KNIGHTS OF A GLOBAL COUNTRYSIDE: THE BALOGUN INSTITUTION OF IJEBULAND, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Toyin Falola's scholarship is impressively spiced by Warfare, warlordism, and diplomacy in pre-colonial Yorubaland. This paper extends Falola's discourse of those themes. It maps the origins, nature and changing connotations of the Balogun title in Ijebuland. The episodic implications of all of these on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence socio-political and economic facts of Ijebuland constitute our tertiary objects here. The paper specifically argues that there is a direct connection between the disappearance of such antique military offices like the Olukongbon, Ade Kola, and Adechegun and the appearance of the paramount Balogun title in pre-colonial Ijebu-land. It similarly links the retreat of martial functions in such offices as the Agbon and Lupoekun to the ascendancy of the Balogun institution. The transformation in the supreme leadership of the pre-colonial all-Ijebu military high command, from the Olisa to the Balogun, this essay simultaneously attributes to that ascendancy. Christianity, Islam, Western-oriented education, coloured individuals, abolition of some indigenous cultural rites, and associated dynamics of the colonial economy are the principal factors concluded by the paper, to be at the heart of the continuity and changes, observable in the Balogun institution during the colonial and post-independence periods in Ijebuland.

Keywords: *Balogun, Ijebu, Colonialism, British, Pre-colonial Nigeria, Post-Independence Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

THE TERRITORIES THAT CONSTITUTE IJEBULAND has shifted at different times in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Presently, the bulk of Ijebuland embraces the towns and settlements within Ijebu East, Ijebu North, Ijebu North East, Ijebu Ode, Odogbolu, Ogun Waterside Local Governments and Remo in parts of Ogun State, Nigeria. Also, several Ijebu-speaking people in towns and settlements to the eastern frontiers of Lagos, especially in places like Ikorodu and Epe, for example, belong to the Ijebu cultural and linguistic group. In 1851, in addition to Ijebu-Ode, the western boundary of 'Ijebuland' extended from Langbasa, Ejirin, Palma, Leckie, Okun Ode to Itsekiri, and on the south, 'from Ijebu Ode, Ikorodu to Iro'. These areas saw the Balogun title originate, evolve, flourish, despised but, ultimately, entrenched. The Balogun title was indeed a towering feature in virtually all the principal and unique polities of Yorubaland, before – during – and after the colonial periods, but in Ijebuland, it was (and remains) understood in the following light.

For the *Ijebus*, the Balogun is conventionally one of the most important offices in the communal administrative arrangement. The earliest recollection of the office is its occupant's superior ability in terms of courage, use of weaponry and deployment of charms in wars that involved the pre-literate societies of Ijebuland. Such occupant, in addition, had to be always armed with unassailable evidence of ancestry in a chain of legendary military generals of Ijebu antiquity. This, for many, is the reason why the traditions and early literature of the *Ijebus* continue to be littered with names of warlords like: Sikakerewe, Kalejaye, Meleki, Osulalu, Amoito, Onayelu, Ogunade, Olisa Dipe, Olisa, Owrosanle, Omolanre, Adde Sounlou, Otuo-Nouyo, Ogborogan, Ajebu, Olode, Otaruwa, Yemule, Osodehinke, Adebote, Ounsemade, Osimuga Opaso, Ogunnupebi, Osiogbe, Osulalu Kuyoro, Kuyagba, and Ogunsirhigbo.

Even then, in Ijebuland today, totally contemporary and significant forces of modernity, some of which include capital, Western-styled education, political pedigree, communal acceptance, popularity, and status in a *Regberegbe*, have come to overtake martial-ancestral links as qualifications for anyone wanting to assume the Balogun office. Remarkably still, these forces have also not left the office's earliest functions – law enforcement, defence, territorial expansion, coordinating the high command of the army, trade dominance, protection of trade caravans - unaffected. Before we examine how these unfolded, it is imperative to acceptably identify the Baloguns' moment of evolution in Ijebuland.

Unlike the unanimity which the basic meaning of the Balogun title seems to enjoy in Ijebuland, the precise period it emerged is a matter of varying conclusions. To Olusola, for example, the Balogun institution is as ancient as Ijebuland. Indeed, Ijebu oral traditions identify the first Balogun as Ogunfeyibo – a pre-Obanta settler and acknowledged founder of one (Ilalapo) of the twenty-five original quarters of Ijebu-Ode. The position spearheaded by Oduwobi, Okubote, Oguntomisin, Chief J.A.B Odunnuga, Aroyewun, Otunba Payne, and Adara is relevant too. This position ascribes the mid-nineteenth for the onset of the Ijebu Balogun Institution. Its proof is Onofowokan, known popularly as Otubunibon, and verifiable in many parts of Ijebu–Ode today as the first holder of the Balogun title. Otutunibon is considered to have lived between the reign of Awujale Fidipote and Awujale Adeona Fusigboye.

Another conclusion is that led by Falola. Here, to the extent that the Balogun institution was an invention of the republican military state of Ibadan, its evolution in Ijebuland, could not have antedated 1829, the year the Ibadan military republic was founded.

Rather than confusion, considerable light is what the above introduces to any future examination of the roots of the Balogun structure in Ijebuland. To be sure, it establishes that the onset of the Balogun title in Ijebuland could not have been outside the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Second, it suggests that, even if the Ogunfehinbo approach is prone to instant dismissal, the Ijebuness of the Balogun will still not be in question. This, because the record is clear, precisely in the composite founding – through Ijebu, Ife, and Oyo warriors (and refugees) - of the Ibadan military state. The Ijebus were actively involved in the nascent administration of Ibadan, and by consequence must have contributed to the evolution of the Balogun title there.

Going by the description of the Balogun that was earlier presented, it is probable that some of the warrior-forebears of Onofowokan partook in the Owu war of the 1820s and the creation of Ibadan thereafter. Falola instructively identified the random return of a significant number of these warriors to Ijebuland, beginning from 1830. These ancestors of Onofowokan might have been among the throng of returnees. In the event, Onofowokan, who was already Balogun of Ijebuland by 1862, certainly had a fertile tradition from which to spring forth.

Who was Otutunibon Onofowokan? Otutunibon would be succeeded by some subordinate, albeit provincial, Baloguns; and in fact eight paramount Baloguns of Ijebuland. Who are these personalities? What imprints, vis-à-vis the unique socio-cultural, political and economic forces of their times, did all of these Baloguns impress on Ijebuland? It is to these that we now turn.

THE BALOGUN IN PRE-COLONIAL IJEBULAND: THE INCUBATION OF GENERALISSIMOS

The pre-colonial period for Ijebuland effectively ended in 1892. An idea of the overarching political arrangement in this area between 1892 and 1850 is required, if the accompanying Baloguns, their activities, and the consequences of these, are to be sufficiently understood. Thankfully, this subject – 19th century socio-political Ijebuland- is a major preoccupation of works of many of the eminent historians of the twentieth century. In their analyses, Ijebuland, which then extended to Epe, Ikorodu, Ibeju Lekki, and the entire Remo settlements, had evolved in to a Kingdom.

At the center of that Kingdom was Ijebu Ode – the capital, metropolis, abode of the preeminent ruler of Ijebuland, and seat of the Kingdom's military high command, that included its Commander-in-chief. The integral sections of the Ijebu Kingdom were the over 600 towns and villages of different sizes. These sections or provinces equally had sovereigns, and they were in several respects autonomous – even if only to the extent of their undeniability of the paramountcy of the ruler at Ijebu Ode. The towns or provinces also usually maintained a military, to which compliance to the inviolability principle apparently devolved. These provincial armies, instructively, had to avail soldiers to the military high command, whenever they were needed at the centre, predictably for the safeguard of the territorial, economic and cultural sovereignty of the Ijebu Kingdom. Ogun-tomisin and Falola came just within an earshot of mentioning this all-Ijebu army, when they located the army's first experience of discord in the 1880s.

Biobaku, his contemporaries, and some recent literature mention the title of the pre-Balogun metropolitan military officials and Commanders-in-Chief of the Ijebu kingdom. Whereas the Olisa office and occupant contained the spirit and functions of the Commander-in-Chief,

that of the Olorogun, Olukongbon, Ade Kola, Adechegun embodied the functions of the Captain, Commanding General, General, and Divisional General respectively. Remarkably, the Agbon, Kakanfo, and Lupoekun military offices of the pre-Balogun Ijebuland only ceased to exercise military functions from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Yet, related military positions like those identified by Ogun-tomisin and Falola – namely, the Kakanfo, Sibetulu and *Mangunle* – probably evolved around the 1850s. To be sure, *Olisa Dipe* is on record to have led the all-Ijebu armed forces in the Owu war of the 1820s, in much the same manner as Olisa Adebote would lead the Ijebu military in the Eleduwa War of the 1830s.

Whoever the holder of the Olisa title was in 1862, they certainly had ceased to be a match for Onofowokan, in terms of requisite martial qualities and other relevant tools of warfare. Incidentally, this was the era where that must have been worse than a taboo. For "If ever there was a bedlam"15, to use the exact words of Ayandele, "then Yoruba-land…of the nineteenth century, outside the area occupied by Ijebu, was one." Indeed, nineteenth century Yorubaland is notable for many reasons, including the one that almost everything was to be settled on the battle field. As a polity, you were respected or taken seriously, depending on the strength of your military and it's Commander-in-Chief. This fact was probably more fundamental to the Ijebus than any of the empire-seeking states of Yorubaland at that period.

So, according to traditions, when Onofowokan demonstrated the overwhelming gallantry in leading the Ijebu military campaign to douse Iperu's insurrection, aftermath the Ijaye war, it became inevitable, upon his return, that he assumed the leadership of the Ijebu military. The Olisa Chieftaincy title was however hereditary. A new office necessarily had to be created. It was the Balogun title, and the pioneer Balogun: Onofowokan Otutunibon. The era of the Baloguns in Ijebuland had begun!

The Emergent Balogun Onofowokan must have been so powerful in the subsequent internal political arrangement of the Ijebu Kingdom. So much so, that some of the traditional military titles had to beat a permanent retreat, particularly as Otutunibon grew in prominence. Nearly no trace, for instance, remained of the Olukongbon, Ade Kola, and Adechegun institutions by the eight decade of the nineteenth century. The inverse connection between the ascendancy of Balogun Onofowokan and the cessation of military functions in the (still existing) Agbon and Lupoekun institutions is equally significant. Akinjogbin asserted that the Ijebu Kingdom was illustrative of uncommon peace between 1865 and 1877. To no other personality but the Balogun, could this have stemmed from, especially at a time when the Balogun and his war-boys had completely replaced the Omodogun (the police force) and its head in Law enforcement, at Ijebu Ode. How much Onofowokan, and the Balogun structure had grown in terms of economic and socio-political influence is captured by the unique episode of 1882-3 in Ijebuland.

The eve of 1882 dawned with the premier Ijebu monarch, Awujale Fidipote and army, still involved in the Kiriji War. While the Ijebu army remained on the side of the Egba-Ilorin-Oyo-Ife-Ekiti alliance, it faced an equally ably constituted Ibadan, throughout the sixteen-year Kiriji War. Interestingly, by 1882, some of the provincial Ijebu towns, for reasons Olubomihin and Oguntomisin rightly identify as economic, had begun to manifest visible objection and insubordination to the ongoing Ijebu participation in the war. Their grouse was economic, in the sense that they longed to resume their lucrative trade with the interior, and notably Ibadan. The war, they reasoned aloud, promised little benefit for Ijebuland. Moreover, the Egbas who supposedly were on the side of the Ijebu, had – secretly - since resumed trade with Ibadan.

This sentiment soon intensified in the capital of the Ijebu Kingdom. Before long, mercantile interests (symbolized by the Ijebu Ode commercial class) had found a willing handsmaiden in the Ijebu military high command, now led by Balogun Onofowokan. What happened next is easy to reconstruct: a notice to Fidipote to withdraw Ijebu support for the Ekitiparapo –and resume trade with the interior or total insurrection. Fidipote, for whatever reasons, failed to properly discern the militaristic spirit of the times. He dismissed the notice. On-discern the battalion he commanded would have nothing of such nonsense. The Awujale was promptly banished to Epe in 1883; he would be there for another two years before he died, some say from small pox, in 1885.

That Fidipote was forcibly removed from the Awujale stool by the formidable Balogun Otutunibon is however not the principal significance of that development. Rather, this is in the fact that, for the next three years, Ijebu Ode and by implication virtually all of Ijebuland was in the pocket of Balogun Otutunibon. So powerful did Otutunibon become that no one was able to stop him from installing his "puppet" as Fidipote's successor.

This new profile of the Balogun would appear to have changed little even towards the end of the pre-colonial period in Ijebuland. When Samuel Johnson visited Ijebu Ode in 1886, for example, he was quick to discover that he could secure access to the Awujale, only after the express intervention of Onofowokan. How all the administrative structures of Ijebu Ode, in addition to the office of the Awujale, had transformed in to rubber-stamps for suggestions emanating from Balogun Onofowokan was instructively also noticed by Samuel. According to Samuel, the ultimate judicial functions in the kingdom were similarly being discharged by Balogun Otunburibon, in the sense that "the only court to which appeal lay was to Balogun Onofowokan."

Before the 1892 colonization of Ijebuland, the Balogun institution in the Ijebu metropolis was to achieve an outstanding impact in other parts of the kingdom. This was in the evolution of Balogun titles in some of the provincial towns of the Ijebu Kingdom. Kehere of Ipara, Atambala and Jaasimi of Ikorodu, Sosinmi of Makun, Rosanwo, Ogoji, and Sarunmi of Idomowon are the notable Baloguns observable in records to have been active in the other parts of the Ijebu Kingdom between the 1860s and 1880s. Curiously, while they exercised military and law-enforcement functions, by no means did the performance of such functions extend beyond their individual towns. In other words, except on very rare situations, they complied with the inviolability principle of the Awujale at Ijebu Ode, and supported the Balogun of the Ijebu–Ode military high command, any time contingents were needed to safeguard the territorial integrity of the entire Ijebu kingdom. Very much, in the same way that virtually all the political and cultural administrations in these integral towns, in any case, mirrored that of the capital.

COLONISATION AND (MIS)FORTUNES AND OF THE IJEBU BALOGUN INSTITUTION

The years 1885-1892 witnessed the height of attempts by the British in Lagos to render the Ijebu kingdom and Ijebu Ode in particular, not only travelable, but also habitable for all previously unauthorized and abominable influences and persons. With the superior British military capacity always dangling above, those years very soon saw the Awujale, Balogun and other Ijebu chiefs reluctantly endorsing entry of missionaries, Christianity, Saros, abolition of human sacrifices, military aid, coloured foreigners, Western-style literacy, free trade, and irregular immigration in to Ijebuland. One of the salient, though unfortunate, consequences of this policy was a decline in the popular appeal and acceptance of Awujale Aboki and Balogun Onafowokan. The Ijebu were never known to cower to

any outside force – let alone one external to Yorubaland –many, particularly in the rank and file of the military protested.

In 1892, situations came to a head. Partly in an attempt to reverse the abominable concessions, Balogun Otunibon with the endorsement of the Awujale sent out a force to crush that of the British, whose mission was to uphold British toehold in Ijebu kingdom. The resultant Imagon War is famous for signaling the termination of Ijebu independence and its colonization by the British. But for the Balogun institution, it was perhaps more telling. Notably, never again will the paramount – or any other – Balogun of Ijebuland preside over a high command, brigade, or contingents of combatants. Gone also were the days when superior mastery and use of native charms and the provisioning of other implements of war provided direct access to the Balogun office.

Further still, in the years that immediately followed the conquest of Ijebuland, the person of the Balogun was also to suffer one humiliation or the other. So molested was the now subdued Balogun Onofowokan at a point, that he had to plead with a mere officer of the new British colonial overlords of Ijebuland for respite.

Cooper recently underlined the element of divide and rule in the application of the theory of colonialism by British officers. This was greatly applied on what remained of the traditional administrative structures of the Ijebu Kingdom. In this regard, three persons were invested with any recognition of relevant, even if of measured, import, by the new British conquerors of Ijebuland, at the capital. These were the Awujale, Seriki Odueyungbo Kuku (a former General in Otunibon's high command), and Balogun Onofowokan. Specifically, they all, on the condition of their unflagging loyalty to the new British managers of Ijebuland, were placed respectively on stipends of 200, 100, and 50 pounds. But not only did this introduction of cash remuneration permanently substitute war-booty as

conventional reward for the Balogun, it more instructively provided the much needed confidence for Seriki Odueyungbo Kuku to eventually supplant Balogun Onafowokan shortly after.

Four paramount Baloguns, in actual fact, defined colonial Ijebuland. They included Chief Bello Odueyungbo Kuku (1899-1907), Chief Gbadamosi Tayo Kuku (1907-1927), Chief Akadiri Sommori Adefuye Kuku (1927-1950), and Chief S. E. Adesoye (1951-1961). Indeed, all but one of them came from the same ancestral tree. Odueyungbo, Gbadamosi and Akadiri in fact represent three generations of the Kuku family. And successively they- thanks, particularly, to the dexterity of Odueyungbo-presided, virtually throughout the colonial period, over what became of the Balogun institution. The rise and reign of Balogun Oduyingbo is critical to appreciating how the interplay of wealth, religion and (to a declining extent) intrepidity produced future Baloguns in Ijebuland.

Traditions establish that Odueyungbo was born the only son to a mother (Detimoku) who died shortly after his birth in 1845. Odueyungbo was given the alias, "Kuku", that is ‘Survivor’ in the Ijebu linguistic tradition of the time. Commenting on the immensely lucrative Caravan trade of nineteenth century Yorubaland, Falola instructively informs that, "the Ijebu traders were groomed for this job from an early age."10 Nobody perhaps personified such preparation in 1860s’ Ijebuland like Odueyungbo Kuku. At the age of fifteen, Odueyungbo is reported to have joined his first trading caravan –to markets like Ode Ondo, Apomu, Ketu, Ilorin, Ibadan, Ikosi, and Lagos. In the process, Odueyungbo recorded unprecedented profit in form of slaves, firearms, and cowries. Understandably, subsequent years saw Odueyungbo repeating this enterprise.

To the extent that Odueyungbo would have become so notable to be appointed Seriki (the only office next to the Balogun in terms of military

power) in the 1880s, it is arguable that he must have supplied both personal and military aid to the Onofowokan led all-Ijebu army of that decade. Nothing however could have sealed Odueyungbo's rapid ascendancy than the previously mentioned entrepreneurial success. For whereas the conventional economic base of the warlords were bribes, tributes, war booty, fines, market dues, and gifts from professionals/guilds, Kuku combined all these with the immense revenue from his far-reaching trading activities and network.

By 1890, Odueyungbo Kuku was probably the wealthiest man in Ijebuland, illustrated amply by his harem of over forty wives. He must have been so invincible, that it was to him Onofowokan and the Awujale Tunwashe turned, to crush the intractable insurrection at Ijebu Igbo that was being led by another aggrieved General – Ogushigun- of the Ijebu high command. Moreover, the reported mutual estrangement and attendant contest for political supremacy between the Awujale, Balogun Onofowokan, the Pampa, the *Otu* on one hand and Seriki Oduyingbo (in 1891 Ijebu-Ode) cannot but constitute another explanation of Oduyingbo's rising preeminence.

Three other factors prior to 1899 foreshadowed the accession of Odueyungbo Kuku to the Balogun office. First was Odueyungbo's refusal to be involved in the planned military response against the imminent British expedition force in 1892. In return for which he, in fact, received the offer of the Awujaleship from Captain Bower, the leader of the expedition. Second was the sublime negotiation that Odueyungbo midwifed between the British agents of occupation and the conquered Ijebu capital. Whereas the British got what they wanted, the complete obliteration of the traditional administrative structures of the Ijebu capital was avoided. The third was Odueyungbo's conversion (and emergence as principal patron) to Christianity – which, like Islam, was winning Ijebu converts in droves.

In addition to that measured British recognition earlier mentioned, these foregoing forces, more than other things, properly paved the way when, around 1899, very old Onofowokan voluntarily ceded the Balogun office to Oduyingbo. That is Bello Odueyungbo Kuku, a man whose father and forefathers, radically, had no manifest evidence of heroic military exploits! Apparently, the cross-section of Ijebu had little continued use for a Commander-in-Chief who could not muster the necessary courage to prevent their subjugation, and that of their heart-land.

Wealthy, war veteran, beacon of enlightenment, guarantor of law and order in Ijebu Ode, principal retainer of the new British lord of Ijebuland, and savior, Oduyingbo's accession, and employment of the office of Balogun, between 1899 to 1906, would be inexorably entrenched when he became the quintessential magnate in timber – the principal source of revenue with colonised Ijebuland.

Equally worthy of note is the fact that, during this period (1899-1906), the Balogun institution received a bureaucratic facet. This was in the seats that were reserved for its occupants, in the Ijebu Ode Town Council; and later the District Council, the Judicial Council, and Advisory Board that constituted the major machinery of British political governance in Ijebuland. By spearheading the replacement of the Odela festival with the Ojude Oba festival (initially Ita Oba Festival), not only had Odueyungbo Kuku incorporated into the Balogun structure an element for which the entire Ijebuland would have to focus on the Balogun office, forever, on a yearly basis, but he had also placed the Balogun office at the centre of what has become the most important event in Ijebuland, in a typical year. The transformation of some other outstanding Generals that fought side-by-side with Onofowokan and Odueyungboin to Baloguns, even if of subordinate status, is equally an element associated with the tenure of Balogun Odueyungbo. Balogun Odejaiyi, Balogun Saromi, and Balogun Odunuga, are relevant names in this light. In future, eldest scions

of these families would come to use these subordinate Balogun title, and be accordingly decorated.

Balogun Oduyingbo Kuku would die in November 1907. At his death, not only had he become the acknowledged leader of the adherents of the British-incurred religion – Islam – he was in fact the 'uncrowned ruler' and most powerful native in Ijebu-Ode. Indeed, on several occasions, fines had to be considered for the Awujales, sequel to the British officials' mediation of altercations between this principal Ijebu monarch and Balogun Odueyung Kuku.

The foregoing support-indices, rather than coordination of any army high command provided the pillars for the tenure of Chief Gbadamosi Kuku and Chief Sonmori Kuku as paramount Baloguns of colonial Ijebuland. In an era where the existential threat to the Ijebu had ceased to be invasion by neighbours, and where a war-drenched Balogun mattered little, these colonial Baloguns cleverly reinforced their material inheritances with the considerable fellowship among the Ijebu Islamic faithful, patronage of Western-style education, positioning as access and conduits of the colonists' exploitation of the economic resources of Ijebuland, martial reenactment activities at the yearly Ojude Oba ceremony, personal friendship with British Residents and officers on the ground, and bureaucratic roles in the British-designed political structures for Ijebuland. Remarkably, their tenures were, as early as 1926, characterized by the evolution and infusion of two subordinate offices, the Otun Balogun and the Osi Balogun, in to the Balogun line.

When Balogun Sonmori Akadiri Kuku died in 1950, very few individuals in the new Ijebu Province were a match for Chief Timothy Adeola Odutola and Alhaji Fasasi Adesoye in terms of charisma, influence, and wealth. In the stiff competition that accompanied the search for Balogun Akadiri Kuku's successor, it was charity and wealth that arguably

clinched the title for Fasasi, ahead of the other eminent contenders for the office. After all, no Ijebu man was as successful as Fasasi, to who some employees owe the gratitude for the construction of their houses. Nor was there anyone that was the frequent toast of the eminent Yoruba musicians of the time.

Unlike his predecessors, no martial ancestry, interestingly, can be produced for Fasasi. Neither was he a warlord by any means. But then Balogun Adesoye was obviously a business warlord, and one who was very liberal in the deployment of its gains; two indices that increasingly appeared to be the most important factors in choosing a Balogun in Ijebuland then. Balogun Fasasi Adesoye is known to have kept thirty-eight wives, which, for the time, is a vivid index of his immense means. Unsurprisingly, at the heart of Fasasi's fortune was one of the instructive forces of colonialism: road transportation.

Born in 1900, Balogun Adesoye started off as a dealer in two of the produce – cocoa and kolanut – whose cultivation was vigorously pursued by the British. When, as observed by Oyemakinde, "in the late twenties the upward spiral of vehicle efficiency, traffic density, and road construction" engulfed Yorubaland, Fasasi was one of the few perceptive Ijebu who took advantage of the then concealed opportunity; another one was Odutola. From just one lorry, Adesoye's evolving Shoye Transport Services had, by the 1940s, developed in to a fleet of lorries, trucks, and buses. His vehicles dominated in the movement of passengers, goods and produce to the northern part of Nigeria, Lagos, Shagamu, Ikorodu, Abeokuta and Lagos throughout the forties and fifties. Significant investment in properties and cash crop plantations (at Ocosa, Ajebandele and Odedeyo) were to simultaneously follow, through the seeds from the surplus capital recovered from the booming transport business.

Chief Odunnuga, father of the presiding paramount Balogun of Ijebuland, and one of the major contenders against Adesoye in 1950 apparently did not come close to the latter in terms of business success. Similarly there appeared to be no question as to who was the most philanthropic, and the most popular moslem, between the two. Besides, another contender, and the scion of Balogun Odejayi, who believed he deserved the main office had spurned the Awujale, by rejecting the monarch's offer of the Otun Balogun office. Consequently, it was a conveniently positioned Fasasi Adesoye that was decorated in to the Balogun institution, by Awujale Gbelegbuwa in 1951.

Though Balogun Adesoye's tenure is remarkable for many of the same factors that bolstered the reign of his three immediate predecessors, it is, even more so, for the blow it dealt one (and reinforcement it gave another) of the unwritten rules of accession to the Balogun, Otun Balogun, and the Osi Balogun offices in post-Akadiri Kuku's Ijebuland.

Precisely when it became customary that occupation of the Balogun office must be rotated among the three traditional wards- Porogun, Ijasi, and Iwade Oke – of Ijebu-Ode is uncertain. In the same vein, no one can say exactly when it became mandatory that, at whatever period, any of the three Balogun offices must be occupied by at least a member of each of the wards. That these must be the case, particularly to the Awujale and his inner court was, however, popular in 1951. Given that Otubunibon, and the Balogun Kukus were respectively from Ijasi and Iwade Oke, the Odejayi family from Porogun, naturally felt it was its turn to produce the paramount Balogun. As earlier revealed, the Awujale, who gives final endorsement in such matters, ended up giving the title to Adesoye, from Ijasi. And when the eldest son of Balogun Odejayi rejected the monarch's Otun Balogun offer, the Awujale was quick to find a worthy Porogun man, Chief Juniad Alatshie, to take the Otun Balogun title.

Any discussion of Balogun Soye's tenure will be incomplete without a mention that it was him that pioneered the pomp, fanfare, and feasting that would, henceforth, be a definite characteristic of the Balogun title holders, especially during the Ojude Oba ceremony.

POST-INDEPENDENCE AND THE BALOGUN INSTITUTION IN IJEBULAND

Independence brought a bitter experience for the chiefs. … What-ever status the chiefs had since 1960, has owed….rather…. to business connection, the ability to align their interest with that of the leading members of their towns. The chiefs…traditional legitimacy is being questioned… they lack coercive powers…a person could sue a chief and show him no courtesy. Those among them who …wield influence do so on account of wealth, connections, and charisma.

That was the evaluation of the post-colonial Yoruba chieftaincy structure, by one of the most accomplished Yoruba historian of the last century. More or less the same description can be extracted from the personalities and tenures of post-colonial Ijebuland Baloguns, and the Balogun institution itself. To recall an apt example, independence in fact dawned with the paramount Balogun institution in Ijebuland embroiled in what will become a protracted litigation among vested stakeholders. So much so that between 1961 and 1971, the Balogun seat in Ijebu-Ode stood visibly vacant.

The problem started with the sudden death of Balogun Adesoye in 1961, and with it the now characteristic jostle for the vacant office. Beginning from 1962, Ijebu Ode became witness to the vigorous aspirations of the Odejayi family for the office of the paramount Balogun. To the Awujale and his inner court, however, the custom whereby the paramount Balogun is succeeded by the Otun Balogun was to be applied.

This provided all the incentive that the Odejayi family needed to institute a suit against the Awujale and Chief Junaid Alatshie. The demand of the Odejayi family is predictable: the office of the paramount Balogun or nothing. The case would be in the courts until 1970, when judgement was given in favour of Chief Junaid Alaba Alatshie and the Awujale. Little time was subsequently wasted in the later's decoration of the former, as the sixth paramount Balogun of Ijebuland.

There is reason to believe that a few other critical factors were instrumental to the Awujale's final endorsement of Chief Junaid Alaba Alatishie. Like Adesoye, Alatishie was a man of immense means. His mosques-typified sprawling estates at Italapo and other parts of Ijebu Ode provides instructive evidence of this, besides revealing his instructive religious subscription. Alatishie had made his wealth as a produce agent through his company –CWS Company Limited-which had omnipresent tentacles across the then Western region in Nigeria.

'Balogun Dondodawa, Omo anihu toyinbo oni…omo…tingba igba powun losu… Ajifowowe baba..kare o.' are the key components in Balogun Junaid Alatishie's cognomen. Translated, they mean: 'Balogun, first among equals, envy of the White man. One whose monthly income never went below 200 pounds. At all times bathing with money'. Indeed, for he was the only Ijebu man who could afford to send some of his children to private primary schools in the Great Britain, as early as the fifties. Himself reasonably educated at Ijebu Ode until 1922, three of his thirty children ended-up as medical doctors and one – Halirat- as first female Attorney General of Lagos State as well as Supreme Court judge. Remarkably, the Awujale and Balogun Alatishie's interests would additionally appear to have converged at the juncture of royalty. Explicitly underlining this is the feature of one Chief Junaid Alatishie's sons as the present Gbegande of Oosa, possible because Balogun Alatishie's grandfather was in fact the first Gegande of Ijebu Oosa. Even then, future

stability must have been cleverly introduced in to Balogun Alatishie's tenure when the Awujale ensured that, whereas the office of the paramount Balogun was in the hands of a Porogun man, that of the Otun Balogun and Osi Balogun were accordingly in the hands of an Ijasi man (Chief Shote) and Iwade Oke man (Chief J.A.B Odunnuga).

Shortly before the demise of Balogun Alaba Alatishie, two developments were particularly pronounced in Ijebu-Ode. The first was the popular appeal, acceptance, and imposing social charisma of Otun Balogun Shote. The second was the dominant influence of the outstanding implication of business connections – wealth- on who became Balogun in Ijebu-Ode. As it were, no one reinforces the first like probably the most successful Nigerian musician in the period. Eulogising Shote, Sunny Ade sang:

Otun Balogun ana Osi Balogun, geshin keshe, bode -nu baba won bi o dokan won geshin keshe. Asote maru omo towobola, patako eshin, ki jeshin oshubu shabu, Iru eshin, ki we mo eshin lorun…baba eni iya eni…chief executive … Shokas…Otunba….Shote….
(From Album: Let them sing)

Translated this meant:
Otun Balogun the in-law of the Osi Balogun. On Princely horse, throttle on. Whoever is offended. That his own headache and his father's. On princely Horse, throttle on. Shote, one for who fuss is additional elevation. Shote whose hands are permanently in wealth. He can never fall off the horse. Never. Never …Shote Chief executive Director at Shokas Industry

Sunny Ade in fact devoted a whole track in the album in question to the praises of Chief M.O. Shote; when Shote was only a subordinate Balogun. Very few personalities in Ijebu-Ode as at the time could boast of such rave eulogy. But if Sunny Ade described Shote in the way he did, to the ordinary Ijebu man who heard of, and came in direct contact with him,

Chief Shote was simply, "Baba alaanu" (The Compassionate). Really, by the early nineties, it was no longer news that Shote was one of the wealthiest and most philanthropic individual in Ijebu-Ode. He would in that decade later expand into the manufacture of textile and embroidered textile fabrics (lace). So successful was this enterprise, that his factory, Shokas Industry Limited, ranked number one; among the retail sellers of the product in the major markets at Lagos, Ibadan and other parts of Western Nigeria in the late eighties and nineties.

It is amid the foregoing that the death of Balogun Juniad Alatishie was recorded in 1995. Otun Balogun M.O. Shote's roots in Jadiyara, the twenty-fifth Awujale, and its membership in the same Regberegbe, Mafowoku, as Awujale Adetona, arguably made the ambition of any other person for the Balogun office unattractive before the Awujale. In 1996, Chief M.O Shote consequently became the paramount Balogun of Ijebuland. Just as well, the Otun Balogun office was accordingly filled by Chief J.A.B. Odunnuga, whilst that of the Osi Balogun office went to Alhaji Agboola Alausa (from Porogun).

Though Balogun Shote's reign was very short, it especially heralded the deepening of the Balogun institution more, as a mechanism for maintenance peaceful co-existence among residents of Ijebu-Ode, as a major feature in the Awujale's itinerary, and as a deliberate tool for cultural renaissance, particularly as captured in the increasing elaborateness of the re-enactment acts at the Ojude -Oba Festivals.

The Balogun institution would appear to have turned full-cycle upon the death of Balogun (Alhaji) M.O Shote in 2001, and the accession to the office of Balogun (Alhaji) J.A.B Odunnuga, whose martial descent, interfaced with the rotation policy, to produce him the Balogun title. An assessment of Chief Odunnuga's tenure, so far, is bound to reveal a relevance upheld by the continued validity of the rotation of the Balogun

office among the three traditional sections of Ijebu Ode, considerable following among Islamic faithful in Ijebu-Ode, Western-style education, and usage of the Balogun- stimulated Ojude Oba festival to record the methodical pursuit and achievement of novel ideas. Notably, the formal demand and movement for the creation of an Ijebu state. Much the same way the motion for the building of a one billion naira cultural pavilion (including a royal arcade, museum and library) for the hosting of Ojude-Oba festivals was adopted in one of the pre-2008 Ojude Oba festivals, and realized three years later.

CONCLUSION

This essay has established the origin and meanings of the Balogun title in Ijebuland. In addition, whilst tracing the evolution of the title, it exposes the implications of this on the socio-political and economic aspects of Ijebuland, between the pre-colonial periods to the twenty-first century. The essay argues that there is a direct connection between the disappearance of such traditional military offices like the Olukongbon, Ade Kola, and Adechegun and the appearance of the paramount Balogun title in pre-colonial Ijebuland. Similarly, the work links the retreat of military functions in such offices as the Agbon and the Lupoekun to the ascendancy of Balogun institution. The change in the customary leadership of the all-Ijebu military high command, from the Olisa to the Balogun in the pre-colonial period is also attributed to this ascendancy. At that point, the Balogun institution would never look back in terms power. It became so powerful, to the extent of deposing Awujales, and appointing them. The essay identifies, Christianity, Islam, Western-style education, colored individuals, abolition of some indigenous cultural observances, and other dynamics of the colonial economy (cash produce, cash and road construction) as some of the major factors behind the continuity and changes observable in the Balogun institution in the colonial and post-independence periods. The submission of the essay is that these factors

combine with such elements as charity and philanthropy, to continue to impress relevance on the Balogun institution in Ijebuland, in the face of the always intolerant macro governance structure of Nigeria.

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