

Durham E-Theses

*The religion of the Yorubas especially in relation to
the religion of ancient Egypt: Being in account of the
religious beliefs and practices of Yoruba peoples of
Southern Nigeria, especially in relation to the religion
of Ancient Egypt*

Canon J Olumide Lucas

How to cite:

Olumide Lucas, Canon J (1942) The religion of the Yorubas especially in relation to the religion of ancient Egypt: Being in account of the religious beliefs and practices of Yoruba peoples of Southern Nigeria, especially in relation to the religion of Ancient Egypt. Masters thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/9661/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

THE RELIGION OF THE YORUBAS
especially in relation to
the Religion of Ancient Egypt

Being an account of the religious beliefs
and practices of the Yoruba Peoples of
Southern Nigeria, especially in relation
to the Religion of Ancient Egypt

By

THE REV. CANON J. OLUMIDE LUCAS,
M.A., Dip.Th. (Dunelm), B.D. (Lond),
Pastor, St. Paul's Church,
Breadfruit, Lagos, Nigeria,
Honorary Secretary,
Diocesan Synod of Lagos.

CHAPTER	C O N T E N T S	PAGE
I	I n t r o d u c t i o n	1
II	Ọlọrun, The Supreme Deity	37
III	The Major Oriṣas - A. E S U	60
IV	The Major Oriṣas - B. IFA	81
V	The Major Oriṣas - C. ỌBATALA D. ODUDUWA E & F. AGINJU and YEMOJA	100
VI	The Major Oriṣas - G. ẸSANGO H. OGUN I. ORIṢA OKO J. SỌPONO	114
VII	The Deified Spirits of Ancestors and other Spirits - A. ORO B. ẸLUKU	130
VIII	The Deified Spirits of Ancestors and other Spirits - C. AGEMO D. EGUNGUN E. ADIMU ORIṢA F. GELEDE G. ABIKU	144
IX	The Minor Oriṣas	167
X	Priesthood and Worship 1. Priesthood 2. Prayer 3. Places of Worship 4. Images or Idols 5. Totemism 6. Secret Societies	194
XI	Priesthood and Worship 1 Service and Sacrifice 2 Cannibalism 3 Tabus.	225

CHAPTER	C O N T E N T S	PAGE
XII	Priesthood and Worship 1. Death and Funeral Customs 2. Funeral Guilds	248
XIII	The Yoruba Conception of Man	269
XIV	Magic in Yorubaland	298
XV	Survival of Hieroglyphics, Emblems and other Symbols	328
XVI	Survival of Hieroglyphics, Emblems and other Symbols (continued)	349
XVII	C o n c l u s i o n	366
APPENDIX I	Egyptian Survivals	398
APPENDIX II	Yoruba Hieroglyphics	445
APPENDIX III	Bibliography	452

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	Facing PAGE
1.	A typical Yoruba hut	6
2.	An Oyo Yoruba (Yoruba proper)	6
3.	An Egbá Yoruba	8
4.	A wealthy Ibadan Farmer	9
5.	Yorubas : Ekiti type	9
6.	A bird's eye view of Abeokuta	15
7.	A Yoruba : Lagos (Eko) type	32
8.	An image of Eṣu	61
9.	Another image of Eṣu	62
10.	An image of Ọbalufon	77
11.	Ifa Utensils	86
12.	Diagrammatic Representation of Ifa Odus	On 87-90
13.	Statues of Odudua on a subordinate Deity	106
14.	Shrine of Yemoja	111
15.	Specimen of Sacred Axe of Šango	116
16.	Two Native Hunters - Worshipers of Ogun, the god of iron.	118
17.	Image of Soṣona, god of smallpox	127
18.	Adimuoriṣa - A group of Eyoṣ.	157
19.	Adimuoriṣa - A single Eyo.	157
20.	A large cowrie shell - Emblem of Aje Šaluga	168
21.	Orisa Ibeji (Twin gods)	172
22.	A woman carrying her twins	173
23.	A silk-cotton Tree.	174
24.	Tapping the Palm Tree	175
25.	A site for the worship of Olokun	177

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	Facing PAGE
26A.	Chief's Staff, showing the Bird Osahin	184
26B.	Temple of Osun at Oshogbo	212
27A.	A grove in Ile Ife	212
27B.	A grove showing Mariwo	213
28.	Images of Esu	215
29.	A Path leading to a Deep Bush	235
30.	A Procession of Ogbonis	255
31.	A Sacred Tree	260
32.	Yoruba Pots	265
33.	Babalawo's Paraphernalia	302
34.	Specimens of Yoruba Amulets	312
35.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	329
36.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	330
37.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	330
38.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	330
39.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	331
40.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	331
41.	Hieroglyphic Inscriptions	331
42.	Ukhure I - Sacred Stick	334
43.	Ukhure II - Sacred Stick	334
44.	Ematon - Sacred Emblem	336
45.	Opa Oranyan (Photograph)	338
46.	Opa Oranyan (Drawing)	339
47.	Ikere Monolith	342
48.	O r e	343
49.	Ore's Slave	343
50.	Ore and his slave (Drawing)	344

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	Facing PAGE
51.	Sacred Crocodile	345
52.	Terra Cottas in Ile Ife	347
53.	Image of Olokun	356
54.	Image of Olokun	356
55.	A Collection of Sacred Images	358
56.	The Oni of Ife	360
57.	Bronze Heads at Ijebu Ode	361
58.	Specimens of Double-headed Axe in Yorubaland	363
59.	Specimens of Double-headed Axe in Yorubaland	364
60.	Christian Women in Native Dress	396
	Map of Yorubaland	

CHAPTER I.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE RELIGION OF THE YORUBAS

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

The question has often been asked as to whether the religions of primitive peoples owe their character to arrested development or to degeneration. A great divergence of opinion exists among anthropologists as regards the answer to this question. Some would agree with Dr. Menzies that "the theory that man was originally civilized and humane, and that it was by a fall, by a degeneration from that earliest condition, that the state of savagery made its appearance, is now generally abandoned",¹ or with Dr. Estlin Carpenter that "whatever may be the occasional instances of degeneration or decline, the general movement of things advances from cruder and less complex to the more refined and developed".² Others would agree with Dr. Nassau that "the source of our knowledge of God is not in us, any more than our spiritual life had its source in ourselves. It came ab extra Knowledge of God was thus an original, donated, component part of us."³ In deciding between these alternative theories a collection of evidence from the primitive parts of the world is an invaluable aid. Unfortunately, however, as Sir J.G. Frazer recently observed,⁴ "the boundaries of existing savagery are rapidly shrinking"

1. History of Religion p. 19 seq.

2. Comparative Religion p. 33.

3. Fetishism in West Africa, pp.28, 30.

4. Public Opinion - April 29, 1932, p.417.

owing to the irresistible force with which the current of western civilization flows into the realms of savagery. The task of collecting such evidence thus becomes a matter of urgent necessity, for within the next few decades many valuable materials may be lost or so transformed as to lose their value as evidence for comparative religion.

In his foreward to Dr. Farrow's book "Faith, Fancies and Fetich"¹ Dr. Marett raised the question with regards to Yoruba Paganism in the following significant words:-

"Dr. Farrow sometimes says 'degraded'; and, taken strictly, this term would imply that there has been actual backsliding - a 'falling away from grace'. This is quite a reasonable assumption so long as it is treated as such; and, if we proceed to verify it by further research, I have no doubt that in the medley of Yoruba beliefs many elements will be found to have 'come down in the world' in the course of their history. Especially interesting is the question whether, Olorun, the Supreme Deity, who at present is revered but scarcely worshipped, is the relic of a purer faith, a fair tree that has become choked by an undergrowth of animistic superstitions". Dr. Menzies also, after remarking that "leading anthropologists declare that the debased tribes of Australia and West Africa show signs of a higher civilization they have lost" goes on to say that "the races among whom fetichism is found exhibit a well-known feature of the decadence of religion".² These quotations raise questions which require

1. pp. VII seq.

2. Op. cit., p.38.

further research, a task to which the present writer has addressed himself. The purpose of this thesis is to give an account of research work conducted on the lines indicated above by Dr. Marett, to show what elements in Yoruba Paganism 'have come down in the world in the course of their history', and to identify the 'purer faith' which has now degenerated into rank fetichism. The thesis will also contain criticisms of existing works on the subject, together with additional details which the research has brought to light.

It is hardly necessary to say here that the criticisms of existing works on the subject which will be found in many parts of the thesis are not made in a carping spirit. The writer realizes his indebtedness to previous writers and entertains a deep sense of gratitude to them. All these writers, however, must have recognised the difficulties under which they had to labour. They cannot but realize that their measure of success must be proportional to the extent to which the difficulties are surmounted. First among these difficulties is the frequent failure of non-natives to obtain a thorough understanding of native mentality. This difficulty makes a thorough understanding of native ways of thinking and of native point of view well-nigh impossible. African mentality is extremely complex, and its complexity which always defies superficial analysis, has led to the erroneous view that it is "equally variable not only as between different individuals, but often in one and the same person."¹ Added to this

1. Dr. Farrow, Op. cit. p.29.

is the natural resentment of the native at the interference of non-natives with the mysteries of his religion, especially when these are the tenets of a secret Society. The penalty attached to the divulgence of secrets was, prior to the establishment of the Pax Britannica, inevitable death. The task of obtaining information thus becomes difficult and perplexing. Miss Mary Kingsley truly says: "Stalking the West African idea is one of the most charming pursuits in the world..... as beset with difficulty as grizzly-bear hunting".

Another difficulty is that of language. Ignorance of the language or a partial acquaintance with it accounts for a large number of errors. For example, Colonel Ellis and Mr. R.E. Dennett - whose works contain a wealth of valuable information and to whom much praise is due for the courage, labour and perseverance necessitated by research work done in those early days - had but a partial acquaintance with the Yoruba language. Some of their errors have been corrected by Dr. Farrow¹ and need not be repeated here. Miss Kingsley, whose references to Yorubaland are also valuable, had no knowledge of the language at all. The works of Bishops Crowther and Johnson are not much affected by errors due to language. Both Bishops² spoke the language with tolerable fluency, although they were Africans who came from Sierra Leone where a knowledge of the language had been lost. Unfortunately the country was not

1. Op. cit p. 133.

2. Bishop Crowther was a Yoruba, born in Yorubaland but afterwards taken to Sierra Leone whence he returned to Yorubaland as a Missionary.
Bishop Johnson was born by Yoruba natives settled in Sierra Leone.

fully opened up in their days as it is now, and hence their field of research was confined within the limits of the towns and villages of the few tribes whom they could safely reach. Besides, neither of them treated the subject from the point of view of comparative religion.

Dr. Farrow's book "Faith, Fancies and Fetich" is probably the best treatise on the subject which has yet been published. He lived in the country for a period of about five years and acquired a working knowledge of the language. All this enabled him to obtain information otherwise unobtainable by the average non-native. Yet his work suffers from some of the difficulties referred to above. For example, in spite of his study of the language, mistranslations and wrong expressions occur in his book, which nullify the value of the explanation or theories based on them. Two examples may be given here, Dr. Farrow speaks of "Orun-Afe¹fe - the heaven of cool breezes". There is no such expression in Yoruba. The correct expression is "Afeferere - Favourable wind". Again, after criticising Ellis for confusing the word "duru" with "duro" he says "duru (always, and only) means "Hard or difficult"². The real meaning of the word is "important, great, distinguished"; e.g. "Nkan duru", something important or fraught with great consequences. Other errors will be pointed out later. Suffice it here to tender an apology, once for all, for these criticisms which are necessitated by a desire to give an accurate account of the subject.

The present writer is a Yoruba, born and bred in Yorubaland.

1. Op. cit. p.133.

2. Op. cit. p. 55.



Fig.1 A typical Yoruba hut



Fig.2 An Oyo Yoruba (Yoruba Proper)

Not only does he speak his native language fluently, but he has also had the privilege of studying it from the point of view of philology. He has lectured on the language and on Yoruba paganism for many years. His acquaintance with the beliefs and practices of his country is a very close one, as he had shared some of the beliefs during some periods of his life, and had had occasion to take part in some of the practices which light and knowledge gained in succeeding years have shown to be superstitious. His contact with the unsophisticated natives is direct, thus facilitating the task of obtaining first-hand and trustworthy information when necessary.

YORUBALAND AND ITS PEOPLES. Yorubaland lies on the southwestern part of Nigeria, between the third and the sixth degrees of north latitude. It is bounded on the north and on the east, roughly, by the river Niger, on the south by the Bight of Benin, and on the west by the French Protectorate of Dahomey. It is a fertile and well-populated region in West Africa, rich in tropical vegetation and producing abundant economic crops. It has been classified by Sir A.C. Burns as one of the advanced communities in Nigeria,¹ and by other writers as the most advanced community.

According to the last census the population of Yorubaland is approximately 4,000,000,² and comprises the following tribes :- Yoruba proper, Ibadan, Egba, Ijebu, Ekiti, Ondo, Ijesa, Ife, Ketu, Bini, Jekri and Igara. Some writers exclude

1. History of Nigeria p.32.

2. 1931 Census.

the names of Bini, Jekri and Igara from the list, because these tribes are culturally inferior to most of the other tribes. The exclusion finds support in the attitude of the remaining tribes to them. As a matter of fact there are some tribes who are so ignorant of their relation to the Igaras as to use the latter's name as a synonym for thieves or robbers. A study of the languages spoken by the three tribes, however, show that they are more or less remote dialects of the Yoruba language,¹ whilst a study of their beliefs and practices shows that the difference of culture is a clear illustration of degrees of degeneration.

The Yorubas are undoubtedly one of the leading and most progressive peoples in West Africa. Before the advent of the British, they were famous for their leather work, chip-carving, smelting of ores, manufacture of steel tools, spinning and other arts. They were also keen agriculturists, although in some parts of the country the deteriorating effect of the slave trade led to the substitution of slave-raiding for agriculture. Their kingdom was sufficiently powerful to resist, with occasional reverses, the successive waves of incursions made by their northern neighbours. There is evidence that their kingdom once extended to Dahomey and the Gold Coast, where gods which originated in Yorubaland are still worshipped.² In the sphere of religion, they showed marked superiority to their neighbours. Miss Kingsley gives an example of this when she says: "What is one god in Yoruba, you get as several gods in Dahomey."³

1. History of Nigeria by A.C. Burns pp. 63 & 64.

2. History of Nigeria by A.C. Burns pp. 33 & 34.

3. Travels in West Africa p. 141.

The achievements of the Yorubas in other parts of the world are also creditable. Some of the slaves imported into America were Yorubas. It cannot be regarded otherwise than just and fair that the Yorubas at home should have a share in the credit due to their kith and kin - the black men in America. Two instances may be cited here. The late Booker T. Washington, the distinguished black man who founded Tuskegee Institute in South America was a man of real fibre and of brilliant achievement. His career was one which would bring credit to any nation which could claim him as a member. There is no doubt that he was of Yoruba extraction, as his middle name "Tanife-¹ani" is unquestionably a Yoruba name which is still in use in Yorubaland, especially among the Egbas. Again, the negro spirituals which have thrilled the western world and which show the delicate pathos of the black man are a development of "Negro" music as used by the Yorubas and other tribes in West Africa.

Under the British rule the Yorubas have made great progress. So great has been the progress that it has received both favourable and adverse comments. Whilst some observers rejoice at the rapid and remarkable changes taking place, others deplore them as merely producing a mere veneer of civilization, and giving the natives the husk rather than the kernel of western civilization. The significant fact, however, is the ease and rapidity with which the Yorubas assimilate western ideas, the splendid results achieved by them within the short period between the advent of the British and
1. The word is corrupted in America; hence the slight difference in spelling.



Fig. 4 A Wealthy Ibadan Farmer

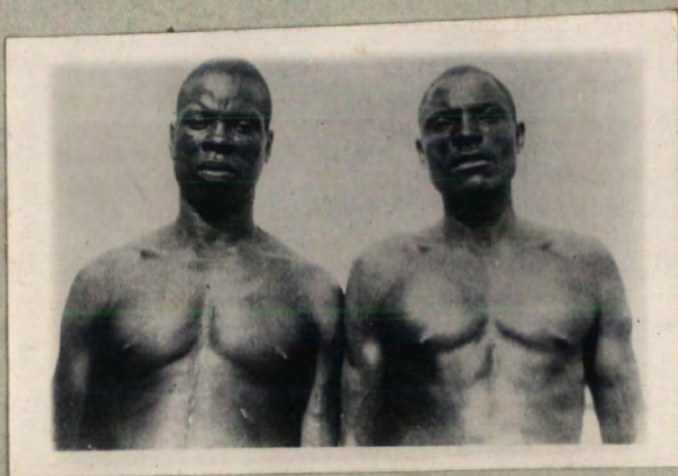


Fig. 5 Yorubas: Ekiti Type

the present time, the number of leaders produced, and the manifest signs of determination to make improvement in every walk of life. For instance, the Church Missionary Society commenced evangelistic work among the Yorubas in 1845. Within eighty-eight years they have produced six native Bishops, one of whom was the late Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther who was rescued as a boy by the British from a slave ship. Such a record has no parallel in any other part of modern Africa. Again, beautiful comments have been made on their military prowess by several distinguished European writers. The following is a specimen:- "Throughout this campaign¹ the conduct of the African soldiers of the Nigeria Regiment,² and indeed of all the West African Frontier Force was beyond praise..... Dozens of instances could be given of the gallantry of the troops."³

Mr. Mollison recording his experiences in West Africa said: "The ancient kingdom of Yoruba may be taken as one of the most interesting of these great tribal divisions, both as regards its geographical situation and national character." "When it is considered that at distances of one day's march from one another are to be found cities of from 20,000 to 60,000 inhabitants besides the still larger city of Ibadan, and the innumerable farm villages which are scattered over the central portion of Yoruba, making a population which has been variously estimated at from two to three millions, it is

1. Campaign against German Cameroon, 1914.

2. The Nigeria Regiment consists of four battalions. One of these consists mainly of Yorubas.

3. History of Nigeria by A.C. Burns pp. 233 & 342.

easy to imagine how great must be the agricultural activity of the people and how vast the proportionate area of land under cultivation."

"It must not be forgotten that the Yoruba is by custom a fully clothed mortal. It is considered in the highest degree unfashionable to appear in the public streets without a complete covering of two or three ample and well-dyed clothes, draped round the body in not ungraceful folds."¹

It should be noted here that the populations of the towns and villages have since increased considerably, the population of Ibadan now being 300,000.

After a visit to West Africa for linguistic purposes Prof. D. Westerman thus described the Yoruba people: "The Yoruba people are remarkable for their attainments. They live in large communities (Ibadan has 300,000 inhabitants), have a very highly developed religion and mythology and know something about their own history; they have always been enterprising people, and as traders and settlers exercise a considerable influence beyond the boundaries of their country."²

Other instances may be cited.³ But those given above and the facts already stated make the conclusion almost irresistible that the Yorubas must have been in contact with a higher civilization which they have lost. An enquiry into

-
1. The Yoruba country, West Africa, 1891 pp. 3, 9 & 10.
 2. "Africa", Journal of the International Institute of African languages and cultures, Vol. II No. 4, pp. 341 & 342.
 3. Cf. also C.V. Bellamy's paper on "A West African Smelting House" quoted by Dennett in his Nigerian Studies, p.126; also Ellis' Yoruba-speaking peoples pp. 32 & 33.

their origin therefore becomes imperative.

THE YORUBA LANGUAGE. Before an attempt is made to trace the origin of the Yorubas, some remarks about the character of their language may be made here. The language belongs to the agglutinating class, and to the family known as Sudanic. Its syllables are all open, unless when the final consonant is 'n'. It is a tonal language and has three distinct accents, viz the high (/) the middle¹, and the low (\). A slight change of accent may change the meaning to the opposite of what is intended. The circumflex (~) is used to denote a double vowel or an abbreviation. In either case, the proper accent of each of the vowels composing the double vowels or appearing in the abbreviated syllables is omitted. These features make the language difficult for Europeans to acquire, and, as a matter of fact, very few non-natives ever learn to speak the language with any degree of accuracy.

As it is a phonetic language, its orthography is very simple. Each letter represents a single distinct sound, except in the case of the nasal 'n' and the letter 'gb', a deep guttural sound, which has no equivalent in English. The consonants are the same as in English, with the exception of the letter 'gb' noted above and the following letters which do not exist :- c, q, v, x, z and p (pronounced as in part), the place of which is taken by p a thick labial sound. The letter s (s with diacritical mark) is pronounced like sh in shame.

The vowels are a, e, ẹ, o, ọ, u and are all broad sounds.

1. No sign is used to indicate the middle tone.

a	is pronounced like	-ar	in park
e	"	"	- a " name
e	"	"	- e " bend
o	"	"	- o " rode
o	"	"	-aw " raw
u	"	"	- u " rule

An important point to be noted in connection with orthography is that the present system is imperfect. Some of the words contain letters which tend to obscure the origin of the words.

Before the note on orthography is concluded it is necessary to explain the rules governing the modifications which Yoruba words undergo before they are incorporated into the Foreign language. The rules are almost the same as those governing the modifications which led to dialectic differences in the language. In order to facilitate reference to them, they will be summarized and numbered as follows :

- (1) Yoruba is a phonetic language. Every consonant has its vowel (the nasal 'n' being the only exception). If therefore two consonants follow one another in a foreign word, a vowel will be inserted between them. In some cases, one of the consonants is dropped.
- (2) All syllables in Yoruba are open. If a syllable in a foreign word is closed, the final consonant either drops out or receives a vowel, thereby forming a new syllable. For example, the word 'pan' becomes 'panu'

in Yoruba (see also the next rule).

- (3) The double consonant 'th' becomes either 't' or 'd'. e.g. 'that' becomes 'dat' in West African languages generally. In Yoruba it must become 'dati'. But the form 'da' is well known in the pidgin English spoken in West Africa e.g. 'that boy' become 'da boy'.
- (4) Final vowels are often nasalized. This is especially the case when a final consonant has been elided or the word has been abbreviated.
- (5) The short 'a' does not exist in the Yoruba language. Whenever it occurs in a foreign word it is generally changed to the long sound of 'a' as in 'bar', or is deflected in 'e' as in 'pet'.
- (6) The vowel sound 'er' as in 'her' becomes the long 'a' in Yoruba.
- (7) The vowels 'i' and 'u' are sometimes substituted for one another. This also applies to the vowels 'a' and 'i' and 'e' and 'o'.
- (8) The letter 'h' ('h' with a diacritical mark) representing a deep guttural sound does not exist in the Yoruba language. Whenever it occurs in a foreign word it becomes modified into 'g' (hard sound) or 'd'.
- (9) The double letter 'kh' also does not exist in Yoruba. Before a foreign word containing it can be incorporated into Yoruba it must be treated as follows: when it is

followed by a consonant it receives a vowel which forms a new syllable with it in accordance with rule 2 above; if it is followed by a vowel and the word is not a monosyllable, the 'kh' is omitted.

- (10) A prefix consisting of a vowel or a vowel and an initial consonant is sometimes added to an adopted word to denote a possessor or an agent.
- (11) 'p' (as in pat) sometimes becomes 'b' in Yoruba
e.g. Bishop becomes 'Bis**o**bu' in Yoruba.
- (12) The aspirate is often elided.
- (13) 'r' is often substituted for 'n'.
- (14) A pure Yoruba noun begins with a vowel, unless it is a noun phrase. A noun adopted from another language may be left without any modification, or it may have a vowel prefixed to it, so that it may look like an ordinary Yoruba noun.

THE ORIGIN OF THE YORUBAS. The question of the higher religion and civilization which the Yorubas seem to have lost is intimately linked up with that of their origin. Dr. Farrow truly says: "any light we can obtain on the history of a people is of value in tracing the origin of their religion, and if certain features in their religion throw light on their origin, the use of this evidence is not necessarily 'arguing in a circle'¹". Unfortunately there is no authentic history of the Yorubas until within the last few decades. Such records

1. Op. citra p. 166.



Fig. 6 A Bird's Eye View of Abeokuta

as we possess carry us back only to the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century. Various speculations have been made, several theories have been propounded by different writers, but no one has yet succeeded in identifying the locality so as to establish a connexion between that locality and the Yoruba religion.

In the absence of records, the Yorubas themselves have no definite knowledge of their origin. Their popular myths "give to Ile Ife the honour of being the spot where God created man, both white and black, and there can be little doubt that Ife was the first settlement of the Yorubas in their present country". Hence the epithet ile "home" is always attached to the name of Ife. From Ile Ife the first home of the Yorubas in Nigeria, the different tribes migrated north and south, founding other towns and absorbing or driving away the original settlers. The Egba kingdom in Abeokuta which was founded in 1837 is perhaps the last kingdom to be founded. The value of the Ife tradition lies in the explanation of the pre-eminent position of Ife in Yoruba folk-lore and its spiritual importance to the other tribes whose "kings" or "paramount chiefs" still have to obtain the sword of state from Ile Ife. There is no doubt, however, that the Yorubas were immigrants into the country which has now become the land of their adoption, although the migration must have taken place at a very early date.

The general trend of opinion among writers is that the Yorubas and some other West African tribes came from the east

or north-east. The opinion finds a strong support in myths frequently related in many parts of West Africa. The countries suggested as the original home of West Africans are parts of Asia, Egypt and the Sudan. In the case of the Yorubas the view which has held the field in recent years and which has been quoted by prominent writers with complacency and seeming approval is that of Sultan Bello of Sokoto. The Sultan states that the Yorubas "it is supposed, originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod. The cause of their establishment in the West of Africa was, as it is stated, in consequence of their being driven by Yaa-rooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia to the western coast between Egypt and Abyssinia. From that spot they advanced into the interior of Africa, till they reached Yarba, where they fixed their residence. On their way they left, in every place they stopped at, a tribe of their own people. Thus it is supposed that all the tribes of Soodan, who inhabit the mountains, are originated from them, as also are the inhabitants of Ya-ory".¹

In spite of the plausible character of this view, it appears to be based on a series of suppositions and mere hearsay, and in consequence of this, to be fanciful and erroneous. The similarity of the words "Yaa-rooba" and "Yarba" cannot but raise one's suspicion against the accuracy of the view. One cannot but ask the question, Is there any connection between the names Yaa-rooba, Yarba and Yoruba? Do the people

1. Clapperton and Denham's Travels, Appendix.

call themselves Yoruba because they were driven out of Arabia by Yaa-rooba, and do they give their name to the town of Yarba? If there is no connexion between the names then it is very curious that the Yorubas were driven out by Yaa-rooba, and they advanced until they reached Yarba! If there is a connexion, then the view lays itself open to a serious objection. It suggests that the Yorubas adopted the name of their conqueror. The adoption of such a name has no parallel in the history of the world, and anyone who understands the mentality of the Yorubas will readily agree that they would be the last people to adopt the names of their conquerors. The view also loses credit by recording the supposition that "all the tribes of Soodan who inhabit the mountains, are originated from them, as also are the inhabitants of Ya-ory", a supposition which cannot bear either a historical or a linguistic test.

In spite of the fanciful character of Sultan Bello's view on the whole, his statement that the Yorubas "originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan who were of the tribe of Nimrod" demands further consideration. Miss Mary Kingsley has discussed the statement, and has adduced evidence leading to the probable conclusion that the Benins (and consequently all the Yorubas) were the children of Canaan.¹ Dr. Farrow too has collected interesting facts about the traditions, myths, customs, idioms and sacrifices of the Yorubas

1. O. cit. pp. 456 & 457.

which show distinct Semitic traces. Commenting on these facts he says, "Whilst they do not necessarily imply any trace of Semitic origin, they would seem to indicate that the Semitic Hebrews and the Negritic Yorubas belong to branches which at some early stage were united to a common stem."¹ Sir. A.C. Burns, following Prof. Leo. Froebenius, the German explorer of Africa, says that "it is probable that the Yorubas were not originally of negro blood."² All this suggests that the Yorubas were at one time in Asia, and that Asia may be regarded as their original home. The probability is further strengthened by the fact that the name of Nimrod, corrupted by the Yorubas to Lamurudu, figures prominently in Yoruba mythology.

There is, however, one remark which must be added to the comments on this statement. In the first place, it must be pointed out that although the Yorubas might belong to the tribe of Nimrod they must not be regarded as the children of Canaan as Sultan Bello suggested. Cush and Canaan were brothers; Nimrod was the son of Cush,³ and hence the members of the tribe of Nimrod could not have been "remnants of the children of Canaan."

The rejection of the view of an Arabian origin does not affect the probability of an Asiatic origin as far as the Yorubas are concerned. As a matter of fact, some people seem to regard Chaldea as the original home of the Yorubas. Some writers by

1. Op. cit p. 168.

2. History of Nigeria p. 33.

3. Gen. X, 6 & 8 for a full discussion of this matter see History of Egyptian Religion by Dr. C.P. Tiele pp 7-11 Dr. Tiele maintains that the divisions are not racial or ethnographical but historico-social.

laying emphasis on Hebrew idioms and customs indirectly suggest Palestine. They forget that the idioms and customs are not peculiar to the Hebrews, but ^{are} also found among other Semitic peoples. That the Yorubas came into contact with the Chaldean is, in their opinion, strongly suggested by some traces which the Chaldean language seems to have left on the Yoruba language. For example, the name Aki (or Akin - nasal n) is very common in Yorubaland and signifies the name of a hero. There are myths about the origin of the name and of the superhuman exploits of the first bearer of the name. It is interesting to observe that the name occurs in Chaldean legends as the name of the hero who rescued Shargani - Shar-Ali, that is Sargon the Elder, from being drowned.¹ Further evidence is supposed to be given by the fact that contact with the Sumerian element of the Chaldean population is attested to by the presence of a few Sumerian words in the Yoruba language. For example, the Sumerian word si means "life". This becomes ² si in Yoruba and possesses exactly the same meaning. Ko si in Yoruba means "He is not living, i.e. He is dead" or "someone or something does not exist." The evidence given above is too flimsy to support the theory that "the original home of the Yorubas was in the land between the Suphrates and the Tigris." The theory cannot be accepted until it is based on data supplied by scientific research.³

1. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization pp. 596-598.

2. There is no "z" sound in Yoruba, its place being taken by "s" sound.

3. See the exposition of the theory by Miss H. Millicent Douglas in the issue of the Daily Service (Nigerian Newspaper) for 30th January, 1942.

CONNECTION WITH ANCIENT EGYPT. Whilst it is doubtful whether the view of an Asiatic origin is correct, there can be no doubt that the Yorubas were in Africa at a very early date. A chain of evidence leads to the conclusion that they must have settled for many years in that part of the continent known as Ancient Egypt. The facts leading to the conclusion may be grouped under the following heads :-

- A. Similarity or Identity of Language.
- B. Similiarity or Identity of Religious Beliefs.
- C. Similarity or Identity of Religious Ideas and Practices.
- D. Survival of Customs, and of names of persons, places, objects, etc.

A. Similarity or Identity of Language. The evidence under this heading is very strong. There is a very close resemblance between the language of the Ancient Egyptians and that of the Yorubas. The former has been described as follows:- "Both Coptic and Ancient Egyptian are of the utmost simplicity of structure, so much so that the language seems all roots. Inflections are almost absent, parts of speech are hardly to be distinguished. Thus ran-i means "name me", and according to the context does duty for "my name" or for "I call" etc. A few auxiliaries mark moods and tenses. The noun is not declined.....¹" The above description applies, almost in every detail, to the Yoruba language. Thus, ran-mi in

1. National Encyclopædia, Article Egypt, p.208.

Yoruba mean "send me" or "help me" or "infect me" or "pain me" or "call me"¹, etc. according to the position of the accent on the word ran or according to the context in which the words occur. Another example of this is the word wa which has as many as twelve different meanings which may be determined by the kind of accent placed upon it and by its function in the context.

The evidence is not limited to similarity of language. There are many words in Yoruba which are identical in spelling and meaning with Egyptian words; there are others which are identical in meaning but whose spelling presents differences which can easily be accounted for by the rules of modifications given above. The writer believes that words which are wholly identical with Egyptian words or contain roots of Egyptian origin form not less than half of the words in the present Yoruba vocabulary. A few examples of these will be given here. The word bu² in the Egyptian language means "place". This word exists in Yoruba with exactly the same meaning. For example, in the Ondo dialect, the expression ki bu e e means "Where (lit., what place) are you going ? The following words contain the word as one of their roots :- ibudo, "a place to settle"

-
1. Wa - come, seek, then : wa - our or ours;
Wa - exist, dig, paddle, drive (a car), cling (to)
Wa - suddenly, clearly, profusely.
 2. Every noun in Yoruba begins with a vowel; hence a vowel is always added to bu as a prefix. Sometimes the vowel 'u' is changed to 'i', the word thereby becoming ibi instead of ibu. Of course both forms are used in the language.
See rule 14 above.

i.e. a camp; ibusun, a place to sleep" i.e. a bed; other similar words are ibu-joko, "a chair", ibu-so, a station, a-bu-le, premises, etc. In the Egyptian language the word amon means "to conceal" or "concealed". This word exists in Yoruba with the same meaning e.g. fi p' amon, "conceal it" (lit, "regard it as hidden or cause it to be hidden"). Other examples are :- (1) Uu = wu, "rise up, swell". (2) Miri = water; in Yoruba this word is used only as an adverb, viz: Miri - ¹miri, "dazzling like water"; but among the Ibos who are the next door neighbours of the Yorubas the word ^{is} still used to denote water. (3) Ha, ²"great house" becomes ³iga in Yoruba which means a great house or a king's palace. (4) Hor "to be high", "that which is high" becomes ori (h is elided, and r being a final consonant receives an additional vowel to form a new syllable). The word ori means "top" "head". (5) Fahaka means a globe fish which has silvery lines on its skin. ⁴Fadaka in Yoruba means "silver". The word Fahaka survives in modern Egyptian language in the form of Faddah which means ⁵"silver". The word ⁶naprit which means a grain survives in the Yoruba word inabiri or inabere which also means a kind of grain.

The connection between the two languages is so close that it is quite possible for the one to help in determining the significance of words whose meanings have not yet been definitely

-
1. pronounced by some Ibo tribes as mili.
 2. h becomes g, (see rule 8, above).
 3. Iga Eleko, the palace of Eleko, the paramount Chief of Lagos.
 4. Maspero, Op. cit. p.36.
 5. Lane's Modern Egyptians, page 579; Everyman's Edition, Appendix B, Moneys.
 6. Maspero's Dawn of Civilization p. 81 Note 2. p becomes b, and final t is dropped.

ascertained or have become obscure in the other. Two examples of such words will be given here. Prof. Sayce, commenting on Horus Ahi, says "The meaning of Ahi, the local title assigned to Horus the younger is doubtful"¹. The word Ahi becomes Ḥhin in Yoruba (short 'a' becomes 'e' according to rule 5 above and 'i' becomes nasalized). The Yoruba word ḥhin which means "behind" or "the back of a thing" is generally applied to a junior person, especially to the younger of twins who is named K'ḥhin-de (lit. to come behind). The probable meaning of the Egyptian word Ahi, therefore, is "the younger"² and the word is used probably in the same way as the word "Junior" when added to the name of a son bearing same name as his father. Again, Prof. Sayce, commenting on Nini says "the meaning of the last name (i.e. Nini) is doubtful."³ The word nini in Yoruba means "perfect" e.g. tutu nini, "as cold as possible". Hence the word Nini⁴ probably signifies "perfection."

B. Similarity or Identity of Religious Beliefs.

Abundant proof of intimate connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas may be produced under this head. Most of the principal gods were well-known, at one time, to the Yorubas. Among these gods are Osiris, Isis, Horus, Shu, Sut, Thoth, Khepera, Amon, Anu, Khonsu, Khnum, Khopri, Hathor, Sokaris, Ra, Seb, the four elemental deities and others. Most of the gods survive in name or in attributes or in both. Ra survives only in name, for the Yorubas are no longer sun-worshippers.

1. The Religion of Ancient Egypt, p. 145.

2. Prof. Maspero thinks that Ahi means "he who strikes the sistrum" but the word is often used when it is plain that there is no reference to the sistrum. When the word is applied to priests the context always shows that they are regarded as belonging to a lower class of priests who may be regarded as junior to some other class of priests.

But the words Irawo, rara, rara, etc preserve the idea. The literal meaning of i - ra - wo, a star, is "that which appears when the Ra (that is, the sun) has set". (wo - set). The Yoruba expression ra - ra, "not at all", is probably an old form of swearing by the god Ra. The word ra-ra "dwarf" bears an unmistakable reference to the Danga dwarfs which, in Egyptian Mythology, hailed the daily arrival of the sun-god in the morning with great delight. Again, the moon-god Khonsu must have been known to the Yorubas. The initial letter 'kh' disappears in Yoruba (See rule 9) and the word becomes osu in Yoruba which means "the moon".

It has been observed above that the word amon exists in the Yoruba language with the same meaning as it had in the language of the Ancient Egyptians. The God Amon is one of the gods formerly known to the Yorubas. The Yoruba words mon, mimon, "holy or sacred", are probably derived from the name of the god. Thoth was the Egyptian god of truth and righteousness. The initial letter "th" becomes "t" and the final "th" is dropped. The word thus becomes to, which means right, fair or just. Other words derived from Thoth are O-ti-to truth, (lit., that which belongs to Thoth) e-to, fairness, justice, right.

One more example will be given here. The West African word "Ye" which means "to exist" is subject to many changes in the different languages; "e" sometimes becomes "a" or "i" or "o" or "o" or these vowels nasalized. Throughout all these changes the meaning remains the same. For the sake of convenience the

root-word is designated "Ye" in this work. The word occurs in several of the leading West African Languages viz: Tshi, Ewe, Ga, Yoruba, Edo, etc.¹ The vowel of the word is subject to modification in the different languages to indicate shades of meaning and may be replaced by any of the other vowels or these vowels nasalized. "J" sometimes replaces "Y", and a nasal sound sometimes precedes it e.g. Nye (Ewe language) = to be.

It is quite probable that the word is of Semitic origin, and that it comes from a root which means to live or to exist. The Hebrew word for "to be", "to exist" is הָיָה ha-ya. The first part of this word (ha) varies when the verb is conjugated and must have been left out when the word was adopted by the peoples who afterwards migrated to West Africa. It is noteworthy that all the changes which the second part undergoes in the process of conjugation are reflected in the different forms of the word in West African languages. The word is also used in a causative sense. For example, in Yoruba Yeye mi means "my mother" or "she who causes me to live (i.e. in this world)". Yeye is often contracted to Ye or modified to Iya. the meaning remains unchanged. In Tshi language Ye mi means "My maker" and is applied to the Supreme Deity.

1. See Pott, Ueber die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues von Wilhelm von Humbolt, vol. 2, pp. 495-498 (1876). See also the comparative table given by Ellis in the Yoruba Speaking Peoples pp. 373 & 374.

These considerations will help in determining the meaning of the word "Yoruba" which is made up of two distinct words, viz: "Yo" and "ruba". "Yo" is a modified form of the word "ye" and the word "ruba" comes from rpa. According to rule (1) above, a vowel must be inserted between two consonants coming together; hence the vowel "u" or sometimes "i" is inserted between "r" and "p". According to rule 11 "p" becomes "b". Thus rpa becomes ruba. Now the word "rpa" was the name of the hereditary prince of the gods by which Seb was known in Ancient Egypt during the feudal period of Egypt when as yet there was no Pharaoh who ruled over the whole land¹. The word "Yoruba"² therefore means "the living rpa" or "the Creator of rpa", and is adopted as a name by the worshippers of "rpa" or of "the creator of rpa". That this is the true interpretation of the word is supported by similar instances in other West African languages to which reference will be made later. The Egyptian gods which are still worshipped in Yorubaland under identical names and with similar ideas will be dealt with in the succeeding chapters.

C. Identity or similarity of religious ideas and practices.

The number of Yoruba ideas and practices which are identical with or similar to those of the Ancient Egyptians is so large that it affords a clear evidence of the close connection which once existed between the Yorubas and the Ancient Egyptians. The wonder is that so many ideas and practices remain unchanged in spite of the lapse of several centuries since the Yorubas migrated

1. Sayce P. cit. page 129.

2. Compare the word Yo-ruba with Ia-rba-s, the name of the North African prince mentioned in Vergil Aeneid, Bk.IV, lines 36,196.

southwards and westwards from Egypt. Some of these ideas and practices will now be mentioned :-

(1) The idea of a future life and that of judgment after death. Reference has been made above to the fact that the Egyptian god Thoth was well known to the Yorubas as the god of truth and righteousness. In consequence of this the Yorubas have a strong belief in judgment after death, when every person will have to render an account of his actions in the present world, and when both the good and the wicked will receive their due reward or punishment. The wicked will be consigned to "Orun Apadi" i.e. "Hell". "Hell", says Tylor, "is unknown to savage thought". The existence of a belief in a future life and in hell among the Yorubas is therefore a survival from some higher religion which in this case may be rightly identified with the religion of Ancient Egypt.

There are many Yoruba proverbs showing the existence of these ideas. The following are examples: Gbogbo ohun ti a ba se li aiye li ao duro ka ni asalu orun "We shall have to give an account of everything that we do in this world when we reach the Hall of Heaven"¹. Nigbati mo ba ku, emi pelu re yio lo ro o niwaju Olorun "Whenever I die, both you and I will have to state our case before God."²

(2) The deification of Kings. In Yorubaland kings are paid such respect as may be described as divine honours. They are

1. This seems to contain a reference to the Hall of Judgment over which Osiris presided and where Thoth weighed souls in the balance.

2. Cf. Isin Orisha Bibo ni ile Yoruba by Bishop James Johnson p.51.

usually addressed as Oluwa mi, Oba i.e. "my Lord, the King".
¹
Sango, one of the deities worshipped in many parts of Yorubaland, is a deified king.

In this connection the existence, in Yorubaland, of a form of double government such as existed in Ancient Egypt may be mentioned.
²
This has persisted all through the centuries, and although the system is fast dying out, yet ^{it} still exists in such important town as Isẹhin, where in 1913 it resulted in bloodshed and murder owing to the unrestrained desire of the vizier to usurp powers belonging to the "Alasẹhin" or paramount chief.

(3) The importance attached to names. This is quite as great as it was in Ancient Egypt. A man's name is supposed to have a real force in determining his character.
³
For example, Oruko nro o "His name is urging him on to such acts". Names are not given haphazardly but according to the prevailing circumstances at the time when the children were born. Every person takes a pride not only in his own name, but also in his ancestral names: for example, Emi Afolabi omp Lisabi "I Afolabi, a descendant of Lisabi".

(4) Strong belief in a future life. The ideas about the future life as held by the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas are quite identical, with the exception of such details as the

-
1. Compare this name with Sangu, the name of the Chief Priest in a Chaldean Temple (See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.675)
 2. Compare the case of Pharaoh and Joseph recorded in the Book of Genesis.
 3. See Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptians, page 42, Sec. 35 and compare Johnson, History of the Yorubas, Chapter V.

Yorubas seem to have lost. Some of the very terms used by the Ancient Egyptians are still in use among the Yorubas of today. They are as follows :- Ka, Aakhu, Khu, Sahu and Ba. According to Prof. Sayce the Egyptian word Khu or the luminous part of man "is a spark of that divine intelligence which pervades the world and to which it must return"¹ It "passed after death into the other world"². That this word should be used in the same sense by the Yorubas is a very interesting fact. The Yoruba word for the verb "to die" is Ku³, that is, "to become a luminous spirit". The word is further explained in the expression O ku o di arinako, "He is dead, he has become a disembodied spirit to be met with at by-paths". In a later chapter it will be shown that the idea of the luminous spirit returning to the divine intelligence is well-known to the Yorubas.

The above remarks about the word Ku will clear up the difficulty about the meaning of the Yoruba salutation O ku and the word Ku used with other words for the purposes of salutation. There is no doubt that the literal translation of O ku as "May you die" is wrong; so also is the translation of Ku ise as "May you die of work".

According to Egyptian conception the Khu is enveloped by the soul which it seeks to raise to the same standard of ethereal

1. Op. Cit. p. 63.

2. Op. Cit. p. 62.

3. The noun is Iku, death, that is, the process of becoming a luminous spirit. The word Ku is used in the same sense by the Ewe people of the Gold Coast e.g. Ma ku Mawu "I will die God's death."

life and quality. After death, the Khu becomes liberated. The wicked soul, which had not responded to the promptings of the Khu passes through a series of sufferings until "it dies the second death, and is annihilated for ever. The good soul, on the other hand, which has listened to the voice of the divine intelligence.....is permitted to see God face to face and to lose itself in His ineffable glory." This is the idea which forms the background of the Yoruba salutations. O ku, therefore, means "May your soul become a luminous spirit;" in other words, the salutation is a wish that the soul of the person to whom it is addressed may be a good soul which will receive^{the} reward described above. In the same way ku ise means "May your soul become a luminous spirit as a reward for the work which you are now doing". In the same way the meanings of salutations prefaced by Ku become quite intelligible. It is note-worthy that the salutations are still in use although their original meaning has been lost through lapse of time. All that remains is the underlying idea that the salutations express good wishes.

(5) The belief in the existence of guardian spirits. This is a part of the doctrine of the Ka. The Kas of departed ancestors were regarded by the Ancient Egyptians as the companions of the living and in-dwelling in their descendants. "In Nigeria there is similarly the belief in a guardian spirit, who is invariably of the same family, and usually the spirit of the father." The following Yoruba expression may be quoted

1. Sayce Op. Cit. pp. 69. & 70.

2. Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptians, p. 43 Col.127, Sec.38.

in support of this :- Bi ti baba mi ba gun mi "When or if my father's spirit spurs me to take action" (lit. When that which belongs to my father rides me). The belief also finds expression in an interesting custom practised by the Yorubas on important occasions. A hole which is about 15 to 18 inches deep and about 8 to 10 inches wide is dug. Into this hole offerings in kind are thrown in order to secure the help of departed spirits who have been ceremoniously invited to occupy the hole. The object of the invitation is explained and the help of all the guardian spirits of the family will be earnestly solicited. Failure to observe this customary rite is regarded as fraught with serious consequences, for it will evoke the displeasure of the guardian spirits whose customary help may be thereby withdrawn.

D. Survivial of Names and Customs. The connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas may be clearly illustrated under this heading. First of all, there is a survival of names of persons. One of these is the name of Khafra, from which the Yoruba word afara¹ is derived. The word is used in two contradictory senses - in one sense to denote the promptness with which the King's orders must be obeyed, and in another sense to denote the delay which usually leads to a man being caught and pressed into the King's service. The name of Khufu² also survives in the word ofu or ofu, "waste", a survival which preserves the idea that the time and energy spent in the

1. The initial Kh is elided (See rule of modification No.9) and a vowel is placed between the two consonants f and r.
2. The initial Kh is elided.



Fig. 7 A Yoruba: Lagos (Eko) Type

service of King Khufu were regarded as absolute waste. Other surviving names are (a) Pasht which survives in Pasi (Pashi)¹ (b) Danga e.g. lo bi Danga "go as quickly as a Danga dwarf (c) Atthar, which survives in the form of Ata, e.g. The Ata of Igbirra.

Secondly, there is a survival of names of animals. The Yoruba word for lion is Kini-Un which is derived from two Egyptian words, viz: Qimi, "black", and Un, "being". The Egyptian word for hippopotamus is Ririt² from which the Yoruba word Riri "dirty" is derived. The derivation is due, no doubt, to the dirty appearance usually presented by a hippopotamus on emerging from marshy waters. The sacred animal of the city of On (Aunu) survives in the word Oni "crocodile", a name used as the title of one of the paramount chiefs in Yorubaland, that is, the Oni of Ife. Nokit - a fabulous beast³ - also survives in the Yoruba word Inoki, a fabulous beast, often identified with an ape.⁴ The survival of Sha, the Typhonian animal, will be noted in a later chapter.

Thirdly, there is a survival of names of places. Salug survives in the name Saluga e.g. Aje Saluga, "the god of wealth of Salug."⁵ Bahtan survives in the word ibatan, "a relation", a word which perhaps originally denoted "a compatriot". The Yoruba phrase apa amu sua which means "an unthrifty person" is derived from three Egyptian words: Apa, "he who belongs

to the house (pa)" i.e. a domestic servant: amu, an Amu, one

1. The writer's birthplace faces a Street formerly known as Pashi Street in Lagos (Eko)
2. The final consonant is elided (see rule 2 p.12) compare the treatment of the following words:- Barnabas becomes Banaba in Yoruba; the Arabic name "Hamzat" becomes "Amusa" in Yoruba.

of the Asiatic tribes engaged in domestic service in Ancient Egypt; Sua (Sua-nit), a nome in Ancient Egypt. The phrase is a contemptuous term which preserves the idea of the wastefulness of foreign domestic servants in Ancient Egypt who hardly knew the value of the crockery and other articles which they sometimes smashed to pieces.

Fourthly, there is a survival of customs. Two of these will be mentioned here. Polygamy existed in Ancient Egypt just as it does now in Yorubaland. A noteworthy point of similarity is the position of the first wife. In Ancient Egypt she enjoyed rights and privileges denied to other wives. In Yorubaland this is also the case. She occupies a peculiar position in the house and is addressed as Iyale "mistress of the house" - a title corresponding in significance to the nibit piru¹ of the Ancient Egyptians.

The burial customs are also similar. Previous to burial the corpse in Yorubaland is dressed like Egyptian mummy. In the case of burial of a king, the king's slaves must be buried with him, and his Chief Officers and wives must die on the day of burial. The idea underlying this custom is that the King would require the services of his dependents, especially for manual work, in the next world. Of course, British influence

1. Maspero Op. Cit. p. 51 and Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptian p. 4, Col. 12, Position of Women. The words nibit & piru survive in the Yoruba language e.g. Ade-nibi, the mistress' crown. Words derived from piru will be dealt with later.

1

has put an end to such practices, but the idea still survives and corresponds to a similar idea leading to a similar custom in the early days of Ancient Egypt, the practice being slightly modified by the substitution of ushebti figures for living persons.

One more piece of evidence may be added here. It is remarkable that the very words used to denote "Egypt" and "the Egyptians" exist in modified forms in the Yoruba language. The Greek word for Egypt, Aiguptos, is said to be derived from Khi-Khu-ptah i.e. "the temple of the soul of Ptah". Now figures of animals, particularly of sheep, are said to be carved on the outer walls of Ptah's temple and it is quite possible for the proletariat to apply the name of the temple to the animals whose figures were carved on its walls. It is quite possible that in this way the Yorubas derived from the Greek word Ai - gup - tos the word a - gu - to(n) which means "a sheep".

Again, the Ancient Egyptian word for an Egyptian is Rotu or Roti. The word exists in the Yoruba language and is used as a name e.g. Ifatu - roti⁴. The word Qubti⁵ (Qobt), the Coptos of the Greeks, survives in the Yoruba word Kobiti which is a well-known name in Yorubaland, especially among the Egbas.

-
1. Bishop Charles Phillips had great difficulty in dissuading the Ondo People from continuing such practices during his episcopate covering the last decade of the last century and the first six years of the present one.
 2. Sayce, Op. Cit. P.55.
 3. Maspero Op. Cit. p. 43.
 4. It will be shown later that the word Ifatu is of Egyptian origin.
 5. Maspero Op. Cit. p.73.

After an inquiry into West African Religions, including that of the Yorubas, Sir Harry Johnston wrote as follows :-
"The more one inquires into those intricate religions of West Africa especially in the whole region of the Niger, the more we come irresistibly to the conclusion that they are founded on ideas which have travelled all the way from Egypt or from the Southern Mediterranean Shores".¹

Dealing with the same subject another writer says "When one thus superficially has surveyed our present knowledge of these Gold Coast people, one cannot but remark a most neglected side of our studies. It is that of the relationship culturally with the culture of the great kingdoms with which they have been in contact. No thorough examination has been made of the impress of Egypt, nor of that of the Greek and Roman Empires...."²
These remarks apply not only to the Gold Coast and Yorubaland, but also to West Africa in general.

The evidence given above may be regarded as prima facie evidence supporting the theory of a close connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas.

An effort will be made in the succeeding chapters to examine the impress of Egypt on Yoruba religion and to show that the connection between Egypt and Yorubaland must have dated from

-
1. S.G.C. Journal, 27th April, 1914.
 2. Journal of the Institute of African Languages and Cultures, Vol: II, No. 4, p. 411.

centuries antecedent to the establishment of the Old Egyptian
Period
Kingdom to the end of the Greek/and the beginning of the Roman
Period.

CHAPTER II

OLORUN, THE SUPREME DEITY.

CHAPTER II.

OLORUN, THE SUPREME DEITY.

Like all primitive religions, the religion of the Yoruba people is of a wholly absorbing character. Every stage of their life being hedged in by some religious observances, they live constantly with a keen consciousness of their relation to the unseen powers. Of them it may truly be said that "they live religiously, eat religiously, and die religiously."

Their religion is mainly animistic. The mysterious, the uncanny, the unfamiliar as well as the great forces of nature are regarded as being indwelt by spirits through whose agency they possess the peculiar forms or supernatural powers which mark them out as objects of veneration. Fetichism and polydaemonism in the form of worship of ancestral spirits play a great part in the religion, and thus arises the worship of "gods many and lords many." Some of these are worshipped by the people as a whole, others are worshipped by some tribes only, and the rest by individuals only.

Various writers¹ have raised the question as to the existence of grades among the large number of Yoruba deities. Some of these writers have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to discover any order among the perplexing horde of deities whose number preclude any accurate study of their attributes.

1. e.g. Dr. R. R. Marett, see Dr. Farrow, Faith, Fetich and Fancies, Foreword by Dr. Marett.

It is true that a large number of Yoruba deities cannot be graded. But there is no doubt that gradations of status of some sort exists in native minds, and that some deities stand so pre-eminently above all others that their relative position to one another and to the other deities can be definitely ascertained.

After a careful and exhaustive research the writer believes that the gradations of status recognised by the natives as existing between their deities are as follows :-

1. The Supreme Deity - Olorun.
2. The Major Orishas¹, of whom E²ṣu and Ifa are the most important.
3. The Deified Spirits of Ancestors and other Spirits, of whom Oro, Eluku, Agemo and Egungun are the most important.
4. The Minor Orishas.

The gradations of status existing between the deities classified under number 4 above vary among different tribes, especially as the worship of the minor deities is not general in Yorubaland.

Over and above all the other deities classified above and excelling them in power, honour and majesty is the Supreme Deity known as OLORUN, a Being of unique character, possessing attributes far too noble, far too abstract and refined to have originated from the thought of a primitive people. He is credited with omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. He is

1. Spelt by other writers as Orisha.
2. Spelt by other writers as Eshu.

the just and impartial Judge, sometimes meting out judgment on the wicked in this world and certainly bringing all men to judgment in the next world. He is Olurun adake - dajo "God, the silent but active Judge." He is Olurun Olore "God, the benefactor." He is Olurun Alanu, "the merciful God." The creation of the universe is ascribed to Him. He therefore bears the title of Eleḍa "Creator". Other titles given to Him are equally significant. He is Alaye "the Living One." Eleṃi "Owner of Spirit", that is the spirit given to human beings, Oga-ogo "the High One or the Lord of Glory."

These lofty ideas raise one's suspicion against the possibility of their being the product of Yoruba thought. It is quite possible, as several persons have argued, for a primitive people to possess some idea of a Supreme Deity, inborn or ingrained in mankind. But an explanation is necessary for the presence of these lofty ideas about Olurun among the primitive Yorubas, especially among the very primitive Yoruba-speaking peoples living under barbarous conditions in the fastnesses of Kukuruku hills and surrounded by gross darkness of rank heathenism. Some anthropologists may be inclined to doubt the existence of such a conception of a Supreme Deity among primitive peoples. There is no doubt, however, that such a conception exists among unsophisticated Yorubas who, with the possible exception of extremely ignorant ones, will give surprising answers when questioned about the attributes of their Supreme Deity. Both Colonel Ellis and Mr. Dennett

who made an improper study of the subject were inclined to classify Ọlọrun as one of the lesser deities known as Orishas or as one of the nature deities. On the other hand, 'Dr. Farrow who acquired a working knowledge of the language and enjoyed a fairly close contact with native thought emphatically asserted that "the Yorubas have a clear conception of the one Supreme Deity¹." The present writer who is in close contact with the religious thought of his own people firmly believes that Dr. Farrow is right.

What, then, is the origin of the conception? To what source can we trace the lofty ideas which the Yorubas hold about Ọlọrun? Dr. Andrew Lang has definitely proved that such a conception "cannot have been evolved from sheer animism²." The Ọlọrun of the Yorubas is not "the deified firmament" or "merely a nature god" or "a sky-god" or "a development of Ẹṣàngo."

Dr. Farrow has compared the word Ọrun (part of the word Ọlọrun) with the Greek *Οὐρανός* and with Varuna of the Rig-Veda, and has suggested the possibility of a philological connection. There does not appear to be any grounds for such a comparison and there are reasons for believing that there is no philological connection. It is true, however, that the word Ọrun like the English word "heavens" and the Hebrew "is used for the 'sky' as well as for the abode of the Deity."

In unravelling the historical origin of the conception of Ọlọrun, the view of a close connection between the Ancient

1. Op. Cit. p. 29

2. The Making of Religion, Chaps IX and XI.

Egyptians and the Yorubas, expressed in the preceding chapter, will be found helpful. The word Ọlọrun may be divided into two parts, viz. Ọl' - ọrun. The word Ọrun means "sky" and the syllable Ọl is only a reduplication of the initial letter of ọrun together with the letter 'l' generally used to denote ownership or agency. The word Ọlọrun therefore means "Lord of the sky or of the heavens." This is the sense in which it is used by the Yorubas. Now the Egyptian word for 'sky' or 'heavens' is Horu. Before the establishment of the Egyptian dynasties and during the early part of the dynastic period, the name Horu was applied to the Sun-god (the eye of Horu) who was afterwards known as the elder Horus (Horu). The changes which the word underwent in Egypt are clearly illustrated in the Yoruba language. From Horu is derived the word Oru¹(n), "sky" or "heavens." When the word was applied to the sun-god the following words were derived from it:- Ōru(n), "the sun," Oru "night" (absence of the sun), Oru, "heat" (originally applied to the heat of the sun and afterwards to heat in general). The word also survives in some of the popular songs.²

It will be remembered that after the establishment of the Old Kingdom the faith of Osiris spread from Abydos in the Delta

1. The aspirate is elided and the final vowel nasalised.

2. e.g. Oru O, Oru O,
Oru fi oka fun ẹiyẹ jẹ
Oru O, Oru
"Oh Oru, Oh Oru
Oru allowed the birds to eat his corn
Oh Oru, Oh Oru"

to other parts of Egypt, and according to Prof. Sayce, it was at one time universal in Egypt. Horu the sun-god was displaced by Horu (Horus) the Younger, son of Osiris. Later on, Osiris who was originally the god of the dead was translated to the sky. With the transference of the Osirian heaven from Daddu to the sky Osiris became "the Lord of the Sky," and this very title¹ was applied to him when the fusion of the Osirian and the solar faiths was effected. It has been pointed out above that the meaning of Ọlọrun is "the Lord of the Sky." This identity of meaning of Ọlọrun with the title of Osiris constitutes a prima facie evidence for assuming the existence of some connection between the Ọlọrun of the Yorubas and the Egyptian "Lord of Daddu."

No sooner did the present writer perceive the above evidence than a series of facts unfolded itself to him. So strong is the support given by the facts to the above assumption that the view of a definite connection between Ọlọrun and Osiris may be asserted with a high degree of probability. It is quite possible that the Yorubas had some conception of a Supreme Deity whose name has now become lost. But the enrichment of the conception with lofty ideas must have taken place when Yoruba religion came into touch with the Osirian faith. The facts may be summarized as follows:-

1. The ideas about Ọlọrun are higher than those which may be expected from a primitive people.

1. History of Religions by G. F. Moore,
Vol. I. p.151.

The ideas of Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence may be traced to elements in the Osirian faith. Ọlọrun is Ẹlẹda, "Creator;" so also was Osiris. Ọlọrun is the impartial Judge; men have to give an account of their doings in His judgment hall¹; men are commended to Him only by uprightness and goodness. All these are relics from the features connected with the Osirian judgment hall. The importance of god Thoth in connection with the judgment has its echo in the words O-ti-to "truth" and ẹ-to, "uprightness" or "justice," derived from his name.²

2. The ideas of the Yorubas about heaven are identical in many respects with those held by the worshippers of Osiris. For example, the Yorubas usually say Ọlẹ li aiye ko gba, ti ọrun kọ "An idle man the world refuses a place and heaven also rejects!" Compare this with the statement that "the Osirian heaven had no place for the idle and inactive"³.
3. One of the titles of Osiris is " Lord of Zaddu", Zaddu being regarded as the place of the dead. The very word Zaddu in its modified form of Sadu is in use in Yorubaland and it indicates the abode of the dead. For example, Bode Sadu⁴ i.e. "the gate of Sadu."⁵

1. See Chapter I, p. 27

2. See Chapter I, p. 25

3. Op. Cit. p. 171.

4. Sayce, Op. Cit. p. 157, Note 1.

5. Z becomes S. Bode Sadu is the North-Western terminus of Yorubaland.

The idea here is that anyone who, in the days of the slave trade and inter-tribal wars, dared to go beyond the town of Bode Sadu literally went to the abode of departed spirits.

4. One of the great objects of terror in primitive Yorubaland is what is known as Ohun Didu. Even a courageous animal like the lion is said to dread its approach and is believed to use the following words when roaring: Bikoṣe erin, bikoṣe enia, bikoṣe ohun (or nkan) didu, on ko bẹru enikan. "Except the elephant, except man, except Ohun didu, he does not fear anybody." Dr. Farrow¹ translates Ohun Didu literally as "the black thing," "the uncanny," such a literal translation does not seem to be the original meaning of the phrase. The word didu should be treated as a noun in the genitive case rather than as a descriptive adjective. The correct meaning seems to be "something which pertains to Didu," that is the Didu (or the black wooden image)² of Osiris. Idols painted black, resembling the Didu of Osiris exist in Yorubaland.

1. Op. Cit. pp. 117 & 118.

2. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p. 130. The legendary Osiris is described as a person possessing a black complexion. The Yorubas call themselves Enia Didu "Black men" literally, "The People of Didu." The word didu is pronounced by most tribes as dudu cf. fifun and fufun, pipa and pupa, titun and tutun, etc. The variant reading dudu is given by Tiele, Religion of Ancient Egyptians, translation by Ballingal, p. 187.

5. Another name for the abode of the dead where Osiris ruled was Alu¹. Here was the abode of the Osirified Bull. The Yoruba word for "bull" is mālu which is a contraction of omo - ²alu, a native of Alu (literally, a child of Alu). The word mālu therefore contains an unmistakable reference to the worship of the osirified Bull (Osiris-apis) at Alu.
6. The Egyptian word for the tomb of Osiris - ben - survives in the form of bini which is the name of an important city³ in Yorubaland.
7. Just as the name of the Supreme Deity of the Yorubas is identical with the title of Osiris and compounded from the name of the sun-god Horu, so the names of the Supreme Deities of the leading tribes in West Africa are derived from the names of Egyptian deities or from Egyptian words. The following select list may be given in support of the statement:-
- (1) NYISUA. This is the Grebo⁴ word for God. It is derived from two words viz:- Nyi and Sua.
- Nyi comes from the West African word ye⁵ "to live" and Sua from Sua-nit⁶ a nome in ancient Egypt.

-
1. Sayce, Op. Cit. pp 168 & 169
 2. Cf. Omo-eko "a native of Eko i.e. Lagos" which is sometimes contracted to 'meko in rapid conversation. Cf. also 'koleko
 3. Benin City inhabited by the Benin people (Ibini), a Yoruba tribe. See Chapter I p.6
 4. The Grebo language is spoken in Liberia, West Africa.
 5. See Note on this word in Chap. I, pp.24-25
 6. The second syllable is left out.

The meaning of Nyisua, therefore, is "the living
(soul of) Sua - nit¹"

(ii) NYANKUPON. This is the Fanti² word for God. It consists of three words, viz:- Nyan-ku-po³(n). Nyan is a form of the word ye⁴; ku is the modified form of the Ancient Egyptian word Khu, "Soul", and po(n) comes from the word Pua = nit a nome in Ancient Egypt. Nyankupon, therefore, means "the living soul of Punt⁵"

(iii) NYONMON. This is the Ga⁶ word for God. It consists of two words viz:- Nyon-mon. Nyo(n) is a modified form of ye⁷ and mo(n) is an abbreviated form of Amon⁸, the name of a god in Ancient Egypt. Nyon-mon, therefore, means "the living Amon⁹"

(iv) MAU. This is the Ewe¹⁰ word for God. It is derived directly ^{or} MAWU from the name of the Egyptian goddess Maut¹¹, the goddess of truth.

(v) ORISE. This is the Jekri¹² word for God. It will be shown later that this word is derived from Horus.

1. This is a common designation of the presiding deity of nomes in Ancient Egypt. Cf. the "living soul of Ra". See Sayce Op.Cit, p.111.
2. The Fanti Language (Twi or Tshi) is spoken on the Gold Coast, West Africa.
3. Nasal 'n'
4. See Note 5 on previous page
5. See note 6 on previous page
6. The Ga Language is spoken on the Gold Coast, West Africa.
7. See Note 5 on previous page
8. Cf. The Yoruba word 'mon' see Chapter I, p.24
9. See note on this word in page 22
10. The Ewe language is spoken on the Gold Coast and in Lome
11. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.507. Final t is dropped; see rule 2 Chapter I, p.12.
12. The Jekri Language is spoken in Nigeria, West Africa.

(vi) CHUKU. This is the Ibo^a word for God. The first syllable appears to be a softening down of the word Khu (Egyptian Khu, "luminous spirit," "soul"). The original word, then, would be Kuku. The doubling of the word ku shows that God is regarded as "the luminous spirit par excellence". Khu has been modified also in the Ibo language to Chi, Spirit. Hence Chu-ku has been taken to mean Chi - uku, "the Great Spirit".

(vii) CHINEKE. This is another Ibo Word for God - Chineke(n). The first syllable here also is a modification of the word ku. The second syllable comes from Nekhen, a nome in Ancient Egypt. The literal meaning of Chineke, therefore, is "the soul of Nekhen¹."

(viii) AYIBA. This is the Ijaw² word for God. A = he who; yi = ye, to make; ba is another word for soul corresponding in meaning to the Greek word $\psi\chi\eta$. Ayiba, therefore, means "The Creator of Souls."

(ix) ORU. This is the Nembe³ word for God. It is derived from the Egyptian word Horu⁴ noted above.⁵

-
- a. The Ibo Language is spoken in Nigeria, West Africa. Chi or Chu is widely used in the language to denote "Spirit".
 1. See Note 4, p.45. This very title "the soul of Nekhen" is applied to a god in Ancient Egypt See Sayce, Op. Cit., p.40, Note 1.
 2. The Ijaw Language is spoken in Nigeria, West Africa.
 3. The Nembe Language is spoken in Nigeria, West Africa.
 4. The initial aspirate is elided.
 5. See Note 1, page 41.

(x) ABASI. This is the Efik¹ word for God, the derivation of which may be traced to the Egyptian word Bast.² The Efik term for Almighty God - Abasi Ibu(n) - seems to be derived from Bu - bastis with a reversal of the order of its component parts.

Further evidence in support of the theory of a close connection between Olorun and Osiris is contained in one of the titles borne by the former. He is styled Olodumare. The meaning of this title has baffled many writers. Dr. Farrow thus comments on the title:-

"The derivation of the word is uncertain. It is generally taken to denote 'the Almighty One'. Bishops Growther and Johnson so regard it, but the latter gives an alternative 'The Ever-righteous One'³

The difficulty about its derivation, and consequently about its meaning, arises from failure to understand the meaning of its component parts which are as follows:- Ol'odu-ma-re. The word Odu⁴ means "a chief", "an exalted personage". Olodu is its intensive form, indicating completeness (e.g. Obiri,⁵ "woman olobiri, a woman in the full bloom of womanhood".) Ma-re means "I shall go or I must go". The meaning of Olodumare then is "the Chief or the Exalted One to whom I must go or return"⁶ Now according to Egyptian belief the highest reward which will be given

1. The Efik Language is spoken in the Eastern part of Nigeria, West Africa.

2. Final t is dropped, and s receives a vowel to form a syllable. See Rule 2 Chap. I p.12

3. Op. Cit. p.27

4. The Egyptian word "Du" means a "mountain", an elevated piece of land.

5. It will be shown later that this word is of Egyptian origin.

6. The word Odu may also be related to the word "Ot", a domain in Sekhet - Aaru presided over by Osiris. "Olodumare" will then mean "The owner of the Ot or domain to which I must return", that is, Osiris. If this derivation is accepted, the underlying idea is by no means different from that associated with the other derivation. The word is apparently a combination of the two ideas.

given to the good soul is to be permitted "to see God face to face and to lose itself in its ineffable glory!"¹ A return to Osiris followed by identification with him is the desire of every devout worshipper of Osiris. Among the Yorubas, the idea of the soul going or returning to the Supreme Deity after death is in existence and is enshrined in the word Olodumare, as its meaning clearly shows. The idea is one which may be rightly regarded as a relic of the Osirian faith.

An impartial consideration of the above facts cannot but lead to the conclusion that a close connection exists between Olorun of the Yorubas and Osiris of the Ancient Egyptians and that there must have been a time when the former was identified with the latter.

There are one or two questions, however, which must be raised at this point. If the connection between Olorun and Osiris is so close, why is it that Olorun is only revered but hardly worshipped by the Yorubas? Osiris had temples where worship was regularly offered to him, and it is quite natural to expect that Olorun should be worshipped in the same way. In answer to this question, it must be observed that although the faith of Osiris was widespread, his worship was almost entirely the monopoly of the priestly class. The common people believed in him but knew very little about his worship. To them he was well represented by his "Didu", the images of the gods subordinate to him, and the animals sacred to him. Their worship was given to these images or gods which were regarded as intermediaries between Osiris and themselves.

1. Sayce, Op. Cit. pp. 69 and 179.

The peasant could not soar to the heights of priestly speculation or be content with empty abstraction; he could not follow all the intricate niceties of organized worship. He therefore clung to the divinity which he could see and handle, and confined his worship to such a divinity. It is quite possible that there was a small priestly class for Olorun among the Yorubas, for there is a faint trace of the worship of Olorun.¹ But a knowledge of the rites and ceremonies of the worship has vanished with the transference and limitation of religious worship to the lesser deities.

Again, the question may be asked: If the connection between Osiris and Olorun is so close that at one time the latter was identified with the former, why is it that the name of Osiris was not adopted and retained by the Yorubas as the name of their Supreme Deity? After the lapse of so many centuries it may not be easy to give a satisfactory answer to the question.² But this difficulty does not militate against the theory of a close connection between Osiris and Olorun since the name of the latter was coined from the title of the former.

1. Sometimes a newly-born child is not assigned to any Orisa as is customary in Yorubaland. The Priests describe him as an "Omo Olorun", "a child of God", that is, the child is not to worship any orisa; he is simply to worship Olorun.
2. In dealing with this question the following extract is noteworthy:-

"From what Herdotus says, and from other indication in mythological texts, it would seem that the Egyptians like the Jews and Hindus, had a Supreme Deity whose name it was not lawful to mention, and who manifested himself, as in Hinduism, under many forms and names" - Murray, Osireion, p.25. It is quite possible that disinclination on the part of the Yorubas to make frequent mention of the name of Osiris led to the adoption of his title as the name of their Supreme Deity.

The name of Osiris, however, is well-known to the Yorubas who use it in a sense which shows that they are conversant with the myth of Osiris. The name survives in its original form of Osiri in the expression gba osiri re¹ or da osiri bo o² which means "to plot against an innocent person with a view to murder him". The meaning of this expression is certainly derived from the myth of Osiris part of which is reproduced from Sir J. G. Frazer's Golden Bough³:-

"Reigning as a king on earth, Osiris reclaimed the Egyptians from savagery, gave them laws, and taught them to worship the gods..... Osiris is said to have been the first to gather fruits from trees, to train the vine to poles and to tread grapes. Eager to communicate these beneficent discoveries to all mankind, he committed the whole government of Egypt to his wife Isis and travelled over the world..... Loaded with wealth that had been showered upon him by grateful nations, he returned to Egypt and, on account of the benefits he had conferred he was unanimously acclaimed as a deity. But his brother Set (whom the Greeks called Typhon⁴) with seventy-two others plotted against him. Having taken the measure of his good brother's body by stealth, the bad brother Typhon fashioned and highly decorated a coffer of the same size, and once when they were all drinking and making merry he brought in the coffer and jestingly promised to give it to the one whom it should fit exactly. Well they all tried one after the other, but it fitted none of them. Last of all Osiris stepped into it and lay down. On that the conspirators ran and slammed the lid down on him, nailed it fast, soldered it with molten lead, and flung the coffer into the Nile".

This myth actually exists in a modified form in Yorubaland.

-
1. Ijebu dialect.
 2. Ijesa dialect.
 3. Abridged Edition p.363.
 4. It will be shown later that the name of Typhon is known to the Yorubas.

Further evidence of the fact that the myth of Osiris is well-known to the Yorubas is contained in the following Yoruba legend :-

"The sacred city of Ife was once plunged into great affliction and misery owing to the frequent raids of the Igbos who presented themselves in a supernatural guise. All efforts to check the raids were unsuccessful. All prayers for help were unanswered. The oracle gave no helpful response. Moved with grief, but fired with patriotic zeal, Moremi, the wife of one of the mythical kings of Ife, made efforts to save the city. The key to the salvation of the city lay in the discovery of the true nature of the invaders. This discovery Moremi determined to make. Before setting out from Ife, she went to the river Osimiri and vowed to offer a costly sacrifice to the god of the river if her efforts should be divinely crowned with success. Her prayers were heard. Her search for the secrets of the Igbos was successful. She discovered that they were mere men covered with grass or rushes. She returned and disclosed this secret to her compatriots who defeated the Igbos by setting their grass cloaks on fire. She returned to the river to fulfil her promise. The god, however, was not satisfied with all that she brought, but he demanded the sacrifice of her only son Ela or Olurogbo. The son was duly sacrificed; but he managed to revive, and ascended into the heavens by means of a rope."

Commenting on this myth Dr. Johnson says:-

"We may discern in this legend a confused idea of the story of Jephtha, and that of the Blessed Virgin and her son!"

In dealing with primitive legends no greater mistakes can be made than to view them with preconceived Christian ideas and to identify them haphazardly with scriptural stories. The prominent figure in the above legend is a heroine, not a hero as in the case of Jephtha. The Blessed Virgin could not be said to have only one son. No. The legend has no connection with scriptural stories. It is only a combination of details borrowed from the myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus.

Moremi represents Isis, and Ela or Olurogbo represents Horus, the son of Isis, whom Set tried to destroy. The Yoruba legend states that it was the son of Moremi who ascended into the heavens. It should be observed that the word Egbeji, the alternative name of the son of Moremi means "the son of the living one".

According to the Egyptian legend, Osiris was the person whose body was cut in pieces and who afterwards revived and, through the influence of Ra, ascended into the heavens. The transference of these details to his son may be due to the fact that Osiris had been given another part to play in the myth.

The most important point in the legend is the reference to the river Osimiri. This river is the Nile and the Nile god is Osiris. The word Osimiri consists of two parts, viz:- Osi¹ and miri. Osi is an abbreviation of Osiris and miri² comes from the Egyptian word miri³, the name of the goddess of the banks of the Nile. The word Osimiri, therefore, means "the efflux of Osiris" or "the Nile overflowing its banks" about which Plutarch wrote as follows :-

"They (i.e. the Ancient Egyptians) call not only the Nile, but also without distinction all that is moist, Osiris Efflux."⁴

The god of the river referred to in the myth is none other than Osiris.

There are other survivals of the name of Osiris. One more instance will be given here.

1. G. F. Moore, Op. Cit. Vol I, p.163

2. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.38

3. The final consonant 't' is elided.

4. Flinders Petrie, p.39, Col.116, Sec.10. The Ibo word Osimiri means "a river". The Ibos are the next door neighbours of the Yorubas in the south-central and south-eastern parts of Nigeria.

The name survives in Orisa Osi, "the idol of the god Osiris¹", the national god of the Yorubas. It was worshipped by Oranyah,² the son of Odudua³ the mythical founder of the Yoruba race. There is a legend that when Oranyan was setting off for an expedition he gave strict injunction to his locum tenens to "observe the customary worship of the gods Idi and Orisa Osi⁴". The Yorubas therefore regard the worship of Orisa Osi as a national obligation.

The relegation of the worship of Olorun to the background does not lead to an entire ignorance of Him as the Supreme Deity. Although He is regarded as too holy and exalted to be approached directly with sacrifices and apart from the instances to be noted below His aid is invoked only on rare and special occasions, yet He is regarded as taking cognizance of, and active interest in, the affairs of men when necessary. He is not an absentee God Who, after creating the world, refused to be bothered with its affairs and safeguarded Himself by locking Himself up behind the metal sheet of the clouds. His exalted nature necessitates the presence of intermediaries to whom long prayers and addresses and sacrifices ^{are} made. But short prayers are often offered to Him, and these show the existence of a belief in His readiness to help in times of urgent necessity or dire calamity, a belief in His activity in the world, and a

1. See Note 2, page 44.

2. Ora(n)-ya(n). Ora comes from Ra, the name of the Egyptian sun-god and ya(n) is a modified form of 'ye'. Oranyan, therefore, means "the living Ra". Cf. "the living soul of Ra" Sayce Op. Cit, p.111

3. Odu-dua, Odu means "a chief", "a lord" and dua comes from the Egyptian word duat which means "other(world)". Odudua, therefore, means "Lord of the other world Cf. Am Duat "the Book of the other world".

4. Osi is an abbreviation of Osi-ris.

and a recognition of gratitude to Him as a special duty incumbent upon man. A few of the prayers will be given here:- Olurun gba mi "May God save me" and Olurun sanu are prayers usually offered in times of great distress: Ki Olorun ji wa re "May God wake us up well" is a prayerful wish on retiring to bed at night; Ki a ma ri i which is a contraction of Ki Olurun ma je ki a ri i. "God forbid", lit. "May God not allow us to see such a thing".

The Yorubas attribute their preservation to the direct agency of Olorun. Before retiring to bed they entrust one another into His keeping as is shewn above. Early in the morning the first complimentary expressions are those of gratitude to Him. For example, the morning salutations are: O ko ji re "Do you wake well ?" Ara ko le bi ? "Are you well ?" Awon ara ile nko ? "How are the members of the family ?". To each of these salutations the reply is A dupe lowo Olorun, literally, "We thank God." This is sometimes contracted to A dupe "Thanks."

Belief in Olorun's Omniscience is very strong. This is well brought out in the saying Bi enia ko ri o? ^{Olorun ko ri o?} "If man does not see you, does not Olorun see you ?"

The belief is also illustrated by one of the titles usually given to Olorun, viz:- Oba a ri inu ri ode "The King who see both the inner and the outer parts of man". Belief in His omnipotence is shown in His title Alewilese "One who not only speaks but can also act", and by the invocation of His aid ^{as} a last resort when the powers of intermediary agencies have reached their extremity.

RELATION BETWEEN OLORUN AND HIS WORSHIPPERS. A point has now been reached where the question of the relation between Olorun and His worshippers may be raised. Love for the Deity certainly does not exist, nor is fear as a distinct emotion ever entertained towards him. Hence there is no need to propitiate Him with sacrifices, no need to erect temples and consecrate priests for His worship. Feelings of awe and reverence exist, and these show themselves in the titles given to Him and in the frequent expressions of gratitude to Him. Belief in His omnipotence leads to humble dependence upon Him for protection and preservation, and for help in times of dire calamity when the character of the need or the exigency of time demands resort to the greatest living power known to man. Apart from the offering of short prayers and the returning of thanks, worship is non-existent. A god with whom such a meagre relation is maintained cannot satisfy the deep and constant yearnings of the human soul for active dependence on the Unseen. The absence of organized worship of Olorun by means of which full and uninterrupted allegiance to Him could be secured has led to the worship of multitudinous gods. The character of these gods will be sketched in the succeeding chapters. Suffice it here to say that the usurpation of the place of Olorun by the intermediary deities has led to a loss of the knowledge of His worship among the Yorubas, with the doubtful exception of a few aged priests who still pose to know something about the worship and by whom the knowledge is very strictly and perhaps jealously guarded.

CONCLUDING REMARKS. In view of the character of Olurun sketched above it is easy to see that the following description of Him is incorrect:- "Olurun is merely a nature-god, the personally divine sky, and he only controls phenomena connected in the native mind with the roof of heaven¹." If Olurun had been the personally divine sky who rained and thundered upon the sons of men, regular worship arising from fear would have been offered to Him, and in view of the frequent occurrence of rain, thunder and lightning He could not have taken a backward place in the native religious system. Besides, it has been shown above that the word is derived from Horu, the name of the Ancient Egyptian sky-god. It is clear, however, that it is not the animistic sky-god that the Yorubas borrowed from the Egyptians. Rather, the conception of Olurun is connected with that of Osiris the spiritualized supreme being of the Ancient Egyptians dwelling in the heavens far beyond human ken. No native would admit that Olurun "only controls phenomena connected with the roof of the world²." The titles, prayers and expressions given above conclusively prove that such a limitation of the powers and functions of Olurun is foreign to native thought.

Nor is it correct to say that "he is not in any sense Omnipotent³." The proverb on which this erroneous statement is based cannot be traced among the masses of the Yorubas, nor

1. A. B. Ellis, Yoruba Speaking Peoples, p.38

2. - ditto -

3. - ditto -

nor does the writer find any support for it among the Yoruba priests and mythologists. That "a man cannot cause rain to fall and Olorun cannot give you a child¹," is perhaps the chance remark of a few unintelligent persons, and may not imply anything more than a recognition of division of labour among the deities and of Olorun's reluctance to perform the duties which He had assigned to an inferior deity. It certainly does not imply inability or limitation of power, in view of the well-known Yoruba proverb A ki ra omo li oja; Olorun ni fun ni "Children are not bought at market places; they are the gift of Olorun".

The foregoing elucidation of the character of Olorun and of the origin of His name make it quite clear that the lofty ideas about Him must be traced to Egypt. Without the hypothesis of a connection between the Egyptians and the Yorubas, the existence of the lofty ideas remains a puzzling and inexplicable phenomenon observed among primitive peoples. The religion of the Ancient Egyptians passed from polytheism to henotheism, until it became monotheism in essence when "the frank polytheism of the Egyptians could speak of the one and only and incomparable God or could worship 'God' without further definition²." Writing about monotheism in Egypt Professor Maspero says:-

"The Egyptians adored a being who was unique, perfect, endowed with absolute knowledge and intelligence, and incomprehensible to such an extent that it passes man's powers to state in what he is incomprehensible. He is "the one of one, he who exists essentially, the only one who lives substantially, the sole generator in heaven and earth, who is not himself generated³...."

1. A. B. Ellis, Yoruba Speaking Peoples, p.38

2. Davies, El Armana I. p.45

3. Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archeologie Egyptiennes, ii, p.446

The religious thought of the Yorubas must have been affected when it came into contact with Egyptian religious thought, especially with the monotheistic ideas described above. The ✓ unvarnished conception of the Yorubas as regards their Supreme Deity must have become enriched by contact with the Osirian faith. It is true that the Supreme Deity of the Yorubas, like the Supreme Deities of other primitive peoples, tends to recede into the background because, as in the case of the Egyptians "the mind of the uneducated class could neither understand nor rise to such lofty heights. Human intelligence supports with difficulty so pure an idea of an absolute being¹ Yet it is also true that, in spite of the contention of writers like Menzies, Huxley and Spencer, there is abundant evidence of the existence of the conception of a Supreme Being among the Yorubas, a being who at one time appeared to have been identified with Osiris and who corresponds, in many important particulars, with the 'one only God' as conceived by the Ancient Egyptians.²

1. Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archeologie Egyptiennes, ii, p.446

2. See The Peoples of Southern Nigeria by P.Amaury Talbot, Vol.II p.15

C H A P T E R I I I .

T H E M A J O R D E I T I E S :

A . E S U .

CHAPTER III.

THE ORISAS.

A. E S U, the Devil.

Next to Olorun the Supreme Deity, Eṣu, (Eshu) is the only deity accorded general recognition throughout Yorubaland. Between the conception of Olorun and that of Eṣu, however, there is a great difference. The conception of Olorun is that of a pure spirit, an exalted personage too remote to be worshipped. There is no representation of him in any shape or form. On the other hand, Eṣu belongs to the animistic system. He is an Orisa which occupies the most important place among the other orisas. He is represented by different kinds of images. He receives worship in the form of offerings and prayer, and must first be propitiated before any other orisa receives an offering. His worship arises chiefly from fear. As the supreme power of evil, the fear arising from ^{the}abhorrence of his malevolence leads to propitiatory offerings being constantly offered to him. He is generally described as buruku "wicked to death", being ever ready to do mischief. In consequence of his malevolence his shrine is often made outside the town or outside the house. Hence the saying "Eṣu ko ni iwa; a ko ile re si ita", "Eṣu has no character; his house is made for him in the street". He is supposed to go about with a knobbed club, known as Agongo Ogo,¹ with which he attacks his enemies or those who indiscreetly dishonour him.

In some parts of the country (e.g. Ondo) he is very actively worshipped. The worship offered to him by his devotees does not appear to arise entirely from fear. Rather, it is sometimes

1. A knobbed club diminishing in thickness from the knob to the tip of the handle.

sometimes inspired by feelings of admiration for his great strength, in consequence of which prayers and gifts are offered to him, not only to avoid his malevolence but also to secure his active favour, especially against enemies. There is a strong belief in his power and readiness to confer benefits on his worshippers, and this accounts for the fact that the following names are borne by Yorubas :-

- (i) Esu-bi-yi, "A scion of Esu"
- (ii) Esu-ri-ohun-bi, "A worthy scion of Esu" ¹
- (iii) Esu-gba-yi-la, often abbreviated to Esugbayi, "A person saved by Esu" ²
- (iv) Esu-to-sin, "Esu is sufficient to worship".³

I m a g e s .

The representation of Esu assumes different forms.

- (i) A common form of representation is by means of a stone slab or a piece of rough laterite stuck into the ground in a slanting manner. The ceremony of sticking a stone in this way is known as gigun Esu "sticking the stone of Esu on the ground". Such a stone is found near the entrance to every town and in front of the entrance to many houses. The stone is often covered with ^arough shed made of ikin leaves supported by four short poles or mud pillars. Corrugated iron sheets are now being substituted for ikin leaves in places near the coast.
- (ii) Another form of representation is that of an earthenware pot with a hole in the middle, sunk into the ground. This form of representation is found in Benin City, Ijebuland and a few other places.

1. A cousin of the writer is known by this name.

2. The late paramount chief of Lagos was known as Esugbayi.

3. This is the name of a worshipper of Esu who is well known to the writer.

(iii) The most common form of representation is that of a pillar of mud. Sometimes the pillar is a solid one, at other times it is hollow. Sometimes it is erected without any mark on it. At other times it is adorned with three rounded holes. In Benin City and in a few other places three shells replace the holes. The pillar is usually covered in the same way as the stone described above.

(iv) The images of Esu for household use are generally made of mud or wood, and are set on orupo or clay couches. Here offerings of blood or palm oil are made to them. The deity is generally represented as a naked human being, sitting on his feet with flexed knees and folded arms or sitting with the hands resting on the knees.

(v) The portable images of Esu are also made in human form.

Two kinds of such images are thus described by Dr. Farrow :-

(a) "The first figure shows the devil in a kneeling posture, supporting with its hands breasts of the female type. The idea expressed is that this deity gives nourishment. It is to be noted that figures of the devil are always given a hair dressed after the fashion of women."

(b) "The second image is a very small one, only 3 inches in height; but is of special interest on account of the markings engraved upon it. This image, below the breast is not of human form, but merges into a square pillar. On its back and two sides is engraved a board precisely similar to a Mohammedan writing tablet (wala)".

It should be noted that the number of lines engraved on the front and back of the latter image is usually seventeen, that is, representing the sixteen (plus one) palm nuts used in Ifa divination. Between Esu and Ifa, the god of divination, there is a close relation. Myths explaining the cause of the close relation will be given in the next chapter.

The numbers five and seven engraved on the sides are significant since they are odd numbers; the number seven, eje¹, signifies "perfection" in wickedness, and the number five, which is the number of days forming a complete cycle of a Yoruba week², contains a reference to the idea of Esu's malevolence being operative on every day of the week.

W o r s h i p.

The worship of Esu is very simple, but is sometimes very dreadful. Sacrifices are generally made to him in the form of cowries thrown into his shrine as a mark of respect. Sometimes cocks, he-goats, and dogs are killed and their blood is splashed on the stone image of Esu. He is often contented to receive a part of the gifts offered to other orisas. When he is consulted for the purpose of divination, a simple offering which sometimes takes the form of a few cowries is enough. But on some occasions among his most devoted worshippers in Ilesa or Ondo and even in the comparatively more civilised town of Abeokuta, human sacrifices used to be offered to propitiate this supreme power of evil. Colonel Ellis says that "on important occasions a human victim is offered to him"³ and gives two instances in support of the statement. He refers to the custom of sweeping the cowries offered to Esu in a temple at Wuru annually and of purchasing with the sum realized a slave to be offered to the god. He also refers to the sacrifice of a slave at Ondo. Dr. Farrow criticizes Colonel Ellis' statement in a way which throws a shadow of doubt on its accuracy.

-
1. E-je. The word je is derived from ye explained above. It means "perfect".
 2. The Yoruba method of reckoning is inclusive. The week consists really of four days.
 3. Op.Cit., page 66.

But Dr. Farrow admits that the Ondo people were the most cruel worshippers of Esu, and that during his sojourn at Abeokuta there was a public sacrifice of a human victim.¹ It will be shown later that this solitary instance of human sacrifice recorded by Dr. Farrow is only one of the many instances of human sacrifice to Esu.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN.

Since the worship of Esu is so widespread and regular in Yorubaland, it is natural to expect that the character of the deity should be well understood and should present no difficulties in its delineation. This, however, is not the case. In the account given above it has been found difficult to leave out some of the incongruous elements in the character of the deity. The difficulties about his character will now be stated :-

(i) The first difficulty concerns the meaning of his generic name as well as those of his specific names. The generic name is Orisa. The meaning of this term has baffled previous writers who describe it as a "term of uncertain derivation"². Bishop Johnson gives the following myths in explanation of the term :-

"These Deities are generally known among us as 'Orishas' a term which, after the religious tradition of the country, was originally applied to some being whom Ifa, or Orunmila, the Son of God, had sent out with others to search about for and collect together the wisdom which he had strewn about, and who were successful in their search and collection whilst others failed, and who were then spoken of as 'Awon ti o ri sa', i.e. those who were successful in making their collection, and who after, and in consequence of this, became objects of worship.

1. Op. Cit., page 59
2. " " " 34.

"But others have represented the term 'Orisha' as derived from the circumstance of a serious difference on a particular occasion between two friends, over a potsherd, "Isha", which the one had made a present of to the other, but a return of which the giver afterwards from envy demanded, and which after its return was accounted sacred and became an object of worship; and they say that from this every object of worship has been called 'Orisha' (Ori-isha), an allusion to the potsherd over which there had been a severe difference".

Mr. Dennett¹ conjectures that it means "the beatified departed one". The Rev. D.O. Epega² believes that the term contains a reference to the practice of sinking a pot to mark the shrine of a deity.

All the above, being fanciful and mythological interpretations of the term, have no historical foundation.

Esu's specific name Elegbera, Elegbara, Elegba or Legba also presents a difficulty. It has been supposed to mean "He who seizes", "He who strikes with a stick", the one who takes the body or "the one who saves". The meaning of the word Esu, the deity's popular name, has also been found difficult to explain. It is supposed to be derived from shu "to emit, throw out, evacuate" or from shu to be (or become) dark," and is therefore supposed to signify "darkness" or "the dark one", the "prince of darkness". The latter meaning is partly correct, but requires fuller explanation.

(ii) Esu is credited with good and bad qualities alike. He is regarded as a malevolent as well as a beneficent deity. It is not easy to explain away such a contradiction as this, for there is a Yoruba saying that there is a good Esu and there is a bad Esu (Esu rere wa, Esu buburu wa:).

1. Nigerian Studies p.12.

2. The Mysteries of the Yoruba gods, p.6.

The facile explanation that the saying means that "Esu is not as black as he is painted" is definitely unsatisfactory. Whenever he is painted black, he is really black.

(iii) Some of his images represent him as a male deity, others as a female deity. The first figure of a portable image of the deity described above is that of a female, whilst the second figure is that of a male. Struck by these contradictory features, Dr. Farrow thus commented on the feminine characteristics of the first figure:

"This (i.e. the hair dressed after the fashion of women) might lead to the supposition that Esu is regarded as a female personage, or that there is a male and a female devil. The truth is, however, that he is regarded as the one and only such being and is always spoken of as 'he'; but this does not preclude him from possessing certain feminine characteristics".¹

Quite apart from any other consideration, the mistake involved in the use of the masculine pronoun 'he' is sufficient to nullify the value of this explanation. Yoruba is a Sudanic language; it is therefore not inflected for the purposes of gender.² The Yoruba word for the third personal pronoun for all genders is 'O' or On (nasalized form). There is nothing in the form of the word which necessitates its being translated 'he' and not 'she' or 'it'.

Efforts to solve the difficulties enumerated above have hitherto met with anything but success. The present writer, however, feels that they will be solved if the theory of a close connection between the religion of the Yorubas and the religion of Ancient Egypt, proposed in the first chapter and applied in the second, is also applied here.

1. Op. Cit. p.88

2. See Structure and Relationship of Modern languages by Alice Werner.

The first clue to the solution of the difficulties lies in the Yoruba saying: "Eṣu li ota oriṣa" "Esu is the enemy of Oriṣa". This implies the existence of an attitude of antagonism between Eṣu and Oriṣa. As a matter of fact the conception of Eṣu involves a dualism in which Esu, the supreme power of evil stands in opposition to Ọlọrun, the most beneficent deity. With the transference of worship from Ọlọrun to the lesser deities, the antagonism is also transferred to these deities.

Now dualism is not a characteristic feature of primitive religions. In the last chapter it was pointed out that the Yoruba peoples were conversant with the myth of Osiris. Ancient Egyptian religion contains a dualism between Osiris and Set. "Osiris is the good power both morally and in the sphere of outward nature, while Set is the embodiment of all that the Egyptian regards as evil".¹ If Osiris is well-known to the Yorubas and the lofty conception of him as the "one and only God" is also familiar, then it follows that they must have a deity which corresponds to the enemy of Osiris. Such a deity is Esu. He is regarded as the enemy of Ọlọrun (identified in the last Chapter with Osiris) and is believed to live in constant opposition to him. The conception of Set as an evil deity living in active opposition to Osiris lies at the root of the conception of Eṣu in relation to Ọlọrun. This identification of the Yoruba deity Esu with the Egyptian deity Set or Sut is strongly supported by the fact that the Yoruba saying quoted above is also applied to Osiris and Set. Just as the Yorubas say that "Eṣu is the enemy of Oriṣa", so

1. Menzies, History of Religion, p.141.

writers on Ancient Egyptian Religion always say that "Set is the enemy of Osiris".¹

It must be noted that the word *oriṣa* is used instead of *Olorun*. This demands an explanation. In the case of Ancient Egyptian Religion the opposition existed originally between the elder Horus, and then between Osiris and subsequently between the younger Horus on the one hand, and Set on the other. So too in the case of the Yoruba religion, the opposition is transferred from *Olorun* to the lesser deities known as *oriṣas*.

What, then, is the origin of the term "*oriṣa*"? First of all, it should be noted that there are three forms of the term, viz., *orisa*, *oyisa*² and *orise*³, each of which signifies an idol, a deity or a god. The word '*orisa*' may be divided into two parts viz. *ori* and *sa*. The first part is a modified form of the ancient Egyptian word *horu*⁴. The survival of this word in Yoruba has been pointed out in the previous chapter. The conclusion that the word "*ori*" is connected with the word *horu* is further strengthened by the fact that the Egyptian god Horus-Bakhu⁵ "the god of the mountain" of the East, survives in Yoruba as *Orisa-Beku*, signifying "the god of the mountain".

-
1. Sayce, Religion of Ancient Egyptians p.74;
Frazer, the Golden Bough, popular edition, p.475;
Brugsch, Maspero, Wiedeman, Wilkinson etc. etc.
 2. This is a slightly modified form of *orisa* which is frequently used in Benin City. It is sometimes contracted to *O'isa* or *o'ise*.
 3. This form is also used in Benin City. It is modified to *ori-tshe* by the Jekris.
 4. See page 41 above.
 5. The Egyptian word *hor* = to be high.

The second part of the word, se, is derived directly from Set¹, and its other form, sa, is derived from the name of the animal sha², which is the animal representative of Set. The word ori-sa or ori-se, is therefore, a modified form of the word 'Horus-Set', the name of a double deity whose worship existed for centuries in Ancient Egypt.

The grounds of identifying "Orisa" with Horus-Set requires amplification. It will be remembered that Horus represented the Asiatic invaders who settled in Ancient Egypt, whilst "Set represented the population which had been conquered by the Pharaonic Egyptians"³. Horus became the title or part of the title of the deities worshipped in Southern Egypt. The worship of Horus was widespread, and that of the Horus gods was at one time general. Set the representative of the North was widely worshipped there, but was regarded as the enemy of Horus, the representative of the South. His worship was not confined to the North of Egypt, but was spread to other parts of Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia. Hence Dr. Menzies says "the evil power Set was much worshipped, and would be approached in private as well as in the public acts depicted on monuments, by all who had anything to fear from him - that is to say by all"⁴. When the crowns of the two kingdoms were united there came into existence a double worship of Horus-Set⁵, and certain

1. T, a final consonant is elided. This is a common occurrence in Yoruba. The final consonant of a monosyllable receives an additional vowel, but if the monosyllabic word is joined to another word, the final consonant is elided.

2. See Masp. Dawn of Civilization, p.83, vignette and note 3.

3. Sayce, Op. Cit. p.166

4. Op. Cit. pp.150-1

5. History of Religion by G.F. Moore, Vol.I, p.149.

districts persisted in this double worship down to the latest times of paganism¹. The Yorubas must have migrated from one or more of such districts.

Further evidence in support of the identification of Esu with Set is supplied by the fact that Eṣu is represented by a stone which is often adored by passers-by as Oluwa mi "My Lord". Set was also represented by a stone. According to Wieldeman, "another Egyptian god² who was occasionally regarded as incorporate in a stone was Set"³. Eṣu is also represented by pillars; so also was Set⁴.

It is quite possible also that the word "Orisa" is derived from Horus the Greek form of the Ancient Egyptian word "Horu". The derivation, then, would be as follows :-
Horus; h is elided, and the final consonant receives a vowel which is either 'a' or 'e'. The word thus becomes O-ri-sa or O-ri-se.

It should be noted here that there are several words in West African languages which denote deities and are traceable to the same origin. For example, the words O-ri-se (Sekiri language), Arose, A-lu-si, A-ru-si (Ibo language) are phonetic modifications of either horus-set or horus.

The origin of the term Set is thus given by Dr. Tiele

"The name Set is perhaps connected with Sati-ray of the sun and Phallos" 5

It is probable that the root idea of this word has survived in a

1. Maspero, Op. Cit. p.200

2. Other gods so regarded are Amon and Ptah. The Yoruba word for a stone is O-ku-ta i.e. the soul of Ptah or that which incorporates the soul of Ptah.

3. Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, p.154.

4. Set is represented by pillars, owing to his identification with Shu, see below.

5. History of Egypt (trans. Ballingal) p.51.

a few images of Esu which are made with disproportionately long phallus. In consequence of these images, Colonel Ellis has described Esu as a phallic god. The present writer has seen a few of the images, but he is convinced that Esu is not a phallic divinity and the stone representations of the deity are not crude imitations of the phallus. Nevertheless, the images lend an indirect support to the theory of a close connection between Esu and Set. It must be admitted, however, that some degenerate tribes do pay undue attention to the phallus in the images.

Whence once the foregoing theory is accepted, it is easy to solve the remaining difficulties. According to Egyptian mytho-^{(logy} there was a god named Shu who came forth from the primaeval waters. He forcibly separated Sibul¹, the god of the earth, from Nuit, the goddess of the starry sky². He thus became the god of the space between earth and sky. His representation was that of a god in a kneeling posture holding up the sky with both hands.³ Later on he became fused with Ra the sun-god, and thus became a sun-god. As a sun-god he was regarded as a beneficent deity and an impersonation of power. He was the life-giver, "The principle which animates matter". Through his benign influence, righteousness and truth reign.

At a later period, however, greater attention was paid to the scorching heat emanating from him than to the animating effect of his rays.

1. Sometimes transliterated Geb or Keb.

2. Maspero, Op. Cit. p.127.

3. See vignette on p.129, Masp. Dawn of Civilization.

"He thus became, as the god of the scorching sun-heat, the dread sun-god, most closely allied to Set; and the ass, the animal of Set, which is also called Shu, appears to have belonged to him as well" 1

The derivation of the name Shu is given as follows : The root whence his name is derived has a twofold signification, first that of scorching, and secondly that of stretching out, growing². The above considerations show that Shu is regarded both as a benevolent and as a malevolent deity³.

The resemblance between the character of the Egyptian god Shu sketched above and that of the Yoruba god Eṣu (E-shu)⁴ will help in unravelling the mystery surrounding the latter. It is clear that the conception of Eṣu is a fusion of the conception of Set and that of Shu. The Yoruba word ṣu (shu) means "to stretch out over something" and hence "to cover up, to darken". For example, the Yoruba expression, 'Orun ṣu means the sky is covered up", that is, with clouds; in other words, clouds have stretched out over the sky. The Yoruba verb meaning "to fall" is su-bu (shu-bu), that is, stretch out over or cover up the place (bu = place, both in Ancient Egyptian language and in Yoruba).

The Yoruba deity thus derives its name and character both from Set, the enemy of Osiris, and from Shu, the sun-god originally regarded as a beneficent deity and afterwards as the dreaded sun-god closely allied to Set. The reason why Eṣu is credited with the opposite qualities of beneficence and malevolence thus becomes clear. His beneficence and malevolence are traceable to the conception of Shu, whilst his malevolence is also traceable

1. Tiele, Op. Cit. page 86.; 2. Tiele, Op. Cit. pp.85 & 86.

3. See the Book of the Dead Chapters 93 & 98, edition by Prof. Budge.

4. E-su = E-shu (s in Yoruba = sh). The initial vowel is added because all Yoruba nouns begin with a vowel, the only exception being noun phrases or borrowed words.

to Set.

An illustration of the fusion of elements in Egyptian mythology in Yoruba religion can be given in support of the above conclusions by quoting a passage from Dennet's "At the Back of the Black Man's Mind". The passage¹, which contains a description of a "juju house" at Idrigena, near Benin City, runs thus :

"As you enter you notice the figure of a man without legs (Oke)², the door-keeper; then turning to the left, you will see a figure in clay dressed in chain armour as in the days of Elizabeth, riding a horse. He is called OKAKWU³ or an officer. Passing along the left wall we find a figure dressed as a prime minister of IYASE. Then in the Open space in the centre of the square there are two figures, one on your right and one on your left as you stand with your back to the door facing AKE. The one on your left represents OYISA (god) and that on your right ESU, the devil. ESU is dressed as a slave in a hat and cloth, carrying a knife at his waist and a stick called UKPOPO⁴ in his right. OYISA on the other hand is dressed like a king. We now stand before the throne of AKE, who dressed like a king seated with a wife (IREBU) with her babe on either side of him".

Ake is the name of a god. The meaning of the word is "an axe". It will be remembered that an axe (└, neter⁵) is the symbol of a god in Ancient Egypt. Iyase means "the living set" (ya from the word ye which means "to exist" and se an abbreviation of the word Set⁶) Oyisa (Horus-Set⁷) is the generic title for a god. In the above passage it is used simply as a substitute for Horus. The figure of Ake who, dressed like a king is seated with a wife and her babe on either side of him strongly suggests that it is a relic of the figure of the divine triad of Horus,

1. pp 220 and 221.

2. Similar figures existed in Ancient Egypt. The figure is also known as Alapafuja in Yoruba.

3. O-ka-kwu is derived from two words, viz. ka and khu.

4. This stick is the same as Agongo Ogo or the knobbed club described above (see p.60).

5. See Masp. Op. Cit., p.221; Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language p.105

6. See note on p. 9 above.

7. See pp 9-11 above.

Osiris and Isis (son, father and mother)¹. Irebu is derived from Rebu², the name of a people who dwelt on the west of Egypt who were often referred to in hieroglyphic inscriptions.

It may be remarked in passing that the practice of symbolizing a god by means of an axe or by means of a figure resembling an axe in form is well-known in other parts of Benin and of Yorubaland in general. The name is sometimes given to the centre of a deity's worship or to the district inhabited by a king who is regarded as wielding supreme authority on behalf of the deity.³

The difficulty arising from the feminine characteristics generally attributed to Esu and from the origin and meaning of the name Elegbera or Elegbara will now be explained.

It has been noted above that the conception of Eṣu is partly derived from that of the Egyptian god Shu. It has also been pointed out that Shu became a sun-god by being fused into the body of Ra. Now Ra is known by two other names, which are the names of other deities who have been identified with him. He is thus the one god known by three different names. As he himself says: "I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Tum in the evening"⁴

The fusion of Shu into Ra and the application of the names of Khepera and Tum to Ra would facilitate the substitution of these names for Shu. As a matter of fact, this is what happened. The name of Khepera was also applied to Shu. As a result of this, Elegbara, the alternative name for Eṣu is derived

1. See Maspero Op. Cit. p. 175

2. See Tiéle, Op.Cit., p.14; Rebu and an initial vowel.

3. For example, Ake the central part of the town of Abeokuta.

4. Sayce, Op. Cit., p.218.

from Khepera. For the sake of clearness the process of derivation will be fully given here. The initial letter Kh is a thin sound which, when followed by a vowel, is elided in Yoruba, unless it occurs in a monosyllabic word.¹ When followed by a vowel in the middle of a word it is hardened into k. When followed by a consonant, it is also hardened into k, but it must be given a vowel to form a new syllable since every consonant must have its own vowel in Yoruba.² Kh in Khepera is therefore elided, leaving epera. The labial sound p does not exist in Yoruba, its place being taken by b or by a thick labial p spelt kp in other West African languages or by gb, another thick labial peculiar to West African languages. In the case of Epera, p is changed to gb, and the word becomes egbera. As a substitute for Shu who, as was noted above, symbolized power, the word becomes a synonym for power.³ A reduplication of the initial vowel of a word together with the letter l is often made, which when added to the original word, signifies "fullness, completeness"⁴. It is thus that the word becomes El'egbera. The change of the third e to a is easily explained by comparing the word with agbara (power) which is certainly a modified form of egbera. The change is perhaps suggested by a word which is sometimes added to Elegbara. That word is Bara, which makes the deity's full name Elegbera Bara. The additional a's supplied by the word Bara may lead to the change of one or more e's to a in the first part of the name.

1. e.g. Khu becomes ku

2. See Chapter 1 p.12 No.(I).

3. The Yoruba word for power is agbara, which is undoubtedly a modified form of egbera. Some tribes use the form egbara.

4. cp. Olorun, Olobiri Chap. II p.48.

The name Eḷegbera, Eḷegbara, Eḷegba or 'Lēgba (the last two being modified forms of the first two words) is thus clearly shown to be derived from Khepera. This statement is further confirmed by the fact that the additional word Ba-Ra means "the soul of Ra", a word which shows a close connection between Eḷegbara and Ra, and thereby through Eḷegbara and Khepera.

This identity of Eḷegbera with Khepera will explain the reason why Esu is credited with feminine characteristics. Khepera is a god, and not a goddess. Why the Greeks chose to give his name a feminine termination is unknown. The fact that he was represented by female images¹ probably led the Greeks to prefer the feminine to the masculine form of the name.

One noteworthy fact in this connection is the derivation of the Yoruba word for woman from Khopri, which is the original Egyptian word for Khepera. The derivation is as follows :- Kh² is elided, leaving opri, p becomes b³, and as Yoruba is a phonetic language, any two consonants coming together in a word must be separated by a vowel. The word thus becomes obiri³ which means a woman. The survival of female images of Eḷegbera (Khepera), the feminine termination of Khepera and the derivation of the word obiri(n) "Woman" from Khopri - all point to the existence of female images of Khopri (Khepera) in Ancient Egypt, in consequence of which Esu is now credited with feminine characteristics.

-
1. There are two hieroglyphic representations of Khepera. One of these is a male figure and the other a female figure. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, pp. 52 & 53, Section 3 Nos. 18 & 19.
 2. See page 75 (Kh) epera.
 3. Sometimes spelt with the nasal n thus: obinrin. The same word exists in the Ibo language spoken in Southern Nigeria and in the Fanti language spoken in the Gold Coast. In each case the meaning is the same.



Fig. 10 An image of Obalufon.

OBA'UFON or OBALUFON.

The identification of Eṣu with Set will also throw light on the origin and character of a deity known as Oba'ufon or Oba-lufon. The deity has been described as 'the god of a prosperous empire', 'the god of the peace of the kingdom', or 'the Lord of Speech'. Dr. Farrow thus writes about the deity:

"Although not so well known as some of the others, he is the possessor of considerable power. He is the only deity to which a human sacrifice was publicly offered during the writer's sojourn in Abeokuta".

The origin of the deity and the reason for the considerable power attributed to him can be explained on the same lines as the difficulties already explained.

Reference has been made above to the prevalence of the worship of Set. Now the Greek name for Set is Typhon, and it should not be surprising if this name survives in Yorubaland, in view of the identification of Set with Eṣu. The fact is that the word Oba'Ufon or Obalufon is partly derived from Typhon. The word may be divided into two parts, viz: Oba and 'ufon or lufon. The word Oba means "a king", derived from the Egyptian word "ba" which means "a soul", the king being regarded as the incarnate soul of the people. The second part 'ufon or lufon comes from Typhon (Greek *τυφον*, t-u-ph-o-n, ph being equivalent to f in sound). The name Typhon must have been obtained by the Greeks from the Phoenicians who identified Set with Ziphon, the god of storms. When the word was adopted by the Yorubas the

the initial letter t or z was elided¹ in keeping with the rule that every noun in Yoruba must begin with a vowel. To the word 'ufon the word oba is added, and the compound word becomes oba'ufon, and is pronounced by some Yorubas in this way till today. The placing of two vowels together is unusual in Yoruba. Hence the letter l is inserted for the sake of euphony and the word becomes oba-l-ufon. The name Oba'ufon or Obalufon is therefore another name for Esu and is derived from Typhon the Grecian name for Set or Sut.

In confirmation of the identification just made, it should be noted that the pig, an animal whose form Set sometimes assumes in mythology, bears a Yoruba name which associates it with Typhon. The Yoruba word for a pig is e-le-de. This word is derived from the Egyptian word deb "to pierce" or "piercing"². Elede therefore means "he who pierces" or "he who possesses the instrument for piercing". When it is remembered that it was in the form of a pig that Typhon, while hunting by night, pierced the eye of Osiris, the reason for the name given by the Yorubas to the pig becomes obvious.

Obalufon possesses considerable power because he is the same god as Set or Shu who is regarded as an impersonation of power and who has been identified with Esu. During the last century he was often propitiated with human sacrifices.³ The reason for the statement that the human sacrifice witnessed by Dr. Farrow was a sacrifice to Esu will now be clear.

1. The elision of t occurs frequently in the Yoruba Language, especially if it denotes possession e.g. Ile ti emi becomes Ile'mi. Also Satide 'Saturday' generally contracted to Sa'ide.
2. Sayce, op. cit. p.221.
3. See page 64 above.

One of the great blessings accruing from the establishment of British Protectorate over Yorubaland is the stoppage of human sacrifices. A few instances of human sacrifices made to Obalufon (Eṣu) last century may be given here, especially as copies of the newspaper from which they are taken are now very rare. They are as follows :-

(1) Iwe Irohin¹. Oct. 3, 1861.

"Human Sacrifice: We hear that from some cause or other the priest of Obalufon, who offered the human sacrifice in Ikereku, died about a week afterwards".

(11) Iwe Irohin. Nov. 1861, Appendix.

"We have again to deplore the fact of a human sacrifice which took place at Ikereku on Tuesday morning the 12th". This town annually sacrifices a slave to Obalufon.

"The victim in this case is the third intended for the purpose this year; the first died, and the second escaped.

"Regarding human sacrifices in this town by the Egbas, we have obtained the following information which we believe to be correct. Of the two hundred townships in Abeokuta the following were accustomed to sacrifice human being before they left their town :-

Igbein	1 annually to Obalufon
Ikereku	1 annually to Obalufon
Iwo	1 annually to Oranmiyan ²
Owu	1 annually to Amunibuwa ³
Oko	7 annually to local deities; not done since the tribe left their old town to come to Abeokuta."

It will be seen from the instances given above that, apart from Ilesa and Ondo where the worship of Esu was most pronounced, human sacrifices to Eṣu or Obalufon were widespread in Yorubaland. The prevalence of human sacrifice to Obalufon is an additional and striking confirmation of the derivation of the word from Typhon, since human sacrifices were also linked

1. Iwe Irohin - the first newspaper published in Yorubaland and edited by C.M.S. Missionaries at Abeokuta.

2. See Chap. 1 p.54.

3. A name of uncertain derivation. It probably means "The Amon of our Settlement" - Amun - ibu - wa

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAJOR DEITIES (Continued)

B. IFA.

CHAPTER IV.

The Orisas - continued.

B. IFA, the Oracular Deity.

Ifa, the oracular deity is by far the most popular and the most important deity in Yorubaland. Although his recognition is not as general as that of Esu, and his status, according to some existing myths, is inferior in some respects to that of Esu, yet his place in the life of every Yoruba is unique.

Among some of the tribes his worship is not as frequent as that of Esu or of the local deities, but his importance is acknowledged by all. He is worshipped and consulted on all important occasions, and his dictates cannot be disregarded with impunity.

Belief in him is a very important strand in the warp and woof of the religious life of the people. It is a vital factor in their psychological background, even up till today. Despite a century of intensive Christian evangelization and about two centuries of Mohammedan penetration into the country, belief in Ifa still finds expression among many civilized Yorubas professing one or other of the higher forms of religion.¹

The desire to probe into the dark bosom of the future is essentially human. Surrounded by many sources of danger as the uncivilized man is, he cannot but seek for guidance from some oracular deity. The uncivilized Yoruba turns

1. See Mr. Herbert Macaulay's evidence before the Commission of enquiry concerning the House of Docemo, published by the Nigerian Government, pages 9 & 10

naturally to Ifa for guidance in regard to the future. He consults him on all matters great and small. Hence there has come into existence an oracular system, invested with such great importance that modern influence has done very little to minimize.

IFA PRIESTS.

The priests of Ifa are known as babalawo (baba-alawo). "The father or the big man who deals with secrets", "An adept in mysteries". Owing to the popularity of the cult, the number of its priests is very large. The Ifa priesthood is also attractive because it is lucrative. There is a popular proverb among the Yorubas that an Ifa priest can never starve - Ebi ko le pa babalawo. Another proverb says that the wisest priest is he who adopts the worship of Ifa.

Initiation to the profession is a very expensive thing. The student of Ifa cult must undergo a long process of training, extending over a period of three to seven years. Before commencing his course he has to pay a sum ranging between £100 and £150 according to his financial capacity or the reputation of his teacher. During this period he has to memorize long passages, and his proficiency depends upon the quality of his retentive memory. He has to memorize 4,096 different stories or couplets, and the more quickly he does this the shorter will be his period of training. No one has been found who has accomplished this feat, but as soon as a student acquires a working knowledge of the principal ones, he is ready for the elaborate ritual of initiation, which includes the ceremony of purification by water and the passing of a test known as

Pinodu. For the purpose of this test the candidate dips his hands into consecrated Ifa water. He then receives on the palm of his hands flaming oil from a new lamp and rubs it on his body. If he sustains no injury, then he becomes an Ifa priest who has given proof that he is secure against all ills and will thereby be able to safeguard others against them.

There are three grades of Ifa priests. Those of the first grade are called Olori, those of the second Orisa, and those of the third, Awon ti a te ni Ifa. "Those of the first grade are entitled to worship their Ifa always, but not to divine with it or suffer it to be so employed. Those of the second grade can both worship their own and divine with it, or suffer it to be thus used whilst those of the third class, who have been brought to their position through the services of Olodus or Chief Babalawos, are, besides being entitled to worship their own Ifa and divine with it, also privileged to eat of any sacrifice that may be offered to or before the Igba Odu, or the calabash or gourd vessel sacred to Odu, a privilege which is denied to those of the first two grades¹."

Every accredited babalawo must pluck off all hairs from his body, and shave his head, and wear a white or a light blue dress.

MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF THE CULT.

Ifa cult is the best organized religious system of the Yorubas. As it has been pointed out above, it is maintained by an intelligent priesthood whose members are subjected to a protracted course of instruction before initiation. What, then,

1. Bp. Johnson, Yoruba Heathenism.

is the origin of the cult ? Who is Ifa ?

There are several myths explaining the origin of the cult and giving details about the deity. A few of these will be reproduced here. They are given not because any reliance can be placed upon them but because they contain details which can serve as clues towards the unravelling of their true origin.

The first of these myths is given by Mr. Oyesile Kẹribo in a pamphlet published by the Egba Government at Abeokuta in 1906. It runs thus :-

"Ifa was a native of Itase near the Ife Country, and of poor parentage. In his youth he had great aversion to manual labour, and therefore had to beg his bread. To better his condition he applied to a wise man for advice, and this sage taught him the art of divination, traditional stories with matters relating thereto, and medicine, as an easy means of obtaining a livelihood. He afterwards became very popular. The sixteen original Odus correspond to the sixteen original stories taught to Ifa etc. His parents, being poor, were not known in the country. Hence he was afterwards considered as without parentage and was deified after death".

The next myth is given by Colonel Ellis and summarized by Dr. Farrow as follows :-

"In the early days of the world when the human race was few in number, the gods were stinted in sacrifices and so often went hungry and had to forage for themselves. Ifa took to fishing, but had no success, and, being hungry consulted Esu (who is also called Elegba) who told him that if he could obtain sixteen palm-nuts from the two palm-trees of Orungan, the chief man, he would show Ifa how to forecast the future and benefit mankind, and so receive abundance of offerings in return; but he stipulated that the first choice of all offerings should be his. Ifa agreed, and went to Orungan to ask for the nuts, telling him for what purpose he required them. Orungan, delighted at the prospect, took his wife with him and hastened to get the nuts Orungan's wife bore them to Ifa. Elegba (Eṣu) then taught Ifa, who in turn taught Orungan, and so made him the first babalawo.

Another interesting myth is given by the late Mr.

Feyisara Sopein in the Nigerian Chronicle of March 12, 1909:-

"Ifa was born at Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba people. He was a skilful medical man, who had an extensive practice and was an eminently skilful diviner. After he had become famous he founded a town called Ipetu and became king of the place People from every part of the Yoruba country flocked to him Out of these, we are told, he chose only sixteen men The names of these apprentices are said to be identical with the names of the sixteen divinitary signs called Odus, and the order of precedence among them, which was probably based upon priority of appointment, is said to be still preserved in the present order of the Odus.

Another myth showing the intimate relationship between Ifa and Esu is given by Dennett¹ :-

"As the story goes, Odudua has no other Orisa except Ifa, and, whenever he consulted any one, he consulted Ifa. Ifa came one day to sacrifice to Odudua, and he was very satisfied with the offering so, on this occasion, Odudua gave Ifa Esu. Thus Esu was the slave of Odudua, and became Ifa's messenger. And when anyone wants to sacrifice to Ifa they say that it is best to square his messenger, as he is a very wicked person."

Other Names of Ifa.

The Yoruba people are very fond of giving titles to deities and distinguished persons. They are also reluctant to call a distinguished person by name, and hence they sometimes substitute titles for names. The following is a selection of titles given to Ifa :-

1. Orunmila
2. Olodumare
3. Ikuforiji
4. Olujeni
5. Oba Olọfa a sun l'ọla
6. Mini
7. Erintunde
8. Edu
9. Alajiki
10. Okitibiri a-pa-ojo-iku-da
11. Ela
12. Oyigiyigi.

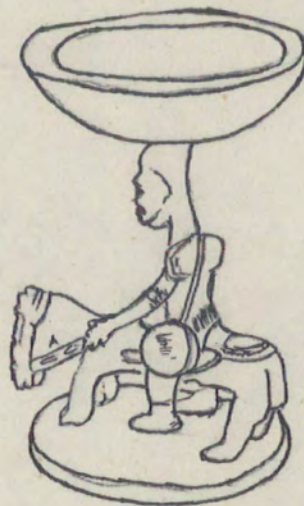


Fig. 11 Ifa Utensils. Palm Nuts and other Articles are placed in these beautifully carved trays.

Facing page 86.

MODE OF DIVINATION.

The materials used for divination are a whitened circular board known as Opon Ifa and sixteen palm nuts. Sometimes a rectangular board or a rectangular fan is used. At other times the number of palm nuts is increased by one. When the diviner has secured all the necessary materials he proceeds in either of the following ways :-

- (i) He puts all the palm nuts on his left palm and attempts to take them up with one grasp of the palm of his right hand. Or
- (ii) He holds the sixteen palm-nuts loosely in the right hand and throws them through the half-closed fingers into the left hand. When either of these processes is adopted if one palm-nut remains, two marks 11 or 00 are made with the finger on the divining board; if two nuts remain, a single mark 1 or 0 is made. The process is repeated eight times and the figure formed by recording the results is called an Odu a "chief", a "head", a "deity" represented by a palm-nut. Behind each of the 16 Odus are sixteen subordinate Odus, thus bringing the number to 256. Behind each of these 256 Odus are other subordinate Odus, bringing the total to 4,096 Odus, for each of which there is an appropriate story or couplet when it appears on the divining board.

The following is a list of the sixteen principal Odus :-

(1) Eji Ogbe	(2) Oyekun meji	(3) Iwori meji
(4) Odi meji	(5) Iroshu meji	(6) Owara meji
(7) Bara Meji	(8) Okara(n) meji	(9) Ogunda meji
(10) Osa meji	(11) Ika meji	(12) Oturupon meji
(13) Oture meji	(14) Irete meji	(15) Ose meji
(16) Ofu meji.		

The following are the diagrammatic representations of the Odus :-

1. Eji Ogbe

1 1		0 0
1 1	or	0 0
1 1		0 0
1 1		0 0

2. Oyeku Meji

1	1		0	0
1	1	or	0	0
1	1		0	0
1	1		0	0

3. Iwori Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0
1	1	or	0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

4. Odi Meji

1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0

5. Iroshu Meji

1	1		0	0
1	1		0	0
		or		
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

6. Owara Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0
1	1		0	0

7. Bara Meji

1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

8. Okara(n) Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0

9. Ogunda Meji

1	1		0	0
1	1	or	0	0
1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

10. Osa Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1	or	0	0
1	1		0	0
1	1		0	0

11. Ika Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1	or	0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

12. Oturupon Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

13. Otüre Meji

1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0
1	1		0	0

14. Irete Meji

1	1		0	0
1	1	or	0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0

15. Ose Meji

1	1		0	0
1 1	1 1	or	0 0	0 0
	1			0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0

16. Ofu Meji

1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1	or	0	0
1 1	1 1		0 0	0 0
1	1		0	0

The oracular response of Ifa is given in the form of a parable. Hence the saying :-

Owe ni Ifa ipa
Omoran ni imo;
Bi a ba wipe mo
Omoran a mo
Nigbati a ko ba mo
A ni, ko se.

"Ifa always speaks in parables.
It is the wise man who understands his speech.
When we say, understand it,
It is the wise man who understands it.
If we claim to understand it
When we really do not understand it,
Then we say, There is something terrible about it.

When a particular Odu turns up on the divining board the diviner recites the appropriate story or couplet and interprets the response to the enquirer as best he can.

Of all these Odus, Eji Ogbe is regarded as the prince. Whenever his figure appears on the divining board, the babalawo attaches the greatest importance to the occasion and, after warning the enquirer about the serious nature of the response

to be expected, quickly chants the following words :-

Bi a ba bọ oju
Bi a ba bọ imu
Isale agbon ni a pari re.

A da fun Orunmila nigbati o nlo gba ase lowo Olodumare. O rubo. Olodumare si wa fi ase fun u. Nigbati gbogbo aiye gbo pe o ti gba ase lowo Olodumare, nwon si nwọ to o Gbogbo eyiti o wi si nse. Lati igbana wa ni a nwipe, A se!

"When we wash our face,
When we wash our nose
We finish off beneath the chin."

"Ifa was consulted for Orunmila, when the latter was going to receive authority from the Almighty. He sacrificed. And the Almighty gave him authority. When all the world heard that he had received authority they came to him. All that he said came to pass. Ever since then we say, 'Amen' or 'So be it!'" "

Opele.

There are other deities which are consulted as oracles by the Yorubas. The chief of these is Opele who is regarded as Ifa's messenger, and is consulted for minor matters, especially as it is easier and less expensive to consult him than to consult Ifa. In theory he is expected to be consulted every day by everybody, but in practice this not the case. "He is always represented by eight flat pieces of wood or metal or something else, strung together in two rows of four on each side, placed at equal distances from each other and joined together."¹

1. Bp. Johnson, Yoruba Heathenism.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN.

An enquiry into the historical origin of the cult is an easy task if the theory of a close connection between the religion of the Yorubas and that of the Ancient Egyptians, which was proposed and applied in the preceding chapters, is also applied here. Although the existence of the system as a complete whole cannot be traced in Ancient Egyptian records, yet its essential elements can be found in various records. Most of the ideas connected with it are, unquestionably, relics of the Osirian faith.

The first point to note is the very name of the deity - Ifa. This word is derived directly from nefer, the title of Osiris. The derivation is as follows :- Since every Yoruba noun begins with a vowel, the initial consonant of a noun borrowed from another language either receives a vowel-prefix or is dropped, especially if it is a weak nasal consonant. Hence the initial consonant in nefer is dropped leaving efer. An 'e' sound is represented in Yoruba by 'i', and the sound 'er' being non-existent in Yoruba is changed to 'a'. Hence the word nefer becomes ifa. It is noteworthy that the initial consonant 'n' is retained when the word is attached to another word e.g. Ope-nifa or Ope-lifa "The tree from which the palm-nuts used for Ifa divination are obtained".

The next point to be considered is the origin of the term Odu. Among the Ancient Egyptians the belief existed that the abode of the dead was divided into regions or domains. These domains (Aats, Ots or Ods) were under the rule of different deities. The Pyramid Texts of the Book of the

Dead contain frequent allusions to the Aats or Domains of Horus and Set, and lists of the Aats of Sekhet - Aaru over which Osiris presided. In view of the survival of elements of the Osirian faith in Yoruba religion pointed out in the previous chapters it should not be surprising if the belief in the Aats over which Osiris presided also survives. As a matter of fact the belief does survive in the Ifa Cult. Most of the words connected with the cult are derived directly from the names of the Aats of Sekhet - Aaru. The word odu itself is derived from Aat (or ot, od) the derivation following the phonetic rules of modification of foreign words to be incorporated into the Yoruba language. The derivation is as follows :- Aat; the first 'a' is usually replaced by O in several books; the second 'a' is elided; the dental 't' becomes 'd', and receives a vowel to form its own syllable, there being no closed syllables in the Yoruba language. Hence the word becomes Odu. Ot or Od is found in books on Egypt as the equivalent of Aat.

The two lists of the Aats or Ots or Ods of Sekhet - Aaru, reproduced by Professor E. Wallis Budge in his edition of the Book of the Dead, deserve consideration. The number of Aats in the first list is fourteen, and in the second, fifteen. Now the number of the Odus of Ifa is sixteen. It is quite easy to see that this number is derived from the number in each of the lists referred to above. The Yorubas would easily add two to the number in the first list, one for Osiris himself, for whom they provide an Odu (Eji Ogbe), and another one for the

enquirer who, according to the Osirian faith, would expect to find a place in the fields of Aaru after death. They would similarly add one to the number in the second list for Osiris, and although they do not add one more for the enquirer to bring the number to seventeen, yet the need for an odu to represent the enquirer is recognized by the fact that many Ifa priests always provide sixteen plus one palm-nuts. The extra one is known as the Adele or "the odu which watches the house", and is never used for the purpose of divination.

It is noteworthy that each of the Odus is described as having a two-fold character e.g. Obara meji¹, Ofu meji. The explanation of this lies in the fact that each odu represents a domain and the deity presiding over it, as shown in the lists referred to above.

It has been pointed out above that as soon as an Odu turns up the babalawo (Ifa Priest) recites an appropriate story or couplet. A number of such stories or religious songs is given by the Rev. D.O. Epega in his book entitled "Ifa, Imọlẹ̀ Rẹ̀". Between these stories or songs and the statements made about the Aats by Osiris as given by Professor Budge on pages 485 to 498 of his edition of the Book of the Dead there is such a close resemblance in respect of language and ideas as cannot be lightly described as accidental. The conclusion is irresistible that the Yoruba passages are modelled upon the statements of Osiris about the Aats of Sekhet - Aaru.

Another noteworthy point is the fact that in recording the results of his divination the babalawo uses Egyptian symbols,

1. Meji = Two.

that is, strokes or circles - III or 000¹.

The derivation of the names of the Odus will now be given. To facilitate this, a comparative table of four lists of the sixteen principal odus will be inserted here. It will be seen that the differences between the names of the Odus in the four lists are, in almost all cases, phonetic differences. The lists are as follows :-

	Ellis'	Johnson's	Phillips'	Dennett's
1.	Buru	Ogbe	Ogbe	Ogbe
2.	Yekun	Oyekun	Oyeku	Oyeku
3.	Ode	Iwori	Iwori	Iwori
4.	Di	Edi	Odi	Odi
5.	Losho	Urosi	Iroshu	Iroshun
6.	Oron	Owara	Owourin	Owourin
7.	Abila	Bara	Obara	Obara
8.	Akala	Okaran	Okauran	Okouron
9.	Kuda	Ogunda	Oguda	Oguda
10.	Sa	Osa	Osa	Osa
11.	Ka	Eka	Ika	Ika
12.	Durapin	Oturupon	Oturupon	Oturupon
13.	Ture	Etüre	Otura	Otura
14.	Leti	Erete	Irete	Irete
15.	Shi	Ose	Oshe	Oshe
16.	Fu	Ofu	Ofu	Ofu

1. Ogbe is derived from uben-f, a title of Osiris see Book of the Dead p.578². Compare Nefer-uben-f. 'u' becomes 'O', and 'b' becomes labial 'gb'. Buru appears to be a local name.
2. Yeku(n) Ye - ku = the living Ku. This occurs in the 3rd Aat, 1st list, introduction p.180³.
3. Iwori comes from Aaru, which first becomes Ooru, then Oworu, then iwori - change of the vowel letters a, i, u, the one for the other, being frequent in both Egyptian and Yoruba languages.

-
1. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language pp 107 & 127.
 2. All the references in this section are made to the Book of the Dead, edition by Prof. Budge.
 3. All the references in this section are made to the Book of the Dead, edition by Professor Budge.

4. Odi comes from Atu. A similar derivation has been given above; see Aat = Odu, above. Atu appears in the 2nd list, introduction p. 181.
5. Iroshu = Iro - shu, the Pillar of Shu. See page 93¹.
6. Owara comes from Uar - t. 'U' becomes 'w' and receives an initial vowel, 'r' receives a vowel to form a syllable, and 't' is elided. Uart is the name of the 13th Aat in the 1st set, introduction p.181.¹
7. Abila is wrong spelling. Ba - Ra = the soul of Ra. 'O' is only an initial vowel.
8. Okaran comes from Kher - aha. Initial vowel O, then a (er), then 'r' inserted to separate two vowels and a (n), a contraction of aha. See the 14th Aat in the 1st list, introduction p.181.
9. Kuda, Ku - Da = the soul of Da, an Ancient Egyptian god. See 5th Aat, 1st list, introduction, p.181.
10. Osa comes from Ha - ser - t. Ha becomes 'O' (h elided), ser becomes sa, and 't' is elided. See 7th Aat, 2nd list, intro., p.181.¹
11. Ka = Soul.
12. Durapin appears to be a wrong spelling of Oturupon. Oturu comes from Atru or Otru and pon from pua - nit. See 13th Aat, 2nd list, intro., p.181.¹
13. Eture or Otura probably comes from Atru or from a combination of Atu and Re or Ra. See 4th Aat, 2nd list, intro., p.181.¹
14. The derivation of Irete is difficult. It probably comes from Rertu. See p.481.¹
15. Oşę or Oshe comes from Ase-s. Shi is wrong spelling. See 7th Aat, 1st list, intro., p.181.
16. Ofu probably comes from Auf, part of the title of Osiris i.e. Auf-nefer. See page 450¹.

1. All the references in this section are made to the Book of the Dead, edition by Professor Budge.

The derivation of the Odus explained above clearly shows that the ingenious guesses contained in popular works on the subject have no historical foundation.

It is interesting to compare the titles of Ifa with those of Osiris given in chapters 141 and 142 of the Book of the Dead. Many of the former are derived from those of the latter or from Egyptian words. A few examples of these will be given here :- (i) Orun-mi-la. The literal translation of this word is "Heaven knows those who will be saved". There is no doubt that it is derived from Horu-m-la, one of the combinations of the names of Egyptian gods (compare Hor-m-Khuti). La is the name of the Egyptian Lion god. (ii) Ela. This is derived from La. (iii) Edu, a contraction of eyi-didu "That which is black". The word is derived from Didu, the black image of Osiris (iv) Olodumare. This has been explained in chapter two.

The mythological stories given above also contain elements from the myth of Osiris. The stories refer to the goodness of Ifa, the benefit he conferred upon others, his persecution and deification. All these details have parallels in the myth of Osiris. The relation between Ifa and Esu also finds a parallel in the one existing between Osiris and Set.

The reference to Orungan in the stories is significant. The meaning of this word is "The noonday sun". Now the name of the noonday sun in ancient Egyptian Religion is Ra. The sun-god is believed to have said : "I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Tum in the evening"¹. The relation

1. Sayce, the Religion of Ancient Egyptians, p.218.

between Osiris, Ra, Shu and Set has been explained in the preceding chapter, and it is interesting to see that a further proof of this relation is given by the references to these gods in the Ifa stories.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The survival of the Osirian faith in Yorubaland is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of Ifa, the god of divination.

The origin of the Ifa system must be traced to Egypt. Its basis lies in the Osirian faith in general and in the doctrine of the Aats in particular. The identical system as a complete whole has not yet been traced, but a similar system, known as Derb el ful or Derb el raml, has been discovered in modern times by Mr. James Hamilton and described in his book entitled "Wanderings in North Africa"¹.

The Ifa system of divination is not confined to the Yorubas. Among the Ibos it is known by the older title of Efa (E pronounced as in E-phraim) and by the later title of Afa or Aga. It is described by P.A. Talbot as follows :-

"The charm consists of two pairs of strings, each composed of four 'Osing' shells. These are laid side by side on either hand of the Diviner. Those on the right are supposed to be male, and on the left female".

"The shells composing the four strings are naturally capable of falling in almost innumerable combinations and, as a consequence, an expert Mboni has an extensive system on which to work"².

A few points in the above description are noteworthy. The Ibo diviner uses two pairs of strings, each composed of four Osing shells. The number of shells is thus sixteen,

1. pp. 264-65.

2. In the shadow of the Bush p.174

and this corresponds to the sixteen palm nuts used by the Yoruba diviner. The word 'Osing' is also noteworthy. It is the word Osi nasalized and is derived from Osi-ris who, as pointed out above, was the chief presiding deity of the Aats (Ots) of Sekhet - Aaru from which the Ifa system originated, and also from whose title (nefer) the system derived its name. The title of the diviner "Mbo-ni" should also be noted. Mbo is derived from ba or bau, soul or souls, andun, a being, person. Mboni therefore means "The people of the ba or bau", that is the people who possess in an especial manner the soul or souls of the ancestors. A similar title exists among the Yorubas and is applied to the priests of Sango, a deity which will be described in a later chapter. The title is "Magba" that is, Ma-gba, Oma(n) or Omo(n) agba, "people of the ba".

A similar system is also found among several peoples of Southern Nigeria, namely, the Ijaws, the Popos, the Ibos, the Ibio-bios, the Ekois, the Iyalas and others. Many of these peoples use four strings consisting of four shells or nuts or stones and also retain the original name of Ifa or Efa.

Belief in Ifa is deeply embedded in the mind of the Yorubas. In view of its antiquity and vigour there is no doubt that in spite of all the rapid progress of western education, centuries will elapse before its last traces can be obliterated from the mind of the average Yoruba.

linked with the name of Typhon in Ancient Egypt. According to Plutarch, "In Eileithyapolis they used to burn living men to ashes.....calling them Typhoneian; and the ashes they winnowed away and scattered. This, however, was done publicly and at one special time"¹. This statement may be considered together with the following extract from Maspero's New Light on Ancient Egypt:- "Human Sacrifice. The victims may be seen carried on a sledge, then strangled and perhaps afterwards burnt". Human sacrifices similar to those in Ancient Egypt survived in Yorubaland up to the end of the last century.²

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The foregoing remarks supply adequate grounds for regarding Esu as being closely connected with the Egyptian god Set, and therefore with Shu, Khepera and Typhon. The conception of Esu is a fusion of ideas connected with each of the three Egyptian gods who had been identified with Set in Ancient Egypt. His worship is another relic of the Osirian faith, which has survived through the centuries with some of its gruesome elements. Rooted in the distant past and carried through a vast expanse of desert, the belief in Set is as strong as ever in Yorubaland today and is centred in Esu, a deity who is sometimes beneficent and sometimes malevolent, but whose malevolence has so preponderated over his beneficence that he is now regarded by many as "the Supreme Power of Evil" and the "Prince of Darkness".

1. Isis and Osiris (translation by Mead) LXXIII, 3 & 4.

2. Public human sacrifices have ceased in Yorubaland. Private ones are of very rare occurrence, thanks to the vigilance of British Officers.

CHAPTER V

THE MAJOR ORISAS (continued) -

C. Obatala. D. Oduduwa

E. and F. Aginju and Yemoja

The Major Orisas - continued.

C. OBATALA

Next in importance to Ifa comes Obatala who is popularly described as "the great god". He belongs to the animistic system, and commands the worship and respect of a large number of Yorubas. He easily evokes their religious feelings. The anthropomorphic description of his character brings him very near to the imagination of simple peasants who are never thrilled by abstractions. The more lofty and nebulous the conception of Olorun becomes, the more popular the worship of Obatala becomes. Tradition says that Obatala is really the vice-gerent of Olorun, and as such he should take precedence over all other deities. In actual practice, however, Obatala's importance does not eclipse that of either of the animistic gods described in the previous chapters.

MYTHS. The myths about Obatala are numerous. One of these represents him as Olorun's vice-gerent. Olorun, it is said, created all things, including the god Obatala. But he did not complete the work. Before retiring to the heavens to live as an absentee god, he entrusted Obatala with the task of completing the work of creation. For example, Olorun is said to have made man as a rough and solid figure, leaving Obatala to put the finishing touches by giving man a face, mouth, nose, eyes, ears and skull.

Another myth represents Obatala as the sole creator of the first man and woman whom he formed out of clay. Another myth ascribes to him the work of forming the child in utero, and

and hence all physical defects are regarded either as his mistakes or as sure signs of his desire to punish some guilty persons. Persons having physical defects (e.g. albinos) are dedicated to him. Another function generally attributed to him in the myths is that of Protector of the town gates. He is, therefore, frequently represented by a horseman with a spear, attended by a serpent, fish, tortoise and leopard.

WORSHIP. Obatala is the only Yoruba deity which enjoins uniformity of colour in respect of his worship. "His worshippers must wear white clothes, and eat white food, using shea-butter (instead of the usual red palm oil) in their cooking, abstaining from red meat, and using and offering the white (or "bitter") kola instead of the red one".¹

His worship is very simple. Inexpensive offerings of edible snails are made to him. On important occasions his worshippers indulge in feasting and dancing. Prayers for the gift of children are frequently offered to him by would-be mothers.

He is one of the Yoruba gods worshipped outside Yorubaland. Among the Ewe speaking peoples at Porto Novo, he serves as an arbiter of disputes, especially in determining a guilty person. This he does by means of an oracle known as Onise (messenger, ambassador). Colonel Ellis gives the following description of the oracle :-

"It consists of a hollow cylinder of wood, about 3½ feet in diameter, one end of which is covered with draperies and the other closed with shells of the edible snail." ²

Obatala is the Yoruba god of purity. He represents the

1. Dr. Farrow, op. cit. p. 43

2. Ellis, op. cit. p. 3

the highest moral conception attained by the Yorubas. His influence perhaps explains the superiority of the Yorubas to many of their neighbours, a fact attested to by several observers. ¹

TITLES. The following are the titles of the god :-

1. OBATALA. This word has been translated as the "King of Whiteness", "Lord of the White Cloth", "Lord of the Visions", according to the nature of the accents placed on the last two vowels by each translator. The real meaning of the word will be given later.
2. ORISA POPO. "Orisa who kneads clay", or ORISA ALAMORERE "The Orisa who owns the best clay". These two titles are given to him in the myth which depicts him as the creator of the first man and woman whom he formed out of clay.
3. ORISA OJ' ENIA. "The orisa who causes man to live", that is, he who breathes life into man and thus brings him into existence.
4. ALABA-NI-ASE. "He who proposes and also disposes". This title refers to his great power.
5. ORISA NLA "The great orisa".
6. OBABA ARUGBO. "The ancient King-Father" or "Father Greybeard".
7. ORISA GBIGBINIKI. "The huge (or bulky) Orisa."

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The historical origin of Obatala may be easily traced by applying the theory explained and applied in the previous chapters.

The first point to be considered is the name Obatala which may be divided into three parts, namely, Oba-ti-ala. The word Oba has been explained before. It denotes a "King". ² The word "ti" means "of" or "pertaining to". The word ala has been misinterpreted as "white". This is only a secondary meaning derived from it by reversing its accents from the acute (ala) to the

1. e.g. Ellis, op. cit. p.33; Westerman, Africa Vol.II

No.4, pp.341 & 342.

2. See Chap.III p.17

to the grave (ala). Another secondary meaning derived from it is ala which means "a Boundary".

What, then, is the origin of this word ala ?

The ideas associated with the god whose name incorporates the word strongly suggests an Egyptian origin. No sooner is this suggestion taken into serious consideration than it leads to the discovery that Obatala was formerly a Nile god. The word ala is a modified form of Iatur-au, Iaur-au which is the name given by the Ancient Egyptians to the River Nile. The Ancient Egyptian word becomes Iaro, Ialo¹ in the Coptic. Timon, the mathematician, used the very word ala in designating the sources of the Nile which he called Phi-ala² - phi³ being the masculine article in Ancient Egyptian language and ala being a modified form of Ialo. Obatala, then means "the King of the Nile" in a literal sense and "a Nile god" in a religious sense.

Which of the Nile gods is the prototype of Obatala ?

When once the true significance of the name is understood, the Nile god of which Obatala is a survival, is not far to seek.

Obatala has been described as "the potter" (Orisa-popo, Alamorere), and "Father Greybeard (Obaba arugbo). The prototype of Obatala is undoubtedly Khnum who was given titles identical or similar to those of Obatala, in Egyptian mythology.

At Philae, Khnum describes himself as "the potter who fashions men and the modeller of the gods"⁴. Hence he is described as "the creator of all this, the fashioner of that which exists, the father of fathers, the mother of mothers",

1. See Masp. Dawn of Civilization, p.6 Note 4.

2. See Pliny, His.Nat. v.9

3. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, p.112
pa or phi; Memphitic dialect pha or phi.

4. Brugsch, Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum p.752

No.11. See also Works by Maspero, Champollion etc.

"the creator of the heaven and the earth, the lower world, the water and the mountains" who has formed the male and the female of fowl and fish, wild beasts, cattle and creeping things". To him is assigned the function of infusing life into babes.¹

It is clear from the above remarks that the ideas associated with Khnum and those associated with Obatala are identical in almost every detail. The conclusion may therefore be made that Obatala is a survival of the Ancient Egyptian god Khnum.

A few other facts may be added here in support of the conclusion. Writers on Egyptology assert that a large number of negroes resided at Elephantine. It is quite possible that the contact of the negroes with the Ancient Egyptian Religion took place here, resulting in the worship of Khnum under the name of Obatala.

Khnum has been described as "the father of the gods, who is himself, who moulds men, and models (masu) the gods". Now there are two words in Yoruba which mean "to model", or "to mould", and they are ma and su.² It is remarkable that the two words are derived from the Ancient Egyptian word masu which means "to model".

The word Khnum itself has been incorporated into the Yoruba Language. Its full Egyptian form is Khnu-mu, and the Yoruba word derived from it is Okuri or Oku(n)ri(n)³ or Okonri(n)³ which means "a man". The derivation is as follows. The termination -mu is dropped, leaving Khnu. Every noun in Yoruba begins with a

-
1. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.389.
 2. e.g. Ma-po, to mould a pillar; cf. Oke Mapo at Ibadan.
Su = shapen, make round, model.
 3. Nasal n.

a vowel, hence the initial vowel o is added; Kh becomes K, and a suitable vowel is inserted between K and n, since Yoruba is a phonetic language. N is changed to r - the change of a nasal to liquid being a well-known phonetic feature in some languages¹. A suitable vowel is then added to r, the vowels in Ancient Egyptian Language being often interchanged in different text-books on Egyptology. It is thus that the word okuri or okunrin or okonrin is obtained².

The use of white in connection with the worship of Obatala must have been suggested by the white colour of the River Nile. It is probable that the Yorubas lived on the bank where the white Nile flowed unmixed with the blue Nile.

The survival of Obatala who is regarded as a great god by the Yorubas strongly suggests that Elephantine must have been one of the cities where Ancient Egyptian culture impressed itself upon Yoruba primitive culture.

-
1. Cp. Enu, which is often pronounced eru.
 2. It is remarkable that the Yoruba words for a man and a woman are both of Egyptian origin. See Chap. 2 p.48.



Fig.13 Statues of Odudua and a Subordinate Deity.
The bigger statue is that of Odudua. The
smaller statue is that of a subordinate deity
supposed to be the wife of Odudua by those who
regard the latter deity as a god.

D. ODUDUWA

Oduduwa is one of the most important Yoruba deities. She is the chief female orisa, just as Obatala is the chief male orisa.

She is reputed as the progenitor of the Yoruba race. The Yorubas therefore usually style themselves as OMO ODUDUWA "Descendants of Oduduwa". Every Yoruba who has rendered some distinguished service to his country or has shown in a marked degree some fine human attribute is generally greeted with the title as a compliment.

MYTHS. The myths about this deity contain conflicting details. Some depict the deity as a male orisa, and others as a female orisa. The former myths are of a late origin. They are supported by the late Feyisara Sopein¹ whose accounts of the Yoruba deities are sometimes fanciful and strongly euhemeristic.

The myths depicting the deity as a female orisa are more original in character, and are more widely accepted. There is hardly any doubt that Oduduwa was originally a female deity. With her adoption as the progenitor of the Yoruba race, there seems to have arisen a tendency to regard her as a leader and a "hero", in consequence of which late stories transforming her to a male deity were invented.

The older myths represent her as the embodiment of virtues. The later myths depict her as an immoral deity worshipped with rites involving unbridled immorality.

Exhaustive research into these inconsistencies shows that

1. See Nigerian Chronicle Vol.I No.18, Mar.19,1909

that Oduduwa was, originally, the worthy wife of Obatala, the god of purity. Like her husband, she possessed many fine attributes. Later, when her worship became degenerated, stories were invented in defence of the revolting features associated with her worship.

Some of the later stories also suggest that the bad attributes of another goddess¹ no longer worshipped were transferred to her. The amorous escapades associated with her name, especially in the legend relating to her illicit passion for a hunter and the foundation of the town of Ado are so revolting that it is certain that the Yorubas would never have adopted such a person as the worthy progenitor of their race. The conjecture is not remote that the idea of immorality is suggested by the conception of Obatala and Oduduwa as being locked in inseparable embrace symbolizing the union between earth and sky.

In the earlier myths she is credited with priority of existence as compared with Obatala. She is regarded as having independent existence, and as co-eval with Olorun, the Supreme Deity with whom she is associated in the work of creation.

She is the wife of Obatala. Their union is regarded as symbolizing the union between earth and sky. The union is symbolized by two whitened calabashes, closely fitted together, one on top of the other, which when once joined are regarded as inseparable. Hence Oduduwa is known as Iya Agbe "Mother of the gourd" or "Mother of the closed calabash". She is always

1. The stories resemble those relating to the Egyptian goddess Hathor.

She is always represented in a sitting posture, nursing a child. Hence prayers are sometimes addressed to her by would-be mothers. HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The goddess Oduduwa is the survival of an Ancient Egyptian deity.

The derivation of her name has been described by previous writers as uncertain. The name has been taken to mean "the Black One", the derivation being as follows :- dudu, "black" and iwa "existence". It has also been regarded as a contraction of Odu ti o da wa, that is, a "self existent personage". Neither of these derivations is correct.

It should be noted that the forms Oduduwa, Odudua, and Odua, refer to one and the same person - the first is an enlarged form, and the third a contracted form, of the second.

The name may be divided into two parts, namely, Odu and dua. The word Odu¹, as has been explained before, means "a chief", "an exalted personage". The word dua comes from the Ancient Egyptian word dua-t² which means "the underworld". Odu-dua, therefore means "Lord of the Underworld" or "Mistress of the Underworld". The title "Lord of the Underworld" was primarily applied to Ra and to Osiris, and then to the other gods and goddesses in the Underworld.

Which of these goddesses, then, is the predecessor of Odudua ?

Two facts are helpful in answering this question. The first is that another name of Oduduwa is Yemu-u or Yemuhu. The word Ye-mu-u or Ye-muhu means "the living Mut" or "Mother Mut". The West African word Ye meaning "the living one" or "Mother" has

1. Du in Ancient Egyptian Language means a mountain.

2. Compare Am Duat, "the Book of the Underworld".

has been explained before. The word Mut is the Ancient Egyptian name for a very well-known goddess. It is customary among the Yorubas to omit the letter 't' wherever possible¹. Hence the word Mut which should have become Mutu becomes Mu-u or Muhu, h being substituted for t, the omission of which brings two vowels together, contrary to the rules governing the structure of syllables in a phonetic language.

It is noteworthy that just as the Yorubas speak of "Mother Mut" so the Ancient Egyptians speak of "Mut", the "Mother".

The second fact is that the union between Obatala and Oduduwa is regarded as symbolizing that existing between the earth and the sky. It is remarkable that such a conception existed in the religious thought of the Ancient Egyptians, and that one of the deities so united is Mut or Nut², the other being Shu or Khnum or Seb³.

Earlier in this Chapter Obatala, the other deity of the union⁴, has been identified with Khnum. An Egyptian text at Esua which identifies Shu with Khnum states that he "raised Nut and put himself under her like a great column of air" and describes him as sustaining "the floor of the sky upon its four supports."⁵

-
1. Compare Sa'ide for Satide(Saturday);Obalufon for Oba-Typhon; Sa'an for standard.
 2. The original form of the word is Nuit.
 3. Sometimes spelt Geb. The original form is Sibū. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization page 129.
 4. The union was originally between Sibū and Nuit.
 5. Similar stories of the union between the Earth and the Sky, symbolized by the union between the Earth Goddess and the Sky God exist in other parts of Nigeria. See "Southern Nigeria by P. Amaury Talbot, Vol.II, Chaps III & IV.

CONCLUSION: The foregoing remarks show that Oduduwa derives her name from the title of Osiris or Ra as "Lord of the Underworld", and that she is the survival of the goddess Nuit or Mut the "Mother", a popular deity in Southern Egypt.

The similarity between the Ancient Egyptian deity and the Yoruba deity which justifies the identification of the latter with the former is an additional evidence in support of the theory of a close connection between the Religion of Ancient Egyptian and the Religion of the Yorubas.



Fig.14 Shrine of Yemaja.

Facing page 111

E. and F. AGINJU AND YEMOJA.

These two deities are the offsprings of Obatala and Odudua.

Aginju, a male deity, is the deity representing land. The word Aganju or Aginju means "a desert", and it is quite possible that the early Yoruba who lived in the desert had no other idea of the nature of land. The worship of the deity has fallen into disuse. This is not surprising, as the worship of the god of the desert must be supplanted by that of the god of fertility when the Yorubas migrated southwards.

Yemoja, a female deity, is the deity representing water. The word Ye-mo-ja is a contraction of Yeye - omo - eja. "The mother of Fishes", the word omo¹ being used here in a generic sense !

There being no other persons to marry, Aganju and Yemoja married one another and had a son named Orungan.

Orungan is said to have committed incest with her mother. She fled from him in horror, but was hotly pursued by her wicked son, until she fell backward to the ground owing to exhaustion. Streams of water began to pour forth from her body, and these eventually united to form a lagoon.

From her body the following deities emanated :- Oloja (the lagoon goddess) Olokun (god of the sea), Dada (the god of vegetables) Sango (god of lightning) Ogun (god of iron and war), Oya (goddess of the River Niger), Osun (goddess of the River Osun), Oba (goddess of the River Oba) Orisa Oko (god of agriculture) Osoji (Oshosi, god of hunters), Oke (god of mountains), Aje Saluga (god of wealth), Sopono (god of smallpox) Orun (the sun-God) Osu (Oshu, the Moon-goddess)

1. cp. Omo enia = human beings.

The origin of several of the well-known Yoruba deities is thus traced to Obatala and Odudua.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The derivation of Aganju is uncertain. It is probable that the name was adopted from the dwellers in the wilderness after the Yorubas had left the fertile lands of Egypt.

The historical connection of the goddess Yemoja is strongly suggested by her name. As the "Mother of Fishes", she is a survival of one of the Nile-goddesses, probably of the goddess Mirit Qimait or Mirit Mihit who, together with the male associates - the Hapis - were described as guardian deities of fishes¹.

The name Orungan, "Noonday Sun", has been explained in the previous chapters².

Many of the names of the deities who sprang from Yemoja can be traced to the names of Egyptian deities or from Egyptian words.

- (1) O-l'-o-sa, "Owner of the lagoon". Sa in Ancient Egyptian language means a pond, a lake.
- (2) O-l'-o-ku(n), "Owner of the sea" Khu(Ancient Egyptian) = soul. Oku(n) is the Yoruba word for the sea, which is regarded as the origin of the watery vapour resembling the soul (Khu) of man.
- (3) Da-da comes from Da, the name of the Egyptian lion-god.
- (4) O-gu(n). Gu(n) is a modified form of Ku(Khu).

1. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization pp. 36-38

2. See Chapters III and IV above.

- (5) O-ya. Ya is a modification of the West African word Ye.
This has been noted in Chapter II above.
- (6) O-shu(n), from Shu, Ancient Egyptian god.
- (7) O-ba. Ba in Ancient Egyptian language = soul. See
Chapter II above.
- (8) O-so-si = O-shu-osi. Shu and Osi¹ are names of
Ancient Egyptian Deities.
- (9) Oke = Mountain. The god of the mountain(Horus Ba-khu)
has been noted
- (10) Aje Saluga, "The Living one of Salug" that is, the God
(of Wealth) of Salug. See Chapter I above.
- (11) Sopono. This will be explained later.
- (12) O-ru(n) from Horu = Sun.
- (13) O-su (Oshu, Moon-goddess). This word is derived from
Khonsu, the Moon Deity in Ancient Egypt.
See Chapter II above.

CONCLUDING REMARKS. It may be safely concluded that
Aginju and Yemoja are survivals of Ancient Egyptian Deities.

1. Osi is a contraction of Osi-ri referred to in
Chapter III above.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAJOR ORISAS (continued) -

G. Sango H. Ogun

I. Orisa Oko J. Sopono
 ..

THE MAJOR ORISAS - continued.

G. Sango.

One of the primary emotions constituting the complex emotion known as the religious emotion is the emotion of fear. In regard to Olorun this emotion has lost its energy. In regard to Sango its energy reaches its climax and raises the emotion to the level of dread or terror. No deity is more dreaded in Yorubaland for its malevolence as Sango, the god of Thunder.

It has been suggested that Sango is not strictly of Yoruba origin. The suggestion arises from the fact that one of his wives is Oya, the goddess of the River Niger. The ground for the suggestion is flimsy, and no reliable authority has ever been produced in support of it.

Sango is the god of lightning and thunder. He is also known as Jakuta, "The Stone Thrower" or "The Fighter with Stone". He has three wives, namely, Oya (the goddess of the River Niger), Osun (Oshun) and Oba (the goddesses of rivers in Abeokuta). He is supposed to have a large retinue, Ogumare, the rainbow, and Oru the thunder clap, are his chief attendants.

The priests of the deity are known as Oni-Sango or Oduṣu-Sango. The chief priests are known as Magbas. The term Magba has been taken to mean "one who receives", "a receiver", but this is only a fanciful and literal explanation.

The following description of the deity given by Colonel Ellis, though containing some errors which had been detected by Dr. Farrow, is noteworthy :-

"Shango is

"Shango is purely anthropomorphic. He dwells in the clouds in an immense brazen palace where he maintains a large retinue and keeps a great number of horses

From his palace Sango hurls upon those who have offended him red-hot chains of iron.....

but this, it should be observed, is seemingly a modern notion, and the red-hot chains furnished by Ogun have a suspicious resemblance to the thunderbolts of Jupiter, forged by Vulcan"¹

MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGIN. Various myths abound in regard to Sango.

Mr. R. E. Dennet reproduced a few of them, but they are all of modern origin.

The most important myth is the one contained in Iwe Kika

Ekerin and thus summarized by Dr. Farrow :-

"About two centuries ago (?) there reigned as King in the old town of Oyo (known to early explorers as Eyo or Katunga), which was situated near the south bank of the River Niger, to the north of the Yoruba country, one Shango, who was a powerful and wise monarch. He was a great medicine man or witch-doctor, and claimed to be able to kill people by ejecting fire from his mouth. His reign was tyrannical and cruel. He had two ministers of whom he was jealous, and set these to fight against each other, hoping both might be slain; but was himself deposed by the one who came off victor in the fight. Sango fled, accompanied by his three wives, Oya, Ogun and Oba, and some of his loyal followers. He wandered in the bush, being gradually deserted by all, until only his favourite wife Oya remained. Then in despair, Sango hung himself from an ayan tree. Oya fled north and became the presiding goddess of the River Niger. Travellers who had seen the body of Sango hanging from a tree entered the town and reported Oba so. The friends of Sango were so incensed that they determined to avenge their deceased monarch.

1. Ellis, op. cit. p.47

"They took a number of small calabashes or hollow gourds, and filled them with gunpowder. They then covered them with cocoanut fibre and put slow matches to them and waited for the next tornado. When this came they ignited the bombs and threw them into the thatched roofs of many houses. The resultant explosions and fires caused the panic stricken people to cry out "why are all our houses burning ?" The friends of Sango then came forward, saying, Oh, you said "Oba so"(the King has hanged himself) "Oba ko so", (the King has not hanged himself). He is angry with you for this. He has become a god and has gone up into heaven and sent down the lightning to punish you. You must bring out oxen, sheep, fowls, palm oil, etc., and offer sacrifices to him, and henceforth worship him and then he will forgive you".

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. It has not been possible to trace a deity in Ancient Egypt bearing name of Sango or a name from which the word can be derived. The name Sangu¹ occurs in the religious history of Chaldea, and denotes "one who is bound to a god", "the representative of vice-gerent of a god". The view maintained by some observers has been expressed in an earlier chapter that the Yorubas seem to have had some contact with the Chaldeans. The similarity between the Yoruba word Sango and the Chaldean word Sangu seems to support the view and to suggest the need for research based on the data now available.

The other name of the deity - Jakuta - unmistakably points to an Egyptian Origin. The word Ja-ku-ta means "The living soul (Khu) of Ptah"². The Egyptian god Ptah was regarded as incorporate in a stone³. The Yoruba word for a stone is O-ku-ta "the soul of Ptah" Hence the literal meaning of Jakuta in Yoruba is "the fighter with stone".

-
1. See Sayce, Religion of the Ancient Babylonians, p.61
 2. Compare O-ku-ta, "the soul of Ptah, noted in Chapter III p.70
 3. See Wieldeman, Religion of the Ancient Egyptian, p.154.

Another noteworthy Yoruba word is A-pa-ta "a rock". It consists of two Egyptian words, namely pa "a house" and ta a modified form of Ptah.¹

The full form of the word Ma-gba is Qma(n) or Qmq(n) a-gba, that is, "people of the ba", agba or elderly persons being regarded as possessing in a special way the spirit or soul of the ancestors.

Professor Leo Frobenius regards Sango "the ram-headed god of thunder" as the chief Yoruba deity. This is incorrect, in view of what has been written above about the other deities.

It seems probable that the worship of Sango² was originally derived from that of Ptah. It became considerably modified in later times, and the addition of the name Sango must have synchronized with the marked change in the conception of the deity.

1. The initial consonant is elided, 'h' is redundant in Yoruba.
2. Compare this god with the Egyptian goddess Pasht, "the devouring one", and Secket "she that kindles fire", the goddess of the heavenly fire and of the Thunderbolt.



Fig. 16 Two Native Hunters - Worshippers of Ogun,
The god of iron.

H. OGUN

One of the deities still actively worshipped in Yorubaland is Ogun. In some parts of the country he is worshipped by isolated individuals or by villages, but at Ilesa he is still worshipped as a national god. In this town elaborate rites and ceremonies are performed annually by the Owa - paramount chief of the town - and by priests duly appointed for the purpose.

Ogun is the god of Iron and of War. He is therefore the patron god of hunters and soldiers. No hunter ever dares to proceed on a hunting expedition without first offering the appropriate sacrifice to this deity. His worship is therefore kept alive by hunters.

Soldiers, blacksmiths and others who make use of iron implements also worship the deity. They look up to him for protection and for help to achieve success in their work.

The symbol of the god is iron. The soldier therefore regards his iron spear or sword as sacred. The blacksmiths also regards his anvil and forge as sacred.

Swearing by the god Ogun is regarded as a severe form of swearing. Worshippers of the deity regard perjury as a serious offence, punishable in the olden days by death. The British Government in Nigeria recognizes the validity of this form of swearing when made in a court of justice by heathen witnesses. The oath is administered by handing a piece of iron to the witness to kiss.

Another form of swearing common among the Yorubas is that of swearing by the ground. Its validity rests partly on the

on the belief that the ground, the final resting place of man's mortal remains, will punish the perjurer by hurling him into an early grave, and partly on the belief held by the worshippers of Ogun that swearing by the ground which contains deposits of iron ore is as sacred and effective as that of swearing by the god himself or a piece of iron.

WORSHIP. The god Ogun is one of the deities to whom human sacrifices used to be made in Yorubaland. In times of great crisis, especially when the tribes decides to wage either an offensive or a defensive war, a human being is offered to propitiate the god and to ensure success. The victim is usually a slave purchased with money taken from public funds. The day before the sacrifice, he is paraded like a king with great ceremony and pomp through the streets and market places¹. The honour thus conferred on the victim is an expression of the belief that the reward for his^{death} or propitiatory sacrifice will be that he will be born again as a king.

The animal sacred to Ogun is the dog. This animal is usually sacrificed to the deity together with sheep, or goats or fowls and articles of food which vary in different parts of the country.² Simpler sacrifices of cock, kola, nuts or other articles are made by hunters.

The people of Ilesa usually observe at their annual festival the ceremony known as "Ibegun". In connection with this ceremony

-
1. Compare the ceremony of parading the "mock king in Ancient Egypt. See Klunzinger, Upper Egypt, p.184
 2. See Dennet's Nigerian studies, pp.182 and 183

the worshippers will assemble in a large square in front of the Afin(palace). The priests appointed for the purpose will hold a dog stretched out at full length by having its front legs tightly drawn forward and its hind legs similarly drawn backwards. When the dog has been stretched almost to a breaking point, the Owa or a priest cuts the dog asunder by a stroke of the sword, the crowd immediately raising a tumultuous shout.

Every blacksmith sacrifices a dog annually to the deity. A dog's head fastened to the top of the door of the blacksmith's shop denotes that the annual sacrifice has been made.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. It has been noted above that Ogun is mythologically regarded as one of the offsprings of Yemoja and that the word O-gu(n) is ^amodified form of the Egyptian word Khu.

The derivation of the word suggests that the god is a survival of an ancient Egyptian god. The details given above afford a clue for identifying it with its prototype.

The first point to note is its name, which is derived from khu. Now Horus, the patron god of several nomes in Ancient Egypt, was known by his worshippers as Khu. He is the same god referred to by the Babylonians as Khur¹

The second point is that Ogun is the god of iron and of war, the patron god of hunters and blacksmiths. Such a description is identical with the following description of Horus and Nin-ip by Prof. Sayce:- "Though the name Khar or Khur is and must remain Egyptian Horus has much common with the Babylonian sun-god Nin-ip.

1. Sayce op. cit. p.79

They are both warrior-gods; and just as the followers of Horus were workers in iron, so Nin-ip also was the god of iron.¹

Prof. Sayce further states that "Horus of Edfu, it will be remembered, was served by smiths² and the shrines he founded to commemorate his conquest of Egypt were known as "smithies"^{2,3}

Such an identity of details can only lead to the conclusion that Ogun is the survival of Horus, the patron god of the Pharaonic Egyptians who with their weapons of metal conquered the natives of Egypt and who as the followers of the god were known as smiths.

One other survival may be pointed out here - Horus has been identified above with Nin-ip, the god of iron. Now the Yoruba word for iron is i-rin which is certainly derived from the Nin, derivation following the rule that every Yoruba word must begin with a vowel and the rule that the letter 'r' is often substituted for the letter 'n' in Yoruba and some other West African languages.⁴

1. Sayce op. cit. p.80

2. The underline is inserted by the writer.

3. Sayce op. cit. p.128

4. See Chapter I p.14, Rule 13.

I. ORISA OKO

As the god of the farm, agriculture and harvest Orisa Oko is a popular deity in Yorubaland. Nearly every village or town has a temple devoted to him. His worship usually evokes great religious enthusiasm which often leads to excesses. He is represented by an iron staff symbolizing strength. Honey bees, indicating happiness, are his messengers.

The priesthood connected with the worship of the god is open to both men and women, but as he is particularly worshipped by women the number of priestesses far exceeds that of priests. The priestesses "really form a secret society of their own, and are so powerful, and so highly respected, that no man dare injure, or offend, any of them. They are distinguished by wearing, stuck on to the middle of the forehead, or small vertical badge, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long and $\frac{1}{6}$ inch wide half-red and half-white..... It is accounted the highest honour to have this priesthood in the family, although the expense of initiation in each case costs from £40 to £50(a large sum to a Yoruba)"¹

The god is regarded as an arbiter of disputes, especially among women. This function he performs through the agency of priests who dwell in the temple. If there is a dispute between two women as to which of them is guilty of a crime, especially of possession of witchcraft, an appeal is made to the god in his temple. Here the disputants spend about three days, after handing one white calabash each to the priest. After due consultation of the god, the priest returns the calabashes.

1. Dr. Farrow, op. cit., p.53

The inside of one of them will remain white whilst the inside of the other will be found black when opened. The priest then condemns the owner of black calabash and kills her by means of an iron club.¹ This club must be purchased by the innocent woman at a great cost, and she thereby becomes the bride of priestess of Orisa Oko.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL. Orisa Oko is worshipped regularly by women at the new moon. He is worshipped by the whole town or village in connection with the annual harvest festival. Before the products of the farm are gathered for sale the first-fruits must be offered to the god. The occasion is one of great rejoicing. Some of the new yams cooked on the occasion will be offered to the god, some will be consumed by the worshippers, and others will be given to the poor and needy. Needless to say that a large quantity of palm wine will be consumed to water down the solids. The consumption of food is followed by general merriment including public processions and dances.

In some other parts of West Africa, the Yam festival is sometimes accompanied by gruesome cannibalism. This is not the case in Yorubaland, but the yam "harvest" festival is always an occasion of scenes of unbridled immorality which has been given religious sanctions in the case of the priestesses of Orisa Oko. Such immorality perpetrated under the guise of religion and indicating the perversity of the human mind is not peculiar to Yorubaland and is disappearing almost to a vanishing point, thanks to the influence of the Government and of Christianity.

1. This club is known as Polo.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The Egyptian prototype of Orisa Oko is undoubtedly Osiris, but the celebration of the harvest festival in honour of the god contains elements connected with the worship of other Egyptian gods, some of whom were identified with Osiris.

It should be noted, in the first place, that Osiris is a god of vegetation. He is said to have taught the Ancient Egyptians "the art of making agricultural implements - the plough and the hoe, - field labour, the rotation of crops, the harvesting of wheat and barley and vine culture!"¹

Secondly, the licentions ~~of the~~ worship of the deity should be noted. Orisa Oko is a phallic deity. In later Egyptian times Osiris whom the Greeks identified with Bacchus was worshipped with elaborate phallic rites.²

It will be remembered that Horus the son of Osiris and Isis was identified with Min, the god of the negroes worshipped at Coptos. Professor Erman says:- "when the harvest was gathered in and the peasant sacrificed the first fruits to Min the god of Koptos, he danced to testify his joy and thankfulness to the god, and when the festivals of the great goddesses of pleasure, Hathor and Bastet, were solemnized, dancing was considered as necessary as the shouting for joy or the carrying of wreaths."³

-
1. Masp. op. cit, p.174. See also Diodorus book 1 sec.14
 2. See Herodotus, edition by Bohn, ii, 48. See also the same author, translation by Littlebury, page 107. See also Tiele, History of the Egyptian Religion, translation by Balingal, p.192.
 3. Life in Ancient Egypt, p.245. See also Wiedeman, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, p.61 note and Plutarch, Isis and Osiris translation Mead, XXXVI, 3.

The chief elements in this Ancient Egyptian celebration survive in the worship of Orisa Oko.

Thirdly, it has been pointed out that the priestesses of the god are "distinguished by wearing, stuck on to middle of the forehead, a small vertical badge and half red and half white". The colours of the badge are significant. Now in connection with the worship of Min, white is the colour of the bull sacred to the god. At a point in the course of the ceremonies connected with the worship of the deity the priest would declare that "Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris has received the white and the red crowns". It is noticeable that the colours of the crowns of Horus who has been identified with Min, the African god of fertility, survives in the colours of the badge of the priestesses of Orisa Oko, the Yoruba god of harvest and fertility.

The fore-going remarks show that Orisa Oko is a survival of Osiris and that his worship is a mixture of the rites and ceremonies connected with the worship of Osiris, of Horus and of Min, the African god of Coptos.

Ṣopponṣ is one of the most dreaded of Yoruba gods. As the god of the disease of smallpox, he inspires terror not only in his worshippers but also and specially in those uninitiated to the cult. He is the only god whose worship has been forbidden by the British Government.

MYTHS. Ṣopponṣ is one of the deities which are believed to have sprung from the body of Yemaja. A popular myth about him is as follows :-

"Shankpanna is old and lame and is depicted as limping along with the aid of a stick. According to a myth, he has a wooden leg. One day, when all the gods were assembled at the palace of Obatala and were dancing and making merry Shankpanna endeavoured to join in the dance; but owing to his deformity, stumbled and fell. All the gods and goddesses thereupon burst out laughing, and Shankpanna in revenge strove to infect them with small-pox, but Obatala came to the rescue and seizing his spear, drove Shankpanna away. From that day Shankpanna was forbidden to associate with other gods, and he became an outcast, who has since lived in desolate and uninhabited tracts of the country!"¹

Another myth given by Mr. Feyisara Ṣopeṣin under the pen name of "Adesola" is as follows :-

"One tradition states that Shokponna (smallpox) was a very wicked boy who often excited great commotions in his town. On one occasion when he had beaten to death several of his townspeople, he was taken by his parents and sold to a native doctor who taught him the use of very bad and poisonous drugs".²

1. Ellis, Yoruba speaking peoples, p.52

2. The Nigerian Chronicle, February 25, 1910.

WORSHIP. The worship of the god reflects his dreaded character. Temples, shrines and paraphernalia of worship are found only outside the town, especially in the bush. The worship of the god consists chiefly in the secret dissemination of the germs of the foul disease. This is the work of the priests who always seek secluded or sheltered places to work their evil purposes. The priests claim not only the victim of the disease, but also his property for the purpose of mediation on behalf of the family affected. The foulness of the disease and its highly infectious character inspires such a dread in the people that they are willing to accept any terms, and they are ready to surrender the victims and their property to the priests. As soon as the epidemic ceases to rage, the relatives of the victims have to send a congratulatory message to the priests. Hence the god is known as "Alapadupe", one who kills and is thanked for killing.

The following materials are used by the priests in spreading the disease (1) A calabash containing some portion of the corpse of a victim of the disease. (2) A pot of black liquid made up of water collected from the corpse of the victim or that with which the victim's rashes have been washed. (3) A vessel of black powder compounded with dried scabs etc. from the victim. It is this black powder that is secretly thrown into the compound or entrance of the would-be victims of the god.

A few years ago, outbreaks of the disease became frequent in Lagos, Dr. Oguntola Sapara, a son of the soil who had received medical education in England, became initiated into the small-pox cult and thus had facilities for studying the modus operandi of the cruel worshippers of the god. He discovered the method of spreading the germs of the disease and the part played by the priest or native doctor who under the pretence of healing the disease was the most active agent in spreading it, since the property of the unfortunate victim who succumbed became the property of the priests.

Dr. Sapara placed his findings at the disposal of the Government who immediately declared the worship of Sopoṇo illegal. Outbreaks of the disease have since become very rare.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. Before tracing the historical origin of the god a note on his name seems necessary. Dr. Farrow¹ sharply criticizes Colonel Ellis for spelling it as Shan-kpan-na. He says that the correct spelling is Sho-po-no. The fact is that both of them are right, each in his own way. Colonel Ellis spells the word as it is pronounced by the Northern Yoruba who always substitutes "a" for "o"² of the Southern Yoruba. He also used kp which is used in West African Phonetics other than Yoruba, for the thick labial sound which does not exist in English language.³ He also included the nasal n, because each or all the vowels of the word may be nasalized. S with a dot is pronounced as Sh. The correct spelling in Yoruba is Sopoṇo.

1. op. cit. p.56

2. O with a dot = aw.

3. See Chapter I p.13 Rule II

For the purpose of pronunciation it may be spelt phonetically as Shaw(n)-paw(n)-naw(n)¹ or Sha(n)-pa(n)-na(n)², the "n" in bracket being nasalized.

The word *Ṣoponṣ* seems to be derived from two Egyptian words, namely Shu and Pua-nit. Reference has already been made to the fact that the god of Punt survives among the Fahtis as Nyan-ku-po(n) (the living soul of Punt)³. Po-no appears to be the Yoruba modification of the word Pun-t or Pua-nit. This is confirmed by the fact that among the Ewe-speaking peoples, the god is known as So-po-to(n), poto(n) being another modification of the same word with the letter 't' retained and a vowel added to it. *Ṣo* (Shaw) is a modification of Shu, the change of vowel being made probably for the sake of euphony. *Ṣoponṣ* then appears to denote "Shu of Punt" which is probably the title of Atthar, the Southern Arabian god of Punt who was introduced into Ancient Egypt by the name of Hathor, the Lady of Puanit.

The title survives among the Yorubas who use it in naming a strange god who came to existence after their migration into West Africa.

-
1. Southern Yoruba vocalization
 2. Northern Yoruba vocalization
 3. It should be noted that a people called 'Pun' were known to be the Ancient Egyptian, see Title Op.cit. p.161

C H A P T E R V I I

THE DEIFIED SPIRITS OF ANCESTORS AND
OTHER SPIRITS -

A. ORO. B. EŁUKU.

CHAPTER VII.

It has been remarked above that fetishism and daemonism in the form of the worship of the spirits of ancestors play a great part in the religion of the Yorubas. An account of the worship of departed spirits will now be given.

The fundamental belief of the Yorubas in connection with this worship is that they are actively in touch with the spirit world, that the departed spirits of ancestors still take active interest in the affairs of their descendants, and that contact between the two can be very real, for good or ill.

Organizations exist in different parts of the country for the worship of ancestral spirits, so that their protective, disciplinary, and helpful influence may be secured for the benefit of the whole community. These organizations are secret societies, open only to male members after due initiation. Before the establishment of the British Government in Nigeria the penalty for intrusion into these secret societies by women or by the uninitiated was death without mercy. Some of these cults exercise a social influence through the worship of ancestral spirits in the family. Others exercise a political influence through the worship of the spirits of the tribe, safe-guarding the interest of the tribe by securing the favour of the spirits and by punishing or banishing such members of the tribe as are likely to bring it into disfavour.

Stress has been laid by some writers¹ on the distinction between Orisa-worship and spirit-worship.

1. e.g. Dr. Farrow Op.cit. p.68

not always inspired by
It is true that the terror inspired by the ~~Orisastis~~ the spirits of the dead. But it should be noted that the leading ancestral spirits are regarded as deities, although no generic name is applied to all of them.

It has also been said by some writers that the Yoruba secret societies are cults connected with male mysteries.¹ No spirit-worship in Yorubaland contain phallic rites or instructions on sex, and no secret societies are cults involving initiation into male mysteries. The erroneous impression is created by the existence of similar male cults in other parts of West Africa and that membership of the Yoruba secret societies is confined to male persons. Actually in all cases initiation takes place before or after puberty, that is at any age.

Spirit-worship assumes different forms among the different tribes. The following is a detailed account of the different cults connected with the worship :-

A. ORO

Oro is one of the spirit-gods worshipped in Yorubaland. His chief worshippers are the Egbas in Abeokuta, where his "voice"² used to be heard on most nights of the year, and the Aworis who live near the Coast. The Ijebus also make use of the influence of the god for political and medical purposes, although they do not possess any rite and ceremonies for his worship.³

-
1. e.g. Colonel Ellist Op.cit. III et passim.
 2. The sound emanating from the "bull-roarer" which is the representative of the god.
 3. Whilst visiting at Ijebu Ode the writer heard the sound of the "bull-roarer" on several nights.

Oro is a god residing in the bush. He comes to the town only by means of his representative - The Oro-stick or the "bull-roarer" - through which he makes his "voice" heard. Dr. Farrow gives a good description of the "bull-roarer" as used by the Yorubas:

"The instrument as used by the Yorubas is a wooden lath varying in size from 6 inches in length by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad to 2 feet 6 inches in length by 4 inches in breadth. The larger sizes are generally somewhat oval in form, and slightly rounded on one side, while nearly flat on the other. The edges are not serrated nor (as a rule) are there any special marks, or designs engraved on it, as in the case of the Churinga of the Australian aborigines. The lath is perforated at one end, through which a string is passed, varying in length from 6 feet up to 10 yards. In the case of the small and medium-sized lath, or "Oro-stick", the cord is attached at the other end to a somewhat flexible rod, or wand, 6 feet or more in length, so that the instrument is raised in the air when in use. The cord of the large powerful ones is attached, at the end remote from the lath, to a ball of cloth, grass or string which is held in the hands of the operator..... The small instrument gives a high, shrill note; but the pitch can be made to vary greatly according to the speed at which it is made to revolve round the operator. The length of the cord also affects the pitch - the bigger the circle described, the deeper is the tone produced. It is impossible to realize without having experienced it, how intensely weird and awe-inspiring a thing it is, to lie awake in the stillness of the night and to hear the deep booming of a full-sized bull-roarer..... It is possible to swing the instrument without producing an audible sound. The secret of producing the note is that it is revolving in a circle. This is effected by getting a twist on the string, which, once started, will be maintained automatically. The Oro-stick is correctly swung "clockwise", never (by a Yoruba) anti-clockwise"

THE ORO GUILD. Worshippers of the god Oro constitute themselves into a guild known as Ogugbo. The members of this guild make an exclusive claim for the possession of knowledge of the Oro mysteries and for the right to perform the ceremonies which are jealously guarded from the view of the uninitiated.

The guild possesses great political power. In the days of the independence of Abeokuta, members of the guild formed the majority

the majority in the political council known as the Ogboni Council. They met periodically to settle civil disputes and to deal with criminal charges. As the executive of the god Oro, the Ogbonis who were members of the guild dealt with persons convicted of serious criminal offences. The penalty imposed might be banishment, execution, deprivation of property or any other form of punishment commensurate with the magnitude of the offence. The Ogbonis functioned not only in a judicial capacity by trying the cases in Council and fixing the punishment, but also in an executive capacity by actually inflicting the punishment on the criminal.

The King of the Egbas in those days was known as the Alake¹. His principal Chiefs were the Nlado or the Prime Minister, the Jaguna or the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Mogaji or the probable successor to either of the former chiefs. The Alake, Chiefs and priests were all members of the Ogboni Council.

WORSHIP. Rites and ceremonies are performed both in the town and in the bush.

Ceremonies performed in the town are preceded by a proclamation of confinement of women and the uninitiated. This is made by the sounding of the Ogboni note on the drum, and the herald shouts "He-e-e-pa! He-e-e-epa!! He-e-e-e-e-pa-ri-pa!!! Wo o firi ko m'oju kuro! that is, Ter-ror! Te-r-ror!! T-e-r-r-or!!! Dare you look at it! This is sufficient warning for all women and the uninitiated to seek for a safe hiding-place. Every house must be sufficiently closed as to make intrusion impossible. The confinement may last for a period ranging between twenty-four hours and three lunar months.

1. Now the title of the paramount chief of Abeokuta.

On ordinary occasions or on the occasion of the Yam festival, the ceremonies consists of parade round the town by the members, dancing, drumming, drinking and ceremonially swinging the Oro-stick on their way to and from the Council Hall or Ile Ogugbo (House of Oshugbo).

The following important ceremonies are performed in the town:-

1. Ceremony connected with Irana (Calabash of Irana). This is a ceremony by means of which an evil spirit is exorcised from the dwelling.
2. Ipade Ceremony. This is performed outside an exorcised dwelling on the wearing apparel and other belongings of the exorcised spirit, prior to their removal into the bush.
3. Ceremony for the banishment or removal from town of a criminal or an unwanted person. The house of the person concerned is surrounded by the members of the Oro guild swinging their Oro-sticks. The person is then arrested and carried away into the bush either for banishment or for execution. It is usually said of a person thus banished "Nwon fi Oro le e ni ilu". "He is banished by means of Oro."
4. Burial ceremonies. Corpses of members of the guild cannot be buried until the necessary ceremonies have been performed. For the performance of the ceremonies the relatives of the deceased have to pay a fee to the Ogbonis. Burial will not be sanctioned until the fee is paid and valuable presents of drinks are made to the Ogbonis. This custom is now being viewed with disfavour and may soon be wiped out.

Ceremonies are also performed in the bush. For this purpose a secluded spot is selected. This is known as Igbo Oro or "Igboro" the grove of Oro". Here the occult ceremonies are performed. There is only one penalty for intrusion into the grove - death.

The following ceremonies are performed in the bush:-

1. Ceremony of Oro Doko. This ceremony is performed in the Igboro at Ondo, probably in connection with the yam festival. It used to last three lunar months.¹
2. Ceremony of Oro Pagi. (Oro destroys the tree) or Oro Jęgi (Oro eats the tree). This ceremony always takes place at night. A tree is selected for the purpose. At dawn every leaf, every tender branch, every young shoot will entirely disappear from the tree. Oro is then said to have devoured the tree. All the remnants of the leaves stripped from the tree are usually removed from the spot and hidden; hence the proverb "A ki i ri ajęku Oro" "No one ever sees the remnants of the food eaten by Oro".
3. Ceremony of executing criminals. On this subject Adesola thus writes :-

"Oro worship has a political side. The god assisted the State to give capital punishment to criminals in return for services rendered it by the State..... The Oro decapitates (pa) in which case the head of the criminal is nailed to a tree as a warning to others; or takes away (gbe) the criminal body and soul, out of the arena of life when neither the living man nor the lifeless is ever seen after..... Their spirits (i.e. of criminals) are supposed to be the Oro they revisit the earth on festive occasions only to wander about in corner places. Hence they are called Pakoko (loiterers in the corner)..... The Oro is also employed as an instrument of banishment.

LEGENDS. A legend states that Oro came into existence as a result of the anguish caused to parents in olden days by a sore affliction. Nearly all the children die a short time after their birth. They consulted a babalawo who pointed out to them the need for another god. So he gave them Oro. The people began to worship the god and soon became populous.

On one occasion the King wanted to play the Oro in the presence of women. The god gave no sound. The babalawo then explained to the King that the silence was due to the presence of women. The women having been sent away, the "voice" of the god immediately became audible. Hence the mysteries of Oro-worship are closed to women.

1. A similar ceremony is observed by the Benins.

Another legend states that some people were living in a bush called Akin-Oro. One of them dreamt that Olurun asked them to leave the place. They all decided to offer sacrifice to appease Oro.

Fortunately Oro himself, who was a hunter, appeared to them and taught them how to worship him and how to make the Oro-stick. He also asked them to offer sacrifices to him every seven days, and told them that the real name of the place was Ibu Mole¹ (or Male²).

On the occasion of a feast the king's wife peeped at the Oro-ceremonies from the King's chair where she had concealed herself. The people called upon Ita (another name for Oro), but there was no answer. On their trying to swing the Oro-stick, the piece of flesh which Oro had torn off from himself and with which he had made the string for the Oro-sticks, flew off and returned to Oro, since the rule that women should not be allowed to see the mysteries had been broken. The piece of flesh cut the woman's throat before returning to Oro.

Oro the hunter came back, blamed the people for their disobedience, and substituted a piece of string tied to a stick for the gift of his own flesh. Then he departed from the world.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The origin of the term Oro has given rise to much speculation. A contributor to the Nigerian Chronicle³ who styles himself Neipos ara Orun says "In regard to derivation, the word Oro is a purely onomatopoeic one and is derived from the sound heard at the discovery of the Abe or Ise of the musical god" Dr. Farrow is quite satisfied with this explanation

1. Southern Yoruba vocalization
 2. Northern Yoruba vocalization
 3. Op.cit.p.69

and considers it the best. He then goes on to say in regard to the origin of the Oro cult that "the simplest explanation, and perhaps the most reliable, is that the Hausa people used the "bull-roarer" to scare the birds away from their farms, and the ingenious Yoruba adopted it as a form of spirit-worship". No Yoruba can read these words without resentment. The tendency to accept the simplest explanations as the best always betrays a desire to avoid the drudgery of adequate scientific research, and this tendency shown in some parts of Dr. Farrow's work rather minimizes the value of an otherwise good work. In the same passage Dr. Farrow¹, quoting Dr. Andrew Lang² as his authority, says that we find this instrument used in connection with spirit-worship in the various countries. It is remarkable, however that it was unknown in Yorubaland until the Hausas used it to scare the birds and the ingenious (sic) Yorubas then adopted³ it as a form of spirit-worship.

It would not be wise to dismiss all Yoruba myths and legends as unreliable. Some of them bear the stamp of late origin. Others have been so modified as to lose their value for practical purposes. But there are a few which contain elements which have survived from the remote past.

In unravelling the historical origin of Oro the theory of a connection between the religion of the Yorubas and that of the Ancient Egyptians will prove helpful if applied.

The first thing to note is the name of the god - ORO. There is an Ancient Egyptian god whose name is very similar to that of Oro.

1. Op. cit. p. 69

2. Custom and Myth.

3. The underline is the writer's.

That god is Orion or Orion-Sahu¹. The Yoruba god Oro is a survival of the Egyptian god Orion. The derivation of the name is as follows :- to incorporate a foreign word into Yoruba language, the final consonant of the word (if any) must receive a vowel so as to form a syllable or must be elided. Hence 'n' in Orion is elided leaving Orio. In Yoruba, two vowels coming together are either separated by the additional of a consonant or reduced to one by the omission of any one of them. Following this rule Orio becomes "Oro".

In one of the legends given above Oro is said to be a hunter². The Egyptian god Orion is also a hunter³. In connection with Oro worship, Oro is said to devour the tree used for the sacrificial ceremony and in the case of execution, to devour the criminal. Orion is said to devour ^{the} gods, some in the morning, others at midday, and others in the evening. Such a coincidence cannot be regarded as accidental, especially in view of the theory which has been propounded and successfully applied in the previous chapters.

One of the legends given above contains a Yoruba word which is identical with the Ancient Egyptian word for a god. The Yoruba word is ITA which is derived from NETER⁴ the Ancient Egyptian word for a god.

1. It will be shown later that Sahu survives in Yorubaland.

2. See Sayce, Op.cit.p.234, See also Maspero, Etudes de Mythologie et de Archeologie Egyptiennes, Vol:I p.156: Vol:II pp.18 et seq., pp.231 & 232.

3. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, p.125.

4. Compare 'ifa' and 'nefer' in chap. 4 p. 92.

The derivation is as follows:- All Yoruba nouns commence with a vowel, hence n is elided; e = i and er = a in Yoruba; hence the word becomes Ita. It should be noted, however, that as in the case of nefer pointed out above¹ the n is not elided when the word is in combination with another word or it is used as an adjective. For example in the Oba-nita² or Obanta³ (Divine King) which is the name of a god worshipped by the Ijebus, the letter n re-appears. Ita is another name for Oro.

One of the titles of Oro is Omo Ye-Nu(n), that is the son of Mother Nu. Now Nu-it is the name of the goddess of the sky and the mother of the stars, one of which is Orion. The title of Oro is significant, for it corresponds to the description of Orion in relation to Nuit as given by Egyptologists⁴.

Another title of Oro is Imale⁵, that is, Son of the Earth. Geb the god representing the earth is the husband of Nu-it, the goddess representing the starry sky and the mother of Orion. It is easy to see the reason why Oro is described as the Son of the Earth.

The significance of the following words should also be noted :-

OGBONI. O-gboni. O is the initial vowel required by all Yoruba nouns. Gbo is a modified form of bau(spirits), gb being a thickened form of the labial b and O, a substitute for the two vowels au. Ni is a contraction of uni or eni (persons or beings), un being the ancient Egyptian word for 'a being' Ogboni, therefore, means "those who possess the spirits(of ancestors)" or "the incarnate form of the spirits of ancestors". It is the title of the elders of the community.

1. Chapter iv p.92

2. Cp. Ope nifa, Chapter iv, p.92

3. A contracted form Oba of nita

4. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.129

See also Lanzone, Dizionario di Mitologia, pl.lxi, 4

5. Victims of Oro are known as Eru Male "slaves of Imale".

ISE. I-se. I is the initial vowel required by all Yoruba nouns. 'se' is the Ancient Egyptian word for 'son'¹ Ise is the name of the smaller of the two instruments used for Oro worship and may be figuratively described as the son of the bigger instrument.

AGBE. A-gbe. A is the initial vowel described above. gbe is a modified form of bau(spirits), e being substituted for au. Agbe, therefore, means that which contains the spirits (of ancestors).

NLADO. N-la-do² or Oni-la-do. la = Ancient Egyptian god. do = Ancient Egyptian word for settlement. Oni = the possessor. Onilado, therefore, means "He who possesses the divine spirit in the settlement".

JAGUNA. Ja-gu-na. Ja = the living³; Gu is a modified form of Khu. Jaguna, therefore, means "the living spirit of the way" and is applied to the Commander-in-Chief of the army.

IBU MALE Bu is the Ancient Egyptian word for place. It is used in the same sense by the Yorubas. Ibu Male, therefore, means "the place of Imale" and is applied to the grove of Oro.

CONCLUDING REMARKS. The detailed account of the Yoruba god Oro shows that he is a survival of the Ancient Egyptian god Orion. The latter is regarded as a powerful god - powerful enough to hunt and devour the other gods⁴. It is therefore, easy to see the reason why Oro, the survival of such a powerful god, wields a very great power in Yorubaland.

The depth of the impression which the god makes on the Yoruba mind can be measured by the extent to which he is dreaded, and by the variety of sense in which the word Oro is used⁵, showing the character of the god as an ancestral spirit belonging to the family, the tribe of the nation and illustrating the severity of the punishment which the god is capable of inflicting.

1. See Tiele, History of the Egyptian Religion, trans Ballingal, p.52

2. Nlado is a contracted form of Onilado.

3. Ja from the West Africa word Je or Ye, which means "to live, to exist".

4. Recently a human sacrifice to Oro was alleged to have been offered at Ikorodu. The child involved was about four years old. See Nigerian Daily Times, August 20, 1941.

5. See Denet, Op.cit. p.54

B. ELUKU.

Like Oro, Eluku is worshipped in more than one district. He is worshipped by the Egbas in Abeokuta, where his worship has been eclipsed by that of Oro. He is worshipped occasionally by the Aworis. But the country where he is actively worshipped, like Oro among the Egbas, is Ijebu.

Eluku is a deified spirit of an ancestor. Great secrecy is enjoined in connection with his worship. There is a guild consisting of initiated persons, and these have so far jealously guarded their rites and ceremonies that very little information has filtered through to the world of the uninitiated.

The chief obstacle in the way of obtaining information is that the performance of the ceremonies takes place outside the town only at night, and only once a year. Before the ceremonies begin, a confinement similar to that of Oro is proclaimed. All women and the uninitiated have to hide themselves in their houses and see that they are not caught in an attempt to intrude into the esoteric ceremonies. The members of guild assemble in their guild house and then make a procession through the town to the Eluku grove. Persons specially selected make loud and weird shrills as the procession wends its way through the town, whilst the remaining members of the guild sing various songs. Some of the songs describe the power of the god as executioner, others contain praises to him as a benefactor who amply rewards his true worshippers. The following is a translation of one of the songs:-

"My child, my child, long life to thee
Coupled with health !
A parent thou 'lt be
Of living sons and fruitful daughters.

It is in connection with funeral rites, however, that some interesting information concerning Eluku worship can be gleaned. If a member of the Eluku guild dies, the surviving members meet to perform solemn funeral rites. Unlike the funeral rites connected with Oro worship exorbitant fees are not charged by the performers.

The ceremonies are performed on the third, seventh and fortieth days after the death of the member. Three, seven and forty are sacred numbers to the Yorubas. The ceremonies on the fortieth day are fast falling into disuse; in some cases the day is changed to the fourteenth, probably because the fortieth days seems to be too far distant from the day of death. The ceremonies on the seventh day are the most important. They have been well summarized as follows :-

"The coffin, with the corpse or bones of the deceased, or a bare plank to represent the same, is placed an hour after sunset, in a well-lighted compound, and the spirit is invoked, and questions asked and answered about him. This chorus is sung :-

J' epo l' aiye o !
B' ai jeun l' orun a ko mo
Se 're l' aiye o
B' ai sere l' orun, a ko mo

That is :-

Eat richly in this world !
We know not whether there is eating in heaven,
Do well in this world !
We know not whether there is well-doing in heaven¹

Sacrifices are offered, the deceased is again invoked and responds (!) in the loud cries of Eluku. On the fourteenth day the shrine is fixed².

-
1. Compare this with the Egyptian Song of the Harper. See Canon Rawnsley's Notes for the Nile pp.188 & 189 and Prof:Erman's Life in Ancient Egypt(English translation) pp.386 & 387.
 2. Dr. Farrow, Op.cit. pp.82 and 83.

MYTHS. Most of the myths about Eluku are euhemeristic. He is said to have been born at Iraye in the royal house of Oniloku, the king of Iraiye. During his lifetime he showed such spiritual power that after his death his spiritual power was believed to be still available to his followers.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. It should be noted that both Oro and Eluku may be worshipped in the same town, but may not be worshipped together at the same time. Where one is the leading deified spirit, the other takes a subordinate position, and the worshippers of each pay deference to one another according to the place occupied by the deity in the locality.

It has been said that Eluku means "wicked to death" or "beat him to death". Neither of these meanings is correct. The word E-lu-ku consists of three parts; e is an initial vowel, lu is a modified form of the word ye¹, which means "to live", and ku is a modified form of Khu which means a "luminous spirit". The word Eluku, therefore, means "The living spirit".

It is not possible to identify the worship with any particular one in Ancient Egypt, but there is no doubt that it is a survival, in a practical form, of the belief that the soul of man does not die but lives on as a khu or luminous spirit.

1. Yu sometimes becomes lu.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEIFIED SPIRITS OF ANCESTORS AND OTHER SPIRITS (continued) -

C. AGEMO

D. EGUNGUN

E. ADIMU ORISA

F. GELEDE

G. ABIKU.

The Deified Spirits of Ancestors and other Spirits.

C. AGEMO.

The previous chapter contains an account of the disembodied spirits worshipped in Yorubaland. An account of the spirits which assume materialized forms will now be given. The forms vary among the different tribes.

Among the Ijebus the chief ancestral spirit is known as Agemo. It has been asserted by previous writers that Agemo is the materialized form of Eluku. As far as the present writer has ascertained the two gods are distinct from each other and are worshipped with different rites and ceremonies.

There is no deity which excites so great a terror among the Ijebus as Agemo. As soon as it becomes known that there is an Agemo outing, women and uninitiated men flee into their houses, or into sheltered places in the bush. Intrusion into the secret worship is punishable by death.

The light of civilization has, however, reduced the darkness surrounding the cult. Agemo procession can now be witnessed by the uninitiated, although in some cases, women are forbidden to witness an Agemo display. The penalty of intrusion has also been modified. It has now been changed to a strong form of imprecation known as Epe. It appears that black magical art is a part of the Agemo cult, for persons on whom dreadful imprecations have been uttered are known to have lost their mental balance or have suffered some grievous bodily harm or have had some serious accident according to the nature of the imprecation.

The Agemo itself is a cylindrical object varying in height between two and a half to three feet and in radius from eighteen

to twenty-four inches. It is open at the top and contains some of the secret paraphernalia of the cult. What the contents are no uninitiated person can say, as these are jealously guarded by the members of the cult.

The writer witnessed an Agemo festival in Ijebu Ode a few years ago. It is usual for the members of the cult to go into a deep bush. There one of their number is selected to carry the Agemo on his head. In addition to this he wears a headgear containing two ram's horns and feathers. He is entirely enveloped in reeds or rushes (Iko). Two or three other men wear headgears more or less resembling that of the Agemo. Then there are two smaller masqueraders dressed almost like the Agemo and known as his sons. It is said that on some other occasions the Agemo is covered with mats covered all over with feathers. This form of Agemo is known as Oniwuruwuru. Some of the members of the cult are entirely wrapped up in mats whilst others wear a wrapper tied to their loins, leaving the upper part of their bodies bare and having their heads clean-shaved, surround the masqueraders and carrying pots, staves and other articles.

As soon as the Agemo party emerges from the bush, all women have to leave the streets. Lorries containing female passengers have to be screened with curtains. The party proceeds through the town until they reach the spot selected for the display. There they are met by the Awujale or Paramount Chief, and dancing commences. After a short time some ceremonies are performed under cover, and the blessing of the Agemo is invoked on the Awujale and his people. Dancing then continues for about an hour, after which the Agemo party leads and the Awujale and suite follow until the palace is reached.

The Agemo party then retire to the lodge house where dancing and merriment continue throughout the day. All through the ceremony great respect is shown to the Agemo. Even chiefs prostrate before it. Women who are allowed to witness the dancing have to prostrate themselves sideways.

On the following day the Agemo party carry their paraphernalia back to the bush and conclude the festival with the performance of rites and ceremonies in the bush.

In times of crisis there are Agemo outings in order to make propitiation or atonement for the people.

MYTH. The popular myth is that Agemo is a very old¹ man hidden in the bush. If any one tries to see him, he lies hidden in the earth or becomes transplanted into the sky. He is invisible to human beings, but his worshippers know how to invoke his spirit by means of sacred objects. He has several children and is regarded as the progenitor of all mankind. He blesses his worshippers, but punishes intruders into his secret cult.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. What is the origin of this deity and what does his name signify? A writer has said:- "The name signifies 'able to change its form', and so is also the word for a chameleon". This is incorrect. The Yoruba word for a chameleon is Oga.

The meaning of the word Agemo cannot be derived from the meanings of its component parts. This as at once suggests that it is a borrowed word.

If the theory proposed in the previous chapters is applied here and a search is made for the origin of word in the religious literature of Ancient Egypt,

1. Compare the Ukulunkulu of the Zulus.

it will be found that Agemo is a survival of an Ancient Egyptian deity or deities.

The word Agemo may be divided into three parts, viz: A-GE-MO(N)¹. A is the initial vowel common to Yoruba nouns, GE is a contraction of GEB², the Ancient Egyptian god representing the earth, and MO(N) is a contraction of AMON³, the god of Thebes, the survival of whom has been noted in a previous chapter.⁴

The following points should be noted :-

(1) The word Amon is rarely found alone; it is always found in compounds, e.g. Amon-Ra, etc., the compound Geb-Amon is found in Egyptian writings.

In Ancient Egypt Amon was confused with Sibū(Geb) the god whose representation was a horse. Hence the compound word Geb-Amon⁵.

(II) The above myth states that Agemo is an old man hidden in the bush, hidden in the earth, or hidden in the sky. The word Amon means hidden, and the Egyptian god bearing the name is regarded as being hidden in the earth or as the hidden principle of the universe⁶. It is not surprising that the Yorubas regard Agemo as being hidden in the sky. It will be remembered that later Egyptian theology identified Amon with Ra and thereby made him "Lord of the sky"⁷. Similarly, the description of Agemo as one who is hidden in the earth is not surprising.

1. Nasal N

2. or Keb or Sibū

3. The full name would be Gebamon. This is contracted to Gemo (n) and becomes Agemo in Yoruba.

4. See Chapter 1 p.22

5. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.87 Note.1

6. See Sayce, Op.cit, p.148

7. See History of Religions by G.F.Moore, Vol.I p.164

because Geb is the god representing the earth in which Amon lies hidden.

(III) The god Amon is also worshipped by the Gas of the Gold Coast in West Africa. There he is known as Nyon-mon, that is, "the living Amon" and worshipped as the Supreme Diety. He is also regarded as being connected with the sky. He causes rain to fall, the lighting to flash, and the thunder to sound.¹

(IV) The use of ram's horns as part of Agemo's head-gear is significant, in view of the fact that the animal representing Amon in Ancient Egypt was a ram.²

(V) The use of feathers as part of Agemo's head-gear and the existence of a feathered Agemo are noteworthy. The animal representing Geb in Ancient Egypt was a goose.³ The identification of Geb with a feathered animal, therefore, survives in the feathered decoration of Agemo.

CONCLUDING REMARKS. In view of the derivation of the word Agemo given above and the comments thereon it may be safely concluded that Agemo is a survival of the Ancient Egyptian gods known as Geb and Amon or the god known as Geb-Amon.

-
1. See Ellis, Yoruba-speaking people, p.36
 2. See Sayce, op. cit. p.149.
 3. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.87.

D. EGUNGUN.

The belief in the existence of the spirits of departed ancestors and of other persons among the Yorubas is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the Egungun¹ cult and of the Adminu-Orisa cult which will be described later.

The cult of Oro, Eluku, or Agemo is that of a single spirit. The Egungun cult is that of numerous spirits who may appear at any time and especially on important occasions. The latter cult shows that the Yorubas piously believe that the spirits of departed members of the family are never far away and they are ready to take an active part in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the family or of the community.

Whilst the sentiment prompting the worship of the spirit deities described above is chiefly that of fear, the chief sentiments in the case of Egungun are those of affection and reverence. The sentiment of fear is not entirely absent, for the persons of Egunguns are regarded as sacrosanct and inviolable on pain of death. But the dominant sentiment is that of affection for the departed ones, and the appearance of their spirits in the materialized form of Egunguns is a practical demonstration of the indissoluble union existing between the living and the dead members of the community.

An Egun is therefore regarded as an embodiment of the spirit of a deceased person who returns from heaven to visit his people. Hence he is called an "Ara-Orun". "A citizen of heaven". He appears in the form of a man covered up from head to foot with the dress known as "Ago", an aperture being made in the part covering the face to enable him to see the external world. The dress may be made of native cloth or grass.

1. Egungun is often contracted to Egun.

Distinguished Egunguns wear a wooden mask. No part of the Egungun's body must be visible.

An Egungun may appear at any time. He may do so singly, accompanied only by one or two persons known as Atokun "Escort". When going about the streets, he carries a flexible whip and speaks in a ventriloquial voice, thereby giving the impression that he is a real "Ara-Orun". All persons scrupulously avoid touching his dress. Those who are Egungun worshippers prostrate or genuflect on his approach. Others offer him presents. This practice of giving presents to Egunguns has led to the degeneration of the cult into a form of beggary in modern times. Would-be beggars who are ashamed of being so described now find it convenient to assume the role of dignified beggar under the cloak of an Egungun.

Small companies of Egunguns may appear. They parade the streets in the same way as the single Egungun and receive homage and presents in the same way.

In some towns the Egunguns form themselves into guilds. Over each guild there is a chief Egungun. The number of members may be large or small but they all owe obeisance to their chief. Each chief Egungun has a title. Some of the titles borne by chief Egungun are as follows :- Egungun Ajolojo, Egungun Ajofoyinbo, Egungun Oye, Egungun Oya.

Of all the Egunguns, Oya is the most dreaded. Whenever he appears he is accompanied by a large band of Atokuns or Escorts and elderly men carrying whips. In front of the Egungun goes a band of women who are clad up to their waist, the remaining part being left bare.¹ The Oya wears a much fuller ~~more~~

and more picturesque dress than the other Egunguns.

1. This dress has been modified in modern times. Some of the women now tie their wrapper up to the chest.

The Oya wears a much fuller and more picturesque dress than the other Egunguns. He wears a mask which gives him a weird appearance.

Egungun Oya is supposed to have been imported from the Niger District. Oya is the name of the goddess of the Niger and Egungun Oya is regarded as the incarnate form of the spirit of the goddess who assumes the form of a man. Hence the appearance of the Egungun is heralded by a bevy of women, and hence women are allowed at all to take part in the parade.

No guild can hold an Egungun play in a town without the permission of the chief Egungun of the town. Failure to do this may lead to serious consequences. Sometimes the guilds in a town may be at enmity, and the play of one guild may be forbidden by another on pain of serious consequences.

An Egungun play is interesting to watch. Quite apart from the duties of the members of the guild in rushing at the crowd assembled to witness the play, the drumming on the occasion is always the best that the Yorubas can produce. The play gives the drummers an opportunity of showing their skill. Various rhythms are used to mark different parts of the play, some are used to announce the approach of the chief Egungun, others to show that a particular display is imminent, whilst the chief drummer, using the language of the drum, enumerates the ancestral titles of the chief Egungun or of any other distinguished persons who may be present.

Egunguns claim the power to metamorphose themselves to animals and to change their sex. A display of this power is supposed to be given when there is an Egungun play. The present writer has watched a number of Egungun plays.

He is satisfied that there is no genuine case of real metamorphosis. All that can be observed is a "make-believe" by means of dress or skin of animals worn by a person who tries to imitate an animal. The human form behind the cloak or dress is clearly discernible. This point is emphasized because there are several stories in Yorubaland crediting Egunguns with supernatural powers for real metamorphosis.

The story is told of an Egungun who, without the permission of the chief Egungun in the town, metamorphosed himself into a crocodile. It is said that by means of enchantment the offended Egungun prevented the metamorphosed Egungun from regaining his human form and that the latter was compelled to sprawl into a pond, and that it was not until due propitiation for the offence has been made was the offender allowed to come out of the pond and to regain his original human form. It may be granted that by the use of black art the offended Egungun could enchant his offender. But that real metamorphosis took place is incredible, in view of the fact that for a period of over thirty years neither the writer nor any reliable person with whom he has discussed the matter has ever witnessed a case of real metamorphosis or come across anyone who has seen anything different from the disguise or masquerading described above.

In the more civilized towns Egungun plays are fast losing their popularity owing to the introduction of other forms of amusements and to the moral revolt against the enactment of scenes of gruesome obscenity connected with some of the plays.

Many tribes still hold an annual Egungun festival in June of each year. In Oyo and Awe where Egungun worship is strongly entrenched, the festival is scrupulously observed.

Large numbers of Egunguns appear and the whole town is en fete. There are parades and plays which last for seven days. The festival has been rightly described as the Yoruba "All Souls" festival, although it is, in a sense, a festival of mourning for the dead, yet it is a joyful festival because it gives a firm assurance that the spirits of the dead are alive and are capable of manifesting themselves in the form of Egunguns.

The Egunguns usually perform ceremonies in connection with funeral obsequies. These ceremonies will be described later.

In modern times the single Egungun is regarded as a mere masquerader. The respect usually given to him has been considerably diminished. He himself sings amusing songs, begs for presents, chats with an acquaintance, and sometimes converses in English!¹

The chief Egunguns, however, are still given a measure of respect and worship, by those who belong to the cult, and the plays organized by such persons still attract large crowds which are composed of unsophisticated persons and those who lack any other form of amusement.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The historical origin of the Egungun cult is easy to trace. First of all, it should be noted that the translation of the word as a "bone" or "skeleton"² is wrong. The error is due to an imperfect knowledge of the language. The Yoruba word for a bone is egungun or egun; there is no accent on each of the vowels of the former as they are all middle tone vowels; the circumflex on the first vowel of the latter shows that the first syllable is a contracted form of the former.

1. The belief exists among the tribes that Yoruba is the language of heaven. Hence an Egungun does not need to change his language.

2. See Dr. Farrow, Op. Cit. p. 76 and Colonel Ellis, Op. cit p. 107

The word for the masquerader is egúngún, the first vowel is a middle tone vowel and the remaining two are high tone vowels; hence the high accents placed on them. The word therefore differs entirely from egun - gun which means a "bone".

In order to explain the origin of the word it is necessary to break it up into its component parts, thus e-gu(n)-gu(n). E is the initial vowel required by all Yoruba nouns, gu is a modified form of Khu, the Ancient Egyptian word for a luminous spirit. Gu(n-gu(n)) is therefore a duplication of the word to denote plurality or perfection¹. Similarly the word i-kũ-kũ is applied to mistis because they correspond, in regard to their whiteness and unsubstantiality, to the Yoruba idea of a spirit. It is probably because the word ku-ku is already used in this sense that the word for the incarnate spirit is modified to engu(n)-gu(n)² a word which in accordance with its derivation given above, means "spirits".

The egungun cult is therefore the survival, in a practical form, of the fusion of the Ancient Egyptian beliefs that after death righteous persons become luminous spirits (Khu) and that their Kas (soul bodies) are capable of moving about and of assuming human forms.

1. See chapter II.

2. The Ibo word for egungun is Mawu or Mau, a word which is derived from the name of the Ancient Egyptian goddess Mau-t. See chapter II above, page 46.

The cult of Adimuorisa or Adamu-orisa is connected with funeral obsequies. A short time after the burial of a leading member of a town an Adimuorisa festival is arranged in his honour. The celebration of the festival is expensive, and therefore takes place on rare occasions when the family of a deceased person can afford the cost of the rites and ceremonies it entails.

The cult is peculiar to the Aworis who dwell near the coast. It resembles that of Egungun in that it involves the appearance of spirits in incarnate forms, but it differs from it in that the members of the guild cannot appear at any time as masqueraders, except on festival occasions.

An Adamuorisa festival is celebrated in the following way. A proclamation is made that an Adamuorisa festival will be celebrated in honour of a deceased person whose name is given, and the date of the festival is announced. A few days ^{later} people are forbidden to go out on a certain night. Any persons caught on that night will be used for the purpose of the festival. In the olden days some of the persons thus caught are sacrificed as propitiation of the orisas to ensure a successful celebration of the festival. One of them is reserved to take the part of Adimuorisa.

Three days before the festival the executive body of the guild meets privately at Agodi (the meeting house of the cult) and performs some secret rites and ceremonies. A secret password is agreed upon, and this is communicated to all the initiated members of the guild for use in connection with the festival. A severe penalty is inflicted on anyone who joins in the festival

who joins in the festival without knowing the pass-word. In the olden days the penalty of death used to be inflicted.

Two days before the festival the trunk of a banana tree or the trunk of a small tree is wrapped up like a mummy and dressed up with expensive cloths and other decorations and laid up at Agodi or at the Iga (palace or great house¹) of one of the chiefs. This mummy is supposed to represent the body of the deceased person in whose honour the festival is to be celebrated. When the mummy has been properly laid out, it is guarded by some of the leading members of the cult. Drumming goes on merrily and crowds assemble to see the mummy richly laden with decorative jewels. Refreshments are served in the adjoining parts of the Agodi or Iga. The expense of the mummy and refreshment must be borne by the family of the deceased person.

Shortly after midnight on the day of the festival, one of the persons caught wandering about on the forbidden night is taken to a place known as Oju Elegba or Oju Elegbara and sacrificed. This human sacrifice is intended to propitiate Esu or Elegbara who must first be propitiated to obviate his malevolent interference in the subsequent proceedings.

Early on the day of the festival the incarnate spirits begin to appear in various forms. Most of the spirits appear as Eyo. The dress of an "Eyo" is not one piece. It comprises a large gown, (Agbada), sewn in native fashion with very long and wide sleeves, a long white veil, and a broad-brimmed hat, also a piece of strong cloth to rub the earth with. A special wand (white) is carried². Sometimes a coloured veil is used, but white is usual colour.

1. Dr.Farrow, Op.cit. p.81

2. This wand is known as Opa bata



Fig. 18

Adamuorisa - a Group of Eyos. Note OPABATA (Wand)



Fig.19

Adamuorisa - A Single Eyo

The aropale must entirely cover the Eyo's feet and trail behind him at a length not less than two feet. Some Aropales are about ten feet long. The wand is called Opabata and is made of the thick part of a long palm leaf.

The Eyos appear singly or in companies. As they parade the streets they accost passers-by in a ventriloquial voice as follows :- "I-ha-ha! I-ha-ha!! I-ha-ha!!! E s'erukeru. O se mi tibalaka tibalaka, O se mi tiboloko tiboloko. I-ha-ha-aa!!!" "Hal-lo! Hal-lo!! Hal-lo!!!.

There is no cause for fear. I feel like dancing this way. I feel like dancing that way. H-a-l-l-o-o-o! "

The spectators usually reply by saying "A-gogoro Eyo! Mo yo fun e, mo yo fun ara mi" "What a tall or imposing Eyo! I congratulate you, I congratulate myself", that is, on having the good luck to participate in or to witness the festival.

Some of the important spirits appear in the form of Agere (Stilt-walker), Oniko (a masquerader whose dress is made of brass heels), Ologede (a masquerader whose dress is made of banana leaves). Each of these is escorted by a number of Eyos, ranging from thirty to a hundred. Each set of escort wears a distinctive hat with an appropriate badge.

The most important spirit is the Adimu. He is clad from head to foot in native cloth and wears a wooden mask with a protruding but closed nose. Hence he is called Adimu Orisa "The orisha with the closed nostrils". Sometimes the nose is open, and then he is called Adamu Orisa "the Orisa with the open nostrils"¹.

1. Adamu Orisa does not mean "We confuse the orisas. Such a wrong translation is due to imperfect knowledge of the language.

There is no aperture in front of his face and hence he cannot move about easily. He has to be led by a number of elderly members of the cult who are not in costume. He is also escorted by a strong force of Eyo's, sometimes numbering over two hundred, who run up and down in front and behind him, thereby preventing any but the initiated to come too near him. Even the other Eyo's and spirits have to run away at his approach. He is credited with supernatural powers to punish those who offer him insult or disrespect.

The Adimu is the chief mourner at the festival. He is also known as O-gu(n)-ra(n). Formerly the Adimu and the Ogunran were two distinct incarnate spirits and, according to tradition, the two used to appear on the occasions of Adamuorisa festivals. At present the two terms are applied to the same masquerade. There are some people, however, who believe that they must be kept distinct.

Drawings in white and red colours are made on the mask worn by the Adimu.

Early on the day of the festival, the Adimu first goes to Oju Elegbã after sacrifices have been made, and performs some ceremonies. He then goes to the Iga where the mummy is laid and bewails the death of the deceased. He then retires to the Agodi. Later in the day he joins in parading the streets like the other incarnate spirits. At the end of the day he returns to the Agodi.

The Adimu is the first incarnate spirit to appear in the streets. No other masquerader must precede him. The death penalty was always imposed for the infringement of this rule in the olden times.

Throughout the day of festival, the greatest respect, amounting to divine honour, is paid by all to the Adimu. Even the Oba (king or paramount chief) who may himself be an Eyo on that day has to pay him great respect. After the festival he returns to his status as an ordinary person and it has been said that, as a result of the ceremonies he has had to undergo before the festival, he will either become an idiot or he will die within a few days.

The priesthood connected with the cult is drawn from the Akarigbere and Idejo Chiefs of Lagos. The priests are always scantily clad and clean shaven.

The Eyos and other masqueraders are sometimes escorted by large retinues. If their followers are chiefs they must be bare from their loins upwards. Other followers must not wear a head-gear. In the olden days all those who come across an Eyo must take off their hats; those who fail to do so used to be mercilessly beaten. This demand for compulsory homage has been greatly modified, owing to the inrush of civilization and the presence of a large non-native element in the population. Nevertheless, respect for the Adimu is being demanded, discretion being used by the escorting Eyos in making exceptions.

Sometimes the festival takes place at night, like the Eluku festival. The masqueraders are then known as Eyo Oru "Night Eyos". The night festival is by no means elaborate or popular. HISTORICAL ORIGIN. The historical origin of this cult is the same as that of the Egungun cult. The word E-yo comes from the word 'ye' which means "to live", "to exist". Eyo therefore means "living ones or living spirits".

It may be interesting to note the following passages describing the beliefs in Ancient Egypt which have survived in Egungun and Adimuorisa spirit worship in Yorubaland :-

1. Professor Wiedeman says - "the soul might.....take up its abode in its former body and return to earth under that form and thus revisit the spots where it had once dwelt".¹

Again the same writer says "The power of the soul(ka) to incarnate itself at pleasure became one of the chief reasons for embalming the dead".²

2. Writing about the nature and functions of the Kas (soul bodies) Professor Flinders Petrie says -

"that each person received a part of the family spirit which guided him and was the inner personality, and on dying he rejoined the whole family spirit which received and preserved him".³

The object of the appearance of the Eyo in connection with Adamu Orisa cult, therefore, seems to be to accord a ceremonial welcome to the spirit of the deceased back into the whole family spirit.

The following points, referring particularly to the Adamuorisha cult, should also be noted :-

1. The respect paid to the Adimu, regardless of class or position and even by the Oba(king or paramount chief), It strongly suggests that the Adimu festival is, in some respects, a survival of the festival of the Mock king in Ancient Egypt which is thus described by Klunzinger⁴:-

" A very ancient popular festival is that of this mock king, which survived in Upper Egypt till the last century. A fellah was dressed with a false beard, carrying a long sceptre. For his day everyone obeyed him, even the governor gave way, till at last the dress was burned away, and the relic of power was over".

1. Doctrine of Immortality p.20

2. Op. cit. p.67

3. Ancient Egyptians, p.43 column 127, section 38

4. Upper Egypt, 1878, page 184

2. The word Adimu itself which is a survival of the Atumu or Adumu, the name of a well-known Egyptian god. It should be observed that the letter 't' is often changed d, i, and u are often used substituted for one another by Egyptian writers.

The reason for the divine honour paid to Adimu thus becomes obvious. Atumu was one of the most revered gods in Ancient Egypt. He was always depicted in the form of a man ¹.

The alternative name of Adimu, that is, O-gu-ra(n) is noteworthy. Gu is a modification of Khu, and Ra is the name of the Egyptian sun-god. O-gu-ra(n), therefore, means "the soul of Ra". Now in Ancient Egypt Atumu was a sun-god. According to Professor Maspero - "The sun existing before the world they (i.e. the Egyptians) called Creator - Tumu, Atumu"². In the theology of Heliopolis, Atumu and Ra were identified under the single name of Atumu-Ra, that is, the sun-god pre-mundane and eternal.³ It is therefore, not surprising that the word Oguran, "the soul of Ra" is used by the Yorubas as an alternative name of Adimu. The use of the word is a further indication of the Egyptian origin of the cult.

1. Sayce, the Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, p.87

2. Dawn of Civilization, p.138

3. See also E. De Rouge, Etudes sur le Rituel Funeraire p.76: Brugsch, Religion and Mythologie, pp.231-280

It may be added here that Atumu or Adumu survives not only among the Yorubas but also among other West African Tribes. For example, an important Deity among the Ijaws is known as Adumu.

3. The colours of the drawings on the mask worn by Adimu, namely, white and red. These colours agree with the sacred colours of the royal crown of Horus as described in the following passage :-

"Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis has received the white and red crown."¹

4. The phrase Oju Elegbara. Elegbara has been identified above with Khepera, the sun-god. "Oju Elegbara" therefore means "the eye or eyes of Khepera". Now "the eyes of Horus" or "the eyes of Ra" and "the eyes of Khepera" were well-known phrases in Ancient Egypt. It is interesting to note that a similar phrase survives in Yorubaland. It is also noteworthy that in connection with the cult the names of the Egyptian sun-god, namely, Ra, Khepera and Atumu, occur.

The above facts together with the survivals of the Ancient Egyptian beliefs noted above clearly show that Adimorisa cult is of Egyptian origin.

1. Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, p.66.

F. GELEDE.

The spirits who appear in the form of Gelede bear great resemblance to those of the Egunguns and Eyo. Unlike these, however, their ceremonies are not connected with funeral obsequies. The Gelede spirits appear only on festival occasions arranged by members of the cult.

The dress of the Gelede is smarter and more artistic than that of the Egungun or the Eyo. He is represented by a human being wearing clean and close-fitting dress and a wooden mask the top of which is exquisitely carved in wood and well ornamented. The mask is made to represent the head of a man or a woman with all the appropriate tribal marks, and sometimes to represent any of the lower animals, such as birds, alligators and others.

Most of the Geledes assume the form of a full-grown woman with magnificent busts and plaited hair. Some Geledes are more gaily dressed than the others, female ornaments such as ear-rings bangles, beads and jingles placed on the ankles being used in larger quantities than in the case of the others.

On festive occasions large numbers of Geledes can be seen parading the streets. They do not attempt to frighten anyone, although the appearance of some of them who are besmired with chalk and camwood is frightful.

They dance about the streets, shaping their movements rhythmically to the sounds of drums and musical instruments. They cause great amusement, and after dancing for some time, they receive presents from the on-lookers.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN. It is difficult to look at the Gelede without thinking of the forms which the Horus Gods used to assume in Ancient Egypt whenever they paraded the streets on festival occasions for the benefit of the peasants, especially those who could not grasp the abstract teaching of the priests regarding the gods who resided in the temples. The masks of some of the Gelede resemble some of the masks worn by the Horus gods and the funerary gods in Ancient Egyptian pictures.

The word Gelede itself appears to be of Egyptian origin. It consists of two parts, namely Ge and 'lede, Ge is an abbreviation of Geb¹ and 'lede is an abbreviation of e-le-de. The last syllable de has been explained in a previous chapter as being derived from the Egyptian word deb which means "to pierce"² E-le-de, therefore, means "one who pierces". The whole word then means "Geb who pierces". As all the myths connected with the cult have disappeared, it is difficult to know why such a name was given to such a harmless incarnate spirit as Gelede.

It may be concluded, however, that the Gelede cult is a survival of a similar element in Ancient Egyptian Religion.

1. See Agemo above, p.7

2. See Chapter III p.

The Yorubas believe that there is a certain class of spirits which enter into new-born children, causing them to die in infancy according to a pre-arranged plan. These spirits are regarded as members of a fraternity. They live in the woods, in big and shady trees, the chief of which is Iroko.

If any of these spirits were to enter into a new-born child or into a child in utero, the child would die in its infancy. Hence the word Abiku "born to die". The explanation of this belief is that the spirit has had instructions from the fraternity of Abiku spirits to return to them on a pre-arranged date. If a woman loses several children, she is said to be troubled by Abiku spirits.

These spirits must, therefore, be placated. Means must also be found to nullify their influence on the child. The mother of an Abiku child continually offers sacrifice of food to the Abiku spirits. The underlying belief of this sacrifice is that the other Abiku spirits who are not privileged to enter the child normally demand their share of the child's food and will compel the child to join them by eating up all the essential parts of the child's food if they fail to get their share. The child's mother is thus put into periodical expense of sacrifice. Another method of preserving the child is to provide him with charms and amulets such as rings, anklets, wristlets of beads, jingles, and so on. It is believed that the sound of jingles will frighten away the evil spirits, and that the protective amulet will prevent them from forcing him to re-join their company.

It is also believed that the child can be saved if it can be preserved beyond the pre-arranged date for its death.

Unfortunately, this date is always unknown.

If, in spite of all efforts, the child dies, its body is maltreated, wounds and blows which are believed to make indelible marks being inflicted on it. Sometimes the body is hacked to pieces and in every case it must be thrown into the bush. The idea behind such maltreatment is that the Abiku spirit thereby suffers and becomes incapable of re-entering a human body.

CHAPTER 1X.

THE MINOR ORISAS.

CHAPTER IX. THE MINOR ORISAS.

The number of Yoruba deities is said to be four hundred and one. Of these, some are so great as to command the worship of every Yoruba or of the majority of the Yorubas. Others are mere local deities worshipped by a few tribes or towns. Others again have become so nebulous in character as to command the worship of only a few individuals or to lose their names and worship.

An account of the worship of the major Orisas and of spirit worship in different parts of Yorubaland has been given in the previous chapters. An account of the minor Orisas which deserve attention will now be given.

A. Aja.

Aja is a beneficent deity. She is supposed to be a spirit who carries off persons whom she meets into deep bush with a view to teach them the medicinal properties of herbs and plants. Those who are thus fortunate become native medical doctors. They regard the goddess as their tutelary deity and worship her by placing presents of food in front of the "Aja vine", the leaves of which they often use for curative purposes.

The word Aja is derived from the West African word Ye or Je¹ which means to exist. Aja, therefore, means "the living one". The goddess is described by Bishop S. Adjai Crowther as "a fairy, said to be diminutive in form,

1. See Chapter I.



PL. 107. - A large, broad, leaf-like shape, possibly a botanical specimen, oriented horizontally. The shape is elongated with a pointed apex and a slightly rounded base. It features several curved lines running parallel to its length, suggesting veins or segments. The drawing is light and appears to be made with a pencil or light ink on aged paper.

PL. 108. - A small, narrow, leaf-like shape, possibly a botanical specimen, oriented vertically. The shape is elongated with a pointed apex and a slightly rounded base. It features several curved lines running parallel to its length, suggesting veins or segments. The drawing is light and appears to be made with a pencil or light ink on aged paper.

PL. 109. - A small, narrow, leaf-like shape, possibly a botanical specimen, oriented vertically. The shape is elongated with a pointed apex and a slightly rounded base. It features several curved lines running parallel to its length, suggesting veins or segments. The drawing is light and appears to be made with a pencil or light ink on aged paper.

who carries persons into the wilderness and instructs them in magic and all kinds of medicines".

B. Aje Saluga.

Reference has already been made to this deity in a previous chapter. There it is pointed out that the name means "The living one of Salug". Salug is the name of an islet in Ancient Egypt. Aje Saluga is therefore the survival of an ancient Egyptian deity.

In Yorubaland he is the god of wealth. Traders and others who actively seek after wealth adore him as their patron, but they regard him as full of whims and caprices. In their opinion, there is no truth in the proverb, "the early bird catches the worm", for they say that Aje Saluga sometimes favours the person who comes behind as against an ambitious forerunner. Hence the Yoruba proverb, "Aje Saluga fi eni iwaju sile, oṣe eni ḗhin li oge". "Aje Saluga often passes by the first person as it comes to market, and leads the last with blessings," that is, "The race is not for the swift".

He is also regarded as a god of good luck. To find a large cowrie shell on the road is considered a sign of good luck, as such a cowrie shell is the emblem of the god.

It is not correct to describe him as a farm god. Farmers and traders in dyes and farm products worship him, not as a farm god, but as the god of wealth who also can bless them with the good fortune of realising substantial

profits from the sale of their wares.

Civilization has not yet succeeded in obliterating the last vestige of the worship of this deity among the educated elements in Yorubaland. On important occasions when large sums of money have been spent, it is usual to hear shouts of Aje O! Aje O! implying that such expenditure or lavish display is only possible through the blessing of the god and that such occasions give a practical demonstration of his munificence.

Further, if a street hawker's offer of goods is declined by anyone, the usual reply is Aje, implying a wish that the hawker may be favoured by the god.

C. Aroni.

Like Aja, Aroni is a god of medicine who dwells in forests. Unlike Aja, however, he is credited with benevolence and malevolence alike. He is a great admirer of courage. Whenever he comes across a courageous person, he takes him into the forests and treats him kindly, teaching him the secret power possessed by herbs, plants and trees. When the person becomes proficient, he becomes a favourite of the god who sends him back to the world as a fully-fledged medicine man and gives him a hair of his own tail as a certificate of proficiency in medicine. On his return such a person becomes a highly respected member of the community.

On the other hand, he hates cowardly persons. These who flee from him he immediately devours. In dealing with

such persons his malevolence is implacable.

The god has been described as an elf possessing the head and tail of a dog and only one leg, the other parts of its body being of human form. Its monstrous appearance would account for the terror which it is supposed to strike into cowardly minds.

The historical origin of Arɔni cannot be definitely stated. The word Arɔni is a compound word consisting of two words, namely, Ara and ɔni. Ara means "A native" and ɔni is probably derived from the Ancient Egyptian city On (Annu). The word, therefore, means "a native of On" and is probably the survival of a deity connected with the famous city of On.

D. Dada.

Dada is the god of new born babies, especially of those who are born with curled hairs. Such children are named Dada. Periodically the parents of such children have to cook vegetables and beans in honour of the children. Hence the god came to be regarded as the god of vegetables, and these have to be used in paying respect to the children who are named after him.

The usual representation of the god is a calabash ornamented with cowrie shells and surmounted with a ball of indigo.

The word Dada is of Egyptian origin. The name of the Ancient Egyptian deity from whom the word is derived is Da. This deity, together with its associate Ia, was much worshipped in Ancient Egypt. Dada is a duplication of the

word Da. It survives as the name of a Yoruba deity having very little in common with its ancient Egyptian namesake.

E. Ekun and Amotekun.

Animal worship does not exist to any great extent in Yorubaland. A few animals, however, are held with veneration almost amounting to worship. One of these animals is the leopard.

The Yoruba word for a leopard is Amotekun, but the word Ekun "Tiger" is sometimes substituted for it.

The leopard is regarded by the Yorubas as a king. When it is killed its face is covered and its pardon asked. This belief accounts for the assumption by the Alafin of Oyo (the paramount chief of Oyo) of the title of "Leopard" and the payment of what almost amounts to divine honours to him by almost all the Yorubas. The Yorubas also hold the belief that a man's spirit may be reincarnated in a leopard or tiger. The word E-ku(n)¹ is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word Khu (luminous spirit), and the word is used as the name of the animal which is often regarded as the incarnation of a man's spirit.

The word Amotekun may be divided into three parts—Amo(n)-to-eku(n), that is, "Amon is as great as a Khu." The reason why such a name is given to the leopard is unknown.

F. Ibeji.

The word Ibeji means Twins. The elder of Twins is known as Taiwo² and the younger is known as

-
1. E is an initial vowel characteristic of Yoruba nouns.
 2. Taiwo is a contraction of Tq-aiye-wo, that is, to taste the world, one who first tastes the world before the other.



Fig. 21 Orisa Ibeji (Twin Gods)

Facing page 172

Kehinde¹.

Twins are paid respect and honour in Yorubaland. Unlike some other parts of West Africa where they are regarded as objects of horror and are cruelly treated, Yorubaland gives twins a degree of reverence almost amounting^{to} worship. This statement is true of Yorubaland as a whole, with the exception of Ondo where contact between the Ondo people and some neighbouring degenerate tribes has led to the practice of destroying one of any pair of twins.

The reverence paid to twins is due to the fact that they are regarded as persons specially protected by Twin gods (Oriṣa Ibeji). Images of the Twin god exist in some parts of Yorubaland, but twin children are regarded to some extent as their real representatives. Hence the reverence paid to twins and the offerings made to them.

To such an extent is the belief in twins as representatives of the Twin gods carried into practice that if one of the twins happens to die, a wooden image is substituted for the child, and the parent must always have the wooden image along with the living child. The children must be two in number, and it is regarded as sufficient to substitute a wooden image for the dead child. Failure to do this will incur the displeasure of the Twin gods who may punish the parents by causing the remaining child to die.

During the lifetime of one or both of the twins, periodical sacrifices are made to the Twin-gods. The sacrifices are simple, usually consisting of cooked beans

1. Kehinde = Ko-ehin-de, to come behind or after another person.



Fig.22 A woman carrying her Twins and asking for alms.

or vegetables.

It is customary for the mother of twins to beg on their behalf. Passers-by are saluted in the name of the twins (Ibeji nki o, "Twins are saluting you"). Sometimes twins are carried about for this purpose. Persons so saluted have to give a present, large or small, as a token of their respect to the representatives of the Twin-gods.

A species of monkey called Edun Dudu or Edun Ori-okun is sacred to the Twin gods. Offerings of fruits are sometimes made to it by parents of twins who must never eat its flesh.

Near Badagry, a town where heathenism exists in a well-organised and strongly conservative form, there is a temple sacred to the Twin-gods. In the olden days twins as well as their parents used to make pilgrimage to it.

Historical Origin.

It is not difficult to see that Oriṣa Ibeji in Yorubaland are survival of twin gods in Ancient Egypt. In the latter country, there were twin-gods representing the soul of Osiris and Ra,¹ or the souls of Shu and Tefnut.² A noteworthy point is that the Egyptian twin gods were regarded as "one pair made one in two bodies", or, to use the Egyptian expression, "one soul in its two twin bodies". This unity survives in connection with the Yoruba Twin-gods who are regarded as inseparable to such an extent that if one of the twin children who are his representatives happen to die a substitute must be made for the child in the shape of a wooden image which must always accompany the living child.

1. The Book of the Dead, translation by Budge, pages 94, 102, 238 and 239.

2. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, page 141.



Fig. 23 A silk Cotton Tree

G. Igi (Trees).

Yorubaland has its sacred trees. Of these the most important are the following :-

1. Peregun, the silk-cotton tree.

The silk-cotton tree is one of the giant trees in West Africa. Its majestic appearance cannot but evoke feelings of awe and reverence from primitive peoples. It often grows to a height approximating 300 feet, "far out-topping all other trees of the forest"¹.

2. Iroko, African Oak.

The Iroko is another giant tree. It is often marked with a white piece of cloth, about nine to fifteen inches wide, tied around its trunk at a height of about fifteen feet from the ground.

Sacrifices are often made to it. Its shady trees make its surroundings the meeting place of guilds.

3. Ayan.

This tree is sacred to Şango, the god of lightning. It is from its hard timber that the club or axe of Şango is made.

4. Apa, African Mahogany.

Apa is venerated on account of its usefulness.

5. Akoko and 6. Ekika.

These trees are sacred on account of the medicinal properties of their barks and leaves.

7. Ope, the Palm Tree.

By far the most useful tree in Yorubaland is the Palm Tree. It is an economic tree producing Ewu, palm wine and Ekuro, palm kernels. Its leaves and trunk are put to a variety
1. Frazer, the Golden Bough, Vol.ii, p.14.

of uses. It is therefore regarded as sacred. Reverence is paid to a species of the tree which is regarded as a representative of all the others.

Palm leaves are emblems of sacredness. Any place or object to which they are tied thereby becomes sacred. They are used to mark groves and shrines.

It should be noted that the Yorubas regard the sacred trees as being indwelt by spirits which give them their majestic appearance or the peculiar quality which marks them out as object of veneration.

H. Oba.

Oba is a river goddess. She has been described as the third wife of Sango and is identified with a river flowing near Ibadan in a south-easterly direction towards the lagoon.

The word O-ba is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word "ba" which means "a soul or spirit". With its accents reversed, the word means "a king" - the king being regarded by the Yorubas as the incarnate soul of the nation.

I. Oke.

The word Oke means "a mountain or a hill". It is also the name of the tutelary deity of mountains or hills.

The god Oke is worshipped by people who live in a hilly or mountainous country. He is a powerful deity who is capable of protecting his worshippers in the crags of rocks or in holes on the side of the hill or mountain. The falling of rocks or landslips are regarded as signs that his worship has been neglected. As soon as this happens sacrifices of food and drink are offered to propitiate him.

At Abeokuta where the town is built on rocks and hills, the god is much worshipped. One of the hills is known as Olump, that is, a hill made by the lord or deity. Until a few decades ago it was believed that a hole on this hill could serve as a hiding place for all the earlier settlers at Abeokuta and would become hermetically sealed should the enemy assail them there.

At Ibadan also the god Oke is worshipped. The town is built on two mountains, and its inhabitants would naturally turn to the deity of the mountains for aid.

Historical Origin.

It has been pointed out in a previous chapter that the Ancient Egyptian god of the mountain survives in Yorubaland.¹ He is Horus-bakhu, and is known in Yorubaland as Orisa-beku, the god of the mountain. Oke may possibly be a distant survival of the same Egyptian god.

J. Olarosa.

Olarosa is the tutelary deity of houses. In a country where belief in witchcraft is strong and the dread of evil spirits is great, no pains are spared to protect each house against the inroad of wicked invisible forces. A stick or sword representing the deity hung at the entrance of a house is a guarantee of protection to the inmates.

The origin of the deity is obscure, but its name (Q-la-ro-sa) contains two ancient Egyptian words, that is la, a god and sa, a sacred protective and re-juvenating fluid.²

1. Chapter III. page 8.

2. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p. 110.

Olarosa probably means "the god la stands (at the door) as a means of protection".

K. Olokun.

Olokun is one of the deities springing from the body of the goddess Yemoja.

The word Olokun (Oni-Okun)¹ denotes the owner or lord of the sea. Olokun is therefore the presiding deity of the sea and is worshipped chiefly by residents near the sea and by those who have much to do with the sea, that is, fishermen and canoe men.

In Lagos sacrifices are made to the deity at Victoria beach. In the olden days human sacrifices used to be made to the deity.

The writer witnessed the ceremonies performed by the devotees of the deity at Victoria beach a few years ago. The ceremonies began early in the morning and continued till late in the afternoon. The male worshippers were clad in black or blue-black dresses, black being the colour of the deity's dress. The female worshippers were clad in white, that being the colour of the dress of Olokun-su, the wife of Olokun. The ceremonies began with a series of prostrations and genuflections, followed by a simple meal. Then followed swimming by those who are able to do so, and then dancing. An important feature of the ceremony was a sumptuous meal. The food provided on the occasion far exceeded what the worshippers could normally consume. After the meal the remainder which was greater than the quantity consumed by

1. Compare Olofin "Lord or Owner of Heaven".

the worshippers was thrown into the sea as a sacrifice to the deity. Dancing and general merriment concluded the ceremonies.

Olokun-su or Elusu, the wife of Olokun is the guardian deity of the bar between the Lagos lagoon and the Bight of Benin. She is supposed to dwell in the bar. All fishes in the vicinity are sacred to her. No fisherman can trespass by fishing on the bar with impunity. His canoe will be upset and he himself may be drowned.

Just as a rough sea is supposed to be an indication of the anger of Olokun, so is the rough bar supposed to be due to the anger of his wife,

Near Benin City there was an altar dedicated to Olokun.¹ In front of the altar were chalk marks.² These marks will be explained later. The Benin people believe that the deity of the river Oba is the first wife of Olokun, and that the deity of the river Sapoba or Igbagon is his second wife.

Myths.

The following is one of the myths current about Olokun. The myth is selected because it is typical of the deluge stories current in Yorubaland.

"Olokun being enraged with mankind because of their neglect of him endeavoured to destroy all of them by overflowing the land. He had destroyed large

1. See Burton, Great Benin, p. 57.

2. A picture of the altar is given by Dennet. See "At the back of the black man's mind" p. 225.

numbers when Obatala interfered to save the remainder, forced Olokun back to his palace, and bound him in seven iron chains until he promised to abandon his design."¹

Historical Origin.

The historical origin of this deity will be discussed later, but it should be noted here that its name is derived from an Egyptian word. The name consists of two parts, namely, Oni, Oku(n). Oni (often changed to Ol' for euphonic reasons) means owner or lord. Oku(n) is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word khu, which means a luminous spirit. The word Okun must have been applied to the sea on account of the watery vapour, conveying the idea of spirits, which is often found floating above it.

L. Olori Merin.

The words Olori Merin mean "The owner of four heads". They are applied to a deity which is regarded as the tutelary deity of towns and cities.

The figure representing this deity is that of a monstrous animal, half man and half beast. The legs and feet of the animal resemble those of a goat or a baboon, whilst the upper part of the body resembles those of a man having four heads. The figure is usually placed on a hillock outside the town. Where no hillock exists, an artificial mound is provided for the purpose. Sometimes a hillock or a mound having four

1. Ellis, Yoruba-speaking peoples, p.71.

rounded tops is regarded as a sufficient representation of the deity. The deity is supposed to appear sometimes at night in the form of a serpent.

The four heads of the deity point to the four points of the compass or to the directions of the four winds known to the Yorubas. The deity is thus able to keep watch in all directions and to protect each town from war and pestilence.

In some parts of Yorubaland the figure is regarded as the representative of a single deity, but in other parts, it is regarded as a combined representation of the four deities Jakuta, Ifa, Obatala and Odudua who are regarded as representatives of the East, West, North and South winds respectively and as joint custodians of towns.

Worship. Olori Merin is one of the few minor deities to whom human sacrifice is offered. Four times a year an infant three or four days old used to be offered to the deity. The sacrifice must be performed in the presence of the child's mother, and it must be made by a priest who would cut the child's throat, collect the blood issuing therefrom in a calabash which would later be placed on the mound. The body of the ill-fated child would then be cut in pieces and buried in different parts of the mound.

Historical Origin.

There is no doubt that the origin of this deity must be traced to the four elemental deities¹ of Hermopolis in Ancient Egypt. The first point to note is the fact that the

1. Sayce, Religion of Ancient Egyptians p.134.

four Yoruba deities referred to above are elemental deities just as the auxiliary gods to Thoth in Hermopolis were regarded as elemental deities. Secondly, the Egyptian deities were represented by baboons.¹ It is significant that this representation survives in the Yoruba figure, the lower part of which resembles the feet and legs of a baboon. Thirdly, the Yoruba deity is supposed to appear at night in the form of a serpent. It will be remembered that the wives of the four Egyptian deities referred to above were serpent-headed.² This survival is noteworthy. Fourthly, the four Egyptian deities were regarded as the impersonation of the four pillars consisting of the arms and legs with which Sibū supports the roof of the earth at its four corners.³ The four heads of the Yoruba deity are regarded as representations of the four corners of the earth. Fifthly, in Ancient Egyptian mythology, the god Shu, when separating Sibū from Geb, had to make use of a mound.⁴ It is noteworthy that the Yorubas use a mound either as the representation of Olori Merin or as the base upon which its figure is superimposed. Sixthly, the connection between the worship of Olori Merin in Yorubaland and the myth of the separation of Sibū from Geb by Shu⁵ is further

-
1. G. F. Moore, History of Religions, Vol. I. pp. 171 & 172.
 2. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p. 148.
 3. G. F. Moore, op. cit. p. 171.
 4. Maspero, Op. cit. p. 128, note 4.
 5. Maspero, Op. cit. pp. 128 and 129.

illustrated by the gruesome sacrifice offered to the Yoruba deity. It is the connection between the deity and Shu, in the myth just referred to that explains this evil custom. It has been pointed out in Chapter III that the Yorubas derive some of their ideas about Esu from those relating to the god Shu, and that as the latter was identified with Sut or Set by the Yorubas, the same gruesome human sacrifice offered to Set or Typhon in Ancient Egypt¹ was often offered to Esu in Yorubaland. The need for human sacrifice to Olori Merin must have arisen from his connection with Shu.

M. Olqsa.

Olqsa is a beneficent goddess. Like Olokun, she sprang from the body of Yemoja, the goddess of waters generally. She is thus the sister of Olokun, and she is also his chief wife.

The word Olqsa means the owner of the Lagoon (Qsa). The goddess Olqsa is therefore the presiding deity of the lagoon which surrounds Lagos, the capital of Nigeria, and flows into the sea. Unlike Elusu, she is kind to fishermen, helping them to secure a plentiful supply of fish. She also protects them from accidents and from molestation by crocodiles who are regarded as sacred to her.

In return for her kindness, sacrifices of fowls, sheep, goats and other animals are often made to her. In the olden days an annual sacrifice of a maiden, gaily bedecked, used to be made to the deity.

1. Isis and Osiris, (translation by Mead) LXIII. 3 and 4.

Temples in her honour were built along the shores of the lagoon, but very few of these now remain. In these temples offerings of food are placed periodically, and these are consumed by crocodiles who are supposed to convey the food to her.

The deity is supposed to live on the bed of the lagoon. It would be interesting to know what became of her when the lagoon was dredged so as to ensure safe passage to large ocean-going liners.

Historical Origin.

The historical origin of Oloṣa cannot be definitely traced but there is no doubt that she is the survival of one of the river deities in Ancient Egypt.

Reference has been made above to the word Sa which means "A sacred, protective fluid". This fluid was supposed to be obtainable from "the pond of Sa". It is probably for this reason that the Yorubas apply the word O-sa (Aw-sah) to the lagoon and the word Oḽ'-ṣa to the lagoon deity.

N. Ōrun and Oṣupa.

The Yorubas do not worship any of the heavenly bodies. Whenever an eclipse of the moon (Oṣupa) occurs, however, prayers are offered to the Sun (Ōrun). Crowds may be seen parading the streets, singing weird songs and making loud shouts, hoping that by their prayers and noises the sun will be induced to disgorge the Moon which it desires to swallow.

The word Ōru(n) (Sun) is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word Horu which was the old name of the Sun-god in Ancient Egypt.¹

1. See chapter I above and Maspero, op.cit.p.

The word Oṣu -pa is derived from two Ancient Egyptian words, namely, Khonsu and pa. Khonsu is the name of the Moon-god in Ancient Egypt and it becomes Oṣu in Yoruba by the following process. Kh is elided since nouns in Yoruba usually begin with a vowel; On-su is further modified by the elision of the weak nasal consonant which if it had been a hard consonant would have received a vowel to form its own syllable; the word thus becomes O-ṣu (the moon). Pa means a house or a district. The word Oṣupa, therefore, means "Khonsu (the god) of the house or district".

O. Oṣahin.

Oṣahin (or Oṣayin) is one of the Yoruba gods of medicine. Unlike Aja and Aroni, he does not carry people into the forest for instruction, but he heals those who pray to him either by inspiring them to use suitable medicinal herbs or without material medium. His worship is general, since health is regarded by all as precious wealth.

In some parts of Yorubaland, Oṣahin is consulted on behalf of sick persons. Quack priests, playing upon the credulity of the people, sometimes make large fortunes by claiming powers of divination, especially in regard to the cure of diseases or the possibility of recovery from illness by a patient.

He is usually represented by the figure of a bird placed on an iron har. Dr. Farrow gives a good illustration of the figure.¹

1. Faith, Fetich and Fancies, p.66.

Historical Origin.

The origin of Qsahin must be traced to Egyptian mythology. The word Q-sahi(n) is derived from the Egyptian word Sahu which is the name of a star god identified with Orion. The Egyptian god is sometimes designated Sahu-Orion. Reference has been made to the god Orion in a previous chapter where it is pointed out that he survives as Oro in Yorubaland.

There is another Ancient Egyptian word Sahu which means a spiritual body. This spiritual body was said to "germinate" from the mummified body.

The ideas underlying the conception of the Yoruba god Qsahin are derived from those associated with the god Sahu and the spiritual body known as Sahu. It will be remembered that Sahu-Orion was identified with Osiris, and his wife with Sothis. Sahu-Orion and Sothis had no son, and therefore the figure of Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis was usually placed between the figures of the former god and goddess. Professor Maspero gives a picture containing Orion and the cow Sothis separated by the sparrow-hawk.¹ The figure of Horus is the sparrow-hawk mounted on an iron rod. It is this same figure, though crudely drawn by the Yorubas, that is used as a representation of Qsahin, the Yoruba survival of Sahu (Orion). It is also noteworthy that the bird represented by the Yorubas is a hawk. The figure of Horus must have been transferred to Qsahin by

1. Dawn of Civilization, p.97. A bird, usually a hawk, is the representative of Kori (Horu or Horus) in Yorubaland. As a hawk is rare, any small bird is generally substituted for it.

mere association of figures always seen together.

Osahin is the god of medicine whilst Sahu was not. It is probable that the idea of medicine became associated with Osahin from the fact that various chemicals were used to embalm or to heal (as it would appear to unsophisticated minds) the body from which the Sahu is "germinated".

P. Ososi.

Ososi has been described above as one of the sons of Yemaja. Like his brother Ogun, he is a patron of hunters. He assists his worshippers in various ways, especially by protecting them whilst engaged in hazardous hunting and by driving animals into snares and pitfalls. He collaborates with his brother in giving effective assistance to hunters.

He has two modes of representation. He is represented simply by a bow or by a man armed with a bow.

It has been pointed out above that the name Ososi is a confection of two words, that is, Oṣu(n) and Osi (Osun-osi). O-ṣu(n) is derived from the name of the Egyptian god Shu and Osi is a contraction of Osi-ri. Both deities have been described above.

Q. Oṣumare.

Oṣumare is the Rainbow deity among the Yorubas. He is regarded as a great snake whose beautiful appearance in the sky symbolizes blessing to mankind. A species of python called Erê, whose skin has several colours, is sacred to him and is regarded as his messenger.

The meaning of his name has baffled several writers.

The name may be divided into two parts - Osu (Oshun) and Mare. The first part comes from the Ancient Egyptian word Shu which means "to gather, to collect, to cover".¹ The second part has been explained in Chapter II in connection with the word Olodumare. The full form of it is emi yio re "I will go or return". Osumare, therefore, means "The deity to whom I shall return"² The deity is probably a survival of an Egyptian deity with whom the faithful Egyptian hoped to be united after death.

R. Oṣun.

Oṣun (Oshun) is the name of the goddess of a river bearing the same name. She is regarded as the second wife of Sango.

The river flows near the town of Oṣogbo (Oshogbo) where the goddess is actively worshipped. The name of the town itself is compounded from the word Oṣun, namely, Oṣun-ogbo.

The goddess is worshipped in many parts of Yorubaland, especially at Abeokuta where her worshippers may be seen wearing the distinctive badge of her worship, that is, a necklace of amber-coloured beads.

The animals sacred to the goddess are crocodiles which bear special marks. Sacrifices of food are sometimes thrown into the river to be consumed by the crocodiles. Worshippers of the goddess understand the means by which the crocodiles can be invited to the surface of the river to receive the food prepared for them.

1. See Chapter III p.72
2. " " II p.48

Qshun is one of the deities to whom human sacrifices are made in time of need.

The origin of this goddess is not difficult to trace. Her name -Q-su(n) or Q-shu(n) is derived from the name of the Ancient Egyptian god Sut or Shu described in a previous chapter.¹

S. Qya.

The goddess Qya must be distinguished from Oya the spirit of ancestors described in the preceding chapter.

The goddess Qya is the goddess of the River Niger which is named after her, (Odo Qya). She is supposed to be the first, and therefore, the favourite wife of Sango, the god of Thunder. Tradition says that the river was formed originally by the copious tears which she shed on the death of her husband.

She has a messenger called Afe, "gentle breeze". This idea must have originated from the comparatively cool breeze which those who sail on it usually enjoy.

She is worshipped in several parts of Yorubaland, but at Lokoro, near Port Novo, there is a temple consecrated to her and containing a symbolic image of her with eight small heads surrounding her own in the centre. This image symbolizes the Niger and its delta.

The word Q-ya comes from the West African word "ye"² which means "to exist". It, therefore, means "the living one".

1. Isis and Osiris (translation by Mead LXXIII, 3 and 4).

2. See Chapter I pages 24 and 25.

T. Oye.

The dry sirroco wind which comes from the Sahara during the months of December and January has made such an impression on the mind of the Yorubas as to wrest from them the honour of a deity. The deity belongs to the class of deities which the Yorubas began to recognize on their arrival in Yorubaland. As such he receives no worship. He is supposed to dwell in a cavern near Ilorin. A later tradition says that he dwells on the mountain named Igbeti, near palace of Eṣu or Eṣegbara.

The word Oye is derived from the West African word "ye" which means "to live, to exist".¹

U. Şugudu (or Şigidi).

Opinion is divided among writers on Yoruba heathenism as to the exact nature of Şugudu (Shugudu) or Şigidi (Shigidi). For example, Ellis says that Şugudu is "a deified nightmare", and regards it as an Orisha.² Dr. Farrow, after denying that it is an Orisha, says that it is "an utterly bad form of demonology or witchcraft, perpetrated through the agency of an evil spirit. It is akin to Eshu (satan) and is employed by the babalawos."

The truth is that Şugudu is an Orisha, but it differs from the other Orishas in that it is made for a special occasion and for a special purpose. As soon as the occasion is over and the purpose is fulfilled or becomes incapable

1. See Chapter I, p. 25.

2. See his "Yoruba-Speaking Peoples", p. 74

of fulfilment, the Şugudu made for the occasion ceases to be an Orişa and is destroyed.

Whenever anyone wishes to revenge himself on another secretly, he consults a babalawo. The babalawo then makes a short and bulky image of a human being. The image is made of clay and is adorned with cowrie shells. Sometimes a thick blunted cone of clay is used. The babalawo then sets to "develop" the image or clay into an Orişa. By way of preparation for this, he had mixed the clay with some drugs. When the image is completed or the cone of clay is selected he applies several charms to it and recites some incantation over it. This process of "development" sometimes takes about a week to complete. At last the image or clay has attained to the status of Orişa Şugudu. It has become endowed with supernatural power to inflict injury on the person for whose ruin it was made. It is credited with powers of motion. It is believed that it can be sent out at night to carry out its evil mission.

The person against whom it is sent may escape injury if he takes the necessary precautionary measures. Some of the measures have been thus described by Ellis :-

"Houses and enclosed yards can be placed under the guardianship of Shigidi. In order to do this a hole is dug in the earth, and a fowl, sheep, or in exceptional cases, a human victim is slaughtered, so that the blood drains into the hole, and is then buried. A short, conical mound of red earth is next built over the spot, and an earthen saucer placed on the summit to receive occasional sacrifices. When a site has thus been placed under the protection of Shigidi, he kills, in his typical manner, those who injure the buildings, or who trespass there with bad intentions."

The sender of the Şugudu must remain awake while it is on its mission. If he were to fall asleep, the evil that he had planned for another person would fall on his own head. The Şugudu will immediately return and inflict grievous bodily harm or the punishment of death on the sender.

The writer does not believe in the existence of a Şugudu who moves about and performs deeds such as are described above or are more vividly described by Mr. I. O. Delano in his book entitled, "The Soul of Nigeria".

The best explanation of the phenomenon is that which has been offered by the late Professor Abayomi Cole of Sierra Leone. He believes that the Şugudu denonology operates on the basis of thought projection. All the babalawo does is to project his thought to another person, wishing him serious injury or death. He develops his will power in projecting the thought by concentrating his attention on Şugudu as a material medium for accomplishing his purpose, the medium greatly helping to strengthen his will. Under certain psychological conditions, such a thought projection is efficacious. The present writer is inclined to accept this explanation as reasonable and scientific, especially as no eye-witness evidence of a Şugudu walking along the streets on its mission has never been offered by any reliable person, though cases of Şugudu's activities are often alleged to occur.

Historical Origin.

The theory enunciated above can be applied to unravel the historical origin of Şugudu.

The word Şu-gu-du consists of three parts. Şu(Shu) is a modified form of Sut or Shu, the Ancient Egyptian god whose character has been sketched above.¹ Gu is a modified form of Khu, spirit, and du is the ancient Egyptian word for mountain. The word Şugudu, therefore, means "Şu (Shu), the spirit of the mountain."

It may be thus seen that Şugudu is also a survival of the god Sut or Shu which has been identified with the Yoruba god Eşu (Eshu).

The worship of Şugudu is similar to that of Eşu. Hence Dr. Farrow says that Şugudu is akin to Eşu.² The image of Eşu is decorated with cowries; so also is the image of Şugudu. Eşu is an evil and fighting deity; he received human sacrifice. This is also true of Şugudu, to whom human sacrifice used to be offered in bygone days when its image was still in the process of "development" to the status of an Orisha.³ According to the Ancient Egyptians "Sit was the spirit of the mountain, stone and sand, the red and arid ground as distinguished from the moist black soil of the valley."⁴ It has been pointed out above that Şugudu means "Shu, the spirit of the mountain."

It is noteworthy also that the material used in making a mound to protect a house from the attack of a Şugudu is

1. See Chapter III.

2. Op.cit. p.126.

3. See above quotation from Ellis re the guardianship of Şugudu.

4. Maspero. op.cit. p.133.

the red earth.

These considerations show that Sugudu is another survival of the worship of Sut or Shu in Ancient Egypt.

C H A P T E R

X.

1. PRIESTHOOD

2. PRAYER

3. PLACES OF WORSHIP.

4. IMAGES OR IDOLS.

5. TOTEMISM.

6. SECRET SOCIETIES.

"Man is the creature of religious instincts,¹ and must worship something", says Immanuel Kant. This necessity finds expression among the Yorubas in the worship of several animistic deities and spirits of ancestors and in the reverence paid to Olurun, the Supreme Deity. The modes of worship vary in the different parts of the country, but all spring from the impulse to worship the higher powers from a sense of need.

Religious worship has been defined as "a kind of commerce between men and gods".² The inadequacy of this definition has been shown by several writers, but there is no doubt that some primitive forms of worship lay undue stress on the benefits derivable from a due performance of the acts of worship. The chief object of Yoruba religious worship is to secure the active favour of the gods, thereby ensuring the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of the worshipper. The belief is strong that if worship is duly given to the gods and spirits, they in their turn will fulfil their ^{own} part of the "commerce" by granting the worshipper his heart's desire. On the other hand, failure to perform the customary rites and ceremonies or the adoption of wrong modes of worship is regarded as fraught with serious

1. The instincts have been defined by Prof. W. MacDougall in his social Psychology (1920), Chapter III "The Principal Instincts in man", and Chapter XIII "The Instinctive Bases of Religion".

See also R.R. Marett's Threshold of Religion" (1920).

2. See Plato's Euthyphro.

consequences to the individual or to the community. The essential goodness of the gods is, therefore, a fundamental idea in Yoruba religious worship.

In this work, the word worship is used in its widest sense. It embraces both private and corporate worship, and includes the usual elements of worship, namely, prayer, praise, adoration and sacrifice.

In a book entitled "The Religious Consciousness", Pratt distinguishes between two types of worship which he describes as the objective and the subjective. "In objective worship, the leading idea is to have in some way an effect on God or to communicate with Him; while in subjective worship, the aim is to have some sort of effect on the minds of the worshippers". Whilst the sharp distinction drawn by Pratt is open to criticism as a drawing in black and white of "what can only be represented truthfully by the use of various shades of grey", it may be used for describing the two types found in Yoruba religious worship. The two types do not exist in watertight compartments, but in some forms of worship the objective element is most prominent when the leading idea is to have an effect on the god or spirit by means of rites and ceremonies acceptable to it. It must be noted here that this type of worship easily degenerates into magic by means of which efforts are made, not merely to propitiate the god or spirit, but chiefly to compel him to bestow certain benefits.

Forms of worship of the subjective type are more common. As the aim of the worship is to have some sort of effect on the

minds of the worshippers, elaborate and sometimes grotesque paraphernalia together with similar rites and ceremonies form the essential features of the worship. This type of worship greatly strengthens the faith of the worshipper both in the efficacy of the worship and in the goodness of the deity.

Yoruba religious worship^{is} of an emotional character. The emotions of admiration, awe and reverence play a principal part in the worship. Whichever of these emotions is called into play usually throws the intellectual side of the worship into the background. The emotion of fear is ~~often~~ often excited as a simple emotion; but it is sometimes fused with admiration, resulting in the complex emotion of awe. This explains the worship of malevolent deities such as Elegbara who is worshipped owing to the fear of his malevolence and to the admiration of his great strength.

The sentiment of love is strongly manifested in Yoruba worship, but it^{is} not so overwhelming as to deepen into mysticism.

PRIESTHOOD.

The Yorubas attach great importance to the correct performance of acts of worship. This importance necessitates the establishment of orders of priests who have been trained to serve as intermediaries between gods and men.

One of the reasons why the primitive Yoruba religion has resisted to some extent the onslaught of western civilization is the fact that it is maintained by an organized and, in some cases, a trained priesthood. The stronger and the more intelligent the priesthood is, the more conservative and irrepressible the religion becomes.

Among the Yorubas, priests occupy positions of great respect in the community. Dr. MacDougall considers that there are a few human beings able to exercise reverence, and that those who do are generally regarded as the ministers and dispensers of divine power. The chief priests in Yorubaland enjoy great respect almost amounting to reverence, especially the Babalawos and those who offer propitiatory sacrifices to much dreaded deities. They are given titles which place them on a high pedestal in society. In some parts of the country, they are more powerful than the chiefs.¹

In all important Yoruba towns there are Ogboni or similar societies. The Ogboni Guild has been described above² as a secret society wielding tremendous power in each town or village. Its functions have also been described. It should be noted here, however, that the Ogboni Guild often performs the functions of priests. The head of the Ogboni Guild in each town or village is known as Ekeji Orisa, "Next to the Gods", and this title is an indication of the priestly character of the Guild.

An account of the orders in the Yoruba priesthood will now be given.

The First Order.

The first order is that of the priests of Ifa. This order is by far the most important. Its members are known as Babalawos "Fathers or Masters of Secrets".

1. Compare the position of priests at Bonny. See Peoples of Southern Nigeria by Talbot, Vol. 1. p.255.

2. See Chapter VII.

Within this order there are various grades. The first grade is that of Oluwo or the senior chief to whom all the members of the order owe the duties of loyalty and obedience. Next comes the Ajigbona, the chief assistant to the Oluwo. After him comes the Odofin, the Oluwo's deputy, who is second in rank to Oluwo; when acting as a deputy, the Ajigbona functions as the Chief assistant to him. The third priest in rank is the Aro, who acts as deputy for his two seniors, when both are absent. The next in rank is the Asare-Pawo, the messenger who summons meetings and prepares the Ile Osugbo or Ile Odi (the place of meeting); he has a deputy named Asawo. The chief priestess of this order is known as Apetebi or Esu or Awayo and is regarded as the wife of Orunmila although in reality she may be the wife of the chief priest or of any other priest. The priest who functions as executioner is known as Aworu; he takes precedence over all the remaining priests of this order who have not been specifically mentioned. All these priests and priestesses belong to the first rank.

The second rank of the first order consists of the priests of Osahin and Aroni (the gods of medicine¹)

The third rank of the same order consists of the priests and priestesses of Obatala and Oduduwa.

Insignia of the first order. - With the exception of the Ifa priest at Ile Ife, all the priests and priestesses of the first order wear white clothes. The Ifa priest at Ife wear light blue clothes.

1. See chapter IX above.

A Babalawo's insignia of office are a wristlet of palm fibre or of white, blue and red beads, an Irukere "bullock's or cow's tail", and a sacred staff. The staff may assume one of the following forms - (a) a plain wooden rod (b) a rod with a rounded top (c) a wooden or iron rod or staff shaped like an Ukere stick described in a later chapter (d) a staff shaped like an Ada or crook described also in a later chapter.¹

The second Order.

The second order of priests includes

- (1) the priests of Şango (Shango). These are the Magbas,² that is, a chief priest and his twelve assistants. They reside near the town of Kuso, the spot at which Şango is said to have descended from heaven into the earth. In their absence, each town or village has its own Magbas.

The priests are also known as Oni-Şango or Odu-Shu-Şango.

- (2) The priests of all the other Orişas except Orişo Oko. These form the second rank of the order.

Insignia of the second order:

The priests of Şango wear a special badge of red, white and black beads as necklaces or wristlets; those of Ogun wear an iron bracelet on the left arm; those of Oshun wear amber-coloured beads as necklaces and also brass anklets and armlets.

Red and white are the chief distinguishing colours of this order.

The Third Order.

1. See Chapter XV. below.
2. See Chapters 1V. and V. above.

The Third Order.

The third order includes

- (1) The priests and priestesses of Orisa Oko, the god of Agriculture.

The priestesses are treated with great respect and even with greater respect than the priests, and are regarded as "brides of the god". The priesthood of Orisa Oko is a powerful secret society.

- (2) The priest of the remaining Orishas and deified spirits of ancestors.

Insignia of the Third Order.

The insignia of the priestesses of Orisha Oko have been described above. These consist of a vertical badge 1 inch long and $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch wide, half red, half white, stuck on to the forehead of the wearer and white dresses generally.

Priests and other priestesses of this order wear a white badge on their foreheads.

The above orders are determined by the importance of the functions performed by the different priests and priestesses. The functions performed by the Babalawos are the most important from the religious, the social and the political points of view. According to Ellis "the reason of the Babalawos taking the highest place in the priesthood is that it is through his agency as the priest of Ifa, the god of divination, that man learns what is necessary to be done to please the other gods. The priests of the Ifa thus, to a certain extent, control and direct the worship of the other gods, and in times of calamity, war or pestilence, it is their business to declare what ought to be done to make the gods propitious".¹

Training and Functions.

To qualify for admission to the higher priesthoods, a candidate must undergo a course of training. ~~The~~ In the case of a

1. Yoruba - Speaking Peoples, p.96.

Babalawo, the course is long and expensive. This has been described in Chapter 1V above. The course is sometimes shortened, and no one has been found who has gone through such a long and thorough course as to enable him to perform the feat of reciting the 4096 Ifa Stories from memory.

Candidates for the other priesthoods also undergo a novitiate of a more or less duration. The training, especially in the cases of the priests of Aroni and Osahin, is considered indispensable.

Among the Eguns of Badagry, the next door neighbours of the Yorubas - the priesthood is well organized and the period of training is long. Youths are sent to heathen "colleges" and take a course of instruction in "heathenism" for a period of seven years. This period has now been shortened to five or three years. The training given during the period is so thorough that a century of Christian teaching has made very little impression on the people of Badagry. Mohammedan infiltration also has been negligible, whilst heathen temples far outshine many of the other buildings in the town and heathen priests engaged in propagating their tenets as a counteraction to Christian propaganda can be seen in the streets.

The functions of the priesthood which require adequate training for their accurate performance may thus be summarized :-

- (1) The priests act as intermediaries between gods and men. They offer prayers and sacrifices.
- (2) They act as diviners. The work of divination belongs particularly to the priests of Ifa. Their mode and ~~instruments~~ instruments of divination have been described in Chapter 1V above.

Other priests practise divination in a small way, using

various methods. Some use the method known as Keke. This is done by casting lots by means of small sticks and stalks of grass, each representing an individual. Others use the method known as Gogo. This is done by drawing lots by means of a number of grass stalks, one of which is bent, the guilty person being believed to be able to draw the bent stalk without fail.

- (3) They conduct trials by ordeal, thereby enforcing morality, prepare and sell charms, amulets and other jujus in their stock-in-trade.

In order to perform these delicate and important functions satisfactorily, priests are regarded as sacrosanct and their persons are inviolable. Insult or violence offered to priests is always severely punished.

The office of a priest or priestess is hereditary in the family. It is regarded as an honour to the family. In the case of Orisa Oko, the office is compulsorily hereditary, as the iron staff - emblem of the god - cannot be got rid of when once it is introduced into the family.

The public priesthood does not conflict with or eliminate the family priesthood. "Almost without exception, every family - and sometimes each member of it - possesses a shrine for household worship; and, though special priests are appointed for the principal lodges or temples and often also for the town shrines, as well as for those of chiefs of importance, yet as a rule, it is the oldest man in a family and in a "quarter" who performs the ceremony."¹

1. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol. II, p. 28.

Historical Connection of Priesthood with Ancient Egypt.

The account of the Yoruba priesthood just given cannot but reflect the influence of the religion of Ancient Egypt on that of the Yorubas.

A few points of similarity in regard to the priesthood may now be noted. -

First, there is similarity in regard to the position^{of priests}/in each country. On this subject, Diodorus says about the Egyptian priesthood - "The priests are in great credit and authority amongst the inhabitants of the country as well because they have the cure and care of divine things, as for that they are full of knowledge and doctrine and do teach others These priests are called to assist the Kings with their counsel in matters of great importance, foretelling things to come....."¹ Compare this statement with account of the position and functions of priests given above.

Secondly, the office of a priestess was hereditary in Ancient Egypt. According to Sir Flinders Petrie "the title priestess was hereditary in the female line of the royal princesses"²

Thirdly, in Yorubaland the priestesses of Orisa Oko are known as the "brides" or "wives" of the god. The following passage shows the existence of a similar idea in Ancient Egypt:- "In all temples..... we find female singers..... and indeed in great numbers... The god was regarded as an earthly prince and the singers, who made music in his presence, were the beautiful

-
1. Book III, Chapter II, p.50 (translation by Cogan)
 2. A season in Egypt, p.12.

singers, the inmates of the house of women. The singers form the harem of the god."¹

Fourthly, the ceremony of consecrating a young virgin to Orisa Oko² in Yorubaland is identical in almost every respect with the ceremony of dedicating a virgin of the greatest beauty to Amen.³ The licence granted to each of them and the ceremonies of purification are identical.

The origin of the white and the red colours or of the white colour of the priestly insignia has been traced to Ancient Egypt in Chapter VI, Section 1, Orisa Oko.

A few words used in connection with the priesthood also deserve attention. The title of an ordinary priest in Ancient Egypt was *ue-b* or *u-eb*, that is "pure one" or "washer". It is remarkable that two Yoruba words are derived from this word. The first is we "wash", "purify", and the second is ebo "sacrifice", "that which has been purified and offered to a deity." Sua (Plural Suau) another title of Egyptian priests survives in Yoruba. Sua means "consecrate", "set apart by washing". The word survives in the Yoruba word *Sa(n)* which means "to cleanse", "to purify by washing". It also survives in *O-su* "a round lock of hair, symbolical of priesthood or consecration to a deity." Compare also *O-su-gbo*,⁴ a priest, lit. *O-su-gbo* = a consecrated person to a ba or incarnate soul of the tribe or nation.

1. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp 295-296

2. Dennet, *Nigerian Studies*, p.164

3. Strabo (Edition Bohn) XVII, p.46

4. Gbo is a modified form of *ba* or *bau*, soul.

The word Kher-ib or Khar-ib was the title of a priest or magician in Ancient Egypt. Some Yoruba words are derived from the title. For example: A-ka-ri-gbo, (Kh become K, er becoming a and b becoming the thick labial peculiar to West African Languages), and Akarigbe-re. Akarigbo was, according to Yoruba tradition, formerly a priest, but the title is now used for the paramount chief of Ijebu Remo, a district in Yorubaland. A-ka-ri-gbe-re is the title of one of the chief priests connected with Adamu-orisa in Lagos. The phonetic modification of Kherib to A-ka-ri-gbe-re is almost identical with that of Akarigbo just noted; the final syllable -re which is derived from Re, the Sun-god, suggesting that Akarigbe-re was originally the chief priest of Re or Ra, the Sun-god, as in Ancient Egypt.

Another word derived from Kher-ib is Ke-ri-bo, a popular name among the Egbas.

Some of the priestly titles which are of Egyptian origin have been explained in the preceding chapters.¹

P R A Y E R.

The Yorubas firmly believe in the efficacy of prayer. They believe that a prayer conscientiously offered by a worshipper or by a properly qualified person, either in a consecrated place of worship or wherever circumstances demand, is bound to be answered. Hence from dawn till dusk they offer ejaculatory prayers as occasions demand; they never leave their homes without offering an appropriate prayer to their tutelary deity; they never pass by a shrine or symbol of their respective deities without a word of adoration and prayer; they never omit the customary corporate

1. e.g. Magba (Chapters IV and VI) Eṣu (Chapter 11)

prayers.

This proneness to prayer is due to the operation of three important factors. The first of these is the operation of the natural human impulse to seek for help from the unseen powers believed to possess objective existence. The second is the operation of the instinct for self-preservation which is constantly stimulated in a primitive community where life is much exposed to danger owing to the ignorance of many of the laws of nature. The third factor is the operation of the belief firmly rooted in the mind of West Africans generally that there is constant interaction between spirit and matter, that spirits and gods take active interest in human beings and that the favour of the former can be secured by the latter by appropriate means, and that the forces of the world are directed by intelligence. Such a belief as this inevitably tends to develop one of the greatest of Roman virtues, namely, pietas or submission to the will of God or of the deities and spirits.

Prayers are offered to Olurun, the Supreme Deity. As the Deity is only revered and not worshipped, prayers to him are short and occasional. The following are a few examples:- Olurun gba mi "May God save me", Olurun sanu "May God have mercy", A dupe lowo Olurun "We thank God". Other examples have been given in Chapter II.

Prayers are offered to the household deities by the elderly members of the family, since the greater priesthoods do not forbid or eliminate the household priesthood. This is similar to what obtained in Ancient Egypt. According to Maspero, "Each family had a place in some corner of the house, a niche

in its walls; lamps were continually kept burning before them, and small daily offerings were made to them, over and above what fell to their share on solemn feast days. In return they become the protectors, its guardians, and ^{its} counsellors. Appeal was made to them in every exigency of daily life." ¹ This statement is true in almost every detail in regard to the Yoruba worship of household deities to whom prayers and offerings are constantly made.

Four postures of prayer are recognized by the Yorubas. These are prostration, genuflexion, kneeling, and postures determined by rhythmic movements of the body when dancing.

The different orisas have separate days of worship. This is exactly as it was in Ancient Egypt. Prof. Wiedemann says about the Ancient Egyptians - "Each month was presided over by a certain deity..... Late texts represent every day of the month as dedicated to a certain deity." ² This system of allotting a particular day to each deity serves as a basis for the calculation of the Yoruba week and for the rotation of market days.

The day sacred to any particular deity is observed as a day of rest. It is known as Ojo Ose, and is generally regarded ^{as} the first day of the week by his worshippers.

The earliest form of Yoruba week consists of a cycle of four days. This, according to the inclusive method of reckoning, is described by the Yorubas as a week of five days.

The frequent recurrence of the day of rest probably led to the extension of the week to a cycle of eight days, and later, of sixteen days. These are described by the Yorubas as the weeks of

1. Dawn of Civilisation, p.122.

2. Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, p.261.

nine days and of seventeen days respectively.

The list of days and their presiding deities are as follows:-

1st. Day:	Eṣu or Ifa or Awo.
2nd. Day:	Qbatala or Oriṣala
3rd. Day:	Odudua or Ogun
4th. Day:	Jakuta.

It is easy to see that the above system is of Egyptian origin. The names of all the deities in the list are all derived from Egyptian words and the deities themselves are all survivals of Egyptian deities.

Eṣu in the above list is a survival of Shu who, as it has been pointed out before, was identified with Ra and through him with Osiris. Hence the title of Osiris, Ifa (Ancient Egyptian Nefer),¹ is used a substitute for Eṣu. Awo (A-wo, A-hwo, A-khu-o) is probably derived from Khu; it means "an unknown entity", "a secret"

Qbatala is the same deity as Oriṣala. Odudua means "Lord or Mistress of the under-world" and is a title applied to Osiris or his consort as the presiding deities of the underworld. Ogun is the god of iron; his name is derived from the word Khu. Jakuta is the Yoruba warrior god, "the fighter with stones". The name Ja-ku-ta means "The Living Soul of Ptah".

It may now be seen that the deities named above are survivals of the four auxiliary gods of Thot, the god of Hermopolis. The following comparative table will make this clear:-

1. See chapter 1V. above.

1. Eṣu (E-shu)	Shu (husband of Tafnuit) ¹
2. Qbatala	Sibu (husband of Nuit)
3. Odudua	Osiris (husband of Isis)
4. Jakuta	Sit (husband of Nephthys) or Ptah or Min.

Eṣu corresponds to Shu, Qbatala corresponds to Sibu, since Qbatala has been identified with Khnum and both Sibu and Khnum are creator gods; Odudua is here regarded as a male deity and corresponds to Osiris "Lord of the underworld"; Jakuta corresponds to Sit, the Egyptian warrior god, or to Ptah or Min.¹

The existence of Thot the presiding deity seems to be recognized by the Yorubas, in view of their constant use of the word five instead of four as the number of days. The insistence on the word five may not be entirely due to inclusive method of reckoning.

The Hermopolitan Ogdoad seems to survive in the extension of Yoruba week from four to eight days. The survival of the wives of the gods as serpent-headed deities has been noted in a previous chapter. It should not be surprising if the male and frog-headed deities also survive in Yorubaland. As a matter of fact, they survive in an indirect way. In a picture drawn by Faucher-Gudin from a photograph by Beato and reproduced by Professor Maspero the eight gods are shown and described as an Ogdo-ad.³ Such a picture as this, containing frog-headed deities and named Ogdo-ad must have been known to the Yorubas. By association of ideas, the

1. For full details about the auxiliary gods of Thot and their wives. See Maspero, op.cit. pp 145-152. The names given above are the original names given to the deities at Heliopolis. On this point see the analysis given by Professor Maspero in *Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archaeologie egyptiennes*, Vol.II pp 337 et seq.

2. See Chapter V.

3. Dawn of Civilization, p.148.

word Ogdo-ad is applied to another object containing frogs which have come to be regarded as deities. That object is a pond, and hence the Yoruba word for a pond containing frogs is O-go-do which is certainly a modification of the Greek word Og-do-ad.

The eight gods were known collectively in Ancient ^{Egypt} ~~as~~ Khominu. This word survives in Yoruba in the name Osi-Kominu, "Osiris, (one) of the eight gods."

The word Monad applied to Thot the leader of the eight gods survives in the Yoruba words mu-na "sharp", "strong" and A-mona "a leader", "a guide" words reminiscent of the strength and leadership of Thot.

The Yoruba word for a frog is derived from the collection of frog-headed deities in the Ogdoad. The word for a frog is Q-pq-lq; pq is a modified form of pau, "many", and lo is a modified form of la, "an Egyptian god". Q-pq-lq therefore means "many gods" - an obvious reference to the large number of gods collectively forming the Ogdo-ad.

The survival of the name of the Egyptian god Thot has been noted in Chapter 1 above.

The legend that Thot gained the five intercalatory days of the Egyptian year by playing dice with the moon survives in Yorubaland in the ideas associated with Ako-qjq "an extraordinary day". It has been pointed out that the Yoruba week consists of four days (five days according to Yoruba mode of reckoning). Seven such weeks make a lunar month which is used as basis for measurement of time. It would appear that the Yoruba had an idea that the thirteen lunar months would not make a complete year, and

hence they usually have a few additional days, ranging between two and five in number, which are known as Ako-ojo and are observed as days of rest. The claims of the gods to which the days are sacred are superseded. The only god who could be worshipped on such days is O-se. The days do not enter into the calculation of the "week" and are therefore intercalatory.

Later Ako-ojo became identified with the first day of the "week", thereby giving its name and character as a day of rest to the latter.

It should be observed that the word O-se comes from Set, the Greek form of the Egyptian deity Sit or Sut who has been confused with Shu by the Yorubas.

Some of the minor orisas may be worshipped on the same day as the one appointed for a major orisa. Care must be taken, however, to offer the prayer or sacrifice appropriate to each deity.

PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Some of the Yoruba gods can be worshipped anywhere, but others ~~must be worshipped in appropriate places.~~ must be worshipped in appropriate places.

In each household there is always a rectangular block made of clay and generally about two feet wide, on which the image of the family god is set. On this block, offerings of palm oil, kola nuts and other articles are made to it daily, and prayers are offered. The block is generally coloured red; otherwise its edges are coloured red. The part of the wall over against which the image or idol leans is usually marked with red or red and white rectangular lines. This is noteworthy in view of the existence

of a similar custom among the Ancient Egyptians. According to Flinders Petrie "In the houses (of the Ancient Egyptians) there were permanent places of worship, marked by a recess in the main hall, about 2 feet wide coloured red." ¹

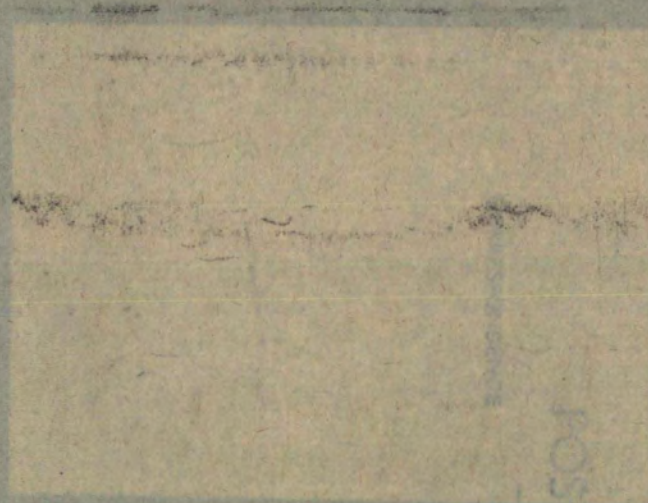
The shrine of Eṣu, as it has been pointed out above, is made outside the house or town.

Idol houses may be seen in towns. These are generally constructed with palm leaves and roofed with thatch.

In some of the large towns where the worship of the god is carried on by trained and well-established priesthoods, more solid buildings are erected. For example, the temple of Oṣun at Oṣogbo is a solid building where the paraphernalia of the god are scrupulously kept by the priests, although the god is worshipped primarily on the bank of the river bearing the name of the god.

Some of the gods are worshipped in "groves". These are places where the thickness of the bush lends itself readily to the occult and sometimes nefarious practices carried on therein. Not far from the grove there is a warning by means of a red flag or of palm leaves that a grove is in the vicinity. The sacred spot itself is marked by having one or more palm - fronds stretched across its entrance. The palm-fronds serve as a sign to the uninitiated to avoid meddling with the grove, under pain of severe penalty. The palm-fronds are known as Mariwo and are regarded as effective jujus to such an extent that, although there are no human guardians on duty at the groves, the fear of

1. Ancient Egyptians, p.47, column 139, No.59.



THE END

THE END

the efficacy of the juju serves as an efficient check to the would-be intruders.

The Yoruba word for a grove is Igbo. To this word is attached the appropriate name of the god worshipped in any particular grove. For example, Igbo Oro. (usually contracted to Igboro) is "the grove of the god Oro", Igbo Agemq(n), "the grove of Agemq(n)", Igbo Eluku, "the grove of Eluku" and so forth.

The solid temples to which priests are attached are fairly clean; they are swept periodically, especially on Ako-ojo "extraordinary or intercalatory days" and also in preparation for approaching festivals. The stench of groves where there have been animal sacrifices is indescribable, but some of the other groves are kept clean.

The temple of Orisa Oko is found in every town or village. In order to facilitate the settlement of disputes between parties, elaborate accommodation is provided for the officiating priests and the paraphernalia of the god. The method of settling disputes in this temple has been described in a previous chapter.

Some of the sacred places are known as Ile Orisa "Idol House", Ile Odi "the house of Odi", Ile Osugbo "the house of Osugbo" Ile Ogboni, "Ogboni Lodge" (same as Ile Osugbo)

A few words in this section deserve attention. The first is Mariwo. This word has been taken to mean "Do not pry into secrets". The writer is inclined to think that it contains a Latin expression which has filtered into the Yoruba language through Egypt. The full form seems to be M - a - riwo, that is,

Omo-a-riwo. The word riwo seems to be a modified form of rivo; ¹ the phrase a rivo then means "from the river" i.e. the River Nile. Omo means "a child". The palm frond is therefore regarded as "the child from the river", that is, what grows in the soil after innundation.

The phrase a rivo also seems to survive in the Yoruba word a - riwo, "noise" literally, "that which comes from the river", "that which is produced by the rushing of the waters of the river (Nile)". Another survival of the phrase may be found in the word a-riwa, "north" i.e. the direction in which the River Nile flows. That this explanation is probably correct is suggested by the fact the Yoruba word for "south" is gu-su, that is Khu-su. Su² is a part of the word Am-su, a river god in Ancient Egypt. Gu-su therefore means "the soul of the river" i.e. the source of the River Nile which lies in a country south of Ancient Egypt. Another survival from the Latin Language which may be noted here is the Yoruba ^{word} turari, "frankincence"; the Latin word for frankincence is turali-s or turari-s.

The Latin word fere "almost" survives in its entire form and with the same meaning in the Yoruba word fere "almost". These apparent survivals of Latin words in the Yoruba Language raise the question of the impress of Rome on West African culture, a subject which requires further research. There is no doubt, however, that the survivals form a striking confirmation of Sir Harry Johnston's statement that "some faint reflex of Egyptian

-
1. The letter V does not exist in the Yoruba language; its place is taken by f or w.
 2. The word Su means river or water in some of the West African Languages; e.g. Tchi, Ga and Ewe.

and even of Roman influence penetrated to the Gulf of Guinea on the Gold Coast and in Benin"¹

The word Igbo is of Egyptian origin; it comes from the word bau (souls), the thick bush being regarded as the abode of souls or spirits. The word Odi comes from the name of the Egyptian god Od or Ot (Aat)². The word Osu-gbo means "the consecrated persons" to the 'ba' or incarnate soul of the tribe or nation and is used by the worshippers of the god Oro who has been identified in a previous chapter with Orion - sahu.

IMAGES OR IDOLS.

Most images in Yorubaland are made of wood or clay. Some of the wooden images are beautifully carved; these show traces of Egyptian origin. The images of Sugudu and a few other deities are made of clay. Eṣu (or Eṣegbara) is represented by a stone which is treated as an idol. Iron is used both as a symbol and as an idol of the god Ogun.

It may be noted here that just as in Ancient Egypt there were periodical processions of the Horus-gods, so also there are processions of oriṣas, especially of the spirit gods in Yorubaland.

There are private as well as public idols. In every house there is an image of the tutelary deity in the inner recesses, and images of other deities on the verandah which faces the open

1. See his "Opening up of Africa", p.122. Similar survivals exist in the Gold Coast languages of Ga and Tshi. Yorubaland is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea.

2. See Budge, Book of the Dead, p.485.

courtyard of each compound.

Portable images exist, and these are used more as protective or tutelary deities than for the purpose of worship.

When one of twin children dies, the mother has to make a wooden image of the deceased child and carry it about; otherwise, evil will befall the surviving child or it will die and rejoin the company of twins in the spirit world.

Images for a particular individual are destroyed after the person's death; the spirit or the guardian angel of the images is supposed to have left them, thereby reducing the images to the level of mere material substances.

The Yoruba word for an idol is Orisa, the Egyptian origin of which has been given in chapter III above. The word for an image is ere. This ^{is} probably derived from the Egyptian q-ere-s, "an image" - - q is dropped because most Yoruba nouns begin with a vowel; the final consonant which does not receive a vowel to form a new syllable is always dropped in Yoruba.

T O T E M I S M.

In all parts of the world, particularly in North America, totemism can be seen in operation. Yorubaland is not an exception to the rule. Although a belief in totemism is not as strong among the Yorubas as among their West African neighbours, yet it exists among some of the tribes and traces of it can be found where the belief is extinct.

Sir J. G. Frazer in his "Totemism and Exogamy" has pointed out that the influence of totemism on religion was great and ramified. There is no doubt that this influence must have played

a great part in moulding the shape of the Yoruba religion and left its traces in the large number of tabus or ewos¹ observed at present by the Yorubas.

Totemism, as several writers have pointed out, is a stage of society through which every race has to pass. Some races or tribes pass from this stage to that of animal worship. The stronger the totemistic belief, the easier the transition to animal worship. For example, among the Ancient Egyptians where totemism was strong, animal worship was widespread and pronounced.² Although totemism is not so strong in Yorubaland, yet it develops to the stage of animal worship among some of the tribes.

It should be noted that in Yorubaland as well as in other parts of West Africa, the totem is not regarded as a god. It is regarded more as a father or a grandfather or a brother. For example, in Ashanti on the Gold Coast, the totem-animal is addressed as "grandfather", and this same title is applied to the King of Ashanti who, according to a well-known West African idea, is the incarnate soul of the tribe. Among the Yorubas the leopard-totem is regarded as a brother; any member of the leopard clan who accidentally kills a leopard usually says "Alas, my brother".

The influence of totemism in strengthening the bond of fellowship in the tribe cannot be over-estimated. The possession of a common totem strengthens the feeling of unity in the tribe or clan and provides a basis for religious fellowship which, in the

1. Ewo = Ay-waw (phonetic spelling)

2. See Wiädemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, pp. 178 and 179, and Diodorus 11, 3, et passim.

more
civilized communities, rests on an agreement to a common belief.

The reason for the acceptance of the totem may not be easy to trace. It may be that the clan or tribe is regarded as possessing some "affinity" with the totem; it may be that the totem is regarded as the incarnate form of ancestors of the tribe.¹ It may be that an ancestor or a leading person in the community is believed to have been metamorphosed into the animal-totem which must therefore be never injured. Whatever the reason may be, the influence of the totem safeguards the unity of the tribe.

The Yoruba word for^a totem is Orile. The word denotes a parent stock, a family origin or a totem. A few of the orile names are: Iji-mere (red monkey or baboon); `Agbo (ram); Eḱun (tiger); `Amòṭṭḱun (leopard); Eḱon (Buffalo); A-gbò(n)-rì(n) (hart or stag); Edu(n) (monkey); Eri(n) (elephant); Ika(n) (rope); `Opó (post or pillar); `Ogú(n) (iron, originally the god of iron); Eḱ-gu-gu (crocodile).

In most parts of Yorubaland the tabus and the proper regard due to the totem have been forgotten; the oriles merely remain as family or clan names and as symbols of unity. Among the Ekitis and^{the} Benins, however, an elaborate totemistic system still exists, and the tabus associated with the totems cannot be violated with impunity.

There is no doubt that the totemistic system in Yorubaland owes its origin to Ancient Egypt. All the words used^{by} the Yorubas in connection with the system are of Egyptian origin. The word

1. e.g. the Leopard is designated "Amo(n)-te-ku(n); this suggests that it is regarded as incorporating the spirit (possibly) of the ancestors of the clan of which it is a totem.

Ori-le means the "chief quarter" i.e. headquarters (ori comes from the Egyptian word hor "top, head").

The Egyptian origin of Ekun, Amoteku(n) and Ogun has been noted in the preceding chapters. The full form of the word Iji-mere is Iji-omo-ere; Iji comes from the West African word 'ye' and denotes "a living being"; omo means a child; re is the name of the Egyptian god Re. Iji-mere therefore means "a living being, the child of Re". This name definitely refers to the historical fact that in Ancient Egypt apes or baboon which used to adore the solar disk in his bark with songs were regarded as the children or favourite servants of Ra.¹

A-gbo (ram) is a modification of the Egyptian word ba or bau (soul or souls", the ram totem being regarded as an incarnation of the soul or souls of the clan. E-fon is probably derived from Ty-phon. A-gbo(n)-ri(n) contains the word ba or bau (gbo) in a modified form. E-le-gu-gu means "the possessor of spirits" (khus, gu-gu being a form of the plural; cp. Ku-ku, clouds). Other names of totems can similarly be traced to Egyptian words.

Animal worship is rare in Yorubaland; but an animal totem may become an object of worship if it is regarded as the incarnation of a god. For example, Ijimere (red monkey or baboon) which is so regarded is saluted by passers-by as Oluwa mi "My Lord" and is given offerings.

According to Wiedemann, "the idea of an animal incarnation of deity is thoroughly Egyptian..... in order to associate

1. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization pp.147-152; Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archeologie Egyptiennes, Vol. II pp. 259 - 261 and 381 - 385.

with mankind he (i.e. a god) must of necessity become incarnate, otherwise he cannot express himself in human speech, nor act with visible effect." ¹ This idea has survived in Yorubaland.

Legitimate children in Yorubaland inherit their father's totem. Illegitimate children who are not acknowledged by their father cannot inherit their father's totem, but they must inherit their mother's totems.

Closely associated with totemism is exogamy in Yorubaland. Prohibitions of marriages contrary to the Yoruba table of affinity are crystallized in the form of tabus or ewos, but as Dr. Johnson truly says, "intermarriages within the same clan was originally not allowed, as coming within the degree of consanguinity, but now the rule is not rigidly observed."²

SECRET SOCIETIES.

A notable feature in the social life of West Africa is the existence of secret societies. No visitor to West Africa could fail to notice some of these societies and the power or influence they wield in their respective communities.

The societies rest upon strong psychological bases, First of all, they are the products of the operation of the gregarious instinct. The need for self-preservation and for the preservation of the tribe easily excites this instinct, especially in a primitive community where tribal feeling is strong and safety is guaranteed by membership in a recognized group. Secondly, the

1. Op. cit. pp 173 and 174

2. History of the Yorubas, p.86.

instinct of self-elation results in the selection of a sub-group which considers itself superior in intelligence to the other members of the group. The sub-group always lays claim to esoteric knowledge and latent power denied to others. Thirdly, the instinct of curiosity is always excited by these societies, with the result that the uninitiated are impelled to seek admission to the societies wherever or whenever it is possible to do so.

West African secret societies can be divided into three classes, namely, totemistic, religious, and semi-religious. Examples of totemistic societies are the "Leopard", the "Crocodile", the "Alligator" and similar societies found in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, on the Gold Coast, especially among the Tchi speaking peoples and in various parts of Nigeria. The members of such societies wear masks or dresses symbolizing the animal totem. This practice is reminiscent of animal worship in Egypt.

Examples of religious societies are the Oro guilds of the Yorubas, the Ibudu societies of the Ijaws and Ibos and the Egbo society of the Efiks. In these cases the worship of a god or spirit is most prominent.

Examples of semi-religious societies are the Ogboni guild, the Agemo guild, the Egungun guilds of the Yorubas, the Bundu worship of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, the Mo (Maw) of the Ibos, and the Ekpe of the Semi-Bantu peoples of Southern Nigeria. These societies are partly religious and partly social or political.

The chief secret societies among the Yorubas are the Ogboni, the Agemo, the Egungun, the Oro, the Soṣona (Small-pox), the Gelede, the Eḷuku and the Adamu-Oriṣa guilds. To this list must

be added the Orisa-Oko guild, a section of which is reserved exclusively for women, and the witchcraft guild. Some of these ~~guilds~~ guilds have been established for the due performance of funeral ceremonies, others for the maintenance of law and order in the community and others seem to have been aimed at keeping the women in subjection.

Some of these societies have been described in the preceding chapters. Details about burial ceremonies and witchcraft will be given later. It must be stated here, however, that the festivals of some of the guilds such as Adamu-orisa, Gẹlẹde, Egungun and Agemo are occasions of general rejoicing when various ceremonies are performed. In some cases the festivals last only a day, whilst in others the period of celebration ranges from a week to three months.

Since the membership of more than one guild is open to ^a/single person, social status is often determined by the number of societies to which a person is admitted and the positions assigned to him in the societies. Admission to the guilds is in most cases, preceded by initiatory rites, including the administration of an oath of secrecy in regard to the mysteries of the cult or guild. The penalty for the divulgence of secrets is always severe; before the establishment of the British Government, as it has been pointed out above, the death penalty used to be imposed.

Connection with Ancient Egypt.

Yoruba secret societies show traces of connection with Ancient Egypt. The names of almost all the secret societies mentioned above are of Egyptian origin. The derivations of some

of them have already been given in the preceding chapters. A few other points of connection with Ancient Egypt will now be given.

Similarity in regard to the scrupulous guarding of secrets can be illustrated by quoting the following passage written by Clement of Alexandria: "The Egyptians neither entrusted their secrets to anyone, nor degraded the secrets of divine matters by disclosing them to the profane, reserving them for the heir apparent to the throne and for such of the priests as excelled in virtue and wisdom".¹ The Yorubas are equally scrupulous about guarding the secrets of their guilds against profanation by the uninitiated.

The word ~~egbe~~ denoting society in general demands attention. It is probably derived from the Egyptian word "ba" or "bau" which in several West African languages have been modified to i-ba, e-gba, i-bo, i-gbo, e-gbo and similar words. The forms ending in "o" are derived from the plural "bau"², souls, and they usually denote "a crowd of souls or persons", or "places where such a crowd can be found". The word e-gbe is a further modification of the same word "bau"² and it denotes an assembly of persons or souls, that is, a society.

A West African word usually applied to secret societies or their meeting places deserve attention. The Yorubas call it I-gbo-du or I-gba-odu, that is the grove of the god Odu or the soul of the same deity. The Limbas in Sierra Leone call it Bu-ndu, that is the place of Odu, or Ba-undu, the soul of the god Odu or Od (Ot). The Ibos of the Degema District call it I-bu-du;

1. Stromata I p.670.

2. bau or bou, a or o being used inter-changeably in Egyptian books.

those of Onitsha call it O-bo-do, land or town (originally the place inherited by a clan or guild). The Onitsha Ibos also use the word M-gbo-du, Oracle. Other tribes use similar words identical in meaning and general application with those given above. The widespread use of the original word and its modifications illustrates the impress of Egypt on West African culture, especially in regard to religious or semi-religious secret societies. The original is probably bu-du the place or shrine of Od or Ot.

CHAPTER XI.

PRIESTHOOD & WORSHIP (continued)

1. Service and Sacrifice.
2. Cannibalism.
3. Tabus.

PRIESTHOOD AND WORSHIP (continued)

SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.

The religion of the Yorubas covers the whole period of life from the cradle to the grave. Rites and ceremonies are performed at each stage of existence and as circumstances require. The frequency of these rites and ceremonies clearly show the strength of the belief that men are in active touch with the unseen world and that right relationship with the unseen powers is a prerequisite for human happiness.

The birth of a child is greeted with prayers and thanks to Ọlọrun. The usual expression are -

Ọlọrun, ku ise! "Well done, Ọlọrun!"

Ki Ọlọrun "May Ọlọrun number the child with us", that is,
Ka a kun wa, "May the child not die young";

Ki Ọlọrun ba wa wo o. "May Ọlọrun assist us in looking after
the child".

On the third day after the birth of a new-born child the ceremony of appointing a tutelary deity for the child takes place. In the presence of a Babalawo, the child is acknowledged by the father. The Babalawo then consults Ifa and declares which of the oris̩as the child is to worship and enumerates the tabus or ewos (ewaws) it is to observe. Sometimes the Babalawo declares that the child is to worship none of the oris̩as as a tutelary deity; such a child is known as Omọ Ọlọrun, "the child of Ọlọrun" and is expected to look for direct protection from Ọlọrun.

This custom of inviting a Babalawo to declare what god the child should worship and what ewos (tabus) he must observe may

be compared with a similar custom in Ancient Egypt which has thus been described by Prof. Erman - "at the birth^{of}/_a child come the seven Hathor goddesses and discover what fate his god has allotted to him, and even though a man attempt to escape his destiny, the god verily does what he will"¹

On the seventh day after the birth of a girl or on the ninth day in the case of a boy an important ceremony is performed. This ceremony is known as I-komo-jade "a child's (first) outing". For the purpose of this ceremony the babalawo who has been summoned for the purpose brings consecrated water. When this water is thrown to the roof of the new-born child's house, the mother and the child will run out of the house to catch the drippings of the water. This is done three times, and on each occasion the babalawo pronounces the child's name. The rite is known as "Iwenumo" "Purification" and is performed after the babalawo has offered sacrifice to Ifa and to the indwelling spirit of the child's head either in his own house or at the new-born child's house. The rite of purification is followed by the ceremonial putting out of a fire which has been made in the house and the carrying of its embers to a place outside the house.

The performance of a ceremony of purification in connection with the first stages of a child's life is closely in keeping with Ancient Egyptian custom. In the case of the Ancient Egyptians, it has been pointed out that "for any service purification was the first step"². Prof. Wiedemann also says that "purification by water is one of the most frequently mentioned ceremonies in the

1. Egyptian Religion, p.79.

2. Griffith, World's Best Literature, p.5290.

Egyptian cult"¹. Other instances of purification among the Yorubas will be noted later.

The ceremony of purification is followed by the ceremony of naming the child, when each member of the family gives it a name and at the same time offers it a present and prayerful wishes.

Service to the orisas may take place in the house or in the groves or temples. The priest performs the daily service in the temples just as the individual or the family does in his house. Public service is of a highly emotional character. In the temples some of the priests and priestesses chant songs of two or three notes until they work themselves into a frenzy. Such persons are regarded as being temporarily indwelt by the god. The usual expression is Orisa gun u "the god has taken hold of his personality". The idea is similar to that of the Greeks who regard the god as temporarily dwelling in a frenzied worshipper (enthumos, a word from which the English word enthusiasm is derived)

Just as in Ancient Egypt, some of the priests and priestesses are known as singers², so also in Yorubaland they are known as singers or a-sun-rara "those who chant the songs of the god Ra".

Service in the temples, groves and in other places is generally of a highly emotional character. On the occasions of festivals, the emotions are given free rein. Intoxication, rude demonstrations of the phallus, singing of immoral songs, shameless dances are some of the elements in the licence which prevails on such occasions. It is unnecessary to recount some of these gruesome features as other writers have done; suffice it to say

1. Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology 23, p.269.

2. See Ermann, Life in Ancient Egypt, pp. 295-296.

that the crude elements in the worship of by-gone centuries have survived with possible additions. There is no doubt that a part of the licentious worship characteristic of the popular religion in Ancient Egypt has survived in Yorubaland. Testimonies to the existence of such a worship have been borne by several writers of Egyptology. The following are a few examples of the testimonies which show similarity between Ancient Egypt and Yorubaland in regard to licentious worship :-

- (1) Plutarch says : "And when they (that is, the Ancient Egyptians) keep the feast Pamyliā, which is phallic..... they bring out and carry round an image having a phallus three times the size of it". 1
- (2) Herodotus says: "This festival to Bacchus (Osiris)..... the Egyptians celebrate much as the Greeks do, but only instead of phalli they have invented certain images, as much as a cubit in height, moved by strings, which women carry about the villages, and which have the member nodding, in size not much less than the rest of the body; a pipe leads the way and the women follow, singing the praises of Bacchus". 2
A similar custom exists in Yorubaland in connection with the feast of Oriṣa-Okò.
- (3) Prof. Wiedemann says: "The feasts of Hathor were festivals at which drink flowed freely and much intoxication prevailed". 3
Similar intoxication may be observed in Yorubaland during the celebration of the harvest festival.

An important feature of the religious worship of the Yorubas is dancing. There is hardly any important festival which is not accompanied or followed by dancing. It is through this medium that the Yorubas express their joy in the presence of their deity. Religious dances are features of primitive religions, and in the case of the Yorubas, they assume the form of joyous dancing in the presence of the deity, joyous dancing through the streets

1. Isis and Osiris (translation, Mead) XXXVI, 3.

2. Edition by Bohn, ii, 48.

3. Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, p. 61, note.

of the town, or group dancing at a selected spot.

These dances usually appear at first sight to the non-native as grotesque and confused. A close study of them, however, will show that they involve intricate rhythmic movements to the beating of the drum and ripples of bodily movements which can be described as graceful. especially in the case of group dances.¹

The importance of dancing in the religious worship of the Yorubas is similar to that of the Ancient Egyptians. According to Prof. Ermann "No ~~feast~~ was considered complete without dancing. To the Egyptian mind it was the natural expression of joy - to rejoice and to dance were synonymous expressions in their poetry".² This statement is true in almost every detail in regard to the Yorubas. It should be noted that the Yoruba words yo "to rejoice" and jo "to dance" come from the same West African root word ye which means "to live, to show signs of life, to be active". The Yoruba A-jo-yo "general rejoicing" also contains dancing as an underlying idea.

A point has now been reached where the important subject of Sacrifice should be discussed.

Sacrifice may be truly described as the kernel of Yoruba religious worship. So strong is the belief among the Yorubas that right relationship with the gods as well as their favour can only be secured by giving them their dues. "By gifts men and gods are swayed". This seems to be a fundamental idea in regard to the sacrificial worship of the Yorubas.

-
1. The group dances at selected spots resemble those of the New Empire in Egypt described by Erman in his "Life in Ancient Egypt", p.249.
 2. Life in Ancient Egypt, p.245.

The first point to note is that sacrifice among the Yorubas has both a positive and a negative aspect. The positive aspect is shown in the offering of gifts to the gods; the negative aspect may be seen in the observance of ewos or tabus, by which the worshipper shows a spirit of self-denial by refraining from things which are indifferrent in themselves.

The next point to note is that in theory, sacrifices must be performed by the priests or priest king; in practice only the major sacrifices are performed by the priests or priest kings, while ordinary sacrifices may be offered by any individual or family or town or country in the absence of the priests or priest king.

On important occasions the priest is consulted, and he not only intercedes for the worshippers but also indicates the will of the god. Sometimes an audible appeal is made to the god. The worshipper stands or prostrates near by, whilst the priest carries on conversation with the god to the hearing of all who may be present. The god replies in a "bird-like chirping, twittering voice"¹. There is no doubt that the response comes from a confederate priest, but some simple-minded worshippers regard the voice as that of a god. This practice may be compared with what obtained in Ancient Egypt as described by Professor Maspero: "The Pharaohs had a priesthood specially charged to inform them of the will of the gods"². "It is clear that the statues really spoke in a loud and intelligence voice....

1. Such a voice is used also by the Egunguns (Ch.VIII) and the Eyos (Ch.VIII). The use of such a voice is widespread among several peoples. See Dr.Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol.I,p.452.

2. New Light on Ancient Egypt, p.233.

The temple had a class of priests whose duty it was to do these things. Their function was not secret, they perform it in the sight and with the knowledge of all.....and all the people knew that the voice or hand of the god was theirs (i.e. the priests)"¹.

Further it should be noted that whilst offerings are many and varied, care is taken to offer the object or objects appropriate to each deity. Appropriate offerings to some of the deities are as follows :-

Offerings to Esu (Eshu) include he-goat, dog, sheep, pig and cowrie shells.

Those to Ifa include pig, goat, fowls and pounded yams.

Those to Obatala include snail, white or bitter kola, fowl, goat, sheep and a few articles of food. To the worshippers of this deity, dogs, palm wine, pink kola are ewos or tabus.

Those to Ogun include dogs and beans.

Those to Sango (Shango) include ram, fowl, kola and dry fish.

Those to Odudua include sheep and palm wine.

Those to Orisa Oko include dried meat, snail, yams and beans.

Those to Oṣun include rats, mice, goats, fowls and rabbit.

It is noteworthy that most of the animals are sacred animals in Ancient Egypt and some of them are animals sacred to the deities with which Yoruba deities have been identified. For example the goat was sacred to Osiris in Ancient Egypt; the same animal is sacred to Ifa (Nefer) who has been described as a survival of Osiris. The pig was sacred to Su-t in Ancient Egypt; the same animal is sacred to E-su, the Yoruba survival of Sut

1. Liber idem, p.148.

Just as appropriate offerings must be made to deities, so also must appropriate offerings be made for particular purposes. Bishop James Johnson, who has studied the subject of Yoruba sacrifice ~~is~~ closely writes :

"For every particular sacrifice a certain victim is prescribed, and sometimes the same animal may be prescribed for more than one sacrifice; and so it is with meat and drink offerings e.g. against death in sickness, a sheep, and for longevity, a dog; for strength to the body, a ram, sheep and a cock; against losses, a basket of eggs, most of which are usually employed with leaves sacred to Ifa; against being lied upon (i.e. being slandered), domestic pigeons and palm nut shells; against trouble and misfortune, rats; against drought, small crabs from which water drops each time each makes a leap; against a flood from incessant rain or for confusion of a plot, snails; against a fire accident, a wild hog or a duck with different kinds of Ifa leaves; for victory in a time of war a ram sheep and an old cock together; against the death of a very young child, a hen that had had chickens; to be permitted to come to a title and for the destruction of a plot, a wild hog."1

An analysis of these offerings shows that they are connected with the sacred animals in Egypt. For example, the sacrifice of a wild hog is necessary for the destruction of a plot. It will be remembered that it was in the form of a pig or hog that Set or Sut treacherously injured the eye of Osiris, his enemy. The destruction of a pig or hog is therefore regarded in Yorubaland as capable of effecting the destruction of a plot just as the destruction of the pig or hog in the case of Osiris would have frustrated the plot of Set or Sut.

When prayers are answered, the Yoruba returns to give thanks. He then offers the same or similar sacrifice. This is quite in keeping with the Ancient Egyptian custom thus described by Wilkinson:

"Thanksgiving for the birth of a child, escape from danger or other marks of divine favour, were offered by individuals through the medium of the priests. The same was also done in

private; and secret as well as public vows were made in the hope of future favours." 1

Sacrifices can be described from the point of view of the range of persons for whom they are intended or from the purpose for which they are intended.

Sacrifice for an individual is usually described as Ebo Ori (sacrifice to one's guardian spirit).

A family sacrifice is known as Ebo Agbole "Sacrifice of the household".

A township sacrifice is known as Ebo Igboro "Sacrifice of the open street".

A city sacrifice is known as Ebo Agbalu "Sacrifice of sweeping the town" or Ebo Oba "Sacrifice of the king".

Sacrifices which derive their titles from objects for which they are offered are many and varied. Bishop Johnson's collection of such sacrifices is very representative and is given in the following passage :-

"There is a great variety of sacrifice, and each prescribed sacrifice, or each set of such a sacrifice, takes its name generally from which it is offered.

Among them may be mentioned the following :-

- the redemption sacrifice;
- the exchange sacrifice;
- the wealth and the longevity sacrifice;
- the sacrifice for recovery from illness and preventing death;
- those for the possession of strength and for the avoiding of losses of any kind;
- those for protection against being a cause of trouble to one's own self;
- those against being successfully plotted against;
- those against a fire accident and for the removal of drought, or the prevention or the cessation of a flood of rain;
- that for attaining to some title and office of dignity and that for securing a long enjoyment of the office, especially if he who seeks it had been told beforehand through Ifa divination that his enjoyment

of it will not be long;
 that for securing the sign or mark on one's forehead
 that would assure him of his safety from the approach
 and touch of the angel of death, and of victory and
 triumph over difficulty and trouble; and
 that for acquiring superiority to others etc.

These various sacrifices mentioned, being
 atonement sacrifices, suggest the existence originally
 in the mind of the Pagan Yoruba, that sin and the
 anger of an offended god are the cause of the various
 ills incidental to human life, that blessings are only
 to be had from him and according to his will, and
 that for this he is to be propitiated by means of
 sacrifice and offering, since he who desires them is
 a sinner". 1

MODES OF SACRIFICE.

Modes of sacrifice vary according to the nature or
 object of the sacrifice.

When the object of the sacrifice is to redeem or to
 make an offering in exchange for the life of the person the
 following modes may be adopted :-

(a) The sacrifice will be taken to a street, a cross-
 road² or highway and left there. The sacrifice usually
 consists of food or animals. A noteworthy sacrifice
 treated in this way is that of seven young chickens
 offered in the belief that their death will replace
 that of the person for whom the offering is made. It
 is supposed to be offered to certain nameless goddesses
 whose appeasement will replace death with life for
 the offerer.

(b) The sacrifice will be burnt with fire and the ashes
 thrown outside the house.

1. Yoruba Heathenism

2. Compare sacrifices offered by the Ancients at cross-roads
 to Hecate, Goddess of Night, See Lucian. Dialogues, I.

(c) In the case of Ebo Iparq Ori "The sacrifice of the exchange of one's fate or destiny (lit. one's head), the offerer lays his hand on the animal victim. Sometimes he touches the forehead of the animal with his own head and rubs the whole body of the animal with his hands. This done, the animal is carried far away into the bush and allowed to escape. The belief underlying the sacrifice is that the fate of the offerer is transferred to the victim.

Offerings of the type just described are known as Ebo Irapada "Redemption or Exchange Sacrifice".

When the chief object of the offerer is the transference of guilt from the offerer to the offering the following modes are adopted :-

(a) The animal victim may be taken across a river (if any) and led into a deep bush.

(b) The victim may be thrown into a river or buried alive with or without chains around the neck.

(c) The victim ~~may be taken to the edge of a river~~ and fastened so as to ensure that it perishes either by hunger or by drowning when the river floods its banks.

(d) Sometimes the victim is paraded through the streets of the town. The inhabitants come out in turn to lay their hands on it, to ensure the transference of their guilt to it.

Offerings of this type are known as Guilt Offerings.

When the chief object is to secure divine help for accomplishing a purpose, the following method is adopted :-

The blood of the victim is sprinkled upon the lintels and upon the door hanging on one of them. If a bird is used as a victim and if a feathered animal is used, its feathers are hung on various parts of the blood-stained surface. The flesh of the victim must be boiled or roasted, and must be entirely consumed as quickly as possible by the offerer, in a standing posture. Such a sacrifice is known as Ebo' Aba, that is a purpose sacrifice or Ebo Ase, that is, accomplishment sacrifice, each being offered to a deity regarded as associated with or interested in the fulfilment of purposes.

It should be noted that Qlorun (the Supreme Deity) is often described as Alaba-lase, but sacrifices are not offered to him as such.

An interesting mode of sacrifice is adopted in the case of sacrifice for protection against enemies or for the suppression of enemies. The priests stand in a straight line and throw the offering to one another without allowing it to fall on the ground. This is known as Ebo Agbeso, that is, Heave offering.

No less interesting is the mode adopted in the case of an atonement sacrifice. The head of the offerer is streaked with the blood of the victim, thereby marking him as the person for whom atonement is sought and assuring him of the acceptance of his offering. This form of sacrifice is often used when

chiefs are being installed to their office, and its detestation by christians has proved an impediment to their acceptance of chieftaincies.

A somewhat similar method is adopted in the case of Ebo Isami. The Babalawo and his assistant, the Ajigbana, usually kill some victims and mix their blood with mud and some sacred Ifa leaves. The mixture thus made is used in marking the forehead of the offerers who had been waiting outside the grove whilst the preparation is being made. This marking is a visible sign assuring the offerer of escape from death. Hence after the ceremony the offerers usually chant the song: "Edu ti sa ni li ami, a ko ku mo. Iwerejeje ni Edu fi sami. "Edu has marked us, we shall not die again. It is the leaf of Iwerejeje herb that he has used in doing the marking."

It is worth noting that in some cases the sacrifice is eaten at once, as in the case of Ebo Osu, whilst in other cases some of which have been pointed out above, the sacrifice is thrown away or must not be eaten. In some cases the sacrifice is attached to a pole and tossed about in the wind until the last remnant of it disappears.

Dealing with the sacrifices of the Yorubas one cannot but be struck with their resemblance to some of the Hebrew sacrifices. Among the sacrifices described above are those which resemble the Hebrew Sin-Offering on the Day of Atonement, the Scape-goat, the Passover, the Heave Offering and the consecration of Priest and of Cleansed Leper. (Leviticus Chapter VIII vv. 23, 24 and XIV, 14 & 17.)

Commenting on the parallels between the Yoruba and the Hebrew sacrifices, Dr. Farrow says :

"These various resemblances to Hebrew religious customs and legislation, particularly when taken in conjunction with the Hebrew native tradition of immigration from the east or north-east, have considerable cumulative force. While they do not necessarily imply any trace of Semitic descent, they would seem to indicate that the Semitic Hebrews and the Nigrific Yorubas belong to branches which at some early stage were united to a common stem, and whether this is so or not, it is very possible, if not probable, that Hebrew and early Christian influence have many centuries ago been brought down through the Sudan, but the traces of Christian influence which may be found are too faint and too degenerate to have been introduced by European voyagers to the West Coast".¹

This view traces the origin of the resemblances to contact between the Yorubas and the Hebrews "at some arly stage".

On the other hand, P. Amaury Talbot seems to trace the origin of the resemblances to the fact that the Yorubas have migrated from Egypt and the fact that there was close contact between Egypt and the Sudan down to the Gulf of Guinea for many years after the migration of the Yorubas and other West African tribes from Egypt.²

Further, Professor Leo Frobenius believes that the cultural survivals in manners, beliefs and customs must be traced to a North-Western "Atlantic culture".³

The question of the cultural survivals has been partly dealt with in Chapter 1 and will be finally discussed in the last chapter. It must be said here, however, that the evidence on the subject strongly suggests that the

resemblances to Hebrew culture must be traced to contact

1. Faith, Fetich and Fancies, pp. 167,168.

2. The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vols. I, II & III, passim.

3. The Voice of Africa, Vols. I & II, Chapters VIII-XV, particularly Chapter XV and Chapters XXI-XXVIII.

between the Yorubas and the Hebrews whilst both of them were in Egypt. During the exile several colonies of Jews resided in various parts of Egypt and many Jews settled in Egypt after the Dispersion, some of whom were included in the comprehensive term "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven"¹.

The resemblances are so close as to suggest actual contact rather than mere infiltration.

The sacrifices resemble not only the Hebrew sacrifices, but also some of the Egyptian sacrifices. Attention has already been called to the fact that purification plays an important part in the religious ceremonies. In the case of several sacrifices, the offerer is often first purified with water. This is quite in keeping with Ancient Egyptian custom. Another important resemblance may be pointed out here. A Yoruba sacrifice of seven chickens to some nameless goddesses has been described above. The goddesses are undoubtedly the seven Hathor goddesses who decide the fate of each person born into the world² or the seven spirits frequently mentioned in the Book of the Dead, to whom prayers were often made for safety or maintenance of one's life³.

Further, care should be taken that the nature of the Yoruba sacrifices is not attributed wholly and solely to Hebrew influence. There are several sacrifices practised by the Yorubas which are similar to those in Ancient Egypt. The meat offerings, drink offerings, harvest offerings and others may be mentioned as examples. Even the burnt offering was found among the Ancient Egyptians. For example, Setna, an Egyptian King, is said to have

1. Acts, Chapter II, v. 5

2. Erman, Egyptian Religion, p.179.

3. Brugsch, Thesaurus, pp.117 et seq; The Book of the Dead (Edition Wallis Budge), Chapter 17; Griffith, Demotic Magical Papyrus, pp. 78, 79.

"caused ox, goose, wine to be brought; he made a burnt-offering, a drink offering before Isis of Coptos and Harpokrates"¹.

Again, it was the duty of the prince in Ancient Egypt who was also the high priest to offer burnt sacrifice to the local god.²

Reference has been made in Chapter III to the prevalence of human sacrifice in Yorubaland before the advent of British Government. A list of instances of such a sacrifice was also given, showing how closely allied was the sacrifice to the worship of Eṣu, the survival of the Ancient Egyptian god Sut or Set. Attention was also called to the similarity between the practice of human sacrifice in Ancient Egypt³ and the same practice in Yorubaland.

Detailed descriptions of the sacrifice as witnessed or experienced by various writers or observers will now be given:

Writing about the practice in Lagos at the close of the eighteenth century Captain John Adams says :-

"The horrid custom of impaling alive a young female to propitiate the favour of the goddess presiding over the rainy season, that she may fill the horn of plenty, is practised here annually. The immolation of the victim takes place soon after the vernal equinox, and along with her are sacrificed sheep and goats; which, together with yams, heads of maize and plantains, are hung on stakes on each side of her. Females destined to be thus destroyed are brought up for the express purpose in the king's or caboceer's seraglio, and it is said that their minds have been so powerfully wrought upon by the fetish men that they proceed to the place of execution with as much cheerfulness as those infatuated

-
1. Griffith's World's Best Literature, p. 5273.
 2. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.122; See also Maspero, Lectures historiques, pp.71-73.
 3. The prevalence of human sacrifice in Ancient Egypt can be judged by the numerous references to the practice in works on Ancient Egypt. The following are a few instances:- Maspero, New Light on Ancient Egypt, pp.31,32; Murray, Osireion, p.30; Plutarch, Isis and Osiris, (translation by Mead) LXXIII, 3, 4; Athenaeus (edition Bohn) IV. 72 etc.

Hindu women who are also burnt with their husbands. One was impaled while I was at Lagos, but of course I did not witness the ceremony. I passed by where her lifeless body still remained on the stake a few days afterwards". 1

In a letter dated 20th August Mr. Bickersteth who paid a visit to Abeokuta described a human sacrifice which was performed as a means of propitiation for the election of a new king. The ceremony contained features which would shock the most hard-hearted person, unless he believes that such a gruesome incident is necessary for the well-being of the community, including himself.

Bishop James Johnson who had studied the subject very carefully and had probably witnessed the dreadful ceremony on several occasions gives the following interesting account of the victim and of the mode of sacrifice :-

"the human victim.....is commonly led and paraded through the streets of the town or city of the sovereign who would sacrifice him for the well-being of his government and of every family or individual under it, in order that he may carry off the guilt, misfortune and death of everyone without exception. Ashes and chalk would be employed to hide his identity by the one being freely thrown over his head and face painted with the latter, whilst individuals would often rush out of their houses to lay their hands upon him, that they might thus transfer to him their sin, guilt trouble and death. This done, he is taken through a temporary sacred shed of palm and other tree branches and especially of the former, the Igbodu, and to its first division where many persons might follow him, and through a second where only the chiefs and other important persons might escort and accompany him, and to a third where only the Babalawo and his assistant, the Ajigbona, are permitted to enter with him. Here after he himself has given out or started his last song, which is to be taken up by the large assembly of people, who have been waiting to hear his last word, or his last groan, his head is taken off and his blood offered to the gods. The announcement

1. Sketches taken during Ten Voyages to Africa between the years 1786 and 1800, pp.25, 26.

of his last word, or his last groan, heard and taken up by the people, would be a signal for joy and thanksgiving and for drum beating and dancing, as an expression of their gratification, because their sacrifice has been accepted, the divine wrath is appeased and the prospect of prosperity or increased prosperity assured." 1

Sometimes the victim is offered by means of a basket into which he is hurled and which would then be forcibly thrown down from a great height. This is known at Abeokuta as Basket Sacrifice.

Dr. Farrow thus describes the human sacrifice which he experienced at Abeokuta :-

"The last public human sacrifice in Abeokuta was offered in 1891 A slave was purchased who was to become the victim and was kept shut up for a week or ten days before being killed....The victim during the days of his incarceration was called by the honourable title Oluwo (a title given to a ruler of the country), and was allowed (according to the usual custom) to have every wish gratified, excepting only liberty and life. On the day immediately preceding the death, he was taken in procession round the township, made much of, and allowed to gratify his every desire. On the fatal day he was brought out and publicly clubbed to death. The body was then tossed about, kicked, mocked and abused; but afterwards worshipped as an orisa." 2

It may be added here that the more usual custom was the beheading of the victim. The following is a description of the sacrifice in the case of Oranyan :-

"The victim destined to be offered up to Awranyan (Oranyan) for success in war, though almost worshipped up to the day of his death, they, however experienced very different treatment; he was hustled, beaten and finally dragged along the ground till the grove where he was to be beheaded was reached. In both cases, however, it was considered that the man would return to earth in a high position, and women even used to pray that he might be reborn to them; after death they decorated the body, rubbed it

1. Yoruba Heathenism.

2. Op. Cit. pp.99, 100.

with cam-wood and treated it with the greatest honour". 1

Human sacrifice was the supreme sacrifice of the Yorubas. It was a practical demonstration of the desire to give the best to the deity to secure his active favour. Although it was most prevalent in Ife, Ondo and Benin, yet it was practised by the other tribes. Nowhere in Yorubaland did it reach the colossal scale which made Dahomey notorious.

The deity to whom human sacrifice was most often offered was Eṣu or Eṣẹgbara or Ọbaluṣọn, the Yoruba counterpart of Sut or Set or Typhon.² It is also offered to deities such as Ifa, Olorimerin, Sango and Ọgun, in times of stress or urgency. Infants as in the case of the annual sacrifice to Olorimerin, were offered just as well as grown up persons. In time of war when a human sacrifice is offered to Ọgun, the soldiers must take the field before the corpse of the victim became rotten; otherwise the sacrifice becomes ineffectual.

In the case of human sacrifice to Eṣu or Eṣẹgbara, the terror inspired by the deity used to be so great as to necessitate a public assurance that he had been propitiated. Such an assurance used to be given by the public exposure of the victim's entrails before a shrine or temple and by the suspension of his body from a tree or a lofty scaffolding of poles.

CANNIBALISM.

Cannibalism does not exist in Yorubaland. When the

1. P. Amaury Talbot, Peoples of Southern Nigeria Vol.III
p.858, 859.

Yorubas emerged into the light of civilization, they had reached a stage of refinement which made cannibalism abhorrent to them.

Traces of the practice, however, survive, and these are found chiefly in connection with religious worship. Colonel Ellis gives the following instance :-

"the Priests of Ogun usually take out the hearts of human victims¹, which are dried, reduced to powder, then mixed with rum and sold to person who wish to be endowed with great courage and who drink the mixture. The reason of this is that the heart is believed to be the seat of courage and to inherently possess that quality; and that when the heart is devoured and swallowed the quality with which it is imputed is also taken into the system"² .

Dr. Farrow thus records his experience during his sojourn at Abeokuta :-

"On the death of a king his heart was taken out and had to be eaten by his successor. Also the head of the deceased monarch was preserved and had to be worshipped by the new ruler" ³.

Dr. Farrow could not say that the heart was actually eaten. Exhaustive enquiries and indirect method of research have resulted in a direct negation that the heart was ever eaten raw or sodden. Usually the heart was preserved in a sacred calabash, or if the new king so desired, it would be reduced to powder and mixed with rum and drunk.

The erroneous supposition that the heart was literally eaten has arisen from the use of the Yoruba word "je" in a restricted sense. The word "je" means "to eat", and therefore the phrase "je Oba" has been taken to mean "to eat the king or to eat the king's heart". This is a wrong translation. Like several other Yoruba words, the word "je" has several meanings.

It has been pointed out in a previous chapter that the word comes from the West African root-word "ye" which means "to exist, to live". The word "je" in Yoruba also means "to become", and therefore "je Qba" merely means "to become king". If "je oḃa" means "to eat the king", then "je aiye" must mean "to eat the world", "je oḡa" must mean "to eat the master" even where a person assuming the post of a master has no predecessor, and "je oye" must mean "to eat a chieftaincy. A similar mistake will be made if the root-word "ye" is translated literally in some of the other West African languages. For example, in the Ga language spoken at Accra, ye gbi "to live, to exist", is literally "to eat a day"; fei ye "to be cold" is "to eat cold".

The traces of cannibalism are survivals of Ancient Egyptian beliefs and practices. In Ancient Egypt the heart of a deceased person was sometimes taken out before mummification and kept in a vase. Several examples of this practice have been found in tombs, and reference to it can be seen in the Book of the Dead, Chapters XXVI to XXX B.¹ Writing on this subject, Professor E.A. Wallis Budge says :-

"a green stone scarab.....one side of which was frequently made in the shape of a heart, was placed inside the body where the heart was before it was removed before the process of mummification, or over the place of the heart on the breast" 2.

The eating of the heart and the belief in the importance of the heart as the seat of intelligence and courage are also similar to, and may be regarded as survivals of, the practice and belief in Ancient Egypt. The following passage written by

1. Edition by Prof. E. Wallis Budge, pp.137-151.

2. Book of the Dead, Introduction p. cix.

Professor Erman clearly supports this statement :-

"In the pyramid of Unas it is said that the king feeds on the gods, and devours their hearts and their crowns and thereby gains their powers, so that their magic is in his body; he swallows the understanding of every god"¹.

In Ancient Egypt also, the head was sometimes separated from the body² and preserved by itself in the tomb. Since the king's person is regarded as sacred or divine in Yorubaland, as was the case in Ancient Egypt³, it is not surprising that the head of a deceased king was preserved and worshipped by his successor.

EWOS OR TABUS.

It has been pointed out above that the Yoruba theory of sacrifice has both a positive and a negative aspect.

The negative aspect can be seen in the numerous "ewos" (sometimes spelt phonetically as "ewaws"). These ewos are prohibitions or taboos which must be strictly observed. "All things are double of one another." This corresponds with the Yoruba belief, and hence all the positive injunctions in regard to sacrifice have their negative sides.

The ewos or taboos may be general or particular. The general ones apply to all the members of the community irrespective of tribe or clan. For example, failure to perform the funeral obsequies of a relation is an ewo to all Yoruba speaking peoples. The particular ewos are those prescribed specially for the worshippers of the different deities or for the different classes of priests. For example, the priests and priestesses of Obatala must not use the red kola or the red palm oil. To them

1. Egyptian Religion, p. 91.

2. See Flindus Petric, Ancient Egyptians, p. 43, Col. 129, see 40 paragraph 2.

3. See Murray, Osireion, p. 34; J.E. Quibell, Hierakonpolis, xxvi, B.

it is an ewo. The ewos may be moral or ceremonial, or merely imposed by custom. Some of them are very interesting, and it is remarkable that civilization has ~~not~~ proved powerless in abolishing them. Whatever may be their nature or scope, the ewos are regarded as pre-requisites for the welfare of the individual or group and as necessary conditions for maintaining right relationship with the different deities. Neglect of ewos is regarded as fraught with dire consequences. Anyone caught whilst ~~infringing~~ the tribal or national ewos will have himself to blame for the severity of the public punishment which may be exacted for the offence.

C H A P T E R X I I .

P R I E S T H O O D A N D W O R S H I P .

N O T E :

Owing to a Bookbinder's error, this
chapter has been placed after Chapter
XIII. The error is regretted.

Chapter XIII.

The Yoruba Conception of Man.

-----0000-----

Religion dominates the whole life of the Yorubas, and therefore their conception of man is essentially religious. Man is viewed from the standpoint of his relation to the gods; his life in the present state of existence and his destiny in the future life are all brought into the orbit of religious conceptions.

Like all other races of the world, the Yorubas believe that man's nature is partly material and partly immaterial. They believe that man has a material body by means of which he acts and reacts on his physical environment. They also believe that he has an immaterial entity.

Various writers have explained how the notion of an immaterial entity first arose in the human mind. For example, Mr. Herbert Spencer in his "Principles of Sociology" has traced the origin of the notion to dreams. Primitive man, he observes, dreams that he is engaged in some form of activities with some of his friends and he wakes before the end of the activities. He feels that he has not left his friends, and therefore reasons that there is something which is detachable and which can go out and return at will, that is, a second individuality. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that in his dreams he meets and recognizes men who have died or are living in distant lands.

The belief is thus extended to include belief in the possession of a second individuality by every human being.

Such a belief as this is bound to be further developed. The fact that children are born who show physical characteristics possessed by their parents to such an extent as to suggest that they are re-incarnations of their parents or ancestors leads to the idea that the second individuality is a double entity, a part of which may be incarnated in a new-born child, whilst the other part contains the existence of the man as an individual.

In West Africa, the belief in a second individuality exists. Among some of the tribes the second individuality is dual in character, but among others, man is the possessor of several souls or spirits, one or two of which corresponds with the second individuality or the dual individuality described above.

The study of the West African conception of man requires a fair amount of psychological knowledge. It also requires a fair knowledge of comparative religion, since it is obvious that a conception evolved from the standpoint of a religion which stands in genetic relation to other religions must contain survivals of elements from its predecessors. Failure to realize the importance of these pre-requisites has made the subject baffling to superficial observers and caused some writers to say that "African psychology is extremely complex" and that "African mentality is extremely variable in one and the same person". Statements such as the latter one

reflect discredibly on ^{their} ~~its~~ authors, as they throw the blame due to the authors' own failure on African mentality and they seem to give the impression that African mentality is sub-human or essentially different from any other mentality.

Constituent parts of human nature.

According to Yoruba conception the constituent parts of human nature are:- (1) Ara, "physical body". (2) Ojiji "Shadow" (3) Iye, "mental body, mind" (4) Oka(n) "heart", "heart-soul" (5) Emi(n) "spirit" "spiritual body", "spiritual soul".

Ara, "physical body" is the medium through which man acts or reacts on his physical environment. During a man's lifetime it can be nourished and caressed. After death it perishes. It is what man possesses in common with the physical world, although it has its peculiar human form.

Ojiji, "shadow" is the constant companion of the body during a man's lifetime. It is the visible representation of the inner self or oka(n). When the inner self comes out at death, the visible representation or shadow ceases to exist and perishes with the body.

Iye, "mental body", "mind" is the conscious part of man which depends upon the soundness of the brain. Directly the brain or the cortex ceases to function, iye ceases to exist, When this happens during a man's lifetime the Yorubas say: "Ori re fo", "His head is broken" or "Iye re ra" "His mental body has disappeared", the word ra being used to denote disappearance in the sense that Ra, the sun-god, disappears

after sunset.

Qkan "heart", "heart-soul", is an immaterial part of man.

The word is used in two senses. In the first sense it denotes the material heart, in the second sense it denotes "an individual entity", "the heart-soul", "the seat of intelligence, thought and action". In this latter sense it forms part of the immaterial and imperishable part of man. It is believed to be the spiritual or minor ego of the man.

Qkan is believed to exist before a man's birth. It may be the "Okon" of an ancestor or of any deceased person. It may be the "Qkan" of an abiku, that is "one who is born to die" and thereby causes the child into which it has entered to die young.

The word is used in a wide sense. It includes that part of man known as ive "rationality," "mind" and also what is known as inu "inner part", "inner self". It is believed to possess a concrete form containing all the characteristics of the body. It is a substantial part of man which uses the body as the medium of communication with the external world. Yet it is capable of going out of the body without becoming dissociated from it. It does this in the case of dreams, although the word is not expressly used for the human forms seen in dreams. After death it goes out of the body as in the case of dreams, but without becoming entirely dissociated from it, and it may be re-incarnated. It is by no means indifferent to the fate of the original body. This

part of the conception of man is not fully worked out to show whether the same okan can belong to two persons.

The Yorubas believe that as man's okan or heart-soul may leave the body and become incapable of re-entering it. This idea can be illustrated by two examples. A witch is supposed to prey upon her victim by means of her okan which metamorphoses into a bird. If the bird is seized, the witch will not wake; if it is killed, the witch will die. Again if a person becomes demented or idiotic, unable to take any intelligent interest in his surroundings or to take any initiative action, the Yorubas will say about him, Okan re ti lo "His heart-soul is gone".

Another important part in the human economy is Emi(n), "Spirit". This is regarded as the seat of life. It is the part of man which is closely related to the gods. Olorun the Supreme Deity is known as Elemi "Owner of spirits". A man's spirit is thus traced to Olorun, and is therefore regarded as the divine element in him. It is also regarded as the highest part of man which makes use both of the okan, "heart-soul" and of "ara" "body". Like okan, it is imperishable. It leaves the body after death. Its fate will be determined by its doings whilst in the flesh. Although it makes use of the heart-soul, yet the latter can show it the right way and cause it to suffer untold pain if it allows the heart-soul to misdirect the body or to misuse its faculties. In this belief one can see a rudimentary idea of conscience. There is no separate word for conscience in Yoruba; the word

okan is used for the purpose. For example, okan re gun u "He is stung by his conscience". The word eri-okan "the witness of the heart-soul" which is now being used to denote conscience has been specially coined to make up for the deficiency in the Yoruba vocabulary and is unintelligible to the unsophisticated native.

It appears that the word Iku was formerly used in the sense of a spirit. The word now survives in rare cases which strongly suggests that the word formerly denotes spirit. For example, Iku mi "my spirit" "something which is part and parcel of me" and hence "something very easy for me to deal with".
Minor Indwelling Spirits.

The parts sketched above comprise the essential elements in man. Several Yoruba tribes, however, believe that man is indwelt by other spirits which are subordinate to his Emi(n) or spirit, which may be described as great in comparison with the others. The subordinate spirits are as follows:-

(1) Olori, "the owner or lord of the head" which is situated in the head, particularly in the brain. It is regarded as the spirit which brings good fortune. A proverb says: Olori ni igbe ori 're ko Olori, ki ise akan eti odo, "It is Olori who brings good fortune to the owner of the head and not the crab on the river bank". He may be regarded as a deification of good luck, especially that which is brought about by intelligence and prudence. He is sometimes worshipped as the family spirit by both sexes.

Every one who desires good fortune makes offerings to Olori. The offerings usually consist of fowls, the blood of which is mixed with palm oil and rubbed on the forehead. The offerings must be made periodically in front of his symbol, which is half a calabash, studded with cowries.

(2) Ipin Ijeun "Sharer of the food". This deified spirit which claims its share in every food is supposed to reside in the stomach, and therefore needs no sacrifices. Hence the proverb: Oriṣa bi ikun ko si; Ojojumo ni o ngba ẹbọ, "There is no oriṣa like the stomach, it receives sacrifice everyday."

Dr Farrow, following Colonel Ellis, thinks that hunger is personified as the servant of Ipin-Ijeun, for the Yoruba equivalent of "I am hungry" is "Ebi npa mi" i.e. "hunger is killing me".¹ This opinion, which due to inadequate knowledge of Yoruba idioms, is incorrect. There are no Yoruba idiomatic forms corresponding word for word to the English expressions "I am hungry", "I am thirsty", "I am tired" and so forth. In each case the state of the body or mind referred to has to stand as the subject of the sentence and does not in any way imply personification. For example, "I am hungry" is "ebi npa mi" literally "Hunger is killing me". "I am thirsty" is "Orungbe ngbe mi". "Thirst is drying me up" "I am tired" is "Are mu mi" "Weariness takes hold of me". Several other examples can be given to show that the Yoruba idiom excludes the idea of personification.

1. Op. Cit. p.131

Again referring to the proverb "Ipin Ijeun ki je ki ina ku li aiye", "Ipin Ijeun does not allow fire to depart from the earth". Dr Farrow suggests that fire too seems to be personified in the expression "Ina njø" which he translates as "fire is dancing." This also is incorrect. The fact is that the word jo of which njo is the ~~is the~~ progressive form is used like several other Yoruba verbs, in more than one sense. The word jo may mean "dance" or "burn" or "sell at a give-away-price". With the accent reversed it has other meanings which need not be enumerated here.

(3) Ipori. "the path of the head" or "the locus of the head when it moves on the feet". This deified spirit is supposed to dwell in the great toe of either foot. Offerings are made to it by those who wish to undertake a journey. These are made by the slaughter of a fowl - not a water fowl which is a taboo or ewo in the case of Ipori. The blood of the fowl is mixed with palm oil and rubbed on the great toe of either foot.

If a traveller knocks his right foot on a stone or some obstacle on the road when making a journey, the incident is regarded as a sign of good luck; if he knocks his left foot, especially his left toe, the incident is a warning of impending disaster and he must return home at once.

The three deified spirits described above are regarded as guardian spirits subordinate to Ẹmi(n) and also to ọkan which is also regarded as a guardian spirit or soul. Of

the three spirits, Ipori is the least important.

Prayers are offered to the Olori and to Epori, but not to Ipin Ijeun which receives sacrifices of food daily. The following is a well known prayer partly offered to Olori and Ipori:-

"Ori ri ibi ire gbe mi da,
Ese ri ibi ire gbe mi re,
Edumare masai gbe ire ko mi".

"May my head direct me to a place of good luck
May my feet carry me to a place of good luck
May the almighty grant me good luck".

Writing about the conception of the soul among the Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Mr.P.Amaury Talbot says "There is a general belief that each person possesses four souls: first, an ethereal one, the double and inner frame of the physical form; secondly, the soul proper, the consciousness, the thinking or mental body; thirdly, the spiritual or minor Ego; and fourthly, the Over-Soul, or Chi, the great spirit, which often includes several lesser Egos and always stays with God..... The shadow is considered the sign, usually of the ethereal, but sometimes of the mental body..... The ethereal one dissolves with the physical structure, while the greater part of the soul is relatively immortal, and the third and fourth perish."¹

The Yoruba conception of the soul agrees very nearly with the above description. The ethereal soul corresponds

1. See also Thouless, Psychology of Religion, Chapter VIII, The Unconscious. Also Dr. Geley, From the Unconscious to the Conscious.

to the Ojiji of the Yorubas which, though unsubstantial in character, is intimately connected with the human personality. The second soul corresponds to the okan "heart-soul" of the Yorubas which is regarded as enveloping the second soul and constituting in a sense, a man's real self. The fourth soul corresponds to the Emi(n) of the Yorubas which rules all the other souls.

Unity of man's personality.

It must not be supposed that the Yorubas have split man's nature into several incoherent elements or selves. The unity of man's personality is an essential element in the Yoruba conception of man. The personality is not divided up into separate and opposing selves such as are described in the psychology of insanity. All the selves or souls constitute a unity which often expresses itself through the medium of the body (ara) and through the agency of the heart-soul (okan), the whole individuality being regarded as Spirit (Emi) or over-soul¹ or the larger self which belongs and is akin to the Supreme Divine Spirit. As a matter of fact, the Yoruba conception of the larger self and of subordinate selves is in accord with the views of modern psychologists, Dr William Mac-Dougall, an authority on psychology, when emphasizing his

1. A term invented by P.A. Talbot; see Peoples of Southern Nigeria (1926) Vol.II. Chapter XV, pp. 279-280.

opinion as to the presence of several consciousnesses in one person subordinate to the dominant self says "I believe that we are compelled to recognize that sometimes, and not infrequently, a single human organism or person is the seat of more than one stream of conscious knowing, feeling and striving, more than one stream of mental activity.... I, who consciously address you, am only one among several selves or egos which my organism, my person comprises".

Professor William James, another great authority, says: "Apart from all religious considerations, there is actually and literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of. The explanation of the trans-marginal field has hardly yet been consciously undertaken... Our intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions, persuasions, convictions and in general all our non-rational operations, come from it.... In it arise whatever mystical operations we may have..... It is also the fountain head of much that feeds our religion. In persons deep in the religious life... the door into this region seems unusually wide open". The deep religiosity of the Yorubas would make the door into this trans-marginal field wide open, and any irruptions from it into consciousness are likely to be attributed to the operation of a soul or spirit possessed by man.

Further, it should be noted that the Yoruba belief that each *ko* *okan* (heart-soul) or *emi* (spirit) belongs to a large family group and that certain characteristics

possessed by individuals must be traced to their connection with their respective family groups seems to be confirmed by the following suggestion of a "Larger Self" made by Sir Oliver Lodge in the Hibbert Journal of October 1923:-

"We are, each of us, larger than we know; that each of us is only a partial incarnation of a larger self. The individual as we know him is an incomplete fraction; a portion only of the whole self is brought, at ~~any~~ one period, into intimate contact with matter and close association with a material body

"As regards Reincarnation it is probably a mistake to suppose that the same individual whom we knew in bodily form is likely to appear again at some future date. There may be exceptions but as a rule this seems unlikely to happen. What may happen, however, is that some other portion of the larger self becomes incarnate.....

"How large a subliminal self may be, one does not know; but one can imagine that in some cases it is very large, so that it contains the potentiality for the incarnation not only of a succession of ordinary individuals, but of really great men....."

Life after death.

Without a consideration of man's life after death or of his destiny in the life hereafter a description of the conception of man would be incomplete.

It has been pointed out above that the Yorubas credit man with both a material body and an immaterial body.

The material body is known as Ara. This becomes dissolved at death. Among most Yoruba tribes there is no attempt at the preservation of this material body, although there is a faint trace among a few tribes of the practice of mummification. The only part of the human body which is sometimes preserved is the heart. This is because the heart

is regarded as the seat of intelligence and courage and the residence of divinity or genius in the case of a king or any other distinguished person. In the case of a king the heart is preserved in a vase and worshipped as an emblem of divinity; otherwise it is reduced to powder and mixed with rum to be drunk by the king's successor who thus preserves the tribal or national divinity residing in the deceased king.

The dead body is known as Oku, a term which has been explained above.¹

After death, Ojiji, shadow, man's image which accompanies him during lifetime, ceases to exist as soon as the corpse is interred. Iye "mental body, mind consciousness" also ceases to exist at death. As a matter of fact, iye may be blurred or lost during life-time and is certainly destroyed before death.

The imperishable parts of man are his oka(n) and emi(n). Sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably. A man's heart-soul proceeds to the Dead-land after death, but it cannot rest unless the proper funeral rites have been performed. It is this part of man which seems to require nourishment in the form of food and drinks. Hence the custom of leaving a hole open on graves, through which food can be passed to the deceased. Hence also the periodical offerings on the graveside of some deceased ancestors. When it lies unburied and haunts various places it is known as iwin "disembodied spirit". When it has been accorded due ceremonial burial it still remains in close association with the body or may wander at will, and may appear in dreams to

1. See Chapter I above.

members of the family, especially to those to whom the death of its possessor has not yet been announced. It also remains in close association with the souls of the other deceased members of the family.

The heart-soul does not allow the living members of the family to forget it. If the funeral obsequies are neglected, it will haunt the living members and torment them until they do the needful. If the obsequies are performed it assumes material forms, such as have been described above, and comes to bless them. The heart-soul of a parent always comes to bless the children. Hence the song : Oku Olomo ki i sun gbagbe "The spirit of a parent never sleeps and forgets his children".

It should be noted that after death the heart-soul is no longer called okan. It is then known as Oji "disembodied spirit resting in a grave" or iwin "disembodied spirit wandering about in anticipation of customary ceremonial burial, or emi(n) "disembodied spirit viewed in relation to the other members of the family."

The spirit or Emi(n) is often credited with the same characteristics as the heart-soul, but it is regarded as living a life dissociated from the body and closely associated with the higher spheres of life beyond the grave. The spirit of a man may be summoned by the living so that prayers for blessing may be made to it. Ancestral spirits are believed to be in close touch with the living, and to be capable of appearing in human forms.

The activities of a heart-soul may be terminated by its re-incarnation in a new-born child. As it has been pointed out above, the Yorubas believe strongly in metempsychosis, and use it to explain what otherwise would have been described as the influence of heredity.

Several Yoruba children have -tunde as part of their names. For example, baba-tunde "father has come again", ye-tunde "mother has come again" i.e. father or mother has been re-incarnated.

A prayer usually heard during the performances of funeral obsequies is as follows: "Ma ma se pe ki o wa Ma lodo wa" "Do not delay in being re-incarnated in our home or family."

The activities may also be terminated by transmigration. The Yorubas believe the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls. The human soul may be born in the form of a lower animal. Some of them are the tiger "Ẹku(n)" and the leopard "Amp(n)-tẹku(n)", both of which are credited with "khus" or luminous spirits.

The Yorubas believe that the transformation of a human soul to a plant is rare. The belief, however, lingers in the legend which is still being told to children in Yorubaland and which has been reproduced by writers on Yoruba religion on account of its fascination and significance. Dr Farrow has thus summarized the legend from the version given by Colonel Ellis:

"A boy with his brother went to a festival at a neighbouring village, where they so successfully entertained the people that they were each given

one thousand cowries. On the way homeward the elder brother murdered the younger and took his cowries. In response to enquiries he said that he had left his brother behind on the road. As search failed to yield any trace of the lad it was supposed that he had been kidnapped and sold. From his decaying bones sprang up a very large Olu or edible fungus, which was discovered by his mother, and, as she was about to pluck it, the fungus sang:

"Do not pluck me, Mother,
Do not pluck me, Mother,
Do not pluck me, Mother,
I am a lowly plant on the ground.

I went to the village frolic,
I went to the village frolic,
I am a lowly plant on the ground:
I was given a thousand cowries,
I am a lowly plant on the ground.

Do not pluck me, Mother,
Do not pluck me, Mother,
Do not pluck me, Mother,
I am a lowly plant on the ground.

My brother received a thousand cowries,
My brother received a thousand cowries,
I am a lowly plant on the ground:
But he slew me for my cowries,
I am a lowly plant on the ground.

The woman, amazed and shocked, called her husband, who in turn called the king, and to each of these, the fungus sang the same song, substituting the correct address, "Father or King" respectively, as required. The elder son was brought and accused. On confession of his crime, he was killed, whereupon the younger son was restored to life"¹

1. Faith, Fancies and Fetich. pp. 134-5

Heaven and Hell.

Souls and spirits do not merely go to the Deadland. Their fate is determined by the life they had led whilst in the flesh.

The Yorubas believe in two kinds of heaven. The first is known as Orun rere "Good Heaven". This is where the righteous go. Hence immediately after death prayers are offered that the spirit of the deceased may meet with afefe rere "cool breezes". The sacrifice of a fowl is often made to secure a safe journey for the deceased. This fowl is known as Adie Irana "The fowl that buys the way".

The other heaven is known as Orun Apadi literally "Heaven of potsherd", hence "Hell".

In order to ascertain which of these heavens the spirit must go, the heart-soul must go to the judgment hall of heaven known as Asalu Orun, and there it must give an account of the deeds done in the flesh.

It is believed that an extremely wicked person will be compelled to commence his account before his death or to give the whole account to the hearing of his fellowmen before he is allowed to die. When a person is in the pangs of death and he begins to narrate his evil deeds, the Yoruba say: "O nka", "He is giving an account of his deeds". When he is gasping for breath, they say "O npoka iku", that is, "O npe oka iku", "He is inviting the spirit of death.

Belief in a future judgment in the hall of heaven is strongly entrenched in the minds of the Yorubas. It contains the idea of a righteous judgment, of a place where wrongs will be righted and grievances redressed. The belief acts as a deterrent to evil doing and checks a reckless desire for vengeance while soothing the mind of one who feels himself incapable of wreaking his vengeance on a bully or an unknown assailant.

In heaven as well as the land of the dead a man is supposed to live the same kind of life as he led in the present world. Hence arose the need of slaves and wives in the other world and the desire of such persons to commit suicide in order to accompany their masters or husbands to the other world. On the occasion of an Alafin of Oyo about two hundred of his slaves and wives were reported to have committed suicide to accompany their lord and to render him service in the other world. It is with difficulty that the practice was stopped by the British Government.

Summary.

From the foregoing description and from the description of the death and burial customs given in the preceding chapter the following points in regard to the Yoruba conception of man stand out in bold belief:

1. That man's nature is dual - material and immaterial.
2. That the material part, Ara "body" together with its constant companion Ojiji "shadow" perishes at death.

3. That the immaterial part Iye "mind, mental body" which is closely connected with the body may perish even during lifetime, and certainly perishes at death.
4. That the immaterial parts Oka(n) "heart-soul" and Emi(n) "spirit" are imperishable, Okan and Emin being used interchangeably as the real essence of personality.
5. That the material heart is perishable, but as the seat of courage and divinity it may be preserved according to the methods described above.
6. That death is not the end of existence. A man's spirit continues to exist with essential characteristics which preserve his identity. His name remains unchanged.
7. That each spirit can identify its own body or its representative. It can re-appear in a form recognizable by others.
8. That the Adimuorisa, Oro and Efluku cults show the existence of a belief in the resurrection of the spirit.
9. That the spirit of man is akin to God and that it belongs to a larger self or a group of spirits.
10. That the spirit of man exists before birth and continues to live after death. This may be compared with Wordsworth's opinion:-

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar."
11. That there is a judgment after death. The heart-soul must go to the judgment hall and there give an account of all that it has done in the flesh. The fate of the spirit in

the next world depends upon the judgment it receives at the judgment hall of heaven.

12. That the king during his lifetime is deified and worshipped. After death the spirit of man may be deified and worshipped. Hence there are anthropomorphic deities.
13. That the spirit-world is in contact with living persons. That the dead still take active interest in the welfare of their family. That their spirit can be invoked, that appeals can be made to them, and that sacrifice avails in securing their favour.
14. That the heart-soul goes to re-join the family group and may be re-incarnated or may transmigrate into a plant or animal.
15. That the spirit goes back to Olorun the Supreme Deity who is known as Elemi, "Owner of Spirits". The spirit is immortal.
16. That there is reward for good conduct in the present world and just retribution in the next world where wrongs committed in the present life will be righted and even justice dispensed.

Comparison with Ancient Egyptian Conception.

In many respects the above description of the Yoruba conception of man is identical with or similar to the Ancient Egyptian conception.

Before the points of identity or similarity are discussed it would be helpful to explain the constituent parts of man according to Ancient Egyptian conception.

Professor E.A. Wallis Budge thus enumerates the constituent parts:-

1. The physical body which was called Khat, i.e. that which was liable to decay, and could only be preserved by mummification.
2. The ka, a word which by general consent is translated "double".....an abstract individuality or personality which possessed the attributes of the man to whom it belonged..... it could wander at will.... and was supposed to eat and drink, and the greatest care was usually taken to lay abundant supplies of offerings in tombs.
3. The ba or heart-soul was in some way connected with the Ka.... It seems to have been able to assume material or immaterial form at will.
4. The ab or heart was closely associated with the soul and it was held to be the source both of the animal life and of good and evil in man. The preservation of the heart of a man was held to be of the greatest importance, and in the judgment it is the one member of the body which is singled out for special examination; here, however, the heart is regarded as having been the centre of the spiritual and thinking life..... and it typifies everything which the word "conscience" signifies to us. The necessity of preserving the material heart was very great.....
5. The Khaibit or shadow, was closely connected with the ba or soul.....
6. The Khu or spiritual soul is often mentioned in connection with the ba or heart-soul, and it seems to have been regarded as an ethereal being, in fact the SOUL which under no circumstances could die; it dwelt in the Sahu or spiritual body.
7. The Sekhem or power.... the incoporeal personification of the vital force of a man.
8. The ren or name.... it ranks equally with the ka.
9. The Sahu or spiritual body which formed the habitation of the soul..... In it all the mental and spiritual attributes of the natural body were united to the new powers of its own nature.¹

1. Book of the Dead (1923) Intro. pp.lix-lxiv.

The resemblance between the Ancient Egyptian conception and the Yoruba conception of man can now be traced in detail.

First, there is the physical body, known as Khat in Ancient Egyptian and as Ara in Yoruba. Both are liable to decay. The Yoruba word A-ra means "that which belongs to Ra"; this strongly suggests that the worship of Ra was so strong in some parts of Ancient Egypt where the Yorubas had resided that they regarded their bodies as the property of Ra, the Sun-God.

Secondly the word ka is noteworthy. From the description given of it above, it is obvious that the ideas connected with it are identical with those connected with the Yoruba word o-ka(n). The word o-ka(n) is certainly derived from ka; o is only an initial vowel characteristic of Yoruba nouns, and n is a nasal consonant.

Both ka and o-ka(n) denote an abstract personality or personality which possesses the attributes of the man to whom each of them may belong. Both could wander at will after death, and both are supposed to need the ~~the~~ food and drink offered to them after death.

It should be noted that when a Yoruba man wishes to refer to his real personality he uses the word ka. For example, he says "Emi ti ka ara mi" literally "I, of the ka of my body" i.e. I myself.

It should be noted that as the same word o-ka(n) is used for the material heart, the ideas associated with ab the material heart in Ancient Egypt are also associated with it.

Both are supposed to be closely associated with the soul and to be "the source both of the animal life and of good and evil in man." The preservation of the heart was deemed to be of great importance in both countries. Also the two words ab and o-ka(n) typify "everything which the word conscience signifies to us".

The identification of the heart with the Ka by the Yorubas is supported by a passage in the Book of the Dead where the deceased says to his heart "Thou art my Ka".¹

Thirdly, the survival of the Ancient Egyptian word ba has been noted in the previous chapters. Somehow among the Yorubas there exists the belief that it is only the wicked soul that will become a ba after death .

In the present world the ba is a heart-soul among the Yorubas. For example, o-ba "King" is supposed to be the incarnate soul of the tribe or nation.

The word is used in the same sense as ka - Yoruba oka(n)- which is supposed to assume material or immaterial form at will.

Fourthly, Khaibit corresponds to the Yoruba ojiji. The former is supposed to be connected with the ba or soul, the latter with the ara or body. The difference is that of the point of view; one is the view of it from an external standpoint of its visibility, the other is from an internal standpoint of its significance. This difference of point of view has led to a further difference; the Yoruba

¹ Chapter XXXB, p. 150, Edition by Wallis Budge (1923)

shadow, viewed externally, perishes at death; whilst the Egyptian shadow, viewed internally and connected with the heart-soul, is imperishable.

Fifthly, the Khu, "spiritual soul": "luminous spirit" is one of the most important words that have survived in the Yoruba language from the Ancient Egyptian language. Its survival as a form of salutation has been noted in Chapter 1. Over two hundred distinct salutations contain the word. So frequent is the use of these salutations that the Yoruba people who settled in Sierra Leone are known as "A-ku" people i.e. those who use the word A-ku or O-ku frequently in their salutations.

The Yorubas believe that a man possesses a Khu. When a person dies, the usual expression is O ku "He or she dies", that is, he or she gives up the Khu or becomes a luminous spirit, according to Ancient Egyptian idea.

The word used by the Yorubas for "spirit" or "spiritual soul" is Emi(n). It is used in the same sense as the Egyptian word Khu. Each of them is regarded as "an ethereal being, in fact the SOUL which under no circumstances could die".

Just as a Khu is regarded by the Ancient Egyptians as the divine element in man, so also is an emi(n) regarded by the Yorubas. In fact the word e-mi(n) means "that which belongs to Min", the African god of Coptos, showing clearly that emi(n) is regarded as a spiritual element

akin to that of a deity. The word may be taken as a further indication of the connection of the Yorubas with Coptos in Ancient Egypt where the god Min was actively worshipped.¹

A corpse or a disembodied spirit is known as O-ku, "that which has become a Khu". "Death" is "I-ku" in Yoruba, that is the process of becoming a luminous spirit or of giving up the Khu.

Sixthly, the word S-ekhe-m survives in Yoruba as eke - initial and final consonants are elided. The word eke means "confidence". Its meaning becomes clearer when one considers the following expression:- Mo gbe gbogbo eke mi le "I put the whole of my confidence in him, literally, "I trace the whole of my power to him" i.e. he alone can support me or give me power to achieve success.

Seventhly, attention has been called to the great importance attached to names in Yorubaland and in Ancient Egypt. In the latter country, the Ka name is of the greatest importance. The Yoruba word for a name is Oruko. This is derived from the Ancient Egyptian ren ka or run ka "Ka Name". The derivation is as follows:- O is the initial vowel characteristic of Yoruba nouns; the letter e is often replaced in Ancient Egyptian language by the letter u e.g. Tem, Tum; hence re becomes ru; final nasal consonant is elided; the word ren or run thus becomes o-ru; kq (kaw) is a modification of the word ka. Oru-kq is thus a survival of ren ka meaning "Ka Name". The reason why the Yorubas attach importance to names thus becomes obvious.

1. See Chapter VI. Orisa Oko, above.

Lastly, Sahu or spiritual body has no counterpart in Yoruba. It must not be confused with Sahu i.e. Orion which has survived in Yoruba as O-sa-hi(n) . The absence of the counterpart is probably due to the fact that the word ẹ-mi(n) also connotes the idea of a spiritual body.

Apart from the survivals connected with the constituent parts of man detailed above, ideas which may be regarded as Egyptian survivals exist in Yorubaland in connection with the conception of man and his destiny in the future world. The following are a few of them:-

1. The idea of heaven. Attention has been called above to the survival of elements in the Osirian faith. It has been pointed out that the Osirian heaven has no place for the idle, that there is a belief in judgment after death, and that the spirit of the good person will return to Osiris. All these ideas survive in Yorubaland. The spirit returns to Elemi "Owner of Spirits" and Olodumare "the exalted personage to whom I will or must return".

The idea of return to the gods is not peculiar to the Osirian faith. Prof. Wiedemann says "The living and indestructible parts of a man..... have found their common house in the living body; on leaving it after death each set out alone to find its own way to the gods".¹ The idea is widespread in Yorubaland as in Ancient Egypt.

The Yoruba word for heaven is o-ru(n) which is derived from the ancient Egyptian word horu, "sky, heaven".

The survival of the god Thot has been noted in Chapter II. and that of the fields of Ialu in Chapter II and IV.

Hell is known by the Yorubas as Orun Apadi, usually translated "Heaven of Potsherd". Apadi is of Egyptian origin. Its full form is A-pa-odi; paper house; Odi, an Egyptian deity regarded as wicked and always revelling in tormenting others. A-pa-di, therefore, is "the abode of Odi".

2. The survival of the idea of guardian and family spirits has been noted in Chapter I. The following passage further illustrates the point:-

"It seems, then, best to regard the Ka as an ancestral emanation, which was associated with each man from birth and by its superiority would guide and help him through this life and the next".¹

3. The idea of metempsychosis. Compare the Yoruba/^{idea} with the Egyptian idea expressed as follows:- "The Egyptians were the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal, and that when the body perishes, it enters into some other animal, constantly spring into existence....."²
4. The different conceptions of the future life. According to Prof. Erman, "From the earliest ages it was an article of faith amongst the Ancient Egyptians that man existed after death, but where or how he existed was not so clear to their minds. Some thought that he was to be found amongst the stars in the sky, others that he sat on the branches of trees with

1. Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egypt (1914), p.23

2. Herodotus, Edn. Bohn, ii, 123.

the birds, and others that he remained on earth where his bones were laid to rest..... The peasants believed..... that he went to the fields of Earu... here he would plough the land and reap the harvests, and when tired in the evening, he would sit under the sycomore, and play draughts with his companions".¹

These different conceptions survive in Yorubaland. The most prevalent conception among the Yorubas is that in the other world, the dead live much the same kind of life. Hence the need for the noble and the rich to be accompanied by slaves and wives. This was the case in Ancient Egypt where in the latter days slaves and wives were replaced by ushebti figures.²

5. The existence of several individualities in one and the same Ego. This is the same in Yorubaland as in Ancient Egypt. Prof. Erman writing on this subject says:-

"They (i.e. the Ancient Egyptians) did not consider man as a simple individuality; he consisted of at least three parts, the body, the soul, and the ghost, the image, the double or the genius, according as we translate the word Ka....." ³

Concluding Remarks.

There is no doubt that the advanced conception by the Yorubas in regard to the nature of man is due to contact

-
1. Life in Ancient Egypt. p 306
 2. Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptians(1925), p.27, col.80 sections 35 & 36.
See also Sayee, The Religion of Ancient Egypt, pp.52, 112 & 171
 3. Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, p.307.

with the lofty religion of Ancient Egypt. Lofty ideas of immortality, heaven, and judgment after death are not often found among primitive people, and their presence in Yorubaland can only find solution in a theory of contact between the Yoruba civilisation and a higher civilisation. That civilisation is the Ancient Egyptian civilisation, as may be seen in the points of similarity and identity noted above in this chapter.

CHAPTER XII

PRIESTHOOD AND WORSHIP (continued)

1. Death and Burial Customs
2. Funeral Guilds.

DEATH AND BURIAL CUSTOMS. Spirit worship is part of the religious worship of the Yorubas. Great importance is therefore attached to the process of transition from the incarnate spirit to the disembodied spirit. Every effort is made to see that the disembodied spirit enjoys the blessedness dependent upon the due performance of his funeral obsequies.

A common salutation in Yorubaland is "O ku". This has been explained in Chapter one and it means "May you become a Khu" i.e. a luminous spirit after death. The wish expressed by the salutation is quite in keeping with the belief and hope of the Ancient Egyptians who at one stage in their religious history earnestly prayed and hoped to become a Khu "luminous spirit" instead of a ba "a mere disembodied spirit". The two ideas survive in Yorubaland, for in addition to the good wish contained in "O ku" the Yorubas use the malediction "Yio ba o" that is "it will turn you to a ba or you will become a ba" instead of a Khu.

An example of Ancient Egyptian prayer for the privilege of becoming a khu is contained in the following passage taken from the Book of the Dead:- "Let me remain on earth and not die in an Amentet, and let me be a khu therein for ever and ever".¹

The Yorubas believe that a man's deeds in this world will determine his fate in the next, as to whether he will become a khu or a ba. They also believe that unless the proper rites and ceremonies are performed the spirit will not be able to join the family spirit, but will be compelled to wander about without rest.

As soon as the condition of a person becomes hopeless, preparations are made to afford him due burial according to custom.

1. Translation by Prof. E. Wallis BUDGE, Chapter 30, p.147

In the case of the death of an aged person who is survived by one or more children, joy rather than sorrow characterizes the ceremonies. Death in such a case does not wear a somber hue. As a matter of fact, death does not evoke the same degree of sorrowful feelings as it does among the highly civilized peoples. It is regarded merely as a process of transition. As the Deji of Akure once said "Death and sleep are alike. Death is male and sleep is female". It is only in the case of a young person that deep sorrowful feelings are evoked, but these soon subside when, according to the usual practice, the babalawo has succeeded in pointing out the witch or wizard responsible for the death and the culprit has been made to pay the penalty. The reason why the funeral obsequies are more or less of a joyful character, marked with feasting and merriment, is that the spirit of the deceased has gone to join the great family of ancestral spirits.

It should not be thought that there is a total absence of sorrow. When the death of a popular person or a chief occurs the friends and relatives assembled by the death-bed usually raise loud mournful shouts and lamentations. Some of them assist in turning the corpse face downwards and cover it up. This done, the majority of them rush into the streets to make a public announcement by cries and singing. At Ondo, if the deceased is survived by sons, the eldest or anyone of them is carried shoulder high by his companions who join in the parade with branches of trees in their hands. In other parts of the country, the parade is not so spectacular. The following is the usual form of funeral cry :- " Epa!!! O-oro!!! Baba wa lo loni!!! Baba(or Iya) li a nwa! Awa ko ri o! Ewe-pa! O-o-o-ro! Mo de oja, ko si l'oja

Mo de ita, ko si ni ita. Mo de ile, ko si ni ile. Ng ko ni ri i mo O. O di gberere, O di arinako." "Alas!!! Oro!!! Our father has gone today!!! We cannot find him - Alas! Oro!!! I go to the market, he is not in the market. I go to the streets, he is not in the streets. I go to the house, he is not in the house. Never shall I see him. He has become a disembodied spirit to be met at by-paths."

The corpse must be left untouched for at least three hours after death has occurred.

The eldest son or the brother of the deceased if there be no son sends for the babalawo who will consult Ifa oracle as to whether the death is due to natural causes or to witchcraft, and if the latter is the case, to point out the culprit. If the oracle declare the spirit of the deceased to be in danger, the babalawo performs two important ceremonies. He sacrifices a goat or a sheep, and causes the carcass to be carried outside the town and deposited at a junction of several roads, the idea being that the evil spirits endangering the spirit of the deceased will thereby be dispersed in different directions. The babalawo also performs a ceremony of purification, sprinkling the corpse, the room and the spectators with the fluid he had prepared with water, shea butter and edible snails. After this he exorcises the spirit of the deceased from the house, bidding it proceed to its destination in peace.

The ^{corpse} is then taken and carefully washed. The belief is that if the corpse is not properly washed the deceased will be refused admission into heaven where the holy ones dwell, and if the spirit of the deceased were re-incarnated all the dirt left on the

corpse will cling irremovably to the re-incarnated body. This ceremony of purification is therefore regarded as indispensable.

After washing the corpse is rubbed with camwood and water. It is then clothed in its best garments and laid on a mat spread on the bare floor or an orupo¹ (mud bed). Among some tribes the hands are placed by the sides, and the feet are tied close together. The corpse is then wrapped up with mat up to the neck and tied in three or four places, the whole figure strongly resembling an Egyptian mummy. Among other tribes, the corpse is laid with its back on the mat, its hands are placed over the chest and the thumbs tied together, its feet are brought close together and the great toes likewise tied, the mouth and nose are gagged with cotton-wool, and a bandage is passed below the lower jaw and tied on the head so as to bring the two jaws close together. Each of the children then covers the corpse with a fine native cloth, the idea being to provide extra cloths for the use of the deceased in the next world.

The corpse usually lies in state for about two or three days, in the case of an important person, the lying-in-state may last for a full week. During this period friends and neighbours are invited to join in the mourning. The house of the deceased is lit with lamps, and people sit round the corpse, each new visitor entering with a cry which may or may not be an expression of real sorrow.

1. Dr. Farrow says that a mat is "the only bed known to Yoruba". He does not seem to know anything about an "orupo" or "mud-bed" erected in the verandah or rooms of the houses of several Yoruba tribes.

Loud drumming takes place outside the house, and volleys of shots are fired as a mark of honour in the case of a distinguished person. Food and drinks are provided freely, and guests are sometimes seen who have become intoxicated with an inordinate quantity of gin, beer, rum or palm wine gratuitously provided by the deceased's relatives. Sometimes professional mourners are employed to make lamentations.

The chief mourners are not allowed to take part in the general merriment; they are shut up in a neighbouring apartment. They utter occasional wails, and there they remain during the whole period between the washing of the corpse and its burial. They are forbidden to wash, and to take food at least for the first twenty-four hours. The male members of the family who have some other work to do are often exempted from the observance of this unhygienic custom. The women, too, are sometimes persuaded to take some nourishment.

The work of digging the grave devolves upon the sons or the male relatives of the deceased. The grave is almost invariably dug in the house of the deceased; sometimes it is dug on his premises.

In some parts of Yorubaland the corpse is taken out¹ on the third or the seventh day and paraded through the streets, richly decorated and carried on a piece of board or on a door unhinged for the purpose. Friends and relations of the deceased accompany the bier singing the praises of the deceased and making presents on his behalf by throwing handfuls of cowries to the spectators or passers-by.

1. This practice has been modified by the substitution of a photograph for the corpse of the deceased.

The procession returns to the house in the evening, ready for the internment of the corpse. Before this is done, a sheep or a goat is provided for a sacrificial ceremony. As soon as the corpse is laid in the grave(which is usually shallow), the animal provided for the purpose is killed and its blood is allowed to drop over the corpse. The children of the deceased also shed their tears into the grave, while wishing him safe journey to the land of the dead.

It is almost needless to add that funeral expenses in Yorubaland are very heavy. Beside the great cost of providing ample food and intoxicating drinks there is "the amount that must be paid the various social, religious and political guilds to which the deceased is attached, apart from the presents of yams, oil, goats, and other cattle and provisions which must be made at some definite time after internment or during the celebration of the funeral ceremonies". Sometimes a whole family is plunged into ruin by funeral expenses, and members of some families have sold themselves into slavery to meet up the exactions of the funeral guilds. And yet the heavy burden is borne with complacency, the belief being very strong that unless the funeral obsequies are duly performed the spirit of the deceased cannot obtain rest and peace.

FUNERAL GUILDS. Some guilds or secret societies are connected with the performance of funeral obsequies. The chief of these are the Ogboni, the Egun, the Oro and the Adamu or Adimu Orisha guilds.

A description of each of these guilds has been given above. The part they play in connection with funeral obsequies will now be sketched.

Of all these guilds the Ogboni guild is the most important. To this guild belongs all the chiefs and leading persons in the community. Admission to it is open to all free born men and confers a measure of honour and dignity. When a member of the guild dies, his relatives have to pay a large sum of money and other presents to the other members of the guild for the performance of the necessary ceremonies. Burial is sometimes delayed by the inability of the relatives to procure the presents in good time, and much inconvenience is thereby caused to all and sundry. The uninitiated are forbidden to touch the corpse, and pressure is thus indirectly exerted on the relatives to hasten the collection of the presents so as to free themselves from the inconvenience of a fast-rottening corpse in a hot climate. Hence the song often heard from the relatives of the deceased :-

Otalelegbeje ro gba

Omo re a san ligbehin O

The large amount you have received
Will some day be paid by your children.

This means that the same presents given to the surviving members of the Ogboni guild by a deceased member's relatives will have to be paid by the surviving members' children when each of the recipients dies.

Writing on the subject of Yoruba funeral customs in Nigerian Chronicle under the pseudonym of "Adesola" Mr. Feyisara Sopein, a native of Abeokuta who has studied the subject very closely thus writes :-

"Otalelegbeje is

"Otalelegbeje is 1460 cowries or 36 strings and half. It is not intended to be interpreted literally.....The amount is for making etutu (propitiatory sacrifices) for the dead; the provision to maintain the members when they meet. There is no native but belongs to one or another of these guilds. Some belong to several and a man's rank is estimated according to the guild or guilds to which he belongs. Whatever amount remains after the necessary expenses are made is distributed among the members and every individual is given a portion, however small, in proportion to his official status. The enjoyment of this benefit is regarded as an accumulated debt for every individual and imposes an obligation upon their children to make similar contribution to the guild towards their parents' funerals at their deaths. This song² repeated at funerals is to keep them always in recollection of this fact. This is both a political, social and a secret society. In fact it is the King's chief consultative chamber in all matters and its principal members form a Cabinet. They lay the corpse with full masonic rites. In their passage to and from the house of mourning they sound alarm with their state drums of various height and sounds so that every woman or uninitiated man might flee their presence either in the street or in the house of mourning.... During the process of corpse-laying they continue beating their drums and so at intervals whilst the corpse is still lying in state when they go to make their etutu. At each time they are generally provided with palm wine and native beer. The members are sometimes called Oshugbo. A few elderly women are always admitted and these are generally distinguished from others by having certain strings(okun) tied down their wrists; such women are supposed to be for ever precluded from marriage."

Next to the Ogboni guild, the Egungun or Egun guild deserves attention. The part played by Egungun in connection with funeral obsequies is interesting and significant; it shows that the Yorubas firmly believe that the soul lives after death and if funeral ceremonies are properly performed, it goes to the abode of spirits. A graphic account of the Egungun ceremonies is thus given by Dr. Farrow:- "While the mourning relatives are assembled,

-
1. i.e. presents of oil, yams, goats, cattle, drinks etc.
 2. i.e. the song given above.

"While the mourning relatives are assembled, a person who acts as Egun lies hidden in the adjoining room. Presently one of the mourners strikes on the ground thrice and cries out, Baba, baba, baba! Da mi lohun! i.e. Father, father, father! Answer me! From the adjoining room comes an answer in 'Egungun Voice' (ventriloquial), and all are comforted and filled with joy, on the supposition that the spirit of the deceased, although unseen, is indeed present with them. Food having been placed by the women in the Egun's room (he having concealed himself, or departed) after he has answered, each guest goes in and helps himself, thus performing an act of communion with the deceased. The Egun does not wear his dress while concealed in the room; but should he desire to come out and join in the festivities, he dons it and will then speak as, and state himself to be, the spirit of the one who is being mourned..... Some days after the burial an Egun comes at night and calls out the name of the deceased; and, after further days have passed, he comes in the daytime, accompanied by followers, and proceeds to the house of the deceased, where he reports that he has safely reached the spirit world, and is well and happy. In response to the good news, he is provided with food, rum and palm wine, of which he partakes in private since spirits must not be seen to eat! When he and his followers have finished, loud groans indicate that he is departing."¹

These ceremonies are regarded as realities, but actually it is only the children and simple-minded persons who do not realize that they are not more than practical demonstration of beliefs.

The ceremonies just described are usually performed on the "seventh" day after a person's death or burial. The word "seventh" must not be interpreted literally. The ceremonies must be delayed till the eleventh or twelfth day.

Similar ceremonies known as Iseku "burial ceremonies" are performed on the fortieth day after a person's death. The preceding ceremonies are known as Ita "the third day's ceremonies" and Ije "seventh day ceremonies" respectively.

1. Op.Cit p.110

Writing on the subject of Iseku, Mr. I.O.Delano, author of "The Soul of Nigeria" gives a graphic and elaborate account of the ceremonies which he was privileged to witness on two occasions. His account gives an impression of his belief in the reality of the deceased's return, especially when he says:-

"All of a sudden the crowd swayed and someone shouted: "He is coming. Yes, he was coming. And at that moment there was a solemnity that was almost indescribable. Dead Silence. The man came slowly.....He was in very truth the man who had departed this life just forty days ago..... His face was not covered. It must have been successfully painted, for the wrinkles and scars were all there as evidence of identity."¹

The present writer has witnessed the ceremonies on several occasions and is convinced that close observation would have revealed to Mr. Delano that the figure which he saw on each occasion was a mere impersonation and not an objective re-incarnation of the deceased person.

The funeral ceremonies connected with Oro worship are also interesting. If a member of the Oro guild dies, all the other members of the guild are bound to assemble and proceed to the deceased person's house. The chief mourners welcome them and provide refreshment of native beer and kola nuts for their enjoyment.. A ram is also offered to them. The ceremonies then begin. Each of the kola nuts is made to touch the head of the corpse, and each mourner also touches the same head with closed fists, one on top of the other and then the head of the eldest son or of the son who is to succeed the deceased. This ceremony is repeated three times again when prayers for blessings on the living, especially on the eldest son or the son who is to succeed, are offered to the dead.

The ram is then ceremoniously slaughtered and its blood is caught in a bowl or calabash, from which the children take small quantities and rub on their heads. The figure of a man closely resembling the deceased is drawn on the wall near the deceased person's grave and the ram's head is offered to this figure. These sacrificial ceremonies must be repeated annually by the children.

As soon as the ceremonies in the house are over, the mourners are asked to leave the house. The members of the Oro guild perform certain secret ceremonies and then lock the door as soon as they are ready to proceed to the Oro grove for further ceremonies.

The part usually played by the Oro guild in the Oro grove has also been well described by Mr. Sopein (anonymously known as "Adesola") in the Nigerian Chronicle: "The whole company of gods and men proceed outside to what is called the Oro-pagi ('Oro kills the tree') or Oro-jegi (Oro eats the tree) ceremony. For its performance the newly deified¹ takes the company to the highest tree in the neighbourhood in order to show proof of his divinity by 'eating up' every leaf thereon, to its latest shoot. At a convenient distance from this tree, gods and men accommodate themselves as best as possible - the gods crying with all their might² and the men drumming very loudly, singing and dancing at the same time. As it is not permitted to the uninitiated to know how this spirit feat is performed, suffice it to say that one wakes up in the morning to see that particular tree enuded of its leaves: and it will require the service of the most powerful microscope to discover even the tiniest and latest shoot anywhere about the tree

1. that is, the supposed re-incarnation of the deceased spirit.

2. The voices of the gods may be heard through the medium of the bull-roarer.

shoot anywhere about the tree up to the loftiest branch, or on the surrounding surface, or anywhere about the vicinity of the tree. These leaves are supposed to have been literally eaten up by the god. Suspended on this tree between two of its branches which are topmost, or sometimes left streaming on one of its branches which is the highest, is a new mat or a white or a red piece of cloth.... What these mats or cloths are intended to symbolize ought to be evident..... Unlike the Egungun and the Agemo the incarnate form of the Oro is never habited in cloths or mats. What its nature and habiliments are is supposed to be a mystery and jealously guarded, up to the present from the gaze of women.

"In fact Oro is worshipped more in its inane and spiritual form than in a materialized shape. It is to the former that sacrifices are offered, not to the latter. Among the Egbas, who are the originators of this cult, the Oro Awe ceremony is the only funeral rite performed in connection with this worship, when the spirit is supposed to pass from the 'unburied' into the 'buried' state. Viewing it in this connection, the mats or cloths, suspended on the tree, must be taken to represent the mats or cloths with which the dead was buried; and its suspension to signify that the spirit of the deceased, now purified with funeral rites, and having entered into that state of purified life in which it can be invoked and worshipped, cast behind it on its flight to the spirit world, these earthly encumbrances as useless to it..... After the completion of this Oro-pagi ceremony they(gods and men) again repair to the house; and having regaled themselves with the remnants¹ they re-form into a procession, remove the mariwo from 1. that is, of the food that had been partaken before setting out to the Oro grove.

remove the mariwo from the gate, march direct to the Aboro's¹ and thence to their own house, ere break of day. In the morning the inmates return to the house of mourning, set a mark to the dedicated spot, and congratulate one another that the departed has passed into the Oro stage and can be invoked at any time for Worship."

Another funeral ceremony connected with Oro worship is the ceremony of erecting a shrine in honour of the deceased member of an Oro guild. In this shrine, which is usually made of thatch and is about three feet high, are placed a mud image of the deceased, and some of his belongings and offerings of food. The image is carefully made so as to resemble the deceased as much as possible, and hence it usually depicts the tribal marks or scars peculiar to the deceased.

In addition to the above ceremonies, there is a set of ceremonies known as Pegbeda "turning over from one side to the other". These ceremonies are performed periodically after a number of years following the death and burial of a deceased person. The relatives and friends of the deceased visit the cemetery or the grave on an appointed day and give offerings of food or flowers. They sometimes express their wishes or prayers over the grave, after summoning the deceased in whose honour the ceremonies were being performed to listen to them. This done, the family with their friends return to their house, and food and drink are sumptuously provided. Cooking is done throughout the day, and food is sent as a present to friends. A good part of the day is spent in dancing, and the spirit of merriment characterizes all the ceremonies.

1. that is, the chief member of the Oro Guild.

Actually the Yorubas now bury their dead with the latter lying on their backs, and the need for the ceremonies of turning the corpse over from one side to the other should not have arisen. The ceremonies, however, are a survival of the ancient custom of making the dead lie on its left side, a custom already abandoned by the Yorubas.

It should be noted that full burial ceremonies are denied to persons who die of infectious disease. For example, in the olden days, a man who died of leprosy will not be accorded full ceremonial burial. Professional Undertakers would be employed who would perform certain ceremonies on the corpse and then burn it to ashes. The Undertakers receive presents of money, kolanuts, fowls and other animals.

Cremation is not practised in Yorubaland except in the case of persons dying from infectious diseases.

The duty of a proper burial of the dead is regarded with great solemnity in Yorubaland. It is believed that those who fail to discharge it will suffer for their negligence; they will be haunted and pestered by the restless disembodied spirit in various ways. On the other hand, it is considered a great misfortune for one to die in such circumstances as to miss a proper burial. Hence the common malediction "Igbe ni iwo yio ku si" "You will die in the bush", that is, you will die where there will be none to perform the burial ceremonies over your corpse. Hence also the expression Oku igbe "a corpse in the bush", implying that one's conduct is such as to merit the misfortune of lying unburied in the bush.

CONNECTION WITH ANCIENT EGYPT. Anyone who has studied both the religion of Ancient Egypt and the religion of Yorubaland cannot fail to detect points of similarity or identity in regard to death and burial customs.

It has been pointed out above that the Yoruba words Ku and Iku "die" and "death" are derived from the Ancient Egyptian word Khu. This derivation shows at the outset that there is some connection between the two religions.

Next one may note the fact that in Yorubaland there is the belief that no one need to die; death can only be caused by some unseen power or a wicked living person. Such a belief existed in Ancient Egypt. Prof Maspero thus writes :-

"The Ancients long refuse to believe that death was natural and inevitable. They thought that life, once begun, might go on indefinitely; if no accident stopped it short, why should it cease of itself? And so men did not die in Egypt; they were assassinated. The murderer often belonged to this world, and was easily recognized another man, an animal....."¹

Hence in Yorubaland when a person dies the Babalawo is summoned to determine whether the deceased has been the victim of some malicious person.

In Yorubaland the disembodied spirit is believed to rejoin the whole family spirit in the other world. A similar belief existed in Ancient Egypt where it was believed that at birth "each person received a part of the family spirit, which guided him and was his inner personality, and on dying he rejoined the whole family spirit which received and preserved him"².

The custom of lamenting the dead by parading the streets is found in both countries. The custom as practised by the Yorubas has been described above.

1. Dawn of Civilization, p.111

2. Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptian (1925)

p.43,col.127 sec.38

The following is a description of the custom as given by writers on Egyptian customs :-

- (a) When an individual died, it was usual for the women to issue forth from the house, and throwing dust and mud upon their heads to utter cries of lamentation..... They sang a doleful dirge.....On these occasions, the services of hired performers were uncalled for; though during the period of seventy days, while the body was in the hands of the embalmers, mourners were employed, who sang the same plaintive dirge.¹
- (b) When a man of any consideration dies, all the female sex of that family besmear their heads and faces with dirt.....beating themselves as they go.....whilst the male, on their part, form another company, gird and beat themselves in like manner.²
- (c) When any of them is dead, all his kindred and friends (who put dirt on their heads until such time as the corpse is interned, go every day round about the city weeping and lamenting) do neither wash themselves all that while, nor drink wine, nor eat any but low-priced meats, neither put on any clothes that are worth ought.³

Compare these details with those of the Yoruba custom given above. With the exception of the reference to the period of embalming and the modification of the practice of besmearing oneself with dirt, nearly all the details survive in Yorubaland and may be seen in practice among all the Yorubas or among some of the tribes.

The duty of the son towards his father in Yorubaland is also identical with the duty of a son in Ancient Egypt. In the latter, just as in the former, "the duty of the son was... to maintain his (father's) tomb and to offer the necessary sacrifices on festival days..... These duties towards the deceased descended in direct line to the head of the family, but at the same time the obligation rested on the members, even of later generations⁴

-
- 1. Wilkinson, Manners and Customs I, p.45
 - 2. Herodotus (trans. Littlebury) ii, 85
 - 3. Diodorus (translation by Cogan) II, iv
 - 4. Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, p.157

It has been remarked above that when an important man died, it was usual in Yorubaland for some of his slaves and wives to be buried with him. The practice is similar to that of Ancient Egypt described as follows :-

"During the early periods of Egyptian civilization, the right to a future life would only be claimed by the wealthy. The lives of many women, children, slaves and animals had to be sacrificed to accompany his double into the other world".¹

Later the practice of sacrificing the lives of human beings in this way was replaced by the provision of clay figures known as ushabtis and modelled like the figures of human beings. The number of ushabtis was at one time very large but was later fixed at four hundred.² It is noteworthy that 400 is an important figure in Yoruba enumeration, it being regarded as a very important square, that is the square of twenty, an important unit in Yoruba.

Egyptian funerals were very expensive. So also are Yoruba funerals. The only difference lies in the degree of wealth possessed by each country; but there is no doubt that in proportion to the wealth possessed by each country the funeral expenses are heavy.³

Similarity also exists in respect of modes of burial, According to Duncan⁴, Egyptian modes of burial are (1) Cloth wrapping (2) Mummifying (3) Clay face coffins (4) Wooden Coffins (5) Stone coffins. The first mode is the most frequently adopted in Yorubaland; occasionally corpses dressed like mummies are found among some of the Yoruba tribes.

1. Maspero, New Light on Ancient Egypt, p.305

2. See Flinders Petrie, Ancient Egyptian, p.27, Col.80, Sec.36

3. "There are three manners of funeral among them, namely, the sumptuous, the mean between both, and the lowest. In the first is spent six hundred crowns, in the second two hundred, and the last is of little cost" (Diodorus, translation by Cogan, II, iv.62)

4. See Petrie, Hyksos and Israelite Cities. p.47

A further description of the first mode is thus given by the same writer :-

"the body was almost invariably placed on its back, with the hands by the sides or folded over the breast.....No trace of mutilation of the corpse was found. From the abundant remains of cloth, we infer that every body was wrapped in cloth before burial, and where we did find cloth in any state of preservation, it was manifest that the body had not been simply dressed in a single garment, but swathed in many folds of linen!"¹

The use of mats in connection with this mode of burial is significant, as it is attested to by MacIver in the following passage :-

"The body is wrapped in a skin and a reed mat. Most commonly there is a ~~triple~~ ^{triple} layer of coverings, viz. cloth next to the body, then skin or leather, outside which is a wide mat!"²

The Yorubas do not use a skin, but they use the other two coverings. The colour of the cloths too are well-known Egyptian colours, that is, white and red, which are the respective colours representing the North and the South of Ancient Egypt respectively.³

The custom of burying children in pots⁴ and of putting vases or pots⁵ in graves was extensively practised during certain periods in Ancient Egypt.

The Yorubas do not practise the custom of pot burials, but they often place pots on graves and put meat and drink offerings in these pots.

1. See Petrie, Hyksos and Israelite Cities. p.30

2. MacIver, El Amrah and Abydos. p.8

3. e.g. White is the colour of the crown of North Egypt and Red is the colour of the South. These colours are also given religious significance in connection with the Adamu-Orisa cult.

7

& See MacIver, El Amrah, pp.7-14

8

The Yoruba word for a pot is I-ko-ko. This seems to be a modification of Kau-kau, that is, the plural of Ka. The idea prevalent in Ancient Egypt that the Kas of deceased persons could enter the pots and eat the food provided therein for them is also found in Yorubaland. Hence the word I-ko-ko means that which belongs to the Kas or spirits of deceased persons.

It is noteworthy that when the Yorubas wish to consecrate a place they sometimes sink a pot into the place and there place offerings for the orisa or god or the spirit or spirits to be worshipped. In cases of emergency, when the help of ancestral spirits is urgently needed, the spirits are usually summoned and asked for help by addressing them through the medium of a hole dug in the ground or through the medium of a pot sunk into the ground.

Attention has been drawn in the previous chapters that the names of funeral guilds, that is Ogboni, Egungun and Oro are all of Egyptian origin. The leading ideas connected with the funeral ceremonies of the guild are also of Egyptian origin.

Certain words used in connection with funerals should be noted. The first shout of relatives and friends when death has occurred is known as Ibosi i.e. I-bi-osi, "the place of an Osi or Osiris." This means that the house has been converted to a place where someone has become an Osiris", this being in keeping with the Egyptian idea that the highest reward due to a righteous man was that he should become an Osiris or a reproduction of Osiris immediately after death. It was an essential element in the Osirian faith that the believer would become an Osiris after death. Prayers that this might happen to devout worshippers of Osiris can be seen in various parts of the Book of the Dead.

The word for a grave is Iboji, that is I-bi-oji. Bi or bu is an

Ancient Egyptian word meaning "place". Oji is derived from the West African root word "ye" which means "to live, to exist, to become", I-bi-oji, therefore means "the place of the living ones or spirits. The word is a clear indication of the Yoruba belief that a man's spirit continues to live after death.

Until recent times the Yorubas are not known to have used coffins. But their word for a coffin strongly suggests that they must have known what coffins were several centuries ago. This is strongly suggested by the fact that the Yoruba word for a coffin is of Ancient Egyptian origin. The word is posi, that is pa-osi. Pa is a modification of the Ancient Egyptian word per, which means a house. Osi is a contraction of Osiris. Posi therefore means "the house of an Osi", that is the place where one who has become an Osiris is encased.

The ceremonies known as Pegbeda described above are a survival of the Egyptian custom of holding periodical feasts in honour of the dead and of periodical renewal of the food offered to the Kas of deceased persons. The Ancient Egyptian custom is thus described by Petrie :-

"Probably the modern custom of going out to the cemetery for a day's picnic taking out food and cooking and feeding in the family, was followed also in Roman times. The many baskets in the chambers, the heaps of dates, date-stones, and peach stones, the pieces of bread, the corn and other food found here, all show that feasts were held; and doubtless those were the representatives of an earlier custom of funeral feasts in honour of the deceased, or for the renewing of the food for the Ka"¹

1. Hawara, Bishnu and Arsinoe, p.10

The word pegbeda "turning over from one side to the other" is a survival of the custom similar to that of the Ancient Egyptians of making a corpse lie on its left side.

The points of similarity and of identity between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yoruba funeral customs described above constitute a further evidence in support of the theory of a close connection between the religions of Ancient Egypt and of Yorubaland.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAGIC
IN YORUBALAND.

CHAPTER XIV.MAGIC IN YORUBALAND.

Closely associated with the religion of the Yoruba peoples are magical beliefs and practices. So close is the association that in some respects, religion and magic in Yorubaland seem to be indistinguishable. The one is so dovetailed into the other that the resulting belief or practice may be associated with the one no less than with the other. The offices of the priest and of the magician are sometimes held by one and the same person, and ceremonies are sometimes performed with an admixture of religious and magical elements.

The Yoruba religion is a primitive religion. As in the case of other primitive religions, the antagonism between priest and magician does not exist. According to Sir J.G. Fraser, such an antagonism "seems to have made its appearance comparatively late in the history of religion. At an earlier stage the functions of priests and sorcerer were often combined, or to speak perhaps more correctly, were not yet differentiated from each other". ¹

Speaking of magic in Ancient Egypt, Professor Maspero says that "we ought not to attach to the word magic the degrading idea which it almost invariably calls up in the mind of a modern. Ancient magic was the very foundation of religion. The faithful who desired to obtain some favour from a god had not chance of succeeding except by laying hands on the deity, and this arrest could only be effected by means of

1. Golden Bough, Abridged Edition, p.52.

a certain number of rites, sacrifices, prayers and chants, which the god himself had revealed and which obliged him to do what was demanded of him". This statement about magic in Ancient Egypt applies in its entirety to magic in its relation to religion in Yorubaland. Even in the case of black magic success is always attributed to the possession of mysterious means of obtaining help from the gods or evil spirits worshipped or acknowledged by the magician.

Professor Breasted's description of magic in Ancient Egypt applies equally well to Yorubaland. The description is as follows :-

"It is difficult for the modern mind to understand how completely the belief in magic penetrated the whole substance of life, dominating popular custom and constantly appearing in the simplest acts of daily household routine.....It constituted the very atmosphere in which the men of early oriental world lived. Without the saving and salutary influence of such magical agencies constantly invoked, the life of an ancient household in the East was unthinkable".

As in the case of Yoruba religion, the foundation of Yoruba magic must be sought in the firm belief in the reality of the unseen world, in the existence of beings underlying, causing and controlling the phenomena of nature and the physical and mental world, in the possibility of establishing contact with the unseen powers and of obtaining favours from them either by prayers or by force of charms and incantations.

Theoretical Magic does not exist in Yorubaland. "The primitive man knows magic only on its practical side". On the other hand, Practical Magic, both positive and negative, form an important part in the life of every Yoruba person or household.

Negative magic takes the form of taboos. These taboos have been described in a previous chapter where attention has been called to their importance as a cohesive factor in the social life of the community. Positive Magic assumes the forms of sorcery, exercise of mysterious powers for good or ill, use of charms and practice of occultism for therapeutic or other purposes, and performances based on a claim to possession of esoteric and mysterious knowledge. Belief in the interaction between mind matter and the interdependence of both on one another is an important factor in the Yoruba practice of magic. This is not expressed theoretically, but the practical working of magic in Yorubaland is inexplicable without such a belief as is so clearly seen in all aspects of Yoruba magic.

It should be noted also that the Yorubas believe in the efficacy of sacrifice as a means of setting spiritual forces in motion. They sometimes perform sacrifices with the wish that the desired blessings should be proportional to, or as unceasing as, their sacrifices. Hence the saying "ISEBO NI ISOGUN", Sacrifice is a means of making 'medicine' that is, a means of acquiring magical power.

A variety of terms has been used to designate the means by which magical powers are wielded or the manifestation of magical power or influence.

One of these terms is "fetich", which is derived from the Portuguese word "Feitico", a name given by the Portuguses to the gods, charms and amulets of West Africa. Another term is "juju", derived from the French word "jou-jou" which means "A TOY". The terms "FETICH" and "JUJU" are generally applied

to visible objects, living or dead, which are worshipped on account of their supposedly inherent supernatural qualities.

The terms used in designating invisible objects include "WITCHCRAFT", "SUPERSTITION", "OCCULTISM", "MAGIC", "MEDICINE", "MANA", "ORENDA", and others. Of these, the terms "medicine" and "Mana" deserve comments.

In connection with magical practices in Yorubaland, the term "medicine" has been applied to the supernatural means of compassing one's ends. The Yoruba word usually translated "medicine" is "ogun".¹ The translation is obviously inadequate, and has been adopted through lack of a better or more suitable word. The term "OGUN" really means "an occult, mysterious or supernatural power by means of which one's end is achieved". It connotes the idea that such an end cannot be achieved by ordinary process. The term must be distinguished from egbogi which is also translated "medicine" and which refers primarily to material medicine. It must be stated, however, that the terms egbogi and ogun are now being used indiscriminately for material medicine and supernatural means. A clear distinction is always made when the term is applied to persons making use of the means. Thus, ONI-SE-GUN "Maker of medicine",

-
1. The word Ogun is used in different senses according to the position of the accents on the syllables. Thus
 - (1) Ogun = wicker basket used by fishermen as traps for crab-fish etc.
 - (2) Ogun = medicine, spell, charm supernatural power;
 - (3) Ogun = god of iron, god of War;
 - (4) Ogun = river ogun;
 - (5) Ogun = War, battle;
 - (6) Ogun = Inheritance, heritage;
 - (7) Ogun = twenty;
 - (8) Ogun = Sweat, perspiration. The use of the word in so many different senses has baffled several non-native writers.

"Medical Doctor" is used in a good sense; ELEGBOGI is used indifferently; BABA-ALAWO and ADAHUNSE are used indifferently according to the use made by the persons so designated of their knowledge and powers; OLOGUN "Owner of medicine", is always used in a bad sense; Ologun Buruku "Owner of bad medicine" is definitely a "BLACK MAGICIAN".

The term Mana is also translated "Medicine". This term has been widely used by anthropologists Bishop Codrington first called attention to it. He discovered that it was widely used by the native tribes of Melanesia, Australia and other islands in the south-west Pacific.¹ The term, however, does not appear to be confined to the tribes just mentioned. It is probably the same term which was applied by ^{the} Hebrews to the strange material object which was supplied to them as food in the wilderness. This object was designated Manna, a Hebrew word which means "What is this?". The word mana exists in the Yoruba language ejaculatory expression for what is uncanny is "KI RE"? or "KINI YI"? "What is this"? It is quite possible that the Hebrew word for "what is this?" - Manna - was adopted by the Yoruba from the Hebrews whilst both were residing in Ancient Egypt and applied to lightning, which, in Yoruba, is mana-mana

Another Yoruba term deserving attention is nkan which does not merely denote "something" but also "something undefined, undefinable, mysterious and powerful". Hence the expression o lo nkan does not merely mean "he uses something" but also means "he uses supernatural or occult means". Also the threat "Iwo yio ri nkan" must not be simply translated "you will see

1. See Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, Comparative Religion, p.80 seqq. and Dr. R.R. Marett. The Threshold of Religion.

shooting." This is a common form of Sympathetic Magic and is used chiefly as secret means of revenge. Dr. Farrow thus describes it: "A person desiring to kill anyone against whom he has a grudge makes a mud image of his intended victim, and at night sets this up, calls the name of his foe three times, and then shoots at the figure with a miniature bow and arrows. At that instant the victim feels a sharp pain in the region of the body which, in the figure representing him, has been struck by the arrow. A wound, or abscess, quickly develops, from which he soon dies, unless he recognizes the nature of the injury and can apply a counter-charm, a more powerful 'medicine' (ogun) than that which has injured him".

Instances known to the writer have occurred when the victims have died within a few days of their being warned against "invocation-shooting".

A confirmatory evidence of the efficacy of sympathetic magic was given by the Rev. J. Buckley Wood who spent forty years as a Missionary in Yorubaland. He related how he visited a chief who said of a man who had offended him at a great distance. "He will die tomorrow". Although the distance made a material means of killing ⁱⁿ a few days impossible, news was brought within a week that the man had died on the day predicted.

(2) Didi-Emi. or "the tying up of a man's life". The writer was present on one occasion by the bedside of a dying man who had been attended by a native doctor at an earlier stage of his illness. The medical practitioner who subsequently attended to him had given up the case as hopeless and yet the patient was in the throes of death for over a week without relief.

The native doctor was called in again and he pointed to a stone which he had tied up pensively in a corner of the room. He remarked that the man's spirit had been tied up by means of the rope and stone and the man would not die until the rope had been cut. The native doctor cut the rope, the stone fell on the ground, and the patient died within a few minutes.

(3) Ogun Ifoju or supernatural means of inflicting blindness. This is done in two ways. A mud image of the intended victim is made. After the recital of appropriate incantations the eyes are speared with a sharp knife. The intended victim's eyes will immediately become blind.

Another method of doing this is by means of a wooden image with blind eyes. Incantations are chanted on the image until it acquires the intended virtue. It is then wrapped up with a piece of cloth. Whoever is the first person to see the unveiled image will become blind.

An effort was made recently to use the latter method in dealing with a public offender. A rowdy mob surrounded the offender's house and asked him merely to look out of windows, at the same time assuring him that no violence was intended. The offender, sensing the danger, went to bed with his head covered up and eyes shut.

If the latter image is not used on the victim a sacrifice must be made to remove the virtue from it.

(4) Nina-ika. or pointing the finger. This is another method of inflicting blindness. A finger over which incantations have been chanted is pointed at the eyes of the intended victim

whilst the operator recites the following incantation :-

Ika ko loju,
O ko ma loju
Ika ki i riran,
O ko ma riran.

"A finger has no eyes;
you will have no eyes.
A finger never sees;
you will never see (again)"

(5) Asun-fonfon. This is a "medicine" used for causing people to fall into a deep sleep. It is used chiefly by burglars. The "medicine" is made in this way. The burglars divide themselves into two sets. Two pieces of thin sticks are stuck on the ground and a heavy stick is placed on them. Some robbers remain at home chanting somniferous incantations over the sticks as follows :-

Asun-fonfon ni ti ifon,
Asun-fonfon ni ti igi aja.
O ki yio sai sun-fonfon.

Soundly sleeps sound sleep,
Soundly sleep the house rafters.
Soundly you must sleep.

As soon as the remaining robbers reach the scene of their operations they chant the same incantations in subdued tones while the inmates fall into a deep sleep until the burglary is completed.

(6) Pipa Ojiji. or "injuring the shadow". This is similar to No. (1) above, but instead of an image, the intended victim's shadow is used. It is believed that a man can be injured or killed by throwing a "medicine" (Ogun) made of "alligator" pepper on the shadow. Whatever part of the man is hit will develop a sore which will lead to blood-poisoning, and then to death, unless powerful counterracting "medicines are applied.

(7) Ikoko gbigbona. or "hot pot". This is a "medicine" consisting of decoctions of herbs and other ingredients which are boiled in a pot. It is used for two purposes. It is used for promoting a strife between husband and wife by an interested third party. The belief is that as long as the pot is boiling, strife and misunderstanding will develop in intensity. A common threat among the Yorubas is A TI GBE IKOKO RE KA INA "Your pot is already on the fire", that is, supernatural forces have been set in motion by means of the hot pot for the disruption of your domestic peace and happiness.

The second purpose for which the "hot pot" is used is the achievement of victory. The herbs used for this purpose differ from those used for the purpose described above. The underlying belief is that as long as the pot is kept boiling, fortune will smile on the person or persons for whom the "medicine is made. In the case of a duel or a contest, success goes to the person or party which has the more powerful "pot" on the fire. When a team loses a football match, the taunt generally levelled on the players by the derisive crowd is "why does your native doctor allow your pot to get cold?"

(8) SUGUDU. Sugudu has been described by some writers as a form of demonology based on the principle of homoeopathic magic. In Chapter IX above it was described as an orisa made for a special purpose and that its efficiency depends upon the exercise of the will power of the sender. The opinion expressed there is confirmed by the following passage written on the subject by Roger Bacon :-

"Where the attention, desire and virtue of a rational soul, which is worthier than the stars, concur with the power of the sky, it is inevitable that either a word or some other instrument of marvellous power be produced which will alter the things of this world, so that not only natural objects but also souls will be inclined to those ends which the wise operator desires".

To this passage P. Amaury Talbot adds :- "Again, if some malignant soul thinks hard of infecting another, and longs for this ardently and has full confidence, in his own power to inflict such injury, 'there is no doubt that nature will obey thought!'"

In view of the available evidence it must be admitted that the Yoruba adahunse (medicine-men) have developed their will power to such a high degree that wonderful results have followed its exercise. This will power is constantly being developed by the use of charms and incantations, and especially by the use of "SUGUDU" or "Sigidi" which serves as a concrete object on which attention is concentrated for the strengthening of the will power. Thought-projection is thereby effectively practised. Ripples of thought which are set in motion by the exercise of will power spread on to the victim and affect his innermost mental recesses for good or for ill. Belief in the efficacy of thought projection is strong among the Yorubas. Although there is no equivalent expression to thought projection in Yoruba, yet the idea is present. When the thought-projection is expressed in words, the process is known as "Epe" cursing, "malediction" which is really "an oral expression of the transmission of mysterious mental poisons which affect both body and mind.

Among the Ijebus the use of Epe is common. The users have so developed their will power that inhabitants of the neighbouring districts sometimes go to "buy" epe from them. It is believed that in the case of powerful epes the range of their efficacy is not limited by distance and that their action is immediate.

The fear of epe is so strong that a loose expression of the evil consequences of an act may be twisted into an epe and may bring a sharp rejoinder that one is uttering a curse - O sepe fun u "You are cursing him".

The use of epe is considered here because it is often accompanied by imitative acts. For example, a man who wishes another to collapse through paralysis may demonstrate the intended effect by the movement of his hands or by gestures or by a practical imitation of a collapse.

According to the Yorubas an important principle affecting the efficacy of thought projection is that "Like associates with like". They believe that the projection of evil and harmful thoughts by an evil person cannot affect a good person. This belief is expressed in several Yoruba sayings, of which the following is an example :-

Eni se ire se e fun ara re,
Eni sika se e fun ara re.
Ire ko ni sai gbe ni,
Ika ko ni sai ka onika
Bi inu ba mo, esinsin onika
ko le kun ni.

"One who does good does it for himself,
One who does evil does it for himself,
Virtue has its good reward,
Evil has its evil consequences.
If one's conscience is clear, the harmful fly sent by
a wicked man can do one no harm".

EXAMPLE OF CONTAGIOUS MAGIC.

The Yorubas believe in the efficacy of contagious magic. They exercise great care in keeping their wearing apparel or other belongings which, by a stretch of imagination, can possibly be used for evil purposes.

The following examples of contagious Magic may be given here :-

(1) BIBU-LESE. "The use of footprints for harmful purposes".

There is a strong belief that a person's feet or legs can be injured if his footprints on the sands or on soft earth be treated with ogun (medicine). Persons suffering from acute rheumatism or elephantiasis very often trace their suffering to malicious treatment of their footprints.

This use of footprints is often resorted to by malicious persons who fail to secure a direct means of wreaking vengeance of their offenders. A law of retaliation in Yoruba is :-

"Bi o ba ba a, ki o pa a; bi o ko ba ba a, bu u li ese." If you meet him, that is your enemy or offender, kill him; if you do not meet him, poison or harm him by means of his footprints."

In the olden days the person pointed out by the babalawo as having caused the death of another person in this way used to be sentenced to death.

(ii) Kiko-itq. "The use of spittle for harmful purposes".

The inrush of western civilization has hardly diminished the belief among the Yorubas that a severe cough or consumption may be caused by removing a person's spittle and treating it magically. As a matter of fact, consumption

was at one time regarded as being caused exclusively by this means. Hence the Yoruba equivalent for consumption is arun-ikoto "disease arising from the magical treatment of spittle". The alternative terms Iko-egbe "wasting or consumptive cough" is of comparatively late origin.

- (iii) Gbigbe pako, bata etc. "Removal of tooth brush, boots, shoes and other articles". The Yorubas believe that physical harm may be done to a person whose property is removed and treated magically.
- (iv.) Bibuje-aja. "dog's bite". In the case of a dog's bite, there is a belief that the wound from a dog's bite will be quickly healed if a piece of bread is soaked with the blood flowing from the wound and the dog is persuaded to eat the piece of bread will set healing properties radiating from the dog in motion and thereby result in the victim's rapid healing.
- (v.) Bibu-enia-je. "bite from human beings". A method of retaliation for a bite by a human being is to wash the wound with water which has been used by a blacksmith in dealing with hot iron. The magical effect of such treatment of the wound is the loss of all the biter's natural teeth.
- (vi.) Didi-enia. "Binding up a person". This is a process combining the principles of Homoeopathic and of Contagious magic. A garment, shoe cap or any other article which has been used by a person is securely tied and suspended on

a wall. This is supposed to be a symbol of the physical or mental powers of the owner tied up in a particular manner. The owner becomes incapable of movement in a particular direction or maintains an inexplicable form of movement for which he is not responsible. Hence when a person fails to act when he ought to act or behaves in an irresponsible way the Yoruba taunt is Nwon di tabi nwon ndi o ni "Have you been magically bound or are you being so bound?" This remark will put the person concerned in his right sense, if he is not really under magical influence.

(vii.) Ma kan "Do not touch, "Untouchable". Some objects are regarded as untouchable or inviolable. If these are touched, immediate death may be the result. Otherwise the magical force in the objects will continue to operate on the objects they have touched, although contact has long been severed. An example of such a sacrosanct, object is the dress of an egungun¹. The virtue in the dress continues to act on the person who has touched it until the destruction of the sacrilegious person is completed.

CHARMS AND AMULETS.

The use of charms and amulets is widespread in Yorubaland. Neither civilization nor any form of superior religion introduced into the country has had much effect in restricting its use.

A great variety of the charms and amulets may be found in different parts of the country. Some of them are animate, others are inanimate.

1. See Chapter VIII. above.

It is noteworthy that animals are used as protective charms. In Ilesha the monkey is used as a protective charm. The belief is that there is a force emanating from the animal which can nullify powerful medicines or ogun. Hence the animal may be found at the entrance of a chief or anyone who has the means of keeping one. In January, 1940 when the house of a powerful chief in Ilesha was attacked by a violent mob, the first object of attack was the chief's monkey. A loud shout was raised when the animal was killed. The underlying belief was that the death of the ^{protective} animal would allow the house to be stormed with impunity.

Snakes are also used for protective purposes. Some of them are kept in bedrooms, after they had been tamed. They are credited with great power for protecting the inmates from harm, especially from accidents.

A few of the inanimate charms used for protective purposes may be mentioned here.

Chains of large size are laid across doors or across premises to neutralize the effect of any powerful medicine (ogun) which may be introduced by a malicious visitor.

Stumps or barks of trees, dried leaves, bunches of feathers and other objects are hung above the lintels inside houses, as protective charms. these are first rendered efficacious by the recital of incantations over them.

In the olden days charms were widely used for the protection of property left on the roadside or in an open farm. The charms may consist of palm nuts, feathers, stones or some other familiar objects. These charms are so dreaded that no one

would dare to steal them. The charms are known as ale "protective juju", and the process of securing a property in this way is known as "pe ale le li ori" "invite ale to protect it". Ale therefore, seems to be an ancient or long lost and much dreaded god or goddess of vengeance, probably the same deity, Ale worshipped by the Ibos as a powerful Earth Goddess¹.

The dread of these ales made it possible in the olden days to hold what were then known as "wayside markets". In these markets which may be found on lonely roads, wares are exposed for sale without anybody being placed in charge of them. They are simply protected by Ales. The value of each ware is indicated by the number of stones placed near it. The buyer comes along, assesses the value of the ware by counting the stones, puts down the required sum of money and takes away nothing more than that for which he had paid. The tribal or national morality thus enforced was very effective. Cases of theft were rare; so great was the dread of the jujus or ales.

One of the painful results of the contact between western civilization and primitive culture is the removal of powerful sanctions of morality centred around the dread of jujus or "medicines" and the substitution for them of sanctions which operate ineffectively as deterrents from evil-doing. Well may the native exclaim: "Ye have taken away my gods which I made..... and.....ye say unto me, What aileth thee?"²

1. The Peoples of Southern Nigeria by P.A. Talbot, Vol.2 pp.43-46. The goddess Ale is sometimes depicted with a matchet in hand. Compare the Egyptian goddess Pasht, "The devouring 'one'".

2.-Judges Chapter 18 Verse 24.

Non-natives often say that the primitive native ^{possesses} a higher standard of morality than the civilized native. Whilst such a generalization is not wholly admissible, the fact must be stated that the unsophisticated native still has the privilege of being guided by efficient sanctions of morality which the civilized or semi-civilized native had been deprived of and for which an equivalent which would operate with the same force is left unprovided or is being gradually understood. A form of civilization which destroys age-long practices and sanctions of morality without providing adequate substitutes is a curse rather than a blessing to Yorubaland or to West Africa in general.

Charms used as mascots for good luck are known as AWURE. Those used as rejuvenators are known as AJIDEWE "A means of ever becoming as young as a little child". Those used as a means of protection against sudden death are known as "Maku" "Do not die". Several other charms exist, and are named after the purposes include acquirement of skill, wisdom, speech, immunity from gun-shot woundsore from the poisonous effect of snakes or insect bites, success in keenly contested competition and a variety of others. There is no doubt that these objects strongly evoke the faith of its users and thereby help in securing a vast amount of invisible force for the realization of aims and objects.

Customs die hard. A century of Christian teaching has not succeeded in obliterating the use of charms in Yorubaland. Christians as well as Pagans and Mohammendans still use them. Centuries will elapse before the belief in the efficacy of the charms can be dislodged from the sub-consciousness of the Yorubas. As long as the belief exists there, it will always

emerge into full consciousness and express itself in the use of charms.

Reference must be made here to the images used by the Ogbonis as charms. These are known as edas, and are used both as offensive and as defensive charms. The edas are usually made of brass and are images of human beings, male or female. They are miniature replicas of a pair of idols known as Eda Moles which are figures of a man and a woman whose heads were connected by a chain and whose lower extremities are fitted with iron prongs. The Eda Moles are usually placed in the centre of the shrine in every Ogboni house. It is on these idols that the Ogbonis and their High Priest place their sacrificial offering. It is in front of these idols that the most solemn ceremony of initiation takes place.

The Eda images may be compared with the Ibo images which are known as Agu or Egu and which are used by "medicine men" for almost the same purposes.¹

Charms used as love philtres are numerous in Yorubaland. Their use is not confined to would-be lovers or persons anxious to retain the love of their wives or husbands, but by servants who wish to procure strange and inexplicable attachment by their masters or mistresses to them. For this purposes various kinds of herbs and parts of the efficacy of Philtres is strong in Yorubaland. Undue attachment on the part of one of a married couple to the other is always attributed to magical love philtres. The usual expression is O ti ko o li aiya je. literally,

..... 1. See Peoples of Southern Nigeria by P.A. Talbot, Vol. 11, p. 161. See Also Niger Ibos by Dr. Basden pp. 76-97

"He or she has eaten the heart-soul of his or her partner".
i.e. he has secured absolute control over the other person's soul by means of a powerful magical love philtre.

WITCHCRAFT.

The subject of witchcraft must be considered along with that of magic. Witches and wizards claim the possession of magical or supernatural powers. These powers may be exercised for good purposes. For example, witches have been found who state that the magical powers were acquired for the purpose of protecting their own children. Very often, however, the powers are used wholly and solely for evil and anti-social purposes.

A few years ago the Editor of a Nigerian newspaper arranged for the publication of a symposium of views on witchcraft. The symposium show that witchcraft is still a terrible reality in African life. Contributors to the symposium are agreed that witchcraft is used almost exclusively for evil purposes and that belief in it still holds sway in civilized or semi-civilized communities.

The practice of witchcraft has always been viewed with disfavour. Hence the organizations connected with it are secret societies. In spite of the existence of a strong public opinion against the practice and in spite of the fact that in the olden days death or sickness caused by witchcraft was punishable by death, yet witchcraft guilds exist, and these meet in secret and often enough to guarantee their existence and efficiency. The secret meeting of these guilds are known as ajo "assembly meeting". The popular belief is that the members of the guilds must supply a human victim for use at each meeting.

Hence the well-known retort to the effusions of any angry woman: Ma fi mi da ajo "Do not use me for the ceremonial opening of your witchcraft meeting". i.e. Do not bewitch me.

Witches are credited with the power of transforming their heart-souls (okan) into birds or cats. In these objective forms they prowl around for their prey and suck the blood of their would be victims. When a witch has metamorphosed herself into a bird or a cat she falls into a deep sleep or she becomes unconscious, since her heart-soul is gone. It is popularly believed that if the bird is killed the witch will die immediately. If it is detained, she will be unable to wake or become conscious.

The weird cries of birds at night are often regarded as definite signs of the presence of witches. Should a person become ill or die shortly afterwards, the witch-doctor or babalawo (medicine man) must be summoned to detect the witch responsible for the crime. The underlying belief in this respect is well illustrated by the saying Aje ke lana, omo ku loni "The witch bird chirped yesterday, the child dies today", Witches are supposed to be most active between midnight and two or three in the morning.

A person accused of witchcraft used to be tried by ordeal. Should she be found guilty, she would be punished by death. The hatred of the practice, however, is so great that the culprit could be lynched without any trial. Of course, such a mode of trial or of violence has ceased owing to British influence. Trial by ordeal, however, still goes on in private.

Wizards are not as active or as numerous as witches in Yorubaland. They are also credited with supernatural powers, and they have their secret guilds, their favourite haunt being the foot of the African Mahogany tree known as Apa. This tree is sacred in Yorubaland. It is regarded as an emblem of vengeance and must not be cut down until the indwelling tree spirit has been duly propitiated by the offering of a fowl and palm oil.

Wizards are also credited with the power of converting their heart-souls into owls. In this objective form they carry out their nefarious practices at night

There is no doubt that somnambulism is practised by witches and wizards, but the belief in metamorphosis is a relic of superstition. Thought-projection, operated by a well developed will power, is undoubtedly an important element in witchcraft and wizardry.

It must be added here that, although the average Yoruba is a happy and merry person, yet the numerous occasions of dread inspired by supposed activities of witches and wizards are dark spots in his life. The benefit conferred upon the natives by disseminating the light of knowledge by means of which the darkness of ignorance and rank superstition can be dispelled, is therefore, inestimable.

DIVINATION.

In some of the earlier chapters a description of the chief supernatural methods by which the Yorubas claim ability to divine the future has been given. The methods centre around the Ifa Cult and also the Opelẹ Cult which is used in a lesser degree.

In addition to these there are a few other methods of devining the future.

The first of these is by the use of ceremonial water. This is known as Wiwo omi, literally, "looking at water", i.e. the process of foretelling the future by interpreting signs or figures rendered visible in water by magical processes. For this purpose the babalawo puts water in a large bowl. He then recites a large number of incantations until he believes that the water has been developed thereby into a supernatural condition. He looks into the water after hearing the question of his client and by means of the signs or figures which he claims to be visible to him, he proceeds to give the correct answer.

The writer once had the privilege of seeing a babalawo at work with his ceremonial water. He had been approached by an anxious father whose only daughter was reported ill in a boarding school about one hundred and twenty miles away. Both the babalawo and the father were unknown to each other prior to this occasion. The father enquired about the condition of his child. After looking at the water in front of him and uttering the required incantations the babalawo declared that the child was a girl and that she was very ill. In reply to further enquiries the babalawo replied that the child would die and that there was no remedy. On the father asking for help with an agonizing cry the babalawo declared that only the timely services of a powerful medicine man living in a certain village could save the child. The news of the child's death was telegraphed the following day, in spite of the efforts made by medical doctors qualified in some of the best British Universities.

Another method is that of using lustral water. This has been well described by Dr. Farrow :- "A young child is taken by the priest, and after the offering of a sacrifice, the child's face is washed with lustral water, which is prepared with shea-butter and edible snails. The child, in a trance, sees and hears what is going on in the spirit world, and reports to the priest. The child's work being finished, the priest, by the use of appropriate charms, restores it to normal consciousness, when the medium no longer remembers anything of what he has reported, the priest alone retaining the knowledge."

The method just described bears a strong resemblance to the method of hypnotism and clairvoyance. It is also an illustration of the great extent to which the babalawos develop their will powers, thereby forcing others into a state of suggestibility.

There is another interesting method of divination known as Wiwo ile literally "looking at the ground", i.e. a precautionary measure for ascertaining the future before embarking on a project or in order to find out explanations of unintelligible phenomena. The babalawo draws some figures on the ground, and by means of incantations he claims to be able to foretell the future from the conclusions he draws from his figures. Wiwo ile is a practice which will take several decades to become extinct in Yorubaland.

All the above methods are sometimes described by means of a comprehensive term, namely, wiwo nkan "looking at something". The thing "looked at" may assume any of the forms described above.

RAIN-MAKING.

Among the magical powers claimed by Yoruba magicians is that of rain-making. In every African Society the rain-maker or the rain-doctor is a well-known person. In Yorubaland there are no professional rain-makers, but there are several babalawos, powerful chiefs or members of secret societies who claim the power of causing rainfall at prescribed hour or prescribed days. Rainfall being abundant in Yorubaland, there is no need for evolving an order of priests who would magically or sacrificially cause rainfall. But the fact that rainfall is copious and is limited to certain seasons offers strong inducement to the claim or power to cause it at any prescribed hour.

It sometimes happens that there is a festival or an outing which is viewed with disfavour by a section of the community. The popular belief is that unless the chief of that section is placated by means of gifts, he may cause a heavy downpour of rain to mar the occasion. Persons intending to stage a show or perform marriage ceremonies or any other ceremony requiring fair weather are often advised to consult or placate persons reputed for the possession of magical controlling powers over the weather.

Instances are not wanting when rival chiefs or influential persons threaten one another with the marring of some impending ceremonies by causing a heavy downpour of rain. These instances are numerous enough to cause the superstitious belief to linger even in the minds of educated Yorubas.

NECROMANCY.

Necromancy is practised by the Yorubas, who strongly believe in the possibility of communicating with the dead.

It is practised in a mild form by the heads of families. Reference has been made above to the practice of talking to the dead about any important step to be taken by one of its members. For this purpose a small hole, some nine inches deep and four inches wide, is dug and the blood of a fowl or some other feathered fowl is poured into it. The head of the family then invokes the spirits of the deceased members of the family explains the step to be taken, and asks for their approval and help.

Necromancy, however, assumes a professional form. This has been well described by Bishop James Johnson: "There are amongst the heathens those in our country who profess to exercise the office of speaking with the dead and of being media of communications from them to the living and who are known as Awon Abokusoro - 'Speakers with the dead' - and whose deliverances have generally been found to be true. But the system does not seem to be so elaborate with them as with their fellow - Professors in Europe and America.....These divinations have often been successful.....This success must be attributed to either a synchronizing of divinely ordered events with those divination, or to God's permitted employment of them through the agency of the devil, with his superior knowledge and capacity to deceive those who would be deceived.....in spite of warnings".¹

1. Yoruba Heathenism p.36 seq.

The practice of necromancy is similar in many respects to what obtains among modern spiritualists in Europe and America. The necromancers claim that their intercourse with ^{the} dead ^{is real,} and they sometimes furnish the proof of its reality. The practice commands universal assent. The means of holding this mysterious intercourse is a secret jealously guarded by the priests.

A form of necromancy connected with burial customs is known as Iyaku "parting with the dead. It has been vividly described by the late Mr. Feyisara Sopein in the Nigerian Chronicle under the pseudonym of "Adeşola". His account has been thus summarized by Dr. Farrow :-

"There is a form of necromancy practised, if the deceased has died intestate, to find out what is his will concerning his property and the disposal of his dependant relatives. A council of elders is appointed and two days are decreed, with a week's interval between them, for the necessary ceremonies. On the first day sacrifices are offered and a white fowl is tied to a pole. A figure in white dashes from the room of the deceased, seized the fowl and flees into the bush, while the friends cry out, File, File! i.e. "Leave it, Leave it !" They follow, but none overtake the "spirit". Only the feathers of the fowl remain to mark the course taken. A week later, further sacrifices are offered, kola-nuts are split in divination and their fragments thrown into a little hole dug for the purpose, together with some oil, water and sacred leaves. Three men, each, holding in his hand the aton whip, demand the attendance of the spirit of the deceased. Their leader calls out his name and asks him to come out when he strikes on the ground e.g. Buko, -o-o-o-o-o-o-o'. Mo pe o-o-o-o-o-o-o'. Bi mo ba fi isan yi lu ile, ki o jade wa o-o-o-o-o-o-o'.

i.e. Buko Oh! I am calling thee, Oh! If I strike the ground with this whip, come out! Oh!"

There is no response at the first or second call. A third call is given, with an abusive reproach, "If you do not reply, I shall go away with the belief that your soul has gone away

into the body of an Ogbugbu (wild-duck) etc. "Then a strill voice is heard in a neighbouring grove, which after repeated strikings on the ground, declares his will, as requested."

The above account shows evidence of collusion and, although its genuineness is supported as an eye-witness account, it is difficult to regard it as a genuine case of necromancy.

CONNECTION WITH ANCIENT EGYPT.

It has been noted above that in Yoruba land, as in Ancient Egypt, the opposition between the priest and the magician does not exist, and that in both countries magic is the very foundation of religion.

Professor Maspero writing about magiciansⁱⁿ Ancient Egypt says :-

"The extent of their power exposed the magicians to terrible temptations: They were often led to use it to the detriment of others, to satisfy their spite or to gratify their grosser appetites. Many, however, made a gain of their knowledge, putting it at the service of the ignorant who would pay for it. When they were asked to plague or get rid of an enemy, they had a hundred different ways of surrounding him without his suspecting it.....In order to compose an irresistible charm they merely require a little blood from a person, a few nail-pairings, some hair, or a scrap of linen which he had worn and which from contact with his skin, had become impregnated with his personality. Portions of these were incorporated with the wax of a doll which they modelled, clothed to resemble their victim; thenceforward all the inflictions to which the image was subjected were experienced by the original; he was consumed with fever when his effigy was exposed to the fire, he was wounded, when the figure was pierced by a knife"¹.

The above description of magicians and their methods in Ancient Egypt is almost entirely true of magicians in Yorubaland, the chief difference being the mere substitution of mud in some cases by the Yorubas for the wax used by the ancient Egyptians.

1. Dawn of Civilization p.213-4.

Some other points of resemblance or identity in regard to magic in Yorubaland and in Ancient Egypt will now be noted.

1. The prevalence of magic. In regard to Ancient Egypt Professor Maspero says "Magic entered into all acts of life, with all its passions, love, hate, ambition, revenge, into the care of the sick"¹. Professor ~~Eyman~~ ^{Eyman} also says that "The objects for which magic was called upon to serve were as numerous as the requirements of life"².

These statements are also descriptive of the prevalence of magic in Yorubaland.

2. Divination. Professor Maspero says that "The Egyptians.... did nothing without consulting the gods"³. This is also true of the Yorubas.
3. Medicine. Magic is used in both countries for therapeutic purposes⁴.
4. Extensive use of armlets. Armlets were used extensively in Ancient Egypt. Over 2000 specimens have been preserved at University College and Catalogued by Professor Flanders Petrie in his book entitled "Amulets". Amulets are also used extensively in Yorubaland for a variety of purposes.
5. The Evil Eye. "The superstition of the evil eyes was rife in Ancient Egypt and every sort of precaution was invented for guarding against those of either sex affected with the vice"⁵. This is true also in Yorubaland.

1. New Light on Ancient Egypt, p.116.

2. Egyptian Religion p.159.

3. New Light on Ancient Egypt, p.144

4. See Wiedemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, pp.271,272.

5. Maspero, New light on Ancient Egypt, p.133.

6. Injurious Magic. The use of figures of a person for injurious magic was usual in Ancient Egypt as it now is in Yorubaland. Black magic in the form of witchcraft and sorcery, the art of inflicting persons with blindness and of making oneself invisible for the purpose of perpetrating crimes, and the idea of a person sucking another person's blood magically and invisibly were all found in Ancient Egypt as they are now found in Yorubaland.¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS. The above description of magic in Yorubaland shows that it has much in common with magic as practised in other parts of the world, but the impress of Ancient Egypt on it is clearly discernible. The points of similarity and identity cannot but form a part of the cumulative evidence in support of the theory of a cultural connection between the Yorubas and the Ancient Egyptians.

1. See Deveris, Memoires ii 202; Athenaeus, (Ed. Bohn) xii, 58; Herodotus (translation by Littlebury) iii, 11.

CHAPTER XV.

SURVIVALS OF HIEROGLYPHICS, EMBLEMS AND OTHER SYMBOLS.

SURVIVALS OF HIEROGLYPHICS, EMBLEMS
AND OTHER SYMBOLS.

Some survivals of elements in Ancient Egyptians culture, supporting the theory of a close connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas, have been noted in the preceding chapters. Another important survival will now be discussed. It is the survival of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics.

Various writers have seen the hieroglyphics, but their significance has hitherto been shrouded in mystery. Their identity with Egyptian hieroglyphics is a surprising revelation to the present writer. The survival of these inscriptions in spite of the lapse of so many centuries cannot but excite feelings of admiration for the intelligence and conservatism of their preservers.

The hieroglyphics may be found in different parts of the country, especially at Benin and Ile Ife.

SURVIVAL OF HIEROGLYPHICS AT BENIN.

A collection of hieroglyphics has been made by Mr. R.E. Dennett who, not knowing their significance, simply described them as "Chalk Marks" and explained some of them by a series of ingenious conjectures. 1.

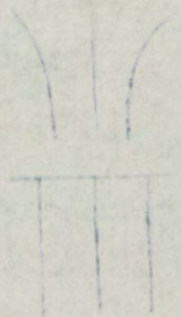
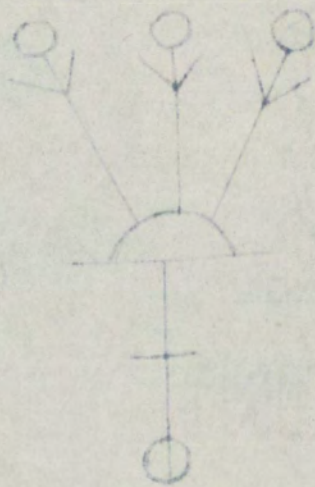
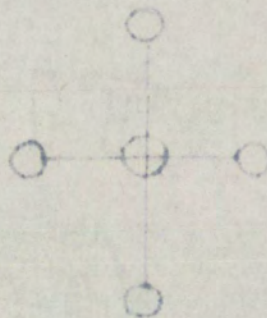
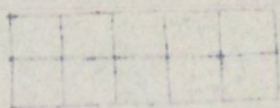
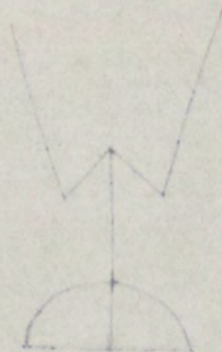
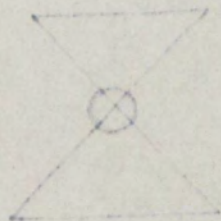
His collection, published in a book entitled "At the Back of the Black Man's Mind" is as follows :-

1. Inscriptions on page 215.

(See next sheet of paper)

It should be noted that Dennett inverted the figures.

1. See his Nigerian Studies, p.150.



1. The first diagram is a hyperbola with a small circle at the center.
 2. The second diagram is a V-shaped curve above a semi-circle.
 3. The third diagram is a rectangle divided into a 3x3 grid.
 4. The fourth diagram is a cross shape with circles at the ends.
 5. The fifth diagram is a semi-circle with three lines radiating from its center to three small circles above it, and a vertical line extending downwards to a circle.
 6. The sixth diagram is three vertical parallel lines intersected by three horizontal parallel lines.

(a) The lower symbol of (a)  (nefer)¹ is the Egyptian hieroglyphic meaning "good". The half moon  is the symbol for the half part of Egypt.²

Each of the three symbols stuck to the half moon is the Egyptian symbol Onku ³  usually held by deities. The symbols, therefore, denote a triad of deities - probably the triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus - reigning over Southern Egypt.

(b) The symbol is an Egyptian symbol⁴.

(c) The symbol marked (c)  is the Egyptian word hesp or sept, a 'nome'⁵

(d) An Egyptian symbol for "the land on one side of the Nile" is ateb,  the symbol for all Egypt being . The figure consisting of one ateb inverted over the other and joined together by a circle, therefore, denotes the "unions of both parts of Egypt."

(e) W is the Egyptian letter 's'⁷, the initial of the god Set or Sut. The half moon  is the symbol of Northern or Southern Egypt. The figure therefore, denotes "Set reigning over Northern Egypt".

(f) Figure (f) is probably a representation of the four elemental deities ⁸ worshipped in Ancient Egypt and surviving in Yorubaland as Olori Merin "The four-headed deity".⁹

(g) Figure (g)  is a survival of a cluster of lotus flowers.¹⁰

1. Budge, Egyptian language p.93, section 24, No.9

2. " " " p.75, " 13, "47

3. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.264, note 3.

4. " " " p.187

5. Budge, Op.Cit.p.75, Nos. 45 and 46.

6. " " " 47.

7. See Genasius, Hebrew Grammar, lists of Alphabets W is the Phoenician or Coptic modification of the original letter sekbet. See similar examples on the Moabite stone.

8. Maspero, Op.Cit., p.134.

9. See Chapter IX above.

10. Budge, Op.Cit., p.72, Nos.40, 42 and 43.

The above inscriptions are made on the ground in front of Ake, a deity in Benin. Figure (a) refers to Egyptian deities, probably the triad of Osiris. Figure (e) refers to Set. Figure (d) refers to the Union of all Egypt. The figures, when considered as a whole, give a striking confirmation to the theory of a close connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas.

2. Inscriptions on page 221.

These inscriptions are generally found at the foot of trees, the whole forming a group of objects known as Ake, "AXE".

The lean to sheds (a) are in the shape of an axe (— neter, a god)¹. Figures (b) (refer) and (c) Seklet have been explained above.² Figure (d) is a representation of the Egyptian lotus flower.

3. Inscriptions on page 192.

The figure marks the entrance to Arovia, a grove sacred to Ovia. The name of the place is Omi-ihl (wrongly spelt Omey). It is remarkable that the three hieroglyphic letters in the figure $\text{W}^3 \text{H}^4 \text{W}^1$ form |H| which is a part of the name of the place where they are found.

4. The figure on page 197.

The figure is that of a wooden object and two pieces of iron-stone placed outside the wall of a house on a clay platform and covered with a piece of board leaning in a slanting way on the wall. Pieces of iron are driven into the board in the form of lll, that is, in the modified form of the Egyptian letter s - sekhet - the symbol of the animal of Sut.⁵

1. See p.vii above; 2 See p.2 above.

3 & 4 See Budge, Op.Cit.p.31; 5 Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.83.



5. The figure on page 202 strongly resembles the Egyptian syllabic word , mas.¹

6. The figure on page 224.

The figures at the top and at the bottom may be regarded as symbolizing the union of both parts of Egypt.²

The sign  is the Egyptian letter s.³ The figures described by Dennett as cows' heads are probably crude representations of the head in the hieroglyph for Set.⁴

7. The figure ⁵ on page 225.

 strongly resembles the Egyptian character determinative of land.⁶  also resembles the character determinative of nu, city.⁷

⁸ survives in the Phoenician Alphabet as the letter z.

8. The figure on page 226.

Compare the symbol w or  with the Egyptian sign for water.⁹

SURVIVAL OF HIEROGLYPHICS IN OTHER DISTRICTS.

1. A few years ago the writer visited a chief at Isagatedo and noticed the following inscriptions on the wall near the couch on which the idols were placed :-    .   ¹⁰ are Egyptian symbols for twenty, and  is never explained above. The number probably indicates the number of deities worshipped in the village.

1. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.223.

2. See fig I (d) above.

3. Budge, Op.Cit., p.32.

4. " " p.62, No.21.

5. The characters in this figure closely resemble Phoenician character, see the comparative table of Alphabets in Genesisius Hebrew Grammar.

6. Budge, Op.Cit., p.75.

7. " " p.76 No.1

8. See Genesisius, Hebrew Grammar, List of alphabets.

9. Budge Op.Cit.p.75, No.55 the sign  is well known in Egyptian writings. 10. Budge Op.Cit.p.128.

2. Ifa symbols. It has been noted in chapter IV above that in recording the results of his divination the babalawo uses strokes or circles III or OOO¹. These symbols correspond with Egyptian symbols for numerals.

2. Yoruba Tribal Marks. It is interesting to note that most of the Yoruba Tribal Marks are Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols as may be seen in several works on Egyptology.² A few examples of the marks will be given here.
OYO MARKS.

(a) Abaja in sets of three    

(b) Abaja in sets of four    

(c) Variations of the Abaja    

(d) Pele  (e) Ture 

(f) Kẹkẹ or Gọmbọ   

OWU MARKS.

(a) Abaja Olowu 

(b) Keke Olowu 

1. Budge Op.Cit., p.107. III. OOO.

2. See works by Budge, Maspero, Champollion etc.

IFE MARKS.

ONDO MARKS | (One thick stroke on either cheek).

Ijesha Marks  ~  (Three long strokes)
(Four horizontal strokes)

Ifon Marks  (Eight thin strokes)

Igbomina Marks  (Three thick strokes)

Jebu Marks  (Three long strokes)

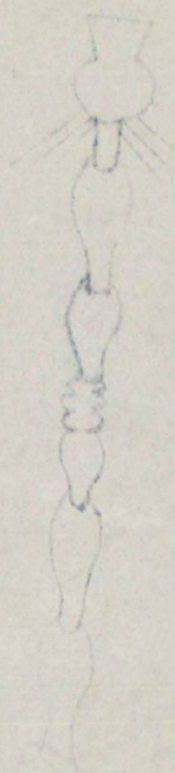
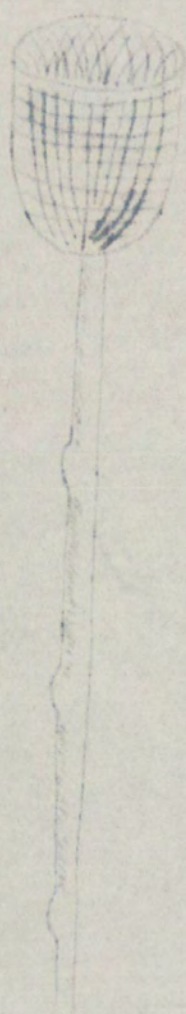
Egba Marks  ~  (Three short strokes)
(Vertical & horizontal strokes)

Yagba Marks 

The above examples show that most of the strokes are hieroglyphic strokes in sets of three or four, arranged in parallel lines either vertically or horizontally, as in Egyptian writings. Variations are made either by doubling ^{the} sets or increasing the number of strokes or by bending the strokes slightly into curves. Most of the marks are identical in arrangement with Egyptian numerals given by Professor Budge in his "Egyptian Language", pages 127 to 129 and with sets of Egyptian numerals accompanying vignets on pages 547 to 571 of his edition of the book of the Dead.

The Yagba tribal marks deserve comment. They are three long lines on each cheek, converging to a point, namely,  The figure resembles a cluster of lotus flowers well-known in Egyptian writings.¹

1. Budge Op.Cit.p. Nos.40-46.



As compared with other facial marks in West Africa, the Yoruba marks may be said to be very neat.

Egyptian Emblems in Benin.

Egyptian emblems also survive in Yoruba-land.

UKHURE.

The first of these is the sacred emblem known as OYISA or ESU or UKHURE. This is a long bamboo with a wicker basket at the top.

The words Oyisa and Esu have been explained in a previous chapter.¹ The word Ukhure is of Egyptian origin like the preceding two. It consists of three parts, namely, U-Khu-re; U is the initial vowel characteristic of Yoruba nouns, Khu is the Egyptian word Khu meaning "soul", "luminous spirit", and re is the name of the Egyptian god Ra or Re. The word therefore means "The soul of Re or Ra".²

The shape of the emblem is suggestive of its origin. It will be remembered that the lotus plant was regarded as sacred in Ancient Egypt. Its flower^{was} often used in connection with the emblem of the god Ra or Re! The god is supposed to spring out of a lotus flower at dawn.³ The upper part of the emblem UKHURE resembles the figure of the bud of an Egyptian lotus flower.⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising that the emblem is designated UKHURE or the soul of Re or Ra, implying that which contains the soul of Ra, from which, according to Egyptian belief, the god springs forth at dawn.⁵

1. Chapter III above.

2. This phrase occurs several times in Ancient Egyptian books, e.g. Budge, Book of the Dead, p.145.

3. & 5. See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p. 65.

4. " " " " " p.136.

The next emblem is another form of Ukhure, This is a stick made of bamboo, but differing in shape from the one described above. Near the top of it are tassels resembling the petals of a lotus flower. Such sticks are found on nearly all altars in Benin. They are also found in the private houses of chiefs, some of the Chiefs having as many as six. They are carried about on ceremonial occasions and are sometimes venerated as sacred objects. The Ukhure bamboo and sticks are survivals of the Egyptian lotus plant, together with the beliefs about the god Re associated with it.

Ukhure survives in other parts of Yoruba-land as A-WU-RE.¹

An Awure is a juju - an armlet, a waist-band, a ring or anything worn in some part of the body - as a sign of good luck.

A strong belief in the potency of Awure exists in Yoruba-land.

When a person is successful, the Yorubas say "Awure re je"

"His awure is successful".

By doubling the word U-Khure the Yorubas obtain the word kure-kure. "a fairy, elf, or nobgoblin". The initial vowel is not needed in a noun phrase.

EMATON.

The next emblem which has survived in Yorubaland is the EMATON. This is an important emblem in Benin. It consists of an iron staff ornamented with two figures of the chameleon, between which there are four leaf-like figures representing the god Aja which has been described in a previous chapter.

1. Figures similar to Ukhure are found in Egyptian Books. Compare the Lotus figures on pages 263, 264, 265, 356, 480 etc. of the Book of the Dead (Edition by Wallis Budge). In each case it is used as a sacred symbol, especially in connection with objects pertaining to the god Re or Ra.

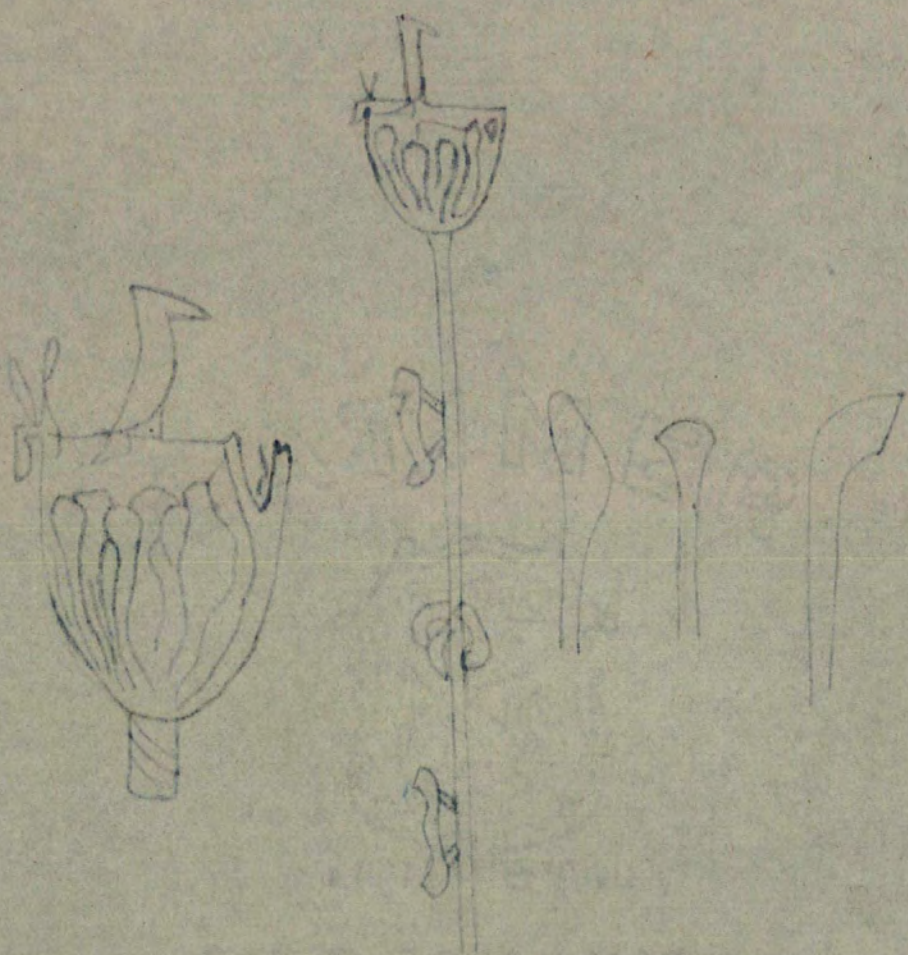


Fig. 1. - Section of the ovary.

Fig. 2. - Section of the ovary.

At the top of the staff is a bunch of figures surmounted by what has been described as the representation of a horse and a bird.

The emblem is a combination of several Egyptian emblems. The circular top of it is a survival of the lotus flower in full bloom.¹ The different parts of the circular top are survivals of Egyptian emblems. Dennett has given pictures of the different parts, and it is easy to see those which he numbered 6 and 8 are   the flail and the crook, Egyptian symbols which are usually carried by Egyptian kings and deities.² The bird in the figure is a survival of the Egyptian bird known as Bennu.³ A comparison of the figure of the bird with the figure of the bennu bird as it is found in books on Egyptology⁴ clearly proves this statement. The long beak of the latter as well as its general appearance survives in the former.

In the vignette given by Prof. Maspero in the Dawn of Civilization, Ra is seen springing from a lotus flower in the form of a human being and holding the crook and the flail.⁵ In the papyrus of Ani (sheet 28) a head is seen springing from a lotus.

-
1. See a similar figure in Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.136. A similar figure is given by Budge in the Book of the Dead p.263 Vignette and p.35.
 2. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.13; Budge, Egyptian language p.119, No.49, etc.
 3. This bird has been identified with the phoenix. The word bennu is very similar to the Yoruba word I-bin-nu (Ebini) or Benin, and it is probable that the latter is derived from the former.
 4. See Budge, Book of the Dead, pages 187, 188, 28, 389 etc.
 5. Same as Note 1 above.

This is also the case in the papyms of Turin (see Lapsius, Todtenbuch, Bl.31). In other vignettes Ra springs from the lotus in the form of a bennu bird,¹ by means of which he is often represented. The figure of a bird on a figure similar to a lotus in shape is a further confirmation of the Egyptian origin of the emblem.

Further, a part of the emblem has been described as the representation of a horse. This description is incorrect. A close study of the part seems to suggest a crude representation of a bark. In books on Ancient Egypt there are vignettes showing the bird bennu standing on the bark of Ra.² The two feathers on the right hand side of the bark are either a representation of the ~~two feathers~~ usually found on the back of the head of the bennu or crude representation of the prow and the stern of the bark.

PILLARS.

Pillars can be seen in many parts of Benin. The noteworthy point about them is that several of them are usually three in number when found together.

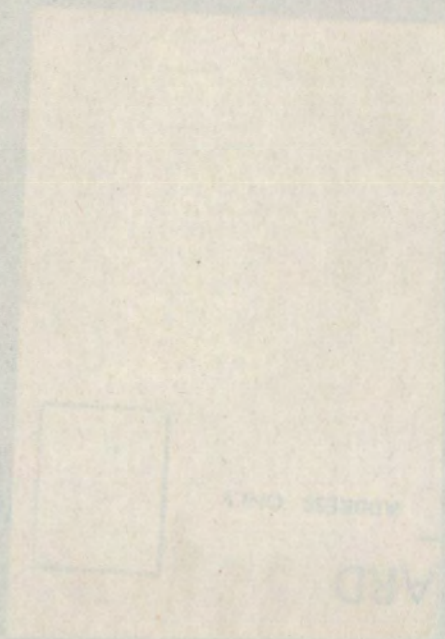
For example, at Esule in the Kukuruku country north of Benin proper, there are three pillars, the figures on them being those of two males and a female.

There are also three pillars at Iaiu, a place whose name bears a strong resemblance to that of Ialu in Ancient Egypt.

Well-informed persons in Benin believe that these pillars are representations of a god and his wife and their son.

1. The bennu bird has been described as the "morning star of Ra". See Budge, Book of the Dead, p.61.

2. Budge, Book of the Dead, pp.305, 389.



The images in the juju house at Idungena have been commented upon in Chapter III. They closely resemble the images of Osiris. Isis and Horus given by Professor Maspero on page 175 of the Dawn of Civilization. It is noteworthy that in the case of the latter, just as in the case of the former, Osiris, the father, squats on a pillar.

The pillars in Benin which are regarded by the people as representations of a triad of deities may also be regarded as a survival of the triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus.

The survival of the above emblems constitute a further evidence of the impress of Ancient Egypt on Yoruba primitive culture.

EGYPTIAN EMBLEMS AND SYMBOLS IN ILE IFE.

OPA ORANYAN AND OTHER PILLARS.

Reference has been made above to Oranyan¹ (the living Ra) the mythical founder of the Yoruba nation.

In Ile Ife there is an obelisk known as Opa Oranyan. The word Opa comes from the Egyptian word per² (O is an initial vowel, and er becomes a in Yoruba). Per means "a house" "a building"; nyan comes from the West African root word "ye" which means "to live, to exist". Opa Oranyan, therefore means "The obelisk of the living Ra".

Dr. Johnson gives a good description of the obelisk :-

1. See chapter II p. O-ra(n)-ya(n) = the living Ra.

2. See Budge, Egyptian language, p.76. No.3.

"The obelisk is about 10 to 12 feet in height, and about four feet square in width at the base; it tapers to a point, and has upon one face of it, several spike nails driven into it, and some carvings as of ancient characters. The nails are arranged in such an ordered manner as to render them significant. First, there are 61 in a straight line from the bottom upwards at intervals of about 2 inches in the midline; and next, at about a distance of 4 inches on either side of this and from the same level on top, two parallel lines of 31 nails, each running downwards and curving below to meet those of the midline. Then in the space between these three rows of parallel lines and about the level where they converge, is found most conspicuous of the carvings ~ ~

"What is conjectured as most probable is that the carvings are the ancient characters Resh and Yod which stand for Oranyan".¹

This conjecture is ingenious but incorrect.

It is only an imperfect knowledge of Hebrew characters that can lead to such a conjecture. The first symbol differs considerably from the Hebrew letter Resh; its top is thick and does not curve up like Resh ~ . The second symbol has to be turned round before it can bear the slightest resemblance to Yod.² The present writer believes that the two symbols are the emblems of dominion and sovereignty, usually held by Egyptian deities.

(2)



(1)



The first symbol is the flail and the second symbol is the crook. These emblems are usually held by Ra, and their appearance on an obelisk of Ra is quite appropriate and in keeping with Egyptian custom. Professor Maspero gives a vignette showing the god Ra holding the same emblems on page 136 of the Dawn of Civilization.³

1. History of the Yorubas, p.146.

2. See the characters as drawn in the accompanying sketch of the Obelisk.

3. See also vignettes on pages 380 and 588, Book of the Dead, translation by Budge.

Near the pillar are the remains of two other pillars, the rectangular bases on which they formerly stood being found nearer the foot of the standing pillar. The three pillars probably formed a triad. Since the pillar still standing has been shown to be an obelisk of Ra, it is not too far-fetched to imagine that the two other pillars are obelisks of Tum and Khpera respectively. It will be remembered that these gods were always associated with Ra¹ in Ancient Egyptian mythology, the three gods forming a triad in Heliopolitan theology.²

For the sake of accuracy attention should be called to some popular mistakes in regard to Opa Oranyan. Some writers regard the pillar as a crude representation of the phallus. P. Amaury Talbot speaks of "Awpa Awranyan, the stick (or Phallus) of Awyanran, one of the earliest of Yoruba Kings. Dennett also says that on enquiry he has been informed that the word Opa is a slang for the penis.³ Leo Froebenius regards the pillar and similar ones as representation of elephants' tusks.⁴ Talbot also subscribes to the idea of elephant tusks and says

"The pillar seems to represent an elephant tusk, which was perhaps at the time reckoned one of the insignia of chieftainship but was no doubt principally worshipped as an emblem of fertility."

Captain Elgee in his paper to the African Society translates the words Opa Awranyan as "The walking stick of God". It may be stated here quite definitely that no native would assign such meanings to the words.

1. Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol.II p.340.

2. Nigerian Studies, p.26.

3. The Voice of Africa Vol.I, pp.298-299.

4. Op.Cit.Vol.II p.340.

To confirm the meaning of the words given above, that is "the house or the obelisk of the living Ra"¹, attention should be called to the fact that the shape of the pillar is similar to that of an Egyptian obelisk as shown in books on Ancient Egypt.² The pillar may be compared with the obelisk of Usirtasen I still standing on the plain of Heliopolis.³

Writing on the subject of obelisks in the Old Kingdom of Egypt Dr. C.P. Tiele says "The single obelisk of the Old Kingdom that we know of was erected there (i.e. Heliopolis) by Usertasen I. Obelisks like this had a two fold purpose; primarily, they symbolized the rays of the sun.....their other purpose was to express steadfastness and durability..... They were a stone representation of the props of Shu, upon which Ra walks. Hence at Heliopolis they were found in great number."⁴ This passage is significant. It shows, in the first place, that obelisks regarded as houses or haunts of the sun-god existed in Ancient Egypt. Secondly, it throws light on the figure formed by the nails stuck on Opa Oranyan. The figures resembles a modified form of sekhet, , the Egyptian letter S5. Now the obelisks in Egypt were known as "Pillars of Shu"⁵ It is significant that Opa Oranyan bears the hieroglyphic for s (sekhet), the initial of the god Shu. Thirdly, it shows that there were several such obelisks in Heliopolis just as there are several obelisks or pillars in the Ile Ife today.

1. "The House of Ra" that is Pa Ra is a well-known expression in Egyptian Books. (On(Heliopolis) is known as "Pa Ra".

2. Budge, Egyptian language, p.78, No.53.

3. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.507.

4. History of the Egyptian Religion (Ed. Ballingal) 1882 pp.130-131

5. See page 3 above, Note 1.

6. See Chapter IV Irōhu or the Pillar of Shu in the Odus of Ifa.

POST

CORRESPONDENCE

Fourthly, the ideas of steadfastness and durability have survived. A well-known Yoruba expression is "O le koko, o duro gbain bi Opa Oranyan". "It is as strong or durable as, and it stands steadfastly as, the obelisk of the living Ra". Fifthly, just as the obelisks in Egypt were made of stone, so also were the obelisk in Ile Ife.

It would be well to repeat here that in addition to Opa Oranyan, there are other stone pillars in various parts of Ile Ife. Most of these appear to have been erected for the same purpose as that of Opa Oranyan, but there are a few which the natives describe as the symbols of Ogun. Among the former the most note-worthy is the Ikere monolith, whose shape has strongly suggested the idea of representation of elephant tusk to various writers. The word I-ke-re it may be noted, is a survival of the Ancient Egyptian word qere-s which means "a statue, an image".

To sum up: Opa Oranyan and several other pillars in Ile Ife are known as the "pillars of Shu" and regarded as the houses or haunts of the sun-god Ra. The figure formed by the nails on Oranyan is the Egyptian letter S  and the figures carved on it are the crook  and the flail , emblems of dominion and sovereignty in Ancient Egypt, often carried by the human representations of Ra, Horus, Osiris and other gods.

ORE, AND HIS SLAVE.

Next in importance come the stone statues of Ore and of his slave.

The statue of Ore is, according to Yoruba mythology, the actual body of an Ancient Oni (pronounced Awni) or King of Ife converted into Stone. There is no doubt, however, that it is the

the work of a stone mason, and that the myth must have been invented when the knowledge of such masonry had vanished.

The statue is "about thirty inches high, with hands folded over the abdomen, which is covered by a kind of apron, while at the other side hangs an appendage consisting of tassel-like ornaments. A necklace is carved round his neck, while another hangs from it over the abdomen and there are armlets on the wrists. The head has been much defaced and the forehead and upper part worn away, probably by the constant libations poured over it. There is a hole in the forehead, said to have been caused by a bullet fired against him by rebels. The hair is represented by little iron pegs inserted into small holes, while the ears are rather large."¹ "The treatment of the hair in this granite head is specially of the greatest interest. The hair is represented by little iron pegs inserted in small holes". The interesting part.....is decidedly its head..... the thick-lipped, broad-nosed face is negroid in type. The ears are large. A long lock of hair, missing on the right, hangs down from the left ear".²

At a short distance on the right of Ore stands the statue of "Gbanna Ore" "or the slave of Ore". The statue is "some thirty two inches, in height, similar in type, but the negroid face is in a much better state of preservation. This also has a sort of ruff round the neck, from which a chain hangs down as in Awre, while the tassel appendages are again carefully sculptured".³

1. Talbot, Peoples of Southern Nigeria Vol.II.p.339.

2. Leo Froebenius, The Voice of Africa, Vol.I, p.298.

3. Talbot, Peoples of Southern Nigeria Vol.II p.339.

In these two statues there is a survival of representations of the god Re or Ra. The word O-re, is a literal survival of the word Re, O being the initial vowel characteristic of Yoruba nouns.

The interesting thing about the statue of Ore is its similarity to the figure of the child Horus in whose form Ra springs out of a lotus flower in the vignette reproduced by Maspero on page 136 of the Dawn of Civilization. The points of similarity are as follows: In both figures the god wears necklaces; in the case of Ore the necklaces are merged into a kind of ruff-like ornament. In both figures the god wears wristlets. Also in both figures there is a lock of hair hanging down one of the ears; in the case of Re, the hair is on the right side whilst in the case of O-re, it is on the left. This lock of hair is known in Ancient Egypt as "the divine lock of the god Ra",¹ which was once hidden in a reliquary of stone at Pa-Aart (House of Lock) and afterwards cast into the great lake of Pa-aart where it became a crocodile.² The survival of this lock of hair in the Yoruba state of Ore is a striking confirmation of the theory of close connection between the Ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas.

The second statue standing near the statue of O-re contains features similar to those of Ore described above. The statue has been described as "the slave" of O-re. There is no doubt that the statue is a representation, in a human form, of one of the followers of Re in his daily journey.

-
1. Compare also the lock of hair in the vignette in the Papyrus of Oni in the British Museum, No.10,470.
 2. See Griffith, Minor Explorations, in the Seventh Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund (1890) pp.71-73. See also Maspero, Dawn of Civilization pp.169-171.

The deity represented here in a crude form is probably the constant companion of Re (or Horus) known as the Eye of Re (or Horus).¹

It may be remarked in passing that the negroid features of the two statues very closely resemble the negroid features of the great sphinx of Gizeh! This should not cause any surprise in view of the complete identification of Ra with Horus.²

The Sphinx which is an image of Horus may, therefore, be regarded as the image of Ra and may rightly have features in common with statues representing Ra or Re.

OTHER SYMBOLS.

Among the other relics the most important are the symbols found in the crocodile temple at Ile Ife. These consist of stone representation of crocodiles and eggs placed in a rudely constructed temple. "Symmetrically placed there is a stone crocodile to^{the} right and left in front of a stone block artificially rounded, set on end. These blocks.....I would like to call drop-stones 1.....Before each of these drop-stones, the more oval of which is twenty-four and the more conical one nineteen and a quarter inches high, there is a crocodile, the larger and better-finished of the two is twenty-four and three eighths, and the other twenty-one and a quarter inches long."³ Each crocodile lies by the side of an egg.

Here in the stone representations of crocodiles and eggs there is survival of elements of Ancient Egyptian sun-worship.

1. Maspero, Dawn of Civilization p.137 et. passim.

2. G.F. Moore, History of Religions pp.152-168.

3. Leo Froebenius, Op.Cit., Vol.I p.300.

The symbol of the egg is well-known in connection with the ancient Egyptian religious symbolism and is constantly applied to the sun-god, particularly to Ra or Osiris and Horus who are identified with him. Representative examples may be given here. Ra is thus described in the Book of the Dead: "O Ra in his egg who shines through his disk, who glitters on the horizon".¹

The sun was regarded by the Ancient Egyptians as an egg which was laid daily by the mate of Sibü. The egg was regarded as an emblem of fertility, and also as an abode of the sun-god especially of Ra.²

Equally significant is the vignette and the description of the ninth Aat of Secket Aaru in the Book of the Dead. The vignette contains the figure of a crocodile touching with its snout a figure which has been described as a vase but the shape of which strongly suggests that it is an egg. In the description of the Aat there are frequent references to a divine egg. The god Osiris, who had been identified with Re or Ra is adored as "O thou holy god who dwellest in thine egg".³ It is highly probable that a crocodile and an egg are found together in this vignette just as they are found together in the crocodile temple at Ile Ife.

Further it has been pointed out above⁴ that "the divine lock of hair" belonging to Ra was changed into a crocodile when thrown into the lake of Pa-Aart. The crocodile thus become a sacred animal symbolical of Ra in the popular religion of Ancient

-
1. Edition by De Rouge, Chapter XVII.
 2. The Egyptian ideas in general concerning the egg are described by Lefebure in *l'Oeuvre dans la Religion Egyptiennes, in the Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Vol. XVI, pp. 16-25.
 3. Book of the Dead, (Edition, Budge), pp. 492, 493.
 4. See History of Religions by F. Moore, Vol. I page 169 Sun-crocodile or Sebek - Re.

Ancient Egypt, especially when the great development of solar worship caused Sebek, the crocodile god, to be identified with Ra! Lastly, it should be noted that blocks of stone were often found in Egyptian Temples. This ^{is} well supported by the following quotation :- "Several blocks of stone with marks of feet were found in the temple".¹

In view of the connection of the crocodile and the egg with the Egyptian religions symbolism and in view of the existence of crocodiles and eggs in the temple found in the grove of O-re (the survival, of the sun-god Re), the latter crocodiles and eggs may be safely regarded as representations of the sun-god Re and as survivals of Egyptian emblems.

A brief reference may be made here to the other relics in Ile Ife.

Among these is the bronze head of Olokun. This effigy clearly shows the skill and dexterity of the Yorubas in making statues of bronze.

The features of the effigy are distinctly negroid.

Besides this effigy there are several portrait-heads made in terra-cotta and excavated by the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in December 1910. All these are survivals of a lost art among the Yorubas.

Several terra-cottas may still be found in various parts of Ile-Ife. The Rev. J.S.Adejumo has a fine collection of these terra-cottas, and the present Oni of Ife has a museum of interesting relics. Unfortunately many of the relics are in the possession of natives who know very little about their archaeological

1. Flinders Petrie, Koptos, 24.

archaeological value and who could hardly be induced to part with their precious treasures.

Lastly, reference must be made here to the stone chair presented by a former Oni of Ife to Sir William Macgregor and placed, together with other relics, in the Egyptian Court of the British Museum where all the relics appear at first glance to be among kindred works of art.

CHAPTER XVI.

SURVIVALS OF HIEROGLYPHICS, EMBLEMS AND OTHER SYMBOLS.

CHAPTER XVI.

SURVIVAL OF HIEROGLYPHICS, EMBLEMS AND OTHER
SYMBOLS (continued).

HISTORICAL CONNECTION OF IFE RELICS WITH ANCIENT EGYPT.

The existence of the relics described above in Ile Ife has raised several questions. One can hardly help asking : "What is the origin of the sculptures? Who were the masons? What is the historical connection of the relics with the artistic cultures of other parts of Africa? What is their religious significance?"

Some of these questions have been partly answered in connection with the description of the relics. Attention has been called to the fact that objects similar to, or identical with, the relics existed in Ancient Egypt.

Some writers suggest that the high culture indicated by the relics was imported to Ile Ife by Phoenician traders from the North who must have travelled extensively and settled in Yorubaland until they executed all the stone and bronze work which has partly survived. This suggestion is not supported by the nature of the relics. There is very little evidence of Phoenician characteristics in the survivals; as a matter of fact, the intrinsic evidence of the relics, both from the point of view of style and also from the point of view of ideas, symbolism and inscriptions, is distinctly Egyptian rather than Phoenician.

Other writers suggest that the culture must be traced to Portuguese traders coming from ^{the} South or to Christians from Europe who have been credited with the introduction of brass and glass work into Benin. This suggestion cannot bear a historical test/

test and can be dismissed as a mere conjecture without any sound foundation.

Professor Leo Froebenius believes that the importers of this high culture have all died out; that they were not the negritic Yorubas; that their descendants have become mixed with the "pure" Yorubas, but the strain of their stock can be seen in the light-coloured skin of some of the Yorubas. This belief is based on the assumption that once a nation is civilized, circumstances and environment cannot cause it to degenerate and that any degree of culture found in Yorubaland must be treated as non-native. These assumptions cannot be proved. Unless it can be definitely stated that those who executed the stone work in Ile Ife lived just long enough there without in any way influencing the native inhabitants, and dying with their art, the belief of Professor Froebenius must be treated as an inadequate explanation of the phenomena.

Over against these suggestions and belief there is the unshaken evidence of the natives of Ife that the relics were the works of the ancestors of the Yorubas and that most of the relics have a religious significance which agrees with the existing religious ideas and beliefs.

Detailed criticism of the suggestions regarding the Phoenician origin and detailed proof of the views that credit for the relics must be shared by Yoruba ancestors are out of place in a work which deals specifically with the religious side of the question. Taking all the available data into consideration, especially in view of the saturation of Yoruba customs and beliefs

by/

by those of the Egyptians, it is difficult to deny active contact between the Yorubas and the Egyptians. This contact was close and uninterrupted for a long period.

According to Talbot, there was much intercourse between Egypt and the Sudan between 2000-500 B.C.¹ It was probably during this period that the first wave of Yoruba immigration took place.

One important fact should be noted here. The stone pillars are objects of worship to the Yorubas. Around them is a chain of religious sentiment which has remained unbroken for several centuries. If the pillars have been entirely the work of visitors or settlers and the Yorubas themselves have had no traditional connection with their erection, the non-native character of the pillars would have prevented the growth of such a strong religious sentiment around them.

All the available data point clearly in one direction, namely, that the relics are remnants of the culture brought by the Yorubas from Egypt and maintained by successive waves of immigrants until the impulse of the culture had spent its energy.

The culture indicated by the survival of pillars of the sun-god, symbols of eggs and crocodiles, and other objects is, in many respects, the Heliolithic culture of Heliopolis. The description given above, especially the survival in some cases of the name of the sun-god Re or Ra, clearly proves this statement. The Heliolithic culture, according to Professor

Smith

1. Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol:I, p.19.

Smith, spread in all directions from Egypt - from the third to the first millenium B.C. It involves the production of stone sculptures and stone worship.

Professor Perry gives the chief elements of the culture as follows :- (1) Agriculture (2) The use of stones for dolmens, stone circles (3) the carving of stone images (4) Pottery making (5) Metal-working and pearl fishing (6) The use of Polished stone implements (7) Rulers consisting of (a) The children of the sun (b) A class associated with the underworld, who survived as war-chiefs (8) The sun-cult (9) The practice of mumunification (10) The great mother goddess (11) Human Sacrifice, connected with agriculture and the cult of the mother goddess (12) Mother right (13) Totemistic clans (14) The dual organization (15) Exogamy.

All these elements survive in Yoruba primitive culture, with the exception of those which are ruled out by geographical conditions.

The affinity of the Yoruba pillars at Ile Ife to the Egyptian pillars at Heliopolis clearly ~~substantiates~~ the theory of Phoenician workmanship. The affinity of the statues of Ile Ife to the statues at Memphis and Thebes also narrows down the conflicting theories of the origin of the former to Egypt exclusively.

It may be added here, however, that Heliopolis was not the only centre of sun worship in Ancient Egypt. According to Professor Wiedmann, "Sun worship existed in Egypt from prehistoric times, and it held its place in popular

popular favour until the latest period of Egyptian history. The obelisks which stood at the entrance of the temples were dedicated to the sun".¹

But more elements from the Heliopolitan sun worship seem to have survived in Yorubaland than from any other form of Egyptian sun worship.

An important survival from Heliopolis may be noted here. Plutarch tells us that "the ox that is kept at Heliopolis which they call Mnevis - sacred to Osiris....., is black also".² It is interesting to note that the Greek word Mnevis survives in Yorubaland by way of Egypt. The initial consonant and the final consonant of the word are dropped in Yoruba, following the rule that a pure Yoruba noun begins with a vowel and the rule that a final consonant which does not receive a vowel to form a syllable is dropped. The word thus becomes clipped into "evi". Now the letter y does not exist in the Yoruba alphabet. It is therefore changed to w. Hence the word becomes "EWI", the name of a Yoruba King or Paramount chief who, in former years, was given respect approximating to divine honour. The country ruled by this chief is known as "ADO EWI", that is, the settlement of "EWI". The colour of the Ox is noteworthy. The face of Osiris was black and his black image was known as didu or dudu, words which mean "BLACK" in the Yoruba language.

Granite statues of gods may be found in various parts of Ancient Egypt.³ These include statues of Ra or Re, although no whole statues^{of} the god have yet been discovered.⁴

1. Ancient Egyptians, p.16.

2. Isis and Osiris (trans Mead) XXXIII, 5.

3. See Erman, Egyptian Religion, p.248.

4. See F.Petrie, Tombs of the Courtiers, XXX, 5.

statues shows that they are
A close examination of some of the similar to the
Memphite Egyptian work of the fifth century B.C. Among those
found by Leo Froebenius there is one which Sir Flinders Petrie
believes to be "obviously a copy of Roman work of about the
second century." This is another Roman survival, but there is
no doubt that it has travelled to Yorubaland by way of Egypt.

DERIVATION OF ILE IFE.

An illustration of the extent to which the Heliolithic
culture has permeated Yoruba primitive culture is furnished by the
large number of Yoruba words embodying elements in the former
culture. Nearly all the names of the gods associated with sun-
worship in Heliopolis and Hermopolis have survived in Yoruba.
Some of the names are Ra, or Re, Osiris, Horus, Khepera, Khopri,
Shu, Adumu or Atumu, Tum and Thot. Some survivals of these names
or derivations from them have been noted above. Here a few
interesting survivals may be noted. Just as Heliopolis the chief
centre of sun worship in Ancient Egypt was known as Pa ra
"The House of Ra", so also is Ile Ife the Chief centre of sun-
worship in Yorubaland known as the "House of the holy souls (of
Ra)". The derivation of Ile Ife is as follows :-

The word Ile means a house. The word I-fe is of Egyptian
origin. It will be remembered in the Book of the Dead there are
numerous references to "the holy souls of Ra" at Heliopolis.
The Egyptian form of this term is "Neferu-kan-Ra". The word I-fe
is derived from n-e-fe-ru; the initial n is omitted, so that as
a Yoruba noun the new word may begin with a vowel; the final
syllable is elided. N-e-fe-ru thus becomes I-fe (an e sound in

Yoruba/

Yoruba is phonetically written i.) That this is the correct derivation is supported by two facts. First, the word nefer, the singular of neferu survives in Yoruba as I-fa or -nifa.¹ The survival of the plural neferu cannot be regarded as impossible. Secondly, the word nefer survives in the name of a district in Ile Ife itself. That district is known as Oramfe (O-RA-MFE or O-Ra-NIFE m being often used as a contraction of ni, and O being an initial vowel characteristic of a pure Yoruba noun). Oramfe is thus modification of Ra nefer, a well-known Egyptian phrase.²

Ile Ife may, therefore, be regarded as a survival, in an abbreviated form of "Pa neferu-kau-Ra". "The House of the divine souls of Ra."

Two other survivals may be noted. The first is the word Wura "The Khu or the soul of Ra". The word wura means "gold" in Yoruba and is derived from the colour of the golden orb of the sun at sunrise or at sunset. The second is the word Biri-kiti "round". The word appears to be derived from Kho-pri Kuti "Khopri or the sun god of the two horizons". The idea of roundness is derived from the shape of the sun at sunrise in the eastern horizon and at sunset in the western horizon.

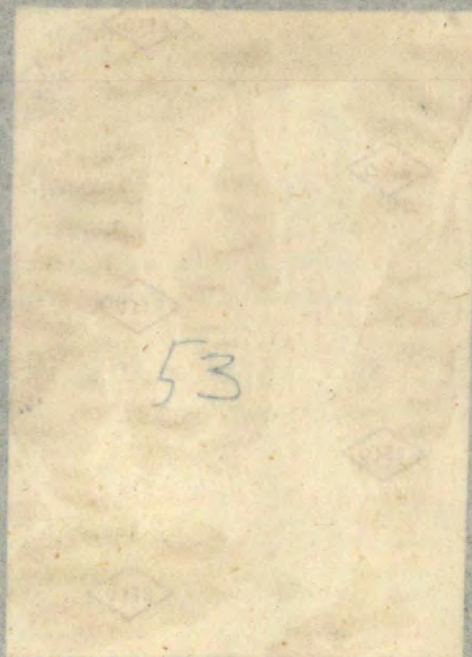
OLOKUN, EBO-OLOKUN, EBORA, IMOLE.

Reference has been made above to Olokun the Lord or Owner of the Sea, as one of the minor deities. There is evidence both at Ile Ife and at Benin that he was once a major deity.

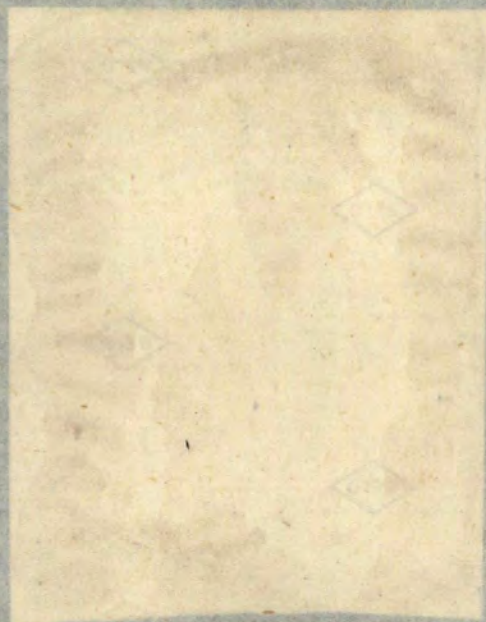
About two miles north of Ile Ife there is a grove known as Ebo-Olokun. It is now thickly overgrown with wood. It was

1. See Chapter IV above.

2. Compare Osiris nefer and see various parts of the Book of the Dead.



Ms. 53. - O. J. K. n. n.



Ms. 53. - O. J. K. n. n.

at this grove that the antique works of art were excavated by Professor Leo Froebenius and his co-workers. The relics excavated include a large quantity of glass beads, a large number of terra-cottas depicting human and animal heads, fragments of urns, jars, pottery, jugs, pipes and other objects.

The most important object excavated at Ebo-Olokun is the bronze head of Olokun himself. This valuable relic is thus described by Professor Leo Froebenius :

"It measures fourteen and a half inches from the tip of the diadem to the neck line; the face from the edge of the forehead to the chin, sixteen and three quarter inches. It is cast in what we call "à cire perdue" , or hollow cast, and very finely chased indeed, like the finest Roman examples. It cannot be said to be 'negro' in countenance, although it is covered with quite fine tattooed lines, which at once contradicts any suggestion of its having been brought from abroad. The setting of the lips, the shape of the ears, the contour of the face, all prove, if separately examined, the perfection of a work of true art, which the whole of it obviously is. The diadem surrounding the head is specially remarkable. There is a flower in its centre behind which rises an entwined staff, ending in a button".¹

Myths current among the people of Ile Ife suggest that Olokun was the creator of the world and of the major deities Odudua and Orisala.

The abode of Olokun is, according to the people of Ife, in the bed of the Ocean or Sea. This ocean or sea was formerly on the site of the city of Ile Ife. Having built the city the god retired to the bed of an adjoining River. The people of Ilesha, twenty miles from Ile Ife, say that the Olokun dwells on a sacred mountain. The people of Benin City believe that he dwells in the bed of an adjoining river known as Owre or Ore.

The terra-cottas are known as Eboṛa or Imole.

1. The Voice of Africa Vol.I, p.310.

One cannot but ask: "What is the origin of these relics?" One can easily understand why the people at Lagos who dwell near the coast worship Olokun, the god of the sea or Ocean. But why should the peoples of Ile Ife and Benin living in Interior cities far away from the sea and who perhaps had never seen the sea be ardent worshippers and admirers of the god of the sea or ocean?

The answer to these questions lies in the historical connection existing between Ancient Egyptian civilization and Yoruba primitive culture.

According to Egyptian mythology, Tum or Atumu (Adumu) was the god of the primordial ocean,¹ the soul of the deep watery abyss. At Heliopolis he was identified with Ra and was known as Atum-Ra or Ra-Tum. The survival of Ra in Yorubaland suggests the survival of Tum. So close is the resemblance between Tum and Olokun that it is difficult to regard the latter other than as the counterpart of the former. It will be remembered that Tum, the Egyptian god of the primordial ocean is often described in Egyptian books as the "soul (khu) of Ra", the "soul (Khu) of souls (Khus)". Now the meaning of Oloku(n)0-1-o-ku-n) is "the owner or possessor of ku or ku's, that is, a soul or souls". The ocean or sea is probably designated "the possessor of soul or souls" because the soul of a god dwells therein or because it is the source of white watery vapours resembling Khus or souls. Both Tum and Olokun are gods of the primordial ocean. Both are connected with creation; Tum was regarded as Creator; Olokun was worshipped at Ile Ife where human being both white and black were

1. Tiele, History of Religion (trans Baligal) pp.76-80.

supposed to have) been created. In Egypt, Tum was also supposed to dwell on a mountain.¹ In Ilesha in Yorubaland, Olokun was supposed to dwell on a mountain where an altar is dedicated to him.

Olokun, as the counterpart of Tum, is an element of survival in Yorubaland of the Heliolithic culture of Egypt.

The above description of the bronze of Olokun given above calls for a brief comment. Professor Froebenius says that "it cannot be regarded as 'negro' in countenance, although it is covered by fine tattooed lines". Now the facial characteristics of a 'negro' or black man are :- a receding forehead; broad flat nose; full, thick and everted lips. An impartial study of the figure will show that these characteristics are in evidence, though not in exaggerated forms. The figure closely resembles that of a fine West African black man, a typical example of whom may be found in West African books and newspapers. Besides, the fine tattooed lines correspond to the fine tattooed facial and tribal marks found in some parts of Yorubaland.

The name Ebo-Olokun is also noteworthy. It has been pointed out above² that the word ebo comes from the Egyptian word u-eb, which means a "priest", the "pure one", "one whose duty is to inspect the purity of sacrificial victims".³ The word, therefore means "sacrifice, pure offering in Yoruba". It follows, then that Ebo-Olokun is the sacrifice, or the place of sacrifice to the god Olokun.

The word Ebo-Ra must be traced to the same source. Ebo-Ra means "sacrifice (offered) to Ra, the sun-god". The term is applied to all kinds of terra-cottas found at Ebo-Olokun.

1. Tiele Op.Cit.p.80.

2. Chapter X above.

3. Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, p.289.

The existence of sacrifices to Olokun (Ebo-Olokun) and sacrifices to Ra (Ebo-Ra) on the same spot constitute a further proof of the identity of Olokun with Tum Ra.

The word Imole has been explained above. It means "the child of the Earth or of the living one", its full form being Omo-ile. Ile is probably a modified form of Iye "that which exists, the living one".

The mass of relics found at Ebo-Olokun strongly suggests that it was an ancient cemetery. The relics include glass beads, terra-cottas of all kinds, depicting men and animals, jars, pipes, urns, different kinds of pottery and a deep layer of ashes. All these are objects likely to be found in an Egyptian Cemetery.

Professor Flinders Petrie writing about the Egyptian funeral says:

"A great burning took place at a funeral and the ashes of the vegetable matter, and even the burnt sand beneath it were gathered up and buried in the grave". ¹

These ashes were often deposited into a large number of jars.

"The position of these ash-jars generally was at the north or foot end of the grave". ²

The terra-cottas of animal heads are reminiscent of ushebtî figures usually deposited in Egyptian graves. The remaining articles are also similar to, or identical with, objects found in Egyptian graves³

There is no doubt that the bronze figure Olokun, the relics at Ebo-Olokun and the names of Ebo-Ra and Ebo Olokun constitute unmistakable links between Ancient Egypt and Yorubaland.

1. Nagada and Ballas, p.19.

2. - ditto -

3. For an enumeration of similar objects see McIver, El Amrah and Abydos, pp.7-14. The objects are intended for the use of the deceased in the next world.

POST

CORRESPONDENCE

THE ONI OF IFE.

The ONI, the King or paramount chief of Ife, is a priest king. He is regarded by the other kings or paramount chiefs as the chief priest. In his absence, however, another priest may offer important sacrifices in the different towns and villages. Tradition says that all other kinds or Obas used to go to Ife for their coronation ceremonies. Until quite recently the sword of state must be obtained from Ife before the coronation ceremonies of an Oba (King or paramount chief) could be considered valid.

The title of the king of Ife and the importance of the sacred city in regard to coronation ceremonies find close parallels in Ancient Egypt. The title of an important priest in Ancient Egypt is On-mut-f(An-mut-f) or On-kenemet (An-kenemet). It should be noted also that the Egyptian word for Heliopolis and the name of an ancient god of the city was On¹ or An.

The importance of Ife in regard to coronation ceremonies may be compared with that of Heliopolis. According to Dr. Tiele :

"Heliopolis was held in the greatest esteem; coronation ceremonies took place there as at Memphis, and the kings who were crowned there had the special title bestowed on them of Haq-an, lord of On". 2

SURVIVAL OF OTHER EMBLEMS AND SYMBOLS.

IFA UTENSILS.

Prominent among Ifa utensils which show traces of Egyptian origin are the Ifa rattles. These are generally made of wood in the shape of human beings or gods. The head-gears of these figures are significant in that most of them are shaped like obelisks, an important element in the Heliolithic culture in Egypt.

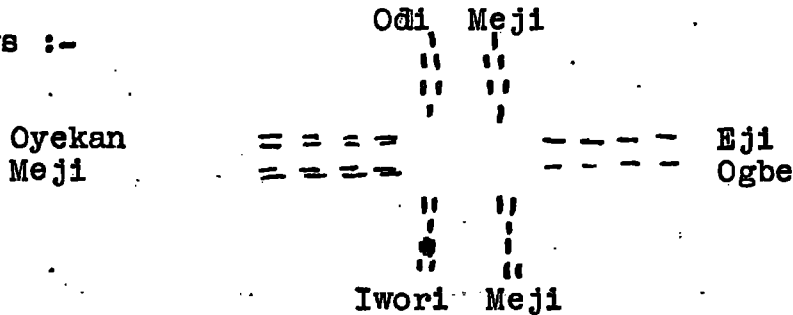
1. Heliopolis was known by the Hebrews as On. See Genesis Ch.41 v.45.

2. Op. Cit. pp. 74 & 75.

Next to the rattles come the Ifa Trays. These are used by Ifa Priests in different parts of Yorubaland. They are made of wood. Each of them has four carved heads¹ pointing to the four points of the compass.

There is no doubt that cosmological ideas are associated with the heads carved on Ifa trays. They represent, according to native ideas, the four deities presiding over the four corners of the earth and whose domains are the four chief Odus of Ifa, namely, Ogbe, Oyeku, Iwori, Odi. The Odus are generally arranged to form the four points of the compass. The arrangement is as follows :-

Odi, Meji



The points of compass represented and the gods presiding over the respective corners are as follows :-

1. Eji Ogbe	East	E-su
2. Oyeku Meji	West	Sango
3. Iwori Meji	South	Obatala
4. Odi Meji	North	O-gu(n)

The above deities are the same as the deities presiding over the respective days of the week. Their identity with the four auxiliary gods of Thot who were associated with the Egyptian cosmogony and guardianship of the world, has been noted in chapter X above.

1. Each head usually contains two eyes reminiscent of the eyes of the sun-god in Ancient Egypt.

The Yoruba oracular system, cosmogony, and guardianship of the four corners of the world are closely linked together as survivals of the same ancient culture.

It should be noted here that E-su (Eshu) the guardian of the East is not su-t, the warrior god, but Shu, the god of the rising sun.

In using the tray for oracular purposes the babalawo faces the east and turns the head representing E-su (Shu) and his domain towards the East. This custom of turning to the East in imitation of upper and lower heaven, is similar to the custom of turning ⁱⁿ that direction by the priests of Heliopolis when performing ceremonies to shu, the god of the rising sun. Impressed by this similarity Gerald Massey in his work entitled "A Book of Beginnings", in which he attempts to reconstruct and recover the lost origins of the myths, with Egypt for the mouth and Africa as the birthplace", says

"Ife is a region of north or lower heaven, out of which the sun issues forth, and is reborn from his burial place."1.

This is quite similar to ideas current about the sun-god in Heliopolis where the sun-god was regarded as issuing forth as "Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and ~~Tun~~ in the evening" and traversing the lower heaven during the hours of darkness and returning to the upper heaven at dawn.

Professor Leo Froebenius who has made a thorough ~~study of the~~ study of the subject has inferred that the cosmogony of the Yorubas, the customs of turning to the East, and the building of a temple at each of the four points of compass are surviving elements

elements of the "Templum" system found among the Ancient Etruscans and belonging to a North-West Atlantic culture.¹

A detailed criticism of his argument cannot be undertaken here. But it must be observed that whatever may be the ultimate origin of the system as a whole, it has come to the Yorubas by way of Egypt, and it bears the indellible stamp of Egypt on it in Yorubaland both as regards its phraseology and its leading ideas.

THE DOUBLE-HEADED AXE.

Of great religious importance is the survival of the double-headed axe. This is in connection with the worship of Sango, the god of Thunder.

In an earlier chapter Sango was identified with Ptah whose symbolic animal was the ram. The other name of Sango is Ja-ku-ta. "The living soul of Ptah". The survival of an axe symbolizing ram's horns in Yorubaland should not, therefore, be surprising.

Commenting on the sacred double axe in Nigeria P.

Amoury Talbot says:

"There may have been some association with the Horns of Consecration, which, with the Double-Axe, formed the commonest Cretan symbol.....There is a curious resemblance between the double axe and some of the winged Ankh crosses found in Egyptian tombs of the early Christian Era".²

Professor Elliot Smyth is also of the opinion that "The double axe was the homologue of the winged disk which fell, or rather flew, from heaven as the tangible form of the god".

The origin of the double axe is thus traced to Crete and Egypt. Between the two countries there was intercourse
dating

1. Vol. The Voice of Africa, Vol.I, p.258-264

2. Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol.II, p.142.

dating as far back as the reign of Minoan I of Crete and the age of Pyramids in Egypt. According to Professor George F. Moore :

"Egyptian Cretan wares or representations of them in Egyptian tombs securely establish certain fundamental synchronisms, and made it possible to assign dates to the principal epochs in Cretan art and architecture.....Commerce with Egypt was early established; Egyptian decorative motives may be recognized in Cretan art at several stages....." 1.

"Among the symbols to which religious significance attaches are a conventionalized pair of bull's horns, which have been called, somewhat awkwardly, "horns of consecration and the bipennis or double-bitted axe, which occurs with such great frequency as to be a characteristic feature of the Minoan art"2.

These extracts not only show that the cult of the double-headed axe in connection with the worship of Sango, the ram-headed deity, has survived in Yorubaland from Crete by way of Ancient Egypt,³ but they also raise the question of the impress of Grecian and Cretan cultures on Yoruba primitive culture. A satisfactory answer to this question can only be the result of adequate research work.

The importance and the degree of sacredness attached to the double-axe can be gauged by the large numbers of the axe, the various forms of it, and its indispensability in connection with the ceremonies connected with the worship of the god. It is usually made of wood, and rarely made of iron. Sometimes it is made of stone, and this double-headed stone axe is sometimes sought for by Sango priests in the houses of victims of lightning. The discovery of this stone axe in a house struck by lightning means the forfeiture of all the goods therein, which then becomes the property of the priests.

1. History of Religion Vol.I p.406-407.

2. - ditto - p.409.

3. See Cambridge Ancient History, Vol.II pp.438,439,44.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The survival of elements in Ancient Egyptian culture described in this chapter shows, in a measure, the degree of permeation of Yoruba culture by elements in the former. The elements described in the chapter do not constitute an exhaustive list. The survival of ancient Egyptian deities in Yorubaland and in other parts of West Africa as well as the survival of Ancient Egyptian words in West African languages in general, and in the Yoruba language in particular, is illustrated in an appendix to this work.

CHAPTER XVII.

C O N C L U S I O N .

CHAPTER XVII - CONCLUSION.

"Science is neither final nor absolute. It is only a recent method of looking at things". The truth of this statement cannot be over-emphasized. The student of religion must occasionally review his data, to see whether they afford adequate support for his theory. He must test his theory in the light of new knowledge. He must ever be on the watch as to the existence of new materials, new data, new phenomena which would test the soundness of his theory. However, attractive or convincing his theory may be, however smashing in its effect on rival or preceding theories his theory may be, he must not strike the note of finality. Science knows no finality. The pet theory of today may be the laughing-stock of tomorrow.

The tone of this thesis has in some parts been critical. This is due to two reasons. First, the results achieved by previous writers, highly appreciated as these are, can only be greeted with interim cheers, and not with prolonged applause denoting finality. Secondly, the subject of Yoruba Religion has been approached and treated from a wider point of view. It has been considered from the point of view of comparative religion, ethnology, and philology. It has been treated, not as an isolated phenomenon, a freak of nature, or a religious curio, but as a religion whose roots are imbedded in the dim recesses of the prehistoric and the historic past, a religion not unrelated in some respects to some of the well-known religions, and a religion closely resembling one of the most ancient religions in the world.

The description of Yoruba Religion given in the preceding chapters can lead to only one conclusion, namely, that the impress of Egypt on it is clear and indelible.

The facts leading to the conclusion have been set out in different parts of the work. It has been pointed out that the religious ideas of the Yorubas are similar to, and in some cases identical with, those of Ancient Egypt. The religious phraseology of the Yorubas is thoroughly permeated with Ancient Egyptian words. All the Yoruba words applied to elements in religious or social life are of Egyptian origin. For example, the Yoruba words for the sun, the sky, the heavens, the stars, man, woman, boy, girl, death, spirit, water, heart, head, body and a host of others are all of Egyptian origin.

It has been said above that words of Egyptian origin form not less than one-half of the words in the Yoruba vocabulary. The extent to which such words have been incorporated into the Yoruba language can best be demonstrated by an examination of a few passages chosen at random from the existing Yoruba literature. The passages will show that the main structure of the language will be destroyed if such words are withdrawn. Here are the passages :-

1. Li Atetekoṣe Olórún dǎ ǫrún on aiyé. Gen. 1 v. 1
"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth".
2. Olórún si wípe, Jé kí a dǎ enia Tí aworan wa, gege bí iri wa: kí nwon o sí jǫba lórí eja okun, atí lórí eiyé oju-órún atí lórí ẹranko atí lórí gbogbo ilẹ atí lórí ohun gbogbo tí nrako lórí ilẹ. Gen. 1 v. 26

"And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth".

3. Egun ki yio si si mo: itp Olorun ati ti Qdọ - Agutan ni yio si ma wa nibe: awon iranse re yio si man sin i.
Rev. XXII - v.3.

"And there will be no more curse: the throne of God and of the lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him".

The words underlined in the above passages are of Egyptian origin. They include words derived from Semitic root ha-ya (or cha-ya) "to exist" from which the Ancient Egyptian word cha-par¹ or che-per, "to exist", is probably derived. The derivations of most of ^{the} words underlined above have been given in the preceding chapters; those of the remaining words will be found in the select list of Yoruba words given in Appendix 1 of this work.

4. Ibiti agbara awon ogun titun ta Britein gbe wa ni idaloju ise ati yivayi awon to a nfi keke-ogun ja ninu won. - Yoruba War Pictorial No.16, p.8.

"The strength of the new British offensive lies in the efficiency and excellent fighting spirit of the tank-soldiers".

-
1. It has been pointed out above that the Semitic root-word ha-ya (or chaya) plays an important role in West African languages. The first syllable which varies with inflections in Hebrew is left out in West African languages. In Ancient Egyptian the same root-word plays an important role. The first syllable ha- or cha- is the Egyptian cha- or che -(Greek ~~YE~~), and the second syllable -ya becomes par or per in Ancient Egyptian. The letter y does not exist in Ancient Egyptian language; its place is taken by p. Hence -ya = -par or -per. The older form Kho-pi-ru is also found. The importance of the root-word in both the West African and the Ancient Egyptian languages cannot be over estimated. See Ellis, Yoruba speaking peoples, Comparison of four West African Languages, pp.305-398; Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, pp.141-142; Pott, Ueber die Verschiedenheit des menshlichen Sprachbaus von Wilhem von Humbolt, 11 pp. 495-498 (1876).

5. Dealing with animals in Yorubaland in a Yoruba reader entitled "Iwe Kika Ekarun" a writer says :-

Eranko ilẹ Yoruba po pupo:.....Ewure, Agutan, Malu, Ologbo, Aja, Elede,.....Adi, pepeiye, eiyele....ekun, kiniun, igbo, gunugun, ...pepeiye-odo, ogbugbu¹.....

"Animals in Yorubaland are many:...goats, sheep, horses, etc."

The words underlined in No.4 above and the names of animals given in No.5 above are all of Ancient Egyptian origin. A fuller list of names of animals is given in Appendix 1 of this work.

It should be noted that in the above passages all the important words are survivals of Ancient Egyptian words. Some of the monosyllabic words which are not underlined may, after further research, be shown to be of Egyptian origin.

The survival of the Ancient Egyptian deities has been noted. Nearly all the leading ones among them survive in Yorubaland in name and in attributes. In most cases the essential features of the deities survive. It is significant that the great gods of Egypt are also the great gods² of Yorubaland. Added to this is the survival of names of places³.

The similarity or identity of magical beliefs and practices, birth and death ceremonies, priesthood and worship has been noted in the preceding chapters⁴.

By far the most interesting survival is that of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It shows the intimacy of the contact between the two countries. It affords^a/striking, though indirect,

1. p.89

2. See Chapters II to VIII above.

3. e.g. Salug in Ancient Egypt and Salug-a in Yorubaland.

4. Chapters X to XIV.

testimony to the value of the work of Young, Champollion and others who have deciphered the Egyptian Hieroglyphics.

Professor Petrie,¹ after pointing out "how largely the earliest stratum of Egyptian ideas has been at one with the rest of Africa", gives fifty-eight odd examples from which Egyptologists have recently been able to obtain a clearer vision of the ancient ceremonies of the Egyptians of old. More than seventy per cent of the examples he gives are found among the Yorubas.

In view of the above facts the conclusion is irresistible that the religion of the Yorubas stands in genetic relation to the religion of Ancient Egypt. It is a survival of the latter. It is a meddley of the worship of different deities in different homes and epochs of Egyptian history. In its essential features it reflects the conservatism characteristic of the Ancient Egyptians. The old is never discarded in favour of the new; both are placed side by side without any attempt at synthesis or reconciliation. Generally speaking, it is a corrupt form of the Ancient Egyptian religion. It is a clear illustration of the saying: Corruptio optimi pessima est. "The corruption of the best is the worst".

Here an attempt may be made to answer the question as to whether Yoruba religion is due to arrested development or to degeneration. The facts adduced above show that in common with the religion of Ancient Egypt it must have reached a fairly high stage. The lofty elements which it still contains can be regarded as cases of arrested development the tendency

1. See Parts 3 and 4, Ancient Egypt, 1914.

to develop having been arrested by the influence of environment, and the tendency to deteriorate having been checked by their practical and sociological value. On the other hand, some of the lofty elements in Ancient Egyptian Religion seems to have degenerated in Yorubaland into rank animism or fetichism.

The general impression is that the Yoruba religion has degenerated from a more lofty religion, the more primitive parts of it showing close affinity with the Egyptian monotheistic belief in "one and only god".

The evidence supplied by Yoruba religion confirms Dr. Menzies' statement that "the debased tribes of Australia and West Africa show signs of a higher civilization they have lost,¹ but contradicts his conclusion that the general tendency of things is upward. A comparison of Yoruba religion with its prototype contradicts the evolutionary hypothesis supported by Dr. Carpenter and shows definitely that there has been a decadence. Any statement contradicting the fact of decadence of religion must either be due to an examination of data under the influence of a subjective theory, or to the attachment of undue weight to tales related by casual travellers which justify a preconceived theory. Dr. Andrew Lang in his monumental work entitled "The Making of Religion" sounds a note of warning against the danger of falling into the latter error when he says - "Nothing can be less scientific than to snatch up any traveller's tale which makes for our theory, and to ignore evidence, perhaps earlier, or later, or better observed, which makes against it". Professor Julian Huxley and Mr. Herbert Spencer are cited as examples of those who fall into this error²

1. History of Religion, p.20

2. Op. cit p.46.

The decadence of religion adversely affected the whole of Yoruba culture. This fact is attested to by Sir Flinders Petrie when he says: "The discoveries made by Leo Proebenius show that there was considerable artistic civilization somewhere between 1000 and 3000 years ago, and that the present West African is, much degraded below his former status"¹. This statement applies with equal force to Yorubaland and the Yorubas.

There is a clear evidence of the existence of a monotheistic belief in Yorubaland. Attention has⁴ been called to this in a previous chapter², where it has been pointed out that the Supreme Being must have been identified with Osiris in the course of the history of the religion. Identification with Osiris resulted in the title of Osiris as "Lord of Heaven" being given to the Yoruba Supreme Deity and in the transference of some of the lofty ideas associated with the Egyptian deity to the Yoruba deity. The conception of Olorun, however, did not thereby become anthropomorphic or animistic. It remained abstract and became gradually nebulous almost up to a vanishing point, resulting in the transfer of worship to the anthropomorphic and animistic deities, and relegating Olorun into the background as a Deity too distant to worship.

The survival of several elements in the Osirian faith is a further testimony to the relation between Osiris and Olorun as sketched in a previous chapter. The three principal elements which have survived in Yorubaland from the religion of Ancient

1. Ancient Egypt, (1914), p.84.

2. Chapter II above.

Egypt are: the Osirian faith, the cult of ancestors or anthropomorphic gods, and the heliolithic culture. Of these three elements, the Osirian faith occupies the most prominent part. The cult of ancestors is widely diffused, whilst the heliolithic culture, wide-spread through its relics may be, is no longer as active or influential in regard to religious worship as the two preceding ones. In the case of Egyptian religion there is no absolute division between the elements: the three elements eventually became assimilated as far as possible or continued to be placed side by side. This is also true of Yoruba religion, but the Osirian faith occupies the most prominent position.

"ATLANTIC" CULTURE.

A discussion of the theory that Yoruba primitive culture is a degenerate form of the lofty culture of Ancient Egypt and that Yoruba religion bears on it an unmistakable stamp of Ancient Egyptian religion cannot be concluded without some reference to what seems to be a rival theory. This latter theory, proposed by Professor Leo Eroebe¹nius the German explorer of West Africa¹ maintains that Yoruba culture is a survival of what he described as "Atlantic" culture.

According to this theory, "Atlantic" culture started from North Africa, somewhere in the region of the Atlas Mountains and travelled eastwards and southwards. It was a culture centred around Poseidon, the great Sea-God. It was permeated by elements of Etruscan civilization before it started on its journey. It travelled eastwards to Egypt. It passed through

1. See the Voice of Africa, Vol. I. chapter XV. pp.319-349.

the pillars of Hercules or the Straits of Gibraltar, and then along the West coast of Africa in a southerly direction until it reached Yorubaland, where it has for centuries defied attempted obliteration by rival cultures.

In support of this theory Prof. Froebenius gives several reasons. He maintains that there is no record of trans-continental dissemination of culture from North Africa in a South-Westerly direction. On the other hand, he says that there is ample evidence of visits paid by the fleets of North African or Mediterranean powers to the West Coast of Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea. As a result of this intercourse between the North and the West of Africa, remnants of this "Atlantic" culture can be found in various parts of West Africa.

In the case of Yorubaland he gives the following proofs :-

1. Water Storage Construction. He points out that Yoruba houses are constructed in a style characteristic of the Etruscans, that is, a style which provides an impluvium in the centre whilst apartments having verandahs are built round it in a rectangular form.
2. The construction of houses with ridge roofs similar to those in North Africa.
3. The Bow. He observes that the Yoruba Bow and Arrow are similar to those of Morocco in form and in colours.
4. The Hand-Loom. He points out that the hand loom is unknown in the Sudan, but was extensively used in North Africa. This North African form of the Hand Loom is found in Yorubaland and is used chiefly by women.
5. Drum shapes and other articles which are peculiar to North Africa, absent in the Sudan, but existing in Yorubaland. These also constitute a proof.

6. The existence of the "Templum" idea in Yoruba. This idea appears in the building of houses round a temple or sacred edifice. Whole town may be planned in this way, houses being grouped and built around the temples in the town. The "Templum" idea is found in North Africa and in Ile Ife. The religion at Ile Ife is shown to be based upon the "templum" idea.

He then says: "We certify that: Firstly: All the monuments of ancient culture are concentrated on the coast; Secondly: There is, apparently, no originating influence by way of the Interior; and Thirdly: Definite and characteristic signs at the Northern edge of Africa, such as the construction for water storage, the handloom for women, and the "Frontal" bow, are recurrent indications of the fact that identical elements of civilization were predominant both in the North and South at an extremely remote period"¹.

Later in a tone of assured conviction and finality he says ex cathedra :-

"I maintain I have re-discovered Atlantis the Emporium of the culture of the West on the further side of the straits of Gibraltar, that Atlantis, whose walls, as Solon informs us, held within them Poseidon's Castle, where there was a wealth of luxuriant vegetation; where tree-like plants grew which gave forth food and drink and unguents (the oil-palm); that a fruit tree, with a quickly decaying fruit (the banana), and desirable condiments (pepper) there flourished abundantly; that elephants lived there; that bronze or brass, was won there (as till recently was so, behind the Yoruba mountain range); that the natives wore dark blue (?indigo) garments, and that they had a somewhat foreign style of architecture (ridge roofs of palm leaf). Therefore I lay claim to Yoruba, so tropically lush and rank in its vegetation; Yoruba, with its channelled network of lakes on the coast and the reaches of the Niger; Yoruba, whose peculiarities are not inadequately depicted in the platonic account - this Yoruba, I assert, is Atlantis,

1. Op.cit, p.336.

the home of Poseidon's posterity, the Sea-God by them named Olokun; the land of a people of whom Solon declared: They had even extended their lordship over Egypt and Tyrrhene!"¹.

There is no doubt that the works of Prof. Froebenius are of incalculable value to students of religion and archeology. His discovery of valuable relics at Ile Ife has won the admiration of students of Yoruba archaeology. With the exception of inferences coloured by negrophobic prejudice which prompted him to ascribe almost every valuable idea or article to non-negritic or "un-African" origin and other inferences inspired by anti-British sentiment which prompted him to regard magnanimous acts of enlightened colonial administration as specimens of unwise generosity shown to and undeserved by "Negroes", his conclusions are generally acceptable. His theory of the survival of "Atlantic" culture in Yorubaland however, has not met with any thing like acceptance by students of the subject.

The first certified statement that all the monuments of ancient culture are concentrated on the Coast must be accepted with reserve. Places like Ile Ife and Offa which contain some of the most valuable monuments are about two hundred miles from the Coast. In the days of slow transport by foot, mule or horse such places cannot be regarded as "on the coast".

The second certified statement is the crux of the question regarding the soundness of the theory. It implies that the chief influence on Yoruba culture comes from the North by way of the Atlantic Ocean and that there is, apparently, no originating influence from the Interior.

1. Op.cit. p.345.

Over against this statement there is a mass of weighty and over-whelming evidence. First of all there is the evidence of the Yorubas themselves who say that their ancestral home was in the North or North-East. Unless it can be proved that they came to Yorubaland by way of the sea, their culture can hardly escape being untouched by the culture of the North or North-East, especially as it has been proved that they have very little in common, in regard to the survival of foreign culture, with the tribes of the Sudan. Their migration to Yorubaland by way of the Sudan is a fact of history, attested to by Sultan Bello of Sokoto and others.

Further, there is ample evidence that the Ancient Egyptians migrated southwards and penetrated deep into the heart of Africa. According to Talbot, "These migrations may have been set in motion by events in Egypt such as the Nubian wars of Amenemhat I who overthrew among others the Wawat, and Matzieu Negro tribes about 1870 B.C."¹

Again the same writer says: "Many Egyptians migrate to the south and south-west when their country was attacked and conquered by the Persians under Ochus".²

In his book entitled Egyptian Sudan Sir Wallis Budge, after declaring that during the Persian wars with Egypt, Herodotus testified to the fact that over 20,000 cities lined the banks of the Nile, expressed the opinion that they must have gone West.

There is evidence that in A.D. 100 and 140 Roman Expeditions from Egypt under General Septimus Flaccus and Julius Maternus

1. Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol. I p. 19

2. Op.cit Vol. I., p. 26

respectively penetrated far into the Sudan and probably reached the approaches of the Gulf of Guinea.

It is inconceivable that Egyptians who immigrated in large numbers to the South West and carried on commercial intercourse with the remotest regions of the Sudan did not exert any cultural influence on the people among whom some of them must have settled.

Dealing with the spread of the cultural influence of Egypt Sir, Harry Johnston states that there are traces of Egyptian influence reaching down to the Gold Coast and the Gulf of Guinea.

Intercourse between Egypt and West Africa during the close of the last era and the beginning of the present one is a fact of history.¹ Influence cannot be separated from intercourse; the fact of influence originating from Egypt is, therefore, undeniable.

The greatest argument against the second certified statement lies in the fact that the Yoruba religion, language, customs and other cultural elements clearly indicate influence originating from Egypt. The theory of Froebenius ignores this influence. The extent of the influence has been shown in preceding chapters of this work. It is an influence which is predominantly Egyptian, and cannot be regarded as sea-borne through a West African Atlantic route.

The third certified statement also requires criticism. It draws attention to the survival of Etruscan or Tyrrhenian culture in Yorubaland. The elements of this culture referred to are the implurium, the ~~bow~~, the hand loom and the "Templum" idea.

The existence of these Etruscan elements must be admitted. In addition it should be observed that ^{Yoruba} "funerary customs resembled those of the Etruscans". The question, however, is - By what way do these elements travel to Yorubaland ? It will be helpful in trying to answer this question to note that the Etruscan elements form only a small part of the cultural elements which have been impressed upon Yoruba culture. If the Etruscan elements come by way of the sea, it will be necessary to explain the presence of such a large volume of Egyptian elements, a fact which the theory of Froebenius does not explain. On the other hand, if the theory of percolation of Egyptian influence into West Africa by way of the Sudan is accepted, the presence of Etruscan elements finds a ready explanation in the theory.

Etruscan civilization flourished in Crete. Between Egypt and Crete there was close intercourse for several centuries. In Cambridge Ancient History it is stated that "There are clear connections between the Egypt of Rameses and the Minoan world"¹ and also that "it is probable that direct relations existed between the Egyptians and the Cretans as early as the Egyptians pre-dynastic period and it is certain that they existed during the time of the Old Kingdom, and continued through that of the Middle Kingdom to the XVIIIth dynasty and the period of Croesus. This we know from the evidence of Cretan Archaeology"²

1. Vol.II. p.447.

2. Vol.II. p.277. On the whole subject of the relation between Crete with its Minoan and Etruscan or Tyrrhene civilization and Ancient Egypt see Cambridge Ancient History Vol.II., pp.431-438.

An important point worth noting is that the Etruscan "implurium" style of building had been introduced into Egypt, that the women's hand-loom existed in Ancient Egypt¹ and that the "templum" town planning existed at Heliopolis in Ancient Egypt, a town which appears in many respects as the prototype of Ile Ife.² In addition there is the fact that Etruscan communities known as Turs or Tursh or Turishas existed in Ancient Egypt³. These facts make it reasonable to suppose that the Etruscan elements travelled along with Ancient Egyptian and other cultural elements to Yorubaland by way of the Interior, that is, through the Sudan.

The absence of similar elements may be explained by the supposition that immigrants from Egypt would find it hard to settle in the arid desert of a sub-tropical climate. Their influence could only be permanently felt in Yorubaland and other parts of West Africa where geographical conditions favoured a prolonged visit or a temporary settlement.

The identification of Olokun with Poseidon is supported with scholarly arguments by Prof. Froebenius. The theory underlying the identification has been shown by the foregoing remarks to be untenable. The view that Poseidon or the ram-headed deity is the major deity of the Yorubas cannot be accepted by the Yorubas themselves or by other students of Yoruba religion. The identification throws Olokun out of the relation which he bears to the other deities. It has been shown in one of the preceding chapters that Olokun "Owner of the sea"

1. Froebenius, Op.cit Vol.I., p.332.

2. See Chapters XV. and XVI. above.

3. Froebenius, op. cit. Vol.I., pp.333-334.

is the survival of the Ancient Egyptian deity known as Adimu or Adumu "Lord of the primordial abyss". This identity places him in the natural relation with other Yoruba deities who are survivals of Egyptian deities.

Prof. Froebenius refers to the similarity between the Yoruba Ifa cult and a system of divination in Algeria and other parts of North Africa. The North African origin of Ifa cult is not disputed. It has been shown above, however, that the cult is Egyptian in form and in name.¹

The cult of the ram-headed god, too, could have come by way of Egypt. Ram-headed deities were worshipped in Ancient Egypt². It should be noted also, that Daddu or Diddu³ later known as Busiris⁴, was described in the seal-cylinder "belonging to the oldest period of Egyptian history as "the city of the ram".

After examining Prof. Froebenius theory of Atlantic culture in Yoruba land, P. Amaury Talbot feels that "it is more probable that, in the same way as Minoan and Mycenaean ideas had penetrated from the North-East, so remnants of Tyrrhenian arts filtered through by way of the Carthaginians, who were closely allied with the Etruscans⁵.

1. See Chapter IV. above. Ifa is derived from N-efer.

2. e.g. Amon.

3. Diddu, the place where the black spiral column of Osiris was erected.

4. BU-siris = BU Osiris = the place of Osiris. This word survives in Yorubaland.

5. Peoples of South Nigeria, Vol.I. p.21.

To sum up: Yoruba primitive culture does not appear to be a survival of an "Atlantic" culture exclusively, a culture which is supposed to have travelled down the West Coast of Africa from North Africa. The weight of evidence is in favour of the theory that Yoruba primitive culture is a survival of Ancient Egyptian culture containing, among others, elements of the culture which prevailed in North Africa many centuries ago. Evidence is also available that the transmission of the Ancient Egyptian culture followed a trans-continental route from Egypt to the Western shores of Africa.

The theory of a close connection between the Egyptians and the Yorubas, proposed, proved, and illustrated in the preceding chapters, throws light on some questions which will be discussed here.

ORIGIN OF THE YORUBAS.

The question of the origin of the Yorubas has been discussed in an earlier chapter. The view of Sultan Bello of Sokoto has been examined. The view of an Egyptian origin or of a settlement for a long period has been put forward as a hypothesis. The preceding chapters show such a close connection that a settlement in Egypt for several centuries appears to be demanded to explain the great extent to which the connection can be found. It covers almost every period of Egyptian history. It covers the earliest period when there was no king in Egypt. The very name Yoruba is shown to be derived from rpa or rba, a mythical king in Northern Africa¹ and later,

1. See Chapter I. above.

a feudal prince in Egypt. It covers the period of the Old Kingdom, The Middle Kingdom, the New Kingdom, the Greek Period and the Roman period. The worship characteristic of the different periods as well as other distinguishing elements survive in Yorubaland, producing a medley of "beliefs representing varying stages of development, all of which were to be seen among peoples which successively inhabited the Mediterranean area from palaeolithic to chalcholithic times" and, on the whole, resembling "that of the Ancient Egyptians, who combined a belief in the existence of an omnipotent and omniscient supreme God, called Neter, with that in multitudes of subordinate deities, mostly personifications of natural phenomena".¹

Mere intercourse between the Yorubas and immigrants from Egypt cannot produce such a deep impress on Yoruba culture, especially as there is no evidence of colonization by such immigrants. It would appear that the Yoruba migrated gradually from Northern Egypt to Southern Egypt, and then to the Sudan until they reached their present home.

Egyptologists are not yet agreed as to the origin of the Ancient Egyptians. Agreement has been reached to a large extent, however, that the early Egyptians belong to a "dolichocephalic race, large-featured and tall, with inter-mixture of semitic and negroid elements", the latter greatly preponderating over the former. This race is believed to be different from that of the older inhabitants of Egypt who are believed to be purely negritic. Further research work by competent scholars

may ultimately settle the question as to whether the Ancient Egyptians were Caucasians, Semites or "Negroes". In the meantime it is sufficient to agree with some of the leading Egyptologists that they were not Caucasians, but that their characteristic features show them to be more negritic than semitic. Until the question is finally settled it will not be easy to say whether the Yorubas belong to the older race found by successive waves of immigrants to Egypt and gradually pushed southwards, or to any of the immigrant nations afterwards known collectively as Ancient Egyptians. Suffice it to say that from the point of view of language, religion, magic and other cultural elements as well as from the point of view of physiognomy, Yoruba culture and the typical Yoruba bears a close resemblance to the culture and the physiognomy of the Ancient Egyptians respectively,¹ thereby supporting the theory that the home of the Yorubas for several centuries must be traced to Ancient Egypt.

There are faint traces and records suggesting Asia as the original home of the Yorubas, but the evidence as a whole is slight in comparison with the strong evidence supporting the theory of a long residence in different parts of Egypt by the Yorubas.

RELATION OF THE YORUBAS TO SOME OTHER WEST AFRICAN TRIBES.

This is a question which the theory of connection between the Yoruba and the Ancient Egyptians necessarily raises.

Occasional references have been made above that some words in other West African languages are derived from Ancient Egyptian words. Select lists of such words are given in Appendix 1.

-
1. Prof. Froebenius discovers two types of Yorubas, one light coloured and handsome, the other dark and more definitely negritic.

Words in these languages, which are derived from the Ancient Egyptian language, are of the same type as those which survive in Yoruba. Sometimes the words derived from Ancient Egyptian language are found with exactly the same meaning in two or more languages. For example, the word ku "to die" in Yoruba is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word Khu, a luminous spirit, death being regarded as a process of becoming a disembodied luminous spirit.¹ In the Tchi language, spoken on the Gold Coast, the verb "to die" is ku, exactly as in Yoruba². In the Ibo language kh is modified to w and the word becomes wu "to die". In the Ewe language spoken on the Gold Coast, the verb "to die" is ku. In Egun Alada spoken in Dahomey the same word ku is used for the verb "to die". Again, the word a-mon in Ancient Egyptian language means "hidden". In Yoruba it survives as o-mo "seed, child", literally "that which is hidden in the shell or in utero". In Ga, it survives as part of the name of the Supreme Deity, namely Nyon-mon "The living Amon". In Ibo, it survives as umu(n) or o-mu(n), child. In Igabo Isoko, it survives as E-ma-mon "holy"; it will be remembered that it survives also in Yoruba as Mo(n) "holy, clean" that is hidden or covered up and therefore kept free from pollution. In the Tchi language it survives as nmo(n) "child" and oma(n) or omo(n) "people", which is perhaps an extended use for persons who had passed through childhood.

Just as the name of the Yoruba tribe is derived from an Ancient Egyptian word, so also are the names of several tribes derived from Ancient Egyptian words.³ For example, Sekiri is derived from Sekri, the name of an Egyptian god; Fanti is

1. See chapter I p.

2. See Appendix I. G. Tchi language.

3. See Appendix I. E.

derived from Fanti or Fenti, an Egyptian God¹.

The names of most of the Yoruba deities are survivals of the names of Egyptian deities. This is the case also with West African tribes.²

A close study of several West African languages shows that the words common to them are all of Ancient Egyptian origin.

Several other points of identity or similarity of features in the culture of some West African tribes including the Yorubas may be given. Those already given lead only to one conclusion, namely, that the other tribes are closely associated with the Yorubas, and if it is agreed that the Yorubas must have migrated from Egypt, their migration from Egypt may be accepted as a reasonable theory.

The names of the Supreme deities of these tribes seem to suggest the respective localities where they had settled in Ancient Egypt. For example, Chi-neke(n) "the soul of Nekhen" is the name of the Supreme Deity of the Ibos. This suggests Nekhen as the settlement of the Ibos in Egypt. Again, Nyi-sua "the living (soul) of Sua-nit", the name of the Supreme Deity of the Grebos suggests Sua-nit as the name from which they migrated. Also, Nya-ku-pon "the living soul of Punt (Pua-nit)" the name of the Supreme Deity of the Fanti people suggest Pua-nit or Punt as the nome from which they had migrated.

An acceptance of the theory of a close connection between Ancient Egyptians and some of the West African tribes and that the latter must have migrated from Egypt will help in overcoming some of the difficulties which have hitherto remained

1. See Appendix I., E II, No. 18

2. See Appendix A to F below

insurmountable. Two examples will be given here. Dr. G.T. Basden, who had lived among the Ibos for thirty five years and had written two valuable books¹ on their culture says "All my attempts to trace the origin of the name 'Ibo' have been unsuccessful. My most reliable informants have been able to offer no other alternative than that it is most probably an abbreviation of a longer name connected with an ancestor since forgotten"². This difficulty will vanish if the theory of connection with the Ancient Egyptians is applied. The word Ibo is not peculiar to a single tribe. It is found in other West African languages in the same or a modified form. It is the same word as the Yoruba word Ibo "ocult beings", the Ibo word igbo applied to an Ibo sub-tribe, the Yoruba word igbo "The haunt of spirits" the word egbo, "a community of spirits" the word aru-gbo "an old person", the egbo "a secret society, and similar words in other West African languages. The words are all derived from the Ancient Egyptian word ba-u or bo-u or bau, "spirits or souls", plural of ba³. The letter b remains the same in some West African languages, but is changed to gb, a deep guttural, in the other languages. The word I-bo, consists of two parts, namely i and -bo. I is an initial vowel, and bo is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word bo-u or ba-u, "souls or spirits". Ibo, therefore, means, "souls or spirits" or "a community of spirits" or persons belonging to the bo-u or ancestral spirits." The use of such a word as the name

1. Among the Ibos of Nigeria, and Niger Ibos (Seeley, Service and Co. Ltd., London).

2. Niger Ibos, Introduction, p. XI.

3. Vowels are often used interchangeably in Ancient Egyptian language. Egyptologists assert that the real vowels of most words cannot yet be definitely stated. Some of them use a where others use o; e.g. At and ot. The word ba may equally be well written bo in Ancient Egyptian language.

of a tribe is not peculiar to the Ibos¹. Among the Yorubas there is a tribe having a similar name. That tribe is the E-gba "people of the ba or ancestral soul or spirit".

Near the Yorubas there are the Ba-riba's "the people belonging to the ancestral soul of rba, an Ancient Egyptian feudal deity. The word ibo is used by the Yorubas in connection with the practice of lottery, with a view to detecting a malefactor or selecting an official. The idiomatic term is dibo or di ibo, that is, "to compel the ancestral spirits or occult powers" to settle the matter.

It may be added that there are several other Ibo words, identical in spelling or meaning or in both with Yoruba words which have survived from the Ancient Egyptian language. A select list of such words is given in Appendix 1. G. The list includes a number of words the origin of which has baffled several writers.

Another example of the results which would accrue from the applications of the same theory will now be given from a Gold Coast language. Several writers have expressed their inability to trace of origin of the words O-hene and bohnsun or bonsum in the Tchi language on the Gold Coast. The two words are derived from Ancient Egyptian. O-hene in Tchi means "chief, paramount chief, king", hen in Ancient Egyptian means "Chief, king, majesty"². The survival of the word is not peculiar to the Tchi language.

In the Igabo Isoko language spoken in south-central Nigeria the word survives as O-ghen-e "Lord, God, Majestic Being", the

1. See Appendix I., E., below.

2. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian language, p. 90, No. 6.

letter g being added because the aspirate is pronounced in a peculiar way corresponding to the original Ancient Egyptian letter h (h with a dot).

The word bohnsum or bonsum or bosum is also derived from Ancient Egyptian language. It may be divided into two parts bo- sum; bo is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word ba or bo "soul or spirit" and su-m from su-t, the name of an Ancient Egyptian deity; bo-sum or boh-nsum or bo-sum, therefore means, "the soul of Sut," a phrase which points to the widespread worship of Sut in Ancient Egypt and of his survival in different parts of West Africa. The word bo-sum or bohnsum is applied generally to idols or objects of worship.

Other survivals of Ancient Egyptian language in Tchi will be found in the select list given in Appendix 1.G.

The writer has studied at least a dozen West African languages including Edo, Jekri, Ijaw, Ibo, Igabo Isoko, Egun, Ga, Tchi, Adangbe, Genyin, Ewe, Grebo and others. He has also examined a number of others including Ibibio, Efik, Limba, Tenne and others. The number of Egyptian survivals found in the languages studied and in some of those examined is large. Several words whose origin has been described as obscure are found to be identical in spelling and meaning with Ancient Egyptian words.

The languages of West Africa have been scientifically studied in recent times by expert philologists, including Prof. D. Westerman¹, Dr. Ida C. Ward², Dr. Alice Werner³,

1. Author of Works on West African languages, See "Africa" Vol. II. p. 436.

2. Author of works on Southern Nigerian Languages.

3. Author of "Structure and Relationship of Modern languages"

Dr. H.J. Melzian¹ and others. Some of the difficulties which confronted them will vanish when approached in the light of the theory proposed in this work. There is no doubt that the application of the theory would lead to a revision of the classifications and conclusions set forth in their respective works.

In view of the close resemblance of the religion and language of the Yorubas to those of some of the other West African tribes, particularly the Tchi-speaking peoples, the Gas, the Ewes, the Eguns and the Ibos, one can safely infer that the tribes are culturally related to the Yorubas and that they must have migrated from different parts of Egypt just like the Yorubas.

IMPRESS OF OTHER ANCIENT CULTURES.

The impress of Egypt on Yoruba culture has been delineated above. Yoruba culture however, shows the impress of other cultures.

Reference has been made above to the survival of Etruscan elements, which must have come by way of Egypt. Instances of survival of Greek or Roman terms have also been given. The survival of the Cretan double-bitted axe has already been noted.

Next to Egyptian culture, the greatest influence in Yoruba culture has been exerted by Hebrew culture. The survival of some elements of Hebrew culture has been noted above. Others have been noted by J.J. Williams in his Hebrewisms in West Africa.

The question of the impress of the Ancient cultures of Greece, Rome and Asiatic lands on Yoruba culture still requires

1. A German linguist who recently visited West Africa and studied several languages.

further research. It requires a detailed examination similar to what has been done in the case of the impress of Ancient Egyptian culture. It is most probable, however, that the result of adequate research work will point to Ancient Egypt as the medium which facilitated the impress.¹

MORALITY AND RELIGION.

The religion of the Yorubas cannot be fully discussed without some reference to their system of morality. The Yorubas have not yet reached a stage where religion and morality are treated separately. With them, as with other West Africans, there is no division between the secular and the sacred; all must be brought within the orbit of religion. Dr. J.H. Oldham and Miss. B. Gibson's statement on this point is true of the Yorubas, namely, "The lines of division between secular and sacred that have grown up in the West have little meaning for the African. We in the West are only trying now to heal a breach which for him had never existed"².

Among the Yorubas the mainsprings of action must be sought for in the dictates of religion. Beyond what religion stipulates the unsophisticated Yoruba will not go, except under compulsion. Religion and morality are closely intertwined and undifferentiated.

The scope of this work forbids detailed discussion and illustration of the important elements in Yoruba morality, but the following summary by Bishop James Johnson will be found useful :-

-
1. It has been suggested above that active contact between the Hebrews and the Yorubas must have taken place in Egypt.
 2. The Remaking of Man in Africa.

"The moral system of Yoruba heathenism teaches reverence to the gods which is to show itself in, amongst other things, a daily early morning worship to them before their images before any business is done, the exercise of faith in them and their guidance, and other assistances by consulting them on all important matters; respect and reverence for age and for all authority; filial regard and reverence for age and obedience to parents on the part of children always, and care and concern for them under the infirmities of sickness and old age, and in times of necessity produced by other circumstances; a great regard for marriage and the perpetuity of the bond, submission to their husbands on the part of wives, and care and protection on the part of the husbands; the exercise of the duties of hospitality to all, especially to strangers; fidelity to friendship under all circumstances; chastity, truthfulness in speech, honesty, kindness, and among some tribes courage also; whilst under its influence, murder and theft, and sometimes the practice of witchcraft, are punished with death; adultery and fornication with a severe social disgrace and fines and selling into slavery, and where the honour of a king's wife is concerned, with death sometimes; suicide, with a dishonoured burial; and neglect and indifference to pay a debt, and insolvency, with much social dishonour; and it discountenances, among other things, pride and vanity and extravagance.

"Among these may be reckoned revenge and retaliation, hatred, jealousy, malice, ill-will, worldliness, anger and wrath and selfishness, some of which have contributed to supply a basis for the system of slavery and the slave trade, and

for the life of polygamy which have ruled the country for centuries and for the very long incessant inter-tribal warfares which have ruined it.

"The motives for virtue are a belief in a retributive providence, either for good or for evil; the fear of social disgrace and of punishment also, which would fall not only upon an individual wrong and evil doer, but upon his relatives and other connections also; the prospect of a long life on earth, desire for prosperity and dread of the anger of the gods and of punishment from them"¹.

This system is enforced by means of Tabus and by means of jujus which are regarded as supernatural powers acquired from the gods or ancestral spirits.

Dr. Farrow, after enlarging upon Bishop Johnson's description, points out the following defects in the religious system of the Yorubas :-

"It does not, and cannot bring man into close touch and communion with a God of love and goodness.

"It teaches morality of life; but cannot give the power to practise this. It has no conception of divine grace working effectually in them that believe

"It gives no real comfort when the sorrow of death falls upon a home. The awful, blank despair of the heathen at such a time is beyond conception, unless it has been witnessed.

"Not only has it these negative defects; but it has great positive evils".

Dr. Farrow then goes on to blame the system as being responsible for "atrocious and abominable cruelties, self-torture, and torture of unwilling victims, and for countless revolting murders of men, women and children in human sacrifice".

1. Yoruba heathenism.

In the same strain he might as well blame Christianity for all the horrors of the Inquisition.

It must be admitted that the Yorubas often fall far below the standard indicated by the above system. Gruesome practices and immoral acts may be witnessed among some of the tribes, and this fact has prevented some observers from seeing very little beyond the gruesome practices of the heathen world enumerated by St. Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans. A dispassionate survey of the facts cannot but produce testimony to the existence of the moral system sketched above. The difference between Bishop Johnson's description and the dark picture drawn by others lies chiefly in the difference between the accepted ideal of the tribe or nation and actuality as illustrated by actions of individual persons or tribes, falling below the ideal. Such a difference is discernible even in highly civilized communities outside Africa, irrespective of the centuries of Christian civilization forming the background of their civilization.

It may be repeated that the gruesome practices referred to by Dr. Farrow constitute a clear evidence of degeneracy from a high ideal of morality which is still discernible among a welter of repulsive acts.

The contribution of religion to the sense of social solidarity among the Yorubas is by no means negligible. Observers have testified to the strong social sense characteristic of the African¹, to "the sense of the continuity of tribal life which is deeply engrained in the African mind"²

1. e.g. Edwin Smith, *Golden Stool*, p.266.

2. J.H. Oldham and B.D. Gibson, *the Remaking of man in Africa*, p.55.

and to the fact^{that} the individual is regarded only as a link in a chain of life which binds together the generations"¹. This sense of solidarity is strengthened by belief in the same deities and by the belief that the bond of union between ancestral and departed spirits on the one hand, and living members of the tribe or nation^{or the other} is indissoluble by death or distance. Such a belief imposes religious and social obligations on every individual wherever he may be.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Students of Anthropology in Africa have raised the question as to what will happen to the peoples of Africa under the influence of Western Civilization. This question has been described by General Smuts as one of the most "interesting and enthralling problems of the twentieth century". What will happen to the religions of African peoples is one of the important factors which will determine what will happen to them on the whole. In the case of Yoruba religion, the foundation and the superstructure have been adversely affected. The old beliefs are being ousted by science. Some still appear under the stress of circumstances, but it is all a question of time; the irresistible force of Western Civilization which drives them underground at present will eventually sweep them away. Seeing that the foundation of Yoruba morality is thus steadily crumbling, and that the power of dreaded jujus is gradually diminishing, one cannot but ask: "What has Western civilization to offer as substitutes?"

Yorubaland has been opened up and the peoples are subject to the civilizing agencies of the Government, the Merchants and

1. J.H. Oldham and B.D. Gibson, the Remaking of man in Africa, p. 55.

the Missionaries. The first two of these civilizing agencies introduce much that is material; they destroy without adequate provision for substitutes or for the re-building of what is destroyed. That task is left chiefly to the Missionaries. They have to see that a new system of morality is built up, and that adjustment from the old to the new is done without detriment.

In handling this delicate situation a dispassionate study of the religion of the Yorubas sketched above will be found useful. A wholesale condemnation of the religion will meet with bitter resentment and failure. Its good elements should be retained, and if necessary, refined. The bad elements should be discarded.

Christianity ~~was~~ ~~been~~ introduced into Yorubaland about a century ago. It has made much progress and has spread to different parts of the country. It is supplying a real want - the best substitute for what the Yorubas have lost religiously and morally. It is supplying valuable spiritual help such as the people have never had before. It is liable, however, to suffer from two great dangers. The first is that it may be swept off entirely, as was the case with the Christianity introduced into South West Africa and into Benin by the Portuguese. At present most Yoruba Christians possess only the veneer of Christianity, the husk and not the kernel of the religion. Its permanence cannot be guaranteed unless it is made "a religion of heart and soul". The second danger is more subtle than the first. It does not involve a wholesale rejection or abandonment of the religion. The danger is that of

its adaptation to local conditions and circumstances as to make it a poor and degenerate form of what it really is. This, as it has pointed out above, is what has happened to the lofty religion of Ancient Egypt. Mohammedanism in Yorubaland is sharing the same fate. Forces are already at work to make Christianity share the same fate. Unless these forces are effectively checked Yoruba Christianity may become a degenerate form of the original Christianity introduced into the country.

"The twentieth century is Africa's", says Professor Aggrey. There is no doubt that Africa is destined to play an important part in world affairs during this century. Whether it will play that part efficiently and successfully depends upon the forces at work and the efforts made by the Africans themselves. "The African is a grand material, if we give him our best" says a former Secretary of the International Missionary Council. This is true, but the African must help himself.

The Yoruba native has shown capacity for progress. He requires a fair chance. He requires wise and efficient leadership. He requires a virile form of Christianity which influences more by deeds than by words, which replaces the uncouth with the sublime, which builds a new structure upon its own teaching but without disregarding all that is best and noblest in the old. Under favourable conditions he will not only make phenomenal material progress, but he will also develop his latent spiritual powers so as to make an effective contribution to the part which Africa as a whole has to play during this century in the general scheme for the amelioration of the world.

APPENDIX 1. EGYPTIAN SURVIVALS.

A P P E N D I X I

A.

A SELECTION OF YORUBA DEITIES

in whose forms Ancient Egyptian deities survive in Yorubaland or whose names are derived from Ancient Egyptian words.

1. O-RA(N) -YA(N), the Living Ra. (Chs. I & IX).
2. ORISA - BEKU, derived from Horus-Bakhu (Chs. I & IX)
3. AJE SALUGA, derived from Salug, an islet in Ancient Egypt
(Chs. I & IX).
4. OLORUN Oni-Orun, Owner of Heaven. Oru(n) is derived from
Horu. Lord of the sky = title of Osiris (Ch. II).
5. O-SU(N) OSI = Ososi, derived from Shu and Osi(ri).
(Chs. II, III, V & IX).
6. O-SU The moon-god, derived from Khonsu, the moon-god
in Ancient Egypt.
7. OLODUMARE = Almighty. (Ch. II). Du = Mountain, hence
an exalted personage.
8. ESU derived from Shu, Sut or Set (Ch. III).
9. OBA-'UFON oba is derived from ba, a soul; 'ufon or lufon,
or from Typhon (Greek, t-u-ph-o-n) (Ch. III).
OBA-LUFON
10. ORISA derived from Horus-set. (Ch. III)
11. ELEGBARA derived from Khepera (Ch. III).
12. BARA derived from ba and Ra (Ch. III)
13. AMUNIBUWA derived from Amon; bu = place (Ch. III)
14. OKE compare Horus-Bakhu, the god of the mountain
(Chs. III & IX).

1. The Chapters in which the names of the deities occur in this work are put in brackets.

15. SUGUDU derived from Shu, Khu, and Du (Chs. III & IX)
16. IFA derived from nefer; compare ope-nifa (Ch. IV).
17. ORU(N)GA(N) Oru(n) is derived from Horu. Ga(n), from ga, to be high. (Ch. IV).
18. ORU(N)-MI-LA derived from Horu-m-la (Ch. IV).
19. ODI derived from Ot (Ch. IV).
20. OBATALA a survival of Khnum (Ch. V)
21. ODUDUA derived from Du and dua-t. A survival of Mut. (Ch. V)
22. YEMOJA traceable to one of Nile goddesses (Ch. V).
23. OLOKUN Oku(n) is derived from Khu (Ch. V); also Chs. IX, XV & XVI.
24. OLOSA derived from sa, a pond. (Ch. V); also Ch. IX.
25. DADA derived from Da. (Chs. V & IX).
26. OGU(N) derived from Khu (Chs. V & VI).
27. OSU(N) derived from SHU (Ch. V).
28. SOPONO derived from Shu or Sut, and Pua-nit or Punt. (Ch. VI).
29. JA-KU-TA derived from Khu and Ptah (Ch. VI).
30. OSU-MARE (Chs. VI & IX).
31. ORISA OKO a survival of Osiris and Min (Ch. VI).
32. ORO a survival of Orion (Ch. VII).
33. ITA derived from neter. Compare Oba-nita (Ch. VII).
34. ELUKU derived from Khu (Ch. VII).
35. A-GE-MON a survival of Geb-amon (Ch. VIII).
36. EGU(N)-GU(N) derived from Khu (Ch. VIII)
~or
EGUN
37. GE-LEDE derived from Geb (Ch. VIII)
38. IBEJI a survival of the Twin-gods. (Ch. IX).
39. OLORI MERIN a survival of the four elemental deities. (Ch. IX)
40. O-SAH(N) a survival of SAHU (Ch. IX).

B

A SELECTION OF EGYPTIAN DEITIES
which have survived in Yorubaland.

1. Amon (I & VIII).	20. Nin-ip (VI)
2. Bast (I & II)	21. Nu (VII)
3. Geb (II & VIII)	22. Pash-t (I)
4. Hathor (II & V)	23. Ptah (VI)
5. Horu -m -la (V)	24. Ra (I, II & III).
6. Horus-Bakhu (II & V)	25. Rpa (I)
7. Horus (III)	26. Seb (V)
8. Hapi Mirit (V)	27. Shu (III, V & IX)
9. Hapi Quaimit (V)	28. Sibn (V)
10. Khepera (II & III)	29. Sokaris (see below)
11. Khonsu (IX)	30. Sut (III)
12. Khnum (X)	31. Sahu (IX)
13. Khopri (III & V)	32. Sekri (II)
14. Kherti (II)	33. Tum (see below)
15. Isis (XI)	34. The Living One of Salug (I & IX)
16. Orion (VII)	35. The Twin Deities- La & Da (IX)
17. Osiris (II)	36. The Four Elemental Deities (IX).
18. Mnevis (see below)	
19. Mut (V)	

(The figures in brackets refer to chapters in this work).

NOTES.

1. PTAH also survives in such words as :-
Ye-gba-ta, (the living soul of Ptah), the name of one of the chiefs in Ode Ondo; O-ta, a cannon-ball.
2. MNEVIS survives in Yorubaland as EWI, in Iboland as NNEWI.
EWI = Mnevis. ADO = settlement. EKITI = Khuti, the two horizons (a well-known term in Ancient Egypt).
EWI ADO EKITI = Mnevis of the settlement of the two horizons.
Khuti (Yoruba, Kuti) survives in the name of important families in Abeokuta (Yorubaland).
3. TUM survives in such words as : tun (again) titun (new), o-tun (right hand). The survivals suggest that the worship of Tum was introduced late into that part of Ancient Egypt where the Yorubas settled.
4. The survival of BARA as part of the name of Elegbara has been noted above. The word Bara is also used to denote a mausoleum.
5. SO-KA-RIS. So, the ka of Osiris. The word So (or So) survives in several Yoruba names.

C.

A SELECTION OF DEITIES

in other parts of West Africa which are survivals of Ancient Egyptian Deities of whose names are derived from Ancient Egyptian words.

1. ABASI Supreme Deity of the Efik people in Calabar, Southern Nigeria. A survival of Bas-t.
2. AYI-BA Supreme Deity of the Ijaw people in Southern Nigeria. Ba = soul.
3. CHI-NEKE "The soul of Nekhen", the Supreme Deity of the Ibo people of Southern Nigeria. See Chapter II above, and Budge, Book of the Dead, pp.338 & 340.
4. MAU or MAWU Supreme Deity of the Ewe people of Dahomey and Gold Coast. A survival of Mau-t.
5. NYI-SUA "The living soul of Sua-nit", the Supreme Deity of the Grebo people in Liberia.
6. NYON-MON "The living AMON", Supreme Deity of the Ga people of the Gold Coast.
7. ORU Supreme Deity of the Nembe people of Southern Nigeria. A survival of Horu.
8. YAN-KU-PON "The living soul of Punt", Supreme Deity of the Fanti people of the Gold Coast.
9. AMOSU a river deity on the Gold Coast. Amsu is an Ancient Egyptian god.

D.

A SELECTION OF EGYPTIAN DEITIES
which have survived in other parts
of West Africa.

1. Amon	7. Mnevis
2. Bast or Pasht	8. Sob-ku
3. Horus	9. Tanen
4. Horus-Set	10. The living Soul of Nekhen
5. Mau-t	11. The living Soul of Punt
6. Amsu	12. The living Soul of Sua-nit

E.

A SELECTION OF WEST AFRICAN TRIBES
whose names are derived from those of Egyptian
deities or from Egyptian words.

I. Nigeria.

Name of Tribe.

1. YO-RUBA	Yo (from the root word ye) = living rpa, an Egyptian god. See Chapter II.
2. I-BI(N)NI	ben-nu, an Egyptian bird, representative of Osiris.
3. SEKIRI	Sekri or Sekru, an Egyptian god.
4. SOBO	Sob-ku, an Egyptian god.

Name of Tribe.	Derivation.
5. BA-RIBA	ba = soul. rpa, see No. 1 above.
6. I-GA-RA	Ga, a modification of ka; Ra, the sun-god.
7. E-GBA	ba = soul.
8. A-WORI	Ha-oiri-t
9. I-JE-BU	Je (from the root ye) = being, person, and bu = place.
10. I-JE-SA	Je, same as 9 above; and sa (sha), the typhonian animal representative of Set. See Chapter III.
11. E-KI-TI	Khuti, the two horizons, See Note 2 under B above.
12. YA-GBA	Ya (from the root ye) = living; gba = ba = soul.
13. I-GBO-MINA	Gbo = bau = souls. Mina = Min.
14. E-GUN	Gu(n) = Khu, luminous spirit.
15. I-BO	Bo = bau = souls.
16. ON-DO	On=un = being or beings; do = settlement. Ondo = people of the settlement i.e. settlers

II. Other parts of West Africa.

17. GA (Gold Coast)	Ga is a modification of ka = soul.
18. FANTI (Gold Coast)	Fanti or Fenti, an Egyptian god. See Budge Book of the Dead, pp. 367 663.
19. TCHI (Gold Coast)	Tchi, a modification of Khu; compare Khu and Chi(neken) in Chapter II above.
20. A-SANTI or A-SHANTI (Gold Coast)	Santi or Senti, one of the titles of Ra. See Budge, op.cit. p.342.
21. SU-SU (Sierra Leone)	Original form of Su-t or Shu. See Budge Egyptian Language p.52 No.18.

F.

A SELECTION OF YORUBA WORDS
with their derivations from the
Ancient Egyptian Language.

1. General.

Yoruba	Ancient Egyptian	
1. ade (crown)	ade-f or ate-f	= crown, plumes, dix.
2. ako (male)	ak	= male
3. abo (female)	ab	= female
4. ala (boundary, white)	ala or I-arau	} see chapter V above.
5. ala (part of the name of a deity)	I-alau I-aro	
6. Amu (a native of Amu)	Amu	The word is found only in combination with other words e.g. Apa amu sua see chapter 1 p. 32 above. Also, da ni amu = confuse, trouble.
7. Amon	amon	= hidden. The word is found chiefly in combination with other words e.g. fi p'amon, cause it to be hidden i.e. hide.
8. a-pa	pa or per	= house. a-pa = that which belongs to the house i.e. a domestic servant. Apa (prodigal) contains the idea of the waste often caused by unskilled domes- tic servant. Hence apa amu sua, (wasteful) domestic servant, an Amu of the nome of sua-nit.
9. a-ra (body)	Ra	The body is regarded as property of the god.

Yoruba

Ancient
Egyptian.

10. a-ra (thunder)	Ra	Thunder was regarded as the voice of Ra, the sun-god, who was also "The Lord of the sky".
11. a-ra (wonderful performance)	Ra	Superior skill is regarded as a gift of the god Ra.
12. a-re (a wretched or miserly person)	Re or Ra	Wretched persons or beggars are regarded in Egypt as incarnations of deities. See Lane, Modern Egyptians.
13. a-ro (river, name of a town near a river)	I-aro or I-alo	see No. 4 and 5 above and Chapter V. pp
14. a-sa (shield)	sa	= a divine fluid regarded as being capable of protecting gods and men from evil.
15. a-se (door, gate)	se-b	= door, gate. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language p.77 Nos. 43 & 44. See also Yoruba Bible, Isa:ch:LX verse 11.
16. a-ke (axe)	qe-h	= axe. Budge Op.Cit.P.85 Nos. 7 & 8 q = k in Yoruba.
17. a-dua (prayer)	dua or tua	= to pray, prayer. Budge, op.cit. p.43 Nos. 5 & 6.
18. a-ga (chair)	qa	= to be high, that which is high.
19. A-ta or Atta	Atthar	ATA is the name of the paramount chief IGBIRRA cp. Nana Ofori Atta, a paramount chief on the Gold Coast.
20. A-ga-ra	Ka	Agara = the ka of the body. Da ni agara = tire one out, lit. wear out the soul of one's body.
21. Agbara (power, strength)	Khepera	See Chapter III above.
22. a-gba (an elderly person, old man).	ba	an elderly or old man is regarded as the full incarnation of the spirit of the tribe.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
23. a-ru-gbo (an old man)	ru-ha ba	= evening } a-ru-gbo = the evening = soul } of the ba i.e. the later stage of life.
24. a-wu-re	Khu & Re	Awure = the soul of Re. It is an amulet of juju for good luck. See Ch.XV.
25. A-gu-ra	Khu & Ra	Agura = the soul of Ra; the name of a district in Abeokuta.
26. A-ka-ri-gbp	Kharib or Kherib	= high priest in ancient Egypt. Akarigbo is the title of the paramount chief of Ijebu Remo. See Chapter X.
27. ade-nibi	atef & nibi-t	Ade-nibi = atef nibi-t = the crown of the mistress. A Yoruba name given to a girl whose birth is a source of pride to her mother. (The mistress of the house.)
28. ba	ba	ba is used as a form of curse or malediction e.g. Yio ba o "evil will meet you", lit., you will become a "ba", as opposed to O ku, you will become a Khu, luminous spirit.
29. ba-ra (beg)	ba & Ra	= the soul of Ra. See No.12 above. ba-ra = to ask for alms; beggars being regarded in Ancient Egypt as incarnations of deities. See Lane's Modern Egyptians.
30. ba-ra (mauseleum; great house)	per & aa ¹	= great house. See Tiele, History of the Ancient Egyptians, (trans.Ballingal) p.107.
31. Dada (a name)	Da	Da, an Egyptian god. See Chapter IX above.
32. da-ra	Ra	dara = to give a wonderful performance See No.II above.
33. da-ra (good, beautiful)	Ra	dara probably means "that which is pleasing to Ra".

1. See also Griffith, Proceedings of the Society of
Biblical Archaeology 23 pp.72-74.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
34. didu or dudu (black)	didu or dudu (tat)	didu or dudu is the black image of Osiris. See Chapter II above.
35. enia or eni-yan or uni-yan (human being, mankind)	un	= eni or uni = being; yan (from the root 'ye') = living. Enia = living being, hence, mankind, human being.
36. e-re (play, games)	Re	probably a survival of games played on festival occasions in honour of the god Re or Ra.
37. e-re (image, idol)	qere-s	= image. See Budge, Op.cit. p.45, no.27.
38. e-re (species of serpent, python)	ere or ara	See Budge, Op.cit. p.68, Nos. 11 16.
39. e-gu(n)-gu(n) or e-gu(n) (masquerade)	Khu	See Chapter VIII above.
40. e-bo (sacrifice)	u-eb	See Chapter XI above.
41. e-ku(n) (district)	Khu	e.g. Ekun Osi, the Khu of Osiris, i.e. the district over which the god of Osiris presides.
42. e-mi(n) (spirit)	Min	That which pertains to Min, implying kinship between the god and man. See Ch. XIII.
43. e-se (sin, offence)	se-t	se-t = what is bad, evil. See Budge, op.cit. p.61, No.66
44. fa (carry)	fa	= carry. See Budge, Op.Cit. pp.46 & 49 Nos. 52 & 105.
45. Fa-te-ru	Fat-heru	Fateru, a Yoruba name; Fat-heru, the name of an Egyptian god.
46. Fa-we	Nefer and ue-b	Fa-we = Ifa-we = one purified by Ifa (Nefer). ue-b = wash, purify.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
47. fe (blow)	nef or naf	= wind, breeze, air, breath, to blow. The Yoruba word a-fe-fe = wind, breeze, is probably derived from this word.
48. fo (fly)	af	= fly. In Yoruba, a verb begins with a consonant.
49. ga (high)	qa	= high
50. gbo (to be old)	bau or bou (souls, spirits)	old men being regarded as possess- ing, in a special manner, the spirits of the nation or tribe. cp.No.22 above.
51. gbo (hear, smell)	ba	gbo, derived from ba or bau: means "to take in the soul of a thing", hence it means "hear" "smell". This will explain the difficulty found in an idiom peculiar to some West African languages, that is, "to <u>hear</u> a smell".
52. ge-le-de	Geb & deb	See Chapter VIII.
53. Iba biri	ba	Iba Biri = the soul of Biri The title of a chief.
54. Igbo-mina	Bau & Min	Igbo = bau. Mina = Min. The name of a tribe.
55. Igbo	Bau	The Igbos are a Yoruba tribe.
56. Ibu (place, the depth of the sea).	bu	bu = place. Sometime it is modified to 'bi' e.g. ibi = place. Ki bu e e ? (Ondo dialect) Lit. ~~what~~ <u>place</u> are you going to ? c.p. ibusun, ibudo, abule.
57. I-gbo-do (name of a place)	bau & do	Igbo = bush, forest where the ba's or spirits live. Do = riverside, settlement.
58. I-ke-re-ku	gere-s & Khu	ge-re-s = an image. Ikereku = the image of Khu. A district in Abeokuta.
59. I-ku (death)	Khu (spirit)	Iku, the process of becoming a Khu; death.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
60. Ifa	Nefer	See chapter IV.
61. Ita	Neter	Neter = a god. Ita = place of worship. Later Ita means a street.
62. I-ki-re	Khu & Re	= the soul of Re. A town in Yorubaland.
63. I-la	La	La, an Egyptian deity. I-la, a Yoruba town or tribe.
64. I-se-hin (a town)	sa-hu	See chapter X
65. I-ta-bo (a town)	Neter & u-eb	Ita (neter) and ẹbo (u-eb) place of sacrifice i.e. a shrine. See chapter X & No. 46 above.
66. I-to-ku (a district)	Neter & Khu	I-to-ku = Ita-okù. Neter-Khu, a well-known Egyptian phrase. See No.65 above.
67. I-te-bu	Neter & bu	= a sacred place. Sometimes written Ntebu.
68. I-te (throne)	Te-s horu	= the throne of Horus, derived from the Egyptian through the Greek language. See Sayce, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians p.224.
69. Itesi (a district)	Neter-osiri	= the divine Osiris. Itesi = Ita Esi or Osi(ri)
70. i-sin (service, worship)	Isis	see chapter X
71. I-na-biri or Ina-bere	na-pri-t	= a kind of grain. Inabiri or inabere is a kind of grain.
72. i-lu (city, town, country)	nu	= city. u is changed to l. See Chapter I p.14 rule 14.
73. I-re	Re	= that which is good, goodness.
74. Ja-ku-ta	Khu & Ptah	THE LIVING SOUL OF PTAH See Chap.V.
75. ka	ka	= soul or spirit. The word occurs in combination with several other words.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
76. Ka-ra(n) (the name of a king)	Ka & Ra	Kara(n), a famous Yoruba king.
77. Ka-ra (apartments)	Ha & Ra	Ka-ra = ha-ra = the house of Ra. Kara = retiring apartments in the houses of great men.
78. Ka-Nla	Ka & la	= the great ka. The name of a place in Yorubaland.
79. Kobiti	Qobt or Kobt	Kobiti, a Yoruba name; Qobt, the name of an Ancient Egyptian town, from which the word Copt is derived.
80. Ko (build)	qo-t or qe-t	= build. The final consonant <u>t</u> is elided in Yoruba.
81. ku (die)	Khu	Khu = luminous spirit. Ku = to become a luminous spirit. The word appears in the same sense in several West African languages.
82. Kuti (a name)	Khuti	= the two horizons.
83. Kemta	Khu & neter	= divine Khu. Kemta, a district in Abeokuta.
84. ku-re-ku-re (fairy, hobgoblin)	Khu & Re	= soul of Re or Ra. See Ch. XV.
85. Koro (corner)	Konb- or ken-b	= corner, kon; n takes a vowel to form a new syllable and is then changed to r. See Ch. I p44 Rules 13 & 14.
86. Kesi	Kesi	Kesi, a city in Upper Egypt; Kesi, a district in the town of Abeokuta. See Budge, Book of the Dead, p. 340.
87. Lisa	Horu-Set	Lisa is a contraction of Orisa or Orisa. It sometimes appears in its full form as Olisa. It is the title of some important chiefs. See Chp. II for full explanation.
88. Loro	Orion	Loro = Ol'oro. The name of a chief in Ilesha. See chap. 7 for Oro & Orion.

Yoruba.	Ancient Egyptian.	
89. Maku (A Yoruba name)	Khu	Ma-ku, do not die.
90. Ma-gba (Ifa priest)	Amon and Va	Ma-gba = Omon-agba, people of the ba, i.e. those who possess in a special manner, the spirit of the tribe. See Ch. IV.
91. mon mimon (holy clean)	Amon	mo(n) or mimo(n) is an adjective which means clean, holy. The idea is probably derived from the cleanliness of a hidden seed which cannot be touched by dirt or pollution from the outside.
92. mo(n) or ma(n) (mould shapen)	ma-su	= mould, shapen. See Chap.V above for full explanation.
93. Ntebo	Neter & u-eb	Ntebo = sacred sacrifice. The name of a place in Ijebu Ode. Chap.X No. 65 above.
94. Odi (a deity)	Ot or Od	= a deity. t or d receives a vowel to form a new syllable.
95. Odu (chief, an exalted personage)	du	= mountain. See Chap.V
96. odo (river, well)	do	= lake, river, settlement.
97. Odu-dua	du & dua-t	See chapter V
98. O-ku(n)-ri(n) (man)	Kh-nu-mu	See Chapter V for full explanation.
99. o-bi(n)ri(n)	Kh-op-ri	See Chap.III & V for full explanation.
100. o-gun (a deity)	Khu	See chap. V above.
101. o-ku (a dead person)	Khu	See Ku, No. 81 above.
102. O-gun (war, battle)	Khu	engagement in which persons are put to death, that is, they are caused to become Khus.

<u>Yoruba</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
103. O-ke	ba-khu	see chap.III above.
104. Omi	i-oma, mi or mu	= water, See Masp. Dawn of Civilization, p.16 & Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, pp. 75 & 76.
105. Oni-sua or Oli-sua	Sea-nit	= a home in Ancient Egypt. Sua is a district in Yorubaland. Oni-sua or Olisua = owner or chief of Sua.
106. O-re	Re	Ore = fairy, elf, disembodied spirit.
107. Ori	hor	= to be high. Ori = head, top, surface.
108. Oro (a deified spirit)	Orion	See chap. VII above.
109. Oru(n) (sun)	Horu	= sun-god.
110. oru (evening,night)	ru-ha	evening.
111. oru (heat)	Horu	Oru = heat, that which is crused by the sun.
112. Ooru(n) (name of a field in Yorubaland)	Ooru or Aaru	= the Elysian Field.
113. Oṣu (moon)	Kh-onsu	= moon-god.
114. Osiri (plot, conspiracy)	Osiri	The word survives in the phrase "da osiri bo o" or "gba osiri re" i.e. plot or conspire against him. The underlying idea is the conspiracy against Osiris by Set and his accomplices.
115. Osi (poverty, wretchedness)	Osiri	Beggars and wretched persons are regarded as incarnations of deities. Hence oṣi = poverty, wretchedness. See No.12 above.

<u>Yoruba.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
116. O-so (wizârd, part of a name)	So-ka-ri	= So, the ka of Osiris. The word So is found chiefly in combination with other words.
117. O-u(n) or O-hu(n) (voice)	Kher-ou	= voice. Only one syllable is retained by the Yorubas. Similar examples can be given; compare masu, No.92 above.
118. o-ba (king)	ba	= soul. The king is regarded as the ba or the incarnate soul of the tribe or nation.
119. o-ba	ba	oba = name of a place or river.
120. Oba-ni-sua	ba & sua-nit	Oba-oni-sua = The king, the owner of Sua. See No.118 above.
121. o-kan (heart)	ka	= heart - soul. Okan = heart, conscience, soul, innermost being.
122. o-ga (master)	qa	= to be high. Oga = a chief, an exalted person, master.
123. O-de (hunter)	de-b	= pierce. Ode = one who pierces animals with spears or arrows i.e. a hunter.
124. o-la (honour)	La	Ola = that which belongs to the god La.
125. om̩(n) or oma(n) (child)	A-mon	= hidden. Omon is applied to the hidden seed of a fruit, and hence to a child in embryo, and to anything small in comparison with another.
126. o-p̩ (quantity, crowd) (p̩ - many)	pau } pau }	= many, company, crowd, ennead of gods. Pau or Pou.
127. o-sa (lagoon)	sa	pond, lake. See Chapter IX.
128. o-ta (enemy)	Ptah	See Chapter V
129. Osi-ko-minu (a family name)	Osi(n) & Khominu	Osi-ko-minu = Osiris Khominu = Osiris of the "Gods Eight". See Masp. Dawn of Civilization p.149.

Yoruba.

Ancient Egyptian.

130. o-ko (boat)	Kho-t or Khe-t	= boat.
131. Sabe (a Yoruba tribe)	Sabe-s	= divine herald. See Budge, Book of the Dead, p.443.
132. si-gi-nibi	shu, Khu, & nibit.	Siginibi = su-gu-nibi = Shu, the khu of the mistress. cp. Si-gi-di = su-gu-du. cp. also Ade-nibi, No.27 above.
133. Su (mould, shapen)	ma-su	= mould, shapen. See No.92 above and Chapter V.
134. ta (to break open)	ptah	= to break open. See Budge, Op. cit. p.69 No.37.
135. we (wash,make clean)	ue-b	= wash, pure, clean.
136. wu (rise,swell)	wu	= rise, swell.
137. yi(n) (praise)	hin	= praise. See Budge, op.cit. p. 41 No.7. <u>H</u> is elided and <u>y</u> is substituted in Yoruba.
138. yq (rejoice)	hoo	= rejoice. See Budge, op.cit. p. 41 No.8
139. wombia	nubia	wombia = iwo Nubia = you, a Nubian.
140. wombiliki	Obeliscus	wom-bi-li-ki = Iwo obiliki = you, an obelisk (obeliscus). The words wombia, wombiliki, have survived from the Egyptian through the Greek language. They are abusive terms applied to a covetous persons. Wombia (you, a Nubia) shows that the Yorubas are not Nubians. Wombiliki (you, an obelisk) shows that the idea of an obelisk as a large object is familiar to the Yorubas, a covetous person being regarded by them as one who wishes to grab things with a view to becoming as huge as an obelisk.

Yoruba.

Ancient Egyptian.

141. Suru
(patience,
forebearance)

Suru-d

= prosperity, patience, forbearance.

142. O-go
(glory,
radiance)

Khu

= glory, radiance. Kh becomes g, and u becomes o. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, p.74 No.9.

143. O-l-otu
(Manager)

Ot

= aat = district. Ot becomes Otu. O-l-otu = owner of the district, hence, Manager, one who is in charge of a group of persons or of a place.

144. Ta
(sell)

Ta

= give; hence to give in exchange for money or an equivalent, to sell.

145. O-pa-ba-ta
(Stick used
by Adamourisa
masquerade)

per ba and
Ptah

pa = per = house; ba = soul; ta = P-tah. O-pa ba ta = the house of the Soul of Ptah. O-pa ba ta stick is used for flogging those who fail to pay the customary respects to Adamourisa masquerade.

146. O-gu-ra(n)
(An Adamu-
orisa
masquerade)

Khu & Ra

Gu = Khu. O-gu-ra(n) = the soul of Ra.

147. Biri-kiti
(Round)

Khopri &
Khuti

Khopri Khuti = The sun-god of the two horizons. Biri-kiti means "like the solar orb at sunset" i.e. round.

128. O-gu(n)

Khu

Twenty, O-gu(n), is an important unit in the Yoruba system of enumeration. Scores up to 180 are multiples of it. e.g. Ogoji = Ogu(n) meji = forty; Ogota = Ogu(n) meta = sixty etc. Hence twenty is designated the "Khu" or spirit of numbers. Compare this with the Ibo system which is almost identical with that of Yoruba. "Twenty" in Ibo is O-gu or Oru.

Yoruba.

Ancient Egyptian.

149. I-gba
(two hundred)

ba

After twenty the next important unit is two-hundred. The hundreds following it up to 20,000 are multiples of it. e.g. egberin = igba merin = 200 times 4 = 800; edegbejo = ogorun di-ni-igba-mejo = 100 taken from 200 times 8 = 1500; ogbokanla = igba moka-la = 200 times 11 = 2200. The only exception to this rule will be noted in the next number.

150. I-rin-wo
(four
hundred)

Nin

= An Egyptian god. The word nin or nini is used by the Yorubas to denote perfection. Wo is an abbreviation of Owo "money" or "cowrie shells". I-rin-wo, therefore means "a perfect number" and is so regarded because it is the square of twenty, an important unit in Yoruba numerals. Hence, four hundred does not follow the rule that numbers above two hundred should be multiples of that figure.

151. Sa(n)
(wash)

Saa-u

= wash, consecrate, c.p. Ibo. Sua = wash.

152. Ita-gbe
(a sacred
emblem used
by chiefs of
Ogboni Secret
Society)

Neter and
ba

Ita = Neter; See Chapter VII. gbe = ba or bau. Ita-gbe = soul.

153. O-lu-ku-lu-ku

Ku

= spirit. O-lu-ku-lu-ku = oni-ku-oni-ku = every possessor of a ku or spirit. cp. A-ku -a-ku (Tehi) = all.

154. Wu-ra
(gold)

Khu-Ra

= the soul or spirit of Ra. The term wura is applied to gold because its colour resembles that of the golden orb of Ra (the Sun-god) at dawn or at sunset. The flesh of Ra was said to become gold at sunset; See Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.110, Note 1.

Yoruba.

Ancient Egyptian.

155. Irele
(submission,
humility)

e-nen
(submission,
humility)

e-nen; "e" becomes "i" in Yoruba; the first 'n' is changed to the liquid 'r' and the second to 'l'. E-nen, therefore = i-nene (r) receiving a vowel to form a new syllable = irele. It should be noted that in some dialects, the word is still pronounced as i-ne-ne. See Ch.I p.14, rules 13 and 14.

156. O ku
(a saluta-
tion indica-
ting good
wishes)

Khu

O ku is a salutation meaning "may you become a Khu" (and not a ba). It is similar to the Ibo salutation I-gu-e or Igwe. See Chapter I for full explanation. - pages 29 & 30.

157. So
(watch)

Sa or So

= watch. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, p.50.

158. O-biri-kiti

Khopri and
Khuti

The derivation of O-biri from Khopri has been noted above (Chapter III); that of Kiti from Khuti has been noted in this Appendix under section B above. Khopri-Khuti = Khopri (the sun-god) of the two horizons.

III. Names of Animals.

<u>Yoruba.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian</u>	
1. Inoki (ape or baboon)	Noki-t	a fabulous beast,ape,baboon.
2. A-gu-ta(n) or A-gu-to(n)	Ha-khu	See Chap. I. p. 34.
3. Kini-un (lion)	Qimi + Un	= black being.
4. O-bo (monkey)	Bau or Bo-u	= spirits, souls; the monkey being regarded as indwelt by spirits and sometimes saluted as "Oluwa mi", My Lord.
5. A-gbo (ram)	Ba or bau or bo-u	= ram or rams in Ancient Egyptian See Budge, op.cit. p. 60 No. 15.
6. Adiye (hen,cock, fowl)	Khadu	= slaughter, adiye = adu-eiye, bird for slaughter, i.e. a domestic fowl kept for edible purposes.
7. Malu (bull)	Omo(n) + alu	Malu = omo-alu, native of alu i.e. the osirified bull of alu. See Chapter II.
8. Olo-gbo (cat)	Ba or bau or bo-u	= spirits, souls. The cat, a sacred abimal in Ancient Egypt, is regarded by the Yorubas as being indwelt by spirits. Hence the term <u>Ologbo</u> , possessor of spirits.
9. E-ku-te (rat)	Ku + Te-mu	E-ku-te = the soul of Te-mu, the rat being sacred to Te-mu in some parts of Ancient Egypt.
10, La-gi-do (monkey)	La,Khu, + Do	La-gi-do = La, the Khu (or the spirit god) of the settlement.
11. Pe-pe-ye, Pe-pe-eiye (duck,goose)	Pe	= water. Pe-pe-ye = pe-pe-eiye = water bird.
12. O-ni (Crocodile)	Au-nu	See Chapter I p. 32

Yoruba.

Ancient Egyptian.

13. Ere (boa)	Ere or Ara	= serpent, See Budge, op.cit. Nos. 11 & 16.
14. E-kun (tiger)	Khu	See chapter IX.
15. Amo(n)-teku(n) (leopard)	Amon + Khu	do.
16. A-ka-ta (jackal)	Ka + Ptah	A-ka-ta = the soul of Ptah.
17. A-ka-la (vulture)	Ka + La	A-ka-la = the soul of La.
18. A-japa (tortoise)	Pa	= house. Ajapa = the living one of the house.
19. A-wun or A-un (tortoise)	Un	= being.
20. E-le-de (pig)	de(b)	= pierce. Elede = one who pierces See Chapter II for full explanati- on.
21. E-ri(n) (elephant)	ri-ri-t	Ririt = hippopotamus = eri(n)-mi Yoruba = eri(n)-omi, i.e. water elephant. The elephant in Benin district is <u>e-ri-ri</u> or <u>e-ni-ni</u> , 'n) being substituted for 'r'
22. I-ka(n)-du (ant)	ka + du	I-ka-(n)du = the spirit of the hill or mountain. This name is applied to the species of ants which builds ant-hills. Du (An- cient Egyptian) = Mountain, hill.
23. Ka-ri-ka (ant - large type)	Ka-ari-ka	= the name of a god in Ancient Egypt. Ka-rika is the name of a species of ants.
24. O-ka (boa cons- trictor)	ka	= a species of snake.
25. O-ke-te	Khu + Te-mu	Okete = a kind of large rat.
26. O-gi-da(n) (tiger)	Khu + da	Khu becomes gi. cp. Ku-da, Ch. IV.
27. O-po-lo (frog)	pau + la	O-po-lo = pau-la = many gods. cp. the large number of frog-headed deities of Hermopolis. See Masp. Dawn of Civilizn., p. 148. See Ch. XI above.

Yoruba. Ancient Egyptian.

28. Ma-gu-du (a species of ants)	Amon, Khu + du	Ma-gu-du = Omo-or Oma(n)-gu-du = the child of the spirit (Khu) of the mountain.
29. Gu(n)-n-te (cockatrice)	Khu + Te-mu	= the Khu of the Te-mu
30. E-le-gu(n) -gu(n) (alligator)	Khu	Elegu(n)gu(n) = the owner or possessor of spirits(khus).

NOTES.

1. The above list contains only a short selection of Yoruba words of Egyptian origin. The selection is confined mainly to roots, the compounds from the roots being left out as far as possible. The range of Egyptian survivals in Yoruba covers at least one-half of the entire Yoruba vocabulary.
2. Most of the animals mentioned in the above list were sacred animals in Ancient Egypt.

G.

SELECT LISTS OF WEST AFRICAN LANGUAGES CONTAINING
SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WORDS.

The Yoruba Language is not unique in respect of survivals of Ancient Egyptian words. Several other West African Languages contain similar survivals. For the purpose of illustration a few of the leading West African languages have been selected and short lists of words of Egyptian origin in each language have been compiled. Much longer lists could have been given if the scope of this work had covered West African religions in general. The lists given below, however, are sufficient to illustrate the existence and prevalence of such survivals.

The languages selected are as follows :—

1. Ibo
2. Ijaw
3. Igabo Isoko
4. Egun (Alada)
5. Ewe
6. Tshi
7. Ga.

IBO.

<u>Ibo.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
1. Chuku (God)	Khu	CHUKU = Chi-uku = the great spirit. CHI IS A SOFTENING DOWN OF KHU. See Chapter II.
2. Chi-neke(n) (God)	Khu & Nekhen	Chi-neke = The soul of Nekhen. The interpretation of this word as CHI-NA-EKE, Creator, is fanciful and is probably due to Christian influence. See Chapter II.
3. Mo (maw) (spirit)	Ma or Mo	= spirit. See Tiele, History of the Egyptians p.85 Ma is the Egyptian spirit of Order in the universe.
4. Miri or Mili (water)	Miri-t	Goddess of the River Nile i.e. Miri-t Hapi or Miri-t Quaimit.
5. Madu (person)	Madu-t	an Egyptian god.
6. Mau (masquerade)	Mau-t	an Egyptian goddess. Compare this with Mau (or Mawu), the Supreme Deity of the Ewe people.
7. Ifa or Efa (divination instrument)	Nefer	Ifa is the same divination instru- ment as in Yorubaland. See Chap.IV.
8. Ori-mili or Ori-miri or Osi-mili or Osi-miri	hor & miri	Ori-miri = the water of Horus. Osimiri, the water of Osiris. Osimiri is also the name of a river in Yorubaland. Osimiri in Ibo = river, sea.
9. Wu or Nwu (die)	Khu	Kh is changed to w. wu = khu = to become a luminous spirit i.e. to die. See Chap. I.
10. Owu or On-wu (death)	Khu	Derivation: same as in 9 above.
11. Ala (land)	Iaro, Ialo, ala	Ialo, I=ala = river. Ala in Yoruba means boundary i.e. land bordering on the River Nile; in Ibo, it means land, e.g. Ala Mo or Maw, land of the dead. Cp. Yoruba Ile Oku = House of the dead.

<u>Ibo.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
12. A-gu (spirit, carved images, leopard)	Khu	= luminous spirit. Agu Mawu in Ibo = the spirit of Mawu i.e. the bull-roarer. Ekun (Yoruba) = leopard.
13. N-so (holy, divine)	Sa	= divine essence of the gods N-so (N-saw) = that which is divine, holy. Sa in Egyptian language also means sacred person.
14. Mbo-ni (diviner)	ba and un	ba or bau = soul or souls; un = being. Mboni = persons who possess the soul of the community in an especial manner. See Chap. IV, cp. Yoruba Magba in Chap.V.
15. O-gu or Oggu (magic, juju)	Khu	Oggu = divine or magical power for working wonders; also the idol or juju used for such a purpose.
16. I-bo (a tribe in Southern Nigeria)	ba or bau (soul or souls)	The names of several West African Tribes are compounds of the Ancient Egyptian word "ba" e.g. Ya-gba, the living ba Ba-riba, the soul of Rpa, etc. (See appendix E above) Bo is a contraction of bau.
17. I-ka (a sub-tribe in Iboland)	ka	For similar examples see Appendix E above.
18. Oru (a sub-tribe in Iboland)	Horu	ditto
19. N-gbo (a sub-tribe in Iboland)	bau (souls)	For similar examples see Appendix E above.
20. Nwon-gbo (cat)	bau (souls)	Gbo is a modified form of bau. The cat was a sacred animal in some parts of Ancient Egypt and was regarded as an incarnation of the community.
21. Okuta (stone)	Khu &	cp. Ol'-ogbo (cat) in Yoruba. O-ku-ta = the soul of Ptah. Ptah was supposed to be incorporated in a stone. Okuta is also the Yoruba word for a stone.

<u>Ibo.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
22. I-gu-e or Igwe (iron)	Khu	O-gu or O-gu(n) is the Yoruba god of iron. Gu is a modification of Khu.
23. Elu-igu-e or Elu-igwe or Eru-igwe (heaven)	Oru & Khu	Elu or eru is a modification of the Egyptian word hor or horu = that which is high, top. Eru in Ibo = high. Igu-e or Igwe; See No.22 above.
24. a-bu	bu	= place.
25. O-ba (king) Yoruba, oba = king.	ba	o-ba = king; the king is regarded as the incarnate soul of the nation. Oba in Yoruba also means a "King".
26. e-kwu	khu	= soul. Ekwu is a small conical lump of clay used for the installation protective idols. E-kwu = belonging to the Khu or spirit.
27. Ogu or Oru (twenty)	Khu	Twenty is an important unit in the Ibo numeration. Several of the scores following it are named as multiples of it. For example FORTY is Ogu abua = twenty times two; Sixty is Ogu ato = twenty times three. Hence twenty is named Khu or the spirit or the chief numbers. Oru, derived from Hor, Horu (high, top) is used in the same sense. Ogu or Ogu(n) in Yoruba = twenty.
28. Zo (heal)	U-za-i or u-zo-i	= health. Zo, in Ibo = to heal; ozi-zo = healing.
29. N-nu (four- hundred)	Nin or Nu	N-nu (four hundred is an important number; it is the square of twenty (o-gu) the important unit and is the same word as the Yoruba irinwo (four hundred). It has been shown in Chapter VI p.121 above that the Yoruba word irin is derived from the name of Nin-ip the Egyptian god of iron.

<u>Ibo.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
30. o-kpa-ra (son)	ba & ra	ba-ra = soul of Ra. The phrase "ba-ra" is used in some West African languages to denote a soul; compare ka-ra 'soul' in Tebi. Here the son is regarded as a continuation or reproduction of the soul of his father.
31. u-mi or o-mi (water)	I-oma or I-omi	= water. Umi or omi denotes water in an Ibo dialect. Miri or mili is used in other dialects. Umi or Omi is the same as Yoruba word omi = water.
32. I-gwe or I-gu-e (a form of salutation)	Khu	Igwe or Igu-e is a form of salutation denoting good wishes for long life etc. It is always used in saluting chiefs or persons of high rank. I-gu-e contains the same idea as the Yoruba salutation Oku or ku explained in chapter I above.
33. sua (wash)	sua-u (wash)	sua-u in Ancient Egyptian means "set apart by washing" "consecrate," "purify".
34. ozo (a titular chief, whose person is sacrosanct)	so or sa	= a sacred person. "By virtue of the initiatory rites and ceremonies, the man admitted to this titular rank (i.e. ozo) is 'ex opere operato' sacrosanct; his person is no longer common; it is holy "Niger Ibos" by Dr. G.T. Basden, Introduction p. XIII.
35. Ekwe-n-su (Devil)	Khu &	E-ku-e-n-su or E-kw-e-n-su = the spirit of Su-t; cp. E-su (Yoruba) = Devil. See Chap. III
36. O-ge-ne (a chief's title)	Hen	= king, prince, chief. cp. O-ghe-ne (Isoko) = God; o-he-ne (Tchi) = king, paramount chief.
37. O-du (a chief's title)	Du or Od	Du = exalted personage, mountain Odu (Yoruba) = chief, an exalted personage. Od. (Ancient Egyptian deity).
38. Alusi, Alose A-ro-se (idol, god).	Horus or Horus-se-t	A-lu-si or A-RO-SE is modified form of orisa or oruse (Yoruba) = idol, minor god. See Chap. III for full explanation.

<u>Ibo.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
39. u-mu(n) or omu(n) (children, child)	a-mon	= that which is hidden, hence, seed, child (before or after its birth)
40. Egwu-gwu (Masquerades, incarnate forms of spirits)	Khu	= spirit. E-gwu-gwu (ibo) = E-GU-(N)-GU-(N) (Yoruba) = incarnate forms of spirits, masquerades.
41. Di-bia (juju priest)	ba	Bia is a modified form of ba = soul, spirit. Di-bia = a person (possessing) a ba. Compare Ma-gba (Yoruba) = juju priest; lit. ma-gba = the son or a person of the ba or the incarnate soul of the tribe or nation.
42. Oru (slave) i-ru (slaves)	Horu	The Ibo word for service is n-ru derived from horu, meaning originally service to the god horu and later compulsory service. One who renders such a service is called oru. Compare e-ru (Yoruba) = slave.
43. O-su (a person consecrated to the deity, a priest, a slave of the deity).	su-au	= consecrated to the deity; a priest. See Tiele, History of Egyptian Religion p.107. Egyptian ideas. A good person becomes an Osi-ri after death. It is quite possible to regard one who submits to perpetual service to a deity as having already become an Osi-ri c.p. the title of a priest in Thebes "consecrated of Osiris". See Tiele History of Egyptian Religion, p.171.
44. O-no-wu (title of a chief)	Khu	O-no-wu = one who possesses a Khu i.e. a luminous spirit.
45. E-wu (goat)	Khu	several animals in West Africa are named after "Khu" or "ba" or "bi" or "KA", Egyptian words for a soul or spirit.
46. Ala Mo or Ala Maw (land of the spirits)	Ala and Ma or Mo	Ala = boundary, land. Ma = spirit. The same expression 'land of Shades or Spirits' was used by the Ancient Egyptians; see Maspero, Dawn of Civilization, p.19.

Ibo. Ancient Egyptian.

47. Ogbu- nike (a minor devil, the servant of Ekwensu)	Khu & Nekhen	Ogbu (from Khu) = one who causes another to become a luminous spirit; hence, a killer, a destroyer. Nike is a modification of Nekhen or Nikhen. Ogbu-nike = destroyer of Nekhen; compare Chi-Neke = the soul of Nekhen.
48. E-ze (king, paramount chief)	Se-ten or Su-ten	= king of the South.
49. O-bi (paramount chief)	bi	= soul, obi = chief or ruler, the leading man in town or village being regarded as the incarnate soul of the nation or tribe.

I J A W.

<u>I j a w.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
1. A-yi-ba (Supreme Deity)	Ba	Ayiba = maker of souls i.e. the Supreme Deity.
2. O-wu (Water spirit)	Khu	The whiteness of watery vapour suggests the idea of the water-spirits being designate Khu = luminous spirit.
3. O-ru (land spirit)	Horu	an Egyptian god.
4. E-le-chu (Earth goddess)	Khu or Chu	E-le-chu = possessor of spirits.
5. O-gu-gu (female deity worshipped by women)	Khu	O-gu-gu is a duplication of the word Khu. Cf. Yoruba o-gu(n) derived from Khu.
6. Adumu (pythomic deity)	Atumu or Adumu	= an Egyptian god.
7. O-ra-u (sun)	Ra	= sun-god.
8. O-wu-la	Khu & la	O-wu-la = spirit of La, the god of Today, i.e. The sun.
9. A-ka-lu or A-ka-ru (moon)	ka & Horu	A-ka-lu or A-ka-ru = A-ka-horu. Ka = soul, horu = sky, heaven. A-ka-horu = the soul of the sky, hence moon.
10. A-ka-ka-i (star)	ka	= soul
11. A-gu-la (star)	Khu, La	same as No. 8 above. Agula denotes a star in an Ijaw dialect.
12. O-wu (masquerade)	Khu	= spirit. Owu is incarnate form of a spirit.
13. U-gu or O-gu I-gu-ye (iron)	Khu	cp. Yoruba, O-gu(n), god of iron; Ibo, Igu-e, iron; Egun, O-ga(n) iron.
14. Egbere	Khu & Re	Egu-re or Egbere = the soul of Re.

<u>I j a w.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
15. Ologbo or Ologbosi (cat)	bau	= soul. Compare, Yoruba, Ologbo, cat; Ibo, Nwon-gbo, cat.
16. Oru-kan (juju priest)	Horu & Kari	= the Egyptian god. = part of the name of an Egyptian god, that is, so-ka-ri.
17. O-la (chief)	La	= the Egyptian god.
18. Kala-oru (fairy or elf)	Ka, la, Horu	Ka-la-oru = the soul of La, (god of) the sky.
19. I-bi (holy).	bi, ba	= soul.
20. O-go-no (heaven)	go, ga, qo, qa & Ra.	go = go or ga = that which is high that is, the high place; no is a modified form of Re or Ra; O-go-no = the high place or position of Ra or Re the suo-god i.e. heaven.
21. A-ka-lu A-KA-RU (moon)	Ka and Ho-ru	A-ka-lu or A-ka-ru = the ka of Horu or the soul or son of the sun-god or the sky.
22. A-GO-NO-WE (moon)	go or go and Khu	AGONO or ogone, see No.20 above. 'we or 'u-e = khu-e = spirit or soul. Agono-we = soul or spirit of heaven.
23. Bi-ni or Beni (water)	Ni or Nu; Bi	Bi = soul. Ni or Nu = water or water-god. Bi-ni = the soul of the water-god, that is, water.
24. O-kpo (earth)	per or po	= district; hence o-kpo = district, land, earth.
25. Ta-mu-na (SUPREME DEITY)	Ta Amun	= Supreme Deity, god of Thebes in Ancient Egypt. See Tiele, History of Egyptian Religion, Chap. VII, pp.141 - 157.
26. I-ka-ka-i (star)	Ka-ka-u or Ka-ka-i.	= genii, images, luminous spirits.

IGABO ISOKO.

<u>Igabo Isoko</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
1. Oghene (God, Supreme Deity)	hene	= king, majesty, cp.ohene(Tchi) = king, paramount chief.
2. Ol-ori (Lord, chief)	hor	= high.
3. oru-e-aro (prophet)	horu & I-aro	Horu, an ancient Egyptian deity. I-aro = name of the river Nile. The word oru-e-aro is probably a reference to a horus god which used to be consulted on the bank of the River Nile.
4. A-hu-o or a a-hw-o (people)	Khu	= soul. A-hu-o = souls or people. The word Khu is used in the same sense in other West African languages. Cp.Tehi- Aku-aku = people, crowd.
5. wu (die)	Khu	cp. Ku (Yoruba) = die, and wu(Ibo) = die.
6. Uwu (death)	Khu	U-wu = the process of becoming a Khu or a dis-embodied spirit, that is, death.
7. e-hru (sky, heaven)	horu	heaven.
8. e-hru (sun)	Horu	= sun-god.
9. a-me (water)	i-oma or i-ama or i-ami	= water. cp omi (Yoruba) = water.
10. u-ru (voice)	Kher-ou	= voice.
11. a-ba-de (sea)	ba	= soul. De is only an emphatic suffix cp. A-wu-ra-de (Tehi) = Lord; wu-ra = Khu or soul of Ra. A-ba-de = that which produces ba or soul-like things; The name is given owing to watery vapour corresponding to the native idea of a soul of spirit and seen generally above the sea.

Igabo Isoko.

Ancient Egyptian.

12. o-si-wi (saviour)	Osiris	osiwi is probably a modification of Osiris, the well-known Egyptian god, also regarded as a Saviour of his people.
13. o-lo-gbo (great)	ba or bau	gbo = ba or bau = souls. Ologbo = that which has many ba's or bau, hence great. Compare Ologbo (Yoruba) = cat; Ologbo or Nwonogbo (Ibo) = cat.
14. a-kpo (earth)	per or por	= district, originally regarded by the unsophisticated as the earth.
15. omo-eru-e (calf, bull)	Amon & alu or aru	Omo is derived from amon; cp. omo (Yoruba) = child, native of a place. Eru is derived from aru or eru or alu, the Egyptian Elysian fields. Omo-eru-e = a native of Alu = calf or bull. Compare omo-alu, contracted to malu (Yoruba) = bull.
16. e-ra-o (beast)	Ra	e-ra-o = that which belongs to Ra, that is, a beast. Compare era(n) (Yoruba) which means "a beast".
17. i-we or i-ue (sacrifice)	ue-b	= pure, washed; hence that which has been purified sacrificially or offered as sacrifice is named i-we; compare ebo (Yoruba) and afor-ebo(Tchi) = sacrifice, the two words being derived from the same Egyptian word ue-b or u-eb.
18. Ologbo Oride (Most high)	ba or bau Hor	For ologbo (great, most) see No. 13 above. Hor = high in ancient Egyptian language.
19. E-ma-mo (holy)	A-mon	Amon = hidden, hence that which is kept free from pollution, pure, holy. E-ma-mo = that which is pure, holy; compare mi-mo (Yoruba) holy, mo and mimo, being also derived from Amon.
20. uzua-zo (life, health)	uzai	= health.
21. o-vie (king)	Nefer	= part of the title of King Osiris. O-vi-e is a corruption of ne-fer; cp. ovia (Edo) = Ifa (Yoruba) = nefer. Cp. also Nifa(Tchi) = queen.

Igabo Isoko. Ancient Egyptian.

22. u-vie (kingdom)	Ne-fer	See No. 21 above.
23. oru-aro (glory)	Horu & I-aro	Horu, an Egyptian god; I-aro the river Nile. Oru-aro = Horus of the river Nile who was regarded as a symbol of glory and majesty.
24. o-ba (governor)	ba	= soul. Oba = governor; the governor or the king is regarded as the incarnate soul of the tribe or nation. Compare o-ba (Yoruba) = king, governor, paramount chief.
25. E-we or E-hu-e (soul)	Khu	= spirit, soul.
26. Ovata-Ore (east)	Ptah and re	ptah = to open. Re Sun-god Ovata-ore, literally = the place of the opening or rising sun.
27. Aru-oriwo (grace, favour)	aru, and hor and Khu	aru = Egyptian Elysian field; hor = high, chief; khu = soul. Aru-ori-wo probably means the blessedness of the chief soul; hence 'grace', 'favour' 'splendour'.
28. I-bi (serpent, viper)	bi and ba	= soul. Sacred animals in West Africa often possess names derived from Ancient Egyptian words denoting spirit or soul; e.g. O-ka (Yoruba) boa constrictor; the word o-ka is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word ka = soul or spirit. Also ba (ga) = crocodile.
29. O-go-do (pond, pit)	og-do-ad	See chapter XI for full explanation.
30. O-tu-ru (shepherd)	O-tru	= an Ancient Egyptian Deity, probably worshipped by the Shepherd Kings. See The Book of the Dead (Edition E. Wallis Budge) p. clxxxi, introduction, second list of Aats No. XIII.

E G U N. (ALADA).

<u>E g u n.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
1. Egun (name of the tribe)	Khu.	= luminous spirit. Many West African tribes have names derived from Khu (spirit and ba(soul))
2. A-LA-DA. (alterna- tive of the name of the tribe)	LA & DA	La and Ba are two deities in Ancient Egypt.
3. JIHWE-YEHWE (Supreme Deity)	Khu	Ji = Ji-hu-e; ji comes from the West African root 'ye; whe or hu-e is a modification of the word Khu (kh sound being pronounced as h, and 'e' being a local addition) Jihwe = sky. Ye = living, whe = Khu. Jihwe-yeh-we = the living soul of the sky.
4. Jihwe (sky)	Khu	Ji-hwe = the living kus i.e. the clouds which resemble luminous spirits in respect of their white colour.
5. Legba (evil spirit, devil).	Khepera	Legba is the same deity as the Yoruba Eleggbara. For the derivation of the word from Khepera see Chapter II p. above.
6. OHU (sea)	Khu	Ohu is the same as the Yoruba word Oku(n)-sea - which is derived from Khu. See select list of Yoruba words above.
7. ku (die)	Khu	same as in Yoruba.
8. o-ku (death)	Khu	oku = the Yoruba word i-ku=death.
9. o-si(n) (water)	su	o-si is a modification of the Ancient Egyptian word su derived from Am-sua river god.
10. osi-o (corpse)	Osi-ri	osi-o = that which has become an Osiri; the belief of the Ancient Egyptian was that a good person would become an Osiri after death.
11. o-whe (sun)	Khu	o-whe = o-hu-e. hu is a modified form of Khu.

E g u n.

Ancient Egyptian.

12. o-su(n) (moon)	Kh-onsu	o-su(n) is the same as Yoruba word osu, derived from Kh-onsu. See Chapter II
13. o-ro(n) (heaven)	h-oru	sky, heaven.
14. a-yi-gba (earth)	ba	= soul. a-yi-gba = the maker of souls (human beings) the earth being regarded as the mother of mankind.
15. Othan (snake)	ka	In Egun k: is often replaced by th; otha(n) = o-ka. Othan is a minor deity in Egunland.
16. ama-than or amo-than (serpent)	amon & ka	ama = amo(n) = child. Ama-than = the child of ka i.e. a serpent.
17. o-ga(n) (iron)	Khu	O-ga(n) is the same word as o-gu(n) - god of iron - in Yoruba.
18. wi-whe (holy)	ue-h	whe = hu-e = the Yoruba word we (wash,make clean) wi-whe = that which is washed or made clean.
19. ogbo-agbo (ram)	ba	agbo in Yoruba = ram, and is derived from bau, the ram being regarded as an incarnation of the deity which it represented in Ancient Egypt. o-gbo-a-gbo is a duplication of the same word. Ba (Ancient Egyptian)= ram
20. a-wo or e-vo (sacrifice)	u-eb	= wash. v is often substituted for b in Egun. A-vo or e-bo = a-bo or e-bo = Yoruba e-bo = sacrifice. See 'ebo' in the Yoruba list above.
21. a-holu (king)	Horu	= king of southern Egypt,chief deity for many centuries in Ancient Egypt. a-holu = a-horu.
22. o-ga(n) (chief)	qa	= high. O-ga = an exalted person i.e. a chief.
23. o-ku(n) (seed)	Khu	o-ku = the spirit of a thing, that is, the innermost part; hence it means a "seed".

E g u n.

Ancient Egyptian.

24. O-du-dua (Supreme Deity iden- tified with Jiwhe-yewhe)	du & dua-t	Odudua is the same deity as the Yoruba Odudua, but among the Eguns it is a male deity.
25. Mau or Mawu (Supreme Deity iden- tified with Jiwhe-yewhe)	Mau-t	= an Egyptian deity. Odudua is borrowed from the neighbouring Yorubas on the West of Egunland; Mawu is borrowed from the neighbouring Ewe speaking peoples on the East of the same country.
26. O-fa (sea or river god)	Ne-fer	Ofa = Yoruba Ifa, derived from n-efer; See Chapter IV. Un-nefer is the title of Osiris, god of the River Nile.
27. vo-thu(n) (idol)	Ba & shu	vo = bo = bau. Thu(n) is a modified form of shu; vo-thu(n) = the soul of shu.
28. Hevi-osu (god of lightning)	Su or Sit	Su or Sit = Egyptian warrior god. Heviosu = the Yoruba Sango or Jakuta, the stone thrower.
29. Ita-gbe (important minor deity)	Neter and ba	Ita = neter; see Chapter VII gbe = ba or bau. Itagbe = the divine soul.

E w e.

Ancient Egyptian.

1. Mawu (Supreme Deity)	Mau-t	= an Egyptian deity.
2. Ku (death)	Khu	= luminous spirit. Ku is the process of becoming a luminous spirit i.e. death.
3. Ku (die)	Khu	same as above.
4. Vi (child)	bi, ba	= soul cp. ba (Tchi) = son; vi = bi Ewe often substitutes v for b.
5. Vo (bad)	ba or bau	b becomes v and au becomes o. The idea underlying the word is that it was regarded as a bad thing for one to become a "ba" and not a "Khu" after death.
6. Wu (kill)	Khu	wu is the process of causing someone to believe a disembodied spirit.
7. Dsu-nu (moon)	Kh-on-su Nu-it (district, name)	= moon deity. Dsu is a modification of Kh-onsu Nu-it = district or name. The Yoruba word for "moon" is O-su = Dsu in Ewe.
8. Tsi (water)	Su or Amsu	Amon = god of a river. Su = river or water. Tsi is a modification of su.
9. Dsu (purification)	su-au	= to purify, cleanse, consecrate with water.
10. Agbo (ram)	ba or bau	= soul. A sacred animal is regarded as possessing a soul. Compare "agbo" (Yoruba) = ram.
11. Egbo (goat)	ba or bau	= soul.
12. Vo-sa (sacrifice)	ue-b & sa	b becomes v; ue is elided; o is added to v. Sa = holy.
13. E-rhu-e (sun)	Ho-ru	= sun-god.
14. An-yi-gba	ba	= soul. An-yi-ba = maker of soul. Cp. Ayiba (Ijaw) = Maker of soul, Supreme Deity.

E W E (continued).

E w e.

Ancient Egyptian.

15. S-ri
(chief,
high)

O-si-ri

= Egyptian Deity of great
or high rank.

TSHI OR TCHI.

<u>Tshi or Tchi.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
1. T-SHI or T-CHI (name of a West African language)	Khu.	Compare T-chi with Ibo word Chi = spirit; chuku = Chi-uku, the great spirit; Chi-neke(n) = the spirit or soul of Nekhen.
2. Fanti (a tribe speaking the Tchi language).	Fanti or Fenti	Fanti or Fenti is an Ancient Egyptian god. See the Book of the Dead, Prof.S.Wallis Budge, p.367.
3. A-santi or A-shanti (same as No.2)	Santi	Santi is an Ancient Egyptian god. See the Book of the Dead, ed. Prof. E.Wallis Budge, p.342.
4. Yankupon (Supreme Deity)	Ku & Sua-nit	Yan-ku-pon, the living soul of Punt. See Chapter II above.
5. o-hen-e (king)	hen	= king, prince. See Budge Egyptian Language, Nos.59-65 & 74-75.
6. bo-fo (angel)	ba or bau	= soul or spirit.
7. ba (son)	ba	= soul. A son is regarded as the reproduction or continuation in some sense, of the soul of the father.
8. o-ba (woman)	ba	= soul.
9. o-ba-bea (daughter)	ba	= soul.
10. Oni-pa (man,mankind)	un & per or par	un = being; per = house or name. oni-pa = a being (which dwells) in a house.
11. O-ba-rima (man,male person)	ba	= soul.
12. a-hen-ni (kingdom)	hen	= king or prince. A-hen-ni = that which belongs to a king i.e. kingdom.
13. wu (die)	Khu.	wu (die) is exactly the same word as the Ibo word "wu" which means to die.
14. Nifa (queen)	Nefer	Nefer was the title of a queen in Ancient Egypt. See Masp.Dawn of Civilization pp.362 & 363.

TCHI.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.

15. Nifa (right)	nefer	= good, right; nefer ^{was} used in ^a moral sense, but it is used by the Tchi speaking peoples in a physical sense.
16. mma or mmo (child)	A-mon	The Yoruba word for a child is omo(n) that is, that which is hidden (an embryo). The word is applied to a child before or after its birth; it is also applied to a seed. It is in the same sense as that of Yoruba that the word mma or mmo is used.
17. O-wu (death)	Khu:	Cp. Yoruba I-ku (death)
18. a-wu-fo (a dead person)	Khu	A-wu; cp. Yoruba o-ku a dead person.
19. nkurofo aku-aku (multitudes)	khu	nkuro = city. Aku-aku = plurality of souls. Nkurofo aku-aku = many souls from the cities i.e. multitudes.
20. bo-ne (wicked)	ba; un	= a being of the ba. The use of this term to denote a wicked person is reminiscent of the period in Ancient Egypt when it was believed that a good person would become a "khu" after death and a wicked person, a "ba".
21. ota-mfo (enemy)	P-tah	The Yoruba word for enemy is also "ota". Mfo is a suffix denoting a person.
22. wu-ra (lord)	Khu & Ra	= the soul of Ra. A person bearing such a title is rightly regarded as a "lord"
23. a-su (river)	Am-su	= Egyptian god of a river.
24. O-man or O-mon (people)	A-mon	See No.16 above. Omo(n) = children is used here in a general sense.

Tchi (continued)

<u>Tchi.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
25. Ku-nu (husband)	Kh-nu-mu	The last syllable is elided. The first consonant receives a vowel to form a new syllable; hence Ku-nu. The Yoruba word derived from Kh-nu-mu is O-ko-ni(n) or O-ku-ri(n) or Oku(n)-ri(n), a male person. Khnumu was a male deity.
26. O-su-ko(n) (thirsty)	su & ka	O-su-ka = that which desires the "ka of the river" (water), that is a thirsty person. Osuke in Yoruba = hiccough.
27. O-dua (thanks, praise)	dua-t or tua-t	= 'thanks, praise. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language, p.43 Nos. 5 & 6.
28. se (guilty)	se-t	= what is bad. cp. Yoruba e-se = sin, offence, guilt.
29. Ko-ma (heart)	Khu & a-mon	Ko-ma or Ko-mo(n) = the hidden Khu, i.e. the innermost part of a man = heart.
30. nkurofo-ku (people)	Khu	nkurofo-ku = the souls of cities = people.
31. Osoro (heaven, sky)	Osi-ri & Horu	Osoro = Osi-oro = Osi-ri Horu, a combination reminiscent of the sky with Horu the sun-god.
32. Nsoro-ma or Nsoro-mo (star)	Osi-ri	Ma or mo(n) is derived from a-mon; it means a child. See Nos.16 & 24 above. Nsoro-ma = child of heaven i.e. star.
33. O-so-fo or O-sa-fo (priest)	Sa or so	= a sacred person. See Budge Ancient Egyptian Language p.50 No. 126 & 127. Sa also means "to make an offering; hence o-sa-fo may mean "one who makes an offering; i.e. a priest.
34. h-onho-m (spirit)	onkhu	= life; hence that which is symbolized by life i.e. spirit. Compare also Ancient Egyptian word 'hon' = servant, prophet, divinely inspired person.

Tchi (continued).

Tchi.

Ancient Egyptian.

35. Kro(n) kro(n) (holy)	krou (voice.)	It will be remembered that Khro (khrou = voice) is an emblem of sacredness or divinity. By means of it gods were created (See Maspero Dawn of Civilization p. 146. See also Etudes de Mythologie et de Archeologie egyptiennes Vol.I pp.93-114. Ma Khrou or Kherou = true voice, genuine voice. Kro(n)-kro(n) is a modification of krou.
36. o-sa (heal)	u-za-i or o-za-i	= health
37. okara or Kara (soul)	ka & Ra	Ka-ra (okara) = the soul of Ra.
38. awu (to kill)	khu	awu = to kill, i.e. to cause to become a khu, a luminous or disembodied spirit.
39. su-m (darkness)	su or shu	= to darken (See Tiele, History of the Egyptian Religion, translation by Ballingal p.85 shu = to stretch out, to cover, to darken)
40. Ku-su (full of darkness)	ku & su	Ku is used in the sense of a large number of Kus. Ku-su therefore means "a large quantity of darkness" i.e. full of darkness. Compare the Yoruba word ku(n) = full and O-ku(n) -ku(n) = darkness literally a large number of kus.
41. o-sra-fo (chief)	o-si-ri	= the chief of an Egyptian triad of gods, the chief deity worshipped in many parts of Ancient Egypt for several centuries.
42. Obonsam (devil)	Ba-un-sam	ba = soul; un = being, living sa(m) = the living soul of the pond i.e. the devil. Note that bon (a contraction of ba and un) means wicked.
43. bohsum or bonsum (deity, idol)	ba and su	bohsum(m) or bonsum(m) = the soul of su or shu, an Ancient Egyptian deity. The word is applied as a generic term for gods or idols.

G A.

<u>G a.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian</u>	
1. Nyon-mo(n) (God, Supreme Deity)	A-mon	Nyon-mon = the living Amon. See Chapter II.
2. Nu-mo (spirit)	Mo or Ma	= spirit.
3. N-so (sea)	so or sa	= pond, lake, a collection of water.
4. Gbo (die)	ba	gbo = to become a ba or a disembodied spirit.
5. Gbo-le (death)	ba	gbo-le = the process of becoming a disembodied spirit.
6. Nu (water)	Nu or mu	= water. See Budge, Ancient Egyptian Language pp.75 & 76 No.55.
7. Bi (child)	Bi, ba	= soul. cp. o-ba (Tchi) = child.
8. Huru(n) (sun)	Horu	= sun-god.
9. Gbo-yo (corpse)	ba	= soul. See Nos. 4 & 5 above.
10. Kro(n) (holy)	Krou	= voice. It will be remembered that krou(voice) an emblem of sacredness or vicinity. By means of it gods were created. See Masp. Dawn of Civilization, p.146. Ma krou or ma kherou = true voice, genuine voice. Kro(n)-Krou(n) is a modification and a duplication of krou.
11. Ba (Crocodile)	ba	= soul. Sacred animals are often named in West Africa by means of Egyptian words denoting soul or spirit; e.g. o-ka (Yoruba) = boa-constrictor; E-le-gu(n) gu(n) Yoruba = crocodile gu(n) being a modification of Khu.
12. To-agbo (ram)	ba or bau	= soul cp. a-agbo (Yoruba) = ram; ba(Ancient Egyptian) = ram.
13. To-gu-anten (sheep)	ku & aten	gu is a modification of ku. Gu-anten = the soul of Aten i.e. a sacred animal to Aten, a sheep.

Ga. (continued).

<u>Ga.</u>	<u>Ancient Egyptian.</u>	
14. Olowo or Olu-wo (leopard)	hor & Khu	Olo = owner; olu or oru = horu = chief; wo = huo = khu. Olowo or Oluwo = the possessor of Khu or spirit, or the chief spirit, a leopard; compare a-mo-te-ku(n) (Yoruba) = leopard.
15. Obla (young person)	ba	= soul. In the Ga language, a liquid usually slips in between the consonant and the vowel of an Ancient Egyptian word. The simplest form of o-bla is o-ba, as in other West African languages.
16. Ba-lu (locust)	Ba & La	Ba = soul; La = an Ancient Egyptian.
17. Di or Tu (To be black, black)	Di-du	= the black image of Osiris. Compare didu (Yoruba) = black.
18. Nu (drink water)	nu or mu	= water.
19. Dsu (wash)	su-au	= wash.
20. sra (watch)	sa	= watch. For the explanation of the presence of r in the Ga word see No.15 above.
21. Go(n) (mountain)	qa or ga	= that which is high.

APPENDIX 11. - YORUBA HIEROGLYPHICS.

APPENDIX 11 .YORUBA HIEROGLYPHICS KNOWN AS "AROKO"¹

Having lost the knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphics the Youbas invented their own hieroglyphics. These are known as "AROKO". The significance of the symbols is generally understood, but variations and local peculiarities obviate the evolution of a national standard form.

Specimens of the hieroglyphics as used by the Ijebus are given on the following pages.

-
1. See Lagos and West African Almanack and Diary for 1894 by J.A. Otonba Payne, pages following page 40

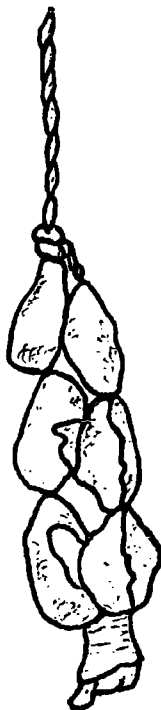
No. 1. - From a Native PRINCE of Jebu Ode to
his BROTHER residing abroad.



By this six* cowries I do draw you to
myself, and you should also draw closely to me.
As by this feather+ I can only reach to your
ears, so I am expecting you to come to me, or
hoping to see you immediately.

- * E-fa (the name expressive of the number six) is from the verb to draw.
- + Feather is the only object which one can see or reach the inward hearing organs, so you and I should see or come to each other at all events.

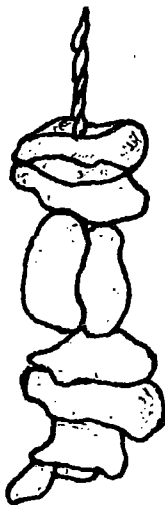
No. 2. - From a Native General of the Jebu Force, to a Native Prince abroad:



Although the road* between us both may be very long, yet I draw you to myself, and set my face towards you. So I desire you to set your face towards me, and draw to me.

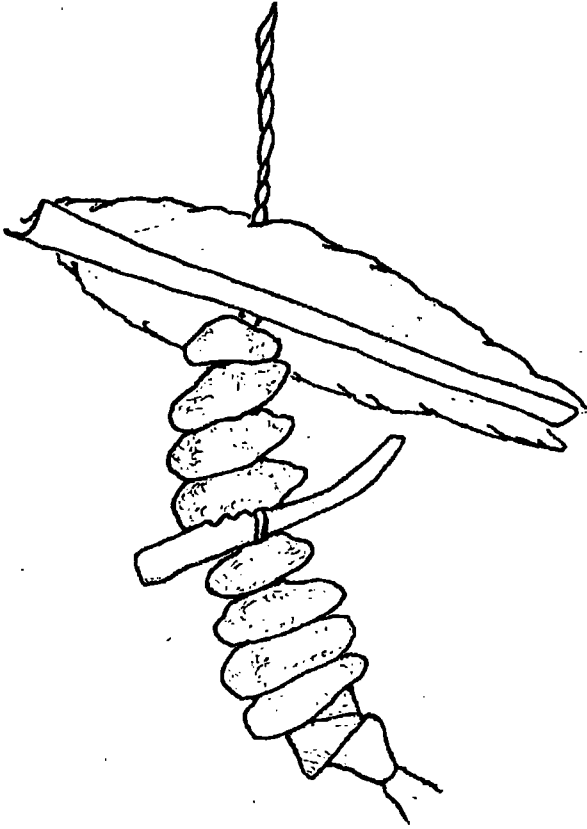
* The long strings indicate considerable distance or a long road.

No. 3. - From a Native PRINCE of Jebu Ode, to one of his Cousins abroad.



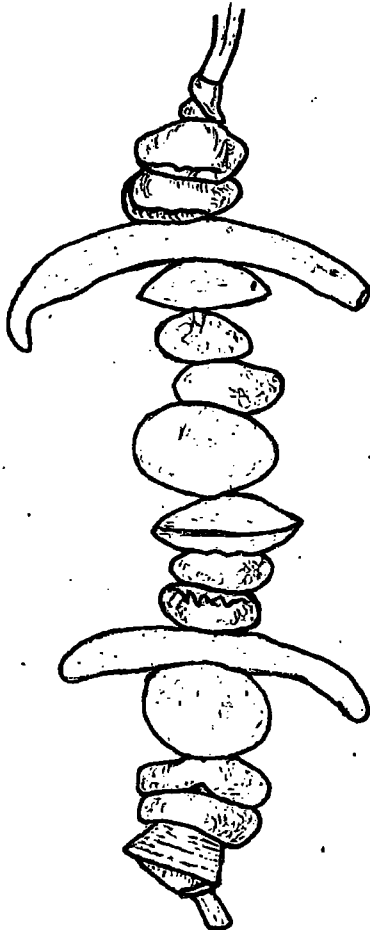
In the midst of numerous people, before and behind, relations are sure to recognise and know each other; as we have known ourselves to be one, let us set our face to each other, and embrace ourselves together, never to turn against each other.

Note:- The two cowries each, up and down, indicate numerous people before and behind, and the two in the middle indicate two blood relations



No. 4 - From his Majesty AWUTALE, the King of Jebu, to his Nephew abroad.

Your words agree with mine very much. Your ways are pleasing to me, and I like them. DECIVE ME NOT :- Because the Spice would yield nothing else but a sweet and genuine odour unto God. I shall never deal doubly with you all my life long. The weight of your words to me is beyond all description. As it is on the same family mat we have been seating and lying down together - I send to you. I am therefore anxiously waiting and hoping to hear from you.



5.

No. 5 - A Message of Peace and Good News from his Majesty, the King of Jebu, to his Majesty the King of Lagos, after his restoration to the throne on the 28th of December, 1851.

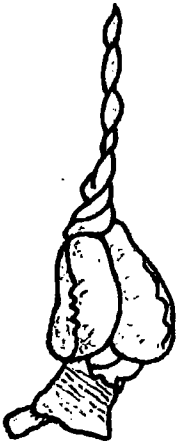
Of all the people by which the four corners of the world are inhabited, the Lagos and Jebu people are the nearest. As "warre" is the common play of the country, so the Jebus and Lagos should always play, and be friendly with each other. Mutual pleasantness + is my desire; as it is pleasant with me, so may it be pleasant with you. DECEIVE ME NOT:- Because the Spice would yield nothing else but a sweet and genuine odour unto God. I shall never deal doubly with you.

+ The word "Osan" (name of a fruit) is from the verb "san" to please.



No. 6. - An unfavourable answer to a Request
or Message.

The matter is unpleasant to our hearing - not
easy to be done.



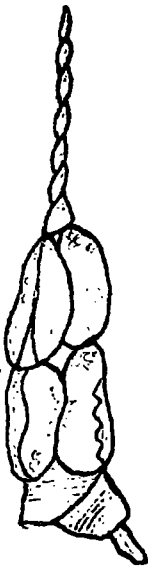
No. 7. - A Message of Reproof for non-payment
of debt.

You have given me the back altogether, after
we have come to an arrangement about the debt you
have owed me, I also will turn my back against you.



No. 8. - A Message from a Creditor to a bad Debtor.

After you have owed me a debt, you kicked against me; I also will throw you off, because I did not know that you could have treated me thus.



No. 9. - A Message of good will from a Brother to another Brother abroad, asking for a personal interview.

It is a message of joy and gladness. We are all quite well in the family. I would like to see you, so that the four eyes of yours and mine may see each other.

A P P E N D I X I I I .

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

APPENDIX III. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The fore-going thesis is an independent original work produced by the writer and based upon his personal observations and experiences extending over a long period of patient research. In the preparation of the thesis, however, several works have been consulted and extracts made from some of them, especially for the purpose of comparison with Yoruba beliefs and customs.

A select list of the works consulted is given on the following pages.

A. GENERAL WORKS ON THE ANTHROPOLOGY
 OF RELIGION.

Cambridge Ancient History. Four Vols:

Carpenter, J. Estlin, Comparative Religion.

Frazer, J.G., The Golden Bough, Third Edition.
 The Golden Bough, Popular Edition.

Galloway, F., Philosophy of Religion.

Jevons, F.B., Introduction to the History of Religion.

Lang, Andrew, The Making of Religion.

MacDougall, W., Social Psychology.

Marett, R.R., Anthropology.
 The Threshold of Religion.

Menzies, Allan, The History of Religion.

Moore, G.F., History of Religion, Two Vols:

Muller, Max, Introduction to the Science of Religion.

Tisdall, W.St. Clair, Comparative Religion.

Thouless, R., Psychology of Religion.

Tiele, C.P., Outlines of the History of Religion
 to the Spread of the Universal Religions.
 (Translation).

Encyclopaedia Britannica 10th Edition.

Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

National Encyclopaedia.

B. WORKS ON ANCIENT EGYPT.

- Bohn, Edition of Athaeneus.
 Edition of Herodotus.
 Edition of Strabo.
- Breasted, Ancient Records.
 Development of Religion.
 History of Egypt.
- Clement of Alexandria, Stromata.
- Cogan, Edition of Diodorus.
- Davies N. de G. Davies, El Armana.
- Erman, Egyptian Religion.
 Life in Ancient Egypt.
- Griffith, F.L., Demotic Magical Papyrus.
 World's Best Literature.
- Holland, Translation of Pliny's Natural History.
- Kluzinger, Upper Egypt.
- Lanzone, Dizionario di Mitologia.
- Littlebury, Translation of Herodotus.
- Maspero, Dawn of Civilization.
 Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archeologie
 Egyptiennes.
 New Light on Ancient Egypt.
- Massey, G. A Book of the Beginnings.
- Murray, Osireion.
- Mead, Translation of Plutarch, Isis and Osiris.
- Naville, Book of the Dead.
- Petrie, F., Abydos
 Amulets
 Denderah
 Ancient Egyptians
 History of Egypt
 Hawara, Bishnu, and Arsinoe.
 Hysoks and Israelite Cities.
 Nagada and Ballas.
 A Season in Egypt.

Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology.

- Renouf, . Book of the Dead.
Sayce, A.H., Religion of Ancient Egypt.
Tiele, C.P., History of Egyptian Religion.
Wiedemann, Doctrine of Immortality.
Religion.
Wilkinson, Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians.

GRAMMAR AND DICTIONARY.

- Budge, E.A. Wallis, Egyptian Language.
Cardiner, A.H., Egyptian Grammar, being an Introduction
to the Study of Egyptian Hieroglyphics
(Oxford, 1927).
Budge, E.A. Wallis, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary,
Two Vols: (1920).

C. WORKS ON YORUBA RELIGION.

- Dennett, R.E., At the Back of the Black Man's Mind.
Nigerian Studies.
Delano, I.O., The Soul of Nigeria.
Ellis, A.B., Yoruba-Speaking Peoples.
Farrow, S.S., Faith, Fetich and Fancies.
Froebenius, Leo, The Voice of Africa, Two Vols.
Johnson, J., Yoruba Heathenism.
Johnson, O., History of the Yorubas.

D. WORKS ON WEST AFRICA (including YORUBALAND).

- Adams, Sketches taken during Ten Voyages in Africa.
- Basden, G.T. Among the Ibos of Nigeria.
 Niger Ibos.
- Burton, R.F., Abeokuta and the Cameroons.
- Clapperton and Denham, Travels.
- Danquah, J.B., Akan Laws
- Ellis, A.B., Tshi-speaking Peoples.
 Ewe-speaking Peoples.
- Kingsley, Miss Mary, Travels in West Africa,
 West African Studies.
- Johnston, H.H., The Opening Up of Africa.
- Mockler-Ferryman, A.F., British Nigeria.
- Mollison, A.W., The Yoruba Country, West Africa.
- Nassau, R.H., Fetichism in West Africa.
- Rattray, The Religion of the Ashantis.
- Schweitzer, A., On the Edge of the Primeval Forest.
- Smith, Edwin W., The Golden Stool.
- Talbot, P. Amaury, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria. Four Vols:
 In the Shadow of the Bush.
- Wilson, John Leighton, Western Africa.
- Williams, J.J., Hebrewisms in West Africa.

E. WORKS IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE.

- Ajayi, M.T.E. and others in Iwe Kika Ekerin (Fourth Yoruba Reader).
- Epega, Ifa (Type-written Work)
 The Mystery of the Yoruba Gods.
- Johnson, James, Isin Orisa Bibo ni Ile Yoruba.
 (Yoruba Edition of "Yoruba Heathenism").
- Lijadu, E.M., Ifa, Imole Re
 Orunmila.

F. PERIODICALS.

"Africa", Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (London). Several Numbers.

Journal of the African Society, London, July, 1904.
Article by Sir William MacGregor on "Lagos, Abeokuta and the Alake".

Journal of the Anthropological Institute XIX, London, 1890.
Articles by Governor Molony and Mrs. Battey :
Notes on the Yoruba Country.

Nigerian Chronicle, Lagos, 1908-1910, Articles on Burial Customs in the Yoruba Country by Mr. Feyisara Sopein under the pseudonym "Adesola".

Church Missionary Intelligencer London, 1857 etc.

Church Missionary Gleaner, London, 1889 etc.

"Daily Service", Lagos, Articles by Miss: H. Millicent Douglas, M.B.E. on the Relation of Yorubaland to Egypt, January and February, 1942.

Iwe Irohin, Yoruba Newspaper published by the Church Missionary Society at Abeokuta Oct. and Nov. 1861.

G. OTHER WORKS.

Gibson, B.D. and Oldham, J.H., The Re-making of Man in Africa.

Ueber die Verschiedenheit des Menschlichen Sprachbaues von Wilhelm von Humbolt, Vol: 2, pp.495-498 (1876).
Article by Pott on African Languages.

Map of the Yoruba Country

