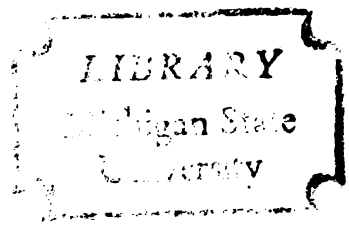
TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CARVED DOORS AS A MANIFESTATION OF YORUBA CULTURE

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MARY JO ARNOLDI

1975



ABSTRACT

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CARVED DOORS AS A MANIFESTATION OF YORUBA CULTURE

By

Mary Jo Arnoldi

This study examines both traditional and modern Yoruba carved doors in their indigenous cultural context. The study is based on a sample of carved doors which extends from the late nineteenth century to the present. The doors in traditional Yoruba society were once an exclusive mark of architectural rank associated with the Afin, the sacred palace-temple complex of the divine king. They were intricately carved in bas-relief, depicting genre scenes with social, political and religious import. Although the modern doors maintain traditional form, they have been commissioned by Westernized governmental and religious institutions. Significantly, these institutions have displaced much of the traditional framework once operative in traditional Yoruba society. Doors commissioned by these new patrons depict genre scenes which often seem divorced from the traditional fabric of Yoruba life. The iconography and function of the traditional doors are discussed in relationship to the religious and social institutions that regulated Yoruba life. Changes wrought in the function and conception of modern doors are discussed in light of acculturation which has resulted in significant modification of Yoruba institutions.

Mary Jo Arnoldi

There is a large body of literature dealing with various aspects of Yoruba art. Though none deals exclusively with the doors, they are often mentioned in many works. The present study examines the doors as a specific category within the plastic arts of the Yoruba and utilizes methods previously applied to free standing figurative sculpture. The full implications of Yoruba doors' function and iconography are still to be explored.

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CARVED DOORS AS A MANIFESTATION OF YORUBA CULTURE

By

Mary Jo Arnoldi

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Art

1975

DEDICATION

To my parents,

Robert and Elizabeth Arnoldi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Alfred E. Opubor, Director of the African Studies Center, Michigan State University, for his continued guidance and encouragement in the preparation of this study. I would also like to thank committee members in the Art History Department, Dr. Sadayoshi Omoto, Dr. Joan Smith and Ms. Barbara Braathen for their helpful suggestions and criticisms. A special thanks is due to my colleague, Gary M. Radke, to whom I am sincerely grateful for his unfailing optimism and for the many hours he has devoted to a discussion and critique of this study at every stage.

I am most grateful for the cooperation extended to me by the British Museum, The Museum für Völkerkunde, the UCLA Museum of Ethnic Art, Wilson Popoola, photographer, Ministry of Information Ibadan and the USIS office in Ibadan for reproductions and information concerning the carved doors. I am indebted to Dr. Joanne Eicher, Department of Human Ecology, Michigan State University, for her help in obtaining information and reproductions of the doors, as well as to the many Africanists at Michigan State University who have aided me in the understanding and interpretation of data. The preparation of photographs for this study was greatly aided by the expertise of Matthew J. Spiro.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria have produced throughout the centuries an enormous body of art works in a variety of media. This study will concentrate on one particular art form, wooden doors carved in bas-relief.

Because of the fragile quality of wood subject to the ravages of climate, fire and the white ant, the earliest extant doors date from the nineteenth century. The sample chosen for this study will concentrate on wooden doors carved in a period extending from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Traditional Yoruba art, firmly rooted in the patronage system, functioned within the context of defined religious, social and political structures. These structures are interdependent in conception and function and form the basis for Yoruba world view. The carved doors as art forms, architectural members and iconographical statements will be examined within their cultural context. Changes in the form and conception of the carved door in the modern era will also be examined to determine if these changes reflect the attitudes and values of modern Yoruba life.

There exists a large body of literature which examines in depth various aspects of Yoruba culture with historical archaeological, anthropological, religious, sociological and art historical bias. This study will reexamine this divergent data in combination with the visual evidence of the doors themselves, in order to present a clearer understanding of the form and function of the Yoruba carved doors.

The earliest body of literature concerning the Yoruba is found in the reports and journals of European travelers in the nineteenth century. Often highly charged with an ethnocentric viewpoint, the journals, nevertheless, provide factual observations regarding the role of the king and court, the morphology of the city and detailed descriptions of architecture and its embellishments. Invaluable as an indicator of Yoruba life prior to the absorption of European models and attitudes, the journals and accounts consulted include those by Clapperton, Lander, Burton, Campbell, Clarke, and Frobenius.[1]

S. Johnson's History of the Yoruba which was written at the turn of the century and first published in 1921 includes factual observations of town planning and architecture which further corroborates the European observations.[2]

The comprehensive studies of African religious systems and the Yoruba religious system have resulted in recent scholarship which has proved invaluable to this study. E.B. Idowu's Olodumare; God in Yoruba Belief provided the basic data for the discussion of traditional religion in Yorubaland.[3] Trimingham's discussion of the role and function of Islam and Christianity in Africa provided useful information concerning the contemporary religious atmosphere.[4]

In a sociological and anthropological vein, the Yoruba culture has been studied in depth and many scholars have collected and evaluated significant data throughout the century. Major works consulted include the early findings of Talbot and Fadipe which have been supplemented and refined by the works of modern scholars such as Bascom, Ojo, Lloyd, Moore, and Mabogunje.[5] These studies discuss at length the basic social structure of the Yoruba people and the underlying principles which govern kinship,

secret organizations, craft specialization and the division of labor, and the morphology of Yoruba towns. Besides examining the traditional social systems of the Yoruba, the authors discuss the changes wrought by modernization.

Ajayi, Smith, and Armstrong have conducted historical research concerning the political structure of the historical state and the effect of the extensive nineteenth century wars on the Yoruba political models and the resultant migrations of people from traditional centers to new urban areas.[6]

Yoruba art forms, since Frobenius' collections of bronzes in the early nineteen hundreds, have been the subject of continued scholarly research. Unlike much African art, Yoruba art is naturalistic in conception. Archaeological expeditions in the mid twentieth century conducted by Fagg and Willett have made important contributions in the rediscovery, dating, and interpretation of many ancient works.[7] Paralleling this interest in bronze art is the study of carved wooden statuary and masks used in ceremony and ritual. Of extreme importance to this study have been the modern works by Thompson, Armstrong, Beier, Carroll and Fagg which have concentrated on stylistic and interpretive approaches to ceremonial art.[8] Studies of Yoruba palaces by Ojo provided essential data about construction and the sacred and symbolic nature of this architectural form throughout Yorubaland.[9] The field studies of Cordwell and Thompson which concentrate on the Yoruba aesthetic system have provided much useful information for the study concentrating on carved doors.[10]

The modern approach to Yoruba art no longer concentrates on the art work in isolation but seeks to integrate it fully within its culture. Cole, Westcott, and Fraser have sought to integrate the various fragmented

disciplines into a unified conception of Yoruba art.[11] This study is based on such an integration and I shall proceed from a discussion of Yoruba religion and philosophy and examine its manifestations in the social institutions, in the ordering of town planning and in the conception of architectural forms. The carved doors, as an integral part of the architectural structure will be examined in cultural context. To my knowledge, these methods have not been previously applied to a study of Yoruba doors.

NOTES--INTRODUCTION

[1]H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa: from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1829).

R. Hallet (ed.) The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1965).

R.F. Burton, Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mts. Vol. 1 (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863).

R. Campbell, A Pilgrimage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa in 1859-60 (Philadelphia: Thomas Hamilton, 1861).

W. Clarke, Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland - 1854-58. Introduction and notes by J.A. Atanda (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972).

L. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa, translated by R. Blind (Rpt., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc. 1968).

[2]S. Johnson, History of the Yorubas 6th ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969).

[3]E.B. Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, 1962).

[4]J.S. Trimingham, The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, Ltd., 1956).

[5]P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria 4 Vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926).

N.A. Fadipe, Sociology of the Yoruba Edited and Introduction by F. Okediji, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970).

W. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969) and "Social Status, Wealth, and Individual Differences Among the Yoruba," American Anthropologist, LIII No. 4 (1951), 490-505, and "Urbanization Among the Yoruba," Cultures and Societies of Africa, Edited by S. and P. Ottenberg (New York: Random House, 1960), 255-67.

G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis (London and Ife: University of Ife Press, 1966).

P.C. Lloyd, "Craft Organization in Yoruba Towns," Africa, XXIII No. 1 (1953), 30-44, and "Some Modern Changes in the Government of Yoruba Towns," West African Institute of Social and Economic Research Conference - Sociology Section, March, 1953, and "The Yoruba Lineage," Africa, XXV No. 3 (1955, 235-251).

E.A. Moore, The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People (Abeokuta, Nigeria: M.O. Ola Fola Bookshops, 1960).

A.L. Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria (London: University of London Press, 1968) and Yoruba Towns (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962).

[6]J.F.A. Ajayi and R. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

R. Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1969).

R.G. Armstrong, "The Development of Kingdoms in Negro Africa," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, LI No. 1 (1960), 27-39.

[7]W. Fagg, Nigerian Images (New York: Praeger, 1963)

F. Willett, Ife in the History of West Africal Sculpture (New York: McGraw and Hill Book Co., 1967).

[8]R.F. Thompson, African Art in Motion (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), and Black Gods and Kings (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

R.P. Armstrong, Affecting Presence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

H.U. Beier, Contemporary Art in Africa (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968) and "Ibo and Yoruba Art: A Comparison," Black Orpheus, No. 8, 46-50.

K. Carroll, Yoruba Religious Carvings (New York: Praeger, 1966).

W. Fagg, op. cit.

[9]G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Palaces - A Study of Afins of Yorubaland (London: University of London Press, 1966), and "Royal Palaces: An Index of Yoruba Traditional Culture," Nigeria Magazine, No. 94 (1967) 194-210, and "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," African Arts, I No. 3 (Spring 1968), 14-17, 70-72.

[10]J. Cordwell, "Some Aesthetic Aspects of Yoruba and Benin Cultures," (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1952)

R.F. Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism," The Traditional Artist in African Societies, Edited by W. d'Azevedo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973) 18-61.

[11]H. Cole, "Yoruba Sculpture: An Interpretation of Style through Form and Meaning," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Columbia University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), 295-328.

J. Westcott, "The Sculpture and Myths of Eshu-Elegba, the Yoruba Trickster: Definition and Interpretation of Yoruba Iconography," Africa, XXXII No. 4 (1962), 336-354.

CHAPTER I

YORUBA RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Religion as a pervasive element in Yoruba culture is widely acknowledged. It permeates every level of human existence and plays a major role in the structure and function of the socio-political institutions serving as the basis for Yoruba philosophy and world view.

In the traditional Yoruba religion, there is an indigenous concept of the Supreme Being, Olodumare (Olorun). He is the ultimate authority, first among all His creatures and the Orderer of the universe.

> He is conceived of as "a Personage, venerable and majestic, aged but not aging, with a greyness which commands awe and reverence. He speaks; He commands; He acts; He rules; He judges; He does all that a person of the highest authority in whose control everything is, will do."[1]

Serving under Olodumare are a pantheon of lesser divinities or orisha. The hierarchy and function of the individual gods within this pantheon are complex and sophisticated. The exact census is undeterminable; various sources within the oral literature indicate from several hundred to several thousand individual orisha.[2] The concern among the Yoruba seems then to be mainly an expression of the plurality of the divinities rather than the assignation of exact numbers to the pantheon.

In this theocratic superstructure, the orisha serve as ministers of the high God. They ultimately derive their power from Him and remain subordinate to His will. One verse of the Odu corpus relates a mythological incident in which the divinities once conspired against Olodumare, questioning His position of absolute authority. The orisha wished an equal share in governing of the universe. In order to show them the

utter folly of their request, Olodumare withdrew His Will. In essence He withdrew the natural order and soon the very existence of the universe was threatened. Realizing the inadequacy of their powers and the pomposity of their demands, the orisha repented and acknowledged Olodumare's authority. He forgave them their transgression, and order and harmony were restored.[3] Within this mythological incident certain essential concepts are presented; the incident serves to define ideal order based on the proper relationship of the orisha to Olodumare, as well as delineating the mode of conduct and attitude for the Yoruba in relationships with their gods and all consecrated authority. It suggests the basis for social order and implies the dire consequences resulting from transgressions, as well as the hope of forgiveness.

Major orisha predominate in all areas of Yorubaland, although the majority of the divinities are minor figures and their acceptance and cults are localized.[4] Unlike Olodumare the divinities exhibit human fallibilities and at one time in the distant past are believed to have lived upon earth, not dying but "going away" to join Olodumare in the spiritual kingdom.[5]

Of the major national divinities Orishnala (Obatala) is generally accepted as the arch divinity and eldest of all other divinities.[6] One of his major functions is the creation of mankind. Albinos and the deformed are visible manifestations of his human frailties as they are believed to have been created as a result of a fit of drunkenness on the god's part. As a result they are sacred to him. He is called the "God of Whiteness" as white is his sacred color and is worn by priests and devotees. His cult is found in various forms throughout Yorubaland.

Oduduwa (Odua) is the younger brother of Orishnala and is believed to have been the first king of Ife. He is the creator of the earth and considered the progenitor of the Yoruba people. He is of major importance in the functioning of kingship, since it is through the direct descent from Oduduwa that the king receives the sanction for his power and authority.

Orunmila embodies the concept of wisdom. In the distant past he was sent by Olodumare to guide and counsel Oduduwa. He continues to serve a similar function through his association with the Ifa oracle, and he is man's link with the gods. It is through the verses of the Ifa divination that the order of the universe is defined for the Yoruba people and made applicable to daily life.[7]

Eshu is the messenger of the gods. The duality of his character exhibits both benevolent and malevolent traits. In his malevolent aspect he is the counterpart of Orunmila. Orunmila brings order; Eshu brings chaos. He is greatly feared in his malevolent role, and there is an ever present concern among the Yoruba to appease his wrath. This "evil" aspect of Eshu's character was often misinterpreted by outside observers who correlated Eshu with the concept of the Christian devil, but in the total conception of his personality, Eshu brings potency and fertility to both nature and mankind.[8]

Ogun is the divinity associated with iron. According to tradition, he introduced its usage to the Yoruba people. He is also the god of war. His special devotees include hunters, warriors, blacksmiths and sculptors.

Sango is the god of thunder, symbolizing the wrath of the orisha. Johnson identifies him with an actual historical personage, the fourth Alafin of Oyo, who through time has been raised to the status of a divinity.[9]

Sopono is the god of smallpox. The brother of Sango, Sopono's power, like Sango's, is associated with wrath and retribution. Within the traditional context, smallpox is not seen as a disease but rather a punishment for human transgressions against the authority of the gods. The function of Sopono's priesthood embodies both rituals of atonement as well as rituals of healing.

Lesser divinities include those associated with nature; personifications of rivers, hills, mountains and streams whose cults are usually localized.

Ranked below the orisha are the ancestors. Their original role as elders is extended into the spiritual kingdom. They help to ensure the harmony and order of the community by serving as intercessors for their descendants to the gods. They are seen as both protectors and disciplinarians, ensuring the continuation of ethical and moral codes.[10] The ancestors provide an identity and solidarity for the Yoruba nation as a whole and for individual lineages within the society.

Worship of God and the divinities, and tokens of fellowship offered to the ancestors ensure the maintenance of universal harmony, balance and order. Sacrifice, whether offered as a gift, in propitiation, or as a communal gesture is the essential ritual in religious practice necessary to preserve universal order. The individual performs personal daily rites to assure the gods of his faithfulness. As a collective exercise, the sacrifices atone for group transgressions, give thanks for blessings received by devotees and seek a continuation of these blessings. On the days set aside as sacred to a particular orisha, his devotees participate in communal worship. Annually a cycle of sacred festivals dedicated to national dieties serve as occasions for rejoicing and thanksgiving by the entire populace.[11]

The sacred and the secular are inseparable in Yoruba metaphysics and the socio-political institutions continue and reflect the cosmic superstructure. The hierarchical ordering of the spiritual domain is filtered down into human institutions and shapes the mode and manner of their functions.

The prevailing system of government among the Yoruba is monarchical. Yorubaland was traditionally divided into independent theocratic city-kingdoms. Although sometimes differing in organizational details, each held basic concepts in common.[12] Even though they regarded themselves as autonomous political entities, each kingdom acknowledges the common creation myth of the Yoruba people and recognized Ife as the center of creation and the spiritual home of the Yoruba.[13]

At the apex of this structure is the Oba or divine king. The Oba served as the earthly reflection of the power invested in the spiritual kingship of Olodumare. There are sixteen Obas of the highest rank, all of whom trace their descent in the patrilineal line from one of the sixteen sons of Oduduwa and ultimately from the god himself.[14]

The Oba is essential to the earthly kingdom both in the political and religious arena. "This mingling of several types of authority in one person is in fact one of the things that gives leadership much of its effectiveness. Thus the power of leaders in Africa stems not only from their socio-political influence, but also from their religious primacy, economic power and moral authority as well."[15] The Oba is the personification of the kingdom, and through his divine nature he is the people's closest living intermediary with the spiritual world. His role is one of overseer and guide in the religious, political and economic affairs of his kingdom. As the Yoruba people state, "without the Oba the town would cease to exist."[16]

Within the kingdom the Oba serves as the focal point of the social order. Ultimate status and prestige are invested in his office as divine ruler, and the status of each institution and individual within the kingdom is reckoned through their relationship to the Oba. "Status is the focus of both political and social organization which is achieved through prestige brought by wealth, title and the outward show."[17] Surrounding the office of the king and manifested in the elaborate ritual and protocol of the court were restrictions which served to emphasize the divine nature of the king and so delineate the code of behavior expected by both the royal personage in his role as divinity, as well as toward subjects in their relationships with him. The protocol observed in interrelationships with consecrated authority echoes similar attitudes displayed by the orisha to Olodumare as related in Yoruba mythology.

Clapperton observed an episode at the court of Old Oyo which serves to point up the Yoruba concern with court ritual.

> "It is the court etiquette here to appear in a loose cloth, tied under one arm; part over the other shoulder, and hanging down to the feet in a graceful manner: but no tobes, no beads, no coral, or grandeur of any kind, must appear but on the king alone. . . When one speaks to the king, he must do it stretched at full length on the ground, and it must be said to him through the eunuch, who is also prostrated by his side."[18]

These attitudes and postures assumed by courtiers in the presence of their king were not mere meaningless gestures. According to Bascom, "Social position is more than a matter of the simple grading or ranking of various segments of Yoruba society, it involves also the privileges and obligations and patterns of social interaction among individuals."[19]

The right to the throne was limited to the royal lineages. Upon selection by the council of chiefs, the initiation ritual endowed the new ruler with the accumulated power of the past kings and of Oduduwa himself. The transferance of mystical and divine powers was symbolized through a number of rituals, the most important being the ritual meal. At this meal, the newly appointed Oba partook of the excised heart of the late Oba, and in essence "all the sacred powers of preceding Obas thus passed to the new ruler."[20]

These solemn rites graphically set apart the Oba from his people. Once consecrated, the Oba was under the restrictions of an ordered ritual life. Because of his divine status he was secluded in his palace-temple and could be approached only with the utmost deference and respect by a designated few of his subjects: his palace servants, council of chiefs and his wives.

According to Yoruba traditional law, as compiled by E.A. Ajisafe Moore,"A king should not appear in public more than three times a year. Each time in connection with an important festival of the country or tribe."[21] When he appeared in state, the regalia and protocol attached to the court served to strengthen and reiterate his status to the people. "The gods and the kings of the Yoruba exalt the world by suggesting these ideals in a panoply of monarchic and sacred traditions. The arts of kingship and religion deepen the understanding of the way things ought to be."[22] The Oba surrounded by his courtiers was physically removed from his subjects which serves to establish his status. He wore gowns of the richest materials and his beaded and fringed crown covered his face from view. He carried a beaded fly whisk and a staff, emblems of his office. Each of his accourtrements symbolized aspects of his power

and in combination presented an image of majesty and command. The wealth of his regalia symbolized the wealth of his kingdom among the neighboring states. The fringed beaded crown concealed his individual personality and presented the Oba as a symbol of the dynasty. The staff was the symbol of his authority and the fly whisk, used to acknowledge the honor paid him by his subjects, symbolized the dignity and grace of his office.[23] "The power to maintain civilization was conferred by the signs and vestments of the king."[24]

Ranked below the Oba in status within the kingdom was the council of chiefs. As the orisha carry out the will of Olodumare, the council of chiefs carries out the practical functions of the Oba's kingdom. This council consisted of representatives from each of the lineages, excluding the royal lineage. The function of the council was both legislative and judicial. The chiefs sitting in council made state decisions and tried transgressions of the highest order; the Oba ordained and sanctioned their decisions. The council formed the link between the people and the king, and they formed the chain of communication whereby the needs of the populace reached the attention of the sacred ruler.

A delicate balance of power existed between the Oba and his senior chiefs. Because of the complex ritual restrictions on his life and his imposed isolation in the palace, the Oba countered the individual power of his chiefs by diplomatically exercizing his perogative to bestow favors. Frobenius observed the effects of such a system: "Each one watches his neighbour and his fellows with the utmost sharpness and is patently concerned that none should get a greater pull upon the ruler himself."[25]

The hierarchical structuring of society is maintained at all levels, extending from the court to the compound. "Character partially implied willing submission and bowing down to traditional authority. . . This is the discipline of traditional Yoruba life."[26] Reflecting the conservatism of traditional societies the Yoruba are largely ruled by custom, in which individual judgements and initiative become sublimated to group decisions. The principle of seniority reinforces the power of authority in a well defined system of behavior models. Kinship extends the boundaries of the group which professes a common loyalty and bonding. The individual, in practice, is responsible to the group in determining his behavior. The power and authority invested in the principle of seniority extend through compound elders, ward chiefs, and kingship into the spiritual domain through the ancestors and the orisha--finally resting in Olodumare.

In the last century the incursion of Islam and Christianity as well as the extension of Western influence in political and economic spheres through colonization has had marked effects on traditional modes of life.

Politically, the British administration, while maintaining vestiges of the traditional authority of the Oba, undermined the balance between the Oba and his chiefs. Certain traditional chieftaincy roles were no longer functional in the modern governmental system. The functions of war chiefs and ward chiefs, which had been an essential and integral part of traditional systems became obsolete. The Oba's right to ultimate economic control as 'Lord of the Market' has been challenged and the acquisition of wealth once limited to ranking members in society has lost its traditional restrictions.[27]

The acceptance of Islam and Christianity is also an important factor in creating observable changes within Yoruba society. Yet neither religion has totally eroded the entire structure of Yoruba traditional beliefs. "The understanding the practice of Christianity reveal the same kind of facts as with Islam. Under the outward form of Christianity which may be held ardently, the old springs of conduct prevail."[28] Modern Yoruba society can be seen as "old and new existing side by side, while in between are compromise (integrated) values."[29] Adherents to Islam and Christianity retain a number of Yoruba metaphysical concepts. Each of the introduced religions has incorporated certain indigenous beliefs into the religious practice. Islamic doctrine outwardly supports more of the traditional Yoruba lifestyle, allowing for polygamy and the extended family system. Christianity has displaced the importance of the kinship system which provides the defined system of authority through the Church's insistence on monogamous relationships and the introduction of the nuclear family concept.[30]

As Nigeria continually moves out of its traditional isolation into international political and economic spheres, acculturation and the acceptance of foreign social models would seem to logically be accelerated resulting in more of the traditional framework in which Yoruba society has operated for centuries becoming inoperative or re-evaluated and re-defined.

NOTES--CHAPTER I

[1]Idowu, E.B., Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, 1962) 39. In chapters four and five of his book, Idowu discusses at length the Yoruba conception of the High God. His person and his attributes are manifest in the rich oral literature of the Yoruba: proverbs, adages, and in the Odu corpus. The Odu corpus consists of thousands of memorized verses used in divination to interpret the 256 possible combinations obtainable in the Ifa system. Divination plays a major role in the functioning of Yoruba life, and no major decision is made, either state or individual before consultation. W. Bascom in Ifa Divination: Communication Between Gods and Men in West Africa (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1969), equates the Odu corpus with scriptures. He gives a detailed description of the mechanics of the system and presents many of the verses from which the diviner chooses for interpretation. The verses contain attributes of the Deity and the orisha, detail the ethical and moral standards of the community and give some insight into the collective aspirations of the Yoruba people.

[2]Idowu, op. cit., 67-68. The author cites examples of the literature in which the number of the orisha is indicated. In Ile-Ife oral tradition states the number of orisha at 201 with Oni of Ife representing the 201st. Within the Odu corpus various verses speak of 1700, 401, 1060 and 600 orisha.

[3]Ibid. 54-55.

> Be there one thousand and four hundred divinities of the home;
> Be there one thousand and two hundred divinities of the market place
> Yet there is not one divinity to compare with Olodumare.
> Olodumare is the King unique
> In our recent dispute
> Edumare, it is who won
> Yes, Edumare

[4]Major divinities include Orishnala (Obatala), Oduduwa (Odua), Orunmila, Eshu, Ogun, Sango and Sopono.

[5]Idowu, op. cit., 61. In Yoruba myths concerning the divinities they are anthropomorphic in conception and many myths allude to human frailties among the orisha.

[6]The ensuing discussion of the roles and attributes of the major divinities in the Yoruba pantheon is based on the works of Idowu, op. cit., 77-106. W. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria 77-92 (New York: Holt Reinhart, Winston, 1969) and S. Johnson, History of the Yoruba 27-28 (London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969).

[7]Idowu, op. cit., 72.

[8]For a detailed study of the dual character of Eshu, see Idowu, op. cit., 80-85, and J. Wescott, "The Sculpture and Myths of Eshu Elegba, the Yoruba Trickster: A Definition and Interpretation of Yoruba Iconography," Africa XXXII No. 4 (1962) pp. 336-64.

[9]S. Johnson, op. cit., 149, and Idowu, op. cit., 93, Jakuta now a less clearly defined divinity seems to be the prototype for Sango, and over an extended period of time the former's position in the pantheon was usurped by Sango.

[10]J. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophies (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970), 107-110.

[11]Idowu, op. cit., 118-128. The author discusses the role of sacrifice in the Yoruba religion, its purposes and its functions. He defines the types of sacrifices offered and in connection with various needs. H.U. Beier, A Year of Sacred Festivals in One Yoruba Town (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1959). Beier examines the annual cycle of religious festivals and discusses them in relationship to their importance in the life of the community.

[12]For a detailed discussion of the particular organizational structures of individual Yoruba kingdoms, see the following works: S.O. Biobaku, The Egba's and Their Neighbors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); S. Johnson, op. cit.; P.C. Lloyd, The Political Developments of Yoruba Kingdoms in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1971); G. Parrinder, Story of Ketu (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1956); Akintoye, S.A. "The North Eastern Yoruba Districts and Benin Kingdom," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria IV No. 4 (1969) 539-53E; A. Moore, History of Abeokuta (Lagos: Kash and Klare Bookshop, 1948).

[13]The indigenous creation myth is related in various sources. Bascom, op. cit., 10, Idowu op. cit., 19, H.U. Beier, The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths (London: Heinemann, 1966), 47. Olodumare instructed Orishnala to create the earth, as below the heavens there existed only primeval waters. He gave Orishnala some earth in a snail's shell, a chain on which to make his descent, and a five-toed chicken. On his way to the gates of heaven, Orishnala came upon the other orisha feasting and drinking. He joined them and became intoxicated from palm wine and fell into a deep sleep. Oduduwa, his younger brother, who had overheard the instructions, took the accoutrements and descended the chain. He placed the earth on the waters and the five-toed chicken spread the earth in all directions. When it became firm, Oduduwa stepped down at the present site of Ile-Ife and claimed ownership of the earth. Upon awakening, Orishnala, realizing what had transpired, confronted Oduduwa and demanded his birthrite. Oduduwa refused to relinquish his claim and fighting insued with the orisha all chossing sides. Olodumare intervened and in judgement he gave to Oduduwa the ownership of the earth and the title of Oni (king) of Ife. To Orishnala he gave the power to create mankind and people the earth.

Besides defining the collective ancestry of the Yoruba people and citing Ile-Ife as the center of creation, the myth also gives credence to the system of the monarchy and establishes the final authority of Olodumare and reveals him in the role of both father and judge.

[14]According to oral tradition as cited by Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria op. cit., 11, Oduduwa left the earth to rejoin Olodumare and he bequeathed his kingdom to his sixteen sons who divided and expanded his earthly dominion thus creating the sixteen independent kingdoms of the Yoruba. The sixteen Obas who trace their descent from Oduduwa are: Oni of Ife, Alafin of Oyo, Onishabe of Shabe, Alaketu of Ketu, Oshamowe of Ondo, Owo of Ilesha, Orangun of Ila. Alaye of Efon, Alara of Ara, Olojudo of Ido, Elekole of Ikole, Oba of Ado (King of Benin) Onipopo of Allada, Onidata of Dahomey (King of the Fon), Oninana of Accra (King of the Gan), and the Oni of Ijesha.

According to P.C. Lloyd, "Sacred Kingship and Government among the Yoruba" Africa, XXX No. 3 (1960), 226, it was obligatory for the reigning Oba to show his descent from one of the sixteen sons of Oduduwa as a sanction for his rule.

[15]D. Fraser and H. Cole, "Art and Leadership: An Overview" African Art and Leadership (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), 296.

[16]Lloyd, "Sacred Kingship. . . " op. cit., 229.

[17]J. Cordwell, "Some Aesthetic Aspects of Yoruba and Benin Cultures" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1952), 43.

[18]H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa: from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1829), 77.

[19]W. Bascom, "Social Status, Wealth and Individual Differences Among the Yoruba" American Anthropologist LIII No. 4 (1951), 501.

[20]Lloyd, "Sacred Kingship. . . " op. cit., 227. This ritual is no longer practiced, but the author feels that at one time it was universally practiced at the installation of each of the new Obas throughout Yorubaland.

[21]E.A. Moore, The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People (Abeokuta, Nigeria: M.O. Ola Fola Bookshops, 1960), 25.

S. Johnson, op. cit., 47-49. In the Oyo kingdom as documented in Johnson the three festivals at which the Oba appeared in state were the Ifa, Orun and Bere festivals. The Oyo kingdom is one of the most developed in regard to palace organizations throughout Yorubaland, but it is generally accepted that other kingdoms followed similar customs regarding kingship in varying degrees of ritual and ceremony.

[22]R.F. Thompson, Black Gods and Kings (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) P/1.

[23]Thompson op. cit., Chapter 8/1-3, discusses the symbolic nature of kingly vestments. See also Thompson's article, "The Sign of the Divine King," African Arts Vol. III No. 3 (Spring 1970), 8-17, 74-79.

[24]Ibid., P/3.

[25]L. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa, R. Blind (Rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), 280.

[26]Thompson, op. cit., P/1.

[27]N.A. Fadipe, Sociology of the Yoruba, edited and introduced by F. Olediji (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 315-329. Chapter 11 of Fadipe's study examines in depth the effects of modernization on Yoruba traditional institutions.

[28]J.S. Trimingham, The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa (Edinburgh, T. and A. Constable, Ltd., 1956), 26.

[29]Fadipe, op. cit., 317.

[30]Ibid., 315-329, and Trimingham, op. cit., 30-33.

CHAPTER II

URBANIZATION AND ARCHITECTURE

Urbanization among the Yoruba is not a result of modernization, but rather a traditional cultural pattern which predates European contact.[1] The stability and strict definition of the socio-political organization seems to have ensured the maintenance of these traditional urban centers. "Yoruba urbanization has been based firmly on social cohesion as expressed by the importance of the lineage system in the social, political and economic life of the town."[2] Yoruba urban areas function as religious, administrative, defense and trade centers. The morphology of the traditional Yoruba city reflects in a physical sense the overall organization of Yoruba life. At the center of the city is the residence of the Oba, who is recognized as the ultimate religious and political authority. The divine king sequestered in the palace complex in effect assured that the administration of the kingdom remained continually based on the central area of the city. Radiating out from this central complex were the residences of lineages, in order of status and rank within the community. In social structuring, the residents of individual family units are responsible to elders, these elders are responsible to lineage chiefs, who are responsible to ward chiefs and ultimately to the king. The morphology of the city reflects these social dictates. The compounds of the ward chiefs are located in the physical center of the ward and look toward the Afin (Palace). "These compounds were meant to look towards the Afin as it was the converging point of activities and interests of the chiefs, who in time of peace had to meet regularly in the Afin to

deliberate on the political, social, economic and religious affairs of the community, and in time of war and general unrest had to shield the Oba from attack, no matter from which side it came. Since all the buildings in a quarter in turn had the compound of the chief as their rallying point, they indirectly also had the Afin as their final focus."[3] The layout of the traditional city is a reflection of the social structuring within the Yoruba society and was found all over Yorubaland consequently lending a more or less identical morphology to all Yoruba towns regardless of their rank in the kingdom. Frobenius observed, "Every one of these towns resolves itself into a definite number of astonishingly large compounds which are severally built on a clearly organized system and in themselves again give expression to an extended powerful systematic and social ideal."[4]

The entire urban settlement was enclosed by a high mud wall. This wall served as the main defense of the city. Deep trenches were dug around the perimeter of the wall and often a thick forest was allowed to surround the area which provided further defense against attack. A road was cut into the forest which cleared the approach to the town gates.[5]

The size, construction and function of the walls of the Yoruba towns made an impression on the European travelers of the nineteenth century and valuable descriptions appear in their journals. Approaching Ilesha, Clarke noted, "Four or five miles from town my attention was drawn to three separate ditches ten feet wide, cut through the woods and running how far I could not tell. These were expedients and very good ones in the thick woods, devised to check the marauding parties of Ibadan robbers and slave catchers, from whom the town had suffered so much."[6]

Clapperton, another nineteenth century traveler, speaks of the defenses and walls of Katunga (Old Oyo). "A belt of thick woods runs around the walls, which are built of clay and about twenty feet high and surrounded by a dry ditch."[7] With the increased use of firearms in the latter half of the nineteenth century, town walls were modified in thickness and holes were placed at intervals in the walls to allow for the firing of weapons. Burton observed that:

> "The celebrated defenses of Abeokuta which have played in Yoruba history the part of the wall of China and the lines of the Torres Vendras next appeared. They are seventeen to eighteen miles in circumference. To the northwards in the direction of the hostile Ibadan, they are three in number and the extreme circumference may be twenty miles somewhat larger than Thebes of the hundred gates. . . The wall is hardened mud, good material, but only five to six feet high without embrasure. . . It is approached by an equally efficient moat, a ditch perhaps five feet broad."[8]

The walls in their enclosing nature lent definition to the pattern of the city by defining the perimeter and fostered the feeling of the city's self-containment and inward looking philosophy which was based on the location of power invested in the Oba at its center.

Unlike modern Western urban areas, traditional Yoruba urbanization is based on non-industrial factors. Trade in agricultural surplus and the products of craft specialization within the city assured the survival of the urban centers. Often agriculturalists lived within the city and traveled to outlying farms returning again to the city at night. Specialists were organized into guilds within the city. These included: iron smelting, blacksmithing, weaving, dyeing, woodcarving, brass casting, bead production, pottery making, divining, drumming and the compounding of medicines and charms. These specialists provided for both the ritual and secular needs of the community.[9] Much of the trade seems to have been localized within the community, although some inter-kingdom trading was

established.[10] The Oba and his designated authorities within the city regulated trading activities and the revenue for the kingdom was extracted from the trade system. According to Yoruba traditional law, "At every town's gate one or two toll collectors are placed. . . They have charge of the gate, the doors of which they open early in the morning or close immediately after sunset. . . The toll collectors are appointed and located by the controlling chief, who is responsible to the king for the proper management as well as the safety of the gate. . . Anyone who fails or refuses to pay his toll-fee or attempts to smuggle shall, if caught, pay a heavy fine with or without the forfeiture of the goods. . . Tolls may be received in money, goods or cattle."[11]

The years of British colonial rule had a marked effect on urban growth and the economic base of the traditional Yoruba city. The importation of cheap manufactured goods into the towns forced many of the craft specialists to abandon their work and return to agricultural pursuits or to adapt themselves to modern trades. Modern urban facilities in Nigerian towns drew large numbers of rural people to the cities seeking employment and educational opportunities. The introduction of export crops such as kola and cocoa affected to a large degree the economic base of the city. Towns whose location was favorable to trade grew quickly, and with the introduction of modern transport systems they attracted European business concerns to the area. The activity of the town shifted from the traditional center to the newly developed perimeters.[12] The traditional mode of town planning was largely abandoned. As a result of lateral expansion, both the Afin the and central market ceased to be the focus of the town. The traditional town, enclosed by a wall and psychologically inward-looking and self-contained, now is outward-looking in character and economic function.

The implied order present in the traditional morphology of the traditional city is also reflected in individual architectural forms.

The architecture of Yorubaland takes into full account environmental conditions, since in form and construction it reflects a practical ecological solution to the problem of shelter. As well as reacting to environmental conditions, the architecture reflects the well-defined social order. Variants in form or architectural embellishments have traditionally been limited to specific strata within the society.

Reacting to environmental necessity, the houses were built on available flat areas and utilized local materials in their construction. S. Johnson in the nineteenth century described the Yoruba house type. "Their homes all on the ground floor are built in compounds called Agbo Ile (Lit: a flock of houses) that is to say in the form of a hollow square, horseshoe or circle, enclosing a large central area, with one principal gateway, the house being divided into compartments to hold several families, all more or less related or united by ties of kinship or friendship." The clan in Yoruba life is more important than the immediate family since it provides permanence.[13] The traditional mode of architecture, houses grouped in compounds, reflects this social viewpoint.

The walls of the Yoruba house are constructed of sevel successive layers of swish-mud, lateritic soil being preferred.[14] Each layer is allowed to bake hard in the heat of the sun. The ceilings are constructed of timbers and plastered with mud. The roofs are thatched, materials varying according to their availability in the region. Southern zones utilize woven palms, the forest zones utilize plants indigenous to the area, and the savannah region utilizes grasses.[15]

The general style of the housing unit has been labeled impluvium architecture. The incline of the saddle back roofing structure allows for drainage of water into the central courtyard where it is collected in jars. The excess is drained out of the compound through ditches.[16]

In describing the architectural style of Yorubaland, Burton observed that, "The form of the building is the gloomy hollow square. . . Rooms which number from ten to twenty in a house are windowless and purposely kept dark, to keep out the sun's glare, they vary from ten to fifteen feet in length and seven to eight in breadth."[17] Rooms are utilized chiefly for storage and privacy. Doors in the ordinary house type are small in dimensions, one and one-half feet wide and four feet high. They were constructed of woven raffia palms or were a single plank of wood.[18]

The most functional aspect of the compound structure and a characteristic feature of Yoruba architecture was the verandah supported by wooden posts which runs around the interior of the courtyard. Most daily activities take place under the verandah including craftmaking, dining, receiving of guests and even tethering of animals at night. Talbot suggests an indigenous origin to the Yoruba house type, since it appears thoroughly adapted to climatic and environmental conditions. "These square erections are well adapted to the climate; they provide good protection from rain and storms, and the rooms are small and close, yet those thick clay walls are cool and the inmates are well guarded from the great variation in temperature."[19]

The single compound was the simplest social unit in Yoruba society. The houses within the compound were arranged to indicate the fixed social order. Directly opposite the main gate was the residence of the bale or elder of the compound. The prominent positioning of his residence

reflected his status and position within the social unit. According to Yoruba law, "Every bale (head of a compound house) is responsible to the authorities for the conduct of the inmates of the compound. He must be respected and obeyed by the inmates of the house. . . He has the power to judge and decide cases affecting his own inmates. . . He may punish any of the inmates who are guilty of misconduct. He is also bound to protect and help his inmates against ill or unfair treatment."[20] The bale's house served as a sign of permanence within the architectural unit, and was inherited by each successor.[21]

The salient architectural features described above provide the basic plan for titled compounds which are further embellishments of the house of the commoner. The compound of the titled chief, who is the head of a quarter and claims the allegiance of the surrounding compounds, may possess additional architectural features; carves posts instead of plain wooden posts, two courtyards, a street verandah and an elaborate gateway, all indicating his status in the community. At the apex of the architectural hierarchy is the Afin, or palace of the Oba, the divine king.[22]

Frobenius seemed overwhelmed by the palace complex of Ife. "The palace of the Oni whose massive walls meet the eye from whatever quarter one approaches it, is that which most impresses everone who visits Ilife today. Its front, especially with the fine open square on which it stands, makes an imposing effect in spite of all its ruin."[23] The Afin of the Oni of Ife reflects the position of the city as the center and spiritual capital of Yorubaland. Most of the Oba's of the first rank claim ascent from Ife and their pre-eminence in Yoruba society is based on this tradition. The palace type in effect became the permanent and visible symbol of their

prestige, status, and wealth. "The classes of Afin in Yorubaland reflected this hierarchy of Obas and therefore the category of any one of them depended more on the traditional status of the Oba than on the size or importance of the town which he ruled, or in the intrinsic features of the Afin itself."[24]

The palace-temple concept of Roman antiquity and the Middle Ages as discussed by E.B. Smith seems to parallel the symbolic function of the Afins of Yorubaland. He states,

> "It is axiomatic that from the remote time when man began to visualize their dieties as like themselves in need of shelter and then began to see in their fulers either priest-kings or god-kings, the palace and temple developed as interrelated forms of architecture. In every theocratic society, where the royal dwelling was revered as a sacred edifice, temples were customarily built like palaces, or palaces like temples. Throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages, there appears to have been recurrent parallels between kingly and divine dwellings, royal and religious ceremonies and the formal rituals pertaining to the adoration of godlike kings and kinglike gods. Hence the importance of the palace temple concepts in the formation of architectural symbolism. As long as the human imagination was limited to thinking of the unknown in terms of the known, to conceive of the invisible only by means of the visible, it remained instinctive for the common man to see in the most memorable aspects of the Sacred Palace, the Royal Stronghold, and the King's Gate heavenly images, visions of paradise and cosmic forms."[25]

Yoruba architecture served these ends and conveyed mystic ideas through visible forms. The form and function of the architecture was directly related to the divinity of the Oba, whose sacred person was protected within the confines of the royal compound. Within the palace were located the shrines and temples of the major national dieties, and courtyards were set aside for the worship of the divine ancestors. As the high priest of the nation, the Oba was the essential link between the spiritual and temporal kingdoms. The continued existence of the nation was largely based on the Oba's fulfillment of the complex ritual requirements of his office. The sanctity associated with the compound and the sense of permanence of the architecture was self-consciously preserved.

There existed until recent times a set of taboos which established the unique and sacred character of the Afin in relationship to other architectural forms. Touching the palace walls was prohibited and carried the penalty of enslavement. Pointing a finger towards the palace from the outside or pointing at any object within the palace was expressly forbidden. Quarreling or fighting within the sacred precincts was a punishable offense as was uttering any proverb that could be misconstrued as an admonishment against the Oba. Cohabitation within the palace excepting for the Oba and his wives was considered a desecration of the holy place and carried the death penalty. There could be no births within the palace precinct and only the Oba's remains could be interred on sacred ground.[26] In the compilation of laws and customs of the Yoruba, Moore cites the following restrictions regarding respect for the palace:

> "Under the old government a king was not allowed to see the corpse of a human being and should any one carry a corpse past the king's quarters, he was liable to a heavy fine. . . the use of an umbrella otherwise than by an authorized chief, or the unfolding of same when passing the king's quarter is repugnant to native law. The offender was liable to punishment with a heavy fine, imprisonment or death. To take hold or carry a new yam past the king's quarters when the ceremony for eating the new yam has not been performed is an offence punishable by a heavy fine."[27]

Though variations exist in particular Afin structures, there are certain architectural features which are common to the palace throughout Yorubaland and accord to the structure its symbolic aspect and its status within the hierarchy of architectural forms. Size and location of the palace in relationship to the surrounding town proper are factors which establish the uniqueness of the royal complex. The Afins are generally large edifices, although actual acreage varies from one to the other. The Afin at Owo encompasses 108.5 acres while the Afin at Oyo only 17 acres.[28] Suffice it to say, nevertheless, that the Afin within its own city remains the

largest compound. Accounts from nineteenth century travelers within Yoruba country document the expanse of the palace grounds and their overwhelming presence in the city. Robert Campbell noted in 1859 the size of the Afin of the Alafin of Oyo. "His compound. . . his palace is the largest in the country accomodating over 1500 people."

Centrality is a feature common to the Afin. Wherever topographically feasible, the Afin was located on elevated ground at the center of the city. All roads converged on upon it and all compounds radiated from it and faced toward it.[30] Yoruba philosophical thought places an emphasis on the importance of the central point. "The Yoruba speaking people believed that the junction of routes was both a converging and a diverging point of good and evil."[31] The role of the Oba in his function as the preservator of order within the universe seems best served by his residence at the source of the power within the kingdom.

The main market abutted the facade of the Afin and served as a physical and psychological extension of the sacred compound. Serving as the center of activity for the economic and social life of the city, its location placed it under the scrutiny of the highest authority. As "Lord of the market" the Oba controlled and regulated the market activities through his designated chiefs and assured and ordered system of trade and exchange.[32]

Multiple courtyards were a distinguishing architectural feature limited to use in the Afin. Each of the courtyards was bounded by buildings with verandahs running the circumference of the courtyard. They provided for the ritual, residential and administrative needs of the Oba and his courtiers and wives. Each of the courtyards had a designated function in the ceremonial life of the Oba: some providing living accomodations for

the Oba and his wives, a courtyard for the convocation of the council of chiefs, courtyard for the consultation of the Ifa oracle, a courtyard for oath taking, specific courtyards for major national dieties, special courtyards, and a courtyard for ancestral worship.[33] The largest courtyard and the one located closest to the market was used on the three occasions annually when the Oba appeared in state. Frobenius described the outer courtyard of Ife, "A narrow porch leads into a large open space, where the kingly prelate held his court in ancient days, and in the last of many brilliant periods now no more. Colonnaded verandahs and passages surround this square and the entrance to it is exactly opposite the throne of the Church's prince."[34]

Projecting from the verandah within this main courtyard were covered porch-like constructions called kobi. The kobi were placed at regular intervals around the square. Symbolically they functioned to allow the Oba enthroned in the kobi to become closer to the people while clearly remaining aloof and physically separated from them. The kobi was an architectural mark of rank and was expressly limited to royalty and designated chiefs.[35]

A unique feature of the Afin complex was the forest background. The forest was sacred ground and it served as a hunting preserve for the Oba; it also functioned as the royal mausoleum. Rare medicinal plants were cultivated and prepared in privacy by the priest doctors of the cult of Ifa.[36]

Because of the Oba's sacred character, the entire palace complex was walled, physically and symbolically separating and protecting the ruler from any profane elements. The walls were built as high and as wide as

possible. Frobenius described the physical measurements of the Ife palace wall. "The masonry of the facade is still in fair condition although it is denuded and devoid of interest. The walls are mighty over a yard broad at the base and some eighteen feet high."[37] Periodically along the wall surface holes were drilled to allow the Oba to observe the activities of the market without himself being observed.[38]

There was only one main gate into the palace complex. Burton observed, "The compound was approached, by a tall and imposing gate, distinguishing the house of a prince from that of a pauper."[39] The actual style of the architectural feature was closer to a portico. At Ile-Ife it measured 300 feet long, 60 feet wide and 24 feet high. The wall spanned six feet and its appearance was more like a tunnel connecting the outer world of the town with the inner world of the palace.[40]

The gateway as a symbolic architectural feature has persisted in many ancient cultures. Speaking of its role in the Ancient Near East, B. Goldman observed,

> "Throughout ancient art the portal is stresses above that of any other architectural feature, for it is through the portal that divine, and by analogy, royal figures emerge, and it is between the doorleaves that the epiphany is to be beheld. When the doors of the palace shrine are thrown wide at the appropriate moment, the theophany is made manifest."[41]

The elaboration of the Yoruba gateway seems to echo these ancient concerns. As the entrance to the palace-temple, it was the focus of the architecture and by its elaboration indicated the power and status of its resident. Only a small number of chiefs and courtiers were intimate with the workings of the palace. The ordinary man's association was restricted to the facade and the main courtyard, but on a daily basis the grandeur of the gateway provided him with an understanding of the might and power of the ruler within.

The Afin was built and maintained by the people. Organized according to age-sets or by ward, each group was responsible for the upkeep of a designated area. There was no financial reward for these services, but as a civic and moral duty there were strict penalties for failing to meet the responsibility.[42] As the divine-king, the Oba demanded the best of the arts and crafts of his kingdom and much time and expertise were lavished on the architectural embellishment of the Afin. This ornamentation had both aesthetic and symbolic significance, heralding the role and function of the king. A large number of master artists worked directly under the patronage of the king, and special courtyards within the palace complex were set aside for artistic production. Elaborate architectural sculpture was traditionally restricted to usage in the palace and in orisha shrines; it was status-bearing and didactic in function. Carved verandah posts served a functional purpose in supporting the roof structure but lent symbolic and aesthetic appeal to the architecture. Posts were often carved in images of warrior kings and devotees of orisha and announced the presence of the gods within the royal complex.[43]

Polychromed mud murals traditionally decorated the palace complex. Symbolic animals and objects associated with the attributes of the king were often portrayed: elephants, ostriches and lions signified majesty; snakes and monkeys alluded to wisdom.[44]

The carved doors on the palace complex were an integral part of the main gateway structure. "As a general rule, the temples, the palaces and to a lesser extent the compounds of chiefs were distinguished from others by their elaborately carved doors which were quite massive and often made

from a solid piece of trunk or the buttress of a tree. The objects cover a wide range of aspects of Yoruba life and experience."[45]

Crowther, writing in the nineteenth century, describes the palace gate at Ketu.

> "The palace. . . is closed by two large gates, one of which is nearly eleven feet high and nine feet broad. Upon the oldest gate are engravings representing the victory won over the Dahomians by the third king from the present one. The Dahomians slain were lying headless in the fields, and Ketu's victorious warriors standing upon the piles of decapitated heads and their wives carrying some of these heads strung together in triumphal march about the streets."[46]

With the introduction of Western models and materials, the structure and type, as well as the architectural ornamentation of the Afins, have sustained enormous changes. Gradually the Afin as the hallmark of the town's architecture incorporated western features. The two-storey structure replaced the single storey residential apartments, corrugated iron roofing replaced the grass thatching, and in some cases wrought iron gates replaced the elaborate architectural gateways of the traditional era.[47] For a time royal prohibitions forbade any other compound from adopting these materials and styles, thus preserving the Afins' uniqueness and status in regards to Yoruba architecture.[48] But with accelerated growth in the past decades and the social changes which have seriously altered the power of the Oba these restrictions no longer remain viable.

The incursion of Western business complexes and religious and educational facilities brought with it the Western architectural forms. The towns have expanded beyond the city wall and the traditional morphology of the city and the architectural order have lost their once perceptable unity which was based on connections with the Afin. New cultural values

and interests have diverted the focus of the city from the Afin.[49] In the modern era the sacred complex has diminished in size and secular facilities have been built on the palace grounds violating the sanctity of the complex. At Owo, the former palace compound now contains a courthouse, council offices, dispensary, and library.[50]

Once the responsibility of the public, the traditional maintenance system of the palace has been abandoned and the older structures of the Afin are in disrepair. Since the Oba no longer controls the economic activities of the city, his position of wealth and the resources from which he could traditionally call upon have diminished, depriving him of the funds and means to maintain the extensive compounds.

The quality of the execution of architectural embellishments has declined. Cement sculpture which has replaced mud reliefs retains similar motifs but often lacks technical expertise.[51] In some cases the traditional style of ornamentation has been retained, although new motifs have combined with traditional ones to present a different image. An example is the Idena gateway at the entrance of the Afin of Ife. The gateway has retained carved posts, potsherd pavements and richly carfed doors.

Exotic motifs on the doors have replaced many of the traditional ones. Themes on the doors include the Creation, Fall of Adam and Eve, Holy Mary, Sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and the Sacrifice of Abraham.[52]

Carved doors, an important architectural and sculptural feature of the Afin, once exclusively limited to use on the palace-temple, have come to be incorporated into the architecture of Christian Churches, modern educational facilities, foreign complexes and modern governmental buildings. The following chapter seeks to examine at length a select sample of these carved doors.

NOTES--CHAPTER II

[1]When the Portuguese explorer, Joao Affonso d'Aveiro made contact with Benin in 1485 A.D., he found a well-established monarchical system and an ordered city planning. Benin at that time owed allegiance to a kingdom to the north, which is now thought to have been Ife. G.R. Crone (ed. and trans.) The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century (London: Hakluyt Society, 1937), 124-28.

W. Bascom, "Urbanization Among the Yoruba," Cultures and Societies of Africa, Edited by S. and P. Ottenberg (New York: Random House, 1960), 258. In his article Bascom identifies the large Yoruba city mentioned by the Portuguese explorer, Pereira in 1505-08 as being Ijebu-Ode.

Nineteenth century European penetration into the interior of Yorubaland witnessed the effect of the extensive inter-kingdom wars of that century on the Yoruba city. As a result of these wars, many traditional cities were abandoned or considerably reduced in size and new urban centers such as Ibadan and Abeokuta, whose populations were comprised of refugees, grew rapidly. The layout and the functioning of these new cities did not adhere to the ordered morphology of the traditional cities. See J.F. Ade Ajayi and R. Smith. Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), for a study of conditions prior to and following the century of warfare.

A. Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria (London: University of London Press, 1968), 75-76. Mabogunje discusses the relationships between Yoruba urban development and that of the medieval Sudanic kingdoms to the north. There is inconclusive evidence that Yoruba towns were outgrowths of contact with the Sudanic empires although there existed some trade relationships between the areas. In the nineteenth century, European explorers noted northern trade items in the markets, but the organization and functioning of the Yoruba city seem not to have been based on large scale international trade.

[2]A. Mabogunje, Yoruba Towns (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1962), 4.

[3]G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Palaces: A Study of Afins of Yorubaland (London: University of London Press, 1966), 32. Ojo defines the word, "palace" as it relates to the Afins. Afin refers exclusively to the residence of the Oba. It will be used in this context throughout this study.

[4]L. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa, Trans. R. Blind, (Rpt., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), I 153.

[5]G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis (London and Ife: University of Ife Press, 1966), 140-141.

[6]W. Clarke, Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland 1854-58. Edited and introduction by J.A. Atanda (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 129.

[7]H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa: From the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1829), 90.

[8]R.F. Burton, Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mountains (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863), I, 69-70.

[9]Mabogunje, Urbanization op. cit., 83-85, W. Bascom, Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehard, and Winston, 1969), 24-26.

[10]Mabogunje, Urbanization op. cit., 85-89. Mabogunje discusses major inter-kingdom trade routes throughout Yorubaland and the conditions and mode of transport.

[11]E.A. Moore, The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People (Abeokuta, Nigeria: M.O. Ola Fola Bookshops, 1960), 26.

[12]Mabogunje, Urbanization op. cit., 107-135. The author discusses in detail the effects of modernization on Yoruba towns.

[13]S. Johnson, History of the Yoruba (6th ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969), 98.

[14]G.J.A. Ojo, "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," African Arts, (Spring 1968), 15.

[15]G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis (London and Ife: University of Ife Press, 1966), 150. The extreme southern zone which encompasses the rain forest utilized Raphia unifera and Raphia sudarica palms. Ribbing structures are wood and palm. Thinner ribs of the palm are woven into rectangular mats three feet by two feet which are bound together to form the thatching material. The second major zone encompasses part of the rain and the dry forest and utilized forest materials. Hard insect resistant woods are preferred for beams and girders. The thatching material is made up of leafs from the phrynium plant. The third zone encompasses the savanna regions and the thatching materials are grasses.

[16]Ibid., 147.

[17]Burton, op. cit., 79.

[18]Ojo, "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," op. cit., 81

[19]P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), III, 881.

[20]Moore, op. cit., 7.

[21]Ibid., 7.

[22]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 13.

[23]Frobenius, op. cit., I, 276.

[24]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 16.

[25]E.B. Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 180-81.

[26]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 79.

[27]Moore, op. cit., 23.

[28]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 24.

[29]R. Campbell, A Pilgramage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa in 1859-60 (Philadelphia: Thomas Hamilton, 1861), 93.

[30]Ojo, Afins, op, cit., 30. In the eastern regions there is hardly an exception to the central placement of the Afin in relationship to the town layout. Exceptions do exist in towns where there are two reigning Obas or in a few cases where the residence shifts according to the reigning Oba. But even in these cases, buildings radiate in all directions from the focus of the Afin.

[31]G.J.A. Ojo, "Royal Palaces: An Index of Traditional Yoruba Culture," Nigeria Magazine, No. 94 (1967), 200.

[32]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 32.

[33]Ibid., 35-51 and Appendices 1-3. Ojo gives a detailed account of the proper names and functions of each of the major courtyards in the Afins of Olowo, Ewi, Oyo, Ake, Ijebu-Ode, Owo and Akure.

[34]Frobenius, op. cit., I, 276.

[35]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 58.

[36]Ibid., 36.

[37]Frobenius, op. cit., I, 276.

[38]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 56.

[39]Burton, op. cit., 78.

[40]Ojo, "Traditional. . . " op. cit., 70.

[41]B. Goldman, The Sacred Portal (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966), 73.

[42]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 66.

[43]R.F. Thompson, Black Gods and Kings (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 12/4 and 19/1.

[44]Ojo, "Traditional. . . " op. cit., 70.

[45]Ojo, Yoruba Culture op. cit., 242.

[46]S. Crowther, "Ketu in the Yoruba Country," Church Missionary Intelligencer, (1853), 244 as cited in G. Parrinder, Story of Ketu (Ibadan University Press, 1956), 78.

[47]Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., 151-57. Ojo discusses at length the changes in the materials and the adoption of western architectural models in Yorubaland. See also Ojo, Afins, op. cit., Plate 14 which shows a modern wrought iron gateway to the palace.

[48]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 89.

[49]Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., 146.

[50]Ojo, Afins, op. cit., 83.

[51]Ibid., 90

[52]Ibid., 90 See also Plate 15.

CHAPTER III

THE CARVED DOOR: DISCUSSION OF FORM AND FUNCTION

The function of the carved door within pre-literate Yoruba society was both aesthetic and didactic in nature. The sample of carved doors included in this study were executed over a time period ranging from the late nineteenth century to post-independence in Nigeria. The sample includes representative doors from an early period--late nineteenth century to 1920, a middle period--from 1930 to 1950, and the modern period--from 1960 to the present.

Criteria for selection were based on several factors. The first was the type and function of the doors. All traditional doors selected for discussion were originally located on the palaces of kings.[1] Modern examples are located on buildings which have replaced the traditional position and function of the palace in city architecture. These include churches, business complexes, and administration buildings of the modern federal government.

A second variable affecting selection was the availability of reproductions of the doors. The traditional doors from the first two time periods are all presently preserved in various museums throughout the United States and Europe.[2] Their provenance is documented and the doors were originally *in situ* on palaces of Yorubaland. The late or modern doors are presently located on buildings in Nigeria and documentation concerning the circumstances and dates of commission has been published in various sources.[3]

It is recognized that the available sample of traditional doors is representative of the regional carving style of Ekiti in northeast Yorubaland, a forest area which enjoyed a high degree of productivity in woodcarving throughout the century. There is also a recognized link between master and apprentice in the works of three of the artists represented in the sample, Areogun, his son Bandele, and Bandele's pupil, Lamidi Fakeye.

Certain generalizations concerning the Yoruba style and aesthetics are applicable cross-regionally, although any discussion of particular aspects of the Ekiti sub-style and those style variations of the individual artist will be noted.

Early Period

Carved door with figurative motifs
Wood and polychroming
6' 10" H. x 4' 2" W.
Artist: Olowere of Ise
Date: Prior to 1924

Provenance: Commissioned for the Afin of the Ogoga of Ikere; acquired by the British Museum in 1924.

Exhibitions: British Empire Exhibition in Wembley, 1924.

Olowere of Ise, a master woodcarver, died in 1938. Originally from Efon, he traveled to Ise and Ikerre and worked under royal patronage.[4] He developed a highly personal style within the traditional framework of Yoruba art and his works are recognizable by the full-bodied conception of figures, carved almost in the round, and by his introduction of movement into many of the figures which are shown in three quarter view, instead of the traditional frontal or profile pose. He also shows an interest in the elongation of the skull, and the headdresses on the figures seem to work as a natural extension of the head. He emphasizes the facial features of the figures through their extended sculptural presentation.

Description of the Door (Illustration 1 and 2)

There are five panel carvings on each separate door, and each panel is enclosed with a rectangle that serves to separate and order the scene and provide a base line to which the figures are orientated.

The panels on the left door represent the following scenes from top to bottom: Three figures carved in profile in a progression to the right, each carrying what appears to be an orisha carving. The second panel

depicts the Oba enthroned and attended by his wife. The third panel shows three women with children on their backs in a progression to the right, each carrying an object tentatively identified as a fan. The fourth panel depicts two elders, with beards and staffs, preceded by a figure with folded hands in a submissive gesture of respect. The fifth panel depicts three figures, the first badly damaged and unrecognizable prededed by a man and woman who are bound.

On the right door are the following scenes from top to bottom: A man on horseback in profile and moving to the left, followed by two men carrying boxes on their heads. A European in the second panel is transported in a litter. On the third panel three chiefs are preceded by an attendant figure, and on the fourth panel load carriers are shown bound together at the wrists. The fifth panel shows four profile figures turning left, tentatively identified as soldiers because of their uniform clothing and ammunition belts.

The figures are polychromed either black or red and the costumes are blue, red and black. Incised geometric patterns decorate and enliven the background of each panel. They are polychromed red, black, light blue or yellow. The door frame is red which contrasts with the black frames of individual rectangles separating the scenes.[5]

The total visual effect of the door is one of elaborate overall design. Over the door is a lintel which depicts a row of five human heads whose eyes are being pecked by vultures. This motif suggests the victims of human sacrifice.

Carved door with figurative motifs
Wood
7' 10" H.
Artist: Unknown
Date: Prior to 1910

Provenance: Commissioned for the palace of the Crown Prince of Ado-Ekiti. Collected by L. Frobenius in 1910-12. Now in the collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin.

The carving is in low relief and is consistent with the carving style of the Ekiti region. Excepting two, all the figures are carved in profile conforming to traditional styles.

Description of the Doors (Illustration 3)

The door consists of seven separate panels each framed in a rectangle. The base line of each rectangle consists of a carved image of a snake devouring a lizard or other animal. The first panel depicts two turtles, a snake or mud fish in a circle biting its own tail, a figure in frontal pose flanked by two diminutive figures, and an image which may be a royal crown or an architectural form. The second panel shows four hunters with rifles and spears who are preceded by two animals. The seven kneeling women in the third panel are facing right. The first woman carries what appears to be a sacrificial cock. The fourth panel, larger in scale, depicts a central figure in frontal pose, presumably the ruler who is flanked by two carved staffs, possibly Ogboni staffs. A monkey and warrior on the left and a mounted warrior on the right complete the scene. The fifth panel includes five warriors flanked by two mounted soldiers. Six bound load carriers on the next panel are followed by a guard with a rifle. The last panel shows men and a woman in procession carrying staffs and possibly orisha symbols.

Middle Period

Carved doors with figurative motif
Wood
9' 7" H.
Artist: Areogun
Date: Prior to 1954

Provenance: Presently in the British Museum.

Areogun was a master carver of considerable fame in the Osi area of Ekiti. He was apprenticed to the master carver Bamgbose of Osi and served a sixteen year apprenticeship under the master. Areogun subscribed to the traditional Yoruba religion. Because of his chosen profession, he was given the praise name of Areogun, "one who gets money with the tools of Ogun and spends it liberally,"[6] although the name given him at birth was Dada. His style reflects the Ekiti sub-style in low relief and naturalistic proportioning of the head to the body.

Description of the Door (Illustration 4)

Areogun's door carvings are complex in nature. Each individual scene is contained within a rectangle. In the Yoruba artistic vocabulary the design employed on the border of each enclosure is called "ibo," a diamond patterned geometric interlace.[7] There are twenty-four separate panels on the doors. The scenes will be described from left to right across the entire door.

In the first panel are four figures, a woman kneeling before a drummer with a sacrificial offering, a devotee of the orisha Sango, and a woman carrying a container. Two hunters flank a leopard attacking an antelope in the second panel while in the third a snake attacks a turtle.

The first panel of the second row shows a European on a bicycle facing a seated European who holds a tablet or book.

The second panel depicts two separate scenes. A prisoner is flanked by warriors, an enthroned Oba is attended by a smaller figure who crowns the Oba. A woman holding twins, and a court musician are to the right of the throne. Two musicians and a priest of Orunmila[8] flanked by two kneeling women occupy the third panel.

In the first panel of the third row, a warrior from Ilorin on horseback with a prisoner,[9] and a standing warrior with a rifle begin the sequence. The second panel shows a woman carrying a container, a kneeling woman, a mounted warrior, again from Ilorin, a captive, a military standard, a standing Ilorin warrior brandishing a cutlass, and a court musician.

A native doctor and attendant assisting a woman in childbirth are carved on the first panel of the fourth row. In the central panel are a kneeling woman, a standing figure with a fan, a European on a bicycle, a musician and two load bearers who are bound by chains at the waist. On the third panel the artist repeats the motifs of the mounted warrior with captives and the kneeling woman.

The first panel of the next row shows the woman kneeling followed by a chief with a staff and a woman carrying a container, and a couple engaged in sexual intercourse. In the center panel there are repeated motifs of the woman carrying the container, a musician, a mounted warrior from Ilorin, a drummer, and a kneeling woman with an offering. Again a European on a bicycle in this instance attended by two smaller figures confronts a seated European holding a tablet or book.

The sixth row narration commences as a seated figure with a fan attends a European with a bicycle. In the corner of this panel is a smaller figure smoking a pipe. The center panel juxtaposes a woman being held captive by three warriors and a kneeling woman with a child holding a sacrificial offering. A mounted warrior and a man smoking are shown in the third panel occupied by attendant figures.

The seventh row of carvings shows yet another mounted warrior with a captive who face a kneeling woman. The central panel depicts a European on a bicycle attended by two figures and two women pounding yams and a priest of Orunmila. Another priest is flanked by a seated European and a kneeling woman offering a sacrifice in the third panel.

The final row of carvings depicts a second couple engaged in sexual intercourse looking towards two Europeans in a wrestling hold. The central panel depicts a scene in which a man is being detained by two warriors and a captive is being presented to a seated European. The last panel shows a warrior with a rifle, a hunter with a crossbow, and a woman carrying a container on her head.

Carved door with figurative motif
Wood
5' 10.5" H. x 1' 8.5" (each door)
Artist: School of Areogun
Date: Prior to 1954

Provenance: In the collection of the Museum of Ethnic Arts, UCLA.

The regional sub-style of the doors is Ekiti and they show a close stylistic affinity to the work of Areogun and were probably carved by apprentices of the master. They do not show the same mastery of form and technique exhibited by the works of Areogun.[10]

Description of the Doors (Illustration 5)

The UCLA doors are less complex in conception than the works of Areogun. Each door has only five framed panels, the border of each panel decorated with the ornamental "ibo" design. The door on the left, from top to bottom, shows a seated European with a tablet and two children, possibly twin images being supported on a horse by two men.

A musician and a woman being detained by two soldiers from Ilorin are carved in the second panel. The third panel shows a European on a bicycle holding a fan flanked by attending musicians.

A mounted warrior from Ilorin flanked by a standing warrior and a drummer are on the fourth panel while the final panel shows women pounding yams and a woman offering a give to a seated European.

The door on the right depicts four warriors and a musician, who are followed in the second panel by a European on a bicycle, a European seated with book or tablet and an attendant figure. There are five

figures on the third panel: a woman kneeling with an offering, a woman carrying a container on her head, and an Oba enthroned receiving a kneeling woman and a male attendant. A standing warrior and a mounted warrior with a captive are depicted on the fourth panel.

A man with an umbrella, and a warrior presenting a captive to a seated European complete the panel sequences.

Modern Period

Carved door with figurative motifs
Wood
Artist: Bandele
Date: 1965

Provenance: Presently located on the Catholic University Chapel, Ibadan University. Commissioned in 1965.

Bandele, the son of Areogun, was trained by Osomuko, a former apprentice of his father's. In 1947 he joined the experimental carving workshop set up by Father Kevin Carroll and Father Sean O'Mahoney at Oye-Ekiti. He worked in producing images for his Catholic patrons as well as traditional commissions.[11]

Bandele carves in the traditional Ekiti sub-style utilizing the traditional postures and proportions for the figures. Unlike Areogun he embellishes the surfaces of his figures with an inordinate amount of detail.

Description of the Doors (Illustration 6)

There are two doors consisting of two separate panels, each divided into five scenes. The narrative sequence of the doors involves stories from the Old Testament which follow in a historical sequence from right to left across both panels. The first scene is the Fall of Adam and Eve followed by the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel. In the second row the story continues with the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Story of Jacob and Essau. Moses and the Burning Bush and the Passover Meal in Egypt complete the third row. The biblical account of the Israelites continues with the Blood of the Covenant and the Worship of the Golden Calf. The final row depicts David Playing the Harp to Saul and David Before the Ark of the Covenant.[12]

Carved doors with figurative motif
Wood
Artist: Lamidi Fakeye
Date: 1967

Provenance: Commissioned by the United States Information Service in Ibadan.

Fakeye was born in 1928 in Ila Orangun in the southeastern part of Nigeria's Western State. His grandfather and father were carvers before him. He worked as an apprentice under Bandele at the Experimental workshop at Oye-Ekiti for three years between 1950-53. He studied in France at the Cite Universite in Besancon and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was a visiting artist at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo in 1963 and at Michigan State University, East Lansing, in 1972.[13]

Description of the Doors (Illustration 7)

Each of the two doors consist of five panels with scenes carved in low relief. The description proceeds across the doors from top to bottom. The first panel depicts a musician and dancers, while directly opposite is a scene depicting a man showing a movie of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Two men attending to a cow are juxtaposed with a panel showing a family listening to a radio. A family--father, mother and child--watch television followed by a panel depicting traditional drummers and musicians. A woman kneeling before an Oba who is attended by a courtier and a musician are carved on the first panel of the fourth row. Directly opposite, two farmers, one cutting cocoa pods and the second cutting plantains, flank a woman carrying farm produce in a basket on her head. The last row depicts a teacher and three pupils. Finally, the last panel shows a librarian and a patron.

Carved doors with figurative motifs (six panels)
Wood
Artist: Felix Idubor
Date: 1960

Provenance: Commissioned by the Federal government of Nigeria for the National Hall in Lagos.

Felix Idubor was born in Benin City in 1928 and carved for the tourist trade from the age of twelve. In 1951, encouraged by the Nigerian painter, Ben Enwonwu, he abandoned carving for the tourist market. In 1957 he studied in Germany.[14] Unlike the previous doors from Yoruba carvers in the sample, his doors are not divided into rectangular panels, although he does indicate divisions between the scenes by the use of architectural and natural motifs. The proportions and conception of his figures show his exposure to European sculptural models.

Description of the Doors (Illustrations 8, 9 and 10)

Of the eighteen doors that Felix Idubor carved for the National Hall, I have selected three sets for discussion in this sample. The overall theme of the doors alludes to the life styles and occupations of the people within present day Nigeria. Exceptional to this theme are two doors on which are carved tree spirits. These fantastic creatures are elongated and stylized and occupy the entire carved surface of the door panels.

The second set of doors seems to relate to varying stages in the production and consumption of palm products. The left door of the set shows a man tapping a palm tree for its product. A single scene it

occupies the full length of the door. Hung opposite this door, the narrative continues with a door which shows three separate scenes: women carrying gourds on their heads seem to be transporting the palm products perhaps to the market area, a man in national dress rides a bicycle and on which he carries the same type of gourds shown in previous scenes, and two men relaxing on what appears to be the verandah of a house enjoying a glass of what is perhaps palm wine.

The third set of doors is a historical narrative. The first scene depicts the British arrival in Nigeria and their military domination of the colony. The second scene depicts a European being transported in a litter, while the third scene shows a parley between a Britisha and Nigerian seated at a table. The door is juxtaposed with a door which celebrates Nigerian independence. The date of October 1, 1960, appears on the door and it is further decorated with lively crowds celebrating the event.

The fascination with the form of Yoruba art by both Western scholars and connoisseurs is largely based on its qualities of naturalism which differentiate it from much of African art. "The Yoruba concern is for man and Yoruba sculpture presents the being-related scenery of his existence which is to say other men, men's works and the plants and animals important to him."[15]

The Yoruba carver's close association with and awareness of his environment are given visible expression in his choice of man-relating imagery. The carved door, which utilizes the repertoire of subjects similar to free-standing sculpture, provides fertile ground for an examination of Yoruba artistic style and of the aesthetic criteria which determine this style, as well as the role and function of the carved door within the Yoruba cultural framework.

Yoruba carving is not homogeneous in style. Regional variations within Yorubaland are recognizable, but do not obscure the recognition of common elements which define the Yoruba style. Addressing himself to this point, Paul Wingert stated, "The degree of variation between a more stubby, naturalistis figure style, and an elongated somewhat more stylized representation of human form makes so little difference that the shared elements of Yoruba style are immediately evident."[16]

An examination of the sample of Yoruba doors will demonstrate common stylistic features.

Each of the doors exhibits an obvious concern with order in the manner of their execution. The motifs are all clearly organized and defined within the geometric boundaries which serve as punctuation allowing

the viewer to escape the complexity of the overall scene and concentrate on individual panels. After a close examination of the traditional doors, however, there seems to be no specific narrative intended, but rather the relationships between the motifs seem more tied to ideological concerns.

All the doors show a selection of images which provide the viewer with genre type scenes based on man engaged in activity, although the carvings provide, only incidentally, representations of architecture and scenery. The physiognomy of the figures is one of a generalized nature, and no attempt at photographic realism or portraiture seems intended.

> "The carver traditionally working in genre subject matter approaches his design with a naturalistic conception in mind, but during his training period he has learned sets of symbols to which he adds in varying degrees by reason of his own creativity. It is through these symbols, which we see as stylized forms, that he represents his subject matter. The symbols are manipulated into a composition that for the Yoruba artist shows the relationship between various parts of the natural form that he is trying to represent. It is not always necessary therefore, that he have his subject before him, since he can draw on the various symbols he has learned and invented. . ."[17]

A close examination of the carvings illustrates this point. Each artist has conceived of the human form as a generalized type which is nonetheless based upon close observation of anatomy. This stylized type is utilized throughout the door as the symbol for man. In Yoruba art selected anatomical features are carefully defined. These include the head and facial features as well as the sex defining characteristics of the anatomy. Facial features occupy almost the entire surface of the face, although they are set in proportion to one another. The exaggeration of these features contributes to their increased visibility and easy recognition by the viewer. The treatment of the trunk of the body

and its appendages is more abstract in character. Though the carvings are in various states of relief, all exhibit sculptural concerns for defining the interrelationships of masses and volumes. The regional style of Oyo tends to give greater emphasis to the eyes which are presented as sculptured spheres extending from the sockets. The size of the head in relationship to the body is given more emphasis and the arms tend to blend into the side of the body. The Ekiti sub-style tends to proportion the head in a more naturalistic relationship to the body, and the features of the face are more life-like in proportion. The carving is in low relief and shows a stylistic affinity with Benin, to whom the Ekiti kingdoms historically owed allegiance.[18] Olowere (Illus. 1 and 2) deviates from the Ekiti style in the fullness of his figures and in his conception of the facial features, while Areogun (Illus. 4), Bandele (Illus. 6) and Fakeye (Illus. 7) work closely within the sub-style. In the case of Felix Idubor (Illus. 8-10), his personal style shows a marked exposure to Western sculptural models, as seen in the proportions of the body and in the full treatment given to the trunk and appendages of the figures.

The doors exhibit an overall patterned effect, the entire surface being filled with carving. The complexity of the conception is consistent with Yoruba style. Justine Cordwell has observed,

> "Yoruba carvings as a whole, show a greater relation of form to chosen subject matter and to function then they do to the material from which they are made. For example, there are great doors decorated with bas reliefs. . . whose simple form is almost hidden by groups of figures surrounding and supporting them."[19]

Hieratic scale is employed to indicate royal personages or other important figures in a panel. The king or priests and important warriors will be frequently shown with diminutive figures in attendance.

Polychroming on the doors was a traditional feature in the early periods.[20] However, the color was never applied in such a manner as to obscure the details of the carving and was never employed to achieve pattern in lieu of incised details. The color was impermanent as a result of its exposure to the elements. For this reason, the process of polychroming seems to have been periodically renewed prior to major festivals. Perhaps the discontinuation of this practice in the modern period relates to the desires of the new patron. The foreign churches and business complexes and the federal government would seem more inclined to be influenced by the present Western aesthetic which places a high value on the integrity of the material itself. Polychromed doors would be inconsistent with the expression of architecture in modern terms.

Through intensive field investigation, R.F. Thompson has isolated a system of qualitative criteria expresses by indigenous artists and critics which serve to amplify the Yoruba style and define the Yoruba aesthetic.[21]

> "Yoruba qualitative criteria are consensual. This means they are matters of opinion widely shared, but perhaps only fully comprehended by the guardians of philosophic thought. The best example of the latter are the priests of the divination cult. Yoruba aesthetic criteria are perhaps best nuanced by sculptor-critics who lend to their works their special insights of process and form. But the roots of the criteria lie with the common people without whose supporting testimony the fabric of aesthetic thought loses conviction and certainty."[22]

The sculptor's main concern predominating Thompson's findings is moderation--striking the mid-point and the artistic balance in every respect. This emphasis on harmony and balance is expressed throughout

the bas-relief carvings on the doors and is consistent with similar concerns expressed in the religious, political and social structures of the culture, as enumerated in previous chapters. The Yoruba style seems an extension of these concerns and addresses itself to the moral and ethical codes of behavior. "Sculpture, therefore, ideally represents a person of moral quality, a person of character. The conclusion is not surprising; most Yoruba aesthetic criteria embody moral associations."[23]

Relative mimesis is stated as a desirable quality of sculpture. The ideal is the achievement of a recognizable likeness of humanity, not a concern for portraiture.

Relative visibility was also cited as an aesthetic consideration. For the Yoruba, a work of quality achieves both a clarity of mass and line. The artist is concerned with achieving a balance between smooth sculptural forms and linear patterning. The doors within the sample show individual solutions to this problem. Olowere (Illus. 1 and 2) balances sculptural figures in high relief against the rich abstract patterning of the background and to a lesser extend repeats this patterning on selective details that identify the figures. An immediate recognition of the subject and a clear understanding of the sculptural forms are implicit in this criteria. Areogun (Illus. 4) exhibits a conscious concern for this quality of clarity. His sculptural forms are never overpowered by concerns with detail and he maintains a tension between sculptural forms and linear patterning. In the modern period Bandale, Fakeye and Idubor (Illus.8-10) lavish an inordinate amount of detail on their figures which is balanced by the overall starkness of the borders and base linesof the doors.

Relative straightness include concerns for order and definition within the overall effect and arrangement of scenes. This quality is also applicable to the figures themselves. Slight deviations from mathematical rigidity in the doors by Olowere, the door collected by Frobenius, and Areogun's carving as exhibited in the incline of the base lines and the variations within the figures themselves, serve to enliven the scenes. The modern examples, especially Bandele's (Illus. 6) and Fakeye's (Illus. 7) doors, are more rigid and static in quality with little relief from manufactured rigidity. Ulli Beier, in speaking of this point in Fakeye's style, said, "In the doors, competent slickness replaces the intensity and vivid composition of his father's work and the warm playfulness of some of the other works has given way to empty and fossiled traditional forms."[24]

Within the figural execution these qualities of straightness are expressed by body positioning. The figures are conceived on a vertical axis, and there is a concern for symmetry within the execution of the figures. Again this is a relative quality, and slight deviations are the individual artist's solutions within the traditional framework. A discussion of Olowere's style (Illus. 1 and 2) and that of Areogun (Illus. 4) will serve to elaborate this point. Olowere's carving of figures in deep relief and his projection of the figures out from the surface and conceived in a three-quarter view inject the carving with implied motion. Figures of a lower status are shown in the experimental manner. It is interesting to note, though, that his depiction of the Oba follows a strict profile view and the motion is sublimated to concerns for the calm dignity of the pose.

Areogun, by depicting his figures in profile or frontally and in lower relief, presents a more static composition. The kneeling woman offering the calabash exhibits a straight upright posture, her arms folding symmetrically around the container. The warrior with the crossbow faces the viewer and clutches his weapon at mirrored points on either side. The weight of the figures is evenly distributed, adding to the effect of immobility. But this static quality is relieved by small details which enliven the carving and prevent it from appearing as a repetitive formula.

Skill and delicacy in carving are important aesthetic considerations. Carvings are judged within the Yoruba society by the demonstration of the artist's ability to manipulate his materials and tools to produce works which show his sensibility to both mass and line.

Ephebism, the depiction of people in idealized youth, is perhaps the most important quality of Yoruba sculpture. "It is in a sence, the resolution of all the canons in combination. . . Yoruba sculpture is a mirror in which human appearances never age."[25] Age in the figures is only depicted in details such as the addition of a beard, but the conception of the body type is always that of people in the prime of life. This is a consistent quality throughout the sample of doors.

Besides aesthetic concerns, the didactic function of the traditional doors is also apparent in the choice of motifs. "Art has a unique power to intensify, mobilize, and indeed create public opinion. . . The ability of art to endure through time and space permits the formation of an alliance with the personality of the leader through which art and leadership project an image of power."[26]

The doors stood like sentinels on the gateway of the sacred complex and announced to the people the character and dominion of the leader who was sequestered within the walls.

> ". . . although nothing was conceivably more awe-inspiring than the king's citadel, the ordinary man's knowledge of it was limited to its towered portal. It was the most memorable feature and the place where the king's business was transacted. . . Every culture in Antiquity was influenced by the gateway concept which had originated in a remote past when men began to live in walled cities. . . everywhere the people who lived under the protection of walled cities and who still considered it the ordained condition of men to be ruled by superior and godlike beings retained very similar ideas to those of the Mesopotamians and Egyptians in regard to the gateway as the place where all powerful gods and kings entered and came forth."[27]

As representations of the traditional values of Yoruba life, the doors announced to the people the ideal social order. Iconic in character, the motifs employed on the doors strike a balance between attitudes of command and attitudes of submission and servitude, graphically relating these values to activities identifiable in everyday life. The king enthroned is consistently depicted with attendant figures, often diminutive in stature. An investigation of the attitudes inherent in the motifs and their relationship to the socio-political order of Yoruba society will serve to clarify these points.

The door carved by Olowere (Illus.1 and 2) seems to represent a two-fold theme. The overall character of the door speaks to the timeless power and authority traditionally invested in the patron, the Oba of Ikerre, while a minor theme suggests a particular historical time period--the arrival of the Europeans to the area.

The status and prestige accorded the divine ruler are expressed in the size and prominence of the panel in relationship to others on the door, and in the manner and attitude chosen for his image. "The enthroned gesture also communicates permanence, as well as calm and sense of character. . . the person who rests upon a chair can concentrate upon important social matters. He takes his chair as a fundamental right or privilege."[28] As mentioned above, Olowere injects a lively movement into subordinate figures by portraying them in three-quarter view, but verticality and uprightness of the image of the Oba suggest a majestic calm and repose. "The frozen face is the seal of order and the patient mind and implies the means to think through the negative situation to arrive at something better."[29]

The extension of the authority of the Oba over every aspect of Yoruba life is suggested by the remaining motifs on the door. The top left panel relates the Oba to the religious concerns of the nation. The figures in this panel appear to represent religious devotees to various orisha, since the figures carry various carvings and symbols associated with cult worship. The first figure appears to carry an axe, the symbol of Sango or Ogun, which would relate him to their worship, while the third figure carries what appears to be a dance wand of Eshu over his shoulder.[30] The panel depicting elders or chiefs, identified by beards and staffs of office seems to relate to the political authority of the Oba. The importance of the chiefs is indicated by the figure in a submissive gesture which precedes them. Yet in the whole complex of the carving, as in Yoruba society itself, the chiefs are subject to the authority of the Oba. The load bearers and presence of the European

suggest the economic trade base of the kingdom which functioned under the control of the Oba.

The arrival of the European to Ikerre, as a secondary theme, is given prominence by its placement directly across from the Oba, but the superiority of the Oba remains foremost. The portrayal of the somewhat comic and dissipated European is in marked contrast to the composure and regal bearing of the Oba.

Similar concerns are expressed in the door collected by Frobenius at Ado-Ekiti (Illus. 3). The central figure of the leader dominates the carving by its size and its unique presentation as the only frontal figure associated with the central panel. The symbols relate to attributes of leadership: the monkey generally symbolizes wisdom, the mudfish or snake biting its own tail is associated with eternity, and the tortoise represents cunning.[31] Attitudes of servitude and submission in the kneeling figures are counter-balanced by the image of authority and command in the ruler and in the standing figures. Allusions to the multifacted authority of the leader are represented by the subordinate figures. Religious authority is alluded to by the figures in procession carrying symbols of the orisha and in the panel of the kneeling woman. The warrior figures may be seen as expressing the political supremacy of the ruler and his obligation to protect his subjects. Load bearers point to the trade and economic activities under the auspices of the leader.

From the middle period, the complex carving by Areogun manifests a balance between figures representing power and command and those representing submission. Power is expressed in the motif of the Oba

enthroned, while his attendants indicate the proper attitudes of submission to authority. Another motif of power is represented by the Ilorin warrior on horseback, an historical reference to the invasions of Ekiti in the nineteenth century.[32] "To ride upon the back of a horse represents an arrogant form of sitting, for in it speed and elevation combine with ruling power."[33] Juxtaposed against the sumbol of power inherent in the horseman, Areogun consistently includes captives and figures on their knees. He utilizes a similar combination of attitudes of command and submission in the panels showing the colonial administrator on his bicycle and the seated European.

The European on the bicycle and the seated European correspond to similar images of warriors on horseback and the Oba enthroned. Within the carvings, the images of Europeans are also juxtaposed with kneeling figures and figures carrying containers on their heads.

> "Tradition selects those bodily positions which come to define lordliness and command in human interaction; standing, sitting, riding on a horse. Tradition also emphasizes postures set at symbolically descended levels of submission and respect. These are kneeling, supporting and balancing objects upon the head. . . Service confirms command."[34]

In addition to the general character of the door, which relates to the balance between leaders and subjects, the motifs appear to allude to specific roles and functions within the strata of Yoruba society. Religious cults are represented in the Sango devotee who carries the _oshe_ and _shere_, symbols of the cult.[35] The priest of the Ifa cult, a major cult in the functioning of Yoruba society, is shown with the _opa osanyin_, the staff of office which symbolizes the power of the _orisha_.[36]

Throughout the panels, Areogun repeats the image of the woman offering sacrifice. Women in Yoruba philosophical thought have been associated with the concept of "cool," that is, the passive element, which serves as a counterbalance to "hot" and disruptive forces. "Coolness is essential and it is consequently possible to designate an 'aesthetic of cool' for traditional Yoruba, provided that we recognize the term confirms and absorbs the qualities of dynamic strength and character. Most important the image of the woman who kneels or presents a bowl of kola, relates to the Other; the call of the human act implies divine response."[37]

The ordered division of labor within Yoruba society is rendered in several motifs. Women are shown in their traditional roles as food preparers in the motif of the women pounding yams. They are shown in their maternal role giving birth and transporting their children. Concerns for fertility seemed to be implied in the motif of the couples engaged in sexual intercourse.

Men are depicted in accepted roles as hunters, and warriors, with both traditional weapons and rifles. They are shown as traders in both goods and slaves, as musicians, as oral historians of the kingdom, and as diviners and doctors who serve both the spiritual and temporal needs of the community. The reality of foreigners within the society is acknowledged by the depictions of Europeans in various colonial roles.

The doors from the early and middle periods seem intimately tied to the traditional religious and philosophical beliefs of the Yoruba people. The significance of the iconography exists at various levels of consciousness. The guardian of these truths was the divine king, the

patron of the doors. The carvings themselves speak to the ethical and moral codes that serve as the basis of Yoruba society. "The world and its vicissitudes are woven into an affirmative fabric that speaks, from the standpoint of secular power and prestige, to the essential truths of the traditional religion."[38]

The effects of modernization and acculturation on all aspects of Yoruba life have been discussed in previous chapters. The power of the Oba in both the religious and temporal spheres was seriously weakened, and certain of the traditional social models that lent sanction to his position have been modified or abandoned. The once exclusive patron of carved doors, the Oba, has been replaced by patrons representing new power institutions within the present society and the traditional restrictions regarding the production of art have been abandoned.

The modern doors, although carved in a traditional style, logically reflect the desires and needs of the new patron, and the motifs no longer seem to speak to traditional values.

The doors have retained their association with status and wealth, but this status is based on new concerns and criteria which are not necessarily tied to the traditional fabric of Yoruba existence.

Bandele's doors for the University Chapel at Ibadan self-consciously employ the traditional style of Yoruba carving, but the iconography of the panels reflects the needs and concerns of the patron. Unlike the earlier doors where there seems to be no discernible narrative thread based on a space-time sequence, Bandele's doors have a definite narrative orientation in the depiction of Old Testament scenes. The narrative quality of the

doors relates to a long tradition of Western prototypes, an obvious example being Ghiberti's doors on the Baptistry of Florence. The chapel doors stand as a symbol of the function, teachings and values of the patron.

Lamidi Fakeye's doors on the USIS building also serve the needs of the patron. Besides being ornamental in character, the scenes of movies, television, radio, schools and libraries speak to the function of the USIS in Nigeria which is the dispersal of information and education. There is a curious combination of traditional and modern motifs. The motifs of the family viewing television and the Oba receiving the homage of his subjects present an interesting contrast. The modern family presented seems a nuclear family--father, mother and child--a Western social concept that has gained some acceptance in modern Nigeria.[39] The king in state recalls the traditional social order and by implication the structures of kinship and the extended family. The appearance of two such contrasting motifs together is indicative of the fact that these two life styles exist side by side in present day Nigeria.

The final set of doors sample by Felix Idubor also reflect modernization. They were commissioned by the federal government of Nigeria and are concerned with portraying the life and activities of the various cultural groups within the Nigerian Republic. The doors with the tree spirit motifs allude to traditional religious beliefs, but one feels that they function more as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the Yoruba nations rather than theological propaganda. The motifs of Nigerians engaged in activities and the overthrow of British rule

correlate with the system of self-government which is the function of Parliament in Nigeria. The concerns of the Parliament in advancing the interests of the people are presented on the doors through representations of the major cultural groups in Nigeria engaged in a wide range of activities.

NOTES--CHAPTER III

[1]The traditional doors were fashioned with pegs on top and bottom which fit into sockets in the door frame and allowed for the manipulation of the door. If carved in separate panels as the door by Areogun in the sample, the individual panels were attached by rods running across the back uncarved surface. Carved doors are also located on major shrines outside the palaces. The motifs employed on these doors seem to be less humanistic in conception and tend to incorporate symbols which can be identified with the orisha to whom the shrine is dedicated. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa, translated by R. Blind (Rpt., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), I, 46-47, describes a shrine dedicated to Sango in Ibadan. See also R.F. Thompson, Black Gods and Kings (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), Illustrations 29 and 30. These show carved doors for a shrine dedicated to Sango.

[2]Besides the doors made available to me from Western museums, there is a large collection of carved doors preserved in Nigerian museums. I was unable to obtain photographs of these doors because of the limited time factor involved in this study.

[3]Bandele's door the for the University Chapel at Ibadan is illustrated and documented in K. Carroll, Yoruba Religious Carvings (New York: Praeger, 1966) Plate 12 and Notes to Plate 12, 157. Personal communication, March 1975, from the USIS office in Ibadan confirmed Fakeye's authorship of the doors which were commissioned in 1967. Felix Idubor's doors for the National Hall in Lagos are documented in M. Mount, African Art: The Years since 1920 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 179-181. Photographs were obtained with the help of Dr. Joanne Eicher, Michigan State University, through the Ministry of Information, Lagos, Nigeria.

[4]Personal communication with the British Museum, December 1974. See also W. Fagg, Nigerian Images (New York: Praeger, 1963), 120, and P. Allison, "A Yoruba Carver," Nigeria Magazine, No. 22 (1944), 50. Another set of doors by Olowere is presently in the Nigerian National Museum in Lagos. They are reputed to represent the arrival of the First Traveling Commissioners to Ekiti region and Allison has tentatively suggested that the European represented on the doors is Captain Ambrose, locally remembered as Akerele.

[5]M. Sadler, (ed.) Art of West Africa (Excluding Music) (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 44-45.

[6]Carroll, op. cit., 79-90. Carroll gives a biographical sketch of Areogun and an analysis of his carving style.

[7]Ibid., 161. The Yoruba names given to the abstract border designs are merely descriptive and change from region to region.

[8]Ibid., 55. Illustration XIV.

[9]Ibid., 56. The Ekiti area was victim of frequent raids by Ilorin warriors during the nineteenth century.

[10]Personal communication with Museum of Ethnic Arts, UCLA, December, 1974. See also an article by J.M. Borgatti, "UCLA's Yoruba Doors," African Arts, III No. 1 (Autumn 1969), 14-19. The doors are also illustrated in R.F. Thompson, Black Gods. . ., op. cit., Plates 31 and 32.

[11]Carroll, op. cit., 91-99.

[12]Ibid., 157. See notes to Plate 12.

[13]Auto-biographical information was obtained from a sketch written by Fakeye for the African Studies Center, Michigan State University, in 1972 while the artist was in residence at the University. A copy of the sketch is located in the Africana files in the Michigan State University Library. See also Carroll, op. cit., 101-115; and U.H. Beier, "Complicated Carver," West African Review, XXXI No. 391 (1960), 30-31; T.A. Ogunwale, "Lamidi Fakeye: Nigerian Traditional Sculptor," African Arts, IV No. 2 (Winter 1971), 66-67; Mount, op. cit., 33-38.

[14]Mount, op. cit., 179-181. Y.A. Grillo and J. Highet, "Felix Idubor - A Sculptor from Benin," African Arts, II No. 1 (Autumn 1968), 30-35. D. Macrow, "A New Carver - Felix Idubor," Nigeria Magazine, No. 41 (1953), 22-27.

[15]R.P. Armstrong, "Aesthetic Continuity in Two Yoruba Works," African Arts, IV No. 3 (Spring 1971), 42.

[16]P. Wingert, Primitive Art Its Traditions and Styles (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1965), 114.
J. Cordwell, "Some Aesthetic Aspects of Yoruba and Benin Cultures," (unpublished dissertation, Northwestern University, 1952), 129-130. Cordwell questioned sculptors as to why they consistently oriented their figures to the base line and she observed that they found the question puzzling as to conceive of it any other way seemed irrational to them.

[17]J. Cordwell, "Naturalism and Stylization in Yoruba Art," Magazine of Art, XLVI No. 5 (1953), 223.

[18]S.A. Akintoye, "The North Eastern Yoruba Districts and Benin Kingdom," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, IV No. 4 (1969), 539-553. Akintoye's study suggests a strong cultural influence from Benin in the Ekiti region. There is a close relationship between both cultures' rituals, dialect, music and dance. Certain chieftaincies in the Ekiti region claim descent from Benin. The tide of Benin expansionism was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and it is known through oral traditions from each culture that the Benin army invaded the Ekiti area. As well as Benin aggression against the Ekiti area, Akintoye suggests that there was a strong trade relationship between the two areas which would have stimulated cultural exchange.

[19]Cordwell, "Some Aesthetic. . .," op. cit., 123.

[20]G.A.J. Ojo, Yoruba Culture - A Geographical Analysis (London and Ife: University of Ife Press, 1966), 244. See also Cordwell, "Some Aesthetic. . .," op. cit., 252-265. In this section the author discusses the Yoruba's use and preference for color as it reflects cultural patterns.

[21]R.F. Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism," Traditional Artist in African Societies (ed.) W. d'Azevedo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 18-61. Thompson gives the nature of his sample and systematically groups his responses based on their frequency. Criteria applicable to sculpture are established from the responses of Yoruba critics and artists to indigenous art works.

[22]Ibid., 22.

[23]Thompson, Black Gods. . ., op. cit., 3/1.

[24]H.U. Beier, Contemporary Art in Africa (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), 27.

[25]Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism," op. cit., 56.

[26]D. Fraser and H. Cole, "Art and Leadership, an Overview," African Art and Leadership (ed.) D. Fraser and H. Cole, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), 325-26.

[27]E.B. Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 12-14.

[28]R.F. Thompson, African Art in Motion (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 68.

[29]Thompson, Black Gods. . ., op. cit., 20/1.

[30]Ibid., 4/1 and Carrol, op. cit., 55. It is not clear what type of object the second figure carries.

[31]G.A.J. Ojo, "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," African Arts, I No. 3 (Spring 1968), 70, and H.U. Beier, "Three Igbin Drums from Igbomina," Nigeria Magazine, No. 78 (1963), 163.

A. Babalola, "The Snail and the Tortoise in Yoruba Folklore," Nigeria Magazine, No. 96 (1968), 38.

[32]Carroll, op. cit., 56.

[33]Thompson, African Art in Motion, op. cit., 74.

[34]Ibid., 47.

[35]Carroll, op. cit., 33.

[36]Thompson, Black Gods. . ., op. cit., 1/13-17 and Carroll, op. cit., 55.

[37]Thompson, Ibid., 20/2.

[38]Ibid., 19/2.

[39]The nuclear family--father, mother, child--perhaps reflects the western patrons idea of family rather than the carvers, or may be merely a practicality in carving the panel, what seems a nuclear family merely an artistic shorthand for the idea of family.

CONCLUSION

The conception and function of traditional carved doors seem thoroughly woven into the religious and socio-political fabric of Yoruba culture which was organized and crystallized in the office of kingship.

> "Works clearly do not lose their presentation when they are deprived of their native audience, but do lose something of their originally intended presentation, and thus their native import."[1]

The function of the doors as symbolic architectural members needs to be considered within the cultural milieu which created the need for their conception.

In the temporal superstructure, the office of kingship embodied both the authority of the sacred and the secular worlds. The theocratic organization with Olodumare at its apex was reflected and extended in the ordering of Yoruba society. The Oba was entrusted with the obligations and duties of protecting the religious and social traditions which were the formula for achieving harmony and balance and order in the universe. Maintenance of harmony and order was seen as essential factors for the continued existence of man. The practical precepts for achieving these ends were contained in the oral scriptures, the Odu corpus, and further reiterated in songs, proverbs and adages. The influence of these precepts was reflected in the religious realm, extended from the simplest family unit through the complex workings of the centralized state.

The Yoruba system of social order was all-encompassing. Concerns for order were physically manifested in the morphology of the city and in the architectural forms. The Afin, the sacred-temple which was centrally located within the walls of the city, stood at the apex of this hierarchical structure and occupied a unique position in both its function and in its architectural style and ornamentation throughout the kingdom.

Because of the imposed ritual seclusion of the Oba within the confines of this Afin complex, the buildings themselves became a visible symbol of divine kingship. The consciousness of the symbolism associated with the palace is reflected in the traditional taboos and restrictions marking it as a holy place. Because it was a sacred edifice, every care and expense was lavished on the construction and ornamentation of the complex and the best of the arts and crafts of the kingdom were embodied in its decoration.

As has been suggested, the facade of the palace received added attention, since for the mass of people it was the only area of the palace with which they would become intimately acquainted. Of critical importance to the structure, clearly demonstrated in its size and elaboration, was the gateway which opened onto the market place. The carved doors of the gateway facing the assembly on the square stood as both guardians and heralds of the sacred compound. In their intricacy of carving and complexity of the ruler, the door announced power, wealth and status of the ruler, the patron of the carving. In its didactic function the meaning implied in the motifs spoke to the essential truths underlying Yoruba life. A description of the doors has shown that motifs of command were juxtaposed with motifs of submission,and these attitudes and concepts were made more immediate by their direct relationship to identifiable roles and activities of daily life.

In their permanence they seem to herald the time honored values of the Yoruba people; balance, harmony, character and composure. In this way the traditional doors from the early and middle period stood as a constant reminder of the ideal social order.

The twentieth century has brought about the opening up of the Yoruba country, once in isolation to influences in attitudes and institutions from European cultures. As a result of a near century of colonial domination much of the traditional social framework has been eroded. The incursion of Christian and Islamic sects has weakened the power of the traditional religion. The introduction of cash crops, kola and cocoa and the move toward industrialization and modernization of the economic interests have altered the economic base of Yorubaland. Once under the domination of the Oba, the economy of Yorubaland was self-contained and inward looking. Now it has become an expansive and outward looking economy. The political power once invested in divine kingship is now sublimated to the needs and functions of a united federal republic.

The traditional city, which once reflected the inward self containment of Yoruba life, with the walls defining its perimeter and the Afin as its central focus has expanded laterally and looks outward to increased interaction between areas.

The architectural models of the new modern institutions which are based on western prototypes of churches, high rise complexes, and multi-storeyed residences, have usurped the uniqueness and the dominance of the Afin in city architecture. Practicalities of modern life have caused a change in architectural materials and styles utilized in palace construction, and the traditional patronage given to artists for the decoration of the Afin is no longer economically feasible or even aesthetically desirable.

The fracturing of power into the sacred and secular in the modern era appears to have rendered obsolete the traditional iconographical function of carved doors. The doors remain a symbol of status and wealth because of their aesthetic appeal and craftsmanship.

A renewed interest in the traditional arts of Yorubaland generated by feelings of nationalism among Nigerians and the interest shown in traditional Yoruba art by western institutions have resulted in the continued commissioning of doors to embellish Christian churches, foreign complexes, educational facilities and federal government buildings. Artistic forms remain tied to traditional solutions while the motifs portrayed on these doors reflect the interests and concerns of the new patron.

Biblical stories on the University Chapel at Ibadan and the motifs describing the functions of the USIS in Nigeria carved on their office doors in Ibadan serve to illustrate these new concerns and interests.

The multiple level of associations both conscious and unconscious implied in the traditional iconography of the doors seems to have been replaced by mere narrative of didactic implications in the themes chosen for the modern works. Traditional motifs occasionally reoccur on modern doors such as the Oba enthroned on Fakeye's door the the USIS, but these motifs read more as factual evidence, in this case, verifying the syncretic nature of Yoruba culture in which old and new institutions exist together.

These conclusions must understandably remain tentative until a larger sample of doors from the traditional and modern periods can be catalogued and examined. Tentative identification of motifs utilized on the doors needs to be corroborated through intensive field work. Interviews with both sculptors, patrons and critics within Yoruba society will be critical in determining the function of the doors as architectural symbols.

An intense and systematic examination of the oral traditions accompanied by interviews with the guardians of traditional belief, the various priesthoods will, it is to be hoped, reveal a more comprehensive body of Yoruba philosophy and allow for the correct interpretation of data which will verify or deny the conclusions reached in this study.

Interviews with modern patrons as to their conception of the role of the door and their reasons for commissioning these works, as well as interviews with modern sculptors may reveal the source and reasoning behind the choice of motifs employed.

After an examination of data presently available, I have concluded that a traditional system of order, well-defined and clearly established throughout Yoruba institutions, also shapes the manner in which the traditional doors as art objects are conceived and perceived by the indigenous peoples. This study has further suggested that the changes in conception and interpretation of the doors occurred because of acculturation and the acceptance of new values and concerns within Yoruba society today. The problems and tentative interpretations presented heretofore will, I hope, provide a framework for additional investigation of Yoruba carved doors within the Yoruba culture.

NOTES--CONCLUSION

[1]R.P. Armstrong, Affecting Presence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971) 29.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adam, L. Primitive Art. London: Penguin Books, 1954.

Adesanya, A. "Yoruba Metaphysical Thinking," Odu, No. 52, 36-41.

Adu-Boahen, A. "The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History, III No. 2 (1962), 349-59.

Ajayi, J.F.A. and Smith, R. Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century. London: Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Akintoye, S.A. "The North Eastern Yoruba Districts and Benin Kingdom," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, IV No. 4 (1969), 539-553.

Allison, P. "A Yoruba Carver," Nigeria Magazine, No. 22 (1944), 49-50.

Armstrong, R.G. "The Development of Kingdoms in Negro Africa," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II No. 1 (1960), 27-39.

Armstrong, R.P. Affecting Presence. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971.

_____. "Aesthetic Continuity in Two Yoruba Works," African Arts, IV No. 3 (Spring 1971), 40-43, 68-70.

Atkinson, G.A. "African Housing," African Affairs, XLIX No. 196 (1950), 229-37.

Babalola, A. "The Snail and the Tortoise in Yoruba Folklore," Nigeria Magazine, No. 96 (1968), 38-40.

Bascom, W. African Art in Cultural Perspective. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1973.

_____. Ifa Divination: Communication Between Gods and Men in West Africa. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1969.

_____. The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.

_____. "A Yoruba Master Carver, Duga of Meko," The Traditional Artist in African Societies, Edited by W.R. d'Azevedo. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973, 62-78.

_____. "Lander's Routes Through Yoruba Country," Nigerian Field, XXV No. 1 (1960), 12-22.

_____. "Social Status, Wealth, and Individual Differences Among the Yoruba," American Anthropologist, LIII No. 4 (1951), 490-505.

Biobaku, S.O. The Egba's and Their Neighbors. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.

_____. "Urbanization Among the Yoruba," Cultures and Societies of Africa. Edited by S. and P. Ottenburg, New York: Random House, 1960, 255-67.

_____. "Yoruba Concepts of the Soul," Men and Cultures. Edited by A.F.C. Wallace, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960, 401-10.

Beier, H.U. A Year of Sacred Festivals in One Yoruba Town. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1959.

_____. Contemporary Art in Africa. London: Pall Mall Press, 1968.

_____. (ed.) The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths. London: Heinemann, 1966.

_____. "Before Oduduwa," Odu, No. 3, 25-32.

_____. "Carvers in Modern Architecture," Nigeria Magazine, No. 60 (1959), 60-75.

_____. "Changing Face of a Yoruba Town," Nigeria Magazine, No. 59 (1958), 373-82.

_____. "Complicated Carver," West African Review, XXXI No. 391 (1960), 30-31.

_____. "Ibo and Yoruba Art; A Comparison," Black Orpheus, No. 8, 46-50.

_____. "The Historical and Psychological Significance of Yoruba Myths," Odu No. 1 (1955), 17-25.

_____. "The Position of Yoruba Women," Presence Africaine, No. 1-2 (1955), 39-46.

_____. "Three Igbin Drums from Igbomina," Nigeria Magazine, No. 78 (1963), 154-163.

Bertho, J. "Habitations a Impluvium dans le Region de Porto Nova et de Ketou," Notes Africaines IFAN, No. 47 (1950), 74-75.

Biobaku, S.O. (ed.) Sources of Yoruba History. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

_____. "The Use and Interpretation of Myths," Odu, No. 1 (1955), 12-17.

Boaz, F. Primitive Art. rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1955.

Boeck, U. Sculpture on Buildings. New York: Universe Books, 1961.

Borgatti, J. "UCLA's Yoruba Doors," African Arts, III No. 1 (Autumn 1969), 14-19.

Burdland, C.A. and Forman, W. The Exotic White Man. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

Burton, R.F. Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mts. Vol. I, London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863.

Campbell, R. A Pilgrimage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa in 1859-60. Philadelphia: Thomas Hamilton, 1861.

Carroll, K. Yoruba Religious Carvings. New York: Praeger, 1966.
"Ekiti Yoruba Woodcarving," Odu, No. 4, 3-10.
"Yoruba Maska," Odu, No. 3, 3-15.

Clapperton, H. Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa: from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1829.

Clarke, W. Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland - 1854-58. Introduction and notes by J.A. Atanda, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972.

Cole, H. "Yoruba Sculpture: An Interpretation of Style through Form and Meaning," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Columbis University, 1974.

Cordwell, J. "African Art," Continuity and Change in African Cultures, Edited by W. Bascom and M. Herskovits, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

_____. "Naturalism and Stylization in Yoruba Art," Magazine of Art, XLVI No. 5 (1953), 220-25.

_____. "Some Aesthetic Aspects of Yoruba and Benin Cultures," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1952.

_____. "The Problem of Process and Form in West African Art," Proceedings of the Third International West African Conference Ibadan, 1949. Lagos: Nigeria Museum, 1956.

Crone, G.R. (ed. and trans.) The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century. London: Hakluyt Society, 1937. 124-28.

Crowther, S. "Ketu in the Yoruba Country," Church Missionary Intelligencer, (1853) 244, as cited in G. Parrinder, Story of Ketu. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1956, 78.

Danford, J.A. "Art in Nigeria," African Affairs, XLVIII No. 190 (1949), 37-47.

Dennett, R.E. The Religious and Political System of the Yoruba. London: MacMillan and Co., 1910.

_____. "How the Yoruba Count," Journal of the African Society, XVI No. 63 (1917), 242-49.

Ellis, A.B. The Yoruba Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa. London: Chapman and Hall, 1894.

Engestrom, T. "Origin of Pre-Islamic Architecture in West Africa," Ethnos, XXIV No. 1-2 (1959), 64-69.

Fadipe, N.A. Sociology of the Yoruba, Edited and introduction by F. Okediji, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970.

Fagg, W. Nigerian Images. New York: Praeger, 1963.

_____. "The Study of African Art," Cultures and Societies of Africa, Edited by S. and P. Ottenberg, New York: Random House, 1960. 458-473.

_____. "de L'Art des Yoruba," Presence Africaine, No. 10-11 (1951), 103-135.

Forde, D. (ed.) African Worlds. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

_____. The Yoruba Speaking Peoples of Southwestern Nigeria. London: International African Institute, 1969.

Foyle, A. "Nigerian Architecture," The Geographical Magazine, XXIII No. 5 (1950), 173-80.

Fraser, D. (ed.) African Art as Philosophy. New York: Interbook, 1974.

_____. "The Fish-Legged Figure in Benin and Yoruba Art," African Art and Leadership. Edited by D. Fraser and H. Cole, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972. 261-294.

_____, and Cole, H. "Art and Leadership, an Overview," African Art and Leadership. Edited by D. Fraser and H. Cole, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972. 295-328.

Frobenius, L. The Voice of Africa. 2 Vols., Translated by R. Blind, Rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968.

Goldman, B. The Sacred Portal. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1966.

Grillo, Y.A. and Highet, J. "Felix Idubor - A Sculptor from Benin," African Arts, II No. 1 (Autumn 1968), 30-35.

Hallett, R. (ed.) The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1965.

Haselberger, H. Bautraditonen der westafrikanishen Negerkulturen. Vienna: Herder and Co., 1964.

Herskovits, M. The Backgrounds of African Art. New York: Biblo and Tanner, 1967.

Hutchinson, J. and Dalziel, J. The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa. London: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1937.

Idowu, E.B. African Traditional Religion. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973.

_____. Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief. London: Longmans, 1962.

Johnson, S. History of the Yoruba. 6th ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969.

Jopling, C. (ed.) Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies. New York: Dutton and Co., 1971.

Krieger, K. West Afrikanische Plastik II. Berlin: Museum fur Volkerkunde, 1969.

Laude, J. The Arts of Black Africa. Translated by J. Decock, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Leighton, A.H. Psychiatric Disorder Among the Yoruba. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1963.

Leuzinger, E. Africa: The Art of the Negro People. Translated by A. Keep, New York: Crown Publishers, 1967.

Lloyd, P.C. The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century. London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1971.

_____. "Craft Organization in Yoruba Towns," Africa, XXIII No. 1 (1953), 30-44.

_____. "Sacred Kingship and Government Among the Yoruba," Africa, XXX No. 3 (1960), 221-237.

_____. "Some Modern Changes in the Government of Yoruba Towns," West African Conference - Sociology Section, March, 1953.

_____. "The Traditional Political System of the Yoruba," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, X No. 4 (1954).

_____. "The Yoruba Lineage," Africa, XXV No. 3 (1955), 235-251.

_____. "The Yoruba of Nigeria," Peoples of Africa. Edited by J. Gibbs, Jr., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966, 547-582.

_____. "Traditional Rulers," Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa. Edited by J. Coleman and C. Rosber, Jr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, 382-412.

_____. "Yoruba Myths - A Sociologist's Interpretation," Odu, No. 2, 20-28.

Mabogunje, A.L. Urbanization in Nigeria. London: University of London Press, 1968.

_____. Yoruba Towns. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962.

Macrow, D. "A New Carver-Felix Idubor," Nigeria Magazine, No. 41 (1953), 22-27.

May, D.J. "Journey in the Yoruba and Nupe Countries in 1858," The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XXX (1860), 212-233.

Mbiti, J. African Religions and Philosophies. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970.

Moore, E.A. The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People. Abeokuta, Nigeria: M.O. Ola Fola Bookshops, 1960.

_____. History of Abeokuta. Lagos: Kash and Klare Bookshop, 1948.

Morton-Williams, P. "An Outline of the Cosmology and Cult Organization of the Oyo Yoruba," Africa, XXXIV No. 3 (1964), 243-261.

_____. "The Iconology of the Yoruba Edan Ogboni," Africa, XXXIV No. 2 (1964), 139-166.

Mount, M. African Art: The Years Since 1920. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

de Negri, E. "Tribal Marks - Decorative Scars and Painted Patterns," Nigeria Magazine, No. 81 (1964), 106-116.

_____. "Yoruba Men's Costume," Nigeria Magazine, No. 73 (1962), 4-12.

_____. "Yoruba Women's Costume," Nigeria Magazine, No. 72 (1962), 4-12.

Newbury, C.W. The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Ogunkoya, T.O. "Yoruba Ancient Religion and Mythology," Africana, I No. 3 (1949), 14-15, 30.

Ogunwale, T.A. "Lamidi Fakeye: Nigerian Traditional Sculptor," African Arts, IV No. 2 (Winter 1971), 66-67.

Ojo, G.J.A. Yoruba Culture - A Geographical Analysis. London and Ife: University of Ife Press, 1966.

_____. Yoruba Palaces - A Study of Afins of Yorubaland. London: University of London Press, 1966.

_____. "Royal Palaces: An Index of Yoruba Traditional Culture," Nigeria Magazine, No. 94 (1967), 194-210.

_____. "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," African Arts, I No. 3 (Spring 1968), 14-17, 70-72.

Parrinder, G. African Mythology. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1967.

_____. Story of Ketu. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1956.

_____. West African Religion. London: Epworth Press, 1969.

Redfield, R., et al. Aspects of Primitive Art. New York: University Publishers, 1959.

Sadler, M. (ed.) Art of West Africa (Excluding Music). London: Oxford University Press, 1935.

Segy, L. African Sculpture Speaks. 3rd ed. revised. New York: Hill and Wang, 1968.

Smith, E.B. Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956.

Smith, H.F.C. "A Neglected Theme of West African History: The Islamic Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II No. 1 (1961), 169-185.

Smith, M (ed.) The Artist in Tribal Society. New York: Fress Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Smith, R. Kingdoms of the Yoruba. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1969.

_____. "Yoruba Armament," Journal of African History, VIII No. 1 (1967), 87-106.

Talbot, P.A. The Peoples of Southern Nigeria. 4 Vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

Thompson, R.F. African Art in Motion. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

_____. Black Gods and Kings. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.

_____. "Esthetics in Traditional Africa," Art News, LXVI No. 9 (1968), 44-45, 63-66.

_____. "The Sign of the Divine King," African Arts, III No. 3 (Spring 1970), 8-17, 74-79.

_____. "Yoruba Artistic Criticism," The Traditional Artist in African Societies. Edited by W. d'Azevedo. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973. 18-61.

Trimingham, J.S. The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa. Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, Ltd., 1956.

Trowell, M. Classical African Sculpture. New York: Praeger, 1954.

Wescott, J. "The Sculpture and Myths of Eshu-Elegba, The Yoruba Trickster: A Definition and Interpretation of Yoruba Iconography," Africa, XXXII No. 4 (1962), 336-354.

Willett, F. African Art. New York: Praeger, 1973.

_____. Ife in the History of West African Sculpture. New York: McGraw and Hill Book Co., 1967.

_____. "Ife, the Art of an Ancient African Aristocracy," African Art and Leadership. Edited by D. Fraser and H. Cole. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972. 209-226.

Wingert, P. Primitive Art, Its Traditions and Styles. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1965.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: Olowere. Carved wooden door. Photograph courtesy of the British Museum, London.

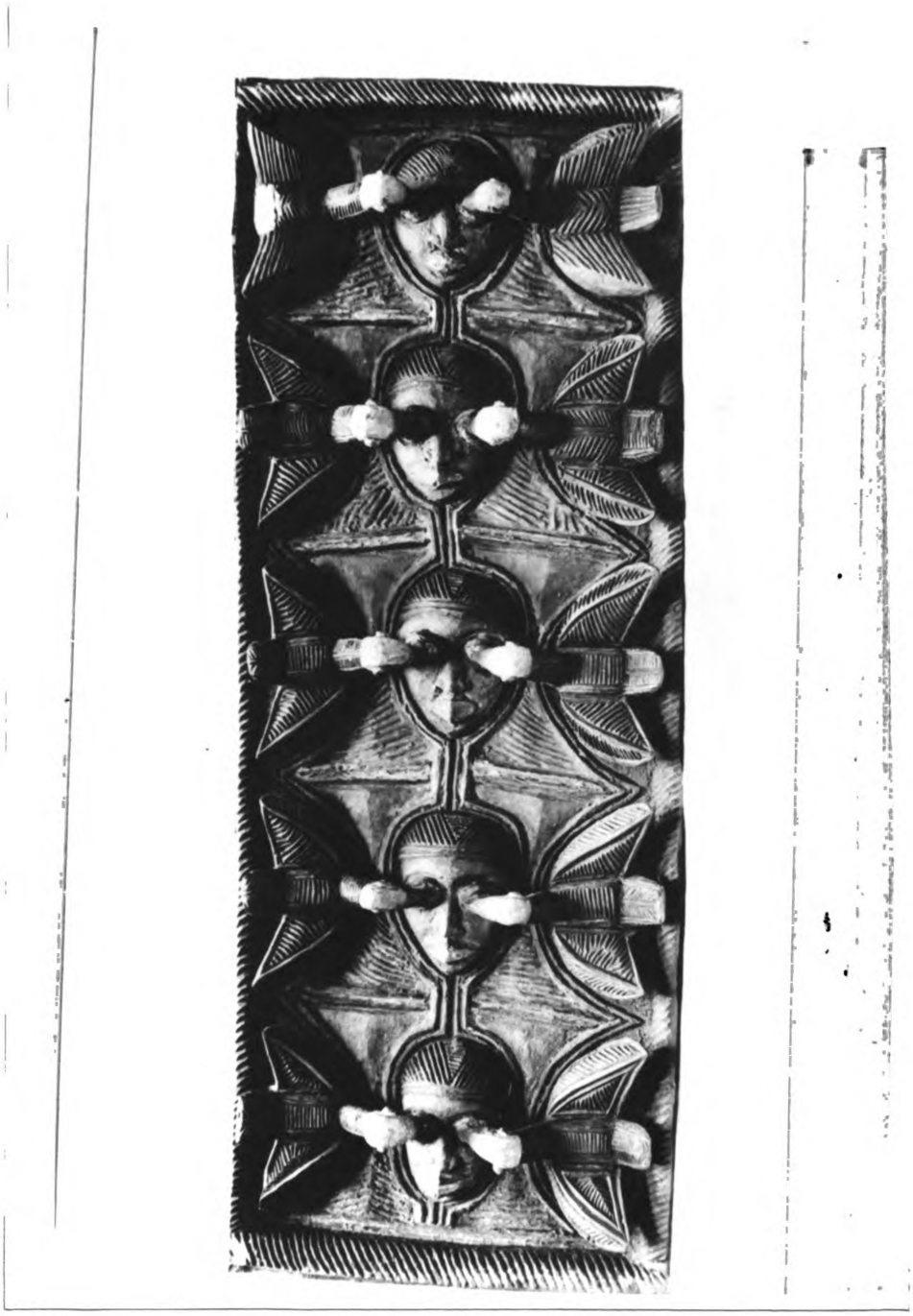


Illustration 2: Olowere. Carved wooden lintel. Photograph courtesy of the British Museum, London.

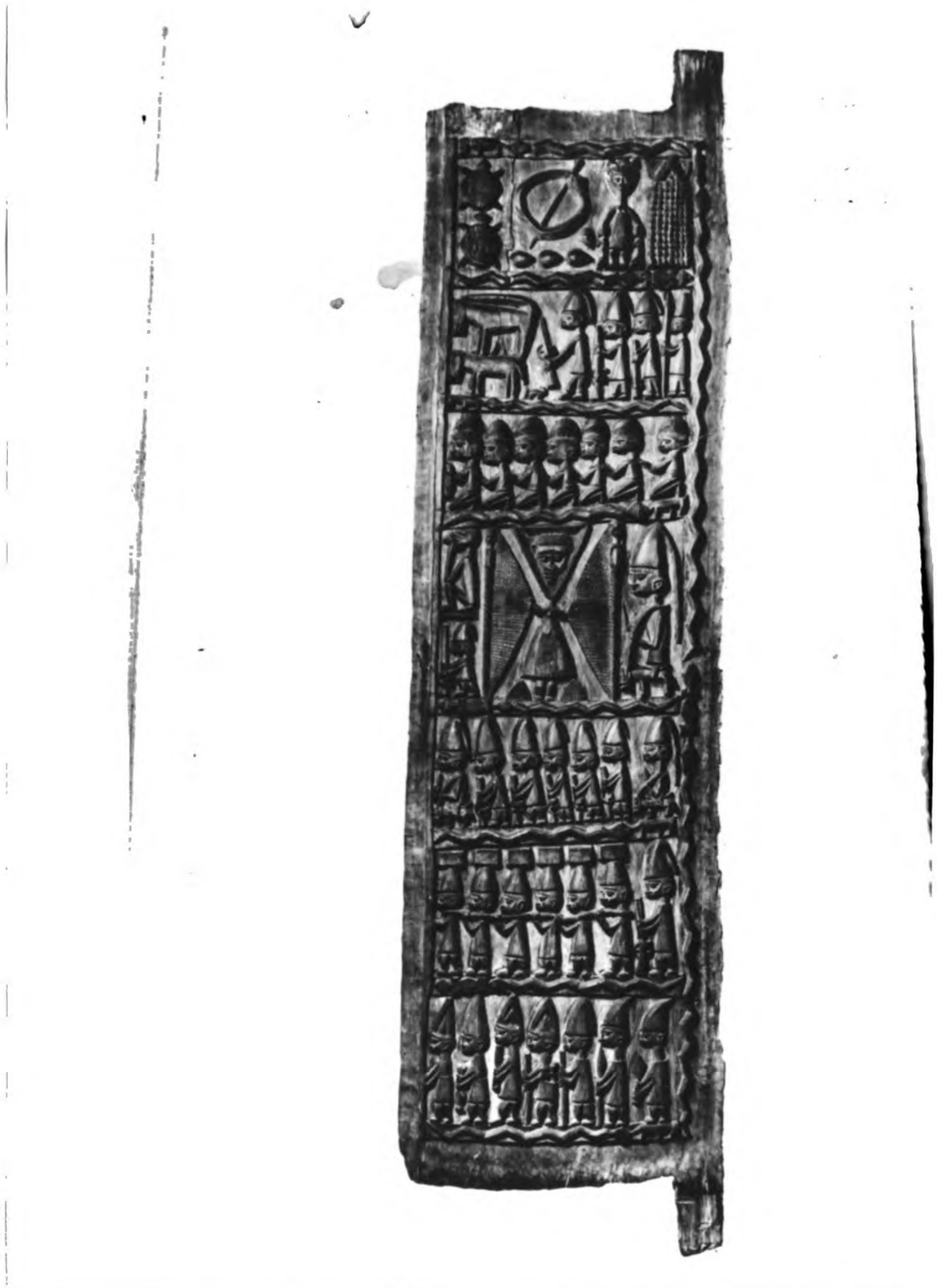


Illustration 3: Anonymous. Carved wooden door. Photograph courtesy of Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.

Illustration 4: Areogun. Carved wooden door. Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London.

Illustration 5: School of Areogun. Carved wooden door. Photograph courtesy of UCLA Museum of Ethnic Art, Los Angeles.

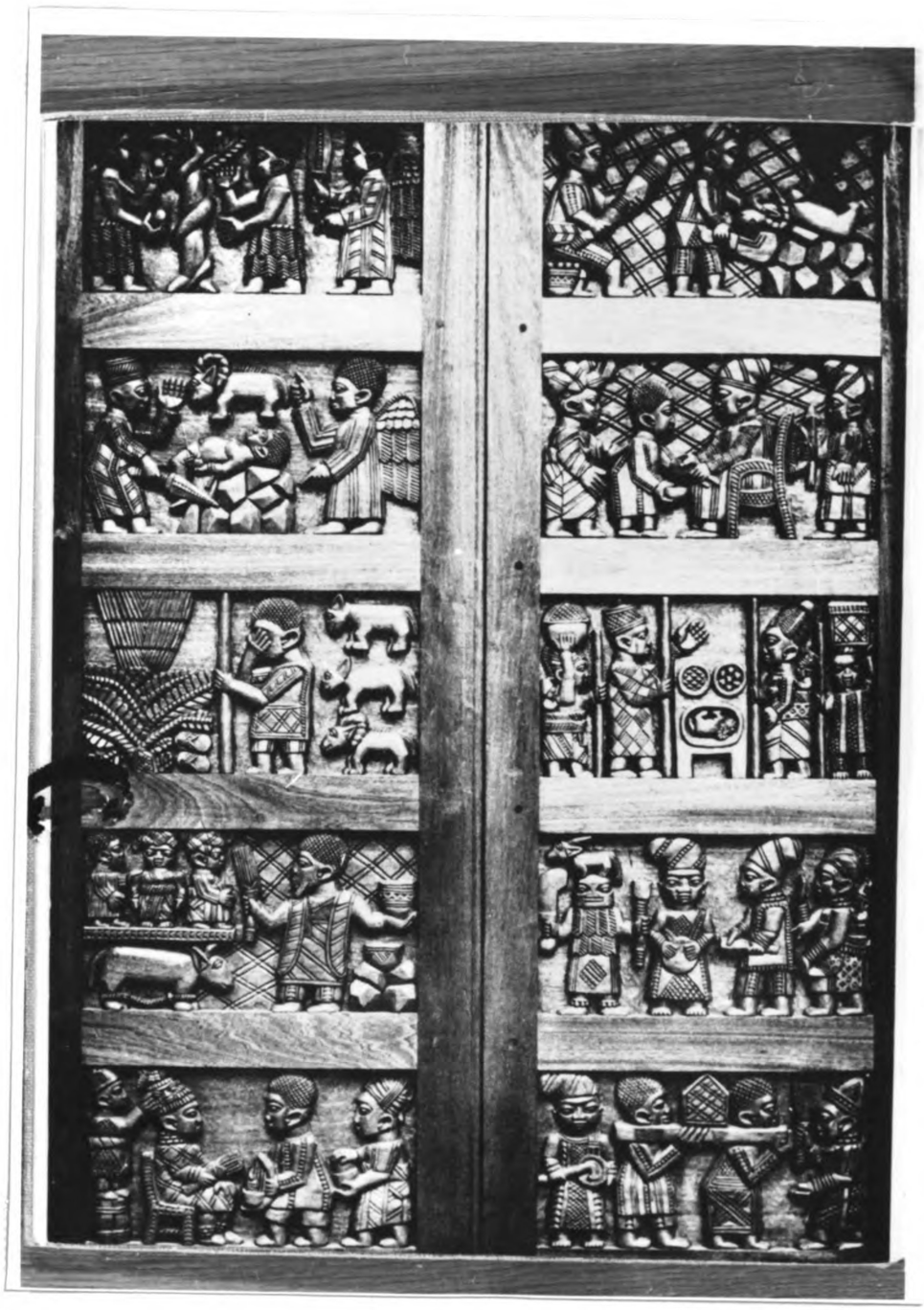


Illustration 6: Bandele. Carved wooden door. University Chapel Ibadan. Photograph, K. Carroll, Yoruba Religious Carving, Plate 12.

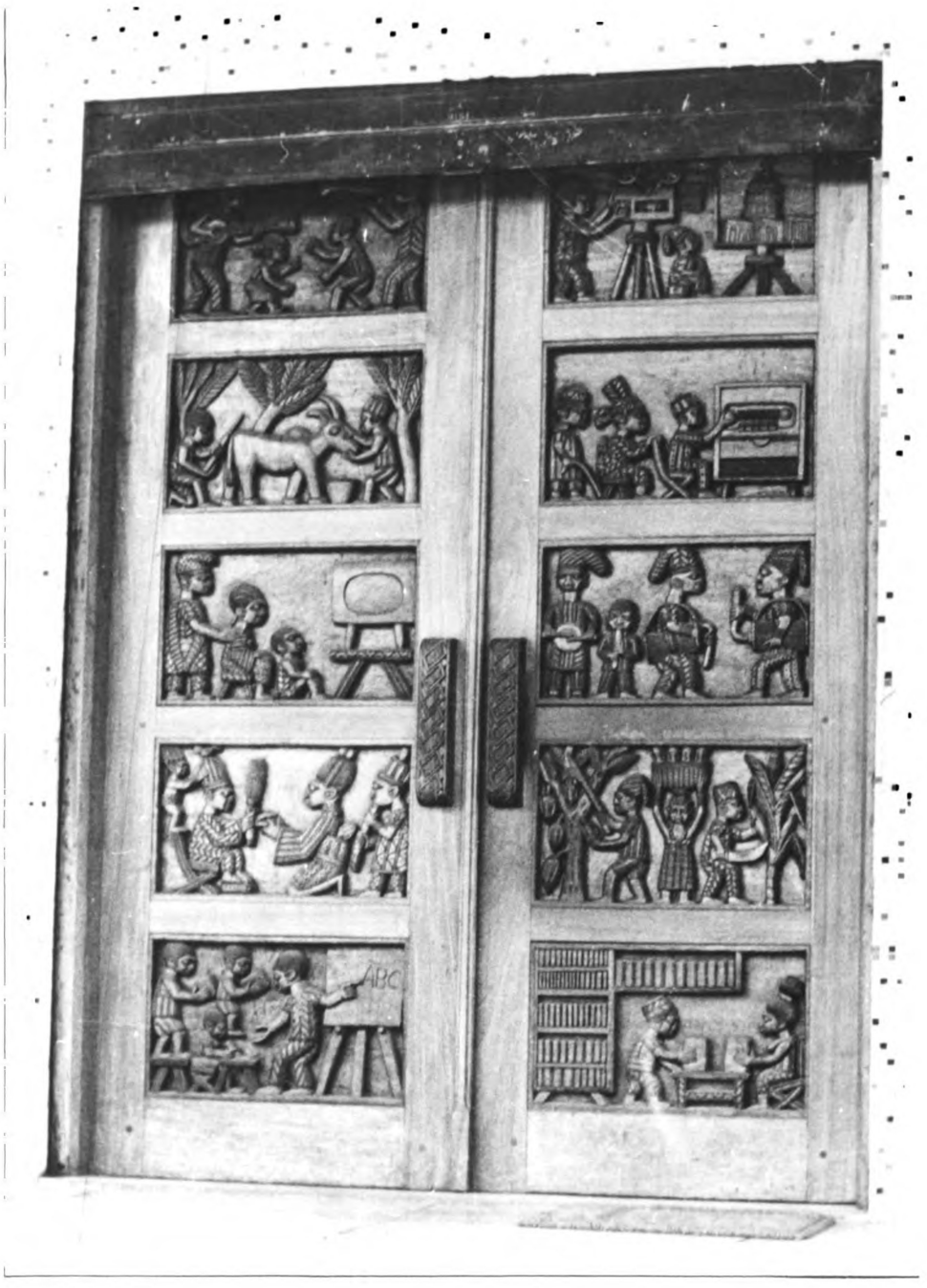


Illustration 7: Lamidi Fakeye. Carved wooden door. USIS offices, Ibadan, Nigeria. Photograph courtesy of Wilson Popoola, Ministry of Information, Ibadan.

Illustration 8: Felix Idubor. Carved wooden door. National Assembly Chambers, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph courtesy of Ministry of Information, Lagos.

Illustration 9: Felix Idubor. Carved wooden door. National Assembly Chambers, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph courtesy of Ministry of Information, Lagos.

Illustration 10: Felix Idubor. Carved wooden door. National Assembly Chambers, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph courtesy of Ministry of Information, Lagos.