasions from the late 1840s till the 1860s and even beyond, thus making life barely bearable for their victims; and
- vi. a postscript of British Colonial Rule/Imperialism in the 20th century, which was indeed, a foreign invasion. The ruins caused by the raids and invasions and the consequent unprecedented consequences were so pervasive and enduring that more than a century later, the devastating ripple effect was described by Burnet after his tour of parts of Igbominaland, that since the Fulani invasion, the area had been somewhat unsettled.¹⁶ Afolayan particularly noted the so enormous physical dislocation, which resulted that no Igbomina village by 1900, was on its pre-18th century site.¹⁷

Although, this study officially terminates in 1900, however, as most of the issues discussed metamorphosed into the present time, reference could be made to the contemporary era. This is because '*Foreign Influence on Igbomina...*' is a study of the past in the present as well as one of change and continuity. Moreover, by the very peculiarity of the nature of historical studies, it is often impossible or *un-historical* to stop sharply, leaving ongoing discussions hanging. As such, one may have to relate the past with the present and into what lies ahead, particularly in this situation in which the European activities on the whole, and colonial control, in particular, provided a clearer understanding of the general global picture of African underdevelopment both within and outside Africa.

1.5. Conceptual Clarification

This study centres on the *diplomatic-cum-economic and military history* of the Igbomina in the pre-colonial times. As such, we are obliged to give proper clarity to certain terms that would have the benefit of prominence in this study beyond the conventional usage, as the case might be. Hence, the word, *foreign*, as used here, is not in any way limited to the Europeans. Its usage refers to and covers all other units whether at the racial, tribal, dialectic, linguistic or geographical level other than the Igbomina-stock of the Yoruba such as the Ijesa, Benin, Oyo, Ibadan and Ilorin-Fulani or non-Yoruba folks such as the Edo and Nupe.

It is, thus, only in this clearly defined and restricted perspective that the word, *foreign* refers to the Europeans. In a broader sense, the word, '*foreign*' as used here might mean more of 'local' than the conventional 'foreign' lexical concept. Technically, the word *influence* refers to the effect and power to sway which affects other people's thinking or actions by means of force of personality.¹⁸ The word, *influence*, within the framework of this text, conjures all forces and powers from outside Igbominaland, which affected the beliefs, actions and psyche of the people and land of Igbomina. Igbominaland is fabled to have been a home for brave, *powerful*¹⁹ and indomitable legendary personages, such as Ajagunnla from Ila-Orangun,²⁰ and a host of others who had demonstrated feats of a gargantuan nature. What, today, might be responsible for the turn of the tide?

Igbomina, especially because of the non-Yoruba readers that may not be very familiar with the Yoruba dialectic groupings, refers to a dialectic version of the Yoruba language, the people who speak that version and the land they occupy. The people are believed by some sects of this sub-group to have been progenitured by Orangun, one of Oduduwa's grandchildren; Oduduwa himself being the acclaimed father of the entire Yoruba race. It should be borne in mind that the Igbomina, too, are not exempted from the conventional migration phenomenon of the era. This is to make us understand that the peopling of

Igbominaland included, not only those who claim descent from Orangun, but also migrants from other Yoruba and non-Yoruba stocks, some of them ante-dating Orangun himself.²¹ Besides, some, such as the people of Oba, have an autochthonous tradition of creation, right on the land they occupy. Some of these lay claim to a pre-Orangun tradition in Igbominaland.

Although for sheer selfishness, miserliness and the political convenience of the British imperialists, it has been delineated into different administrative units, and even disconnected from one another at the state level (a misnomer which had since the colonial era been fought against under the series of protests and agitations for re-grouping²²) Igbomina land and people are today mainly in the Isin, Irepodun and Ifelodun LGAs of Kwara State as well as the Ora-Igbomina, Oke-Ila and Ila-Orangun people in the present Ifedayo and Ila LGAs of Osun State. These are better defined or described in the sections under historical antecedents, both geographical and historical.

We carefully selected certain specific dictions to describe the weight of influence and relationship the Igbomina 'suffered' under their different imposters. It would be common place to have the researcher, in this study, use such dictions as *onslaught* and *incursion* for the Nupe influence, *conquest and domination* for the Ilorin influenza, *raid and attack* for the Ibadan relation as well as *Imperialism and colonialism* for the British/European overall subjugation.

Ogba system is parallel to the *Ajele system* of the Oyo Empire and *Ajia system* of Ilorin. The word, Ogba itself is akin to Ajele, a Yoruba term.²³ *Ogba* was the tag-name or title given to the Nupe Residents who served as the link between the Nupe potentates and the subject people.²⁴ Hence, the *Ogba system* was the administrative style adopted by the Nupe overlords. It was a familiar institution among the classical emirates of northern Nigeria. The *Ogba* wielded great authority as the sole representative of the Etsu himself. The *Ajia System*

employed at Ilorin was thus a parallel version of the *Ogba System* of the Nupe or the *Ajele System* of Oyo and Ibadan.

An *epoch* is a period in history or life, marked by special events or characteristics. It is an orderly setting out of a body of facts or beliefs. It might also mean making public of discreditable fact(s). This suggests that this study is an embodiment of facts and beliefs, known or unknown, lost or preserved, that have already been discredited via skilful European machinations. The pre-colonial era of foreign influence was, indeed, an epoch for the Igbomina, considering the fact that it was a pathetic and traumatic time in their history, which rendered the *powerful Igbomina* people²⁵ susceptible to another foreign, European hegemony. This was exacerbated by a combination of external and internal ‘imperial’ onslaughts.

1.6. Research Methodology and Problems

Primary and secondary sources such as oral information, archival materials, personal observation and library materials were employed in this study. The limitation of Yoruba traditional oral historical sources has occasioned the use of the inter-cum-multi-and trans-disciplinary approach to the study of contemporary history. This study has, therefore, straddled into other related fields such as archaeology, linguistics, science, geography and statistics, among others; realising that traditional historical sources, whether oral or documented now prove inadequate to provide acceptable answers to all that bugs the inquisitive mind of the modern man about his past.

A tripartite dimensional approach for the theory and practice of field-work investigation prescribed by Omobiyi-Obidike²⁶ has been adopted for this research. These comprise pre-field preparations, actual field preparations and post-fieldwork. *Pre-field preparations* begin with a thorough library search, which undoubtedly is indispensable as a first step in order to enable the researcher acquaint himself with relevant studies and scholarly publications in relation to the subject matter. This took us to various libraries, national

archives, including internet search in search of relevant materials—books, journals, newspapers, magazines, periodicals and others, all of which updated our knowledge on the subject matter. Whereas *actual field-work* entails the investigator utilising in-Depth oral interviews with key informants²⁷ as well as personal observation methods, *post-fieldwork* involves transcription, recording, collation and interpretation or codification with a view to analysing them.

The gradual development of analytical history, which is also field history (i.e. a product of oral interviews and on-the-spot-investigation), is a giant stride as recently observed. Against this background, a multi-inter- and trans-disciplinary approach is being adopted with some level of emphasis on oral tradition. But it needs be noted that as much as possible, we propose the informal investigation method as against the conventional formal style. The researcher is a crusader for a paradigm shift on the method of acquiring oral tradition from formal to informal. This is because the formal method, it has been discovered, has a very high propensity for embellishments. A previous test-run of the objectivity and reliability achievable in the informal type has proven rewarding. Hence, the feedback and the feed-forward therefrom have informed the methodology adopted here.

As a proof that the research is a practical outcome of an inter-and multi-cum-trans-disciplinary approach to the study of contemporary history, this study has browsed through other fields, including archaeology, linguistics evidence, scientific, geographical and statistical data, among others; realising that traditional historical sources, whether oral or documented now prove inadequate to answer to all that bugs the mind of man about his past.

History, today, is being defined as the study of the past, which now includes the historic period during which we have written records and reliable oral traditions, and the pre-historic period for which we neither have written records nor reliable oral tradition.²⁸ The importance of archaeology, thus, lies in the fact that for several thousand millennia of

Africa's past for which there are neither written records nor reliable oral evidence, it is probably only archaeology that can be used to record man's obscure past. Oral tradition therefore, can rarely supply reliable evidence on extensive time span, while written sources cover a comparably brief period of man's history on earth. In such circumstances, the historian cannot but turn to the archaeologists for evidence of human activities in the distant past. Hence, some available archaeological data of prominent archaeologists such as Thurstan Shaw and Ade Obayemi have been employed here.²⁹

The art of writing, even though started in Africa, in Egypt, first gained currency in Europe, especially after the invention of the printing machine/press by German Johann Guttenberg in 1456.³⁰ Over time, the latter was put at an advantage since whatever is written down becomes permanent, and so it has been possible, or better still, easier to pass across to generations after them in documentary form, the values, norms, deeds, cultures, memories and heritage of the people and land, including their biases, prejudice, and chauvinism.

It may need to be stated here that it is not only until writing or documentation takes place that norms, cultures, memories, values and heritage of the people and land are preserved. With the peculiarity of their society, the pre-literate society, especially in Africa south of the Sahara had been able to device very relatively reliable means for the preservation of their people's history. Permit it to be re-emphasised here that the pre-literate people of Africa generally and Igbomina specifically, had honest historians who jealously guarded, guided, protected and preserved well-chronicled events of their society. This they guaranteed by certain well defined institutions they officiated and obliged with the preservation of the societal history and heritage, for posterity.

There were the Griots—professional oral historians and members of a caste of professional oral historians as it was in the Mali Empire,³¹ who acted as custodians of the history of the people. They were 'Human Archives' and men of high mental magnitude.³²

There were also the Chroniclers, who may be described as the living mobile encyclopaedia of their societies; although their information may be influenced by prevailing local political factors.³³ The flutters, drummers and cymbalists who often constituted a section of the Paramilitia, performed similar role at the war front,³⁴ as those attached to the palace.³⁵ Requisite worthwhile credentials included: mental alertness, physical agility, emotional stability, spiritual prowess, among others. Johnson noted the hereditary office of the kings' drummer and cymbalists through whom all traditions known were carefully handed down.³⁶ The Ile Agbonbiifa in Esie³⁷ may possibly serve as an example of the above, as well as the Oke-Ore compound in Iwo, reputed to be skilful drummers, whose progenitor reportedly migrated from the Ajiboro compound in Oyo Empire.³⁸

The multi-cum-inter-and trans-disciplinary approach to historical research has today gained currency. As such, as part of the best practices in the world today, a well-coordinated tripartite dimensional methodological approach, as appropriate for this research, has been adopted: *multi-disciplinary* depicts the study of the same research from different disciplinary perspectives. *Inter-disciplinary*, here, refers to the integration and interlocking of several disciplines for research purposes; for example, Pure Sciences generate theories to be solved by the Applied Sciences. *Trans-disciplinary* portrays the understudying of a phenomenon general to several disciplines, all coming together to unravel a mutual '*pandemic*'. This is because, "perspective", people say, "determines position" just as position, in turn, affects perspective. And not until every available relevant perspective is ransacked, one cannot get the true picture correctly. In doing this, however, cognizance must be cautiously taken of the pitfalls and weaknesses of each approach, while one utilises the strengths of each.

Problems

Aside the risk involved in travelling over Igbominaland and non-Igbomina towns while collecting oral data for this study, oral research usually poses the challenge of

objectivity. This is, perhaps, why some have arrived at the conclusion that objectivity in history can only be aimed at, but perhaps at best, unattainable.³⁹ However, objectivity is attainable by applying two inter-locking methods: *external criticism*, which involves comparison of sources for overall evidence, rejection of conjectures not justified by known facts and interpretation as warranted; and *internal criticism*, which involves the backgrounds, biases, preferences and personal intents of the creator of original documents. Some western historians felt that objectivity must be supplemented by subjectivity (i.e. the ability of the historian “to feel” a period), albeit Isichei had argued that this approach merely produces relativism rather than historical truth.⁴⁰

We equipped ourselves with requisite background knowledge from private, institutional, state, federal, and special libraries such as the libraries of the national Archives and the *Arewa Documentation Centre in Kaduna*. There some existing theses and dissertations, and colonial files and records were ransacked. Thereafter, we embarked on interviewing traditional professional historians or *griots*, who are custodians of the history of the people. The deplorable conditions of many of these libraries are however, very unfortunate. Some of the Nigerian libraries may rank highest among the most disorganised or unorganised all over.

Today, there apparently exists an increasing number of unpublished theses, dissertations and seminars papers, plus a few useful articles in notable journals and magazines on Igbomina. These works which form a significant source of the materials used are well reflected under the literature review, notes and bibliography. However, to come-by these works was not really an easy task in view of their uneven distribution in the libraries all over. The *National Archives*, in spite of their characteristic shortcoming of very scanty and often ill-arranged and uncoordinated records, yet remain indispensable to this study. In some cases, some records were already mutilated into scraps while some were not even well or

fully compiled or documented in the first instance. Also, due to old age, some of these materials have already become defaced or faded in ink, making the inscriptions erratic to read. Cases of forfeiture of vital leaflets in certain files, or loss of whole files were also noticed.

Hence, the researcher needed to cross-check one source with the other in order to eschew historical fallacies and over-blown issues. But the researcher was careful to sieve the chaff of mere sentiments or patriotic embellishments from the corn of actual historicity; always bearing in mind Elphinstone's observation and sincere warning in this regard to be cautious of swallowing hook, line and sinker the rather patriotic arrogations of respondents.⁴¹

Although this study officially terminates just at the very beginning of the colonial era, some of the colonial records and gazetteers written then appear relevant, especially aspects on the economy, geography and origin of the people as well as the peopling of Igbominaland. But the problem with archival materials is that they constitute what Aboyaji described as colonial history since those who created the archives and left the records were expatriates.⁴² Essentially, therefore, these records incorporate their bigotry, attitude and posture towards themselves, those they governed and the roles expected of each.⁴³ This reveals the danger of simple immersion in archives.

1.7. Literature Review

Isaac Newton is perhaps most popularly known for his statement: "*...if I have seen a little farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants*".⁴⁴ It would be rather unscholarly for anyone to pretend or portend that the whole embodiment of his exposé was all his personal idea. This researcher has been able to stand on the shoulders of some members of the academia whose works deserve to be accorded a place here. This has, in no small measure, greatly aided this work, if this exposé has achieved any measure of success whatsoever. The contributions and limitations of some of these earlier works provide a prelude to this study.

This section is particularly designed to provide a systematic appraisal through a thorough perusal of some of the key-literature consulted in the field. Other works consulted include archival materials obtained from provincial files, gazetteers, and some unpublished seminar papers, as well as articles in notable journals. Attempt is made to spread this review over the following literatures:

i. General Literature

ii. Literature on Igbomina

iii. Literature on Nupe

iv. Unpublished Academic works such as Theses and Dissertations.

v. Journal Articles, Magazines, Seminar and Conference papers.

i. General Literature

Quite a number of scholarly works exist on Africa, West Africa, Nigeria, and Yoruba. These were read to provide a general prelude for the study. Among these include: Atanda's *The New Oyo Empire*, Longman, (1973),⁴⁵ Afigbo's *The Warrant Chiefs...*, Longman, (1972),⁴⁶ and Asiwaju's *Western Yorubaland Under European Rule, 1889-1945*, (1976)⁴⁷ among others. However, many of these studies are too general as sources for this study.

A cursory survey of the historiography of Nigeria readily reveals that Igbomina has not been given accurate attention. *The Gazetteers of Ilorin Province* (1921⁴⁸ and 1929⁴⁹) contain some useful information on the pre-colonial history of Igbomina. Clarke,⁵⁰ who visited Igbomina in 1957, left some illuminating traveller's accounts about the 19th Century Igbomina. Smith in his *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*⁵¹ and Akintoye's *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland*⁵² made occasional references to the involvement of the Igbomina in the wars and crises of the 19th century Yorubaland. *Yorubaland up to 1800* by Akinjogbin and Ayandele in Ikime (1980)⁵³ provides remarkable exposition on Yorubaland from Ife to

Benin, Oyo and the constitutional crises, eventual collapse and consequences on Yorubaland generally, but with smattering references to Igbomina.

Some authors have only made passing remarks on Igbomina such as Johnson (1897),⁵⁴ Hogben & Kirk-Greene (1966),⁵⁵ Temple (1918),⁵⁶ and Talbot's *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, (1926).⁵⁷ Igbomina has not received any serious attention in most of the works written on Nigeria, particularly in Yorubaland. Atanda⁵⁸ made no reference to the sub-units of the Igbomina, apart from some modicum treatment of Ila. These are, at least, useful in indicating that these authors noticed the events in the area. Some of them actually portrayed the Igbomina as active and successful participant warriors, particularly in the Ekiti-parapo wars.⁵⁹

Indeed, the *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793-1893* edited by Akinjogbin (1998) may be referred to as a book of books. It contains the contributions of seasoned historians cutting across different aspects of the 19th century warfare in Yorubaland. Ade Ajayi in Chapter 1 wrote on “19th Century Wars and Yoruba Ethnicity”.⁶⁰ He delved into the pre-19th century background, the 19th century wars, the search for peace, the Colonial period, Decolonisation and Post-independence. The ethnic composition and involvement in the 19th C Wars were considered. In Chapter 3, Akinjogbin himself wrote on “Wars in Yorubaland, 1793-1893: An Analytical Categorisation”.⁶¹ In Chapter 8, Oguntomisin, a Yoruba war historian, worked on “Military Alliances in Yorubaland in the 19th Century”.⁶² Chapter 9 has Danmole’s “The Ekiti of Ilorin Emirate in the Kiriji/Ekitiparapo War”.⁶³ Awe and Olutoye in Chapter 10, wrote on “Women and Warfare in the 19th Century Yorubaland: An Introduction”.⁶⁴ Chapter 11 provides us another of Akinjogbin’s article, “The Causes of the 19th Century Yoruba Civil Wars”.⁶⁵ Chapter 12 contains Ade Ajayi’s “Fundamental Causes of the 19th Century Yoruba Wars”.⁶⁶

Akiwowo, in Chapter 17 dealt with the “War Ethics Among the Yoruba”.⁶⁷ Olutoye, and Olapade, in Chapter 18, worked on the “Implements and Tactics of War Among the

Yoruba”.⁶⁸ Adefila and Opeola, in Chapter 19, devoted their attention to the “Supernatural and Herbal Weapons in 19th Century Yoruba Warfare”.⁶⁹ Olowookere and Fagborun, in Chapter 20, wrote on the “Systems of Communication in Yoruba Wars”.⁷⁰ Ogunremi, a renowned Yoruba Economic historian, in Chapter 28, acquaints us with the “Economic Development and Warfare in 19th Century Yorubaland”.⁷¹ In Chapter 31, Olomola discussed the “Demographic Effects of the 19th Century Yoruba Wars”.⁷² Adediran in Chapter 29, wrote on “The 19th Century Wars and Yoruba Royalty”.⁷³ Chapter 43 provides an “Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey at the Site of the Kiriji/Ekitiparapo War Camps”⁷⁴ by Onabanjo. The book also contains “An Extract from Welcome Address by His Highness Oba Adelani Famodun II, the Owa of Igbajo on 23 September, 1986”,⁷⁵ as appendix, among others.

This book, which may be described as a Yoruba War Project Book is indeed, a mega-book—a book of books. These writers and their contributions, cover events throughout the Yorubaland with their plurality of kingdoms and chiefdoms.⁷⁶ Although these authors wrote on Yorubaland generally, their works have direct relevance and bearing on Igbominaland since it is an important component of Yorubaland. Beside, Yorubaland itself is, at best, incomplete without Igbomina. The different authors above included in their writings specific references to the activities of the groups being understudied in this study such as the Igbomina, Nupe, Benin, Oyo, Ilorin, Ibadan and the Europeans.

A professor of history, Isichei, in her book, *The Igbo World: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Description*, carved out a section she tagged: Postscript.⁷⁷ There, she provided *Some Guidelines for the Amateur Historian*. Although her work centres on Igboland, she provided general clues to on-the-field approaches to historians; professional, academic or amateur. To her, no one should be deterred from historical research for lack of formal training, as many academic historians themselves, including some who have made

giant feats in the study of African past receive their formal training in areas far remote from oral data collection in the field, but have by trial and error learnt to. Besides, many so-called amateurs have made notable contributions to historical study. The renowned professor of history, Ade Ajayi, for instance, noted of Johnson that *'He had no formal training in History, but had a superb sense of history'*.⁷⁸ He is even addressed as the *Historian of the Yoruba*. Isichei addressed many issues relating to the "what", "where", "when", "why", "who's" and "how" of obtaining oral historical information, recording and transmitting. This, no doubt, provides a useful workable tool for on-the-field historical research.⁷⁹

Some literatures are particularly helpful in providing a *balanced sheet* for this study: Oyebola's *The Black Man's Dilemma; Update of Events, 1976-2002*, (2002)⁸⁰ and Nwabueze's *"Colonialism in Africa: Ancient and Modern, Vol. 2"* with specific focus on Africa's inheritance from colonialism.⁸¹ They might have helped the researcher, in no small measure, from falling a victim of bias, prejudice and bigotry. They help to arouse a re-think of Rodney's *"How Europe Underdeveloped Africa"*,⁸² to raising a fundamental question—*"For how long do we over-emphasise how foreign influence undermined Igbomina, in particular, Nigeria specifically, and Africa in general?"*

ii. Literature on Igbomina

For the purpose of this study, literatures on Igbomina will attract much of our attention. It suffices to say, at this juncture, that the dearth of information, which once held sway on Igbomina is fast waning off, especially in the realms of unpublished dissertations and theses. There exists a few journal articles, conference or seminar papers, magazines or periodicals. However, it should be quickly added that there still exists relatively few written materials on pre-colonial Igbomina history, which this study is out to undertake. There has been a general influx of researchers into the colonial and post-colonial Igbomina history probably, due to the more available secondary materials, both published and unpublished.

It is necessary to state here that the actual documentation of historical events in Igbominaland did not begin until after the first half of the 20th century. Very little information is, therefore, still available in the written sources, especially published works in regard to the distant past.⁸³ For a very long time, perhaps, the only available published work on Igbomina by an Igbomina, although a pamphlet, was Dada's *A Brief History of the Igbomina*.⁸⁴ A pro-Oro Ago stand was maintained by him having hailed from there. Greater emphasis was also placed on Oro Ago. Hence, the work was borne of a rather patriotic spirit. The booklet attempted a discourse of the history of the various Igbomina sub-groups. It gave an account of the migratory pattern as well as the people's experience under their various imposters. It attempted to discuss the history of the various sub-groups in Igbominaland, but has Oro Ago as its main concern.

An X-Ray of Irepodun LGA, by Ogundele,⁸⁵ although focuses on the evolution and development of Irepodun L.G.A., provided some useful contributions to Igbomina history. However, it is conspicuously evident that the pamphlet was more of a political jamboree, propelled by both political and patriotic inclinations as it eulogises some political juggernauts in the Igbomina society. This may be inferred as he quoted this Shakespearean refrain, "*Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness bestowed on them*".⁸⁶ He is a geographer by training. However, his work provided some useful guide and information, especially in chapter one on the history of the Igbomina and the different groups of Igbomina immigrants, which he divided into three batches from: Ile-Ife, Oyo-Ile and Ketu respectively. But his work is pro-Omu Aran. For instance, predicating his submission on 'oral evidence', he arrogated the leadership of the first group of Igbomina immigrants who left Ile-Ife to Olomu Aperan, who was said to be the son of Omutoto, one of the numerous wives of Oduduwa and a niece of Yemoja, the mother of Oranmiyan. Olomu was said to have left Ile-Ife with the *Ogbo*, at the time when all royal princes were leaving Ile-Ife to found Kingdoms.

It is said that the Ogbo is still in Omu-Aran till today. In support of this claim, a college in Omu-Aran is christened, Ogbo Grammar School.

It needs be noted that accounts differ on the issue of who the paramount of all the Igbomina kings was.⁸⁷ Since his work centred on the history of Irepodun LGA from its inception, it includes some of the aspects of the histories of what he called the four other children she gave birth to (i.e. Isin, Oke-Ero, etc). His work also provided a geographical survey of Igbomina, and being a geographer by training, this substantiates the fact that this study adopts the inter-disciplinary approach, which involves a close collaboration with related disciplines such as archaeology, economics, agriculture, political science, comparative linguistics, geography and even journalism.

Perhaps, the first comprehensive publication or rather compilation of Igbomina history was Afolabi's *Igbominaland in the Context of Yoruba History*.⁸⁸ While this feat is highly commendable, even a hasty observer would easily discover it to have been borne out of a purely patriotic drive. There is nothing so bad about being patriotic, but the problem here boils down to the objectivity of the historical documentation. Being a graduate of Industrial Chemistry, he lacks the professional expertise to sieve the chaff of sweeping embellishments from the corn of actual historicity. His patriotic stance made him to make a mountain out of a molehill of the Ila tradition, being an Ila son himself. It could be said that his publication is to Igbomina what Johnson's *History of the Yoruba* is to Yoruba. It needs be duly noted here, that the strength of this historical documentation, a daring attempt and a challenge to historians, lies in it being a rich source of primary data and archival documents.

'*War and Change in 19th Century Igbomina*' by Afolayan⁸⁹ is a chapter contribution in the gargantuan project tagged *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793-1893* edited by Akinjogbin. Afolayan gave a hasty touch on the geographical and historical antecedents of Igbomina. He also provided a synopsis of the invasions the Igbomina suffered under the

Nupe (1744-1795), Fulani (1823[1835]-1897) and the Ibadan between the late 1840s through the 1860s. These constant military pressures from their more powerful neighbours, according to him, brought their indigenous traditional system under considerable stress in the 18th and 19th centuries. He also delved into the devastating consequences these had on Igbomina. According to him, these...

*...were not just important because of the ruins they caused, but more because of the profoundly lasting social, political and military re-organisation consequent upon them.*⁹⁰

Hence, generally speaking, war had often acted as an instrument of socio-political change.

His geographical description of Igbomina as having been located within *Latitude 8^o and 9^o North and Longitude 4^o and 6^o East*, as against *Longitude 8^o and 9^o North and Latitude 4^o and 6^o East*⁹¹ even though might have been an oversight or typographical error (since an earlier work of his on Igbomina has the correct description) is rather misleading. This has misled several writers.⁹² If it was a typographical error, it was a rather costly one, indeed.

Though a 43-page pamphlet, Afolayan's *101 Facts About Igbomina*⁹³ provides important information on Igbomina such as names of 235 villages in Igbomina-Kwara (although certain duplications were noted) and 4 (four) in Igbomina-Osun, making 239 altogether. (See Appendix III) Although the list is in-exhaustive, as Igbomina is said to have over 250 towns and villages, some of the facts therein are unknown even to respected stakeholders and elder-statesmen in Igbomina as confessed by one.⁹⁴

iii. Literature on Nupe

*Political Changes and Continuity in Nupeland (Decline and Regeneration of Edegi Ruling Dynasty of Nupeland, 1805-1945*⁹⁵ by Idrees provided appreciable knowledge of the land and people, their economic system, Nupe title system, Nupe King lists and genealogical trees, among other things. Nadel's *A Black Byzantium, The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*⁹⁶

refers to the West African society as far from ‘simple’ or ‘primitive’. Its social and economic complexity is comparable only with the civilizations of imperial Rome, Byzantium of medieval Europe.” Nadel referred to some groups who settled in the region but who *Nupenised* themselves both economically and politically. They inter-married with the Nupe, forgot their language and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. The extent to which some Igbomina were *Nupenised* by virtue of their geographical proximity and cultural affinity with the Nupe is part of the task of this study. A close look at some Igbomina groups may easily attest to this. For example, the Oro-Ago, Share and Tsaragi peoples of Ifelodun LGA and Rore people of Irepodun LGA of Kwara State. Nadel, undoubtedly justifies the furtherance of knowledge of Nupe history.

*Studies in Yoruba History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor S. O. Biobaku*⁹⁷ by Olusanya (ed), contained Obayemi’s “*History, Culture, Yoruba and Northern Factors*”. Obayemi revealed that iconographic and art-historical studies have greatly added to the understanding and mapping of traits associated with the ‘Yoruba Religion’. Yoruba traditional religion has received far greater attention by foreign and indigenous scholars and authors than any other traditional religion in Africa South of the Sahara. He suggests probable Yoruba-Nupe exchanges along the lines of ancestor personification, for example. He also provides empirical correlation between Yoruba and Nupe socio-religious relations.

iv. Unpublished Academic Works such as Theses and Dissertations

Asonibare's “A History of Chieftaincy Institutions in the Pre-colonial Igbominaland”⁹⁸ concentrated his focus on the nature of chieftaincy ceremonies and their significance prior to the 19th C. as well as foreign influence on the Igbomina chieftaincy institutions in the 19th century. He delved into the early political influence of Ilorin, Ibadan, and Nupe, the European colonial administration, the impact of Christianity as well as the changes and adaptations in the traditional institutions.

"The Impact of the 19th century Yoruba Wars on Isinland" by Gege⁹⁹ although focused on Isinland, provided relevance to this study since Isin is a component unit of Igbomina. The work digs into the involvement of Isin warriors in the Yoruba wars—Agannigan (i. e. Ibadan marauders) and the Kiriji Wars. A brief implication of those wars on Isinland was documented. Besides its pro-Isanlu stance, some historical fallacies are noticeable in the work. Thanks to the fore-knowledge on the area, plus a cross-check with some other village traditions, historical objectivity was almost completely caged, in some instances.

One of such historical fallacies wrongly made Iwo, Oke-Aba (Obate) and Iwo Odu-Ore (otherwise known as Iwo Alagbon), who truly belonged to the same kingdom, blood brothers. Iwo and Igbaja traditions have it that Igbaja, Ora, Iwo and Ikosin were the actual brothers in that order, who migrated as royal princes from Old Oyo sometimes around the late 17th or early 18th century¹⁰⁰ The consensus acknowledgment of this tradition among the communities, plus common boundaries as well as common historical and kinship bond, carefully preserved, till date, attest to this. Furthermore, *Akitimo* was the battle ground where Iwo and Oke-Aba, who were neighbours jointly and successfully rallied together to ward off a common enemy—the Nupe invaders.¹⁰¹ The claim that *Akitimo* was a village on its own, which became scattered by the Nupe wars of 1769-1777 and later breaking into Iwo, Oke-Aba and Odu-Ore is but an aberration; and the fission, a historical blunder. *Akitimo* was never a village. *Akitimo* (i.e. A-kiti-mo-o) was the common ground for a military alliance or confederacy against their common foe—Nupe.

"A Study of Igbomina Economy in the Colonial Era, 1897-1960" by Aboyeji¹⁰² provided a fascinating study of the area. His emphasis however, is on the economic life of the people, while the periodisation makes it predominantly colonial. Its relevance to this work lies basically in the introductory chapter where the historical and geographical backgrounds of the Igbomina people were discussed. It is an earlier research study by this researcher.

Hassan, wrote his M. A. thesis on "Aspects of Economic History of Igbomina, 1800-1960".¹⁰³ Like the previous literatures, he shared similar strength and weakness to this particular study. But its relevance heightens in the area of periodisation. The fact that Hassan has explored a little bit into the latter pre-colonial age gives the study perhaps the closest affinity to the present study, despite its prime focus on the economy. It however, needs be noted that he adheres to certain traditions, which are parochial in outlook. He must have relied on a one-sided tradition. For instance, he arrogated the Awoji deity to Oke-Aba instead of Iwo.

Aboyeji, wrote on "The Impact of Colonial Rule on the Indigenous Culture and Institutions of Isinland."¹⁰⁴ The study from a bird-eye-view lacked a definite periodisation. His focus was on the cultural aspect of Isin history vis-à-vis colonialism. Its relevance comes in here since Isinland is an integral part of Igbomina. Brilliant expositions and submissions were made on the change and continuity in relation to indigenous culture and institutions of Isinland in the light of Imperial rule.

One may not be able to do justice to this review, as there are so many relevant or related literatures and theses that deserve it. Some of them even concentrated on Igbomina land. Examples include: Raji's "Islam and Society in Igbominaland, C. 1800-1968: A Historical Analysis",¹⁰⁵ and "Demystifying the Proselytising Mission: A Case Study of Ilorin Overrule in Igbomina, C. 1835-1967",¹⁰⁶ Adeyemi's "Protest and Agitation in Igbomina, 1933-1952";¹⁰⁷ Ajide's "Isin Settlements: Their Evolution";¹⁰⁸ Aiyedun's "Changes in Settlement and Occupational Patterns in Igbaja District, From Earliest Times to the Present";¹⁰⁹ to mention but a few.

v. Journal Articles, Magazines, Seminar and Conference papers

Apata wrote an article titled “*The Ogba System: A Study of Nupe Imperialism in the Northeast Yorubaland, 1840-1897*”.¹¹⁰ It needs be noted that virtually all communities in both the northwest and northeast of Eastern Yorubaland (especially the frontier settlements) became Nupe dependencies through conquest. The same pattern of administration, captioned and based on the Ogba System was imposed on them by the Nupe overlords. He understudied the Nupe conquest from 1840-1882 as well as under the two very prominent Etsu—Masaba (1833-1873) and Umaru Maijigi (1873-1882) as well as the nature and running of the Ogba System. He also delved into the resistance against Nupe Imperialism and the collapse of the *Ogba* System via the refusal to pay tributes, followed by general protests, passive resistance and armed revolt. On their own side, Igbomina under the same potentates were bearing their heavy burden of the Nupe onslaught. Hence, this study offers a useful guide for a comparative analysis, since the Igbomina share the same geographical and historical antecedent with northeast Yorubaland.

Some unpublished memoranda that add value to this study include: “*Actualising the Desire for Self-determination*”¹¹¹ being a memorandum for the creation of Igbomina State, submitted to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Olusegun Obasanjo and the National Assembly, Abuja by a group known as Asepo Omo Igbomina in April, 2005; “*A Memorandum Presented to the National Assembly for Igbomina State*”¹¹² by the Movement for Igbomina State on May 30th 2012. These contain the reactions of the Igbomina to the National Political Reforms Conference and the Minority Question, the persistent liberation struggles of the Yoruba (Igbomina) people administratively grouped in the north, a rationale for the request for a state, the composition of the proposed state and the economic viability of the proposed state.

The contributions and limitations of some of these earlier studies form part of the basis for the present effort, which aims at filling the gaps in the existing studies in the history of Igbominaland. The various shortcomings of most of the identified works notwithstanding, they have been of tremendous relevance to the present study. Several other authors whose works contributed to the success of this research in one way or the other, under this category, are duly acknowledged in the reference and bibliography sections.

1. 8. Geographical Description

For as long as certain men share certain things in common than other men, which consequently bring them closer together in social relation, either in terms of ethnic, religious, historical or geographical affiliations, whether for peace or for war, lines of divide are already delineated. An awareness of certain aspects of the physical and human geography of the Igbomina area is indispensable to the understanding of its historical and economic experiences. This section will attempt a review of Igbomina under different geographical frameworks.

Language and Dialectic Groupings: Language has been described as the vehicle of ideas. Greenberg, in *The Languages of Africa*,¹¹³ viewed the Yoruba language with appropriateness as the parent source of all the languages in the Bight of Guinea and of many in southern Sudan. Whereas myriads of expressions akin to those found in the Old Testament point to it as having a derivation or at least a very ancient connection, with the Hebrew, the syntax or peculiarity of its construction shares some semblance with the Greek and Latin. As earlier noted, the term, Igbomina, refers to the people, the land they occupy¹¹⁴ and the version of the Yoruba language they speak. At all events, by the 16th century, a number of distinct sub-cultural groups were identifiable in the Yoruba area, based on regional variations of the common language differences in political and social arrangements, details of land tenure and local emphasis on particular deities from the common pantheon. The principal ones were the

Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti, Ebira, Owo, Akoko, Ondo, Ilaje, Ijebu, Egbadò, Awori, Egba, Owu and Oyo. On the eastern and western fringes and around the coastal lagoons, there were other related groups. Prominent among those in the north-eastern section of Yorubaland were the Igbomina.

Obayemi in "The Yoruba and Edo-speaking peoples and their neighbours before 1600 AD."¹¹⁵ opined that language, more than any other consideration, forms the basis for the usage of the names: 'Yoruba', (originally the name of the Oyo only), 'Edo' (strictly speaking, the Benin district), 'Nupe', 'Igala' or 'Idoma', may be adapted to Igbomina. Perhaps, more than any other consideration, also, language forms the principal basis for the usage of the name 'Igbomina' for the Igbomina people.

Linguistically, the Igbomina, for the sake of clarity, may be broadly categorised into the '*Mo san*' and '*Mo ye*' dialectic groupings. The *Mo yee* group, which fell under Lafiagi or Nupe control in the northern¹¹⁶ (north-eastern¹¹⁷) section of Igbomina, comprised Oro-Ago, Ile-Ire, Ora, Oko-Olla, Oke-Ode, Idofin and Agunjin districts. The *Mo san* group, which predominately lived in the southern¹¹⁸ (south-western¹¹⁹) section and which came under the Fulani rule based at Ilorin in the pre-colonial era included Ajase, the Iwo group, Igbaja, Isin, Omu-Aran, Eku-Mesan Oro, Esie, Share, Omupo, Idofian and Ila Orangun Districts.¹²⁰ However, the Ila group (i.e. Ila Orangun, Oke-Ila-Orangun and Ora-Igbomina) in the south-eastern section remains precariously under Ibadan influence. The '*Mo san*' group, however, may be further split into the real '*Mo san*'—(Isin area for example) and the '*Mo han*'¹²¹—(Arandun area, for instance) groups.

In West Africa, as elsewhere in the world, ethnic boundaries are not easy to fix. Constant population expansion and the resultant socio-cultural contacts among different groups often frustrate such attempts, and it becomes difficult to decide where one ethnic

group begins and where another ends.¹²² The languages are closely related, most of them being classified under the “*Kwa*” sub-group of the Niger-Congo family of languages.¹²³

Ethnic Composition and Population: The Yoruba is said to form the largest ethnic group in the forest belt of West Africa, although geography-wise, monolithically positioned. Igbomina is one of the major ethnic groupings found in eastern Yorubaland. The Igbomina are a distinct dialectic unit of the Yoruba. They are one of the major ethnic groupings found in eastern Yorubaland.¹²⁴ They are pure Yoruba.¹²⁵ They are made up of many sub-units such as the Ila, Ipo, Oro, Aran, Iyanga, Isin, Irese, Esisa, Ile-Ire, Oke-Ode and Share. There are well over 250 Igbomina towns and villages.¹²⁶

The Igbomina have been described differently: Talbot in his *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, regarded them as true Yoruba under the sovereignty of the Alaafin but under the direct leadership of the Orangun of Ila.¹²⁷ Hermon-Hodge described them as “another branch of the Yoruba stock whose exact origin is as doubtful as that of the Ekitis.”¹²⁸ Johnson held that it would, perhaps, be more correct to say they are “Oyos with Ekiti sympathies”.¹²⁹ Clarke, who visited Igbomina (Ila) as far back as 1854, did not regard them as part of the Yoruba country though he was aware that they spoke the Yoruba language.¹³⁰ In his own case, Smith¹³¹ noted that the Igbomina formed a distinct group within their own states.

But whatever variance, the Igbomina have a unique identity that makes them distinct from other Yoruba. They are indisputably a sub-group of the Yoruba, being descendants of one of Oduduwa’s children or grandchildren (local tradition claims it is Orangun), Oduduwa himself being the progenitor of the Yoruba race. Orangun Ile-Ila, according to documented local tradition, was the second son (but the fourth child) of Okanbi, the only son of Oduduwa.¹³² The Igbomina people now constitute a mixture of the Nupe, Fulani and Yoruba as a result of inter-tribal marriage as evident in areas such as Igbaja, Share, Idofian and Oke-Ode Districts.¹³³

The Igbomina area, perhaps, to lend some credence to Johnson's claim above, was said to have included Illofa, Ekan, Odo-Owa, Osi, Oshin, and Obo, whose peoples are no more particularly keen in joining their Igbomina brethren.¹³⁴ This might provide a historical rationale for the inclusion of Ekiti and Oke-Ero LGAs in the on-going proposed Igbomina state, with a projected population of 708, 220 people in 2010.¹³⁵ The projection was drawn from the approximate 625, 966 population figures based on the available 2006 census (although controversial)—a population which almost doubled the entire population of a sovereign country—Cape Verde in Year 2003. It also projects a population of 781, 737 by the end of Year 2015—a rationale to exist as a state within a country based on that international criterion.¹³⁶ The 2006 population census' results published in 2007, corroborates the above population figure. The populations of Ifelodun (206, 042), Irepodun (148, 610), Isin (59,738) LGAs in Kwara state, with Ifedayo (37, 058) and Ila (62, 049) in Osun state total 513, 497 people. Adding Oke-Ero (57, 619) and Ekiti (54, 850) LGAs, the census figure stood at 625, 966;¹³⁷ not counting other Igbomina communities that appear to have been subsumed and acculturated into the LGAs of the ever-expanding Ilorin emirate.

Territorial Boundary and Location: Asonibare¹³⁸ suggested that prior to the incursion of the various foreign influences of local and external overlords into the area, Igbominaland might have been a single territory stretching from Share, headquarters of the present Ifelodun LGA of Kwara State, to Ila-Orangun and Ora, presently in Osun State. Consequent upon external intrusions into the territory and the attendant ripple effects, and notably through the instrumentality of the British appointed Boundary Adjustment Commission in the early 20th century, the northern Igbomina territorial district now found in Kwara State was demarcated from their southern counterparts.¹³⁹ Let it be noted here that the former northern Igbomina country under Nupe constituted the Ifelodun L.G.A while the then southern Igbomina under Ilorin constituted the Irepodun L.G.A,¹⁴⁰ from which Isin L.G.A was carved in 1996 under the Abacha administration, which brought LGAs in Nigeria to 774.¹⁴¹ The map of Igbominaland and many other areas were, thus, altered.

MAP I

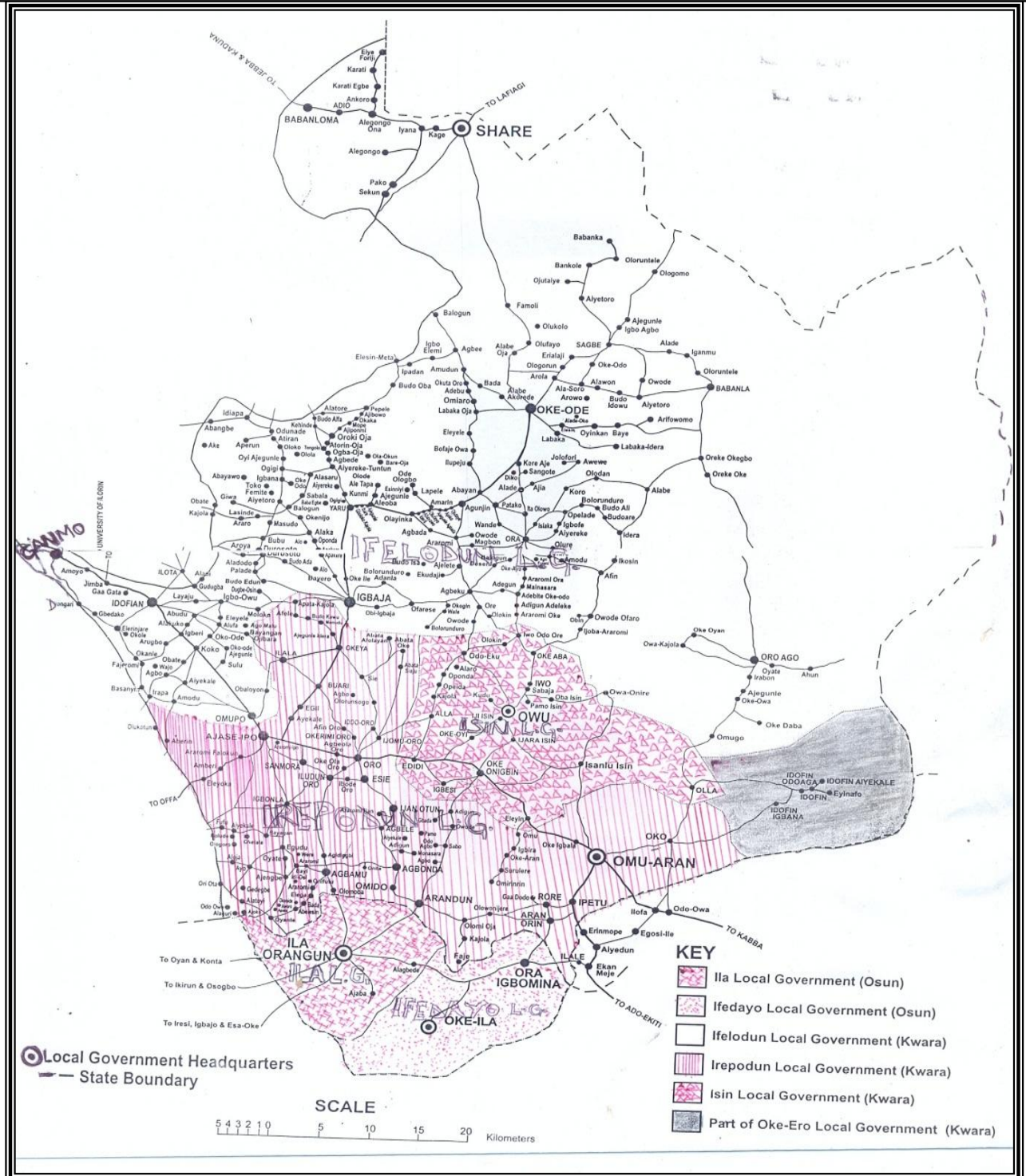
A MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING KWARA & OSUN STATES; HOME OF THE IGBOMINA



SOURCE: Adapted from Odeigah, T. N. "The Eastern Niger-Delta Economy Under Colonial Rule; 1885-1960" Unpublished PhD Thesis prepared for Final Defense, Department of History and International Studies, Kogi State University, Anyigba, 2015, p xv.^{141b}

MAP II

A MAP SHOWING ALL THE IGBOMINA VILLAGES AND TOWNS IN THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS



Produced & Printed by: BISI ADE & COMPANY
(Adapted by ABOYEJI, Adeniyi Justus, 2013)

Hogben and Kirk-Greene in *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria...* noted that the ‘powerful’ Igbona (i.e. Igbomina) predominated in the area to the south and east of Ilorin town.¹⁴² The Igbomina reportedly formed at least, three-quarters of the inhabitants of Ilorin province, occupying a large area extending as far as Ila-Orangun in Oyo province; Ila being the most southerly town of this area. To the north of the Ijesha and the Ekiti, and east from Oyo live the Igbomina. Igbomina is a major sub-group of the Yoruba nation, found in the Eastern part of the Yoruba country. The term refers to the people and land they occupied.¹⁴³ Igbomina is said to fall between Longitude 8⁰ and 9⁰ North and Latitude 4⁰ and 6⁰ East and is located on the south-eastern side of Ilorin¹⁴⁴ with an area of land covering about 66, 709²kms.¹⁴⁵ Before the Fulani invasion, the Igbomina were said to have occupied some 900 square miles between the south-west boundary of the province, to the Yagba District on the East, and a few miles of Ilorin town on the north.¹⁴⁶ Johnson also noted that:

*Before the advent of the Fulanis, the powerful [northern] Igbomina sub-tribe ... virtually occupied some of hundred of a square miles reaching from the southern Nigeria border on the south of the Yagba Districts, on the east, and to within a few miles of Ilorin on the north.*¹⁴⁷

All Igbomina towns, apart from the Oke-Ila, Ajaba, Ila-Orangun sub-unit and Ora-Igbomina, in the present Ila and Ifedapo LGAs of Osun State,¹⁴⁸ are presently located in Kwara State of Nigeria. They are particularly found in the whole of Isin, Ifelodun and Irepodun L.G.A of the State. However, other pockets of Igbomina towns have been discovered in other districts of Kwara State, including Jeba in Lanwa District, Apado in the Iponrin District, Apa-Ola, Joroma, Iloa, Fufu, among others in Akanbi District and Ogbondoroko in Afon District, now classified as Ilorin Emirate.¹⁴⁹ Dada has revealed that the mother of *Sulu Gambari*, the ninth emir of Ilorin was an Igbomina from Agbeyangi in Iponrin District of Ilorin East L.G.A.¹⁵⁰

Igbominaland is bounded to the west by Ilorin; to the north-east by the Yagba; to the south-east by the Ekiti; to the north by the Nupe; and to the southwest by the Ibolo, while she shares her northern boundary with the Yoruba of present Osun State. Clarke made attempts at a map of the Igbomina country.¹⁵¹

Rivers: Throughout history, the presence of water has been both life-giving and strategic. Whether one lives in a dry climate or a rainforest, water is a non-negotiable necessity. In the era of state formation, empire-building as well as founding of settlements, knowing whether to find a place of water can mean the difference between life and death.

Important rivers, most of which flow along the mountain valleys, water the Igbomina towns and villages. These include Kokoto in Omugo; Oko at Irabon, Arigun and Obu in Oro-Ago; Ogun, Eleyo, Adu, Ayaba, Omi-Oke, Omi-Arin, etcetera at Iwo; Oyi, rising in the south-west of the Omu-Isanlu District and flowing north-east into the River Niger between Shonga and Lafiagi; River Oyun rising in Ajase; River Oshin, which practically encircles all the Igbomina towns with the exception of two or three, rises in the Ife Division, near Ila and flows from south to north into the River Niger; the River Oro, rising in the Osi District and flowing north-east into the River Niger near Lafiagi; Awere River, etcetera. However, in his remark, Elphinstone revealed that none of these Rivers was very navigable; while some were relatively deep, some being merely running deep streams in the rainy seasons and nearly dry in the dry season.¹⁵² These Rivers were of immense benefits to the people as they were used for domestic, economic and agricultural purposes. They also provided livelihood for some, especially for those whose occupation was fishing. Ogundele reported in his *An X-Ray of Irepodun LGA*¹⁵³ that River Asa used to be the traditional boundary between the Olupo of Ajase and the Emir of Ilorin. Aiyedun confirmed that the founders of many Igbomina communities such as Igbaja, Ora, Iwo and Ikosin who came from Oyo at the same time, settled by the rivers Obaakefun, Ogun, Awua and Awere respectively.¹⁵⁴

Vegetation: Vegetation type is another geographical factor, which played a significant role in the historical and economic development of the area. The level of rainfall allowed for luxuriant grasses that attracted pastoralists or nomads and their herds while also creating favourable conditions for agriculture. Smith, in his *Kingdoms of the Yoruba...* noted that as with the Ekiti and other Yoruba groups too, the Igbomina environment straddles the forest and the savannah.¹⁵⁵ Igbomina is thus, a frontier Yoruba state, standing in the middle-belt position and strategically situated as gateway between the South and north of Nigeria. Afolayan, argued in his “Igbomina Under Colonial Rule...” that vegetation actually made Igbomina a focal point in the struggle for power between and among the forest powers to the south and the savannah powers to the north, over the years.¹⁵⁶ The possibility of the cultivation of a variety of crops made the region attractive to many ambitious immigrants.

Topography: The geography of eastern Yorubaland has always been conducive to human habitation. The rugged topography and marshy section provided adequate places of refuge for those fleeing from enemies. In “A Study of Igbomina Economy...”, Aboyeji argued that one major factor that led to the formation of most of the settlements in the region, was the desire for safety.¹⁵⁷ In his own remark on the subject matter, Adeyemi noted particularly that hill-settlements were usually resorted to for protection during the pre-colonial eras of slave raids and wars.¹⁵⁸ Temple also remarked that the southeast of Ilorin province was extremely hilly, with precipitous rocks while tin had also been reportedly found in the extreme southeast of the province.¹⁵⁹

Obayemi¹⁶⁰ noted that hills exceeding 600 meters (2, 000 feet) were found in northeast Yorubaland. The hill country, although difficult, was inhabited. This area was well noted for its many hills, some of which stretch in long range for many kilometres, culminating in the adoption of hill-settlement styles by the people. Aiyedun revealed that, whereas the towns on the hills relied on the hills enveloping them for defence, with no

tradition of wall-building, settlements on the plains such as Igbaja, Adanla, Ofarese and Agunjin, built walls round themselves for defence and also relied on bushes surrounding them.¹⁶¹ Considering the sites of many Igbomina settlements such as Alabe, Oreke, Oke-Oyan, Afin, Owode Ofaro and Ikosin, one would better understand what prompted Bowen's alarm that: "*Nothing but the terror of war could have planted these villages in such places as these.*"¹⁶² However, following the introduction of British administration and the relative peace that followed, many of the settlements on the hills moved down to the plains while those on the plains expanded from their former compact character. Thus, as revealed by Aiyedun, in 1914, Oke-Aba moved down from the hill noted for Aba trees, Oke-Ode between 1919 and 1921, Afin 1930, Oreke 1931, Ofaro 1930 as well as Alabe and Ikosin.¹⁶³

The importance of hills and mountains as places easy for defence and therefore, focal points for settlement, need not be over-emphasised. In his "Political Changes and Continuity in Traditional Institutions in Oro-Ago District, 1900-1990" Malomo listed some of such prominent hills as having included Osa, Odia, Oke Owa, Oke Ayin and Oganyin in Oro-Ago District.¹⁶⁴ Others included the *Alawoji hill at Iwo* and Alaguso at Ijara-Isin, to mention just a few.

Ecology: On his journey east, from Ijesa to Ila, Clarke left this geographical description:

*...I entered a beautiful wooded level... exceedingly rich. It was a wooded country, well watered and sufficiently broken to render it healthy when brought into a state of cultivation. The soil of the more elevated regions is mixture of clay and sands quite common in forests of this country, and well adopted to agriculture. Ten or twelve miles from Ila, our road led us through a low, marshy, black-looking country, and an open field of uninviting and almost impenetrable forests. The red ironstone was very abundant.*¹⁶⁵

Yet, according to Rodney, European evidence, in certain aspects, may be said to be the best evidence in that it can hardly be said to have been a pro-African propaganda.¹⁶⁶

Aiyedun revealed in his "Changes in Settlement and Occupational Patterns in Igbaja District..." that Igbomina fell within the Ilorin Province, which had been dubbed, '*the Market Garden of Nigeria*'.¹⁶⁷ The area had good climatic conditions favourable for the growth of both cash and food crops such as cocoa (*Theobroma Cacao*), oil palm (*Elaeis Guineensis*),

kola nuts (*Cola Acuminata*), coffee (*Coffea Brevipes*), cashew (*Anacardium Ocidentalis*) and cotton (*Gossypium Barbadense*), orange (*Citrus Sinensis*)—cash crops; as well as yam (*Dioscorea spp*), cassava (*Manihot Esculanta*), plantain (*Musa Sapientumvar Paradisiaca*), guinea corn (*Sorghum Caudatum*), maize (*Zeamays*),¹⁶⁸ among others—food crops. It also has potentials for animal husbandry, fisheries and bee hives for honey keeping. “Memorandum for the Creation of Igbomna State”¹⁶⁹ also claimed that marble, granite, clay and other precious stones such as kaolin, gold and talc are found in Igbomina.

Generally speaking, therefore, Igbomina had a relatively strategic and advantageous position to both benefit economically from trade with and also suffer from the more powerful but hostile potentates from the north and south. The country was extensive having streams, forests, rocks and hills, with many curious and beautiful things therein and often used for hunting and game.

1.8 Historical Background of Igbomina

Oral evidence is, perhaps, the most significant source for the early history of the Yoruba peoples among other non-written sources of various kinds. This, however, need to be supplemented with the archaeological and linguistic research findings and inferences drawn from the outcome of ethnographic mapping of contemporary cultures and socio-political organisations.¹⁷⁰ The Igbomina have well authenticated traditions, which buttress inferences from auxiliary studies. This could serve as a good starting point for an exploration into the history of the people.

Archaeology, probably, provides the only means by which man’s remote, pre-historic past may be known. Although this, it may be said, remains yet at infancy in West Africa, archaeologists have revealed that man’s ancestral precursors had, for long, occupied the West African sub-region. Pre-historic and archaeological studies revealed that the earth is some four-thousand-six-hundred-million years old (4,600,000,000 i.e. 4.6 billion years).¹⁷¹ The

implications for archaeological findings reveal that: one, there have been considerable populations in this region for several thousand years; and two, that such populations seem to have been physically and culturally continuous with the contemporary dwellers.¹⁷² Shaw's archaeological discoveries confirm that man has been living in the West African sub-region for a reasonably long time, probably prior to the differentiation of the ethnic groups, which now inhabit the region.¹⁷³ Within Yorubaland, some archaeological data also demonstrate the antiquity of human settlement.¹⁷⁴ Inferences from linguistic studies suggest that the Yoruba occupied their present habitat thousands of years ago.¹⁷⁵ Whereas a cave at Iwo Eleru, adjoining Akure, is said to have produced a skeleton with a *radio carbon date* of about 9, 000 B. C., linguistic evidence purports that the Yoruba language has been spoken uninterruptedly within the area for years upwards four millennia.¹⁷⁶

Mythical and legendary stories of origin are a common phenomenon, not only in Yorubaland, but also almost throughout Africa and in places that remained for long without the writing tradition. Remarking on this development, Johnson noted that:

*The origin of the Yoruba nation is involved in obscurity. Like the early history of most nations, the commonly received accounts are for the most part, purely legendary. The people being unlettered, and the language unwritten, all that is known is from traditions carefully handed down...through a hereditary office of ... king's drummers, and cymbalists...*¹⁷⁷

Local traditions emphasise the existence of fairly well-defined states in Igbominaland in pre-colonial times. Apparently the earliest and most notable is said to be the Ila Kingdom, whose ruler, the Orangun is traditionally regarded as the leader of Igbomina.¹⁷⁸ The Igbomina claim to have migrated from Ile-Ife the same time the Alaafin did. They were said to have been guided by a distinct brand of machete, called the opa ogbo (ogbo staff); as the charm they received at Ile-Ife.¹⁷⁹

Available evidence suggests how one Chief Onaolapo, the Baba-kekere in the Orangun's palace, in 1949, recalling reminiscences of the story handed over to him by his

forebears and other reliable sources, claimed that the Orangun was the head of Igbomina.¹⁸⁰

Orangun was one of the descendants of Oduduwa, the precursor of the Yoruba. When he was finally leaving Ife, to found his own kingdom, probably due to political emergencies or chieftaincy quarrels,¹⁸¹ his father gave him the ogbo with which to trace his path through the grove to the site where his father would have him go and be established. Raji added that the leader of the team was fabled to be an Ile-Ife prince, liable for the militaries, and reputed to be an icon, and perhaps, a legendary soldier.

As an imperial doyen, who had countless slaves and subjects answerable to him, one may reasonably not expect Orangun himself to have led the way through the grove, particularly considering the magnitude of the authority wielded by Yoruba royalty then. There was every possibility that he delegated someone else to lead the way through. Yet, his forerunner status in the team was unhampered. This might have coined the “Ologbomona” nickname for him. The contingent was then known as the Ogbomona from where the word Igbomina evolved¹⁸² (i.e. the club knows the path to the locale to which father directed us) over time.

Having established and consolidated himself in the designated area, Ajagunla who was said to be the first Orangun, gave directives to the headmen among his followers to look for their own convenient spots and establish themselves. Some of the places where Orangun’s followers established, as it is claimed in that tradition, included Omu-Aran, Apa, Oro, Ajase, Isin (Isanlu); Igbaja, Oke-Ode, Babanla, Ora, Share, Iwo and Oro-Ago. In all these places, the same tradition was observed at national festivals; the dialect, names, titles, and usages being the same. These people were said to have consolidated themselves long before the advent of the Ilorin or Fulani.¹⁸³

Furthermore, Ilorin town itself, it is said, at first, belonged to the Alaafin of Oyo. Meanwhile, the Alaafin and Orangun were said to be brothers of the same father. Afolayan had, in a similar way, argued that Ilorin was originally an Igbomina village under Oyo, that:

...the 19th C crises transformed Ilorin from an insignificant Igbomina village to the most dominant centre of power in the region...The 19th C wars in Yoruba countries had far reaching and revolutionary consequences on Igbomina. War became the progenitor and accelerator of change¹⁸⁴

The Mallam Alimi-led Hausa-Fulani, not only seized Afonja's ill-gotten gains when nemesis struck, but advanced in the characteristic manner of the Fulani, to expand the territorial bounds of Ilorin proper to Igbomina and its neighbourhood.¹⁸⁵ Thus, of all the sons of Oduduwa, the Orangun and other principal monarchs of Igbomina tribes seem hitherto to be the most ill-fated because hostile conditions leading to the establishment of a political frontier for governmental expediency had wielded them to political dissections to which they are incapable of pulling their full weight of responsibilities for progress in a natural manner. Thus, from Sokoto, the Fulani came to meet these Igbomina where they are presently.¹⁸⁶

Historical evidence has displayed that Oyo's early raiding activities on its neighbours, which led to demographic upheavals in central Yorubaland as evident in the destruction of early settlements of the Owu, Imeri and Igbona probably lasted till the early 16th century. This informed many people to abscond from their homes to safer places. Thus, the hilly and marshy regions of Yorubaland became a magnetic field with pockets of colonists settling there. This was when the western Yoruba region was occupied by the Sabe, Idaisa, Ketu and Anago peoples. Such a group was one founded by one Dirin just before the arrival of the groups that set the Ketu kingdom on inferno. Dirin's tradition traced the origin of this group, which left at a time of unspecified hardship, guided by the same *Opa Ogbo*, through the Oyan River southward until it arrived in the present town¹⁸⁷ of Ila-Orangun in the Igbomina country.

Meanwhile, the Eweka Dynasty is but an episode in Benin history and not the actual beginning of her history. In the same vein, even at Ile-Ife, there are claims to pre-Oduduwa inhabitants of Ife in certain myths. For example, one of such was one Agbonmiregun (also known as Setilu), Orunmila's son, who was acclaimed the father of the Ifa Oracle. Hence, like the pre-Adamic and pre-Edenic as well as pre-Ile-Ife humans, we also have the pre-Ila and pre-Igbomina inhabitants of what later became Igbominaland. A closer examination of Igbomina traditions reveals that prior to the emergence of the Ila kingdom itself (claimed to be the origin of Igbomina, traced to the legendary Orangun of Ila, a son or grandson of Oduduwa) there were said to have been sizeable communities all over the Igbomina country. Traditions in different parts of Igbomina are replete with the existence of an "ancient" Oba state, reportedly broken up by immigrants whose leaders probably established new states in various parts of the region.¹⁸⁸ This might be the beginning of the fission of the Oba people into the different Oba segments. Oba reportedly grew so large in the pre-colonial epoch into what historians call *'The Oba Complex'*, comprising many Obas. However, the Nupe incursion, inter-tribal wars among the Igbomina, *The Apata Oba Massacre*, chieftaincy disputes as well as both self-induced and battle-impelled migrations, have reduced the one time flourishing Oba community into the apparently insignificant village it is today.¹⁸⁹

Besides the suggestion of Nupe disorder, the (Oba) colossal population might have been scattered by a joint Isin assault by one Esinkin Olusin at Owu-Isin under the pretext of Isin general meeting (*i.e. Ipade Idi Ije*) said to have taken place at a place called "Apata Oba", between Pamo and Owu. The only two Oba survivors out of this holocaust were said to have founded the two wards in Oba (*i.e. Obi Ile-Nla and Obi-Oke-Dajo*). Today, there are ten compounds in the village. Surprisingly, however, no reference to such an act against the Oba people is mentioned in any Isin village.¹⁹⁰ Yet, these autochthonous accounts are not confined to Oba alone. They are a common place all over the Igbomina country.

Some archaeological finds prove that this area under review was not altogether unpeopled prior to the arrival of the Igbomina stone carvings, iron slags, potsherd pavements, fragments of bead polishers and clay tuyeres as well as iron smelting furnaces discovered in Ijara¹⁹¹ and Oba.¹⁹² But Phillip's reference to Ijara might just be incorrect. From all indications, the claim rooted in antiquity predates the people of the different Igbomina groups. The founder of Ijara arrived in the 18th century. Oral source agrees that this acclaimed civilization and culture, which belonged to a rather obscure people might be the ancient Oba state, which one held a flourishing state and a distinct identity. Offering support to the above, Phillips, reporting Obayemi's conjecture, revealed that the Ijara, Ofaro and Esie stone images with the relics discovered there belonged to an old Oba state or another one, which though today unknown, must have shared geographical proximity with Oba.¹⁹³

A few inferences from available archaeological evidence have given credence and support to oral traditions pointing to ancient human habitation of the Igbomina. Aiyedun, drawing inferences from the rich material culture of the Late Stone Age in places such as Ofaro, Ijara and Oba, all in Igbomina, support the great antiquity of human activities in Igbominaland. Aiyedun further suggests the existence of an aboriginal pre-Oyo population forming the earliest group of people in Igbomina. The remnants of these aborigines include the present Oba as well as the Nupe pre-Oyo settlers who settled in or founded such places such as Igbaja, Ora, and Alabe. The Nupe and Yoruba settlers only came from Nupe, Oyo-Ile, Ile-Ife, among others to augment the aboriginal population, probably in waves and not in a single migration to this area.¹⁹⁴ Nomenclatural inferences also provide some important finds to substantiate that the Oba were linguistically Yoruba in the pre-Ila or pre-Igbomina era. The names borne by the acclaimed Olobas such as *Obalegbayan*, *Okonihin-in Okolohun-un*, *Oloko-ni-geregere-atitan* and *Aka-Igbo* are of a surety, Yoruba compound (proper or nick) names.¹⁹⁵ Obayemi's excavations at Oba provide a startling revelation of the existence of iron

smelting furnaces, iron slag, a potsherd pavement, fragments of bead polishers and at least, one rock out-crop, the surface of which is covered by several pounding or grinding hollows.¹⁹⁶

The fascinating autochthonous evolutionary tradition arising from Igbomina, from Oba, suggests that, the antiquity of Oba, if admitted, probably ante-dates Ife. Besides, the real cradle of man, then, may be in Igbominaland and not Ife. If the popularised Ife evolutionary story is upheld, then both the Ife and Oba traditions may be reconciled in a way—man evolved in both areas and dispersed to populate the earth therefrom. Perhaps, the best reconciliation between both, today, is that civilization began in both areas concurrently. In a similar comparative analysis, Egypt had for long, remained uncontended as the cradle of man's civilization, but recently, certain studies have begun to debunk that popular *prima-facie*, claiming that Mesopotamia might have developed side-by-side if not earlier than the Egyptian civilization.¹⁹⁷

Ọ̀bà-Igbomina, or just simply Ọ̀bà , is a primordial Igbomina town in Isin LGA of Kwara State, in north-eastern Yorubaland, Nigeria. It is one of the five inter -related Yoruba towns called "Ọ̀bà". The others are:

- i. Ọ̀bà-Ile, Akure South LGA, Ondo State, located just east of Akure, on Akure-Owo Road,
- ii. Ọ̀bà-Akoko, Akoko South-West LGA, Ondo State, located northeast of Owo.
- iii. Ọ̀bà-Ile, Olorunda LGA, Osun State, located some 15kms northwest of Osogbo;
- iv. Ọ̀bà-Oke, Olorunda LGA, Osun State, situated in north-northwest of Osogbo.

Nupe raids in the 18th and early 19th centuries occasioned the movement of some people from Ọ̀bà homeland in Igbomina to Osogbo area where they founded another Ọ̀bà .¹⁹⁸ The original Ọ̀bà was the capital of an ancient Ọ̀bà Civilization , a kingdom fabled in the oral history of the region as a centre of enormous affluence, enterprise and creativity. Virtually all the

surviving Òbà towns , therefore, arrogate to themselves claims to the oldest derivative of the ancient civilization and the original Òbà.

Reports of contemporary collaborative archaeological investigations by history experts, anthropologists and archaeologists at the Arizona State University , USA and the University of Ibadan, Nigeria about the contemporary and later settlements of the region suggests that Òbà was established between the 9th and 10th centuries, as reported by Phillips.¹⁹⁹ The recurrent conflicts with the neighbouring Nupe occasioned series of desertion and reoccupation of the Òbà motherland.

This study on Igbomina unveils some fascinating myths. Beside the more popular Ife legend, similar legends indigenous to Igbomina abound . For example , traditions prevalent in Igbomina speak of pre -Igbomina settlements and civilization in the area , the most popularised one being that of the aborigines of Òbà -Ile in the present day Isin L.G.A., Kwara State. There exist various variations in the mythical/legendary stories among the modern day Òbà people . The ‘-Ile’ suffix for Òbà -Ile as it is for Yoruba place-names suggests that this is the real homeland for all the Òbà people in Diaspora . What is not certain is whether there is a national convention that convenes the Òbà people together , like the Owu convention periodically , to celebrate their common origin. The Òbà Story may be viewed from two broad approaches :

- i. **Fundamentalist (Evolutionary) Narratives** suggesting man’s descent from a ‘*mythical heaven*’ at a few mythical and /or cultural centres such as Ife and Benin (as well as Òbà -Ile in Igbominaland) and the subsequent dispersal from these centres.

One account claims that the first Oloba (whose name is lost today) descended from the skies, with a white cockerel and a handful of earth handed over to him by Olodumare. It was believed that he threw the fowl down to spread the soil on the primordial ocean. The first Oloba was said to have landed and settled at the place where the white fowl landed . The etymology of the name Òbà itself , is said to be the corruption of the Yoruba statement, “o ba” (i.e. the fowl

landed).²⁰⁰ Hence, it was at Òbà that the world was allegedly created . Although similar to the Ife story of which many may be tempted to think it was a *mere* copy-cat, Obayemi, a renowned archaeologist has tended to give credence to it by referring to a similar creation story credited to Oba-Ile, near Akure—which is said to predate the establishment of Ile-Ife.²⁰¹ This is also similar to the biblical story of creation in Genesis chapter one, in a way.

A second folklore relates how the first Oloba, in response to a directive by Olodumare, after a worldwide flood, which ravaged the world, for the people to preserve whatever is valuable to them. Whereas others reportedly kept gold, silver and clothes as their preserves, the Oloba preserved a handful of soil with which he created a new earth after the flood with the aid of a white cockerel, after landing on the solid earth amidst shouts of his probable entourage “*O...ba*” (i.e. he landed).²⁰² While it is probable that the Ife world had been wiped off by the deluge of tsunami, if truly it was the Cradle of Mankind, and as analogous to what happened in the days of Noah in Genesis 6:6-18 in which all other *Adamic* descendants were destroyed, safe Noah and his family, the Ife earth might have been wiped off. The Oba earth, it may be, is what exists today as the preserve of the earth or vice versa.

A third version, which is perhaps the most popular or popularised and probably more highly incredible, claims that the first Oloba who founded Oba came from nowhere but merely emerged from the earth and settled at Oba-Igbo, the former or original site of Oba (before its displacement probably during the Nupe raids) near the present site. Hence, this belief has been emphasised very particularly in the generic Orile of the Oloba as Ọba Ọmọ ẹrẹ. (i.e. Ọba, descendant of the earth or off-springs of the mud). That very site where he evolved from, called Ojubo ẹrẹ, is said to be venerated till date with rituals. It has been proved in some quarters,²⁰³ one reason why the African man is dark-complexioned—the humus soil. Testimonies from all over Igbomina proves, just as personal observation also confirms that no true Ọba-born is light-

complexioned.²⁰⁴ This belief has been factored into the generic orile of the Oloba as “omo ere”, meaning ‘offspring of the mud’.

A fourth legend speaks of a legendary farmer, one Ọba Medu, the first Oloba who introduced palm tree plantation into Isinland. Hence, the saying: “Etitan Oloba” (i.e. Oloba’s palm fruit).

- ii. **Migratory Narratives** suggesting migration from say, the Middle East, following the foundation of Islam and followed by subsequent dispersal from a few centres of initial settlement or from Ile-Ife alone.

A fifth myth, which is migratory in nature, has it that the Oloba came from another Ọba, near Ile-Ife but got sank into the earth while coming, only to re-surface at the Ọba site in present Isin L.G.A. **A sixth version** claims that the first Oloba, known as Akaigbo migrated from Arabiti (i.e. Arabia; Arabiti—a corruption of Arabic).²⁰⁵

Criticisms: i) The Evolutionary Fundamental Approach is particularly vulnerable to criticism on the ground of its incompatibility with modern science, as it came from Obayemi himself. ii) The Middle Eastern Migratory Narratives have enjoyed greater “*prima facie*” (i.e. accepted as correct until proved otherwise) plausibility. However, we are warned to be wary of reliance on the relatively late Islamised Hausa-Fulani versions of Yoruba descent and on still later oral traditions deriving from these documented versions. It is plausible to consider the tendency of Islamic chroniclers to make ‘unjustifiable’ claims and unwarranted claims about the trans-Saharan origins of the African peoples. Etymological arguments conventionally to support these Middle Eastern claims do not pass the test of scientific scrutiny. Obayemi, thus, joined his voice with others to disprove the claims that Yoruba origin could ever have been from a Middle Eastern exodus.²⁰⁶

Besides the general probability of oral data, precision, dating and scientific backings, and thus, relegation to mere hypotheses, some of the above creation legends, especially the

migratory folktales are often criticised for incredibility. However, the fact that there are many Oba towns scattered all over Nigeria, today, in Yoruba and non-Yoruba states such as in Osun, Ondo, Delta, Anambra, Kwara, among others may suggest the migration from Oba (Medu) as probable. But this is nullified when one realises that the location of the said Oba Medu remains obscure and unknown to anybody till date, perhaps just as no man can point at the exact location of the Biblical Garden of Eden.

But the credibility of the other migratory legends can also be easily faulted, for instance, the purported migration from Arabia (similar to Ile-Ife legend too). Drawing inferences from linguistic studies, Obayemi revealed that whereas the language of the Arabs is Semitic, which falls under the Afro-Asiatic language group, the Yoruba as a linguistic family belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo language group. On the other hand, the Niger-Congo belongs to a proto-language known as Niger-Kodofnaian.²⁰⁷ The fact that the ancient Oba spoke Yoruba, devoid of any linguistic correlation, specifically with the Arabic language (Semitic) or the Afro-Asiatic languages in general, may conspicuously disapprove of any Middle Eastern Origin for the Oba people. This contravenes Greenberg's linguistic classification above, if it is anything to go by.²⁰⁸ But can the plausibility of the autochthonous civilization of Oba be criticised as depicted by Henderson?²⁰⁹ The conventional etymological rationale often presented in favour of the Middle Eastern migratory narratives lacks every iota of scrupulous scientific examination. Some Yoruba scholars of repute have proved that, "*Yoruba genesis could not have been a result of an exodus from the Middle East*".²¹⁰

From a cursory point of view, the subsequent dispersal of modern day peoples from only one or two countries such as Ife and Benin seems very plausible and laudable. However, from a closer bird-eye-view, one tends to agree with Obayemi that such claims appear as illusory as the claims of ultimate origins in the Middle East. It has been argued here that if any Eastern origin is to be used for the Yoruba, '*East*' then must refer to the Niger-Benue confluence area, rather than

to Egypt or the Yemen.²¹¹ Drawing inferences from linguistic research, Obayemi further suggests that the

*Yoruba, Edo, Igala, Idoma, Igbo, Nupe, Ebira and Gbari form a cluster of languages within the larger Kwa group, centred roughly on the area of the Niger-Benue confluence.*²¹²

The sub-themes that appear to have attracted scholars to studying the Yoruba and Edo-speaking peoples, among the better known peoples of Africa, centre round their

sizeable population, with sophisticated, large scale population organisations and a long tradition of urbanization as well as an outstanding heritage of arts and crafts, of which the sculpture has a history of some thousand years or more".²¹³

The earliest documentary records on contemporary events in the Guinea forest states and their savannah hinterlands date back only to the apparently pioneering exploration of the Atlantic Coast by the Portuguese seaman, Ruy de Sequire, in 1472. The priceless written reports by the Portuguese sailors and merchants, as well as their English, Dutch, Italian and French counterparts, who trooped in *en mass* within a few decades after, all came rather belatedly as they could not throw direct light on the processes of state formation. Obayemi identified three kinds of oral traditions under the non-written sources we have to entirely rely on for the reconstruction of the early history of these people: pure oral tradition, written/documented sources derived from oral tradition, and oral tradition derived from written sources with an earlier oral base.²¹⁴ Etymological considerations of a highly unscientific nature have also unfortunately tended to be used.

Autochthonous traditions abound in Nigeria but the Ife version seems to be the most popular of them. Among others, we have the Idoko people who were said to have, at least, occupied some part of the territory of the Ijebu, but the Yoruba people might have conquered and extinct them out of the remote part.²¹⁵ Ile-Igbèdè, in Ekiti-Kwara, not far from Odo-Owa also claims to be the cradle of civilization.²¹⁶ The name, 'Obo-Ayegunle', especially the 'Ayegunle' suffix also suggests a claim similar to Ile-Ife's and Oba's. Another autochthonous tradition spoken of, in Igbominaland, is yet, that in Òrò Land. The present *Oyatèdo* community in the Òrò-

Àgò confederacy was previously called *Ayekalẹ* (literally meaning the descent of the earth) with the mythical claim that right there, mankind descended upon the earth. The day they uprooted grasses to the Oya tree, in their bid to clearing off the grove and erecting shelter for themselves and in making farmland for survival, but found some grasses impossible to rid, then they realised it was Oya. They therefore, settled there and christened the place “Oyatedo”.²¹⁷

A closer examination of Igbomina tradition, vis-à-vis the peopling of Igbominaland shows that Igbomina communities did not evolve at the same time. Ogundele also confirmed the Igbomina’s claim to have migrated to this area at different times in history and from different centres. He agreed that these people who are a sub-section of the Yoruba share common culture and common origin by migration from the historical Yoruba towns of Ile-Ife and Oyo-Ile. He claims that the Igbomina were among the very first or earliest people to migrate from Ile-Ife. However, he presented an entirely contradictory account to the Orangun tradition, eulogising Omu-Aran as the custodian of the legendary *Ogbo* which is said to be in the palace of the Olomu till today.²¹⁸

Three major groups of immigrants into Igbomina were considered by Ogundele, drawing from oral evidence. The first group, said to be headed by ‘Olomu Aperan’ (or ‘Olomu Aperun’ among the Ijesa and Ife), one of the princes of Ife who distinguished himself as a valiant, left Ile-Ife with one Ogbo at the time when the royal princes were leaving Ile-Ife to found various kingdoms . He was believed to be the son of Omutoto, one of Oduduwa’s numerous wives, a niece of Iyemoja, the mother of Oranmiyan, the founder and first Alaafin of Oyo. His bravery and martial aptitude must have earned him the *Esinkin* title, a title akin to the *Are-ona-kakanfo* of the Old Oyo Empire. Eventually, Aperan was said to have become the custodian of the Ogbo.²¹⁹

The origin of the Ogbo remains clustered in obscurity. Oral tradition has it that Oduduwa himself met this Ogbo at Ile-Ife. Its importance lies in its being the symbol of unity among the council of elders called *the Council of Ologbomona* in Ile-Ife. The custodian, who served as an

arbiter between the council of elders and the warriors, was said to have been addressed as Esinkin Ologbomona. The practice of conferring the Esinkin title on brave princes is still prevalent till date in some Igbomina towns. Brigadier General David Bamigboye (Rtd.) is the current *Esinkin Olomu* of Omu-Aran, Chief David Adeoye, the *Esinkin Olusin* and Chief Sunday Idowu ('Cool Tiger'), the *Esinkin Oniwo*, for instance.

Olomu Aperan is believed to have founded the Omu- group of towns: Omupo, Omu-Aran and Omugo, some of which were claimed to have been battlefields between Olomu Aperan and the Nupe who had been a stumbling block on the way to the other side of the River Niger. While Prince Olomu Aperan reportedly drove the Nupe to the East, prince Oranmiyan pursued them to the West. This explains the relocation of the Olomu to the present Igbominaland, from his original home at a place called Omu-Ijaegbe (still existing today as a village near Ilesa, and Olomu is still the title of the Oba there), some 8 kilometres from Ilesa.

Omu-Aran is said to comprise Aran-Orin, Arandun and Rore, most of whom migrated from Omu-Aran, which itself is a combination of two settlements: Omu and Aran. Presently, Omu-Aran consists of three wards, viz: Ifaja, Ihaye and Aran. Omu-Aran, today, is the headquarters of the Kwara South Senatorial District, which consists of seven LGAs, namely, Isin, Irepodun, Ifelodun, Ekiti, Oke-Ero, Oyun and Offa.

At about 1650, the second group of Igbomina people was reported to have migrated from Oyo-Ile and to found some towns, which included the towns of Ajase-Ipo (formerly called Apateki), Igbaja, Ora, Iwo, Ikosin, Oke-Ode, Agunjin, among others. This might have been occasioned by the despotic tendencies prevalent in the Old Oyo Empire from around the second half of the 17th century, during the reigns of the likes of Alaafin Odarowu, Kanran, Jayin, Ayibi and Osinyago. The influx of these new immigrants might have witnessed series of encounters with the Nupe.²²⁰

The third and last batch was said to have been led by the founders of the Oloro Dynasty of Oro-Ago, believed to have come from Ketu, in the far western Yoruba country, early in the 1700s. Reportedly, their migration was informed by their inability to tolerate further the political unrest in the Ketu Kingdom. These people also played very significant roles in the later wars against the Nupe.²²¹

The present Owa-Oye of Igbajo also added his voice to this migratory story by revealing that sixteen royal princes left Ile Ife at the same time.²²² Their parting point is called ITAJERO, which is today at the heart of Igbajo. We were, during our field trips for this study, conducted round sixteen rocks upon which the sixteen principalities sat, attaching names to each. The sixteen princes were named, among who was the Orangun of Ile Ila. The High Chief who conducted us round said that some years back, the late Ooni of Ife came, disguised, to inspect the *Itajero* to see if the Igbajo had allowed these historical relics destroyed.²²³ But the Igbajos have jealously guarded them till date, in spite of developments and *civilization*.²²⁴ Further enquiries into this also revealed that the dissensions in Igbomina are often explicable in the light of the differing origins of the Yoruba-stock known as Igbomina. Archival evidence reveals that the Igbomina were composed of the following groups:

TABLE 1: IGBOMINA GROUPS BY ORIGIN/MIGRATION

S/N	GROUP		PERCENTAGE
1	Yoruba of Ile-Ife origin	Igbomina	40%
2	Yoruba of Old Oyo origin	Igbomina	20%
3	Yoruba of Ilorin origin	Yoruba proper	26%
4	Yoruba of Old Oyo origin	Yoruba proper	3%
5	Yoruba of Offa origin	Yoruba proper	1%
6	Yoruba of other Western origin	-	3%
7	Fulani	-	4%
8	Nupe	-	2%
9	Miscellaneous tribes	-	1%

SOURCE: NAK ILOR PROF. NAC/30/C.5 P.12.²²⁵

Basically, only the first two groups, today regard themselves as Igbomina, the remainder, amounting to 40% of the entire population, frequently does not. The earliest and only true Igbomina settlers in the area (as they claim) were undoubtedly those who traditionally claimed to have migrated north-eastwards from the mythical home of the Yoruba-speaking peoples at Ife. They were said to have arrived in groups between the 15th and 17th centuries,²²⁶ and settled in an area probably bounded by the present-day towns of Offa, Ilorin, Iponrin, Babanla, Aun, Omu-Aran, and Ila in the Oyo Province. They were, however, forced to retreat southwards during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Ife Igbomina in Share District, represent a later northward migration from Aun, towards the end of the 18th century.

The next arrival migrated from Old Oyo, north-east of Ilorin, perhaps, during the 17th and 18th centuries. They penetrated eastwards until they met the Lafiagi-Patigi Division. They were “Yoruba proper” and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Alafin of Oyo. Today, this group concentrates in the east of the Emirate in an area bounded by the towns and villages of Babanla, Igbaja, Ijara, Ola and by the Lafiagi boundary.²²⁷ The migration was due to various reasons such as political unrest in the late 17th century Oyo Empire characterised by cruelty and abuse of power by successive Alaafins. The Oyo group of Igbomina founded towns like Igbaja, Agunjin, Ora, Ikosin, Oke-Ode, Alabe, Iwo, and the Ile-Ire District near Oke-Ode as well as Ajase-po.²²⁸ The territory occupied by the Oke-Ode group is sometimes called Ile-Ire, which may be translated as the group which practiced the Ogun cult, the Yoruba god of Iron. The headquarters of the cult was Owa-Onire in the Oke-Ode Village Group.²²⁹

The group six above, which was largely concentrated in Oro-Ago town is said to be Egba in origin, but regarded itself as having been *Igbominanised* or naturalised through their long sojourn in Igbomina. However, Dada in his *Short History of Igbomina* maintained that they migrated from Ketu, due to dynastic upheavals between Ajagun (Oloro) and rival princes.²³⁰ They left Ketu when the political unrest became insurmountable and intolerable.²³¹ By the late 18th century, some new towns were just evolving, like Rore, founded by migrants from Nupeland, near Bida, led by one Oni Aduloju.²³² Hence, these distinctive groups that emerged

over the years included Igbomina 'Ire' comprising the whole of Ile-Ire; 'Esisa' headed by Oro-Ago; 'Isin' headed by the Olusin of Isanlu Isin; 'Iyanga' comprising Omu-Aran and environs; 'Iresa' under Elese of Igbaja; 'Ipo' comprising Ajase-po and other villages some of which have the "-po" suffix such as Omupo, Egii Oyo-po and Okeya-po; and 'Eku-mesan Oro' (i.e. the nine Oro clans).²³³

Even the settled Fulani said to form 4% of the population tend to lose their identity in the Igbomina mass. Those of them whose forebears settled in Ilorin prior to, say C.1860, knew no language other than Yoruba, and occasionally, as at Okanle in the Omupo Village Group, have adopted the Yoruba form of domestic or sedentary architecture. It is a curious fact however, that the Fulani were rarely to be found in association with the Igbomina of Old Oyo origin. Eighty per cent (80%) of them lived in areas where there was a majority of Ilorin Yoruba. The only predominantly Fulani village in the area was said to have been the hamlet of Shao in the Share Yoruba District.²³⁴ Temple noted five sub-sections that the Igbomina were divided into: Omu, Isanlu, both of whom migrated from Ife; Ijara, Oke-Aba (Iwo) who came from Oyo; and Ala, who came from near Ora.²³⁵

From a contrary opinion, Obayemi²³⁶ provided archaeological evidences against the independent origin of the Igbomina, thereby challenging the waves of opinions as regard their origin. He dismissed the idea of Ile-Ife and Oyo-Ile origins as "semi-stereotype" in the sense that, the commonly accepted story of origin appears obscure rather than illuminate the issue. In his own view, Asonibare sheds some light on this issue, arguing that Igbomina had an origin independent of Oyo-Ile and Ile-Ife. He opines that the Igbomina had long occupied their present homeland prior to the 16th century, when many principal Igbomina towns at the periphery of Ilorin and Nupeland were occupied by Oyo warlords during the Nupe attacks on Oyo.²³⁷

In conclusion, the limitations of traditional Yoruba historical sources evidently reveal the necessity to fill the vacuum, to which modern archaeological and linguistic investigations among others, prove of no little significance.²³⁸ The best, and indeed, only legitimate approach that can prove worthwhile and fruitful yet remains embarking on a well-coordinated inter-multi-and trans-disciplinary study.

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203. Euphrates: Arabic *Al Furāt*, Turkish *Firāt*), a river said to be in southwest Asia, rising in Turkey and flowing through Syria and Iraq before joining the Tigris to form the Shatt al Arab is in Northern Africa. The Euphrates, along with the Tigris River, provided much of the water that supported the development of ancient Mesopotamian culture (*see Mesopotamia*). *Mesopotamia* literally means "between the rivers" in Greek, and this area was the site of such early states as Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria. The Euphrates is 2,700 km (1,700 mi) long and drains an area of 444,000 sq km (171,000 sq mi). (*Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009. © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation*).
204. Oral Tradition—Mr. Yinka Oyedepo and personal observation of researcher over the years outing to this attesting to this realistic but rather unscientific hypothesis). See also Opadeji J.O. "Isin East....
205. Afolabi, *Igbomina in the Context of Yoruba History*... p. 198 adds a related cognomen 'Adiye funfun ni ipilese oro l'Oba, meaning a white hen was the source of wealth at Oba'. See also Ajide, C.O. "Settlements..." p. 2.
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217. Jagunlabi Alasela, An Audio tape titled *Iseda Òrò*.
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222. Oral Evidence: the Owa Oye of Igbajo (**Oba (Engr.) Olufemi Adeniyi Fashade, FNSE, Akeran IV Owa of Igbajoland**) during a Field Trip to Igbajo on 27/09/2010.
223. Oral tradition from an Igbajo High Chief who conducted us round the historical relics.
224. Field Trip to the 19th C War Camp Sites at Igbajo and Imesi-Ile, and interviews with the Royal Fathers and High Chiefs on 27th September, 2010.
225. *NAK ILOR PROF. NAC/30/C.5* P.12.
226. *NAK ILOR PROF. NAC/30/C.5* pp. 12-15; see also Michie C. W. Memoranda to the Minority Commission from the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria (Government Printer, Kaduna, 1957) pp 12-14. Elphinstone, K.V. *Gazetteer...* p. 15 provides account that another Igbomina group migrated from Oyo.
227. Raji, "Demystifying the Proselytising Mission..."
228. *NAK ILOR PROF. NAC/30/C.5*. p. 15.
229. *Ibidem*, p. 16.
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231. *NAK ILOR PROF. NAC/ 9, p. 2; 2064*. P.9.
232. Adeyemi, "Protest and Agitation..." p. 29.
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CHAPTER TWO

IGBOMINA BEFORE THE 18TH CENTURY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts an analysis of the foreign relations between the Igbomina and her neighbours in the pre-18th century era. Let us not forget that the word, 'foreign' as is used in this study, refers to and covers all other units, whether European or African, Yoruba or non-Yoruba, other than the Igbomina stock of the Yoruba, which included the Ijesa, Edo, Benin, Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan, Ilorin and the British.

Smith found it rather irresistible to defeat his inner urge to describe the wars and foreign affairs of even the so-called 'stateless' societies of West Africa, using the words, *international relations*.¹ To him, international relations constitute an inexorable element of the duties of any government. He maintained that the essence of international relations and diplomacy, which apparently evolved independently by peoples across the globe, is to enable men to live with their neighbours. One basic requirement here, however, is the ability to accommodate the interests of others.² But since there will always be clashes of interests within our social milieu, resulting into conflicts at different levels and scope, diplomacy also plays the role of mediator and arbiter of peace between and among the warring parties. Hence, ultimately, the more detailed ends of diplomacy, which is a universal phenomenon, are the questions of peace and war.³ In his further remark on this development, Smith saw:

*...the war and diplomacy of pre-colonial West Africa as different phases in the continuing function of international relations, rather than as contrasting conditions. Every state and every society, however self-absorbed, must conduct, however reluctantly or passively, such relations. Conflict and harmony of interests, incompatibility and compatibility of aims, these separate peoples and bring them together, cause wars and alliances, and in sum make up the pattern which gives meaning to political history--which is the history that matters above all. To write a history of relations between any nations and peoples requires an analysis into terms of cause and effect of such conflict and such harmony....war and diplomacy retained their importance and continued to be agents of change.*⁴

Hence, important determinants for inter-group interactions, included, among others, economic pursuits, ecological differentiations, religious considerations, politics, warfare or militarism, local imperialism and empire-building. What is more, Afolayan, had described war as '*diplomacy by other means*'.⁵ Meanwhile, to Smith, diplomacy is the fundamental means by which foreign relations are conducted and a foreign policy is implemented. To him, diplomacy, as a concept, is neither a capitalist invention nor of the modern nation state. It is not an exclusive preserve of classical antiquity either, as it was found even in some of the most primitive communities.⁶

Afolayan⁷ noted that war became the progenitor and accelerator of change considering the far-reaching and revolutionary consequences the 19th century wars in the Yoruba country had on the Igbomina. Historical accounts reveal that the Igbomina had witnessed myriads of military raids prior to the 19th century Yoruba civil wars. From a conglomeration of groups through the different waves of migrants at different times, and from different places in different modes for different reasons, the Igbomina nation came into being—a fusion of '*nations*' into a nation. The group of the Yoruba, known as Igbomina, became knitted together over the centuries, with considerable interactions.

2.2 Igbomina Traditional Institutions Prior to the External Influence

There had existed considerable relations among the Igbomina communities and also with other non-Igbomina groups of Yoruba and non-Yoruba extractions before and after the era of British Colonial foreign influence in Igbominaland. This cut across the different façades of their live.

a. Political Relations:

State Administration: Man is presumed as a political animal. Adegbola, decrying '*The Suffering of Yoruba(s)*' revealed that "...the various municipal princedoms of Igbomina and Yagba could boast of orderly governments as old as many centuries".⁸

Brown⁹ categorised the political structure in West Africa into four, viz:

- (a.) societies whose political structures are based on lineage, system; for example, Tallensi;
- (b.) those who have only lineages and associations such as the Igbo;
- (c.) those with lineages, associations and state inter-mingled, such as the Yoruba; and
- (d.) those where lineages and associations are mingled but the state was supreme, for example, in Nupe, Dahomey and Ashanti. The socio-political organisation in Igbomina may be grouped under the third group, but it also shows traces of the last grouping. Prior to the 19th century, lineage grouping was the basic unit of political structure in Igbomina.¹⁰

Even though, the political systems of the various polities showed striking similarities, certain characteristic differences were evident. The mode of succession to the leadership of the communities was one. Afolayan also identified three modes of succession in this regards in Igbomina.¹¹

One, communities where succession to the throne was vested in those who genealogically descended from the ancestral founder; for example, Omupo, Omu-Aran and Oro-Ago. In Omupo, the Olomupo was usually chosen from the direct lineage of the first Olomupo.¹² In Omu-Aran, an Olomu-designate must be a direct decent of a former one from the Olomu ruling house, through the patrilineal line. Two, communities where power and authority were shared between lineages or compounds of diverse origins; for example, Oro, Isanlu-Isin, Ijara, Ajase and Iwo. At Iwo, the kingship stool is rotated successively among the four compounds believed to have been progenitored by the first sons of the founder of Iwo, even though he himself did not assume the title of Oniwo.¹³ Three, communities in which kingship was rotational among different settlements; for example, Oro (among the Ekun-Mesan-an), Isanlu-Isin, where the Olusin stool was, until recently, rotated among the three major component settlements of Isanlu, Ijara and Iji. Over time, Isanlu broke out of the league, leaving Iji and Ijara. The late Oba Omiyale was from Iji, after whom Oba Omoniyi

Banigbe, from Ijara assumed the stool as Olusin of Iji-Ijara Isin. However, recently, on 25th March, 2011, Oba Samuel Babatunde Aboyeji was coronated as the first Olusin of Iji-Isin,¹⁴ thus bringing to an end the age-long tradition of joint-Obaship.

Also at Iwo, certain vicissitudes, following the Nupe invasion of Iwo and Oke-Aba around 1789 and consequent developments therefrom, led to the making of an unwritten, but certified treaty, which established the Obate village and the rotation of Obaship between the two communities to which Iwo agreed to settle Oke-Aba on her land.¹⁵

The Oniwo stool was held in rotation between the duo of Iwo and Iwo Oke-Aba. The confederate style of political administration accounts for why administrative political set-ups were not met by the colonisers in certain places. Meanwhile, those communities have tended to use that, today, to boost their status *vis-à-vis* the other members of the erstwhile confederacy. Oke Aba, for instance, was then recognised by the colonial government gazetteer, since the kingship stool of the Iwo Kingdom, by rotation, was at Oke Aba.¹⁶ Thus, Oke Aba became recognised as the main Iwo community, without employing simple logic that the community, which carried the sole appellation and nomenclature to which others were suffixed, must have been the principal Iwo town.¹⁷ Oke-Aba and Iwo separated from having joint Oba in 1968.¹⁸ It was later on that Odu-Ore, was founded, following certain vicissitudes we will not bother ourselves with here. Edidi, too, operated this mode of succession.

The Oba normally presided over the village council, which met on periodic basis to deliberate on village affairs, settle quarrels, among others. Indeed, the council was the highest court in the land; imposing fines on the guilty, discharging and acquitting the innocent. The Oba was usually the last speaker on any issue, and his veto came with a binding effect on the people. He was the chief judge of the Supreme Court who decided all cases, including appeal cases, beyond the capacity of the chiefs and ward-lords. His authority was believed to be

divinely sanctioned and was regarded as next to the god(s) of the land. Hence, he enjoyed similar divine right of kings as the kings of Europe during the era of royal absolutism in medieval Europe. The Igbomina style of government was monarchy-patriarchal, although sometimes tyrannical in nature. However, Asonibare suggested that the Igbomina Oba were not *Absolute* but *Constitutional* Monarchs.¹⁹

Asonibare devoted a section of his work to the government of the Igbomina Kingdoms. There, he opined that this may be viewed from two perspectives that of the entire Kingdom, which centred on the capital itself and that of the dependent towns and villages, both of which are inter-related. The governing body in the capitals comprised of the Oba and a council of the proper chiefs who included the Baale or Eesa—the traditional prime minister and executive presidents of the councils; the Eesinkin, the vice president; Asanlu, the administrative head; Asipa, the chief of staff for the hunters; Aro acted as a prominent palace chief, and a host of others. There were also titled women, such as the Olori who was the Oba's most favourite wife or wives and head of the royal harem in Igbominaland; the Iyalode, Iyaloja and Iya-Oba or Yeye Oba. Even though, perhaps, due to the gender imbalance indigenous to Yorubaland, these titled women were traditionally kept in the background in many instances, they still could, and in fact, did influenced important policies and decisions in their respective communities.²⁰ See the Appendix section for a table showing the chieftaincy institutions in pre-colonial Igbominaland.²¹

Aside his political powers, the Oba performed both social and religious functions and was indeed regarded as the religious leader and head of the social organisations. The Oniwo, for instance, was to lead the annual Awoji Festival just as the Olusin led the Agba-Isin festival, which consolidated the unity of all Isin communities.²²

Every Igbomina community had its council of king-makers, the Afobaje, sine qua non to the Oyo-mesi in Oyo, saddled with the task of choosing and installing a new Oba, after

necessary consultations with the oracle. The Oke-Irese compound, for instance, was the king-makers' compound in Iwo and there was no other chieftaincy in Iwo that the Oke-Irese compound did not have its own.²³ The political organisation in Igbomina was based on the institution of chieftaincy, with the Oba at the helms of affairs. Political legitimacy conferred political power and authority on him as long as he enjoyed the support of the common people.

In most cases, the earlier settlers were often distinguished from the new immigrants by the functions they performed and the power exercised by them in the state. For example, the Oke-Irese compound in Iwo exercised the king-makers function as their progenitor and the founder of Iwo were said to have perceived the presence of each other and thus, searched for each other to jointly found the land with the tacit agreement, especially since the other was a renowned prince. No one knew who first arrived at the land.

Political authority in Ile-Ire Igbomina, too, was said to have centred on the Olorá of Ora whose connection with the Alaafin royal family made him to be acknowledged as the paramount ruler in the area. On the other hand, spiritual authority was said to have been vested in the Olowá of Owa Onire, who was the acknowledged traditional high priest of the Ire cult of Ogun.²⁴ The Yoruba folklore or proverb "*Ire kii se ile Ogun, o lo be lo mu 'mi ni*" (i.e. Ire is not Ogun's abode, he only went there in search of water to drink), although, suggests Ogun was not from Ire, but the fact that he had a rather significant affiliation with Ire conferred that spiritual authority on the Olowá of Owa Onire.

The fact that new foci of political authority continued to spring up in different parts of Igbomina consequent upon the continual waves of migration into and within the region accounted for these differences in the modes of succession. The primogenitary order of succession was not necessarily a rule throughout Igbominaland. The proliferation of states allowed for constitutional experimentations geared towards solving the peculiar problems of

each emergent state, which in most cases were not established by conquest but rather mutual agreements by earlier inhabitants and later immigrants. In Igbaja, for instance, made up of four principal settlements, the Elese of Igbaja was regarded as the most pre-eminent and paramount ruler, but was assisted by notable chiefs from each of the other component settlements. However, each of the settlements had its council of chiefs for local administration, but a central council of state made up of four representatives of Igbaja town chiefs, one representative of the Elese, and one representative of each of the other three major component settlements. This council formed the highest law-making body in the state, the decisions of which were binding on the Elese himself²⁵ let alone any other person.

In the past, the Oba and his chiefs, enjoyed high economic status and were the wealthiest in Igbominaland. They derived their wealth from annual tributes from their people, (subjects and vassals—where applicable) fines, presents during ceremonial functions, gifts, booties and spoils of war.²⁶

There were institutions of checks and balances against excessiveness in spite of the divine right of kings. He delegated legislative powers through ward chiefs—Baale, and title-holders as well as leaders of traditional religions representing various wards. Afolayan noted that the prevalent political systems thrived based on three things; compromise, faith/trust and confidence—a product of a political experimentation, aimed at creating a *Balance of Power* among the divergent interest groups. Nevertheless, expectedly, there seldom arose crises of confidence and conflicts of interests, which considerably threatened the system, particularly when the people were subjected to constant military pressure from their powerful neighbours in the 19th century.²⁷

Arms Resort: In the period under study, relationships and interactions were not always cordial. Military confrontations or arms resort to settle intra-Igbomina riffs were a commonplace. It never the less, often formed the last resort for the resolution of intractable

face-offs. Rather unfortunately, Eurocentric authors, observers and commentators made a mountain out of a mole-hill of the conflict aspect of our inter-group relations in Africa, generally, without any serious critical analysis. Such rash considerations and reports are not only unfortunate, but rather unscholarly.

It appeared to the Missionaries and British secular agents that the Yoruba were possessed by demonic spirits and were suffering from a psychosomatic syndrome, to the extent that they were incapable of appreciating the external dangers that endangered them as a cultural entity and polity. Noticeable among these external dangers were the Fulani Jihad, the megalomania of Dahomey and the imperial ambition of the British. Even throughout the 19th century, each sub-ethnic group gave its 'incurable selfishness' priority over the solidarity of the cultural group as a whole. However, that was a later invention into Yoruba warfare.²⁸

Wars are dramatic in nature and form heroic moments, which are easily remembered and preserved in oral traditions, especially by the affected groups in the annals of their political history. Besides, the era of imperial expansion represented a glorious epoch in the minds of citizens, which was marked in oral tradition accordingly. From the parochial Eurocentric point of view then, the emphasis on militarism as the dominant pattern of interaction between and among states may be attributed to a derogatory notion of an anarchical pre-colonial scene bedevilled by endemic warfare.²⁹

But suffice it to say that the high level of cultural maturity and mental magnitude already attained by these people belies this viewpoint. A more critical approach would identify the causes of the military clashes, note their dates, and study their circumstances and consequences. Little wonder that, as noted by Afolayan over the years, the initial differences among the component groups began to wane, while a sort of sub-group consciousness began to spring up.³⁰

b. Social Relations:

Kinship: Man is said to be a social animal. In other words, he is a relational being, who cannot thrive without fellow men. People who descend from the same ancestors normally belonged to a lineage (ebi), which exercised strong moral authority over its members, as a sub-unit of the political arrangement. In Igbomina, every community is broken into two or three segments closely interrelated in nature: the ward (Idolu-Odede), compound (Agbo-Ile) and Family (Idile).

The extended family system in which the whole lineage lived in a compound, under a family head, usually the eldest male person of the oldest generation, was the order in Igbomina. The compound comprised brothers, wives, children and other related members of the family. There were elements such as molebi, male and female descendants of a ward/compound; omo-baba (children of the same father) but of different mothers in the case of a polygamous family; omo-iya or iyekan—children of the same mother; omosu—women of the same compound who had married outside their own compound; orogun—a league or guild of women married as wives within a lineage, formed to bring cordiality among wives. Every successive senior wife is called iyale, even if she was only a few hours senior, for as much as she got home before the other.³¹

Inter-marriage served as another binding factor among the Igbomina, like other Yoruba. This was often skilfully used as a diplomatic weapon to foster or strengthen relationship to guarantee or consolidate peaceful relationship between and among communities. Many kings, princes and war-lords were ‘given’ wives in this manner purely for diplomatic purposes. Generally speaking, the pattern of social relationship and organisation was similar to what obtained in the Ilesa, Akoko, Ekiti, and to an extent, Yagba countries.³²

Class Structure (Age Grade): Every member of the society also belonged to a particular age grade called egbe, each of which performed specified functions and occupied definite

positions in the socio-political arrangement of the community. Afolayan³³ cites the example of Omu-Aran which had three major such egbe, namely the ete, Eso and ologun. Duties of the Ete included roads construction, provision of food in war times, and maintenance of sacred houses. The eso constituted the constabulary (police) force or army contingents while the Ologun Ilu were the war lords and chiefs in the state (i.e. the state army or armed force). Also in Iwo and most of the Isin communities, there were Age Groups viz: the eso, ologun and ihare. The eso were able-bodied men of between 20–40 years old, responsible for carrying out the decisions and orders of the ruling council. They may be said to purely constitute the constabulary (police) force of their communities as they form the fishing class, wholly responsible for the internal security and protection of the society. Their leader was often the eldest person among them, called elegbo in some places.

The ologun were agile, able-bodied men of between the ages of 40–50, responsible for warding off external aggression via military, spiritual (traditional medicine and charms) or whatever means. Ologun titles include Akogun, Oluju, Elemoso, Ajapana, among others; titles which are common place today, almost throughout Igbominaland, although, merely as ceremonial titles, as most men parading themselves about today with such titles can hardly defend themselves let alone their community. Thanks to the serenity enjoyed today compared with the days of intense militarism. Eesinkin was a title of honour bestowed upon any ologun who distinguished himself among his contemporaries and other warlords.

In Ijara, added to their functions, the Ologun served as emissaries or orderlies of great and/or senior chiefs. An ologun was attached to every senior chief. The oloye (ihare group) were the most elderly persons in Igbomina communities and were basically preoccupied with the welfare of the people. They commanded respect by their positions of authority. Hence, title and office formed the basis for their veneration. The market place was often the meeting place for matters affecting the entire community. Sitting arrangement was according to the

social groups and hierarchies in each group. Agreement reached became a law binding on the people³⁴ and no man was above the law.

Religious Considerations brought the people together in social interaction. Sacred religious centres such as Ile-Ife remained a centre of sacredness, not only to Igbomina but all Yoruba. Such sacred places attracted contact. Beside the universal belief in a Supreme Being called Olodumare, and the Almighty (Olorun) i.e. God, who is regarded as the owner of the universe, one who executes judgment from above, they equally believed that Olorun had delegated certain functions to the Orisa—i.e. lesser gods such as Ogun, (deified Ewuare the Great of Benin and) accredited god of iron; Ifa, god of divination; Sango, god of thunder; Esu, the Inspector General of Police; Sanponna, god of small pox; Oya,³⁵ among others. These were worshipped to bring fortunes and prosperity to their faithfuls.

Obayemi³⁶ stated that Yoruba traditional religion has received far greater attention by indigenous and foreign scholars and authors than any other traditional religion in black Africa. Primacy has been accorded Esu by a specialist on Yoruba religion as the next to Olorun, the supreme divinity. Esu is the only deity accorded general recognition throughout Yorubaland. He was the orisa, which occupies the *primus inter pares* status among all other orisa.³⁷

A tradition has been cited tracing the origin of Esu to Ofa-Ile, which in all probability, according to Obayemi, refers to Oba-Ile, a community of apparently insignificant size in the Isin section of Igbomina. Legends of the village associate it, like Ile-Ife and another Oba, near Akure, with the creation of the earth. An account of the origins, including the parentage of Esu was narrated to Obayemi in August, 1978, there.³⁸

He continued in his submission that Oba was, indeed, located in the north. Agreeably, Esu, in more recent times, is associated more strangely with groups of southern Yorubaland—Ondo, Ijebu and Egba. If the Oba legend and identification are anything to go

by, we can, at least, infer an internal north-south diffusion of principles, of members of the Yoruba pantheon. And perhaps, the deities had different origins before being fused into one cycle in the central district of Yorubaland. Esu's shrine can still be inspected at Oba-Ile.³⁹ These orisa were believed also to act as intermediaries between man and God. The Igbomina also venerated such natural phenomena and forces such as Rivers and Mountains peculiar to each area; for example, the Awoji hill in Iwo, Alaguso in Ijara, Olooke in Isanlu.⁴⁰ These two, among the venerated gods of Igbomina, Agba-Isin of the *Olusinnate* in Isinland and Awoji of the *Oniwonate* in Iwoland never see eye-to-eye.

The Igbomina equally believed in the propitiatory worship and appeasement of ancestral spirits at the family shrine, to keep keeping watch over their living descendants for fortunes and blessings, that evil may not befall them. The people believed that “*Oku oloṃo kii sun*” (i.e. an ancestral spirit would not rest *ad infinitum*). Sacrifices, accompanied with big festivals, were performed to prevent misfortunes and to bless the family. This cut across the length and breadth of Igbomina. This provided the rationale behind the Egungun cult celebrated every two years throughout Isinland, for instance.⁴¹ Egungun are believed to be the reincarnated spirits of the forebears coming back to life. The Egungun Elewe is particularly peculiar to the Igbomina. In fact, it is often called Eegun Igbomina.⁴² Egungun is still found in Arandun, Omu-Aran, Oro-Ago, among other areas. It is often a common place in community ceremonies such as Community Days.

Beside the Orisa who played mediatory roles between God and man, certain designated persons also acted as intermediaries between men and their Orisa. These were the high priests and priestesses of the various gods. They granted the people's requests by interceding for them with the Orisa. The Olu-awo was the head of diviners, the Baba Mogba headed the Sango cult while the Ogun cult was headed by the Olu-Ode or Balode⁴³ who was chief of the

hunters' guild.⁴⁴ Alapini and Erelu were the male and female ritual heads of the Egungun deity, respectively.⁴⁵

Religious Festivals and other important traditional ceremonies provided avenues for considerable interactions, which served as powerful weapons of integration among the Igbomina. They fostered unity, communal understanding, integration and a powerful sense of brotherhood and identity. Traditions, for instance, hold it that the founders of Igbaja, Oṛa, Ikṣin and Iwo were brother princes who migrated together from the Ajibṛṛ family of the old Oyo Empire. Traditions hold that the blood affinity and brotherly conventions still stand till today aside the boundaries they share.⁴⁶ The Igbaja People's Forum in the 1st Oko-Irese Day Celebration in December, 2001 confirmed the brotherly affinity on the programme under *History of Town*.⁴⁷

Generally speaking, representatives of neighbouring states normally attended festivals in other states, bringing royal salutations, goodwill messages, gifts and presents from their rulers. During installation ceremonies, important royal or inter-dynastic marriages or the recent development of "Community Days", similar exchanges are exhibited.

Among other things, the Igbomina believed in indigenous institutions or beliefs such as reincarnation such as *abiku*, *akudaaya*, ghosts, spirits, *egungun* (ancestral spirits, masquerades); *Olodumare* (God, the Supreme Being), *orisa* (idols/deities), shrines, *oso/aje/emere* (witchcraft, wizardry and familiar spirit), naming, marriage, burial, dressing, tribal facial marks, circumcision, body incisions, family structure, filiations (i.e. parent-children relationship), food, Ifa (oracle), taboos, *oogun* (juju or charms), *Ogboni* fraternity (secret societies), omen, Ori⁴⁸ (head/individual), inheritance system, music, kinship structure, among others For all these and many more, the Igbomina became distinct for who they are today.⁴⁹

c. Economic Relations:

Aboyaji⁵⁰ discussed the various indigenous economic enterprises of the Igbomina. Three broad groups of Igbomina economic activities were given serious consideration.

Agriculture—the Agrarian Economy: Aboyaji argued that it is very misleading to persist in describing the Igbomina *agricultural systems* during the pre-colonial era as merely “subsistence”, sustaining “natural economies”, ‘static’, ‘tribal’ or “self-contained”.

*...What the Igbomina experience highlights is that African agricultural systems in the pre-colonial epoch were such that the different communities could not be regarded as self-contained. It thus, suffices to say that the pre-colonial agricultural system remained the basis of the colonial political economy. There was no fundamental departure from the pre-19thC land-tenure system....*⁵¹

Indigenous Production Techniques—Prominent indigenous industries in Igbominland in the pre-colonial Igbominaland included carving and sculpturing, weaving, dying, pottery and trade-medicine.

Indigenous Trade and Commerce—Business or mercantilism is not strange to the Igbomina.⁵² A complex network of trade routes, according to Afolayan⁵³ covered the whole Igbomina. Through a traveller’s account, Clarke who was on visit to the area in 1858 was fascinated by the trade and traffic in cotton (*Gossypium Barbadosense*), especially from the Igbomina areas that fell within the tropical rain forest region as well as the other goods, including manufactured articles.⁵⁴ He was not only impressed by the quantity but also the quality of cotton produced by the Igbomina.⁵⁵ Cotton production, as far back as the second half of the 19th century was on a large scale. Merchants came from far and near: Ijesa, Ilorin, Oyo, Abeokuta, among others, for cheap, yet quality cotton products. In his report, Clarke beckoned to the American cotton growers and business-minded British traders to come and exploit this “*gold mine*” for their textile industries in Manchester and Liverpool.⁵⁶

Consequent upon the flourishing trade in cotton, weaving became a characteristic occupation of the Igbomina.⁵⁷ Because of the unique toughness and quality, farmers, smiths

and hunters mad-rushed it for uniform.⁵⁸ The Igbomina became popular far and wide for a variety of hand-woven cloth locally called kutupu.⁵⁹ Oro, an Igbomina town in Irepodun LGA of Kwara State was renowned for cotton work. Although it might have been exaggerated, oral tradition has it that during the pre-colonial and colonial era, all Oro born survived on cotton-allied businesses. Even during the mad-rush to Lagos, the Oro merchants were engaged in the sales of cloth, as cotton is considered their traditional industry.⁶⁰

In fact, virtually all the Igbomina towns became popular for their cotton work, trade and industry. In Igbaja, for example, many of them were among the popular and successful cloth sellers and dealers in markets that later on metamorphosed into the likes of the popular Jankara Market, Lagos. One of such was the late Baba Olowoniirejuaro, from Igbaja.⁶¹ The name, '*Olowoniirejuaro*' itself speaks volume. It is pregnant with meaning, reflecting the family business orientation. By its literal interpretation or transliteration, it means, 'it is a wealthy man that dyes his garment'. It probably was one of such *nick*-names-turned *surnames*.

2.3 Foreign Incursion into Igbomina Prior to the 18th Century

The geographical location of Igbomina, which strategically situates her as a lineal settlement in the middle-belt and as a gateway between the north and south made her particularly susceptible to series of foreign imposters and influences. Igbomina was thus, like the *Plimsoll Line*,⁶² which cuts across vegetational belts, economic zones, linguistic borders and ethnic boundaries. Her location among different and often distinct neighbours rendered Igbominaland an area of plural cultural interactions over the years.⁶³

Among her neighbours, turned potentates, who took batons, one from another (both the successful and/or attempted but aborted efforts) at over-lording the Igbomina include traditions prevalent in Omupo, Ajase and Omu-Aran, which purported that by the 17th century, military encounters had begun to take place between the Igbomina and their

neighbours. Afolayan recorded claims of hostilities, which began probably with the Ijesa who were harassing and enslaving the Igbomina people around present day Ajase-Ipo. However, these Ijesa marauders were said to have been repelled by the allied forces led by the Olomu of Omu and the ruler of Bagidi who eventually became known as the Olupo (i.e. Olu (Head) of Ipo) and over the years, his state became known as Ajase-Ipo.⁶⁴

Following the Ijesa, similar attempts were reportedly made by the warriors from Benin kingdom to penetrate into Igbomina, passing through the Akoko and Ekiti countries but thwarted through local cooperative residents in affected areas, from the 17th century. Since it was an unsuccessful *passing* attempt, it could not be substantiated that it was the Benin influence that gave birth to the sculpturing arts prevalent in Igbomina in areas such as Esie, Ijara, Owode Ofaro, among others.

These attempts, from the 17th century, proved unsuccessful until the early 19th C when a handful of Edo warriors reportedly got a hold, very briefly, of the frontiers of Igbomina.⁶⁵ Sometimes, along the line, in their history, the people of Lagos were also said to have constituted another upheaval for the Igbomina,⁶⁶ probably during the inglorious epoch of slave raid and slave trade. However, the more successful of the invaders of Igbomina were the Oyo. Prior to this time, one may say, Igbominaland, to a large extent, lived under considerable socio-political conditions with a sustainable economy that satisfied the needs of the mainstream of the populace, with a few amassing wealth. Even though, there may be indications of muted rumblings here and there, they were either momentarily resolved vis-à-vis the laid down rules, or ignored if they affected the non-ruling class.

2.4 Era of the Dominance of Oyo Empire

Perhaps, the first of the series of constant military pressures to establish a military and political control over the Igbomina came with the Oyo. Oyo political affiliation could have dated as far back as the period of settlement in the area since Oyo owned the whole land

where these people settled.⁶⁷ Oyo Empire might have emerged at about 1390 AD on the frontier of Yorubaland with Nupe and Igbira.^{67b} Around the 17th century, the Old Oyo Empire was by far the largest and most powerful state in Yorubaland and west coast of Africa. Beginning around the 16th century and through the 17th and 18th centuries, Igbomina was subjected to constant military pressure by the Oyo; particularly under the intrepid and belligerent Alaafin Ojigi.⁶⁸ Oyo itself had emerged as a veritable empire in the mid-16th century from the Bariba and Tapa (Nupe) attacks, having been previously checked by them. Oyo, after a short period of consolidation with an army of both infantry and cavalry launched out an imperial expansion by around the early 17th century under Alaafin Obalokun Aganra Erin.⁶⁹ Oyo expanded far and fast down south-west towards the coast and south-eastwards through the 17th and 18th centuries as far as Dahomey between 1726–1730; eastward beyond Ede to Igbomina, probably following the recovery of Oyo after the Nupe invasion of the 16th century.⁷⁰

The Oyo were able to establish a military control over some parts of the Igbominaland, by the 17th century.⁷¹ Scholars such as Afolayan and Law maintained that Oyo, in the event, raised the status of the Olupo to that of a prominent ruler in the area.⁷² In the 18th century Oyo, under the powerful and belligerent Alaafin Ojigi subjected Igbomina to incessant military pressure. This was around the same time when Oyo, under Ojigi, extended his conquests and brought the Dahomian territory, such as Yansumi, under his control.⁷³

Great exploits were reported of the leaders. An expedition was sent against the Igbomina. In order to prove his undisputed sovereignty over the entire Yorubaland, including Benin Kingdom, Ojigi's army, led by the Basorun Yamba and the Gbonka Latoyọ sent out a large expedition which struck the Niger in the north, near the Ibaribas and coasted along the right bank until they arrived at the coast and returned to Oyo by the Popo country.^{73b}

Evidently, by the mid-18th century, Oyo's grip over Igbominaland had waned considerably. This was not unconnected, on the one hand, with the constitutional upheavals within the Oyo Empire itself, and the rise to power of Nupe as the predominant super power in the north-eastern Yoruba region, on the other hand. As a counter-measure to check-mate the growth of Nupe influence, Oyo made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a military outpost in the Igbomina country, as the Nupe systematically extended their control over the Igbomina from Gbara.⁷⁴

At its peak, the Alaafin of Oyo controlled the sea coast from about Whydah to just east of Badagry and the territory extended for, perhaps, more than 200 miles (about 320 kms) inland. The enormous empire included the Oyo kingdom, the whole of Weme, Dahomey and Ajase kingdoms, the whole of Egbado, some parts of Igbomina, Tapa and Ibariba.⁷⁵

Different antecedents had been advanced towards the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire,⁷⁶ which are needless recounting here. Its great cavalry, however, undoubtedly provided a basis for its military prowess. Hence, it was able to establish its control over the more open areas of the Yoruba country. Meanwhile, only the Igbomina, which occupied the comparatively open savannah country north of Ekiti, came under Oyo, and the eastern Yoruba districts under the belligerent Alaafin Ojigi.⁷⁷ Among the Igbomina states said to have been subsumed by the Oyo Empire included Oke-Ode, Ora, Idofian, Omu-Aran, Oro, Isanlu-Isin, Iwo and Igbaja.⁷⁸ Even though, the nature and extent of Oyo's influence on Igbomina cannot be precisely determined, the intensity of her influence is believed to be enormous.

2.5 Structure of Oyo Administration—The Ajẹḽe System

It has been earlier noted that it was particularly during the reign of the intrepid Alaafin Ojigi during the 18th century that Igbomina was put under constant military pressure by the Oyo⁷⁹ and probably incorporated into its structural administration. Ojigi, according to

Johnson⁸⁰ was a powerful and war-like king who extended his conquests to the Dahomian territory, when Yansumi, an Idahomian town was taken and destroyed. In addition, he maintained:

*He sent an expedition also against the Igbonas... This king, in order to show his undisputed sovereignty over the whole of the Yoruba country, including Benin, sent out a large expedition which struck the Niger in the north near the Ibaribas, and coasted along the right bank until they arrived at the coast and returned to Oyo by the Popo country.*⁸¹

Alaafin Obalokun Agana Erin probably instituted the office of the Ajele following certain vicissitudes in which 800 messengers were allegedly sent by the same Alaafin to the King of France (probably Portugal) with whom he was said to be in friendly relations with presents. These unfortunates were never heard of again. Johnson reported that:

*Tradition says that the sounds of bells ringing in the skies was plainly heard in the Akesan (King's) market and it was conjectured that it was the voices of the unfortunates speaking to them from the other world to tell their fate.*⁸²

Following this omen, a white traveller reportedly visited Oyo, still during Obalokun's reign. The previous antecedent must have informed him of a political reform to device a political institution, which was to be later known in history as the Ajele (a political resident). Obalokun was said to have placed the first Ajele at Ijana, near Ilaro and Onisare was his title. As a rule then, the Ajele or Onisare must be a Tapa (Nupe), and his appointment came regularly from Oyo.⁸³ This predated Ojigi's reign or the conquest and subjugation of Igbomina by the Oyo Empire. It was, in fact, perhaps about seven reigns prior to Ojigi's. The name 'Ajele' itself is said to have been coined from the Arabic word '*ajala*', meaning, 'to dispatch'.⁸⁴

The Oyo Empire is generally believed to have operated a constitutional monarchy and a polity with fairly centralised administration at the capital. The vast Oyo Empire, for ease of administration, was mapped out into provinces. For example, the Iyangba Ologbomona Province to which Igbomina belonged. It was a bloc of Yoruba kingdoms comprising Moba,

Igbomina and some Ekiti Kingdoms owing allegiance to the empire.⁸⁵ Provinces were further demarcated into Districts/Villages under District Heads and other administrative units, all of which were still under the Alaafin's direct control, and who was obliged with the defence, security and day to day affairs of the empire.⁸⁶

Relationship between the metropolis and Districts was structurally one of overlord and vassals as Oba of conquered territories were allowed to continue to administer their people, but under the supervision of political agents (i.e. Residents) known as Ajele.⁸⁷ Igbominaland, as well as other vassalages, were thus, administered under this structural arrangement. Ajele were stationed in strategic towns of the vassalages to oversee coronation and confirmation ceremonies, and more importantly, tribute payments. In modern parlance, these Ajele may be referred to as Foreign Ambassadors of the Heads of States to distant lands; the representatives of the Alaafin of Oyo, in this case. Ajele served as intermediaries between the metropolis and the vassalages. They were the sole or legal channels through which the Igbomina and other vassalages communicated their grievances to the Alaafin. The Musu in Igbaja during the reign of Elese Fakayode, who was succeeded by Abidolu who reigned during the time of the European and Emir Abdulsalam of Ilorin (1823-1835), and Olupo in Ajase-Ipo and Eesa in Pamo (for Isin) acted as Alaafin's Agents.⁸⁸

Ajele were appointed from Oyo and therefore, represented the metropolis. They were, in fact, more venerated in the state than the village heads themselves, who had to go through them in lobbying for whatever favour from the Alaafin. Worse still, for instance, the Olupo was delegated to appoint Igbomina chiefs such as the Orangun and Oloro. The Alaafin, for instance, gave the staff of office to Arisegun, the Oba of Oro through the Olupo.⁸⁹ They equally served as go-betweens between the vassalages (Igbomina) and the metropolis (Oyo/Alaafin) by way of ensuring prompt payment of tributes. It may be significant to note,

here, that a fraction of the tribute was deducted as their own due before they sent the rest to the appropriate quarters i.e. the metropolitan authority.⁹⁰

Government in Oyo was based on title grades and palace societies, which centred round the Alaafin who governed with three eunuchs responsible for political, judicial and religious affairs. A group of king-makers known as Oyo-mesi selected the Alaafin and checked his power, thus, providing a BOP between the Alaafin and his palace administration, on one hand, and Oyo-mesi and Ogboni cult on the other hand.⁹¹

Many writers have dealt extensively with the Ajele system,⁹² which is said to have probably been extended to Igbominaland towards the end of the 18th century and between the first three decades of the 19th century. The excesses of these Ajele in subsequent decades were to reach the point of *démarche* later in history. That would be considered later on in the course of this exposé.

Akinjogbin and Ayandele noted that the Ajele often times acted virtually as sub-kings, especially where the territory had no recognisable ruler prior to Oyo conquest, such as at Ijanna. Besides, the administrative creativeness and acumen of Oyo is evident in the Ajele system. One basic challenge posed by its increasing size was that of effective governance over the vast territories, maintenance of peace and order as well as prevention of break-aways at the same time. The appointment of Ajele, which Akinjogbin and Ayandele christened *intendants*⁹³ was an administrative experimentation, well calculated to solve the problem. Hence, where the conquered territory already had a ruler like at Ajase, the Ajele became a sort of Colonial Governor, without whose consent the local ruler could take any major political or economic decision, and through whom annual tributes were sent to Oyo. Nevertheless, the Igbomina never formed a single political entity.⁹⁴

2.6 Weakness and Collapse of Oyo

Akinjogbin and Ayandele⁹⁵ had provided indications that some other Yoruba Kingdoms, since the early 17th century, when Oyo's imperial expansion was launched, remained strong and virile, each at its own level. Examples include the Ijesa, Owu, Ife and Ketu. Note that oral traditions, in some accounts, have revealed that by the 17th century, some Ijesa marauders had begun to harass and enslave the Igbomina around present day Ajase.⁹⁶

Akinjogbin noted that foreign intruders did not venture into the country as long as Yorubaland remained politically stable, economically versatile and structurally united. They began to experience an influx of invaders from all fronts—North, South, East and West. As soon as political authority disintegrated, the first set of invaders was the Dahomians from the south-western front. The ancient Dahomian Kingdom had been a vassal under Oyo since about 1730. In 1821, some 25 years after the political disintegration in Oyo, Dahomey under its intrepid King, Gezo declared its secession. However, Dahomey virtually had its independence on a platter of gold. It would be recalled that the Owu War began that same year in 1821, with most parts of Yorubaland such as Ife, Owu, Oyo, and Ijebu, involved. Therefore, the Oyo army was unavailable to defend Oyo interest when Dahomey declared its independence.⁹⁷ With the Dahomians taking the lead, others followed suit.

But with the collapse of the Oyo monarchy and empire, most Yoruba kingdoms once again embarked upon active constitutional re-appraisal. The consequence of this was a great deal of political upheaval which was to last the whole of the 19th century.⁹⁸

The remaining history of the entire Yorubaland, throughout the 19th century, it may be plausible to say, could, at best, be described as a replica of the Oyo Empire with the aftermath effects it left the entire Yorubaland with, all through the rest of the century. And from the first years of the 19th century, according to Akintoye, “The traditional system of order in Yorubaland was disrupted by the collapse of the Oyo Empire....”⁹⁹ The fall of Oyo left a

power vacuum, the attempt to fill, which made the Yoruba country a scenery of fratricidal campaigns, which lasted over seven decades.¹⁰⁰ The factors accountable for the collapse of Oyo are not unnecessary but might be superfluous here as they have been adequately dealt with by very many scholars.¹⁰¹ Merely highlighting them, these included military weakness, (i.e. the weakening of the army), constitutional crisis, especially between the Executive (*Alaafin*) and the Parliament/Legislature (*Oyomesi*); the degree of personality conflict/enmity—for example, Aare Afonja versus Alaafin Aole, among others. Authorities have made it clear that the fall of Oyo was not caused by the Fulani Jihad, as they were by that time a mere wandering band within the Hausa states. Oyo reportedly collapsed eight years prior to the first Fulani attack on the Hausa state of Gobir, the first Hausa state to be conquered by the Usman Dan Fodio-led Jihad.¹⁰²

2.7 Influence of the Collapse of Oyo on Igbomina

a. Social

Demography: One aspect of change on Igbomina and the entire Yorubaland was the influence on human population, demography. The Yoruba civil war of the 19th century, which went on almost unabated for a whole century left behind it un-exhausted ripple effects.

As Gege revealed on the development:

*By 1835, Oyo's glory was over and insecurity became the order of the day in Yorubaland. Many towns such as Igboho, Igbeti, Ikoyi, Kishi, Igbomina and Iresi were destroyed. The destruction of these towns led to movement of people southwards as far as Isinland as well. This led to the peopling of Isin as a whole.*¹⁰³

Population Re-distribution: Besides the massive loss of lives and property, there was a general population re-distribution of the inhabitants of the vast fallen empire who had to flee from one place to the other for their lives in search of safety and security.

Isinland is a sect of the Igbomina. Refugees from Oyo were said to have settled in favourable areas for security reasons. Examples of such towns included Isanlu, Pamo, and Oponda, that settled around naturally fortified environments such as hilly areas for security

reasons.¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that these migrant refugees, in some cases, only joined already existing city-states. This is because even as early as the early 18th century, many independent state structures could be identified. Igbomina was settled by different kinds of migrants. As earlier noted, for example, the late 17th and early 18th centuries witnessed the peopling of Isin, Oke-Ode, Ile-Ire and Esisa sections of Igbomina.¹⁰⁵

These vicissitudes greatly aided the ‘increased populations of some of the existing Yoruba settlements, such as Ogbomoso, Owu, Osogbo and Ife.’¹⁰⁶ Rather than settle in any of the already existing towns, some of the fleeing folks gathered under notable military leaders and founded new Yoruba towns and settlements. Hence, new towns sprang up in place of the ancient ruins.¹⁰⁷ As Ajayi and Akintoye¹⁰⁸ have well noted that by 1800, some of the most important Yoruba towns of today such as Ibadan and Abeokuta did not exist. Osogbo was an Ijesa town; Ikire, Gbongan and others were Ife; all these are now Oyo towns. Atiba, son of Alaafin Abiodun funded the New Oyo around 1837 after the abandonment of the Old Oyo. Ijaye was funded by Kurunmi, Abeokuta by Sodeke in 1830; Ibadan by Basorun Oluyole in the 1820s. Others included Modakeke and Sagamu.¹⁰⁹

Same was applicable to Igbomina. Available oral data has it that Òwù, the headquarters of Isin LGA, was settled by such refugees and immigrants from among the Òwu, when their original home was totally razed down following the Owu War of 1822–25. It was a war significant in history for being the first time in Yoruba history when the whole army was equipped with European muskets, as against local weapons. New tactics were also learnt.¹¹⁰ Ties of brotherhood still exist, till today. The Òwu National Convention, for example, brings all the Òwu people together, and it is on rotation among the various Òwus. The Òwù people in Isin-Igbomina hosted the 1996 National Convention in which prominent Òwus, including former President Olusegun Obasanjo, attended.¹¹¹ In the first half of the 19th century, Ofarese, Gogo, Pee, Ogbe, Ikeku and Para-Oyo were established.¹¹²

From the socio-cultural point of view, just as anyone who did not speak the Greek language was, at a time, referred to as a barbarian, the de-humanising effect of Oyo dominance made the Oyo to regard anybody who lived outside the metropolis, whether he was an important chief, a free born or slave as Ara oko (bush-man). Such a person was seen as one of less intelligence and was looked down upon with disdain by the lowliest slave in the metropolis. The names "Ibolo" (the dirt) and the "Epo" (the weed) for the provinces in the left, reflected how the metropolitan Oyo regarded everyone in those areas.¹¹³

b. Political:

Paramountcy: In the pre-19th century era, no Igbomina ruler could be regarded as the paramount ruler of all Igbomina. After the 19th century influences of the previous developments, different Igbomina monarchs began to jostle for paramountcy: the Orangun of Ila, Olomu of Omu-Aran, Olupo of Ajase-Ipo, among others. Commenting on this development, Elphinstone noted that: "... *in relating their old myths, the people try to make their own history fit in to show their greatness prior to the Fulani uprising.*"¹¹⁴

Constitutional Breakdown: One major effect of the collapse of Oyo and its multiplier effect on vassal states, such as Igbomina, was the subsequent constitutional breakdown and anarchy throughout the length and breadth of the Oyo Empire. This got to the point of *démarche* between and among blood brothers in the 19th century. Igbomina also had her own fair share of this constitutional crisis, which resulted into new political experimentations, some of which were not very palatable, as would be seen below.

Political Experimentations: In Igbomina, new forms of political arrangements and experimentations occurred. Villages resorted to alliances for joint defence and security. The vicissitudes of the 19th century brought the military men into prominence, and the pre-existing traditional base of authority had to be revolutionised to absorb and accommodate the new ruling military class, who, in certain cases, overthrew the old ruling civilian class. They,

thus, seized the initiatives in the scheme of things of that period.¹¹⁵ One Asanlu Odasodekun during the Owu-Ijaye War of 1822–25 was said to have migrated from Egbaland to Isanlu. In like manner, Esinkin Olusin Aiyemoro from Òwu, a warrior who distinguished himself during the Òwu War reportedly moved into Òwù, in Isin-Igbominaland, introducing military weapons such as guns and muskets.¹¹⁶

These new military men were integrated into a diarchy of a political system. For example, Esinkin Olusin was said to be the generalissimo of Isin's irregular army. Asanlu Odasodekun also reportedly dealt a great blow on the Ibadan warriors at Otun, which won him the cognomen:

O gb'Ekiti lowo Latoosa, o gbarata lowo Oloyin, Bó da kan, a pa'kan, a d'agba meji si koto" (i.e. He rescued Ekiti from Latoosa and Oloyin, conquering one, he slayed the other, throwing two people into the pit).¹¹⁷

The military prowess of the Olusin of Isanlu-Isin and his connection with Ile-Ife enhanced his status. The security and safety people enjoyed with him from invaders had attracted migrants to him for protection. His Orile (cognomen) attests to this:

Isanlu Yeye; Omo a-jo-kogun; i.e. Isanlu Isin born; children who dance to embrace battle.¹¹⁸

Isanlu's expansion won for her paramountcy among the other rulers. Thereafter, the Olusin gradually extended his supremacy over the entire Isinland.¹¹⁹

The martial ability of Elese, the founder of Igbaja, and his connection with the Alaafin might have been responsible for the military-cum- political power-shift in Irese-Igbomina in favour of the Elese of Igbaja. His ability to curtail the constant state of war in the 18th and 19th centuries gave an in-road for the eventual supremacy of Igbaja over the other and even older settlements such as Obin, Adanla, and Oke-Emo.¹²⁰ Today, the Elese of Igbaja is a First Class Oba.

Military Intervention in Politics: Prior to the 20th century escalation of military intervention in politics, the existence of, and the part played by the military in some societies¹²¹ is often being overlooked.

By 1800, pragmatically speaking, monarchy was the sanctified order of society throughout Yorubaland. Even till the late 19th century, communities without kings were still referred to as bastards by many Yoruba.¹²² Military rule was not the usual form that government took in Yorubaland prior to the 19th C. In their typologies, Oyo was a fairly decentralised unitary state. It would be obviously dangerous to assume that the conditions of the colonial era or even of the New Oyo in pre-colonial times can be safely extrapolated back into the 18th century. However, the narrative oral traditions explicitly or indirectly attest to some of the changes, which have taken place.¹²³ Egba was a confederate; Ife, a fully centralised state, Ekiti, an agglomeration of separate independent kingdoms; and Awori, a highly decentralised group, the highest level of political organisation among them being the village.¹²⁴ For the Igbomina who were knitted together into a group of the Yoruba over the centuries, there have been considerable socio-political interactions in spite of the proliferation of autonomous polities. However, the Igbomina never formed a single political entity, although, the initial differences among the component groups began to disappear over the years, thus giving way to a sub-group consciousness.

The “*mini-state*” was the commonest feature of socio-political organisation in Igbomina according to Obayemi, who noted that:

*The existence of fairly well defined mini-states...of these, Iwo, Owu, Oba and others existed in the Igbomina area...*¹²⁵

Slight variations persisted in the socio-political system of the various Igbomina communities. It needs be noted here that in all these states, civilians, and not the military held the reins of power before the 19th century.¹²⁶ What then brought the military into the administration of these states in the 19th century?

Unlike in the contemporary age when the military are heralded into power by coup d'états, military interventions in the politics of the 19th century Yorubaland was a response to the disturbed political situation and was a natural outgrowth of the challenges of the various wars. So natural was it that it spread fast like wild harmattan fire throughout Yorubaland. These military governments were said to be contingency arrangements designed to meet the demands of the precarious century.¹²⁷ Hence, the military came in to fill the political power vacuum and arrest the disorder that followed the fall of Oyo.

In conclusion, the nature and existent of Oyo's influence on Igbomina is difficult to determine very precisely. But the intensity of her influence can be easily seen in local traditions. For instance, many Igbomina kings continued to claim ancestral connections with the Oyo Empire and to receive paraphernalia and insignias of political authority from the Alaafin.

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53. Afolayan, F.S. "Igbomina Under Colonial Rule", 1984, p. 6.
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60. Oral tradition: Chief Hon. Ibiyeye Esie, March, 2011.
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62. Crowder, B. in his “Load Line”, in www.odh.org. (© 2014, Thursday January 23, 2014, “December, January, February 2013-2014 Edition”) provides this historical illumination on the subject matter: “In the 19th century, ships were often recklessly overloaded, resulting in those ships going down and the crews being lost at sea. In 1875, to remedy this negligent practice, British politician—Samuel Plimsoll—led the charge for legislation to create a line on the side of a ship to show if it was carrying too much cargo. That “load line” became known as the Plimsoll Line, and it continues to mark the hulls of ships today”.
63. Afolayan, F.S. “War and Change...” 1998, p. 78.
64. Afolayan, “Igbomina Under Colonial Rule” 1984, p. 11; Afolayan, ‘War and Change...’ 1998, p.78.
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CHAPTER THREE

18th CENTURY FOREIGN INFLUENCE: THE NUPE INCURSION

3.0 Introduction

Periodisation in history is often not easy to fix. Certain variables make it fickle, inconsistent and capricious in nature. It, therefore, becomes necessary to note here that the time-lag over-laps in most cases. The Igbomina and Ibolu traditions mentioned numerous encounters with the Tapa and it is not uncommon to find some lineages among them (the Igbomina and Ibolu) preserving memories of their Tapa ancestry in their Oriki and lineage rituals, even till today.¹ The Iwo/Oke-Aba military alliance against the Nupe incursion at a place called, *Akitimo* is a good case study. There is little doubt that Nupe was a power of prime importance in the military politics of the Niger valley during the 16th and 17th centuries. The source of its power was military.² But who are the Nupe?

3.1 The Nupe

In the words of Aliyu,

*...it seems impossible to know the origin of the term, "Nupe".
What we do know is that the term 'Nupe' refers to a distinct group
of people who dwell within Nupeland in the Trans-Niger areas.
They speak Nupe as their first language.*³

The names "Kwararafa" and "Nupe" are cited in chronicles of the Hausa Kingdoms, referring to events put in the 14th or 15th century context.⁴ The land areas they occupy fall between Latitude 9° 30' and 8° 30' North within the lower basins of the Rivers Niger and Kaduna. These cover the land area of about 11, 200² kms.⁵ The Nupe constituted one of the most prominent entities in the Niger-Benue Confluence area, and had, along with the Igala and Kwararafa (Jukun) kingdoms, exercised dominant influence in the area, especially in the pre-1800 history. Nupeland shares boundary with the Yoruba sub-groups of Igbomina, Yagba, Owe and Oworo on the west bank of the River Niger, in the hinterland. By the 19th century, all these western neighbours had fallen under the political sphere of influence of the

Nupe and remained so until the advent of the British.⁶ There are formal accounts, which relate to the emergence of the Nupe kingdom. Dates for the foundation of the kingdom had been suggested on the basis of their king-list.⁷

Meanwhile, there exists a number of king-lists and genealogical trees on Nupe Kingdom, all being compilations of colonial officials, and all beginning with Edegi (Tsoede) as the uncontested first king of Nupeland. With the exception of a few mix-ups here and there, to a large extent, names of the Etsu given are the same.⁸ Geographical location has contributed in no small measure to the prominence of the Nupe state.⁹

The Nupe-speaking peoples are located basically around the confluence of the Rivers Kaduna and Gbako, with the Niger above and the Niger-Kaduna Confluence below. The kingdom had served as a melting point of cultures; a core area for the process of acculturation for political domination of the various sub-sections of Nupe and of initial outsiders such as the Kupa, Ihabe or Kakanda, and even some Yoruba-speaking peoples.¹⁰

Nupe is believed to be one of the so-called *Hausa Banza* states. The people lived in-between the basin of Rivers Niger and Kaduna. This description reveals that:

*The Igbomina Yoruba was located near the Nupe ethnic group, who lived both on the right bank of the Niger downstream of Jebba and to the north of the River Niger. The Nupe located along the northern frontier of the Old Oyo, appear to have exerted a great deal of political pressure on Oyo. The Igbomina society, located between the Nupe and Old Oyo had the strategic advantage of protecting Oyo's northern frontier.*¹¹

It has been suggested that the Igbomina area was inhabited earlier on by the Nupe. They were later dislodged and partially absorbed by successive waves of Yoruba immigrants first from Ile-Ife and then from Oyo-Yoruba speaking areas.¹² The soapstone figures found in Igbomina areas such as Esie, Ijara and Ofaro exhibiting both Nupe and Yoruba culture traits have been used to support this claim.¹³ Both the Yoruba and Nupe cultures might have existed simultaneously, probably until the 16th century, when the Nupe were displaced by the expansion of Old Oyo.¹⁴

Archaeological findings have placed the establishment of the Nupe kingdom, under Tsoede, from Idah, towards the end of 15th or early 16th century.¹⁵ Tsoede or Edegi is said to have been fathered by an Igala king, and a Nupe woman. He established himself at Nupeko after a period of residence at Idah before his father died. He was said to have fled upstream from Idah with an essential insignia of office in a celebrated bronze canoe piloted by Kyedye (riverine Nupe) canoe men. He arrived with them at the confluence of the Rivers Kaduna and Niger at Nupeko from where he conquered the pre-existing confederacy of the Bini Nupe.¹⁶

Whereas Nadel made it obvious that there existed pre-Tsoede kings, such as Jegu and Jigba, there is no doubting the fact that Tsoede's era was revolutionary in the political history of the Nupe-speaking peoples.¹⁷ He not only brought the unification of the sedentary Nupe represented by the Benin confederacy, but of the riverine Kyedye who "*rule the water*" and had also in a remarkable way sealed the union by an effective ritual centred upon his personality.¹⁸ Tsoede acquired an army with strong emphasis on cavalry. Thus, he was establishing an independent Nupe Kingdom, which became the core of one of the most powerful autochthonous states of the Nigerian area, freed from a plausible supremacy of the Igala. Although references to the Nupe in Hausa sources date back to the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, Tsoede himself is believed to have reigned in the early part of the 16th century.¹⁹

Through Tsoede, the Nupe were united. He established his capital at Nupeko, since the capital of the kingdom had at various times been at Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, Nupeko, and probably some others²⁰ and expanded his empire north and south by war. He ensured efficient government, agriculture, industry, army and markets, and was greatly dreaded for his diabolical and metaphysical powers. He, indeed, was a divine monarch who must not be disobeyed, lest you be hypnotised. He built canoes, an art he had learnt at Idah, for industry.²¹

But of utmost importance in this discourse is the question of the relationship between the Nupe state and its neighbours. Nupe, thus, incorporated other peoples into its area of

dominance, either by conquest or acculturation.²² Meanwhile, whereas Mason indicated that Nupe militarism actually ante-dated Tsoede,²³ Nadel portrayed Tseode as a warlike king who waged “big and victorious wars” against neighbouring peoples.²⁴ Obayemi reported him to have died in one of such military expeditions at Gbagede in the Kamberi territory.²⁵

As reported by Johnson, traditions of the neighbouring states and kingdoms concerning Nupe militarism prior to 1800 included those of the old Yoruba revealing a pre-occupation of the ancient Alaafins with Baruba and Nupe states, to the north and north-east respectively. These traditions of Oyo–Tapa (pronounced as ‘*Takpa*’ –the Yoruba name for the Nupe) relations were almost predominantly martial,²⁶ featuring in memories of the reigns of some Alaafin such as Oranmiyan, the founder of Oyo probably around 1390 AD, Sango and Ajuan, otherwise known as Ajaka.²⁷

Johnson noted that when Oranmiyan was sufficiently strong, he set off for an expedition against Mecca to avenge the death of their great-grandfather (Oduduwa) and the expulsion of his party from that city. The route by which they came from Mecca was reportedly rendered impassable owing to an army of black ants blocking up the path. Hence, they were obliged to follow another route through the Tapa or Nupe country. So strong were the Tapa that they were said to have successfully opposed his crossing the river. When he got to River Niger and could not force his way through, he was obliged to remain for a while near the banks and afterwards resolved to retrace his steps.²⁸

Considering it rather ignominious to return to Ile-Ife, Oranmiyan consulted the King of Ibariba as to where to reside, since he was encamping near Ibariba country. Oranmiyan later married Torosi, the daughter of Elempe, a Nupe King. Through an alliance, the Nupe king gave his daughter to Oranmiyan as wife. Sango was the issue. Sango, therefore, sent a Tetu and an Hausa slave on errand to the Tapaland, home of his maternal grandfather, Elempe, to deliver to them a horse and a cow required for the sacrifice.²⁹

Alaafin Ajaka who was earlier sent on exile on the ground of his peaceful disposition³⁰ was recalled to the throne after seven years of Sango's rule and demise, proved a totally different man to what he had been before and even showed himself more belligerent than Sango, his brother. He proved himself by leading an expedition into the Tapa/Nupe country—the maternal relations of Sango, his half-brother.³¹ Meanwhile, it has been argued that Oyo was tired of his (Ajaka) non-performance.³² Later on, an invading Nupe army, probably in an attempt to avenge the holocaust against their forebears, and apparently with the support of some of the embittered subjects of the Alaafin, made a successful entry into Oyo, forcing the Alaafin Onigbogi into exile. Even in exile, Nupe offensive against the Alaafins persisted that Old Oyo was not re-occupied until the reign of Abipa, the fourth Alaafin after Onigbogi, probably around 1535–1610 AD.³³

The establishment of the Nupe Kingdom under Tsoede, from Idah, has been placed towards the end of the 15th century or the early 16th century.^{33b} After Tsoede, there were other prominent Etsu. Under Etsu Mu'azu, 1778–1795, the kingdom attained its greatest power and expansion. Etsu Moma, 1795–96, was said to have changed the capital to Raba, and the kingdom began to collapse after him due to succession and/or chieftaincy disputes, especially between Jimada and Majuga. Jimada (1796–1805), Jimi and Majuga II (1796–1810) all reigned at Raba. Moreover, the Fulani Jihadists, led by Mallam Dendo, were invited in 1810 to invade the kingdom. This was an event, which extended the Usman Dan Fodio-led jihad into Nupeland. Dendo wielded great powers and influence, gathered Muslim followers, both Hausa and Fulani, seized power and put the Etsu under him to subjection. War broke out again after Dendo's death in 1831 as his successor suppressed them from Bida, the new capital. W.B. Baiki who succeeded John Beecroft in the successful expeditions of 1854 and 1857, visited during the reign of Etsu Massaba and met him at Bida, which has survived as a

centre of craftsmanship and activities. They were great craftsmen in glass, wood, stone and ivory as well as fishing.³⁴

Obayemi revealed how many Yoruba groups such as the Ibolu, Ijesa, Yagba/Ookun and Igbomina speak of Nupe invasions through their territories. Also, Oyo cavalry could have included Tapa (Nupe) and other northerners like the Hausa and Bariba. Benin traditions of the great defeat by a northern power during the reign of Oba Ehengbuda (C. 1578–1606) often ascribed to Oyo, could well refer to the Nupe, and not the Oyo. The Nupe, rather than Oyo, have been the invading supreme power in events dateable, if approximately, to the 16th century.³⁵ In other words, Nupe probably was the supreme military power over this entire region during this epoch. During the reign of Etsu Jiya who expelled Mu'azu, a well-known warrior and one who had a firm grip on the kingdom, an invading Oyo army was defeated with great losses for the Oyo in c.1790. The war itself was probably an attempt by the Alaafin to renounce an over-lordship, which the Nupe probably had exercised over the Oyo. Etsu Mu'azu, like Jiya, apparently had an effective control of his domains, and was probably the last Etsu of the Tseode Dynasty to hold all of Nupe together in an effective way. Idrees revealed that even though Edegi (Tsoede)'s four sons ascended the royal throne in succession, viz: Etsu Shaaba (1591-1600), Etsu Zagunla (1600-1625), Etsu Jiya (1625-1670) and Etsu Momman Wari (1670-1679), there is nothing to substantiate that the primogenitary, father-to-son succession order became a permanent feature thereafter.^{35b}

3.2 First Phase of Nupe Incursion into Igbomina, 1733-1795

The evidence of Nupe facial marks on the archaeological stone images, particularly those of Esie, with their radio carbon dating, which puts their dates at around the 12th century, suggests that interactions with the Nupe were probably the earliest and the most intense among the Igbomina neighbours.³⁶ Presumably, the initial contacts could have been peaceful in nature, drawing from evidences of socio-cultural-cum-economic interactions. However, the

natural co-existence based on tranquillity and cordiality might have been changed into hostility by the mid-18th century, when Nupe emerged as the predominant super power in the north-east of Yorubaland,³⁷ thus, upsetting the existing *balance of power* in the area south-west of the Niger-Benue Confluence.³⁸ Commenting on this development, Asonibare noted that

*In the physical sense of it, what the Ambas were to the Ethiopians in the face of colonial pressure was what the Igbomina hills and inselbergs were to the Nupe.*³⁹

Afolayan⁴⁰ noted that the Igbomina's peaceful established order came under considerable stress in the 18th and 19th centuries when they became subjected to incessant military pressures from their more belligerent neighbours. Meanwhile, Gege⁴¹ has revealed that it appears from traditions prevalent in Igbominaland that military encounters had begun to take place between the Igbomina and their neighbours, by the 17th and 18th centuries. Nupe raid could be broadly categorised into three phases under three likely aggressive Nupe kings.⁴²

Etsu Jibrilu, 1744-1759: The actual beginning of Nupe invasion of Igbominaland may yet, be clustered in obscurity. But it became rather incessant and, perhaps, more severe during the reigns of Etsu Jibrilu and his immediate successor.⁴³ Nupe military incursions into Igbominaland, which took the form of sacking and raiding of Igbomina town and villages, to a very great extent, had an economic undertone. The Nupe attempted not only to terminate Oyo's pre-eminence over its internal economic affairs but also went as far as establishing economic out-posts in the country for raiding of slaves and booties. This lasted from the era of Etsu Jibrilu in 1744 through the end of the reign of Etsu Mu'azu in 1795.⁴⁴ Nupe raids have been described as "*Smash and grab*" operation because it had little consideration for long-term exploitation in most distant Igbomina towns.⁴⁵

Nupe imposed effective administrative system on the Igbomina towns, particularly in the northern region due to their proximity to Nupeland.⁴⁶ Nupe administrations were set up with the stationing of residents in some villages such as Ora and Oke-Ode.⁴⁷ Areas too remote from Nupe home-base were left, probably for fear of effective occupation and control. However, such outlying territories, such as Isanlu-Isin, Ajase-Ipo and Ila-Orangun were attacked and defeated by Nupe invading forces, but left to themselves safe for periodic raids for slaves and booties.⁴⁸ Under Etsu Jibrilu, the Oba people were dislodged from their initial settlement at Oba Igbo.⁴⁹ Gege, drawing from oral sources called it Oba-Ofaro valley, about 5-6 kms behind Oba-Igbo.⁵⁰ Other villages such as Ora, Oke-Ode and Oro-Ago were conquered and subjected to tributary and vassalage status.⁵¹

Etsu Maijia II, 1769-1777: There was a ten years interval because of the brief power-hijack of Etsu Mu'azu, to be restored to Etsuship after about two decades. The 1769-1778 invasions were, however, the most extensive and most severe, principally perpetrated by Maijia II. With his massive cavalry, Maijia II razed through the length and breadth of Igbominaland. Oba was once again dislodged from its newly settled site at Oba Ofaro. The Olusin's town of Igbole was stormed, ravaged, and razed down by fire and the people scattered. Thus, the Olusin, who was at Igbole, had to move away from the war-torn area to settle at Ajagbo.⁵² Ijara and Iji did not escape this Nupe holocaust. The inhabitants of Odo-Eku, a newly founded settlement took to their heels deserting the town. The *Oniwonate* (i.e. the villages of the Oniwo) was razed down.⁵³ Kanko (Oro) was also annihilated. Only the settlements not directly situated along Maijia's path, such as Ala, Edidi and Oke-Onigbin appeared to have been spared of the Nupe attacks.

Etsu Mu'azu (1759-1769; 1787-1795): Another round of Nupe invasion ravaged Igbominaland like wild harmattan fire during the reigns of Etsu Mu'azu and Majiya, in which Isinland, Afon (in the present day Asa LGA); Ajase-Ipo in Igbominaland and Offa were

invaded. The Nupe atrocities extended through Mu'azu's reign when Dalla II, the Olupo of Ajase, was killed in one of his raids. His capital town of Bagidi was destroyed while the greater percentage of its inhabitants was taken captive. Mu'azu also reportedly burnt down the Orangun's town of Yara.⁵⁴

3.3 Second Phase of Nupe Incursion, 1833-1897

Igbominaland seemed to experience relative military relaxation between 1795 and 1833 (i.e. a time in-between the first and second phases of Nupe incursion into Igbominaland). However, the era, 1833-1897 ushered the Igbomina into the second phase of Nupe incursion. It was important because of the collaboration of Nupe-Fulani military activities, signifying a new dimension of joint control on the Igbomina. It was the period of Fulani power-hijack from the erstwhile Nupe Estu and yet, Igbominaland was massively exploited by the Nupe.⁵⁵ The invasion of this era has been described as an extension of the Usman dan Fodiyo-led religious reformation, which had begun in the Hausa state of Gobir in 1804. By the time this Islamic movement had spread to Igbomina, without doubts, the jihad had lost its religious fervour. Instead, the desire for worldly glory had become evident.⁵⁶

The Nupe, under Malam Dendo—the Fulani Jihadist—after occupying the extreme north-eastern parts of Yorubaland, (i.e the Oworo, Bunu, Iyagba, Owo and Ijumu) between 1830-1850, made incursions into Igbomina, Akoko and northern Ekiti and even beyond, into Afenmai in Kukuruku area of present day Edo State. They established some provincial administration, frequently disrupted by revolts. In most cases, Nupe control was usually only of short duration.⁵⁷ Agunjin, Oṛa, Oke-Oḍe and Ile-Ire (i.e. Oṛa, Ikṣin, Afin, Oke-Oyan, Oreke, Alabe and Agbeku), the area to the north of the River Oyi had fallen under Nupe control, in Lafiagi, prior to the Alade War of 1850-1860. Aiyedun suggested that they came under Nupe influence as early as 1814.⁵⁸

There was evidence of Nupe-Fulani military activities in Igbominaland around 1885 when the whole of the Lafiagi country was reputedly seized by one Maliki of Bida who installed Arjaia at Oke-Ode as Ajele. One Abdulkadir Ogunsoun was placed as Ajele at Ora. But for the intervention of the Emir of Gwandu, Lafiagi itself would have been integrated into the Bida Emirate. These territories had been incorporated into Lafiagi in the days of the Nupe Etsu and Oke-Ode had been paying an annual tribute of 5 pounds (\$5) to Lafiagi. The forces of the Royal Niger Company bombarded the Nupe Emirate and ushered in the British administration in Nupeland, thus putting an end to Nupe raid in Igbominaland.⁵⁹

A lasting legacy of this, however, is that those sections of Igbomina integrated into the Nupe Emirate via military conquest were left within the administrative structure of the Nupe during the indirect colonial administration of the British. In spite of the political activities of the Nupe, the people of these areas still never will agree or believe to have been conquered by the Nupe.⁶⁰

3.4 Structure of Nupe Administration in Igbominaland–The Ogba System

The advent of the Nupe was but an episode in the general history of the northern Igbomina of Yorubaland. It was a significant period as it marked a watershed in its history. It also witnessed, according to Apata, the most devastating form of Nupe imperialism through what is known as the *Ogba system*. The pervasive impact of Nupe administrative control led some British colonial officers such as C.K. Meek and H.B. James to exaggerate that the history of the North-east Yorubaland began from the advent of the Nupe.⁶¹

Apata further enunciated that the second phase of Nupe conquests was largely due to internal wranglings in Nupeland. He recorded the history of how one Mallam Dendo, an itinerant Fulani teacher and trader credited to have initiated the Jihad in the Nupe Kingdom came to Nupeland about 1810 and exploited the rivalry between the princes to dislodge them, especially owing to the mutual suspicion and petit jealousy of his growing popularity despite

the initial fondness and mutual relation. Although Dendo never declared himself Etsu of Nupe in spite of his undisputable power in Nupeland and his warning to his sons prior to his death in 1833 not to seek worldly glory, his sons after him called his injunctions a bluff and hijacked the Etsuhip. A bitter fratricidal war ensued between his two sons—Usman Zaki and Masaba (i.e. Mohammed Shaba) and later joined by the pre-Jihad Nupe dynasty as a third party, which forced the duo of Usman Zaki and Masaba to seek relief in Northeast Yorubaland, a region rich both in human and material resources needed for the prosecution of their wars. The Gwandu factor equally became paramount as tributes had to be paid to the Emir. Thus, the history of the Nupe kingdom in the first half of the 19th century was characterised by constant intrigues, fights, wars and rebellions.⁶²

The proximity of their capitals at Rabah and Lade respectively in late 1834 to northeast Yorubaland facilitated its conquest, with simultaneous attacks from both capitals. Masaba's firm hold on the trade in the Nupe Kingdom and his influence on the European merchants to transact business only through his accredited agents made him able to monopolise the trade in firearms in his kingdom. He equally exploited other avenues for guns.⁶³ Umaru Majigi who ruled as Etsu Nupe from 1873–1882 was able to bring virtually the entire Northern Yorubaland under Nupe, before his death in 1882.⁶⁴ Abubakar has revealed that the Nupe Emirates were never administered fully by the central government. Dependence on Nupe entailed two things: recognition by other existing powers and annual tributes.⁶⁵

The “Ogba system” formed the basis upon which the pattern of Nupe administration was superimposed upon their dependencies of northern Yorubaland.⁶⁶ The *Ogba system* is parallel to the *Ajele system* of the Oyo and Ibadan and the *Ajia System* of Ilorin. The word ‘*Ogba*’ itself is akin to *Ajele*, a Yoruba term.⁶⁷ *Ogba* was the title conferred on the Nupe residents who served as the link between the Nupe potentates and the subject peoples.⁶⁸ The

Ogba system thus refers to the administrative system adopted by the Nupe overlords, a familiar institution among the classical Emirates of northern Nigeria. The *Ogba* wielded great authority as the sole representative of the *Etsu* himself, with no constituted Council to advise or check his power and excesses. Awe has noted that at the height of its power, Ibadan adopted the *Ajele system*.⁶⁹ *Ajele*, as suggested by Apata⁷⁰ probably derived from “*Ajala*” an Arabic word meaning "a dispatch".

The Nupe (Lafiagi) agents in the north-east at Oke-Ode were known as *Shaaba*. The Fulani (Ilorin) representatives at Omu-Isanlu, in the south-west were known as *Ajia*. At Igbaja, under the Ilorin, they were referred to as *Maiyaki*, while the Ibadan dispatches, in Ila, were christened *Ajele* or *Baba-kekere* (i.e. small father). Whereas the title, *Ajele* or *Baba-kekere* had come to be generally associated with Yoruba (Oyo) and Ibadan imperialism, *Ajia* had come to be generally associated with the Nupe-Fulani local imperialism in Igbomina and elsewhere.⁷¹ But the *Ogba* institution was an innovation as far as the northern Igbomina was concerned.⁷² The ruling *Etsu* created as many fiefs from his dependencies as there were his faithful soldiers, relatives and allies, controlled by them as *Ogba*. Notably, the arrangement was orchestrated for the administrative convenience of the Nupe who amalgamated rather incompatible republics with different political and administrative set-ups prior to the Nupe era. So obviously, the delineation into fiefs did not conform with the indigenous administrative patterns.

Loyalty was considered paramount in the appointment of an *Ogba*. This could be freed slaves, free born, loyal and faithful soldiers or warriors, village head-chiefs, relatives of the Nupe rulers and their allies. These fief-holders resided outside their territories but appointed their *Ogba*, directly responsible to them, who often used their administrative powers to exploit their subjects rather ruthlessly. Basically, local lords were less pre-occupied with how well the fiefs were administered, rather, the amount of tribute and other wealth

accruable therefrom.⁷³ At Oke-Ode and Ora, Maliki installed Arjaia and Abdulkadir Ogunsokun as Ajele/Ogba.⁷⁴

The Ogba were given un-refrained free hands to operate and administer their areas of jurisdiction for as long as the tributes accruable to the Etsu were not interrupted, and loyalty was maintained. The principal duty of the Ogba involved tribute collection and ensuring that the subject peoples remained absolutely loyal to the authority of the metropolis. To aid them in the pursuance of their duty, a detachment of well-armed warriors was placed at the Ogba's disposal. The Ogba became highly rapacious in their tribute demands just to win the Etsu's award known as tokoshi and also because it was the yardstick of measuring efficiency on the part of the Ogba as well as loyalty on the part of the fiefs to Nupe government.⁷⁵

More often than not, the Ogba extracted loyalty from the people by coercion. The Ogba could have been more excessive in their abuse of power than the Yoruba Ajele. Their words became law and they increasingly saw themselves above the subject peoples. They made unstable and arbitrary demands for increase on tributes.⁷⁶ They constituted nonentities and nuisances, usurping the functions of local chiefs and seeing themselves as alternative local chiefs. Going by the political set up in the three major sections of the Igbomina sub-region, the Ajia (under Ilorin), Ajele (under Ibadan), Tuci or Ogba (under the Nupe) were innovations. The system was originally introduced by the Ibadan invaders through the adoption of Baba-kekere. The system was, thus, retained by the various local imperialists but with slight modifications to peculiar political arrangements.⁷⁷

The fact that no checks were placed on the activities of the Nupe agents who were given free hands in the administration of the areas under their respective control, made their administration particularly burdensome. This was especially worsened by the insatiable quest of the Etsu. The Nupe agents, especially between 1833-95, thus, increasingly became agents of misrule and disorder. This marked the 'Golden Age' of the Nupe imperialism in

Igbominaland. Efficiency was lavishly rewarded by a special honour known as *tokoshi*, an award which enhanced the avarice of the Nupe agents and which typified a visible sign of the Etsu's favour, which every *tuci/ogba* struggled to achieve, thus making them to become more gluttonous in their demand for tributes. The *Ogba* and local chiefs in Igbominaland danced in favour to the music of the *tuci*, thus becoming ordinary stooges. This is not surprising as the *tuci* often presented themselves as alternative rulers in their areas, thereby usurping the functions of the local chiefs. The *tuci/ogba* system became a gross abuse of the indigenous system.⁷⁸

The economic factor has always claimed utmost prominence in any imperialist bid. Undoubtedly, between the late 18th and early 19th century, there was a period of slight breakdown of Igbomina society in which tributes were paid to their Nupe overlords who saw Igbominaland as a rich raiding ground for slaves and war supplies. Since much of Igbominaland is situated in the savannah, the Nupe were attracted to Igbomina particularly as they increasingly needed food in abundance for the maintenance of their army. They equally needed booties of war and so many people were captured and taken captive as slaves to Nupeland. The ward leaders and chiefs in each of the settlements within the District were made to work hand-in-hand with the Nupe agents—*Shaaba* in order to ensure the furtherance of the exploitation of the people's resources. Nupe vassals were periodically visited by the *Tuci* (i.e. Royal representatives or messengers in the conquered territories of the Nupe Kingdom) to collect tributes and gifts for the *Etsu*. These *Tucis* went as far as to administer the collections of levies on the deceased, known as *Ushuru*. A variant name of *Ogba* might be *Tuci*.⁷⁹

The Igbomina had already established a commercial relation with the Nupe and had also served as a commercial link between them and some other Yoruba cities prior to the 18th century. The strategic position of Omu-Aran in the sub-region is notable here especially due

to her economic prosperity. Omu-Aran had in fact, long before the 19th century, been the trade centre for local products like cotton and locally woven clothes, which were exported to Offa in Ibololand and onward to the coast. Consequent upon this strategic location of hers, the Nupe thought it necessary to lord themselves over the sub-region so they could possess a full commercial control throughout Igbominaland.⁸⁰

Coincidentally, just about this time, one Mallam Maliki and some other Fulani jihadists from Kebbi in the Sokoto Caliphate settled around the present town of Lafiagi. Maliki reportedly received a Flag in 1806, two years after Uthman Dan Fodiyo's proclamation of his Jihad, to establish Islam among the non-Muslim people of Nupe. Proud of his recognition by Dan Fodiyo, Maliki assembled all the resident Fulani in Lafiagi and raised a large cavalry army. He immediately declared wars of Islamic proselytisation against Lafiagi and its entire neighbourhood. The Nupe were conquered as far as to Lade, with a high death toll. Thereafter, he turned to north-east Igbominaland before he was finally driven away to Ilorin by Etsu Majiya, a Nupe ruler of the Western region.⁸¹

Maliki's activities greatly affected the existing Nupe-Igbomina relations. Before Majiya's intervention, he had made a tremendous impact on the spread of Fulani influence just as several north-eastern communities became tributary states. The annual tribute paid by Oke-Ode, Ile-Ire and Oro-Ago to Maliki served as sufficient evidence that he ruled the sub-region. While Oro-Ago was given as a fief by Wazir Dan Adamawa of Gwando, Oke-Ode paid five (5) slaves, ten (10) flowing garments and ten (10) articles of women-clothing to Lafiagi. Subsequently, a tribute of an undisclosed sum was paid for Shonga, both in cash and in kind.⁸²

All these excesses drove the Igbomina to the brink of revolt. This was the exact position of many Igbomina kings and their people under Nupe imperialism, when the news of the British conquest of the sub-region was heralded.

3. 5 Nupe Influence on Igbomina

Following the Fulani take-over of the Nupe Kingdom in the 19th century, the various Yoruba sub-groups on its borders were incorporated into the Emirates of Bida and Lafiagi. While the Yagba, Owe, Oworo and Akoko were dominated by Bida Emirate system, the Igbomina of Oke-Ode extraction, for instance, were under the influence of Lafiagi.⁸³ Whereas the Fulani took hold of western Igbomina, the Nupe had a firm grip of the north-east of Igbomina, Nupe-Igbomina, as the place was termed, was derived from the long historical relationships between the Nupe and the inhabitants of Ora, Igbaja,, Ile-Ire, Oro-Ago, Oke-Ode and others in present day Ifelodun and part of Ilorin South LGAs of Kwara State.

Generally speaking, Nupe influence in Yorubaland started with the invasion of Old Oyo in 1791, which probably represents an extension of influence to Igbominaland. Nupe's influence in Igbominaland was very significant because it provided the background for the understanding of/and prelude to the British conquest of the sub-region. The aforementioned areas were administered under the Nupe during the colonial rule.

a. Social Influence

i. Extinction of Old Settlements: The relations, which existed between the Igbomina and Nupe has been described as that of a “menacing enemy”, which led to the extinction of many Igbomina settlements.⁸⁴ Some people migrated from Nupeland into Igbominaland. Such included the inhabitants of Oke-Apata compound at Owu. The Odo-Rore and Ilafe sections of Oro-Ago are also believed to have migrated and acculturated into Igbominaland from Nupeland. The founder of Oponda, presently in Isin LGA, is believed to have come from Ejiwo in Nupe land.⁸⁵ Archival documents reveal that in the course of these Nupe raids, many Igbomina settlements such as Oba, Odo-Eku, Isanlu, Iwo, Ijara, Bagidi, Kanko and others were obliterated.⁸⁶ Nupe raids continued well into the 19th century when the Fulani conquest was super-imposed on Igbominaland.⁸⁷

ii. Foundation of New Settlements: One major consequence and influence of Nupe raid was that some new settlements emerged, being founded by the fleeing or displaced inhabitants of the dislodged and destroyed settlements.⁸⁸ This resulted in new political configurations. For example, the agglomeration of nine villages known as Ekumesan Oro emerged from the ruins of Kanko. Ila Orangun also emerged out of the ruins of Yara.⁸⁹

iii. Inter-marriage: Nadel, who understudied the Nupe, made reference to some groups who settled in the region but who *Nupenised* themselves both economically and politically. They intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their own language and abandoned most of their original cultural traits.⁹⁰ The extent to which some Igbomina were *Nupenised* by virtue of their geographical proximity and cultural affinity with the Nupe is the crux of this sub-section.

iv. Acculturation: One major influence from Nupe relations had been the emergence of a recognisable culture group, which with some internal variations in the area now covered by some Nupe, *Nupenised* peoples, may be described as the Nupe culture—the acculturation in the promotion of the influence and power of the Nupe Kingdom, in the tradition of Tsoede.⁹¹ In the course of time, many non-Nupe simply become *Nupenised* or ‘naturalised’ into the Nupe cultural society, something like a cultural tribunal which confers tribal membership to new naturalised groups.

The name ‘Nupe’ today, has been extended to other originally alien groups living within the Nupe country, which have become *Nupenised* and are hardly recognisable from the people among whom they live. Some Igbomina towns have very close cultural affinity with Nupe, among which include Share and Tsaragi. This has produced another species of people known as the *Yoruba-Nupe*—people of Yoruba descent who are slave descendants captured in the wars of the Fulani Etsu Nupe against the Yoruba. They later regained their freedom and by the order of the Etsu, settled in the various districts of the kingdom. Many of the Igbomina close neighbours with the Nupe, at present, speak the Nupe language and conform in their

whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. One significant distinction between the sub-groups and the Nupe proper is that most people in these sub-groups are bi-lingual, and so, understand and speak both their own dialect as well as Nupe proper.⁹² It is particularly interesting that the incumbent governor of Kwara State, Abdulfatah Ahmed is a descendant of one of such communities—Share. Though believed to be Igbomina, he speaks the Nupe language. During his electioneering campaign, he addressed the Nupe speakers in the state in *raw* Nupe in a telecast.

v. Mixed-Bloodedness: Some Igbomina settlements such as Rore and Ora are said to have been originally peopled from Nupeland.⁹³ The Odo-Rore and Ilafe sections of Oro-Ago, Oke-Apata compound at Owu and Oponda migrated from Nupe.⁹⁴ Cultural diffusion, no doubt, brought about inter-marriages and mixed-bloodedness.

vi. Body and Facial Markings: The Nupe practised body and facial markings, *etsa* “patterns”, cut deep into the foreskin of both male and female babies, which differ in the different sub-groups. Many of these have, however, been either altered or modified by modernisation as fathers and sons now bear dissimilar markings. Nadel revealed that Modern Bida and Beni markings might also have been originally borrowed from contact with the Yoruba [possibly, Igbomina since they are among the closest Yoruba groups to the Nupe] whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found ‘nicer’ and, perhaps, less cruel than their own crude lacerations.⁹⁵

vii. Religious Influence: Socio-culturally, there also existed probable Yoruba-Nupe exchanges along the lines of ancestor personification. Thanks to easily recognisable *Nupeisms* in terminologies and oriki. Non-Yoruba features adopted, which appear in records have been identified. Some of such likely borrowed syntaxes from Nupe into Yoruba lexicon include eegun, from *gugu*; elu—elo; igunnu, from *gunu*, as well as the related forms of Alapinni, the Oyo chieftain who presided over egungun affairs in that town and the Nupe

title, *Lapene*.⁹⁶ The *Egungun* festival, which is still presently an on-going phenomenon in some Igbomina communities such as Omu-Aran, Oko, Arandun and Oro-Ago, is believed to have been introduced into Igbominaland from Nupeland.⁹⁷ The *Egungun Elewe* is believed to have been copied from Nupeland, perhaps, due partly to the prevalence of *Igunnu*.⁹⁸ The Odogbo compound at Isanlu-Isin of which Lobanika masquerade was peculiar to, is a legacy of Nupe conquest in that area. Nupe descendants could still be found there.⁹⁹

Furthermore, some have attempted a link between the Nupe *Soko* and the Yoruba deity—*Sango*—who has, for long, been understood as an intrusive northern figure. And in the Oyo case, there is a historical rationale for fixing the advent of *Sango* into Oyo-Nupe relations. *Sango*, although an Oyo, had a Nupe maternal record. Documented legends also helped us to link Sango with *Oya*,¹⁰⁰ one Yoruba variant name for the River Niger. They were said to be husband and wife respectively. Meanwhile, in spite of the Christianisation and Islamisation of the Igbomina-Yoruba society, traces of *Sango* worship and relics have survived, till date, in Igbominaland; for example, in Omugo and Oro-Ago.

Obayemi has equally conjectured the likelihood of the introduction of *Ifa* oracle into the Yoruba homeland from Nupe-land. *Ifa* derives from the north of Yorubaland, although it is also a strong member of the central Yoruba pantheon.¹⁰¹

viii. New Arts, Skills, Wares and Weapons of Warfare, such as bows and arrows were introduced into Igbomina as the Nupe were powerful in terms of martial arts and charms. Obayemi has attached the introduction of iron metallurgy into Isinland of Igbomina to the Nupe.¹⁰² Aiyedun suggested blacksmithing or iron metallurgy as an Oyo or Nupe influence on Igbomina from locally smelted iron ore prior to the Alade War of 1850-1860.¹⁰³ However, the iron figurines found in the early settlement of Oba, at least, may dispute this claim.¹⁰⁴

Impacts of the cultural diffusion of the Igbomina who were taken as slaves into Nupeland is yet to be determined. That may form the subject of further research.

b. Political Influence

i. Institutional Wreckage: The Nupe *Ogba*, in their influence on Igbominaland, invaded and penetrated the age-long customs and traditions of the people, thereby shaking the very bedrock of the Igbomina societies politically and socio-culturally. The devastating effects of the menace that accompanied the Nupe incursion into Igbominaland manifested politically in the truncation of their day-to-day administration, hijack of traditional stool now manned by the Nupe potentates. Gege¹⁰⁵ claimed that the Nupe rulers did not impose any semblance of *Ajele* (agents) on Isin-Igbomina and that the chiefs only paid tributes to the Nupe rulers. While this claim may not be impossible, nevertheless, the fact that the people paid tributes to the *Etsu* Nupe is a clear indication of their hegemony on the people, since no people will out of freewill subject themselves to foreign potentates without a propelling force. Nnamdi Azikiwe once noted that it is a fool that loves his chains even if they are made of gold.¹⁰⁶ Hassan noted that it was mandatory for the Igbomina to pay tribute to the *Etsu* annually or bi-annually be it in agricultural or industrial products, and the *Ogba* was charged with the task of tributes collection.¹⁰⁷ Malomo observed that the Nupe had established control over Oro-Ago and Oke-Ode since the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁰⁸

Nupe invasion disrupted the political arrangement of Igbominaland, while on the other hand, the Nupe people became more dreaded by the people as terrorists. The Isin people, in a bid to forging and expressing their resistance to the Nupe incursion, settled at *Ogba-Irobi* (protest-migration settlement). There, they formed a common front against the Nupe invaders.¹⁰⁹ Traditions in Iwo, as presented by Aboyeji, has it that during the Nupe raids and the final Nupe sporadic invasions for slaves and imperial expansionism around 1787, Iwo and Oke-Aba, her close neighbour, rallied together against the invaders at a place called "*Akitimo*" i.e. the place where we jointly fought them. *Akitimo* was a place considered conducive to fight the Nupe. It was a deep, thick forest, on Iwo land, where Iwo and Oke-Aba

ran to, using the foliage of trees and the strange mysterious palm tree with two trunks as defence and obstacle against the fast-footed Nupe cavalry men. The palm tree was believed to possess great spiritual protective powers.¹¹⁰ Both communities retreated to their sites after the war—Oke-Aba to her village on the hill top where the ‘*Aba*’ tree is predominant; and Iwo to part of her land where she had settled before, of which the “*Oganwo*” tree was symbolic.¹¹¹

This has helped to re-construct the erroneous account presented by Gege¹¹² that ‘*Akitimo*’, was one of the early settlements destroyed in Isinland during the Nupe invasion under *Etsu* Jibrilu and that *Akitimo* was, thus, broken down into Iwo, Oke-Aba, and Odo-Ore.

ii. De-militarisation of Igbomina: Nupe influence precipitated severe injury to the socio-political setting and military strength of the Igbomina as those raids continued well into the 19th century, when the Fulani conquest was superimposed on the Igbomina. Hence, the already severely weakened and scattered Igbomina, by the preceding Nupe onslaughts, could not put up any viable resistance to Fulani incursion.¹¹³

iii. Monarchical Boost: Some Igbomina monarchs seemed to have their status boosted as they were several times coerced to aid the Nupe in their raids against the Iyagba, Akoko, Ebira as well as other Igbomina towns.¹¹⁴ Examples of these included the *Olupo* of Ajase and the *Oloro* of Oro.

iv. Introduction of New Political Titles: War, the paramount factor of promotion and inter-class mobility had stopped; there were no more raids and conquests; slaves and feudal fiefs existed no longer, but ranks and titles and state offices linked with ranks and titles still existed.¹¹⁵ Malomo observed that the administrative agents that exercised control as village-heads were called *Ajele* or *Baba-kekere*. But the activities of these district officers were controlled and supervised by the fief-holders known in *Ajia* by Fulani, while the Nupe called them *Shaaba* or *Maiyaki*, for those in the Share and Oke-Ode districts in Igbominaland.¹¹⁶

Nupe titles, such as *Shaba*, *Benu*, *Nakoju*, *Kpotun*, *Makun*, *Olupoun* and *Balogun* were evident in Ora, Oke-Ode and Agunjin.¹¹⁷

v. Religio-Political Influence: It is observed that the Igbomina people such as Share, Oke-Ode, Igbaja and Ajase who were close neighbours of the Nupe, observed the Moslem law. Today, most, if not all, of the monarchs are Moslems, and one imagines the probability or chance of a Christian or non-Moslem ascending to such exalted thrones. These communities are apparently predominantly Moslem.¹¹⁸

vi. New Colonial Administrative Arrangements: The British divided the various regions conquered in Nigeria into Provinces with Ilorin as one of them. Each Province was further split into Districts for effective administrative control. Districts in most cases comprised of a number of settlements with similar cultural beliefs and backgrounds. S. Dwyer, Resident of the Ilorin Province by 1917 observed that the fief-holding system had left the Oro-Ago District and environs poorly administered. Consequently, due to its proximity to the Nupe region, the area was brought under the Nupe control. In 1916 when the Lafiagi Province was created under the Nupe Emirate, some Yoruba settlements such as the Oro-Ago and Oke-Ode districts, from the Ilorin Province, came under the Lafiagi Emirate.

Thus, both the Oro-Ago and Oke-Ode districts, from this time, came under the administrative control of the Nupe. It should be noted that as at then, Nupe rule was not new to the people, as the Nupe had since the 18th and 19th centuries, at several times, established control over this region.

Conclusively, Nadel argued that the West African pre-colonial society generally was

*...far from 'simple' and 'primitive'. Its social and economic complexity is comparable only with the civilizations of Imperial Rome, Byzantium, of medieval Europe.*¹¹⁹

In order to place the Nupe political, economic, cultural and social relations with the other peoples and states in the Nigerian area, it becomes imperative to emphasise the crucial

importance of its riverain orientation with the presence of the River Niger and its great tributaries: the Benue and Kaduna. Its capitals had always been situated near rivers, such as Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba, even later in historical times when the Nupe states extended far across Central Nigeria. Economically, the River Niger was the life-centre of the country, the welfare of a large section of the population depending on the River Niger. Traffic and trade were also bound up with it.

Whereas the Fulani took hold of Western Igbomina, the Nupe had a firm grip of the North-east of Igbomina. Nupe-Igbomina, as the place was termed, was derived from the long historical relationships between the Nupe and the inhabitants of Ora, Igbaja, Ile-Ire, Oro-Ago, Oke-Ode and others in the present day Ifelodun and part of Ilorin South LGAs of Kwara State.

Meanwhile, Nupe raid in Igbomina is said to have persisted until 1948 when the Oro-Ago people apparently boldly and successfully launched a local war of emancipation against the Nupe of Lafiagi Province. This war of independence, it was, that finally liberated the whole of Northern Igbomina from the Nupe-Fulani hegemony.¹²⁰

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CHAPTER FOUR
19TH CENTURY FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON IGBOMINA:
ILORIN CONQUEST AND IBADAN RAIDS

4.0 Introduction:

At no point in time was internal division as endemic among the Yoruba as the 19th century when the various groups—the Oyo-Yoruba, Egba, Ondo, Ijebu, Igbomina, Ife, Ijesa and Ekiti—to name only a few, regarded themselves as distinct groups and rejected the eponymous label, ‘Yoruba’ to which they now answer. But not only did they emphasise sub-ethnic identity, they also turned their country into a war theatre, a phenomenon, which has misled many historians to see Yoruba history in the 19th century in predominantly military terms.¹

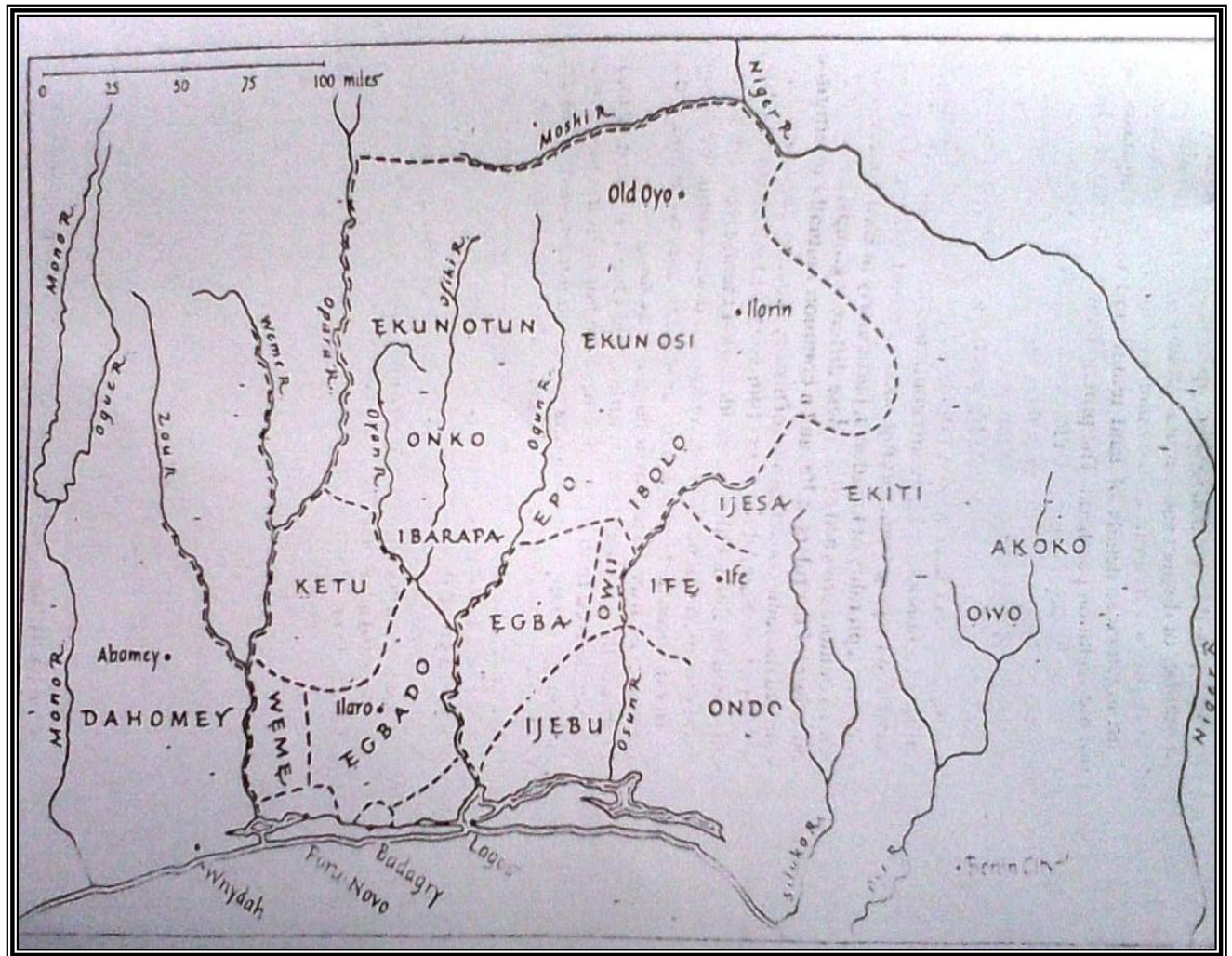
4.1. Igbomina in the Context of the 19th Century Yoruba Civil Wars

One of the most important events in the history of the entire Yorubaland in the 19th century (1800-1899) was the final collapse of the Old Oyo Empire with the power vacuum it created and its ripple effects and subsequent consequences. It is, however, not easy to categorically determine the exact date when the Old Oyo Empire began to decline. Various scholars have come up with different suggestions in this regard, attributing the collapse of the Empire to factors both remote and immediate. Existing and new Yoruba states struggled to fill this vacuum. However, Ibadan obviously proved to be the most powerful of them all. Yorubaland, during the rest of the 19th century could perhaps, be regarded as a battlefield and war-zone for a series of protracted warfares.

Smith² divided the civil wars into three dispensations lasting over seventy years. In his own case, Akinjogbin posited that the wars actually lasted a whole century, from 1793-1893.³ One century of civil wars within a nation renowned for orderly organisation and obedience to moral authority with few short inter-missions of peace, until an external force came to ensue tranquility, surely deserves attention.⁴ A most annoying thing, as the late Owa

MAP III

MAP OF YORUBALAND IN THE 19TH CENTURY



SOURCE: J.F.Ade Ajayi, "19th Century Wars and Yoruba Ethnicity" in Akinjogbin, I. A. (Ed.) *War and Peace in Yorubaland*,... 1998, p.12.

Ooye of Igbajo lamented and decried, is the fact that this unending chains of wars were fought between "brothers, motherly born; a war of allies fighting other allies of about the same composition".⁵ Worse still is the fact that all Yoruba, going by the Oduduwa legend, descended from the same progenitor.

As the name "Igbajo" itself suggests, it is a conglomeration of various units of people, not the Ijesa and Oyo alone—Ado, Ila-Orangun, Igbomina and Ekiti. Igbajo is, indeed, a coming together; a synopsis of all Yoruba groups.⁶ It was, indeed, a civil and not an inter-tribal war since Igbajo had among her the Ijesa, Ekiti and Igbomina; a true fratricidal war.⁷ Besides the fact that the mixed population of both Ibadan and Igbajo had same composition, it is plausible to emphasise that the Igbomina were prominent among the players and actors of the 19th century drama.

In the 19th century, the vast Yorubaland became a theatre of wars, being the aftermath of the fall of Old Oyo. The creation of a power-vacuum in the power politics of Yorubaland naturally led to a contest for power and supremacy among some of the existing towns like Owu and Ilorin as well as some of the new states in Yorubaland such as Abeokuta, Ibadan, New Oyo, Ijaye and Ogbomoso. It was, in fact that contest that dominated the historical scene in Yorubaland for the rest of the 19th century. According to Akinjogbin,

*With the fall of the Oyo monarchy and the collapse of the Oyo empire, most Yoruba kingdoms became once again involved in active constitutional reappraisal and a great deal of political upheaval which was to last the whole of the 19th C.*⁸

It suffices to say, at this juncture, that by and large, Yorubaland in the 19th century was bedevilled by three distinct upheavals from three distinct quarters. One was the internal upheaval that resulted in the Yoruba civil wars, which rocked the entire Yorubaland in the 19th century.⁹ The second was the southern or downward movement of the Fulani reformers with their Jihadist bid. This shall be adequately addressed here. And the third was the northern or upward movement, which precipitated the eventual usurpation of the hegemony

and suzerainty of the Yorubaland by the European intruders who tactically through their “Protectionist Treaties” established their political over-lordship over the entire land. This shall be considered in a later chapter in this study. By and large, each of these in its own way, restructured the political scene, which consequently, among others, led to the emergence of new forms of political organisation in Yorubaland in the 19th century.

Igbomina and the Ekiti-Parapo/Kiriji War

Although some have chosen to see the entire 19th century wars as one continuous episode, the wars may only, perhaps at best, be treated as a series of battles in a protracted war. For example, not less than eleven battles were fought between the 1826 and 1840. The first three were the Ogele, Mugba-Mugba and Kanla Battles; the Pole (7th) Otefon, Eleduwe and finally the Oshogbo War in 1840.¹⁰ Ibadan’s oppressive and exploitative authority led to revolts against her by her subjects, aimed at overthrowing Ibadan’s hegemony in their areas.

The Ekiti-Parapo/Kiriji War, otherwise known as the 16 Years War was a necessary phenomenon to both sides. For Ibadan, it could be said to be a *war of containment*—a war to preserve all the gains made since 1840 for Yorubaland; or for some, to preserve Ibadan’s dominion. For the allies, it could be referred to as a *war of independence*, fought by all those towns either subject to Ibadan or jealous of its power or sceptically fearful of its domination,¹¹ all in a bid to either *regain* or *retain* their independence—i.e. Ekiti, Ijesa, Akoko, Igbomina (later Egba, Ijebu, Ife, and Ilorin). On their parts, the Ijesa and Ekiti, joined by the Igbomina and Akoko people who had also been conquered by Ibadan formed a grand alliance/confederacy called Ekiti-parapo Confederacy in 1878 under the leadership of one Prince Fabunmi (Imesi), Faboro (Ido), Olugbosu (Oye), Arimoro, Ogundele, Obe and Ogedengbe (Ilesa) and Prince Adeyale (Ila) with a view to putting an end to the uncontrolled Ibadan imperial activities, once and for all.¹² Ogedengbe was the *primus inter pares*

Generalissimo of the Ekiti-parapo war chiefs. The headquarters of the confederacy was initially the palace of the Oore at Otun-Ekiti but later shifted to Imesi-Igbodo.

The Ijesa and Ekiti-parapo descended on Igbajo due to what they considered a treason by Igbajo, who, although a collection of Yoruba peoples, was on Ijesaland, and yet refused to join the Ekiti Confederacy but rather aligned with the Ibadan. Igbajo became the major war theatre. The Ibadan, therefore, went to the aid of Igbajo and the Ijesa army was routed. The confederates, also set out, in a rather retaliatory move, to destroy the Ibadan Ajele in their countries.¹³

The Yoruba name, “Ekiti-Parapo”, itself reveals the spirit behind the grand alliance—a league of state—initiated by all the Ekiti people in support of prince Fabumi’s action. They were subsequently joined by the Egba, Ijebu, Ilorin and the Ife. Basically, the allies wanted to clip Ibadan’s wings, which in the course of its wars of expansion, as epitomised in the previous Ibadan expansionist wars of 1840-1878, had overrun so many Yoruba kingdoms and threatened the sovereignty of those that had not yet been conquered. Ibadan, between 1844-1877, through the intervention of local feuds and under the façade of repelling the Ilorin forces, had conquered the Ekiti, Ijesa, Igbomina and Akoko countries and subjugated them under her political hegemony.¹⁴ Ibadan added to its list of tributaries Ife and Modakeke after her intervention in Ife/Modakeke feud in 1854. The Ijebu and Egba expressed legitimate panic that Ibadan would eventually overrun their kingdoms, if unchecked. Ibadan’s resolute raid on Egba farms in 1877 justified this fear. Hence, all the non-Oyo-Yoruba people had, on the eve of the Ekiti-parapo War, regarded Ibadan as ‘*a monster with gaping jaws ready to swallow all Yoruba kingdoms*’.¹⁵

Both Ilorin and Ibadan rules over the Ekiti and Igbomina had been particularly extremely exploitative and oppressive. The Ajele/Ajia had been the conduit pipes through which the exploits accruing from economic activities were siphoned to both Ibadan and

Ilorin. The confederates joined the league for several reasons ranging from common descent to common imperial experience and the hope that they could use the confederacy against Ilorin, after Ibadan might have been defeated.¹⁶

The various motives of the allies provide clear expressions of their different national interests, ranging basically from political to economic and which determined the extent of the commitment of the allies in the alliance. Generally speaking, the allies all wanted to “clip the wings” of the Ibadan who had subjugated many Yoruba kingdoms and threatened the sovereignty of those that it had not yet conquered. They also wanted Ibadan’s power reduced or totally crushed militarily, considering its political and economic interests.

More specifically, however, the motives proved as diverse as the composition of the grand alliance itself. The Ijebu and Egba feared that if unrestricted, Ibadan would eventually, in its characteristic manner, crush their kingdoms as she had done to the Ekiti, Akoko, Ijesa and Igbomina countries. They, therefore, basically, joined the alliance on a political ground, to forestall being conquered by the Ibadan but also on economic grounds to safeguard her position as middlemen between the merchants on the coast and the Yoruba states in the interior. The Ekiti, Ijesa, Akoko and Igbomina had a united front fundamentally to remove the yoke of Ibadan’s imperialism, especially the extortion and excesses of the Ibadan residents called “*Ajele*”. The Ilorin, on their own part, purposely wanted the military prowess of Ibadan annihilated for a number of reasons—the desire for booty, wealth and embellishment (economic inclination) as well as to re-impose her political hegemony on her former Igbomina vassals, and bring the Ekiti towns under her hegemony (political undertone). The Emir of Ilorin had during the Ijaye War said, “...we should combine against this Ibadan which had often baulked us of our prey; we may yet carry the Koran to the sea”.¹⁷

The Ife and Ijebu had specific grievances against the Owu, which they sought occasion to deal with.¹⁸ In 1882, Dahomey also added immensely to Ibadan’s heartache in the

upper Ogun Area, while Ife also revolted and thus, joined forces with the Ekiti-Parapo. Ife, which had earlier, only reluctantly, joined the Ibadan army in 1878, changed sides and declared for the confederates in 1882, a development which led to reprisals being taken against Ife by the Ibadan.¹⁹

After Afonja's cold-blooded murder, Ilorin had spread its conquering zeal to such Yoruba towns as Igbaja, Ila (Igbomina), Ikirun and Otan-Ayegbaju. Ibadan went to the succour of these towns and liberated them from the clutches of Ilorin.²⁰ Prior to the Kiriji War, Ibadan and Ilorin in almost all battles had always been in opposing camps for obvious reasons—clash of enlightened interest, among others. While Ibadan seemed to want to revive the lost glories of the Old Oyo Empire, Ilorin aimed at carving out an “Emirate of Yoruba” within Yorubaland. Not surprisingly, Ilorin aligned herself with the Ekiti-parapo with the sole aim of liquidating the power of Ibadan in Yorubaland.

Contingents were recruited from all over the confederate states—Isanlu, Ekan, Osi, Ijara, Eruku, Odo-Owa, Ilofa, Idofin, Obbo, Iji, Owu, etc under Balogun Apapalaso. This underscores the fact that the Igbomina also took very active parts in their participation and tremendous role thus, contributing to the successful resistance, which dictated the fate of the Ekiti-parapo War. For instance, Oguntomisin revealed that despite the 60, 000—40, 000 Ibadan/Ekiti-parapo army, the war, yet, ended in a stalemate.²¹ The Igbomina contingents were said to have been led by Prince Adeyale from Ila,²² while the irregular constabulary from Isin was led by Esinkin Ogodorigbo from Isanlu, a man portrayed as a fiery warrior. Other participants from among the Isin warriors included Esinkin Olusin, Asanlu Odasodekun, Elemoso Gudugudu, Esinkin Owokunrinmogbo, among others. Many other Igbomina men especially from Ila and the present Omu-Aran including Ose and Ifaja joined their other colleagues at Otun, which was the entrepot of all the Ekitis of Ilorin Emirate and others especially after the Battle of Ikirun known as the Jalumi War. It serves as the rallying

point for the Confederates. Those who joined from Omu-Aran were said to have been selected from Ose, Omu-Aran and Ifaja.²³ The *Elese*, renowned to be great warriors also actively participated in the Yoruba wars. *Elese* Olawoye, the 20th *Elese* of Igbaja and *Elese* Abidolu, for instance were killed in the Offa/Jalumi war and Ibadan war at Osogbo respectively.²⁴ Both the Igbomina and Ekiti women had suffered uncluttered molestation from the Ibadan just as they were also captured as slaves, thus heightening a rationale for their support of the confederacy.²⁵

A treaty was made on 23rd September, 1886. Following the joint efforts of the Yoruba educated elite asking the colonial administration in Lagos to intervene and make peace, the two camps in the main theatre of war both at Igbajo and Imesi-Ile, after its relocation from Otun later as the war progressed, were broken up. However, it was not until 1893 that the Ofa camp was broken up and the armies disbanded after Sir Gilbert Carter had become governor of Lagos. He came to Ilorin on 2nd February, 1893 to make a separate peace between Ilorin and Ibadan. The war had by 1882 reached a stalemate—no winner and no vanquished. And although everyone wanted peace, no one was ready or able to arrange one. Ekiti-parapo army was soon disbanded while at the same time, the Isin people returned from Ogba-Irobi.²⁶ By that time, the British were well into taking over Yorubaland and incorporating it into what later became Nigeria. In the final analysis, divided Yorubaland fell an easy prey to British colonial penetration.²⁷

As regards the headship of the Ekiti-parapo, the confederates were said to have invited Ogedengbe to come over to lead them. He, however, turned it down *vis-à-vis* the oaths he had been committed to by the Ibadan. This is because the Ibadan were said to have previously defeated the Ijesa in a war led by their Generalsimo—*Seriki* Ogedemgbe, the *Primus inter pares* of the Ekiti war chiefs.²⁸ Meanwhile, Fabunmi took the lead. The more radical and forward looking of its men, in the last years of the Ekiti-parapo went so far as to

suggest either the transformation of the confederacy into a kingdom or the transmogrification of all the towns comprising it into one single vast metropolis.²⁹ Those who championed such ideas were men of wisdom who could gladly welcome the fusion of their kingdoms or sub-groups to form a new order of society.

As has been observed in this discourse, historical periods do overlap; hence, there is no clear-cut demarcation between our periodisations. Virtually all the different foreign overlords, especially the major ones that have been studied have been significantly overlapped. Hence, the periodisation given only provides a rough delineation.

No doubt, the Ekitiparapo/Kiriji War brought an end to the one century war. The formation of alliances led to the deployment of a large number of soldiers in battles. A substantial number of troops were deployed on both sides in the Kiriji War. The Ibadan and Ekiti-parapo contingents were estimated in 1886 as 60, 000 and 40, 000 soldiers respectively.³⁰ However, as revealed by Akintoye³¹ and Smith,³² those figures, which came from missionary sources, probably included the wives, children and attendants of the warriors. The actual fighting strength has thus, been estimated at 30, 000/40, 000 and 20, 000/27, 000 for Ibadan and the Ekitiparapo armies respectively.

Beginning with the quelling of the insurgence by Ibadan in the Jalumi/Ikirun War of late 1878, Ibadan engaged the confederates in a number of wars between 1878 and 1885. The Kiriji apparently ended in a stalemate in 1882. By mid-1885, both sides had obviously become tired of the wars. As the wars were detrimental to the commercial and economic interests of the British Colony of Lagos, the British government of the colony seized the opportunity of the invitation of the Yoruba leaders, to intervene in the wars and to see to the signing of the Ekiti-parapo Peace Treaty of July 1886 between the belligerents. Consequent upon the 1886 Peace Treaty, Ibadan recognised the independence of the members of the confederacy.

It should be noted that while the Ibadan raid was still raging, another parallel power originating in the far north (the Fulani Jihadists who had seized Ilorin) was also on the rampage, raging through some parts of Yorubaland. The Fulani had converted Ilorin into a launch-pad for more attacks on Yorubaland in general, but the Igbomina in particular.³³

4.2 Rise of the Ilorin/Fulani and Structure of Administration on Igbomina

It is generally believed that Islam spread into the Hausa states or was introduced into the area that later became known as Nigeria sometimes during the 14th century A.D. However, some accounts put this at an earlier date around the 10th or 11th century A.D. From this little beginning, the number of Hausa Muslims increased gradually through the evangelistic mission of its proselytes. And as is usual with Muslim communities all over the world, these Hausa Muslims constituted themselves into what was called the *Jama'as* in the Hausa lexicon.

Probably at about this same time when Islam was being introduced into the Hausa states, a group of people who called themselves *Pulbe*, but who their *Habe* (i.e. Hausa) neighbours called the *Fulanis* began to emigrate into the Hausa states and to settle there. The Fulani are generally believed to have migrated from Futa Toro of Senegal into the various parts of the later northern Nigeria, probably during the 14th century A.D.

Most of the Fulani were Muslims and were also learned in the Islamic sense. In other words, they knew how to read and write Arabic and also knew the Islamic laws and science. Literatures abound today, which adequately address the causes, both remote and immediate of what became known as the Fulani Jihad. Some call it the Sokoto or Uthman dan Fodiyo-led Jihad.³⁴ Meanwhile, at the beginning of the 19th century, Oyo Empire had grown so large that it had become almost practically ungovernable effectively. At this time, the constitutional crises that began sometimes in the 18th century had come to breaking point. The various components that made up the empire had become alienated from one another. Until the 18th

century, politics in Old Oyo was in terms of competition between the major families and with their allies—those of the executives representing the monarchy or Alaafin and the legislature, the kingmakers—Oyo-Mesi. Consequently, a stalemate developed in the central administration of the empire on the matter of polity.

The introduction of the cavalry force and the professionalization of the military, which it encouraged, deepened class distinctions, which cut across the old family rivalries (i.e. the rivalry between allies of the power based in the old established families and allies of the paradigm power shift to the hands of the new professional warriors). Although this had an economic undertone, in no clearly specific manner, some of the warriors were more particular in a northern policy protecting sources of horses, while others were more interested in the southern trade and access to European goods.³⁵

The central government became virtually impotent and could not wield any significant influence, and the army was weak (or better still, had been weakened by Alaafin Abiodun's deliberate ploy to cut the over-grown excesses of the legislative arm and ensure peace for his reign. The empire's army was equally in ruins as a result of the shift in the axis of trade from the north (desert) to the south (coast). However, in spite of these problems, Oyo managed to drag on until it was dealt a final blow by the revolt of Afonja against the Alaafin in 1817 with the help of a Fulani proselyte and itinerant Muslim preacher, Mallam Alimi.³⁶ Put in the words of Akinjogbin and Ayandele:

Around 1823, Afonja proclaimed what in modern parlance would be called a revolution of the peasants when "all the Hausa slaves in the adjacent towns hitherto employed as barbers, rope-makers and cowherds, now deserted their masters and flocked to Ilorin under the standard of Afonja, the Kakanfo and were protected against their masters."³⁷

Afonja doubled up as governor of Ilorin and the Are-Ona-Kakanfo (i.e. field marshal or generalissimo) of the Oyo army. He connived with the Fulani Jihadists to stage a peasant revolution to carve Ilorin out as a kingdom for himself at a time when other Yoruba

kingdoms were preoccupied with a most unpremeditated revolutionary war (i.e. the Owu War). His example was so soon emulated and it sparked up a wave of break ups from Oyo.

But Afonja's bid to establish a peasant republic under himself backfired, as he got more than he ever bargained for from his supposed foreign allies. The aliens (Hausa/Fulani slaves) he had invited to aid him, who constituted his Jamaa, not only turned against him, but seized leadership from his descendants after putting him to the sword in a fierce battle and turned the movement into the thrust of the Fulani Jihad into Yorubaland.³⁸ In other words, his coup d'état provoked a counter-coup against himself and his posterity. Besides, his action opened the gate and gave an easy in-road for the Fulani into Yorubaland, Igbomina inclusive.

It was in an Igbomina town called Sawo (probably Shao) that Abdulsalam evaluated and certified his military prowess after the demise of Alimi, his father.³⁹ Having proved it again in his counter-coup against Afonja, Abdulsalam became the ruler of Ilorin and heir to the whole of the Igbomina Ipo area, which Afonja had kept under his own authority since about 1797. This became one of the assets inherited by the young Abdulsalam.⁴⁰

Over time, those who had led the rebellion were themselves swept off by the "tsunami" of revolution they had instigated. It is plausible to say that in order to Islamise the coup d'état, Abdulsalam subsequently sent for a flag from Sokoto, which he secured as the first Emir of Yoruba (Ilorin) under the Gwandu Emirate. Subsequently, Emir Abdulsalam declared a jihad against the whole of Yorubaland.⁴¹

Johnson might have over-exaggerated Afonja's bravery in his record when he remarked:

He fell indeed like a hero. So covered was he with darts that his body was supported in an erect position upon the shafts of spears and arrows showered upon him. So much dread had his personality inspired that these treacherous Jamaas whom he had so often led to victory could not believe he was really dead; they continued to shower darts upon him long after he had ceased fighting...Ilorin now passed unto the hands of foreigners, the Fulanis who had been invited there as friends and allies....⁴²

The Yoruba, probably before 1830, launched two unsuccessful attempts to recover Ilorin from the Fulani at the battles of *Ogele* and *Mugba-Mugba*.⁴³ The Fulani were not only victorious, they swept away all the towns in the direction of Ofa, Erin, Igbomina, among others. But the Fulani, having wielded very great powers, aimed at nothing short of the subversion of the entire Yoruba country. “Intestine Wars” not only weakened the Yoruba country, it offered it an easy prey to the common enemy via a combination of petit-jealousy, mutual rivalry, disunity, ill-will, opposition, resentment and even at length, into a long protracted chain of civil wars.

Again, after the Pamo War in which Abdulsalam killed Solagberu, his last major rival and threat, Abdulsalam renewed his resolve upon subverting the whole kingdom and making himself the king of the entire Yoruba country. The remaining Yoruba towns spared were subjected to tribute.⁴⁴ The Yoruba leaders at logger-heads realised rather too late the real dangers of their dissent. Although Ibadan, the most populous and powerful Yoruba state that emerged eventually, succeeded in halting the Fulani ambition of washing up their sword (of expansion) at the sea coast, Ilorin and some parts of Yorubaland, such as Igbominaland had been taken; and they could not undo that.

Ilorin vs Ibadan: Question of National Interest and Struggle for Eastern Yorubaland

The Ilorin Emirate, as noted earlier, had been founded since about 1823 by Abdulsalam. With the Emirate established, the authorities of the Emirate embarked on wars of expansion, aimed, among others, at meeting the obligation required of all the emirates within the Sokoto Caliphate, to fight wars in order to spread Islam and the Jihad in the new and more territories. The authorities of the emirates also wanted to extend and thereby, increase their power and this could only be achieved through territorial annexations and the resultant booty—slaves and annual tribute. Besides, the authorities needed the financial and material resources with which to fulfil its obligations to the Caliph at Sokoto, such as

payment of annual tributes and the sending of regular gifts to the Caliph. Hence, fighting wars of conquest offered the opportunity for these.

For this quest for expansion, the authority of the then Emirate turned attention to the Osun district. But Ilorin clashed with Ibadan, which also had her own territorial and expansionist ambitions in those areas. The first in the series of clashes among the various “Western Yoruba” states in their attempt to rise to the challenge of filling the power vacuum occurred between Ilorin and Ibadan which had by then become the two most powerful and ambitious states around. The first major clash between the two sides came in 1840, at the battle of Osogbo in which Ibadan decisively defeated Ilorin and thereby halted the latter’s ambitions and expansions in the Osun district.

Thus, halted by Ibadan in that axis, Ilorin next turned its attention to the territories of the Igbomina, Ekiti, Ijesa and Akoko of Yorubaland. Meanwhile, following her defeat of Ilorin southwards at Osogbo in 1840, Ibadan had consolidated her position on both the military and political scenes in Yorubaland by establishing its political control over the towns of the Osun district from which it was gradually expelling Ilorin. Thereafter, came the clash between Ibadan and Ilorin in the north-eastern Yoruba states mentioned above.

From 1840 onwards, Ibadan had sustained its patriotic duty of protecting Yorubaland from its common enemy—the Fulani marauding invaders.⁴⁵ Within twenty-five years, by 1865, Ibadan had grown to become the most powerful political force throughout Yorubaland. Ibadan capitalised on her nationalistic and patriotic duty of protecting Yorubaland to unveil its expansionist ambitions, which became the main political thrust of this epoch. Thus, by about 1865, Ibadan had brought under what has been called the Ibadan empire, almost all the Oyo-speaking areas, the Ife and Ijesa kingdoms, the entire Ekiti, Akoko and Yagba from where the Fulani Marauders had been effectively expelled. It got to a point that other Yoruba states, such as the Egba state and Ijebu kingdom became suspicious of Ibadan who may want

to take them over and become '*Master of the whole world*'.⁴⁶ Ibadan expansionism was both via comparative peaceful or freewill alliance and military conquest.

The Ilorin-Fulani, before and after the Ilorin defeat at Osogbo in 1840, had been attempting incursions into the Igbomina, Ekiti and Ijesa kingdoms. The Ibadan after their 1840 victory repelled the Ilorin army to as far as Offa.⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, Ibadan and Ilorin were about the two most prominent powerful and ambitious states in Yorubaland this time. But the Ilorin after the vicissitudes that ensued militarily this time eventually conceded superiority to Ibadan in the Igbomina and Ekiti regions. Ibadan dislodged Ilorin from the Ekiti towns and conquered such Igbomina towns as Omu-Aran and Ekan between 1847 and 1848. Till 1855, Ibadan's imperial expansion continued unabated all in the pretext of circumventing the Fulani from making an in-road into any part of Yorubaland. The Ibadan, under her Balogun—Ibikunle had successfully cleared a large part of Yorubaland of foreign invaders⁴⁸ but had imposed her own authority instead.

Such a clash was obviously inevitable in view of the expansionist and imperial ambitions of both Ibadan and Ilorin in that axis. Ilorin's efforts to establish herself in the Ijesa/Ekiti countries, just next door to the territory newly acquired by Ibadan in the Osun district constituted a serious threat to the empire building ambition of Ibadan, which, therefore needed to be dealt with. Furthermore, the conquest of the Ijesa/Ekiti countries by Ibadan would provide it with an extensive source of inputs, which Ibadan needed so much in order to consolidate herself in the on-going contest for supremacy between her (Ibadan) and Ijaye and the attendant wars between the two sides. For example, the subjugation of the Ijesa/Ekiti countries would provide Ibadan with considerable tributes and slaves. With the tributes and proceeds from the sales of slaves, Ibadan could buy a lot of military hardwares. Moreover, the able bodied men in the area would be used for cultivating Ibadan farms in order to produce adequate foods for the fast growing populace.

In fact, with young men from all parts of Yorubaland flocking into Ibadan to seek their fortunes, Ibadan had become, by the late 1840s, very heavily populated. Some of the young men in the Ijesa/Ekiti countries could also be trained as soldiers and enlisted after that in Ibadan's army. For these and other factors, the Ijesa/Ekiti countries thus became the next bone of contention between Ibadan and Ilorin. As it later turned out to be, Ibadan was able to conquer a lot of the Ijesa/Ekiti countries.

The advent of the Fulani of Ilorin into Igbominaland, an aftermath of the counter coup d'état against Afonja in about 1823 and the consolidation of the power of the Fulani Jihadist in Ilorin⁴⁹ served as a consolation for Ilorin. Thus, after 1831, led by Balogun Ali Gambari and Ajia Gaju, Ilorin systematically subjugated Igbominaland. Little or no formidable resistance could be launched by the Igbomina (who already had been severely weakened and its population scattered by the preceding foreign raids, attacks and onslaughts) against the Fulani incursion. The fate suffered by the Orangun who dared to put up resistance and subsequent submission of the Olupo who then, was said to be the most powerful Igbomina monarch discouraged any other attempt at resisting the Fulani of Ilorin.⁵⁰

Ilorin turned her attention to raiding the Igbomina, Igboho and the Ekitis, in a desperate bid to consolidate her victory over the Old Oyo. But the Ilorin forces were defeated by the Ibadan at the Battle of Osogbo in 1840 thus, putting an end to Ilorin's southward movement. Ilorin, frustrated by this, turned eastward into Igbominaland, in the Savannah grassland where their fast-footed cavalry spelt doom for the Igbomina. The conquest of Igbomina should not just be seen as part of Ilorin's effort to spread Islam (which is often the camouflaged and confessed impetus) but more importantly, the concealed and fundamental impetus, the political domination and economic exploitation of the people.⁵¹

The Ilorin

Who exactly are the Ilorin? Has Ilorin always been a distinct unit of the Yoruba? ⁵² Remarking on these questions, Hogben and Kirk-Greene noted that “*Up to recently, very little was known for certain of the pre-Fulani history of the Ilorin Yoruba*”. The Ilorin-Yoruba claim descent from Oraniyan, the great grandson of Lamurudu. Hogben and Kirk-Greene claimed that only the Idi-Ape family of the Magaji Are, those of the Baba Isale compound and Magaji Abdu came from Old Oyo. Others either came to hunt or for trade or for asylum from the Yoruba wars. Hence, Ilorin began to grow.⁵³ Several etymological explanations of derivation of names have been provided from Ilorin, ranging from “*Ilo Irin*” (the sharpening of iron), *Ilu Erin* (the town of Elephants);⁵⁴ some even spoke of “*Ilu Erin*” to mean the town of a mythical man called “ERIN”.⁵⁵ One Ojo isekuse (the bad one), a hunter is said to be the founder of the town but was eventually driven out by a new settler Eminla, another hunter from Ila. Ojo isekuse, who was alleged to have committed incest was later said to have been found at Ojo-Oku (meaning Oju is still alive).⁵⁶ Ojooku is presently located in Oyun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Ilorin legends have it that one Laderin from the maternal side of the Royal family in Oyo had left Oyo and settled at Ilorin. The famous Afonja is said to be his son or great grandson. However, others claim that he was just the *Are-Ona-Kakanfo* of Old Oyo.⁵⁷ The last is the most universally accepted. Although both traditions might be reconciled as other accounts refer to Afonja as Alaafin Aole’s cousin on the maternal side, claiming it was one of the reasons for Afonja’s thinking that he equally had the right to the exalted throne rather than being made a mere “gate man” for his own cousin. Undoubtedly, Afonja held the Military rank of *Are-Ona-Kakanfo* or Generalsimo.⁵⁸

Are the pre-Jihad Ilorin then purely Oyo or just simply Ilorin? The question was raised in “The Daily Times” of 19th July, 1949, by one J.O Fakeye, Secretary Omo Ibile Esie Lagos Branch, also documented in the archive. He wrote:

Let me state straight away that, ‘Ilorin Descendants’ Union’ is a misnomer for that organisation. The correct name should have been ‘Igbomina Descendants’ Union’. It may be generally known that the Igbomina form at least, three-quarters of the inhabitants of Ilorin Province, occupying a large areas extending as far as Ila-Orangun in Oyo Province. They are pure Yoruba.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, V. F. Biscoe⁶⁰ provides The Population of the Whole of Ilorin District as comprising:

TABLE 2: THE POPULATION OF THE ILORIN DISTRICT; 1916

<i>Igbomina Natives</i>	27, 503
Ilorin settlers	6,271
Fulani-Yoruba Cattle owners	984
Yoruba settlers from Oyo S.P.	736
Yoruba settlers from Offa District	357
Hausa natives	8
Total population	<u>35, 859</u>

Hence, the riddle of Ilorin’s status remains unresolved. Fakeye noted that:

It may not be generally known that...the ‘Ilorin Descendants Union’ are all Igbomina who settled in Lagos many years ago. Because Igbominaland was practically unknown in these days [in that area], the then new settlers in Lagos gave Ilorin (fairly well-known then) as their place of birth, and not Igbominaland, their true place of birth. Nor did they tell their descendants the truth.⁶¹

Afolayan made it emphatic saying, “Ilorin was an Igbomina village under Oyo, which rose to prominence via the vicissitudes of that era. He provided further explanations, to clarify earlier speculations:

...the independence of Ilorin under the Fulani Jihadists radically changed the socio-political character of the Igbomina region in and around Ilorin. The dialect, the political system and the socio-cultural organisation of this region which included Ilorin, Idofin, Afin and Iponrin changed in a way remarkably different from the other Igbomina and Yoruba people. Today, this region, beside

*being on Igbominaland and having a tradition of being part of Igbomina in the past, has become socially, economically and politically integrated into the Ilorin society. Thus, the 19th century crises transformed Ilorin from an insignificant Igbomina village to the most dominant centre of power in the region.*⁶²

It was the Fulani of Ilorin by their counter-coup of Afonja that succeeded in detaching large Igbomina areas from the main sub-group and giving it a new character.⁶³ Other Igbomina areas whose peoples today would not show that they were particularly keen in joining their Igbomina brethren from archival documentation included Iloffa, Ekan, Odo-Owa, Osi, Osin and Obbo.⁶⁴ The River Osin, which runs from Ila-Orangun right into the River Niger practically encircles all the Igbomina peoples with the exception of only two or three.⁶⁵ The Bayajjida legend, which refers to Ilorin among the seven *Hausa Banza* states should, therefore, be subjected to serious scrutiny.

History is a gift to all of us who are yearning to find self, yearning to know self and for all searching for self-identity and self-realisation. A people must know their history if they are to begin to understand themselves and the world of which they are humble inhabitants. Without history, we have no knowledge of who we are or how we came to be. And so, we become like people who have lost their memory, blindly groping in the dark to find their 'lost' identity. Yet, all that we are actively conscious of presently can be said to be already in the past and therefore, part of history.⁶⁶

Structure of Ilorin Administration in Igbomina: The Ajia/Emirate System

About 1835 marked the actual beginning of the conquest and subjugation of a vast number of the Igbomina settlements by the Ilorin forces, and this remained unabated until the British conquest of Ilorin herself in 1897.⁶⁷

What began as a rather purely Islamic movement became evidently political, as a means to the real end—economic. It may be plausible to say that when religion did not succeed or succeed fast as a potent means to achieving the economic end, the Fulani were swift to swerve to the political means to their ultimate end. Having conquered their prey-

states, like the later European imperialists, the Ilorin adopted the Principle of Effective Occupation by setting up imperial administration. They appointed representatives known as Ajia over the vast areas they controlled in Igbominaland. Ajia was a notorious title attached to most of the district representatives in Ilorin and Lafiagi Emirates, regardless of where they came from.⁶⁸ It came as an extension of the *Emirate System* introduced by the Fulbe people, whose Hausa/Habe neighbours referred to as Fulani. The pre-Fulani system of Northern Nigeria had been called the Sarauta system. The Hausa society, much like our present society, could be broadly categorised into two: the Masu-Saranta represents the first extreme group, the aristocracy—the rich and affluent, while the Talakawas formed the other extreme sect, the peasants—the poor people. There was no middle class, and since it was a society where economic power was might, political power was won by the *Sarauta* group with their economic power; hence, the traditional *Sarauta* system in Hausaland.

However, with the successful power shift from the Habe (Hausa) ruler to the Fulbe (Fulani) via the Jihad, the age long *Sarauta* system became substituted by a novel style known as the *Emirate System* under the Sokoto Caliphate. Hence, the introduction of the *Emirate System* of the Fulani in Northern Nigeria was seen as an extension of the system southwards into Yoruba land. But the notorious nature of the system, especially as typified by the Emir's agents who acted as District Heads in the local districts, won it the caption that has been popularised as the Ajia System.

The Emirate system was a polity with fairly centralised administration. At the helm of affairs was the Emir who was responsible for the economic, political and social activities within the Emirate. Outside the metropolis were districts and villages. However, in most cases, the local traditional rulers were retained but in reality the Emir controlled from behind the scene. Structurally, towns and villages were constituted into fiefs each belonging to one or the other of the loyalists (chiefs or relatives) of the Emir who acted as Baba-Kekere (the

guardian of the town) like the four Ilorin *Baloguns*: Alanamu, Ajikobi, Gambari and Fulani. Although the fiefs were directly administered by the *Baba-Kekere* who resided in the headquarters (Ilorin), they relied greatly on agents, known as *Ajia* for the day to day administration of their fiefs. The *Baba-kekere* (fief-holders) therefore, acted as non-resident or absentee landlords, playing the patron role to the districts by bringing their suits before the Emirate authority in the metropolis. The *Baba-kekere* were members of the Emirate governing council. They were obliged to guarantee loyalty from all rank and files to Emir, prompt payment of tributes, and other ad-hoc duties as they were assigned by the Emir.⁶⁹

The *Ajia System* was somewhat highly centralised though fairly organised and effective. The actual fief-holders resided at Ilorin, the headquarters, entrusting their representatives (*Ajia*) to carry on the day-to-day local administration in the districts in order to ensure the fulfilment of their duties.⁷⁰ Not every village constituted a district. A district was the fief (Village Areas) allocated to a notable chief (who is the fief-holder). Villages were constituted into fiefs. Each holds the fief in trust of the Emir. Each was assigned a number of non-contiguous territories, numbering in some cases up to a dozen.⁷¹

The *Ajia* was a highly powered resident. The *Ajia* chose for himself his District's headquarters, especially in cases of conflicting claims to paramountcy as was the case between the *Olusin*, *Olomu* and *Oloro* in the Omu-Isanlu district. Oke-Onigbin therefore became his choice. The *Ajia* himself resided in the major town (i.e. Headquarters) such as Igbaja or Oke-Ode from where he, in turn, dispatched his own representatives to nearly all the towns and villages in his district. His agents acted as his spies and messengers to the village heads (traditional rulers) as well as media through which he exercised his power.⁷²

To ensure compliance to his authority, effective execution of his policies and coercion of the subject people, the *Ajia* constituted his own *local police* known as *Dongari*. The *Ojoo* constituted another set of officials whose functions and status were undefined, yet their

demands and requests dared not be denied. They often came in groups, posing as itinerant authorized agents and messengers of the Emir and his high chiefs. Effects of the nefarious activities of these licentious men in any village which hosted them were grave. The village head hosted them for days in reveling (festive) mood, carrying along as “*take-away*” all the utensils, mats and other materials they had used, and at times, all the movable household property of their unfortunate host.⁷³ In a bid to reviving the pre-Sixteen Years Yoruba War-status of the chiefs, the Igbomina-parapo council which comprised the Igbomina of Ila and those under the Ilorin Province, formed in 1940, strategised how to expel the Ajia.⁷⁴

Structurally the Ilorin Emirate relation was one of overlord-vassal.⁷⁵ The Ajia himself embarked on periodic and regular tours of the villages under his District. They lived and preyed on the people. They were worse than parasites. They were brutal. Their activities typified a classical instance of “*man’s inhumanity to man*”. Their tours often provided opportunities for raiding expeditions. Heavy financial extortions such as fines and occasional gifts to woo the Ajia’s favour were normalities. Innocent folks were often routinely arrested and maltreated, without any impunity. It was a reign of terror and anarchy. Anyone caught wearing a long cap and turban among the people was seriously reprimanded and summarily stripped nude, arrested and punished for imitating the Fulani (Ilorin) Emir. They planted no farms, nor had any tangible means of livelihood, yet they lived like kings. This explains why they chose preying on the people as their stock-in-trade.

The Ajia System, both in its organisation and operation, principle and practice, was essentially oppressive. The presence of myriads of the *Ajias’ boys* (sub-agents since he was himself an agent of an authority) in the districts further heightened oppressiveness and the suffering it brought upon the people. These “sub-agents” are said to have in certain cases, numbered as many as twenty in some villages.⁷⁶ As far as the Igbomina was concerned, the

Ajia System of the Fulani/Ilorin was intolerable and unacceptable as its officials were, to say the least, a law unto themselves.⁷⁷

Perhaps, more frustrating is the fact that this unwholesome system was the basis upon which the British colonial administration was set, for sheer selfishness, tight-fistedness and convenience bid of the colonial headquarters in London, and as designed and experimented by Sir, later Lord, Lugard. It needs be noted here that while the Indirect Rule System was a total fiasco in eastern Nigeria and only a partial success in western Nigeria, it recorded a huge success in northern Nigeria among which the Igbomina of western Nigeria had been wrongly and arbitrarily delineated.

4.3 Ilorin-Fulani Influence on Igbomina

The Fulani were not the only pre-colonial powers that had untold influence on the Igbomina, but theirs were most profound. It suffices to say, here, that the extension of Fulani Jihad launched against Yorubaland had fundamental consequences, not only on the Yoruba in particular and the Igbomina specifically, but the entire Western Sudan.

a. Political Influence

It led to the political ascendancy of the Fulbe or Fulani and overthrow of Yoruba rulers in some parts of the Yoruba country, as well as the incorporation of parts of Yorubaland into Hausaland or northern Nigeria, that is, places originally outside Hausaland, where the Jihadists' influence had reached. This led to the emergence of terms such as Emirs and Emirates as against terms such as Obas (Kings) and states/kingdoms not only within the entire Hausa areas of Northern Nigeria but even beyond.

Politically, this brought about the ascendancy of Moslem monarchs in a number of Igbomina towns. Some of these kings follow the turbaning style of the Fulani/Islamic style instead of the deified crowned kings of their ancestors. The judicial institution of Sharia has also held sway in many places today, consequent upon the Fulani Rule. Officially, the Sharia

Court has been incorporated by the Federal Government into the judicial system of the country. Igbominaland is not left out as even till date, there are still kings who put on turbans instead of the traditional Yoruba crowns. Ilorin, a previously acclaimed Igbomina-Yoruba state, was erroneously and politically ceded with northern Nigeria in the Hausaland, with an Emir, not only ruling over Ilorin but all other pure Igbomina throughout the state. Ilorin has given herself a distinct identity having carved herself uniquely out of Igbomina.

The Emirate administration was a gross abuse of the indigenous system in the Igbomina sub-region. The Igbomina traditional rulers, via these Emirate institutions, were reduced to mere figureheads in their respective domains, having been deprived of their legitimacy and positions of authority as conferred by tradition. For example, Ilorin and Lafiagi turbaned all the town chiefs who reigned during this period, thereby increasing Ilorin-Lafiagi political control in these areas. Ilorin Ajia such as Alufa, Audu and Lukumanu were placed at Igbaja, while at Iwo/Oke-Aba area, Ilorin Ajia such as Mahamma, Audulai and Aliu firmly established Ilorin rule.⁷⁸

There was also the imposition of a single governmental authority of the Sokoto Caliphate consisting of fifteen (15) Emirates, which covered an area of about 290² kms instead of the former states under kings. Ilorin too, a Yoruba-Igbomina state became an emirate under the Fulani. It also brought about the overthrow of the Yoruba dynasty (ies) in Ilorin and since 1823/1835, the Fulani dynasty has held sway. The result of this was the existence of a unified political system. It gave way to the emirate system under the Fulani/Fulbe rulers as against the Hausa/Habe Sarauta system of administration.

Another aftermath of the Fulani proselytising mission was that it led to a wave of Jihads in several other parts of the Western Sudan; for example, the Jihads of Sekou Ahmadu in Maccina and Al-hajj Umar.

It is good to note here that the vicissitudes of the 19th century Yoruba politics were greatly influenced or affected by the proselytising ambitions of the Fulani Jihadists. However, it should be noted here that the Jihad, at this point, had lost its pure religious fervour. And like the medieval religious reformers in Europe who might have begun with pure religious inclinations but drifted into political and economic movements, the Jihadists too had begun to be driven, perhaps more passionately, now for political and economic drives.

b. Economic Influence: The Ilorin/Fulani foreign influence in Igbomina, typified by the *Ajia* replicated a pictogram of oppression, atrocities and dubiety. For instance, taxations were not just excessively exacted, but also, outside the official rates. Surprisingly, however, the vicissitudes in some sense also resulted in expanded trade and prosperity in those areas. The economic drive can neither be overemphasised, nor fully discussed in this section as it would be accorded a special section in a later chapter of this work.

c. Social Influence: Socially, polygamy, which was apparently indigenous to the Yoruba/Igbomina society, was retained, since it plumbs with the Fulani way of life and the Islamic teaching. But the islamisation of Igbomina is one Fulani influence on the land and people. Fulani/Islamic education and titles were embraced, and this has almost been perfectly implanted in the genes of some Yoruba and Igbomina peoples.⁷⁹

d. Demographic Effects: Part of the resultant effect of the Fulani activities included the ensuing sparse population in the Middle Belt area of Nigeria and Igbomina, specifically. The overbearing nature of the emirate system upon the Igbomina did not only make the dominant populations of the Igbomina to see Ilorin as an “*anathema*”, but the obvious bad-feelings all over the Igbomina districts of the Emirate eventually escalated into series of protest movements among the Igbomina during the colonial rule. This was when the overbearing attitude of the overlordship system had reached its apogee.⁸⁰ It should be noted here that this

was the causative factor of the most protracted warfare in Yoruba history—the Sixteen Years War—the Kiriji/Ekiti-Parapo war.

Perhaps, most importantly in this regard, consequent upon the Fulani proselytising mission, Islam spread to many parts of the entire Western Sudan and Igbominaland. This spread stimulated Islamic education and learning.

The Jihad gave a new stimulus to Islamic learning and literacy since Mallam Alimi, like the three leaders of the Fulani Jihad—Dan Fodiyo, his brother Abdullahi and his son, Mohammed Bello, were scholars in the first instance. Only in the second sense could they be regarded as political/military leaders. The Jihad also led to the development of Arabic as the official language of literacy and correspondence throughout the Hausa states and beyond, while it also led to the spread of Hausa as a Lingua Franca among peoples of diverse languages. Even the Yoruba and Igbomina people, today, present Arabic salutations in public and official functions. For instance, “*Soliu allah nabiyy kareem*” (The Peace and Blessing of God be upon Prophet Mohammed), and the response “*Salallahu alahi wasalam*” (Peace be upon him)⁸¹ is a common exchange in starting off a public talk, even in our so-called academic environments.

4.4 Ibadan’s Expansionism and Structure of Administration in Igbomina

Ibadan, one of the successor states of the Old Oyo Empire had been founded around 1827 from the ruins of Old Oyo. Ibadan was formerly known as ‘*Eba Odan*’ (i.e. adjoining the savannah grove). It lies at Latitude 7.2° North of the Equator and 4° of the Meridian. It is located in the forest region, with a handful of hills here and there.⁸² Ibadan was said to be an abandoned Egba Agura (Gbagura) town resettled by Oyo warriors⁸³ and by a combination of some Ife, Ijebu, Oyo, Owu and Egba refugees. That mixed population of Ibadan was later further increased by a considerable population of the Ijesa, Ekiti, Akoko, Igbomina and Yagba peoples, many of who had come to look for military power and fame as well as slaves,

booty and wealth through Ibadan's military organisation and frequent wars of the 19th century. Ibadan's peculiar military organisation offered a lot of opportunities which attracted to Ibadan many ambitious and adventurous men from all over Yorubaland who tried to seek their fortunes and make a new life in this new state, especially as such opportunities were not available to them in their places of origin.

At a time, throughout Yorubaland, the fear of Ibadan was, indeed, the beginning of wisdom. There is this common Yoruba saying in respect of the Ibadan, which has gone into their cognomen, today:

*A kii wa, kaa ma larun kan lara, ija igboro niti Ibadan...Ibadan,
ma-ja ma-ja, eyi to ja ni josi, to ja aladugbo gbogbo logun....
There is no man without his own defect; for Ibadan, it is street
fighting...Ibadan, don't fight, don't fight, the one that fought the
other day fought with all neighbours.*⁸⁴

The Ibadan knew quite well that they attained their present status through warfare and must sustain it with it. Ibadan itself was a product of warfare, founded by a mixture of warriors and refugees. It grew so fast into a war camp, which dramatically attracted refugees until its army became the most powerful in Yorubaland. Her martial prowess, no doubt, came in part from their constant military engagements. For example, Gbanamu, Ipetu-modu, Owiwi, Oniyefun, Arakonga and Iperu.

Most of the Ibadan leaders were warriors and professional soldiers. Besides, they had an organised army supported by well-trained *cavalry*—use of horses in war. They learnt this through their proximity and interaction with the Nupe-Fulani and Hausa-Fulani. It was reported that it was Alaafin Orompoto that sent military contingents to the north to train in this art of warfare, and he imported horses to Oyo. This was done at a time when this soldiery art was still very strange to the Igbomina. With this advantage, it was very easy to overrun any of their unskilled foes.⁸⁵

However, the Ibadan, unlike the Nupe and Fulani, may not have found it that easy to subjugate the Igbomina, perhaps due to their (the Nupe and Fulani) mastery of cavalry and missile (arrows) martial styles and weapons. There are traditional claims of effective resistance and repulsion of Ibadan army by many Igbomina villages such as Oro-Ago and Isanlu. Greatly frustrated by such stubbornly resolute resistance, Ibadan resorted to total or virtual total destruction of the Igbomina towns involved.⁸⁶

Perhaps, considering the incessant and prevalent nature of wars in the Yoruba country during the 19th century, Smith described warfare as a way of life of the Yoruba.⁸⁷ But wars were not undertaken without serious thoughts given to them. And as Smith later noted,

*Warfare was undertaken by the Yoruba with deliberation. Only after lengthy discussion in the Councils of the kingdoms, exhortatory speeches to the troops, and sacrifices to the war standard did the army move out to the vicinity of the enemy.*⁸⁸

The people often resorted to warfare when all forms of diplomatic and religious means had failed. The opinion held by European observers and subscribed to by some writers had since been demolished. It is now well known that the issues of the wars were basically political or economic regarding questions of *balance of power*. This is not to suggest that the Yoruba wars were fought for the purpose of acquiring slaves.⁸⁹ Akiwowo⁹⁰ has provided us with the “War Ethics among the Yoruba” comparing it with the compelling evidences of a phenomenal growth of militarism in the global society of today decrying the possession of the nuclear capability of blowing up the planet earth by the world super powers and their allies. War is described as an act of barbarity that for generations had been waged under strict rules of conduct for the protection of homes and the civilization of a nation, but which today has lost the justification of this purpose, for mass slaughter has become one of its primary objectives. Today, armies no longer fight armies alone; they seek the death and destruction of an entire populace.

Ogunremi⁹¹ observed that wars were not fought at all times but often at intervals especially during the dry season when there was less to do on the farm and when food was available. Besides, not everybody went to war and farmers were adequately protected while wars were on, among other politico-economic measures to ensure a buoyant and ever flourishing economic base.

For about a century between 1783-1893, Yorubaland was a theatre of warfare sequel to the fall of Old Oyo⁹² although Smith assumed the wars lasted over seventy years, dividing them into three dispensations: 1820-1837, 1837-1878 and 1878-1893.⁹³ Proving the changes in the political aims and the character of the wars over the years, Akinjogbin⁹⁴ categorised the wars into these six overlapping phases:

**TABLE 3: CHANGING PHASES OF THE POLITICAL AIMS AND THE CHARACTER
OF THE 19TH CENTURY WARS BY AKINJOGBIN⁹⁴**

i.	The Rebellious and Chaotic Phase	1793 -1817
ii.	The Revolutionary Phase	1817-1830
iii.	The Consolidation and Resistance Phase	1826-1840
iv.	Wars of Invasion	1821-1864
v.	Ibadan Expansionist Wars	1840-1878
vi.	The 16 Years War/War to End All Wars/Ekiti-Parapo/Kiriji War	1877-1893

As may be easily observed, historical periods do overlap. Ibadan's peculiar military organisation—a sort of military republicanism⁹⁵ attracted myriads of talents seeking fortunes there. On arrival at Ibadan, such a new man will join one of the chiefs there, as each Ibadan chief was constantly on one or the other of Ibadan's wars, in an attempt to outshine the other chiefs through his military prowess and thus earn promotion and move up the rungs of power and command in the state. Such a new comer would have the opportunity of proving his military capability under the chief he had joined. After a while and on the basis of his ability, the new comer would acquire his own military followings which he, as its leader would use

for fighting Ibadan's wars. As his military achievements increased, he would be publicly recognised by the Ibadan authorities by being made a chief in Ibadanland. Any citizen could rise to the position of Baale because political ascendancy in Ibadan was not based on inheritance as it was in Oyo but on merit.

However, as Ibadan was emerging as the dominant power, the Fulani of Ilorin were also expanding. Ibadan initially did not pursue any policy of aggressive imperial expansion. Thus, the period 1829-1835 was not only a period of open door policy but also one of peace and consolidation. So, beginning from 1840, began Ibadan's aggressive war policy, which could also be interpreted as wars of expansion.⁹⁶

Ilorin prior to 1840 had invaded and acquired some Ekiti and Igbomina towns. But after 1840, due to Ibadan's success at the Osogbo Battle which brought her into limelight as the defender of the remnant of Old Oyo heritage and Yoruba tradition, Ibadan was prepared to expel Ilorin from the Ekiti towns, due to the change in the BOP in her favour. Because of her proximity to Ilorin, much of Igbomina fell under Ilorin's hegemony.⁹⁷

Consequently, Ibadan's martial impact was felt virtually everywhere in Yorubaland, Igbominaland inclusive. Ibadan's official maiden incursion into Igbominaland came from the south east, on invitation from Otun under Oderinlo, the Balogun around 1847. Prior to this time, Aaye, one of Otun's vassals was disturbing the trading activities of the Otun people and had thus waxed too strong to control, thus compelling Otun to invite Ilorin to help conquer Aaye. Whereas Ilorin's refusal of help forced the Oore (Oba) of Otun, Adefagbade⁹⁸ to invite Ibadan; Aaye too thereafter appealed to Ilorin for support. Not only were the Ilorin and their allies defeated (by cutting away the source of water supply from them; the Ilorin army thus became thirsty and weak to fight) but Ekan, Omu-Aran and Isinland⁹⁹ where the Ilorin-Aaye troop have fled to take refuge also fell in succession. Most of them fled to Oro-Ago further north. There, at Oro-Ago, the Ibadan troop was effectively resisted and repelled by the

legendary arrow men of Oro-Ago.¹⁰⁰ Ibadan could not penetrate into Idofin also. Thus, Otun became Ibadan's base from where other Ekiti settlements were subjugated.¹⁰¹

While the rest Ibadan troop under Balogun Oderinlo had pushed on into northern Ekiti where they attacked Iyapa, Osi, Isan and other settlements in that axis, Ibadan, on withdrawal from Oro-Ago area, shortly harassed Oro, Esie, Iludun, Ijara and Okeya-po.¹⁰² Asanlu Odasodekun, Elemoso Gudugudu of Ijara and Esinkin Olusin from Owu were among the Isin-Igbomina warriors that participated in this war under Ilorin. These warriors were dispatched to Erinmope to participate in the Otun-Aaye War.¹⁰³

This war had grave consequences for the Igbomina as it exposed the Igbominaland to the constant raids of the Ibadan, popularly referred to as Agannigan (i.e. Ibadan thugs/marauders) borne from their guerrilla warfare. The Agannigan possibly pushed westward through Olla into the southeast of Isinland and plundered the Isolo group, like Oke-Ara. Efforts of some at resisting the Agannigan was met by poor visibility, a phenomenon attributed to the Ibadan charms—an important aspect of 19th century militarism in Yorubaland. Gege assumed, however, that this might have been the effects of harmattan at this time of invasion.¹⁰⁴

Consequently, Ibadan succeeded in defeating the Ilorin, Ekiti and Igbomina people, although some traditions in Isin and elsewhere denied any Ibadan defeat. Another source portrays Isanlu, for example, around the 1860s, as being victorious over the Agannigans. Some Isanlu warriors were said to have been renowned for their charms and magical arts. For example, Esinkin Owokunrinmogbo and Asanlu Odasodekun, after due consultations with the oracle were said to have been instructed by the venerated spiritual god—Olooke in Isanlu to lay some clubs beside the hill. The Agannigan were reportedly beaten or defeated with the aid of those clubs by the Olooke. Hence, the theatre of war in Isanlu is said to have been called Apate (i.e. merciless killing).¹⁰⁵ This is said to have brought about the coinage of the orile by

drummers and ballad-singers in praise of the Isanlu men of valour as “*Isanlu iyeye, omo a-jo-kogun*”, meaning Isanlu, progenies of those who danced to embrace warfare.¹⁰⁶

The mortality rate on the side of the Agannigan was estimated at about 100, 000 of Ibadan forces hit and killed by the small poisoned clubs (kukute). The Ibadan Agannigan, it is said, could not in a haste forget the humiliation they suffered in Isanlu in the 1860s to the extent that Isanlu citizens at Ibadan dared not give their true identity.¹⁰⁷ The mortality rate of the Agannigans, reportedly, made them to shift focus to Ijara via the route from Igbo-Olomi-merindilogun at Illa via Omo’lepo (Eleyin) plundering Ijara and looting the people of their valuables.

Some Isanlu people such as Winlola and Ibitayo who had gone to Ijara for a wedding ceremony were reportedly captured by the Agannigan, who fled with their loots before the Isanlu army could catch up with them at Oke-Emila near Eleyin. However, they might have been accosted, courtesy of the Isin irregular army under Esinkin Olusin and Ijimawo Jakolodi.¹⁰⁸

Although some local traditions among the Isin people, as recorded by Gege claimed that they were not defeated in any war,¹⁰⁹ some other local sources¹¹⁰ reveal that the inhabitants of these villages were scattered while many of them, including the Alara, ruler of Ala–Aroduyebioye and his seventy (70) sons who were enslaved and taken captive to Ibadan. But the Alara might have had his ransom paid by a friend of his at Iloffa. At Omu-Aran, he married and returned to meet his subjects (Isolo and Odo-Dosin groups) who had migrated southwest to Isanlu to join the already formed common front at Isanlu. They were the Isolo ward in Isanlu with Alaa as their head. Even today, the Aroduyioye descendants are still said to be at Ibadan, with the salutation of “*Omo Aroduye*”.¹¹¹

The Agannigan had as one of their objectives, attacking Ilorin from the Omirinrin side through Otun-Ijaka via Igbaja. It was another strategy to attack Ilorin from Anyara–Ilorin war

camp and farm settlement. At Isanlu, they encamped at Pagun, near Gaa-Omidoyin, but the town could not be taken as it was well garrisoned, having been fortified by the construction of deep trenches round it. The Agannigan, as a result, were routed by the Isanlu troops under the leadership of Ijimawo Erinjogunola.¹¹² The Agannigan continued their raid of other places in Igbomina such as Okeya, Esie, Oro and Iludun.¹¹³

It should be noted that while for Ibadan, the 19th century war, especially from 1840-1878, it was a war of expansion, for the confederates, it was one for unity and freedom.¹¹⁴ Igbomina, for example, perhaps would not have participated in the wars, but for the involvement of Ilorin whose political hegemony they hoped to flush out. The Ijesa, Ekiti and Igbomina and other members of the Ekiti-parapo who fought a War of liberation against the imperial Ibadan between 1877 and 1893 did not hesitate to appeal to the Fulani leaders from Ilorin against Ibadan. Irrefutably, by the 1880s, all the key paramount rulers and military leaders beyond the coastal areas had entreated the British intervention in Yoruba affairs anticipating that the British would hereby help terminate warfare in their society.¹¹⁵

Igbomina's involvement, as it were, was prompted by at least two factors—the phobia of the Ibadan marauders, and her proximity to Ilorin. And just as John Foster Dulles, the then United States of America's Secretary of State, in view of the Cold War, had declared neutrality (or non-alignment) in world affairs as *immoral*,¹¹⁶ it would have been an act of political suicide if Igbomina had refused to take sides in the wars.

Structure of Ibadan Administration

Ibadan imposed its administration on villages under her tutelage, sending agents such as Baba-kekere and Ajele to protect her interest. Available oral tradition claims that Fabunmi of Oke-Imesi beheaded one of such Ibadan Ajele (agents) due to their excesses, overbearing high handedness, and then trouble ensued.¹¹⁷ However, the Agannigan did not gain a

permanent foothold to warrant the establishment of any administrative structure.¹¹⁸ No Ibadan agent was imposed on the Igbomina.¹¹⁹

Some Igbomina communities, such as Odo-Eku, Igbesi, Ile-Ire, Ora and Agunjin, in a bid to avoiding the Agannigan staged protest migrations to the military ruler of Oke-Ode for protection while some also migrated to Akara, northeast of Oponda. Oko, a new town that arose out of the vicissitudes of this period consisted of refugees from the Ekiti towns of Isan, Apa, Otun and Igbomina towns of Illa and Isanlu who were fleeing from their battered towns. The Isin people, due to the state of uncertainty and insecurity, settled at Ogba-Irobi, a better fortified (less accessible but hidden with forested gorge on the extreme) and more secured settlement, northern fringe of their homeland¹²⁰ during the Ekiti-parapo wars as the Agannigan usually launched their attacks on Isin settlements at night to catch them unawares. It may be at this time that it became coined into the Oro-Ago traditional poetry that:

*Ogun d'ogun ale o, Oro ee jagun owuro... (Adjourned till sunset,
The Oro people are not engaged in broad-day warfare.)¹²¹*

They enslaved many to the extent that many families were utterly annihilated and many homes razed, thus rendering many homeless and destitute. While the younger progenies were spared, the older ones were taken along in times of war.¹²² Aftermaths of the sporadic raids perpetrated by the Ibadan war chiefs and their restless war boys and agents made life unbearable for the people. Economic activities were adversely affected since the able-bodied population was un-sedentarily unsettled.

The origin of the Ajele System, it has been noted, began under the Oyo imperial administrative system. It is, undoubtedly, plausible to state that this was imported and incorporated into the Ibadan administrative system. Under the Ibadan, the fiefs were directly controlled by some chiefs known as Baba-Kekere. They were the fief-holders, who as absentee non-resident landlords, depended on agents known as Ajele for the administration of the fiefs. The Baba-Kekere (Ibadan chief) appointed as Ajele (a highly influential

representative or agent) on ground to ensure the fulfilment of his duties. Ajele was a minor military title conferred on some of the ex-slaves who escaped from Oyo during the slave revolt of 1817 and had risen to the position of responsibility.¹²³

As an agent of the Baba-Kekere, the Ajele collected tributes in form of farm produce or its equivalence from the people, on behalf of the latter.¹²⁴ It was his duty to keep his chief (the Baba-Kekere) abreast of developments in the town. As on-the-spot representative of the imperial authority, he was responsible for receiving and introducing foreign visitors to the local chiefs. He represented the symbol of authority outside the metropolis and could have been much higher in status than any Igbomina Oba, who had to go through him for whatever favour from the imperial overlord.¹²⁵ It was his responsibility to arrange for the comfort of all chief messengers passing through his domain. They interfered very often in the internal politics of their subject territories, imposing their whims and caprices by reversing decisions taken by Igbomina Obas and Ilu (town council) if found contradictory to their wishes and interests or that of the Baba-Kekere (their superior).¹²⁶ The administrative arrangement in Igbomina, with Ajele serving as intermediaries created avenue for a rapacious exploitation of both the human and economic resources of Igbomina, in favour of the megalopolis and its people.

4.5 Ibadan Influence on the Igbomina Institutions

Following the collapse of Old Oyo, the next problem to be tackled was that of the Oyo refugees migrating southwards to build a new capital under the new Alaafin Atiba around 1837. The rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba power, to the Igbomina, seems to be the most noticeable event during the precarious years after the fall of Oyo, having achieved the recognition needed as an aggressive power to put Igbominaland under her political and economic jurisdiction. In reaction to this over-zealous ambition of Ibadan, the Igbomina

teamed up with the potential foes of Ibadan: the Ekiti, Ijesa, among others, to form the Ekitiparapo Confederacy against the Ibadan overrule.

The Ibadan phobia made the Igbomina to move to different places and settlements in search of safety. For instance, during the Alade War of the 1850s, Oke-Ode almost consolidated herself as a power to be reckoned with throughout Igbominaland. Makun, a renowned Oke-Ode chieftain was more or less a war chief supporting Alade's activities in Igbominaland. Alade was an Ibadan *Ajele*. The 'Alade War' was a glorious age in Igbominaland generally and in Oke-Ode particularly, because Oke-Ode had held the political domination over the north-east Igbomina since the war began. However, the peculiar territorial fortifications and individualistic self-constraint of each Igbomina state, mostly being a hilly country frustrated the *Ajele System* and every effort of Oke-Ode to maintain its leadership of Igbomina.

The BOP in favour of Ibadan after 1838, made Ibadan, Ilorin's arch-enemy prepared to seize every available opportunity to sack Ilorin from the Igbomina communities she (Ilorin) had acquired prior to 1838. However, this opportunity did not come until 1847 when the *Oore* of Otun invited the Ibadan forces to raid Aiye-Ekan (now Aiyedun). Consequently, this raid made the people to disperse as far as to Omu-Aran and Ilofa while the inhabitants of these two towns had themselves escaped to Oro-Ago, a hilly country, for safety and refuge. They were said to have remained there for more than thirty years, probably till the end of the Sixteen-Years-War and the beginning of British occupation of Nigeria. An example of such hills is the Oke-Odian hill in Oro-Ago.

The invasion of Igbomina by the Ibadan was a significant milestone in the political history of the people because the political structures of the people were almost completely jeopardised during the wars that attended that period. The period marked the era of socio-political anarchy in Igbomina. The people were chased away from their habitats into nearby

hills in most cases, while defence strategies were mounted at different positions. Most of the people remained on these hills until the British occupation while their original settlements were destroyed by the Ibadan warriors. Evidences of this still abound in some Igbomina communities, till date.¹²⁷

However, in spite of all the defence mechanisms mounted against the Ibadan army, many less privileged Igbomina communities yet fell under the yoke of her imperialism, most probably due to the military supremacy of the Ibadan and perhaps the apparent weakness of the affected towns who had not recovered from the Nupe onslaught.

Furthermore, as was the case with the Fulani-Ilorin Emirate/*Ajia system*, all the Obas and chiefs of the Igbomina communities who fell under the yoke of Ibadan imperialism took order directly from the *Ajele* before anything could be done. The *Ajele* also interrupted the hereditary system of succession because, imposition of loyalists emerged to replace the traditional primogenitary system of succession. Hence, even those who did not fall under Ibadan's direct hegemony experienced anarchy in their respective domains. Great confusion and pandemonium set in, following the *Alade Wars*, as the people were re-settling.

It is true that not all Igbomina settlements fell directly under the Ibadan imperialism. Yet, all of them felt its presence. Little wonder Dosumu exclaimed: "Think of the whirlwind sweeping the face of the Yorubaland in general."¹²⁸

4.6 POSTSCRIPT: Igbomina in the 20th Century

The dawn of the 20th century witnessed the establishment of formal empires, (i.e. colonialism) in most of West Africa, thus, making the end of informal empires when the relationship between Europe and Africa was essentially commercial, an era which has been aptly described as that of mercantilism. Europe's sudden change of interest as well as sporadic swerve from mercantilism to imperialism marked a watershed in the history of the colonised people in general and the Igbomina in particular.¹²⁹

In compliance with the resolutions of the West African Berlin Conference which was held between November 15th 1884 and January 30th 1885, especially the requirement for the establishment of “Effective Occupation” (i.e. by the establishment of an effective degree of authority or administration in the acquired areas before such claims would be deemed valid), the so-called “Sphere of Influence” was consolidated.¹³⁰ This instigated and accounted for the rat-race and mad-rush in a bid to remaining a major player on the European scene—the sporadic departure from *mercantilism* (mere trading and economic interests) to *imperialism* (political subjugation and land annexation—i.e. making colonies of the nations, peoples and lands of the world). It has been argued that it was racism that confirmed the decision that the form of governance should be direct colonial rule.¹³¹ But colonialism was only the political aspect of imperialism. It was only a means to an end, because European Imperialism is capitalism-based, the child of European Industrialisation. Expansionism is equivalent to Imperialism, a generic phenomenon which entails the foreign domination, the conquest, administration and exploitation of both the human and material resources of the conquest by the conquered—a question of power relation between the weak and the strong.¹³²

With the precarious position of the Royal Niger Company at Lokoja—the defender of European interests on the Niger as well as the hinterland—measures needed to be put in place for defensive purposes, among which included the bombardment of Bida on 20th January, 1897, and Ilorin’s only four days after, led by Major Arnold and accompanied by George Taubman Goldie. The Emir’s Palace at Ilorin, with his Baloguns, was bombarded. With the Emir on flight, the Fulani headquarters of Ilorin city was razed down on 15th February, 1897.¹³³

The Igbomina as well as other Ibolo and Ekiti subjects of Ilorin received the news of Ilorin’s defeat with great jubilation as they breathed a sigh of relief with the false hope of freedom—“Emancipation at last”. They therefore, saw a Messiah in the Whiteman. It

deserves note that though Ilorin had been defeated by the British in 1897, it was not until 1900 that the actual “Effective Occupation” became established.

By 31st December, 1899, the Royal Niger Company RNC’s charter was revoked and in the wee hours of the new century, on 1st January, 1900, the British colonial Authority took over control, declaring a “Protectorate” of the entire “Niger Area”.¹³⁴ For the Igbomina, both the former (Ilorin, Ibadan, Nupe) colonisers and the colonised were again re-colonised by a more foreign and more powerful colonial potentate—the British. But that was not all—matters were made more precarious when the Igbomina realised that following the Lugardian Indirect Rule System which employed the services of the established political institutions, the new colonisers have only re-consolidated and further empowered their former colonisers—the Fulani/Ilorin. For the Igbomina, their subject status had just been switched to the “To be continued” Mode; and not only that, but re-empowered to represent the interest of “Her Majesty’s Government” way back in Britain, and thus, they now will enjoy all the mercenaries of Her Majesty to achieve Her Majesty’s caprices. This is what this researcher, in an earlier research work, has christened “connubial imperial ossification”.¹³⁵

4.7 British Colonialism and Influence

For four centuries or thereabout, beginning from the 14th Century, Africa and Europe maintained contact such that the relationship was based on parity and not lord-serf relations, the emphasis of which was predominantly commercial. The tide turned in the 1880s—a period that witnessed one of the most significant historical movements of modern times. Europe suddenly became increasingly interested in colonial possessions. During this era, Africa was partitioned, conquered and effectively occupied by the industrialised nations of Europe, Africa being the last continent to be subdued.¹³⁶

Providing a chronological antecedent of the British annexation of the area under discussion, by around 1878, Balogun Abubakar Karara had succeeded in laying a siege on

Offa. That was his form of avenging on them, against their role in the *Jalumi War* when the Offa boys allegedly expurgated the bridge in the rear of the Ilorin defence force at the River Otin. This supposedly occasioned the decisive defeat of Ilorin. Consequently, fear was not only instilled in the Ibolo, but also the Igbomina. All these formed the background for the struggle for Eastern Yorubaland, especially between Ibadan and Ilorin in the 19th century. Ilorin's unrelenting belligerent posture even after the 1886 Peace Treaty whereby Ibadan was compelled by the British to admit the self-government of the members of the *Allied Powers (Ekitiparapo)*, which included Ilorin and Igbomina, attracted more British attention. Ilorin persistently exploited its Ekiti and Igbomina subjects.

By 1865, the *Royal Niger Company (RNC)* had signed a pact with Emir Aliyu of Ilorin. Whereas, Aliyu had thought it only to be a commercial contract which would enhance commercial activities within his emirate, the RNC however interpreted it in line with their hidden imperial agenda (i.e. Ilorin's eventual surrender to the "protection" of the RNC and ultimately, to the British). This accounted for Ilorin's consternation at the implementation of the treaty by the British, upon which Emirs Momo (1891-1895) and Sulaiman (1895-1915)'s anti-British postures were predicated. In view of that, Emir Sulaiman became more obstinate that he launched concerted efforts at dealing with Lagos. One of such was the murder of the RNC's emissaries in 1896 at Ilorin. He also attacked the Lagos constabulary force positioned at Odo Otin.¹³⁷

By 1896, Emir Momo was succeeded by Sulaiman as the new political leader of the Ilorin Emirate.¹³⁸ However, it could be said that Balogun Alanamu was responsible for the constant raids and subversive activities in Igbominaland. Undoubtedly, by 1897, the position of the RNC at Lokoja was precarious. In defence of themselves as well as their neighbouring non-Mohammedans, an attack was launched against Bida and Ilorin. Four days after Bida's attack on 23rd January, 1897, the RNC's contingents headed by *Major Arnold*, and convoyed

by *G.T. Goldie*,¹³⁹ crossing the River Niger at Bida, opened fire on the Emir's palace at Ilorin with his Baloguns. The Emir took to his heels, and the Fulani quarters of Ilorin city was on 15th February, 1897, annihilated.¹⁴⁰

Putting the vicissitudes that followed in picturesque, the Igbomina seized the opportunity to revolt. At the instigation of *Major Reeve Tucker, the Resident of Ibadan*, the Ekiti council was formed with the *Oore of Otun* as President. A treaty was signed by which the Emir became a vassal of the company. This agreement, signed by Emir Sulaiman of Ilorin and the RNC's Governor—G. T. Goldie, was said to have grown somewhat unpopular among other RNC's treaties. The Ekitis, Ibolos and Igbomina, who had seen the New British Authority as a “*Messiah*” by and large, received the news of Ilorin's defeat with great euphoria. But the question of the British Imperial motives was to soon become manifest. They were resolute at representing the concern of *Her Majesty's Government* way back at home. Thus, it is to be elucidated that Ilorin's final defeat in 1897 did not, in any way, end Ilorin's grip on her subjects. Rather, it only served to consolidate it on the one hand, and on the other, it was a means to an end in accomplishing British Indirect Rule System in the Emirate. With Ilorin's conquest, the people had to adjust to new forms of economic ventures brought in by British colonialism. It should be noted that, although the British defeat of Ilorin was in 1897, it wasn't until 1900 that an actual “*Effective Occupation*” became established. By 31st December, 1899, the RNC's charter was revoked, and on *January 1, 1900*, the British Colonial Authority took over control, declaring the entire area, a *Protectorate*.¹⁴¹

It is almost needless re-echoing it that by the wake of the millennium, in 1900, when the colonial rule became firmly established, Britain had been able to effectively occupy many parts of Nigeria. This was achieved, in part, by armed conquests after the occupation, which became effective on January 1, 1900 when Union Jack was lowered on Lokoja. On that day, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was declared by the British with Sir (later Lord) Fredrick

Lugard as High Commissioner, which he did not hesitate to partition very swiftly into Provinces. The Ilorin Emirate became a substantial integral part of the Ilorin Province under a Resident.¹⁴²

1918, which marks the end of the World War I (August 1914 to November 1918) coincided with the end of the first phase of colonialism, following the institution of the various weapons of exploitation within the colonial economy. 1919 marks the dawn of another phase, which firmly built upon the pre-1919 groundwork. The first phase was experimental and as such the second phase was to do away with the initial administrative lapses and indiscipline. Spirited struggles were undertaken to quell these impediments through the instrumentality of the Native Administration, Native Courts, and Native Treasury, with the police being reinvigorated, to instil “*discipline*” in the colonies. Later on, a re-enforcement policy was launched by the colonial administration, at the level of administration and economy.

The first two phases of colonial rule in Igbomina, and indeed Nigeria, meant an almost total departure from the traditional system, to an almost completely alien one imposed on the people through imperialism and colonialism. This, basically, served to consolidate the incorporation of the Igbomina and colonial Africa as a whole into the orbit of capitalist ideology in the post war epoch. This was to become more conspicuous with the outbreak of the World War II.¹⁴³

Aboyaji delved into the impact of local (Ilorin) imperial onslaught, particularly on Igbomina economy. But the Igbomina perhaps, entered the most traumatising era in the period described as “*an epoch of a connubial imperial ossification*” between 1897 and 1960 (and even beyond till about 1967). This time, the Igbomina groups found themselves under both the *local* (Ilorin/Lafiagi/Ibadan Provinces as the case may be) and *foreign* (European) imperialism and/or colonialism, concurrently.¹⁴⁴ This ossification, however, tended more in

favour of the local imperial powers, and to the disfavour of the vassals, the Igbomina, in this case. This became copiously translated into the gross abuse of power, particularly by the different colonial agents such as the Shaaba/Baba-kekere/Ajia/Ajele. In the words of Aboyeji,

*...it wasn't until **the Local Government Reforms of 1968** that spelt the separation and indeed, a sort of partial freedom of the Igbomina, that the people experienced emancipation from the tutelage of Ilorin. The colonial era only ushered the Igbomina into an era of a connubial imperial onslaught, an era when the Igbomina precariously lived in the throes of a double-edged imperialism: one "local", by the Ilorin, and the other, "foreign", by the British. This was undoubtedly the worst time ever in the history of the Igbomina. The Igbomina experience between C. 1897 and 1960 only underscored the validity of the popular biblical maxim and aphorism that, "a servant cannot serve two masters..." [But] the Igbomina indeed, served the Ilorin concurrently with the British.*¹⁴⁵

To put it more succinctly, colonialism, indeed, meant an intensification of great exploitation within Igbomina specifically and Africa generally, and at the same time, simultaneously. The colonialists' powers only became ossified with imperialism because imperialism meant investment, and investment (with or without colonialism) gave the European capitalists control over production within each continent.¹⁴⁶

4.8 Impetus to the Incessant Military Invasions and Conquests of Igbomina

Broadly speaking, it suffices to say, that there seems to be only two factors responsible for the incessant military invasions and conquests of Igbominaland, namely: the economic impetus and others. All other factors that may be identified, besides the economic, all constituted a means to an end, the exclusive end being economic. These other factors will first receive attention here, all of which serve as pointers to the above postulation. The fact that the relations between the Igbomina and her neighbours were initially cordial raised a pertinent question—what attracted the potentates to Igbomina? What went wrong or came in along the way? It is hoped that the discussions in this section would be found useful for both the proponents as well as critics of our own school. The question that readily comes to mind

is this—what exactly is it about the Igbomina, which had so endeared and attracted these myriads of potentates to them?

a. Other Factors

i. Geographical Factor: It has been earlier pointed out that Igbomina is a frontier Yoruba state, standing in the Middle Belt position and strategically situated as the gateway or ‘toll-gate’ between the South and the North of Nigeria. This has made it a focal point in the struggle for power between the geographically contiguous Forest powers to the South and the Savannah powers to the North over the years. Hence, Igbomina is like the *Plimsoll Line*,¹⁴⁷ which straddles across the country, Nigeria.

ii. Vegetational Variation: During the era of decolonisation, Britain and France suffered ignominious defeat and a loss of their Far Eastern Colonies to Japan, a non-European power. The contention between and among the World Powers, included the struggle for Tropical Africa, as a replacement, following the loss of Tropical Asia. A re-orientation of the colonial policies of the imperial powers took place during and shortly after the World War II, which shook the very foundations of imperialism. In a comparative analysis, vegetational variation provided a BOP between the overlords and Igbomina.¹⁴⁸

Igbomina was the gateway between the forest region to the south and savannah region to the north. Hence, there was the regional specialisation between the largely cereal-growing savannah belt of the North and the roots and trees-growing crop culture of the forest zone in the South. For a cross-carpeting of the vegetational deficiency of one region to the other, Igbominaland is the gateway. Interestingly, a part of Igbomina falls within the Savannah while the other falls in the relatively forested zone. Whereas, much of Igbomina concentrated in cereal production, Oyo and Ibadan specialised in roots and tree crops. Even while the Nupe and Ilorin share geographical contiguity and fall within the same Savannah vegetational belt

and agricultural products being mainly cereal, yet, Nupe and Ilorin relied on the suburb districts for their supply of food and commercial needs.¹⁴⁹

iii. Ecological Delineation: Struggle for land has been identified as one major factor here.

On his trip east from Ijesa to Ila, Clarke left this geographical description of Igbomina as:

*...a beautiful wooded level...exceedingly rich [land]. It was a wooded country, well-watered and sufficiently broken to render it healthy when brought into a state of cultivation. The soil of the more elevated regions is mixture of clay and sands quite common in forests of this country, and well adapted to agriculture. Ten or twelve miles from Ila, our road led us through a low, marshy, black-looking country, and an open field of uninviting and almost impenetrable forests.*¹⁵⁰

Igbomina was a harmonisation of the sandy and marshy or clayey soils of the north and south—indeed, a ‘beautiful’ land that the overlords scrambled for and actually partitioned. Since most Nigerian groups practised agriculture, the struggle for land caused by an increase in population and the consequent pressure in available land¹⁵¹ as evident in Ibadan was quite understandable. Hence, the imperial subjugation of such a land was the next administrative policy. Nupeland, though in the loamy Savannah, is more riverine and so, specialised more on river-induced vocations such as fishing and salt-making. The availability of many streams and rivers enabled large scale agriculture and agro-allied industries. The nature of the land area inhabited by a particular sect of the Igbomina, perhaps, more than any other factor, influenced their economic pursuits. The largest proportion of Igbomina were farmers. All aspects of agriculture, besides animal husbandry received adequate attention. The industrial base of the Igbomina was equally enormous as local industries abound. Cloth weaving industries, for instance, existed and thrived well in the pre-colonial epoch. This might have been further influenced by their close neighbours, the Nupe, whose cloth weaving industries also thrived well in their own style, since the early 15th century through the early 19th century when their indigenous textile industries expanded greatly owing to the increase in the demand for their products both internally and externally.¹⁵²

iv. Linguistic Zones: To the north lived (and still lives) the Hausa-speaking populace, while the Yoruba, Igbo and others live in the south. Igbomina was, therefore, a phonological melting-point or Tower of Babel, of its own sort.

v. Ethnic Boundaries: The Igbomina borders the predominant Hausa-speaking and Muslim people of the north and the predominantly Yoruba, Igbo (and others) and Christian peoples of the south.

vi. Religious Factor: Oppressors often times do not show their true colours at the beginning. Just like the European colonialists have been criticised as having used Christianity as a diplomatic strategy towards achieving the European imperialism and well-coordinated exploitation,¹⁵³ the Nupe and Ilorin Fulani also used Islam as their in-road into the Igbomina country. It has been seen as a southward extension of the Fulani Jihad, which had ravaged the whole of Northern Nigeria in the early 19th century.

vii. Political Impetus: If the jihad of Uthman dan Fodiyo had begun with a purely religious motive, it is clearly evident that by the time it came downward to Igbomina, it surely, had lost its religious fervour. It had turned into a political movement since after the demise of the real vision carriers. Politically inclined enthusiasts simply hid under the religious umbrella to demand for ‘flags’ from the Jihad leaders, since they were to assume the leadership of such areas captured as Emirates thereafter.

viii. Military Prowess: One of the greatest factors, which accounted for the victory of the overlords was their superior military technical know-how and martial skills. The use of cavalry for military purposes, particularly by the Nupe and Ilorin were well pronounced in the 19th century. Note that Ibadan, which did not employ the cavalry army until later in history or the arrow shooting missile weapons, did not have it easy with the Igbomina. They were in fact, successfully resisted and even repelled in a number of places as earlier seen. The Oyo and Ibadan were almost at par with the Igbomina in the non-use of cavalry army, as

horses were never extensively used for military expedition. Ilorin and Nupe's access to the horse markets came through their northern connections during the Jihad, which guaranteed uninterrupted supply of horses for their cavalry forces. Whereas Oyo and Ibadan were located in the southern forest zone, Igbomina was located off the major trade routes running from the north to the south in the Savannah region. This invariably made the Nupe and Ilorin to be more advanced in the use of horses for martial purposes.¹⁵⁴

Fearing that the religious guise may not yield appreciable dividends in good time, the political instrument was employed to fast-track this. Hence, there were outright wars of expansion, raids and conquests waged by so-called proselytes to establish political domination over their unfortunate neighbours-turned-preys. This is true of the Nupe incursion, Ibadan expansionist wars and Ilorin conquest upon their Igbomina preys, for economic purposes as would be seen later on in the course of this discourse.

b. Economic Motive

Economic and military survival are two forms of survival that had been at stake in the history of human collectivisation. The quest for economic survival has been a major aspect behind state formation. How often it is erroneously assumed that politics and economics have a special bond, that a man is a political animal just because of his economic needs. Indeed, man had been an economic agent prior to the institutionalisation of distinctive organisation of politics. The pre-political man was indeed an economic being. Relations needed to cultivate land; bands had to organise for hunting expeditions even in situations devoid of distinctive political organisations or political processes. The real impetus to man's politicisation may, therefore, in actual sense, lie in military inclinations, as against economic.

Politics is not just the process of determining who gets *what*, *when* and *where*, but also *how*. Hence, the processes of politicisation and militarisation were often both intimately and mutually reinforcing. Meanwhile, even in Europe, one of the amazing paradoxes inherent in the growth of statehood was the emergence of this doctrine that the military must be

apolitical. One important lesson for our modern day societies, from past experiences, is that the culmination of statehood must ultimately lie in a pragmatic disconnect between politics and militarism. The basic transition is therefore, from the *Warfare Polity* to *Welfare Polity*.¹⁵⁵

The economic system of the Igbomina hinged upon, at least, three broad based sectors: Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. It would be easily noted from the fore-going that Igbomina seemed to be the bull's eye of the power politics among the Yoruba of Oyo, the Fulani of Ilorin, Yoruba of Ibadan, and (Bariba) Tapa people of Nupeland. The reasons were not far-fetched. Against any camouflaged religious or whatever justification for the conquest of Igbomina by the local and European imperialists, the actual concealed yet, fundamental motive has often been over under-estimated: the economic drive. The political impetus, was perhaps, at best, only a means to achieving the ultimate end—economic.

The desire to control major trade routes became imperative since toll collection from the control of trade was so highly coveted. The power-tussle over much of Igbomina between and among the imperial powers, like notable markets such as Otun, Pamo, Oke-Ode¹⁵⁶ is notable. Political domination over vassals became a portent weapon for regular and sporadic tribute collection and economic exploitation. Raids were frequently undertaken in the slave trade period to capture human beings for exports as articles of trade. The large export market provided by the European slaves made the “*trade in human merchandise*” a lucrative enterprise for the overlords and the de-humanising effects of the trade nullified existing codes of conduct for warfare. It was so lucrative that even after the abolition of this trade in 1807 in Britain and after it had been completely outlawed in 1833, its vestiges persisted in many places until the imposition of British colonial rule in 1900.¹⁵⁷ By 1905, the colonialists dispatched their agents to go around and map out areas that have refused to comply with the abolitionist bid. This gave birth to a political map in 1905, for that very purpose,¹⁵⁸ containing towns which had persisted in the de-humanising trade in human merchandise.

In the mercantilist sphere, Oyo, Ibadan, Lafiagi and Ilorin were all located on the Trans-Saharan route, which flourished for centuries. There, they possessed great economic power which helped them in tapping the economic resources of their immediate environment

for their use.¹⁵⁹ The centralised political and administrative set-up of the overlords favoured the overlords in terms of population mobilisation. The Oyo, Ibadan, Nupe and Ilorin potentates exploited a much larger population for military and mercantilist exploits. In the 19th century, economic power was a function of population size and the extent to which administrative concentration was achieved to mobilise such population for economic gains. Hence, the Igbomina whose economic activities were never centrally coordinated to achieve common goals seemed inferior to their Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan and Ilorin/Fulani overlords¹⁶⁰ who used their economic and political power to exploit the economic resources of Igbomina for the development of their metropolis.

Hence, military, demographic, geographical and economic inequalities (that is, the Igbomina versus their overlords) made it possible for the Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan and Ilorin/Fulani overlords to impose their political whims but much more importantly economic caprices on the Igbomina. Thus, they became the controlling authority in Igbomina political and economic life throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁶¹

The overriding goal for the imperial adventure of the different Igbomina overlords remains obviously economic. The rationale for and the activities of their various agents—Ajia, Ajele, Maiyaki and Shaaba, very clearly unveils this truism. The Igbomina were obliged to pay tributes periodically to their overlords in terms of agricultural or industrial produce. Efficiency in tribute collection was the yardstick for assessing the effectiveness and loyalty of both the agents to their lords (fief-holders) and from the vassalages to the agents. To them, it was a do-or-die affair because it was designed to be so, ultimately for optimal economic exploitation. The agents acted as the conduit pipe towards siphoning and milking up the vassalages. On the other hand, this accounted for their economic survival. They therefore became idlers, licentious and hanger-ons. Besides, they rapidly multiplied all over Igbomina.

The economic exploitation of the Igbomina under these economic devourers was a long and harrowing one. Many of their nefarious activities are still very fresh in the memories of the Igbomina people.

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5. Appendix II: Extracts from the Welcome Address by his Highness Oba Adelani Famodun II, the Owa of Igbajo on 23 September 1986 "What does Kiriji mean to Us?" in Akinjogbin, 1998, p.515.
6. Igbajo is a home of all Yoruba races or groups. Its very existence was determined by war, its present site (i.e. Igbajo Ìlórò, omo alagogo memu) chosen by their progenitors as a hide-out due to its ruggedness.
7. Appendix II: Extracts from the Welcome Address by his Highness Oba Adelani Famodun II, the Owa of Igbajo on 23 September 1986 "What does Kiriji mean to Us?" in Akinjogbin, 1998, pp. 515-517.
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CHAPTER FIVE

ASPECTS OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN IGBOMINA

5.0 Introduction

The researcher lunched out zealously to break grounds having realised that previous authors had lumped the influences of the different overlords together. However, we soon discovered probably as previous authors had discovered too that to isolate the influence of each of the different imperial onslaughts on Igbomina is not merely arduous but almost pragmatically impracticable. This is not unconnected, with the timing, which overlapped, among other factors, thus making them difficult to isolate. But a question that may bug the minds of interested people about these once ‘fabled’ *powerful* Igbomina is: *did the Igbomina just fold theirs arms, accepting it as their fate, as having been doomed or destined for servitude?* This and a number of other issues would be accorded some attention in this chapter.

5.1 Igbomina’s Reactions to Foreign Influence

Is it not a fool that would love and cherish his fetters even if ornamented with gold? Or is it not only timid men who would prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty? And even when there was not much they could do against these foreign dominations, what was their response to foreign influence? What stringent efforts did they make in pursuit of the ideology of the “effacement of man’s inhumanity to man”? We intend to address these in this chapter.

Of course, the Igbomina realised that there was a destiny for them and their posterity, which could only be best realised under a peaceful and independent atmosphere. They saw beyond the present. They challenged destiny. They pulled the bull by the horns. However, the bull proved wild and more ferocious than they could stand.

It was crystal clear then from the principles of their imperial overlords, that they were all out to snatch their fortunes and thus deprive them of their posterity; nor should it be imagined that the Igbomina were mere passive, hopeless, and helpless speculators of the activities of their foreign invaders. The Igbomina repudiated every move for every inch of their fortunes. It, therefore, became necessary for the marauders to resort to arms struggle with the Igbomina for the establishment of their colonial overrule or economic exploitation of the land and people. The Igbomina never, for once, saw the incursion of any of their foreign potentates as good fortunes, as some Euro-centric writers would like to make us believe. After all, it is said that *the monkey and gorilla may only claim kinship, but a monkey is a monkey, and a gorilla, a gorilla*. Not even the coming of the British, which was initially misconstrued as their “messiah”, was seen as a welcome relief from the oppressive rule of their former local but cruel neighbours. Both the local and European incursion into Igbomina were not met with folded arms by the 'powerful' Igbomina who rallied round their people and resisted with a tenacity that assisted them in resisting such alien incursions. It needs to be noted that the Igbomina claimed to have successfully repelled the Ibadan, partially resisted the Nupe, and, at least, registered their disapproval of the foreign overlordship of Ilorin and the British over them, and to which they successfully developed strong resilience.

However, the mode and level of resistance varied from place to place, depending on the circumstances and the overlords involved. The courage of some Igbomina local nationalists who either fought in the proto-nationalistic times to “retain” or in the post-invasion era(s) to “regain” their age-long independence is particularly notable and acknowledged. Suffice it to say that the people reacted against foreign overrule whenever they found their political, social, commercial and other interests endangered by foreign forces and presence.¹ Igbomina’s modes of resistance include, among others:

i. Open Military Confrontation:- Words such as campaign, battle, raid, ambush, siege, and skirmish are vocabularies in military parlance, which are in no way synonymous with “wars”. They are but the integral parts of a war. For instance, a war may begin and end with just one battle and that single battle is only a part of the total state of hostility or war. In other words, a battle is an integral part of a war. Whereas, a battle is a long and fierce struggle—a fight between organised armed forces, a war entails a larger outlook—a state or period of armed conflict between different groups or nations. War has been described as the opposite of peace, and technically, it is a state of open hostility between a part and the rest of a nation,² although of course, it transcends that in scope, style and content.

It has been noted that military confrontation constitutes an important part of human relations. However, it often forms the last resort for the resolution of intractable face-offs.³ Hence, whenever the Igbomina saw their peace being jeopardised by foreign incursion, they often engaged in open military confrontation, most times playing the defensive or at times, but seldom, on the offensive. For instance, the Oro-Ago warriors stationed themselves strategically on and in-between their naturally fortified rock-outposts, hurling heavy rocks, stones and poisoned arrows on their Ibadan invaders at sight.⁴ And it worked, as they succeeded in repelling them. At Ajo, a military force was established by the refugees under the command of the *Esinkin Olowu* Aluko against the resolute Ibadan under the fearsome Ajayi Ogboriefon, their highly dreaded generalissimo.⁵ The Isanlu, Iwo, Oke-Aba, Oro-Ago and, indeed, almost all Igbomina people and settlements responded in their astute bravery by a military confrontation. Only when this had failed them did they resort to other means. Indeed, this accounts for the most popular response of the Igbomina to external invasion.

ii. Diplomacy: Afolayan has described war as "diplomacy by other means".⁶ In spite of their purported lack of cohesiveness,⁷ the Igbomina, whether in part, whole or even with outsiders had, out of diplomacy, formed series of alliances with a bid to warding off their common

foes. Villages began to ally with one another for joint defence and security.⁸ The external threats occasioned a military confederation among the various states under Oro-Ago. The same was noticeable in Oke-Ode, Ora and Ile-Ire Districts.⁹ The Iwo/Oke-Aba historic alliance at *Akitimo* against their Nupe fast-footed horse-user raiders, is particularly noted, in spite of their age-long particularity. The Isin *ad hoc* army under *Esinkin Olusin* and Ijimowo and Jakolodi¹⁰ and the alliance of the Igbomina, led by Prince Adeyale of Illa, with the Ekitiparapo, to fight against the Ibadan, a common enemy following the outbreak of the Ekitiparapo/Kiriji War in 1877¹¹, were only a few more examples.

iii. Metaphysical Martial Skills and Weapons:- The use of metaphysical, supernatural, magical, herbal and religious martial skills and weapons in warfare is of long antecedence in African as well as Yoruba warfare. It would be recalled that Sango, the third *Alaafin* of Oyo, an in-law of king Elempe of Nupe, one of the close Igbomina neighbours, became the accredited god of thunder because of his supernatural knowledge of African science, which the gods reportedly bequeathed to him with which to command fire and lightening at will, while working hand-in-hand with Oya, his mysterious wife; who equally commanded rain at will. He was given the magic axe (*Ose-Sango*) in Nupeland, his maternal homeland. The efficacy of African science, typified of these herbal military wares, which many refer to as charm or magic in Yorubaland and Africa, perhaps, made Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd.) as Military Head of State, in pursuit of African brotherhood, to advocate the use of ‘black power’. He insisted that “the blacks will have to use native curse, medicine and charms as well as guns” in order to successfully liquidate the hideous racist South African Apartheid Government.¹² However, expectedly, this sparked off series of reactions as well as counter-reactions, in the news media, both from his critics as well as allies.

Other implements of war were used in the Yoruba wars, beside the physical weapons. The quality of meta-physical weapons and magical art were instrumental to winning or losing

wars, and provided extra-psychological impetus to the militias. Yoruba magical arts and charms included among others: ogun ifoju (a supernatural means of inflicting blindness), apeta (invocation shooting), sidigi—an effigy often sent on errands to destroy a foe), oro (bull-roarer—to instigate psychological disturbance, arouse emotions and instil fears in the enemies); amulets such as ifunpa—a magical art commonly worn by most of the militias, serving various functions such as okigbe—protection against cuts, aki-aya—charm to instil boldness and fearlessness; egbe and afeeri—charm for mysterious disappearance from the scene of attack or danger, isuju—charm to conceal, obscure and hypnotise user's physical presence from the opponent(s), among others, war dresses and armours, Yoruba war standard (staff), masking and masquerading, drums, war songs/chants and dance such as Ijala Ode/Ogun among others;¹³ saki-ibon, afoohun and ayo-eta served as bullet proofs, èyìn l'olobe sq ensured that the enemies miss their target; afose or awise usually put in deer horn for whatsoever invocation pronounced to come to pass, oruka-ere (poisoned ring), epe (curse) put in cylindrical wooden containers called apo, kusayin (treated rings) among others¹⁴ Most of these aforementioned meta-physical martial weapons and skills were used in the Ijaye and Kiriji and other wars¹⁵ in which the Igbomina were actively involved.

Besides, masquerades such as Lobanika found in Isanlu among some descendants of Nupe blood at Odigbo compound¹⁶, as elsewhere in Oro-Ago, Omu-Aran, Arandun, among others, besides entertainment, had martial functions too. Warriors such as Esinkin Owokunrin-mogbo and Asanlu Odasodekun were said to be greatly and metaphysically powerful. Not until after due consultation with the oracle, which Yoruba would not but make before embarking on any military escapade, will they proceed to the war-front.¹⁷ Oloke, the venerated spiritual mountain-god in Isanlu was said to have given clear instructions through which Olooke was said to have destroyed the Aganigan-Ibadan marauders with the aid of poisoned clubs (Kukute). Gege recorded an estimation of a death rate of about 100,000 from

among the Ibadan army.¹⁸ Afolayan noted the use of poisoned arrows by the Oro-Ago against the Ibadan invaders.¹⁹ These provide only a few examples to substantiate the mass, and in many cases, effective use of this resistance form.

iv. Protest Migration: It has been quoted earlier that the “pack and flee” guerrilla principle was generally adopted by the Igbomina when their resistance was devoid of any hope of success or would amount to stupidity or colossal loss. Hence, the people preferred to stage a protest migration rather than submit to their foreign aggressors.²⁰ In a sense, their flight, for instance, in the face of Nupe raids and Ibadan invasions was a style of resistance, not only to enslavement but to foreign domination and influence. This era witnessed a constant change of settlement and movement of people. It was a miniature of series of “Great Trek”; for example, the Igbomina people moved from Iyara to Ila,²¹ Bagidi to Ajase-Ipo,²² the entire Isin people to Ogba Irobi²³ for about fifteen years;²⁵ Ile-Ire, Ora and Agunjin areas to Oke-Ode,²⁴ Òwu to Òwù and Iji to another Iji. While some of such migrations were only temporary, like the Ogba-Irobi episode where the Isin people re-settled for at least fifteen years, some others, whether premeditated or as a child of circumstances became permanent settlements. Indeed, so colossal was the dislocation that by 1900, no Igbomina village was said to be on its pre-18th century site.²⁶

v. Demonstrations: - The Igbomina people demonstrated against the excesses of their foreign invaders. Here, reactions did not come against the fact of their being under foreign domination but the way they were being treated.²⁷ Hassan decried the long, harrowing and nefarious activities of the licentious itinerant officials, idlers and hanger-ons of the Nupe Etsu as well as the Ilorin/Fulani Emir and all sorts of atrocities committed by them with all forms of impunity,²⁸ since the insurance of the royal absolutism of that era covered them and their deeds or misdeeds. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Igbomina, in some instances, reacted by practical demonstration of refusal to pay the sporadic tributes imposed on them,

especially when women too were taxed in Igbomina villages. At certain instances, there were open demonstrations by the people to the excesses of the Nupe-Ilorin Ajia and Ibadan Ajele. A good example was the beheading of Awopitun, an Ibadan Ajele by one of the boys of Prince Fabunmi of Oke-Imesi at his annual festival at Erin-Ile in 1878. This came as luck ran against the unfortunate Ajele, who in their characteristic manner, was reported to have come to demonstrate their abuse of power. Unfortunately, the resilience of the people had exhausted its elastic limit as Prince Fabunmi's boys demonstrated, by beheading him. It is particularly interesting, here that this became externalised as other embittered people, including the Igbomina, identified with this bold demonstration. This accounts for the immediate impetus to the Ekiti-parapo/Kiriji War, which was the longest and most harrowing in the history of Yoruba warfare. The massacre of Ajele in Ila and other areas in Igbomina is the height of such demonstrations.²⁹

vi. Protests and Agitations: The colonial policy on taxation sparked off series of protests. But to the Igbomina, it was a symbol of their loss of independence, and inauguration of foreign domination as well as exploitation. Thus, resistance against the imposition of tax was a clear reaction against foreign exploitation. An example was the 1947 Oke-Ode anti-tax riot.³⁰ Tax evasion gimmicks such as the fleeing of adult males into the bush to escape tax assessment census, refusal of chiefs to disclose names and actual population,³¹ among others, were forms of protests and agitations. Protests and agitations were, perhaps, more heightened and frequent in their reaction against the arbitrary boundary delineation in which Ila was and is still disconnected from the other Igbomina and in which these other Igbomina are suffering a disconnect with the other Yoruba with which they share biological, socio-cultural and historical affinity.³² Afolabi leaves us with this documentary regarding the spate of agitation by the Igbomina towards their unification with their brethren:

...since December 1932 when the Igbomina had been separated arbitrarily into the North and South West without putting into consideration the Origin, Cultural affinities, aspirations and visions of these innocent people, there had been series of organised and un-abated agitation for regrouping of the Igbomina and other northern Yoruba with their kith and kilns in the West. However, the history of agitation would be discussed under five stages, viz: Stage I: 1933 to 1949, Stage II: 1949-1952, Stage III: 1952-1960, Stage IV: 1960-2000, Stage V: 2000 to date.³³

5.2 Implements of War

Implements of wars ranged from local to modern implements such as poisoned club, poisoned arrows, stone missiles,³⁴ and sophisticated breech-loading rifles, such as were first used during the *Kiriji War* by the *Ekiti-parapo* side, of which the Igbomina contingent was, led there by Prince Adeyale of Ila-Orangun. Mountain spirits were also used, both as protective (defensive) and for attack (offensive—such as oracles).³⁵

Meanwhile, one may say, that right from the day the Biblical Cain made his rudimentary implement to kill his brother, Abel, man has worked tirelessly on discoveries and manufacturing of weapons, ranging from fire-arms such as guns to the unconventional weapons such as atomic bombs and chemical weapons. Akiwowo stated that there are compelling evidences of a phenomenal growth of militarism in most nations of the world today. State terrorism competes with fighting for freedom in relentless and uncompromising armed conflict. And what is more, the two world super powers and their allies possess the nuclear capability of blowing up the planet earth. No wonder, war has been described as *a* barbarity, which has been waged for generations, for which mass slaughter has become its primary objective.³⁶

Both physical and meta-physical weapons were employed by the Igbomina against their foreign invaders. And these ranged from the pre-war implements such as due consultation with the *Ifa* oracle, having been well-equipped with sufficient number of capable militias in good possession of fighting implements—physical, herbal, juju, spiritual, magical, and supernatural weapons.

Undoubtedly, superiority of weaponry as well as mastery and articulation of martial skills could be a decisive factor in warfare. However, Smith had argued that wars are probably won more often by superior organisation and morale than by superior weapons.³⁷ Whatever technological innovations devoid of adequate training, tactics and skills loses its effectiveness.³⁸ Smith extensively discussed the arms and armours of the warriors of West Africa.³⁹ This section will endeavour to relate them to Igbomina.

i. Clubs or Batons (*Kumo*): - This is certainly the simplest and probably, the most ancient of weapons. It is skilfully cut from a tree branch and trimmed in such a way that one end looked like a handle, and the other like a head. It was used as a precautionary weapon, either as a throwing stick or cudgel, used against foes, either man or animal, like uninvited “nocturnal guests” such as reptiles. To make them more brutal, fatal and deadly, some were studded with nails or iron with coils. It should be noted that the modern version of this ancient weapon could be the secondary armament for the Nigeria Police, since they serve a similar purpose. Permit it to be noted too that this has given them their Yoruba tag-name as “*Olopa*” (that is, holder of a baton/club).⁴⁰ The use of (*kumo-ere*) a poisoned club by the venerated *Olooke* of the Isanlu people against the Ibadan marauders and its alleged effectiveness in destroying a purportedly gargantuan number of contingents of up to 100,000, is quite notable,⁴¹ even if it might have been exaggerated.

ii. Stones and Rocks: Slings and catapults provided some earliest weapons and forms of early missiles for hurling pebbles against man or beast, or whatever target. But the Igbomina warriors of Oro-Ago became skilful in adapting their natural endowment to positive use, as they strategically stationed themselves on and between rock outposts, hurling stones, pebbles and heavy rocks at the sight of their Ibadan invaders.⁴²

iii. Bows and Arrows (*Ofa*): - Yoruba bows, which were said to have had an estimated effective range of 50-75 yards, and purported to be powerful enough to kill an elephant at

close range, is perhaps next in order of antiquity. Bows and arrows comprised three parts: the arrow (*ofa*), which was the real ammunition, an elastic bow string called *orun* and a stave often made of strong twigs, such as *ito* and *ijan* on which the bow was mounted. *Ofa* was believed to be man's first innovation and invention for accumulating and storing energy. For maximum effect, the arrow was 'tipped' in poison. The Yoruba's close neighbours, the Nupe, Igbira/Ebira were said to have excelled in the use of this weapon; hence, their *Orile* as "*omo ajita'fa*",⁴³ meaning progenies of professional early morning archers/shooters. The Igbomina of Oro-Ago, very close to the Nupe, who were equally renowned for their art of arrow usage, probably unarguably learnt this martial skill from them.⁴⁴ Afolayan, and Johnson recorded the steady torrents of poisoned arrows by the Oro-Ago warriors on the Ibadan marauders. The Nupe/Fulani use of it proved most fatal for the Igbomina situated in the open country of the savannah, northern Yorubaland. But as they moved into the forest region where the range became much shorter, a more powerful cross-bow, a specialised form of bow, more suitable for defence, came into use.⁴⁵

iv. Supernatural Weapons: This has been highlighted under the section on Igbomina's reactions to foreign domination and influence. In order to show that charms formed one of the important tactics in the 19th century Yoruba wars, the Ibadan *Agannigan*, for instance, were said to have invoked poor visibility upon their Igbomina attackers who tried to resist them, with the aid of charms so that the people could not see them clearly.⁴⁶

v. Swords (*Agedegbe*): For many centuries, the major personal weapons of the Yoruba militia were swords. It was the major infantry weapon before firearms were introduced in the 1850s on a large scale. The more efficient missile weapons of the Nupe and Ilorin/Fulani cavalry invaders against the Igbomina proved most deadly for them since swords were meant for close-range combat, suitable for stabbing, cutting and slashing the foes. It spelt doom for their rank and file, as they were, especially in the early times, hurled down by the long-range

missile weapons of their foes, before they (Igbomina) could reach them and demonstrate their martial skills. This explains why they, in many instances, successfully resisted and repelled the Ibadan, since, being Yoruba, they were accustomed to same martial skills and weapons. The sword consisted typically of a long, straight or slightly curved blade, sharp-edged on one or both sides with a pointed end and the other fixed in a quilt or handle.⁴⁷

vi. Throwing Knives and Daggers: These were carried along side with the sword. And like the swords, they were used for and mostly effective for stabbing at close range. It thus, suffered the same demerits as the swords. Although, they were more easily thrown than the swords, proximity to the enemy was still important for effectiveness and considering hitting a targeted foe on a fast-footed horse typical of the Fulani/Ilorin and Nupe, proved brutal for them. They were much shorter than swords and with sharp pointed blades.⁴⁸

vii. Spears: -Whereas swords and daggers were effective for close-range combats, spears were used both for close and long-range combats. A spear consisted of a long staff to which a sharp head was fixed. They were referred to as spears (*okò*) when employed as javelins either by infantry or cavalry; but lances (*esin*) when carried by cavalry and intended for thrusting. These became prominently used until the 1850s when spear usage and need was greatly reduced as the war theatre changed from the open country of the north to the woody forest of the south in Yorubaland.⁴⁹ The Igbomina might not be great users of spears and, if they were, their Ilorin and Nupe overlords had long perfected its use ever before the Igbomina learnt its use. This greatly undermined its use, at least, vis-à-vis their Nupe and Fulani invaders. One other factor that could account for this is the fact that the Nupe and Ilorin/Fulani invaders used and had perfected cavalry-fighting via their fast-footed horses. So, while the Igbomina fought on foot the Nupe and Fulani fought on horses. It was, therefore, easier for the one on the horse to target and close-range the one on foot than the other way round. The people of

Oro-Ago might have learnt the art of spear thrusting from their intrepid Nupe neighbours and imperialists.⁵⁰

viii. Firearms: Firearms became the predominant weapon of Yoruba militia after the 1850s. It became a common possession of every other army in Yorubaland after its use by the Ijebu army on a large scale during the 1820s *Owu War*. First, *Dane guns* or the muzzle-loading muskets (consisting a variety of flint-lock guns and cap gun) which were ineffective in battle as they were often inaccurate, the barrels being prone to burst, thus making them probably more dangerous to the user than the targeted foe. Thus, it might have been an improvement over traditional weapons such as bows and arrows, swords and spears, with a range of about 200 yards. Dane guns also required an interval of 3-4 minutes between volleys to re-load. The more sophisticated guns known as breech-loading rifles were introduced into the West African market in the second half of the 19th century. The *Ekiti-Parapo* forces' (of which the Igbomina were an integral part) acquisition of some of these single-shot breech-loading rifles early in the 1880s is noted to have marked a watershed in the history of the *Kiriji War*.⁵¹

Evidently, the 40,000 *Ekiti-parapo* army's superiority over the 60, 000 Ibadan forces was immeasurably boosted by the use of these rifles. The Confederates, at the early stage of the war, enjoyed exclusive privilege of possessing sophisticated weapons. In a report to *Aare* Latosa by one of the war boys, sometimes in 1884 in a rather pathetic tone, Adefila and Opeola described it thus:

*Our camps are almost in ruins, the Ekiti[parapo and Igbomina] boys shoot mighty guns at us. Mighty guns. You need to hear the murderous sound, elders of our land. It is the sound of ten elephants roaring at the same time: "KII-RII-JIII, -KIII-RII-JIII. ... and ten tents are destroyed just like that....I am sent to tell you this. my General, for we are powerless...We fought like brave men, but power surpasses power."*⁵²

The Ibadan, with all their supernatural amours and Dane guns were just no match for the sophisticated guns of the *Ekiti-parapo*. Hence, although certain charms may secure invulnerability from gun-shots, there is not the same confidence as regard breech-loading

rifles as there was in dealing with the muzzle-loading Dane guns. This showcases the susceptibility and limitations of charms, amulets and juju in the face of sophisticated weapons.⁵³

Military weapons such as guns and muskets were said to have been introduced in Isinland, for example by a warrior who distinguished himself as the Esinkin Olusin (Aiyemoro from Owu) when the Òwù people migrated from their original home in Òwu when Òwu was totally annihilated after the Owu War.⁵⁴ It is also noted that, although there were no standing army, each of the warrior-leaders in Igbomina was a hunter-warrior who had many war-boys under him to be trained on how to handle guns and rifles.⁵⁵

Regarding the annihilating effect of warfare, Enger added his voice quoting President John F. Kennedy as having said that each day drew us nearer to the hour of maximum danger. Perils such as nuclear holocaust are now a greater possibility than ever.... If an atomic war were to take place, the total destruction of mankind would be inevitable; and in his own article "No Place to Hide", Bradley, who monitored the radiology of early atomic bomb tests, wrote, "When one considers that one-millionth of a gram of radium contained within the body may be fatal, one is inclined to turn from Calculus to Christianity."⁵⁶

Crowder also lent his own voice, quoting Albert Einstein during the Cold War (1947-1991), a time of tension between the world's super powers: "I know not with what weapons WW III [World War III] will be fought, but WW IV [World War IV] will be fought with sticks and stones."⁵⁷ It was a movement of clarity that focused on the consequences of the choice to fight a nuclear war. Regardless of the motives for making such a choice however, the results would be overtly devastating. The *balance of power* in our world would, perhaps, regulate the choice of weaponry, having realised that almost everyone is a carrier of these deadly weapons. Even Nigeria that is not classed among the super powers or industrial nations of the world is today unleashing terror everywhere even in the so-called industrialised

and highly belligerent nations, due to the activities of the BOKO-HARAM deadly Islamic religious sect.

Afolayan observed that in Igbomina, war has been a progenitor and accelerator of change. Thus, the 19th century Yoruba wars had far-reaching and revolutionary consequences on Igbomina. War has often acted as an instrument of social change. The present shape and character of the Igbomina society undoubtedly cannot be divorced from the civil wars of the 19th century Yorubaland. Igbomina, in particular and Yorubaland in general, never remained the same after these wars.⁵⁸

5.3 Igbomina Women in Warfare

Most, indeed all, societies have the concept of masculinity in almost every spectrum of life; ditto in African military history. This forms the prop of Mazrui's "*The Warrior Tradition and the Masculinity of War*".⁵⁹ The role of women in accounts of warfare has more often than not been underestimated. This is particularly noteworthy in a society such as the Yoruba where gender inequality was on the high side for man. In a few accounts where their roles have been identified, concentration has been on the centralised larger societies. Whereas the Yoruba may not have had standing army of women such as the *Amazons* of the Fon Kingdom of Dahomey,⁶⁰ but there were occasions when some notable women of valour had played prominent roles in times of national crises. The example of Madam Omosa, daughter of Basorun Ogunlola who saved Ibadan from an Ijebu invasion during the *Kiriji War* is particularly historic.⁶¹

Traditions in certain quarters in Igbomina also have claims to the notable roles of such valiant women in times of crises. The Oro-Ago women, for example, were said to have demonstrated such an act of heroism against the Nupe. They stationed themselves up-hills, hurling heavy rocks and pebbles against their invaders.⁶² Yet, it has been reported that people from many Igbomina and other places had escaped there to seek asylum. Oral tradition has it

that women were predominantly involved, because the men considered it rather unmanly to be involved in such a campaign. And so, while the men kept in-doors, women spearheaded the stiff resistance. And it is particularly notable in Oro-Ago tradition today that the Oro people were never at a time subdued or brought under subjugation by the Agannigan.⁶³ This might further explain why people flocked into Oro-Ago for asylum, confident of the protection by the men whose women acted with such gallantry.⁶⁴

Fighting alongside the men-folk, women acquired a new status, which placed them more or less at parity with the men-folk. The old myths, which forbade them from appearing in public with men or their wearing of veils, if at all they must, about the inferiority of the womenfolk and their subservience to men appear in public were, thus, jettisoned, with their new participatory roles as combatants in a revolutionary war situation.⁶⁵

Witch-craft, a form of *primordial science*, which enabled witches (*aje*) to identify herbs and concoctions suitable both for killing and for healing also had a significant role to play in Yoruba warfare, which many may not be aware of. Regardless of the stigma that is often attached to witchcraft, some women are said to have employed it in accompanying their military husbands, children or compatriots to the war-front in order to be of assistance to them in their war efforts.⁶⁶

Witchcraft, it should be noted, is not a Yoruba or an African exclusive preserve. Williams Shakespeare in his play *Macbeth*⁶⁷ depicted the English society as having been long accustomed to witchcraft. The three '*weird sisters*' is only a euphemism for witches. Let it not be misconstrued that it was just a mere fiction. Shakespeare was in actual fact, depicting the real picture of the European society. There are conjectures in many people today, after considering the mysteries of modern science that, even where African labour is employed in the process of assemblage in certain factories, they would be kept off in the final stage of making such products of science and technology to work.⁶⁸ There is, thus, the speculation

that, coined in whatever diction, (witchcraft, wizardry), it equates the secret of the knowledge of vital forces (i.e. ase) which the witches (i.e. *awon iya osoronga, olokiki oru* or *iya nla*) possess.

Witchcraft is, therefore, prevalent in every society, till date, although waning fast, and done in more secluded secrecy, today, perhaps, due to the malevolent stigma and societal rejection of this cult. This is obviously not unconnected with their destructive tendencies and warding off of societal blessings and development. Adefila and Opeola, offered a vivid depiction of a tradition about an old woman, a witch, who was rough-handled at Imesi market by one of the boys of the Ibadan Ajele who was later to be murdered by Prince Fabunmi of Oke-Imesi. The *irate* witch was determined to avenge her ill-treatment, using her metaphysical sway. The result was the error spirit (i.e. sise-sise) spell cast upon the boy, in which the Ajele, identified as *Awopitun* was eventually beheaded by Prince Fabunmi, while the offending boy was fatally wounded. This accounts for the immediate spark-off of the Ekiti-parapo War, probably orchestrated by this aggrieved woman who was determined to avenge her ill-treatment, not only on those who had met their misfortune, but an act of patriotism to punish the Ibadan as a whole for the ill-treatment her people had long been subjected to. Joined by two other patriotic iya-nla (witches), they offered supernatural aid to the Ekiti-parapo warriors. In a particular episode, when the confederates were reportedly caught unawares by the Ibadan, these three iya-nla who went to the battle-front on the side of the Confederates were reportedly singing and dancing in the camp. They, thus, fortified the allied forces from their enemies so that the bullets had no effect on them. What would have spelt doom for them only afforded them the chance to re-gather momentum, fire back and force the Ibadan to retreat.⁶⁹ Witchcraft was prevalent in Igbomina, as elsewhere in Yorubaland.

5.4 Igbomina Inter-Group Relations and Influence

Generally speaking, man is believed to be a social animal, in that he relates with other members of his social environment. His social milieu refers to others of like creatures i.e human beings like him, living around him. From time immemorial, man had learnt to relate very well with fellow men, far or near, in order to achieve his set goals in life. Man could not afford to have lived like the fabled *Robinson Crusoe*, who had to make his own clothes, house, and indeed, all his needs and live in a lone solitary world. As no one is obviously an island on his own, or self-sufficient, man had long ago, dating to the obscure pre-historic times, learnt to live in groups.

Furthermore, due to the uniqueness and divergences in the ecological, geographical, topographical, vegetational, climatic, rainfall and soil-type distributions of the divergent geographical-cum-political zones of the global society, it, therefore, means that the potentials, products, skills and peculiarities of each zone differ. Igbomina was, therefore, in no small measure, an exceptional case. Igbomina was surrounded by people of diverse groups, which were in meaningful contact prior to the advent of European imperialism. The relevance of such contact laid in the fact that the history of any group of people is, perhaps, at best, incomplete without the knowledge of their interactions with their neighbours.⁷⁰

This study provides us with clear and practical instances of pre-colonial inter-group as well as international relations between the Igbomina and her numerous neighbours. Earlier studies have cantered on the patterns of interaction as well as important determinants for early contacts, ranging from migration, to ecological differentiation, religious considerations, diplomatic factors such as inter marriage, economic pursuits, militarism/warfare and local imperialism as well as empire-building, among others.⁷¹ Igbomina occupied the eastern section of Yorubaland along with the Ekiti, Ijesa and Ife kingdom as against the western and central Yorubaland.⁷²

The foreign influences shall be looked into under the political, economic and social considerations. It might be plausible to say that long after the wars have ended and the bullets as well as Kiriji sounds had ceased, the dusts raised, for long, in certain instances, have remained unsettled. Thus, the ripple effects have continued. The Igbominaland, which emerged after the war was never the same that had been in the pre-war years with grave demographic dislocations, religio-cultural disorientation, political disorganisation, ecological differentiation, economic deterioration,⁷³ and overall destabilisation.

a. Political Influence

Igbomina's location in the middle-belt of Nigeria, a gateway between the north and south as well as a frontier Yoruba area, made it to become an area of multiple cultural interactions in the crises of the pre-colonial epochs. It became a major bone of contention between the major imperial potentates of Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan, Fulani/Ilorin and later in the early 20th century, the British. Igbominaland was one area where their military, political and diplomatic rivalries were staged. The 19th century crisis and its 18th century antecedents brought Igbomina into a frantic flux of socio-political and economic instability.⁷⁴

The influences of the various foreign potentates on the socio-political life of the Igbomina people were gargantuan in nature. It has been noted that the era of imperial expansion by such powerful states as Benin, Old Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan, and Ilorin/Fulani represented a remarkable epoch in the minds of indigenes.⁷⁵ Their way of life was so drastically altered.⁷⁶

It should be noted that royalty in Igbomina lost much of its glory and splendour, consequent upon the tyranny of their more powerful foreign impostors and neighbours in pre-colonial times. The status of the monarchs and other powers who had previously held sway socio-politically was consciously relegated by the political arrangements of the impostors. This was done at times by appointing new faithfuls who were directly answerable and loyal

to them in place of the local title-holders who may not be truly loyal to the overlords. The indigenous socio-political setting in Igbomina was badly affected, as the chiefs no longer headed the political hierarchies of their villages. This became the preserve of the foreign imposters.⁷⁷

The dominance, incursion, onslaughts and hegemony of the Oyo, Nupe, Ilorin/Fulani and Ibadan were both significant for the disruptive and destructive tendencies caused as well as and more importantly, the profoundly lasting socio-political, economic and military re-organisation they caused. Remarking on this development, Afolayan noted that:

*Probably at no time in the history of Igbomina was their survival so severely tried and threatened as it was during the turbulent era of insecurity between C. 1750 and C. 1897.*⁷⁸

i. Power Shift: One influence Oyo had on Igbomina was is the empowerment the system gave to some privileged Igbomina kings ahead of the powers that had held sway there. Writers have often attributed the Orangun as the monarch of Igbomina.⁷⁹ Both written and oral data⁸⁰ suggest the paramountcy of the Orangun of Ila. Although he might not have always been the most powerful Igbomina ruler, nor his sovereignty always acknowledged in all parts of Igbominaland, whatever claims of paramountcy that might have been arrogated to his leadership in Igbomina apparently would have been based substantially on the traditional claims of ancestral links with Ile-Ife and prominent Yoruba rulers. As at September, 1917 when Elphinstone, Resident of Ilorin Province was compiling his Gazetteer, he still referred to the Orangun as “the senior chief of all Igbonas” although he quickly added that this might not have extended to the Igbomina under Ilorin Province.⁸¹

But his pre-eminence in Igbomina during the pre-colonial times might not have been in serious doubt, although evidently, it had waned considerably by the 17th century. consequent upon the challenge by the rising power of the Olupo of Ajassee-Ipo.⁸² Colonial officers noted the Olupo’s overlordship as the head chief of the Igbomina when V.F Boscoe,

the Assistant District Officer (A.D.O) for Omu-Isanlu District wrote in 1916. He also noted Ajase-Ipo as the headquarters of the Yoruba-Igbomina group, although they might have excluded Ila-Orangun since Ila had been ceded away to another province.⁸³ The Alaafin of Oyo might have been instrumental to this, having boosted and enhanced the influence of the Olupo in the Igbomina area by making him the local superintendent for Oyo's interest in the Igbomina axis. Besides, he used him as a tool to counter-balance the Orangun's traditional prominence.⁸⁴

A great deal of mixing of the various Yoruba sub-groups occurred during the 19th century, beginning with the migration of the Oyo people southward into the Egba, Owu, Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti and Igbomina countries early in the 19th century.⁸⁵ More Oyo later came into the Ekiti, Ijesa, Akoko and Igbomina countries as a result of Ibadan-expansion.⁸⁶

ii. Change in the Ethos of Warfare: For some societies such as Igbomina, warfare did not go beyond adult male adventure during the dry season, when people were less preoccupied with agriculture. Those societies could be said to be segmentary at heart. Wars were neither meant to extend political influence or to be destructive. The Igbomina manifested norms, which abhorred the use of violence for political ends. But unfortunately, the Igbomina was to encounter different other societies for whom warfare was a means of imperial expansion and political influence. The ethos of these societies vis-à-vis militarism or warfare helps to determine and account for their fortune or otherwise in combat with their neighbours. This explains why the Igbomina who had been described in many accounts as “powerful” became victims of incessant raids and political hegemony. No wonder, the Igbomina political units could not be forcefully forged to effectively withstand external aggression, as this form of warfare appeared foreign to them. This explains the variations of societal ethos in this regard.⁸⁷ Hence, the Igbomina became highly susceptible in times of armed conflict with rather belligerent states.⁸⁸ In this regard, Igbomina had no better option than to adapt into the

new form. However, they could not catch up with their neighbours who had perfected this ethos before the Igbomina only began to acculturate.

The presence of Nupe facial marks on the archaeological soap-stone figures, especially those of Esie suggests some form of cultural cross-interactions and influence with the Nupe many centuries ago, as revealed by the *thermo luminescence* examination conducted at Oxford in 1974 around 1100 AD.⁸⁹

iii. Militarism: This constituted a significant part of human relations. However, it often forms the last resort for the resolution of intractable face-offs between and among divergent groups/camps. But rather unfortunately, the conflict aspect of inter-/intra-group relations, especially in Yorubaland in particular, and Africa in general, has tended to be exaggerated in many accounts, principally by European writers, observers and commentators, without any serious critical analytical objectivity, but only often treated based on a cursory consideration.

A number of factors could be adduced for this aberration. One, wars are dramatic in nature and form heroic moments, which are easily remembered and preserved in oral traditions, especially in the political history of the affected groups. Two, the era of imperial expansion represented a glorious epoch in the minds of citizens, which was accordingly marked in oral traditions. Three, from the Euro-centric parochial point of view, therefore, the emphasis on militarism as the dominant pattern of interaction between the Igbomina and their numerous neighbours among whom they were sandwiched, may be attributed to a derogatory notion of an anarchic pre-colonial scene bedevilled by endemic warfare.⁹⁰

Suffice it to say that the high level of cultural maturity already attained by the various peoples of Africa South of the Sahara, with particular reference to the Igbomina and Yoruba peoples, belies this view. A more critical approach would identify the causes of the conflicts, their dates and circumstances as well as consequences. The initial contacts were presumably

peaceful in nature until the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries when the rather peaceful relations turned into hostilities and constant military harassments.⁹¹

iv. Militarisation of the Igbomina Society: For the Igbomina, foreign influence acted as external stimulus, during the crises-ridden decades of the 18th and 19th centuries to change their ethos of war, swerve and intensify warlike activities, which were stripped-off of political ambitions. Theirs was basically on the defensive. The Igbomina society, thus, if not by freewill, then by constraints and coercion, became somewhat militarised. Walls and trenches were built round their towns and villages for security reasons, as were said to be evident in Isanlu, Oponda, Ijara and Alla-Isin.⁹² The Igbomina society also evolved series of intelligence and surveillance systems in order to cope with the spate of insecurity of those decades. Whereas various new martial titles were introduced either to reward or oblige the martial prowess of the war chiefs, the old ones assumed new significance such as the Balogun, Esinkin and Elemoso (war chiefs) in Isanlu, Oke-Onigbin, Owu, Omu-Aran and Igbaja; and the Ihare, Ologun and Eso groups of war chiefs in Iwo and Oke-Aba;⁹³ Asanlu in Oro and Esie areas.

These chiefs assumed new roles in state affairs. Prominent among these powerfults included one Aiyemoro from Owu whose military prowess earned him the title Esinkin Olusin, that is, the Generalissimo of the Isin militia. Another was a man from Oke-Onigbin, popularly known as A-mowo-eru-ra-baka, who eventually staged a coup d'état against the traditional stool in the early 19th century as he was more powerful than the king himself.⁹⁴ Royalty was, therefore, relegated to the background. He reigned for several years as a despot, selling many of his own very people into slavery. Also notable among them was Esinkin Olomu Aluko from Omu-Aran, who spearheaded the formation of Iyangba Confederate Army in 1879 and had to be physically dislodged by a military expedition under Captain R.L. Bower's command from Ajo some seven years after, in 1896. Balogun Oderinlo Atanbati

from Igbaja also distinguished himself by dealing mercilessly with the Otun and Erin-Ile peoples in unnamed wars. Elemoso Gudugudu from Ijara was also said to be notable.⁹⁵

The refugees of the 19th century Yoruba civil wars were also said to have altered the traditional political set-up of Igbominaland. The establishment of quarters and wards in their new settlements as refugees changed the faces of the affected traditional way of living of the people. For example, socio-politically, they were said to have had their own separate traditional chiefs. A good example was the Omuye section of Odo-Igbo and Eyin compound of Oke-Onigbin. This was retained as it was the practice while they were at their original settlement. Also in Isanlu, the deserted Isolo group formed the Isolo ward while the Odo-Dosin and Igbaa were said to have merged to become the Oke-Isanlu ward. Ijara was equally affected as it had its wards increased to six.⁹⁶

v. New Forms of Political Experimentation and Arrangements:

Sustained military harassment from centralised states resulted in the formation of political Confederations among the more segmentary societies of the Igbomina, for defensive purposes, security exigencies and joint defence made the villages to go into alliances with one another, thus expanding the traditional base of authority since the old ruling class of civilians had to share power with the new military class who had been brought into prominence by the 19th century vicissitudes. We have earlier noted how one A-m'owo-eru-ra-baka from Oke-Onigbin, one of these new men usurped power and seized the initiatives in the scheme of things of the period. The ability of the Olusin of Isanlu to effectively hold the people against the Ibadan and Fulani imposters proved his military prowess in Isinland and had drawn the Isin people to seek for protection with him. His connection with Ile-Ife, however, might have also enhanced his status. The Olusin gradually emerged as the paramount ruler over the others who eventually, became subordinates to him.

Ascension to the Olusin stool was extended to the descendants of two of the absorbed settlements, older than Isanlu itself. The three other villages that could not succeed to the throne had their paramount rulers recognised and incorporated into the inner Council of the Olusin chiefs. Having secured his supremacy over the six initial villages of Isanlu: Isanlu, Ijara, Iji, and others that have probably become extinct, the Olusin thereafter, gradually extended his political tentacles over the whole of Isinland.⁹⁷ Archival record confirmed the paramountcy of the Olusin on other Isin groups.⁹⁸ And this has been preserved till today. Only recently was the aforesaid political arrangement of the rotational nature of the three villages of Isanlu, Ijara and Iji to the Olusin throne finally disbanded. The initial break-off came with Isanlu in 1911, when she began to have a separate Olusin, different from Iji and Ijara-Isin who also had the Olusin title retained for their joint-monarch. But recently, on 25th March, 2011, some one hundred years after the Isanlu disengagement, there came the complete turning of the tide with the coronation of Oba Samuel Babatunde Aboyeji as the first separate Olusin of Iji-Isin. It should be noted that, today, there are three different Olusin in Isin-land. Each unit had retained and preserved the Olusin title, probably as a heritage of the pre-colonial traditional base.

A similar, rotational political system among the Irese Igbomina groups had not only stopped, but is said to have ceded military and political paramountcy from Obin and Adanla to Igbaja for the martial ability of the Elese.⁹⁹ The 18th and 19th centuries' crises, as experienced by the Igbomina, proved the supremacy of the military engagements of the centralised polities such as Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan and Fulani/Ilorin over the segmentary societies and "mini states" such as Igbomina. Whereas the former, could raise and motivate large and at times standing contingents through their rulers, the latter could only summon a handful of ad-hoc, irregular fighting men, having no political allegiance beyond the small-scale autonomous communities. The consequence was that the centralised political polities of the

Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan, Fulani/Ilorin found it easy to overrun the segementary Igbomina communities.¹⁰⁰

Many Obas were relegated both politically and traditionally.¹⁰¹ The Orangun Iyara site which was destroyed led to the relegation of the Orangun as a Second Class Chief in Igbomina. A sort of polarization of political power between the Orangun of Ila and the rest Igbomina chiefs came about as a result of the shift in place of residence or location to his present site. Having left Iyara, his traditional base, the Orangun lost much of his power and authority, and consequently his control over the Igbomina towns, now in Kwara State and others in present day Osun, formally Oyo.

The Olusin became recognised as the political leader of his new settlement, having moved from Owa to Ajagbo and finally Isanlu as people flocked to him for safety. For Isanlu, the 19th century crises helped to strengthen the unity of Isin and consolidate the position of the Olusin.¹⁰²

vi. Military Confederacy: Foreign influence and external threats initially occasioned a military confederacy among the Igbomina groups. Afolayan provided examples of the emergence of new *foci* of political authorities in Irese-Igbomina, Esisa-Igbomina Isin-Igbomina and in the Oke-Ode, Ora and Ile-Ire Districts of Igbomina.¹⁰³

In the Esisa country (that is, Oro-Ago Axis), for instance, by the early 18th century, several autonomous settlements were reportedly evident, each of which jealously guarded its independence—Ayetoro, Awu which was founded by Nupe migrants who introduced into Oro-Ago some elements of Nupe-Culture, Iraye, Isaoye, Oke-Ayin, Oke-Daba, Oke-Mure, Okerunwon, under Olorunwon or Lord of Okerunwon, Okewa, Okeluworo, Omugo and Oganyin. But the vicissitudes of the 19th century forced them out of their state of “political particularism”. The military pressures heightened and the alliance transformed into a cohesive political union. It therefore, came to be that the reputed traditional ruler who was

deified for her earlier military achievements (i.e. the head of the Ajagun group) emerged as the paramount ruler. He was to be assisted by chiefs to be selected from the other groups.¹⁰⁴

vii. Introduction of New Martial Skills and Weapons: Smith¹⁰⁵ had rightly contended that the period was not one of mere conflicts but also of political, social and economic changes. An examination of foreign influence in Igbomina include the weapons and methods employed by their raiders and imperialists. It is important to note that at one stage in the 19th century civil wars, especially, during the Ekiti-parapo wars, relatively sophisticated weapons were introduced, especially by the Ijebu and Ijesa members of the Confederates, who had direct access to the Atlantic Coast.

The Portuguese were said to have introduced firearms to the West African coast around the mid-15th century, during their expeditions. There are claims that the Benin warriors used guns during their invasion of some parts of eastern Yorubaland, which included Igbomina in the 17th and 18th centuries.¹⁰⁶ Nationals of other European countries such as the English, Dutch and Danes began to sell muskets to West Africans after the pioneering activity of the Portuguese. The Dutch were the major sellers. However, these guns were known as “Dane-guns” as most of the guns came from Holland (the land of the Danes) by 1750. It was not until the 19th century, however, that firearms became the predominant weapon of Yoruba armies. During the Owu War of the 1820s, the Ijebu army is reputed to have first used firearms on a large scale. Thereafter, it became a common possession of every other Yoruba army. Guns were clearly an improvement on the traditional weapons such as bows and arrows, swords and spears, with a range of about 200 yards. Breech-loading rifles were more sophisticated guns introduced to the West African market in the 1850s. A few of them were said to have been used by the Egba army during the Ijaye War. Although already obsolete in Europe and America, the single-shot breech-loading rifles, far superior in range and accuracy to Dane guns, were exported to West Africa.¹⁰⁷

The acquisition and use of some of these new guns by the Ekiti-Parapo armies in the 1880s in deed marked a significant watershed in the Ekiti-Parapo War. This phase has been isolated by some as the Kiriji phase in the Ekiti-Parapo War, drawing its etymology from the sound of the new guns, which reportedly sounded like ten elephants roaring together at the same time. Kiriji was the climax of it all. The Ekiti-Parapo ally is said to be the only army to acquire a weapon in the semblance of a rocket during the Kiriji war.¹⁰⁸ The psychological effect of guns at a time when their possession was limited to a few groups was equally significant during raids and combats.¹⁰⁹ The Igbomina imposters who had early access to firearms had a tremendous edge over their neighbours and were in most cases the aggressors, playing the role of predator-states on their poorly armed neighbours. The Nupe, for instance, armed with bows and arrows, which were missile weapons of a sort, had an edge over their machete-wielding warrior-preys, who required close combat to display their martial effectiveness.¹¹⁰

The use of horses in the grassland region of Igbomina, by Nupe and Ilorin, who had by now become masters in cavalry fighting forces, also proved decisive in military and raiding engagements. It is notable that most of the expansionist and potentate states of the Igbomina were notable for their large cavalry.¹¹¹ Ajayi and Akintoye noted that cavalry was the backbone of the Oyo army prior to the 19th century. This method of warfare, they added, continued to be important throughout the century among the Fulani of Ilorin as well as among the Nupe. However, at no known major battle did the cavalry contribute significantly to Ibadan war efforts.¹¹²

The blacksmiths worked in close cooperation with the armies, mending damaged spears and swords, replacing exhausted stock of armours, fabricating iron bullets from pieces of waste iron and repairing guns. They played a significant role in the Ekiri-parapo Camp

during the *Kiriji* War.¹¹³ Archaeological investigations confirm that the site of the smithing is still recognisable as it is marked by a large collection of disused forged and stone anvils.¹¹⁴

viii. The Unification of Igbomina People: Hogben and Kirk-Greene had noted that “...the powerful Igbona or Igbomina...it appears, were never a very cohesive unit....”¹¹⁵ They also observed “their numerous leaders”. The nature of their political existence before 1800 was largely one of mutual co-existence and independence. The absence of any spirited effort to unite, and lack of cohesiveness against common foes rendered Igbomina weak and thus susceptible to the foreign incursion and influences of the Nupe, Fulani and Ibadan who took their turns of imperial thrusts on the Igbomina territory. However, the Igbomina, as noted by Afolayan,

*...battered by the Nupe, conquered by the Fulani and continually harassed by the Ibadan, gradually began to submerge their agelong particularism and to unite in more cohesive forms.*¹¹⁶

Several cases of military confederacies, some of which transformed into political unions had earlier, in this discourse, been cited. But much damage seemed to have been done to the extent that the 19th century exigencies did not succeed in totally removing the local particularism of the people due to enlightened self-interest, distrust, envy, petit-jealousy and what have you. No central political system could emerge in spite of efforts by some progressive elements to translate the Ekiti-parapo Confederacy into a cohesive united kingdom, encompassing the whole Igbomina.

ix. Partitioning of Igbominaland: The Igbomina have to suffer the consequences of their past, as Igbomina had been truncated into three unequal sectional entities: the south-western group under the Fulani, with headquarter at Ilorin; the north-eastern sect under the Nupe-Fulani based at Lafiagi; and the south-eastern Ila group, which precariously remained under Ibadan influence.¹¹⁷ Igbomina, like Africa, was partitioned by all the major imperial powers that scrambled for it. Each one eventually had a fair share of its land. Every of their efforts

towards emancipation from these overlords and unification with their brethren in the South yielded no success.¹¹⁸ Perhaps, most appalling of all was the fact that the British who were thought to have come to initiate peace had only succeeded in strengthening their fetters and consolidating the powers and authorities of the overlords of the Igbomina. This was particularly achieved through the Lagardian style of Indirect Rule system in the 20th century, which was rooted in British parsimoniousness and tight-fistedness, among other impetus.

It has been rightly noted that the Igbomina were grouped with the northern people for administrative convenience, and not kept there by conquest.¹¹⁹ Prior to 1945, Oke-Ode and Oro-Ago Districts formed part of the Lafiagi Emirate within the Ilorin Province. The people of these Districts were however, Igbona—a branch of the Yoruba group, while the Emirate of Lafiagi was eventually Nupe.¹²⁰

x. Sectionalisation of Igbomina under British Colonial Rule:

The conquest of Igbomina by her overlords had been consolidated with the setting up of imperial administration under the three local imperial masters as noted earlier. For instance, the local agents, representatives or District Heads assumed different titles in their respective provinces. While the Ibadan agents in the Ila District were called “Ajele” or Baba-kekere,¹²¹ those of the Lafiagi Province in Share, Oke-Ode and Oro-Ago, Igbaja Yoruba Districts were called “Shaaba” or “Maiyaki”. Although traditions from Igbaja maintains that Igbaja was not as much under the influence of the Nupe Maiyaki as the Ilorin Ajia. Their tradition has it that although the Akusu still identified by a distinctive tribal mark in the forehead were the first settlers, they were acculturated by the Elese (later migrants from Oyo) due to their military prowess. The Elese was said to have been particularly invited to ward off the Nupe invaders to the north. The Elese (the one who shut the Nupe invaders to the North) title came as a *trophy* for the achievement of that feat.¹²² The Fulani representatives in the Omu-Isanlu District were known as “Ajia”.¹²³

By 1917 when the Resident of Ilorin, S. Dwyer, observed that the fief-holding system had left some part of the Ilorin Province/Emirate poorly administered and as such the area, due to its proximity to the Nupe region was made to come under the Nupe rule. When the Lafiagi Emirate was created in 1916 under the Nupe Province and control, Oro-Ago and Oke-Ode thus, became parts of its Districts, taking them over from Ilorin.¹²⁴

An important element of the reform was the restructuring of the Ilorin and Nupe provincial administrations, which mandated fief-holders to be resident in their respective districts or fiefs/colonies rather than in the capital or headquarters such as Ilorin and Lafiagi, and only leaving their representatives and agents in the districts to carry on the local administration. This development made the agents—*Ajia*, *Shaaba* or *Ajele* directly responsible for the administration of their estates in the districts of their provinces.¹²⁵

xi. Imperial Endorsement of Traditional Heads: Another aspect of change was the newly introduced role of the Emir in the appointment of the traditional ruler in Igbomina. Malomo¹²⁶ noted, for instance, that any Oloro—ruler of Oro-Ago to be appointed had to receive the approval of the Emir and the British officials. Thus, the Oro-Ago people had to lobby the support of both the Emir and colonial government before their Oba and other traditional political leaders were allowed to administer on their settlement, contrary to what held sway before the British conquest. The Oloro and Baale of Alabe were also said to have received their ranks from Etsu Nupe.¹²⁷ This was the situation in all the provinces. The implication of this menace is that the people have lost their political right to choose their Oba or chiefs. Government has to make approval before the ratification of the people's choice is made. There are cases of the rejection of community's choice, perhaps because of differences in political affiliation or loyalty, and the imposition upon the people of a pro-government candidate. Hence, such hold and retain their "privileged" offices only if they remain loyal to the government as was the case under the British colonial government.¹²⁸ The consequence of

this is that there are repeated cases of Obas going against their own people whose interests they are expected to guide and guard. The other side of it is that the holders of the once exalted royal stools have become mere “stooges” or “good boys” in the hands of tenured politicians.

xii. Bartering of Royalty for Salaries: It could be plausible to say that the recent spate of down-turning of traditional stools, as evident in the Deji of Akure and Ataoja of Osogbo, Otun-Ekiti, is traceable to pre-colonial antecedents, when the deified traditional stool and royalty became de-mystified. The face of tradition was flouted and trampled upon by the Nupe, Fulani, and British to command loyalty. Arbitrary deposition of traditional rulers and enthronement of stooges began as far back as the pre-colonial era, when King Kosoko of Lagos was deposed under some political pretexts and a less intrepid Akintoye was imposed.

The introduction of remuneration for Royal Fathers came as a foreign influence on Igbominaland and Yorubaland in general. Yoruba kings owned all the wealth in their land prior to British rule. People were supposed to have rented the land upon which they occupied and worked. Hence, the need for payment of periodic tributes, among others, to the royal treasury. But the situation changed with the foreign influence from the British imperialists who turned the royal fathers and some ‘high’ chiefs to salaried ‘civil servants’, being remunerated for working for government, rather than being remunerated by the people they ought to serve. Archival documents show the salaries of the Village Heads in 1948/49, thus:

TABLE 4: SOUTH Omu COURT AND COUNCIL; 1948-1949

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Village Area</i>	<i>Populati on</i>	<i>Tax 1948/9</i>	<i>Village Head Salary Pounds/Shillings/Pence</i>
1	Omu-Aran	4398	£ 625	£3/1/6
2	Aran-Orin	1723	£117	£1/10/0
3	Rore	483	£73	£ 9/0
4	Ipetu-Igbomina	145	£25	£ 3/0
5	Oko (?)	1819	£261	£1/10/0
6	Olla (?)	780	£152	£ 18/0
7	Arandun (?)	1184	£163	£1/10/0
	TOTAL=	9532	£1416	

SOURCE: ¹²⁹ NAK ILOR PROF 5163 VOL.I: “IGBONA REORGANISATION”

TABLE 5: NORTH OMU COURT AND COUNCIL;1948-1949

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Village Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Tax 1948/9</i>	<i>Village Head Salary Pounds/Shillings/Pence</i>
1.	Oke-Onigbin	1316	£143	£ 16/0
2	Isanlu	1275	£215	£1/7/0
3	Alla	814	£130	£ 18/0
4	Edidi	1194	£165	£1/1/0
5	Ijara	1613	£289	£2/2/0
6	Odo-Ore	484	£72	£ 12/0
7	Oke-Aba [Villages of the <i>Oniwonate</i>]	1738	£236	£1/8/0
8	Owu	818	£120	£ 18/0
	TOTAL	9252	£1370	

SOURCE: ¹²⁹ NAK ILOR PROF 5163 VOL.I: “IGBONA REORGANISATION”

The rise in Oke-Aba Village Area’s population and tax above Isanlu and Ijara is obviously explainable. The rotational Kingship arrangement was still in operation then. Whereas some accounts maintain that Odo-Ore had ceded, some versions, especially traditions from Iwo maintain that Odo-Ore was never part of the Confederacy. Oke-Aba was given recognition because that was the seat of power for the Villages of the Oniwonate then under the *Oluwo* of Oke-Aba.

V.F Biscoe, the A.D.O. of Oke-Onigbin, reveals the annual salaries of the four (4) Village Areas (V.As.) in Isin and population in 1924 thus:

**TABLE 6: POPULATION AND ANNUAL SALARIES OF THE FOUR (4)
VILLAGE AREAS IN ISIN; 1924**

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Village Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Salary Per Annum</i>	<i>Village Head</i>
1.	Isanlu	2,977	£18	<i>Olusin</i> of Isanlu
2.	Ijara	2,802	£18	<i>Oba</i> of Ijara
3.	Alla	758	£6	<i>Oba</i> Alla
4.	Oke-Aba (Iwo)	1,888	£12	<i>Oluwo</i> of Oke-Aba

SOURCE: ¹³⁰ NAK ILOR PROF 5163 VOL. I: “IGBONA REORGANISATION”

Even though the nature and extent of Oyo’s influence on Igbomina cannot be precisely determined, the intensity of her influence can easily be seen in local traditions. Many Igbomina rulers have continued to claim ancestral connections with Oyo and to receive

insignia of political authority from the Alaafin of Oyo.¹³¹ Archival documents reveal that about 23% of the Igbomina claimed to have migrated from Old Oyo:¹³² Igbaja, Agunjin, Ora, Ikosin, Oke-Ode, Alabe, Ile-Ire District near Oke-Ode, as well as Ajase-Ipo.¹³³

Local traditions widespread in Igbomina will not easily forget the District Head System for its oppressiveness, presence of numerous agents of the District Heads (the Ajele, Ajia, Shaaba or Maiyaki) in the regions, and the hardship it unleashed upon the people. In some villages, not less than twenty agents were reported to be living, preying and parasiting on the people, committing all manners of hideous atrocities. Having noted the ‘sad and melancholy’ state of the Orangun in Ila, Clarke described the Ibadan Ajele he met in 1858 in Ila as being not only the lion, but the tyrant of the place.¹³⁴ From the rich evidence available, a holocaust of not less than 1,000 Ibadan Ajele was said to have been recorded in Ila alone. It is, therefore, not surprising that the reaction against Ibadan Ajele was most pronounced at Ila in the Ekiti-parapo revolt of 1878.¹³⁵

The agglomeration of nine villages today known as Eku-mesan Oro arose because of the displacement of Kanko via the Nupe raids and influence. The displaced inhabitants of Kanko were said to have founded the Eku-mesan Oro. The same is applicable to Ila which emerged out of the ruins of Yara.¹³⁶

The nefarious activities and licentiousness of the Ajia System particularly made the Fulani rule more intolerable and unacceptable, so pervasive and enduring that C.S. Burnet after a tour of parts of Igbomina could declare that the area had been “somewhat unsettled” ever since the Fulani invasion. E.C. Duff, the Resident for Ilorin Province, writing on the Igbomina area in 1912 has left in his report that prior to the advent of British rule, the District Head and his agents “were a terror to the lives of the people. No one was safe from them....They behaved with perfect impunity, causing great misery and discontent among the people”.¹³⁷

xiii. Introduction of New Titles: Traditional royal titles were thrown into the air while Nupe/Fulani and Islamic royal titles such as Shaaba, Etsu (Osu), Kpotun, and Emir were adopted mostly by the key members of the political administrative hierarchy of some Igbomina states. The traditional myth of using crowns was bluffed in some Igbomina states where they trampled down the face of Yoruba tradition. Today, the Muslim turban is the order of the day. Such areas include Ajase-po, Igbaja and Odu-Ore.¹³⁸ For the Igbomina, the Nupe onslaught, the Ibadan raids and Ilorin conquests drastically altered their ways of life, and seriously weakened their sense of security, faith in their survival and confidence in their ability to effect and sustain such survival, in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.¹³⁹

The colonial development via the 1902 Native Court proclamation, which recognised the Emir of Ilorin as the sole authority of the Emirate, down-graded many Igbomina Obas to the second and third class status.¹⁴⁰ Many of the traditional monarchs, even in the 21st century, are preoccupied with jostling for this political grading, which is seen as the yardstick for recognition and economic status. Many of them in a bid to “retaining” or “regaining” their grades have resorted to all sorts of malicious things, to woo the government, even if they have to be at loggerhead with their own people, to achieve this end, at all cost. In the Native Authority Ordinance of 1907, staffs of office were given to the recognised chiefs. Although the Olusin was recognised, he was not given his staff of office until 1914 after the Isanlu District had been amalgamated with the Omu District in 1912 to form the Omu-Isanlu District.¹⁴¹

Consequent upon the 19th century crises, the various District Heads were given the right to collect taxes from their subjects. This came with the 1904 Treasury Proclamation. The old socio-political order in Igbomina was thus altered in that the traditional chiefs no longer headed the political hierarchies of their lands. This had been conceded to the Nupe-Fulani-Ibadan agents and ultimately the Divisional and Provincial Heads.¹⁴²

xiv. Consolidation of Local Imperialism by European Imperialism:

The peace treaties of 1886 and 1893, which declared the independence of the components of the confederacy, initially appeared to have constituted a challenge against local imperialists—Ibadan, Ilorin and Nupe—to the utmost joy of the Igbomina people, in actual sense, had consolidated their powers the more by providing fresh authority under European colonialism. The 1893 treaty arbitrarily ceded Igbomina under divergent foreign or alien powers. In actual sense, it was the establishment of British colonial rule that allowed for the effective consolidation of Nupe local imperialism on the north-eastern section of the Igbomina under the Fulani with their base at Lafiagi; Ibadan local imperialism on the south-eastern section of the Ila under the precarious Ibadan influence and the south-western section under Fulani imperialism with headquarters at Ilorin. Since the British were to administer via the Lugardian style of indirect rule, through intermediaries and especially via the pre-British traditional arrangements, the traditional basis of imperial administration of societies within the Ibadan province, Ilorin and Lafiagi Emirates in the pre-colonial era as typified by the agent and District Head system using the Ajele, Ajia and Maiyaki/Shaabba respectively, was retained by the British only with minor modifications. This was the situation in which the Igbomina had to serve two masters at the same time—the British on the one hand, and one of the local imperialists or the other, as applicable. This has been described by Aboyeji as “an epoch of a connubial imperial ossification between 1897 and 1960 (and even beyond)”.¹⁴³

Throughout the 20th century, and till date, prominent Yoruba people, especially Igbomina monarchs and elder-statesmen, made countless demands to both colonial and post-colonial administrations to be reconstituted into an autonomous Division or Province, directly responsible to the British. A few of them were documented in the archives, but only ended in the trash-can, as not only being unrealistic but impracticable. Some described the agitations as being by a “disgruntled minority of Igbomina”.¹⁴⁴ But the Igbomina, throughout the

colonial and post-colonial epochs, have not relented in demonstrating their repugnance to this ill-fated pattern of political arrangement. The demand for the Igbomina State is an on-going struggle, to which the Igbomina have vowed not to rest on their oars until their age-long request is granted. Igbomina, as it is today, could perhaps, at best, be described as a British “artificial aberration”. And as noted in an archival document,

*The fact is, Ilorin is not entitled to any Igbomina village except by virtue of old wars, and in my view, it is our duty to sort the tribes out and keep them separate.*¹⁴⁵

If the alien colonial authorities could realise this but did nothing to right this wrong, the post-colonial governments by our own people who are expected to have a good sense of history and tradition ought to have realised that it must have been a serious blunder that these people are still in Northern Nigeria.¹⁴⁶

b. Social Influence

i. General Population Re-distribution: In a way, there was a spate of general population re-distribution in Igbomina consequent upon the vicissitudes of the pre-colonial epoch. The consequences varied from place to place and were not only disruptive, but also destructive. Some people were compelled to flee the war-torn areas and theatres of war and to seek asylum in more secure environments, at times among neighbouring communities. Pressure from fleeing refugees, in turn, ignited other migrations from more peaceful host communities away from the theatres of war.¹⁴⁷ The physical dislocation was so enormous that by 1900, no Igbomina village was said to have remained on its original pre-18th century site. There was, indeed, an overall population re-distribution throughout the entire region.

When there was no rationale for resistance, the people chose to embark on protest migration, either on temporary or permanent basis, rather than surrender to their foreign imposters. In a sense, flight in the face of Nupe and Ibadan invasions was a sort of resistance both to their enslavement, and to portray their abhorrence of foreign domination.¹⁴⁸

Whereas the overall population re-distribution of Igbominaland occasioned the founding of new towns, the surviving ones were continuously augmented by migrants and refugees from all over Yorubaland. For instance, Erinmope in the Ekiti country was said to have been established by refugees of war who fled from the Ile-Ire District of Igbomina. There, they struggled to maintain their Igbomina identity but with the spate of time, became culturally assimilated into the Ekiti ethos. Share, too, was founded as early as around 1908 by the former inhabitants of Ahun, a flourishing, large and fortified (walled) settlement in north-eastern Igbomina when it was destroyed early in the 19th century. In their flight from utter destruction, their inhabitants fled to the present site to establish a new settlement in northern Igbomina, on the Igbomina-Nupe borderland.¹⁴⁹

Some Igbomina settlements such as Igbaja and Rore were also said to have been originally peopled from Nupeland.¹⁵⁰ A panorama of population in Yorubaland during the 19th and early 20th centuries will reveal changes in the population re-distribution of its regions.¹⁵¹

Perhaps, the most affected and worst hit by the upheavals of these years was the kingdom of the Orangun of Ila whose headquarters of Iyara (Yara) was completely annihilated and thereafter subjected to incessant harassments. The unfortunate status, opulence and power of the Orangun were reduced by the ravages of time to a state of poverty and penury. Evidence of his palmy days had become more of a myth, and his power of royalty gone into oblivion. Whatever heritage he previously had has been reduced to a mere shadow of itself.¹⁵²

ii. Cultural Intermingling: By virtue of her strategic location as a frontier Yoruba region, Igbomina became a battle-ground between and among the great imperial masters—Oyo, Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin and Ibadan. Being sandwiched among peoples of cultural diversity, she became herself an area of cultural interactions due to her position in the Nigeria middle-belt. The

Igbomina were in no way prepared for the power politics or game of the 19th century by powers whose military, political and diplomatic rivalries were displayed. She obviously was not prepared for the role foisted upon her by virtue of her geographical location during the crises-ridden years of the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁵³

iii. Change in Liquor Taste: One often neglected aspect of discontinuity or change in the foreign influence on the Igbomina people's tradition was the preference of European beer and liquor to the traditional wine such as oti/sekete, emu (palm wine), ogogoro, burukutu—a beer brewed from corn.¹⁵⁴ This came as a Western influence in the Igbomina people. Production of traditional wine, which many Igbomina towns such as Ila were renowned for¹⁵⁵ was somehow affected in the face of the 19th century vicissitudes. Production was difficult, until after the war.

Liquor, over the ages, has been taken by people for different reasons. For some, it is simply to enhance their social status; as being sociable. For some, it is to embolden them to do things they otherwise would not have been bold enough to do. For whatever different reasons the Igbomina took liquor, the new products, perhaps, being simply “western” (oti Oyibo) enjoyed better preference, not knowing or considering the alcoholic content therein, and the repercussions therefrom. It was, perhaps, at this time, that people either began to, or at least, proliferated constituting nuisances to the society, having been reduced to temporary insanity under the influence of alcohol. The high demand of people and the lucrativeness of this trade made people—professed Christians and even church elders—to bluff their religious professions, not only to specialise in selling liquor (wine and beer), but also to secure official licenses and approval to sell it. One of such was Mr./Elder (now Late Pa.) Ezekiel Oladimeji from Ile-Elemure, Iwo.¹⁵⁶

iv. Arts and Cultural Exchanges: Speculations drawing from researches on the Esie soapstone images suggest some form of foreign influence on Igbomina. Hambolu

documented some attempts to date the fragments of terra cotta associated with the Esie images. The dating of two unidentifiable fragments by *thermo luminescence* at Oxford in 1974 presents an exciting approximation of 1100 A.D. date, thus revealing a civilization of great antiquity,¹⁵⁷ if this proves true. Clapperton claimed to have seen stone statues at Old Oyo in the early 19th century, although there are still speculations whether those he saw had anything whatsoever to do with the Esie Soapstone images. However, intensive work in and around Esie by Obayemi seems to prove that the images were carved around Esie. He argued that the Esie people, especially the ‘Oyo stock’, met the objects ‘here’, and supported it with scientific inferences suggesting dates of great antiquity for those objects. These facts incline one towards thinking that the sculptures are the works of indigenous artists who lived in and around this present day Esie area before the present population took form or shape.¹⁵⁸

If speculations of Oyo influence cannot be substantiated, others have been pushed forward. Some are of the view that the images were made and carried to the area by early immigrants from the direction of Ife and not Ife itself.¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile another school of thought suggests Nupe influence that:

*...the images were made by Nupe, the original inhabitants of the area, who fleeing from the area abandoned the images where they were found by the present Esie community....The possibility of the Nupe being the original occupants of the Esie area cannot be ruled out.*¹⁶⁰

The fluidity of Yoruba boundaries in the past especially in the northern frontiers has been noted. We would keep as a working hypothesis the fact that some of the objects also feature some Nupe traits.¹⁶¹ The recently reported discovery of a small head at a farm site in Oko-Odo, the last settlement of the Esie people before they moved to the present site they occupy is quite significant and is, perhaps, a pointer to what to expect. The discovery of the outcrop of the basic raw materials (i.e. Steatite) at Agbonda, (or probably Isanlu), as well as evidence of discovery of similar images only at Ijara and (Owode) Ofaro, all of them being nearby settlements and all Igbomina settlements call for closer look at the immediate

environs for the origin of the images.¹⁶² Obayemi presented a conjecture about Oba, 30 kms away for Esie probably as being the mini-state responsible for the Esie images.¹⁶³

As regards Nupe cultural influence, Hambolu saw the Esie soapstone images as a form of Nupe influence on Igbomina, postulating that the objects are Nupe in origin, made by Nupe, the purported original inhabitants of the area, who fleeing from the area abandoned the images where they were found by the present Esie community. The possibility of the Nupe being the original inhabitants of Esie area, it was argued, cannot be ruled out, considering the fluidity of Yoruba boundaries in the past, especially in the northern frontiers. Some of the objects also feature some Nupe traits. The speculation of foreign artists, or at least foreign inspiration or influence keeps the Nupe option in view, at least, as a working hypothesis.¹⁶⁴

v. Annihilation and Extension of Towns and Villages, and Springing up of New or Refugee Settlements: In Ireseland, by the first half of the 19th century, not less than five settlements were reportedly established, mainly by war refugees i.e. Ofarese, Gogo, Pee, Ogbe, Ikeku and Para-Oyo. But, Gogo, Pee, Ogbe and Ikeku are said to have been broken up by the end of the 19th century. Consequent upon the incessant spate of militarism, the inhabitants therefrom became assimilated into Igbaja. The Elese's territorial influence is said to have extended as far as Oke-Ode in the east and as far as River Osin near Ajase to the South, during the reign of the 16th Elese (Abidolu) of Igbaja.¹⁶⁵ Aiyedun devoted some attention to this, especially as the *Alade War* (1850-1860) occasioned a concentration of villages towards Oke-Ode, dubbed as the 'Ibadan' of the Igbomina during this period. As such, Ora, Agunjin, Alabe, Owa, Oreke, Agbeku, Ofaro, Ikosin, Oke-Oyan, Iji, Ijara, Pamo, Odo-Eku and some more remote places such as Ila, Omu-Aran and Esie, all fled to populate Oke-Ode. Meanwhile, some proportion of people from Iwo, Iji, Ijara, Pamo and other towns

in the Isin District fled to Ogba Irobi, situated between the present day Iwo-Oke Aba and Iwo-Odu Ore, where there was abundant thick grove for defence.¹⁶⁶

The Ibadan raids and attacks became particularly intensified in the 1860s and 1870s throughout Igbominaland. So persistent were these engagements that many deserted their homelands for better fortified and more securely protected settlements. One of the legends vis-à-vis the derivation of the name “Isin” postulated that each Isin village settled in clearly distinct units and maintained its independent identity. The settlers did not intend it to be a permanent one, but looked forward to the time the upheavals that led to this mass migration would be over so they could return to their homelands. Hence, “ibi isinmi” –a place of rest, which later metamorphosed into “Isin”.

During the Ekiti-Parapo/Kiriji War years, the thirty-six villages comprising Isin were said to have again re-settled at Ogba-Irobi voluntarily deserting their respective towns and villages. After the Sixteen Years War, while some re-settled in their original respective towns, others re-settled elsewhere with the people of other towns and villages. Oke-Onigbin experienced an influx of people probably due to its original large population which made it possible for the inhabitants to dig big trenches round the town and fortify it against foreign incursion.¹⁶⁷ The Iji people were said to have initially settled around River Oyi before they migrated probably to their present site during this time. This great population dislocation led to the shrinking of the number of Isin villages from thirty-six to the present eighteen communities.¹⁶⁸

The defeat of the Ekiti-Parapo in the Jalumi War almost spelt doom for Igbomina as Balogun Ajayi Ogbori-efon, the military leader of Ibadan vowed to crush the Ibadan foes once and for all. He, reportedly, subdued Ila, Oro, Omu-Aran, Gogo and Erinmope. Refugees therefrom fled to a more secured town called Ajo, located on the more naturally fortified land of Oro-Ago.¹⁶⁹ Gege claimed that Esinkin Aiyemoro was a warrior who came from Esie into

Isinland. Conjecturally, the Esie refugees could have introduced a new culture of stone carving to Isinland. The presence of stone images at Ijara and (Owode) Ofaro may lend credence to this conjecture, although, local versions insist that the Esie stone images were humans, mostly warriors and very important personages who rather than being captured in war preferred to turn into these objects.¹⁷⁰ Esie refugees could also be found in places such as Iji, Ijara and Oke-Onigbin.¹⁷¹ The Ile-Elesie (compound) at Iwo too might have migrated from Esie.

Gege¹⁷² did much on population migration and re-distribution in Isinland as an aftermath of the 19th century civil wars. Although these should be followed with caution as certain historical fallacies have been noted. For example, the claim arrogating ownership of Akitimo to the Oniwo of Oke-Aba is erroneous. Besides, to say that Akitimo was initially a village which split into the present villages of Oke-Aba, Odo-Ore and Iwo appears to be a mere fabrication, from some quarters to distort the face of history.¹⁷³ This appears, therefore, to be part of such chaffs of embellishments, which should skilfully and professionally be sieved from the “facts of actual historicity”. Akitimo was never a village/town, but a war field where the communities withdrew to for a frontal attack. It was a thick forest where Iwo and Oke-Aba, by Ifa directive withdrew to and fought against the Nupe raiders, using the forest as an obstacle against the fast-footed horses of the Nupe to fight and ward off the Nupe invasion. Akitimo, from the name, means “the place where we jointly fought them”, and is owned by the Iwo community.

The Yoruba wars seem to have proved more of a blessing to some towns such as Isanlu, Oko, Oke-Onigbin, Oro-Ago and Igbaja, in terms of population growth. Oko and Òwù, for instance, are said to be among the new towns that arose out of the exigencies of this period. Oko is said to have comprised refugees from the Ekiti towns of Isan, Apa, Otun, and

Igbomina towns of Ila and Isanlu. The Òwù people are said to have migrated from the Òwu war zone to the present Òwù site during the Òwu War of 1822-1825.¹⁷⁴

vi. *Emergence of Ilorin as a Distinct Cultural Group Independent of Igbomina and the Loss of Igbomina Identity:* Earlier in this study, we have noted how Ilorin, an originally Igbomina village under Oyo had not only lost her Igbomina socio-political character and was assimilated radically into the Fulani culture, but transformed by the revolutionary crises of this era from “an insignificant Igbomina village to the most dominant centre of power in the region”.¹⁷⁵ Until the 19th century Yoruba wars, Ilorin was an Igbomina village under Oyo. Afonja’s revolt and eventual independence of Ilorin under the Fulani Jihadists that established the present Fulani dynasty in Ilorin radically brought a level of change to the socio-political character of the Igbomina region in and around Ilorin. Thus, the dialect, political system and socio-cultural organisation of Ilorin, Idofian, Afon and Iponrin changed in a way remarkably different from the other Igbomina and Yoruba people and have integrated into the Ilorin society socially, economically and politically despite the historical fact that they are Igbomina people, on Igbomina land, who had a tradition of being part of Igbomina in the past.¹⁷⁶ Some of them have embedded in their family *orile*, *oriki* similar to one Igbomina community or the other.¹⁷⁷

vii. *Introduction of Islamic Education:* The introduction of Islam into the Igbomina society brought some level of change. For example, the new religion brought new ideas notably the introduction of Islamic education. The Islamic religion afforded the people the ample opportunity of learning the Arabic language. The Arabic language and Arabic literacy, it should be noted, revolutionised the Igbomina people.¹⁷⁸

viii. *Religious Revival:* The religious revival, which began in the northern part of Nigeria through a Jihad in the 19th century, spawned numerous wars throughout the Western Sudan,

but particularly in Yorubaland. The extension of the Jihad into Yorubaland did not contribute to the collapse of the Oyo Empire in anyway. As noted by Akinjogbin and Ayandele,

*What is clear is that the collapse of the Oyo Empire was not caused by the invasion of the Fulani, who by the time were still a wandering band within the Hausa Kingdoms. The Oyo Empire collapsed eight years before the first Fulani attack on Gobir, the first Hausa Kingdom won by the Jihad of Usman dan Fodio.*¹⁷⁹

The jihad had exerted a stabilising influence in Igbomina as well as the entire Yorubaland. It equally sparked off a chain of reactions, which made the greater part of the 19th century a turbulent period in the history of the Yoruba in general and the Igbomina, in particular.¹⁸⁰ The present turbaning of some Igbomina *Oba* contribute to the process of Islamisation and Fulanisation in the area. For example, in Igbaja, Abidolu, the 16th *Elese* was the first to be turbaned in Ilorin, by Emir Abdulslam.¹⁸¹ This has become a phenomenon ever since.

Under the pretext of settling the fratricidal wars of the 19th century in Yorubaland, the British craftily created a sort of cleavage within the rank and files of the Igbomina and Yoruba by implanting Christianity among them. This made some believe that they came with *the Bible* and *the Plough*. The Christian missionaries penetrated in the course of the settlement of the crises, accompanied by the Holy Bible into the war-torn Yorubaland. Christianity thus became entrenched in Igbomina so that by the early 20th C, Christian Churches such as Christ Apostolic Church, American Baptist Church and the Sudan Interior Mission, with the full backing of the colonial administration were effectively established.¹⁸² Cases of the Missionaries' keen longing of achieving victory for their respective sides—(interests) in the 19th century Yoruba wars were noted. In the Ijaye War, although, the missionaries on both sides of the conflict saw the war as an event in which God had an interest at stake and thus, did all they could to achieve victory for their respective camps in the conflicts. Adefila and Opeola noted:

*David Henderier identified himself with the Ibadan cause, maintaining that "as long as Ilorin stands as a Mohammedan power in this country, it is by no means to be wished that Ibadan's war powers should diminish or the Yoruba country would be overrun with Mohammedanism and Christian Mission be at an end."*¹⁸³

One important bye-product of the introduction of Christianity was the introduction of Western style of education and establishment of schools as against the indigenous or traditional education of the Igbomina people. Paradoxically, the products of these schools established by the British, formed an alliance with their counterparts elsewhere throughout the country to flush out British colonialism on 1st October 1960.

ix. Linguistic Borrowing and Dialectic Influence: Greenberge's classification of African languages revealed that the Yoruba language belongs to the Kwa sub-group of the Niger-Congo family of languages.¹⁸⁴ But in spite of being of the same linguistic stock, the Yoruba evidently have various dialectic variations of which the Igbomina can be distinguished. Although the common historical experiences of wars, oppression, deprivation, persecutions and adaptation which blended the Igbomina people together are still largely here with us, they have bequeathed to us some form of language influence or linguistic borrowing, in terms of loaned words and intonation. The Igbomina, at least, still have a common language to show for it, but there seems to be more variant versions of the Igbomina than ever before, all broadly grouped under two broad linguistic groups. It has been noted earlier that the three 19th century major scramblers for Igbomina eventually, each succeeded in having its own fair share or chunk of Igbominaland. The south-eastern section (Ila) fell into the hands of Ibadan; the south-western Igbomina, under the Ilorin-Fulani while the north-eastern bloc (Oke-Ode, Oro-Ago etc) fell under the Nupe at Lafiagi.

For the sake of clarity, there are two major dialectic variations of the Igbomina dialect; the Moyee and Mosan groups. The Mosan group who predominately lived in the southern¹⁸⁵ (south-western)¹⁸⁶ section and which came under the Fulani rule based at Ilorin in the pre-colonial era included: the Iwo group, Ajase, Igbaja, Isin, Omu-Aran, Eku-Mesan Oro,

Omupo, Idofian and (Ila Orangun) Districts. However, Ila Orangun in the South-Eastern section remains precariously under Ibadan influence. The Moyee group who fell under Lafiagi or Nupe control in the northern¹⁸⁷ (north-eastern¹⁸⁸) section of Igbomina, comprised Oro-Ago, Ile-Ire, Ora, Oko-Olla, Oke-Ode and Agunjin.

The distinct historical experiences of the Igbomina, under their culturally variant imperialists, would not but bequeath its own legacies on them. Hence, even among the Moye group, there are, even if, at least, slight variations among the Oro-Ago, Ile-Ire, Idofin and other tongues. Providing explanations to the dialectic differentiations, even among people of the same geographical region, an oral source provides a rather hypothetical explanation. The source explains that the water you drink (For example, the Osin River in Igbominaland) [among other things such as food, dresses, contact with people of different languages, geographical, social and other factors] affect your tongue, and so explains the dialectic diffusion of a people with the same historical and linguistic background—the Igbomina.¹⁸⁹ While this might appear unscientific, on a cursory outlook, it might, at least, provide a working hypothesis for interested researchers in that area.

In the same vein, among the Mosan group, there are the Mosan and Mohan. An example of the Mosan sect include Iwo, while Arandun provides an example for the Mohan faction. Certain linguistic influences have also been identified in the form of borrowed words, salutations and accent variations from the Igbomina neighbours.

x. Loss of Identity via Personal Names: Apart from language, perhaps, the most distinguishing characteristic of autochthonous peoples and nations, throughout the world, is the system of authentic identification in the choice of personal names, through which citizens from some geographical entities are identified such as English, Yoruba, French and Mongol. With the internationalisation of certain *lingual francas*, (especially English and French) the use of national personal names present, perhaps, the most important index and national

cultural traits of authenticity and identification. The loss of either first or surname, or both, due to blind acceptance and contact with foreign cultures is evident in the great irregularities in names now borne by the Igbomina people, in particular, and Yoruba people in general. The so-called baptismal or religious names, for example, have resulted in culture modification in favour of the foreign overlords.¹⁹⁰ The sections of the Igbomina colonised by the so-called *Mohammedans*—the Nupe and Ilorin—who rode on the back of their Jihadist bid, are today almost predominantly Moslem. The adoption of Muslim names is a common phenomenon. Mostly pathetic is the loss of identity that comes with people whose official names are now, either wholly Islamic, English or Christian, such as Joel Jackson Terry, Wilson Johnson, Michael Jackson, Andrew James, Yusuf Mohammed, William Sunday John, Abraham Templeman, Aliyu Bello and Muhammed Lawal Yusuf.

Before recent times, some, not all Christians, gave one English or Christian name to their children from birth. However, today, there are cases of christening children two or more (sometimes up to four) Christian or purely English names at birth. The current spate of modernisation of names in which traditional (like Yoruba) names are westernised (such as Bayo–Bayour, Kemi–Keming, Adeola–Hardeyolar, Sola–Xholar and Buraimoh–Brimo) portends greater doom for the future of traditional names which may, over time become extinct by the ongoing holocaust of neo-colonisation. A child who has two or more western names can also westernize his/her surname (i.e. if not yet westernised by the parents). This way, many have lost, or are fast losing their *Igbominaness* or *Yorubaness* (i.e. Igbomina or Yoruba identity).

Also worthy of attention here is the Christianisation of traditional names from pagan or Islamic names such as Adeosun–Adewola, Inawole–Oluwole, Abifarin–Abolurin, Ogunbayo–Olubayo, to mention but a few. There seems to be this belief that *Orisa-alloyed* names still fetter such name-bearers with the deities they professed to have renounced. But

what is it that actually makes John Paul or Samuel Johnson more *Christian* than Ogundun Odeleke or Oguntulu Ogunmodede? However, some have laid claims to divine instructions to break away from whatever curses that may be associated with such names.¹⁹¹ Yet, others have specifically retained such names to give a unique message to even a hasty observer; for example, Rev. R. A. Afolayan- Salami, Rev. Amos Ibitoye Mufutau Raheem. After-all, the same thing the dog reacts to by barking, the sheep reacts to with absolute mute. A whole city cannot go to bed putting their pillows or heads in the same direction. What faces a man actually, backs the other. Or does it not sound paradoxical that the Yoruba language and Igbomina dialects are being exterminated by their own very people as they enhance the modern languages of their colonisers and imperial overlords, especially English and Arabic to the utter detriment of theirs?

c. Economic Influence:

All aspects of the Igbomina economy, ranging from agriculture, to industry and commerce, had their fair share of ‘change’ and ‘continuity’ consequent upon the 19th century crises and their pre-19th century antecedents.

Agricultural Sector:

Igbominaland had been described by visiting Europeans in the 19th century as the “*Garden of Eden*”.¹⁹² The constant harassment, pillaging, raids and attacks from the Nupe-Fulani-Ibadan occasioned a state of insecurity which dealt a serious blow on the agricultural sector, though it had survived as the mainstay of the society’s economy.¹⁹³ It has survived as the matrix on which other economic activities were built. Factors responsible for this have been aptly discussed by Ogunremi¹⁹⁴ affirming that some political, social and economic activities were in full force in spite of the wars of this period.

Factors for survival included, among others, the fact that there were no standing armies, as men did not exclusively devote their time to warfare. Besides, not even everybody

went to war; wars were not fought all the times, neither did the campaigns bring farming activities to a standstill. Food crops were even cultivated within the vicinity of their camps. In addition, farmers were adequately protected while wars were raging. However, there were cases of siege-fights in which invaders fought their prey with long sieges resulting into scarcity of food and famine.¹⁹⁵ The *Mugba-mugba War*, is a case in point.

i. Waning of Agriculture and Local Industries: The relative profitability of these new entrants, plus the introduction of new crafts learnt and imported from abroad such as bricklaying, masonry, carpentry, timber industry (i.e. sawying, which was important in many Igbomina areas such as Oke-Aba and Alla) was a turning point. But, however the ‘gains’ these might have brought, the underlying influence of this on the waning of agriculture and local industries, is unfortunately often overlooked. The once prolific agriculture and industrialisation in local produces such as textile were worse hit as these “been-tos” began to import new, (often European model) clothes instead of the traditional/local stuffs such as the once highly revered *Kijipa*.¹⁹⁶ With the introduction of these “imported” stuffs, it later became manifest that the days of the local stuff and industries of the Igbomina are over. Or where are the once respected local stuffs of the Igbomina-Yoruba: the *Kijipa*, *Ewu Etu*? Not even the *aso-ofi* or newer *aso-oke* is well fitting for functions today. Damask and more modern, often European stuffs are the vogue today, or at best, their westernized fabrics. Where *aso-oke* is used at all, they are often the Igbira type and not the Igbomina (Yoruba) model. Aboyaji and Aboyaji had decried this greatly.¹⁹⁷

Between 1930 and 1950, it was revealed that new sets of small scale industries emerged largely as a result of the adoption of new skills elsewhere in the arts of tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying and vehicle repairs. For instance, a man from Iwo was said to have left for Lagos in 1937 to learn modern tailoring, only to return after a year or thereabout already skilled in the art. Tailoring soon became a notable industry in Iwo, where prominent tailors

such as Late Solomon Abioye, popularly known as Baba Ife, and Chief James Aransiola, the Akeweje of Iwo, among others, had made their names. Men from the neighbourhood, such as Pamo and Oke-Aba, went to Iwo to acquire the skill and imported to their hometowns. The developmental pattern of these crafts seemed to be a south-northward movement as these industries were introduced further south to the Ilorin Province reaching places like Iwo, Owu in the south of Isin District before reaching places such as Oba, Iji, Oke-Aba and Odo-Ore.¹⁹⁸

ii. From “*Traditional*” to “*Modernised*” Farming: The adoption of mechanised farming came as a result of Western influence on Igbomina. It was adopted for the good prospect it portends in the short run. But it has been revealed that the adoption of modern methods of agriculture—the use of the gramazone for weeding, fertilizers, tractor-allied implements, among others have not yet revolutionised agriculture in West Africa, in general and Igbomina, in particular. As such, even today, the so-called traditional implements still account for the largest bulk of food production in Nigeria.

Hence, in spite of series of government (federal, state and local government) policies, efforts and huge “investments” in the agricultural sector, these have not yielded profoundly. Aboyeji once noted on this development that: Igbomina farmers depended upon local implements, such as digging sticks, hoes and machetes. It could be argued that the plough was not used in Igbomina because it was unsuitable, or too expensive, or both. The plough is of great use in areas where soils are heavy and land cannot be cleared by fire. These conditions are more typical of Europe than of Africa. Although, technically and apparently superior, the use of it in Igbominaland and most parts of Africa has proved economically unrewarding. It is also very pertinent, to note, at this juncture, that virtually the bulk of the massive expansion of domestic foodstuff and export crops, which occurred during the 20th century, in the West African sub-region, was produced with the aid of traditional tools. To presume that the failure to adopt a more complex agricultural technology was a cause of

under-development in Igbominaland and other parts of the West Africa would be rather unfortunate.¹⁹⁹ Another available evidence also reveals that:

*They pointed to the lack of plough and concluded that local farmers were uninventive, forgetting that there was the component of **Universalist** and **Environmentalist** nature of technology. This is to say that technology has a universal as well as environmental application. In the area of Environmentalism, every technological invention has its dialectic relationship with the environment in which it was invented. Accordingly, American technological inventions such as the aeroplanes, military hardware and software, and hardware computers have a close affinity with the American environment. Mechanical equipments such as tractor or plough were also designed to cope with the environment where it exists. In Igbominaland as elsewhere in Africa, the traditional skills of blacksmithing, soap production, weaving, pottery, among others were essentially responsive to the African environment in which they existed. Therefore, the application and use of high cost technologies in this context in Igbominaland, and Africa at large, has never been known to function well.*²⁰⁰

iii. Introduction of New (Cash) Crops into Igbominaland:

Farmers were reported to have introduced new crops or species into Igbomina during the colonial era. Cocoa itself, which was introduced into Nigeria from Brazil was said to have been tried on the Igbomina soil. This, among other new species of crops such as cocoa-yams, obi gbanja kolanuts (as against the traditional abata), pineapples and cassava were successfully implanted in Igbomina, especially in the more forested areas such as Isanlu, Oponda, Edidi, Pamo, Ala, Igbesi,²⁰¹ and Arandun-Omido. This must have also attracted some European trading companies such as the P.Z.—Peterson Zochonis to Igbomina and other areas within the Ilorin Province, as elsewhere, buying forest products such as groundnuts and Shea-butter nuts.

Concerning colonial cash crop cultivation, relative peace was restored after the 1886 peace treaty. In pursuit of this colonial objectives, the colonial masters encouraged the cultivation of cotton. Igbomina had a good harvest in cotton in early 1911 and English firms bought cotton from them, which brought profitable gains in May, the same year. Consequently, cotton price rose from 1st June, same year, in order to compete with the local markets.²⁰² Expansion in cotton growth encouraged the development of cotton manufacturing

industries throughout Igbomina, to the extent that there was a sort of competition for raw materials (cotton fibre) between the indigenous cloth-weaving and the British Cotton Growers' Association.²⁰³

Important trading routes, which developed included Isanlu-Ijara-Owu-Pamo; Gbogba-Kudu-Odo Eku-Igbaja-Oke Oyan-Oke Ode; Isanlu-Omu Aran-Ipetu-Ora-Iyapa-Ipoti-Otun, among others. Traders going to Ipoti slept at Iyapo (present day Ayetoro). Articles of trade included Shea-butter, tortoise, locust bean, fish and cotton wares. But these roads were said to have been closed down in 1911 for “administrative convenience” and “economic growth”.²⁰⁴

Industrial Sector

In spite of the crises of this epoch, some cash crops had received a boost. There was an expansion in the growth of cotton, for instance. This was accompanied by the development of cotton manufacturing industries all over Igbomina.²⁰⁵ Many 19th century European travellers copiously recorded the considerable amount of woven clothes and dying pots or pits they came across in Igbomina. Use of woven cloth in Igbomina was an amazing antiquity. Clarke confessed he was attracted to 15–20 cotton loads and that at Ila, every third day, 2,000 loads from surrounding countries were brought into town for market. Aboyeji has done much on the pre-colonial economy and Igbomina textile industry, dyeing, and other forms of industries all over Igbomina.²⁰⁶

Available oral tradition particularly noted Oro for its cotton manufacture. It is believed that every Oro born at home or abroad survived (and perhaps to an extent still largely subsists), on cotton work, whether as farmers, business tycoons, weavers, spinners and tailors.²⁰⁷ The popular Jankara Market in Lagos, renowned for clothing materials, was, and is still home of business for Igbomina townsmen and villagers. At Igbaja, the late Pa Olowoniirejuaro was prominent.²⁰⁸ The name, “Olowo-nii-re’ju-aro” itself is pregnant with meanings. Altogether, this conferred unprecedented affluence upon the Igbomina, and

indisputably, it was during this time that the Igbomina became renowned for their ‘Owó ní é jẹ, kè ní jẹ’gbàdò’ philosophy (i.e. all that is required is not beyond the purview of cash, which is in abundance). This provides a juxtaposition of those days when the rich Igbomina business elite believed that “with money, all things are possible”, as against the alleged ‘ke see se’ (i.e. impossibility syndrome) of the later educated elite class.²⁰⁹

Even in the midst of the 19th century crises, weavers experimented with a variety of cotton fabrics. aso oloboro—an indigenous cloth, very coarse in stuff and of pale white colour was initially the commonest. But as buyers at Ilorin, Ekiti, Ibadan and elsewhere as far as Cotonou ceased to give it as a good buy, this became obsolete by the second half of the 19th C and new varieties of stuffs were introduced into the market such as keke, etakete and ijiwosa, kutupu and kijipa, which were all relatively soft and of brighter colours.²¹⁰

Some Nupe who had settled in Igbomina in the course of their conquests had also introduced novel styles of weaving. These new styles copied from the Nupe had been adopted by the Oro weavers, who from about the second half of the 19th century had begun to produce various styles of Nupe wears, such as the epala and eleya-mesan, (kijipa—one with nine different colours), produced principally for markets at Eggan, Pategi, Bida and the neighbourhood.²¹¹

But while the cotton industry had enjoyed not only continuity but a boost, some industries had suffered a drastic decline. The iron-smelting and blacksmithing industries from locally smelted iron ore, probably introduced from Nupe or Oyo prior to the Alade War of 1850-1860,²¹² of which the Ile-Ire region was popular for, was badly affected. Ogun, the venerated and accredited “god of iron”, is according to legends embedded in Yoruba proverbs, said to have had something spectacular to do with Ire. Although, it is said that “Ire ki se Ile Ogun, o lo be lo mu omi ni”, (i.e. Ire is not Ogun’s home, he only went in search of drinking water), it has survived as part of the oriki orile (cognomen) for Ogun himself—(i.e.

Ogun Onire). Reference has been made of the proliferation of this industry, all over Igbomina especially in areas such as Ila, Owa-Onire, Oba-Isin, Oro-Ago, Oke-Ayin, Irabon, Babanla, Oke-Daba, Iwo—where there is even a compound that specialised in blacksmithing, (Oke-Ope Alagbede compound) to mention just a few.

Iron metallurgy has not only brought economic revolution, but also political power into the hands of those who knew and used the Iron as war weapons to subjugate their neighbours.²¹³ Johnson noted the Òrò warriors as having possessed poisoned arrows which enabled them to do more damage to the ranks of their invaders.²¹⁴ Archaeological survey has also discovered rich artefacts to substantiate evidence for a blacksmithing spot in the Ekiti-Parapo War camp, of which the Igbomina membership has been adequately noted.²¹⁵

The above postulations have revealed that in many places in Igbomina, manufacturing continued. Besides hoes, cutlasses and household utensils, the production of articles of wars such as guns, arrows and spears had increased in the face of the 19th century exigencies. Having learnt the art of spear thrusting from the Nupe, the Oro-Ago people had embarked upon a large scale production of it.²¹⁶

Whereas many of those who had contributed immensely to the growth and development of Igbomina economy were maimed, captured or killed in the 19th century crises, the economic development of this era was badly affected.²¹⁷ The iwofa or iwefa (bond or indentured servant) system of slavery was badly affected as it was said to have been abolished after the Yoruba civil wars, which gravely affected the people.²¹⁸

Trade

Nupe merchants patronised Igbomina markets regularly, exchanging articles of trade such as salt, smoked fish, groundnut cake, pots and mats, from Nupeland for cotton cloths, beads and foodstuff from Igbomina. This is despite the fact that the Nupe also had their own cotton industries and styles. If this did not provide sufficient rationale for the superiority of

Igbomina textile materials, it, at least brought diversity of taste and variety into the Nupe society. The Nupe-Igbomina trade reportedly flourished for centuries prior to the advent of European rule.²¹⁹ Owu, Igbaja, Oke-Ora and Otun were important markets then. Igbomina acted as middle-man between the southern areas of Yorubaland and the north-eastern part. Trades from Ibadan, Ekiti and Ijesa passed through Igbomina, while the Otun Market, a very important trading centre with its environs before the 19th century wars, was disrupted by war.²²⁰

Generally speaking, two factors affected trade adversely and greatly reduced its contribution to the development of the economy; viz: the insecurity of roads and trading routes as well as the blockade of trading routes. Hence, trade suffered, although it was not entirely halted. The exigencies of that era of insecurity must have evolved or, at least, strengthened the Alajapa system among the traders. Traders had to move together in large groups, escorted from one market to another by armed men. The Igbomina-Nupe trade flourished for centuries before the advent of European rule²²¹ especially in the frontier states of Nupeland such as Oke-Ode, Alabe, Share, Ora, and also with the Ilorin, Ijesa, and Egba sub-Yoruba groups.

Labour Movement

The colonial policy on taxation and the oppressive tax of the Ilorin rule led to the emigration of Igbomina people *enmass* in the early 20th century to the southern provinces *exported* their services, to ‘sell’ their labour in order to get enough money to meet up with the requirements of colonial tax system. Archival records²²² indicate records of taxation of adult males. There were also cases of imposition of taxes upon women. People moved to the more forested areas such as Ife/Osun/Ondo/Ekiti areas to work as cocoa farmers. In Isinland, for example, one man from Isanlu-Isin called *Oga Agba Bolarin* is reputed to be the first to bell the cat. His success at Mokore in Oyo area encouraged many others. Moreover, the cocoa boom of the

1940s sparked a great influx of a new set of Igbomina into this lucrative business. So successful were these cocoa farmers that many of them gave their various Igbomina communities almost a complete face lift.²²³

There was a paradigm shift in the architectural styles of building houses, from the traditional thatched roofing and mud bricks to the corrugated iron sheets and blocks mode. Most of the ancient types of storey building, as edifices across Igbominaland were erected by these successful cocoa farmers as dividends of their bold step to take the bulls by their horns. Whereas the earlier mentioned *Oga Agba Bolarin* was said to be the first to use a motor vehicle in Isinland. One Ogundele Ayede from Isanlu was also said to be the first to buy a commercial vehicle, plying Isanlu-Ibadan in Oyo state. Other people from Isinland purportedly, had to patronise Isanlu commercial vehicles to travel by this novel means of transportation.

The colonial transport, which saw the construction of more private roads, encouraged transportation with commercial vehicles as an occupation.²²⁴ One major impact of this on the people, which is often easily overlooked, is the effect of the abandonment of food crops to cash crops plantation. However, there is no sufficient indication to ascertain that this resulted into famine or for the short-fall. What, perhaps, would have been affected was a reduction in surplus production, for exchange, as the Igbomina pre-colonial economy was not a subsistence economy, as some puported.²²⁵

New architectural designs were introduced also in the building of Churches and Mosques, inspired by what they saw in their areas of settlement or as *'been-tos'* on their frequent trips. The "*Gbangan Church*" became the architectural model for many; for instance ECWA Church, Iwo. People went as far as Gbangan to copy and import this edifice, which was the vogue then. Oral tradition leaves this preserve—"O ri gagara bii Soosi Gbangan" (meaning, as gargantuan as the Gbongan Church).²²⁶ Many of such churches, today, remain

as historical artefacts. The late Baba Ijo of 1st ECWA, Iwo, Pa Samuel Adeoye's warning, prophecy or curse, prior to his death, that there would be loss of live (s) if anyone attempts to demolish this church--their sweat--for a 'modern' one in future, was recently recalled.²²⁷

One significant aspect of economic discontinuity and change, which emerged from the turbulence of the Ibadan episode in Igbomina—a turbulence, which extended beyond the Igbomina to other parts of Yorubaland, included the new forms of economic experimentations and arrangements that occurred. While the Olusin emerged as the economic leader in Isinland, the ruler of Oke-Ode was accepted as the economic leader over the Oke-Ode, Ora and Ile-Ire Districts.²²⁸

In the final analysis, it is particularly germane to state, at this juncture, that the accounts of the efflorescence of agriculture, manufacture and trade within Igbomina during the crises-ridden years of the pre-colonial era have been aptly documented by many scholars²²⁹ such that further discussion would only amount to sheer repetition, duplication of efforts.

5.5. Traditional Religious System

There have been both discontinuities and continuities in African institutions, both under the colonial as well as pre-colonial epochs of African history. Mazrui has alleged political scientists as having been overtly preoccupied with studying political change that they virtually forgot how to study political continuity just as economists have also similarly been relatively indifferent to the continuities of traditional economic behaviour in Africa. Political scientists and economists seem guiltier of this impaired vision to the realities of continuities of African history than the social anthropologists and historians are.²³⁰

One remarkable thing during this time was that rather than being weakened, the traditional religious system in almost every case was strengthened. The traditional religious system of the Igbomina people had shown remarkable resilience to change and power of

adaptation. In all the territories of the Oniwonate, the Alawoji festival was one important traditional celebration brought by the founder of Iwo. Awoji is a hill of historical significance around which the history of the Iwo people revolves. The Awoji priest, called Aworo, dressed in flowing white, holding a dressed palm frond in his right hand, went once a year at the very height of dry season to the shrine of Awoji to offer sacrifices. On such days, barren women and others in dire need of something specific from Awoji would bring hens and goats for sacrifices. On such days, even at the peak of the harmattan season, a mysterious rain would rain and drain the people as they returned to their homes. It was also customary that out of the sections of bush-land owned by Iwo, which were annually burnt and hunted, the Alawoji bush was the first to be burnt and hunted annually. Those whose prayers were answered would come back the next year to thank Awoji in the same manner.²³¹ Iwo's land was extensive and distinct from those of her Isin neighbours. The Oniwonate reportedly comprised the Iwo town and other villages, which were all settlers on Iwo's land: Obate, now called Oke-Aba, Sabaja, Odo-Eku, Alaro, Wale, Budo Ajia, Elesuwo, Gbogba, Olokin, Odo-Ore, now called Iwo-Odu-Ore, among others.²³²

It is pertinent to mention that the Awoji priesthood is a contemporary of Agba-Isin priesthood of which metamorphosed into Isin kingdom, headed by Isanlu-Isin and Iwo kingdom is headed by the Oniwo of Iwoland. Also notable in the uniqueness of this town from her neighbours is the fact that legends have it that both the Awoji deity of Iwo and Agba-Isin of Isin never see eye-to-eye, trespassing on each other's land. Similar developments could be noted with regard to Olofina at Oro and Agbalu at Ala as well as Epa and Odutan deities and festivals at Oro-Ago. These deities were expected to protect the people from the misfortunes of the crises of those decades.²³³

Foreign Religion—Islamisation and Christianisation

There is no proof that the Igbomina abandoned their traditional religions for the religion(s) of their potentates—i.e. Islam, a foreign religion, during this period. The *Islamisation* and *Christianisation* of Igbomina was a later and gradual development. So, suffice it to say that the conquest of Igbomina by the Nupe and Fulani Jihadists from Lafiagi (Nupe) and Ilorin did not result in the religious conversion of the people into a foreign religion—Islam. Many of the Oba only paid tacit allegiance to the religion of their imposters, only as a ‘game’, since they continued with their pre-Fulani or pre-Jihadist way of life. This would be described as syncretistic, though in Islam, but the jihadists themselves did not care much as they were principally pre-occupied with the economic and political gains of their conquest than in any vigorous conversion to Islam. This reveals to us the concealed and underlying motives of both local and European imperialisms, only under the religious façade.

Igbomina kings such as the Elese and Olupo who accepted the Muslim turban might have just displayed an exercise of political authority rather than a determination to convert them, as there is no other exact evidence to suggest that it was a conversion ceremony. Allegiance to traditional religion remained very strong. For example, a new Oloro was enthroned in the 1860s in place of the previous Oloro, Ayigusi, who adopted Islam in a bid to displeasing the Emir of Ilorin and against the wish of his people. He was deposed, dethroned and exiled, while a new Oloro who was committed to the sustenance of traditional religion was enthroned. Worse still, the pervasive state of insecurity, characteristic of the 19th century, plus the excesses of Ilorin Ajia made matters worse for their Islamisation bid in Igbominaland.²³⁴ The incursion of foreign religions—Islam and Christianity—in most cases, appears to be an early 20th century development. For example, Islam and Christianity came to Iwo in 1910 and 1924 respectively.²³⁵

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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study is predicated upon a historical continuum. It is a study of the past in the present; a study of change and continuity. It attempted to create a connect between inherent paradoxes of the past and present. It assessed the experience of a people who have, over the centuries, been bedevilled by incessant political hegemony. Factors that should have served to them an advantage, their strategic location in a lineal settlement and middle belt between the Northern and Southern fringes of Nigeria, have rather proven to their utter disadvantage. The consequence of this protracted stay under subservience has apparently culminated in the re-cloning of the once *fabled* ‘powerful’¹ Igbomina, whose psyche had been severely traumatised. This perhaps explains why they now seemingly act as cowards in the face of un-seeming challenges.

We undertook a study of the *Foreign Influence on Igbomina* under various distinct imperialists as well as the influence of each, before, briefly during and after the European epoch of territorial annexation. More specifically, an attempt has been made towards the reconstruction of African History. This study, in part, has examined the established order in Igbominaland prior to the incursion of foreign powers, and in part, examined the nature, style and extent of foreign influence on Igbomina land and people. This academic odyssey has, thus, helped to reveal the central role of foreign influence on the land and people, called Igbomina. It also delved into the impact of Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan and Ilorin-Fulani on Igbominaland. But Igbomina, perhaps, got to the peak of her harrowing years in the period between 1897 and 1960 (and even beyond till about 1967²) when she was entangled in-between both the local and foreign imperialists concurrently.³

Basically, this study is divided into six chapters, covering a period of about 150 years (i.e. C. 1750-1900). This was the period when the Igbomina society was plunged into frantic

flux of socio-political-cum-economic instability during the 19th century crisis and from its 18th century antecedents. Then, it very briefly delved into their ripple effects in the 20th century. The periodisation covers the era when the unprecedented tranquillity hitherto enjoyed by the Igbomina since inception was disturbed by a series of military encounters by the Ijesa, Benin and Edo (17th century).⁴ but especially the Oyo dominance and Nupe onslaught (18th century), Ilorin-Fulani conquest and Ibadan raids (19th century) and briefly the British imperialism (20th century) only as a postscript or an epilogue. The ruins caused and the resultant consequences were so pervasive and enduring that more than a century after the Fulani invasion, the area yet remained greatly disconcerted.⁵ Afolayan, on the whole, noted the enormous physical dislocation, which ensued that no Igbomina village, by 1900, was on its pre-18th century site.⁶

Due to the complex and interlocking nature of the periodisations of the different imperial experiences, it is, perhaps, too arduous a task to isolate each of them, especially in the aspect of “change”, unlike the aspects of “continuity”, which was a sort of continuum, and, therefore, somewhat needless re-echoing.

As part of the best practices in the world today, a tripartite dimensional methodological approach, as appropriate for this study, has been adopted. The multi-cum-inter-and-trans-disciplinary approach, therefore, becomes indispensable for a study of this nature and in order to effectively address pressing human problems. In view of this, the researcher embarked upon a careful library search to acquaint himself with relevant studies and scholarly publications in relation to the subject matter. This took the researcher to various libraries, national archives, including internet scan in search of relevant materials—archival materials, colonial files and records, theses, dissertations, books, journals, newspapers, magazines and periodicals, all of which updated the researcher’s knowledge on the subject matter.

Thereafter, the researcher established contacts with key-informants for the collection of useful oral data. For data collection, the researcher utilised in-depth interviews with key informants as well as personal observation methods. All these were corroborated with the writings of scholars on the subject matter. Inferences were drawn based on the data gathered from field-work alongside the findings found in the existing literature. Vis-à-vis the customary problem of authenticity with oral tradition, the researcher has been able to sieve the chaff of mere embellishments from the corn of realism, due to the foreknowledge he had about the subject matter prior to going out on actual field-work.

As part of our findings in this study and an evidence that this research is a product of inter-cum-multi-and trans-disciplinary approach to the study of contemporary history, this study has straddled into other related fields such as archaeology, linguistics, science, geography and statistics, among others; realising that traditional historical sources alone, whether oral or documented, now prove inadequate to provide answers to all that bugs the inquisitive mind of the modern man about his past.

At least, five reasons may be advanced for carrying out a research: one, to confirm knowledge of what is already known or of earlier findings. Findings of this research, for instance, have confirmed earlier findings and researches such as those premised upon the centrality of the imposition of the *political whims* of the successive imperial potentates. But even far more important was their *economic caprices* on the Igbomina. Two, to update knowledge. At this juncture, it may suffice to re-echo the words of Nadel that "*...the furtherance of knowledge carries its own justification. Historical falsifications, racial doctrines, distorted dogmas of social necessities have produced weapons no less deadly than those manufactured in factories and laboratories....*"⁷

This study has been able to debunk some of such distorted dogmas, historical fallacies and patriotic embellishments inherent in Igbomina history. Hence, this study has been advanced if only to cause a ripple in the vast ocean of knowledge. Three, to unveil contradictions of earlier findings. Four, to reveal the contradictions inherent in common

beliefs or opinions. It was once generally accepted that the earth was flat until it was refuted to be spherical; and that popular *prima facie*, hence invalidated. Egypt for long, also remained un-contended as the Cradle of Man's Civilization. Yet, that generally accepted age-long belief later became *paralleled* by that of Mesopotamia.⁸ In the same vein, this study has challenged the apparently popularised *prima facie* of Ife and has supported Obayemi's claim as regards the autochthonous traditions of Oba as against Ife. The researcher has employed a multi-dimensional approach , including some autochthonous evolutionary mythologies in Ìgbómìnà, inferences from Biblical Accounts , reports of archaeological studies in (Òbà-) Ìgbómìnà, as well as historical hypotheses, to divert attention to Ìgbómìnàland as the *likely* actual Cradle of Mankind. Submissions from this research work have attempted a demystification of the popularised Ife legend. Five, to generate new knowledge through novel discoveries or surprise findings.

In this study, the researcher has been able to open our eyes to at least four things about the Igbomina: remind us of some things we know and know that we know; re-call some things we know but do not know that we know; re-examine some things we do not know, yet do not know that we do not know and reflect upon some things we do not know and know that we do not know. These, on specific notes, form the humble contributions of this researcher and his research to the vast ocean of knowledge and humanity at large.

However, on a more general note, it needs to be emphatically declared, at this juncture, that although many historians and non-historians have attempted some work on Igbomina, this researcher has been able to produce a comprehensive groundwork of the Igbomina pre-colonial historical record, especially of the rather distant sacred times, often, jettisoned by researchers, from a historian's perspective.

The findings of this study are significant in a number of ways. Of a truth, one can plausibly say that Igbomina, as it is today, is a product of three significant factors: geography,

history and the character (peaceful disposition) of her people.⁹ Her geographical location which strategically situates her as a lineal settlement in the middle belt as gateway between the North and South,¹⁰ made her particularly vulnerable to series of foreign impostors, attacks, dominations and influences. The historical antecedents-cum-experiences therefrom, particularly the foreign influences from local (Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin and Ibadan) and Western European imperial onslaughts seems to have re-cloned the present generation of Igbomina into a new species of *weaklings* quite different from the pre-domination era *powerful* Igbomina. The character (peaceful disposition) of the people as open-armed, hospitable people made them to receive with open arms folks and foes they should have successfully sternly resisted. But they became victims of the very people upon whom they had showered hospitality and displayed magnanimity. In furtherance, the long protracted stay under subservience and servitude apparently culminate in the third, to speak of the character of its people, today.

Perhaps the most unfortunate thing that can happen to a society is the fallacy of repeated history. This study, indeed, is a study of the past in the present. As such, the recent infiltration of the Bororo-Fulani herdsmen into Igbominaland, from the 1980s or thereabout, till date and the increasing barbaric act on the land of their host-communities should be seen and urgently treated as it is--a serious danger-signal. All the Igbomina Obas and stakeholders should declare a state of emergency on the dastardly acts of this alien sect on their land to forestall a repeated episode of the Fulani colonialism or betterstill, neo-colonialism. The Oro-Ago experience should be seen and treated as a joint-assault on the once 'powerful' Igbomina, if at all we have learnt from our history.

The study systematically x-rays why, for instance, the once acclaimed 'powerful',¹¹ valiant, almost 'impregnable' or *fabled* indomitable Igbomina, said to be grand children of the legendary Orangun of Ila, whose psyche had been badly affected and traumatised now act

as cowards in the face of un-seeming challenges. Or why the Igbomina who once believed in the doctrine of "*owo ni e je*" (that is, with money, all things are possible) later, in the event of history, became notorious for the "*ke see se*" (that is, impossibility) syndrome of the latter educated elite class.

This study has also brought to the fore the economic urge responsible for the incessant invasions and subjugations of Igbomina land and people by such foreign powers such as Oyo, Nupe, Ibadan, Ilorin/Fulani and the British. This becomes particularly germane since Euro-centric writers and theorists often relegate the *concealed* motives such as the economic/mercantilist and political/diplomatic theories, but rather eulogise the *camouflaged* and *confessed* motives such as the psychological or humanitarian theories as well as proselytising mission—that is, the religious drive as the basis for what propelled imperialism, be it western or local. However, afrocentric writers¹² have emphasised the centrality of the economic drive.

The fundamental purpose for the imperial adventure of the diverse Igbomina overlords remains evidently economic. The rationale for and the activities of their various agents—the Ajia, Ajele, Maiyaki and Shaaba, obviously reveal this fact. By obligation, the Igbomina were made to pay tributes periodically to their overlords in terms of agricultural and/or industrial produce. In fact, the yardstick for measuring the effectiveness and loyalty of both the agents to their lords and from the vassalages to the agents was based on the efficiency in tribute collection. It was "a do-or-die affair" because it was programmed to be so, ultimately for optimal economic exploitation. These agents acted as the conduit pipes towards the siphoning of the vassalages. This accounted for their economic survival. No wonder, they rapidly multiplied all over Igbomina and they became idlers, licentious and hanger-ons. Reminiscences of the infamous protracted and traumatic economic exploitation of the Igbomina under these economic parasites will forever remain evergreen.

The devastating consequences of the harrowing historical experience of the Igbomina under the different imperial overlords, even after over a century later, yet remained indelible throughout Igbominaland. The enormous physical dislocation evident by 1900 left no single Igbomina settlement on its pre-18th century site. These could not have been overemphasised in this study, and chapter five has aptly discussed this at length.

This research has been advanced to correct the anomaly of over-flopping the histories of mega-states and societies, and to demonstrate that the so-called mini-states, such as Igbomina, equally deliver prospects of historical documentation like their mega-state counterparts. Besides, albeit increasing academic works are being carried out, especially in recent times on Igbomina, little attention has been paid to intensive pre-colonial studies. Prime emphasis has often been directed towards colonial history, be it political, economic or socio-cultural. Obviously, this is not unconnected with materials accessibility—archival, library, research theses and dissertations. This study has advanced our knowledge on Igbomina history, particularly pre-colonial.

Furthermore, where pre-colonial Igbomina has been treated at all, it has more often been only or mainly as a general historical overview. As such, there was a pressing need for a more comprehensive documentary research on pre-colonial Igbomina. This study, has thus, widened our scope of Igbomina history into those distant times, of which there was a general paucity and rarity of written records and oral evidence fast going into oblivion. To this end, this study postulates that Igbomina is, on its own, an entity. This study has thus contributed to the vast ocean of knowledge in the emerging sub-field of History dubbed as “Igbomina Studies”.

This study is an extrapolation of the interplay of history and the esoteric law of cause and effect on the people called Igbomina. Making reference to the Ilorin-Fulani hegemony on Igbomina, Igbomina delegates in the recent National Confab described the Fulani hegemony

on Igbomina, Ekiti and Ibolu as a misnomer—the same position which was acknowledged and upheld by the imperial overlords (except Luggard) during the various boundary delineation exercises between the North and South from 1893 under Captain R. Bower. Sequel to the misclassification of the Igbomina sub-ethnic group of the Yoruba nation to Northern Nigeria in 1906, the people have ever since been subjected to the status of second class citizens on their own native land. This continued until Luggard sailed through with his Amalgamation bid in 1914.¹³

Various platforms, including the recent National Confab, have since been raised for the purpose of fighting for their liberty and self-governance in a bid to correcting this anomaly. The resultant distortion, infiltration and adulteration of history and cultural anthropology of the Yoruba nation is what must be corrected now. It is the position of the *Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State*, at the recent National Conference that the wagging problems such as the inequalities arising from the lop-sidedness and arbitrariness in state creation, Boko-haram insurgency, kidnapping, herdsmen menaces and minority question are seriously begging for answers.

It is rather unfair and unwholesome that culturally knitted sub-ethnic groups were and remain divided along state and even international borders; a scheme which has hitherto made such apparently unfortunate groups perpetual minority groups subjected to servitude in their states. Among such cases include the Igbomina divided between Kwara and Osun States; Awori divided between Ogun and Lagos States; Nupe divided between Kwara and Niger States; Idoma divided between Benue and Anambra States; Okun divided among Kogi, Ekiti and Ondo States; Ekiti divided between Kwara and Ekiti States; and Ijebu divided between Ogun and Lagos States.¹⁴ What is the rationale for divorcing these groups proven to be kith and kilns? Part of the dilemma of these *schismised* peoples is that of the gradual erosion of their culture and identity. The Igbomina, for instance, have a problem of identity, in the name

of either Kwara or which direction to look when it comes to aspiring for national political offices. They cannot aspire for any position allotted for the Yoruba because they would be regarded as ‘*Northerners*’, neither can they aspire for that which is meant for the North because by then, they would again be treated as Yoruba.¹⁵

It is, indeed, absurd that the larger bulk of the Igbomina land and people who are historically and unanimously agreed to be a part of the Yoruba stock were wrongly ceded and cut off from their kiths and kilns in Western Nigeria in the arbitrary boundary delineation of the British Colonial Administration and politically merged with the Northern Region, since the 1906 micro-amalgamation.¹⁶

However, this sub-section provides a balanced sheet for this study. It portends that foreign influence on Igbomina might have been truly very devastating and destabilising, however, Nwabueze¹⁷ and Areoye,¹⁸ have helped to put our perspective straight. They have helped to provoke a re-think of Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.¹⁹ As such, this study is not one of such instigated by the pangs of one or a combination of patriotism, desire for fame and recognition, or a drive for financial aggrandisement, as conspicuously noticeable in some literature work.

Oyebola has, in his *Black Man's Dilemma*, presented some staggering posers to every nationalist historian. He raised this fundamental conundrum:

*But the strange thing about our race is that other races have, in the past, been similarly enslaved and colonised. But these other races broke the shackles of slavery and domination, reached great heights and in many cases excelled their oppressors in contributions to civilization. But the black man has, for too long, looked for scapegoats for his many problems...It means our salvation as a race depends on our ability to honestly and candidly examine our limitations and weaknesses.*²⁰

Caucasian (white) colonialist countries such as Britain, France and Germany as well as such countries as Denmark, Norway and Sweden, which have no history of colonial exploitation²¹ have all built modern nations. Even many countries and peoples that have suffered similar fate under slavery and colonialism, including America, have broken the jinx of retrogression and have “had a breakthrough to modernity and their peoples attained some

of the highest standards of living in the world”.²² For how long, then, do we continue to justify our relative backwardness by rehearsing Walter Rodney’s refrain, “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”?²³ Considering the *apparent* spate of barbarism, intra- and inter-tribal wars among the Igbomina, Yoruba, Nigerians and Africans, in the past and present,²⁴ one is tempted to fall along with Eurocentric justification for Imperialism. They have argued, among others, that considering the wars, killings, witchcraft, wizardry, slavery, barbarism of killings of twins, human sacrifices, backwardness, among others by now, but for their intervention, the African Continent, housing the black race, very plausibly, would have become extinct. They therefore justify the evils of imperialism with this ‘good’.²⁵

We, after all, might have been our own worst enemies. Or who is to blame, for instance, for the gargantuan evils we perpetrated against ourselves by engaging in chains of inter-tribal wars with the sole aim of getting fellow blacks for sale as slaves to the Europeans in the era of *European-propelled* but *African-impelled* slavery? Quoting that famous Afro-American historian, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, Areoye revealed that:

*...from about 1510 when the first slaves were transported to the New World till the 19th Century, a total of 14, 650, 000 [i.e 14.65m] blacks were taken to America from Africa as slaves. Later estimates put the number of black slaves removed from Africa from the sixteenth century onward at 20 million. Dr. Du Bois also said that Africa lost 100, 000, 000 people as a result of the slave trade.*²⁶

Or what explanation do we have for Walter Rodney’s reference to this estimate of **World Population in Millions**, according to Continents, thus?

TABLE 7: ESTIMATE OF WORLD POPULATION IN MILLIONS ACCORDING TO CONTINENTS

YEAR	1650	1750	1850	1900
AFRICA	100	100	100	120
EUROPE	103	144	274	428
ASIA	257	437	656	857

SOURCE: Rodney, Walter: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (B’ogle-Louverture, 1972:106; See also Aboyeji A. J. & Aboyeji O. S. “From Mercantilism to Imperialism: An Overview of the British Imperial Motives” in JASSO Vol. 4 No. 1 2009, A Journal of the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Kw/St COED, Oro, p. 14).*²⁷

The truth is that the black man, for centuries, had been ruthlessly exploited by the white man, and would like to maintain that statusquo *ad infinitum*.²⁸ Admittedly, our race has always been the underdog in all the crises of man's history. Or can it be true as Aghalino purported, that the black man needs a "spirito-surgical operation?"²⁹ This may be a re-echoing of the advocacy of Areoye, campaigning for 'a revolution of the mind' insisting that "the black people of the world require a revolution...the conquest of the right to think..."³⁰

Perhaps it will suffice to conclude this study on this note, that as a people just struggling to emerge "from centuries of backwardness, [retrogression, slavery] foreign domination and dehumanisation, the concept of African personality is a constructive force for the blacks". It helps us in the reconstruction of the past and in formulating some relevant myths to our future aspirations.³¹ Herein lays the rationale upon which this study is predicated upon a historical continuum.

History became distorted when, following the aftermath of the 19th century inter-tribal wars in Yorubaland, coupled with other factors that led to the collapse of Old Oyo, much of the history and anthropology of the entire Yoruba nation became infiltrated and adulterated. Much of the geo-political classification of the people by the British shared no linguistic, cultural and historical affinity. Worse still is the Fulani hegemony on the Igbomina. But the Igbomina are in no way relenting in their liberation struggles. Hitherto, various platforms have been raised for the purpose of fighting for their liberty and self-determination. Starting from the 1893 various boundary delineation exercises between the North and South under Captain R. Bower up to the 1914 mega Amalgamation, the 1950 revisit of the matter by the Egbe Ibile Yoruba, the resolution of which was forwarded to Sir. John Stuarh Macpherson, the Colonial Governor who pledged to address the lingering issue at the 1951 Legislative Council meeting. The issue was revisited in the 1957 Constitutional Conference in London, where in its pursuant, the Henry Willinck Minority Commission of Enquiry was set up. The

report of the Commission, published on 18th August, 1958 was favourable but had to be suspended to allow for the attainment of Nigeria's independence.³²

The unfortunate '*balkanization*' of the Igbomina people between the North and South in the 1914 Amalgamation that birthed Nigeria, resulting into Igbomina North and Igbomina South, the Igbomina have not rested their oars in search for freedom, liberty, independence and self-determination. This will eventually achieve the long-standing quest for their reunification as kiths and kilns. Recent among the Igbomina liberation struggles include the presentation of the matter before the National Political Conference held in Abuja on 30th March, 2005. There, while the identity crisis and marginalisation of the Igbomina people was emphasised, the Yoruba in the present Kwara State (i.e. Igbomina, Ibolu, and Ekiti) requested a separate state of their own to be known as Oke-Oodua State.³³ As part of the outcome of the recently concluded National Conference submitted to the National Assembly by President Goodluck Jonathan, a hoary proposal for the creation of eighteen more states was made. If eventually implemented, this will turn Nigeria into a 54-state entity.³⁴

Whereas the Igbomina have, at every available opportunity, ceaselessly presented their quest for unification, they have been hitherto unjustly denied.³⁵ However, this study challenges the Igbomina to spew out the bitter pill and venom of the yesteryears, and forge ahead courageously, like their once fabled ancestors, to embrace a glorious future in the embryonic Igbomina State.

This study on the *diplomatic-cum-economic and military history* of the Igbomina does not claim to be exhaustive. Hence, future researchers can embark on the inter-group relations and a *diplomatic study* of foreign influence on other non-Igbomina Yoruba groups. They can also look at the foreign influence on Yoruba-Igbomina during the colonial or post-colonial eras.

In the final analysis, it is plausible to state, at this juncture, that, if anything will get lost, it is definitely not History. If a child does not witness the object of History and does not make conscious efforts to dig deep into it, he will surely become a subject of history. Without History, we have no knowledge of who we are or how we came to be. We become like a people suffering from amnesia, who have lost their memory and are, therefore, blindly groping in the dark, in search of their identity. They are like a blind man wearing a black attire, putting on a dark spectacle in a dark room and looking for a black shoe that is just not there.

History is a record of experience. A people must know their history if they are to begin to understand themselves and the world they are humble inhabitants of. It is by knowing our history that we live within the protective shield of hard-earned experience, which translates into wisdom. Without record, history will be lost. When history is lost, tradition is lost and a society without tradition has no existence. To know one's past is to know one's root. He who does not know the past will not appreciate the present; and if you cannot grasp the meaning of the present, how can you plausibly prepare for the future?

Nothing happens by chance. Everything we are actively conscious of presently can be said to have been in the past already, distinct and complete in itself. But each one should be viewed as a cohesive continuity; as a link in a chain. Whether we are aware of it or not, the chains of events, (that is the experiences of life) are all linked by the underlying *esoteric law of cause and effect*. It, therefore, becomes imperative for man to be consciously aware of and learn from his experiences, if he must make the most of the present and future experiences and realise his full potential. History allows everyone who takes cognizance of it to see right and wrong as well as wisdom and error in retrospect, providing us with the necessary understanding to desire to improve ourselves, to realise our full potentials. It is in the light of this that the words of Commager comes readily to mind that,

For a people to be without History, or to be ignorant of its history, is as for a man to be without memory—condemned forever to make the same discoveries that have been made in the past, invent the same techniques, wrestle with the same problems, commit the same errors, and condemned too to forfeit the rich treasures of recollection....As it is difficult to imagine history without civilization, so it is difficult to imagine civilization without history.³⁶

For whatever reason, if our memory of human group experience, which is history, is lost, forgotten, neglected, ignored, hidden, distorted, twisted or marooned, we lose some of our humanity and culture. Consequently, we hand down to posterity after, at best, a bastardized version of history. Moreover, perhaps, the greatest evil any man or a group of people can do to posterity after them is to hand over to them falsified history. It is therefore, in view of this that this researcher has opted to make an exposé out of the group historical experience of the tribal unit of the Yoruba people called, Igbomina. This is because the present is just an instant. The past is a vast eternity, much more than most of us mortals believe or would like to believe. However, the heat of historical reality is potent enough to melt away the wax of ignorance, which impedes our clear vision of History.³⁷

In the light of the above, it becomes rather imperative to state that the past is but an experience, the present an experiment; and the future an expectation. Wisdom lies in man's ability to convert his experience, whether palatable or exasperating, to achieve desired expectations and thereby fulfil life's purpose. But for the Igbomina, the golden question however remains: "For how long do we *superfluously* over-emphasise how foreign influence has undermined Igbomina?"

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S/N	TITLE	NAME	AGE	PLACE	DATE
1	Late Pa	Silas Abu Aboyeji	*Late	Iwo	Dec, 2003
2	Chief	Solomon Omoniyi Aboyeji	± 71	Iwo	06/03/2011
3	Mr	Cornelius Inawole	± 40	Oro-Ago	13/07/2011
4	Mrs	Aboyeji Elizabeth ‘Bodunde	± 62	Oro-Ago	Jan. 2005
5	Engr	Steve ‘Niyi Aboyeji	± 40	Iwo	2001
6	Mr	Abdulfatai Abdulraheem	± 40	Oro/Ilorin	11/01/2013
7	Rev.	James ‘Layi Olagunju	± 70	Ila-Orangun	June, 2011
8	Chief	‘Lere Balogun	± 50	Iwo	23/02/2012
9	Mr	Mohammed Oladimeji Alabi	± 41	Ilorin/Oro	Oct. 2010
10	Elder	D. O. Adeniyi	± 55	Oro-Ago	Oct., 2012
11	Mr	‘Femi Adewola	± 45	Ilorin	Sept. 2010
12	Hon. Pa	Ibiyeye	± 70	Esie	June, 2012
13	Dr	A.O. Olowonirejuaro	± 55	Igbaja	July, 2012
14	Prince	Abdullateef Ibrahim	± 40	Ajase-Ipo	03/12/2012
15	Mr	Caleb ‘Yinka Oyedepo	± 50	Ijara-Isin	2005
16	Mrs	Aboyeji Adedotun Margret	± 31	Owu	11/05/2011
17	Mr	Rotimi Aremu	± 30	Ila-Orangun	10/10/2010
18	Late Pa	Aaron Odeleke	*Late	Owu	Dec., 2010
19	Dr	K. D. Aiyedun	± 60	Igbaja	18/11/2013
20	Chief	James Aransiola (Akeweje of Iwo)	± 70	Iwo	June, 2012
21	Dr (Now Prof)	Sam Aghalino	± 50	Ilorin	1998
22	HRN	Oba (Engr.) Olufemi Adeniyi Fashade, FNSE, Akeran IV Owa of Igbajoland	± 65	Igbajo	27/09/2010
23	Chief	An Igbajo High Chief	± 70	Igbajo	27/09/2010
24	Mr	Yusuf, S. Danlad	44	Ilorin	04/03/2015
25	Elder	Banji Adunbarin	± 60	Iwo	22/02/2015
26	Elder	P. A. Ajibola	± 65	Omugo	12/02/2012
27	Chief	J.A. Ogundele	± 60	Odo-Eku	04/12/2014
28	Prof.	R. O. Lasisi	*Late	Ilorin	15/03/2011
The personal observations of the researcher over the years are also enthrenched.					

NOTE: * Interview was conducted before the demise of the informants with this sign (*).

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Appendix I

PICTURES SHOWING ÌGBÓMÌNÀ's TRADITIONAL 'OGBO'



Appendix II

NAMES OF IGBOMINA TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN KWARA AND OSUN

1. ABATO-ORO	43. AMORI	85. EKUDAJI
2. ABAYAN	44. ATORI	86. ELERINJARE
3. ADANLA	45. AJIBOWO	87. ESINNIYI
4. ADELAKUN	46. AYEJA	88. EGUDU
5. ADIO	47. APA-OJA	89. ELEYIN
6. ADEBU	48. AROWO	90. ERI-ALAJI
7. AAFIN ILE-IRE	49. AWORO	91. ELEYELE
8. AAFIN-ORO	50. AROBAYE	92. ESIE
9. ADIGUN	51. AMODU ASUNGBOLU	93. GANMO
10. AGBAMU	52. ARANDUN	94. GBAGEDE
11. AGBELE	53. ASUNGBOLU	95. IDERA
12. AGBELE	54. ASEPADE	96. IBARE
13. AGBONDA	55. ASUNGBALE	97. IDOFIN
14. AJENGBE	56. ARAN-ORIN	98. IDOBA-ARAROMI
15. AGBEKU	57. ARUGBO	99. IDIGBA
16. AGBE-OLA ORO	58. AROLA	100. IDOFIAN
17. AGUNJIN	59. ARAN-ORIN	101. IDO-ORO
18. AGO PANLE	60. ARUGBO	102. IPETU
19. AJASE-IPO	61. AROLA	103. IGBAJA
20. AJEGUNLE	62. ALASO-DUDU	104. IGBESI
21. AJIA	63. BABANLOMO	105. IGBERI
22. AJOKO	64. BABANLA	106. IGBO-ELEMI
23. AJILETE	65. BADA	107. IGBONLA
24. ARAROMI-IPO	66. BALOGUN-OJA	108. IGBO-OWU
25. ARAROMI	67. BALOGUN-ETIOYI	109. IGBO-ELU
26. AYEKALE	68. BASANYAN	110. IGBO-AGBON
27. AHUN	69. BASANYAN-ILE	111. IJAN
28. ALABE	70. BANKOLE	112. IJARA-ISIN
29. ALABE-OJA	71. BUDO-ESU	113. IJI-ISIN
30. ALADE	72. BOFAJE	114. IJOMU-ORO
31. ALAKA	73. BAYERO	115. IKOSIN
32. ATANDA	74. BODE-ORO	116. ILALA
33. ALAKUKO	75. BAREE	117. ILUDUN-ORO
34. AIREKE-ORA	76. BUARI	118. ILUPEJU
35. ALEGONGO	77. BUDO-ARE	119. IRABON
36. ALLA	78. BUDO-IDOWU	120. IRAPA
37. ATIRAN	79. BOLORUNDURO	121. ISANLU-ISIN
38. ALASORO	80. DUROSOTO	122. ITA-OLOWO
39. ALOMILAYA	81. DESENI	123. IWO
40. AMOYO	82. EDIDI	124. IWO-ODO-ORE
41. AMODU	83. EBAMIYO	125. ISHOLA
42. APATA KAJOLA	84. EGII-IPO	126. KABBA DOGARI

127. KABBA-KAJOLA	164. OMI-ARO	201. OREKE-OKE-IGBO
128. KAJOLA	165. OMU-ARAN	202. ORO
129. KABBA-OWODE	166. OMIDO	203. OKEOLA-ORO
130. KAJOLA-ISIN	167. ONILA-OKE	204. ORO-AGO
131. KERE AJE	168. OYATE	205. OWA KAJOLA
132. KAOJI	169. OLOTU	206. OWA ONIRE
133. KOKO	170. ODE-OLUGBO	207. OWODE OFARO
134. KUDU-OWODE	171. OLUFAYO	208. OWU-ISIN
135. LABAJU	172. ORUA	209. OYATEDO
136. LAKANLA	173. OLOMIDE	210. OLOMODA
137. LABAKA	174. OLOTU	211. OKEYA-AGBAMU
138. LABAKA-IDERA	175. OWODUNNI	212. PAMO
139. MAGBON	176. OWOYALE	213. PATAKO
140. MANANSARA	177. ONILA	214. PIDAN
141. MALOKO	178. OKE-OFA	215. RORA
142. MEMUDU	179. OJOMU	216. SABAJA
143. MOSUDO	180. OKUTA-OKE	217. SANMORA
144. OBA	181. OLOKIN	218. SAGBE
145. OBIN	182. ONIGBONGBO	219. SHARE
146. ODO-EKU	183. OLOGOMO	220. SIE-ORO
147. ODO-ORE	184. OLAYEMI	221. SULU
148. OFARESE	185. OLOWONIJERE	222. WANDE
149. OKE-ABA	186. OGBERE	223. WERE
150. OKE-AYO	187. ODUNADE	224. YARU
151. OKE-ODE	188. OLAOKUN	225. DEFONU
152. OKE-DABA	189. ONIJO	226. JAGBORI
153. OKE-ONIGBIN	190. OROKI-OJA	227. AGO FEMU ADELAKUN
154. OKE-OYAN	191. OBADARE	228. ELEGA
155. OKE-OYI	192. OGBA	229. AGIDIRIGBI
156. OKERIMI-ORO	193. OBALOYAN	230. GAA-OKANLA
157. OKEYA-IPO	194. OMUGO	231. FALOKUN-OJA
158. OKO	195. OMUPO	232. JIMBA-OJA
159. OKO-ODE	196. OPONDA	233. APADO
160. OLAYINKA	197. ORA	234. OLORUNJARE
161. OLLA	198. ORE	235. OJA-KISHI
162. OLOKE	199. OJA KISHIN	
163. OLORUNSOGO ORO	200. OREKE	

IGBOMINA TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN OSUN STATE

236.ILA-ORANGUN	238.OKE-ILA
237.ORA-IGBOMINA	239.AJABA

Source: Afolayan, J. A. *101 Facts About Igbomina*, Femyom Prints, 2014, pp.30-33.

(Please, note that while there are duplications on the list, the names of some towns believed to be Igbomina do not appear; e.g. Agbeyangi, Iponrin, Ilota, Jebba, Bayagan, Fufu, Afon, Ogbondoroko, Shao, Olomi-Oja, Okanle-fajeromi, among others, some of which have been tagged as "Igbomina in Diaspora".)

Appendix III

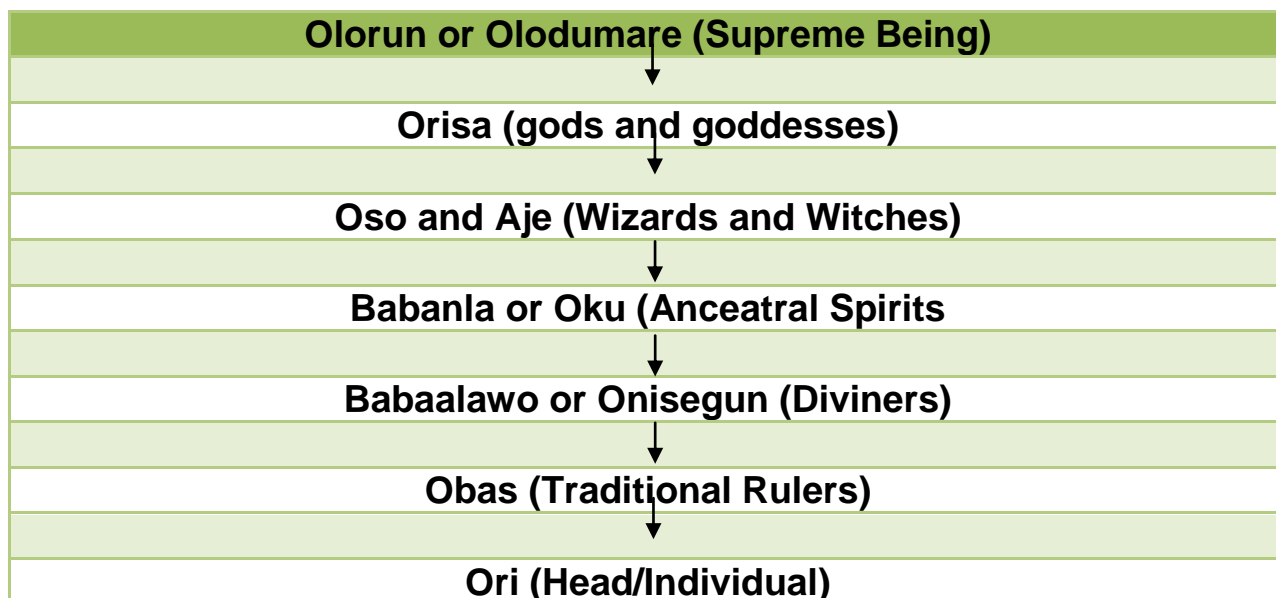
MAJOR CHIEFTAINCY TITLES IN PRE-COLONIAL IGBOMINALAND

<i>S/N</i>	<i>TITLE</i>	<i>SEX</i>	<i>OFFICE/FUNCTION</i>	<i>DESIGNATION</i>
1	Baale	Male	Prime Minister	Political
2	Asanlu	Male	Head of Administration	Political
3	Asipa	Male	Chief of Staff of Hunters	Political/Military
4	Eesinkin/Agba-Akin	Male	War Lord/Prime Minister	Political/Military
5	Alapinni	Male	Ritual (Egungun Deity)	Religious
6	Akogun	Male	War-lord/Minister	Military
7	Aro	Male	Palace Chief Administrator	Political
8	Apena/Ajapanna	Male	Ritual (PRO of the Ogboni Society 3 rd in rank to the Oba)	Religious
9	Eesa	Male	Ritual	Religious
10	Erelu/Elu	Female	Ritual (in Charge of Egungun Deity)	Religious
11	Balogun	Both	Military Lord	Religious
12	Elemoso/Olori-Eso	Both	Military Lord (Commander of the guards)	Military
13	Eejala/Onijala	Male	Hunter Lord	Military
14	Onigemo/Olongemo	Male	Ritual (Custodian of the Ogbo)	Religious
15	Oluwo	Male	Ritual	Religious
16	Babamogba	Male	Ritual (Head of Sango Deity)	Religious
17	Olu-Ode/Balode	Male	Ritual (Chief-head of the hunters)	Religious
18	Obamogun	Male	Ritual	Religious
19	Aworo	Male	Ritual (Ifa Chief Priest)	Religious
20	Iyalode/Yeye Oba	Female	Head of the Women-folk Council	Political
21	Iyaloja/Iyalaje	Female	Economic Affairs	Economic
22	Iya Ewe	Female	Admin/Ritual (in charge of young unmarried adult ladies)	Political/Religious
23	Odofa	Male	Administration	Political
24	Akoda/Agbopa	Both	Escorts	Military
Minor or less conventional Chieftaincy titles among the Igbomina included Alaagba (in charge of the Egungun deity), Mogaji, Gboyero, Gbedako, Olori-Ewe, among others, mostly adapted from their respective places of emigration.				

SOURCE: Asonibare, A. T., "A History of Chieftaincy Institutions in Pre-colonial Igbominaland", Oct., 2000 See Appendix III pp. 167-168.

Appendix IV

THE INFLUENCE OF 'ORI' ON THE LIFE ATTAINMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL AS ELUCIDATED IN THE HIERARCHICAL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE



SOURCE: Afolabi, F. *Igbomina in the Context of Yoruba History...* p. 41.

Appendix V

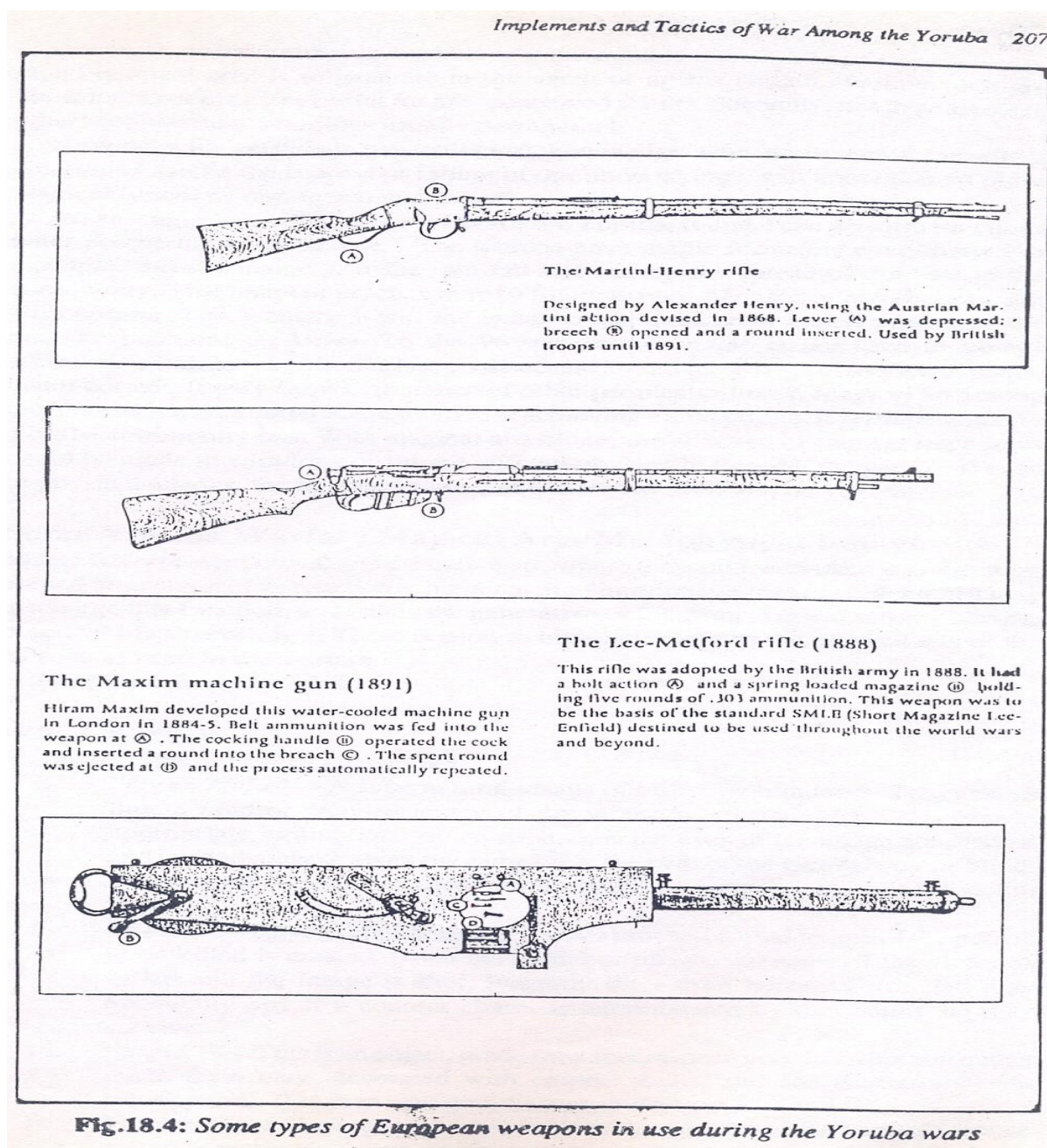
THE GENELOGICAL TREE OF MUAZU YISSA, ETSU PATIGI, COMPILED IN 1900

S/N	NAMES	S/N	NAMES
1.	Tsoede, about 1500	12.	AbubakarKolo
2.	Tsoacha	13.	Jibrilu
3.	Zagunla	14.	Zubeiru
4.	Gebba	15.	Illiasu I
5.	Mohammed Wari	16.	Iliasu II
6.	Abdalla	17.	Jimada
7.	Aliu	18.	Idrisu I
8.	SachiGanaomache	19.	Muazu
9.	Ibrahim	20.	Idrisu Gana II
10.	Idrisu	21.	MuazuYissa (Etsu at Pategi, 1900)
11.	Abdullahi (EtsuTsado)		

SOURCE: NAK SOK Prof S.2840

Appendix VI

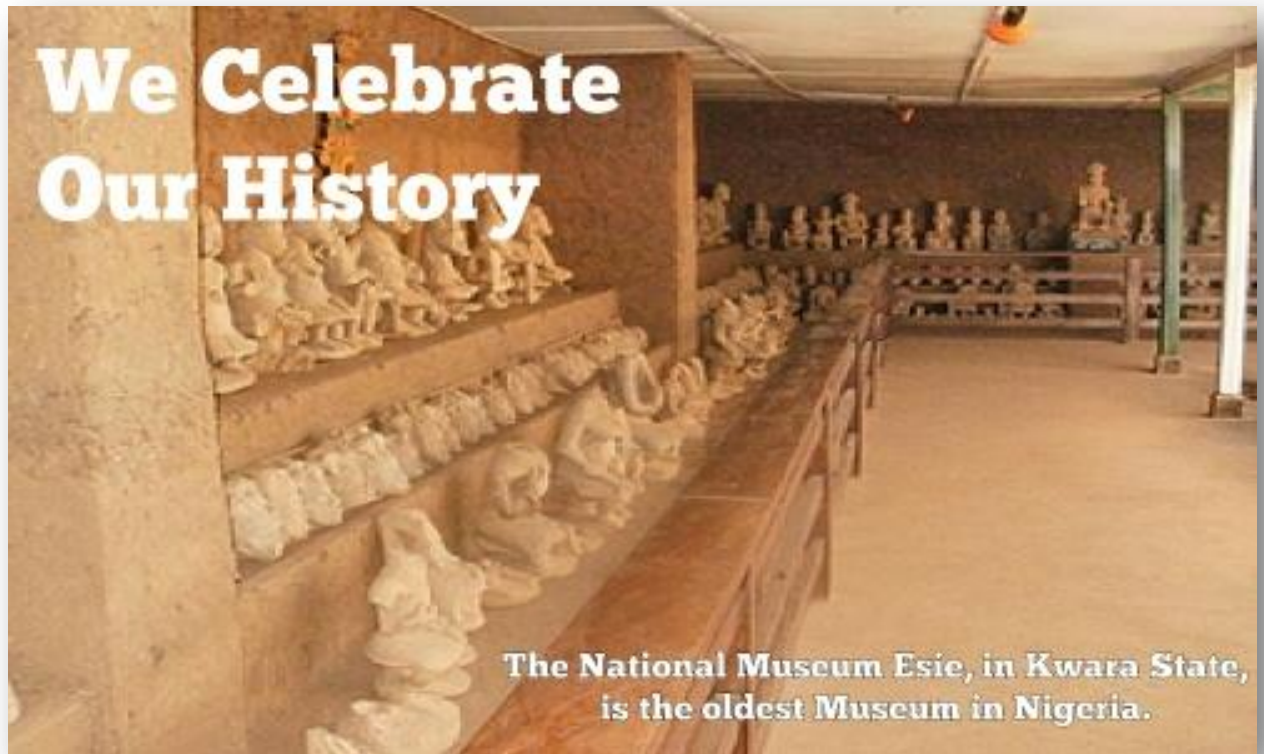
A FIGURE SHOWING SOME TYPES OF EUROPEAN FIREARMS USED DURING THE 19TH CENTURY YORUBA CIVIL WARS



SOURCE: O. Olutoye and J.A Olapade "Implements and Tactics of War among the Yoruba" in I. A. Akinjogbin (Ed.), *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793—1893...* 1998, p. 207.

Appendix VII

A PICTURE OF ESIE STONE IMAGES



SOURCE: www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/esie-stone-images-in-igbomina/
Esie Stone Images in Igbomina - Vanguard News