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THE KING'S HORSEMAN: PORTRAITS OF AUTHORITY IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA [1]

The philosopher Kwami Anthony Appiah begins his seminal chapter on the postcolonial and the postmodern in Africa with a description of a sculpture that had been chosen by the African American poet James Baldwin for the exhibition *Perspectives: Angles on African Art* curated by Susan Vogel in 1987.[2] The sculpture in question was the, now, well-known Yoruba sculpture, labelled *Man with a Bicycle* currently in the Newark Museum (Fig . 1). The label claims it as 'neo-traditional' a designation that intrigued Appiah. He claims the *neo* in this description is apt, because 'it has elements that are recognisably from the colonial or post-colonial in reference, has been made for Western tourists and other collectors.[3] The African bourgeois in contrast would, he claims, rather have a 'genuinely' 'traditional' piece.[4] That the piece was produced for a Western market enables him to examine the ways in which the postcolonial articulates with the postmodern in Africa.

It is unfair, perhaps, to use a chapter written over thirty years ago to begin a commentary on visual practice within the colonial period in Nigeria. Studies of body art, textiles,

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1. This paper arises from work carried out while on Fellowship at the Sainsbury Research Unit at the University of East Anglia. My thanks to Professor Stephen Hooper, the director of the Unit, and to the staff and students in Norwich for allowing me the intellectual and conversational space to start rethinking my work. The title of this paper makes deliberate reference to Wọle Ṣoyinka's 'Death and the King's horseman'. It is appropriate not only because the subject matter of that play corresponds vaguely with the subject matter of this paper, but also because Ṣoyinka graduated from the University of Leeds. The role of the colonial commissioner in the first performance at the University of Ife was taken by Michael Crowder. Crowder's great collaborator, Professor J F Ade Ajayi taught me that the colonial regime in Nigeria must only ever be seen as a mere episode in that nation's long history. All three were good friends of my father, to whom this paper is dedicated. As was John Picton, whose influence on this paper should be clear to readers of his work. I am indebted to two anonymous readers whose advice on structure and content was invaluable. All omissions and errors remain my own.

2. Susan Vogel et al (eds) *Perspectives: Angles on African Art* (New York, The Centre For African Art_. 1987).

3. Anthony Appiah *In my father's house: Africa in the philosophy of Culture*, London, Methuen, 1992 p239. Critique of Appiah's model is more competently handled by Kasfir. See Sidney Kasfir, *Contemporary African Art,* London, Thames and Hudson, 1999.

4. An alternative perspective on the idea that a Nigerian bourgeoise would have anything like a 'traditional' piece on their shelves is provided by Peel's discussion of iconoclasm amongst the Yoruba. See JDY Peel
The Iconoclastic Impulse in Yoruba Culture. *Religion and Society: Advances in Research, 8*(1), 2017 30-41.

masquerades and carving traditions; that is, the material production of the aesthetic (however that is defined) which have, in the past, too often taken place in under the rubric of a 'contextual connoisseurship'[5] of the ethnographic present are increasingly cognizant of the cultural logics from which creativity springs. The last thirty years have seen some foundational shifts in the historiography of African art. The weight of work dedicated to understanding the position of the artwork, alongside the named artist, within the cultural schemas, the indigenous understanding of aesthetic, semiotic or linguistic is remarkable. Numerous authors, but most notably (or originally) Sidney Kasfir have debunked those older forms of historiography.[6] Nor is this to suggest that artists or workshops were not engaged in modes of creativity or innovation, or that no analysis of this form of temporal or stylistic change, developed from within the terms of the culture does not exist. It does and has greatly enhanced our understanding of the logic of creativity – whether that be in textiles, masquerade or woodcarving or work dealing more broadly on creativity and innovation.[7]

It is odd then that, given the awareness of the dangers of an ethnographic present, scholarly works that deal with the relationship between works of art and the historical events

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[5] Whitney Davis 1989. "Review of Object and Intellect." *African Arts* 22 (4) 1989 pp 24-32.

[6] . Sidney
Kasfir. One tribe one style? Paradigms in the historiography of African art. *History in Africa, 11*(1), 1984 163-193. There have been numerous works challanging the paradigms that have underpinned the historiography of African art (see John Picton *Desperately seeking Africa* . Kasfir notes however that there is, still however, a danger of creating a separation, one defined by a corpus of the "contemporary" and which then ignores the actual histories of art as they have developed in Africa (See S. Kasfir The disappearing study of the premodern African past, *African Arts* Vol 46 (1) 2013 pp 4-5). It is, of course, also to consign prior forms of work to the idea of the "traditional", a term that makes little historical sense and does damage to the ongoing traditions both of works produced in and by social group practice, and the work of contemporary art practitioners, who, after all, stand upon traditions of practice. The boundaries are set up between the differing forms, which in turn reinforce the setting up of parallel lines of study, which I would suggest are still determined by the dominant modelling of colonialism's modernity. The best works by and about contemporary artists are, of course, very aware of the issue. See for instance Chika Okeke-Agulu *Postcolonial Modernism* Durham Duke University Press 2015 and Sylvester Ogbechie *Ben Enwonwu: the making of an African modernist*. New York, University of Rochester Press 2008,

[7] . On Yoruba indigenous discourse on art, innovation and creativity see Ọlabiyi Yai In praise of Metonymy: The concepts of 'tradition' and 'creativity' creative artistry in the transmission of Yoruba artistry over time and space in *The Yoruba Artist* eds. Abiodun, Drewal and Pemberton Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press 1994. Karin Barber's work, while based on wider idioms of performance places the emphasis on how creativity and improvisation offer an understanding of Yoruba culture more generally See Karin Barber, K.. Improvisation and the Art of Making Things Stick. In E. Hallam, & T. Ingold (Eds.), *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (pp. 25-44). Oxford: Berg 2007.

occurring at the time of their making, have, until recently, been somewhat limited. What I am specifically thinking of here is the relationship between the work of art and the detailed event of history. To suggest this is both seemingly obvious, but also complex. One part of that complexity is that, as Herbert Cole notes, 'African art historians have painfully little historical data to draw upon… Extant objects rarely predate 1900'.[8] That the history of art in Africa is, outside of the archaeological context, largely a history of colonial entanglement is now both widely acknowledged and but also somewhat disguised by notions of the ethnographic present that still sits within the canonical / museological western archive. The second, and more serious complexity is, as Sylvester Ogbechie has pointed out, (albeit in the context of a deliberately ephemeral object), the history of art in Africa needs to contend with the logics of practice from within African cultures, and those logics may not include the archiving or historical impulses that we associate with the development of a canon in the West.[9] The point of creative making may rest upon very different premises than those associated with western exhibitory/viewing, collection and archive practices.[10] That complexity should be a starting point. Nevertheless, the archive that does exist does not do so without reference to historical circumstance.[11] To ignore that is to ignore the very conditions that exist within works of art for their explication; of why, at that time and in that place they were necessary. Given, as Cole suggests, most of the objects come from the t wentieth c entury, the conditions under which they were made is one forced on people by the policies of colonial regimes.

On the other hand the construction of colonial society as a regime of visual spectacle, wherein subject positions are literally positioned within the colonising gaze, made to carry either the constructed forms of imperial imagination or the objective scientific form of colonial (often

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[8] Herbert Cole 1975. "The History of Mbari Houses: Facts and The ories." In African Images: Essays in African Iconology, eds. Daniel F. McCall and Edna G. Bay, pp. 104-32. New York: Africana Publishing. Quoted in Ogbechie, 2005 p 66

[9] See Sylvester Ogbechie The historical life of objects: African Art History and the problem of discursive Obsolesce *African Arts* 38 (4) 2005 62-69.

[10] . See Will Rea Amodu and the material manifestation of Eegun. In P. Basu, *The Inbetweeness of things.* London: Bloomsbury 2017. In that chapter I look to explore Yoruba number logics and their relationship to ways of seeing in Ikọle Ekiti.

[11] . In some senses the issue is one that reflects Thomas Crow's analysis of art history more generally (Thomas Crow *The Intelligence of Art* Chapel Hill The University of North Carolina, 1999). That in order to provide the paraphrase for the work of art various modes of interpretation have been put in place. The presiding paraphrase in African art history has been the ethnographic, yet the realization of the limitations in that model has led to others – artist biography, study of centres and workshops, symbolisism, aesthetic systems and so on. No one system is better or worse than the next, and the history of art in Africa, long subservient to Western Art History, has required whatever tools it can use.

anthropological) investigation has been an important part of the examination of colonialism's culture for a number of years.[12] The colonial process viewed through the material production of its spectatorship, most especially in the photographic archive, shows not only a progressive surveying and mapping, the objectifications of a subject people by visual means, it is also apparent in the development of the very sites within which colonial spectatorship took place, whether in the form of the hyper-reality of the world fair or the constructions of the transplanted colonial festivals such as those that Apter documents in Northern Nigeria.[13] There custom or tradition becomes normalised spectacle within the terms of the regime.[14]

More recently the move has been to look to more refined readings, to shift, particularly in 'reading' the photographic, to the more subtle interactions and intricacies that exist within the colonial archive and to acknowledge that while power may have been formally located on the one side (of the lens –for instance), the traffic in visual positioning was not all one way. Some part of writing the colonial and post-colonial legacies of the gaze left an uncomfortable legacy of dichotomy and over-determination in the dynamics of power relations and visualising rhetoric.[15] The trouble is that the voices of the indigenous other – often on the receiving end of the camera's intrusion – have been doubly silenced, firstly by the objectification (and violence) of the image and then passive within the subsequent discourse of postcolonial critique.[16] What is needed is an understanding of how local agents complicated the parameters of visual power within the colonial regime. Even as these parameters are made manifest within certain visual idioms, the agency of those subjects working within and through the colonial is never actually (entirely or even partially) complicit. Local agency it seems is often as adept at positioning itself in relation to the new realities as colonial administrations were in developing those realities and

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. On imperial spectacle see for instance Jan Morris *The spectacle of Empire* (Faber and Faber, London, 1982).

13. See for instance WJT Mitchell, Imperial landscape in WJT Mitchell (ed.) *Landscape and power* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002) and Annie Coombes *Reinventing Africa: Museums, material culture and popular imagination in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997)

14. Andrew Apter On Imperial spectacle: The dialectics of seeing in colonial Nigeria *Comparative studies in society and history* 44(3) 2002 pp. 564-596. p. 590

15. Elizabeth Edwards *Anthropology and photography 1860-1920* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994) p.3.

16. Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton *Photographs, museums, collections : between art and information* (Bloomsbury, London, 2015) p. 7

their visualisations.[17] There is indeed a strand of African art historical study that interprets the local representation of the 'exotic' European. Yet works in this category are too often reviewed as a sign of the European historical encounter and often regarded as a maverick category.[18]

The simple aim of this paper is to outline the various orders of representation within a single and particular moment of colonial relations in a specific encounter in South-Western Nigeria in the 1920s. As with Appiah my starting point is a sculpture also carved by a Yoruba artist. I then analyze a photograph, an image captured during the seemingly mundane flow of colonial bureaucratic process that sits within the frame of imperial spectacle. I posit that that the Yoruba artist's sculpture is (plausibly) a shadow 'other' within the photograph. These two works speak to each other even while being made for different purposes. The suggestion is that the sculpture takes as its subject a figure within the photograph. The two works, one a piece of sculpture and the other a photograph, face each other, offering different viewpoints of the characters portrayed, one of whom then reappears in another series of photographs taken in the heart of empire. Imagery, one might even say portraiture, with its address to singular identities and their social and political relations, is thus placed in the field of debate about reading the colonial in terms of entanglement.

This paper recounts a history of visual and material imagery in which such cross-referencing and entanglement confuses some of the (normative) categories into which discourse on colonial imagery appears to have slipped. I aim to muddle those divisions which Appiah maintained and which, more importantly, African art history seeks to maintain. In doing so, I aim to address the agency of Africans in the relations of the colonial regime.

The Colonial Horseman

The sculpture of my focus shows a man on horseback (F ig. 2). Specifically, the man is a white colonial officer on horseback easily identified as such by his dress. Most indicative is, the

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17. The example that I am closest to is that of the British Empire Day celebrations at Ado-Ekiti, a jamboree that led to a long and protracted dispute between the Ewi of Ado and Elekole of Ikole (kings of those respective towns in the Yoruba region of Ekiti) as to who should be seated directly beneath the flagpole. It was a dispute that baffled the resident A.D.O. but which makes absolute (visual) sense in relation to the power politics of Ekiti kingdoms in the 1920s. See Rea Unpublished Ph.D. 'No Event, No History', University of East Anglia, 1995.

18 . See Clementine Deliss *Exotic Europeans* (National touring exhibitions, Hayward Gallery, London) 1992, and also Ni Quarcoopome *Through African Eyes: The European in African Art 1500 to Present* (Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts) 2010. The representation of Europeans has been a fact of life in Africa for as long as there has been contact. It is the specific formulation of colonialism's modernism that creates the fracture.

presence of the large sun-helmet (pith helmet), which was standard issue to officers of the British Empire. It marks the figure out as a member of the British colonial cadre. He is not a military officer. The suit and bow tie suggest the standard dress of the colonial administrator or businessman. The colouration strongly marks the horse rider as a white man – even now the familiar child's chant on encountering a white person is '*o yinbo, o yinbo p epe'* (lit: Whiteman, white man pepper, which in turn might refer to a person with his skin peeled).[19]

In its formal use of polychromes, the carving follows the Yoruba sculptural traditions of the Ẹgba/Abẹokuta of Southwestern Nigeria (Map 1). Other Yoruba carving traditions are more restrained in their use of colour. Yet, while identifiably from the Abẹokuta tradition, there are a number of unusual stylistic features. The sharpness of the nose, the fact that the mouth is open and the teeth are depicted and the whiskery moustache, all suggest that this carving stands outside the generic forms of Western Yoruba carving styles and is, in fact, a closely observed *portrait*. Yet, there are features of the sculpture that seem out of place. The figure is seated on a horse, not in itself anomalous as British colonial officers were depicted on horseback. The more striking fact is that the figure appears to be seated on a horse with what is clearly a local form of bridle, thrown over the shoulder in a style reminiscent of either the chiefly form of the *Eru* flywhisk or of the way in which the staff depicting *Ẹ̀ṣu*, the Yoruba deity of law and justice, is carried. Odder still, the figure is carrying a spear and not a rifle (as might be expected).[20] As such he is presented as a warrior, reminiscent of other carved depictions found in Southern Nigeria.

The representation of the mounted warrior in Yoruba carving is, in general terms, considered an icon of authority. There are three broad categories in which the representation figures. Perhaps best known are the sculptures of the mounted warrior found in the Ekiti Yoruba carving traditions (Fig. 3). Ekiti is an area of small-town polities in the North-eastern Yoruba region. Here, a history of warfare and raiding means that the mounted warrior is a more recent phenomenon, still held in local memory. It has been argued that in Ekiti the warrior figure, especially associated with the large Ẹpa-type masquerade mask, is closely related to the Oriṣa Ogun, the deity most closely associated with warfare through his association with iron.

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19. The phrase may be a reference to the idea of Europeans as yellow – but I think the phrase is one that makes reference to skin that has been flayed, which until healed appears red. However, Solgar notes that the use of a red skin tone may be associated with authority. Christopher Solgar Carved Ogboni Figures from Abẹokuta *African Arts* 35 (4) 2002.

20. The depiction of a figure on horseback is a common motif in Yoruba carving from Ẹgba to Ekiti. In general it is a sign of authority. See John Picton The horse and rider in Yoruba art: Images of conquest and possession in Pezzoli G (ed.) *Cavaleri Dell'Africa* (Centro Studi Archeologia Africana Milano 1995) pp.203-226

This historical image is regarded as a form of prophylactic magic, created not as a celebration of conquest, but rather as a preventative icon, to ward off attacks.[21] It is however also the theme of numerous palace posts (formally) found in the region. The second broad category is the association of the mounted warrior with Ṣango, the deified emperor (*Alaafin*) of Ọyọ. The Ọyọ empire gained its suzerainty over large areas of the Yoruba region in part because of its ability to utilize highly organised and structured cavalry. Although seemingly obvious, the association between Ọyọ, the horseman and Ṣ ango is made manifest during festivals for the deity when Ṣango is said to mount his followers in possession.[22] It is, however, the third field, the relationship with Eṣu that is most intriguing.[23] Eṣu represents a form of divine wisdom allied to a keen sense of moral justice. Moreover, his position is one of indeterminacy (his shrines are a fixture in marketplaces and found at crossroads), a reflection of his liminal status as the deity that communicates between the worlds of humans and that of the gods. As a messenger he is always portrayed accompanying Ọrunmila, deity of divination. In this role he is sometimes depicted as a horseman.[24]

Abẹokuta had not suffered incursion and raiding since the 1880s. Yet the mounted figure as seen in Figure 2 suggests a form of authority that would seemingly be appropriate to the colonial official and it would seem to fit nicely within a European narrative of dominance and control. The figure is not, however, quite so convincing for it carries little of the regal authority that other depictions of mounted warrior figures have, and its aspect is, while not exactly comic, certainly amusing. The most striking element is the handling of the bridle. The reference to Eṣu is unmistakable and while this in no way places the sculpture within the comic or ludic there is (as described below) a definite tradition in Yoruba carving that places Eṣu at the shoulder of the colonial official.

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21. On the horseman image in Epa-type masquerades see JRO Ojo, 'The Symbolism and significance of the Epa Type Masquerade headpieces.' *Man* (NS.) 13 3 1978 455-470

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. See Peter Morton-Williams A supurb Yoruba horseman *African Arts* 35 (1) 2005 pp 72-73.

23 Eṣu takes many manifestations and is known as one of the original Oriṣa, For early missionaries the Oriṣa became synonymous with a version of Satan, but his status was, and is, both more complex and unspecified than that colonial idealisation.

24 On Eṣu see Joan Wescott The sculpture and myths of Eshu-Elẹgba, the Yoruba trickster *Africa* 32 (4) 1962 pp336-354. See also Donald Constantino Who is the fellow in the many colored cap. *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 100, No. 397 1987, pp. 261-275. Constantino's article concentrates on Fon iterations of Eṣu but offers a transatlantic view. It should be noted that the image of the horse in the Cuban painter Wilfredo Lam's work may also be a reference to possession by Eṣu.

While a tentative iconographic 'reading' of the work provides possible location of this piece within a Yoruba logic, it might be, through stylistic analysis produce some knowledge of the context of its making. Unfortunately, as with much of the corpus of works by Yoruba carvers in private collections, there is little contextual provenance associated with the purchase of this piece to enable the scholar to trace its specific creative origin. All that is known is that it was collected in Lagos sometime in the 1960s, purchased from 'runners,' traders in African art servicing the expatriate population.[25] Stylistically however, the sculpture comes from the workshop of the Abẹokuta carving family generally known as Adugbologe.[26] C arving from this workshop was so prolific that the Adugbologe workshop has been erroneously identified as synonymous with Abẹokuta carving more generally, a fact that ignores the work of another great carving house in the town, that of Akinyode.[27] H owever, the fact that there is a representative corpus of work from the Adugbologe workshop makes not only identification of this particular carving style possible, but also allows for the 'provisional identification of an individual hand (or hands)'.[28]

The founding figure of the Adugbologe workshop, the individual whose 'nickname', Adugbologe, has become synonymous with this particular Ẹgba style, was Ojeyinde (d. before 1914). Tim Chappel's extensive work on the Adugbologe workshop allows clear identification of the hand of Ojeyinde, an individual carver of quite exceptional talent. Ojeyinde was originally from the Ẹgbado town of Aibo but left (alongside many refugees) in the face of an advancing Dahomean army in 1851.[29] Having settled in Abẹokuta, Ojeyinde developed the Aibo compound in Itoko town in the Alake section of Abẹokuta.[30] He also developed a formidable reputation, not only as a woodcarver, but also as a priest of divination

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. Phillip Allison *Collectors piece* unpublished Ms. Allison Archive, Weston Library, University of Oxford.

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. See Tim Chappel 1981 A Woodcarving from Abẹokuta *African Arts* 15 (1) 38-43+86-87 p.40.

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. Tim Chappel 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta p.38. For a wider discussion of Abẹokuta carving families see also Tim Chappel 1972 Critical Carvers: A case study *Man* (NS) 7(2) 296-307

28. Chappel 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta' p.40

29. Chappel Critical carvers p.297. On Abẹokuta see also A I Asiwaju *Western Yorubaland under European rule 1889-1945: A comparative analysis of French and British Colonialism.* (Longmans, London 1976). See especially p.18 and more generally for the history of conflict in the Western Yoruba region.

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. As with a number of Yoruba towns founded in the 19th Century, Abẹokuta was made up of refugees. These were divided into three broad groups, each of which settled discrete 'quarters' of the town. The main sub-divisions were between Ẹgba and Owu groups.

(*ifa*) and owner of medicines. It is also clear that he was favoured by the heads of the Alake quarter, and Chappel documents the close ties that existed between Ojeyinde and two kings (*Alake*), Okukenu (fl. 1854-1862) and Gbadebo I (r. 1898-1920).[31] His son, Oniyinde (d. 1949), does not appear to have had the force of personality of his father, but, as Chappel reports, it may well be that the greater number of carvings attributed to 'Adugbologe' are actually from Oniyinde's hand or his workshop.[32]

On stylistic grounds the colonial horseman illustrated in Figure 2 comes from one of these two hands. There is a tantalising hint, reported by Chappel, that it might relate to Ojeyinde. Chappel writes that,

> In the praise chant (*oríkì*) of Ojeyinde, one-line states:
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> Akanbi (Ojeyinde's attributive name, given to him at birth), fellow who carved an image for a white man to look at on the high seas.
>
> In 1964, his grandson, Ayoola (Ayo), explained that this referred to an occasion when his grandfather gave a carving to a European who was so impressed that he stared at it in wonder on his journey back to his homeland.[33]

The more likely artist of this work is, however, Ojeyinde's son, Oniyinde. In part this is an attribution based on the stylistic character of the work. Oniyede's work is not as refined as that of his father, although they share in common the tendency to tilt the head so that one eye is lower than the other.[34] Oniyede is also known for his attention to detail; for instance his carvings of Yoruba twin figures show the figures wearing shoes.[35] (Fig. 4) Beyond carving style, the detail of this piece actually allows a close identification of the type of clothes worn and facial hair. Inevitably the striking, but unprovable, connection is with the figure of the white man depicted in the photograph I shall shortly discuss (see Fig. 6).

The sculpture in Figure 2 is not the only work from the Adugbologe lineage that depicts the presence of Europeans in Africa. One of the most important works, identified as

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31. Chappel 'Critical carvers' p 297

32. Chappel 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta' p. 41.

33. Tim Chappel, Personal Communication 03/02/2017. This notion of carving for the 'white man' is a reoccurring theme in the lives of Yoruba carvers. Ọlọwẹ of Isẹ was reputed to have carved a 'lion' that was taken overseas, and the attributive name of the Ekiti master carver who has become known as Agunna is Agunna bi Oyinbo – that is, 'one who can carve like a white man.'

34. Chappel Pers com 03/02/2017.

35. Chappel 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta' p.40

by Ojeyinde, is the two tier sculptural tableau in the Brighton Museum . (Fig. 5) Chappel convincingly shows that this carving is, in all likelihood, a depiction of the Catholic missionaries Fathers Chausse and Holley who arrived in Abẹokuta in 1880.[36] The carving presents a single bearded figure on horseback, wearing a broad brimmed hat (*chapeau romain*) and a cassock. Chappel distinguishes the figure from other missionary figures, such as the Reverend H Townsend (1815-1886), primarily through the use of their religious dress, and through close attention to and, with reference to another work that shows the paired missionary figures, Chappel suggests that this is the depiction of an event; the arrival of the Catholic Mission in the town. Chappel does not speculate on what this piece may have been made for. His only comment on why this work was made is open ended, The intention of the patron and/or carver may simply have been anecdotal; if, on the other hand, the scene refers to a specific event and to actual persons, the most likely candidates would appear to be Frs. Chausse and Holley.[37]

Chappel is not the only author to note the Adugbologe lineage's facility for carving 'into history'. Christopher Slogar's careful tracing of the iconography of the missionary 'hat' through carvings of figures related to the Ogboni society (a society of elder statesmen) offers a close reading of sculptural works that looks to place those works exactly within the historical frame.[38] His tracing of the hat motif into a system of power and prestige offers a reflect of the prominent way in which the Solar Topee in this particular carving is handled and he argues that the red skin of the figures he details is related to an idiom of authority. Indeed Norma Wolff makes it clear that the Adugbologe workshop was, from at least World War I, engaged in producing, 'traditionally styled Yoruba sculpture for an outsider market made up of Yoruba and Hausa middlemen and the occasional expatriate Nigerian elite or tourist visitor.' [39]

Is this the purpose of making the Abẹokuta horseman— an anecdotal piece made for amusement? An item of tourist art ? Or is it also the documentation/commemoration of an event? It is unclear, but a consideration of a wider context may provide some clues.

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. Chappel, 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta', p.43 see also A J Asiwaju Western Yorubaland under European rule 1889-1945' London, Longmans 1976, p.44.

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. Chappel, 'A woodcarving from Abẹokuta' p.43

38 Christopher Solgar Carved Ogboni Figures from Abẹokuta *African Arts* 35 (4) 2002

39 . Norma H Wolff 'A matter of must' Continuities and change in Adugbologe Woodcarving workshop in Abẹokuta in Kasfir and Forster (eds) African art and agency in the workshop. Bloomington, Indiana University Press 2013 p 300. Wolff's work in Abẹokuta is, alongside Chappel's the most detailed and significant. Unfortunately, due to Covid her 1985 Ph.D. thesis was unavailable for this paper.

A colonial visit in Abẹokuta

The photograph in Figure 6, known only to me from an Alamy stock picture, records the visit of the British Under-Secretary for State for the Colonies, William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore (1885-1964; Lord Harlech since 1936) to the Ẹgba Yoruba town of Abẹokuta in 1926.[40] His host, Ademola II (r. 1920-1962) had acceded to the throne of Abẹokuta in July 1920. The occasion for the photograph was a visit to Abẹokuta by Ormsby-Gore as a part of what would, nowadays, be described as a fact-finding tour of West Africa. Presented in the photograph is a relatively routine record of the honour paid by the host 'chief' to the visiting colonial dignitary.

The king of Abẹokuta , in, what would conventionally be described by the contemporary colonialist descriptions as full 'native' attire, stands next to, and equal to, the equally 'tribally dressed' British official, while in the background are the retinues of both men, on the one side resident colonial officials and members of the travelling party, and on the other the people of Abẹokuta. Both central figures are supported by porters in official dress carrying large umbrellas and the welcome is proclaimed by a large banner which can be partially read, stating '(gree)tings from the (…..) All Ẹgbas'.

William George Ormsby-Gore was born in 1885 into the British establishment. Attending Eton College and Oxford he was almost pre-destined to enter the sphere of establishment British 'public service'. In October 1922, he became parliamentary under-secretary at the Colonial Office. In 1926 Ormsby-Gore visited West Africa as leader of a parliamentary delegation, on the instruction of Leo Amery (!873-1955), Colonial Secretary in Baldwin's government. He was accompanied by the Hon.. C. A. U. Rhys MP and Mr J. E. Flood and Mr Bevir of the Colonial Office. The three-month tour included visits to all Britain's West African dependencies, but it was in Nigeria that the most extensive and intensive work was carried out. The group left Liverpool on 'MSS. Adda' on the 30th of January 1926 and landed in Lagos on the 4th of February. Between leaving Lagos on the 11th February and embarking for Accra on the 19th March 1926, the delegation visited all the major cities and towns of Nigeria. On the 13th March they travelled from Ibadan to Abẹokuta and on the 14th from Abẹokuta to Lagos, the last leg of their tour before returning to further conferences and meetings in Lagos.[41]

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40. Attempts to trace the original source have proved fruitless.

41. W Ormsby-Gore *Report by the Hon. WGA Ormsby-Gore on his visit to West Africa during the year 1926*. (H M Stationary Office, London, 1926) p.188

As a result of his visit Ormsby-Gore published a number of papers. The most important was his report to the Colonial Office, which offered detailed accounts of both the peoples and also the economies of each of the dependencies alongside detailed breakdown of the economy, healthcare and education of each region.[42] The drive to maximisation of economic utility underlies the thrust of this report, but there are some interesting (and perhaps unexpected) recommendations, for instance, on the use of school textbooks that actually made reference to local circumstance rather than English life. The underlying thrust, however, is a document aimed at the maximisation of resource, but one that insists on active state intervention, particularly in infrastructure investment.

While the visit was primarily administrative, particularly in the investigation of educational development and the opportunities created by the growth of transport infrastructure in Nigeria, the report, and a subsequent paper by Ormsby-Gore in the *Geographical Journal*, offer a quasi-ethnographic commentary on the peoples of the region. The article is, Ormsby-Gore admits, heavily influenced by the anthropological surveys by C. K.Meek and P. Amaury Talbot,[43] but it is the commentary on the Yoruba in the official report that is of most interest here.

> The Yoruba is in many ways the most varied and adaptable of all the Negro peoples. Christianity and Civilisation are advancing among them, but they retain in remarkable degree their loyalty to their chiefs, who are in a very special degree 'priest kings', the guardians of the national fetishes or shrines and the symbols of tradition and unity.[44]

Here is another, all too familiar, fashioning of Africa. Even as Ormsby-Gore is looking to report on the various opportunities to be found in the British protectorates, and how, with the right forms of investment and suitable adjustments to infrastructure and education of the people these opportunities might be multiplied, the report cannot resist imposing what we must name an anthropological gaze. Running throughout the narrative is an insistence on race, on the particular types of people that are encountered in the course of his visit, and how those 'types' might conform as instruments of empire. There is also, in the above statement, a conflation of past and present. The notion of the 'priest king' sits firmly within a constructed ethnographic

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42. 'Report by the Hon. WGA Ormsby-Gore on his visit to West Africa' p.189

43. WGA Ormsby Gore Some Contrasts in Nigeria *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 69, No. 6 (Jun., 1927), pp. 497-511

44. Ormsby-Gore 'Report by the Hon. WGA Ormsby-Gore on his visit to West Africa' pp.18-19

present, the Coloniser upholding their mission despite the forms of modernity that they must have seen around them.

Standing next to Ormsby-Gore, the king of Abẹokuta, Ademola II, presents a striking and composed figure. Dressed in richly embroidered robes, shoes and *fila (*cap*)*, he carries with him both beaded staff and white horsetail *Eru*. He presents to the viewer a precise image of a Yoruba king carrying the various insignia of his office – even to the point that, on first sight, he fulfils Ormsby-Gore's description of the Yoruba 'priest' king. Palace officials accompany him and standing behind him is a woman who may be the queen mother, or leader of the *Oloori* (palace wives). Taken at face value, within the coloniser's idiom this would appear to be a photograph of Ademola II as 'traditional' king, conforming to 'type'? Yet, as I discuss below, this self-fashioning within this frame is entirely deliberate, and reoccurs throughout his reign.

The photograph in Figure 6, presumably taken for reproduction in the local press, has a dual character. While the stances of Ormsby-Gore and the king of Abẹokuta are formal and posed, there is something casual and momentary, snap-shot-like, in the way in which Ormsby-Gore carries a cigarette in his left hand and the various figures stand in clustered but un-organised groupings. The photograph offers a quasi-framing. It is neither entirely posed colonial documentation, nor an official portrait. The scene offers contrasts. To an extent it fits within a paradigm of photographic posing noted by the art historian Jean Borgatti. She argues that Westerners and Africans present themselves differently to the camera – a different aesthetic of self-presentation.[45] Westerners, she states, affect a relaxed posture, showing dominance of a situation, while, 'Africans in robes or wrappers stare sternly at the camera with hands and feet visible – complete – as their way of showing control of the moment.'[46]

Borgatti's comment would seem to be borne out in this photograph, and yet all is not quite as it seems. While the king stands in his regalia pointing to his role and legacy in the traditions of Yoruba kingship, and the banners are framed by *Màrìwò* palms – a device that usually indicates an area of spiritual importance – signs of modernity abound. Two African men in the background, just drifting into frame, wear European clothing in contrast with the clothing worn by the king. Attached to the palace wall (I make the assumption that this is the palace, the *Aàfin Alake*) is a connection to an electrical power cable. Corrugated iron roofing

[45] Jean Borgatti, Likeness or not : Musings on portraiture in canonical African art and its implications for African portrait photography, in John Peffer and Elisabeth Cameron (eds.) *Portraiture and photography in Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press 2013). p324

[46]. Borgatti 'Likeness or not' p.324

and concrete pillars further point to the actual modernity of the moment. As such this photograph contrasts with those that Ormsby-Gore chose to use in his report to the geographical society. These more clearly take the form of ethnographic documentation, and which avoid the signs of the modern.[47] This photograph offers something different, something slightly out of kilter in the mis en scene of colonial framing. It suggests hybridity.

The town of Abẹokuta in south-western Nigeria is, itself, something of a hybrid. It was founded in 1830 by Owu and Ẹgba refugees fleeing the internecine warfare and slave trading that plagued the peoples between Porto Novo and Ijebu (see Map 1). The formation of the city was, like that of Ibadan to the East, one of expediency and a coming together of disparate groups and governance in the town was not stable, each group vying for control. It was not until the intervention of Henry Townsend (b. 1815), missionary and pastor, who arrived in the town in 1846, that an attempt at a formal structure of governance was introduced.[48] Townsend's attempt ultimately failed to unite the fissiparous factions with the town, although he did succeed in introducing the notion of a single royal authority, except that each of the main groupings in the town proceeded to elect their own king. It was not until the expansion of British authority from the Lagos Protectorate in the late Nineteenth century that a formally defined figure of authority came to prominence in Abẹokuta. The establishment of the Ẹgba United Government (EUG), which by 1897 had representative titular leaders from the four main groups of the Abẹokuta peoples, was the first governing body in the town.[49] As ex officio president of the council, and highest judicial authority in the town court, the king finally consolidated the position that Townsend had originally envisaged.[50] The success of the Ẹgba in asserting the king as *primus inter pares* was in part due to British support. By the time Ademola II ascended the throne, the king had control over revenue being in charge of all taxation and tolls.

The king became de-facto the British representative in Abẹokuta. During periods of unrest (such as 1914) it was to the king that the British turned and it was the king who

47 . See Ormsby-Gore 1927 pp 501-502.

48 . Insa Nolte I 2002 Chieftaincy and the state in Abacha's Nigeria: Kingship, political rivalry and competing histories in Abẹokuta during the 1990s *Africa* 72 (3) 368-390. Oduntun also provides a comprehensive documentation of the founding and history of Abẹokuta between 1830 and 1947. See Oluwatoyin Oduntun *Elite Identity and Power: A Study of Social Change and Leadership Among the Ẹgba of Western Nigeria 1860-1950* (unpublished PhD, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 2010).

49 . Nolte, chieftaincy and the state in Abacha's Nigeria' p371.

50 . Nolte, 'Chieftaincy and the state in Abacha's Nigeria' p.372

signed Abẹokuta into the Protectorate of Nigeria. Insa Nolte notes that, after the administrative structure was formed royal authority gained a stable grounding. She writes that,

> In the following decades, royal authority - especially that of the *Alake* - reached unprecedented heights. While for several decades the *Alake* was the Sole Native Authority of Ẹgbaland, all kings held ex-officio posts in the administration, received stipends and controlled or influenced police activities as well as matters relating to jurisdiction, taxation and sanitation.[51]

Ademola II was crowned the king of Abẹokuta in 1920. The son of Ademola I, he received a formal education in Abẹokuta and Lagos, attending Breadfruit College and the Forsythe School. He then trained as a printer and worked for the *Lagos Weekly Record*, a newspaper dedicated to the nationalist cause. It was, however, Ẹgba politics that primarily preoccupied him and he became an important broker between the government of the Lagos protectorate (working as advisor to the Lagos Governor McCallum) and the Ẹgba, eventually helping to develop the Ẹgba United Government, which, alongside promoting the railway connection to Abẹokuta, was eventually responsible for the form of governance that prevailed in Abẹokuta until 1947. One of the striking points about reports on Ademola II from this period is that they note his comfort in western 'clothes', something that is very much to the fore when he accompanied the then ruling Gbadebo I to Britain in 1904, visiting Liverpool and then London where they were received by Edward VII (r. 1901-1910). More importantly, the visit was used to establish trading relationships between Abẹokuta and the United Kingdom, particularly with the British Cotton Growing Association.[52]

After his election as the king (not without controversy) Ademola II moved successfully to consolidate power within Abẹokuta and by 1924 he was given full control of the administration of the town, including tax raising powers. Clearly, he was a person that, in the eyes of the British, conformed precisely to their image of a 'traditional' ruler under the idiom of indirect rule. On the part of Ademola II, of course, this 'conformity' secured his position as undisputed ruler in Abẹokuta.

Carving the colonial: Europeans more generally.

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. Nolte, Chieftaincy and the state in Abacha's Nigeria' p.372

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. A detailed account of Gbademo's visit is recounted in Robins 2013 downloaded from https://www.academia.edu/4397151/Invested_in_Empire_Political_Elites_and_Imperial_Business_in_Nigeria_and_Uganda_c._1900-1920 12.04.2017

It is possible that both carving and photograph (see Figs. 2, 6) are visual representations of Ormsby-Gore's visit to Abẹokuta. They can be read, however, across each other as representation 'from the other side'. The sculpture is easily categorised by the Western traditions of art historical writing about Yoruba art. It is of a 'familiar' type, recognisably belonging to Yoruba tradition, one that can be particularly recognised as within the idioms of Ẹgba woodcarving. That the relationship between photograph and sculpture has not been recognised may be the consequence of the construction of the art history of Africa. While offering fabulous report of numerous traditions, this art historical tradition persistently sees in the figurative sculptural traditions of that continent, forms of type rather than portraits. This has manifestly been the case in the art history of Yoruba sculpture, which until recently took as an accepted dictum that Yoruba sculpture was bound by formal demands instilled into the carver during his apprenticeship. Most famously Robert Thompson's Yoruba artistic criticism argues that the ideal form of sculpture is one that stands upon the formulation of general principles of humanity, not exact likeness. To Thompson mimesis at the mid-point (which he terms *jíjora*), between absolute abstraction and absolute likeness is characteristic of the carver's aim.[53] Here, I argue, this frame of reference needs to be adjusted. That in accounting for a sculpture such as this a particular form of Yoruba modernism needs to be acknowledged.

Between the various mission activities in Ẹgba/ Abẹokuta and the arrival of Ormsby-Gore, the political and social identity of South-Western Nigeria had undergone profound change, and while the establishment of the official colonial polity (as represented by Ormsby-Gore's visit from the metropolitan centre) was undoubtedly catalytic in that change, the active agencies working toward the making of Yoruba identity came very much from within the Yoruba community itself. The Yoruba ethnogenesis, the production of a sociality and self-identification as 'Yoruba', from the late 19th c entury has been thoroughly explored and in many ways provides the on-going basis for historical and sociological commentary upon this region.[54]

Yet there are, still, in many commentaries on Yoruba art, an assumption of a unitary place known as 'Yorubaland'. In part this is a product of the aforementioned ethnographic present, the separation 'out of time' of the singular tradition or ritual, but it is also, perhaps, a

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. Robert Faris Thompson, Yoruba artistic criticism, in D'Azevedo (ed.) *The Traditional artist in Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press 1973) p.33

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. JDY Peel *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The incorporation of a Yoruba kingdom.* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1983).

product of the global 'success' of Yoruba culture.[55] The fact remains that most of the 'masterpieces' of Yoruba art reported upon as coming from 'Yorubaland' were created during a time of significant shifts in what 'being Yoruba' actually meant; both for an emerging elite, but also at the level of the everyday. Those shifts were not unitary or indeed even, and the process of ethnogenesis plays out in different ways and at different times across Western Nigeria.

One of the more subtle commentaries on Yoruba visual culture is provided by Yomi Ola.[56] In tracing a singular theme, that of Yoruba satire, through the path of t wentieth century visual representation Ola manages to capture the way shifts in the everyday were recorded, both in the metropolitan centres of Nigeria; through photographs, reports in the lively local press and literature but also within the periphery. His primary focus is upon prints and political cartoons , but he grounds his analysis of Western Nigerian modernity firmly within the existent traditions of Yoruba satire. One part of his analysis concerns the carvers of Ekiti and in particular the work of perhaps the most acknowledged master of Yoruba carving, Ọlọwẹ of Isẹ (1875-c. 1938).

The best known carved image of the European in Nigeria is that of Captain William Ambrose at the court of the king (*Ogoga*) of Ikerre (r. 1890-1928), in a scene depicted on a carved door, now held in the British Museum.[57] (Fig. 7) As with the Brighton work, the carving depicts an event; the arrival of a British commissioner at the court of the king (*Ogoga*) of Ikẹrẹ. The door once adorned the courtyard of the palace of Ikerre. The door arrived at the British museum via the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley in 1924. As such, and in that context, it was very much a part of an imperial spectacle – installed as a part of the Nigerian pavilion and acting as the entrance to the 'timber exhibit'. The door is by the best-known Yoruba artist of the twentieth century, Ọlọwẹ of Isẹ. Here, however, rather than

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55 . See Peel, 2017

56 Yemi Ola ***Satires of Power in Yoruba Visual Culture*. Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press, African World Series. 2013.**

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. Ros Walker in Walker R *Ọlọwẹ of Isẹ: A Yoruba sculptor to Kings* National Musuem of African Art, Smithsonian, Washington DC, 1998,offers the most comprehensive catalogue of Ọlọwẹ's work. She illustrates this door on p. 46-47 (plate 5 A,B). See also Rowland Abiodun *Yoruba art and language: Seeking the African in African Art* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012). See espcially pp 290-301. See also Sylvester Ogbechie The Ọlọwẹ Corpus and Yoruba sculpture in Making History: African collectors and the canon of African art Lagos, Five Continents 2011(see especially p136-137). The comparison between the Akinsanya collection Alawe door and that of the Isẹ door is instructive.

concentrating on the door as a whole, I want to pursue an exercise in tracing how 'a' history might work through a single 'motif' in the corpus of Ọlọwẹ of Isẹ.

I begin the exercise with another example drawn from William Fagg's *Nigerian images*, the volume he produced to celebrate Nigeria's independence in 1960.[58]. The exemplary piece is a group of figures (Figs. 8, 9). The sculpture depicts a diminutive Yoruba king (*Ọba/Ọwa*) wearing a beaded crown and carrying a fan. He is sitting in a hammock carried by two porters who are far larger than the king. He is also accompanied by a female figure identified as his wife and a figure identified as a court messenger playing a flute.[59] The work clearly amused Fagg, who regarded Ọlọwẹ as representing the epitome of Yoruba carving. He suggests that Ọlọwẹ was being deliberately humorous, poking fun at the king, making him deliberately smaller than the bearers, in a reversal of hierarchical convention and giving him a less than dignified facial expression.

As such this piece appears as an anomaly to the normative carving expectations of a Yoruba style. That then should perhaps give us pause. Why this subject? why this humour? What is going on here? In most narratives of Yoruba carving these are questions hardly pursued; it is enough to note that this is a king, that the proportionate style is inappropriate and so on – the work is interpreted with reference to the genius of Ọlọwẹ and placed against the informing tradition. Indeed, what other material do we, as interpretative art historians, have to hand? Ọlọwẹ is long deceased and there is no surrounding textual material for the art historian to draw upon. Thus, while 'anonymous' now has a name, we seem no further on in understanding how a piece such as this might sit within the particularity of this time and this place.

Except that, of course, we do – but not exactly. What is known is the history of relations and the specific events in the region, most especially the relationships between the town of Ileṣa and the smaller towns of Ekiti. What is also known is the impact of British colonial incursion into the region following the end of the Kiriji war, the last, largest and most vicious conflict between the inhabitants of Ileṣa and its Ekiti allies (the Ekitiparapo) and the military theocracy of Ibadan.[60] There is not space here to fully explicate the historical circumstance and

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58 . William Fagg Nigerian Images London, Lund Humphries, 1963.

59 . An act often associated with Eṣu

60 See SA Akintoye 1971 *Revolution and power politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893* Longmans, London and JDY Peel 1983 *Ijeshas and Nigerians: the Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom 1890-1970s.*Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

consequences of the realignment of Ekiti following Kiriji. Here I am more concerned with a detail.

In September 1901 Ajimoko (r. 1896-1901), the king (*Ọwa*) of Ileṣa, died. He was replaced by Ataiyero (r. 1902-1920). His ascendancy came at a time that saw the British increasingly being drawn into local political disputes – primarily as a resource which various parties in both Ileṣa and Ekiti could draw upon, but who were also keen to assert their authority in the region.[61] In 1901 the British launched the Native Councils Ordinance, the effect of which was to commute the level of tolls that could be gathered by the king, but which also radically undercut the discretionary power of the king to raise taxes and made his authority dependent upon the colonial state.[62] By 1905 the relationship between the king and the British district commissioner in Ileṣa (Captain Ambrose) had seriously deteriorated; the British felt that the king was illegally levying bribes and taxes and the king understood that his power had been severely curtailed. Into this toxic mix petitions demanding the removal of the commissioner or the king from various parties in the town flew back and forth.

On the 16th March 1905 the Governor of the Lagos protectorate, Sir Walter Egerton (1858-1947), arrived in Ileṣa and summoned the king to the resident Commissioner's compound King Ataiyero refused to leave his palace, but the next day the Governor sent his travelling hammock and the king was forced to offer tribute, which was refused.[63] The king then complained of the travelling commissioner's behaviour; his rudeness and high-handed manner in the resolution of disputes and after two days of accusation and counter accusation, the governor proposed that the king joined him on a visit to Benin in order to inspect the administrative system there. This was tantamount to telling the king to take enforced exile and rumours abounded that the king was to take his own life. Yet on the 19th of March four soldiers, with 'hammock men' were sent to collect the king and he was forced into temporary exile.

While there is no evidence, either visual or textual, that this is the event that is recorded in Ọlọwẹ's work, it is difficult to imagine any other event that might have precipitated the carving of such an anomalous piece. That claim sits at odds with an art history that rarely looks

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61 Peel, Ibid p.97

62 Peel Ibid p.98

63 It is evident that the event caused a stir. Reports were carried in both the *Lagos Standard* and the *Lagos weekly record*. See Peel p.100 fn62

to the wood carved works as historical document, placing them within an ongoing tradition of carving, but hardly suggesting an origin in veristic representation or portraiture. Yet, Ọlọwẹ's most famous work, the door that is currently held by the British Museum, is exactly that, a record of an event, in this case the visit of Captain Ambrose to the king of Ikerre (see Fig. 7).

That door was probably carved sometime between 1910 and 1914, on the commission of the king of Ikerre to commemorate his meeting with 'the travelling commissioner of Ondo province'.[64] The door is divided into two panels each of five registers. Those on the right hand side depict the arrival of the Captain Ambrose (Fig. 10) and his retinue (including, perhaps, his fellow district officer Colonel Reeve-Tucker on horseback) while the registers of the left hand panel depict the enthroned king, accompanied by his wife (Fig. 11), as well as scenes from the life of the palace. Ambrose and the king are shown on the second register of each panel facing each other. The king, carved as the larger figure, is seated upon a British campaign folding chair awaiting the arrival of Ambrose, who is carried on a travelling litter (hammock).

Much has been made of the relative portrayals on this door. The figure of Ambrose 'with enormous drooping moustaches' is first identified as wearing a cricketing cap by Phillip Alison, who goes on to wonder what 'colours' he wore while in Ekiti.[65] Fagg comments that it was with 'considerable humour Ọlọwẹ has carved Ambrose himself as almost supplicant to the king, who by contrast has a very condescending expression'.[66] John Picton goes further; describing Ambrose as worn out, an almost pathetic figure in relation to the regal bearing of the king .[67] As Ros Walker notes, this door, follows the sculptural programme

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64. Fagg 1963 and subsequent commentators have placed this meeting around 1895. The fact that Ambrose was not commissioned to operate in this area until 1899 rather disrupts this narrative. See Phillip Allison The travelling commissioners of Ekiti *The Nigerian Field* 17 (3) 1952, 100-115 and also *The official diary of travelling commissioners in Southern Nigeria 1900-1903*. (Unpublished ms. Oxford Weston library).

65. Allison 'The travelling commissioners of Ekiti' p110

66. See William Fagg *Nigerian Images* (Lund Humphries, London 1963) p56. Here Fagg also references the Clausmeyer collection Ọlọwẹ svulpture, one which he was clearly very taken with. This piece is a freestanding sculpture depicting a Yoruba king being carried on a hammock. The king is carved as a small man, while the hammock carriers are very tall. (see Fagg Nigerian images pl.83). For Fagg this appears as a moment of ridicule. Speculatively, however, this carving could refer directly to the enforced exile of the Ijesha Ọwa (king) Ataiyero in 1904. During a dispute between Ambrose and the Ijesha chiefs the Ọwa was forced into a humiliating 'tour' of Benin with governor Egerton (effectively forced into temporary exile). As Peel notes, four soldiers and Hammock men collected him from his palace, despite the avowals that this was not how an Ọwa should leave. See Peel Ijeshas and Nigerians pp.98-100.

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that Ọlọwẹ developed in the smaller Ekiti town of Iṣe. Indeed the themes of this major door are present in Ọlọwẹ's earlier work, carved between 1904 and 1910, for the palace of Arinjalẹ, the king of Isẹ (Figs 12, 13). As with the later work, the left panel of the door depicts the arrival of the British commissioners from Ileṣa, Reeve Tucker on horseback, whereas Ambrose is depicted carried in a hammock. On the right panel, King Arinjalẹ greets Ambrose from a horse, his arm extended in greeting. The Isẹ door offers a somewhat different narrative to that of the Ikẹrẹ door and yet it is very obviously the template for the later door.

That its narrative is different is unsurprising. King Ajimoko of Ileṣa kept a prison where he had detained the 'ruler of Isẹ' in a dispute about a female slave. Reeve-Tucker, who had arrived in Ileṣa in 1899 as Travelling Commissioner, described the king of Isẹ as a political prisoner. Siding with the widespread consternation of the Ekiti communities, it is clear that it was the intervention of the Travelling Commissioners that succeeded in gaining the release of King Arinjalẹ of Isẹ.[68] The British were useful to the kings of Ekiti.

By 1905 a clear division had developed between the former allies of the Ekitiparapo. The kingdoms of Ekiti had become wholly dismayed by the attempts of the Ilesa to assert control over the region and had, with the support of the British Commissioners, absolutely asserted their independence. It was a cause that was readily taken up by competing factions in Lagos and widely reported in the pages of the *Lagos Standard* and the *Lagos Weekly Record*. There is no way of knowing if Ọlọwẹ was literate, but there can be little doubt that this door, and its subsequent iterations operate absolutely within a context of Ekiti nationalism and in that movement the British Commissioners were used by local rulers to bolster the position of the Ekiti Obas.

Picton points to the recurrent theme of the European commissioner in the series of doors that make up some part of the Ọpin corpus of works.[69] The image of the cycling District Commissioner occurs particularly in the works of Areogun of Osi (1880-1954), often filling one of the registers of the door panels he carved, situated amidst scenes of Yoruba life

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. John Picton Art, identity and identification: A commentary on Yoruba art historical studies in Abiodun R, Drewal H and Pemberton J (eds.) *The Yoruba artist* (Smithsonian institution press, Washington 1994) p. 26

[68] See Peel p.97. See also Fn41.

[69]. The art history of the Ọpin region is described in detail by John Picton in, The sculptors of Ọpin *African Arts* 1994 27 (3) 46-102. Ọpin refers to a unique groups of villages, beholden to Ilorin, and thereby separated from the Ekiti region by the political settlement of 1902)

that range from such domestic images as a woman pounding yam or a woman being fought over by two men to images of slavery and slave caravans (Fig. 14). Crucially, in his depictions of white officers, now riding bicycles rather than on horseback, Areogun would often carve a small supplementary figure, placed standing on the front mudguard of the district officer's bicycle, either biting his thumb or smoking a pipe – icons associated with the deity Ẹṣu. Here, as in Abẹokuta, the coloniser is associated with the deity of ambivalence and unpredictability.

Picton's reading of the European offers the figure as double edged – figures of fun as well as icons of authority.

> 'The idea that the European may be appropriated as an image of the authority of gods could be said to work precisely because it was taken for granted that the authority represented in these images was not located in Europeans themselves. On the other hand the representation of the authority of Europeans for what it is in itself seems always have been a subject for a ridicule that was subversive of that authority.'[70]

Yet we should be wary of overstating the Yoruba response to colonial authority as one that is entirely subversive. To an extent this is too easy and falls into a narrative that generalises the Yoruba response to Europeans without due attention to historical context. In doing so different genres of depiction become conflated. So, while there is little doubt that the image of the stranger is a recurrent theme of ridicule in numerous Yoruba genres it does not necessarily follow that all such images are satirical. As Ola has shown, satire, of strangers more generally but Europeans in particular, is most keenly seen in the performances of different types of regional masquerade such as Gẹlẹdẹ and Egungun. Satire is also a persistent narrative in Yoruba travelling theatre and other popular cultural forms.[71] However, if we turn to the specific circumstances of Ọlọwẹ 's Ikẹrẹ door (and perhaps those of the Ọpin tradition) a more complex picture emerges.

There is little doubt that Captain Ambrose's position as travelling commissioner for Ilesha and Ekiti was ambivalent. The primary purpose of the commissioners was the implementation of colonial organisation upon the district now known as Ekiti. The colonial presence in Ekiti began at the end of the civil war between Ilesha and its Ekiti allies and the

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. John Picton 1991 Nigerian images of Europeans: Commentary, appropriation, subversion in C Deliss (ed.) *Exotic Europeans*. (South Bank Centre, London) p.26.

71. See Karin Barber *I could speak until tomorrow: Oriki, women and the past in a Yoruba town* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1994).

armies of Ibadan.[72] The peace treaty of 1886 and the establishment of the *Pax Britannica* in 1893 was overseen by the governor of Lagos, but on the ground it was initially supported by a resident official in Ibadan and then, from 1899, by the travelling commissioners based in Ileṣa. The initial treaties covered little other than the prevention of a reoccurrence of the war, the abolition of slavery and human sacrifice and the promotion of trade throughout Eastern Yoruba speaking districts. In fact, under these rubrics a whole series of political issues began to be played out across the region, and it was the primary responsibility of the travelling commissioner to deal with them.

The administrative reorganisation was primarily settling the claims of smaller villages to independent jurisdiction. In general, they were forced to remain under the suzerainty of the senior kings (*Ọbas/ Ọwas*). Thus, Reeve Tucker's diary notes from Ado read, 'Villages placed under king and Ado country settled.' Village heads were called to see him, and one was, 'made a prisoner, and made to prostrate himself before king of Ado and fined £5 for, 'hesitating to obey my order'.[73] In general the principle adopted by the British in Ekiti was directed toward forcing smaller towns to obey the jurisdiction of named Obas, including their rights to levy local taxation.[74] Official recognition by Ambrose and Reeve Tucker and membership of the Ekitiparapo council became the *sine-qua-non* for the holding of state power by the kings of Ekiti. The second administrative preoccupation was with the establishment of the proper border between Nigeria and the Lagos protectorate. Northern Nigeria was administered by the Royal Niger Trading company, whereas the south fell under the more direct governance of the Lagos protectorate. The border ran through Ekiti territory. Meetings between British officials were not amicable and at times Ambrose was forced to station garrisons (against the Northern Nigerian British) within towns that fell on the disputed border. The stabilisation of that border

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. See S A Akintoye *Revolution and power politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893: Ibadan expansion and the rise of the Ekitiparapo* (Longmans, London, 1971).

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. See Phillip Allison The travelling commissioners of Ekiti *The Nigerian Field* 17 (3) 1952, 100-115

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. This brief discussion cannot do justice to the complexity of political manoeuvring that took place between the kings of Ekiti. Membership of the established council was crucial and even today disputes still arise concerning the relative positions of the Ekiti Ọba. To an extent the Ekitiparapo has become an historical charter of current political affiliations. See Will Rea *No event, no history* (Unpublished PhD, University of East Anglia,1995), and Akintoye, 'Revolution and power politics'.

was not fully achieved until the two parts of Nigeria came together, in the process of which a great deal of antipathy toward the British officials was generated in Ekiti.[75]

Ambrose was known in Ekiti as *Akerele,* which can be translated as 'small but powerful' or 'little rogue'. Allison notes the respect and dread that he was held in by local people in Ekiti.[76] The term *Akerele* became a cognomen for the British official. Is it this duality that is represented in the depictions of the British? It is plausible to suggest that they are satirised by the carvers of Ọpin, that perhaps, the addition of Eṣu to the front mudguard of his bicycle is not just appropriately satirical but is also a statement about the nature of British administration? Is it then plausible to suggest that Ọlọwẹ 's door is a critical commentary? That it constitutes a satire on colonial power? Here I think that things are more complex –the establishment of the *pax Britannica* and the consequent development of the Ekitiparapo actually allowed the Ekiti kings freedom from the over-lordship of the Ilesha. For the kings of Ekiti the British were a support, even if the British at the time did not know it, and they drew them willingly into their political system and disputes. Representations of Ambrose and Reeve Tucker cannot be simply dismissed as satirical commentary; their usefulness to the Ekiti king, however irritating their presence, was too important to the political manoeuvring of this period.

What this does suggest, however, is a change in representational form. The sense of the aesthetic that Thompson terms *jijọra*– mimesis at the mid-point between realism and the generic (abstraction is the wrong word) – is clearly not present in these *portrait*-like carvings.[77] In these works there is a clear and identifiable likeness – often alluded to in distinctive features – the moustache, items of clothing, modes of transport and so on. This is a distinct change and one that should lead us to question whether Areogun or Ọlọwẹ were also making portraits of the kings that they were working for. If the British Museum door depicts a portrait of Ambrose on the right panel, does it not also depict a portrait of Onijagbo Alowolodu, the king of Ikẹrẹ, on the left ?

Two things stand out in relation to this question. The first is the position of the king, who sits (literally) as the holder of the title, not as an individual. The signs and insignia shown here belong to the *persona* of the king rather than to any particular individual. T he question of whether it is an actual portrait is moot; it already is a representation of the role rather

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75 . The wider history of woodcarving in Ekiti remains to be written, however see Will Rea From Ebuta Metta to Ekiti in N Bridger and J Picton (ed) *Christian Art and African modernity*, Galda Verlag, 2021,

76

. Phillip Allison 'The travelling commissioners of Ekiti' p.110. *jirga*

77. Robert Faris Thompson, 'Yoruba artistic criticism' pp.31-34.

than that of an individual. The second point concerns the historical location of the work. There is little dispute that Ọlọwẹ 's door was created at least ten years after the event that it depicts. And yet the attention to detail in the construction and in the carving suggests that either Ọlọwẹ was present at the event or that the oral narratives were such that Ọlọwẹ was well versed in the event (which is entirely possible) or that Ọlọwẹ had access to some other form of visual reproduction. The fact that Ambrose's activity in Ekiti was closely monitored in the Nigerian press, particularly the *Lagos Standard*, does not put the idea that some form of photographic reproduction was available to Ọlọwẹ beyond the bounds of possibility.[78]

ABẸOKUTA - The portrait of the king

One of the issues with the carved image of the European in western Nigeria is that while the comparison is between two different carving traditions, in location, the real difference is in the relative relationship to what might be termed 'colonial time'. The response to the colonial presence in Ekiti and in Abẹokuta is a response to differing colonial concerns. In Ekiti the position of Ambrose and Reeve-Tucker is distinctly different from that of colonial presence in Abẹokuta. Ambivalence toward the colonial regime in Ekiti was primarily informed by considerations of power politics as they pertained to local issues of dominance and control; the literal setting of boundaries, the relationship between colonial authorities and indigenous authority in Abẹokuta was one that offered a, seemingly, more settled and established set of accommodations.

In part the differences can be considered through the idiom of modernity and the variance in space and time that this project took in Nigeria. Ekiti, as a region, developed local idioms of the modern that drew upon the historical experience of both subjugation to Ibadan and also an ambivalence toward their nominal partners in the Ekitiparapo, notably the Ijesha. The peripheral status of Ekiti in many ways meant that there was a sense of 'catch up' with the process of Yoruba ethnogenesis that was witnessed occurring to the south and the west. Into this mix the travelling commissioners added a sense of defining what was and what was not a part of 'Yoruba' proper – a sense that continues in local politics even today.

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. The interaction between photography and woodcarving in Western Nigeria has not been investigated. This is an entirely speculative statement, with no foundation, but Ọlọwẹ's work is in many ways so dramatically innovative within the bounds of Yoruba carving tradition that it is worth making the suggestion.

Relationships in Abẹokuta, at least by the 1920s, were more stable. The Ẹgba position, and that of Abẹokuta, within the wider emergent sense of a Western Nigerian state as well as a clearly defined sense of Yoruba identity was much more settled than on the periphery. Here politics was an internal issue rather than one of boundary definition. However, to argue that identities were settled underestimates the continual flux of Yoruba town politics. Ladapo's authority depended upon a balancing act; specifically one that required him to be both 'traditional' ruler and 'modern' politician. As such, and as the historian Insa Nolte notes, the logic of this act was to remain engaged in local and communal politics while recognising that these were now played out within the larger logic of the state.

> 'In Abẹokuta, kingship and chieftaincy exist in only in a very limited sense, namely the basis from which they draw their legitimacy. In this sense, 'traditional' and modern politics remain opposed, the one referring to mythical origins and locality while at the other - in the widest sense - exists in relations of power at state, regional or even national level. However, instead of weakening or replacing the state, the political competition of Nigerian leaders is aimed at access to the state…Traditional politics in Abẹokuta were restructured to legitimise the colonial state's administrative process' [79]

As Nolte points out, the authority of the king within local politics draws absolutely upon the legitimacy of his position as sanctioned by historical precedent (tracing back to the mythical origins of kingship at Ile-Ife, the font of Yoruba identity, guaranteed through the rituals of his accession). It is precedent that draws not from any one individual but rather upon a continuity between past and present found in the *persona* of the king.

The arrival of British administration (perhaps paradoxically) served to bolster and enhance the traditions of royal authority. Here, however, the idea of the 'traditional' is exactly that – a conscious and public projection of traditionalism; an 'invented traditional'. Through the establishment of administrative mechanisms that worked through the orders of Yoruba organisation, they placed the king at the centre of the 'modern' administration. In doing so administrative power becomes absolutely centred on the single figure, as a *traditional* ruler, in part because that is the role that the colonial administration expects. As such, and as Nolte notes, traditional status becomes a political asset in modern Nigeria; it becomes a state ideology, a charter by which competition for power in the Colonial state is enhanced. Nolte remarks, but makes no further comment, that recognised 'traditional' status was the most visible way in which

[79]. Nolte 'Chieftaincy and the state in Abacha's Nigeria'p.374.

access to state apparatus could be achieved. Making the 'traditional' visible would appear to be exactly the *modus operendi* of Ademola II.

Abẹokuta is (still) renowned as a centre of artistic production. The carving workshops, however, offer only one aspect of the productive creativity that the city is known for. In fact, the form of creative production that is probably most closely associated with Abẹokuta resides in a different material form altogether; that of indigo dyed cloth generically known as *a dire*. Seemingly the quintessential Yoruba 'traditional' cloth, it is anything but. The history of making the *adire* cloth runs alongside the evolution of a modern Yoruba identity.[80] Differing forms of resist dyed cloth existed in western Nigeria as prestige cloth, but also due to the fact that indigo is a useful dye for recycling and renewing older cloths for continued use, particularly amongst women, *adire* was a common cloth. Abẹokuta as a city of refugees and Sierra Leonean repatriates would have had access to different traditions of pattern making, but the distinctive *a dire* cloth of the city, stencilled starch resist cloth known as *a dire e leko* (ie: using starch, ẹkọ, applied to one face of the cloth) may also have had its origins in the availability of zinc for the making of stencils. The zinc came from the lining of the wooden boxes used to import European victuals.[81]

In both Ibadan and Abẹokuta, the design of the *a dire* cloth flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century and especially in the first half of the t wentieth.[82] As Picton notes, developments in the *a dire* cloth represent an engagement between local technology and aesthetic sensibility, but also, and in part because of the new form of technology and the ways that that technology was taken up by the women dyers of Abẹokuta and Ibadan, the *adire* cloth allowed for a flexible and rapid visual commentary on topical events, the rapid incorporation of the new into the design repertoire. [83] T here is a rich established repertoire for the motifs, deriving from the natural world, Yoruba proverbs and the religious world. Yet it is two particular designs that most evidently incorporate Yoruba reaction to the modern world. The

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81. John Picton Indigo dyed textiles, p.93

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. No definitive date for the introduction of Adire eleko has been established, but Pat Oyelola suggests the most probable are between 1880 and the early 1900s. see Pat Oyelola An Update in D Simmonds, P Oyelola and S Oke (eds.) *Adire Cloth in Nigeria 1971-2016*. (University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2016). p.78

83

. See Pat Oyelola An update in D Simmonds, P Oyelola and S Oke (eds.) *Adire Cloth in Nigeria 1971-2016*. (University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2016)

first is known as *Ibadandun* (Ibadan is sweet) and is (obviously) associated with the city of Ibadan. In this design the colonial Mapo Hall, the architectural symbol of British dominance in that city, is translated into a series of columns, reflecting those of the building's neo-classical façade.[84] (Figs 15, 16) Yet interwoven into the design is a Yoruba subversion, motifs of Ibadan's Yoruba cultural presence.

The second cloth to reference the colonial presence is that of *Ọ̀loba* (lit. It has King or the cloth with a king; Figs 17, 18) This is perhaps the most famous of all *adire* cloth designs and was still being produced with variations through to the 1970s. Each piece of cloth features a central medallion containing images of a royal couple, while surrounding them are two repeats of elaborate motifs, the most significant of which is that of Al Buraq, the winged horseman who carried Prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Jerusalem. This is a motif derived from Islamic oleographs common in Western Nigeria. The central figures however belong to another tradition of popular image dissemination. George Jackson shows convincingly that the central figures are those of Queen Mary and King George V (r. 1910-1936) and that the image is derived from the material produced to celebrate the silver jubilee of George V, held in 1935.[85] Whatever the source of the original image, its link with the King and Queen is well established and the cloth is popularly known as Jubilee.

The *Ọ̀lọ̀ba* cloth was immensely popular and had a great commercial success. The reference to royalty gave the cloth a special status, one that is enhanced by the popular proverbs that accompany the design images. The design plays with Yoruba idioms of power and hierarchy – giving royalty a central place, but yet also reminding the viewer (and presumably the wearer) that whatever their temporal power they are ultimately known to God.[86] What cannot be ignored, however, is that at the centre of the cloth is the image of the imperial king and queen. Is this representation a presentation of loyalty, an understanding of colonial power relations or a suggestion that at the centre of the world sits imperial dominance? That interpretation is unlikely; as with the *Ibadandun* cloth, motifs of imperial power are incorporated and subverted – made to stand as (and within) Yoruba idioms of identity rather

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84. Mapo hall, a large colonial structure that dominates the skyline of Ibadan, was built in 1929.

85. See George Jackson The devolution of the Jubilee design in D Simmonds, P Oyelola and S Oke (eds.) *Adire Cloth in Nigeria 1971-2016*. (University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2016). It is not entirely clear what this material was, whether it was a flag, specially printed cloth or oleograph designed to hang in district offices, or a tin lid or drinking vessel such as a commemorative mug.

86. There are a number of accompanying epigrams printed below the central medallion, but the most common is the phrase '*Gbogbo ohun ko s'ehin Oluwa*' - everything is known to God.

than as colonial propaganda. And yet, two things about this cloth point back to Nolte's argument about the position of 'traditional' authority within the modern state. As with the image of the horseman, this is a representation of the white people (*o yinbo*) (albeit one of royal status – although it could be argued that the commissioners and visiting under-secretaries understood that they embodied that status in the Imperial ideology) that opens up a series of questions about the visualisation of 'traditional' authority under the colonial regime.

The *Ibadandun* cloth makes its affiliation with the town of Ibadan absolutely clear. While the image of the columns of Mapo Hall are not the only signifier of the town depicted on the cloth, they are an essential marker of the cloth's identity. The *Ọlọba* cloth, while not specifically associated with Abẹokuta, is an Abẹokuta cloth. Made originally by stencil and resist technique it is a quintessential product of the town. This prompts the question as to why this motif was specifically developed in Abẹokuta – the jubilee image, in whatever form it took, presumably had a wider spread across Nigeria. Perhaps the image lent itself to the technical forms of making amongst the Abẹokuta dyers, but this seems an instrumental explanation – why not other mass produced images?

One, speculative, reason that the image resonated in Abẹokuta was the close relationship (perceived or otherwise) between the British monarchy and that of Abẹokuta. Ademola II started his personal relationship with Edward VII long before he was enthroned in 1920 when he visited Liverpool and London with his father, Gbadebo I, in 1904 had resulted in a reception in their honour by Edward VII; the relationship was clearly maintained through the early part of the reign of Ademola II. In 1935, the year of the Jubilee, Ademola II was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).[87] Whether or not the *Ọlọba* cloth makes actual reference to this relationship cannot be known, but there does appear to have been a clear sense in the Abẹokuta royal family that a close relationship with the British was to their advantage.

The culmination of this relationship was arguably Ademola II's arrival at the coronation of George VI (r. 1936-1952) in 1937. As reported by the *Manchester Guardian*,

> The *Alake* of Abẹokuta, who has arrived in London for the coronation, yesterday drove in the full glory of his royal blue robes to lay a wreath at the cenotaph…When one saw him at his hotel he was still wearing the gorgeous blue regalia. He carries his sixty four

[87]. It is interesting to note that another Nigerian artist makes trickster play with the fact that he has been awarded Membership of the British Empire, ironically embedding the 'award' into his name; Yinka Ṣonibare MBE.

years actively and affably and from his quick and interesting conversation it is easy to realise he is one of the most progressive of the Nigerian chiefs…he was not a little indignant that separate representatives of Southern and Northern Nigeria had not been invited to the coronation; he decided to come in any case: the other Southern Chiefs had asked him to be their representative.'[88]

The attention paid to the clothing is of interest; it would seem a strategic decision on the part of Ademola II to arrive in London as spectacle. In part perhaps the assertion of traditionality in the centre of empire was a part of that strategy, in this instance being deployed as an assertion of political (traditional and state) authority on the behalf of the whole of Southern Nigeria's traditional elite. Yet a number of portrait photographs taken of Ademola II while in London suggest that there is also something else at work here.

The series of photographs, taken by Hay Wrightson (1874-1949) in June 1937, are conventional studio portraits, of a type that might have been taken by any professional photographer (Fig. 19).[89] Yet they are also an assertion of a particular form of persona – that of the Yoruba king. With the placement of staff (*opa ileke*), crown and other beaded regalia the portraits reflect those taken (or painted) of George VI in his royal regalia. This portrait series almost seems to proclaim 'I too am a king.' Yet within a Yoruba idiom of seeing royalty they also do something else. The usual mode of public appearance for a Yoruba king, especially in full regalia is for the face to be covered, hidden beneath the fringes of a beaded crown. Here the beaded crown, the absolute symbol of Yoruba kingship, is absent; the face is uncovered. More than this Ademola II 's gaze is one that looks directly at, or through, the camera to the viewer. The pose(s) are both regal and assertive. These images proclaim Yoruba kingship as a principle of equality with other kings but they also assert the individuality of this particular king. Ademola II's gaze is one that encounters the viewer; his pose is one of relaxed sovereignty looking out and beyond the confines of the studio.

Ademola II, while not exactly appropriating the photographic as an active agent behind the lens was perhaps doing something more, he was appropriating the idea of spectacle, turning a European expectation on its head. There is little doubt within these images as to who is in charge of the representation – these photographs do not frame a colonial subject, rather images made in the centre of empire are used to establish a legitimacy that looks back to Nigeria.

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88. Our London Correspondence: the parliamentary interlude. *Manchester Guardian*. May 7, 1937.

89. Hay Whightson was the photographer of choice to the Royal Family. Many royal portraits taken by him are found in the National Portrait Gallery. The use of Wrightson was no doubt a deliberate commission by Ladapo.

The problem with colonialism is that it always felt more important to itself than it actually was to people in Western Nigeria. Ademola II 's gaze punctures the colonialist's fantasy, he proclaims his ownership of tradition while at the same time proclaiming that it is a very modern tradition.

'Portraiture has a genealogy in the history of art that is related to the right to be represented.'[90]

Scholars of African art have extended the idea of the portrait as it has been used in Africa. Jean Borgatti in particular has pointed to the fact that, in Europe, the one consistent definition of the portrait has been that it depicts a specific person; that there is an emphasis upon likeness. She argues that portraiture comes from an impulse to remember and to be remembered. In her attempt to extend the notion of the portrait to Africa Borgatti counterpoises the European notion of the individual identity to a view of the portrait more closely embedded in forms of social identity. In part the effort in this paper is to extend the notion of the portrait beyond the forms of veristic representation most commonly associated with the genre, while at the same time maintaining that in Africa the identification of the individual may be made in a number of different modes, ranging from the representational to the more purely symbolic assemblages of material (in, for instance, a masquerade).[91] What this paper documents are forms of the portrait (in different materials) that suggest that the notion of the individual is very much a part of the artistic repertoire.

In his work on portrait photography John Tagg enunciates a division between the social, economic and political privilege of the right to representation and the shift that occurs in the nineteenth century during which being represented becomes 'a burden' that is imposed on subjected people(s) by those for whom the photographic image functions as a mode of discipline and surveillance under cover of the pursuit of scientific knowledge of the other; social, racial, mental, or gendered.

The case from Abẹokuta suggests that a more nuanced view of visual representation is required – one that accounts not only for the insertion of the colonial regime of spectatorship,

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. Griselda Pollock Between Portrait and type: Psychic life, otherness and the Image according to Aby Warburg in Valerie Mainz, Laura Malosetti Costa & Griselda Pollock (eds) *Representation and the Gaze between Science and Portraiture,* Unpublished (London: I B Tauris; in *New Encounters: Arts, Cultures, Concept*s series edited by Griselda Pollock). p.2

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. See Jean Borgatti African Portraits in J Borgatti and Brilliant R (eds.) *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits in Africa and the world* (Center for African Art, New York 1990) p.38

but also requires that the active agency of local idioms be understood. This is not to deny that European power and associated forms of visual representation and documentation did not impose themselves upon Africa, they undoubtedly did. However, to subscribe to a view that this introduced a singular regime of spectatorship is also to subscribe to a view of the colonial in Africa that sits firmly within the teleology of Western modernism. It is a model that suggests that Africa is shaped by colonial rule and represented according to European ideals, that its evolution develops from some 'primordial' traditional past and that its 'evolution' to its modern future is one framed only by colonial transition.

People in Abẹokuta, Ekiti and in western Nigeria more generally, accepted colonial power for what is was, another set of persons to be brokered, another group of people to be brought into on-going struggles that essentially remained at a local level. That is to understand the past, not as static tradition (something that would not apply to Abẹokuta in any case) but as the grounds upon which circumstantial change is encountered encapsulated and represented. . There is a distinction to be drawn between those arenas, such as Gẹlẹdẹ or Egungun masquerade, where the outsider is portrayed as a figure of satirical amusement and those where more intricate intent may be desired. Depictions of Europeans within the Southern Yoruba masking complex's fall into, what Yomi Ola describes as patterns of political and social criticism.[92] The depiction of the European in these contexts is one of parody, the European being the perfect example of the stranger that knows not how to act with proper social mores. The European is an ethnographic *type*; an exotic other, useful for satirical depiction. Yet this logic does not extend to the wood-carved images. In the work of Ọlọwẹ , Areogun or even Ojinde there is something more than satirical intent, something that goes beyond typical parody. These are not depictions of types, but are rather portraits, known and identifiable individuals, and as such they escape the denial of history that is associated with the 'type'. The depiction of Ambrose, Reeve-Tucker, Frs. Chausse and Holley of Abẹokuta or what might be the portrait of Ormbsy-Gore, are particular, the figures are identifiable and as such move beyond representation of the 'ethnographic present' and into historical consciousness. They are, however, represented in an historical consciousness that is well aware of the past from whence it came.

Simon Njami's argument that photography lent itself to becoming an appropriated technology that was used to fracture 'the west's monopoly on seeing' is certainly apt.[93] A

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. Ola 'Satires of Power in Yoruba visual culture' p31.

93. Simon Njami. "A Useful Dream: Photography as a Metaphor of Freedom and Self-esteem." in S Njami (ed.) *A Useful Dream: African Photography 1960–2010* (Brussels: Silvana Editoriale. 2010) p.12

developing literature on the place of the photograph, both image and material object, demonstrates that the appropriation of photographic technology does not take place at some time after the development of the colonial state, but is an intrinsic part of Africa's modernity.[94] Yet photography, and the challenge to the scopic regimes of the colony hardly sits on one side alone. Lacking from the more recent discourse on the disruptive viewing of Empire is a discussion of the material forms through which representation is made. In *Empires of Vision*, Jay and Ramaswamy provide an interesting framework of material types—oil, ink, silver gelatine and so on— through which the imperial gaze is established . Christopher Pinney's chapter in the volume points to the way in which these materialities of viewing were 'sensuously' rearticulated by the 'subaltern', but his work, while pointing to the fractures in forms of seeing, the displacement of Cartesian Perspectivalism, still relies upon the analysis of one form, that of the photograph. [95]

Less often remarked upon in the post-colonial discourses of fracture is the way in which other materialities are also offer a view back on colonial vision. The fashioning of the colonial world, *from the other side*, relies upon forms from outside the colonial frame. These are forms that colonial regimes (both in the colony at the heart of empire) framed as associated with an embedded traditions and thus 'traditional' (ie: as timeless, or at least outside the time of European modernity) and therefore as evidence of lesser technological skill and advancement - that modernist paradigm that posits European colonialism as the engine of African development and as the motor of history (in Africa).

While Ademola II was able to counter the colonial frame through his own appropriation of photographic technology, more significant perhaps is the way in which existing traditions of material and artistic production were used to return a local view on imperial spectacle. In this there is undoubtedly the 'capture' of European technology – whether in the use of lithographs and print media to remake *a dire* cloth or in the probable use of photographic images in the making of carved sculpture.[96] But more than this, it is clear is that a work such as Oniyinde's horseman works toward developing a Yoruba idiom of spectacle. In

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[94] . See for instance John Peffer and Elisabeth Cameron *Portraiture and photography in Africa* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2013) and Charles Gore, African photography *African Arts* 48 (3) 2015.

[95]. Pinney C, Notes from the surface: Photography, post colonialism and vernacular modernism. In Jay M and S Ramaswamy (eds.) *Empires of Vision: A Reader* Duke University Press, Durham 2014.

[96]. See John Picton Concerning image and likeness in African art, in C Krydz Ikuemesi [ed], *Changing Attitudes,* (Pan-African Circle of Artists, Enugu, published for the PACA 4th biennale, Lagos,2002) 104-118.

doing so it drew upon prior and established traditions but was anything but 'traditional' or even neo-traditional in the sense that Appiah means. It is a work that states its moment in time, not framed by European temporal conceptions of the traditional but existing exactly within a Yoruba tradition absolutely capable of encompassing the spectacle of Europeans, witness to their time in Nigeria and anticipating their future passing.