

THE FOUNDATION OF IWO TOWN AND ITS MIGRATION HISTORY FROM ILE-IFE

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INTRODUCTION

Professor N.Y. Merpet brought out the fact lucidly that migration has played essential roles in all the stages of history of man right from the communal tribal formation up to the era of class formation (Merpet, 1978 p. 9). History therefore, is not to be limited to a simple record of what is known or believed to have occurred. According to R.G. Collingwood, *“History is pore properly concerned with examining, analyzing, and explaining past events, particularly in human affairs”*.

The History of Iwo according to both Alademomi Kenyon and Prince Adelegan Adegbola (2009) dates back to the **14th century (1363)** when the progenitor of Oluwo migrated from Ile-Ife, by name, Prince Adekola Telu.

Adekola Telu, the founder of the Ruling dynasty of Iwo, was the first son of Queen Luwo Gbagida (first woman Ooni of Ile-Ife) who got married to Chief Obaloran, a High Chief of Ooni of Ife (i.e. member of the Council of Ife). Oba Luwo Gbagida was the 18th Ooni of Ife (Chief M.A Fabunmi 1985 p. 73) confirmed by Adelegan Adegbola, (2009).

Prince Adekola Telu left Ile-Ife with a host of attendants headed to the unknown when they left Ile-Ife. However, his first settlement was at a place called **Ogundigbaro** which was a place located at the confluence of River Oba and River Osun. After a number of years at this settlement, they were forced to leave the place due to constant flooding.

After consultation with Ifa Oracle they moved to **Erunmu District** where they could not remain for a long time because of the depredation of wild animals around the area (Alademomi Kenyan). The sojourners then moved to **Igbo-Orita** from where, after a long time they proceeded to settle finally at Ile-Iwo. **They claimed that Adekola Telu died at Igbo Orita.** The site was a distance of about six (6) kilometres from the centre of the preset Iwo (Ibadan Iwo Garage).

I.B. Akinyele (1911) in “Iwe Itan Ibadan” writing on the history of Iwo, Ikirun and Osogbo, claimed that the first sentiment of Iwo people was IGBO-ORITA where four members of Adekola Telu dynasty ruled for **312 years** (Lunar months) or **208 years** in (British Calendar months). It was due to the hostility of the Ijesa people that made the fourth ruler - **JIKANMU** - to migrate west words; I believe that was when they passed through Ogundigbaro, to Erunmu and the so called Igbo-Orita.

However, the late progenitor of Oluwo dynasty was succeeded by his first son, **Adeyemi** who also ruled for a short time and died. He was succeeded by his son, **Ogunfenumodi Aderonmu.** He was later succeeded by **Oba Jikanmu.** Due to small-pox attack, they had to consult **Ifa Oracle** that advised them to move northwards to a place where he would find a legendary OSE TREE (Baobab Adamsonia) inhabited a flock of parrots with hooked beaks.

However, Oba Jikanmu didn't reach the promised site as he died on the way. The place where he died (gave up the ghost) was shortly after crossing a stream called Obadake (the king stopped breathing) which later evolved as “**Adeeke**”. This is about two (2) kilomtres from the present sites of Iwo and is presumably just down the slope of where Baptist High school now situates.

According to the tradition and custom of the Yoruba kingship system, the oldest son of **Oba Jikanmu, Olumade Pariu,** succeeded his father and became the first Oluwo of Iwo. On getting to the present site, a house was horridly built where the corpse of Oba

Jikanmu was buried and at the same time, they commence the construction of the palace for the Oba, the first Oluwo of Iwo.

It was during the reign of Oba Olumade Pariu that the Iwo Town was divided into four major quarters, namely: **Isale Oba, Molete, Gidigbo and Oke-Adan**. For ease of administration, each quarter was being administered under the command of a senior. This kind of historical migration was **not** peculiar to the founding of Iwo alone; there was also a common historical documentation of the migration history of Owu, Oyo, Ilesa, the Aworis and Ibadan. **Therefore, except recorded history can be backed up with authentic documents of objective facts, and dates, its credibility is suspect and controversial** (Dr. Fedric Fasheun, 2009).

FROM THE ARCHIVES

According to investigations of both Omotoso Eluyemi, an Ile-Ife historian and archaeologist (1980), and Oluremi I. Obateru, a Town Planner and Author of “Yoruba City in History: 11th Century to the Present (2006)”; Oduduwa was on the throne of Ile-Ife between **10th** and **11th** century. By implication, Oba Luwo Gbagida, **the 18th Ooni of Ife** who married Chief Obaloran, one of the High Chiefs of the Ooni of Ife and the parents of Prince Adekola Telu, the progenitor of Oluwo of Iwo dynasty must have ruled between **1363** and **1410A.D.** Hence, the claim that Prince Adekola Telu initiated the founding of the first settlement in the 14th century after leaving Ife.

The late Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade Olubuse II stated in the Nigeria Tribune of Friday 30 January, 2009 that the first founder of Ibadan, Crown Prince Adio Lagelu, was a beaded crown with fringe benefits sent to settle in Ibadan in **1401A.D.** However, further investigation revealed that Lagelu’s mother was the first daughter of Luwo Gbagida and Obaloran who married the son of Orunto (Obalufe), that gave birth to Lagelu Adio at Degelu Compound in Ile-Ife. Lagelu founded Ibadan before or after the reign of Alaafin Onigbogi (1530-1542) probably in the middle of the 16th century before

Oyo Igboho was established. Oyo went into exile at Ibariba (Gberu) according to the late Professor J.A. Atanda (1973) after the attack of Oyo Ile by the Tapas.

Further consequences of this incident led to the desertion of Old Oyo capital which led to many emigrations to Egba, Egbado, Ibolu, Oke-Ogun and Ibarapa areas (see Iwe Itan Oyo by S. Ojo, the Bada of Saki page 41).

I.B. Akinyele in “Iwe Itan Ibadan (1911)” writing on Ikirun, Iwo and Osogbo said that Iwo was probably founded 208 years after Prince Adekola Telu must have established Igbo-Orita after leaving Ile-Ife.

The daughter of **Oba Olumade Parin**, the first Oluwa of Iwo (1571-1631) got married to Prince Makudunmi Adegoroku, who was the son of **Oba Jogioro**, the second Soun of Ogbomosho who reigned between (1714-1770) and gave birth to **Balogun Alli Okunmade**. He was the Balogun of Iwo during the reign of Oba Memmudu Lamuye I (1816-1906) and the 12th Oluwo of Iwo. Incidentally, Ogunmola was also from Ile-Alawe in Fesu near Iwo. He came to Ibadan as Babalawo (herbalist) before he joined Oluyole army as apprentice and later became Otun Balogun Ibikunle and subsequently Basorun of Ibadan. Balogun Alli Okunmade also came to Ibadan after the Kutuje war of **1862** as a result of crisis between Oluwo Mammud Lamuye I and the son of Balogun Okunmade. He became the ancestor of the Alli-Iwo dynasty in Ibadan.

According to Elizabeth Cox and Erica Anderson (1984), the first settler in Eko Island was Aromire, one of the children of Olofin Ogunfunminire from Ile-Ife, who reigned between **1425** and **1505**. Armoire and his brothers swamp across the Lagoon to the Island from Iddo settlement in the middle of the 15th century and grew pepper on what is today the site of the Oba’s palace at Idunganran, the core of Isale Eko, before the Portuguese explorer by name; **Ruy de Sequeria** changed the name of Eko to Lagos in **1472 A.D.** Olofin Ogunfunminire had earlier founded Iseri which was as built on River Ogun in 1425 – 1505 A.D. before the children moved to Ebute Metta and later to Iddo

wher Benin army attacked them. **These were concrete evidence of migration of a Yoruba-sub-ethnic group, “The AWORIS”.** The Aromire dynasty comprised the Idejos and the White Cap Chiefs of Lagos till today.

The first Ibadan was destroyed after about 100 years, according to Oba I.B. Akinyele (1911) and Lagelu and his children who survived the war had to seek refuge on **Eleyele Hill** around Awotan before establishing the second Ibadan at Oriyangi now Oja’ba. Lagelu, the ancestral founder of Ibadan, who migrated from Ile-Ife on the **middle of the 16th century**, was buried on Eleyele/Awotan Hills. The hills are worshiped by the priest of Okebadan (Aboke). Till today, the village established at Awotan has a Baale under the suzerainty of Olubadan of Ibadanland. **This is another conclusive evidence of the past linked with the present.**

At the 27th Owu National Convention held in Iwo, Osun State on the 8th of December, 2018, General Opaleye, the former governor of Ondo State during the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, went down the memory lane in his address to the Royal Union of Owu people (RUOP) and said:

Owu people left their footprints after (1821-1826) war, which dealt a devastating blow to the people as they were forced to disperse and find settlement in different parts of Yorubaland. Today, the Owu towns and communities are located in five South Western States including Kwara and Benin Republic. Similarly, the Old Oyo kingdom left footprints of settlements in its migration history at Oyo-Ile, Oko, Igboho before Prince Atiba finally settled at the present site at Ago-Oja which was transformed to the new Oyo town.

In conclusion, Owa Obokun Ajibogun came originally from Ile-Ife. The founder of Ilesa was formally at Igbade, a village of about ten kilometres from Ilesa. The Ilesa people had one time also settled at different places like other Yoruba communities of ancient period, such places included: Ibokun and Ipole from where Ataoja of Osogbo

migrated; then to Ilowa, before they finally settled at the present site, Ilesa. At Ilowa, Owa Ajibogn and Ajigiri, the elder brother departed to found their kingdoms. Ajisegiri was the founder of Ijebu-Ijesa and they both went to the Atlantic Ocean to fetch water which cured Oduduwa's blindness who was their father.

In all the migration history in Yorubaland, there has always been track records of development or landmark symbol of authority of those who passed through the migration route of the people unless it was destroyed by war like Owu Ogbere which was destroyed in Ibadan between 1821 and 1826. Yet, the Missionary **Rev. David Hinderer** was able to described the geographic location of the destroyed settlement of Owu (archives, CA210149, June 1851).