

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF YORUBALAND
AND THE ORIGIN OF WEARING BEADED
CROWN IN YORUBALAND

By: Ambassador ESV. Tomori Moshood Adijolola anivs, rsv, mnim

Email: lolatomori1@gmail.com

Website: www.macosconsultancy.com

The archeological field survey by Omotoso Eluyemi reveals that thirteen of the aborigine communities. They were the earliest known units of groups based on **Idile** (family units) in Ife environment. *Traditional history says that the unification of these thirteen (13) communities into one central administration of Ile-Ife was effected by Oduduwa.* Each of their heads was called **Oba** (king) who was a **priest-king** as he performed the dual role of a priest and a king.

The thirteen (13) communities **resettled** in Ile-Ife and formed the **five original and traditional quarters** of **Moore, Ilode, Ireemo, Okerewe and Ilare**. At the end of the **civil war at Ile-Ife** with Obataja, Oduduwa invited the kings of these old settlements to move with their people to the new locations that he had chosen for them (Professor S.A. Akintoye, 2010).

The massive movement of people began, each group to its predetermined location around the centre of the **new city**. The old settlements, as well as the new one that had spring during the **wars**, were abandoned. In all directions around Oduduwa's location, the new city of Ile-Ife slowly emerged.

As this proceeded, Oduduwa embarked on two important tasks, provision of security for the **new city** and elaboration of **the city's new system of government**. Just as the city was forming, attacks on it began from **Igbo-Igbo**. Oduduwa therefore mobilized the citizens of the new city for the building of a **protective wall round the city**. And, as he and his people worked on **building Ile-Ife' first city wall**, he established the details of the new city government.

THE THIRTEEN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES OF ILE -IFE

S/NO	Name of Community	Head of Community
1.	Iddo	Onipetu
2.	Iloromu	Obaluru
3.	Idita	Obalesun/Obalale
4.	Iloran	Obaloran
5.	Odin	Lakore
6.	Oke-Oja	Obajio
7.	Imojubi	Apata
8.	Iraye	Obalaye
9.	Ijugbe	Obalegugbe
10.	Oke-Awo	Owa Fagun
11.	Iwinrin	Obawinrin
12.	Parakin	Obalufe
13.	Omologun	Obadio

Sources: (a) Omotoso Eluyomi, "This is Ile – Ife", 1986, P. 17.

(b) Oba Adesoji Aderemi: "50 Years in the History of Ile-Ife, 1980 pp. 21-22

1.0 THE NEW YORUBA GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM:

The "Oduduwa Constitution" as it emerged, took the following form. **Ile-Ife had only one king**, and that was **Oduduwa** himself, whose family became the royal family and (in the well-known **tradition of kingship** in the Ife baol) would provide the kings in succession forever. **The city thus became one single kingdom** under one king, and not an alliance, confederation, or federation of kingdoms.

Each of the pre-Oduduwa settlements had used to hold the **ARE**, the sacred symbol of royalty. These were now surrendered to Oduduwa so that only Oduduwa as king of Ile-Ife could hold the **Are** with the **Are** in his possession, the king of Ile-Ife became the legitimate leader of every single one of the old settlements and their lineages, and any of the old settlements and third lineages, and nay claims to ultimate leadership by their former kings were thus terminated.

The city was then delineated into quarters, each quarter under a **quarter chief**. The former kings, as found appropriate, were appointed **quarter chiefs** in their quarters, and other significant citizens were appointed quarter chief in other sections of the city. Below the level of the quarter chiefs, other chieftaincies were instituted in every quarter.

Like Maryan and early dynastic Egyptian cities, Yoruba cities evolved in a stable political environment created by immigrants headed by Oduduwa. **The new comers**

established in the 11th Century (1086-1150) the most indigenous political systems ever found in pre-industrial societies. Classical Yoruba government system was not only hierarchical but also representatively democratic by any pre-industrial society standard.

The system of government differs from one community to another. It also varies in structures from leadership to the governed. When Oduduwa got to Ile-Ife, he met thirteen (13) Aborigines communities which he compressed to five (5) e.g. **Iremo, Moore, Ilode, Ilare and Okerewe**. Within each quarter there are compounds. Within each compound, there are family lineages. Land belongs to family lineages. To own land in Ife, one must belong to a family.

Information has it that scared kingship belonged to the Yoruba Aborigines. Apparently, the kingship institution was elaborately or highly developed among the **Oduduwa group**, the new comers who ruled Yorubaland between **1086** and **1150AD**. The higher status of their institutions coupled with the elevated socio-political plan on which the newcomers (Oduduwa group) were placed by the aborigines as a result of the former superior culture, higher intelligence and greater military powers almost certainly aided the rise of Yoruba cities: on account of the charismatic personality of the new kings, and the great palaces become pole of attraction for the inhabitants of the neighboring aboriginal villages and hamlets.

2.0 ORGANIZATION OF YORUBA KINGDOMS

Before the crisis of the nineteenth century, there was usually only one Oba or BAALE in a town. The functions performed by an OBA and Baale were similar in each kingdom. The OBA was not at an absolute ruler. It is true that as the executive head of the government to exercised considerable powers, particularly over the common people.

In any event the powers of the Obas were checked many ways. An Oba did not rule his town or kingdom alone. He did so together with a **Council** known as **Igbimo**. In some places the Igbimo had specific names. They were called the **Oyomesi in Oyo**, the **Ilamuren in Ijebu-Ode**, the **Ogboni of Egba towns**, the **Iwarefa in Ife**, **Ijesa, Ekiti and Ondo towns** and Olubadan-in-Council in Ibadan.

Administratively and judicially, each town was divided into a number of ards or quarters known generally, **as adugbo** but which may have specific names. At the head of Adugbo was an Ijoye (chief) or **olori itun** in some areas. An adugbo was made of a number of agbo-ile (compounds). Each compound is headed by a **Bale** or **olori ebi** (head of the compound or head of the family that is the extended family). While the Ijoye had a specific title and his appointment must be confirmed of approval by the **Oba**, that of the Bale was an informal title not requiring the approval of the Oba.

Before the Yoruba Civil War of (1723 – 1893) there were 26 kings, but today, there are several hundred ‘Kings’ or Obas in Yorubaland who wear beaded crowns and claim descent of Oduduwa and of Oduduwa. The increased number of Obas has resulted from the granting to some town chiefs who were **Baales** or **Olojas** the right to wear beaded crowns since the onset of the 19th century civil wars

There were categories of Obas or head of a town before the civil wars in the old Oyo Empire because of the population, size and spatial extent of the Empire. There were also several large towns and an innumerable number of rural communities. Each major town was headed by a **High Chief** (kinglet) whose **socio-political status** was higher than that of an **ordinary Baale who ruled small town, village or hamlet.**

Notable among the **Oyo kinglets**, according to Oluremi I. Obateru (2003), were the **Onikoyi of Ikoyi**, the **Olofa of Ofa**, the **Okere of Saki**; the **Akirun of Ikirun**, the **Onibode of Igboho**, the **Onjo of Okeho**, the **Olugbon of Igbon** and **Aresa of Iresa**, all of whom were responsible to the Alaafin as **they were not kings.**

3.0 THE EFFECT OF CIVIL WARS:

The civil wars of the ninetieth century produce a far reaching and **lasting modification** of the traditional governmental structure outlined above that structure was one in which a town had **a single head chief called an Oba (or a Baale in the case of uncrowned head), assisted by a council of state.** During the crisis period of the nineteenth century, however, it happened that the entire people of some towns were forced to seek refuge in another **town with greater** security, and in doing so, they **transported intact** their machinery of government to the **host town.**

*The head chief of the host town was recognized as the overall leader of the head chiefs and he was therefore Chairman or President of the federation council. For example, Oke-Iho. The worst of these anomalies was the situation in which the **head chief of the town** was an uncrowned head while some of the head chiefs of the **guest towns** were Obas (crowned heads). **As the Chairman of the federal council, the uncrowned head.** According to Dr. J.A. Atanda (1980), this violated the Yoruba tradition in which an Oba was superior to Baale. **Ogbomoso, where the Baale of Ogbomoso had to lord it over the Ompetu,** was a typical example of this.*

As the panic that compelled migration and acquiescence in this anomalous situation receded, a crisis of seniority arose in some of these enlarged towns with **federal councils**. It was a crisis that survived into the **twentieth century and made some uncrowned heads not only to acquire kingly titles but also to become desirous of wearing crowns**. The traditional status symbols of the Oba became highly prestigious and were hotly sought after. The seed of future political bickering in chieftaincy matters had been sown.

4.0 THE CRISIS OF SUPREMACY AMONG TRADITIONAL RULERS:

The traditional rulers played a major role in matters of conflict resolution, dispute management and security. In pre-colonial Nigeria, the societies had series of mechanisms of controlling and managing conflicts, varying from one community to another. The traditional rulers in each pre-colonial society obtained their mandate from the society's customs and native laws.

According to the **Alake** and paramount ruler of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Gbadebo, **the Ooni is first among Yoruba monarchs. He identified ego as the cause of disunity among monarchs in Yorubaland.** (The Nigerian Tribune of Monday, February 8, 2016). He then listed the five (5) principal Obas in Yorubaland classified on a **supremacy basis as follows:**

- (i) The Ooni of Ife,
- (ii) The Alaafin of Oyo,
- (iii) The Oba of Benin,
- (iv) Alake of Egbaland
- (v) The Awujale of Ijebuland.

According to Samuel Johnson's book "The History of the Yoruba" published in **1921**. The children of Oduduwa classified according to **age and seniority** in the family of Oduduwa after Okanbi the eldest:

- (i) The mother of the Olowu of Owu,
- (ii) The King of Benin
- (iii) The King of Ila
- (iv) The Onisabe of Sabe
- (v) The Olupopo of the Popes, and
- (vi) Oranyan, the First Alafin of Oyo

4.1 Correcting Some Historical Errors:

- (a) According to Oluremi I. Obateru (2003), former Head of Ibadan Polytechnic Town Planning Department, (Now late), said, **the historical error regarding Oranyan is noteworthy**. It was **Oranyan who founded the kingdoms of Benin and Oyo**. He first founded Benin Kingdom in **1170** and put his son Eweka I in charge when returning to Ile-Ife. From Ile-Ife, he again moved northwest to found Oyo Kingdom between **1200 and 1300**. He returned to Ile-Ife where he died leaving his two children, Dada Ajuwon (a.k.a Ajaka) and Songo to consolidate the kingdom. However, he became the fourth (4th) King of Ife before he died. So, Oba of Benin was a grandson of Oduduwa
- (b) In the two list **Owa Obokun**, was missing. **Owa Ajibogun**, the paramount ruler of Ijeshaland was a direct son of Oduduwa whose mother was **Saparakunmi**. He also went to **fetch sea-water with Aremitan**, the founder of Idanre to cure Oduduwa's blindness. Hence, he was given the nickname "**Owa Obokun**".

According to Chief (Alfa) Samuel Ojo Bada in "Iwe Itan Saki published in **1937** and reprinted in 1986, both were led by **Ajabadi**, the son of **Owafonran or (Ore Otun)**. Owafonran was the father of **Yemoja** who was the **mother of Oranmiyan Odede**. Thereafter, **Ogun** who has been **Regent on Oduduwa throne** returned to Ire, Ekiti where his son, **Ogundahunsi was installed king in 1192A.D.** before returning to **Asabari Hill** in Saki, founded by him. He died there (see Tribune pg. 22 of Tuesday, 16 July, 2019).

- (c) About **Awujale of Ijebu-Ode** by name, **Lagborogan**. He was the son of Oduduwa through **Gborowo** his mother and the daughter of **Olu-Iwa** who

claimed to have come from **Waddai** (the present day Chad) and passed through Ife to found Ijebu Ode. **ARISU** succeeded Olu-Iwa before Lagborogan migrated to Ijebu-Ode

The paramount Ruler of **Remo Kingdom** migrated together with Lugborogan before the parted ways to found Ijebu Remo. The ruler of Ijebu_Remo migrated from **Iremo quarters of Ile-Ife**.

(d) As regards the founding of **Ibadan** by **Lagelu**, he was **Jagun Oshin of Ife kingdom** who fought along with **Agura of Gbagura** to support **Olofin Ogunfunminire**, also from the royal family of **Sooko** when the Benin army invaded Iddo in Lagos. **Lagelu thereafter, migrated to Ibadan as Jagun Oshin while Oyo was returning from exile at Gbere in Ibariba country** (1530-1542). Obalokun (1590-1600) the father of Alaafin Ajagbo (1600-1658) conferred **Jagun of Oyo Kingdom on Lagelu** a.k.a. Oro-apatamaja. Thereafter **Alaafin Ajagbo** established the institution of Aare-Ona-Kakanfo in **1640** while Alaafin Sango, the second son of Oranmiyan reigned in the 13th century A.D. Therefore, Lagelu did not found Ibadan during the reign of Alaafin Sango as claimed by I.B. Akinyele (1911) and quoted by Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Adeyemi III.

4.2 Effects of 19TH Century Civil Wars on Chieftaincy Matters:

But the civil wars of the nineteenth century produced a far-reaching and lasting modification of the traditional governmental structure that existed from the time of Oduduwa. In fashioning a new government, *the earliest war leaders who occupied Ibadan aftermath of Owu Ogbere war in 1825 and established the third Ibadan, had very little justification to duplicate the old hereditary monarchical system of declining old Oyo Empire government structure. Instead, they embraced Traditional Republican system.* In Ogbomoso, the Baale of the host town to Olugbon, Aresa, Onpetu and Onikoyi, had to lord it over these Obas.

As the panic that compelled migration and acquiescence in this anomalous situation receded, **a crisis of seniority arose** in some of these enlarged towns of **Oke-Iho, Abeokuta, Sagamu and Ogbomoso**. It was a crisis that survived into twentieth century

and made some **uncrowned heads** not only to acquire **kingly titles** but also to become desirous of wearing crowns. The **traditional status symbols of the Oba** became highly prestigious and were hotly sought after. The seed of future political bickering in chieftaincy matters had been sown (Dr. J. A. Atanda, 1980).

5.0 THE BRITISH INFLUENCE ON TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION IN YORUBALAND

5.1 Extent of the Old Oyo Empire

According to Dr. J.A. Atanda in the book “The New Oyo Empire (1979)”, Johnson’s neat definition of the Old Oyo Empire Implies that the whole of Yorubaland and Dahomey were included in the empire. This erroneous idea about the extent of the Old Oyo Empire was also shared by British Officials, probably through the influence of me like of **Samuel Ajayi Crowthers** and **Johnson** who were from Oyo town. While, therefore, the Alafin’s appellation ‘**Head of Yorubaland**’ might originally mean ‘**Head of the Yoruba people**’, it soon acquired the wider connotation of “Head of all Yoruba-speaking peoples”. And it was in this sense that the British Officials used it from the early nineteenth century onwards.

Inspite of this, Atanda went further, **the fact was that Old Oyo Empire of which the Alafin was the head, never embraced the whole of Yorubaland**. Some parts of Yorubaland were tributary to the kingdom of Benin and were never controlled by Oyo, as Benin itself was not. For example, Benin tradition shows that Ekiti, Owo, Ondo areas were for a long time under the rule or influence of the kingdom of Benin including Ado-Ekiti

Ilesa, Ile-Ife and Ila were kingdoms, each with a considerable area of influence and independent of Old Oyo. With respect to Ilesa, it will be recalled that the attempt which Old Oyo made in the seventeenth (17th) century, during the reign of **Obalokun**, to reduce, Ilesa to submission resulted in heavy losses for Oyo. Since that time, no further attempt was made by Oyo to control Ilesa. **Not until when Balogun Akere I, led Ibadan army to subdue Ilesa between 1869 and 1871 (I.B. Akinyele, 1991).**

5.2 The Origin of Consenting Authority

According to Dr. J.A. Atanda (1979), Governor Mc. Callum and Resident Fuller between **1898-99** initiated the policy of reviving what they conceived as **the ancient powers of the Alaafin**. However, it was Governor William MacGregor who advanced what Mc. Callum and Fulani started. Besides MacGregor supplied the philosophy which, from 1901 onwards, was to lead to the **supremacy of the Alaafin among the Yoruba rulers in Oyo Province**.

Consequently, Alaafin of Oyo from 1900, was allowed to make deliberate interference in the disputes among the chief and became active in the selection, promotion and disposition of chiefs especially from 1907 onward when the Resident, Captain Elgee (1903-1913) advised **Baale Dada Opadare** to resign his appointment during the constitutional crisis over promotion between the Balogun title holders and Otun Baale title holders led by Balogun Apampa.

The involvement of Oyo was based on the premise that the Alaafin was paramount over the Baale of Ibadan and several other **Oba** in Yorubaland (Toyin Falola, 1989). Some were even forced to pay tribute to him. **This was, no doubt, an exaggeration of the power and role of the Alaafin in Yorubaland**, but one to which the British were committed.

These powers, granted to the Alaafin reached its peak in the era of Captain W.A. Ross (1913-1931) as the first District Commissioner of **Ibadan Province** before it changed to Oyo Province in 1914 when the capital was transferred from Ibadan to Oyo. He succeeded Captain Elgee who spent the longest period in Ibadan (1903-1913).

The period of 25 years from 1906 to 1931 enabled the Alaafin the opportunity to consolidate on the exercise of the wide powers to the extent of the dethronement of Baale of Ibadan Ireferin in 1914, Layode, the Baale of Ogbomoso in 1914, and Shittu (Omo Are Latosa) and Baale of Ibadan in 1925. He died in exile at Oke-Ogun. He created Oyo Province in January 1914 and forced Baale of Ibadan, Ooni of Ife, Owa of Ilesa and the Orangun of Ila to be subordinated to Alaafin's Authority and changed the headquarter of the province from Ibadan where it has been since 1893 to Oyo town.

In keeping with the principle that the jurisdiction of a Native Authority must be based on the consent of the people, Ward-price Ross's successor as the Resident of Oyo Province created in January, 1914, had to press that the Power of the Alaafin as the **sole Native Authority over Oyo and Ibadan Divisions** be broken. In **April 1934**, Ibadan Division was officially recognized as an **Independent Native Authority (INA)**. At the same time, **Ife, Ilesa and Ila Independent Native Authorities were created** (Dr. J.A. Atanda 1979).

In effect, instead of a province where the Alaafin was the most powerful paramount chief, there came to be five Independent Native Authorities and five subordinate ones. And even the subordinate ones were not under the Alaafin but subordinates to the Baale of **Ibadan and Council. The Alaafin was left with only the Oyo Division**. This structure was also approved and implemented by Governor David Jembewon when he constituted the twelve (12) membership of the council of Obas and Chiefs in 1977. (See the Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette Extraordinary, NO. 17 of 3 April 1934, pp. I and II).

Quoting Dr. J.A. Atanda (1979), Captain Ross (1913-1931) left Oyo and Nigeria for good on 1st September, 1931. Barely three years after his departure, the **New Oyo Empire**, which he spent a quarter of a century building up, was no more. *The doctrine that jurisdiction of a Native Authority must be based on the consent of the people over whom such authority would be exercised.*

5.3 Concerning Alaafin and Other Obas' Salaries

Captain W.A. Ross in 1917 begged the Baale of Ibadan and Council to give some **pecuniary assistance to the Alaafin of Oyo from the Ibadan Treasury** after the payment of taxes began and the Treasuries were somewhat stronger. This is of practical necessity and the desire to enhance the prestige of the Alaafin of Oyo (Dr. J.A. Atanda, 1979 pp. 143/145 of the New Oyo Empire).

During the time, Ross unilaterally raised the grant payable per annum to the Alaafin from the Ibadan Treasury by **£2,400** per annum to augment the salary of the Alaafin. In a bid to enhance the status of the Alaafin, Captain Ross managed to raise the **Alaafin's salary** to **£4,500** per annum. The **£2,400** taken annually from the Ibadan Treasury formed part of

this salary. The remaining **£2,100** came from the Oyo Treasury. But the same year, the amount taken from Oyo Treasury was increased to **£2,400**. Consequently, the Alaafin's salary finally stood at **£4,800 per annum**. With this figure, the Alaafin Siyanbola Oladigbolu I, received the highest salary in the province (Dr. J.A. Atanda, 1979 pg. 14-146).

- The Baale of Ibadan received the next highest salary which was **£2,400** per annum.
- The Ooni of Ife, the Owa of Ilesa, and the Orangun of Ila received **£1,400, £1,400, and £56** per annum respectively.

On the other hand, from **1935** onwards, too, the Ibadan Independent Native Authority were agitating for the completion of their independence by seeking to **stop the payment of part of the Alaafin's salary** which, on the **advice** of the Lieutenant-Governor, they had agreed to pay in **1933** until the death of Alaafin's Siyanbola Ladigbolu. (Dr. J.A. Atanda, 1979 pg. 281 of *The New Oyo Empire*). They did not succeed in this and had to pay the required part of the Alaafin's salary up to the end of **1944** when Siyanbola Ladigbolu died.

However, in **1936**, Ibadan scored a significant success in their struggle to be on equal footing with Oyo. They succeeded, inspite of Alaafin Ladigbolu's opposition, in having the title of their **head chief changed from 'Baale Ibadan' to 'Olubadan'**. According to Dr. J.A. Atanda (1979), this change was probably in reaction to a taunt in **1934** by Alaafin Ladigbolu that **'they [the people of Ibadan] can never have a higher title than Baale of Ibadan'**. (See Nigerian Government Gazette xxiii, 80, of 29 October; 1936, Notice No. 1424)

5.4 Inauguration of Conference of Obas and Chiefs:

The problem of subordinating one Oba and tis people to another was recognized in the late 1930s, following the ceaseless demands by the other towns in the Divisions for autonomy. One other step was taken to back up the administrative changes. The administration encouraged cooperation among the chiefs and Obas. Conference of Obas

and chiefs was inaugurated in **1937** for them to discuss ideas which were of interest to the colonial state.

The first of this conference was held in **Oyo** in **1937**. The **second** meeting was held in **Ile-Ife** in **1938** with Olubadan Alesinloye in attendance. The **third** was held in Ibadan hosted by Olubadan Alesinloye in **1939**. The **fourth** meeting was held in Abeokuta in **1940** by Alake, Oba Adetokumbo Ademola. The Awujale of Ijebu Ode in **1941** and Oba of Benin, the Akenzua in **1942** (Ogbontiba Femi, 1977). According to Prince Adelegan Adegbola (200), about eighteen (18) Obas attended the meeting in **1940** and twenty eight (28) Obas in 1944.

The forum for Obas and Chiefs to meet was given a legal backing in **1959** when the first **Obas and Chiefs Law No. W.R. 38 of 1959** was put in place.

The Council was inaugurated on **24th March, 1960** consisting of the Chairman (The Ooni of Ife) Oba Adesoji Aderemi and six other members each of whom was appointed for **Two years** only. Oba Adesoji Aderemi was appointed the first African Governor in the British Empire and Commonwealth in 1960 and Oba Ladigbolu II replaced the Ooni as the Chairman of the Council of Obas and Chiefs.

6.0 EFFECTS OF 1976 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN NIGERIA

6.1 Creation of Traditional Councils:

The single-tier multipurpose structure also had another significant feature different from the earlier N.As in the sense that it completely kept off the traditional chiefs from membership of the traditional chiefs from membership of the elected local government councils. Rather, it provided for them their own separate councils known as **Emirate** or **Traditional Councils** which comprised appointed chiefs within the local government jurisdictions of such traditional chiefs.

According to the Federal Governments Guidelines for Local Government Reform, which document has since become the major authority guiding the conduct of local government affairs throughout the country which was implemented in **1997** during the regime of President General Sanni Abacha. Among others, the guidelines provided that: “it is essential that **Emirs** or **Paramount Chiefs** who are *Councils Presidents should avoid*

any kind of political partnership. Otherwise, they cannot maintain their public position as impartial fathers of their people”.

Chiefs, variously designated as Emirs, Obas, Obis etc. and a host of other traditional titles, are generally regarded in this country as fathers of their people. The chiefs are also the custodians of the people’s culture and in this capacity serve as a link between the past and the present. In this revered and exalted position, coupled with the official recognition accorded them, Traditional Rulers have come to be accepted by the people as **a symbol of authority** whose proverbial wisdom and matured counsel on **local issues** are greatly cherished.

It is in this way that in spite of the many administrative and political reforms carried out under the various military regimes in this country, the vast majority of Nigerians have accepted that the Chieftaincy Institution has come to stay.

6.2 The Creation of Council of Obas in the South West :

The forum for Obas and Chiefs to meet was given a legal backing in **1959** when the first Obas and chiefs Law No. W.R. 38 of 1959 was put in place.

The Council was inaugurated in 24th March, 1960 consisting of the Chairman, **The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adesoji Aderemi** and six other members each of whom was appointed for **Two years** only. Oba Adesoji Aderemi was appointed the first African Governor in the British Empire and Common wealth in 1960 and Oba Ladigbolu II, the Alaafin of Oyo, replaced the Ooni as the Chairman of the Council of Obas and Chiefs.

The foundation members were:

- 1) Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Ooni of Ife
- 2) Sir Ladapo Ademola, The Alake of Abeokuta;
- 3) Oba Gbadegesin Oladigolu II, the Alaafin of Oyo;
- 4) Oba Tewogboye II, The Osemawe of Ondo;
- 5) Oba Moses S. Awolesi, The Akarigbo of Ijebu Remo;
- 6) Oba Adetoyese Laoye II, The Timi of Ede;
- 7) Oba Obika A. Gbnuba, The Obi of Agbor;

The size of the Council had continually been enlarged since then, according to His Excellency, Governor Omololu Olunloyo's Broadcast on the crisis regarding the **rotation of chairmanship of the council of Obas was contained** in the **National Advocate** of Tuesday, December 6, 1983.

For example, when the Military took over government of Nigeria in January, 1966, LT Col, F. Adekunle Fajuyi became the Military Governor, Western Nigeria. The Council of Obas and Chiefs (Appointment) Edict, 1966, W.N.L.N. of 1966 published in the "Supplement to Western Nigeria Gazette No 19, Volume 15, 17th February, 1966-Part B provided for the appointment of the following Chairman, Deputy chairman and members respectively:

- i) The Oni of Ife - Chairman
- ii) The Alaafin of Oyo - Deputy Chairman
- iii) The Alake of Abeokuta
- iv) The Awujale of Ijebuland
- v) The Owa of Ijeshaland
- vi) The Osemawe of Ondo
- vii) The Olubadan of Ibadan
- viii) The Orangun of Ila
- ix) The Akarigbo of Ijebu Remo
- x) The Ewi of Ado
- xi) The Deji of Akure

The membership was further increased to twelve (12) when **Olowo of Owo** was added in 1977 by His Excellency **Governor Adeyinka Adebayo** with the following members as permanent members base on the paramountcy of Obas in the twelve Divisions of Western state as follows.

- i) The Alaafin of Oyo to represent Oyo south and Oyo North Divisions.
- ii) The Ooni of Ife to represent Ife Division
- iii) The Alake of Abeokuta to represent Egba Division:
- iv) The Awujale of Ijebuland to represent Ijebu Ode Division:
- v) The Owa Obukan of Ijeshaland to represent Ijesa South and North Divisions.

- vi) The Ewi of Ado-Ekiti to represent Ekiti Central Division
- vii) Osemawe of Ondo to represent Ondo Division
- viii) The Olowo of Owo to represent Owo Division
- ix) The Deji of Okure represent Akure Division
- x) The Orangun of Ila to represent Osun North East.
- xi) The Olubadan of Ibadanland to represent Ibadan City and Ibadan Division
- xii) The Akarigbo of Ijebu Remo to represent Remo Division.

7.0 THE NEED TO CARRY OUT TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAINCY REFORM IN OYO STATE

Firstly, it is considered necessary to make some distinctions between various types of Chieftaincies in order to facilitate a better understanding of the chieftaincy system in Yorubaland and Ibadan in particular.

7.1 A Traditional Chief:

In addition to the earlier definitions, is a person whose chieftaincy title is associated with a native community and this includes a **recognized Chief** and a **minor Chief**

7.2 A Minor Chief

A minor Chief is a Chief other than **recognized Chief**. In other words, a minor chief is a person whose chieftaincy title is governed by the provisions of Part III of the Chiefs Law (Cap 28 Laws of Oyo State, 2000; Cap 20, Laws of Ogun State of Nigeria, 1978 and recently, Chiefs Law, Laws of Ogun State, 2006. The authority to approve appointments and determine disputes among **minor Chiefs** is vested in a Prescribed Authority e.g. the Olubadan of Ibadanland, the Alaafin of Oyo, Aseyin of Iseyin etc.

7.3 A Prescribed Authority

A Prescribed Authority is a person or persons appointed by the Governor or the Executive Council as the case may be to exercise **traditional authority** over an area or areas traditionally associated with that chieftaincy. **Holders of recognized chieftaincies are usually vested with powers of prescribed** to appoint and install **minor Chiefs** in areas traditionally associated with their chieftaincies. With particular reference to **Oyo State**, the traditional institution comprises recognized categories of Traditional Rulers;

(A) Paramount Rulers (3 nos)

Alaafin of Oyo

Olubadan of Ibadanland

Soun of Ogbomoso

(B) First Class Traditional Rulers

(C) Part II (Recognized) Obas and Chiefs

(D) Part III Coronet Traditional Rulers

7.4 Structure of House of Obas and Chiefs:

According to Professor Bolaji Akinyemi Former External Minister, in “The Nation, Monday, September 10, 2003, the history of pre-colonial Nigeria is a fluid history of **independent states**, losing their independence to fellow states and regaining their independence from fellow states. This **continuing struggle for dominance** and domination was still on going when the British intervention took place. These are nationalities with very long memory very entrenched traditions and culture.

The past influence the present in ways we are not even aware of. He said where different nationalities come under a common authority, conflict can only be minimized by following the principle of subsidiarity **which means allowing issues which are of interest and valuable o only a particular locality should be under the local authority.**

In the book “Perspectives of Peace and Conflicts in Africa: essays in honor of General (Dr.) Abdulsalami Abubakar” Dalal Lama XIV, Martin Luther King, President J.F. Kennedy, and Nelson Mandela, stressed that *peace is not the absence of disagreement. It was stated there is nothing wrong with people having disagreements, that what is expected is that when people have disagreements they should find peaceful solutions to the issues.*

The Nations that flourished are the ones in which people are ready to face the realities around them by investing sufficiently in finding peaceful solutions to the problems besetting them.

According to Olotu of Ota, Oba AbdulKabir Adeyemi, in the Nigerian Tribune, Tuesday, 2 July, 2019 Yoruba Obas should play down unnecessary class struggle. It does not really matter which class you belong in when it comes to issue affecting the security

and development of the Yoruba nation. Ego and trivial things should not be allowed to divide us further. But you talk of unity, we must not forget that **truth holds unity better**. Once we stop promoting self-image, there will be unity among us. **Every Oba in Yorubaland has a letter of appointment**

(a) OGUN STATE

The prominent Traditional Rulers are:

- Alake of Egbaland – Paramount Ruler
- The Awujale of Ijebuland – Paramount Ruler
- The Akarigbo of Ijebu Remo – Paramount Ruler
- The Olu of Ilaro – Paramount Ruler
- There are other 30 Prominent Traditional Rulers

(b) LAGOS STATE:

- Oba of Lagos – Chairman
- Ayangburin of Ikorodu – 1st Vice Chairman
- Olu of Ikeja – 2nd Chairman
- Akran of Badagry - 3rd Vice Chairman
- Alare of Epe – 4th Vice Chairman
- There are other 51 prominent Obas

(c) OSUN STATE:

- Ooni Arole Odudua of Ife
- Orangun of Oke Ila
- Owa-Obokun of Ijesa
- There are 57 Prominent Obas

(d) ONDO STATE

- Deji of Akure
- Osemawe of Ondo
- Olowo of Owo
- There are 139 other Traditional Obas

(e) OYO STATE

- The Alaafin of Oyo
- The Olubadan of Ibadanland

- The Soun od Ogbomosoland
- The Eleruwa of Eruwa
- The Olugbon of Orile Igbon
- The Aseyin of Iseyin
- The Okere of Saki
- The Onpetu of Ijoru
- There are other 43 Traditional Rulers none from Ibadanland except Olubadan

(f) EKITI STATE

- There are 126 recognized Traditional Rulers