

# OONI AND ALAAFIN / SUPREMACY CONTEST: THE TRADITION OF KINGDOM FOUNDERS IN YORUBALAND

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## OVERVIEW

Between *AD 1400 and 1570s*, there was regional instability due to hemispherical ecological crisis and continental political turbulence; a period of intense dry conditions characterized by recurrent multiyear droughts; collapse of regional economy, external aggression by Nupe militarists; many prominent Yoruba Polities collapsed autonomy and embarked on its own expansion northward. Early stages of Atlantic commercial exchanges began in the Bight of Benin with the arrival of Portuguese trades in 1472 soon followed by the Dutch and English (Professor Akinwumi Ogundiran 2020) in the book "The Yoruba: A New History"

### **1.0. POLITICAL FRICTIONS BETWEEN NUPE AND YORUBA KINGDOMS**

**Yet, political frictions characterized the relationship of these peoples in the frontier areas.** Aribidesi Usman has identified two broad periods in the development of these frictions. **First, in the early history of Igbomina and Nupe settlements**, only small, local frictions commonly occurred - minor frictions over land, water and other resources between neighboring villages or village groups.

Probably a similar situation existed between early Bariba and Oyo settlements to the west. Usman then identifies a period, starting from about the thirteenth century and continuing until about the seventeenth century, when a reverse migration of Yoruba people from the southern forests to the northern grasslands took place. This migration increased Yoruba populations in northern Yorubaland in general and in particular in the Oyo and Igbomina countries. As the numbers of the Yoruba increased, their non-Yoruba neighbors felt threatened. Settlements that had been originally wholly or partly Nupe became predominantly Yoruba and the Nupe, in order to hold or regain position, fought back. Again, almost certainly, similar

developments were taking place between the Oyo Yoruba and the Bariba further to the west

**(a) How Ila Kingdom was displaced by Nupe Militarists.**

It is significant that this period of increased frictions was the period of the founding of kingdoms in Yorubaland. As Yoruba kingdoms arose in the Niger area, they faced stiff opposition by the Nupe or Bariba. The history of **Owu**, **Ketu**, and **Ila** illustrates the experiences of the earliest Yoruba kingdoms close to the Niger. *Owu finally flourished in the country roughly west of Ife; but there is evidence that its first location was further to the north, in the Ogboro area, and that it was pushed south from there by the Bariba.* The Ketu kingdom first took a position in the territory to the west of the hills where Oyo-Ile was later founded. Bariba opposition forced it to give up that location and migrate to the south, where it finally settled down. And the *Orangun's kingdom of Ila was forced to move from location to location for a long time. At last, in about the fourteenth century, Ila chose a good location and embarked upon building for its defense a very formidable wall system.*

*Ila's city walls became famous in Yorubaland and Ila itself became proudly known as Ila-Yara (Ila of the great walls).* Protected behind its famous walls, Ila settled down and prospered; the glory of the Orangun finally shone forth.

**(b) Nupe Invaded Ekiti Country and Trans regional Alliances:**

Even then the Nupe never ceased harassing Ila and other Igbomina towns. In **about the fifteenth century, the various Nupe groups became united into one centralized kingdom under Edegi (or Tsoede).** With that, their aggression became better led and better directed, mainly towards the seizure of channels of trade. From Igbomina, the Nupe broke into south in the fifteenth century into **Ijesa, northern Ekiti and Akoko and even threatened Ilesa.** Ilesa traditions count at least two Nupe invasions of Ijesa, against both of which the Ilesa forces were victorious. *At the same hold time, Ife sent armies during the reign of Ooni Luwo Gbagida as earlier related, to Ara in Ekiti to join with the Ekiti in repelling the Nupe. This situation continued until the sixteenth century. Ooni Luwo Gbagida was the mother of Adekola Tolu, the ancestor of the founder of Iwo, called Olumade Parin, and the mother of Lagelu who married the son of Obalufe or Orunto at Degelu's Compound, Oke-Eso in Ile-Ife in fifteenth century.* Adekola

Tolu was succeeded by his son, **Adeyemi**, later by **Oganfemumodi Aderonmu** and his son **Jikanmu**, the father of **Olumade Parin**.

One very important consequence of the Nupe and Bariba hostility was that the Yoruba lost some of their foothold on the southern banks of the Middle Niger. In the area to the west of the country where Oyo-Ile was later to be founded, the Bariba, pushed Oyo and Ketu settlers down southwards. Further east, the Yoruba who had lived in the Jebba-Mokwa area were absorbed by the Nupe. The **Gbedegi** of that area are now mostly Nupe in culture, but they were probably originally Yoruba. Bishop Ajayi Crowther reported witnessing some rituals of the Gbedegi on the Niger in the late nineteenth century, rituals being conducted in the Yoruba language, and noted that the persons conducting the rituals did not understand the language that they were using.

From the seventeenth century, a new development gave a fresh impetus and purpose to Nupe aggression. The Atlantic slave trade was growing on the coast of West Africa. From then on, Nupe incursions into the territories of their neighbors (the **Gbagyi** in the country north of the Niger Valley, and the Yoruba south of it) increasingly took on the character of slave raids - what some historians have described as "smash and grab operations, with little consideration for long-term exploitation" commercial or political.

### **(c) Igbomina Kingdom Split into Ila and Oke-Ila:**

*During the late sixteenth century, however, Oyo-Ile emerged as a very powerful kingdom in the Oyo country. Its military power soon penetrated into the Igbomina country, a demise that began the process which was later to establish Oyo-Ile's overlordship over much of the Nupe territory south of the Niger. For the Ila and other Igbomina kingdoms, there followed two centuries of comparative peace, shielded by Oyo-Ile's power. Nupe incursions did not completely stop, but they became fewer and less effective. But then, two centuries later, by the second half of the eighteenth century, Oyo-Ile's power began to wane. This opened the door to a new intensity of Nupe aggression. Three of the Nupe kings of the mid to late eighteenth century, the Etsu Jibrilu (1744-59), Majiya I (1769-80), and Mu'azu (1780-95), are particularly notable for their violent raids. Many Igbomina towns - Isanlu, Oba, Oke-Aba, Oke-Ode, Oro-Ago, and even Ila - were either forced to evacuate or were reduced to tributaries by the Jibrilu raids. Weakened by internal dissension, the people lost the will to fight, and their great city fell to the enemy, their king, the Orangun Arutu, dying in the process. After*

*evacuating lo Yara, la people split into two, one continuing to bear the name Ila, the other taking the name Oke-Ila, both kings retaining the Orangun title.* Not surprisingly, the two only became more vulnerable to Nupe aggression. The raids under **Majiya I** were even more devastating. **Majiya's cavalry forces galloped on whirlwind raids throughout the Igbomina country, sacking and burning towns and villages and capturing men, women and children for sale.** The flourishing town of **Igbole** in the **Olusin's kingdom, Odo-Eku, Oro**, as well as many villages in the **Ibolo area (near Offa)** fell to **Majiya's attacks.** So also did **Gbagede, the royal town of the Olupos kingdom.** The **Olupo Dalla II** died **fighting at the head of his people, a fate shared by some other Igbomina kings.** To the east of Igbomina, the territories of the **Iyagba, Abunu, Ikiri, Owe, Gbede and Oworo**, lacking centralized kingdoms, became easy raiding ground for the Nupe. In fits and bursts, the Nupe activities extended into **Akoko and northern Ekiti.** The Nupe made a habit of stationing resident officials in ravaged towns, but, according to traditions in the affected places, the presence of such an official did not shield any town from being raided again and again. **As the eighteenth century drew to a close, then, the kingdoms, towns and villages of much of the Igbomina and the Okun Yoruba reeled under the Nupe scourge.**

#### **(d) Formation of New Yoruba Kingdoms:**

It says much for the strength and resilience of the Yoruba kingdoms and towns in these places that nearly all survived. ***Kingdoms smashed in their original homes took their kings, political systems and religious properties, and struck root in other locations. Even the smallest of towns did the same. Usually, such groups sought sites that held out particular advantages (especially hilly places) where they would be better able to defend themselves.*** Also, trade survived. Yoruba traders and their Nupe counterparts (both mostly women) kept trade flowing, albeit with interruptions and in the midst of grave hazards.

The period of **1570s and 1650** was a renewal and regeneration marked by rebuilding of old kingdoms and foundation of new ones, political landscape was transformed by **warrior kings and militaristic** states such as **Ilesa, Oyo and Benin.**

## i. **Rebuilding of New Oyo Kingdom:**

The Nupe militarists invaded and sacked Oyo, laying waste the core of the kingdom (1530-1542). The displaced Oyo population set up new homes in **Saki, Kisi, Igbeti**, and **Igboho**, as well as in **Ibariba country**. A section of the **Oyo Royal House** managed to keep the idea of the kingdom alive by relocating the seat of power to **Igboho**, where **four Alaafins** (kings of Oyo) ruled in the **sixteenth century**. Tasting the sweetness of victory in the north, the Nupe militarists penetrated deep into **Igbomina, Ekiti**, and **Ibollo**-all in Ife centric areas. Massive abandonment of towns and villages preceded and followed those attacks.

## ii. **State Builders and the Rise of Ilesa:**

Oyo and Benin established themselves as **the two dominant powers in the Yoruba world** in the aftermath of the Nupe militarist crisis, but their stories do not tell us everything about the regional political reorganization that took place between **1570 and 1650**, according to Professor Akinwumi Ogundiran (2020).

They were not the only ones seeking to fill the lingering vacuum that the collapse of Ife Empire had created in the central Yoruba region composed mostly of Ekiti in the east, Upper Osun in the west, and southern Igbomina in the north. The state of military activities and political maneuvering that took place in this area between **1570 and 1590** was the most important and dramatic development on the political landscape of the Yoruba region during the **Restoration period**.

The power politics associated with these events led to the creation of **new kingdom, Ilesa**, in the **1580s**, just twenty kilometres northeast of Ile-Ife. Over a period of three decades (1580 - 1610), this **young** kingdom in redrawing the political geography of the central Yoruba region.

After the death of **Owa Obewad**, Owa Obaluse is credited with completing the decade long spate of conquests, making Ilesa the seat of government of a new Ilesa kingdom, and creating political institutions that integrated all the conquered territories under Ilesa's control. All of this took place shortly after Oyo had driven the Nupe to the other side of the Niger River and established **Oyo-Ile** as their capital and it probably overlapped with the last years of **Abipa's reign** and the early years of Obalokun's rule in Oyo (1599-1600).

## 2.0. ORANMIYAN AND OBALUFON ALAYEMORE:

According to Ife oral and written traditional history, **Obalufon Ogbogbodirin** was not the first Ooni of Ife as claimed by the late His Imperial Majesty, Ikubabayeye. The Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi; II (Thursday Tribune, February 14, 2009). It was *Obalufon Ogbogbodirin who succeeded Oduduwa* (page 635 of IFE: the sources of Yoruba Civilization, 2009) and Chief (Dr.) M.O. Fabunmi who says *Obalufon Ogbodirin and Osangangan Obamakin* are the same person. "IFE: The Genesis of the Yoruba Race, 1985.

According to the historical charter that explains *the dynastic relationship between Benin and Ile-Ife*, there was a period of political turmoil in Benin during which leaders of several House polities could not agree on a leader. They sent a delegation to the king of Ile-Ife to ask him to send a prince to Benin to rule them. **Oranmiyan** was the prince selected for the task. **Oranmiyan** married a daughter of one of the leaders of the Great House of Benin, who bore him a son called **Eweka**. After some time, the warlike and restless **Oranmiyan** was tired of ruling over a people whose language he did not understand. *He also preferred the adventures of military life to the slow-paced arts of governance*. So he left **Eweka** and His wife in the care of his father-in-law and decreed that **Eweka** should serve as the king of Benin once he was of age (Professor Akmwumi Ogundiran (2020).

It is true that his son **Obalufon Alayemore** succeeded his father, and when **Oranmiyan** heard of it, he left Oyo Ile with **Dada Ajuwon** and drove away **Obalufon Alayemore** from the throne of Ile-Ife and ran to *found Efon Alaye* as a refuge. Alaafin claimed that the story was absurd, that it is not clear that Efon Alaye had been in existence even before Ile-Ife to have accommodated a runaway Ooni of Ife, the deposed Obalufon Alayemore.

But according to professor I. Akinjogbin, it was during the period that Ooni Obalufon Alayemore was driven out by Oranmiyan, his uncle, from the throne of Ile-Ife that he lived around the present day **Iddo Osun** between **Ede** and **Osogbo**, followed by a large number of people in Ife *and later migrated to the Ekiti country where he stayed at Ilara and from where he went back to Ife to succeed Oranmiyan as the 5th Ooni of Ile-Ife in the fourteenth century*.

Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Ooni of Ife (1930-1980), also confirmed that, the *Obalufon Alayemore of Efon* was one of the direct sons of Oduduwa who was installed of three separate ceremonies viz as the 3rd Ooni of Ife, two, who migrated and founded Efon Alaaye and installed as the fifth (5th) Ooni of Ife. They and their descendants have thus retained the right to wear "Ade-Ileke" beaded crown.

According to Babalola, *Obalufon Alayemore* (who succeeded Oranmiyan after his return from *Efon Alaaye* was *the first Ooni that brought effective government to Ile-Ife, more importantly, he carried out administrative re-organization which* followed the victory over Ugbo people new in Okitipupa whose king is *Akinruntan*.

## 2.1. ENCOUNTER BETWEEN IFE AND OWU:

Like many other Yoruba polities during the classical period, Owu was within Ife ritual field. Its patron deity, *Alugbua*, was (and still is) an avatar of Obatala (Professor Akinwumi, Ogundiran, 2020). However, emboldened by its *wealth, military strength, and strategic commercial location*, Owu began to undermine the commercial and political interests of Ife, militarily and ideologically. With its invasion of Ife's spheres of influence as far as *Igbomina*, Owu declared open war on the political and economic interest of Ife. The Owu leaders did not stop there. They also began to make strong ideological claims that theirs was the first kingdom in the Yoruba world's *ebi fraternity*. Hence the saying *Owu l'akoda: "Owu is the oldest kingdom"*. This primus inter pares ideology directly challenged the apical status of Ife in the Yoruba community of practice.

Whatever the motivations for Owu's expansionist program, the *outcome of the struggle between the frontier kingdom and Ile-Ife* proved that Obalufe Alayemore (Obalufe II) reclaimed lost territories and established new Ife colonies in *Igbomina* with military vigor, expansionist drive and political sagacity. *Igbomina was previously under Owu's influence*. There was overall peace and prosperity across the land, and his name became synonymous with wealth, innovation, security, and stability across the region.

Owu's expansionist agenda, hegemonic ambitions, and military forays into *Igbomina* posed a serious threat to the northern thrust of Ife's commercial empire. Containing this threat was the centerpiece of *Obalufon Alayemore's* political agenda when he ascended the throne of Ife during the *mid-fourteenth century*.

Also known as **Obalufon II** in the historiography, he is reputed to have pursued vigorous military campaigns and political diplomacy in order to reinstate Ife's influence and control of commercial networks along the northern axis. Obalufon Alayemore resuscitated the expansionist programme that his earlier predecessors had put in place during the *twelfth and thirteenth centuries*

Those efforts had already built the **Ife Empire** by bringing **Owu, Owo** and **Ede**, as well as most of the **Ekiti and Igbomina** territories, to the sphere of Ile-Ife's influence. By the time Obalufon Alayemore came to power, most of the northern frontiers of the empire were under **Owu**.

In order to turn the tide, the king focused his attention on the **Igbomina area**. This was necessary to halt the advance of Owu into Ile-Ife itself.

## **2.2. RESTORATION OF ILE-IFE ANCIENT STATUS:**

By the **1620s**, Ile-Ife had lost its far-flung and nearby territories to the new powers, **Ilesa, Benin, Oyo** and **Ijebu-Ode**. Its recovery was slower compared to the other polities mentioned above. Without the military wherewithal to challenge the intruders, all Ife could do was focus on sorting out its own internal political problems. Ile-Ife experienced a delayed recovery, but it was not left out of the political rejuvenation that began in the last quarter of the seventh century. Its time of rebirth eventually came during the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

**Lajamisan** was the king of Ile-Ife who managed to secure the full recovery of the ancient city. He is remembered in the oral traditions as the **founder of Post-Classical Ife dynasty**. It was, Lajamisan who facilitated the growth of population and urban expansion. One of his accomplishments was the rebuilding of some of the outer walls of the city, which had fallen into disrepair during the Intermediate period. **Lajodogun** and L, who reigned in turn after him, may have actually completed the walls.

However, **Luwo Gbagida, the 18th Ooni of Ife and the first female king in Ile-Ife**, was linked with the draining of many avines in Ile-Ife and with the paving of the major thoroughfares of the city with posherds. According to Professor Akinwumi Ogundiran (2020), the popular association of Luwo Gbagida with potsherd pavement in Ile-Ife traditions has no historical credibility.



Ogundiran went further, by the time Lajamisan took over the reins of power in Ile-Ife three aspects of material life that defined classical period, *porsherd pavement*, *naturalistic terracotta* and *copper-alloy sculptures*, and *glass production*, had *ceased*. Luwo Gbagida also reigned when Ife was involved in the Ara war.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of Ooni Luwo Gbagida who married High Chief **Obaloran**, she gave birth to the grandmother of **Lagelu**, the founder of Ibadan. The mother of Lagelu got married to the son of **Orunto** or **Obalufe** at **Degelu** compound, **Oke- Eso** in Ile Ife. She was also the mother of **Adekola Tolu**, the ancestor of the first Oluwo, Olumade Parin. Adekola Tolu who gave birth to three sons, and the last son gave birth to **Parin** who did not get to Iwo before he died but was buried in Iwo when it was founded by his son, **Olumide Parin** who built the first palace in Iwo.

#### **4.0. EMERGENCE OF IBADAN EMPIRE IN THE 10TH CENTURY:**

The fall of Old Oyo Empire, arising from the combination of internal constitutional debates, power tussles and conflicts, and the rise of militant Islam in Ilorin played significant roles in the emergence of **Ibadan Empire**. However, the **republican nature of Ibadan civil and military population** also partly explains why it quickly and effortlessly succeeded Oyo Empire as the military headquarters of the Yorubaland in the nineteenth century.

From the northern part of Yorubaland, the **Oyo Emirate of Ilorin** was much stronger, more persistent, and more successful. **Ilorin had developed into a predominantly Islamic Yoruba kingdom**, and most of troops and commanders were of Yoruba (mostly Oyo) stock, with a strong complement of **Hausa and Fulani commanders** and troops, essentially the army which **Afonja** had created for Ilorin, though with additions and modifications overtime. (Professor S. Adebajji Akintoye, 2010).

Ilorin forces pushed southwards until they come to the **Osun Valley** and even harassed towns and villages as far as Ife kingdom. About **1835**, the populations of **Ife towns of Ikire, Gbongan** and the **Origbo villages** were forced to flee into of Ile-Ife. In the last years of the **1830s** it looked as if nothing could stop the Ilorin from pushing all the way to the coast to **dip the Koran in the sea**". The fate of the new towns, **Ibadan, Ijaiye, Oyo and Abeokuta**, as well as of the old kingdoms south of them in the **Awori and Ijebu** countries seemed to hang in the balance.

In **1840**, however, the tide suddenly turned, according to Prof. S. A. Akintoye (2010). Ibadan had started to confront the Ilorin forces by **1838**. At Osogbo in **1840**, the Ibadan army led by Balogun Oderinlo, met formidable Ilorin forces and routed them very decisively, destroying their dready calvary, killing or capturing most of their horses, and capturing many of the Ilorin commanders.

There upon, Ibadan forces pushed north-wards, dislodging Ilorin forces and pushing them all the way beyond Offa, to only a short distance from Ilorin itself. **Ibadan decided not to make any attempt on the narrow territory between Offa and Ilorin** because it was too firmly controlled by the Ilorin calvary. The boundary of Ilorin's domain came to stabilize at this line.

**Ibadan thus saved the consolidation of the new towns and cities in the middle belt of Yorubaland.** People who had been forced by the **Ilorin threat** to flee their towns in these places returned. The inhabitants of the Ife towns of **Ikire, Gbongan, and Origbo villages** returned home from Ile-Ife.

One of the most important consequences of the Ibadan victories over Ilorin at Osogbo and beyond Osogbo was the **emergence of an Ibadan Empire**. For the towns of Osun valley and those north of Offa acceptance of Ibadan's protection occurred as a matter of course. They had joined hands with the Ibadan forces in dislodging those of Ilorin, and they needed Ibadan's protection against their return. As a result of the influence of a native of Ikire, **Ajobo, who had become a prominent chief in Ibadan as Balogun**. Ikire willingly accepted Ibadan's protection. Employing the well-tried system of provincial administration of the **dissolved Oyo Empired. Ibadan placed Ajele in all these towns and villages to watch over their security**, to receive tributes for Ibadan, and to prod the local rulers to send troops and other types of help to Ibadan whenever such was needed.

#### i. **Aftermath of the Fall of old Oyo Empire:**

The Fulani and Owu wars that caused the disintegration and collapsed of the old Oyo Empire. The wars generated a process of disintegration in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century and the proved to be the precursors of the Oyo Empire and kingdom destroyed the pre-existing system of order and security in Yorubaland and created a situation whereby all centres of power, old and new, had to scramble to establish new systems and patterns that would guarantee order and security. Those efforts created conflicts and wars, which the Yoruba people were not able to

put an end to, until European powers intervened and imposed their own system of order, security and peace.

## ii. **Transfer of Old Oyo Capital to Ago'Oja:**

Once the collapse of old Oyo Empire was complete, a Prince of Oyo by the name **Atiba** decided to re-settle the new capital of Oyo on the present site then named **Ago-Ojo** renamed **Ago'eleyo** and later Oyo. He gathered people from neighbouring settlements to populate the **new capital**. He was an astute leader, conscious of the traditions of his fathers. He built a palace based on the old models and kept the ceremonies of the king's court.

Alaafin Afonja reached out to the new warlord of Ibadan called **Oluyole** and made him the **Basorun**. The charismatic leader of Ijaye, Kurumi, he made him the **generalissimo**, the **Aare-ona-kakanfo**. **They had instruction to defend the territory of the dying kingdom**. The Chiefs were grateful for the honour and recognition, but they were **quasi-independent** because of their military capabilities.

It was clear that **in place of one monolithic and influential kingdom, there were several in its stead**. Though Ijaye quickly emerged as a military power, Ibadan soon overtook her to become the most dominant of the three, *Oyo became Cultural headquarters and a rallying point for all the fragmented bits of a once formidable" empire* (Professor Dele Layiwola, 2015).

## iii. **The Ekitiparapo War of Resistance:**

After the defeat of Ilorin army at Osogbo in 1840 by Ibadan army led by Balogun Oderinlo, one of the underlying causes of the Ekitiparapo or kiriji war was the internal strife among the different Ekiti groups which led one group to invite the Ibadans to come to their aid while the other group invited the Ilorins to come to their aid.

Thus, the **Ekiti country** became the battle ground for many years with the Ibadan's supporting one group and the Ilorins the other (Kemi Morgan).

The Ibadan troops formed the expedition so successful that they intensified their raids into the Ekiti country for more slaves. The result was that, by the time **Obadoke Lafosisa became the Aare Ona-kakanfo of Ibadan**, the greater part of the **Ekiti, Akoko, and Ijesa** country had come under the rule of Ibadan. It seemed

at that time as if Ibadan was developing from an ordinary "**State**" into an Empire like the old Oyo Empire.

However, according to Kemi Morgan, this dream of an *Ibadan Empire never became a reality because the Ibadans were warriors and not statesmen*. From time to time, history has proved that to conquer a territory is one thing but to administer the conquered territory so that its inhabitants would be content to remain under subject demands great tact, great administrative experience and statesmanship on the part of the conquerors.

Unfortunately, Ibadan failed to produce at time, men who had these qualities. And this was the root cause of the disaffection felt in those areas conquered by the Ibadans and the reason why nearly all the tributary towns of Ibadan joined the **Ekitiparapo coalition** against Ibadan in **1879**.

The motive which drove the Ekitiparapo to declare war on Ibadan was a very strong one indeed, according to Kemi Morgan, it was the motive which acted as the strong unifying force among them. This motive was the desire to be free, to regain their independence from Ibadan and to take back from Ibadan, the lands and possession which belonged to their ancestors.

At the same time, Aare Latosisa's regime also serves to illustrate the peculiarity of the character of the average Ibadan person who cannot and will not tolerate any form of dictatorship. The circumstances by which the Ibadan people settled and lived in Ibadan made the idea of **dictatorship** or **autocracy** vary distasteful to them. Aare Latosisa fell out with his chiefs because he was inclined to be a dictator. **His chief revolted against him and refused to fight to win any battles for him at Kiriji, because of his dictatorial attitude towards them.** And the Ibadan people have not changed in this important respect over almost e century even now, Ibadan people still resist with all their might, any appearance of **dictatorship** of **autocracy** or any measures which appear to them to be arbitrary.

## 5.2. THE FACTS OF HISTORY

If we take a quick look at the history of the world, we shall find that **it is a record of continual process of change**. It is a record of the Great Empires and civilizations which have lasted for a time and then passed away. **Egypt, Greece and Rome** are examples of these great civilizations that have passed away as a result of wars and conquest by stronger and sometimes less civilized tribes and nations. *That Yoruba country came under foreign or colonial rule in 1893, was inevitable. It was part of this continual process of change that had to come about to ensure progress after 100 years of internal strife and civil wars.*

What happened in the Yoruba country at the turn of the 19th century must serve as a warning and lessons for the future. *In 1840, under the command and leadership of his war commander, Balogun Oderinlo, the advance of Ilorins ambition was halted on the outskirts of Osogbo. The Ilorin army was thoroughly beaten. The victory put to rest the threat of the jihadist agenda in the Yoruba world. With this, Basorun Oluyole (1835-1850), achieved what had eluded Alaafin Oluewu and five other Alaafins before him.* This military, according to Professor Akinwumi Ogundiran (2020), was **the most consequential event in Yoruba history during the nineteenth century**.

Reverend Samuel Johnson (1921) said; *if not for Olunloyo and his military superstars, many beaded crown kings and potentates of Yoruba kingdoms would have since been replaced by turban-wearing emirs"* Ibadan's victory over Ilorin saved the House of Oduduwa. The victory was not only over Ilorin. It was also a defeat of its patron, the **Gwandu Emirate** and of the **Sokoto Caliphate** as a whole.

The fall of the Old Oyo Empire, arising from the combination of **internal constitutional debacles, power tussles and conflicts, and the rise of militant Islam in Ilorin** played significant roles in the emergence of Ibadan as a dominant State in Yorubaland. Also, the *republican nature of Ibadan Civil and military population partly explains why it quickly and effortlessly succeeded Oyo as the military headquarters of the Yoruba Empire in the nineteenth century and the headquarters of Yoruba Provinces in the twentieth century with the seat of Colonial Government at Agodi since 1893.*

With the creation of states in Yorubaland from 1967, Oba of Lagos became Paramount Ruler of Lagos Council of Obas and Chiefs, while in Ogun State, there existed four Paramount Rulers namely; **Alake** of Abeokuta, Paramount of

Egbaland, **Awujele**, the Paramount Ruler of Ijebuland, **Akarigbo**, the Paramount of ruler of Remoland and the **Oba of Ilaro**, Paramount Ruler of Yelwaland.

In Osun and Oyo which constituted Oyo Province from 1914 but split into five Divisions in 1934 headed by five Paramount Rulers: **Alaafin of Oyo**, **Olubadan of Ibadan**, **Ooni of Ife**, **Owa Obokun of Ijesaland** and the **Orangun of Ila** now has **Alaafin Olubadan** and **Soun** is paramount rulers of Oyo, Ibadanland and Ogbomosoland while Ooni of Ife is the Paramount Ruler of Ile Ife and Osun state.