

Icons & oracles across the confluence

(or, Metaphysical migrations)

Victor Manfredi
African Studies Center, Boston University

[Consolidated draft 13 January 2021, last update 14 June 2025]

*“Resta da vedere se, come tutti coloro che si scandalizzano (la banalità del loro linguaggio lo dimostra), ho torto, oppure se ci sono delle ragioni speciali che giustificano il mio scandalo.”*⁸ (Pasolini 1975)

[It remains to be seen whether I’m wrong like everybody who expresses outrage (as proved by the triviality of their discourse), or if instead my outrage rests upon identifiable reasons.]

0. Front matter	
0.1 Abstract.....	i
0.2 Dedication	ii
0.3 Acknowledgements	ii
0.4 Prosodic bifurcation transcribed.....	ii
0.5 Other conventions	ii
1. The <i>Fá</i> -mily tree is a medieval wave	
1.1 The creation of Yorùbá creationism	1
1.2 Historical <i>Fá</i> -netics	2
1.3 Paralinguistic mutations	7
Array names.....	7
Strict order.....	7
Retrieval key (lookup table)	8
1.4 The rise of heaven	11
1.5 Back on planet Earth.....	17
2. Before <i>Wá-ṣó-bìá</i>	
2.1 “The unholy trinity”	19
2.2 Allochronism all the way down	20
2.3 Ifẹ̀’ s modern magnetism in Èdó	21
2.4 Ìgbòníc Òminìgbòn	23
Primary familiar-name	24
Secondary familiar-name, two more oracle terms	26
2.5 A dozen Ìgbònisms beyond the oracle.....	28
2.6 Facial recognition test: Èṣù or Vòdún?.....	29
2.7 MFA sends letter to <i>Óba</i>	31
2.8 <i>Àwọ̀n Fẹ̀lò-fẹ̀lò</i> Frobenius.....	34
Sequela of a nonsequitur	34
Leo <i>oní-original-tòkúnḃò</i>	37
William Fagg, <i>post Nok ergo propter Nok</i>	38
Willett the wishful	41
Sir Robin, last-ditch defender of the faith.....	41
Şíjúwádé <i>olóríi-túlẹ̀</i> , Şóyíńká <i>olóríi-fake-tòkúnḃò</i>	42
2.9 Ìgbòníc art, Ìgbòníc authority.....	45
Èdó <i>cire perdue</i> : two names and a semantic doublet	45
Èdó palace organization	47
Fast forward to history	48
2.10 Why “people start to grope... in the air”	49
3. Appendix	
3.1 <i>Áfa</i> simulation [audio] by <i>díbìá</i> Chúkwiùma, Àgbádaàna, Òrì, August 1977.....	56
3.2 4-bit array spreadsheet	58
3.3 8-bit semantic key.....	59
3.4 <i>re</i> : Ògúndiran (2020)	64
4. Literature cited	66
5. Typographic notes.....	95

0.1 ABSTRACT

About five centuries ago, virtuosi of two artistic techniques—*cire perdue* copper-alloy casting and a hermetic-poetic oracle that calls and interprets duplex 4-bit binary strings—crossed the Niger-Benue confluence and left phonetic footprints in the Ìgbo-, Èdó- and Yorùbá-speaking zones. Without inferring this transmission route, it would be hard to explain a list of independent observations of directed diffusion, collated here. Fifteen salient vocabulary items of Èdó (alias *Bìní*, “Benin”), all semantically opaque in that language, unscramble with Ìgbo loanword etymologies, including:

two prominent genres of ritual sculpture and the names of two reputed pioneer copper-alloy sculptors

ìkẹ̀tẹ̀ga [ohó] ‘altarpiece representing an individual’s enthroned wrist/hand/arm/tools’ (Bradbury 1961, Ezra 1992)

< *ìk(h)énìg(h)a* ‘horned, seated altar figure representing an individual’s right arm/hand/dexterity/agency’ (Ọ̀nwùjẹjìogwù 1975, Bentor 1988, Ígwè 1999, 252), cf. Ígàlà “*okega*” (Boston 1977, 2, no tones in source)

[àkèbúrhe] òhò ‘*Detarium microcarpum* or *senegalense*, botanical model for carved icon used in convoking ancestors’ also known as *àkhuẹ̀ khue* > Yorùbá *apèpè* > Yorùbá *òpèlẹ̀* (Melzian 1937, 15, 213, Keay 1989, 206, Èhigiamusoe 2013, 188-90, Ekhosuehi 2014, cf. Ben-Amos 2007, 153, 410, Gore 2007b, 133f.)

< *òfó* ‘*Detarium microcarpum* or *senegalense*; bundle/model of its node-segmented twigs, used in convoking ancestors’ (Dalziel 1937, 188, Meek 1937, 63, Keay 1989, 206, Aka[h] & al. 2012, cf. Boston 1977, 48, Bentor 1988, 66)

“*Igue-Igha*” or “*Iguegha*” (proper name as spelled by Egharhevba 1936b/1953 vs. 1960/1968, no tones)

< **ìgwé ìbì ha* ‘oozing/glittering/molten metal’ or ‘the burning of metal with a hot instrument’ (Williamson 1972, 175, 446f; Ígwè 1999, 227, 245)

“*Ahammangina*” (proper name in garbled transcription reproduced by Read & Dalton 1899, 5, no tones)

< **Áhà-m-a-jù-nwa* ‘My [family] name doesn’t refuse child[birth]’ (canonical proper name)

two unique items of *Ìba Ominigbon* metalanguage and the primary name of its reputed introducer

òguẹ̀tẹ̀ga ‘*Detarium senegalense* or *beudelotiana*; oracle strings formed from its linked half-endocarps’ (Melzian 1937, 137f., Èhigiamusoe 2013, 189f., *pace* abridged tones and syllables of Aghẹyisi 1986, 105)

< **òkewé ẹ̀ja* ‘oracle seeds’ cf. *òkwe* ‘*Ricinodendron africanum*; its seeds’, *àja/ẹ̀ja* ‘sacrifices, oracle’ (Williamson 1972, 17, 373f.; Keay 1989, 152f., Ígwè 1999, 32, 270, 601), cf. Èdó *òkhuẹ̀n* (Melzian 1937, 155)

n’áàbe ‘doubled oracle sign’

< *n’áàbọ̀* ‘double’ (Williamson 1972, 359; Ígwè 1999, 456, cf. Ézikéojiakú 2000, 73, *pace* Nabofa & Elugbe 1981)

Òminigbon (Egharhevba 1936a, 3, Melzian 1937, 144)

< **òmi-n’igbo* ‘someone who delves into the community’ or ‘concealed, general knowledge’

< *òmi* ‘one who delves, depth/secret’, *igbo* ‘general community’ (Ígwè 1999, 123, 456, 573, 607f., Williamson 1972, 89, cf. 1984a, 173, 235), cf. Ùrhobo *Òminigbo* (Erivwo 1979, Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, Prof. T. Ojaide *p.c.*)

Because their single probabilities are multiplied, the conjunction of these garbled but unmistakeable, independent Èdó echoes of an Ìgbo oracular and sculptural past is already statistically sufficient to dismiss the fond notion that either Yorùbá *Ifá*, or a few dozen conjecturally attributed fine-art castings scavenged and salvaged from secondary contexts in 20th century Ilé-Ifẹ̀ by Frobenius, Murray and Willett attest to “the birth of the Yorùbá-Èdó world system” in “the 13th century... Classical period” (Ọ̀gúndiran 2003, 51, cf. Burton 1863a, 222, Egharhevba 1936a,b, Willett 1967, Garlake 1977, Horton 1979, Ọ̀gúndiran 2002a, Àjàyí 2004). The romantic fancy to extrapolate a cultural ‘big bang’ indefinitely backwards in time and impose Yorùbá-Èdó linkages of modern *Ọ̀ja*—the British “Nàìjá area” enclosed as “Nigeria” in 1914—on Èdó prehistory betrays the susceptibility of present ethnic consciousness “to secondary reasoning and to reinterpretations which... obscure the real history of the development of ideas” (Boas 1911, 67, 71, cf. Bradbury 1959, Beidelman 1970, Ífemésia 1976, 88, Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, Erim 1993, Eisenhower 1995, *pace* Vansina 1971). The same kind of instrumentality is more blatant in more recent, popular riffs (e.g. Ọ̀gúnwùsi 2019a). Non-selfie forensics instead support a contrary scenario, as follows.

Neolithic savanna skill-sets, thriving in rainforests cleared with post-Nok iron tools, evolved rapidly on pathways shaped by mental “superstimuli” of the “genius of paganism” and by the mnemonic cognitive modules for number, folk biology/“natural history intelligence”, folk sociology and theory-of-mind (Augé 1982, Boyer 1998, Sperber & Hirshfield 2004, cf. Verger 1977a, Donald 1991, Mithen 1996, Foley 2004, Assmann 2008). As migratory innovations accrued in feudal Ifẹ̀, stoked by profits from the production of cobalt *sẹ̀gi* beads (Elúyẹmí 1987, Lankton & al. 2006), *Áfá*’s stringed geomantic detector of underground ancestral advice flipped to become *Ifá*’s divining chain of clairvoyant authority dangling from the sky—no matter that this inversion effectively “confused Odùduwà with Ọ̀rúnmilà” (Erediauwa 2004, 206) and redefined an old word for ‘death’ (Verger 1966, Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 22, cf. Ryder 1965, Bámgbósé 1972, Law 1973, Ọ̀nwùjẹjìogwù 1978, Obáyẹmí 1979a, Emọ̀vọ̀n 1984). As tropical Africa exited its “geographical accident” of medieval i.e. precapitalist isolation and became “coeval” in Braudel’s clock of “social time” with Eurasian seaborne trading spheres under asymmetric economic and symbolic value régimes (Mbembe 2002, 631, Fabian 1983, Braudel 1958, 749, cf. Emmanuel 1969, Amin 1973, Wallerstein 1974, Abu-Lughod 1989, Augé 1994, Beaujard 2012, Green 2019), theologizing trends of local “belief” electively converged with heavenly doctrines of the globalizing “Axial Age”—enabling elite-led “culturalization” (Sansi 2003, 82) and stranding in the process an unassimilable residue of stubbornly terrestrial, irreligiously enchanted metaphysics on the distal side of syncretist dualism, now exotically labeled *fetish*, *witchcraft*, *voodoo*, *jùjú* and *art* (Jaspers 1949, Ìdòwú 1962, Iacono 1985, Belting 1990, Besançon 1994, Bellah 2011, Peachey 2012, Swidler 2012, MacGaffey 1998, cf. Goethe 1809, Feuerbach 1841, Weber 1920, Horkheimer & Adorno 1947, De Martino 1948, Tambiah 1990, 17, Graeber 2001).

0.2 Dedication

To four departed mentors:

“Ígwé” [‘sky’] Ben Àkùnné (1924-2006), curator, Òḍinanjí Museum, Nri
 Dóná Nwàòga (1933-1991), professor of English, University of Nigeria, Nsùkà
 Mike Ònwùjèìogwù (1934-2008), professor of anthropology, University of Benin, Benin-City
 Adé Qbáyemí (1943-1998), professor of history, University of Ilorin

In 1976, Ònwùjèìogwù shared his draft dissertation on *Áfa* (1978/1997) and ferried me in his antique German sedan across Ònìcha bridge to Àkùnné, counsellor of Nri palace and organizer of the *Áfa* oracle session transcribed in §3.1. In 1984-85, Nwàòga and Qbáyemí shared their written critiques of ethnic consciousness east and west of the Niger.

0.3 Acknowledgements

Prof. W. Abímbólá, Prof. R. Abíódún, late Prof. A. Adétúgbò, Dr. Q. Àdùnbí, late Ígoló K. Ànòkà, Prof. A. Apter, late Prof. R. Armstrong, Dr. Q. Babájidé, Dr. A. Babalolá, late Prof. A. Bānjò, Dr. Rhoda Bilansky, Prof. T. Brennan, Dr. F. Buzzetta, Prof. H. Capo, Dr. S. Capo-Chichi, late Dr. P. Darling, Chief Q. Èbòhò, G. Edebiri, Chief Orok Edem, late Prof. P. Ekeh, late Prof. N. Eménanjò, late Káyòdé Èsùlèkè *Baálè Èsù Òsogbo*, late *Íchiè* P. Èzikéojaku, Prof. F. Gbè, Dr. K. Gunsch, late Prof. J. Guyer, Prof. R. Henderson, late Prof. C. Ifemésia, Dr. P. Ífèùkó, *Alhaji* M. Ìghílè, late I. Ighodaro MD, late *Íyàsè* Justice S. Ighodaro, *Máází* U. Ìhiònú, Chief N. Ìsekurhè, Dr. S. Jell-Bahlsen, Dr. M. Jungwirth, late Prof. S. Kasfir, *Oníyè-ónà* M. Kone, Q. Làsisi, Prof. A. Lühning, *Babalorichá* J. Mason, Dr. I. Miller, Prof. D. Northrup, Dr. K. Qbasèki, Prof. M. Ochonu, Dr. Q. Ògie, Prof. A. Ògúndiran, Prof. T. Ojaide, late Prof. I. Okpehwo, Prof. D. Okwu, A. Qlá, Prof. J. Olúpònà, Engr. K. Olúwolé, Prof. E. Omolúábí, Dr. T. Omolúábí-Idiodi, Prof. A. Omokhua, Dr. Q. Omokhua, dott. A. Orlando, P. Onípèédé, Dr. C. Oşaşonà, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Prof. S. Oyèláràn, Chief D. Peavy, Prof. P. Peek, Prof. Y. Pessoa de Castro, late Prof. G. Rouget, late K. Saínz Almoguera, late Prof. J. Schindler, late S. & T. Šólá.rin, Dr. J. Souty, Prof. I. Sow, Dr. U. Stewart, late Prof. S. Tambiah, B. Tokar, Prof. E. Udjo, Dr. C. Úgwu, Prof. U. Úsuánléle, late Rev. Dr. M. Ûwaláàka, Dr. M. Vickers, late Prof. C. Watkins, late *Adúnni* S. Wenger, late Dr. Q. Yáí.

§1 was commissioned for the Harvard Ifá conference (14 March 2008) and reprised at Grupo de Estudios Africanos e Afrobrasileiros em Línguas e Culturas, Universidade do Estado da Bahia (15 April 2009). §2 was outlined at the Walter Rodney African Studies seminar, Boston University (13 February 2012) then revised as described by Manfredi (2016).

0.4 Prosodic bifurcation transcribed

‘Tones’—categories of perceived pitch distinguishing strings that translate graphic words of European languages—optimise differently across the Benue-Kwa (BK) clade of Niger-Congo (Elugbe & Williamson 1977, Manfredi 2009a). In **BK2**—an innovative subgroup comprising the Gbè, Yorubá, Nupe and Idòmà clusters—finite inflection is suffixless (‘isolating’), pitch scales are ternary {H/M/L} and tonemarking economy has to be *paradigmatic*, with each syllable labeled individually H [‘] or L [‘] leaving M as the unmarked, neutral value (Siertsema 1958, 583, Akinlabí 1985). In **BK1**—the archaic elsewhere set including Akan, Èdó, Ìgbo, Tiv and Cross clusters plus a remnant area known by the “traditional” and “irrelevant” (Greenberg 1963, 37) name of *Bantu*—finite inflection is suffixal (‘agglutinative’), local pitch contrasts at most binary {H/L} so a simpler, *syntagmatic* tone spelling can apply: an unmarked syllable copies the preceding pitch and successive H marks are cumulatively downstepped (Christaller 1875, 15, Winston 1960, Swift & al. 1962, 49f, Williamson 1962, 54 *fn* 2, Welmers & Welmers 1968, *iv*, Nwáchukwu 1976, 20, 1995, 2f, Tucker 1964, 600f, Roberts 2011, 84).

Downstep—a ~10Hz drop, transcribed [!]¹—occurs at phrasal junctures that syntacticians call cyclic nodes (Chomsky & Halle 1968, Bresnan 1971, D’Alessandro & Scheer 2015). In BK1, unrecoverable downsteps are folded inside graphic words like Ìgbo *gí nì* (HH!) ‘what?’, *bík(h)ó* (HH!) ‘please!’, *átúlú/áthurú* (HH!) ‘sheep’, *ńkítá* (HH!) ‘dog’ and Èdó *Èwéka* (H!HH) [‘dynastic name’], *Ólókún* (HH!) [‘tutelary supernatural’] (Williamson 1972, 56, 67, 126, 312, Ígwé 1999, 84, 97, 181, 487, Melzian 1937, 57, 144 *pace* Agheyisi 1986, *xiv*, 44, 110). Throughout BK, regular vowel elision traps recoverable downsteps in phrases written conjunctively as ‘words’. In Yorubá (BK2), an elided vowel with L, spelled as a full stop [.] , has two complementary effects: (i) downstep before M as in *Olókún* (MH!M) ‘possessor/epitome of *òkún* (LM) [ocean]’ vs. *olókún* (MHM) ‘possessor/epitome of *òkún* (MM) [energy]’ and (ii) blocking a preceding H from lagging (‘spreading’) to the syllable of a following L as in *olódù* (MH!L) ‘possessor/epitome of an *òdù* (LL) [clay cauldron]’ vs. *olódù* (MHL) ‘possessor/epitome of an *òdù* (ML) [oracle sign]’ (Bámgbòsé 1966b, 1972, cf. Armstrong 1968 for similar effects in an Idòmà variety). In Èdó (BK1), elided L blocks H-lag (H-spread) as in *ìgbo òkèpè* (pronounced ìgho.kpè HH!L) ‘money for a palmwine tapper [LL]’ vs. *ìgbo òkèpè* (ìghokpè HHL) ‘money for a flute [HL]’ and it lowers a final H to the level of L (while also blocking H-lag) as in *nó.dè* (H!L) ‘yesterday’ cf. *òdè* (LH) ‘road/way’ (Amayo 1976, 168f., 179, *pace* Agheyisi 1986, 101). Downstep reset—misleadingly called “upstep” as if it could cumulate, contrary to fact—is optional at clause boundaries but obligatory in a list of cyclic, clause-internal contexts (Manfredi 1992, *pace* Pike & Wistrand 1974, Meir & al. 1975).

0.5 Other conventions

Colonial spellings are fixed by “quiet copyediting” (chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Quotations/faq0035.html, cf. Capo 1981, 1984, 2008). For convenience, some historical versions are supplied parenthetically in the text.

Aspirated [Ch] is written *Ch* as distinct from dotless *Ch* which is a fricative like *gh* [ɣ] (Green & Ígwé 1963, 2 *fn* 6).

Unreleased (‘lenis’) stops carry a leading apostrophe ’C (Stewart 1973).

In multilingual datasets, nonroman *ŋ* replaces orthographic *ñ*, *ñ*, *ñ* and *ng* for a prevocalic or prepausal velar nasal.

Nonroman *ɛ*, *ɔ* of Àkan and Gbè are replaced by subdotted *ɛ*, *ɔ* (Surgu 1988a, 7, cf. Lepsius 1854, Àjàyí 1960).

Unicode’s “combining dot below” (U+0323) is used under the banal duress of monopolistic mediocrity. Unicode’s “composite characters are aesthetically unacceptable and lead to technically unpredictable data. They are therefore in direct conflict with the aims of the International Standards Organization” (Mueller 2006). An alternative is badly needed.

Binary oracle arrays: ◇ = ‘open’ i.e. concave surface facing up, ◆ = ‘closed’ i.e. concave surface facing down, left side of page = top of array from the oraclist’s perspective, seated 180° opposite the client.

Items preceded by * (asterisk) are either ill-formed (in fluent speech) or hypothetical (claimed to have once existed).

Unattributed English translations, added in square brackets after original text, are by myself.

Quotation marks align by logical scope: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quotation_marks_in_English_-_Logical_quotation.

Material in single (‘scare’) quotes is not verbatim but either abbreviated, paraphrased or quoted secondhand.

To preserve listing prosody (Wagner 2005), the ‘Oxford’ listing comma (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serial_comma) is avoided.

Cited URLs have been ‘waybacked up’ at archive.org as much as possible.

1. The *Fá*-mily tree is a medieval wave

1.1 The creation of Yorùbá creationism

Sapped by amnesia and enthralled by ethnicity, retrospective social consciousness is prone “to secondary reasoning and to reinterpretations which... obscure the real history of the development of ideas” (Boas 1911, 67, 71, cf. Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, *pave* Vansina 1971). Moderns can’t resist ventriloquizing mute, excavated things like the brass head that Frobenius took from a secondary context in Ilé-Ifè’s Oló.kun Grove and baptised “the Oló.kun, Atlantic Africa’s Poseidon”—not minding that it was “named ‘*Mia*’ [= *Òràmíyàn*] by the natives” (1913, 98, 313, plate facing 308), still less that “most Yorùbá images are not representations of any particular deities” (Adépegba 1983d, 23, cf. 1981/1983a). Colonial archaeologists kept Frobenius’ *Oló.kun* tag but dropped his saltwater exoticism, guessing that this and a few dozen kindred metal trophies “could not have been made far away” from Ifè’s “delicate terracottas in an identical style” (Murray 1941, 73) but rueing that the search for “evidence of bronze-casting... was not achieved” (Willett 1960, 239f.). A fog of “predisposed continuity” (Williams 1977, 116) also cloaks *Ifá*, a binary ‘oracle’ (text processor) whose present-day initiates know no origin for their patron saint *Òrúnmìlàn* than *Òrun*—a place ambiguously identified as “heaven”, “the skies” or “another territory... But *Òrun* later moved away skywards” (Abimbólá 1977, 1, 37 *fn.* 6) unless it’s the “two bottomless wells... the shortest road to the other world” under *Òrun* *Ọba* *Àdó* in Ilàré, Ilé-Ifè (Fábùnmí 1969, 23).

Pie in the sky won’t solve Ifè’s cultural mysteries. Creationism should have died when the science of prehistory debunked the Bible’s fables of Eden and Babel (Schleicher 1848, Darwin 1859, cf. Pfeiffer 1976, Alter 1999, Cavalli-Sforza 2000, *pave* Trubetsky 1923, Baker 1995). In principle and many well-worked examples, cladistic comparison detects events beyond the reach of oral and written memory. Given two separate outcomes of remote development, any nonuniversal, nonaccidental similarity between them is either a trace of passing contact or a relic of initial unity. If these reconstructions are then replayed in a thought experiment running “forwards in time” (Watkins 1962, 7), the conserved inheritance maps onto temporally ‘vertical’ (inter-generational) taxonomic trees representing phylogenetic lineages or literary textual *stemma*, while mutation events traversing a population on ‘horizontal’ (intra-generational) time paths are graphed as intersecting waves of borrowing (Cayley 1857, Schmidt 1872, Meillet 1922). These changes are amplified by ecological niche feedback through “unselected consequences of selection” (Levins & Lewontin 1985, 41, cf. Eldredge & Gould 1972) and Lamarckian leakage from horizontal to vertical modality—a.k.a. constructive transmission, directed variation or group selection (Boyer 1999, Jablonka & Lamb 2005, Kronfeldner 2007, Koster 2008, Nowak & al. 2010).

In ethnic selfportraits however, stigmata of cultural contagion (Sperber 1984, 1999) are airbrushed out. Just as classical Hellenists habitually diss Bernal’s lists (1987, 1997) of Egyptian and Levantine influence on Aegean culture three millennia ago (cf. Burkert 1984/1992, 34 for Semitic Mesopotamia), most Yorùbologues automatically disregard the possibility that all of the *cire perdue* artefacts ever found in modern Ifè—numbering from “only 21” (Èyò 1977, 114) to “[a]round 40” (Blier 2015, 93)—came from somewhere else. A leading art critic is able to doubt every other attribute—“Who do these heads represent, why were they made and how were they used? We may never know...”—but still assume the objects’ “autochthony (regardless of ethnic or lineage identity)” while failing to note that three leading archaeologists queried their provenance (Connah 1968b; Shaw 1970b, 83; Èyò 1977, 122), instead of which she supposes that “Igbo-linked artisan groups... and ritual experts... have come to [Ifè]... and made it their home... Over time associated language differences fell away, with only fragmentary evidence of these groups being retained through enduring names and rituals” (Blier 2015, 41f., 233, 254). Blier intuitively these immigrants’ ethnicity from equivocal clues: subjective resemblances of Ifè *terracotta* keloids to Igbo *ọ̀zọ́ ibí* initiation scars, plus two Igbo-sounding names in the quasibiblical myth of *Mòrèmi* (2015, 40f., cf. Fábùnmí 1969, 17f.), but on closer examination these indices evaporate. (i) Facial decorations of random *tchotchkes* feed confirmation bias *à la* Frobenius (1926, *xvii* = 1949, 32 fig. 8). (ii) The Ifè toponym “*Èsinnirín*” could derive from Igbo *Ọshimili=Orimili* ‘Niger river, *lit.* big water’ (Williamson 1972, 384) but close variants of this tag occur all around the confluence (Baikie 1856, 426), the riverbank is 200 km. from Ifè and mere mention of a ubiquitous tradeword says nothing about anybody’s birthplace. (iii) To equate Ifè’s hostile “*Igbo*” indigenes with modern Igbo-speakers is a colonial fancy (Jeffreys 1935a, 350, Beier 1959, 14f.) that got fresh legs in 1966 amid the Biafra crisis when Dúró Ládíípò had Agbò dancers shout the shibboleth “*Igbo, kéré nù!*” in his musical drama *Mòrèmi* (Beier 1957; 1994, 58, 160, Ògúnléyè 2002, 69).¹ Older Ifè residents preferred more local etymologies: “These ‘wild’ men called themselves ‘Igbo’ because of... behaving like a hawk-like wild bird... called ‘Igbo’... well-known... for its... aggressive nature” (Fábùnmí 1969, 23 cf. Abraham 1958, 28, 287). More plausibly, modern descendants of the legendary Ifè autochthones include the residents of *Ugbò*, an Ikálè fraction 100 km. south of Ifè in Òkitipupa, present Òndó State (Sheba 2002, 29; 2007, 463, cf. Òlómólá 1976, 48, Oyèláràn 1977, 646, Òsúntó.kun 2004, Adéyemí 2018).

Notwithstanding the allure of “Myth Igbo” (Northrup 2000) as a “floating signifier... loadable with any arbitrary symbolic content” (Lévi-Strauss 1950, *xlix*f.), Igbo speakers did arguably play nonmythic roles in cultural prehistory west of the Niger. Igbo decodes fifteen proper names or other lemmas of Edo alias “Bini”—of which two relate to cuprous metallurgy and four to *Iha Ominigbon*, the Edo version of the duplex 4-bit oracle (§§2.4, 2.5, 2.9). On Blier’s scenario, some of these Igboisms (Igboisms in Edo) could make charitable sense of Egharheva’s claim that both arteforms came from “*Úhè*” (1936a,b), but others including ‘dog’ and the four ritual market-days are less likely to be echoes of vanished Igbo-Ifè *X-men* than relics of quotidian exchange between Edo- and Igbo-speaking neighbors sharing basic sociocultural patterns like primogeniture inheritance (Bradbury 1964, 154, Idúuwè *ms.*, Okpehwo 1998). Although a ritual road from Igbo to Edo probably never ran through Ifè, medieval Ifè did verifiably impact the region in a potentially relevant way: costly *ségi* beads of cobalt glass, smelted in quantity in the aforementioned Oló.kun Grove (Willett 1960, 237, Horton 1979, 146, Elúyemí 1986, Lankton & al. 2006, Babalólá 2015), could easily have financed the import of a few dozen yellow-metal masterpieces from hands and places currently unknown (Shaw 1970a, 238f.) which then became models for countless Ifè knockoffs commissioned in the less exacting but no less beautiful medium of local *terracotta* (*pave* Murray 1941, cf. §2.8 below). As for *Ifá*, its canonical story of self-fashioning elicited prudent, forthright Igbo pushback:

Bascom has inferred the political supremacy of Ifè among the Yorùbá kingdoms and the spread of *Ifá* from Ifè to other parts of West Africa. Both inferences are controversial, however. ...As often happens in such matters, it is usually the first example to be widely known and studied that is readily accorded primacy. But the results of progressive investigation in various fields in West Africa, such as those obtained about *cire perdue* art after the Igbo Ukwu investigations, should warn us about premature attributions and interpretations. (Ifemésia 1976, 88)

Ifemésia’s cautious critique is vindicated by comparative data diagnosing oracle transmission from the *Apà* (“Jukun”) empire some five centuries ago (§1.2 below). Intervention is urgent when an essay titled “The diffusion of some Yorùbá artefacts and institutions” can slyly delete thirteen directly contrary words—boldfaced below—from a relevant citation:

...in his [=Shelton’s] 1971 monograph on the Igbo-Ígálá borderland (Nsúká village region), he quoted Talbot that the method of divination in Nsúká “may have derived from Yorùbá *Ifá*”.

(Ojó 1976, 382)

...*Ájá*—the method of divination common in Nsúká—“may have derived from Yorùbá *Ifá* or vice versa” (Talbot 1926, 187), or both systems may have derived from an aboriginal method. (Shelton 1971, 201, boldface added)

1 The story lives on in popular fancies: “Igbo migrated from Ifè —Ooni” (www.vanguardngr.com/2023/10/igbo-migrated-from-ifè-ooni) and many more e.g. www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/800321-nigerian-govt-disowns-textbooks-containing-controversial-yoruba-history.html.

Tendentious or mendacious, Ifè's immaculate conception story masks a hybrid pedigree. Comparison shows indirectly that *babaláwos*—Ifè initiates²—disconnected the old-school 'geomantic' Benue valley intercom addressing ancestors in subterranean "Deads Town" (Tútùolá 1952) and replaced it with a high-tech hotline 'divining' misty messages from an Old Testament-like CEO of Odùduwà, Incorporated (Morton-Williams 1964, 249). In modern Yorùbá, the epithets *Olórun* and *Èdùmàrè/Oló.dùmarè* are near synonyms, roughly 'possessor/epitome of the sky' and 'immensity of heaven', but when *òrun* replaced **imàrè*—"the original word for 'sky'" as Bámgbosé speculates (1972, 30)—it did not thereby cease to be a nominalization of *-run* 'perish' (Abraham 1958, 579), "associated with the idea of death" (Verger 1966, 35), cognate to Igbo *-nwú, ònwú*, 'die, death' (Igwe 1999, 550f., 688). The impetus for such a radical revision is unknown, but a good guess is "the monotheistic bridgehead Islam had created within Yorùbá culture" (Peel 2016a, 543, cf. Talbot 1926, 268, Matory 1994, 496). Two details point to Islamic inspiration for the semantic change: (i) Abraham treats the phrase *-kí.run* as if built on a *hapax* (otherwise unattested) noun **irun* 'Muslim prayers' (1958, 319, 374), but if the root is *-kí* 'greet, salute' then the expression can be plausibly parsed as *-kí.òrun* 'salute *òrun*' (Wenger 1983, 60). (ii) A poem of ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ describes "Muslims" descending from the sky on a rope to rob Òrúnmílà's farm. When Èṣù caught them by burning the rope, they shouted *Salama ké'kùn!* 'Salama (?) has cut (*ké*) the rope (*okùn*)!' (Maupoil 1943a, 488f.).

Ifè's cosmological acrobats performed a classic Feuerbach flip: "the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm" (Marx 1845, 70f./1941, 83).³ But this great leap upward was not monotheism-*manqué*, despite incessant claims that "the role that Yorùbá pagans ascribed to their *òrìṣà*" was one of mere "mediators who transmitted blessings whose ultimate source was God in heaven", "*Òrúnmílà*, the *òrìṣà* of Ifè, became an anticipation of Christ" and Ifè "became 'the Yorùbá Bible'" (Peel 2016a, 542, 544f., cf. Ayéjina 2010, Cox 2010). Insiders say different: "Most of the sacrifices that Ifè priests ask their clients to offer are usually offered to particular gods" (Abímbólá 1976, 37) and even Canon Idòwú, echoing old coasters (Ellis 1894, 36f., Macgregor 1927, 9), concedes that "the Yorùbá do not erect temples for the cult of Oló.dùmarè, neither are images dedicated to Him [sic]" (1962, 141).⁴ Any specific cultic icons encountered in contexts of use were disdained as proof of "fetishism"—the missionaries' own circular, looking-glass Freudian projection onto unknown African minds of their own atavistically Biblical anxiety about committing idolatry of "graven images" (de Brosses 1760, 20, Iacono 1985, 1989, Belting 1990, Besançon 1994).⁵

A sky-based *deus otiosus* 'lazy god' is as vacuous as a spandrel in a cathedral ceiling vault (Gould & Lewontin 1979), but *Oló.run* showered down some real blessings of evolutionary "exaptation" (Gould & Vrba 1982) upon the *Fá*-ithful. (i) *Babaláwos* gained a *télé*-coms monopoly to charge sacrificial rents for sending invisible data packets up and down the cosmic cable.⁶ (ii) *Sàró* (ex-Sierraleonean) "Black Englishmen" immunized themselves to the intended insult of paganism by embracing a Yorùbá version of the *Jehovah-Allah* literary character and joining a "cultural nexus with the non-Nigerian world" (Ayándélé 1969, 25). (iii) Participants in "the Lagosian cultural renaissance of the 1890's" (Matory 1999, 74) midwifed *santerian* syncretism in the Americas (Sansi 2003) and qualified "the religion of Yorùbáland and its diasporas" for its current membership in the spiritual G8 club—"the eight rival religions that run the world" (Prothero 2010, 220).

Every evolutionary breakthrough presents a downside to antiquarians, because any system upgrade makes old data that much harder to read. Enough tracks nonetheless persist to recover outlines of a sequence by which lost-wax copper-alloy icons and the duplex 4-bit oracle moved, not outward from Ifè to the east and north (Brenner 2000, 160) but in the opposite direction, namely south and west towards Ifè via the Niger-Benue confluence. Whether the two techniques diffused together or independently—and propagated by which particular blend of state sponsorship and social marketing—is unknown and perhaps unknowable, but the parallelism of their respective paths is no surprise, given the Benue valley's gateway role in transmitting iron age culture from the savanna to the rainforest zone.

1.2 Historical *Fá*-netics

*Il est temps de prendre nouveaux risques et d'élargir la perspective comparative.*⁷
(Heusch 1986, 295)

Comparison of the 16 array names across localities (cf. Fig. 1) convinced Armstrong that "the spread of this particular divination institution was a relatively recent historical event" (1964b, 137). As his paper's French blurb further clarifies,

La linguistique montre que la diffusion de ce culte sur la côte de Guinée est *bien plus récente* que la séparation des divers langages Kwa entre eux. [Linguistics shows that the spread of this initiation society along the West African coast is *much younger* than the original divergence of the respective Kwa languages from each other.] (1964b, 143f., italics added)

A half-century on, Armstrong's empirical finding against the possible "demic diffusion" (Ammerman & Cavalli Sforza 1971, 686; 1984, 6) of this regionally widespread oracle—as if its unique vocabulary had ever belonged to "the culture of the users of the protolanguage" (Watkins 1989, 785)—can be reconfirmed, and made more precise, as follows:

- (i) By now the labels *Kwa* and *Benue-Congo* have succumbed to "legitimate doubts... concerning the validity of the division between them" (Greenberg 1963, 39 *fn* 13, cf. Mukarovsky 1977, 240). The null hypothesis is to treat the aggregate area, including the traditional "Bantu" zone, as a "dialect continuum" called *Benue-Kwa* (BK) or *East Volta-Congo* (Williamson & Blench 2000, 17f., cf. Elugbe & Williamson 1976, Stewart 1976).
- (ii) "Lexicostatistics" (Swadesh 1952), once an Africanist mainstay (Armstrong 1962, Bennett & Sterk 1977, Schadeberg 1986, Williamson 1989), is observed to generate "objectionable" results (Armstrong 1983, 146) and so "should be rejected" (Campbell 1998, 186). Raw percentages of quickie wordlists may heuristically approximate some of the phylogeny deducible from comparative reconstruction (Embleton 2005, 437), but the time calculations of "glottochronology" fail to converge with calendrical dates obtained by archaeology's grittier techniques, to the point that even a Swadesh apologist must grudgingly concede that "the method is unfortunately least useful for situations we would most like to determine" (Lehmann 1993, 37, cf. Alinei 1991).

2 Literally, 'senior male possessor/epitome of secrets'—but not "priest's father" (ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ifa-divination-system-00146).

3 Thesis 4: "... daß die weltliche Grundlage sich von sich selbst abhebt und sich, ein selbständiges Reich, in den Wolken fixiert" (de.wikisource.org/wiki/Thesen_über_Feuerbach), cf. Feuerbach (1841, 442), Marx (1842, 393), Mauss (1923-24) and Gèdègbè:

Par leurs prières et leurs sacrifices, les hommes «donnent de la force aux *vodun*». Plus les offrandes sont nombreuses et magnifiques, plus les divinités ont de force. ... si leur nombre décroît, les *vodun* s'affaiblissent. (Maupoil 1943a, 57)

The immediate subsequent question—namely, *which* features of social structure appear reflected in the supernatural imagery of each respective 'religion'—begs typological comparison in ethnographic detail, along the lines convincingly pioneered by Testart (1993).

4 Today *Oló.dùmarè* is venerated in the "Indigene Faith of Africa Temple" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6GVcZpPBK8), recalling the neo-Jesuit *Arú Osa* cathedral on Àkpakpá.và Street, Benin-City (thenationonline.net/church-where-oba-of-benin-is-general-overseer) cf. Melzian 1937, 148, Bradbury 1968, 245). Èdó presence on Lagos Island—called *Ekó* in Yorùbá—began as a 15th century *èkó* 'camp/outpost' (Melzian 1937, 34, Agíri & Barnes 1987, 18-20 citing Jones 1983, 24, 40 = Crecelius 1879, 101, 118 = Ulsheimer 1616, cf. also Ryder 1969, 14, Law 1983, 328f., Mann 2007, 27). Lagos *babaláwos* of Èdó heritage included Cromwell Osamaró Ibíe (1986, 1993).

5 Similarly, the concepts of *polytheism* and *pantheon* have been mystified in Greco-Roman studies (Scheid 1985, 2010).

6 "*Agbèrù* (the receiver of sacrifices)" (Abímbólá 1976, 36f.) is phonetically not far from *agbèrò*, the taxi-tout who lives on tips!

7 [Now is the time to take new risks and expand the scope of comparison.]

- (iii) Talk of “diffusion” and “spread” begs to know from where to where. Phonetic differences in oracle jargon show predictable effects of loanword adaptation, pointing to a geography of prehistoric transmission that strikingly matches up with shifts in semantic and ritual repertoires (§1.3) and supporting metaphysics (§1.4).

The following chart, updating Armstrong (1964b, 139) and Peek (1982, 189), samples the spoken names of the oracle’s sixteen simplex 4-bit⁸ signs across a dozen localities between the Bight of Benin and the lower Benue valley.⁹

	<i>Fon-Gbè</i>	NW <i>Yorùbá</i>	NE <i>Yorùbá</i>	<i>Nupe</i>	<i>Ngas</i>	Èdó ᵛ180°	Ìròbò ᵛ180°	<i>Wìgbo</i>	<i>Nrì-Igbo</i>	<i>Nsùkà-Igbo</i> ᵛ180°	<i>Ígálà</i>	<i>Ìdomà</i>
			no tones in source	no tones in source	no tones in source		no tones in source			no tones in source		
◊◊◊◊	Gbè	Ogbè	[Ošika]	[Šikan]	[Šhi]	Ógbi	Ogbi	Ógbi	Óbi/Ógbù	Obi	Èbí	Èbí
◆◆◆◆	Yè kú	Ọyè kú	Ọyèku	Eyako	Kum	Àkó	Ako	Àkwù	Àkwù/Àhwù	Akwù	Àkwù/Ọyèku	Àkwù
◆◊◆◆	(W)ólì	Ìwòrì	Ogori	Gori	Guiri	Òghoi	Oghori	Ògoli	Ọyeri/Ógori	Ogoli	Ògòlì	Ògòlì
◊◆◆◆	Dí	Èdì/Òdì	Ojì	Ejì	[Nwa]	Òdín	Edi/Odi	Òdí	Òdí	[missing]	Ọjì/Òdì	Ọjì
◊◆◆◆	Ab(á)là	Ọbàrà	Qbara	Bara	Mbara	Ọ(v)ba	Q(v)bara	Ọbáí	Ọbala	Qbara	Ọbàrà	Ọblà
◆◆◆◊	Aklán/Akàná	Ọkànràn	Ọkọna	Kana	Gina	Ọkan	Ọkanran	Ọkaí	Ọkala	Ọkara	Ọkàrà/Ọkọnò	Ọklà
◊◊◆◆	Lósò	Ìròsùn	Orosun	Rusu	Lusu	Ọrúùhu	Urhur(h)u	Úlúshù	Úrúru	Uhu	Òlòrù	Òlò
◆◆◆◊	Wòlín/Wèlé	Ọwónrín	Qga	Ega	[Chiyong]	Ọghác	E/Aghare	Ọgá(í)	Àyáí/Àgáí	Egali	Ègálí	Ègálí
◊◊◊◆	Gùdà	Ọgúndá	Oguntá	Guta	Kura	Ìghítan	Ighite	Èjíte/Ọgúte	Íjíte/Ọgúte	Ijite/Ogute	Èjítá/Ọgwute	Èjítá
◆◊◊◊	Sá	Ọsá	Osa	Esa	Saa	Ọhá	Ọrha	Ọshá	Ọrá	Oha	Ọrá	Ọlá
◊◆◆◊	Lètè	Ìrètè	Irètè	Etia	Lete	Ète	Ete/?Eke	Ète	Ète/Èke	Ete	Ètè/Ọlètè	Ete
◊◆◆◊	Túlá	Òtú(r)á	Otura	Turia	Toro	Ètúre	Erhurè	Ètúle	Òtúre	Oture	Òtúlá	Òtlé
◆◆◆◆	Trúkpe	Òtúrúpòn	Qtaru	Rakpan	Matpa	Èrhóxuà	Erhokpo/a	Àtúkpa	Àtúrúpka	Ètúrúpka	Àtúnúkpa	Ètrúkpa
◆◊◆◆	Ká	Ìká	Oyinkan	Yikan	Mishpa	Èká	Èka	Àká	Àká	Èka	Èká	Èká
◊◆◆◆	Ché	Ọsé	Qkin	Arikin	Kye	Ọsé	Ose	Ọsé	Ọsé	Ose	Ọché	Ọché
◆◆◆◊	Fú	Ọfún	Ofun	Efu	[Kapla]	Ọhún	Ophu	Ọfú	Ọhú	Ohu	Ọfú	Ọfú

Figure 1. Comparison of the names of the sixteen 4-bit oracle arrays across a dozen localities

All the above items are morphologically opaque, lacking etymologies in any known human language.¹⁰ No phonetic or semantic match exists to any oracle of the sahel or Indian Ocean for which I have been able to access relevant data (Trautmann 1939, 149, 155, cf. Maupoil 1943b, Nadel 1954, 55–64, Kassibo 1992, Eglash 1997, 116, Colley 2005, Sow 2009, Jansen & Kanté 2010), therefore except for the visual arrays alone, it’s false to assert that “Ifá, Fá and ‘Sixteen Cowries’... derive directly from the Arabian prototype” (Binsbergen 1997, 230, cf. Dianteill 2024). Secondary accretions do occur in locales where both traditions are practiced side-by-side, but lacking separation in space they’re not reconstructible to an early stage. In Ígálà for example, seven signs of *Ifá-anwa* the seed oracle share glosses with geometrically congruent signs of *Ifá-ebutu* the sand oracle: *Alubiala*=*Atunukpa* ‘mother’, *Atelikí*=*Ebi* ‘journey’, *Alekumola*=*Eka* ‘maiden’, *Inachaja*=*Oloru* ‘laughter’, *Atamain*=*Ogoli* ‘quadruped’, *Ajema*=*Ọyèku* ‘meeting’, *Enikiladi*=*Otula* ‘quarrelling’ (Boston 1974, 352–59 no tones), but none of the seven semantic overlaps repeats outside Ígálà, and *anwa* and *ebutu* labels share no phonetic content at all. Another candidate for a late sahelian overlay is the consonant string *r-m-l*, found in *Ọrúnmílà* the name of the *Ifá* protagonist and in the Arabic phrase *er-reml* ‘[writing] on sand’ borrowed in Yorùbá as (*batí*) *ramli* alias *yanrín tílè* ‘sand pressing’ (Ọgúnbiyí 1952, Hébert 1961, 117, Morton-Williams 1966, 407, Bascom 1969, 8, cf. Oduyoyè 1971, Gleason 1973, 15, Parés 2016, 379 *fn* 83). *Ifá* and its successors use a sand-like transcription where the *babaláwo* manipulates *ikin* seeds eight times in an odd-even lottery so as to press two columns of four binary bits in *iyèrè osùn* powder on the *ọpón* tray (Abimbólá 1976, 28f., Trautmann 1939, 33, Maupoil 1943, 193f., 244).¹¹ The joint presence in *Ifá* of these two demonstrably sahelian features is simpler to explain as a single complex borrowed once than as two unrelated borrowing events, moreover both traits are limited to *Ifá* and its direct successors further west, therefore *Ifá* acquired them from late contact with local sahelians. Otherwise, had either *Ọrúnmílà* or finger-tallied lots been part of the Benue-valley oracle, vestiges of one or both ought to show up in some oracle sites which are geographically separate from *Ifá* and its direct descendants—contrary to observation.¹²

Secondary features aside, all the array names in Figure 1 (minus a handful of apparent intrusions, in square brackets) are closely similar in sound across all 12 oracle localities. As Armstrong perceived, the phonetic mutations between these places are smaller for the oracle terms than for non-oracle vocabulary, leading him to rightly conclude that the oracle’s presence across this area is much younger than the historical divergence of the host languages among themselves (1964a,b). This inference can be further focused by more detailed and comprehensive evidence currently available.

Adetúgbò (1967, 201) maps two sound shifts affecting NW Yorùbá—roughly, the Ọyó kingdom—that reduce a *g*-like (voiced velar) consonant to *w* (bilabial glide) as in *ogbe* > *owe* ‘proverb’, *ogba* > *awa* ‘1 pl’, *ogbo* > *owo* ‘a town in Oñdó’] and in *gwi* > *wi* ‘say’, *gwó* > *wó* ‘collapse’, *egwá* > *ewá* ‘ten’. The forms in Figure 1 indicate that *Ifá* jargon was caught up in one or both of these mutations. Comparison with Èdó *Ọghoi* and *Ọghác* suggests that the NW forms *Ìwòrì* and *Ọwónrín* attest *gh* > *w* deelarization.¹³ Ígálà and Nupe, lacking such a rule, gave a different treatment to oracle words with *gh*,

⁸ A bit is a binary digit, taking a value of either 0 or 1. ...Eight-bit bytes, also known as octets, can represent 256 values (2⁸ values, 0–255). ...“Word” is a term for a slightly larger group of bits, but it has no standard size.

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bit)

⁹ Sources given in §3.2 below. The ᵛ180° rotations are shown in Figure 3 below. An earlier version of Figure 1 was pirated (sans diacritics) in a blog by *omo-oba* Justice Fálóyé web.archive.org/web/20180717191653/http://asbejournal.org/perspectives and appears repeatedly in a video blur of a 2018 summit of Ifè creationists www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4BnWY6icns bankrolled by Ọmí Ọgúnwùsi the current *Oba* of Ifè. Fálóyé ignores the difference between inherited chromosomes and borrowed culture in order to support Ọgúnwùsi’s paternalistic Igbo-philía (2019a,b), rightly denounced as “fallacious history and pseudoscience” by the Yorùbá nationalist Oyèéyemí (2019). But Oyèéyemí’s standard-issue ethnic chauvinism is not a viable remedy for Fálóyé’s *Fá*-ntasies.

¹⁰ Despite Ọbáyemí’s view that “the etymology of the sixteen basic *odù* of *Ifá* are entirely meaningful [sic] in current Nupe” (1979a, 175).

¹¹ In both *Fá* and *Ifá* but in neither *Ati* nor *Yanrín tílè* (Maupoil 1943a, 244, 1943b, 21, Bascom 1969, 8), the finger-marking tally reverses the even/odd polarity of the binary lots. In 1948, Rouch filmed an example of the sahelian sand calculus in *Les magiciens de Wanzerbé Niger* www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eVjB-9j-fg. A recent recording of Togolese *Afá* shows the numbers inscribed sahel-style on the ground while a square-frame *ọpón*-like tray sits unused to one side: culturerealm.com/new-blog/2016/3/22/kipizqgo3rxcpqd0wnlqkizbbnfjaa.

¹² Egharhevba (1936a, 3) names *Ọrúnmílà* as the teacher of *Ọminighon*, founder of the *Iba* oracle alias *ogúègga*, but fails to mention that *Ọrúnmílà* is also the name of the Yorùbá-speaking *Ifá* oracle operating in Èdó separately from *Iba* (Melzian 1937, 159, Gore 2007a, 36).

¹³ The Ilorin transcription “Gwónrín” (Clarke 1939, 255) could show a middlebelt source or improvised spelling of phonetic *ᵛwónrín*.

strengthening the sound to *g*. An imaginable reverse scenario, with Ûrhobo and Èdó weakening original *g > gb*, flunks the simplicity test, since a language already possessing indigenous *g* has no reason to tamper with a borrowed one.

It follows that the names of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ and $\blacklozenge\diamond\diamond$, repeated in (1a) below, were already present in the Òyó area by the time that NW delevelarization had gotten into gear. But when was that? A successful sound change needs two generations to convert from a socially marked, restricted style to an unconscious, general communal norm (Labov 1963, Akéré 1982) and this intrinsic timelag adds a margin of error of tens—but not hundreds—of years. Adétúgbò regards delevelarization as “one of the oldest characteristic differentiating factors between SEY and NWY” (1967, 201) and an Òyó tradition held to be “essentially historical” correlates “the introduction of... the cult of Ifá... from the Àwóri town of Òtá” with “Alààfin Ajíbóyèdè’s victory” in the late 16th century over “the Nupe threat” (Law 1976, 43f.).¹⁴ The resulting inference that Ifá is at least 400 years old in Òyó is consistent with separate evidence that delevelarization ceased soon thereafter: Portuguese *goiaba* [gwoyáβa] ‘guava’ was adopted as *gúrúbà* ~ *gúrúfà* ~ *gólóbà* ~ *gílóbà* and did not become **wúrúbà* ~ **wúrúfà* etc., just as English *guava* became *gúúfà* ~ *gúúfà* and not **wáfà* ~ **wófà* (Abraham 1958, 257; Awóyalé 2008).

Ifá’s array names in NW Yorùbá are thus older than an early European loanword, but they are younger than basic (inherited) vocabulary as shown by the contrast between the oracle terms in (1a) and ordinary lexical roots whose bilabial consonants in Yorùbá come from velar stops of the Benue-Kwa protolanguage (1b). Two considerations show that the sound shift in (1b) is the older. (i) It’s more *extensive*, covering not just a Yorùbá subregion but the whole of the Yorùbá-Ìgálà (Macro-Yorùbá) cluster, as shown by the *b* in Ìgálà ‘hunger (n.)’ versus the *g* in Ìgálà $\diamond\diamond\diamond$. (ii) It’s also more *intensive*: more phonetic features are affected by changing a velar stop to a bilabial stop or glide, *g > b > w*.¹⁵

		Benue-Kwa									
		BK2					BK1				
		Y-I									
		Gbè	NWYorùbá	Ìgálà	Nupe	Ìdòmà	Àkan	Èdó	Ìgbo	Proto-“Bantu”	
(1a)	$\diamond\diamond\diamond$ $\blacklozenge\diamond\diamond$	(W)óli “Anlọc”/ŋólí/Wèlẹ	Ìwòrì Ọwónrín	Ọ̀gòlì Ègálì	“Gorì” “Ega”	Ọ̀gòlì Ègálì		Ọ̀ghoi Ọ̀ghác	Ọ̀gori/Ọ̀yeri Àgári/Àyári		
(1b)	‘hunger (v.)’ ‘hunger (n.)’ ‘journey’ ‘needle/thorn’ ‘pierce/split/sew’ ‘bend/bent’ ‘cowry’ ‘buy’	-wù ebi abi -bẹ -bọ -hó/-wó	 ebi abi -bẹ -wó owó	 ebi ewó	-gùn ezi ekin -gá	-ŋmú ẹyẹ igyẹ -gá	 -chwá kòtów	 ọ̀kóm -gia -gọ	-g(h)ú ág(h)ùú/ó íj(h)ẹ àg(h)ìg(h)á -g(h)á -gó/-g(h)ọ ég(h)ó -g(h)ó	*-guid ‘seize’ *-gend *-gua *-gòb *-gùd	

The inference that NW delevelarization predated the Portuguese entails that the names in (1a) were already pronounced with *w* before Ifá reached the 18th century palace of Àgbómẹ (alias “Abomey”) from Òyó (Herskovits 1938, 104 fn 1).¹⁶ This is consistent with the Fòn treatment of Yorùbá words borrowed presumably around the same time: Yorùbá *g* was transmitted to Fòn intact (2a) whereas *k* was labialized (in nasal syllables) and *b* and some *w* were weakened to *v* (2b).¹⁷

		Fòn-Gbè < Yorùbá	
(2a)	‘ <i>Cola nitida</i> ’ ‘[name of supernatural]’	gólò Gún	górò (cf. Hausa <i>gwórò</i>) Ọ̀gún
(2b)	‘seeds of <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> <i>idolatraca</i> ’ ¹⁸ ‘oracle casting lots’ [cult headship title] ‘secret/concealment’ ‘ <i>Dialium guineense</i> ’	kwin vo-de duwo àwo aviní	ikin ibò olúwo awo àwín

Other data indicate that the oracle arrived earlier, further east. In the Macro-Èdó cluster (alias “Edoid”), the phonetic pattern of oracle-specific terms (3a) matches some items of basic vocabulary (4a), suggesting that the oracle’s arrival in Èdó proper (alias *Bini*), Isóko and Ûrhobo was relatively near in time to the differentiation of these languages from each other. The date of Macro-Èdó separation is indeterminate, but unlikely to be less than 500 years ago.¹⁹

- 14 Àhórì (“Àwóri”) is a southern Ègbá group adjoining Lagos (Abraham 1958, 178 citing Blair 1940). The story that “the Ifá oracle was brought [to Yorùbá] by a Nupe man” (Beier 1956, 27) may telescope the Ajíbóyèdè tradition due to ambiguous translation of the Yorùbá word *tápà*, which can indeed refer narrowly to Nupe as in poetic lyrics—*Ayèè gba Tápa, ó kólé Igunnu* ‘As soon as a Nupe gets comfortable, a towering house [i.e. dance mask] sprouts up’ (Abraham 1958, 83, Owómoyèlè 2005, 154)—but which can also denote the wide savanna zone known as *Kákànda* including, other language areas such as Ebira and Ìgálà (Ọ̀báyẹmí 1980, 158f., 1983).
- 15 The labels BK1/2 are defined in §0.4 above. In (1a), “Anlọc” is Adzà [Ajá] (Kligue[h] 2011b). *ŋólì* is Èuè (Surgy 1981a, 43) as are all Gbè data in (1b) except the second form of ‘cowry’ which occurs in Fòn *èkẹ̀-wo* ‘cowry’ (Segurolo & Rassinoux 2000, 488). In Àkan, *g > k/ch* devoicing is regular (Stewart 1993, 34; 2002, 219) as is palatalization in Nupe and Igbo ‘journey’. The nasal stop in Ìdòmà ‘hunger (v.)’ matches nasal prosody in Nupe and aspiration/murmur in southern Igbo, where dotted *ChV* is the outcome of **CnV* (Williamson 1973a, 117f., 1973b, Ladefoged & al. 1976). Èdó *igbo* ‘cowrie’ demands a separate explanation. In Àgbọ—adjacent to Èdó at the west edge of Macro-Igbo—the root ‘buy’ is *-ḡó* whose consonant is a possible source for the voiced velar spirant *gb* [ɣ], however *gb* can’t be the unique source of Yorùbá *w* in (1b), given the nonspirant *g* in Èdó ‘bend’.
- 16 In Èuè “an initial arrival of *Afá* from Ajá (Tádó) was followed by a second one, from Òyó” (Surgy 1981a, 22 cf. Herskovits 1938, 104, Kligue[h] 2001, 199). The Tádó route may explain the oracle tray obtained at Alàdà c.1650 from a “vassal of the Great King of Benin” (Jones 1994, 29, 36, Parés 2016, 115). “Ifá” and “Yorùbá” identifications of this item, divined by Drewal & al. (1989a, 70, 1989b, 21), are as arbitrary as their “nonsense... dating” and “amusing... attribution” (Jones 1994, 37, 93) of ivory bracelets in the same collection (1989b, 106). Èdó (“Benin”) inspiration is no less likely on formal grounds for any of the tray’s carved icons, all of which are *mute* (*pace* Abiódún 2016). Moreover, direct Èdó-Àlàdà trade is widely held to have been ongoing already at the time (e.g. Curnow 1983, 177).
- 17 Cf. Maupoil (1943a, 218f.). The second element in *vo-de* may denote ‘amulet’ (Höftmann & Ahohunkpanzon 2003, 143).
- 18 The tree is also known in Yorùbá as *òpẹ Ifá* (Abraham 1958, 275, 523, Verger 1997, 601, Èhigiamusoe 2013, 210, Abiódún 2014, 14).
- 19 In (3a), the Èuè forms are from Hamberger (2011, 602) and Westermann (1905, 130, cf. Bertho 1936, Kligue[h] 2001) while the Mìnà and Ebira forms are from Gaillard (1907, 119 via Maupoil 1943a, 4 fn 2) and Wilson-Haffenden (1927, 29) respectively. In (3b), the Ìgálà form is from Clifford (1936, 398). The Isóko form in (3a) is vague between bilabial and labiodental articulation, whereas ‘urinate’ (4a) is labiodental in Isóko but bilabial in Uvbie (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 15 fn 4; Elugbe 1989, 63, 219). For ‘breeze’ (4b), Elugbe (1989, 170) gives only a reconstructed Macro-Èdó protoform without citing modern reflexes.

		Benue-Kwa													
		BK2						BK1							
		Gbè		Y-I		N-E		Macro-Èdó				Macro-Ìgbo		Proto-“Bantu”	
		Èuè	Mínà	Fòn	Yorùbá	Ígálà	Nupe	Ebira	Ìdòmà	Èdó	Ùrhobo	Ìsòkò	Uvbiè	Macro-Ìgbo	Proto-“Bantu”
(3a)	[oracle name] ◆◆◆◆	Afá/Afá “Fu”	Iphá	Fá Fú	Ifá Ófún	Ifá Ófú	Eba “Efu”	Èpa/Èba Ófú	Ìha Òhún	Èpha/Èvwa “Ophu”	Èva “Ovu”	Áfa/Éfa/É(p)ha Ófú/Óhú			
(3b)	[place name]	Ifè/Ùhè						“Ifè”				Úhè			
(4a)	‘debt-pawn’ ‘urinate’ ‘fly/blow [wind]’	àwòbá	iwòfá		swàfá		-bóli -bè	ìyòha (-phá ‘pay’) ijova -hiò -phé -vé -vbé -hie				-fé/-phé/-hé		*pep	
(4b)	‘wash [cloth]’ ‘breeze/wind’	...fáfe	-fò		-fò		-fo efè	-hò -fò -hò -fò [*fè ...]				úfèrè/ìhuhe		*pepo	

Also deducibly, the items in (3a) did not move from Yorùbá to Èdó. Not recently, because Èdó fails to change *f* to *b* in modern loans, else a Catholic padre in Benin-City should be **èbadá* not *èfadá* (Melzian 1937, 28). Likewise Ìsòkò and Ùrhobo have no reason to alter *f*—a sound that they already possess—in a borrowed word. The remaining possibility is that the items in (3a) reached Macro-Èdó in time to undergo older sound shifts in the cluster, and that the donor was not Yorùbá-speaking. Elugbe (1986) reconstructs the [h=ph=v] correspondence (4a) as **p*—a consonant produced with light (unreleased) constriction—in contrast to **f* for the [h=f=h] set (4b). If the words in (3a) had *f* when they entered Macro-Èdó, Ùrhobo and Ìsòkò should have *f* and *b* respectively, not *ph* and *v*. Therefore the source for (3a) in Macro-Èdó did not contain **f* at any time, ruling out a Yorùbá source for the Èdó *Ìha* oracle, *pace* Egharheva (1936b).

(3a) helps to narrow down where Yorùbá obtained the array names and the name *Ifá*. Yorùbá shifts *p* to *b* in modern loans like *béba* ‘paper’, *sòbù* ‘shop’, *bèbùsi* ‘Pepsi™’ and *Bickering* ‘Pickering’, but *v* becomes *f* as in *fídìò* ‘video’ and *f* is also the fate of **p* (unreleased/light/lenited *p*) as in *káfinítà* ‘carpenter’.²⁰ Therefore Yorùbá—or Ígálà, having the same inventory of labial consonants—could have acquired the names in (3a) from a language that pronounced them with any labial consonant except for *b* or released (non-light) *p*.²¹ Such a language is neither Nupe nor modern Èdó, but could have been another language in the Èdó cluster or an older stage of Èdó itself. The latter probability is increased by the match of nasality in the name of ◆◆◆◆, the matching initial vowels of *Ifá* and *Ìha*, and the fact that Èdó imperial “rule undoubtedly extended, at least from the 16th century” across the Yorùbá-speaking coastal fringe (Bradbury 1957, 21).²²

Reconstructing the oracle name with **p* fits the middle belt reflexes. Ìdòmà has *Èpa* and *Èba* in the Àkwéyà and Òtùkpó dialects respectively (Abraham 1951, 132; Amali & Armstrong 1968, 43; Kasfir 1989, 87 *fn.* 19 and *p.c.*). Both places have indigenous *p*, *b* and *f*, and both lack *v* (Armstrong 1983, 140) but it would be odd to borrow *v* as *p* and easier for **p* to become *p* or *b* indifferently.²³ Speakers of Ngas (alias “Angas”) call the oracle either “Pa” or “Peh” (Danfulani 1995, 88, no diacritics) and it’s unlikely that the source had a *b*, *f* or *v* because Ngas has all three sounds (Burquest 1973). Modern *b* in the oracle name also lacks internal motivation in Nupe, which natively has both *p* and *f*, so unless the *b* is a random event, it also points to a source like **p* which is halfway between *p* and *b* on the phonation (VOT) scale.²⁴

In the Macro-Ìgbo cluster, correspondence sets in the oracle name (5a), ritual terms (5b) and general vocabulary (5c) show weakening (lenition) of reconstructed **f* or **p*. The irregularity of the Ñri reflexes in (5b) with *b* not *f* points to horizontal transmission (borrowing) of these items, versus the inherited pattern (5c) that includes (5a).²⁵

		Macro-Ìgbo					
		Ágbò	Ònichà	Ñri	Nsúkà	Mbàisén	Èhugbò
(5a)	[oracle name]	Éfa	Áfa/Áva	Áfa/Áva	Éha	Áfa	
(5b)	‘patrilineage icon’ ◆◆◆◆	òfò	òfò/òvò	òhwò Óhú	òhò “Ohu”	òfò	òfò
(5c)	‘sauce’	ófe	ófe/óve	ófe/óve	óhe	ófe	óhe
	‘stomach’	éfò	áfò/ávò	áfò/ávò	èhò	áfò	èhò

These phonetic facts converge on an etymology for the oracle name based on a “regional identity which... in the 16th century... linked the peoples producing and trading salt in Nigeria’s Benue river valley” (Shain 2005, 246, cf. Áfigbo 2005b, 71). The salt funded a state whose epithet—*Kwàràràfáa* or *Kororofa*—combined Jukun *apà* ‘person’ with a term for woven grass parcels, in Hausa *kwàróorò* (Àjàyí & Alagoa 1980, 232, cf. Abraham & Mai 1946, 593, 986, Hodgkin 1960, 31, Shimizu 1971, 2, Adamu 1984, 281 *fn.* 59). In the 17th century, Borno expelled this salt polity from “the upper Gongola valley” to “south of the Benue” (Webster 1975, 11, 17) and a “region... known as *Àpa*” (Erim 1981, 15). The

20 Abraham (1958, 357), Bânjò & al. (1991, 181, 287), Awóyalé (2008, *p.c.*), Fálana (2001). Other outcomes are possible in case of more extreme simplification like *sábùkèti* ‘certificate’ (Bânjò & al. 1991, 43). Yorùbá-English bilinguals can say “*pépa* (not *béba*) ‘conference paper’” (Bámgbósé 1986, 60) and even play with spelling meta-pronunciation so that a *piece of paper* becomes a *képís of képékpá*.

21 Some Hausa speakers borrow *p* as *f*, e.g. *sílífa* ‘slipper’, *fásinja* ‘passenger’ (Greenberg 1941, 322; Jaggar 2001, 50, 53), others turn a *ceiling fan* into a “sailing pan” (E. Omolúabi *p.c.*). Linguistic evidence apart, Hausa speakers can’t be excluded from the oracle history, given the importance of *Abakwa-riga*, “pagan” (nonmuslim) Hausa-speaking refugees from the Fulani *jihād* in the Benue valley in the early 19th century (Ruxton 1907, 381 via Rubin 1970a, 141). Erim calls them “the Abakpa people (Hausa)” (1981, 23, no diacritics).

22 In the 17th century, Èdó hegemony reached the Àkan-speaking area via coastal routes (Jones 1983, 68 citing Brun 1624, 38), cf. *fn.* 4 above). Gbè folklore (Bertho 1936, 360) links the personified “Afa” oracle to Àgbádárigi [“Badagri”] which was “populated mainly by Àwóri who settled there at the time of the [Èdó] domination” (Abraham 1958, 157). Èdó agents followed this route to traffick eastern Yorùbá speakers, who they called *Olùkù mí*—a shibboleth meaning ‘my buddy’ and pronounced *Unúkumí* in western Igbo (Thomas 1914a). In modern Èdó, the expression proverbially signifies incomprehensible speech (Prof. U. Usuanlele *p.c.*). The “alternative etymology” of *Olùkù mí* floated by Lovejoy & Ojó (2015, 364) is pure postmodern fancy.

23 Thus English speakers may parse French unaspirated initial *p* as a token of *b*, turning *Paul* into a *ball*. Armstrong (1983, 142) finds no [p=b] correspondence within the Ìdòmà cluster, and 4 out of the 11 Macro-Ìdòmà varieties surveyed fail to contrast *p* and *f*.

24 Cf. Ladefoged (1972). In Nupe, the phonetic split between *Eba* and “*èfu*” separates -bè ‘blow [wind]’ (4a) and èfè ‘breeze’ (4b) and divides the loanword *áfátà* ‘Cola acuminata’ (Banfield 1914, 22) from its presumed source, Yorùbá *abàtá*. Okene Ebira lacks *f* though it has *v*; a more southern dialect “has *f* or *sh* in place of [Okene] *h*” (Ladefoged 1964, 33, 1968, 58).

25 Èhugbò (5b) is also irregular. The evolution of **f* and **p* in Macro-Ìgbo (“Igboid”) is inconclusive because Williamson (1973b, 2000, cf. Williamson & Ohiri-Aníché 1996) adopts the Neogrammarian fallacy that a reconstructed protolanguage reflects all irregularities of all daughter languages so as to enjoy the luxury to need only simplification rules to reach attested outcomes (cf. Anttila 1972, 188f.).

Benue commodity may echo in $\diamond\diamond\diamond/\diamond\diamond\diamond$ where *egbínrín iyò* ‘bags of salt’ are used in *òrun* ‘heaven’ to bribe the *onibodé* ‘gatekeeper’ on the road to Àjàlá who molds *orí*-destinies for reincarnation on the earth (Abímbólá 1975, 178-207).

The bare Jukun autonym persists with varied geographic meanings. In Ígálà legend, the *Ifá* oracle was used against “*Apa*” invaders, where “*Apa* and *Ichi* frequently stand for East and West in everyday speech” (Boston 1968, 24, 200 correcting Seton 1928, 270, no tones in source). Present “Ìdòmà, Ebira and Ígálà often describe themselves as being related to the Jukun and are sometimes jointly referred to as *Apa people*” (Ọbáyemí 1980, 160). In 2009 a wealthy Ìdòmà-speaking ‘militician’ (general>senator) unsuccessfully lobbied his colleagues to create an Ìdòmà-majority “*Apa State*”.²⁶

Any appeal to Jukunology rests upon a notoriously speculative literature, consumable with some grains of *kwàróórò*.²⁷ However, evidence for *Apà* (“Jukun”) as the oracle’s remote geographic source goes beyond mere phonetic resemblance to the reconstructed **A’pa* ethnic name. A terse colonial report summarizes legends describing *Apà* hegemony as

a theocracy of some sort, with temporal and spiritual power vested in the *Asum* or king. One is led to suppose that they were not numerous, but owed their power to the possession of an oracle deemed infallible. Owing to this superior “juju” they kept a loose hold over numbers of pagan states who paid them a voluntary tribute... (Ruxton 1907, 379f.)

It’s unclear if Ruxton had in mind a stationary judicial shrine like “Yaku” (Meek 1931, 276-84), analogous to *Chí ukwu* of Árù (alias “Arochukwu”) or *Ọgwugwu* of “Ọkija” (Díké & Èkèjiùbá 1990, Ellis 2008), as opposed to a guild of itinerant psychotherapists like *Ifá*. Both types reportedly coexisted in *Apà* as well as in the roughly contemporaneous Nri, and these two polities displayed another functional parallel: the use of a “secret” argot by their respective agents.²⁸

A colonial source reports that the Ebira version of the oracle was “learned from the [Ì]gbo tribe south of the Benue” (Wilson-Haffenden 1927, 27), and other phonetic details suggest that Nri was the oracle’s gateway across the confluence. (6) shows that the sound written “gb” in the name of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ is limited to a contiguous area including Gbè, Yorùbá, Macro-Èdó, western Igbo and one Nri variant; elsewhere it has plain *b* or else is a phonetically unrelated item. In the standard Igbo orthography of 1961, the digraph “gb” spells phonetic [ɓ], a bilabial implosive (Ladefoged & al. 1976) as reflected in well-intentioned, improvised colonial spellings like “Ibwo” and “Ib’o” (Thomas 1913b). Èdó, Yorùbá and other nearby languages that lack implosives regularly borrow Igbo [ɓ] as labiovelar plosive [gb], as in their pronunciation of the ethnonym *Igbo* itself (Baikie 1856, 288). Nonesoteric Igbo has no *b* ~ [ɓ] alternations, but the Nri *dihia* recorded in the Appendix saying the name of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ consistently produced *b* before *i* and [ɓ] before *u*. Secondly, it’s remarkable that the geographic split between orthographic “gb” (plosive or implosive) and plain *b* in the name of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ matches the distribution of continuant *gh/y* versus stop *g* in the names of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ and $\diamond\diamond\diamond$. For both these patterns (6) and (1a+), Nri is the point of greatest internal diversity, and thus, by the logic of demographic drift (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 42f.), the presumptive diffusion point from conservative to innovative zones.²⁹

		<i>area of innovations</i>										
		Fòn-Gbè	NWYorùbá	Èdó	Ùrhobo	W Igbo	Nri-Igbo	Ígálà	Ìdòmà	NE Yorùbá	Nupe	Ngas
(6)	◇◇◇◇	Gbè	Ogbè	Ógbi	Ogbi	Ógbi	Ógbù/Óbi	Èbí	Ébí	[Oṣika]	[Ṣikan]	[Shi]
(1a+)	◆◆◆◆	(W)óli	Ìwòrì	Òghoi	Oghori	Ògoli	Òyeri/Ògori	Ògòlì	Ògòlì	“Ogori”	“Gori”	“Guiri”
	◆◆◆◇	Wèlè	Ọwónrín	Ọghác	E/Aghare	Ọgá(ŋ)í	Àyári/Àgári	Ègálí	Ègálí	“Ọga”	“Ega”	[Chiyyong]

Variants of $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ and $\diamond\diamond\diamond$ attest a distinct, intersecting wave: Ngas, Nupe and Gbè have *s* versus Ìdòmà *l* while the Igbo, Èdó and Yorùbá-Ígálà clusters are each internally split between *s* and *r* (7a). The same pattern appears in general vocabulary (7b). Akinkugbé (1978, 176, 545-60) explains Yorùbá vs. Ígálà as rhotacism *s* > *r* as in the lenition of Latin **flōs-is* ‘flower gen. sg.’ > *flōris* (Meillet 1924, 74, Buck 1933, 133, 192), cf. the Yorùbá-internal doublets *-ṣò/-rò* ‘descend, dangle’ and *orí.sun/orí.run* ‘source (of flow), origin’ (Abraham 1958, 574, 595, 600, Fábùnmi 1969, 4, Bǎñjò 1991, 262). For the Igbo cluster, Williamson reconstructs a “voiceless tap” that “could perhaps have developed from *sh*, a sound in which the blade of the tongue is necessarily retracted. (I have been told that such a voiceless tap occurs in some dialects not far from Ọnicha...)” (1973b, 13). This tap shows up in the colonial spelling of Nri as “Ndrì” (Jeffreys 1935).³⁰

		Fòn-Gbè	NWYorùbá	Nupe	NEYorùbá	Èdó	W Igbo	area of rhotacism				Ngas
(7a)	<div> <div>◊◊◆◆</div> <div>◆◊◊◊</div> </div>	Lósò	Ìròsùn	“Rusu”	“Orosun”	Òrúúhu	Ùlúshù	Òlòrù	Urhur(h)u	Ùrùrù	Òlò	“Lusu”
		Sá	Ọsá	“Esa”	“Osa”	Ọhá	Ọshá	Ọrá	Ọrha	Ọrá	Ọlá	“Saa”
(7b)	‘hang, tie’		so					ro			lò	
	‘seed, fruit’		èso					èro				
	‘noonday’		Ọsọ̀n					Ọrọ̀(ka)				
	‘roast, ooze’		sun				shù	ro	rho	rù		

²⁶ See www.idomanationalforum.org.ng/inf.php, www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2009/12/22/4544995.htm.

²⁷ Jukun is enmeshed in the mythic “Hamitic” conquest (Meinhof & v Luschan 1912, Palmer 1931, cf. MacGaffey 1978) which, race fantasies apart, presumes “unwarranted extension backwards in time of 19th-century Fulani political and military structures” (Rubin 1970a, 189, cf. Law 1984). Other mixups are phonetic. When Meek wrote variously *Wapá*, *Apa*, *apa-Jukú* and *apa-Jukun* (1931, 14-17), the circumflex of nasality on “*Wapá*” may be contagion from the distinct ethnonym (*A*)*kpa* = (*I*)*kpan* (Shimizu 1971, 2) enhanced by dim European perception of *kp*. Conversely, Baikie omits the nasal in his own *Akpa* (1856, 433), an oversight that probably birthed Meek’s wild etymology of the name of the Cross River seaport as “Atakpa, or ‘king of the Akpa’ or Apa” (1931, 28). Meek’s phonetic fuzziness in turn begat Áfiigbo’s carelessly twinned “name *Apa* or *Akpa*... to refer to the Jukun” (1977, 137) and Alagoa’s assured citation of “[t]he name *Akpa* by which the Jukun are identified in the Cross River region...” (1980, 60), cf. Nwàwá (1991, 309 *fn* 10).

²⁸ The *nám hēne* argot of “Jukun” was “spoken by *báhehe* ‘priests, kingmakers’” (Storch 2004, 344). Nri *òlu* argot (literally ‘neck’ i.e. concealed voice) was used by *òzò ichi* men acting as “eyes and ears” of the Ágbàlà stationary oracle and by *Afa* specialists “employed... by the Ágbàlà” (Ọnwụjọgwù 1981, 142, Manfredi 1991, 269f. cf. §1.4 below). The Nri network may have operated in Ígálà in medieval times (Ọguagha & Ọkpoko 1984, 215, Ọguagha 1989, 46f.) and was active in north Nsúkà c. 1900 (Shelton 1965a, 123) and at Umùlérì and Agulérì in 1967 (Ọnwụjọgwù 1981, 166). In 1977, Nkàma Ọkpánj my host in Èhugbò (“Áfikpo”) pointed out two tall visitors with *ichi* (forehead keloids) standing in Eké market and described them as Nri mediators invited to arbitrate a local dispute.

²⁹ In (1a+), Western Igbo has *g* not *gh* (Bradbury *p.c.* via Armstrong 1964b, 139), entailing that the oracle arrived after Western Igbo shifted *gh* > *y* as in *-ghá* > *-yá* ‘scatter’, *-ghé* > *-yé* ‘fry’ and *-ghó* > *-yó* ‘sharp/clever’ (Thomas 1914c, 6, 149ff.). Eastern BK cognates of all three roots have a voiceless plosive onset (either palatal or velar) and a nasal coda: *-can*, *-kang*, *-cong* (www.metajfro.be/1/bh/).

³⁰ For Èdó *b* = Ùrhobo *rh* correspondences, Elugbe reconstructs a light (“lenis”) stop (1989, 103). In every other branch of Macro-Èdó, only *s* occurs in the items in (7b), but proto-BK probably had a stop, in view of the “Proto-Bantu” forms **ton* ‘hang’ and **tumb* ‘roast’.

Rhotacism affected the Lower Benue and Niger valleys, a roughly contiguous area outside of which, for example, the ethnic name *Ūrhobo* is pronounced non-rhotically in Yorùbá as *Isòbò* (Abraham 1958, 320). The non-rhotic items in (7a) show that the oracle had crossed the confluence before this sound change and the same inference holds for Nri migrants' crossing of the Niger river—notably called *Ōsimili* on the west bank, *Ōrimili* on the east—in view of the non-rhotic place-name *Ōgwáàshi* < *ògwá Nshi* 'Nri village assembly'. The Nri movement has been calibrated from genealogy as not later than the 17th century (Ōnwùjèiògwù 1981, 9-12). Maybe the two westward migrations—of the oracle, of Nri descendants—were not merely contemporaneous, but demographically intertwined. Alluvial rhotacism also post-dated the (undated) movement to the Nsúkà “borderland” of Nri, pronounced there “Nshie” (Shelton 1971, 13).³¹

Less informative of transmission sequence are vowel mutations in the oracle name (3a). The root vowel is consistently *a*, except perhaps for the obscure Ngas spelling “Peh” (Danfulani 1995, 88). The initial vowel shows all possible degrees of height, but BK languages treat this slot as a proclitic quasi-article (Westermann 1905, 6; Stahlke 1971, Welmers 1973, Manfredi 2009b) therefore prone to being written over by the nominal morphology of the borrowing language. Thus, Gùn-gbè *o-* in “Ofa” (Spieth 1911, 190) is regular restructuring (Fréchet 1994, 32), Wací-Gbè initial *a-* in *áfá* (Hamburger 2011, 602) parallels the *a-* of *Ayó* < *Ōyó* and Fõn-Gbè drops the initial non-*a* vowel of Yorùbá loans cf. (2) above. Igálà and Eastern Yorùbá prefix toneless *i* to consonant-initial nominals (Bowen 1958, 6f. cited by Bámgbósé 1966, 163f., Awóbùlúyí 2004) except internal to a phrase, as in the report that “Igálà country... is administered by a Chief who... bears the title of *Ata Gala*...” (Clifford 1936, 394) not **Ata Igala*. In Èdó the prosthetic vowel of nominals is *e* whereas Nupe lacks a phonetic *e* altogether, showing *e* initially and *ya* elsewhere, e.g. Nupe *egya* = Yorùbá *èjè* ‘blood’ (Kawu 2002, 111).³² In Ōnicha [“Onitsha”] Igbo, *a* automatically replaces initial *e*, so Èdó is pronounced “Adó” even though *e* is the regular Ōnicha treatment of *e* in non-initial position (Williamson 1966, 1984a,b; Èménanjo 1971).

As to lexical tones, the 16 array names are quasi-identical across the board. The oracle name looks erratic at first glance, because there's no pitch overlap between the HH of Igbo *Afa* and the LL of Ūrhobo *Èpha* or Èdó *Iba*, but the outcomes are less random when possible links of forward transmission are taken into account. All BK1 languages have the same binary tone inventory {H,L}, but BK2 languages are ternary {H,L,M} so a BK1 borrowing language confronts a forced choice for M as either H or L. Thus, the LL of Èdó and Ūrhobo could reflect the MM of Nupe *Eba* (Banfield 1914, 94) or the LM of Ìdòmá *Èba/Èpa*. Conversely the MH of Yorùbá *Ifá* can't come from Nupe MM or Èdó/Ūrhobo LL, but the automatic Yorùbá interpretation of tonelessness as M (Akinlabí 1985) qualifies MH as a trivial repair of Igbo HH to fit Yorùbá's prohibition of H on nonclitic phrase-initial (so-called word-initial) vowels (Ward 1952, 37).

In sum, phonetic differences in the oracle name and 16 array names across a dozen localities are largely predictable from standard loan phonology plus the hypothesis that *Ifá* and eleven documented counterparts share a primary origin in a network that arose in the lower Benue valley and spread west and south of the confluence some 500 years ago. This rough ‘phonetic clock’ is consistent with independent observations of a sociological nature, to be considered next.³³

1.3 Paralinguistic mutations

This oracle is more easily transmissible because core features are *paralinguistic*—untethered to any particular language medium—such that cognitive investments in encyclopedic knowledge can accumulate unconstrained. In *Ifá*, the most elaborate case, a competent *babaláwo* needs to memorize copious information of several analytically distinguishable types:

- (i) untranslatable individual names of sixteen 4-bit arrays (hexadecimal addresses), discussed in §1.2 above,
- (ii) a unique total ordering of same (Lóngé 1983, 28-41),
- (iii) a retrieval key indexing 256 duplex arrays (*odù*) to an open corpus of narrative and incantatory texts (*itàn, ofò*) conforming to a standardized stylistic template (*ese Ifá*, Abimbólá 1976, 43-57),
- (iv) the translatable (language-independent) thematic content of these texts themselves,
- (v) correlated sacrificial and medical recipes (*ebò, òògùn*) and their botanical and zoological ingredients.

Types (i) - (iii) are exclusive intellectual property of the *awo* guild, whereas (iv) - (v) overlap with dispersed ‘folklore’ in the public (non-initiatory) domain. *Ifá* demonstrably innovated to a considerable extent in every type apart from (i).

1.3.1 Array names

The array names' paralinguistic status is diagnosed by their wide flux of pronunciation as sampled in the Nri recording (Appendix below and manfredi.mayfirst.org/chukwumaDibyaNri.moi). NE Yorùbá has two noncognate names, *Oyika* ◇◇◇◇ and *Okin* ◇◇◇◇ (Bascom 1969, 7 no tones, citing Ōgúnbiyí 1952, cf. also Qbáyemí 1983), which are matched in Ngas and Nupe (cf. Figure 1 above) but the distribution doesn't decide if these oddballs are archaic or innovative. Similarly in *Èjèrindínlógún*, the 16-cowry oracle reading 17 unordered arrays, most of the array names have *Ifá* counterparts (Bascom 1980, 775-83; Ajibádé 2009) and the geometric resemblance is clear for *Èjì Ogbè* with 8 cowries facing up and *Èjì rèsùn* with 4, but less so for *Ogbè Òsé* with 5, *Òbàrà b'Ògbè* with 6, *Ōwónrin s'Ògbè* with 11 or *Ōfún Òkànràn* with 15. Whether *Èjèrindínlógún* was a precursor for, or reduced/lite version of, *Ifá*'s 256 *odù* procedure remains for now an open question.

1.3.2 Strict order

In *Ifá* a deterministic, strict order of the arrays is invoked to answer *ìbò* ‘yes/no queries’ (Abraham 1958, 269, Bascom 1969, 51-53). Abimbólá explains this in the idiom of “seniority” (1976, 26f., 34), interpreting the serial descent to earth of Oòduà's 16 heavenly companions with the traditional trope—also applied to ritual processions and multiple births—that anyone arriving earlier is junior/inferior to those following behind.³⁴ The sequences cited in Ōyó versus Ifè diverge in two ways: transposing whole pairs (5/6↔7/8, 11/12↔13/14) and reversing within pairs (11↔12, 13↔14). Bascom considers the Ōyó order “dominant” because it's more widely distributed across the *Ifá* zone. Such ordering may be a mnemonic add-on, because it's of secondary importance in *Ifá* and either absent or less salient in other oracle localities.³⁵

31 In Èdó, lacking relevant examples of non-ritual vocabulary (7b), it's unclear if the *b* reflex (7a) is a development of *rb* or *s*.

32 Kawu (2002) doesn't treat Nupe *e* as epenthetic, but his discussion is limited to syllables with overt onsets. Initial (i.e. onsetless) *e* remarkably comprises 90% of the vowel-initial lemmas in the dictionary (Banfield 1914), even counting dozens of Arabic loans in *al-*.

33 A chronology of loans is necessarily more recent than one of protolanguages, e.g. as estimated for Proto-Gbè by Gbètò (2024, 102).

34 The elder arrives ‘fashionably late’ so to say (cf. §1.4 below). Maupoil also describes the ordering in terms of “strength” (1943a, 237f.).

35 A carved “*hwezo*” (*Fá-dù* “calendrier”) sourced to Gèdègbè encodes the order 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 7, 6, 5, 10, 9, 13, 14, 11, 12, 16, 15 (Perlès 2023, 139) whereas Maupoil cites a “nago” consensus of 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 13, 12, 11, 15, 16 (1943a, 414 and *fn* 2). As to intuitive gender, opposite polarity is assigned to arrays standing in a relation of topological inversion or rotation, for example ♀ Ōdí ◇◇◇◇ inverts ♂ Iwòri ◇◇◇◇, and ♀ Ōwónrin ◇◇◇◇ rotates ♂ Irosùn ◇◇◇◇ (Hébert 1961, 151f., citing Johnson 1899, Maupoil 1943a, 414-16, Alápiní 1950). In Arab sand-writing, only four of the sixteen 4-bit signs are classified female (Colley 2005, 13).

1.3.3 Retrieval key (lookup table)

*Le devin est un peu «comme un dictionnaire»...*³⁶
(Maupoil 1943a, 222)

Meek observed a “Jukun” oraculist retrieve, for each individual 4-bit array, one out of 16 lexical glosses such as ‘woman’, ‘health’, ‘evening’ or ‘unhappiness’ and then interpret these creatively by combining them in pairs (1931, 326f. and facing plate). A similar procedure appears to be sketched in Ìsóko (Welch 1934, 166). By contrast, in Nri, Nsúkà, Nupe, Ígàlà, Úrhobo and Èdó the oracle lookup table returns a unique semantic domain (minus accidental duplicates) for each of the 256 duplex signs. Appendix 4.3 below compiles the full index for Nri and Èdó and the biggest available set for four other sites. The matching rate between Nri and the other five localities is given below and illustrated with 30 cases.³⁷

← top, left\right	Áfà (Nri-Igbo) n=256	Ébà (Nsúkà-Igbo) n=12, match=50%	Èphà (Úrhobo) n=64, match=35%	Ìbà (Èdó) n=256, match=41%	Eba (Nupe) n=32, match=25%	“Ifa anwa” (Ígàlà) n=20, match=50%
◇◇◇◇\◇◇◇◇	reappear/ twice		double	doubled/ repeated [make sacrifice]	[smallpox]	
◆◆◆◆\◇◇◇◇	go			journey	pleasant trip	
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	abandon home		[ears/ dry season]	rotten crops		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	animal sacrifice	ram or sheep		animal sacrifice		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	cow			duke who eats cow		
◇◇◆◆\◇◇◆◆	stomach illness			stomach illness		
◇◇◆◆\◇◇◆◆	oracle priest/ Ágwù ³⁸			oracle priest		
◇◆◆◆\◇◆◆◆	common sense			wisdom		
◇◆◆◆\◇◆◆◆	prepared medicine			medicine/ poison		
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	cleanse evil			overcome evil		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	mother, pregnancy			mother		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	alcoholic drink	alcoholic drink		alcoholic drink		
◇◇◆◆\◆◆◆◆	said/ decided		advice, counsel	messenger	[quarrel]	
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	watchfulness			heart/ confidence		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	alcoholic drink		alcoholic drink	alcoholic drink		
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	pay a debt		debt	vomit back	[happiness]	
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	refusal/ crazy talk			mischief	anger/ [gifts]	
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	shame/ billygoat			shame/ billygoat		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	money		money, [male child]	money		
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	thing outside			visitor	highway/ visitor	
◇◆◆◆\◇◇◆◆	close door/ night		night	[war]		
◇◆◆◆\◇◇◆◆	sworn oath		[destiny]	sworn oath		
◇◆◆◆\◇◇◆◆	pleading			request		
◆◆◆◆\◇◇◆◆	bad talk			bad talk		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	taboo			turn away from		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	patrilineage		relative/ brother/ sister	patrilineage		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	bad-death ones		spirit world/ the dead	bad companions		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	chí (procreative force)			[mother]		no ancestral staff gjo (≈ Igbo chí)
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	see		eyes	eyes		
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	meeting/ forest		crowd/ public	[monkey sacrifice]		
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	eat poison			poison		

Figure 2. Semantic translations of 30 of the 256 eight-bit oracle arrays across six localities, sampled from §3.3 below

By inspection, the correspondence among the six is well above chance, even assuming that most of the glosses come from a limited set of stereotypic oracle message tags like ‘journey’, ‘quarrel’, ‘sacrificial animal’ and ‘alcoholic drink’.³⁹ Figure 2 therefore diagnoses common origin on the semantic side just as Figure 1 does for phonetics, although semantic space is larger and its vectors of shift are less predictable (Campbell 1988, 115, 272f.). In the absence of semantic data from the Benue valley, it’s unknown if this table was invented there or in a confluence locality such as Ígàlà.⁴⁰

Figure 2 (drawn from §3.3 below) simplifies the glosses in the source documents, whether by translation, abbreviation or abstracting from diverse storage formats. In *Iba Ominighon* alias *òguéèga*, for example, each duplex address cues not just a single phrase as in *Áfà*, but potentially an entire proverb or other “fixed sentence” that can be further elaborated as a “folktale” or *èrìá nó òmínwín* ‘deep explanation’ (Emovon 1984, 4, 7, Egharhevbà 1936b/1965, 90-168). Similar elasticity is reported in Ígàlà (Boston 1974) and Gbè (Maupoil 1943a, Surgý 1981a; Kligueh 2001, 2011b) and *Ifá* goes further, with each one-byte address returning multiple alternate texts, from which the client and *babaláwo* can choose based on situational factors. Compensating for the extra memory load imposed by such narrative richness, all *Ifá* texts are tailored to an eight-part stylistic template called *ese Ifá* (Abimbólá 1976, 43-62) and the alternative texts returned by any one array (*odù*) may share a general thematic “character” (Abimbólá 1976, 33, cf. Clarke 1939, 255; Maupoil 1943a, 430-572).⁴¹

In the less professional oracles of the north and east, interpretive freedom is obtained less arduously, by mechanical procedures multiplying the number of arrays that can be read from one cycle of the processor (oracle apparatus). In Nri for example, four 4-bit strings are thrown in two successive pairs, then the four outcomes are paired off in all possible right-to-left permutations, returning as many as six distinct duplex (8-bit) signs minus chance duplicates (cf. §3.1). The

³⁶ [An oracle-priest is rather like a dictionary...]

³⁷ In Figure 2, non-Nri glosses with no clear semantic similarity to the Nri interpretation of the same sign are cited in square brackets.

³⁸ *Ágwù* is represented as the *dìbì a áfà*’s supernatural familiar, an equivocal force mediating with the invisible world, see §1.4 below.

³⁹ The usual motives for consultation are “illness, fear of death, fear of enemies, lack of a wife, lack of children and lack of money” (Abimbólá 1976, 47, cf. Maupoil 1943a, 222).

⁴⁰ Downes (1933) gives 14 of the 256 translations in Tiv with no match to any of the six localities in Figure 2, but Bohannan may go too far in declaring “proof that the univocal readings that were given by Captain Downes were on the wrong track” (1950, 684).

⁴¹ For five individual signs, Egharhevbà’s second edition (1965, 19, 22, 33, 38) adds a Yorùbá phrase:

◇◇◇◇\◆◆◆◆	Òkàn Ogbi	Omódé kò pé àgbà	‘A small child doesn’t summon an elder’
◆◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	Òghàe n’aaè	Yeye irè omọ	‘Mother the child-comforter’
◇◇◇◇\◇◇◆◆	Ìgbitan Ogbi	awo	‘Ifá initiate’
◇◆◆◆\◆◆◆◆	Èrbòcua Osé	Olùkùmi maa di ilé	‘A close companion is not like a member of one’s family’
◇◇◇◇\◆◆◆◆	Èkà Ogbi	ori imọlẹ	‘ancestral/ earth altar’

It’s presently unknown whether the first edition (Egharhevbà 1936a) already contained these or similar Yorùbá tags.

same permutations are described in Ñsùká, with most of the multiple alternatives filtered out as “non-functional” noise, against whose background a contextually appropriate signal is discerned (Shelton 1965b, 1449-51).

A different flexibility is afforded by the option to read the arrays “from the side of the client sitting opposite the diviner” (Emovon 1984, 4f). This is noted in Nupe (Nadel 1954, 42), Ígàlà (Boston 1974, 351) and Èdó (Egharheba 1936b, 54-86). In Ùrhobo, Erivwo the oralist “says that when the seeds are cast, there are two ends from which the reading can be taken viz: the *Àkpo* end and the *Èrìwìn* end” (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 8). In that case, the observers expressed personal “doubts about Erivwo’s explanations as regards the reading of the Èpha” (1981, 6) and decided to reinterpret his statement as referring, not to a 180° rotation of the array, but to a polarity switch of each binary digit, as if the array was being scanned from a virtual underground position looking up:

[I]n Ùrhobo thought forms, *Àkpo* is the abode of the living—both plants and animals—and this is believed to be on the surface of the earth. Conversely, *Èrìwìn* is the permanent [sic] abode of the dead, and it is thought to be under the earth, although the living-dead are said to show up occasionally in *Àkpo*. ...When the whole divination element is read from the surface, it is then said that its *Àkpo* end is being read. However, when the diviner imaginatively goes under the earth and reads the Èpha from there, it is then regarded that its *Èrìwìn* end is being read... (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 10)

Indeed the *Èrìwìn* (ancestor’s eye) versions of two symmetric arrays are derived by polarity switch, as if seen from below: *Oghori* ♦♦♦♦ > *Odi* ♦♦♦♦, *Oghi* ♦♦♦♦ > *Ako* ♦♦♦♦ (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 10). To locate the ancestors underground is consistent with most West African ethnography, apart from orthodox Ifá that puts them in the sky, but this does not disprove planar rotation in other cases, for a mechanical reason already noted for Nupe:

Certain slabs, for example, have symmetrical markings, so that their ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ halves coincide; in this case, the second name, which corresponds to the reversed throw, refers to the (blank) back of the slab. Again, two strings in their standard position... show the same pattern when reversed; here the ‘reversed pattern’ is obtained by counting open shells and closed and *vice versa*. (Nadel 1954, 42)

Thus, *pace* Nabofa & Elugbe, polarity switch and planar rotation are complementary—not mutually exclusive—forms of interpretive license. Planar rotation is apparently the first choice, and polarity switch only a last resort to handle linearly symmetrical arrays, when the result of planar rotation would be string-vacuous.

The occurrence of optional interpretive 180° rotation in four dispersed localities helps to explain how two of these oracles and one other (*Èpha* of Ñsùká-Ìgbo) have been described with a 180° mutation of the mapping between names and visual arrays. Unaware of this context, Bascom was plainly flummoxed by Shelton’s description of Ñsùká and felt compelled to “seriously question his description of the method... unless one reads all the figures from the bottom up” (1966, 420 and *fn.* 1). On closer examination, however, Shelton’s report is internally consistent: the string held in the *dibì*’s right hand appears on the left side of the diagrams and photos (1965b, 1449ff.), proving that the illustrations and the names do in fact take the client’s-eye view. The same name rotation is found in Èdó and Ùrhobo:⁴²

180° rotation									
←top	Ifá		Ìha	Èpha	Èha		Áfa		
♦♦♦♦	Òbàrà	×	Òkan	Òkanran	Òkara	×	Òbara		
♦♦♦♦	Òkànràn		Òvba	Ò(v)bara	Òbara		Òkara		
♦♦♦♦	Ìròsùn	×	Òghàc	Aghare	Egali	×	Ùrùrù		
♦♦♦♦	Òwónrín		Òrúhù	Urhur(h)u	Uhu		Àg(h)ári		
♦♦♦♦	Ògúndá	×	Òhá	Orha	Oha	×	Ìjíte/Ògúte		
♦♦♦♦	Òsá		Èghítan	Ighite	Ijite/Ogwute		Òrá		
♦♦♦♦	Ìrètè	×	Ètùrè	Erhurè	Oture	×	Ètè/Èke		
♦♦♦♦	Òtú(r)á		Ète	Ete	Ete		Òtùre		
♦♦♦♦	Òtúrúpòn	×	Èká	Èka	Èka	×	Àtúrùkpà		
♦♦♦♦	Ìká		Èrhóxwà	Erhokpo	Ètùrukpa		Àká		
♦♦♦♦	Òsé	×	Òhún	Ophu	Ohu	×	Òsé		
♦♦♦♦	Òfún		Òsé	Ose	Ose		Òhú		

Figure 3. Comparison of the twelve asymmetric 4-bit arrays across five West African localities

180° rotation in three roughly contiguous localities is less likely to show three independent mutations than one connected transmission wave, whose timing with respect to other changes is difficult to evaluate because it has no interpretive consequences. Figure 2 shows that semantic content is keyed to the verbal address not to the visual one: despite visual rotation, semantics hold constant with respect to audible array names. Thus in *Áfa*, the gloss of *Òrá Aghári* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ is “patrilineage” (Ọnwụjẹìógwù 1997, 143) and this fits the meaning of its verbal cognate in *Ìha*, despite visual inversion: *Òhá Ọghàc* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ is “believed to indicate enmity from a brother by the same father... It seems, however, that the term can also be used without any connotation of enmity, only to denote paternal relatives” (Melzian 1937, 32f.). If on the contrary interpretations were keyed to visual arrays (as is the case in sahelian sand oracles), the *Ìha* equivalent of *Òrá Aghári* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ should have been *Èghítan Ọrúhù* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ glossed “*òhè* [gift]” (Egharheba 1936b, 25), a completely unrelated meaning. Similarly in *Èpha*, *Orbaghare* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ means “relation, brother, sister” (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 17), predictable from the verbal address not the visual one.⁴³ Thus the oracle works like normal writing systems: interpretations are derived primarily from auditory signs and only secondarily linked to visual representations. That’s why one language (Hindi-Urdu) can be written alternatively in two unrelated syllabic scripts (*devanāgarī* and Arabic) and why Japanese is successfully biscriptal, blending syllabics (*kana*) with Chinese characters (*kanji*). The choice of visual form affects processing but not denotation.

Ifá adds its own flexibility, not by rotating the arrays but by linking alternative, multiple texts to an individual *odù* (duplex 4-bit address). As noted, corpus expansion imposes a bigger learning task on the *Ifá* initiate, and the heavier memory burden helps in turn to explain *Ifá*’s extreme preoccupation with mnemonic devices, including

⁴² In western Gbè, the middle of the 8-bit chain is thrown inward/towards the oralist yielding a ‘hollow’ U-shape (“face creuse”), but elsewhere falls outward/away from the oralist in a ‘bulging’ U-shape (“face bombée”), e.g. in Nàgó (eastern Gbè) and Ifè (Maupoil 1943a, 201, Bascom 1969, 29, Surgy 1981a, 49). In Igbo and Èdó, unlooped 4-bit strings are thrown outward so their ornamented bottom terminals fall pointing back towards the oralist (Shelton 1965b, 1449, Emovon 1984, 6, Ọnwụjẹìógwù 1997, 46).

⁴³ The gloss of Ùrhobo *Ighite Urbur(h)u* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ is not mentioned in available sources.

...verbal links between names of plants, names of the medicinal and magical action expected from them and the *odù* or sign of Ifá in which they are classified by the *babaláwos*. Those verbal links are essential to help them to memorize notions and knowledge transmitted by oral traditions, having so a collective character and not an individual one.

We must mention first that verbal transmission of knowledge is thought in Yorùbá tradition to be the vehicle of *àṣẹ*, the power, the strength of the words which remain ineffectual in a written text. ...A plant alone may be compared to a letter which is part of a word. Alone it is without signification; associated with other letters it contributes to the meaning of the word. ...We must keep in mind that in [the] Yorùbá language there is often a direct relation between the name of the plant and its qualities, and it would be important to know if the plants bear those names according to their virtues or if it is because the plants bear those names that they have received in attribution [of] the said virtues by a kind of play on words (that again more respectfully we could call *gṣṣ*, incantation). Those ‘play of words-incantations’ have an enormous importance in the oral-tradition civilizations. Being pronounced in solemn traditional texts and incantations, they may be considered as definitions. They are often the bases on which reasoning is built up. In the same way, they serve as conclusion and final proof in the traditional stories transmitted from generation to generation by *babaláwo*, and express at the same time the philosophical point of view of the Yorùbá culture and the common sense of its people.

...Among the Yorùbá, *gṣṣ*, the incantatory formulas accompanying the preparation of remedies and magical works are short sentences in which very often the verb which defines the anticipated action, the ‘acting verb’, is one of the syllables in the name of the plant or the ingredient employed. ...All the recipes and ‘works’ made with the plants are classified by the *babaláwo* into the 256 signs, *odù* of Ifá and verbal links, which often established links between the names of the *odù* of Ifá, but more specifically with the second names given to each *odù*. A *babaláwo* seldom uses the name of an *odù* in its original form, but [rather] a name proceeding from it phonetically with adjunction of prefix and suffix giving them a particular signification, which helps the *babaláwo* to find out more easily the symbolism and the context of the stories, *itàn*, and remedies classified into this *odù*...

(Verger 1977a, 242f., 245, 248f., 254, 268, cf. Bascom 1941, 47; Bastide 1970c; Olóródé 1993, 60; Souty 2007, 345ff.)

(8) lists some of the “second names given to each *odù*” as collected by Verger (1977a).⁴⁴ In (8a), the link to a medical or ritual recipe is phonetically cued by the syllables *in bold italics*. In (8b), the motivation is the accident that the array name *Ìròsùn* has a homophone in ordinary Yorùbá vocabulary denoting ‘camwood’ (also called *ìgì osùn*), a material of reddish hue. In (8c), no obvious phonetic or lexical similarity links the array name to its canonical semantic domain.

- (8a) Ogbè *Ìwòrì* → *w'èhìn* ‘look [*wò*] back [*èhìn*’]
 → *w'èhìn* ‘wash/cure [*wè*] back [*èhìn*’] → *ewé j'ómó ruke* ‘let-child-grow-well leaf, a backache remedy’⁴⁵
 Ogbè *Òdí* → *dí nà* ‘block the road [*ò nà*’]
 → *dímú-dímú* ‘that which siezes by grasping’
 Ogbè *Òtúrá* → *háríhá* ‘sheath... enveloping the maize cob’ → *aláṣọ funfun* ‘owner of white cloth’
 Ogbè *Òtúrúpòn* → *tún* ọmọ *pòn* ‘again [*tún*] carry a child in a sling [*pòn*]’ i.e. on the parent’s back → *àwè bí* ‘birth medicine’
 Ogbè *Ọṣẹ* → *ṣẹ* ‘gun’ win the war [ogun] OR *ṣẹ*.*tẹ* ‘quell the rebellion [*òtẹ*]’
 Ọyèkú *Ìròsùn* → *aláṣùn* ‘without sleep’
 Ọyèkú *Òtúrúpòn* → *Ikú* *jé n jó!* ‘[personified] Death, allow me to dance!’ → *idáábòbò l'ọyọ ikú* ‘protection from death’
 Ìròsùn *Ọgúndá* → *gún dá* ‘pound bush-rat [*edá*]’
 Ìròsùn *Òtúrúpòn* → *tútú* ‘fresh’
 Ìwòrì *Ìròsùn* → *olòsùn* ‘owner of sleep’
 Ìwòrì *Ọwónrín* → *chín* ọmọdè ‘tooth of a young child’
 Ìwòrì *Ìrètẹ* → *wèrè* ‘madness’
 Ìwòrì *Ọfún* → *fún* ‘white’ → *ewé àgbàdò* ‘leaves of [white West African] maize’ (“used for *àwùre orí ire*, to have good luck”)
 Ọdí *Ìròsùn* → *idin ò sùn* ‘maggot does not sleep’
 Ọbàrà *Ìwòrì* → *àkó yèè* ‘collector of understanding [*òyè*]’
 Ọbàrà *Ọṣẹ* → *aláṣẹ* ‘owner of power’
 Ọwónrín *Ọfún* → *fún* ‘white’ → *ewé àwè fún* ‘leaves that wash white’ (“used to wash [images of] *òrìṣà*”)
 Ọgúndá *Ọgbè* → *egbò ọgbé* ‘ulcer of knife-wound’ → *ewé p'ọgbé-p'ọgbé* ‘leaf, antidote [*pa*] for knife-wound’
 Ọgúndá *Ọyèkú* → *ikú* ‘death’
 Ọgúndá *Ọdí* → *gẹ* *dít* *igbín* ‘cut the base [*idí*] of snail’ (“which alludes to the notion of calm”)
 Ọgúndá *Ìròsùn* → *Mo sùn* ‘I sleep’
 Ọsá *Ìròsùn* → *lè sùn* ‘can sleep’ OR *ò lè sùn* ‘cannot sleep’
 [*Ìrètẹ Ọṣẹ*]⁴⁶ → *tẹ ọṣẹ* ‘press down on soap’ → “medicament composed of a leopard’s tail [*irù*] pounded [*tẹ*] with soap”
 → *ẹkún fírù nàlẹ* ‘leopard beat the ground with its tail’ (“showing its dangerous, restless, personality”)
 → *fà tútù tó yinyin* ‘as cold as a hailstone’ (“not much encouraging”)
 → *alájé* ‘owner of wealth’ (“things are ambivalent and ...may also... have their beneficent sides”)
 Ọtúrá *mé.ji* → *elẹjọ* ‘litigant in court’
 Ọṣẹ *mé.ji* → *onjá* ‘quarrelsome’ → *pòpòrò àgbàdò* ‘maize cob without its grains’ (“to be victorious in wrestling”)
 Ọṣẹ *Ọwónrín* → *oniwọ* ‘owner of poison’
 Ọfún *Ìwòrì* → *wò re* ‘look well upon’
- (8b) Ìròsùn *mé.ji* → *odíderé* ‘parrot’ (“whose tailfeathers are very red”)
 Ọsá *Ìròsùn* → *elẹpo* ‘possessing red palm oil [*epo*]’
 Ìròsùn *Ọṣẹ* → *ẹjẹ* ‘blood’
- (8c) Ogbè *Òdí* → *káká* ‘strong’
 Ogbè *Ìrètẹ* → *aláhéré owó* ‘owner of storehouse for money’
 Ogbè *Òtúrá* → *àgbàdò súnṣun* ‘roasted maize grains’ → *kò l'ẹjọ* ‘has no court-case’
 Ọbàrà *Ọgúndá* → *èpè tán* ‘curse finished’
 Ọtúrá *Ọgbè* → *olójò* OR *eréjì* ‘owner of rain’
 Ọfún *Òtúrá* → *olómọ sọ àdà* ‘parent throw cutlass’

Verger (1995) suggests that the primary use of the extreme puns in (8a) was to “activate” named herbs, then *Ifá* binary metalanguage (in the left column) applied at second order, allowing the coincident syllables to index and retrieve a larger stock of texts—whether *itàn* ‘stories’ or *ọfọ* ‘magic spells’—from a given *odù* (digital address).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Among others e.g. “*Òtúrúpòn Ìròsùn* [is] better known as *Òtúrúpòn Sòkùn*” [sc. ‘tie a rope’] (Lóngé 1983, 24), cf. also Maupoil (1943a), Kligueh (2011b), Babáyeṁí & Adékòlá eds. (1987-1991). Presumably more are recorded in Verger’s own manuscripts, now archived in Salvador. In one anonymous typewritten *libreta* of Cuban *Ifá* I’ve seen, 69 out of the 256 *odù* include phonetic aliases of type (8a).

⁴⁵ “Of the 19 recipes I have for this *oṣùn* [= backache remedy], 12 are classified in Ogbè [*Ìwòrì*] → *wèhìn*” (Verger 1977a, 273f.).

⁴⁶ This *odù*, “too dangerous to be pronounced”, is “formed by the fourteenth and fifteenth simple signs” (Verger 1977a, 277). According to Maupoil the reverse combination—*Ọṣẹ Ìrètẹ*—is equally “innomable” [forbidden to explicitly name] (1943a, 411f., 669).

⁴⁷ Second-order coding can also occur in visual media. Thus, a triple-cowrie row embedded in an entranceway floor—whether in 17th century *Ìjẹṣà* or modern *Oṣòdò*—can be interpreted as “warding off evil eyes” thanks to syllabic homophony between *ẹta* ‘cardinal 3’ and the predicate root *-tu* meaning ‘shoot/propel away’ (Ọgúndiran 2000, 243, 2002b, 453 cf. Abraham 1958, 627).

Command of a larger repertoire, acquired by “lifelong learning” (Abimbólá 1973, 48f) and tested in public shows of virtuosity (Awórindé 1965), upgrades an oraclist’s reputation (Bascom 1941, 51f.). Skills of shamanic tradecraft (*àṣẹ*), verbatim recall (*isòye*) and a stylistic “coefficient of weirdness, strangeness and unusualness” (Malinowski 1935, 221f., cf. Tambiah 1968, Verger 1972, Abimbólá 1976, 18-25) set *Ifá* initiates apart from ordinary language users (Marcus 1993) and qualify them as a “dominated fraction of the dominant class” (Bourdieu 1971c, 17), closely analogous to the *brāhman* maestri of Sanskrit grammar and Vēdic verse who epitomise the ideology of Hindu caste (Dumont 1966, Staal 1989).⁴⁸

More than a memory aid, *Ifá* coding grants *babaláwos* poetic license to coin new Yorùbá words like *eníyàn* MHH “witch” (Abimbólá 1976, 166), carrying opposite tones from *eníyàn* LLL ‘human being’ (Abraham 1958, 160) so as to convey the opposite connotation, namely alleged nonhumanity.⁴⁹ Prosodic counterpoint operates freely at the margins of Yorùbá grammar, in ideophones (Awóyalé 1978), versification (Oyélá.ràn 1975) and stylistic figures like the proverb *ohun tí a ñ wá ló sí Sókótó tí a bá l’á.pò sòkòtò* ‘something that we go looking for all the way to Sókótó [HHH] but that we find in the pocket of our own trousers [sòkòtò LLL]’—where the difference between HHH and LLL iconically contrasts distal and proximate deixis respectively (Bámgbòṣé 1968, 83, cf. Bascom 1941, 47, 130, Owómoyèlā 2005, 8).

The foregoing helps explain how *Ifá* grew features (ii) - (v) in the course of transmission and adoption. The scenario can’t be reversed, as if an originating *Ifá* was reduced in dispersed localities by ‘degeneration’ (defective copying). Any claim by *babaláwos* to historical priority over their Nupe, Ígalà, Èdó and Ígbo counterparts—blaming them for clumsy plagiarism, in effect—faces the improbability that the same information set could be lost in multiple, spatially disparate amnesias, but no conspiracy is required if *Ifá* added unique secondary innovations. Proverbially: *Èwé ñlá káì padà rú nẹ̀wẹ̀* ‘A big leaf doesn’t go backward to become smaller’ (Wenger 1977, 50), organic growth can’t run in reverse.⁵⁰

Behind *Ifá*’s rhetorical inventiveness, political-economic factors propelled its innovations and encouraged Kantian *Wahlverwandschaften* ‘elective affinities’ (Goethe 1809, Howe 1978) by a new social class embracing new ideas.

1.4 The rise of heaven

“Will AI create a religion?” (Singler 2023)⁵¹

In Westafricanist discourse, wherever English speakers speak of *divination* the more specific Francophone diction is *géomancie* (Maupoil 1943a, Jaulin 1957, Surgu 1987, 279, Colleyn 2005, 9). For Surgu, for example, any random-number procedure qualifies as *divination clérômantique* (< *klēros* ‘lot’, Liddell & Scott 1940, 959) whereas *géomancie* has “référence essentielle au monde souterrain de l’origine... par les ancêtres aimant secourir l’humanité” (1988a, 218, 221).⁵² This conceptual contrast conserved in current definitions follows straightforwardly from the terms’ respective etymologies:⁵³

- (i) *ge-ō-man-t-eia* ‘geomancy’ < *ge-ō-* ‘earth, land’, *mán-t-is* ‘seer’ cf. *mén-os* ‘force, spirit, passion’
→ *geomancy* ‘divination by means of signs derived from the earth... usually... by means of lines or figures formed by jotting down on paper a number of dots at random’
- (ii) *div-in-ātiō* ‘miraculous foreseeing, predicting’ < *div-in-* ‘belonging to a deity’
→ *divination* ‘soothsaying, augury, prophecy’ (calquing Greek *mantikē* cf. Santangelo 2013, 47f)

Geomancy’s atrophy in Anglophone scholarship leaves in its wake an ambiguity as wide as the cosmic void separating “enjoy-for-heaven” from Fèlā’s “underground spiritual game” (Aníkúlá.pò Kú.ù 1977, 1989). Therefore in practice, English *divination* covers a wide range of oracle types, including descriptions as divergent as the following:

- (i) *Áfá* = normative memory buffer
The *dibìyá áfá* [oracle priest’s] interpretation... is based on the person’s past and present actions in relation to those of his ancestors, in short [on] his biography and [the] history of the social structure. The *dibìyá áfá* reconstructs the social reality of his disorganized client... (Ọnwụẹjìógwù 1978/1997, 19)⁵⁴
- (ii) *Ifá* = infallible supernatural clairvoyance⁵⁵
Ọrúnmílà is... believed to have complete knowledge and understanding about all matters both on earth and in heaven. His knowledge covers the whole range of time and space. He is completely informed about the past, the present and the future. (Abimbólá 1973, 41)

Ọrúnmílà’s imagined ascent to omniscience (ii) accompanied the real rise of Yorùbá feudalism, when a hieratic cult expropriated public folklore, to amass “religious capital (as accumulated symbolic labor)” (Bourdieu 1971b, 304f., cf. 1971a, 1977, 409).⁵⁶ This move recalls the enclosure of agrarian commons by 16th-century landed English lords (Thompson 1968). Thanks to analogies of spiritual and temporal authority, the heavenly claims of Yorùbá priests and kings were conflated in one “topological figure” (Mary 1988, 236), an *inverted descending queue* (IDQ) or *last-in-first-out* memory stack where the rank-seniority of sixteen arriving extraterrestrials up-ends their sequential touchdown order:⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Mnemonics, key in oral civilization, weren’t neglected by European Renaissance mystics either. Galileo’s forerunner Giordano Bruno sought “[b]y applying his art of memory... to call the whole world to attention within his head” (Rowland 2008, 138). Both Yorùbá and Italian enlightenments aggregated folktales in meta-narratives—*Odù Ifá*, *il Decamerone*—but the *babaláwos* became a wealthy clerisy whereas the *liberi pensatori* were martyred by stoicist terror (Hroch & Skybová 1988, Finocchiaro 1989 cf. Gellner 1988, Wilson 2008).

⁴⁹ At the 2008 Harvard *Ifá* conference, Professors Oyèwùmí and Abimbólá publicly debated the dictionary status of *eníyàn* MHH.

⁵⁰ Hubert Ọgundé covered it: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNfYXXys9Ks. In biology, genetic innovation need not increase phenotype complexity, and parallel, secondary simplification occur in plant and animal phyla (Taylor & Taylor 1993, Dunn & al. 2008, 748).

⁵¹ It did so already, at far less cost, in Ifá and other advanced cults of numerological text-conjuring. A tacky Northamerican AI epiphany is spoofed here: languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=64929 (cf. Benjamin 1921, Ellul 1973, Noble 1997, Löwy 2006, Faustino & al. 2022).

⁵² [Indispensable reference to the underground world of origin... by ancestors desiring to help humans out of trouble]

⁵³ Liddell & Scott (1940, 346f., 1080, 1103), Lewis & Short (1879, 602), *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933 v. 3, 554, v. 6, 126).

⁵⁴ Cf. the Epicurean concept of anticipatory *prōlēpsis* (πρόληψις), “a memory of what has appeared often from outside” (Diogenes Laertius 10.33 cited by Konstan 2011 61, www.persens.tufts.edu/bopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0004.tlg001.persens-eng1:10.1). The AI version of this procedure—branded “Future You”—comes with a boilerplate disclaimer:

Your future self is NOT a prophecy: it is a narrative of a potential version of the future generated from a large-language model that has been personalized on your initial survey responses. The future self cannot predict specific details about your future life—rather, it aims to paint a vivid and realistic picture of what your future life could be like. (www.media.mit.edu/projects/future-you/overview)

⁵⁵ Táirwò (2004) insists on the resilience in Ifá of type (i) epistemic rational discourse, albeit embedded in type (ii) “religious” faith.

⁵⁶ Here *feudalism* does not refer to a particular form of *demesne* rent narrowly defined by medievalists of northwestern Europe (Wolf 1982, 81 cf. Hilton 1976, 30) but covers a plurality of local institutions across diverse social ecologies (Bloch 1940, 603, 610, Abu-Lughod 1989, 49 fn 1) that unite abstractly as the mode of production organized for “political extraction of surplus” (Moore 2003, 106) through an institution of “seigneurie banale” (Testart 2021, 227). Equivalently: “feudalism was driven by rents extracted outside of markets” (Varoufakis 2022, glossing “Mehrarbeit... durch ausserökonomischen Zwang abgepresst” Marx 1894, 324). Violent extraction by the Ifè palace of hereditary ground-rent from Mòdèéké peasants (§2.8 below) is a perfect example of this format, no less than the digital rents seized by technofeudalists from “cloud serfs, cloud proles and cloud vassals” (Varoufakis 2024, 185).

⁵⁷ On LIFO memory see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stack_\(abstract_data_type\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stack_(abstract_data_type)).

Oòduà [= Odùduwà] descended from Heaven... with the reputed 16 elders and their followers. ... Òrànmiyàn was the youngest of Oòduà's sons but he eventually became the most powerful among them... (Fábùnni 1969, 3f., 15)

When 16 principal *Odù* were coming down from heaven... when they came to the frontier gate separating heaven from earth, they reversed their order of procession so that the 16th and the most junior... went through the frontier gate first... until the first *Odù* came last. (Abimbólá 1976, 26f.)

IDQ also defines the *ibé, jì* (or *ibejì*) cult.⁵⁸ Once upon a time, according to *Ìròsùn Òbàrà* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ and other *odùs* of *Ifá*, multiple human gestation was a taboo monstrosity (Bascom 1969, 346-51, Abimbólá 1981, Lawal 2011, 87-89) as also more widely across West Africa (Denham 2008, 14) then in Yorùbá the anomaly became exemplary, so twins are prodigially auspicious (cf. Sperber 1975, Heusch 1980).⁵⁹ When newborns are welcomed from their “long journey... to the earth” (Abimbólá 1975, 178f.) with an ascribed *orúkọ a-mú-t-òrun-wá* “name... brought from heaven [*òrun*]... the most important [such omen] is twin-births” (Johnson 1897, 80). The obligatory formula—twin #1 addressed as *T[ó]-ayé-wò* ‘Test-life/Taste-the-world’ and #2 as *K[ó]-è-hin-dé* ‘Arrive-lagging-behind’—entails rhetorically that “the second born... is regarded as the elder of the two” (Babalólá & Alàbá 2003, 433) by virtue of possessing sufficient seniority to send the ‘younger’ (i.e. first-born) to scout the road ahead. The same trope expands to include a subsequent neonate as well.⁶⁰

The child born next after twins is called *Ìdòwú*... When there is an *Ìdòwú*... any sacrifices offered for [the] twins must also be offered for the *Ìdòwú* and the offering must be made prior to that of the twins... (Abraham 1958, 266f.)

Adoption of the LIFO/IDQ spatial metaphor dragged folk-semantic changes in its train. Today “the word *òrun* is used by some people to refer to ‘sky’ as well as ‘heaven’” (Bámgbósé 1972, 30 fn. 35) as in the aphorism *Àsẹ̀ sẹ̀yọ̀ m̀àrìwò, ó ní òun ó ẹ̀kan òrun*... ‘The freshly sprouted palmshoot said that it would touch the sky...’ (Owómoyèlà 2005, 57), and a leading *Ifá* specialist affirms that “*Òrun* moved skywards” (Abimbólá 1973a, 74, cf. 1977, 1, 37 fn. 6).⁶¹ But still *òrun*’s etymological starting point as ‘death’ is anchored externally by the Igbo cognates *-nwú* and *ónwú* (9a), whose historical relevance to the Yorùbá term is ensured by parallel sound shifts in three independent lexical correspondence sets (9b).⁶²

	NW Yorùbá	NE Yorùbá	Ígálà	Èdó	Ìgbo	Proto-“Bantu”	Jarawa
(9)a.	‘perish/die’ ‘death’	-run/[-kú] [íkú]	[-kwú] [úkwú]	[-wu] [ùwú]	-nwú ónwú	[-*kú]	-wúm, -wónj
b.	‘sunshine’ ‘neck’ ‘four’	oòrùn orùn ẹ̀rin	ólù ólò ẹ̀lẹ̀	ònwẹ ùrhu ènẹ̀	ánwú ónu ànó	*tángua *nài	

Whenever it was that *òrun* was borrowed into Èdó as *òrún*, it meant the “same as *ẹ̀rínmwin*” i.e. the “world of the dead and the unborn” with no recorded linkage to *ísó*, Èdó’s indigenous term for ‘sky’ (Melzian 1937, 55f., 101, 168).

Òrun’s original denotation of ‘death’ also crops up in numerous textual fossils of Yorùbá orature itself. (i) The predicate roots *-run* and *-kú* are used as effective synonyms in a lyric vaunting the immortality of *Ifá* initiates:

Awo kú kú, awo kú run, awo pá’pò dà ní. An *awo* doesn’t die, doesn’t perish, but is merely transformed.
Kí awo má sèdàrò awo. An *awo* should never mourn the death of another *awo*.
Bí ó pẹ̀ tíí, awo á tún rí awo be. Sooner or later, the *awo* will be reunited with his colleague once again.
 (Adéoyè 1979, 10 cited by Awóyalé 2008)

(ii) The idiom *òrun ẹ̀ni* means “someone’s ancestors” not ‘somebody’s sky’ (Bánjò & al. 1991, 15 *pace* Babalólá 1975, 105). (iii) The fixed phrase *isẹ̀ tí ẹ̀súúfú lẹ̀lẹ̀ ñ se òrun* ‘what the wind does to the sky’ (Owómoyèlà 2005, 351) is very close to *isẹ̀ tí ẹ̀súúfú lẹ̀lẹ̀ ñ se sí òkè l’òrùn* ‘the action of the strong wind against the top of the mountain’ (Dé.lànò 1966, 80 cited by Awóyalé 2008), suggesting that *òrun* substituted for *orùn*, an unrelated lexical item meaning ‘neck’ and referring in context to what English calls a hill-crest (literally ‘head plume’, cf. ornithological *crested*). (iv) In an *Oyò* ceremony called *Òrun*, the *Alááfin*—styled *Ọ̀ba ayé* ‘king of the living’—“worships [the] Earth” and his death is invoked by the ancestral priest titled *Ọ̀ba Òrun/Ọ̀sòrun/Basòrun* (Morton-Williams 1960, 363, Babáyemí 1973, 121, cf. Abraham 1957, 83).⁶³

At the annual *Òrun* festival, the *Basòrun*... can declare, after divination, that the king’s fortune, as symbolized by his head, would be bad and that his *òrun*—spirit double in the sky [sic]—no longer supports his stay on earth.
 (Morton-Williams 1960, 364)

At this festival the King and the *Basòrun* worship together the *Orí* or god of fate. The *Òrun* from which it appears the *Basòrun* derives his name and title is a curious if not rather a mystical rite. ... The emblem of worship is said to be a coffin made or paved with clay in which he is to be buried.
 (Johnson 1897, 48)

- 58 In the compound *ibí-ẹ̀jì* ‘double birth’ > *ibé-ẹ̀jì* > *ibejì*, loss of the L-sandwiched H before a cyclic boundary is regular, given productive parallels like *òrù-ké-òrù* ‘any utterance whatsoever’ > *òrùkọ̀-òrù* > *òrùkọ̀rù* (Bámgbósé 1966b, 8f., 1972, 28, Oyèlàn 1970, 94f.).
- 59 In the past century, twin infanticide was reported in northeast Yorùbá (Forde 1951, 28, Chappel 1974, Renne 2001, 65, 2011, 308). *Ojó* dismisses such cases as “influenced from outside” (1966, 178) but cites no evidence of external origin. Conversely in the Èdó zone, IDQ ideology is not applied to twins in Èsàn (“Ishan”), instead of which the bearers of the birthnames *òdìdì* and *àkèbèrè* are socially as well as biologically ‘older’ and ‘younger’ respectively (Dr. Q. Omonkhua, Prof. A. Omonkhua *p.c.*). Melzian notes a twin taboo at Usen in western Èdó (1937, 103). A tenuous line between positive and negative significance of multiple gestation is also attested in the *Popol Vuh* text of the medieval K’iche’ Maya state, according to which “[t]wins are especially *auspicious*... and twin sacrifice is a central theme” in rituals “to outwit the gods of the underworld” (Barquera & al. 2024, 6, *italics added*).
- 60 Application of IDQ to twins and continued to the subsequent birth is also found in Èvè-Gbè *vodú* (Gilli 1982, 123, Surgý 1988, 276).
- 61 This *Sachwandel* may seem ‘natural’ because it’s not isolated in cognitive evolution. The source of Modern English *heaven* originally denoted a bending arc, cognate to Greek *kamára* ‘vaulted cover of a carriage/bed/tomb/sewer’ (Liddell & Scott 1940, 871) and metaphorically referring to the astronomical sky conceived as an arched roof (< **bibin*, Watkins & al. 1969, 1520). Eventually the architectural image became extraneous to the ‘religious’ dogma of an invisible, abstract and completely imaginary location. The shared ideological *télos* of the two semantic changes, Yorùbá and Germanic respectively, is of a piece with others as discussed in §1.5 below.
- 62 Ígálà from Armstrong (1965) and Akinkugbé (1978). Jarawa and Proto-“Bantu” from Williamson & al. (1973) and Bastin & al. (2005). NE Yorùbá is the “Uyere/Iyere” of Struck (1911, 53). Square brackets indicate noncognate forms based on an unrelated root. As a matter of cosmology, Èdó *-nwú* “mostly” can’t refer to a person with living progeny (Melzian 1937, 60, 221).
- 63 It appears that Heusch inadvertently interchanged the glosses: “Johnson nous dit que le roi et le *basòrun* forment en quelque sort de couple, le *basòrun* étant en rapport avec la terre, le roi avec le ciel” [Johnson tells us that the king and *basòrun* are paired, with *basòrun* corresponding to the earth and the king to the sky] (1987, 120, cf. 2009, 106). In *Oyò* the skygod is rather Sàngò, whose earthly avatar is the *alááfin* ‘palace occupant’. “Molè”, the annual Ifá festival (Johnson 1897, 48, tone omitted by Law 1977, 65), truncates *ì(rún)mòlẹ̀* ‘earth spirits’ (Abraham 1958, 19, 21, 307, 319, 699) indicating a geomantic orientation of the *Òrùnmùlá* cult. Veneration of *ilẹ̀* ‘earth/ground’ is otherwise conducted by Ogbóni, a conclave ritually opposed to the palace (Morton-Williams 1960, 363, Döbbelmann 1976, *pace* Drewal 1989). Nowadays by contrast, the palace is fully subordinate to the Lugardian state governor acting as heaven’s exclusive agent, with an opportune assist by a famed, mercenary oraclist:
www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/south-west/766417-how-gov-makinde-violated-laws-in-appointing-owoade-as-alaaifin-of-oyo.html.

Verger connects many of these dots to draw a sharp contrast between Abrahamic and Yorùbá philosophies:

[I]n Yorùbá vocabulary *òrun*, the sky, is associated with the idea of death and the *ará òrun* [inhabitants of *òrun*]... are the dead; whilst *àyé* means world, earth, lifetime and the *aráyè* [dwellers in *àyé*] are mankind, living people. The same opposition exists between a religion of salvation based on the expiation of individual sin and directed to preparation for a good death, and the religion of the *òrìṣà* and *àṣẹ*, ... a religion of exaltation turned toward life and its continuance. 'Life on earth is better than life in the beyond,' declared Gèdègbè to Maupoil. (1966, 35, cf. 1982, 22)⁶⁴

As Verger implies, Yorùbá sky-worship did not amount to otherworldly orientation of the “Axial” type (Jaspers 1949, Mangabeira 2014). Concerted injections of “Chrislam”—late Professor Òmó Òmórúyí's wry tag for the dual hegemony in West Africa of both imported West Asian creeds—failed to eradicate the idea of subterranean residence by the ancestors—*àwọn ará ilẹ̀* (Awóyalé 2008)—otherwise we couldn't read explicit modern reports like the following:

Èrínmùnn is the permanent abode of the dead, and it is thought to be under the earth... (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 10)

The village of souls, *óbyo ekepò*... is located beneath the earth and is entered through a giant anthill. (Messenger 1957, 158)

The idea of heaven in the sky probably came from Egypt [to Èdó] via the Yorùbá... though it may be a relic of the old Roman Catholic missionary teaching. That the dead were originally thought to dwell beneath the earth seems probable from the fact that the entrance to this, in the old story of [the Èdó monarch] Èwúarè, was by a hole in the ground. Unless badly treated in this world, all people prefer it to the next. Life in 'heaven' cannot be pleasant, otherwise people would not come back so quickly—sometimes the next year—while many live to such a great age on earth. ... Bad people are punished by being kept long in 'heaven' and are detained there till they 'learn sense'. Good and wise people are reincarnated very quickly. (Talbot 1926, 268)

I believe that for the Ìgbò, the artistic meaning of life is a unity of earth (*Àla*), man and death: earth as the environment for life, man as society—the meaning of life—and death as the infiniteness of life. ... *Àla* has a mythological essence: genies and cosmological elements of folktales and masquerades emanate from beneath the earth or from its nether limits. (Nzewi 1978, 74)

Aux yeux des Evhé, tout ce qui prend forme au dessus de terre a pour fondement une réalité invisible située elle aussi dans les profondeurs de la terre or du nadir. C'est là que l'âme humaine, originaire du ciel, est d'abord précipitée; elle y fait choix d'un lot de caractères naturels, d'orientations et d'idées qui déterminent très largement à l'avance la suite de ses expériences vécues, puis y fait normalement retour après la mort et reste y séjourne assez longtemps, en remplissant des fonctions d'ancêtre, avant de regagner les hauteurs d'où elle était venue. Au lieu d'élaboration de cette réalité ils donnent le nom d'*amedegbo* fè signifiant 'lieu d'origine de la personne humaine... Les géomanciens... le nomment de leur côté *Fetume* ou *Fedome*, ce qui signifie 'dans le cour même ou dans le trou de la cité d'Ifè'... (Surgu 1988b, 60)⁶⁵

Since the *Òrìṣà* first entered the earth's crust before re-emerging on the surface as a force of the physical environment, *Ilẹ̀*, the Earth herself became a second *òrun* (heaven). The first heaven which is in the sky and from where the original 400+1 *Òrìṣà* descended is known as *òrun okè* (heaven above). It is the permanent abode of *Olódùmarè*, but the High God also visits the second heaven, known as *òrun odò*, from time to time. *Òrun odò*, which literally means "heaven below", is also the abode of the ancestors (i.e. all departed humans). (Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 22)⁶⁶

Rewriting *òrun* on the *tabula rāsa* of the sky did not erase its first inscription here below. Contexts of “social pluralism” (MacGaffey 1990b) favor not “conversion”—the fond missionary conceit of reformatting human brains—but accretive “adhesion” (Nock 1933, 7) “with one foot on either side of the fence, adopting the new worship as useful supplements” (Fisher 1973, 330). Cuban *santería* and Brazilian *candomblé* “use the mechanisms of bricolage... consistent with the prevailing situation... to construct a new and semantically Black culture by deploying signs obtained from other, non-Black social groups” (Bastide 1970a, 108 cited by Mary 2000, 890), amounting neither to a style of assimilationist striving nor to “an ecumenical screen hiding the worship of African deities from official persecution” but on the contrary to “a counter-hegemonic strategy” (Apter 2004, 178f., cf. Ortiz 1940). *Ifá*'s own syncretism, ongoing since medieval time, sports jazzy new blends like *òrun àpààdì* lit. 'heaven of potsherds'—a term revealingly self-glossed as “the nearest to the Christian hell in our own [sic] belief” (Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 35 fn. 6, cf. Hallgren 1988, 68, Dianteill 2024).

A second key lexical item became entangled in this change. Current authorities divide benevolent invisible agents into “two types: the gods (*òrìṣà*) and the ancestors (*òkú òrun*)” literally ‘cadavers of *òrun*’ (Abimbólá 1976, 151).⁶⁷ If so, *òrìṣà* should refer narrowly to “any Yorùbá deity apart from *Olórun*” (Abraham 1958, 483) but such tidy theology is scattered by many ambiguities. (i) Assuming that Èdó *ò(ì)ṣà* (LLL) was borrowed from Yorùbá, it's odd that it can't denote any Èdó supernatural other than the “High God” worshipped at the Portuguese *Arú Òsa* cathedral (Melzian 1937, 148, cf. fn. 4 above). (ii) “The *òrìṣà* cult is addressed jointly to the tamed natural force and to the deified ancestor” (Verger 1966, 37). (iii) The slogan *Wón di òrìṣà* ‘They are become an *òrìṣà*’ is proclaimed—with a plural of respect—on the death of any heroic individual.⁶⁸ (iv) In 1997 in the northeast Yorùbá town of Uhè-Ijùmú, I saw the annual *eégún* masks publicly greeted as “*Ò-ò-òrìṣà!*” (cf. Obáyemí 1976, 231 fn. 61) and comparable overlap is much reported in the Yorùbá southeast (Poynor 1978, 65f.). (v) Bascom cryptically alludes to further reasons to be sceptical about nonancestral divinity:

Among the Yorùbá, the worship of the immediate ancestors and of the compound founder are set apart from the worship of the *òrìṣàs*... Nevertheless it should be noted that the worship of the *òrìṣàs* is conceptually ancestor worship, and that in many respects the elaborate Dahomean cult of the ancestors resembles the worship of the *òrìṣàs* more closely than it does the Yorùbá ancestor cult. (1944, 39)

Any cosmological tremor powerful enough to launch *òrun* into the sky, dissociate *òrìṣà* from earthly ancestors (residually represented by *ògbóni* and *eégún*) and mediate the resulting stratospheric gap by systematically resorting to the IDQ format, inevitably also reshuffled the historiographic deck and turned oral kinglists into chronological mysteries:

It has been my contention that the figure called Odùduwà and all that are associated with such a figure constitute one of the most formidable obstacles to an advancement of our knowledge of the history of the Yorùbá-speaking peoples. (Obáyemí 1981, 9 cf. Aṣiwájú 1976, 125 fn. 45)

⁶⁴ “La vie terrestre, poursuit Gèdègbè, est préférable à la vie dans l'au-delà” [Life is better on earth, Gèdègbè continued, than in the hereafter] (Maupoil 1943a, 402, cf. Heusch 1962). Bāmgbósé “cast some doubt” on Verger's idea but offered partial support by positing **màrà* as the Yorùbá's “original word for ‘sky’” derived from *arè* a dialectal item denoting departure from the earth as at ‘the point of death’ (1972, 30ff., 31 fn 36, cf. Oyètádé 2000). At least this vocabulary domain has, of relatively recent, seen dramatic flux!

⁶⁵ [In the Èvè view, everything materialised on top of the earth reflects an invisible reality deep underground or at the lowest point. That's where the human soul, originating from the sky, first landed and chose its destiny from assorted characters, directions and goals that largely predetermine its subsequent experiences, where it normally returns after death and where it resides for a long time as an ancestor before eventually regaining the heights whence it came. Where this happens is called *amedegbo* ‘the origin of human person’... The oracle priests... call it either *Fetume* or *Fedome* ‘in the heart or hollow of the city of Ifè’...]

⁶⁶ A more literal gloss for *odò* is ‘depth’, accounting for its typical reference to rivers and lowland streams (Abraham 1958, 450).

⁶⁷ “*Ará òrun* is the designation for masqueraders who are supposed to be the spirits of dead ancestors” (Owómoyèlā 2005, 105 fn 43).

⁶⁸ Cf. “*Wón d'òrìṣà*” by Tùndé Oṣófisàn & His Rhythm Fàdákàs (= Track 16, *Aṣagas & Archibol[n]gs: the Sixties Sound of Lagos Highlife*. Original Music, Tivoli New York, 1991) and the lyrics of “*Abàmi*” by the performance artist known as Lágbájá (Bello 2016, 214).

Episodic memory, being an “adaptive constructive process” (Schacter 2013), tends to telescope sequences of events or even to flip them teleologically, e.g. by making “traditional genealogies... functions of political relationships rather than *vice-versa*” (Law 1976, 129 *fn.* 34, cf. Heusch 1966). But revisionism can’t perfectly cover its own tracks. Oyèláràn finds

...a contradiction in the postulate that the Yorùbá institution of *Ọba* and the growth of an urban setting constitute the prerequisites for the emergence, the promotion and the preservation of Yorùbá civilization and culture, while at the same time suggesting that the pre-Odùduà group... was responsible for this civilization (Igè 1974, 1976). If the Ọwóró, Idáísà-Mánìgì and Ilàjẹ descended from a Yorùbá-speaking group who had neither *ọba* nor cities... then we may have to rest content that the pre-Odùduà Yorùbá group gave us only the values and not the political organization that made Yorùbá civilization possible. (1977, 646)

To exit ethnic doublethink, Ọbáyẹmí insists that “history... is a game of probabilities” (1979a, 169, cf. Bernoulli 1713, Greenberg 1952) not a public opinion poll. His naturalistic account rests on observations like the following. (i) Unique similarities of the oracle between Nupe in the northwest and *Ookun* Yorùbá in the northeast entail that “Ilẹ-Ifẹ... belongs *with* other places in the diffusion of the knowledge of *Ifá*; it could not have been ‘central’ nor a ‘headquarters’ in any chronological sense” (1979a, 175, original italics, Ọlómọlà 1976, 62). (ii) Any “evidence for the actual manufacture of the... thirty or so brass objects” that have been recovered in Ilẹ-Ifẹ up to date “is yet to be shown” (1979a, 175f, cf. §2.8 below). (iii) A “crisis of legitimacy” and break in royal succession in Ifẹ “perhaps after 1600 AD” has been scrubbed from oral tradition by “ingenuous devices... at the centre of an unhistorical pan-Yorùbáness” (1979a, 182f). Dismissing such anomalies blinds ethnic prehistorians to an epochal event that Ọbáyẹmí could have called a symbolic revolution to naturalise the symbolic violence of Yorùbá feudal *arrivisme* (Bourdieu 2013, cf. §2.10 below).

East of the Niger, chiefdoms may be less centripetal or hierarchical than in the west, but symbolic codes are no less prone to presentist refashioning. Achebé recalls how missionaries “unfortunately” misparsed the phrase *Chí-nà-ékè* (lit. ‘*chí* and *ékè*’) “as the creator God of Christianity” (1975, 171). Nwáòga deploys literary criticism to identify *Chí ukwu*, the capricious figure of Igbo folktales, not with “God” the cloud-based tyrant of Biblical imaginative literature, but with the slaving shrine of the town of Àrù (known to colonialists as “Arochuku”), and he affirms that “[a]ny appearances of reference to the Judeo-Christian concept must be seen as accretions due to the dynamism of oral tradition” (1984, 48).

At Ñrì, the imagery is more intricate. Sacrifices are performatively dedicated to *Chí ukwu* ‘big *chí*’ by pointing a whole kolanut at *anya anwú* ‘the eye/orb of the sun’ (Ọnwùjẹjógwù 1981, 31). This gesture has been interpreted to enact a belief that “a person’s *chí* normally resides with the sun, bringer of daylight” (Achebé 1975, 161), echoing the quotidian fact that *chí* means ‘sunlight’ in plain Igbo phrases like *Chí ejjó* ‘Day has darkened i.e. It’s time to go home’ and *Kà chí fool* ‘Let dawn spread out, i.e. See you tomorrow!’⁶⁹ Daylight imagery has also been plausibly read into *ichi*, a likely cognate expression denoting parallel keloid lines carved like solar rays on the foreheads of titled *òzọ* initiates (Jeffreys 1951, cf. Shaw 1970 plates 272, 512) thereby branding them as *ndị gbúrú ichi* ‘persons incised with *ichi*’—in effect, *illuminati* of the *Chí ukwu* mysteries.⁷⁰ However, Ñrì ritualists also define *chí* in a second way: as an invisible “procreative force” of “prosperity, fertility, health [and] longevity” that determines “the course of a person’s life history” symbolized for a man by an *ògbú* tree—top row of photos, below—planted at the birth of his first child and “cut down the day he dies”, and for a woman by an *ọrá* tree—bottom row of photos (Ọnwùjẹjógwù 1981, 33, 1997, 17f, 89).⁷¹



www.figweb.org/Ficus/Subgenus_Urostigma/Section_Galaglychia/Subsection_Galaglychia/Ficus_saussureana.htm



www.africanplants.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page_id=78&id=1320,...1321

69 Diurnal significance is reinforced by the apparent cognate *échi* ‘tomorrow/the morrow’, measuring one daylight cycle forward or—in dialects where it also means ‘yesterday’—backward from speech time (cf. Ígwè 1999, 140). Unpalatalized *ékei*, the Àgbò version of this item, is one step closer to the reconstructed Niger-Congo items **k(y)án* ‘day(light)’ and **k(i)a* ‘to dawn’ (Mukarovskiy 1976, 146, 152).

70 Kidnapped *òzọ* initiates sold to the Americas were called *breeche*/ *briche*/ *embrenché* (Adams 1923, 134, Ortiz 1924, 66, Edwards 1962).

71 The name *ògbú* may contain the root *-gbú* ‘ooze/squirt (sap)’ as a metaphor of the fluid of Y chromosome transmission. The female counterpart *ọrá*—species not specifically identified among the redwood genus *Pterocarpus*, illustrated here by *lucens* and *santalinooides*—has large ‘winged’ fruit (not shown) and abundant yellow flowers, suggesting that its name is built from the predicate *-rá* (*nnwá*) ‘bear (offspring)’ (Williamson 1972, 154f, 407, 429, Ígwè 1999, 210, 227, 634, 720, cf. Keay 1989, 267, 296, Èhigiamusoe 2013, 384-87).

The question occurs whether *chí*'s two meanings—visible daylight, invisible reincarnation—are linked by anything besides homophony (randomly identical sound, like English *toe* and *ton*). It's tempting to derive both senses from one root *-chí* 'return, reverse, repeat' as in *-chí azú* 'retreat', *-kwú-chí-gha* 'reimburse', *-kwú-gha-chí* 'speak yet again', *-yó-gha-chí* 'return' (Manfredi 1998, 175 *fn* 22, cf. Williamson 1972, 80, 249, Igwè 1999, 119, 838). This guess is not disproved by the opposite tones of predicate *-chí* L vs. nominal *chí* H because Igbo has three solid examples of L↔HH: *-dú* 'advise' ↔ *ódú* 'advice', *-gwù* 'play' ↔ *égwù* 'play, n.', *-rè* 'imagine' ↔ *írò* 'dream, n.' (Williamson 1972, xxxixff.), but it crashes out on the simple fact that the 'return' root is aspirated (spelled by linguists *-chí* or *-ch'í*) in any Igbo dialect possessing aspirated consonants, whereas nominal *chí* (sometimes spelled *ch'*) is never aspirated in any locality (Green & Igwè 1963, Swift & al. 1962, 495, Armstrong 1967, ##124, 394, 433, S389, Igwè & Green 1970, 137, Williamson 1973b, Ladefoged & al. 1976, Igwè 1999, 110, 118, 363, 838). It follows that neither of the two senses of nominal *chí* shares a history with the predicate of 'return', no matter how attractive this may at first appear on semantic grounds (*meā culpā* 1998).

Nevertheless, the perceived daylight aura of *chí* the 'procreative force' is more than a fortuitous pun, because the same two ideas also cohabit in the Èdó word *èhí*, despite the fact that *èhí* rhymes neither with Igbo *chí* nor with any Èdó word for sunshine. Instead, *èhí* has a plausible derivation internal to Èdó from the predicate *-hí*:

èhí. (1) one's personal guardian spirit; *èhí* is believed to live in the *èrinnwìn* ['world of the dead and the unborn']; it "prays in *èrinnwìn* for our long life" and it is also responsible for any lucky or unlucky happenings. It is believed to be "with a man all the day" and at night it gives account to *Òsa* ["the Bini high god"]. The *èhí* is represented by an object near a man's sleeping place... The *èhí* does not want any blood sacrifices. *Uhúmwùn*, the head, is believed to be the *èhí*'s helper and to render account of the happenings during the day to it; *òb-èhí nò* 'it is the *èhí*'s work (lit. 'hand'): this is said whenever a man has achieved anything extraordinary, or has had outstanding luck. ... (4) *èhí n-àkòpè* region at the back of the head; the hole is explained by the belief that during his stay in *èrinnwìn* a man has to pay something for his food, and that a part of his skull is cut out in order to serve as a payment; cf. *hí*... (Melzian 1937, 51f., 55, cf. 201)⁷²

-hí. to pray [to] *Òsa* and *Èhí* for one's well-being during the next reincarnation (*arí-avbèhé*)... (Melzian 1937, 76)⁷³

Despite lacking a common etymology, *chí* and *èhí* do share cognitive history because they're exact calques in Àgbò—a bicultural Igbo-related kingdom on the eastern Èdó border—where *èhí* automatically replaces *chí* in countless personal names like *Èhí-edú* < *Chí-nà-edú* 'Èhí/Chí guides or escorts [an individual life journey]' &c.⁷⁴ The cults of *chí* and *èhí* coexist in parallel at Àhaba (the colonial "Asaba"), an Igbo town on the *òfèst-ímili* (right) bank of the Niger river:

In addition to *chí* a man has also *èhí* and two forms are distinguished, *èhí únò* ['of the house'] and *èhí ófíá* ['of the forest']. Both the name and the belief are curiously reminiscent of the Èdó belief in *èhí owá* ['of the house'] and *èhí obá* ['of the forest']. (Thomas 1914b, 19; cf. 1910, 40)

The lack of phonetic resemblance between the functional analogues *chí* and *èhí* shows that what was shared by Igbo and Èdó ritualists was not a word but an extralinguistic—encyclopedic/poetic/ritual—association between daylight and personal guidance. Such a folk belief obtains initial plausibility from dreaming impressions of the sense of sight, possibly analogous to the Platonic visualisation of the *ψυχή* 'self' as an *αἰῶνος εἰδωλόν* 'life-image double' (cf. Vernant 1990, 35), compounded with the objectively obvious causal relationship between solar radiation and biological growth:

During the period of the rising and setting of the sun, its rays radiate to all the corners of the world (*àwà*), disclosing all things and enhancing fertility. ...Light promotes knowledge and darkness limits it. (Ọnwụcịjógwù 1997, 88)

Chí's (and *èhí*'s) ritual ambiguity recurs in Gbè, west of Yorùbá. In Èwè-gbè *vodú*, *dzò-gbè* literally 'birth-day' also means 'fate' (Westermann 1905, 85, 89, 168) and it names the precise facet of the 'plural' human psyche treated by *Afá* therapy (Surgy 1988a, 30-35, cf. Mary 2000, 187). The Fòn-gbè localisation of *vodún* has an equivalent of the *chí*↔*Chí ukwu* dyad, expressed as *sé* with the alternative senses 'soul/destiny' and 'God' distinguished by notional size: "Il existe un grand *Sé*, qui est *Máwú*" (Maupoil 1943a, 388, cf. Segurola & Rassinoux 2000, 440, Höftmann & Ahohunkpanzon 2003, 339).⁷⁵ Èwè *vodú* has a 'big' *sé* of its own: *Sé-Kpòlú*, *Sé-Lìsà* and *Máwú Se-Gbo* (Westermann 1905, Surgy 1988b, 64, 74).⁷⁶ Fòn *sé* and Èwè *sé* may derive from Yorùbá "*ìsẹ̀sẹ̀*" (tones unknown), a borrowed shrine icon of

...the head, the father, the mother and *Ifá*... Every year we sacrifice a ram to the *ìsẹ̀sẹ̀* of a deceased elder. People say that *ìsẹ̀sẹ̀* is a little fragment of the power of *Olódùmarè* remaining in the home. (Verger 1973, 64)

The identification of Fòn-gbè 'big *Sé*' with *Máwú* can be blamed on 19th-century Jesuit catechists who enlisted *Máwú* to alias the Biblical skygod, replacing *Lìsà* (< Yorùbá *òrìsà*) in this role (Yáí 1992) and who hallucinated in many other Westafrican vocabulary items the novel, medieval-Christian soul/body opposition (Vesperini 2024, 101f).

Rather than pursue these clues, some of which he was the first to print, Àchebé demurs from "even... preliminary" conclusions, disqualifying himself as "one whose primary love is literature and not religion, philosophy or linguistics" (1975, 160). His possibly tongue-in-cheek namecheck of "the Supreme Deity *Chí Ukwu* Himself" (1975, 161) perfectly suits someone schooled by High Church Anglicans in "Religious Knowledge" and subjected to the notorious colonial "No Vernacular Rule" (Ọchíàgha 2015, 69-71).⁷⁷ His English gloss of *chí* as small-*g* "personal god" (1958/1962, 16), evidently a back-formed diminutive of the missionary *Chí Ukwu*, sounds suspiciously "similar to the Christian religious

⁷² The mentioned functional association of *èhí* with *ùhúmwùn* 'head' may show the influence of Yorùbá *orí* 'head' regarded as the seat of personal destiny according to *Ogúndá Méjì* ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ (Abimbólá 1975, 158-77, 453f., cf. Abiódún 1987).

⁷³ Èdó *Ò(ì)sa*, an apparent loan < Yorùbá *òrìsà* in the reign of *Ọmọ n'Ọba* Èsìgíe alias *Òsawé* (Melzian 1937, 148f.; Read & Dalton 1899, 5) became *òlisa*/e/e in western Igbo (Williamson 1966, 1972, 376f.). The tone of Èdó predicates is fully predictable from syllabic skeleton plus inflectional context (Melzian 1937, xii, Wescott 1962b, 25, Ogierakhi 1973, Elugbe 1973, 171, Amayo 1975, 21-23, 1976, 230).

⁷⁴ In Àgbò, *chí* is implied in the borrowed name *Chúku* < *Chí uk(w)u* found in *Íkenchúku* 'Strength-of-Chúku' (Manfredi 2013a, 127). In inherited vocabulary, Àgbò regularly has nonpalatal *k* before high front vowels where Igbo has palatal *ch*, e.g. *èkí*=*échi* 'tomorrow', *-kí*=*-chí* 'gather, govern'. In Igbo, the *k* of *íkítá* 'dog' (Àgbò *ítítén*) may have preceded a historic back vowel (< *-chú* 'chase, pursue' Clark 1989, 245), the *k* of dialectal *kítáa* 'now' may have preceded a nonhigh vowel in a phrasal contraction (**kè táa*) and the voiced counterpart *g* is nonexistent before *i* apart from one antique, fixed compound *-gid(h)e* 'against' cf. *-jí* 'hold' (Igwè 1999, 181, 271).

⁷⁵ [There's a big *Sé*, which is *Máwú*]. The same dualism replicates in the *Fá* of Fòn-gbè:

On peut donc distinguer un *Fá* de tout le monde...et un *Fá* (ou signe) individuel, objet d'un culte privé rendu par chaque initié au symbole de son âme extérieure. [Thus we can distinguish between the *Fá* that belongs to everyone... and the individual *Fá* (or sign) ritualized by each initiate as the visible symbol of his/her soul.] (Maupoil 1943a, 14)

⁷⁶ The unexpanded-pharynx (non-ATR) vowel of Fòn-gbè *sé* corresponds to an expanded (ATR) vowel in Èwè (western Gbè) varieties, where the items reconstructed **gbè* 'life' and **dé* 'tongue' (Capo 1991, 66) show up with either undotted *e* or else with *ə* (schwa).

⁷⁷ "In those days, it was a serious offence for a secondary school boy or girl to speak in the 'vernacular' within the school premises" (Fáfúnwa & al. 1989, 5). The edict gave Professor Fáfúnwa his famous anecdote of the student accused of 'laughing in vernacular'!

idea of guardian angel” (Ọnwụejìógwù 1997, 18).⁷⁸ Threads of Biblical hybridity are also woven into the Hebrophilic drag modeled by Biafra’s current runway mascot who drapes an orthodox Judaic *tallis godoil* over his Àrù-style *ìsì ag(h)ù* jumper printed with *ótùsí* totems and stylishly accessorized with a Zikist fez, an *óẸ̀o* ivory tusk and an *ògbúéfí* leather fan emblazoned with Lt. Colonel Ojúkwu’s sun-ray flag motif (photo below, cf. Melie & Waas 1983, Harnischfeger 2012).⁷⁹



“Nnamdi Kánú, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement, wears a Jewish prayer shawl as he walks in his garden in Qmàáhjá [“Umuahia”], Nigeria before meeting veterans of the Nigerian civil war on May 26” (Marco Longari/AFP, www.newsweek.com/war-nigeria-biafra-nnamdi-kanu-686961)

Viewing the annual Nri enactment of “the drama of *chí* and *ágwù*” (Ọnwụejìógwù 1997, 19), Orientalist eyeglasses may see avatars of good and evil, but the participants themselves decode a less Manichean message: they report that *Afa* is consulted by someone who feels deserted by his or her *chí* and left exposed to the anomic caprices of *ágwù*,

a supernatural being and also a force that reveals the secret ‘actions’ of *álusí* [invisible supernatural agents] and *nmúó* [ancestors] to the visible world [*élu ñwa*, literally ‘up-world’] through *Afa*... [E]very living being is constantly under the influence of *ágwù* which can take possession of a person temporarily. When this happens... he becomes unpredictable. His actions alternate between frenzy and calmness, disorderliness and orderliness, destructiveness and creativeness, insanity and sanity, violence and peacefulness, ignorance and wisdom. Such personality traits are generally described... as ‘bad *chí*’ [*ájó chí*] or using the specific concept of saying that *ágwù* has taken possession of the person’s actions, *Ágwù atú yá*. Where has one’s *chí* gone during the period one is under the influence of *ágwù*? ... When a person is defiled, for example on breaking a taboo, his *chí* abandons him and dwells in the *chí* tree until the ritual of purification is done, after which his *chí* returns to him to direct him along creative lines. Occasionally it happens that a person remains in a state of defilement for a long time... In that case, it is believed that the person’s *chí* has gone from the *chí* tree to the sky, *anya anwú* [‘orb of the sun’]. ... The *dibí a dfa* refers him to the *dibí a aja* who specializes in the performance of all types of sacrifices to the supernaturals, in purification rituals, in exorcism of *ágwù*, in chaining of *ékewéshu* [bad deaths, coopted by missionaries as the Igbo name for “Lucifer, Satan” (Igwe 1999, 157)] and *akalá-ógoli* [‘halfway’ spirits i.e. the unfulfilled and nonreincarnating dead] and in preparing protective charms. ... The alternating relationship in which *chí* and *ágwù* are conceived, namely predictability and non-predictability, is annually displayed in the ritual drama of *ágwù*. ... [Y]oung men who have taken the *nmánwú* title perform mask dances. ... [T]hey are violent and turbulent at one time, constructive and calm at another. (Ọnwụejìógwù 1997, 13, 18f)

To access *Afa*’s psycho-social therapy, no clairvoyant intercessor like ‘heavenly’ *Ọrínmílá* is called upon. Instead, if *ágwù*—the *dibí a*’s invisible familiar—has any Yorùbá analogue at all it’s *Èsù*, insurgent personification of ambivalence and nondeterminism.⁸⁰ To clear his client’s mental entropy the *dibí a* summons not an omniscient angel but *ndị nmúó*, the client’s real human ancestors retrieved from collective memory. Although the term *ancestor worship* is bandied about by colonial and missionary writers (Frazer 1890, Addison 1924), no mysticism is necessary in order for the living to discuss their individual and collective antecedents—not, at least, according to the founder of modern sociology:

La société, pour Comte, se compose dans tous les hommes vivantes et de tous les hommes disparus qui vivent dans la pensée de leurs descendants et y développent une action égale à l’ascendant de leur souvenir. Car elle est formée par l’accumulation d’une expérience et d’un savoir constituant une donnée spirituelle objective et reliant les unes aux autres les générations. (Bouthoul 1950, 57, original italics)⁸¹

Accordingly, when the *Afa* oracle is employed to access past, lived experiences for decisionmaking in the present,

‘old’ social reality is transformed into ‘new’ social reality. The transformational process is expressed in the idiom of mysticism and religion, though it is achieved through a complex communication network... Ideally, Nri traditional philosophy is based on the relationship linking the past, present and future. ... This conception is expressed in the genealogical structure that models the collective actions of contemporaries (the living) in terms of predecessors (ancestors) and successors (the unborn). In this system of belief, fathers under certain conditions are expected to reincarnate in their grandchildren... (Ọnwụejìógwù 1997, 2, 121)

Gramscian “‘common sense’ (i.e. philosophical folklore)” (1935, 2311) also informs the *Afa* oracle of Èwè-gbè *vodún*:

⁷⁸ Another instance of the whole/part relation between skygod and ‘soul’ discussed immediately above for Gbè catechist calques.

⁷⁹ Before the makeover in Fendi™ gear: cdn.vanguardngr.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/IPOB.jpg?width=756&auto=optimize=medium, www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/511921-just-in-why-nnamdi-kanu-wont-be-allowed-to-wear-clothes-with-lion-head-image-sss.html, but either version is cooler than this “Finland-based” thrift-shop fashion victim: tribuneonline.ng.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Simon-Ekpa.jpeg, cf. tribuneonline.ng.com/simon-ekpa-declaring-second-biafra-war-deploy-soldiers-to-south-east-obanaze-tells-tinubu/.

⁸⁰ Monotheist translation-identity of *Èsù* with *Satan*, anti-hero of Biblical literature, though long internalized by Africans (e.g. Dòpámú 1986), is now rejected as crosscultural slander: Oyèláràn (2011), Adégbolá (2025), alamojayoruba.com/esu-is-not-satan-who-esu-is-and-who-he-is-not, www.youtube.com/watch?v=C984zJL6ROs, twitter.com/hashtag/esuisnotsatan, blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2020/05/esu-at-the-bl.html.

⁸¹ [According to Comte, society comprises all living persons plus all the departed who live on in the thoughts of their descendants with an impact relative to the persistence of their memory. Society is constituted by the *accumulation of experience and knowledge*, amounting to an objective mental datum that links successive generations to each other.]

The expression *spirituelle* here is evidently to be understood in the non-theistic idiom of Cartesian mind/body dualism.

La divination [sic]... ne prétend nullement prédire l'avenir, mais consiste à “deviner” ce qui se passe ici et maintenant, c'est-à-dire à identifier les forces invisibles à l'oeuvre en l'homme, en train de modeler le cours des événements.
... [I]l y a, à la base de la divination [sic], le souci d'intervenir dans le cours normal des événements, tels qu'ils affectent intérieurement les gens, et de le faire sciemment, après une analyse de ce qui les conditionne et en provoque l'apparition. C'est là une préoccupation très proche d'une préoccupation scientifique... (Surgu 1981a, 8)⁸²

In contrast to both Ìgbo *Àfà* and Èwè *Afá*, Yorùbá *Ifá* is vaunted as being “completely informed about... the future” (Abimbólá 1973, 41) and has accordingly been described less as a source of sage advice based upon precedent than as a morale-boosting psychosomatic ritual *placebo* wrapped up in a verbal Rorschach blot:

[A]n accurate prediction is not simply a matter of coincidence, because the questions themselves are loaded; and since the alternatives proposed are neither wholly good nor wholly bad, it frequently makes little difference which answer is given. But it is important to realize that this does not mean that nothing is gained by consulting the diviner. As Herskovits has indicated in discussing the same system among the neighboring Dahomeans, a conviction that the choice is in the hands of deities who have much greater knowledge and foresight than human beings gives the individual confidence in the decision... Certainly the elimination of fruitless hesitation and indecision would seem to enable the individual to concentrate his entire energy, without distraction, upon the task in hand.
(Bascom 1941, 45, cf. Herskovits 1938, 217, Bastide 1971b, 352)

The Westafrican distinction between remembered underground advice and free-floating futuristic faith ran through the Middle Passage and registered in centenarian recollections in a 19th century Cuban labor yard as the contrasting ritual styles of Congo-heritage *Palo-Nganga* and Lucumí-Yorùbá *Ifá*—showing how diasporan migration can “sharpen sociocultural diversity” and crystallise “multiple modernities” (Tambiah 2000, cf. Eisenstadt 2000, Amselle 2022, 160).

La brujería tira mas para los congos que para los lucumises. Los lucumises están más ligados a los santos y a Dios.
...La diferencia entre el congo y el lucumí es que el congo resuelve, pero el lucumí adivina.
(Barnet 1966, 33f., cited in part by Peel 1990, 363f. *fn* 20 and substantially revisiting Cabrera 1954b)⁸³

1.5 Back on planet Earth

Before *Ifá*'s ‘stairway to heaven’ (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob's_Ladder) sprouted up in Ilé-Ifè like Jack's magic beanstalk, its seeds had germinated in the Benue valley and its tendrils wound around the Nsùkà and Òkà hills, down the Òmámbalá [“Anambra”] river valley and across the Niger confluence. But botanical metaphors aside, what exactly moved when, and how? For any bit of folklore, the ratio of internal inheritance to borrowing across boundaries—vertical to horizontal transmission—is an empirical question undecidable in advance (Graça da Silva & Tehrani 2015, Bortolini & al. 2017).⁸⁴ The foregoing data of *Ifá* diagnose borrowing on a time-scale of centuries not millennia, because sound shifts between local variants of oracle terms are smaller, hence more recent, than general phonetic differences between cognates of the general (nonritual) vocabulary of the respective language hosts. If oracle jargon *in situ* was as old as the nearest common ancestor of all these languages, its phonetic splits should approximate those in basic lexical items—contrary to fact.

This much is already enough to dismiss dreams of primordial “Yorùbá” hominds glimpsed in a crystal ball of googled genetics and ethnic conspiracies (Fálóyè 2018, cf. Ònùòhà 2019). The remaining possibility is that *Ifá*—textual mark of Yorùbá culture par excellence—is an amalgam of things copied from afar with those inherited and renewed in place. Real demographic migration is strictly unnecessary for this outcome, and even if it occurred it would be no easier to detect for *Ifá* than for wheat cultivar adoption in northwest Europe (Olalde & al. 2018, Cavalli-Sforza 2019, 178-81). Even supposing for the sake of argument that medieval Ifè's inhabitants received some copper alloy artefacts direct from errant Ìgbo artisans like those seen in recent years (Thomas 1913a, Jeffreys 1941, Neaher 1976a, 133, 1976b, 1979a, Njókú 1994), there's no reason beyond an unimpressive coincidence of one syllable to connect these conjectured donors to vanished forest autochthones named “Ugbo (not Igbo)” (Ọ̀ṣúntó.kun 2004, no tones in source) as referenced in the myth of Mòrèmi and reenacted in Ifè's annual Qbátálá or Edì festival (Stevens 1966, Ọ̀gúnwùsì 2019a).⁸⁵

Naturalistic methods are less febrile and more informative. Available traces, “sparse and patchy” (Sutherland & Wordley 2018) though they inevitably are, show that the oracle grew stepwise, collecting mutations and complexity while crossing language boundaries. The accumulated changes detailed above include phonetic transcription errors in oracle terminology (§1.2), planar rotation of the duplex linear arrays (§1.3) and constructive adaptations of oracle semantics to local ideational complexes, most notably the Ìgbo ‘plural’ personality and the Yorùbá hierarchical trope of IDQ (§1.4).

Ifè's metaphysical innovations surpassed Nri's in several ways. (i) Solar authority evoked in the *Chí Ukwu* cult licensed the *Ẹ̀zẹ̀ Nri* to pronounce *nìsọ̀ ́àna* ‘earth taboos’ across a wide area (Ọ̀nwụ̀ẹ̀jìọ̀gwù 1981, 166) and key images of authority are literally grounded. Alongside the epithet *ìgwe* ‘sky’—endlessly addressed to Ìgbo paramounts in Nollywood films—Henderson & Ọ̀mùnnà report that the *Ọ̀bí* of Ọ̀nicha is also called *ńkpu* ‘termite mound’ and that the feathered crown worn by Ọ̀nicha palace chiefs depicts “a mound of earth” (1988, 28). They see parallels in the famed *ìjèlè* mask “representing a deceased person of high title... emerging out of the termite hill that connects this world with... *àní ́ímụ̀ọ̀* ‘land of the dead’” crowned by a “sky-ascending tree... of life” (1988, 30f. citing also Meek 1937, 186, Cole 1982). By contrast, Ifè *babaláwos* raised up the underground ancestral domain of *òrun* itself to *become* the sky, surely enhanced by “the relationship between Ọ̀rúnmìlā and Islam” when *Ifá* “absorbed some [Islamic] practices and beliefs into its own worldview” (Olúpòná 2016, 178, cf. Fisher 1973, Gbàdāmòsì 1977). (ii) The clout of Ìgbo priestly elders—who ‘feed’ remembered underground dead with sacrifices on altars of lineage *ọ̀jọ̀*—is inherently dispersed among compounds of the commune, whereas secular trends of bilateral kinship and collateral residence expanded the urban charter of the prototype Yorùbá palace, whose chief occupant, screened behind a frontally beaded crown (Thompson 1970), acts as “mediator between the living and the dead” and controls “the collection and redistribution of goods on a grand scale”—as Polanyi described 19th century Àgbómẹ̀ under Ọ̀yọ̀ influence (1966, 34f., cf. Herskovits 1938, 49, Tall 1995). Overall the Nri ruler resembles more the head of a Polynesian or Southeast Asian “conical clan” (Sahlins 1963; Friedman 1975) than a Yorùbá *oba alá, ẹ̀ ẹ̀ké, ẹ̀ ọ̀rìsà* ‘ruler, whose power is second only to that of the *ọ̀rìsà* [divinities]’ (Abraham 1958, 71).

That the sky is a handy parking place for invisible causal agents has been remarked since Feuerbach (1841), but whether this arrangement adds cognitive value is open to debate (Horton 1971, Guthrie 1995, Godelier 1996, 147). Memetic mechanisms of evolutionary psychology may be enlightening, but *Ifá*'s strides of self-fashioning are largely explainable by more mundane, material considerations. When *babaláwos* poetically revamped and digitally indexed

⁸² [Divination doesn't claim to predict the future but to “deduce” what's happening here and now, identifying unseen forces affecting a person to explain the course of events. ...Divination reflects the impulse to intervene in an unfolding sequence of events in people's subjective life, revealing causal factors. Such concerns are similar to those of the natural sciences...]

⁸³ [Magic means more to Congolese Cubans than it does to Lucumís. The Lucumís are more loyal to their saints and to ‘God’. ...The difference between Congo and Lucumí is that the Congolese fix problems while the Lucumís make predictions.]

Also relevant is that Lucumí initiates are prohibited to join Abakuá but the reverse trajectory is possible (Miller 2022, 39 *fn* 17).

⁸⁴ Schleicher (1868) assumed the opposite and reconstructed all shared folklore automatically as proto Indo-European heritage.

⁸⁵ Most historians of Ifè write “Ìgbò” (Adémákinwá 1958 vol. 2, 32-42; Fábùnmí 1969, 17f.; Elúyémí 1975, 123; Babáyémí 1988, 33-35; Akintóyè 2010, 46) either tonelessly or with explicit [l.l.] perhaps under Wáẓòbíán influence (cf. §2 below). Similarly, the sporadic flux of phonetic variants like “Mòrèmi” (Ọ̀gúndiran 2020, 433), *Mòrèmi* etc. may diagnose the hazy status of mythic nomenclature.

peasant folktales and herbal recipes into a proprietary cache of sacred texts—a precocious ‘big data’ scrape—they not only composed an effective charter for the Ifè throne, they also did their own particular interests no harm:

Ifá priests are in many respects quite different from other *òrìṣà* devotees, being specialist and professional masters of a divinatory system which operates precisely by bringing all the disparate cults and forces into relationship with each other and mediating between them. ... But the *Ifá* cult does in one sense work like any other *òrìṣà* cult writ large, for the effect of all synthesising *Ifá* stories is ultimately to claim a unique and superior position in the cosmology for *Ifá*: every divination verse in the vast *Ifá* corpus reaffirms the sagacity of *Ifá* and the effectuality of the *Ifá* divination system, and many explicitly show other *òrìṣà* at a disadvantage in comparison with *Ifá*. (Barber 1990, 335 *fn.* 14)

Since the priests of all deities rely partially upon the diviners for sacrifices and worshippers, it is to their economic advantage to direct the sanctions of religious faith toward the diviners and their work more than to any other deity or cult, aside from their own. (Bascom 1941, 44)

It takes historic *chutẓpah* to enclose a folkloric commons distilled from long popular experience and expropriate its symbolic surplus to sustain a priestly rentier class. The encroachment is all the bolder in West Africa’s baseline social ecology, whose low carrying capacity for elites and high resistance to accumulative “take-off” have been bemoaned as “backward” by Western market-fetishists (Rostow 1962). In hindsight however the con is obvious. Analogous hoards of metaphysical capital appear across the anthropological record with enough frequency to qualify as a structural *telos*:

The creation of an apparently separate religion is closely tied to the history of the state. ... The development of the Merina state in Madagascar in the 18th and 19th century shows how the construction of the symbolic state is accompanied by a partial destruction and reformulation of the symbolism of the subjects. Thus, certain key attributes of elders/ancestors were forcibly transferred from local descent groups to the king and his palace. ... Interestingly, a similar process involving the diminution of the transcendental social of subjects for the benefit and construction of the royal transcendental has been examined for early Egypt. ... (Bloch 2008, 2058)

Willett posits the same scenario for the Odùduàn takeover: “The indigenous population almost certainly had some cult of the ancestors... [which t]he sophisticated ruling class in Ifè seems to have overcome” (1967b, 33).⁸⁶

Independent parallels show that Ifè’s major innovations were neither rare accidents nor clever one-off hacks but replicable steps of a cultural logic or “psychological necessity which brings about the appearance of certain groups of ideas and activities on certain stages of culture” (Boas 1910, 535). Channeling Childe (1951) on neolithic intensification, Bookchin insists that the name of *evolution* properly applies to any ubiquitous and recurrent process of cultural unfolding:

If critics were correct in dubbing [the] dialectic a mystery for claiming to encompass *all* phenomena by a few cosmic formulas, then they would be obliged to regard human social development as a mystery if they claimed that it lacks any continuity and unity—that is, the bases for a philosophy of History. Without a notion of continuity in History, how can we explain... the clearly unrelated evolution of complex agricultural systems in at least three separate parts of the world—the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Mesoamerica—that apparently had no contact with one another and that were based on the cultivation of three different grains, notably wheat, rice and maize? ... Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia, most clearly, could not have had any contact with each other since Paleolithic times, yet their agriculture, towns and cities, literacy and mathematics developed in ways that are remarkably similar. (1994, 163, cf. Testart 2012)

Ifè’s trajectory recaps the Eurasian pattern. “The massive political and social changes which accompanied Roman imperial expansion led to an effective simplification of religious organization” as Augustus’ elevation to *pontifex maximus* capped “an already old process, the appropriation by the Roman *élite* of the religious institutions of the Roman people” (Gordon 1990, 181, 183*f.*, cf. Brelich 1951). In the “millennium from about 600 BC to 650 CE... preindustrial empires” saw a “process of structural differentiation... by which ‘religion’ (or ‘religious authority’) became defined for the first time as an independent category” (Beard 1990, 46*f.*) and “exclusive alliances between church and state constituted a key element in each religion’s formation” (Hopkins 1999, 248, cf. Eisenstadt 1971, 1982, Baumard & Boyer 2013, 277), proving “the speculative proposition that the state and religion are identical” (Rose 1981, 112 citing Hegel’s *Philosophie der Religion* v. 2, 190). 12th Century Germanic Europe saw “a redrawing of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane” as saints’ relic bones ceased to be a “repository of the collective values of the group” and instead signified the “superior coercive power” of clergy, knights and merchants (Brown 1975, 134, 140, 143).⁸⁷ In northern Christian towns, top social strata did semantic somersaults no less agile than those by which Ifè’s poetic gurus launched death into the sky. Latin *mundus* ‘clean; world’ (cf. Sanskrit मृद *mṛd* ‘shaved clean’, Macdonell 1929, 231), whose negation *im-mundus* logically meant ‘un-clean’ (cf. Italian *immondizia* ‘garbage’), was inverted (“disenchanted” *à la* Weber, “rationalized” *per* Habermas) in ecclesiastical usage so that non-negated *mundus* took on the negative connotation of defilement, as in “this world, the realm of sin and death” (Lewis & Short 1879, 1175 citing *Evangelium Johannis* 17,9). Cinquecento Florence bravely contested theocratic-oligarchic “‘descending’... power” (Pocock 1975, 29 quoting Ullmann 1961, 19*f.*, cf. 95*f.*).

It’s hard not to “see doctrinal religion as only one of the many manifestations of social and cognitive dynamics that appear with the development of large-scale polities with social stratification” and—unless literacy includes Ifá—Ifè disproves the absence of “doctrinal practice outside literate cultures” (Boyer 2005, 18, 22 cf. Whitehouse 2004).⁸⁸ Maybe West Africa was infected by Eurasian “religious rejection of the world characterized by a negative evaluation of man and society and the exaltation of another realm of reality as alone true and infinitely valuable” (Bellah 1964, 359) but clear traces of early contact are few, and *pave* Binsbergen (1997, 230), the numerologic-graphic match between Arabic and Benue valley oracles is not accompanied by phonetic or semantic similarities in any of the sixteen 4-bit signs, nor by any shared interpretive text. The remaining possibility is that after sharing basic binary visual calculus, the two computational systems grew independently in parallel on the respective sides of the Sahara in tune with endogenous social hierarchies. Some subsaharans managed to spin state worship doctrines out of atmospheric whims, then when fullblown Eurasian monotheisms eventually reached West Africa by land and sea, these recombined with homegrown up-gazing ideologies that had already pre-adapted to express metaphysical disdain for the real, ancestral, bio-social ground on which we stand. The outcome is a planetary *putsch* whose apocalyptic consequences are dawning on human awareness rather late:

Alors que les Modernes regardaient en l’air, les Terrestres regardent en bas. Les Modernes formaient un peuple sans territoire, les Terrestres recherchent sur quel sol poser leurs pieds. Ils reviennent sur une Terre dont ils acceptent enfin d’explorer les limites; ils se définissent politiquement comme ceux qui se préparent à regarder Gaïa de face. (Latour 2015, back cover)⁸⁹

⁸⁶ So that now, a high-profile *babaláwo* can successfully connive with a state governor to usurp the *Ọ̀yámèsì* (council of titled kingmakers) and rig the selection of the *Alaàfin* (www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/766466-the-making-of-an-alaafin-bribes-or-the-gods-by-festus-adedayo.html).

⁸⁷ The pattern recurs across continents: Vēdic priests outrank warriors (Dumézil 1940, 43, cf. Dumont 1962, Madan 1971, 1997, Meillassoux 1973, Malamoud 1980, Graeber 2011, 62*f.*), Thai Buddhist amulets attract “the commodification of charisma” (Tambiah 1984) and in Congolese “areas characterized by weak government, relics... substituted for public authority” (MacGaffey 1990a, 60).

⁸⁸ In both Nigeria and Cuba, Ifá has inspired many literate recensions (Egharheva 1936a, Arango 1963, Abimbólá 1975, Íbici 1986...).

⁸⁹ [Where Moderns once gazed up in the air, Terrestrials now direct their sight downward. The Moderns became people without a homeland, whereas the Terrestrials are looking for where to plant their feet. They are returning themselves to an Earth whose limits they have belatedly begun to investigate. They define themselves in political terms as people who are finally ready to look at Gaïa with unaverted gaze.]

2. Before *Wá-ṣó-bì-á*⁹⁰

Identity as such is about as boring a subject as one can imagine. Nothing seems less interesting than the narcissistic self-study that today passes in many places for identity politics, or ethnic studies, or affirmations of roots, cultural pride, drum-beating nationalism and so on. We have to defend peoples and identities threatened with extinction or subordinated because they are considered inferior, but that is very different from aggrandising a past invented for present reasons. (Said 1998/2000, 567)

2.1 “The unholy trinity”⁹¹

Wá-ṣó-bì-á is a polyglot phrasal idiom compounded from monosyllables translating ‘come [here]’ in Yorùbá, Hausa and Igbo—the three largest indigenous *lingue franche* of the “tropical dependency” that an imperial-Irish journalist and future Mrs. F. Lugard named *Nigeria* as a less “inconvenient” abbreviation of George Goldie’s “Royal Niger Company’s Territories” (Shaw 1897, 6, cf. 1905, 7), and that cynical postcolonials more deftly abbreviate *Nàìjíríyà* (Nzekwú 1961, 8).⁹²

Used as a meta-shibboleth, *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* is three-ways ambiguous.⁹³ (i) Indexically, it refers to a progressive but never implemented policy to establish the principal languages of the three constituent regions of 1960 in federal offices and schools (Bámgbósé *ed.* 1976, Bânjò & *al.* 1991).⁹⁴ (ii) Poetically, it became a banner of fashionable multiculturalism, blazoned—sans diacritics—on signboards of *émigré* bistros worldwide, and was chosen as the name of a utopian stage heroine who led an anti-patriarchal *coup d’état* in a western Igbo town (Ọnwueme 1988).⁹⁵ (iii) Politically, it signals “hegemonization of the three big ethno-national groups of Hausa-Fulani, Yorùbá and Igbo in a so-called WAZOBIA arrangement... sequel to imposed unification of the country’s diverse cultural and linguistic groups” at the expense of “linguistic minorities” (Ekuerhare 2007, 556).⁹⁶ Any residual idealism of parse (ii) can’t hide the nation-building failure that sabotaged parse (i) nor make palatable the bitter taste of parse (iii) on the tongues of ethnolinguistic also-rans.

Political *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* arrived by brazen steps. Lewis Harcourt’s 1914 “amalgamation of Nigeria was a fraud” (Akinjide 2000). Frederick Lugard’s 1916 “indirect rule” invented an apartheid caste of southern “native foreigners” resident in northern towns, establishing “that it is only possible to be a Nigerian through the membership of an ethnic group” (Ekeh 1989, 40, cf. Dudley 1968, Okónjò 1974, 76, Nnòlì 1978, 3f., 116, 194, Madan 1998, Táíwò 1999, Fourchard 2018). Arthur Richards’ 1945 “Obnoxious Ordinances” (Coleman 1958, 281) licensed central government to seize rentable resources from once autonomous regions and dole out crumbs of ‘national cake’ to ever-fractioning fiefs: a dozen in 1967, three dozen in 1996 and still more in view as “united Nigeria” promotes “its own disintegration” (Awóló.Ẁ 1968, 72, cf. Èlá 1983, Àwọm 2010, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Nigeria#Evolution_of_Nigerian_states).

The so-called 1999 constitution is really Decree 24... promulgated by General Abdulsalami Abubakar on the 5th of May 1999 but today you will not see his name on it. It’s a fraudulent document. (Fálana 2022, cf. Sagay 2000, 40)

Propped up on its *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* “tripod” (Ọmọruyí 2001), Lugard’s leviathan plays “prebendal politics” (Joseph 1987), pulls levers of “federal character” and sets local “strangers” to fight “indigenes” for access to once public goods (Human Rights Watch 2006, cf. Ûdò 1970, Dudley 1973, Mamdani 1996, Chandhoke 2005, Ochon 2010, Vickers 2010).

Cemented by a century of *divide-et-impera*, *Wá-ṣó-bì-á*’s balkanizing borders criss-cross a map of prehistoric human movements detectable today as ripples of stochastic drift in linguistic heritage. (i) Proto-“Bantu” speakers reached from the Niger-Benue confluence to central, east and southern Africa (Greenberg 1963, 1972).⁹⁷ (ii) Proto-Yorùbá speakers can be traced to the same confluence by the greater diversity conserved among northeast Yorùbá dialects and Ígálá (Akínkugbé 1978, 30).⁹⁸ (iii) Analogous southward spread is indicated for the Èdó cluster (alias “Edoid”, Elugbe 1979, 94). (iv) Speakers of Ìzòṇ [“Íjaw, Íjò”] were pushed into their present niche of mangrove creeks by land-scarce swidden farmers speaking Ùrhobo, Isóko and Igbo (Jones 1963, 28–30, Williamson 1983, Nzewunwa 1988).⁹⁹ (v) The primary dispersion zones were subsequently blurred at the edges and reshuffled internally by smaller displacements that still echo in collective memory (Adétúgbò 1967, Ọnwuejiógwù 1970b, Ûdò 1975, Law 1977b, Smith 1978). These demographic signals are nearly drowned out in the relentless blare of quasi-biblical Hamitic or Semitic ‘origin’ tales (Johnson 1897, Talbot 1912; 1926, 28, Johnston 1913, Seligman(n) 1913, 1930, 1934, Basden 1921, 31; 1938, 411–23, Williams 1930, Lucas 1948, Egharhevbá 1953, Ìdòwú 1962, Aye 1967, Aríńze 1970, Odúúyoyè 1971, Harnischfeger 2012).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ Shout-out to Beier (1956a).

⁹¹ (Áfiigbo 1989, 15)

⁹² Or *Ọja* in texting mode (Ífèyúko 2010). The choice of ‘come [here]’ as token predicate is canonical: someone with no communicative ability in Igbo is said “not to even hear [comprehend] ordinary *Bì-á*!” *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* inspired “Guosa”, an improbable trilingual esperanto devised by an Èdó journalist who modestly named the confection after himself (cf. Fákúwádé 1992). Shaw’s neologism was more than a triumphal salute to Goldie’s royal monopoly: she “had hoped to marry Goldie” although “Goldie refused her offer of marriage”, just as “[t]he suggestion that Nigeria be called ‘Goldesia’... met with a flat refusal from Goldie himself” (Kwarteng 2011, 276, 287). Taylor incredibly missed Shaw’s 1897 letter in the *Times* but noted that Goldie called his own domain “the Niger” in 1892 (1939, 158).

⁹³ *Meta-shibboleth* is the ethnonym counterpart of *meta-barrio*—Espinoza’s term for the supra-ethnic “abstract meeting space” (2014) or “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) invoked in the poetics of *salsa consciente*, a Pan-Latin dance music inspired by 1960’s radical ‘consciousness raising’ and crafted from post-Palladium, neo-Cuban *mambo* by the Portorriquan composer Tite Curet Alonso en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tite_Curet_Alonso, the East Harlem *conguero* Ray Barretto www.herencialatina.com/Ray_Barretto_campo/Ray_Barretto.htm and the Panamanian crooner Rubén Blades www.jania.com/products/canciones-del-solar-de-los-aburridos. ¡Que viva la meta-musica!

⁹⁴ General Múritálá Muhammed penned the *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* trio into the draft constitution of October 1975 alongside English as language media of the legislative record (T. Sólá.rin *p.c.* 1977). The government printer started planning for quadrilingual Hansard text, until the policy was aborted in the 1985 IMF fiscal putsch enforced by General Ibrahim Babangida, then the corpse of the plan was definitively buried in 1996 when General Sani Abacha, by then the pariah of the British Commonwealth, signed French President Chirac’s cheap deal to tie Nigeria to *la Françafrique* and promote French ahead of African languages in schools (Igboanúsi & Pütz 2008).

⁹⁵ The script evokes the women’s anti-colonial *intifāda* of 1929–30 (Green 1947, Gailey 1970, Áfiigbo 1972, Matera & *al.* 2012) and adds metalinguistic symbols for (i) the retrograde consciousness of the *òbí*’s three junior wives with the separated names *Wá, Zó* and *Bì-á*, and (ii) the mini-syncretism of the Igbo-speaking region on the west side of the Niger river—now called *Anioma* ‘good country’ or ‘fertile farmland’ cf. Ọnwuejiógwù & Okó[h] (1981)—with the polyglot calque *Òbí-Ọgisó* for *Ọba Ọgisó*, the name of the stock Èdó tyrant of west-Igbo folktales (Manfredi 1991, 321, Okpehwo 1998). The triple-barreled name was also adopted by an Anioma *hílfé* band: iv.dataura.network/watch?v=C1CBmjmW64. In the 1980’s, Federal radio added token Hausa and Igbo musical riffs to the Yorùbá *dún-dún* drummed phrase which since 1960 had been played as the hourly time signal *à la Lillibulero*, intended to encode the English phrase *This is the Nigerian Broadcasting Service* but infinitely overinterpretable when freely re-parsed as Yorùbá text (Beier 1969, 12f.).

⁹⁶ The same description applies to the competitive national sport of census-count inflation (Àlùkò 1965, Ûdò 1968, Ekanem 1972), and in the ‘civil religion’ of literal sport, *Wá-ṣó-bì-á* pluralism is represented via ‘religious’ proxies in this knowing *tableau vivant* from the stands of the Coupe d’Afrique final in Abidjan, 11 February 2024: nitter.lanterne-rouge.info/pic/orig/media%2FGGIz55rWkAAAsP5.jpg.

⁹⁷ Guthrie insisted on a fact-free “westward” (1962, 281) scenario in order to save Bleek’s (1862) ideological assumption that “Bantu” forms a coherent historical unit. Current Bantuists admit—reluctantly and *sotto voce*—that it’s “impossible to draw a clear line between Bantu, however defined, and non-Bantu Niger-Congo” (Nurse & Philippson 2003, 5, cf. Bennett 1983; Marten 2006).

⁹⁸ *Ígálá* has LHL tones in Nupe (Banfield 1914, 178 cited by Manfredi 1991, 24 *fn* 15, 31). Ìlòrí’s (2009) MHL is a Yorùbáism: Yorùbá forbids H in an initial syllable with empty an onset; Ígálá prohibits M in the same context (Ward 1952, 37, Etù & Miáchi 1991, 7).

⁹⁹ The precise historical divergence of Ìzòṇ [“Íjaw, Íjò”] from the rest of Niger-Congo remains a matter of perpetual uncertainty.

¹⁰⁰ Such whimsy, oft-debunked (Greenberg 1963, Wescott 1964, Bámgbósé 1972, Armstrong 1978, Nwàòga 1984, Schuh 1997, Amselle 2022, 181–85), blends two senses of ‘roots’—etyma, ancestors—into an Abrahamic folk-belief that cultures are genetically inscribed:

waves of production and exchange (1974, 2010, cf. Luxemburg 1915) and Saïd diagnoses “the hallmarks of modernist culture... [to] include a response to the external pressures... from the *imperium*” (1993, 188). No expectation exists that older phases of humanity were more homeostatic or homogeneous than the sample visible today. Conversely, social development does not unroll a predetermined script but emerges from clashing contradictions. Bookchin summarises the position gnomically thus: “Shorn” of Hegel’s teleology and of Engels’ reductionism, “dialectical reason may be rendered naturalistic and ecological” (1990, 15, cf. Levins & Lewontin 1985).

Unconfined by the limits of human recollection, the comparative method diagnoses *Ifá* as a medieval bricolage of fossils and inventions, but for all of its brilliant originality, *Ifá* resembles other cases near and far where hermetic-poetic virtuosi conjure metaphysical doctrine out of a mix of found folklore, creative cosmology and an exclusivist social contract (cf. §1.5). Traditional humanism, rather than coming to grips with remarkably parallel outcomes of distant developments, hides behind an imagined duel of two hackneyed strawmen, willed action versus passive conformity:

[I]f we try to study social change without attending to the role of history as a subjective reality, then we effectively exclude human agency from it: social change becomes something driven by inherent mechanisms below the level of consciousness, or a naturalization of history. (Peel 2016a, 537)

On the contrary, subjective-individual and historic-collective meanings can coexist, although they needn’t always match: “Quando io adopero la parola «disastro» nessuno può imputarmi credenze astrologiche...” (Gramsci 1932/1975, 438, cf. Décobert 1998).¹⁰⁴ But just as shunning naturalism can be hazardous to the health (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antivaxxer), neither are natural scientists immune to ideology themselves (Mannheim 1952, Kuhn 1962, MacGaffey 1986). It’s noble to preach tolerance of “nonoverlapping *magisteria*” (Gould 1997), but even if *magisteria* don’t overlap, they can collide.¹⁰⁵

In premodern West Africa behind the Saharan and Atlantic barriers to prior literacy zones (cf. Curtin 1997), the scarcity of calendar dates invites a temptation to deny co-evality and garnish 12th-16th century Ifè with the atemporal labels “ancient” and “classical” (Frobenius 1913, 187, 316, 337, Willett 1967, Horton 1979, Ögündiran 2003). Such vaguely prestigious adjectives feed “Hellenomania” (Bernal 1987, 281) and “orientalism in reverse” (al-‘Azm 1981), inspiring derivative remakes of Greek tragedy (Clark 1961, Sóyínká 1973). At the same time the “classical” conceit packs an implied Orientalist thesis of “slow, but inevitable decline” (Turner 1978, 6), fostering factoids like “the production of... brass/bronze sculptures” floated upon the undefended assumption that this ever occurred “in Ilé-Ifè” itself:

The Classical period has been the focus of most archaeological investigations in Ilé-Ifè. The period was characterized by the florescence of the production of naturalistic terracotta [and] brass/bronze sculptures. (Ögündiran 2002, 41)

Realist periodizations are available: (i) relational *early/middle/late* categories like Connah’s Èdó stratigraphy (1975), (ii) reference to immediate context like Shaw’s “Islamic Contact Period c. 700AD - 1475” and “Coastal Contact Period c. 1475AD - 1850” (1976, 61) or (iii) a global frame calibrated to coeval, late feudal/early capitalist Western Europe when commodity chains came clanking down on tropical African coasts (Rodney 1970, Wallerstein 1974). To instead declare “the end of prehistory” sounds like liberation until it turns out that the replacement is “a polysemic conception of time that unites the cyclical and linear modes of historical thinking” (Ögündiran 2013, 791, cf. 2020) echoing the ‘decolonial’ strand of postmodernist romance.¹⁰⁶ Pomo circularity spurs ethnic imaginations to project present forms of identity indefinitely backwards, whereas the boring-old comparative method defines prehistory linearly and tractably as *events before the onset of (oral or written) memory*, therefore approachable only by indirect, probabilistic and fragmentary inferences.

2.3 Ifè’s modern magnetism in Èdó

King Òrúnranmwen [“Ororammwen”] the paramount ruler of the Benin Kingdom, whose ancestry, one line of legend insists, was none other than Yorùbá! (Sóyínká 2006, 222)

J.U. Eghar[h]evba was born in Ìdànrè in 1893 and schooled in Àkúré—east Yorùbá towns in the western penumbra of the Èdó kingdom for some centuries (1972, 4, cf. Akintóyè 1969, Adédiran 1989, 1991). His publications pioneered Èdó literacy on the model of Crowther’s standardized Yorùbá spelling (Àjàyí 1960), but he blended faith and folklore from anonymous sources to bank a Yorùbá-centric political investment. The “indirect rule” regime in “Nigeria” was modeled on British response to the failed Indian rebellion of 1857 (alias Sepoy Mutiny) “with the idea of keeping native society intact and avoiding further violent convulsions” (Satia 2020, 109 citing Metcalf 1994, 40). So-called “princely states” and other “existing powers... would be left with as few modifications as possible” although, as Lugard’s successor Clifford wrote in 1920, the “system... was in reality a thinly disguised form of direct administration by British Officers” (Ìgbàfè 1967, 715f, cf. Maine 1861, Mair 1962). Like other imperial nation-building projects, Lugard’s bulldozing of the 9ja ethnic landscape had severely unintended consequences (Merton 1936, cf. Kinzer 2007).

Egharhevba crafted the currently standard stories of the Òminìgbòn oracle, Èdó copper-alloy casting and Èdó state formation.¹⁰⁷ More or less explicitly he named Ifè as the source of all three, but his authority in these matters is usually cited without mentioning his eastern Yorùbá upbringing and part-parentage (1972, 4, Ùsuánléle & Fálólá 1994, 1998). Circular endorsement of his books by Yorùbá historians is therefore hardly dispassionate, whereas art curators may be inclined to buy his words wholesale for a more superficial but no less misdirected reason: as a neat, authentically ‘native’ Èdó narrative to paste into museum and auction catalogs, the better to distract from the Èdó antiquities’ scandalous provenance (Fagg 1981, Éyò 1997, Plankensteiner 2007b). Willett’s smooth synthesis of ethnicity and image laundering pleased these interested parties by connecting all their blurry mirages with improbably sharp, straight lines:

There is no direct evidence in Ifè itself of the date when the brasses and terracottas were made, but there is evidence [sic] from Benin. ... The *Ọba* Oguóla, who reigned towards the end of the 14th century, asked if the *Ọni* could not send a brass-smith to teach the craft to his people. Iguè-Igha went, and he is worshipped to this day in Benin as the patron of the brass-smiths. This tradition means that brass-casting must have been [sic] flourishing in Ifè already before the late 14th century. How long before is a matter of guesswork, but it seems likely that the brasses were not made over a very long period since they appear to be the work of only two or three artists. We may assume then that brass-casting in Ifè flourished during the 12th to 14th centuries, but it may have begun earlier and continued later. (1967b, 34, 78)

Dissent came from a documentary historian who objected that “the picture of the past 600 years is... far too static” (Ryder 1965, 37), from a parade of archaeologists (Connah 1968b, Shaw 1970b, Williams 1974, Éyò 1977, Qbáyemí

¹⁰⁴ [Whenever I use the word *disaster*, nobody can accuse me of believing in astrology...]

¹⁰⁵ Zimmerman (2001) recounts how newly global “human sciences” of the late 19th century began—unevenly to be sure—unsettling the cultural quietism of European humanists.

¹⁰⁶ Citing the Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmitt, Mignolo & Walsh seek to “transcend the linear precepts, binary-based suppositions and outcome-oriented views of Western knowledge, research and thought” (2018, 50 cf. 226 *fn* 11, Habermas 1986, Brennan 2003, 363).

¹⁰⁷ Akinolá (1976) compares Egharhevba’s “received” tradition with the “new” one reprised also by Aimuwu (1971) and Ákẹ̀nzuà (2008).

1976) and from *Òmo n'Ọba* Erediauwa, the Èdó monarch whose sceptical remarks about the alleged Yorùbá origin of his own dynasty earned him an intemperate rebuke from the reigning 'king' of Yorùbá historiographers:

The mistake that modern historians (including Yorùbá) made... is that they confused Odùduwà with Ọrúnmilà, the bringer of *Ifá* divination. It was Ọrúnmilà who, according to [the] traditional account, had sixteen children, each of whom he sent to rule over each of sixteen communities in his own world, among which were Ifẹ and Adó (Benin). (Erediauwa 2004, 206)

At least those who said that Benin tradition agree[s] with Ifẹ tradition quote Egharhevba who was a Benin chief, who actually did a lot of research not only on Benin but on Akúrẹ and surrounding areas, Urhobo and Işẹkiri. He even wrote a book entitled *A Short History of Benin*. And any day, I will rather follow that book than follow what an *Ọba* who is not an expert in the field [writes]... His own father used to attend and meet at the conference of Yorùbá *Ọbas* regularly during the colonial rule. His own father did not object to this... What did he study that was not available to Egharhevba? ... [T]he story told about Ifẹ in Benin is less likely to be credible than the story told about Ifẹ in Ifẹ... I believe the story as told by the *Ọṣin* of Ifẹ. It is better founded than what the *Ọba* of Benin is trying to tell Nigerians. The *Ọba* of Benin has no *locus standi*, as it were, to tell the story of Ọrànmiyàn. (Ajayi 2004)

Àjàyí protests too much. His own house is made of glass, unless he can say why Ifẹ has “*locus standi*... to tell the story of” Èdó. And Egharhevba's is not the only canonical Nigerian history book composed with poetic license: consider the *History of the Yorùbás* (1899) by Rev. Samuel Johnson, another pioneer penman whose “kinglist, as a list was his creation rather than his discovery” (Law 1984, 214, cf. Agíri 1975).

Egharhevba's irredentist view of Èdó as an eastern Yorùbá annex was magnified, not just by nearness of the nearest *Wá-zó-bi-án* attractor (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attractor) but also by faintness on the farther side. Igbo oblivion in Èdó historiography was ensured by the truncation of two scientific careers. From 1906-13, Northcote Thomas was “the first government anthropologist ever to be appointed” in Nigeria until he was judged to undermine Lugard's legitimacy and abruptly “transferred to Sierra Leone” having been labeled “a recognized maniac” who “wore sandals” and “lived on vegetables” so as “to bring a certain amount of discredit upon the white man's prestige” (Lackner 1973, 135 quoting Flood, Colonial Office 1003, 19 December 1930, cf. Basu 2016).¹⁰⁸ From 1951, Robert Bradbury began describing the Èdó kingdom, first as a student of Darryl Forde (London) then as staff of Ọnwukà Dike's Benin Historical Research Scheme (Ibàdàn), until the Biafran Blitzkrieg of 1967 and Major Okónkwo's brief, ham-handed occupation of the Midwest that left a lasting Igbo-phobic legacy (de St. Jorre 1972, 162, 171f., Ọròbátò 1987, Gore 1997, 36). Before their respective rushed departures, however, both scholars had observed two structural features in which Èdó resembles Nri more than it does Ifẹ (cf. also Ọbáyemí 1976).

- (i) Status succession and property inheritance follow male primogeniture. In Èdó this applies to *Òmo n'Ọba* ‘the legitimate royal child’ who has the exclusive right to perform the funeral of his mother after his own coronation, to the serried ranks of *ẹghaerbo n'ogbè*—titled dependent initiates of *ẹguae*, the huge, extended royal household—as well as to village and family heads throughout the kingdom (Thomas 1910, 12, 64, Melzian 1937, 49, 166, Bradbury 1956, 1965, 1968, 1973, Shaw 1978, 172).
- (ii) Palace authority is circumscribed by a “style and structure of political competition and conflict” (Bradbury 1968, 248) whose “centrifugally fragmenting” phases deserve the astronomical metaphor of “galactic” (Tambiah 1977, 74, cf. Manfredi 2013a). In Èdó, insubordinate *ẹghaerbo n'óre* ‘town chiefs’ (Melzian 1937, 31), an appointed hierarchy of non-royal ‘bigmen’, gave the British a pretext to impose “free trade” with Gatling guns in 1897 (Rótímí 1974, Igbáfẹ 1979, 90) and then destabilised Lugard's emirate-style administration after the coronations of Ẹwẹka 2 in 1914 and Akenzuà 2 in 1933 (Bradbury 1968, 216). Finally in 1963, *Òmo n'Ọba* Akenzuà restored palace hegemony by winning a plebiscite to detach the Midwest from a Western Region founded on Ifẹ cultural supremacy and *ogboni* initiation networks (Coleman 1958, 344-49, Bradbury 1968, 247; Otite 1975, 75; Vickers 2000; Idúuwẹ *ms.*). The galactic pattern recurred a generation later, when *Òmo n'Ọba* Erediauwa censured a town title-holder for serial episodes of *lèse-majesté* fueled by looted Èdó State funds (Egbegbulem 2008, 2012, Okenwá 2008, Enogholase 2009, Èdó State Government 2013).

The same traits hold (i) in Igbo households (Úchéndù 1965, 84f., Ánèné 1966, 13) and (ii) in Igbo chiefdoms (Áfiigbo 1972). The scale of Èdó political economy greatly surpassed that of any Igbo-speaking town, but structure is not the same as size. Èdó military expansion stretched a local Igbo pattern onto a vast regional frame, and the homology was proved in practice by a natural experiment of the 17th century when Ágbò [“Agbor”] and a string of so-called Ùmù Ẹzẹ Chũma towns extending east as far as Ọnicha [“Onitsha”] and Ọsòmàla [“Ossomari”] on the left bank of the Niger, became Èdó tributaries. All these towns acquired Èdó-style palaces without deleting their own *ézẹ* institutions that had been shaped centuries before by Nri immigrants (Bradbury 1969, Henderson 1972, Nzímíro 1972, Idúuwẹ *ms.*, Ọnwuejiógwù 1974, Ẹjiófó 1982, Áfiigbo 1983, Ọhadíkẹ 1994, Manfredi 2013a). Evidently the old and new frameworks of governance could not have cohabited for so long in all these settlements, maintaining parallel routines of ceremony and batteries of nomenclature, if the coexisting constitutions were not fundamentally compatible.

As reviewed in §2.8 below, the priority of Ifẹ *cire perdue* art, imagined by one wildcat adventurer, was officially adopted in colonial musings on Ọja prehistory, as in this overconfident revelation by the British domain's founding museologue:

[T]he Igbo and Ibibio tribes, who preceded the Yorùbá in Nigeria and show many signs of Egyptian influence, do not cast in bronze or brass. This fact, which indicates that knowledge of bronze-working in Nigeria did not come from dynastic Egypt, also suggests that neither did the art exist in Nigeria in earlier times, but only began with the Yorùbá. (Murray 1941, 75)

This story was dismissed by ~1100 y.o. radiocarbon accompanying cuprous sculptures excavated in primary burials in Igbo Ukwu near Nri (Shaw 1970a, Ọnwuejiógwù & Ọnwuejiógwù 1977, *pace* Lawal 1973). Nobody knows if the Igbo Ukwu finds were cast *in situ*, but they weren't isolated: similar items have surfaced nearby and in the eastern Niger delta, some in primary sites (Alagoa 1976, 355, 362, Ànòzie 1993), nor is the area lacking technical prerequisites. (i) Some of the Igbo Ukwu pieces chemically resemble worked copper ore deposits just 100 km away (Chikwendù & Ùmẹjí 1979, Craddock & Picton 1986; McIntosh & McIntosh 1988; Chikwendù & *al.* 1989, Craddock & *al.* 1993, Garenne-Marot & Hurtel 1993). (ii) The town of Ọka [“Awka”], 15 km from Igbo Ukwu, has long specialized in iron fabrication (Nzekwú 1959, Oguagha 1989) and two types of iron furnace have been excavated 80 km from Igbo Ukwu in the Nsúkà [“Nsukka”] plateau, one of them dated to the 17th/18th century (Ànòzie 1979). (iii) Beads recovered from Igbo Ukwu and Gao (eastern Mali) are similar enough to “de-mystify” (Insoll & Shaw 1997, 10) the possibility that Igbo Ukwu was linked to medieval saharan trade through the Niger valley. In contrast, premodern Ifẹ has left no trace of copper alloy smelting (Elúyemí 1976, 322, Lawal 1977a, 203) and today “brass-casting is carried out in few of the [Yorùbá] towns, the most important of which are now Ijẹbú-Ode, Ibàdàn, Ilóbùu and Obo Ayégúnlẹ” (Adépégba 1983c, 31).

¹⁰⁸ Curiously, the same racial prestige was somehow never discredited by Lord Lugard's legendary “philandering” and “inhumanity” (archives.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/9982).

That Egharhevba would map Èdó cultural heritage as unilineal (biological) vertical inheritance is no surprise. Ifè already did this for itself with the attractive metaphors of the skychain (Apter 1987, 2017) and the inverted descending queue (§1.4 above). Doctrinal preference for descent over diffusion (horizontal borrowing) is more globally widespread. The Romans felt so culturally inferior to Greek colonizers of *Magna Graecia* (the coasts of Sicily and the southern Italian peninsula) that Augustus paid Virgil to compose the *Aeneid*, a propaganda masterpiece that puffed the Julian ruling house as the spawn of a Greek goddess and a Trojan hero. This song of exceptionalism in turn shows mythopoetic parallels to the “patriarchal narratives” of Hebrew *Exodus* (Weinfeld 1988). Egharhevba may not have read Latin epics, but he was steeped enough in Abrahamic literature to apply a stencil of Old Testament-ish ‘begats’ to high-profile Èdó topics like the oracle, cast sculpture and the ruling dynasty. A sympathetic reception was assured, both inside Nigeria and abroad, as Egharhevba’s account reinforced larger power claims, and this predictable success foreclosed consideration of factually more informative alternatives like the following, whose supporting details are presented below:

- (§2.4) The Èdó oracle *Ìba Ominigbón* arrived ‘downstream’ of Nri-Igbo *Áfa* (probably via Ùrhobo) and sits either ‘upstream’ of Yorùbá *Ifá* or else on a collateral transmission line—either way, *contra* Egharhevba.
- (§2.9) A parallel conclusion holds for Èdó cuprous metallurgy (“Benin bronze”), which bears multiple verbal and material traces of Igbo participation but no sign of specific Ifè influence in form or content.

In fairness, the *babalávos*’ idea that *Ifá* dropped down to Ifè from above expresses perfectly their detachment from *terra firma* and corresponding reliance on remote, abstract—call it heavenly—authority. The same self-exoticising move was also ‘in the air’ in older kingdoms around the confluence like Nupe, Igàlà and Nri (Thomas 1913a, Nadel 1935b, Oguagha & Okpoko 1984, Weise 2003, 2013) but in that exalted company Ifè exceptionalism was truly exceptional.

2.4 Ìgbònic Òminigbón

The second paragraph of Egharhevba’s second book—*Ìba Ominigbón*—begins as follows:

Ominigbón (Ogbeide) o re a tie eni omwan nọ rhie Iha na ke Uhe (Ile-Ifè) ghadi Edo. Obo Oronmila nọ re Uhe orọ na rue iha, ren ore ovbiawaisẹ n’odion oghe Oronmila vbe eghẹ nni, o ke vbe ren iha dinmwini esesemwese o ke do mu oghe obo re tobọ-re y’oto gha fi vbe Edo.¹⁰⁹ (1936a, 3, no tones in source)

Emovon finds “nothing in *Òminigbón* myth [or] its corpus that helps to corroborate the claim of Ùhè origin” (1984, 2). Even taken at face value, Egharhevba never wrote that “*Òminigbón* (Ogbeide)” was indigenous to Ifè or that the *Ìba* he brought to Èdó bears particular resemblance to Yorùbá *Ifá*. Historians jumping to such conclusions may not appreciate how successive editions of Egharhevba’s first book—*A Short History of Benin*—were serially embellished. (i) Between the printings of 1933 and 1936, the pioneer *cire perdue* artist of Èdó called “Igwehae” (or other spellings, cf. below) acquired the interpolated identity of ex-servant of the *Q̄m̄i* of Ifè, and (ii) by 1953 the grave of the dynastic founder Èwẹka 1 moved from the Èdó town of Ùsamá to Ilé-Ifè itself—a revision that’s “not likely to be the product of new findings” (Ùsuánléle & Fálólá 1998, 374-77). (iii) From 1936 to 1953 to 1968, Egharhevba’s list of early Èdó rulers holding the title *Q̄gisó* (“sky-ruler”) grew on the printed page from 1 to 12 to 15 and their *rēs gestae* expanded apace, duplicating accomplishments previously credited to the post-*Q̄gisó* dynasty (Eisenhofer 1995, 145-48, 154f.). (iv) Egharhevba’s friend Bradbury, while praising his mentor’s “industry and integrity” as well as “accuracy” concerning “the period from 1715 onwards”, diplomatically assessed the earlier spans of his Èdó chronology as “very uncertain” (1959, 285f.).

Motive for these elaborate enhancements is not far to seek. In Southern Nigeria under Lugard, “the claim of descent from the royal family of Ilé-Ifè was sometimes fabricated by kings anxious to legitimate their rule” (Law 1973, 211, cf. Aṣiwájú 1976, Adépégba 1986), so it made sense for a patriotic midwife of Èdó rebirth from its defeat of 1897 to bid for a favored spot in the colonial pecking order. Horton, ensconced at the University of Ifè, understandably pushed a maximalist parse of Egharhevba consistent with “Ifè leadership in matters pertaining to *Ifá*” (1979, 123), a system aptly characterised as “the political interpretation of Yorùbá religion” (Apter 1987b, 3, cf. §1.5). This explains why Ifè oral tradition would fuse—or *confuse*, in the words of *Om̄o n’Q̄ba* Erediauwa quoted above—two delegations of celestial immigrants listed in reverse-stack (IDQ) format: *Odùdunwà*’s 16 “elders” (Fábùnmi 1969, 3f.) and *Q̄rúnmilá*’s 16 oracle signatures called *odù* (Abimbólá 1976, 26f.). Ideological conflation of the two sky-hierarchies is reinforced by the audible echo of the string *odù* in *Odùdunwà*, the semantically opaque name of the dynastic founder figure.¹¹⁰

Egharhevba’s text and Horton’s strong reading of it force the Ifè-Èdó relationship into a model of direct succession or transfer from A to B, but this is not inevitable. Ryder (1965) contemplates another possible geometry, namely that A and B share a common inheritance or influence from some hypothetical third location C whose identity remains to be determined. Indirect explanation of similarity is the essence of the comparative method: most famously, nonaccidental resemblances between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin don’t show that one of them begat the others, only that they all reflect “some common source which, perhaps, no longer exists” (Jones 1786/1807, 34 cf. Haas 1969, 18f.). Similarly, the myth of “Proto-Bantu” (Guthrie 1962, 281, cf. Meinhof 1899) arose when tropical Africa was viewed from a myopic starting point, statistically over-weighting nearby resemblances and underestimating more distant comparisons whose historical significance is, however, far greater when measured probabilistically (Greenberg 1963, 1972, cf. Westermann 1927).

As shown above (§1.2), the chronological age of *Ifá*, *Áfa*, *Ìba* and kindred oracles is reckoned in centuries, not in the millennia of Benue-Kwa (BK), the Niger-Congo branch that sprouted a dozen language clusters from Àkan to “Bantu”. Such relative youth doesn’t entail that for any pair of oracles adjacent on the map, one must have been the source of the other. A long list of clues in *Ìba Ominigbón* disproves that it derives from *Ifá* and shows instead an Igbo source, maybe via Ùrhobo (below, this section). Separate facts support a similar correction of received ideas about Èdó copper-alloy work (§2.9). Pertinent observations divide into five subsets whose independence—unbundled transmission in separate information streams—makes their parallelism more significant. The linguistic matches—Igbo etymologies of Èdó expressions pertaining to oracles and metallurgy—are also more compelling for a second reason: their “unconscious character” as opaque to modern awareness (Boas 1910, 67).¹¹¹ By contrast, Egharhevba’s conscious (‘folk’) etymologies

¹⁰⁹ [Òminigbón (Ogbeide) is the name of the person who brought *Ìba* to Èdó from Ùhè (Ilé-Ifè). His teacher in Ùhè was the oracle-priest Q̄rúnmilá, and he had already become Q̄rúnmilá’s senior apprentice and mastered *Ìba* before establishing his own practice in Èdó.]

I’ve corrected “Obo Q̄rúnmilá” to *Obo Q̄rúnmilá* and applied tones and official spelling to the whole Èdó text (cf. §§0.4-5 above).

¹¹⁰ An unknown Yorùbá source (Courlander 1973, 53, 158) says that Q̄rúnmilá ruled Èdó before Q̄ránmiyàn, whose name ‘My crisis has been resolved’ is conventionally understood to convey an oracle allusion (Abraham 1958, 687, Babalólá & Alàbà 2003, 762).

¹¹¹ From my experience among the Yorùbá, the people often used by scholars as informants because they are considered directly involved in the art either through their vocation or their use of the objects, sometimes give information which would make themselves or their activities appear important or mysterious. Information extracted from the language is more likely to be free of personal bias. (Adépégba 1983c, 21)

of *Bini* and *Ẹ̀wéka* as Yorùbá *ilẹ̀ ibínú* ‘vexatious land’ and *owó mí ká* ‘I have won’ (1953, 6-8) may be entertaining mystifications, but both sides can play this game and the fun is easily reversed by tauntingly Ẹ̀dó-ifying *Odùduwà* as “*I ma do d’uwa*... ‘I have not missed the road to good fortune’” (Erediauwa 2004, 209, cf. Akinolá 1976, 25).¹¹²

Primary familiar-name

Whether reflecting Egharheba’s written authority or an independent oral tradition—if one still exists after decades of literate feedback—the Ẹ̀dó palace today regards *Òminighon* as the name of *Ìba*’s pioneer practitioner (Chief N. Ìsekurhẹ, *p.c.* 2009) roughly analogous to *Àgwù* and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, the named familiar spirits of *Àfà* and *Ìfà* respectively.¹¹³

What kind of word is *Òminighon*? Wescott calls it “an archetypical noun” and glosses it as “divining tree” (1963, 58) but this description applies more obviously to the species *oguègga* (*Detarium senegalense* or *heudelotiana*) whose half-pericarps furnish the oracle processor strings (discussed below). Quadrisyllabic shape typifies a nominal compound or lexicalized phrase, but there’s no guarantee to isolate all the meaningful constituents, because over time a listed expression of any size tends to become semantically opaque as its components suffer phonetic erosion, morphological oblivion and regular rules of sound change. More than other word classes, proper names tolerate structural decay because they can efficiently designate a unique individual person or place without calling up a denotation of any kind (Kripke 1970, 48). Any obscure loanword or borrowed phrase can therefore easily become localized as an unanalyzable proper name, and this would not be shocking in the present example of a widely shared cultural complex.

An Ẹ̀dó-internal etymology for *Òminighon* almost works. The initial string *òmini-* has no listing in the Ẹ̀dó dictionary, but two possible hints appear in fixed expressions with some phonetic and/or pragmatic overlap:

- (i) The string “*Emini*” (tones unknown) begins a formula *Emini ere nọ wẹ...* ‘What *Emini* say(s) is...’, repeated by Egharheba 256 times to introduce each basic oracle text (1936a, 10-39). *Emini* has no dictionary entry, but contextually it names the messages’ invisible source, an authority of “ostensive detachment” (Boyer 2020a). On internal grounds, *èmini* could be the plural of *òmini-* with archaic, prefixal *o-/e-* inflection as in *ògie/ègie* ‘chief’/‘rulers’ (Wescott 1963, 69) and —modulo ‘dotted’ vowel harmony—*òmó/èmó* ‘child’/‘children’ and *òdìon/èdìon* ‘elder’/‘elders, senior age grade, collective ancestors’ (Melzian 1937, 160, 166).
- (ii) The string *òmini-* superficially recurs in *òminigie*, an expression glossed “class of people who possess no titles” as if the residual part is *ègie* ‘chieftaincy title(s)’ (Melzian 1937, 29, 144). Apophetic elision of *è*, required under such an analysis, would be unusual but has a possible precedent in *úmòbiẹ* ‘mother of many children’, assuming that this is composed of *-mọ* ‘bear fruit (of plants)’ plus *àbiẹ* ‘children/servants’.¹¹⁴ Wescott suggests a simpler parse of *úmòbiẹ* without elision, treating the final syllable as the bare predicate root *-biẹ* ‘give birth to’ (1963, 115), but a parallel treatment of *òminigie*—identifying the final syllable as the bare predicate root *-gie* ‘send’—would lose in semantic plausibility what it gains in regular morphology, and in any case no such option exists for *Òminighon* because Ẹ̀dó apparently lacks *-ghon* as a bare predicate root altogether (Melzian 63, 79, 124, 206).

Consider a prefix elision analysis on the analogy of *òminigie* in (ii). Subtracting *òmini-* from *Òminighon*, the residue could be one of two nominal complements, differing only in the identity of the abstract initial vowel:

- àghon* LL “world, esp. in contrast to *èrínmwin*... world of the dead and the unborn” (Melzian 1937, 4, 55)
ìghon LL “the *Ìgbo* people” (Melzian 1937, 85)¹¹⁵

To parse *òminighon* as ‘class of people without *x*’ if *x* = *ìghon* doesn’t yield a coherent interpretation, whereas *x* = *àghon* could allow it to denote a class of people located outside the visible world—not a bad description of human ancestors like the paired tutelaries of *Ẹ̀pha* (or *Ẹ̀wà*), the duplex 4-bit oracle of the Urhobo-speaking region, directly south-east of Ẹ̀dó (Erivwo 1979).¹¹⁶ Relevant folklore has been paraphrased from a ritual specialist as follows:

The most popular divination apparatus among the Urhobo is specially made of 16 half-shells of the *agbragha* fruit, and it is from this tree that *Epha* derives its other name *Agbragha*. ...In Urhobo mythology the spiritual forces behind *Agbragha* are those of *Againabe* and *Akunabe*. These two spiritual beings are thought to have been mortals who... were able to operate freely in both the physical world (*akpo*) and the spiritual realm (*erivbin*). When they died a dispute arose between the people of *akpo* and those of *erivbin* over where they should be buried... because both the people of *akpo* and the inhabitants of *erivbin* regarded *Againabe* and *Akunabe* as traitors and tale-bearers who, in their lifetime, had specialized in learning the secrets of the one world and divulging them to the other... In the end it was decided as a compromise to bury them at the border between the two realms... A fruit-bearing tree known as *agbragha* was planted on their graves. ...These two spiritual-cum-mortal beings... vowed not only to continue but to intensify their efforts at revealing secrets of both realms to anyone who established communication with them through the *agbragha* fruits. The legend goes further to say that in a dream *Againabe* and *Akunabe* revealed to a hunter named *Ominigbo* how to divine, that is, establish this communication with them through the *agbragha* fruits. It is however stated in another version that the secret of divination was first revealed to a hunter known as *Dibie*. These shells are believed to be spiritually charged with the powers of those who stand astride *akpo* and *erivbin*, hence they are able to know secrets not only of the physical world but also of the spiritual sphere. Therefore this system of divination, which is referred to as either *Agbragha* or *Epha*, is taken to be the most reliable of all... (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 6-8, no diacritics in source)¹¹⁷

¹¹² *Bini* (“Benin”) may have been southern Nupe *Bini* or *Beni* (Banfield 1914, 47; Dupigny 1920, 7; Nadel 1935a, 274, Ryder 1965, 31/),

¹¹³ *Ìbiẹ* writes “*Ominigun*” (1993, 1-4 no tones) citing *Ogbè Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀* (“*Ogbe Ate*”) and *Ọ̀fún Ogbè*. This could be a real variant or a typo.

¹¹⁴ The reported gloss of *òminigie* could derive from the Ẹ̀dó lexical elements *ma* the negative modal auxiliary and the root *-ni* ‘to set the fees payable by initiates of a title society’ (Melzian 1937, 121, 129). As for *ègie*, if it’s treated as a frozen plural of *ògie* ‘ruling chief’, Melzian tentatively relates the latter to *igie* ‘corner, base’ and *ùgie* ‘fixed occasion’ (1937, 82, 135, 196).

¹¹⁵ *Emọ̀vọ̀n* defines *Ìghon* as “a foreigner” (1984, 2). *Izọ̀n* (“*Ijaw*”) glosses *Ìghon* even more vaguely as “Hausa, Northerner” (Williamson & Timitimi 1983, 79), as if to exclude *Igbo* speakers, who might be covered instead by narrow geographic terms like *Abo*/*Ebe* (colonial “*Aboh*”). Apart from the fuzzy semantics, there are two phonetic reasons to treat *Izọ̀n* *Ìghon* as acquired secondarily from the Ẹ̀dó (“Benin”) empire in the historical course of Atlantic trade. *Izọ̀n*’s indigenous bilabial implosive [ɓ] (spelled *b*) is not used in *Ìghon*, whose labiovelar plosive [gb] is however expected to occur here because the Ẹ̀dó cluster (Macro-Ẹ̀dó or ‘Ẹ̀doid’) generally lacks [ɓ], apart from three small delta lects (Elugbe 1986, 29). Secondly, *Izọ̀n* does not observe the general prohibition observed that holds throughout Macro-Ẹ̀dó (minus the same three lects) against dotless nasal mid vowels like [õ] (Williamson 1965, 16f), therefore the nasal, dotted vowel of *Ìghon* is likely to have been transmitted to *Izọ̀n* via a Macro-Ẹ̀dó language.

¹¹⁶ The abstract decomposition of possession as location is motivated in theoretical and comparative syntax (Freeze 1992, Kayne 1993) and applies no less in BK (Manfredi 1994, Ajibóyè 2005, 87-136).

¹¹⁷ “Interview with Okohwake Igonuware of Arhawwarien on 10th and 11th August 1974” (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 15 *fn* 1). *Àfà* *Nri* premises a similar two-sided communication between visible and invisible worlds of human existence (Ọ̀nwẹ̀cìjọ̀gwù 1997, 103).

This report fails to indicate tones or vowel features, but with some philological help it yields four linguistic signposts of an exotic origin for the oracle, specifically a prehistoric trajectory from Ìgbò to Ùrhòbò and thence to Èdó.

- (i) Out of a dozen local pronunciations of the 4-bit oracle signs (Fig. 1 above), the Ùrhòbò names of the twin oracle tutelaries spelled *Agai-nabe* and *Aku-nabe* are phonetically closest, by inspection, to the Ìgbò versions of these (doubled) signatures: *Agári n'áàbò* '◆◆◆◆/◆◆◆◆' and *Akuvu n'áàbò* '◆◆◆◆/◆◆◆◆'.
- (ii) “Dibie”—a rough spelling of the alternate quoted name of the culture hero *Òminighò*—is obviously *dibiè*, the ordinary Àgbò (“Agbor”) and Ùkùàṇì (“Kwale”) term for oracle specialist, corresponding to the eastern Ìgbò pronunciation *dibià* (Williamson *ed.* 1968, 34; Williamson 1972, 91; Manfredi 1991, 321; Igwè 1999, 125).
- (iii) In Èdó the final vowels of *Òminighò* and *Ìghò* are dotted (narrow pharynx) and nasalised, but both features are absent in the Ùrhòbò counterparts *Òminighò* and *Ìghò*.¹¹⁸ The same phonetic difference divides Èdó *ófigbò* from Ùrhòbò *ófigbò* ‘red palm-oil’ (Melzian 1937, 135, Ukere 1986, 10), a tradeword with a literal Ìgbò gloss *ófe-igbo* ‘food for the community, that is, all purpose oil’ (Ọnwuejiógwù 1972, 40) as pronounced in Ànị́oma and Ọnị́cha *ófigbo*, Ùkùàṇì *ófigbò* (Thomas 1913b, 314, Armstrong 1967, #287, Williamson 1968, 41).¹¹⁹ This pattern determines a sequence of spread. Across the cluster as reconstructed by Elugbe, nasality was lost in Ùrhòbò in seven items (10a) but three of these kept their narrow pharynx dot, proving that loss of nasality need not affect dottedness (pharyngeal stricture).¹²⁰ It follows that, if the final vowels of Ùrhòbò *Òminighò*, *Ìghò* and *ófigbò* had been originally dotted as well as nasalised, the dots should have stayed when nasality went, contrary to fact.¹²¹ The reverse scenario is not symmetrical: by Elugbe’s reckoning, two lexical items acquired nasality in Èdó (10b) and two more can arguably be added (10b’), providing a workable model for how Èdó *Òminighò*, *Ìghò* and *ófigbò* developed. If the final syllable of all three items was originally undotted and non-nasal and then became nasal on arrival in Èdó *à la* (10b), they would acquire the dot by a general rule of acoustic enhancement, that undotted nasalised mid vowels are impossible. This holds across a wide *Sprachbund* west of the Niger, including all of “Edoid” except for three small delta lects (Adétúgbò 1967, 172, Amayo 1976, 109, Oyèláràn 1970, 62f., Awóbùlúyì 1978, 141, Capo 1985, Elugbe 1986, 116).

	“Proto-Edoid” (Elugbe 1986)	Èdó (“Bini”) (Melzian 1937, Wescott 1962a, 31)	Ùrhòbò (Ukere 1986)
(10)a. ‘life-world’	*-N	àgbòṇ	àkpò
‘tooth’	*-N	àkòṇ	àkò
‘sunshine’	*-N	òvèṇ	ùvo
‘many’	*-N	-bun	-bu
‘spin (thread)’	*-N	-sin	-si
‘flow, crawl’	*-N	-sun	-su
‘full’	*-N	-v(u)ṇ	-vò
b. ‘newness’	*[no nasality reconstructed]	ògbòṇ	-kpò
‘palm(wine)’	*[no nasality reconstructed]	ùdín	ùdì
b’. ‘cut (grass)’	*[item not reconstructed by Elugbe]	-gbèṇ	-gbè
‘leopard’	*ɹ ¹²²	èkpeṇ	[noncognates: è rha, èjele]

- (iv) The phonology in (iii) allows an Ìgbò-internal etymology of *Òminighò*. If *igbo* is a meaningful constituent, it’s not the modern *Wá-ṣó-bi-án* exonym as defined in the post-Biafra second edition of Melzian’s Èdó dictionary: “a derogatory Èdó word for the Ìgbò-speaking people (not much in use any more with this meaning but as a general abusive term)” (Agheyisi 1986, 67). Instead it denotes the social collective as in fixed collocations: the aforementioned *ófe-igbo* ‘common edible oil’, the famous greeting *Ìgbò, kweé nù!* ‘The whole assembly should assent!’ and many personal names like *Òdé-n’igbo* ‘The news has spread to the people’ and *Ọnwu-ṣúru-igbo* ‘Death is common to all’ (Ọnwuejiógwù 1972, 40). In all these expressions *igbo* is synonymous to *ọ̀ra/ọ̀ba(n)* (Williamson 1972, 429, Igwè 1999, 656). The other lexical pieces of *Òminighò* could be *omi* construed either animately as ‘one who delves/plunges’ or inanimately as ‘depth, mystery, secret, obscurity of sense’ plus *n(à)* the locative preposition e.g. as in *Òdé-n’igbo* (Igwè 1999, 123, 456, 573, 607f., Williamson 1972, 89, cf. 1984a, 173, 235). Joining these constituents together, the hypothetical compound **òmi-n’igbo* ought to signify either (animate) ‘someone who delves into the community’ or (inanimate) ‘concealed, general knowledge’.

In sum, Nabofa & Elugbe inadvertently collected crucial evidence for the Ìgbò-speaking origin of the Ùrhòbò oracle called *Èp̣ha* or *Èmma*, as well as for its onward transmission to Èdó.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Thanks to Prof. T. Ojaide for verifying the final undotted vowel of Ùrhòbò *Òminighò*, an essential data point.

¹¹⁹ The initial dotted *ó*... in Ùrhòbò and Ùkùàṇì *ófigbò* copies the *ó*... of [ófè], the Ọnị́cha pronunciation of *ófe* ‘stew/soup’ (Williamson 1965, 68). The indigenous Èdó and Ùrhòbò terms for palm oil are *èbù* and *èmmi* respectively (Melzian 1937, 56, Ukere 1986, 10).

¹²⁰ The voicing contrast in ‘life-world’ (10a) and ‘newness’ (10b) falls under a general diachronic rule **gb>kp* (Elugbe 1986, 105, 110). The root vowel correspondence in ‘sunshine’ (10a) is irregular.

¹²¹ In Ọ̀sósó (Àkóko), *Ìghò* and *ófigbò* have a dotted final vowel that’s not nasalised (E. Omolúàbí *p.c.*) but this fits the hypothesis that the nasality of Èdó *Ìghò* was innovative, because nowhere in NWE (“Northwest Edoid” the cluster that includes Àkóko) does either item in (10b) show nasality, whereas three of the items in set (10a) are cited by Elugbe with a nasal in NWE: ‘tooth’, ‘sunshine’ and ‘full’.

¹²² Elugbe’s *-N for ‘leopard’ is equivocal. Ùrhòbò has no cognate (Prof. E. Udjo, *p.c.*), Elugbe & Williamson reconstruct non-nasalised **èkpè* (1977, 356, no tone) and no nasality appears in any cognate east of the Niger (Williamson & Shimizu 1973, 222–25), unless the scope of reconstruction is arbitrarily stretched to include forms like Èkòí *ngbe* (Crabb 1965, 77). Across BK, the translated gloss of ‘leopard’—a feline species that’s totemically “good to think” *à la* Lévi-Strauss (1962, 128)—covers a plurality of items whose history is the more complex for its iconic attractiveness. Ìgbò *èkpè* LL, probably the closest to Èdó *èkpè* LL, denotes not the carnivore known in Ìgbò by the hypocoristic *àgù/àghù* lit. ‘the hungry one’ (Williamson 1972, 10, Igwè 1999, 20), but instead “a vigorous a type of dance requiring much energetic action and so restricted to able-bodied young men” (Igwè 1999, 155). Of wider distribution is Ìgbò *èkpè* HL, the leopard-dance initiation club (cf. Miller 2009) that spread west from the Cross River in modern times and which in Èfík is called *èkpè* HL without nasality but with a subphonemic final subdot. Dotted and undotted *e* are in near-complementary distribution in some Ìgbò dialects and in Èfík (Williamson 1966, Cook 1985, 270f.) and the difference is ignored in Èfík manuals as well as in the Ibibio dictionary which has dotless “*èkpè*” (Goldie 1874, 74, Adams 1952, 188, Welmers 1968, x, Kaufman 1972, 141=Urua & *al.* 2012, 98).

¹²³ A piece of anecdotal evidence of Ùrhòbò contact with *Nmù dibìè* the western Ìgbò oracle guild is the greeting *Mì sia aguare!* ‘I salute the assembly’ used in a ceremony of *égedi dibìè* ‘ecstatic oracular dance’ in honor of *Odū* Egwabò Idúúwe at the Àgbò royal lineage Ọ̀gbè Nmù Dèín (recorded 9 January 1982). I had no idea that this expression was Ùrhòbò until so informed by Prof. P. Ekeh (*p.c.*).

An Òrhobo oracle is prominently cited in the journal of a slavetrader's late-17th century visit in the Èdó palace:¹²⁴

To conclude this account of the religion in Benin, it is an inviolable law that no priest shall ever go out of the country under very high fines and even pain of death unless he has first obtained leave of the king; and they are more particularly obliged by that law not to go to Oedo [Èdó] the capital city of the kingdom, which seems very strange considering the great respect both king and subjects pay to their priests. The priest of Loebo [Òrhobo], a town near the mouth of the river Ferosa [Formosa] or Benin river, is esteemed and very famous among them for his intimate familiarity with the devil and for being an eminent magician; whose prerogatives are such that he can at his will cause the sea either to advance or draw back and foretell the most remote events; in regard whereof the king has bestowed on him and his heirs forever all the lands of the territory of Loebo, with all the slaves that were therein; and from his name the town was called Loebo. This priest is counted in the rank of their chief sacrificers, and so dreaded by all the people, that none dares come near him, much less to touch his hand, the king's envoys not excepted. (Barbot 1688-1732, 375)

The same relationship to the palace is referenced again in the late 19th century, in “folklore that most Òrhobo diviners and musical artists (including Ogute Otan) seem to accept” (Prof. T. Ojaide *p.c.*), this time explicitly by name:

Ominigbo was the name of the diviner who foretold the sacking of Benin in 1897. ...[H]e... told the *Qba*... that “white army ants would swarm and take over Benin”... before noon of the following day. That noon came and there were no swarms of white ants or locusts around and the *Qba* ordered *Ominigbo* to be executed. As soon as the execution was done, the *Qba*'s men saw a column of British soldiers... After then, all the *Epha* practitioners in order to memorialize *Ominigbo*'s name started their divination by invoking his name to have the courage to tell inconvenient truths!

A western Ìgbo etymology of Òminigbón—maybe via Òrhobo—makes Ìgbo sources less surprising for three more *Ìba* oracle terms (immediately below) plus nine other items of Èdó vocabulary, seven of which are specific to ritual (§2.5).

Secondary familiar-name, two more oracle terms

Egharhevba gives the full name of the *Ìba* familiar (culture-hero) as “Ominigbón (Ogbéide)” (1936a, 3, no tones). The parenthesised material has no Yorùbá parse but with the allegro pattern LHLL is a “normal” Èdó personal name meaning *ògbé* LL ‘family house can’t fall’ i.e. fail (G. Edebiri *p.c.* citing Bello Osagie 2017, cf. Melzian 1937, 138, M. Ìghilè *p.c.*).¹²⁵ The puzzle of how an alleged immigrant got an indigenous Èdó appellation may explain why a bicultural Èdó-Yorùbá recension of *Ifú* would strain to identify Ogbéide as Ominigbón’s “eldest son” (Ìbié 1993, 6) even though Egharhevba gives no hint that two distinct individuals are involved. Provisionally, I suggest that Ogbéide, a *hapax* (unique token) in Egharhevba’s text, is the phonetic parse into Èdó of a non-Èdó loan for which a plausible Ìgbo etymology is at hand.

In the context of an activity, the Ìgbo predicate root *-gbú* means “to do [something] with forceful movement of the hand” (Ìgwè 1999, 583) and nominalizes in synthetic compounds *ò-gbú x* ‘cutter/killer of x’ (11a) and in a static situation, a homophonous intransitive *ò-gbú x* means ‘middle/depth of x’ (11b).¹²⁶ The same two complementary senses recur in an open list of expressions where suffixal *-gbú* adds the adverbial meaning ‘to perfection’ to an active, transitive root (12a) and conveys the related notion ‘utterly’ in construction with a pseudoreflexive phrase (12b). Although syntactically distinct, all four types share a common semantic component: the superlative culmination of a graded property, whether resultant outcome or inherent attribute (Williamson 1972, 363, Èménanjo 1984, Ìgwè 1999, 209, 277, 376, 583).¹²⁷

- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| (11)a. | <i>ò-gbú èdè</i>
<i>ò-gbú éfí</i> | ‘planter of <i>édè</i> [cocoyam]’
‘cow-slaughterer→chief’ |
| b. | <i>ò-gbú mírí</i>
<i>ò-gbú ńrú</i> | ‘depth of water→deep water’
‘depth of sleep→deep sleep’ |
| (12)a. | <i>-gwré-gbu</i>
<i>-rí-gbu</i>
<i>-sí-gbu</i> | ‘grind-kill→grind perfectly or to a powder’
‘eat-kill→chew perfectly or into pulp; eat someone into poverty’
‘boil-kill→cook perfectly or overcook’ |
| b. | <i>-jù-gbu ònwé yá</i>
<i>-má-gbu ònwé yá</i> | ‘ugly-kill self→be utterly ugly’
‘beautiful-kill self→be utterly beautiful’ |

Phonetically, an Ìgbo sequence of voiced bilabial implosive [ɓ] (spelled *gb*) plus *u* before front vowel can undergo ‘coalescent’ (nonlinear) assimilation (Èménanjo 1978, 24f.), perceivable in Èdó as labiovelar plosive [gb] plus front vowel consistent with Egharhevba’s “...gbè...”. As for the final two syllables that Egharhevba rendered ...*ide* LL, a close match is *ìlè/ìrè* LL ‘effectiveness [of a medicine or sacrifice], fulfilment [of a prediction or agreement]’ based on the root *-lè/-rè* ‘efficacious, fulfilled’ (Williamson 1972, 179, 253f., Ìgwè 1999, 259, 723).¹²⁸ For the Ìgbo tapped [ɾ] or [ɽ], the Èdó alveolar stop *d* is at least as plausible a loan treatment as any other of modern Èdó’s many lenis (lightly articulated) voiced coronals, laterals and rhotics (Wescott 1962a, 23f.; Àmáyo 1976, 87; Elugbe 1986, 78). Thus Ìgbo **ò-gbú ìlè/ìrè* LHLL is a plausible guess for the auditory target of Egharhevba’s hypothetical Èdó-spelling translation as *Ògbéide* LHLL.

On the semantic-pragmatic side, a synthetic compound of *ògbú* plus *ìlè/ìrè* would predictably denote either (i) a person ‘who effectively or curatively throws [the oracle apparatus]’ or ‘whose [oracular predictions and sacrificial requests] are precisely fulfilled’ or else (ii) a medicinal instrument or oracular prediction ‘achieving utmost efficacy’. Gloss (i) would be appropriate praise for a *dibì a áfá* and gloss (ii) for his proprietary tools and pharmacological or verbal formulas.

¹²⁴ The text appeared posthumously in a “composite” form with “derivative” contemporary material (Law 1982, 156, 165). Identification of Barbot’s “Loebo” and “Oedo” as Òrhobo and Èdó respectively is confirmed by geographical details in several passages.

¹²⁵ This LHLL contour of *Ògbéide* has phonetic and syntactic parallels (Wescott 1962a, 61, 65, 1963, 88, 92, cf. Melzian 1937, 8).

(i) *àlẹ̀fẹ̀* LH!H ‘an escape’ < *àlẹ̀fẹ̀* LLHLH where the final downstep alias “flat tone” merges with L in allegro speech;

(ii) *òsa-i-kpèè* ‘wood-dove’ lit. ‘the High God-can’t-sing [more sweetly]’.

¹²⁶ The semantic typeshift of ‘qualificative noun’→attributive modifier is generally available in Ìgbo, e.g. *ágadi nwaanyi* ‘advanced age of a woman’→‘old woman’ (Èménanjo 1978, 47f.; Mádùkà-Duruñze 1990; Ìgwè 1999, 17). The genitive case of ‘sleep’ in ‘deep sleep’ is shown by downstep [ɿ] on the final syllable of *ògbú ńrú* LH !HH versus the penult of *ò-gbú éfí* LH !HH ‘chief’.

¹²⁷ E.g., superlative *-gbú* collocates with the adjectival root *-sọ* ‘sweet/tasty’ in a western Ìgbo *Trinkled* reprised in 1984 by XY chiefsis Clement Oghèné and Obrám Esèdáfè of the Palmwine Drinkers Club: manfredi.mayfirst.org/gyration19841mahigbe.mov @ 1'38"-2'32".

Mánya, manya nkwi ó, manya Wine, wine of oilpalm indeed, wine
Ó sọ-gbu-sọ! Supersweet! [←It sweet-kill-sweet!]

¹²⁸ *-rè* occurs in Àgbò with the same meaning (Elugbe 1969; Manfredi 1991, 32; 1992, 110f.).

Tone apart, an expression phonetically similar to *ò-ghú ìlè/ìrè LHLL is heard in the documentary film *Mammy Water* (Jell-Bahlsen 1989), namely Ògbúidè LHH!H or Ògbúide LH!HH, a ritual epithet of the lake spirit Ûhámmiri, mythic patron of Ògwuntà [“Oguta”], an Igbo-speaking port in the òru floodplain of the lower Niger valley. Like any proper name, it’s not necessarily transparent to the user. “According to consultants, the name *Ogbuide* originates from Benin” (Jell-Bahlsen 1998, 102 *fn* 17) but such attributions are ambiguous because the Igbo predicate -s(h)í, usually translated in English as ‘come from [place]’, can also refer to a detour not the original departure point (Williamson 1972, 466; Ígwè 1999, 744f., cf. Manfredi 1991, 252). Loose claims of Èdó ‘origin’ proliferate in the Niger Delta as metaphors for cultural allegiance, just as many southwest 9ja towns present themselves as Ifè ‘migrants’ (Òbáyemí 1976, 200). The Ògwuntà palace has a distinctive Èdó-style organigram reflecting political and economic ties to the Èdó kingdom, for which the idiom of wholesale migration is a condensed poetic slogan (Nzímíro 1972). Igbo ‘floodwater’ is given variously as *idè* HL, *idèi* HLL and *ideé* HH!H (Williamson 1972, 170; 1984; Ígwè 1999, 243) so by attribute typeshift (11b) a phrase pronounced roughly *ògbú idè/ògbú ide could mean ‘depth of flood→deep flood’, a description that fits Ògwuntà lake, or alternatively on the model of synthetic compounds as (11a), ‘one who kills with inundation’, a fitting apotropaic tag for a water goddess.¹²⁹ In sum, while it can’t be excluded that the founding bronzecaster of Èdó was a priest of the Ògwuntà lake goddess, criteria of semantic as well as tonal similarity independently favor Igbo *ò-ghú ìlè/ìrè as the hypothetical basis of the parenthesised *hapax* in Egharhevba’s cryptic citation “Ominigbon (Ogbeide)” identifying this legendary individual.

Another polysyllabic Èdó expression of Ìba Òminigbon is ògwéèga. This doesn’t analyze into meaningful components in Èdó—nor in Yorùbá—but it has two physical referents: (i) the tree species *Detarium senegalense* or *hendelotiana* and (ii) the oracle strings, each of which links four half-pericarps of that tree (Melzian 1937, 137, Èhigiamusoe 2013, 189f., *pace* the garbled tones of Aghèyisi 1986, 105). The same ambiguity between tree and binary artefact holds for Igbo òkéné which denotes *Ricinodendron africanum* and the *Afa* oracle’s 4-bit half-pericarp string (Williamson 1972, 373f.; Èzikéojiakú 1984, 38; 1987, 64; 2000, 72; Ígwè 1999, 601) and also the Òrhobo counterpart *agbragha* (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 7, no tones). This botanical-ritual parallelism further suggests a hypothetical Western Igbo phrase *òkéné èja literally ‘òkéné seeds for èja (ritual sacrifice)’ (cf. Williamson 1972, 17; Ígwè 1999, 32; Èzikéojiakú 1984, 57f.).¹³⁰ The required loan path of Igbo *òkéné èja > Èdó ògwéèga is phonetically straightforward: the tone match is exact and the shift Igbo -j- > Èdó -g- is plausible because Èdó lacks affricated -j- and has palatal stops as positional variants of velars (Wescott 1962a, 46).¹³¹

Whatever its immediate antecedents, Èdó ògwéèga eventually became *gumagan*, *agumega*, *agúmagàn* and *agúмага*—local Gbè names for the oracle strings (Maupoil 1943a, 197, Surgy 1981a, 49, Segurola & Rassinoux 2000, 27, Hamberger 2011, 603). The tonal match to these is either exact or trivially different for Gbè-internal reasons, and the shift of the initial vowel is regular, cf. *Àyó* < *Òyó*. Across Gbè, this Èdó-derived name for the oracle processor exists alongside the (À)nàgó name *kpèlè* < Yorùbá *òpèlè* denoting the seedpods of *Schrebera arborea* (Gbile 1984, 53, 93, Keay 1989, 403f., Verger 1995, 599, [701 bad typo], 1997, 602, [694 bad typo] and Awóyalé 2008). This duplication of ritual nomenclature shows that the oracle reached Gbè in parallel transmission streams, Èdó and Yorùbá, respectively by coast and inland routes.¹³² In Gbè, the oracle chain connects seeds of either the *àsló* ‘bush mango, *Iringia gabonensis*’ or *avini* tree species (Trautmann 1939, 20f., Maupoil 1943a, 198 *fn* 2, citing Bertho 1936, 370, Segurola & Rassinoux 2000, 72, 80, Höftmann & Ahohunkpanzon, 2003, 102), the latter name probably < Yorùbá *àwín*=*ìwín* ‘black tamarind, *Dialium guineense*’ (Abraham 1958, 79, 329, 725, Keay 1989, 204f., Èhigiamusoe 2013, 191). *Iringia gabonensis* also supplies an alternative binary material for the *Afa* chain, both of which are known in Igbo as *úgílí* (Ògbálú 1970, 58f., Williamson 1972, 514).

One more translatable technical expression of Èdó Ìba—shared with Òrhobo Èpha/Èrma—is *n’áabe*. This is applied by Èdó and Òrhobo oracles to any identical pair of 4-bit arrays: “If both positions are the same, their name is followed by *n’áabe* ‘combined’...” (Melzian 1937, xviii, 137, cf. Egharhevba 1936b, 8, Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, 9). Melzian’s English gloss has no linguistic basis in either Èdó, Òrhobo or Yorùbá, but in Igbo it closely matches *n’áabo* (= *n’áabe* in some dialects), the ordinary adnominal modifier ‘double’ (Williamson 1972, 190, 359; Ígwè 1999, 456). Igbo *n’áabo* has exactly the same specialized use in *Afa*, as *n’áabe* does in *Ìba* and *Èpha/Èrma*, namely to mark bilateral symmetry in a thrown pair of 4-bit chains (Ònwuejiógwù 1997, 52; Èzikéojiakú 2000, 73, Appendix 3.1 below).¹³³ This etymology was identified by Èzikéojiakú who writes “*n’áabo* (or *n’áabe* in Edo)” (2000, 73, no diacritics) and a generation earlier was spotted in the Ìgálà version of *Ìfá* by Boston who wrote in passing about ♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦ “*Eka nabo... nabo* is the Igbo term for twice” (1974, 354, no tones). Nabofa & Elugbe missed the boat in Òrhobo through several stumbles: (i) oversegmenting “nabe” (*n’áabe*) as “abe”, (ii) arbitrarily limiting the cognate search in Igbo to cardinal “2”, which is also cognate but less obviously so, especially because among its many variant forms they landed arbitrarily on “abua” (no tones) and (iii) jumping from the correct but trivial point that oracle jargon “can hardly be called a language” to the hasty conclusion that it necessarily “was made up”—independently invented—by speakers of Òrhobo, ignoring the more interesting possibility that a nonlinguistic code can perfectly well be borrowed from “a neighboring tribe” (1981, 12f.).

To find Igbo etymologies for four Ìba-specific expressions—two proper names and two technical terms, all morphologically opaque in either Èdó or Yorùbá—would be bizarre unless the rest of the Ìba oracle had been borrowed at the same time, either directly from western Igbo or at second-hand via Òrhobo which as noted above is independently described as the oracle’s geographic gateway form east to west. This could still be squared with Egharhevba’s text under the most charitable interpretation of the latter, retreating from Yorùbá purism to Blier’s less falsifiable assumption that the legendary persons Òminigbon and Òrínmíla were Igbo-speaking residents of/itinerants transiting via Òhè (Ifè). However, such special pleading to save Egharhevba’s published words is pointless (i) in light of the textual criticism reviewed above that he sought *Wá-ò-ò-bí-án* prestige by tethering Èdó to Ifè ideologically, and (ii) because more Igbo loans occur across a wider spectrum of Èdó cultural domains than can be explained by invoking *migratōres ex machinā*.

129 If Ûhámmiri’s other canonical epithet “Ogbuama” means ‘brilliantly sparkling one’ then its tone would be *ògbú àma* [LH LL] and its meaning ‘depth/epitome of brilliance’ would follow the stative rule in (12b) above (cf. Williamson 1972, 154, 268; Ígwè 1999, 385).

130 In a non-western Igbo dialect, the regular phonetic counterpart of this phrase would be *òkéné àja.

131 Èdó -gi- corresponds to Èsán -j-, e.g. Èdó *ògie* = Èsán *òje* ‘chief’ (Elugbe 1986, 174f.), and borrowed into Igbo, Èdó -gi- becomes -j- e.g. Èdó *Esíje* > Igbo “*Asíje*” (Nzímíro 1962, 52). By contrast, Yorùbá -j- becomes Èdó -z- not -g-, e.g. *Ìjè bú* > *Úzèbú*, *Òjù* > *Òzù* (Melzian 1937, xi, 214; Wescott 1962a, 90).

132 The modern title *Akplogán* alias “Aplogan... head of religious affairs” (Law 1999, 77) in “Ouidah/Whydah/Hueda” and nearby Gbè kingdoms may parse as *akp(è)lè* ‘oracle chain’ plus *ogán* ‘protecteur de secte’ (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000, 52, Rouget 2001, 97, cf. Akoha 2010, 264, Manfredi 2013b) literally ‘custodian/patron of oracle paraphernalia’. Yorùbá *òpèlè* may have an Èdó etymology, given that its alternate form *òpèpèrè* (Dennett 1906, 250) “recognized in Ifè but not in Mèkò” (Bascom 1969, 29) phonetically resembles *apèpè*, an item cited by Melzian as the Yorùbá version of Èdó *àkhuèkhuè* “a tree, the fruits of which are used in Òrínmíla divination” (1937, 15). *Akhuèkhuè* is *Detarium microcarpum*, a species whose nomenclature overlaps with *Detarium senegalense* as Èdó calls both *ùkhuèhè òhó* (Èhigiamusoe 2013, 188f.). The proposed direction of borrowing *àkhuèkhuè* > *apèpè* is supported by the greater likelihood of Yorùbá despirantising [x] (spelled *kb* in Èdó) > [kp] (spelled *p* in Yorùbá) than the reverse. Èdó has no reason to spirantise borrowed *kp* since it has this plosive natively. Aghèyisi’s abridged reprint of Melzian changes *àkhuèkhuè* to *àkhuè* with the gloss of “marble” (1986, 6) but Nigerian English *marbles* denotes the tree seeds used in the *àyò* counting game (Melzian 1937, 15).

133 Other northern Igbo cases of backness harmony are *Kèdì* ‘How is [it]?’ versus *Kèdú* and *Ò dū ímá* ‘It’s fine!’ versus *Ò dī ímá*.

2.5 A dozen Ìgbonisms beyond the oracle

Ìgboisms in Èdó—let’s call them *Ìgbonisms* for short—are not limited to the oracle. Eight more are of wider ritual use, two occur in general Èdó vocabulary and two more (§2.9) parse proper names of reported artists of Èdó *cire perdue*.

“The Bini have now eight days in their week but the part of jujuism [sic]... has preserved the more ancient form of four days” (Dennett 1906, 215) “representing the four quarters of the earth” (Egharheba 1953, 98). All four ritual day names are cognate to the ordinary days of the Igbo market week (13a). The plain Èdó term for ‘dog’ has an Igbo cognate with a plausible Igbo etymology (13b). For both sets, the direction of borrowing is proved by the fact that the *nC* sequences in Igbo *ńkwó* and *ńkítà*, being unpronounceable in Èdó, are minimally repaired as *o-* and *e-* in “*okwó*” and *ékítà* respectively, whereas if the latter had been adopted *into* Igbo they could have kept their initial vowels unmodified.

	Èdó (Dennett 1906, 215, Melzian 1937, 33, 34, 48) (Egharheba 1946, 81, 1953, 98, 1968, 82, no tones)	Ìgbo (Williamson 1972, 9, 108f., 312, 314, 390) (Ìgwè 1999, 15, 154, 487, 496, 615)
(13)a. ‘day of rest’	<i>è dé èkén</i> (also ‘east’)	<i>èkén / èk(h)é</i>
‘[2nd weekday]’	<i>è dé “orie”</i> (also ‘west’)	<i>óriè / óyè</i>
‘[3rd weekday]’	<i>è dé “abọ”</i> (also ‘south’)	<i>àfọ / àbọ</i>
‘[4th weekday]’	<i>è dé “okwó”</i> (also ‘north’)	<i>ńkwó</i>
b. ‘dog’	<i>ékítà</i>	<i>ńkítà</i> <? ‘instrument of chasing game’ ¹³⁴

Another example is *ùkburhe*. This Èdó patrilineal ancestral staff is carved from the tree *ùkburhe òbó* (*Detarium senegalense* or *microcarpum*) alias *àkhuèkhuè*, the same species as the Igbo counterpart *òfó* whose segmented “branchlets... are often clustered at the end of short gnarled bosses and fall off entire” (Keay 1989, 206, cf. Dalziel 1937, 188, Meek 1937, 63, Ilogu 1964, 234, Vogel 1979, Williamson 1983, 274, Ben-Amos 2007, 153, 410, Gore 2007b, 133f., Akalhi & al. 2012, Ehigiamusoe 2013, 188-90, Ekhosuehi 2014).¹³⁵ *Òfó* and *ùkburhe* stems share a communicative ritual use. In Èdó: “During prayers they are knocked on the ground in order to confirm the words” (Melzian 1937, 213). In Igbo:

Ísù ofó is the ritual of knocking the sacred stick on the ground (*àla*) to activate the powers of *òfó* and *àla*...
[T]he knocking of the sacred stick on the ground evokes all kinds of connotations. There is the belief in the potency of the sacred stick itself because of the immanence in it of supernatural powers. There is also the belief in the potency of the earth, the source of life and the abode of the ancestors... (Uwaláaka 1996, 14 *fn* 1, 21)

In Ígàlà and in Ìjèbú Yorùbá, the “*ok(w)utẹ*” statue is “made of the same kind of wood and patterned in the same way” (Ogúnba 1964, 251, Boston 1964, 18, 23, 1968, 196, cf. Obáyemí 1976, 221, no tones).¹³⁶ In Onicha (“Onitsha”) two reigns after *Èzè Chúma* (§2.3 above), an Ígàlà prince introduced “*òrá òkwute*, a secret inner council of the incarnate dead” (Henderson 1972, 88, cf. Williamson 1972, 372). *Òkwute* figures haven’t been reported in Onicha (Prof. R. Henderson *p.c.*) so it’s unlikely that Èdó *ùkburhe* owes its name to Igbo, but Igbo *òfó* is the only available source of Èdó *òbó*. The sound shift Igbo *f* > Èdó *b* is paralleled in *Afa* > *Iba* and in *òfú* > *òbún* “◆◆◆” (modulo 180° rotation, §2.3 above).¹³⁷

Ìk(h)éng(h)a, an icon representing the human right hand/forearm/dexterity/agency, stands on the *iru ñmuo* ‘ancestral altar’ in the *òbí* ‘ancestral dwelling-temple’ of an Igbo patrilineal compound (Basden 1921, 219f.; Jeffreys 1954; Cole & Anjākò 1984, 24-34). Carved from soft or hard wood, it depicts a seated titled man or the abstract cylinder of a chiefly stool—both types topped with horns evoking “the stubbornness of a ram” (Onwuejiogwu 1975, 92) or more simply “a distinction of gender” (Boston 1977, 110).¹³⁸ Similar icons of similar significance are carved in Ígàlà, Èsán [“Ishan”], Úrhobò and Èdó (Vogel 1974; Lorenz 1987; Foss 2004).¹³⁹ The Èdó version, called *ikéèga obó*, also has a deluxe edition of the cylindric type cast in copper alloy, replacing the integral ram’s horn with a superposed ivory tusk (Bradbury 1961).

Bradbury was noncommittal about the crosscultural path of *ikéèga obó* (1961, 138 *fn.* 14), but a viable Igbo etymology exists. Southern Igbo has *ikhéngha* with two aspirated consonants (Ìgwè 1999, 252). Aspiration (here spelled *h*, cf. §0.4) is a reflex of old nasal plosion (Williamson 1973a, 117f., 1973b, Ladefoged & al. 1976), predictably absent in denasalised northern dialects and unknown in adjacent languages. (No case exists of southern Igbo adding aspiration to a non-Igbo loan.) Then, the aspiration of southern *-ngha* rules out glosses like “the strength with which I advance” (Òdìtá 1973, 79) and “my strength must go ahead” (Onwuejiogwu 1975, 93f.) because the root *-gá* ‘go’ is not aspirated in any Igbo dialect, whereas *-g(h)à* ‘scratch, claw’ (Williamson 1972, 125; Ìgwè 1999, 185) with regular southern aspiration connotes a relevant concept of tenacity. The *h* of *ì-k(h)éng(h)a* excludes H-initial *ìk(h)e* [HH] ‘strength, ability, exertion, hardness’ (Ìgwè 1999, 251) but it could be the same nominalizer responsible for *I-jé-lè*, the giant dance mask of the Omámabala [“Anambra”] valley that ‘walks (-jé) proudly about (lè)’ and/or the regular gerund formative which, applied to *-k(h)é* ‘hard/strong/difficult’ (Ìgwè 1999, 305) would yield reduplicated *ì-k(h)é-khe* ‘strength, power, authority’ (Ìgwè 1999, 252), potentially subject to *allegro* syncope as in *ákwnkwo* ‘leaf’ > *áukwo*, *ósisi* ‘tree’ > *ósi*. Either way, *ìk(h)éng(h)a* can be glossed ‘[hand] that claws tenaciously’—not far from the attested folk gloss “strength... to succeed” (Jeffreys 1954, 30).

As for Èdó *ikéèga*, Èdó vocalization of Igbo *nC* was already discussed for (13) above. Semantically, Èdó *ikéèga* is ambiguous between its primary meaning ‘wrist’ and a secondary reference to “an anklet [*sc.* bracelet] of cowries which is whorlipped as *òbó* ‘hand, arm’” (Melzian 1937, 90). Banal loanword opacity of *ikéèga* in Èdó motivates pleonastic *ikéèga obó*, literally, ‘right hand/arm of the hand/arm’, to specify the Èdó icon—parallel to the cringeworthy redundancy of *shrimp scampi* (etymologically ‘shrimp shrimp’) on the bicultural-but-not-bilingual menus of Italoamerican red-sauce joints. In Èdó, ‘wrist’ is *urhú abó* < *urhu* ‘neck’ plus an irregular form of *òbó* ‘arm/hand’ (Melzian 1938, 133, 209).

¹³⁴ Clark (1989, 245), cf. *-chú* ‘chase’, *nta/ntá* ‘hunting’ (Williamson 1972, 83f., 328, Ìgwè 1999, 116, 528). Èdó final downstep is ‘total’ (L).

¹³⁵ Ehigiamusoe notes that “the main species *D. senegalense* or *hendetoliana* and *D. microcarpum* bear the same native names in many communities, however the Benins have two distinguishing terms *òguèèga* and *àkhuèkhuè* for the two main groups” (2013, 190). He nonetheless connects *ùkburhe òbó* to both species (2013, 188f.).

¹³⁶ A widely recognized Yorùbá name for the tree itself, as opposed to the ritual artefact, is *ògbògbò* (Verger 1997, 597).

¹³⁷ As with *Òminigbo*, indirect transmission of *òbó* from Igbo to Èdó via southeast “Èdoid” can’t be excluded. In Ísóko the ritual counterpart is *òvó* (Peek 1980, 63) and the same voicing occurs in the Úrhobò oracle name which can be pronounced *Èrma* as well as *Èpha* (Prof. T. Ojaide *p.c.*). “Many words associated with Ísóko religious belief and practice have [Ig]bo cognates” (Peek 1976, 34).

¹³⁸ Every [*dibí* *áfá*] has carved images of *ágwù*, its household and pets, and sacrifices are made on these images to persuade and activate *ágwù*. For example, Ezumézù (Plate 1 = people.bu.edu/manfredi/Ezumezu.jpg) is a wooden figure in which all images of *ágwù*’s household, pets and cult are carved on one piece of wood. (Onwuejiogwu 1997, 13)

In 1985, cement representations of *ikénga* and *òfó* were erected in crossroads of the Ímò State capital Òweré [“Owerri”] by Brigadier Ike Nwáchukwu (Ejizú 1991, 250), then demolished by the military administrator, Pentacostal Colonel Tanko Zubairu (Ilozúè 1999).

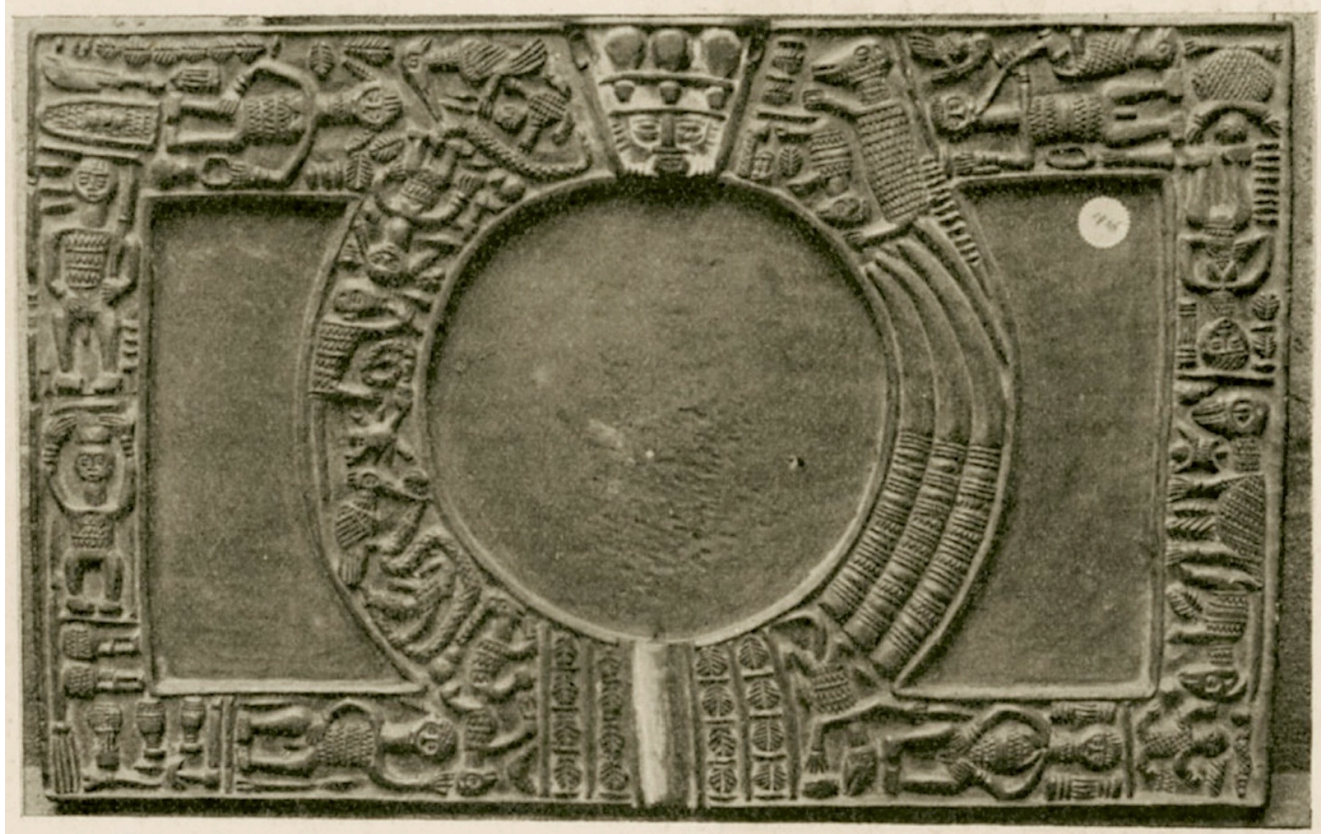
¹³⁹ In constructing his ideal type of “the art style of Owó” (i.e. the town of Òghò)—Fagg strangely managed to overlook the many published Igbo and Ígàlà examples of “a human head... provided with the horns of a ram” (1951, 75).

Melzian compares Èdó *úku* ‘a praise-name of the *Óba*’ to the Igbo adjective *úke(n)u* ‘large, great’ (Williamson 1972, 517, Igwè 1999, 783) and this works because the full epithet is *úku à-kpòlò-kpòlò* where the second part independently means ‘very big’ in Èdó (1937, 118, 203), thus it’s another bicultural *shrimp scampi* pleonasm. Èdó *Ógbè*, the unique name of the palace district of the capital city (Melzian 1937, 138), is far more plausibly a referential narrowing of *ógbè*, the generic Igbo term for residential quarter (Igwè 1999, 581) than the reverse direction of derivation. Èdó *èbulikè* ‘loincloth’ (Melzian 1937, xvii) and Ùrhobo *ibunúku* ‘skirt’ (Ukere 1986, 18) have an analytic Igbo etymon *m-be n’úke(n)u* ‘native underwear’ *lit.* ‘item set upon the waist’ (Williamson 1972, 65, 270 *illus.*, 518), again with regular *nC* repair.

2.6 Facial recognition test: Èṣù or Vòdún?

Ambient *Wá-zó-bì-án* ‘noise’ in modern scholarship signal threatens to drown out not only the philology of the oracle but also the archaeology of ritual icons, to which specialists in the field of ‘art history’ assign historically improbable and incoherent identities, the better to package them for booming modern markets of ethnic capital.

For example, in the mid-17th century, a carved wooden tray was brought from the Gùn-gbè speaking town of Àlàdà (Capo 1991, 14) to the Suabian-German town of Ulm by Christoph Weickmann, a successful slavetrader:



rossarchive.library.yale.edu/web/site/index.php?globalnav=image_detail&image_id=7667

Weickmann’s collection catalog—the *Exoticophylacium*, printed in 1659—describes this artefact as follows:

<p>Terra Sigillata Turcica pallida. Terra Sigillata Turcica, ex albo flavescens. Terra Sigillata Turcica cinerea. Argilla, rubri & cinerei coloris, instar marmoris, maculis albis. Argilla lutea.</p> <p>Fremde, Kunst- und Curiose Sachen.</p> <p>In Rock oder Kleid / wie es die Könige zu Haarder zu tragen pflegen / mit gar grossen und weiten Ermlen.</p> <p>Ein Ritters-Rock oder Talar, so der König von Haarder in Africa einem zu verehren pflegt / wann er ihn zu einem Edelmann oder Ritter macht / an der Form und Gestalt allerdings dem Königlich Rock gleich / doch anders vom Zeug und Farben.</p> <p>Zwey Arm- / Ring auß / Helfenbein geschnitten / von allerhand Krotten und abscheulichen Thieren figurirt / so die Vitalgos / oder Edelleut des Königs zu Haarder, zu einer sonderlichen Zierd und Hofart an ihren Armen zu tragen pflegen.</p> <p>Ein Indianischer wunderlicher Sessel von Palmen- / Holz / darauf ihre Könige / und grosse Herren zu sitzen pflegen / dessen Sitz von Seiden / auß Aloës Americana, gar artig und künstlich geflochten.</p> <p>Ein Opfer- / Brett / von erhabenen und wunderfeligem / und abscheulichen Teufels- / Bildern geschnitten / welches der König zu Haarder, so des größten Königs von Bennis Valall ist / samt dessen größten Officieren und Naturelen dergestalt</p>	<p>uno Curiose Sachen. 41</p> <p>bigen Provinz, bey ihrer Götter Opfer / oder Fetische, zu gebrauchen / und ihnen darauf zu opfern pflegen / und ist dieses Opfer- / Brett von dem jetzt regierenden König zu Haarder selbst infeltirt / und von ihm gebraucht worden.</p> <p>Ein Indianischer Abgott von einer gar seltsamen und wunderlichen Form / so auß einem ganzen Stück Orientalischen Türckis heraus geschnitten worden / dritthalben Zwergfinger in der Länge / und eines starcken Daumens dick / so die Indianer mit ihrem eigenen Blut verehrt haben / eine sonderbare Rarität.</p> <p>Ein ander dergleichen geschmelzter blau- / grüner Abgott.</p> <p>Ein rundes grosses Indianisches Gefäß / auß einer Fisch- / Haut gemacht / darinnen sie ihre Getränke aufzuhalten pflegen / und in welches über die 30 Württemberger Maas gehen.</p> <p>Eine Ampel von Erden / auf welcher ein Heptanischer Abgott gebildet / so die Alten und sonderlich die Aegyptier ihren Tooten in denen Begräbnissen beigesetzt / und etlich hundert Jahre ohne Zugießung einiger weiterer Materi / unaufgelöscht gebrunnen haben.</p> <p>Ein ander dergleichen Ampel.</p> <p>Eine sonderliche und künstliche Oel-Lampen / welche also brennender in einem Hosen-Sack getragen / oder wohl gar ohne Zerschüttung einiges Tropfen / hinter die Thür geworffen werden kan.</p> <p>Ein sehr künstliche Tafel / Decken in Angola gemacht / nicht geweben / sondern aus freyen Händen geflochten / von trefflicher schöner und künstl</p>
---	---

reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10075653_00046.html?numScans=2&zoom=0.5

Ein Opfer-Brett von erhabenen und wunderseltsamen und abscheulichen Teufels-Bildern geschnitten welches der König zu Haarder, so des größten Königs von Benin Vasall ist, samt dessen größten Offizieren und Naturen derselben Provinz, den ihrer Götter Opfer oder Fetisse zu gebrauchen und ihnen darauf zu opfern pflegen und ist dieses Opfer-Brett von dem jetzt-regierenden König zu Haarder selbst infelirt und von ihm gebraucht worden.

A sacrificial board carved in relief with wondrously strange and abominable devilish images which the king of Haarder [Alàdà], who is a vassal of the Great King of Benin, together with his most senior officers and natives of the same province, are accustomed to use in sacrifices to their gods or Fetish, and upon which they make offerings to them. This sacrificial board has been invested [*sc. commissioned*] by the currently reigning King of Haarder himself and employed by him. (translation by Jones 1994 36, cf Vansina 1984, 3)¹⁴⁰

Luschan likens this “sacrificial board” to some *opón Ifá* that Carl Arriens sketched for Frobenius (1912, 249), but adds a sensational comment in a different vein: that “a drilled drain, opening directly opposite the head carved above it, leads out from the middle round depression on which one can just imagine, neatly placed, a severed head” (1919, 493).¹⁴¹

Bassani repeats the reflexive *Ifá* label but has the candor to list several “anomalous” features that “contradict or at least are not congruent with what’s now known about the use of similar trays in the divinatory practice of the *Ifá* oracle” (1983, 585).¹⁴² The face atop the tray may broadly resemble the Èṣù carved on many modern *opón Ifá*, but all of Bassani’s other stylistic comparisons are directed elsewhere: to Ajá-gbè wooden *venàni* ‘mother of twins’ statuettes of the “Mono” River valley (citing for these, Merlo 1975).

Joining the *Ifá Gruppendenken*, Jones beggars belief to suggest that “a number of small dents on the surface” of the central area—visible in Luschan’s photo above—were produced “presumably from the repeated throwing of palm nuts” but then immediately backtracks: “... (or perhaps something heavier)” (1994, 36). Straining to reconcile the *Ifá* theory with Bassani’s qualms and Luschan’s lurid allusion, Jones gestures towards “another cult” (1994, 36, 93 *fn* 21), obliquely referencing rites of “veneration of deceased members of the lineage” as enacted in 17th century Alàdà by “the removal and reburial of heads” (Law 1991, 107 cf. 1989, 411, Herissé 1911, 161, Akindélé & Ageşin 1953, 108-10, 171 *plate* I-B).

Most of the tray’s variegated motifs—including birds, brooms, swords, pipes and pangolins—are widespread in West African lore, but not every image is indifferent to locale. A design resembling four 4-bit oracle strings, one pair flanking each side of the “drilled” channel drain, more plausibly represents the four strings that are thrown, two pairs per cycle, in *Iba*, *Epha/Evwa*, *Afa* and kindred oracles further north, than an *opèlè Ifá* which comprises just one doubled 4-bit string that’s anyhow less used with an *opón* (Bascom 1969, 9, cf. §1.3.3 above, §3.1 below). Either the quadruple 4-bit figure on the Alàdà tray doesn’t signify a binary processor of any kind, or else the tray’s conventional attribution to *Ifá* should give way to some oracle localization that uses four 4-bit strings, consistent with the pattern actually inscribed.

Entertaining zero doubts, Drewal sees simply an “*opón Ifá*... divination tray” (1987, 145*f.*, cf. Drewal & al. 1989, 21). With clairvoyance worthy of a *babaláwo*, he decodes the triplicate horn shape in the right circular band as *iróké* “tapper rattles... used to invoke the presence of Orúnmilà... that is voiced three times” and further illustrates “the prominence of three in the Alàdà piece” by registering that “[t]hree medicine gourds crown the brow” of the central face, as if to prove a hunch that “[n]umbers may also be significant in *Ifá* divination tray iconography” (1987, 146, 148). Holy trinities aside however, and even sticking to southern Nigeria, it’s parochial to pretend that *Ifá* owns a patent on cardinal three. For example, threefold ritual packets tied around a forehead are found in two major, nearby non-Yorubá traditions:

Numerous *ikénga*, both the warrior and titled person’s types, as well as some masks, have a row of pointed projections flanking the head, usually three or another odd number on each side. *Ikénga* in the southern Igbo area have three knobs on a horizontal bar. The number three is associated with males throughout West Africa. In Benin [*i.e.* Èdó], the king has three hidden tufts of hair as protective charms, and doctors wear amulets that resemble these projections during public appearances (Paula Ben-Amos *p.c.* 1987). Alternatively, these projections may stand for *hzu/hzun*, cone-shaped pieces of chalk used in rituals. (Bentor 1988, 71, cf. Williamson 1972, 334, Igwe 1999, 545)

“Arranged around the border are a myriad of images”—Drewal continues—but “[n]o narrative unifies these diverse depictions” because the forms have “approximately equal visual importance” (1987, 146). The reader may well wonder which artefact Drewal is looking at when he describes “an explicit orientation and emphasis on four directions, the four quadrants between these and the center of the tray” and judges that the “compositional mode documents the autonomy of individual motifs” (1987, 146*f.*). Such is plainly true for modern examples of *opón Ifá* (e.g. Maupoil 1943a, 192*f.*, Abíódún 1975, 439) but not in this particular object, whose meandering *bande dessinée* seems to repeat several individuals in dynamic postures as if serially progressing through a dramatic folktale, proverb or commemorative text. If these bas-reliefs have any analogue in coeval carvings of the region it’s the Èdó ivories, commissioned when—as Weickmann records—Alàdà participated in the Èdó kingdom’s human trafficking network on the Atlantic coast (Curnow 1983, 177, cf. Eisenhofer 1993, Lovejoy & Ojó 2015). Not until circa 1698 did Alàdà fall into the Oyo political sphere (Akínjogbin 1971, 313 citing Bosman 1705, 397, cf. Maupoil 1943a, 46), by which time this sculpture was gathering Bavarian dust.

In sum, a list of observations—some unintentionally made by Drewal himself—count against Luschan’s first-glance assignment of this 17th century Alàdà tray to a 20th century Yorubá type. Robotic recycling of the anachronistic Yorubá tag can’t enhance the object’s resemblance to actual *opón Ifá* beyond a basic slab of wood, worked to a smooth surface—never mind that this tray uniquely has three of them—ringed by a wide figurative border and surveilled by a central face. More numerous and more specific are the discrepancies from *opón Ifá*—the drain channel, above all—not to mention the problem that this item left Alàdà four decades before Oyo (Yorubá) hegemony arrived there.

Scholars try to classify isolated antiques, and ethnic consciousness seeks familiarity at any price, but free extrapolation of present models backwards in time brings diminishing returns. This dilemma is avoidable, however. In paleontology, a single token can properly define a novel taxon, and archaeologists do accept the ambiguity of mute “images... in need of confirmatory evidence” (Adépegba 1989c, 16).¹⁴³ The greater mystery is how art critics could simultaneously fixate on “naturalistic” style (§2.8 below) and be indifferent to naturalistic reasoning (Manfredi 1991, 309-11). Today, as historic colonizers wonder what is to be done with historic colonial loot (Östberg ed. 2010, Sarr & Savoy 2018, Baqué 2020), simple parity should caution present curators and gallerists of this farflung bling not to default to apply speculative methods designed to gratify collectors, many of whom may not be more ethically scrupulous or culturally informed than the old-school buccaneers responsible for the objects’ initial extraction from their primary context of use.

¹⁴⁰ Thanks to M. Kone of orishaimage.com (archive-only) and susannewengerfoundation.at for discussions of the image and its catalog text.

¹⁴¹ ... von der runden Vertiefung in der Mitte, in die man sich ganz gut etwa einen abgeschnittenen Kopf gelegt denken kann, führt unten, dem oben geschnittenen Kopfe gerade gegenüber, ein Bohrloch nach außen. (Luschan 1919, 493)

¹⁴² Excerpting this original text from the cited page:

Questa soluzione spaziale è anomala... Posso però rivelare che l’informazione contenuta nel catalogo seicentesco circa l’impiego del vassoio in riti sacrificali sembra contraddire, o perlomeno non collimare, con quanto sappiamo ora circa l’utilizzo di vassoi simili nelle pratiche divinatorie dell’oracolo di *Ifá*.

¹⁴³ For example the “heroic nudity” of two bronze warriors shipwrecked off the Calabrian coast remains cloaked in mystery despite abundant “numismatic, archaeological and literary sources” about eastern Mediterranean cultures of the day (Castrizio 2019, 67*f.*)

Like the lonesome Àlàdà tray in Ulm, the inscrutable brass casts recovered in Ifè fire the imaginations of art historians and ethnic chauvinists alike. Current museological consensus about these anonymous finds was fathered by a paragon of romantic fervor and scientific insouciance—quirky qualities which are ironically emulated by some of the same experts who lambaste his racist rants (§2.8). With a little linguistic help, a more credible alternative comes into view (§2.9).

2.7 MFA sends letter to *Ọ̀ba*

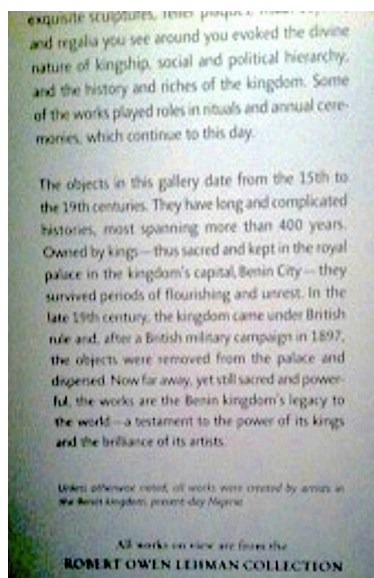
Curatorial malpractice has not spared “Benin bronzes”—Èdó copper-alloy casts—in metropolitan trophy racks. When 32 sculptures originally seized by the British army in the 1897 sack of the Èdó palace were deposited in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) by an heir of a notorious predatory banking clan, the contractual niceties were best known to U.S. tax lawyers but the museum explained its own role in the affair with p.r. boilerplate and a shiny FB selfie:

In 2012, the MFA gratefully accepted the Robert Owen Lehman Collection... Today, the ethics of collecting and displaying works removed from their places of origin during periods of European colonialism is a subject of debate among museums, local and national governments, collectors, and the public. The MFA displays these Benin artworks for the benefit of communities in Boston and abroad, and holds them in the public trust where they may be studied and viewed by all [sic]. www.mfa.org/collections/featured-galleries/benin-kingdom-gallery



“27 September 2013. Ambassador Walter Carrington, Chief Nicholas O. Obaseki of Benin Kingdom, His Royal Highness Professor Gregory I. Akenzua of Benin Kingdom, Chief Esosa Eghobamien The Obobaifo of Benin Kingdom, Dr. Arese Carrington and Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Thank you to everyone who joined us and the Coalition of Committed Benin Organizations for the opening of the Benin Kingdom Gallery and a celebration of the arts and culture of the Edo community.” www.facebook.com/mfaboston/photos/a.10151699724402321.1073741849.28314922320/10151699725127321

The dignitaries’ regal clothes and titles notwithstanding, this exhibit never had Èdó royal assent (cf. below), and behind Dr. Arese’s shiny *shakara* (cf. Aníkúlá.pò Kù.ti 1972) a financial time-bomb was ticking.¹⁴⁴ Gallery goers were fobbed off with flattering obfuscations (celphone image of gallery wall-text, transcribed below) about the items’ chain of custody:



Display detail, Benin Kingdom Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 27 September 2013. Text transcribed below. Presumptive author: Dr. C. Geary, Teel Senior Curator of African & Oceanic Art. Photo: F. Ekhatọ.

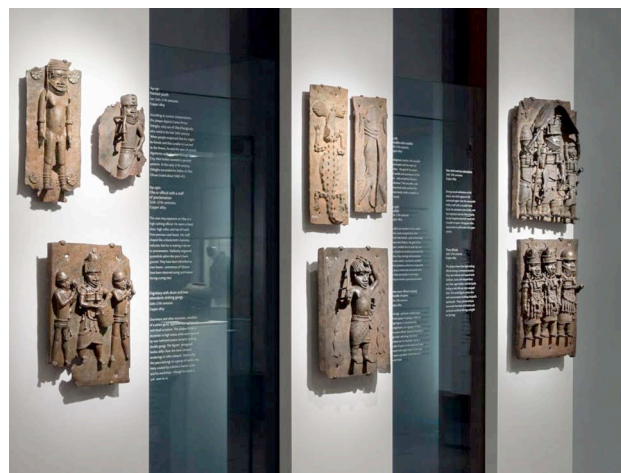
144 MFA Boston to Rescind Promised Gift of Benin Bronzes, Close Dedicated Gallery. *ARTnews*, New York, 22 April 2025, www.artnews.com/art-news/news/mfa-boston-to-rescind-promised-gift-of-benin-bronzes-close-dedicated-gallery-1234739559.

“...The objects in this gallery date from the 15th to the 19th centuries. They have long and complicated histories, most spanning more than 400 years. Owned by kings—thus sacred and kept in the royal palace in the kingdom’s capital, Benin City—they survived periods of flourishing and unrest. In the late 19th century, the kingdom came under British rule and, after a British military campaign in 1897, the objects were removed from the palace and dispersed. Now far away, yet still sacred and powerful, the works are the Benin kingdom’s legacy to the world—a testament to the power of its kings and the brilliance of its artists.”

Visually too, these 34 trafficked “hostages” are subjected to the customary fetishistic museum format whose “aesthetic anaesthetises the historic” (Wilson 1993, 3 cf. Kravagna 2008). A pirate tour of their Bostonian Guantánamo is viewable at this link: video.twimg.com/ext_tw_video/1821065561977081858/pu/vid/arc1/720x1168/9YLX3g89ZTWQRbkr.mp4.¹⁴⁵



www.facebook.com/mjaboston/photos/a.10151699724402321.1073741849.28314922320/10151699734862321



d1nn9x4jgzyv4.cloudfront.net/styles/1720x1290/s3/migration-slide-image/benin_gallery_3.jpg?itok=XPV/BIGFC

Months before showtime, Benin Club of Massachusetts—for decades the main Èdó *émigré* assembly in the region—offered to escort an MFA delegate to *Ọmọ n'Ọba* Erediauwa, just as in 2005 the MFA had in analogous circumstances obtained “representation” from the *Asantehene* of “Ashanti” Kingdom (cf. www.mfa.org/exhibitions/west-african-gold). This time around, the MFA ‘sent a letter to the *Ọba*’ (paraphrase of Dr. C. Geary *p.c.*, 30 May 2013) while Dr. Aresé’s local factotum Mr. Alex Ọmọregie formed a factional “Coalition of Committed Benin Organizatons” (MFA text above) sufficient to lull willing foreign gullibles with whiffs of ethnic legitimacy. Benin Club rejected this *mauvaise foi*, protested to the palace and boycotted the gallery gala—a classic spectacle of *divide et impera* that Frederick Lugard would have loved and that the Lagos press reported two days later under the trenchant headline “U.S. Museum Splits Benin Royal House”:

Last week, a “delegation” described by MFA as representatives of the Benin Monarch, Ọmọ N’Ọba N’Èdo Uku Akpolokpolo Erediauwa (CFR), were among the guests who witnessed the official opening of Benin Kingdom Gallery at the Boston museum. ...But last year, the Ọba of Benin responded to the Robert Owen-donation through a member of the Benin Royal house, Chief Irabor Frank, who stated via email: “The Ọba of Benin had said at many forums that the looting of the Benin palace by the British government in 1897 was premeditated. The Ọba had made his demand very clear that the stolen Benin artefacts should be returned.” Few days ago a brother of the Ọba, Prince Edun Akenzua claimed that he was not aware of the Benin delegation to the opening of the gallery in Boston. He explained in SMS: “The Ọba did not send any representative to the Boston museum event.” Akenzua noted that a claim that the Ọba sent a delegation “is spurious.” Akenzua, Enogie of Ọbazua, who said he was on holiday abroad as at the time of sending the SMS, disclosed that “the palace has categorically informed me that no representative was sent.” He noted that “some organisations (project) their events” through misrepresentation. He described the action of the so-called representatives of the Ọba as “wrong and reprehensible.” nrguardiannews.com/national-news/134176-us-museum-splits-benin-royal-house

Nine months after the MFA 4-1-9 gala, Adrian Mark Walker MD flew from England to Nigeria and restored to *Ọmọ n'Ọba* Erediauwa two copper-alloy casts (on red velvet tray, left image below, Otzen 2015) that had been robbed by his great-grandfather *Capt.* Herbert Walker, intelligence officer of the 1897 invasion force. At the handover on 20 June 2014 “*Ẹdó people came out in large numbers to show immense gratitude*” (Láyíwọlá 2014).¹⁴⁶ Coincidentally or not, “about a week” later the Nigerian National Museum in Lagos announced receipt from the MFA of eight assorted objects including one unidentified *Ẹdó*-style cast of undetermined quality (on hacked mattress foam, right image below, Šówọlé 2014).



Left: Edun Akenzua and Mark Walker at *Ẹ̀guae Ọba n'Ẹ̀dó*, 20 June 2014. Photo: Kelvin Ikpea/AFP (via Otzen 2015).
Right: National Commission for Museums & Monuments display, 26 June 2014 (*Guardian* [Lagos] via Šówọlé 2014).

The contrast between Dr. Walker's truth-and-reconciliation moment in the *Ẹ̀dó* palace and the MFA's arm's-length airdrop of charity cast-offs goes beyond fine points of antiquarian ethics to illustrate a stark choice between facing or falsifying the past. By volunteering a copy of his ancestor's personal diary from the 1897 raid, Dr. Walker furnished primary evidence that the British army theft of several thousand *Ẹ̀dó* palace icons was as intentional and official as the Nazi plunder of occupied Europe to which he explicitly compared it in his quoted remarks (Láyíwọlá 2014). The MFA on their part, by wafting expensive smoke around secretive, mediated and contested deals with some peripheral *Ẹ̀dó* palace personalities behind *Ọmọ n'Ọba*'s back (not to mention with Dr. Arese Carrington's local ethnic astroturf), only further mystified the chain of opaque transactions connecting Robert Owen Lehman's treasure horde with its African origins.

Already in 2009, the open-source approach advocated in vain by Benin Club to the MFA had been successfully applied by the Stockholm Ethnographic Museum. At the ribbon-cutting (photo below), *Ẹ̀daiken* (crown prince) Ehenḡeden Erediauwa—now *Ọmọ n'Ọba* Ẹ̀wúarè 2nd—was joined by his uncle *Ẹ̀nó.ḡie* (Duke) Edun Akenzua, the same person who would denounce the MFA in a newspaper interview four years later.



Photo: Tony Sandin (via Östberg ed. 2010, 7)

The Stockholm catalog, frankly entitled “Whose Objects?” (Östberg ed. 2010), gave its diverse contributors scope to debate the modern migrations of these overdetermined commodities, putting to shame the sweeping of this grubby history under the Oriental(ist) rug of the MFA's polished marble dais in 2013. In fact, much worse than grubby:

[A]n den Benin-Bronzen klebt regelrecht Blut. ...[M]it jedem Monat, mit jedem Tag sinkt die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass die Bronzen gezeigt werden können, ohne sich zu blamieren... (B. Savoy via Bohr & Knöfel 2021).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ State broadcast footage of this remarkable event was posted at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuTT1F6dQBQ.

¹⁴⁷ [[T]he Benin bronzes [sic] are undeniably stained with blood ...[W]ith every passing month and every passing day, it becomes harder to display these bronzes [in foreign galleries] without exposing one's own complicity...]

Such scruples are mocked by the neocon author of Bush's “axis of evil” slogan, a wealthy collector who maintains that “art cannot... redress grievances, salve shame, absolve guilt” on the grounds that Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* turned all African art into ‘Western’ intellectual property, and who sensationalises restitution pitfalls before parachuting in like the U.S. Marines to save the day: “I suggest a defense of the existing” (Frum 2022, cf. Tomasky 2018). Less self-serving would be the inverse option, to let the ‘West’ simulate Africa just as it simulates itself in prestige piles: “Ein Fake-Museum in einem Fake-Schloss, das würde Sinn machen” [A museum of fakes inside a fake castle—now *that* would make sense] (Savoy 2017).

2.8 Àwọn Fẹ̀lẹ̀-fẹ̀lẹ̀ Frobenius¹⁴⁸

Willett's Ifẹ in the History of West African Sculpture is organized around a patchwork system of working hypotheses which has evolved over time and become more or less ossified into 'fact' by virtue of constant repetition. ... Most research to date into the problems posed by the Nigerian bronzes can only be described as Yorùbá-centric, as if Ifẹ actually were the point of creation of the world. (Rubin 1970b, 353)

It is within the realm of the art critic to make subjective evaluations of works of art, and the Benin works lend themselves to this... What is not generally realised, however, is that these evaluations are subjective and should be used as such, not as established facts. (Eyò 1977, 146)

Sequelae of a nonsequitur

Egharheva's hint (§2.4 above) that the *Ìba* oracle came to Èdó from “Úhè” (Ilé-Ifẹ) was not a stray mistake. Also citing no evidence, he named Ifẹ as the source of the current Èdó ruling dynasty and of its workshop of commemorative cast bronze. In principle, the icon heritage claim could seek support in the archaeological record, but in practice, lacking any such data, the attribution has been entirely mortgaged on one mystery souvenir collected by a roughshod Prussian.

To crown his “charming little adventure” of 1910, Frobenius bribed and wheedled out of the custody of the custodian of Ifẹ's Olókun grove “a head of marvellous beauty, wonderfully cast in antique bronze, true to the [sic] life, incrustated with a patina of glorious dark green” (1913, 98). That and similar trophies hold high profiles today, not just as world-class commodities but also as boosters of local morale. Their burnished aura kindles precolonial nostalgia, soothes postcolonial blues and taunts “the poet's pen” to give them “a local habitation and a name” (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V scene i). One patriot confesses embarrassment “that the Ifẹs of today are not as important in the work of art or carving or of war... as their great grandfathers were...” (Adémákinwá 1958 vol. 1, 40f.) and as if to compensate, Ifẹ authorship of the bronzes is proclaimed in history books, though hedged with customary academic adverbs:

The classical period in Ilé-Ifẹ: classical and awe inspiring *is thought to* have lasted from the 11th to the 15th centuries AD, though terracotta sculpture *is probably* much older and *may have* commenced in the 7th century, *within or outside* the precincts of the Ilé-Ifẹ. When the technology of the lost wax process came to Ilé-Ifẹ from the north *as it was assumed*, the highly developed art of sculpting in clay was translated into copper alloy casting. Although the technique was introduced from the north, that the art itself is Ilé-Ifẹ's art *is incontrovertible*. (Ogúnymí 2010, 1f., italics added)

However, for better or worse the only tangible historical reference to cuprous casting in premodern Ilé-Ifẹ had to be inferred from two oblique sentences in one precocious pamphlet—Egharheva's *Short History of Benin*.

Ọba Ogùṣṣa wished to introduce brass-casting into Benin so as to produce works of art similar to those which had been sent to him from Ifẹ. He therefore requested the *Ọghè nẹ* of Uhè [in later editions: *Ọṣi* of Ifẹ] for a brass smith and Igue-igha [in later editions: *Iguegha*] was sent to him. (1953, 12)¹⁴⁹

On this slender thread—double or so the infamous sixteen words with which U.S. neocons hawked their invasion of Iraq—hangs the weight of modern curatorial consensus concerning the most freighted topic of Nigerian art history.¹⁵⁰

In fairness, Egharheva himself never explicitly wrote that copper alloy was ever cast in Ifẹ, but his skeletal hint was dressed up as an archaeological *egúngún* wrapped in a richly embroidered shroud of authority. His casual remark became more heavily cathected with each successive paraphrase down the decades:

A Benin tradition, for example, recounts that *Ọba* Ogùṣṣa sent to the *Ọṣi* of Ifẹ for a bronze-smith to instruct his people in the craft... As Ogùṣṣa seems to have reigned towards the end of the fourteenth century [fn 54], bronze-working must have been established at Ifẹ before that time. (Willett 1960, 245)

The naturalism of Ifẹ was transmitted, as we know from traditional evidence and could in any case deduce from stylistic comparison, to Benin... (Fagg & Plass 1966, 65)

There can be no doubt that the modern city of Ifẹ is on the site of Ilé-Ifẹ, despite the objections of Alan Ryder [fn 93] and that terracotta sculpture and *cire-perdue* castings were made there from early in the present millennium. (Willett 1971b, 367)

We know also that the great bronze founding industry of Benin was introduced from Ifẹ... (Fagg 1982a, 11)

From Kenneth Murray, founding director of Nigerian antiquities, his successor Bernard Fagg inherited a noble agenda to “dispose of the widely-held hypothesis that the Ifẹ-Benin complex [sic] owes its style and inspiration to origins outside West Africa” (1959, 293). Their high-minded defense of indigeneity takes off from two solid inferences:

- (i) “Some of the *terracotta* figures must be about four feet high” (Willett 1959, 137) so it's virtually certain that they were locally produced rather than being carried to Ifẹ across long distances.
- (ii) Some of the brass heads recovered in Ifẹ are stylistically so similar to some of the Ifẹ *terracottas* that direct cross-inspiration between the items in their respective media must have occurred at some time.

Murray however went further and stretched these reasonable strands into a tenuous conjecture:

These bronzes... are more akin to the sculpture of the [Italian] Renaissance than to the typical [sic] art of Africa. An extraordinary thing about them is their faultlessness of workmanship and their isolation as a style. None has been found at Ifẹ that suggests their evolution; there is nothing to show progress up to, or decline from, their perfection. ... Some people have thought that **they** were not made at Ifẹ, but were brought from elsewhere. ... The existence of the delicate *terracottas* in an identical style makes it unlikely that **they** could have been brought from far... (1941, 73, boldface added)

An identifiable logic lurks behind Murray's loose wording. If the “they” (boldfaced twice above) refers to “bronzes” that were not “brought from far”, then Murray must have assumed (iii) that the “bronzes” were modeled on the *terracottas* rather than the reverse. But why? Nobody disputes that, taken as a class, the *terracottas* of Nok are centuries older than the oldest Nigerian lost-wax casts, nor that “Nok culture flourished at about the beginning of the metal age”

¹⁴⁸ “The (lemming-like) followers of Frobenius” (cf. Aníkúlá.pò Kú.ti 1976).

¹⁴⁹ Meyerowitz writes “Ighè Igha” (1940, 129) citing Egharheva (1936b) in a 1937 printing inaccessible to me. Other spellings are also reported although some could be typos: “Igueghae” (Willett 1967a, 132) and “Iguehae” (Eyò 1977, 134; Lawal 2001, 524 [fn 73]). On the chemistry of *brass* and *bronze*—terms much muddled by historians—cf. Shaw (1970, 273-80), Herbert (1984, 94), Junge (2007).

¹⁵⁰ “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa” www.cnn.com/interactive/allpolitics/0307/bush.16.words/content2.html, cf. Wheeler (2007).

(Fagg 1959, 289) i.e. some 2500 years ago, when tin and iron were first mined and smelted in the vicinity (Bitiyong 1993, Chesi & Merzeder 2006, Breunig 2013, Breunig & Rupp 2016). However, the evident *generic* precedence of *terracotta* before *cire perdue* as existing techniques can't decide whether any *individual* example of clay art produced in Ifè either influenced, or was influenced by, any particular copper-alloy cast located there, no matter how neatly the two forms may visually match. To elide this elementary point and assume that only one sequence of media—from clay to metal—is possible for any and every perceptible sculptural influence in Ifè is to imagine absurdly and counterfactually that Ifè people instantly ceased baking *terracotta* the first day they set eyes on gleaming brass, as if ontogeny of form must recapitulate phylogeny of material. Such unilinear delusion perfectly illustrates the general fallacy of genre stereotypes:

[A]s long as the Nigerian art traditions are studied as *groups* without attention to any possible stylistic variations within the groups, *no matter how subtle*, possible intercultural influences between the various Nigerian art traditions will be difficult to ascertain or dismiss. (Adépegba 1983b, 31, original italics)

Willett restates Murray's leap more cautiously, but still never entertains the reverse sequence of events:

Kenneth Murray, writing in 1941, effectively demonstrated that Benin Bronzes were being made before the Portuguese arrived, and that the Ifè bronzes appeared to be ancestral to them. The identity of style between the bronzes and *terracottas* at Ifè, showed that they could not have been made far away. (Willett 1960, 239)

It would seem **very likely** that the art of Ifè developed in *terracotta* first. (The existence of the highly skilled *terracottas* of the Nok culture, now dated by radiocarbon to between 900 BC and AD 200, supports this idea.) The art was then transferred bodily, unchanged in detail and fully developed, into brass, so that it is to the *terracottas* that we must look for the origins of the art of Ifè. (Willett 1959, 137=1958, 33 without the "very", boldface added)

The naturalistic art style **probably** developed in *terracotta*. (Willett 1967b, 34, boldface added)

A trenchant early review of Willett's *magnum opus* did not fail to note the faulty, crucial reasoning:

[W]e cannot say whether Ifè naturalism originated in bronze or *terracotta*... we have at this point no even remotely adequate understanding of the relation between the bronzes and *terracottas* of Ifè... (Rubin 1970b, 351)

The Murray-Willett problem is how to get from premise (14a) to conclusion (14c) across an unsupported bridge (14b).

- (14)a. The Nigerian 'Iron Age' including tin and *terracotta* long preceded the Nigerian 'Bronze Age' of *cire perdue* casting.
- b. The "naturalistic" *terracottas* made in Ifè were the models for the "naturalistic" "bronze" heads (Willett 1959, 137).
- c. The "naturalistic" "bronze" heads found in Ifè "could not have been made far away" (Willett 1960, 239).

This syllogism being invalid on its face, some proof is still required that brass heads were made in the locality of Ifè as opposed to any other place in the Niger-Benue basin. *Alas!* "It was hoped that evidence of bronze casting might be discovered... but this aim was not achieved" (Willett 1960, 240). This admitted failure didn't stop generations of art historians from following Willett the pied piper down the primrose path of Ifè creationism where Frobenius first trod. Even Blier the critic, proudly nonconformist regarding *some* bits of the Ifè narrative, still affirms without evidence the conventionally claimed "autochthony (regardless of ethnic or lineage identity)" (2015, 233) of Ifè's copper alloy heads.

It's never too late to reverse a misstep and retrace a road not taken. Depending on who's counting, the complete tally of *cire perdue* pieces ever found in Ifè is either "21 bronze [sic] sculptures... from only three sites" (Éyò 1977, 114) or 27 (Dark 1960, 17) or "less than thirty" (Shaw 1981, 112) or maximally "[a]round 40" (Blier 2015, 93).¹⁵¹ Furthermore, none of these pieces was recovered in a primary setting, whereas some of the *terracottas* were indeed excavated *in situ* (Shaw 1981) with a potentially informative radiocarbon context. The oldest brass with a published TL date—a so-called *Qôni* figure from Ita Yemòwó (1365±70)—is nominally a century younger than the oldest dated Ifè *terracotta* (1275±80) and half a century younger than the oldest brass collected in Nupe: the large "seated figure" (1325±60) which on stylistic grounds "can be matched in detail in Ifè sculptures from the Iwinrin Grove" (Willett & Fleming 1976, 138f., cf. Eccles 162, 20f.). However, the age difference between the two media falls within the respective error bars, therefore as far as anybody knows, these brass and *terracotta* works were contemporaneous (cf. Lawal 1977, 202).



(Forman & Brentjes 1967, plates 3, 4, cf. Éyò 1977, 68, 70)

¹⁵¹ By comparison, the Igbo Ùkwu excavations yielded "a hundred major... and nearly 600 minor... leaded tin bronze[s] made by *cire perdue* casting and [items] of copper made by smithing and chasing" (Chikwendù & al. 1989, 29, cf. Shaw 1970a, 107, 295), and Èdó was despoiled in 1897 of "over 4000" locally produced copper alloy casts (Shaw 1970b, 80).

To get real about the matter: mere inspection can't say if the clay head *above right* (found in Igbó Iwínrin) inspired the lost-wax cast *above left* (found in Ilé Wunmonije) as Murray and Willett hastily assumed, or if the direction of influence was the reverse, from left to right, translating the formal inspiration from brass to clay.¹⁵² It's also not irrelevant to notice that the brasses recovered in Ifè are few enough that all of them could have been brought from Nupe or Igàlà as luxury goods, paid for with wealth from Ifè's Oló.kun grove, "the center of the great glass-making industry which had spread blue *sègè* beads across West Africa" (Willett 1960, 237, cf. Frobenius 1913, 100, Elúyemí 1976, 1987, Lankton & al. 2006, Babalolá 2015). If so, then the Ifè *terracottas* could, likelier than not, be low-budget local knockoffs of costly metal imports, though no less artistically accomplished for their greater economy and fragility.

Other clues support the brass-into-clay causation chain. (i) The absence of similarly "delicate" *terracottas* outside of Ifè in southwest Nigeria (Williams 1974, 209) is less expected under Murray's scenario proceeding from widely available clay to unique local metal, than it is with the inverse development of artistic influence, from scarce exotic metal to abundant local clay. (ii) A second observation also favors the latter sequence of events as far as Ifè is concerned:

Fragments of terracotta figures, some three-quarters life size, have been recovered from the Iwínrin grove and elsewhere at Ifè. It is obvious that the naturalism of the face is not repeated throughout the whole figure.
(Speed & Simmonds 1966, 1)

It would seem odd for original sculpture to be "naturalistic" just from the neck upwards, unless this discrepancy arose when clay sculptors copied body-less brass heads while lacking metallic models for the rest of the human figure.

Another way to save Willett's (14b), assuming Egharhevba's corollary that Ifè taught *cire perdue* to Èdó, is to identify some nonaccidental similarities of materials and techniques between the Ifè brass finds (no matter how few as they are) and the Èdó bronzes (numbered in the thousands), but the result is negative: "Ifè and Benin [Èdó] employed entirely different methods of the *cire-perdue* process" (Williams 1974, 208). This is so in two respects: (i) the Ifè brasses have pre-fired cores without internal armature, parallel to objects from the north and east in Nupe, to the Igbo Úkwu finds and to extant casting industries of the savanna, but not to any Èdó works (Williams 1967; 1974, 179-98; Seromi 1987, 56f., 64, 87).¹⁵³ (ii) The respective alloys used in the Ifè finds and Èdó productions show different isotopic ratios of lead, suggesting "separate sources" of metallic ore, a result which would be surprising—though not impossible—if Èdó's casting industry had arisen from Ifè tutelage (Goucher & al. 1978, 290).¹⁵⁴

Failing all objective tests, the lowest conceivable bar that Egharhevba's corollary of Frobenius could pass is to find some *subjective* resemblance between the Ifè brass finds and the *oldest* Èdó bronzes—if only an independent chronology of the Èdó cuprous corpus existed (spoiler: not yet). Such an exercise would of course be pointless, indeed intellectually abusive, if it amounted to merely casting an *a priori* eye across four thousand Èdó bronzes, most of which lack firm dates, to declare "oldest" just those which look most "naturalistic" or Ifè-like in some respect. Unfortunately, that's exactly the circular reasoning employed by Fagg and Willett, and this embarrassment did not escape critique:

For the last 36 years it has been common to accept the speculations in von Luschan's (1919) copious account of Benin Antiquities and those of his pupil, Struck (1923) on chronology, as providing an authentic version of Benin art history. Unfortunately, nearly all the numerous dates advanced by Struck lack any foundation in fact. The von Luschan and Struck chronology is based on formal differences between a number of heads and groups of figures. The 'Queen Mother' heads... are assigned to AD 1485 quite arbitrarily and the clay heads excavated at Ifè by Frobenius are assigned to the same period because the similarity between the two types is considered to be so great. ...The underlying assumption of theories of the development of Benin art is that the more naturalistic, less stylized and more finely cast specimens... are earlier than the more stylized less finely cast ones... because the art of casting bronze at Benin was learned from Ifè where there was a tradition of casting bronzes of outstanding naturalism and skill... (Dark 1960, 18)

By and large, since evidence of an Ifè stylistic influence has yet to be convincingly demonstrated, a new and *independent* chronology is needed for Benin art, and this should be structured on internal evidence, rather than on an assumed continuum of Ifè naturalism.
(Lawal 1977a, 199, italics added)

On second look, Murray's conjecture (14b) has all the plausibility of Tony Blair's "dodgy dossier" when "intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" to invade Iraq, evidence be damned.¹⁵⁵ Rather than explaining anything, it's Ifè exceptionalism—like Anglophone neoconservatism—that needs to be explained. When Nigeria's first official antiquarians set themselves to refute the despicable canard that "native" African artists lacked a flair for something called "naturalism"—the Victorian esthetic standard, which they maintained against the tide of 20th century European artists since Picasso (Cooper 1970, Martin 2006)—this well-intended mission of reputational rescue drove them to embrace the needlessly specific antithesis that "proves the African, *or more specifically Yorùbá*, origins of the art of Ifè" (Fagg 1959, 292, italics added). However, it's a nonsequitur to say that anything not distantly exotic must be immediately local. On the contrary, before "specifically Yorùbá... origins" can be taken as proved, other regional transmissions need to be considered and ruled out. Rubin gets the last laugh with his wisecrack quoted above, that Willett must have truly believed the *babaláwos'* pet cosmology to the effect that everything on earth originated in Ifè, *q.e.d.*

To save an Ifè origin for the metal heads at all costs, Willett's last resort was to lean on the external prop of Egharhevba's Whiggish tale of Ifè-to-Èdó transmission, read with blatant confirmation bias. The story endures, despite objections by other archaeologists, both (i) because it flatters a modern ethno-national agenda and also (ii) because no clear alternative has been articulated. Motivation (i) is irrelevant, and motivation (ii) can now be definitively dismissed because a literal reading of Egharhevba's account is falsified on etymological grounds (§2.9 below). In the intervening century however, a parade of eminences has lined up to defend the Ifè attribution by any means necessary.

¹⁵² A near-identical Wunmonije cast is dated 1490±85 (Willett & Fleming 1976, 137). To my knowledge, no Iwínrin *terracotta* has been TL-tested. Contextual C-14 determines only that a stylistically similar *terracotta* from Odò Ogbè is older by some unknown interval than 1630±95 (Eyò 1974, 106).

¹⁵³ Williams distinguishes the respective techniques as follows. An "admixture of large quantities of organic matter" is "characteristic in the preparation of clays for moulds and cores in the *cinquecento* method as today observed among the Yorùbá and at Benin" whereas "a low percentage of carbon remaining in the burnt contact area" is found in "core stuff from the Ifè *Lájàgido* bust" (1974, 189). The latter method, called "spiral" and pertaining to the Nupe (Jeba-Tada) and Ifè finds, stabilizes a "self-supporting" core by "admixture of pulverized charcoal... between the core mass and the mould" without resort to "the integral armature of the south" e.g. of Èdó (1974, 201, 189, cf. 232). Williams associates the spiral method to the Igbo Úkwu finds (1974, 211f) and Shaw had already remarked the *absence* of armature in one Igbo Úkwu cast: "no signs of iron pegs" (1970a, 186). Williams' iconoclastic *Icon & Image* (1974) received prompt appreciation in France (Paulme 1976) but Anglophone acknowledgement was long delayed (Gore & Picton 2010).

¹⁵⁴ Willett & Sayre reach the opposite conclusion from different assays of different objects in a different lab (2006, 77), but lacking the opportunity to "calculate a correction factor" they chose to "exclude [Goucher's] data from our statistical analysis" (2006, 56).

¹⁵⁵ M. Rycroft, 23 July 2002: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downing_Street_memo, www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article387374.ece.

Leo *oní-original-tòkunbò*¹⁵⁶

Frobenius' travelogue of "Inner Africa" is rightly reviled because of its imperially deranged, proto-Nazi quest for "a race, far superior in strain to the negro" and its toxic rants about "the dreary moral waste of the black man's soul" (1913, 88f., 106, cf. Frobenius & Freytag-Loringhoven 1917).¹⁵⁷ But it's only fair to admit that the same unpalatable book, penned by such "a despicable character" (Fabian 1998, 86), is the key source of current ethnic group-think about Ifẹ prehistory.

One sculpture, unveiled by Frobenius as "the Oló.kun, Atlantic Africa's Poseidon" (1913, 98, photo facing 308, cf. 1926 photo facing *xv*) furnished the eventual logo of Yorùbá exceptionalism and is emblazoned today—in lieu of an image of Odùduwà, the image-less legendary Ifẹ ancestor—on the crests of the University of Ifẹ, the Oòduà People's Congress vigilante corps and the Ifẹ royal Yorùbá Parapò Cultural Carnival among many other ethnic enterprises.¹⁵⁸ After three decades of reification, the "father of the museum movement in Nigeria" gave government blessing to the adventurer's guess that this metal head represents "Oló.kun the sea goddess, mother of Ọ̀bàlùfòn the second Ọ̀nì, or king, of Ifẹ" (Murray 1941, 72, cf. Bascom 1939, James 1994). Subsequent curators were loath to admit that the icon's chain of custody got lost in Ifẹ's "broken... continuity both of traditions and practices" and that the only empirical basis for the "Orí Oló.kun" tag is effectively a sleight-of-phrase: the piece is literally an *orí* (head) which "appears to have been dug up in the Oló.kun Grove during the second half of the 19th century" (Willett 1960, 234, 237). Frobenius himself didn't hide that Ifẹ's recovered treasures are opportunistically "christened" (1913, 286), musing guilelessly about the "Oló.kun... head in particular named 'Mia' by the natives (why I do not know)" (1913, 313).¹⁵⁹

The first professional description of this item obtained a different identification from a different oral source:

The beautiful and well-known so-called Oló.kun head, which Leo Frobenius has frequently shown in illustrations, is, judging by the head ornaments, according to information given by the Ọ̀nì of Ifẹ, the portrait of a Yorùbá aristocratic lady and not of a god. (Sydov 1938, 59 *fn.* 1)

Not only is the sculpture "ambiguous" in gender (Willett 1960, 241 *fn.* 42), so is its alleged supernatural referent. Yorùbá Oló.kun is male in one paraphrased *Ifá* story (Frobenius 1913, 238-40) but female in most other accounts: "Oló.kun... was the consort of Odùduwà, the twain thus seen as primogenitors [sic] of the Yorùbá" (Şoyínká 2006, 224) or she was "the rich Ifẹ bead trader of Odùduwà's generation" (Akintoyè 2010, 187). In the latter tale, childless Oló.kun flaunted her wealth so as to shade her co-wife Ọ̀sààrà—"a poor woman but blessed with many children"—but the materialistic "power show" (Aníkúlápò Kú.tí 1981) was overwhelmed by "wealth in people" (Guyer 1995) namely

Ọ̀sààrà with her children and children's children with their friends and well-wishers and the usual crowd of inquisitive onlookers who could not be controlled or prevented from trampling on the gems, the jewels, the dresses and all the other costly articles put on show by Oló.kun who, it is related, very quickly took her leave of the unruly crowd and, from that time, 'never smiled again'. (Fábùnmí 1969, 4f.)

In Èdó by contrast, Ọ̀lókún—HH!H as it's pronounced there—is no barren loser but rather a bestower of children (Weltón 1968). The ubiquitous Èdó clay statues of Ọ̀lókún are all anatomically male. Yorùbá-centrism led Beier to call Ọ̀lókún female on five pages (1956b, 280, 282, 286, 291, 294) and male on only one (284). "Ọ̀lókún, here definitely a goddess" goes the caption of one sculpture in "Osonigbe" [Urhonigbe] (1956b, 291) although the photo doesn't seem "definite" at all. The mistake is common—Nevadomsky confirms that Èdó "Ọ̀lókún is sometimes confused with Mámí Wátá and described as female" (1993, 25, cf. Jell-Bahlsen 2008)—and Beier's second draft silently corrects the caption of the same photo as male, adding that Èdó representation of "Ọ̀lókún as a female deity, a kind of great mother" is limited to just one "far from conventional" sculpture in a "more modern shrine" created by an idiosyncratic female sculptor who was "influenced by Western ideas and Christianity" (Beier 1963a, 38, 60f.). Beier speculates that the female gender of *Oló.kun* in modern Ifẹ may be innovative, caused by *Oló.kun*'s relegation as a "suppressed divinity" or "conquered deity" after Oòduà overthrew the *ancien régime* (1956b, 295, 1963a, 62, cf. Ọ̀báyemí 1992).¹⁶⁰ In fairness, gender-fluid supernaturals are not rare, and in coastal Ijẹ̀bù, where "Àgbó or Mágbo" is the name of a mask that "perform[s] to honor Oló.kun", "Àgbó masks... have male and female aspects" (Lawal 1996, 66).

Setting aside where "Orí Oló.kun" was actually made and who it was originally intended to depict, another mystery is the current location of the artefact itself. Frobenius boasted of capturing the prize after hard haggling and a token dash of "six pounds, a bottle of whiskey and a few other trifles" while still plotting to substitute "a fresh copy... made at the tinsmith's"—justifying this trickery by the "utmost importance to obtain the type and material of a more ancient epoch for comparison with the bronzes from Benin" (1913, 99).¹⁶¹ When the counterfeiting ruse apparently flopped, the cash (without the whiskey) was refunded under duress of minatory visitation by the District Commissioner from colonial headquarters in Oşogbo (1913, 112).¹⁶² A persistent rumor that the item presently held in the palace is Frobenius' ersatz

¹⁵⁶ 'Leo, trafficker of genuine imports'. The phrase *original tòkunbò* was coined by sellers of automotive spares after the IMF currency collapse and flood of shoddy counterfeits. Guyer writes "*tòkunbò*" [LHL] (2004, 91) but the durative H-tone prefix of *-bò* doesn't occur in nominals (Abraham 1958, 113, Bámgbòsé 1966a, 75). Fabian describes the context of ethnographic "commodification" (1998, 88) while Apter reads Frobenius' refashioning of Ifẹ myths as an "affective" gloss on Yorùbá "poetics of displacement" (2022, 121f.).

¹⁵⁷ *Ad infinitum*: "Oh Europeans, my dear Europeans, do all the good you can to these black 'children', bring them everything you possibly can, give them work and gladness, fortune and freedom, but never, never forget to bring the whip!" (1913, 130). The British also received the wrath of "me, who was greatly respected in the German colony [Togo]... had not been held in honor in the English colony... where we pursued our scientific studies with all our might and by spending our good German money!" (1913, 132f.).

¹⁵⁸ www.oauife.edu.ng_oouapeoplescongress.org, www.afeniferereneval.org, www.newswatchnigeria.com/ooni-unveils-yoruba-parapo-cultural-carnival-logo, also now "the monument to Zumbi dos Palmares in Brazil... Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 11.20.2022" (www.shutterstock.com/it/image-photo/black-movement-woman-take-part-celebration-232265157, image reprinted at www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/20/brazil-black-consciousness-day). On the haplogogy *Odùduwà*→*Oòduà*, see Abímboḷá & Oyèlárán (1975).

¹⁵⁹ Let's guess now that this "Mia" truncates Ọ̀rànmíyàn alias Ọ̀rànhíyàn, said to be "the youngest of Oòduà's sons" (Fábùnmí 1969, 15).

¹⁶⁰ Even Odùduwà/Oòduà is ambiguous (Epègà 1931, Ìdòwú 1963, 27, Ọ̀báyemí 1992, 65), described as male in Ifẹ (Fábùnmí 1969, 3) but elsewhere as "the wife of Ọ̀bátálá... this union is symbolised by two whitened calabashes closely fitting on top of each other" (Abraham 1958, 451, cf. Crowther 1852, 207, Ellis 1894, 41), as "*Iya Agbè* i.e. 'Mother of the... closed calabash'" (Farrow 1926, 45) and "*Iya Agbà*, la mère qui reçoit" [the welcoming mother] (Baudin 1884, 11). Upon hearing in Ifẹ that "Odùduwà is a female deity, an earth goddess in fact", Beier surmised Bachofen-like "that early Yorùbá society was matriarchal" (1955, 20f., cf. Belasco 1980, 97f.). Verger was less gullible: hearing female Odùduwà concepts in the Gùngbè towns of Xàgbónù ["Porto Novo"] and Wémé ["Dagbè"], he warned of missionary "confusion" over mythic sex-assignment and invoked Lévi-Straussian ideas of *Odùduwà*: Ọ̀bátálá :: earth : sky and *Odùduwà*: Oló.kun :: earth : water (1957, 448-64, cf. Baudin 1884, 12; Cabrera 1954a, 441). Classificatory "untidiness" in the "overlapping and inconsistency of Yorùbá spiritual beings" (Barber 1990, 313) is supported by an *oríkì* from Bainingbe near Xàgbónù: Ọ̀kọ ni Oòduà, aya ni Oòduà 'Oòduà is both husband and wife' (Verger 1957, 487, cf. Augé 1982, 128 citing Vernant 1965).

¹⁶¹ The intrigue is plausible, given Frobenius' admission that a stone carving removed from Ifẹ was substituted with a "copy made by [artist and fellow expeditionary] Carl Arriens" (1913, 119, cf. x). One antiquity removed from Ifẹ is the *terracotta* photographed in Canada in 1968 in possession of Frobenius' expedition engineer Albrecht Martius (Abíódún 2014, 207f.).

¹⁶² With better grace, Bascom reversed his "unauthorized export" of two brass heads "smuggled" from Ifẹ in 1938 (Tignor 1990, 429f.).

cast (Fagg & Underwood 1949) has been downplayed “on the balance of evidence” from exhaustive forensic tests, but even so the scandalous possibility of counterfeit “cannot be entirely excluded” (Craddock & al. 2013, cf. Barley 2010, 3).

To sustain the belief that this elegant antique was indigenous to Ifẹ, it’s convenient to describe the town’s modern squalor as a fall from former magnificence. As a matter of record, Ifẹ did suffer “desecration” in 1886 at the hands of neighboring Ọ̀dákẹ̀kẹ̀ and remained “deserted until 1894” (Akínjógbin 1992, 159). 16 years later, when Frobenius cried out “Poor Ọ̀nì! Poor palace! How are the mighty fallen!” (1913, 277), his outpouring of pity slid down a slippery slope and led our hero and his disciples to espouse the much repeated, Romantic-fantastist trope of civilizational collapse:

Yorùbá culture belongs to antiquity by virtue of its inherent “style”. The slave traffic of Mediævalism, modern industrial conditions and the foreign rule of today have, beyond question, distorted, transformed and ruined it. Yet we need not first delve a few yards beneath the soil and dig up terracotta to see from their features after such long concealment that these have an austere severity, a “beautiful” style, which is a certain index of their antiquity. (Frobenius 1913, 95, 337)

Gegenwärtig ist die alte Kunst von Yorùbá auf ein sehr tiefes Niveau herabgesunken...¹⁶³ (Luschan 1919, 511)

The visitor to the ramshackle and noisome cocoa town of today could have no inkling, save within its museum, of the store which its people once placed on preeminence in every field. (Fagg 1982b, 27)

To prove Yorùbá exceptionality compared to its “negro” neighbors, Frobenius cited three material traits—hunting bow, architectural impluvium, certain styles of hand loom—that struck him as being less tropical than Mediterranean, assuming that these features were transmitted by assumed Phoenician coastal trade (1913, 326-33, 345). This “Atlantic” hypothesis, long faded as a serious proposition, lives on as the memorable idea of Yorùbá exceptionality itself. Of course there may be excellent reasons to perceive Yorùbá as unusual in the broad region in any number of respects, without needing to derive these special qualities from a primordial pedigree. Genuine novelty can, and does, emerge in time.

Thus Frobenius forcibly refashioned a beautiful brass artwork into a rhetorical brass knuckle—an item which has proved handy in modern Ọ̀ja’s *ròfò-ròfò* [rumble](#) of vain and dangerous ethno-national myths (cf. also Manfredi 2023).

The Yorùbá disposition is absolutely different from that of the so-called “negro” nations. ...The soul of this people appeals to us as being so originally un-African... (Frobenius 1913, 146, 319)

The Yorùbá is a fine race, and in some respects—such as ease of control, and perhaps physique—it is better than the Ìgbo; but were I to need carriers or workmen for specially trying work requiring resource and self-reliance, and had to take men of one race only, I should choose Ìgbo before Yorùbas... (Kitson 1913, 38)

Under a system which aims at getting all the peoples in the country to the goal of autonomy at the same hour and minute, the Yorùbas have been compelled to mark time on their higher level while the other sections catch up with them. (Awóló. wò 1947, 49, cf. Dudley 1978, 206)

It would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ìgbo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the Ages. (Àzịkàíwè 1949, cited by Coleman 1958, 347)

William Fagg, *post Nok ergo propter Nok*¹⁶⁴

*In the attempt to extend the timescale of Benin art from the forged antiquities of the present day backward through Ifẹ art—whose directly ancestral status may be accepted as adequately established [sic] in art history—to the earliest times, the Nok culture of the central area of Nigeria is now presented as the only candidate at present available for the ancestry of Ifẹ art—though whether the ancestry is direct or collateral remains to be seen. Yorùbá kingship, even though the Benin monarchy was derived [sic] from it, is **very different** from it.* (Fagg 1970, 45, 49, boldface added)

In form if not in substance, Frobenius’ remote Mediterranean pedigree for a racialized Yorùbá “soul” matches the Ifẹ belief that “*Oòduà rò nì, o—Oòduà only descended*” (Fábùnmi 1969, 4). Whether original Yorùbáness was implanted in Nigeria by Semitic traders navigating “the Atlantic Ocean’s shores” (Frobenius 1913, 321) or by sixteen sequential elders belaying from above, both flavors of cultural exoticism share key historiographic traits: they are (i) monocausal, (ii) immune to counterevidence and (iii) uninterested in influences from Igàlá, Nupe and adjacent populations in the diverse multicultural zone west of the confluence, known collectively as *Kákánda* (Ọ̀báyẹ̀mí 1980, 1983). The same three boxes are ticked by the British Museum pamphlet text (above), with one modest difference: for William Fagg, the source of the Ifẹ mystique is neither ancient Carthage nor airy *òrun*, instead it’s the early iron-age culture baptized “Nok” by Bill’s *àbúrò* Bernard after the tin-miners’ town of the central plateau in whose vicinity he collected and excavated fine figurative *terracottas* (Fagg 1959). Note however that “Nok” includes much of Northern Nigeria, because similar fired clay icons have been found as far as 400 km further north, in Katsina and Sókoto (Chesi & Merzeder 2006, 104-19).

Invoking “Nok” “ancestry” enabled W. Fagg to bring mystique of “Ifẹ art” out of the Frobenian sea and down from the Odùduwàn sky onto dry land—but not yet within empirical reach.¹⁶⁵ It’s not widely accepted that either “Nok” or Èdó sculpture shows particular resemblance to the so-called Ifẹ style (Fagg 1959, 292f., Lawal 1977a, 205 replying Willett 1967a, 110-17, 125) and this negative evaluation is no surprise. When Fagg wrote, it was commonly believed that “Nok” ironsmelting and *terracotta* happened 2500-1700 years ago, but new radiocarbon and thermoluminescence data push back its “disparition” (*terminus ante quem*) by about three centuries (Franke 2016, Höhn & Neumann 2016, cf. Boullier & al. 2002, 12, 27). Willett (1986) already accepted that one millennium between “Nok” and “Ifẹ” dilutes the concept of ancestry to insignificance, so how much moreso if as it now seems, the time gap was 30% longer? At best, “Nok” represents a breakthrough savanna culture of broad regional significance, but it’s illusory to consider “Nok” as either a “direct or collateral” source for any artistic or techical traits of the Ifẹ finds, save perhaps for their generically non-Mediterranean Westafricanity. The respective contexts share little else. For example, unlike the really existing Ilẹ-Ifẹ, the “Nok” excavations disclose no hint of “social hierarchies or...other signs of inequality” (Breunig & Rupp 2016, 251f.). Even Willett eventually conceded the point: twenty years worth of Nigerian radiocarbon and thermoluminescence data allowed him to announce that “the chronological gap between Nok and Ifẹ has been spanned” (1986, 93) but the corresponding visual evidence failed to support Fagg’s armchair idea:

¹⁶³ [Presently the old art of Yorùbá has declined to a very low level...]

¹⁶⁴ Not to be confounded with the “post-Nok” successor culture of the past two millennia with “complete absence of Nok sculptures” and “marked difference in pottery” (Breunig & Rupp 2016, 244 citing Beck 2015, Franke 2015).

¹⁶⁵ Another thing Fagg retained from Frobenius is disdain for modern locals, e.g. his gratuitous sneer at “forged antiquities” (quoted above) and his scurrilous denial that the British firebombing and looting of Èdó in 1897 amounted to a “sack” (1981), even gloating that British burning of the Èdó capital was not so bad, since “all the houses up to roof level were of course made of mud and were doubtless all the better [sic] for a superficial firing along the top edges” (1981, 20). Èyò (1997) rebuked this odious provocation.

There is however no clear general stylistic link for this period. ...Precisely what the relationship is between the Nok and the Ifẹ traditions remains obscure. Did one somehow lead to the other, thanks to the migration of people? Or do they both draw on a much wider common tradition? (1986, 94, 99)

Equally implausible is Fagg's belief in "directly ancestral" Ifẹ tutelage of Èdó *cire perdue* techniques. Egharhevba's legend to this effect was grafted by Underwood (1949) onto a subjective chronology of Èdó bronzes originally proposed by Luschan (1919) and Struck (1923) based on an unsubstantiated principle of esthetic evolution: the irreversible decline of stylistic "naturalism" and technical skill from an assumed primordial golden age (cf. Eisenhofer 1997).¹⁶⁶ Frobenius had already introduced this the capital-R Romantic "model of a decaying artistic expression" (Junge 2007, 195), opining that "The most beautiful specimens of craftsmanship must have undoubtedly been the oldest" (1913, 95). W. Fagg then spliced these strands of untethered evolutionary opinion into one omniscient narrative, whose disconnection from empirical support is matched only by its sonorous rhetoric of self-assurance:

It is at Benin that we can best discern the aftermath of the Ifẹ school of sculpture...

Of the many bronze heads in the extant corpus of Benin work, one type is by common consent the earliest: namely, the very thin heads of generally naturalistic form... Some informants at Benin have declared that these are the heads brought from Ifẹ before Oḡuḡla's time, but these reports may be discounted because more or less subtle stylistic differences are not among the details that an ancient oral tradition is likely to preserve. It is far more likely, from a close study of their iconography, that they are from the first two centuries of Bini casting, which terminate with the period of first European contact in the late 15th century. What is very clear is, on the one hand, that the realistic subtlety of their modelling can derive only from the Ifẹ tradition, and, on the other, that stylization of a somewhat superficial kind is already well advanced as compared with the more idealized heads of Ifẹ...

In the late 16th century the gradually changing artistic tradition seems to have undergone a major reorientation... Perhaps the most striking development was a great increase in the number and variety of the bronze castings... and above all the great series of several hundred wall plaques... which were to adorn the mud pillars and pilasters of the palace courts for the next century and a half, until they were torn down by a later Oba and stacked in an outhouse to wait another 150 years for the British expedition. ...

In the great middle period, so extraordinarily prolific of imposing if seldom masterly bronzes, Benin art stood at a kind of climacteric. The Ifẹ aesthetic had run down for lack of appreciation and nourishment; its aftermath and the philistine influence of a partly alien materialism were in an equilibrium which made possible the production of works whose most admirable quality was restraint. Only by hindsight do we discern in this period the seeds of decay... In the event, artistic discipline gave way and a flamboyant decadence set in. (1958, 62, 64-65; cf. 1963)

The art of Ifẹ was more naturalistic than that of Benin, but the Early Period at Benin is the most naturalistic, and is not very far short of the naturalism of Ifẹ except that some features such as the ears have become schematic. (1970, 43)

To be minimally credible, the hybrid Underwood-Fagg conjecture would need to cite more than a mere impression of "naturalism" and point to some observable fact directly linking the hypothetically "early" Èdó casts with their equally hypothetical "Ifẹ" antedecents. Fagg recognized this necessity and proposed two such elements:

According to Benin oral history, it was in Oba Oḡuḡla's time, perhaps in the 13th or 14th century, that a request was sent to the Oḡni of Ifẹ for a master bronze-caster to be sent to Benin to teach the Benin craftsmen how to cast bronze heads, which according to the story had till then been made at Ifẹ for the Obas of Benin. ...Confirmation of this story is found especially from two sources: first, one small figure found at Benin which is undoubtedly in the Ifẹ style (although it may have been made perhaps by Iguegha at Benin); and, secondly, from recent excavations by Prof. Frank Willett at the place called Oṛun Oba Adó at Ifẹ, where heads of Obas of Benin were traditionally buried. A small piece of Benin bronze work was found in these excavations, but, more important, the excavations were found to relate in their lower levels to a period about AD 1000-1200 (and indeed one radiocarbon date related to a period about AD 600). (Fagg 1970, 43)

However, neither of these suggestions withstands scrutiny.

Fagg's first suggestion is inconclusive: Egharhevba had indeed urged Fagg to identify the "small figure" as an image cast by "Igue-Igha" for Omo n'Oba Èwúarè and to accept it as "one of the missing links between the style of the Ifẹ heads (probably all belonging to a single period) and the greater stylization of the Benin heads" (Fagg 1950, 70), but Éyò reasonably objects that "interchange of works between Ifẹ and Benin may only reflect contact and may not necessarily mean that one was derived from the other" (1977, 136, cf. Bitiyong 1993).¹⁶⁷

Fagg's second point is factually wrong: Willett never reported "[a] small piece of Benin bronze" from Oṛun Oba Adó, but only "seven brass castings" with no mention of Èdó origin (1971b, 366; 1971a, 28). Radiocarbon of AD 1060±130 and 1150±200, obtained by Willett "from a layer containing terracotta sculptures" at the same Ifẹ site, may disfavor "the possibility that Ifẹ and its ruling dynasty may have moved to the present site since the 16th century" (Ryder 1965, 36), but such dates are wrongly "taken by Willett as confirming the antiquity of the Ifẹ/Benin connection" (Shaw 1973, 233), rather than are only interpretable as such by already assuming what is to be proved, namely that there exists an empirical observation for which a plausible chronology can be supplied. Absent any such, chronological speculation is moot.

Worse news still is the failure of the Luschan-Struck conjecture—on which Fagg and Willett rely that freestanding Èdó heads are older than the less "naturalistic" Èdó palace plaques. Precisely the opposite conclusion was reached by Williams (1974, 149-78) already on stylistic grounds, and his subjective impression is confirmed by the most detailed thermoluminescence measurements currently available. This summary tabulation of Goedicke & Henschel's (1993) data shows at first approximation that, across a sample of 36 objects from the palace loot, the plaques, whether calibrated as a cluster or individually, are centuries *older* than the "naturalistic" heads:

	"plaques" n=19	"figures" n=2	"groups" n=3	other n=4	"heads" n=8	total n=36
mean TL date	AD 1583 SD=67 years	AD 1591 SD=67 years	AD 1674 SD=33 years	AD 1731 SD=145 years	AD 1752 SD=84 years	AD 1645 SD=111 years

¹⁶⁶ Austrian von Luschan was more famous for another typology of stolen heads: 300 crania confiscated to Berlin from victims of the German genocide of the Herero in 1904-07—some of the relics being sold onward to New York (Gross 2018, cf. Schaller 2008). Luschan held that "the only 'savages' in Africa are certain white men with 'Tropenkoller' [tropical delirium/culture shock]" (1911, 22), where the latter term "first appeared around 1895 in Berlin dialect as a mocking designation for the 'pathological irritability' (*krankhafte Reizbarkeit*) of European officers and officials in tropical colonies" (Besser 2003, 304, citing Ladendorf 1906, 315f). On the other hand, the same aristocratic Luschan callously endorsed apartheid, opining that "*racial barriers will never cease to exist, and if ever they should show a tendency to disappear, it will certainly be better to preserve than to obliterate them*" (1911, 23, original italics).

¹⁶⁷ This example of modern feedback into archaeological data is not isolated. As Shaw drily notes, "most of the ascriptions" of Benin Museum catalog labels used to identify Èdó copper-alloy casts are "probably attributable to Chief J.U. Eghar[h]evba" (1969, 94).

In finer detail, the picture is only starker. Goedicke & Henschel's TL the firing of the earliest plaque (IIC 27506) is assigned to *annodomini* 1508, whereas two of the "naturalistic" heads (IIC 7658, 8170) calibrate to multiple centuries later: 1729 and 1859 respectively. Moreover, Riederer & Forkl infer from chemical analysis that the so-called *Iyoba* and *Ọba* "naturalistic" heads now held in Stuttgart "are made from a type of brass which did not yet exist in Benin by the time the plaques were produced" (2003, 231).

All these forensic indications prove just the opposite of what Luschan and Struck believed, and what Underwood and Fagg *needed* to believe to save Ifẹ tutelage of Èdó. Compared to these hard facts, Fagg's flights of fancy are self-parody:

As the [self-described] umbilicus of the world, Ifẹ acquired over the centuries a religious organization hardly less elaborate than its political structure... and it would not be surprising if the exercise of spiritual and temporal power on such a scale tended in some sense to corrupt, by fostering among the priests and chiefs a worldly cynicism and materialism such as we know to have developed in Egypt and Greece... In the case of the art of Ifẹ, I have suggested a correlation between its worldly naturalism and a (hypothetical) tendency to cynical materialism in the higher levels of the hierarchy. A similar explanation seems to me valid for the Benin court style, and is of course more readily open to verification; the seed may, is reasonable to suppose, have been transplanted from Ifẹ at the time of the original cultural-political penetration. ...[T]he great corpus of some thousands of bronze and other antiquities, surviving from the past 500 years of Benin history... can be read almost like a book... [T]hese Benin antiquities are so clear in their broad historical implications that they are destined to provide the armature on which we shall eventually erect the art history of this part of Africa. ...Of the late period of Benin bronze art much less needs to be said, for it follows almost inexorably, from what has already been said, in the completion of a cycle of decay... until the overpowering impact of western technology topples the art into a decline which is final and short enough of term. (1963, 20, 26, 36f.)¹⁶⁸

Another missing link in Fagg's linear theory deriving "Ifẹ" art from "Nok" is some reason to exclude from the transmission chain any geographically intermediate locales such as Nupe that have yielded stylistically similar casts. Why must Nupe be derivative of Ifẹ rather than the other way around? Standard literature settles the point unhelpfully by fiat:

The seated bronze figure at Tada... belongs *undoubtedly* to the Ifẹ school... the extraordinary seated bronze figure of Tada, which is about two-thirds of life size and *certainly* of Ifẹ manufacture... [T]he human and animal figures of Jebba and Tada, on the middle Niger in Nupe country... are said to have been brought thither from Idá ["Idah"] on the lower Niger early in the 16th century by the culture hero Tsoede, who deposited them as sanctions of chieftainship at a number of Nupe villages. Since these include the four largest bronzes ever found in Africa, the possibility must obviously be considered that Idah was once a great center of bronzecasting, but research there has so far failed to confirm this. One of them, the most famous, is *certainly* by an Ifẹ master (and this incomparable seated figure greatly extends our appreciation of the Ifẹ style)... (Fagg 1963, 16, 27, 40, italics added)

[T]he finest Ifẹ bronze work so far known, the seated figure of Tada... has reposed on the banks of the Niger in Nupe country for five centuries or more. (Fagg 1970, 43)

That the seated Tada bronze is of Ifẹ manufacture seems *beyond doubt*. (Fraser 1975, 34, italics added)

Preconceptions aside, technical similarities between clay cores of copper-alloy items collected from Ifẹ and Nupe group them apart from the Èdó casts (Slater & Willett 1988, cf. Ryder 1965, Williams 1974, Lawal 1977a, Ọbáyemí 1979a, Thornton 1988). Of course this difference does not clarify whether Nupe and Ifẹ icons are the output of one workshop or several independent ones, because no trace of a *cire perdue* workshop has been found in either place. Given the small numbers of objects in play, and their close formal and material resemblances, a common source is the most economical explanation, but even so it remains unknown whether this inferred, reconstructed source was closer to Nupe than to Ifẹ, or whether both sets of finds arrived from some third location still to be identified.

In a fact-free environment, speculation freely roams. To Dark, the Nupe sites at "Tada and Jebba seem to be a meeting point of the Ifẹ and Benin [Èdó] styles" (1960, 27 *fn* 41), but even if this impression of intermediate status translates into a list of observable traits, such an outcome could have resulted from several alternative transmission paths, depending on unknown factors especially whether any of the few objects in consideration were actually cast at Ifẹ or Nupe at all. Other scenarios appear in the art history literature, none impossible *a priori*, but all obtaining their explanatory force from implausible and/or invisible events. Lawal imagines that imaginary Ifẹ brass artists had understudied "a rich casting tradition" that existed in Ọyọ before all "traces" of casting were "carefully" eliminated in both places—like a bank robber erasing the fingerprints of a perfect crime?—then a few years later he referred to a different folkloric plot that's even more entertaining but no less conspiratorial:

No relic of brass-casting has yet been found in the ruins of Ọyọ-Ilé; it is possible that not enough research has been carried on there. ...The strategic location of Ọyọ-Ilé on or near a major caravan must have afforded her an ample supply of raw materials^[FN] as evidenced [sic] by both the Tsoede and Lower-Niger complexes. ...If the story that the seat of government was transferred from Ifẹ to Ọyọ-Ilé be correct^[FN], it might imply that the erstwhile Ifẹ royal brass casters were also transferred. Perhaps this is why brass-casting has not survived at Ifẹ as at Benin; nor can traces of past working be now found there, if all the implements had been carefully transported.^[FN] (1971, 156f.)

One of the most baffling things about Ifẹ art is the conspicuous absence of any living trace in present day Ifẹ of the artistic tradition which produced these famous bronze and terracotta sculptures. The only explanation we have at present for this phenomenon is the story which tells of a mass slaughter of artists and sculptors at some point in the distant past, because they had conspired with some courtiers to keep the news of the death of a certain well-loved *Ọni* from the public. The bronze-casters had made an effigy of the deceased *Ọni* and placed it on the throne, and to this effigy the unsuspecting chiefs and other members of the court paid homage. But soon the trick was discovered; thereupon the heir apparent ordered the execution of all the artists.^[FN] (1977a, 203)

Such empirical insouciance costs art historians nothing except the wrath of archaeologists, e.g.:

The succession of essentially unproven assumptions underlying this identification will be obvious although their continued repetition invests them with the status of fact which can hardly be justified and indeed, this kind of thing is the source of many of the problems that bedevil the writing of Afrian art history. (Craddock & Picton 1986, 10)

Lacking material support, the belief that Ifẹ practiced copper-alloy casting rests on just one prop: Egharhevba's brief remark that Ifẹ founded Èdó's *cire perdue* industry. That domino falls to verbal evidence of a less subjective type: a long list of Igbo etymologies in Èdó vocabulary, whether general in nature or specific to the exotic and specialized skill of copper-alloy casting (§2.9 below). The fabulists however bet the farm on Egharhevba, none more than Willett.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ The archaeological fallacy of presumed linear evolution between dispersed prehistoric sites, here exemplified by Fagg's Nok>Ifẹ>Èdó conveyor belt, has also been extensively critiqued for the monuments of medieval southern Zimbabwe (Chirikure & al. 2013, 2017).

¹⁶⁹ Fagg himself recognized that a tendency of later Èdó pieces to be thicker and heavier may have a simple material explanation in the arrival of brass manillas in larger quantity, providing an ever-cheaper casting medium for conspicuous display (Eyò 1977, 142).

Willett the wishful

Invited to Nigeria in 1956 as the *protégé* of Bill and Bernard Fagg (Picton 2007, 13/), Willett inherited their premature certainty about artistic inheritance. Writing in Willett's obituary, his close colleague Picton candidly admits that

Frank [Willett] was entirely dependent on the interpretive framework proposed by William Fagg in which Ifè ceramic sculpture was the distant child of Nok; once the tradition was transferred into [sic] the medium of cast brass, Ifè was the ancestor [sic] of the art of Benin-City. (2007, 14)

Willett diligently brought modern Ifè's copper-alloy finds out of curio cabinets stocked by imperial treasure-hunts and into the public record of field archaeology. However, when his—and his patrons'—hopes were dashed that “evidence of bronze casting might be discovered” (1960, 240), rather than question this cherished prior, he grasped at one last straw: Egharhevba's claim—authoritatively endorsed by Murray and W. Fagg—that Èdó *cire perdue* casting skills came from Ifè. This prestigious precommitment pushed Willett so far out on a limb that he could herald an isolated low-grade Èdó plaque pulled from “a relatively recent rubbish pit in Ifè in 1940-41” (1967a, 186) by announcing “that the art-historical importance of the piece is *self-evident* in supporting the tradition of a connection between the casting traditions of Ifè and Benin” (1973, 10, *italics added*). Confirmation bias is the only explanation of this desperate claim.

Such leaps of faith landed painfully on the toes of professional colleagues. Connah's review of Willett (1967a) gripes that Ryder (1965)—a critique of Egharhevba—“is listed in the bibliography” but that “its arguments are ignored in the text” (1968b, 351). Willett presented Èdó potsherd pavements dated 1305±105AD as an example of “[t]he cultural influence of Ifè” (1967a, 104) but Connah considered this inference “unwise” (1968b, 351, cf. Williams 1974, 310 *fn.* 4) because “such pavements were being made in the Lake Chad region as early as the 8th century AD” (Connah 1968a, 315) i.e. long before the earliest known Ifè example. Werner & Willett's (1975) attempt to link Èdó metallurgy forensically to the Ifè finds was thoroughly debunked (Craddock 1985). In reply to Willett (1964), Shaw remonstrated:

It therefore seems difficult to understand how the idea of ‘brass is early, tin bronze is later’ at Benin was extracted from the evidence. ... The new evidence published here suggests that, if there is any correlation between chronology and metal content it is in fact the other way round, i.e. that bronze is early and brass is late. (1969, 86)

Willett & Fleming insisted that the “[s]eated figure from... the Nupe village of Tada... is clearly an Ifè work... and is perhaps the supreme masterpiece of Ifè founding” but still had to concede, “It is strange that it should have been traded over such a large distance, especially if, as traditions suggest, it travelled via Idá [“Idah”] the Ígàlà capital” (1976, 138/). Willett & Sayre found it “puzzling” that only one Tada item fits the alloy profile of the Ifè finds, and noted that this one is “a nearly pure copper” which would more reasonably suggest a separate origin from the others (2006, 64).

The theoretically laudable goal “to explain the unusual naturalism of the Ifè sculptures” without appealing to remote origins *à la* Frobenius and Fagg led Willett to suppose that apparent portraits like the life-size mask christened Òbàlùfòn (1967a, 33) had a functional analog “in mediaeval Europe, where royal funerals employed effigies of the deceased... with the purpose... of emphasizing the continuity of the [king's] authority through successive office-bearers” (1966, 34, 39). As a real Yorùbá counterpart for this role, he cited “naturalistic wooden effigies made in recent times for second burial ceremonies at Òghò [“Òwò”], a hundred miles to the East” of Ifè (Willett 1966, 34). Although an Òghò specialist judged this specific comparison “inadequate” and its reasoning “strange” (Abíódún 1976, 7), in general terms it's plausible if naturalistic style should be desired in portraits of known individual patrons, versus the default option of representational abstraction for “cognitive anchors” created to give external form to invisible, mind-internal supernatural entities (Mithen 1998).¹⁷⁰

Unable to prove *cire perdue* casting in Ifè, Willett demurred from replying to relentless critiques by Ryder, Shaw, Connah, Craddock, Williams, Èyò, Òbáyemí and Lawal. Such reticence never restrained a certain Oxford philosopher.

Sir Robin, last-ditch defender of the faith

...bloodied but unbowed... bloodied but unbowed...
(Horton 1979, 90, 93)

This pugilistic refrain above punctuates Robin Horton's punchy 40,000 word riposte to Ifè sceptics. Conceding most of the critiques of Ryder (1965), Òbáyemí (1976) and others unpersuaded by “Ifè pretensions to an accepted ‘paternal’ primacy among the dynasties descended from Odùduwà” (Law 1977a, 122), Horton retreats from the least believable Ifè beliefs—the *motte* that the Yorùbás came from Arabia or from the sky—and takes a defiant stand on the bland *bailey* that “Ifè became prominent *after* the main dispersal of the ancestral Yorùbá-speaking population from a homeland in the area of the Niger-Benue confluence” (1979, 94, original *italics*, cf. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motte-and-bailey_fallacy).

Eventually Horton accepts to defend just two Ifè-centric ramparts:

- (i) that “a ‘classical’ political and artistic tradition... originated in Ifè and subsequently spread to Benin” (1979, 87)¹⁷¹
- (ii) that “the city [of Ifè] remained the ‘spiritual capital’ of Yorùbáland” (1979, 70).

Both of these closely written formulas drawn from standard Ifè dogma surrender more than they save. Point (i) amounts to Willett's final fallback, that Ifè's past prestige is *indirectly* proved by its reflections in the visible glory of Èdó (“Benin”) as interpreted by Egharhevba. It's a high stakes, long odds wager—not normally expected from a logical-positivist philosopher—to tie the historical veracity of Ifè's self-image to an unsubstantiated, selfinterested narrative.

Point (ii) is an undergraduate debater's gambit: “spiritual capital” can't be observed, but nimble rhetoric can deploy the verb *remain* to project an uncancellable presupposition into argumentative discourse. (Something can't be said to *remain* if it never *was there* to start with, cf. Lakoff (1970, 178). Even so, Horton acknowledges the lack of tangible historical traces of the key premise:

¹⁷⁰ In a similar vein, Adépégba conjectures to correlate visual realism with political hierarchy:

The growth of naturalism with autocracy is not peculiar to Nigerian art. In classical Greece and Rome there are evidences that the types of political set-up to some extent conditioned naturalism in art. In the democratic Greek city-states, the arts had no rulers to glorify hence they are mostly impersonal ‘perfect’ human representation. The naturalism of the portraits of the period, where it exists, can hardly be compared with the portraits of the time of Alexander the Great, or the portraits of the Romans whose political setup was dominated by certain individuals. (1983b, 31)

¹⁷¹ Cf. “adoption and adaptation of the Ifè-centered innovations” in the “Yorùbá-Èdó region as a whole” (Ògúndìran 2003, 51).

Ifè influence depended on an *entente*, lasting from the middle of the 17th to the end of the 18th century, between the major successors to the city's economic and military power. ...[T]he evidence for this *entente* is still mainly of a negative kind... Another principal contention of this paper is that the *entente* encouraged the development of Ifè as an 'elder-statesmanly' and mediating center, and they the city discharged this function through the *Ifá* cult. (1979, 147)

In sum, Ifè supremacy was audibly silent, like the “dog... [that] did nothing in the night-time” (Conan-Doyle 1894, 50).

Nobody disputes “[t]he Ifè-centric nature of *Ifá*” (Apter 1987, 11) but the problem for (ii) is that the boundaries of “Yorubáland” may be vague now but they were undefined centuries ago as far as anybody knows. In the multi-ethnic *Òokun* [LMM] zone, located near the same Niger-Benue confluence that Horton accepts as the “ancestral... homeland” of Yorubá-speakers, the format of the duplex 4-bit oracle is “Agbigba” (Ògúnbiyí 1952, cited by Bascom 1969, 7, no tones), markedly closer to Igbo *Afa* and Èdó *Òminighon* in both form and content (Seton 1929, 43, Nadel 1953, 39, Qbayemi 1979b, 1983, 83, cf. §1 above). Having apparently never heard of *Òminighon* at all, Horton wrongly assumed that the only duplex 4-bit oracle practiced in modern Èdó is *Ifá* alias *Òrònmila* (1979, 123 citing Bradbury 1957, 54, cf. Gore 2007a, 36).¹⁷² Even in nearby Onḍó the local version of *Ifá* shares with Èdó *Òrònmila* a ranking order among the 16 basic *odù* different from what obtains in Ifè (Ìbiyè 1986, 65). Thus as far as evidence goes, the effective boundaries of Horton's “Yorubáland” in (ii) were not necessarily larger than those of its supposed “‘spiritual capital’”.¹⁷³

Şijúwadé olóríi-túlè, Şóyíńká olóríi-fake-tòkumbò¹⁷⁴

“All we are saying is give us the head”

Yunifè student protest song, 7 June 1981
(Belgore & al. 1981, 43)

We also have our myths, but we have never employed them
as a base for the subjugation of others. (Şóyíńká 1986)

The ink was not yet dry on Horton's lawyerly Ifè brief before the rule of law broke down between the Ifè palace and the adjacent town of Modééké, whose exonym (< *Modákéké*) denotes bearers of *kéké* ‘broad facial keloids’ representing the heritage of Ọyó, the 17th-18th century empire erased by the Sókoto *jihād* early in the 19th (Abraham 1958, 300, 364, Law 1977a, 280, Òké.diji 1998, 495). The Ifè-Modééké clashes that resumed in 1980 continued a century and a half of sporadic combat between Ọyó descendants and non-Ọyó fractions of the linguistic area now known as Yorubá.¹⁷⁵

The slogan “Yorubá warfare in the 19th century” (Àjàyí & Smith 1964) is unhelpfully ambiguous, because the intended broad ethnic reference is anachronistic. An exonym sounding close to “Yorubá” was first applied narrowly by the Sókoto Caliphate to nonmuslims of Ọyó, then the scope of the expression expanded only in the latter 19th century as Bishop Àjàyí Crowther's Church Missionary Society constructed Yorubá spelling from Ọyó speech, to the point that Anglophone proto-nationalists started describing Ọyó speakers anaronistically as “Yorubá(s) proper” (*sensū strictō*), i.e. as a subset of the maximal area where Crowther's Yorubá spelling was being taught in schools (Burton 1863, 222, Johnson 1897, 8, Àjàyí 1960, cf. Awóníyí 1981 and Peel 2000a, 283, 384 citing Law 1977a, 5 and Farias 1990). More concisely put:

[I]t was only in the process of evolving a written form of the language that the name Yorubá, formerly applied only to the Ọyó, came to be applied to all the [presently named] Yorubá people. (Àjàyí 1974, 129)

Pave Peel, however, the eventual hegemony of Yorubá selfconsciousness took more than “cultural work” (1989). The emergent shared identity was also molded by hard material forces: (i) encroachment from the savanna and the coast by soldiers of Sókoto and London and (ii) redirection of human trafficking into vegetable commodities controlled by

...the Royal Niger Company which, in the classical manner of chartered companies, used administrative as well as commercial weapons to drive out its competitors. (Hopkins 1973, 164, cf. Abraham 1958, 536).¹⁷⁶

These external drivers of group awareness projected Ọyó culture in the transatlantic diaspora of the Middle Passage. Back home, however, Ọyó supremacy stalled halfway. From the 1820's to the end of 19th century, Ibádán absorbed displaced Ọyó populations and tried to rebuild Ọyó power under new management, but met armed resistance. This struggle played out in Ifè and environs, well described by standard historiographers.

- 172 E.g. Jungwirth (1965) recorded a version of *Ìyèrè Ifá* from the “Ifá-Òr[ò]nmila Union” of Benin-City. Horton apparently missed Melzian's contrasting descriptions of *Òminighon*/Ògweyèga and *Òrònmila*/Ifá (1937, 137f., 159), and his mistaken focus on the latter may have been reinforced by Qlā Rótímí's 1974 stageplay premiered at University of Ifè campus in December 1971 creatively re-imagining the 1897 overthrow of the Èdó kingdom by the British army. Bradbury—the other source Horton might have consulted—did cite *Òminighon* at least once (1961, 134) but never to my knowledge did he evaluate Egharhevba (1936a) as a historical document.
- 173 Willet too could not resist saving unsubstantiated prehistory by invoking as evidence the very thing which was to be proved, citing “oral traditions in Ifè and elsewhere... that the Ifè empire covered the whole of Yorubáland [sic] before the rise to dominance of the Old Ọyó Empire in the 17th century” (1986, 97).
- 174 *Olóríi túlè* ‘possessor/epitome of student's head’ cf. *túlè* ‘student’ < English *student* (Abraham 1958, 656) reinforced by folk etymology < *tú ilè* ‘pour downwards’ as if describing the posture of concentrated reading (Awóyalé 2008). *Oníi fake tòkumbò* ‘possessor/epitome of illegitimate counterfeit’ (cf. *tòkumbò* ‘imported secondhand goods’ lit. ‘coming from the ocean’). The expression “fake *tòkumbò*” is observed by Guyer (2004, 91). Bowley (2017) reports a relevant example of recursive fakery of art:

www.buffpost.com/entry/damien-hirst-nigerian-art_n_5911b952e4b0e7021e9b1cde, www.instagram.com/p/BT01TCqg3Hp/
victorsozaboy (Victor Ehikhamenor) May 8, 2017 at 1:40am PDT

This postcard of “Golden heads (Female)” by Damien Hirst with no reference to Ifè and great artists that originally made these timeless classic[s] will travel far and wide. Once again the hunter has glorified his tale in the absence of the lion.

- 175 Ethnically less tendentious labels for this cluster, covering Ígàlá and Íşèkiri and many local varieties (Adétúgbò 1967, Fresco 1970, Akinkugbé 1978), include *Yoruboid* (Capo 1985), *Defoid* (Capo 1989 < *èdè* ‘language’ cf. Abraham 1958, 148) and *Macro-Yoribá*.
- 176 Original name *Royal African Company*—slaving venture of the British state—then privatised as *West African Company* and merged with George Goldie's *United African Company*/*National African Company*/*Royal Niger Company* until 1900 when “the business of empire... had become the empire of business” (Said 1993, 23) and Goldie's jurisdiction was spun off as the colony “Nigeria” with its commercial side rebranded UAC, now *Unilever*. ‘Religion’ was not left out: the British Church Missionary Society invested in WAC which Bishop Crowther's son Joshua managed on the Niger in the 1870's (Flint 1960, 26 cited by Nzimiro 1962, 32). Neoliberals call mercantilist West Africa an “open economy” (Hopkins 1973, 168ff.), glossing over the sense of “open” that describes the “veins of Latin America” (Galeano 1971, cf. Dalton 1976). To “open” the Niger basin in either sense, Goldie's “constabulary forces embarked on many punitive expeditions and other wanton acts of plunder and terrorism” (Asíégbu 1984, 261), just as General Pinochet's putsch jailed Chilean society in order to “open” the economy for Milton Friedman's “Chicago boys” (Klein 2007) on 11 September 1973.

With the establishment of the Fulani at Ilorin, free access to the north, which was formerly the main source of slaves, was seriously interrupted. The Yorùbá therefore turned on themselves to meet the demand for more slaves. [FN The old Spanish and Portuguese colonies in South America had just won their independence during this period and were in dire need of slaves to work their plantations.] The Ijèbú, whose country bordered the coastal areas, were the middlemen in this trade, and they soon started to encourage their neighbors, the Ifè, to engage in slave raiding. ... (Awè 1967, 13)

During the massive Ọyọ migrations southwards earlier in the [19th] century, a sizeable refugee population had grown up in Ilé-Ifè. ... [I]n the [eighteen]forties disagreements appeared and the refugees finally withdrew from the town and established just outside it a separate settlement. ... About 1850 open war erupted between the two and the Ifè were defeated and forced to abandon their town for five years. (Akintoyè 1971, 53)

In the 1870's, Ibàdàn carried a series of expeditions into Èkìtì country and finally brought under subjection the Ijèṣà who had been the greatest obstacle to its ascendancy to the northeast of Yorùbá country. [FN] With these new conquests, Ibàdàn had come to a position where it could dispense with the patronage of the *Alaúfin*. ... Indeed the roles of Ibàdàn and Ọyọ were now effectively reversed not only in the politics of the Ọyọ community but in that of all Yorùbá land. ... [T]he Ijèbú, people of an old established kingdom, resented the fact that this upstart town which could not even boast of a crowned head in its town should supercede well-established kingdoms and defy all crowned heads. ... In Ọfà and Ilé-Ifè, Ibàdàn's allies Ọfà and Mọdákéké were also attacked by the Ilorin Fulani and the inhabitants of Ilé-Ifè respectively. ... Moreover the *Alaúfin* was in secret collusion with the enemies of Ibàdàn. ... (Awè 1967, 23f)

Ilé-Ifè itself barely escaped being swamped by creating a separate town of Mọdákéké just outside its own walls. ... The Ifè people. ... had welcomed many Ọyọ migrants in the hope that they were acquiring valuable tenants aamd cheap labor for their farms. ... The Ọyọ complained that they were treated as slaves, being made to build Ifè houses, clean their farms, perform all sorts of menial tasks and above all pay heavy rent for the land they tilled. ... Twice, in 1850 and 1881, Mọdákéké sacked Ilé-Ifè and drove the Ọṣini and his people into exile. (Ajayi 1974, 150)

After the British-imposed military stalemate of 1900, the war of Ijèbú and Ifè against Ibàdàn and other remnants of Ọyọ moved onto an ideological plane. In 1945 Obáfẹmi Awólọ.wò, an Ijèbú barrister in London, launched Egbé Ọmọ Odùduwà, adopting Ifè as the symbol of Yorùbá postcolonial rebirth and making the ambiguous object that Frobenius christened “Orí Oló.kun” into the badge of pan-Yorùbá identity. Back in Nigeria however, political mobilization by *awon alákẹ̀nẹ̀*—the literate modernists—faced frustration. In the 1940's, Adélabú Adégòkè an Ibàdàn populist formed Egbé Ọmọ Ibílẹ̀ excluding Ijèbú “strangers” (*àjẹ̀rì*) resident in the city (Sklar 1963, 289-320). In 1962, barrister Ládòkè Akintólá, a gifted orator and cultural conservative whose cheeks bore the *kẹ́kẹ́ kẹ́*-loids of rustic, Ọyọ-descended Ọgbómòsọ (Ọṣuntó.kun 1984), split from Awólọ.wò and formed a parliamentary pact with Ahmadu Bello, *Sardauna* of Sokótó and head of the ruling Northern Peoples Congress. In 1963 Awólọ.wò was jailed for treason, then in January 1966 both Akintólá and Bello were assassinated in the early hours of Major Nzeogwu's failed coup that aimed “to install Chief Awólọ.wò as executive president” (Luckham 1971, 21ff., 42 *fn* 3 citing Ọlárín 1967, cf. Akínrẹ́fón 2019).¹⁷⁷

After the counter-coup of 1966, Awólọ.wò was pardoned and deployed in the federal war against secessionist Biafra, but his newfound loyalty to a unitary nation-state didn't erase the historic rifts in the Yorùbá ethnic zone. The Ifè palace continued exacting *onó ọ̀sákọ̀lẹ̀* ‘ground-rent’ from Mọdékéké peasants until 1978, when General Ọbásanjó signed a “[d]ecree... abolishing the customary proprietary rights of families and individuals—and traditional rulers—over both developed and undeveloped land” (Vaughan 2000, 149, cf. Lloyd 1962, 63f., Berry 1988). This dictatorial enclosure of rentable demesne, imposed under pretext of neoliberal economic rationality, had the immediate and intended consequence to endow a neofeudal cadre of top military officers with vast *latifundia* like Ọbásanjó Farms, Ọtá.¹⁷⁸

Ọbásanjó's 1978 landgrab reignited 19th century strife. In December 1980, when Awólọ.wò's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) government of Ọyọ State installed Sijúwadé as Ọṣini of Ifè, a war of machetes, arrows and guns rained on the newly liberated Mọdékéké serfs (Ọlání.yan 1992, Vaughan 1988, 47ff., 2000, 188-92). On 1 June 1981 the headless body of 'Bùkólá Arógundádé, a history student of the University of Ifè (Yunifè), was found at Ifè's Odò Ọgbè shrine. The following weekend, Yunifè hosted the 1st World Ọrìṣà Conference, financed by Sijúwadé himself (Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 31) and marking Prof. Wándé Abimbólá's title of *Awíṣe Agbáyé* ‘world ambassador’ of Ifà. On Sunday 7 June after overnight rain, I woke up in a hotel near the campus gate and cadged a lift to the canteen to buy *àkàrà*. The car's other occupants were students discussing how to protest the recent ritual slaughter of their colleague. That afternoon, Prof. Abimbólá urged conference participants to avoid Ifè town. With a private message to deliver on Mòrè Street I rushed to board a *kombi* bus, which halted halfway on damp tarmac littered with stones and shoes. Not long before, “several thousands” of students had carried an empty coffin toward the palace while singing the above-quoted refrain to the tune of John Lennon's 1969 anthem “Give peace a chance”. As the cortège reached the crossroads, federal police shot in the air and stampeded four students into fatal contact with an ungrounded electric pole in front of Mayfair Hotel.

Two months later Wólé Sọyínká, Professor of Dramatic Arts at Yunifè and founder (cf. Bàabàngidáa 2018) of Ọyọ State Road Safety Corps—the freshly minted, yellowjacketed UPN militia—staged an interrogation in Corps premises, Ibàdàn, trying to browbeat an “illiterate” Senior Mortuary Attendant of Yunifè to disown the university pathologist's finding of electrocution, as if to deflect responsibility from Sijúwadé onto the federal police (Belgore & al. 1981, 112f., 153-60). Ọṣini Sijúwadé escaped accountability and “[a]fter renewed conflict in 1996, reports of killings on both sides defied imagination” (Olúpòná 2011, 48). As for Sọyínká, his coy self-deprecation *olóríkunkun* ‘stubborn-headed’ (2006, 213) euphemises a rap sheet that includes one armed hijack, two kidnaps and one count of intercontinental petty larceny. After his meddling in the Mayfair massacre, the charge of “hypocritical self-righteousness” that he penned for others was returned to him by the Yunifè pathologist (Sọyínká 1972, 16, 1994, Belgore & al. 1981, 154, cf. Májà-Pearce 2007).

1981 was not the first time the dramaturge delved unbidden into the matter of a missing cranium.¹⁷⁹ Two years before, he had veteran researcher Pierre *Fátúnbí* Verger sequestered by the same dictator Ọbásanjó, affording Sọyínká and a hapless confederate the opportunity to dash ahead to Salvador, Bahia, bluff their way into the home of Verger's

177 Awólọ.wò vs. Akintólá in Nigeria was more than just analogous to Nkrumah vs. Danquah in Ghana. These two rivalries were directly linked in the charge proffered at his treason trial that Awólọ.wò the Fabian socialist had conspired with pro-Moscow Nkrumah to overthrow the Nigerian first Republic—an accusation well in tune with Whitehall anticommunism which was the same motive alleged for “British election tampering against the Action Group in 1956” (Vickers 2011, cf. Lapping 1985, 384-86, Mason 2007). In 21st century Ibàdàn, the same struggle of federalist Ọyọ elements against regional Awoists resumed as the taxi boss *Alhaji* Lamidi Adedibú propped up successive governors of Ọyọ State to the satisfaction of the central Abuja regime en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamidi_Adedibun.

178 “The Land Use Act is a military document” said Jiti Ọgúnýè, a lawyer. “It was made by the Olúṣẹgun Ọbásanjó administration in 1978 at a time when the federal government was intervening in businesses, institutions and all walks of life of the people”... He also condemned the fact that the Act was by a departing military government in its bid to protect its “land grab” adding that Ọbásanjó himself had acquired “a large expanse of land... in the name of farming. They needed to have that law in place and prevent people... from coming back to them to ask why did you take the land.” Mr. Ọgúnýè said further that the Act was inserted in the 1979 constitution to make its amendment difficult. (Adébáyó 2009)

179 A fixation recalling the precocity of the Jolly Roger skull, emblem of the Pyrates Confraternity which he co-founded in Ibàdàn in 1952, see archive photos at: jojonaija.com/throwback-photos-wole-soyinka-and-his-friends-that-founded-the-pirates-confraternity.

friend the sculptor Carybe and snatch a small figure which they credulously believed to be the same one that Frobenius tried to swipe in 1910. In both capers, the pilferers acted on the same myth—first conjured by Frobenius, then amped by Awóló.wò's civil religion (cf. Voegelin 1938)—that the treasure's serene face depicts the Oló.kun divinity.

Verger's side of the story, never published in English, is reported by his biographers in Brazil:

À Lagos, juste avant l'embarquement à l'aéroport pour retourner au Brésil, [Verger] est arrêté sur des motifs inventés (trafiquant d'armes ou d'œuvres d'art, agent de l'Afrique du Sud...), dénoncé pour des motifs rocambolesques (le vol d'une sculpture en bronze d'Ifè connue comme la tête d'Oló.kun) par certains collègues de l'université nigérienne qu'il croyait être des amis (Wándé Abímóbólá, Wólé Sóyínká, Olábiyi Yáì), jeté en prison sans recours et ainsi humilié à l'âge de 77 ans. [FN 112: Verger aurait notamment été dénoncé à la police en raison de la jalousie de Wándé Abímóbólá (Verger avait fait une copie de tous ses enregistrements sur Ifá pour l'Université d'Ifè, mais Abímóbólá aurait souhaité accaparer l'ensemble de ses archives). Quelques jours auparavant, Verger s'était opposé à Wólé Sóyínká qui appuyait alors la thèse de l'existence d'un racisme politique de nature génocidaire au Brésil. Deux professeurs de l'université d'Ifè, W. Sóyínká, futur prix Nobel de littérature et alors à la tête du département de théâtre, et Olábiyi Yáì, se rendent rapidement à Salvador et trouvent dans la maison bahianaise du peintre et sculpteur Carybé une copie de la tête d'Oló.kun que ce dernier a lui-même réalisée et qu'ils supposent être l'original. Ils se ramènent au Nigeria où ils s'aperçoivent qu'elle n'est qu'une modeste copie en plâtre d'une réplique en bronze de la pièce du British Museum...]

En ce qui concerne l'étude de la divination, [Verger] tenta sans succès de faire publier au Nigeria dans les années 1970 le corpus d'histoires d'Ifá qu'il a recueilli. ...En 1966, il déclare avoir recueilli plus de 4,000 histoires d'Ifá, "d'intérêt plus ou moins grand, mais toutes contribuent à définir la structure et correspondances du système d'Ifá" ainsi que d'avoir enregistré, retranscrites en yorùbá et traduites en français plus de 600 de ces histoires. [FN 71: Titres et travaux (sept. 1966), 35.] Étant donné que plusieurs histoires se chevauchent ou constituent des variations proches, le corpus effectivement recueilli puis retranscrit peut être ramené au final à environ 2,000 histoires distinctes.

(Souty 2007, 104, 106, 337, citing Nóbrega & Echeverría 2002, 270-75)¹⁸⁰

Elements of this report can be partly corroborated. (i) In April 2009, Fundação Verger in Salvador allowed Prof. 'Sopé Oyèláràn and myself to examine several meticulously typed, partly tonemarked *Ifá* transcripts, each indexed to a numbered audiotape.¹⁸¹ A remarkable feature of these foolscap folios is that the names of sacrificial plants are typed in green ribbon ink, and those of animals in red. (ii) Verger eventually published excerpts of two texts "collected from Awótundé Awórindé in Òşogbo in 1969" and marked "Recording P.V. XII-28" and "xx-9" (1989, 168f., 186-88).¹⁸² Maybe it's a coincidence that Abímóbólá credits the same Awótundé Awórindé for one poem, recorded in Lagos in December 1968, in his UNESCO anthology of 16 *Ifá* texts, whereas the other 15 chants in this book were all performed by a different *awo*, Oyèdélé Ìşòlá, at various other times in Òyó (1975, 178-207, 463f.). That the two scholars' listed sources intersected even to this minor and possibly accidental extent is at least consistent with the unanswered allegation that professional rivalry led to covert appropriation by Abímóbólá of some primary data collected by Verger.

Sóyínká's own potential motive in the affair was something else again. Barring an undisclosed personal grudge, his intervention could have been nothing more than an expensive Walter Mitty ego trip, and if so, the quest for notoriety didn't fail, because bad publicity is still publicity of a sort, even if Pinky Panther finally failed to crack the cold Frobenius case.¹⁸³ Verger boycotted Nigeria for the last 16 years of his life and Sóyínká, unable to apologise in person, waited ten *more* years after Verger's death before acknowledging the researcher's "rough treatment at the hands of the police, and... betrayal by trusted colleagues" while still floating a delicately phrased post-mortem evading primary responsibility:

...unfortunately, it was Pierre's impish sense of humor that had triggered off a chain of events... Pierre died some years ago. Reconciliation with that misused scholar was one that I truly craved, but appeasement must now be delayed until our reunion under the generous canopy of Ọ̀rúnmìlá [sic]. (Sóyínká 2006, 260f.)

Having blamed the victim as craven self-exoneration requires, Sóyínká added three insults-upon-injury: (i) downplaying the offense (using *misused* in the impersonal passive), (ii) traducing theology (do Yorùbá ancestors meet in 'heaven?') and (iii) botching the diacritics of Ọ̀rúnmìlá (did proofreading *also* die when the man kept silent in the face of injustice?).

Sóyínká's Ifè exploits suit both available construals of the characterizing nominalization *olóri*. (i) By taking Carybé's tourist trinket he became a transitive *olóri-fake-tòkumbò*, holder of a replica (intentional fake) head that traveled by sea (*òkùn*). Although Frobenius' baptism of "Orí Oló.kun" was speculative, the gift-shop copy did cross the Atlantic (twice) in transiting from London to Salvador to Dakar. (ii) Then, in his equally vain cameo role in the Ifè student autopsy, Sóyínká played not 'Robbin' Head' the righteous outlaw, but Sheriff of the Highway Patrol befitting the intransitive version of *olóri*, not *possessor-of(someone's)-head* but *person-at-the-head (of something)* as in *caposquadrista* or "road safety boss" (Belgore & al. 1981, 153). The authoritarian itch was apparently not sufficiently scratched in 1980, because our hero has now accepted the commission of "Grand Marshall [sic]" in *Amòtẹ̀ kàn* 'Leopard'—a new-minted autodefense militia of Yorùbá-speaking states—as if to finally "proclaim his tigritude" according to a famous *ijalá*-infused anti-*négritude* riposte of 1962 (Sóyínká 1977/2019, 86 cf. Jahn 1966, 242f./1968, 265f., Babalola 1966 and induction portraits below).

¹⁸⁰ [In Lagos, just before boarding a flight back to Brazil, Verger was arrested on trumped up charges (arms- or art-trafficker, South African spy...), having been accused on incredible grounds (theft of an Ifè brass sculpture called *Head of Oló.kun*) by some Nigerian university colleagues he had regarded as his friends (Wándé Abímóbólá, Wólé Sóyínká, Olábiyi Yáì), thrown in jail without appeal and thus humiliated at the age of 77. [FN: Verger was notably reported to the police due to the jealousy of Wándé Abímóbólá (Verger had duplicated all his own *Ifá* recordings for the University of Ifè, but Abímóbólá wanted to grab all of the archives). Several days before, Verger had disagreed with Wólé Sóyínká who held the view that genocidal political racism existed in Brazil. Two professors of the University of Ifè, W. Sóyínká, future Nobel laureate in literature and then Head of the Dept. of Theater, and Olábiyi Yáì, dashed to Salvador and found in the Bahian house of the painter and sculptor Carybé a copy of the *Head of Oló.kun* which Carybé had himself made and which they believed to be the original. They returned to Nigeria where they realized that it was only a modest plaster copy of a bronze replica in the British Museum...]

As to divination, in the 1970's Verger unsuccessfully tried to publish in Nigeria the corpus of Ifá stories he had collected. ...In 1966 he claimed to have more than 4,000 Ifá stories "of more or less interest, all helping to define the structure of the Ifá system", and to have recorded, transcribed in Yorùbá and translated in French more than 600 of these stories. [FN...]

As some stories overlapped or were variants, the full set collected and transcribed may amount to 2,000 distinct stories.]

¹⁸¹ Thanks to the Foundation's research director Prof. A. Lühning and to the library staff for their warm cooperation during our visit. Regrettably on that brief occasion we were unable to listen to any of Verger's archival audio or to clarify the extent of holdings of *Ifá* oracle texts conserved in whatever medium.

¹⁸² The *awo* is portrayed on the sleeve of his LP recording (Awórindé 1965, people.bu.edu/manfredi/AwotundeAworinde1965.jpg).

¹⁸³ Sóyínká framed the 1979 caper as substitute fulfilment of his vow circa 1976 that "a task force of specialists... including foreign mercenaries if necessary—be set up to bring back the treasure" [sc. the FESTAC emblem mask] (2006, 223 quoted by Savoy 2021). His disclaimer "I never really looked for fame" www.theguardian.com/books/2021/sep/25/wole-soyinka-this-book-is-my-gift-to-nigeria must be nuanced by how the protégés of Beier's CIA-funded *Black Orpheus* and *Mbari* had been groomed to ethnic forms of anticolonial consciousness i.e. "strategic essentialism" (Suhr-Sytsma 2017, 69 citing Spivak 1987, 205, Rubin 2012, 9, cf. Ogbachie 2021).

When *Osogboa* [Ōrhòǫgbà] was king, he sent his messengers to the king of *Igbon* [Igbon], a country near the Niger—but the king of *Igbon* was bad and killed the messengers—then *Osogboa* vex, and he sent war against *Igbon* and caught the king and plenty of his people. When they brought them, *Osogboa* called **Ahammangiwa** and his boys, and asked them if they could put them in brass. They said, ‘We can try’: so they did, and those are they. Then the king nailed them on the wall of his house. The other plaques are pictures of white men, friends of the kings and **Ahammangiwa**, but who they are or their names we do not know who they are. The white men’s house is near *Obayagbon’s* [Ōbahiagbon’s]—it is where the first king put them—it has always been kept up ever since—it has fallen in now since the war.

Ahammangiwa was a white man. In the time of *Esemede* [Ōsémwèdè], *Overami’s* [Ōvónrànmwèns] grandfather, white men named **Ayniaju** (the man without eyebrows) and another named *Cappy Dor* used to live and trade at *Gwatto*...
(Read & Dalton 1899, 5f, cf. Roth 1903, 229f. boldface added)¹⁸⁶

How informative is this published text?¹⁸⁷ One positive sign is that thermoluminescence dates (§2.8 above) match the attribution of the palace plaques to *Ōmọ n’Ōba* Ōrhòǫgbà of the 16th century (Bradbury 1959, 285). Other details imply an Igbo identity for the plaques’ creator, depending on how some garbled expressions are understood:

- (i) That *Ahammangiwa* is a bad spelling job is shown by other quoted names whose Èdó pronunciations—given above in brackets—are masked by garbling or the influence of nearby languages: “Gwatto”, the initial *a* in “Ado”, the lack of rhotacism in “Osogboa”. In published literature, the only guess for the source of *Ahammangiwa* is Arabic (e.g. Williams 1974, 125), but any imaginable resemblance to Arabic names like *Ahmadu* is remote at best. Luschán prudently refused “to opine about such a piece of information before hearing from a proper scholar of Westafrican soundshifts how a word pronounced *Ahammangiwa* today would have sounded in the 16th century” (1919, 22).¹⁸⁸ No phonetic time machine is needed to find ordinary Igbo personal names like *Abà-m* ‘My name’, *Ajù-nwa* ‘Doesn’t/shouldn’t refuse/never refuses child[birth]’ (e.g. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chioma_Ajunwa) and *Abà-m-ajù* [HL-H-H!H].¹⁸⁹ These forms are automatically understood by Igbo culture bearers as truncating full sentences like *Abà-m-efula* ‘My family name should not become extinct’ and *Ōba-ajù-nwa* ‘The community never refuses childbirth’ (Échèrúó 1979, Ûbàhàkwé 1981, 48) which, taken together, predict the existence of a name **Abà-m-ajù-nwa* ‘My family name never refuses childbirth’—a string unknown to Google’s Orwellian panopticon, but judged plausible by a fluent Mbàisén Igbo speaker (U. Ìhiònú p.c.). Familiar loanword rules like Igbo *-j-* > Èdó *-g-* (cf. fn. 118 above) suggest how an Èdó pronunciation of **Abà-m-ajù-nwa* could get mangled as *Ahammangiwa* in the distorted transcript made in a British inquest under duress. Igbo-internal soundshifts entail that anyone who confers the name **Abà-m-ajù-nwa* hails from the east side of the Niger river.¹⁹⁰
- (ii) The text “he was a white man when he was born, and he wanted to see [a] white man again before he died” is nonsensical if applied by *Ōba* Èsígíe to himself, but can be made sensible—and consistent with anaphoric “again”—by emending “was” to *sam*. In that sentence, “white man” clearly stands for Èdó *Ébó* ‘European’ but *Ahammangiwa* himself isn’t called an *Ébó*, he only “came *with* them” (italics added).¹⁹¹ However, as later applied by the interpreter to *Ahammangiwa*, “white man” could represent a different Èdó expression, either *omwan n’ó fua* ‘person of white color’ i.e. of light complexion or else *enyae* ‘albino’ (Melzian 1937, 54, 62, cf. Jones 1983, 40 = Crecelius 1879, 117). Pidgin “the great water” is ambiguous in context between two Èdó lexemes: *òkún* ‘the sea’ and *Ōhimwin* ‘the River Niger’.¹⁹² Ryder preferred the freshwater interpretation (1965, 25f.) which is plausible because much of the region’s commerce moved through Igbo-speaking Niger river ports (cf. Nzimiro 1972).¹⁹³ *Ayniaju*, referencing another of the ethnically ambiguous “white men”, is tagged “the man without eyebrows” which is very close in meaning to a homophonous Igbo phrase *anya aájù* ‘eyes don’t blink’.¹⁹⁴ This could have been conferred on an individual of any ethnicity, but it was definitely coined by a speaker of Igbo, attesting an Igbo presence in early 19th century Èdó commerce.¹⁹⁵

The tin ears of colonial scribes can’t hide the Igbo biography of the 16th-century individual credited by palace chiefs as artist of the palace plaques. An Igbo analysis also explains Egharhevba’s odd spelling of the reputed first Èdó “brass smith” decoded above. Both names disprove Egharhevba’s story whether or not they refer to the same person.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁶ Italics in the published version appear random. Here I italicise all proper names and phonetically retranscribe each first mention.

¹⁸⁷ If the original scribal document still exists in British occupation archives, it may contain more clues.

¹⁸⁸ [I]ch würde es für sehr unvorsichtig halten, zu einer solchen Angabe Stellung zu nehmen, ehe wir von einem wirklichen Kenner west-sudánischer Lautverschiebungsgesetze erfahren, wie ein heute »Ahammangiwa« gesprochenes Wort im 16. Jahrhundert ausgesagen hat...

¹⁸⁹ The first comment on igberetvnews.com/100167/just-in-biafra-as-soludo-weighs-in-for-kanu has the screen name “Ahamaju” (no diacritics).

¹⁹⁰ The only Igbo dialects pronouncing ‘name’ with *-b-* are spoken east of the Niger (Ward 1941, 35). The regular correspondence of *-b-* to *-f-* in *abà = áfà* ‘name’, *ébi = éfi* ‘cow’, *bá = fà* ‘3pl.’ etc. can be reconstructed as **pn*—a glottalized (lenited) bilabial plosive onset in a nasalised syllable—or as a longer formula expressing the same phonetic equation (Williamson 2000; Ohiri-Anjichè 2003). The date at which *-b-* developed in these words by debuccalization is unlikely to be less than 500 years ago.

¹⁹¹ Like Yorùbá *Ọ̀yínbó*, Èdó *Ébó* can also refer to an African person who is prosperous, pretentious or literate, e.g. Burton (1863a, 238).

¹⁹² E.g. “On the lower reaches, the natives speak of it as the ‘Big Water’. The addition of the word ‘salt’ serves to distinguish the sea from the river among the I[g]bo people” (Basden 1938, 110).

¹⁹³ Direct observations of pre-19th century commerce are rare. Ìjèǫma summarizes those of the 1841 British expedition thus:

Up to about the mid-19th century, the states of Àbó and Ígàlá virtually controlled the bulk of the trade on the Lower Niger and did the policing of their spheres of influence. Ígàlá would appear to have given safe conduct from Àhaba to the confluence of the Benue, while Àbó policed from Àhaba to its location at the apex of the delta. (1983, 39)

¹⁹⁴ Ígwè (1999, 282) doesn’t cite the root-*jù* ‘flog/bat’ in collocation with *anya* ‘eye(s)’ but it occurs in a proverb given to me in October 1976 by the *Ọ̀jọ̀bù* (< *Ọ̀gì ọ̀bọ*) of Àgbò: *Èlú adjú ibian ọ̀ júbènt’ enyá* ‘Life never hurts you to the extent that you stop blinking your eyes’.

¹⁹⁵ Similarly, how the looted Èdó “cockerel” icon that became the mascot of Jesus College, Cambridge came to bear the distinctly Igbo name *òkúkò* ‘hen’ (colonial spelling “okukur”, Hertz 2016, Robinson 2016, further garbled by the BBC as “okukur”, Akinpèlú 2021) may show mere scribal incompetence rather than a trace of artistic authorship. ‘Hen’ in Èdó is *òkúkòkò*, whereas ‘cockerel’ in both languages is *òkpa* (Melzian 1937, 165, 172, Ígwè 1999, 662, 667). Upon repatriation, the label of *òkpa* was restored (Ìbílé.kè 2021).

¹⁹⁶ The hypothesis of Igbo authorship of Èdó copper-alloy art may not be new. Horton cites Ryder (1965) via Williams (1974) for “traditions to the effect that the techniques and style [of the palace plaques] were brought by a white man from over the sea or by ‘the Igbon’” (1979, 76). However, careful review of both Ryder and Williams finds no basis for this attribution. Maybe Horton misread Read & Dalton’s remark that the plaques depict Igbon *captives* (“put them in brass”) or else his intended reference was garbled in the historian’s traditional footnote format. Either way, the suggestion has solid empirical support of which Horton himself was unaware.

The finding that Èdó lost-wax expertise had an Ìgbo origin is reinforced by an independent detail of palace bronze-casters. In Èdó and sibling languages, *òtu* (11.) denotes an age-grade cohort (Melzian 1937, 151, Elimelech 1976, 121), but in Benin-City it also refers to the Ìgún bronze-casting lineage (Agbontaen-Eghafona 2010, 25 citing Omoregie 1997). By contrast, the Ìgbo homophone *òtu* (11.) *excludes* the meaning of age grade—which in Ìgbo is *ùke* 11.—and denotes instead any initiation guild or club (Williamson 1972, 387f., Igwè 1999, 621, 780). Precisely this extra meaning as found in Èdó is limited to the hereditary *cire perdue* workers of the palace, so the latter usage is a presumptive Ìgbonism of Èdó bronze.

Alongside *cire perdue* casting, another plausible instance of Ìgbo artistic influence in Èdó is the monumental genre of “mud sculpture” best known from Ìgbo *mbàrì* communal temples and from Èdó *Ólokún* altars (Beier 1956b, 1963a, Ben-Amos 1972, Peek 1976, 39, Izevbigie 1978, 1987, Cole 1982). Unfired clay is ephemeral—intentionally so for *mbàrì* spirit houses, sacrificially abandoned to decay in the forest—but westward transmission of this style left intermediate tracks in Ùrhonígbe (“Usonigbe”), Ólokún’s legendary home 80 km east of Èdó, leading Odokuma to conclude that

...the origins of the medium and concept, particularly those representing Ólokún, most likely stemmed from the western Ìgbo area and later spread to other neighboring areas through the river Ethiope. (2011, 47)

Èdó palace organization

Egharhevbá’s third pillar of Ifè infrastructure in Èdó is monarchy—the focus of Àjàyí’s 2004 attack on *Òmò n’Òba* Erediauwá (§2.3 above). Like alleged Ifè primacy in Èdó *cire perdue* art and in the Óminigbón oracle, so also the reputed “common origin” (Bradbury 1964, 159) of Ifè and Èdó kings rests on modern hearsay, and in this case, any possible glimpse of Ìgbo influence is blocked in advance by the colonial stereotype of southeast Nigeria as “stateless” and lacking paramount “chiefs with substantial territorial jurisdiction” (Meek 1937, x, Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940, 5). “Chiefs in the Eastern Region do not rule in the accepted sense” declared Jones (1956, 8) ergo—so goes the usual argument—any “centralized political systems” encountered there must be outliers introduced by external “conquest” (Afiigbo 2005, 483 rehearsing Meek 1937, 185). “Ìgbo... ungovernability” (Afiigbo 1981b, 307), the supposed correlate of supposed Ìgbo statelessness, was the constant refrain of the exasperated occupiers in 1929–30 when southeastern women raised an anticolonial *intifāda* and were gunned down by the dozens “in cold blood” (sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1123478 @ 1:55:44).

British disdain for perceived Ìgbo anarchy blew back as Biafran self-love for “the communal democracy which gave stability and morality to the politics of our traditional society” (Ojúkwu 1968, 263) where “[n]obody had any special privilege because of ancestry” (Oñwumèchili 2000, cf. Afiigbo 2002). In reality however, residents of Nri’s neighbor Óka [“Awka”] a millennium ago left behind “archaeological evidence for a social institution which indicates a considerable measure of centralization of social authority and an attendant concentration of wealth” (Shaw 1978, 99).¹⁹⁷ Similar inequalities occur in living memory (Oñwuejiogwù 1981, 134, 2001). The divide between rich and poor citizens—*ògalanya* and *ògbènya*—is ritualised by *òzọ* title ceremonies of ‘big man’ potlatch (Handlin & al. 1986, Àchebé 2011, cf. Sahlins 1963). Many communities also recognize economic peonage and endogamous untouchability—*òbù* and *òsù* (Uchéndù 1965, 89f., 1977; Thomas-Éméagwalí 1984, 1989). A century ago, these castes and classes were salient enough to spark local resistance, when the British recruited individuals euphemistically described as “ordinary young men of *no special standing* in indigenous society” to preside over “native courts” (Afiigbo 1966, 541 italics added).¹⁹⁸ Thus, whatever colonialists and Biafrans may have believed, Ìgbo monarchies and aristocracies were not imported outliers, rather they sat on top of indigenous categories of entrenched feudalism, comparable to Èdó’s own form of social hierarchy.

British conquest obscured other political commonalities between the Ìgbo and Èdó-speaking zones. Many Ìgbo paramounts were deposed in the course of the attempted—and wildly unsuccessful—“permanent [sic] pacification of the Hinterland” (Capt. I. Hogg 1904, cited by Àsíégbo 1984, 281). The Ézé Nri’s abdication, long and loudly demanded by Bishop Shanahan, was finally, publicly accomplished at gunpoint in 1911 (Tovey 1929, Jordan 1949, 35, both cited by Oñwuejiogwù 1981, 175, 184).¹⁹⁹ Notwithstanding the formal doctrinal distinction between Direct and Indirect Rule (Mair 1962), the colonial regime in Èdó between the overthrow of Óvónrànmwèy in 1897 and the 1914 restoration of Èwéka 2 was indistinguishable in practice from the eastern “warrant chief” system (Ìgbáfè 1967, Afiigbo 1967, 1972).

The gamut of east-west resemblances is masked by the legend that Ifè begat the Èdó dynasty, prompting a frankly bewildered Dr. Bradbury to wonder how they “came to differ so markedly” (1964, 155). A less puzzling account is available, namely of convergence: that the current kingdoms of Ifè and Èdó grew from separate roots to become superficially entwined in recent centuries. The undeniable modern attraction—in both directions—between the Ifè and Èdó states could not erase the prior contrast between Ìgbonic primogeniture, still observed in the Èdó palace, and the flexible ‘seniority’ (*ipò agbà*) practiced by most Yorùbá paramountcies including Ifè itself (Adébóyè 2007).²⁰⁰

In sum, while nobody can ignore the present existence of an “Ifè-Benin interaction field” or “Yorùbá-Èdó world system” (Ogúndiran 2002, 2003), the substantive question is *when* this economic and cultural commons formed, and in respect to *which particular traits*. Distinctive, undisputed Yorùbá intellectual property, currently ubiquitous in Èdó, includes the cults of three pre-eminent supernaturals. *Èsangó* (or maybe *Èsangó?*) doesn’t even earn a lemma of its own in the Èdó dictionary, so transparently it is borrowed from Yorùbá *Sàngó* plus prosthetic *e-*, not to mention the ostentatious Yorùbá lyrics sung in *Èsangó*’s Èdó ceremonies. Similarly, *Èsù* and *Òrúnmila* obviously reached Èdó as *Èsù* and *Òrúnmila* along with the *Ìfá* oracle, whose recitations are still today performed in Benin-City by itinerant Yorùbá *babaláwo*s who rely upon simultaneous Èdó translation for local intelligibility (Gore 2007a, 36 and my own observation in December 1982). Short of creationism, however, none of these facts shows anything about older claims of borrowing.

¹⁹⁷ Shaw holds “that this authority was more religious and moral than political and administrative” (1978, 99) but this begs what counts as politics and whether Nri differed from Ifè in that respect. Typically without evidence, Fagg dismisses “the ‘divine kingship’ of the Nri clan [as] an anomaly among the Ìgbo, and probably introduced by the Jukun, who once overran the area” (1963, 112).

¹⁹⁸ For decades, government and churches have decreed to ‘finally’ abolish caste (e.g. Òsùjì 2020), but with no more success than their counterparts in India. Two recent examples of *òsù* harassment came to my attention through euphemistic accounts by victims.

¹⁹⁹ Gwilym I. Jones, colonist turned anthropologist (mcgoy.lib.siu.edu/jmccall/jones/jonesbio.html), confessed on his Cambridge sickbed to M. Oñwuejiogwù (*p.c.*) to having fiddled the chieftaincy roster of Eastern Nigeria specifically to downgrade *Ézé Nri* in favor of *Obí Onícha* [“Onitsha”] in whose palace Nnàndí Azí kàíwè [“Azikiwe” alias *Zíkè*] held the Èdó-derived title *Onwèlè*, 6th in the *Ndị Ichè Ùmè* hierarchy (Jones 1956, 10, 21, 53f., Nzimiro 1962, 44, Henderson 1972, 543, cf. Melzian 1937, 153f.). A verbose muckraking journalist turned toothless political figurehead, *Zíkè* founded the NCNC party which the British groomed to join the Sókótó caliphate party NPC in national coalition government so as to exclude Awóló.wò’s Action Group, accused of Nkrumah-like ‘communist’ tendencies.

²⁰⁰ Primogeniture is the default succession rule in Ìgbo, based on the familial authority of the first son—*ókpara* or *óphara*—who evokes reincarnation and other ideas of patrilineal ancestry (Uchéndù 1965, 84f.; Anenè 1966, 13; Manfredi 1997). There’s no reason to think that primogeniture to the *Obí* royal title in western Ìgbo towns like Agbò, Ísele-Úku and Ùbulu-Úku (Ìjèóma 1983, 36) is anything other than an Ìgbo archaism, although living ideology may tend to lump it together with more visible aspects of the Èdó palace format adopted by Ìgbo kingdoms of the “West Niger” plains and *òru* ‘floodlands’ in the 17th century (Udò 1970, 49, Nzimiro 1972; Èjiogbò 1982; Óhadíkè 1994). More accurately it seems, the dramatic eastward expansion of Èdó political institutions in modern times traversed an older common ground that was already shared between the Ìgbo and Èdó-speaking areas, and did so the more easily thanks to pre-existing structural similarities.

Less plausible is a Yorùbá derivation for either of the Èdó state cults. The name *Ògún*, patron saint of ironwork, appears to be indigenously Èdó as it's homophonous with the singular/plural pair *ò-gún* 'blacksmith', *ì-gún* 'brasscasting lineage' (Melzian 1937, 83, 136, cf. Ofeimu[n] 2003), cognate to Igbo *í-zun* 'blacksmith(ery)' (Igwe 1999, 823).²⁰¹ Modern Yorùbá descriptions of *Ògún* [LH] as 'the god of war' (Crowther & al. 1911, 167, Williams 1973, 151, Lawal 1977b, 56) show secondhand attraction to the unrelated Yorùbá noun *ogun* [MM] 'warfare'—itself cognate to Igbo *òg(h)u* 'warfare' (Igwe 1999, 647)—that forms the title *ológún* [MHM] 'warlord' with the regular *o-ní-* prefix.²⁰²

Èdó *Ólokún* [HH¹H] is triply ambiguous between (i) the name of a supernatural, (ii) 'the sea' and (iii) 'the Ethiopian River' which is the location of Úghòtón, reputed home of the *Ólokún* cult (Melzian 1937, 144, Belasco 1980, 79). In Èdó songs, the supernatural is addressed as *Òkún*, homophonous with *òkún* 'the sea' (Melzian 1937, 142, Welton 1968, 227, Rosen 1993, 37). Yorùbá *Oló.kun* has a transparent derivation as 'possessor/epitome' (*o-ní-*) of 'the sea' (*òkun*), cf. Bámgbósé (1972, 1975), but Yorùbá shrines, songs and rituals for *Oló.kun* [MH¹M] are scarce to nonexistent, so the Èdó pleonasm of *Òkún* and *Ólokún* could show secondary Èdó reborrowing of the name in its Yorùbá version.²⁰³

Yorùbá vs. Èdó origin is indeterminate for two other shared lexical items. Èdó *óloi* [HHH] 'living queen' could come from Yorùbá *olori* [MML] 'senior or designated queen' with regular *r*-deletion (Aikhionbare 1988, 226 fn. 5), but the mismatch of tones between the two languages is mysterious and no Yorùbá-internal etymology exists. The Èdó plural *ì-loi* [HHH] 'queens' looks archaic, parallel to the inflected plurals of patently indigenous human nouns like *ò-kehuo/ì-kehuo* 'woman/women' and *ò-vbi/ì-vbi* 'sg./pl. offspring' (cf. *-bié* 'give birth'). Lastly, Melzian (1937, 134) compares Èdó *òdòdò* 'red flannel', a Portuguese trade item associated with the reign of *Ọba Ewúarè* (Bradbury 1959, 278), to Yorùbá *òdòdò* 'redness' (Abraham 1958, 451), the proverbial color of *Sàngó's* flashy *agbádá* gown (Verger 1957, 358, 361) but again as with *óloi:olori*, the tone difference of *òdòdò:òdòdò* is unexplained by a hypothesis of direct borrowing in either direction.

Some Èdó footprints in Yorùbá were influentially overlooked by casual observers. Both languages use the name *Èkó* for Lagos island (cf. fn. 3 above), which before the 16th century was an Èdó 'camp' (*èkó*) whose armed garrison installed the present *Ọba Ekó* lineage.²⁰⁴ This bicultural heritage however somehow escaped the notice of a "choleric visitor" (Smith 1962, 331) who instead perceived "abundantly evident" Yorùbá hegemony in Èdó, then colonial curators recycled this traveller's tale into conventional wisdom by dressing it up with pseudoscientific cant:

It is however abundantly evident that Benin and Dahome are integral parts of Yorùbá, somewhat differing in language but identical in manners, customs and religion. (Burton 1863a, 222)

Though their language differs somewhat from that of the inhabitants of Yorùbá and Dahomey, in manners customs and religion these peoples [*sc.* "The Bini"] must be regarded as *integral parts of a single ethnological whole*. (Read & Dalton 1898, 362, italics added)

The near identity of these quotes shows the "production of anthropological knowledge in a concrete colonial situation" (Clifford 2003, 7). Air war was the most spectacular expression of 20th century global power, but bombardment by ethnic clichés also flattens "human terrain" (González 2008) and efficiently inscribes foreign whimsy in a timeless template, handy for the occupiers and serviceable for reshaping the newly occupied. Not only did medieval Yorùbá ideology furnish administrative legitimacy for the colonial Western Region, it also became the "derivative discourse" (Chatterjee 1986) of Awóló.wò's anticolonial movement Egbé Ọmọ Odùduwà and its political arm the Action Group (AG) whose ethnically inspired government of the Western Region founded the University of Ifè in 1961.

In the non-Yorùbá rest-of-the-West however, especially in the western Niger Delta, the AG's "cultural nationalism" was less popular than its Fabian "welfarist programme" (Dudley 1982, 47). During the 1951 Western Region campaign, Èdó, Agbò and nearby palaces violently defected from Awóló.wò's AG to join NCNC, Chief Azíkaíwè's ["Azikiwe's"] breakaway eastern party. A 1963 plebiscite eventually hived off the Midwest, thereby constituting the first postcolonial jurisdiction of the 9ja entity and the only one ever created by ballots rather than bullets or decrees (Bradbury 1968, 247, Otite 1975, 75, Vickers 2000, Idúuwe *ms.*). Today the same tense rivalry simmers in Èdó, administrative capital of the former Midwest, between the national PDP and APC parties rehashing the region's long-term bicultural heritage.

The modern oblivion of medieval Igbo influence in Èdó illustrates the political fickleness of oral tradition and the distracting effect of fanciful stories spread by assorted thieves, chiefs and historians about anonymous visual icons.

Fast forward to history

After ten detailed chapters surveying Africanist art scholarship, Vansina's textbook concludes by evaluating theories of stylistic development within and between the various African localities concerned:

The tree model is moderately fruitful because it draws attention to time, but it remains flawed because it considers only drift, not multiple influences nor radical innovation. A stream model comes closer to reality and takes unknowns into account, but it too cannot account for the reasons for change, nor can it document and explain radical innovation. Only the reconstruction of the general social and cultural history can be the proper framework in which to establish valid art history. (1984, 195)

This verdict is premature—by the time of writing, evolutionary analysis had scarcely been applied to African icons—as well as being multiply misguided in principle: (i) too pessimistic about the comparative method, which *pace* Vansina is all about innovation and can't ignore mutations even those of a radical, 'catastrophic' cast, and (ii) unreasonably optimistic in expecting "general social and cultural history" to interpret artefacts from *pre-historic* time i.e. without benefit of accompanying ideographic records. The serial failings of Africanist art criticism lamented by Vansina are plain enough, but they're less historiographic than ideological in origin and so perhaps they escape his possible field of view. Not for lack of trying or shortage of empirical arguments did sober specialists of Nigerian archaeology fail to scotch mythopoetically intoxicated derivations of Èdó art and aristocracy from Ifè. Rather, the ships slipped past each other in the scholarly night because ethnic and scientific logics don't intersect, and the irreducible gap between the two frames of reference explains how easily discrepancies of awareness arise in just a few generations.

Explanations in terms of inheritance ("the tree model" that Vansina malapropically calls "drift") and borrowing (the wave model that—metaphorically?—he calls a "stream") are not optional in "historico-cultural ethnology" (De Martino 1941, cf. Bloch 2005). The question is not whether to guess—all reconstructions, being hypotheses, are necessarily guesses—but how to evaluate guesswork empirically. A century and a half ago, Schleicher and Darwin applied inferential methods to reconstruct language change and biological speciation on time scales of respectively thousands and millions

²⁰¹ No Yorùbá is heard in *Ògún* songs recorded at Úgbekun, Èdó on 13/12/1981 (manfredi.mayfirst.org/~AmayoUgieOgun13Dec1981.mov).

²⁰² Cf. Èdó *òkúù* 'warfare' (Melzian 1937, 142). Yorùbá *ológún* [MHM] 'warlord' is transparently the source of Èdó *olugun* [HHH] 'warlord' with predictable default of initial Yorùbá M to Èdó H, parallel to Yorùbá *agbádá* [MHH] 'wide male gown' > Èdó *aghada* [HHH].

²⁰³ In Ilàjè (coastal Yorùbá) the supernatural is *Malòkun* 'earth-spirit of the sea' < *umalè* [*i(rín)mòlè*] *òkun* (Ọjàdè 1980, 66, Sheba 2002, 3).

²⁰⁴ The matter remains vivid in ethnicised Lagos politics of the "Tinúubú" era: nitter.d420.de/IPrinceSavior/status/1729260756569362480.

of years. In both domains of prehistory, comparison of observable traits in distant locations—whether sampled from extinct fossils or from surviving present descendants—points to prior states of affairs separated from the present by unobservable events. With luck, chronologically intermediate stages (but scarcely ever actual events) may be directly attested by opportune finds. Famous breakthroughs of paleontology were spurred by unexpected fossils like *Homo habilis* (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo_habilis) and Indo-European philology was significantly boosted by accidentally preserved epigraphy and by modern relics like the Vēdic poems—intellectual capital orally conserved quasi-verbatim by the *brāhman* caste. Sometimes a speculative reconstruction can be verified after the fact, as when Saussure (1879) posited two abstract consonants in the Indo-European protolanguage so as to explain otherwise inexplicable vowel correspondences between Sanskrit and epigraphic Greek, then decades later these unheard of sounds were uncannily matched by two mysterious syllabic signs on Hittite cuneiform tablets unearthed in Anatolia (Kuryłowicz 1927, 1956, Watkins 1958).²⁰⁵ Similarly, pleistocene human migrations inferred from modern haplotypes have been either proved or disproved by fossil human DNA whose sequences were only recently able to be extracted and read with the help of souped-up molecular assays and automata (Skoglund & al. 2017, Lipson & al. 2020).²⁰⁶

The thought experiment to replay inferred reconstructions “forward in time” (Watkins 1962, 7) detects both kinds of change that excited Vansina’s interest: novel mutations (vertical innovation mapped in trees) and the spread of extant features across extant groups (horizontal contagion modeled in waves). Both types of innovation serve as markers of diachronic communities (subgroup populations) which share them to the exclusion of other cladistic characters.

Archaeological fieldwork has declined in neoliberal West Africa since the 1970’s, but the same array of methods can be applied to language data, which are less arduous and less expensive to obtain. Non-folk etymologies resemble subterranean deposits in the Boasian respect of possessing an unconscious character. Eventually, any nonaccidental convergence between the two types of diachronic signal—archaeological and linguistic—enhances the confidence level of either source treated separately. Multiplication of probabilities also obtains when comparing independent traits. For example, the individual trajectories of *cire perdue* icons and the duplex 4-bit oracle have no apriori necessity to align, so if any demographic parallel is observed between these two high profile cultural complexes, this is newsworthy and leads to a further conjecture of bundled transmission, indicating more comprehensive political and ideological forces operating south of the Niger-Benue confluence in medieval times. A potentially confounding factor is that local, inland changes overlapped in time with the long-distance, trans-saharan and transatlantic interaction, but the impacts of the latter are easily exaggerated by the mere fact of inscription in the ideographic records of literate commercial and ‘religious’ actors, whose testimony is habitually over-blown—as Vansina (1961) took commendable pains to point out.

Jointly, indigenous and foreign forces eventually produced the fractal social aggregations observable today across the Westafrican subcontinent. The extreme modern fragmentation of this zone supplied a learned philologist with the wry motto of his inaugural lecture: “Let us joke over it; Nigeria as a Tower of Babel” (Capo 1992) and inspired another colleague to the less ironic allusion of Biblical Paradise (N. Eménanjo *p.c.* to Ndíméle 2003). More seriously, current forms of ethnic false consciousness echo the discourse of ‘religion’ in two ways. Concretely, they arose as old West Asian monotheisms began to syncretise with local intellectual frameworks, riding on elective affinities in both directions further orchestrated “contrapuntally” in the “imperialist ensemble” of cultural “engagement” (Saïd 1993, 51). Abstractly, inversion of cause and effect is a general psychological feature of ideological restructuring apace with social change (Godelier 1996/1999, 147/106). For both reasons, ethnic retrospection risks reduction to Whig history told by present ‘winners’ of the nationalist game, at the cost of making contingent events appear fatefully inevitable.²⁰⁷

2.10 Why “people start to grope... in the air”

Horton’s claim is that, given the structure of the basic African cosmology, social changes of the kind specified will result in a more monolatric emphasis. ...Horton does not say that, as a result of certain social changes, people first become more monolatric and then switch to Islam or Christianity. What he says is that, as a result of certain social changes, people start to grope for a more elaborate definition of the supreme being, and that if either of the world religions is present at this time, its ideas are likely to be enthusiastically if selectively accepted. ...Horton’s argument is that, in some respects, the Christian message contains elements that are very much “in the air” in a situation of weakening microcosmic boundaries...
(Horton & Peel 1976, 484, emphasis original)

It seems likely that cannabis was used at Arad as a deliberate psychoactive, to stimulate ecstasy as part of cultic ceremonies. If so, this is the first such evidence in the cult of Judah.
(Arie & al. 2020, 23)

To understand the rapid spread of Islam and Christianity across inter-tropical Africa in recent centuries, Horton (1971) proposes that these waves were catalysed by indigenous trends towards *monolatry*—a label coined in Hebraic studies for a situation where many supreme gods are recognised to exist, but only one per ethnic group:

Israels Gott ist freilich einer, aber einer neben anderen, wie schon daraus hervorgeht, daß er einen Eigennamen, Jahwe, trägt, durch den er sich von anderen Göttern unterscheidet. ...Im alten Israel besteht *Monolatrie, aber nicht Monotheismus*. Daß es neben Jahwe andere Götter gibt, ist dem alten Israeliten selbstverständlich, den das Dasein anderer Götter, welche diese verehren, lert es ihm ja deutlich. Jahwe ist Israels Gott, wei Kemosch der Moabs, Milkom der Ammons, Baalzebub der der Etroniten...²⁰⁸
(Stade 1887, 428f., italics added)

A better-known synonym is *henotheism*, popularised by the 19th century’s most famous Orientalist philologist:

If we must have a general name for the earliest form of religion among the Vēdic Indians, it can be neither *monotheism* nor *polytheism*, but only *henotheism* [FN 1 from *εἷς, ἑνός* ‘one’ as opposed to *μόνος* ‘one only’]... This is the peculiar character of the ancient Vēdic religion which I have tried to characterise as *Henotheism* or *Kathenotheism*, a successive belief in single supreme gods, in order to keep it distinct from that phase of religious thought which we commonly call polytheism, in which the many gods are already subordinated to one supreme god, and by which therefore the craving after the one without a second, has been more fully satisfied. In the Vēda one god after another is invoked.

²⁰⁵ Sausure’s abstract prehistoric consonants have also inspired synchronic phonological theory (Kaye & al. 1985, Scheer 2015).

²⁰⁶ This is harder in tropical Africa where humans are older, their diversity greater and the environment harsher on organic remains.

²⁰⁷ Similarly Abu-Lughod critiques “self-centered literature” represented by Chirot (1985) who, “following Max Weber, claims that the unique qualities of the West were largely responsible for its ‘rise’” (1989, 39f., fn. 10).

²⁰⁸ [Israel’s god is surely singular, but one among others, as noted above, since he has one personal name—Jahwe—whereby he is distinguished from other gods. ...Ancient Israel practiced *monolatry*, not *monotheism*. That there were other gods besides Jahwe was obvious to an Israelite of the time, to whom the existence of other gods that could be worshipped was very clear. Jahwe was Israel’s god, just as Kemosch was Moab’s, Milkom Ammon’s and Baalzebub that of the Etronites...]

For the time being, all that can be said of a divine being is ascribed to him. The poet, while addressing him, seems hardly to know of any other gods. But in the same collection of hymns, sometimes even in the same hymn, other gods are mentioned, and they also are truly divine, truly independent, or, it may be supreme. ... The poets ascribed the highest powers to the sun, but they ascribed equally high powers to other natural phenomena likewise.

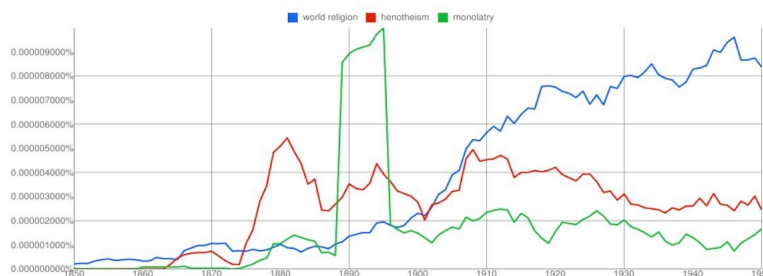
(Müller 1878, 260, 271f., original italics)

Assyriologists think that “promotion” of Babylon’s patron god Marduk to “supreme” status over adjacent deities in the 2nd millennium BC made Hammurabi the world’s first henotheist (Bottéro 1981, 4, cited by Augé 1982, 139f.). Hebrew *YHWH* was just another henotheistically “national” supernatural at a time when nobody “disputed that other gods existed, any less than that other peoples did” (Caquot 1970, 388f.), until prophetic lamentations under Babylonian rule finally goaded the exiles into the exceptionalist monotheistic mindset that still prevails today:²⁰⁹

Marduk ne conserva pas toujours la place privilégiée que d’autres divinités lui disputèrent et lui ôtèrent au gré des fluctuations politiques. Cette organisation du divin relève de l’hénothéisme, système reconnaissant une place particulière à un dieu, que Bottéro distingue du monothéisme, dont il lie l’apparition en Israël à la défaite et à la réactualisation correspondante du discours des prophètes, universalisant la personne de Yahvé à partir du moment où il fait des armées mésopotamiennes l’instrument de sa volonté. Il reste que Yahvé ne serait toujours pas encore ce dieu véritablement unique que suppose le monothéisme s’il n’apparaissait aussi dans le Livre de Jérémie à la fois comme le Dieu transcendant et l’interlocuteur familier des âmes individuelles: «Yahvé demeure le Souverain suprême et transcendant, qui du regard et de la puissance embrasse l’Univers entier; mais il se rapproche en même temps de chacun et se rend présent à son cœur: c’est le seul Dieu avec qui l’on puisse s’épancher et qui rompt notre solitude foncière. Jérémie est le promoteur du monothéisme spirituel» (1981, p. 16).²¹⁰ (Augé 1982, 140, original italics)

Horton predicted that “the advent of modern industrial society must sooner or later” favor henotheism/monolatry at the expense of “traditional African cosmology” (1971, 107), but “modern industrial society” coexists with several mass belief systems that defeat this expectation. For Weber, ‘world religions’ comprised “the Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Islamic religious ethics” plus Judaism *honoris causa* as “precursor” of the last two (1920, 237f., cf. Masuzawa 2005, 217, Baumard & Chevallier 2015). A recent pundit adds Daoism, atheism and “the religion of Yorubaland and its diasporas” to complete the list of “religions that rule the world” (Prothero 2010, 220, cf. Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 1-6). Horton’s theory comes to grief on Buddhism and on all three of Prothero’s addenda to the standard Weberian list.

Horton’s question can be productively reframed. Word attestation is a poor proxy for currency of ideas, but a graph of textual hits in printed literature shows a reversal of scholarly interest around the turn of the 20th century, from imputing the recognition of supreme beings to a more achievable task, a global census of top-ranked doctrinal brands.



If monotheism had a political-economic engine, it operated indirectly through the same social conditions that fostered “Axial” metaphysics, of which neo-Hegelian comparative sociology points to three indicative correlates: “the distinction between a mundane and extramundane order of reality”, the “disembedding... of the individual from his ascriptive social relations... of society from nature and or nature itself from the higher order of reality” and “the development of a complex of forms of consciousness focused on the power of thought to address and revise its own procedures” (Mangabeira 2014, 451f.).

Specifically in inter-tropical Africa, Horton’s teleology is mistaken, for an empirical reason much remarked, namely that many avowed Christians and Muslims practice, not the cultic possessiveness of jealous Jeremiahs, but a more relaxed régime of multiple situational loyalties—call it syncretism or religious polygamy:

Persons don’t see their own religion as a bounded system... They are likely to be selective, rather than all-embracing, of those elements of Christianity or of Islam that come their way... They don’t abandon their traditional ways of dealing with misfortune; they rather add on new ones. ... This does not mean that they do not believe in the aspects of the external religious practices that they absorb, but as in traditional life there is parallelism between practical common sense and beliefs that mystical powers affect natural and human life, so one finds it here. At Bafodea [Sierra Leone] a farmer employs both his skilled practical knowledge of the land and crops, and also rituals and magical protection, to insure success in farming. This side-by-side quality of traditional thought and action is readily applied to new social and economic situations through new religious forces. (Ottenberg 1984, 447-50)

Not even converted Yorubá deny the existence of *òrìṣà*, although a Christian or Moslem will emphasize that he is unwilling to serve them. The *Olórìṣà* says that he does not ‘believe’ [*gbàgbá*] meaning that he is not a Christian [*onígbaḡbá*], or that he does not perform ablutions [*se àlìwàlálá*] meaning that he is not a Moslem [*onímàlè*]. But many go to church or to the mosque and nevertheless privately perform *ébo*, the traditional ceremonial offerings to *òrìṣà*. ... The Yorubá is truly capable of integrating certain aspirations and rejecting others. Sònpònnò himself is referred to in his *oriki* as the *òrìṣà* who performs *ìkèrùn*, a term which covers not only Yorubá prayer but also Islamic ablutions (literally, ‘to greet heaven’). The variant forms of Christianity that have arisen here—the various ‘African Churches’—remain true to some traditional cultural elements, like polygyny and ritual awakening of the living water by means of

²⁰⁹ Freud conjectured “the dependence of Jewish monotheism on the monotheist episode in Egyptian history” i.e. the Amarna heresy of Amenhotep IV alias “Ikhnaton” or “Akhenaten” (1939/1964, 55/33, cited by Sacks 2014, 374) which he explained as an Oedipal *Vaterkomplex* (Jung 1962). For Horton, Egyptian monotheism had the statist function to oppose “the centrifugal tendencies” of “powerful priesthoods” (1962b, 139, cf. White 1949, 246ff) and this contradiction is effectively dramatised by Mahfouz (1985).

²¹⁰ [Marduk did not always hold his privileged position, which other divinities contested and envied in tune with political trends. Such a framework of divinity amounts to *henotheism*, a system granting a special place to one god; Bottéro distinguishes this from *monothéisme*, whose appearance he links to Israel’s subjugation [by Babylon] and its renewal as reflected in the discourse of its prophets, universalizing the figure of *YHWH* after he had made the Mesopotamian armies into the instrument of his will. Effectively, *YHWH* would never have become this kind of unique god in the monotheistic sense if he hadn’t also appeared in the Book of Jeremiah as both transcendent God and intimate interlocutor of individual souls: “*YHWH* remains the supreme and transcendent Lord of the entire Universe in both appearance and power, but at the same time he comes near to everyone and comes directly into his heart. This is the only God to whom one can reveal one’s innermost thoughts and who overcomes one’s basic isolation. Jeremiah is the sponsor of spiritual monotheism” ([Bottéro] 1981, 16).]

nightly dancing, singing, drumming and rhythmic clapping of hands. In this way they tap sacred fecundities and healing powers from Jesus, just as if from *òrìṣà*. Their experience of Christianity is very direct and unreserved. They are reminiscent of early Christianity through their elementary involvement and primal experience of Christ; but there is no sensory deprivation with them or with Christ as they encounter him in elated trance. (Wenger 1983, 59f.)

Even for supreme beings that hover in the air, the historical significance may not be visible at first sight. Peel asserts that “previously pagan people” who “profess to be Christian or Muslim” thereby “change their religion” so as to cause “the ‘domestication’ of the world religion[s]” and “the beginning of distinctive indigenous traditions of Islam and Christianity” (1968, 121, 140f., 1977, 108, 111). The latter process is certainly real—all cultures spawn local variants—but without necessarily deleting paganism from the mental menu. Peel wants to distinguish the “dogmatic exclusiveness of prophetic religion” from permissive “syncretism” in terms of degrees of “cultural self-consciousness” (1968, 140f.), but it would be harder to surpass the rigorous self-consciousness of the defense of *òrìṣà* by an avowed “Christian apologist” adherent of Crowther’s Africanised Anglicanism (Adégbolá 2025). At best it’s premature to claim that Africans’ rapid embrace of Abrahamic slogans and rituals launched them onto a historical path markedly different from “some of the mystical religions of the East” which are standardly said to show a “lack of impact of Christian missionaries” (Horton 1971, 97f.).²¹¹ Measured in the middle-run of centuries, the impact of alleged conversion events is easily overstated.

Conversion advocates never ask: when does ‘religion’ begin—not to mention, end? What are the temporal boundaries of the “religious field” (Bourdieu 1971b, 304f., 1987a,b)? Peel’s label “*òrìṣà* religion” (2016) sets African metaphysics on an uneven playing field where a god is a god, but some gods are suprema than others. This is an odd assertion. “*Òrìṣà* religion” may describe the present syncretic outcome of sahelo-jihādic and euro-colonial encounters, but it’s probably anachronistic for earlier times, when mental options were more open than presentists presently imagine. At the other end of the historical road is a possibility that Peel didn’t contemplate but which is apparently well under way on a world scale, namely the detachment of metaphysical commitments from social origins: call it “religion without culture” (Roy 2008, cf. 2005) e.g. ‘New Age’ consumerism of the global North (Pels 1998). At what points past and future is the term *religion* analytically vacuous—as the Weberian tradition holds that it historically was, prior to “structural differentiation of social spaces resulting in the separation of religion from politics, economy, science and so forth” when secular nationalism arose (Asad 1999, 178)? Peel dodges this question by excluding any Weberian “causal explanation of traditional beliefs” in a “preliterate” context (1969, 71) but elements of an answer can be discerned.

It seems that African metaphysics substantially survived the missionaries’ hectoring “manera preconceituosa” (Ortiz 1959, 78) and colonial suppression, whether thanks to the generic peasant pragmatism (*furbizia popolare*) not to burn one’s bridges in haste, or as a result of particular events. 19th century “warfare, enslavement and population displacement, life in refugee camps and villagers’ movement into cities” fostered individual “patronage of multiple *òrìṣà*” amid “a gradual creolization of Yorùbá society” (Ojó 2009a, 55, 66).²¹² In such a pluralist setting, possessive and exclusive concepts like “apostasy” and “conversion”—effectively, spiritual divorce and remarriage—stood little chance, and anecdotal evidence of shrewdly tacit conservatism abounds. “Up till today in Nigeria, bishops and Islamic leaders come to the *babaláwo* for divination” (Abimbólá & Miller 1997, 7). In neo-African diasporan settings, similar phenomena have been famously called *double consciousness* (Du Bois) and *transculturation* (Ortiz), adopting elements of West Asian henotheism/monolatry not as a Hortonian teleological stepping stone towards monotheism, but—like the Babylon example—as an adaptive niche allowing strains of organic ‘paganism’—at worst, polytheism—to continue under predatory statist rule.²¹³

Christian construction of “God in Yorùbá Belief” (Ìdòwú 1962) is belied by the difference between what monotheists call *exorcism* and the pagan praxis of ecstatic possession or “adorcism” (Heusch 1962, 1965, 145ff., cf. Talbot 1926, 268, Maupoil 1943a, 402, Verger 1954b, 1966, 35, Rouget 1980, Barber 1981, Cox 2008). The gap shows the noncongruence of two types of propositional attitude. Even in European languages the predicate *believe* is polysemous between mundane and ‘religious’ uses (Bouveresse 2007) and beyond Europe “... ‘religious belief’... does not have universal applicability” (Pouillon 1979, 51). Describing a Chadian binary oracle, Adler & Zempléni (1972) consider that “[t]he most important point is not believing (*croire*) but seeing (*voir*)” (Dammann 1978, 74). In Candomblé “the question of belief is otiose” (Ryle 1988, 49). Malagasy ideas of ancestors fall outside the scope of belief statements “most of the time” (Bloch 2002, 140). A hypothetical Yorùbá sentence like #*Mo gbàgbó pé òjó ñ rẹ* (literally ‘I believe that it is/was raining’) is incoherent and early adopters of Yorùbá *Aláḍiúrù* mistook the referent of the calqued expression *ìgbàgbó* to be literacy itself, i.e. blind faith in a book (Gillies 1988, 108, cf. Asad 1983, 245, Brenner 1989, Hopkins 1999, 82).²¹⁴ Sperber’s theory of quotational *metarepresentation* can gloss *ìgbàgbó* more neatly as a propositional attitude of ‘reflective belief’ (1997), versus *imọ* ‘knowledge/techno-practical ability’ comprising plausible intuitive inferences from sensorial percepts. Ìdòwú’s enthusiastic belief that Yorùbá pagans ideate like Angloprotestants could pass muster only at a relatively permissive time when “[c]onversion to Islam and Christianity was not so menacing... since individuals were not pressed to give up their old value systems, culture and language” (Olúpòṇà 2014). Similarly, European and African folklores could accidentally align in the “Baroque mirror” of 17th-18th century Brazil, in which Gêge-Nagô *cultos de orixá* and Portuguese counter-reformation tales of *adoração dos santos* were mutually reflected (Tall 2013). In cold daylight, however, the category of religious belief consistently dissolves outside the historically bounded umbra of Abrahamic monotheism:

[T]he Christian *believes* in God, which implies the possibility of disbelief, not only dialectically but as a matter of fact. A Yorùbá finds that absurd. (S. Wenger quoted by Brockmann & Hötter 1984, 65, original italics)

But of course Yorùbá pagans do not select ‘belief’ as the defining feature of religion... (Peel 1968a, 29)

In Africa, the mystery is not ontological... The real focus of the cult is on the material aspect of the object-god. (Augé 1986, 130)

Classical Greek has no word which covers *religion* as we use the term. *Eusebia* approximates to it, but in essence it means no more than the regular performance of due worship in the proper spirit, while *hoisotes* describes ritual purity in all its aspects. The place of faith was taken [sic] by myth and ritual. These things implied an attitude rather than a conviction. (Nock 1933, 10 cited by Assmann (1997, 7)

- 211 Weber’s premise that East and West Asian ideologies irreversibly diverged seems implausible today. Once-pacific Hindu offshoots like Theravāda Buddhism in the Sinhala state (Rāhula 1974; Tambiah 1992) are not less aggressive than some violent Abrahamic cults.
- 212 In like vein, Akínjógbin speaks of “the mixing and mingling of different sections of Yorùbá-speaking peoples and the subsequent harmonization of Yorùbá culture” (1998, 5, cf. also Morton-Williams 1956, 102f., Olómòlà 1998, Ojó 2009b). To the extent this was intentional it can be described as “cultural engineering” (Ojó 2008, 353), otherwise as “integrative effects” (Barnes 2001, 124).
- 213 The obvious alternative to exclusivist *conversion* is additive *initiation* (Hubert & Mauss 1904, Evans-Pritchard 1937, Verger 1954b). It’s inconsistent for postmodern scholars to embrace Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), a Marxist critique of mass culture, while eliding its materialist premise that “the study of invented traditions cannot... expect to advance much... unless it is integrated into a wider study” of factors like “[s]ocial mobility, class conflict and the prevalent ideology” (Hobsbawm 1983, 12, 9).
- 214 Christian *faith* upshifts the feudal patron-client relation from the Holy Roman Emperor to “The Lord” (Testart 2006, 150-52). This is confirmed by Adégbolá’s literal gloss of Biblical *ìgbàgbó*, conventional *belief*, as “acceptance of what you are told” (Adégbolá 2025) i.e. obedience to what Ọja military pidgin calls “my ọgá at the top” (www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/127973-my-oga-at-the-top-oba-aiye-replaced-at-civil-defence-without-reason.html). Adégbolá also salutes “the ingenuity of the translators, with Crowther at the helm” who coined *ẹ̀sìn*, literally ‘serving/working for a master’ (cf. Abraham 1958, 591), as the Yorùbá rendering of King James’ Anglican *religion*.

It is as though Christians feel so unsure of what they declare that they have to repeat, emphatically and endlessly, what they believe *in*, to convince themselves and others that they believe *that* the world is so, rather like a child coming back home in the dark might repeat to herself “I am not afraid of the dark.” (Bloch 2002, 136 original italics)

Given the comparatively low rates of religious affiliation in some parts of East Asia, as well as the complexity of translating the word “religion” into some Asian languages, it is perhaps not surprising that relatively few people in the region say religion is “very important” to them. ...[M]any people in East Asia and Vietnam do not formally identify with a religion. ...Moreover, adults in the region often express an affinity for multiple traditions.

(Evans & al. 2024, 21, 42)

Horton rejects such ethnography altogether as woolly relativism and instead posits direct intellectual continuity between “African traditional thought and Western science” (1967), treating Africa’s superficially rapid uptake of West Asian monotheisms as a vigorous evolutionary graft onto “the indigenous supreme being” that he believes to have already existed in “concept” before the advent of jihādīc and missionary visions of omnipotence:

One final criticism of *Aláḍiḍiḍiḍi* [= Peel (1968a)] concerns the phenomenology of conversion. Despite all the fruitful things Peel has to say on this subject, he makes a serious slip when he talks of Christianity as if it were one more cult coming in alongside the existing cults of the *oríyá*. For one salient feature of Christian proselytization in Yorubáland has surely been the identification of the Christian God with the indigenous supreme being *Olórun*, and the presentation of Christianity as the ‘true’ way of contacting this being [FN4]. Indeed it would seem that missionaries all over Africa have usually striven to discover the name of the indigenous supreme being and, where successful, have then gone on to tell the people of his ‘true’ nature. Hence the African convert has not accepted an addition to the pantheon of lesser spirits. Rather, he has accepted change and development in his concept of the supreme being. Although some readers may find this point too obvious to be worth stressing, I see it as the key to further development of an intellectualist theory of conversion.

(Horton 1971, 100)

Not himself a missionary, Horton nevertheless argues rather evangelically that supreme beings and natural-scientific frameworks of explanation share some cognitive virtues, which he considers to have been more useful to participants in larger-scale social networks. So convinced was he of this speculation that he restated it intact for 20 years:

So far as the immediate external relations of his village were concerned, ...the Níké man lived in a narrow world of flux and inconstancy. At the same time, however, his view of the world was far from parochial. A great trader, he would travel considerable distances to markets of those nearby groups which happened at the time to be friendly with his own; and early records show Níké to have been the crossroads of trade routes from such distant points as *Édà* [“Adda”], *Ọkà* [“Awka”], *Bénde* and the Cross River. Such trade was kept open firstly by exogamic ties whereby members of a group were custom-bound to select their wives from a neighbouring community, and secondly by safe-conduct passes from the ubiquitous agents of the *Arù Chùkwu* oracle. Even before the advent of Colonial administration, then, the *Igbo* had, despite the narrowness of his political affiliations, a well-developed broad view of the world outside his own social group. ...It is in the above context that the imposition of a universal upon a parochial supernatural order becomes significant. For these two orders provide two distinct frames of reference within which the individual must act—the first for life within his social group, and the second for his numerous expeditions outside it. Nevertheless, though a man may regard himself as the son of a parochial *Aní* [“Earth”] of his group, he knows that the latter is ultimately a part of the universal *Aní*; and he is constantly reminded by the *éjé* in their shrines of the relation between the parochial cults and *Chùkwu*.

(Horton 1956, 26)

I suggest that the extent to which any population actively worships its high god is partly determined by the degree of its active contact with the wider world outside the microcosm. For the greater its active contact, the greater its need to take practical account of that level of theory which relates the microcosm to the wider world—i.e. the level of ideas about the high god. Again, the greater the active contact with the wider world, the greater the area of experience within the microcosm which comes to be seen, not as peculiar to it, but as part of a general human predicament. Hence the larger the number of occasions within the microcosm when people’s practical concerns force them to take active account, not of the lesser gods who are concerned with its peculiarities, but of the high god who is concerned with its universal features. Another factor which may be important in this context is the ascription/ achievement variable. Where the individual’s status is largely determined by ascription, his peculiar lot will appear to be something largely dictated by his community. Hence the ideas appropriate to the explanation of his lot will be drawn from the realm of those lesser gods who are concerned with the community and its peculiar features. On the other hand, where achievement plays a greater part, individual and community are likely to appear as partially independent variables. Here, then, explanations of individual vicissitudes may well refer, not to the parochial lesser gods, but to the high god who is concerned with the wider order of things. In the latter situation, one would expect individual worship of the high god to be far more developed than where ascription determines status.

(Horton 1962b, 139)

Where the way of life is dominated by subsistence farming and commerce is poorly developed... is likely to favor a religious life in which a great deal of attention is paid to the lesser spirits (underpinners of the microcosm), whilst very little attention is paid to the supreme being (underpinner of the macrocosm). ...However, where there is a development of factors making for wider communication (for instance, a development of long-distance trade)... [l]ess attention will be paid to the spirits, and more to the supreme being. This scheme... provides us with the basis for understanding in any given case the outcome of exposure to Islam and/or Christianity. ...The central *Igbo*, though lacking in state political institutions, have long supplemented farming with a fair amount of intercommunal trade; and it is not surprising that in their indigenous religious tradition, cults of the lesser spirits are supplemented by a cult of the supreme being. ...About three hundred years ago, however, a strikingly different situation began to develop in the south-east corner of the area. The *Arù*... became more and more deeply involved in the long-distance commerce stimulated by the Atlantic slave dealers... Over the years, moreover, their commercial prestige took on political overtones. ...Inseparable from these commercial and political developments were others of a religious nature. Most notable was the development of a cult of the supreme being far more elaborate than anything to be found elsewhere in *Igbo*land.

(Horton 1975, 220, 228f.)

For Horton’s purpose any groundless African divinity will do, but this is airy reasoning in more than one respect. Any flat-earthier ‘knows’ that the *sky* is *high*, and in contexts of authority *high* can mean *supreme*, so if long-distance trade spurs contemplation of “the macrocosm” and “the general human predicament”, such circumstance is not flatly inconsistent with “a more monolatric emphasis” and “ideas about the [sic] high god” (all extracts from the passages quoted above).²¹⁵ Less teleologically however, and better founded in neurochemistry, an origin for the ‘high’ in *high god* is suggested by *ganja* residues excavated by Arie & al. (2020) in a 9th-6th century BC stratum of the Judahite shrine of Tel Arad in historic Palestine.²¹⁶ Horton’s just-so psychological evolution, much like his “classical” Ifè apologetics (§2.8 above), burns more intellectual calories the closer it skates to the edge of circularity. Even with the benefit of time machines, the presumed mental mechanism ratcheting medieval West Africa ‘up’ from paganism to abstract theology could never be directly observed. Instead, the best available evidence for monotheism’s emergence is whatever semantic changes can be reconstructed from the etymological detritus scattered across the cultural record of historical times.²¹⁷

215 For Pythagoreans, by contrast, “Le ciel n’est pas ce qui est en haut. Le ciel est partout” [The sky is not on high, it’s in all directions] (Coccia 2016, 119) and for Catholics, ‘heaven’ is properly the plural of ‘sky’: *Pater noster qui es in caelis*/Padre nostro che sei nei cieli.

216 A reproducible experiment, courtesy of Johns Hopkins University: www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/05/26/this-is-your-priest-on-drugs.

217 Horton doesn’t even try to justify his key claim that indigenous Africans held the same interest of dominion over nature that drives “Western science”—a notion closer to Frazer and Popper, and further from Tylor and Durkheim, than Horton would willingly admit (Tambiah 1990, 91, 131; Horton 1970, 105, 1987, 1993b, cf. also Marcuse 1965; Habermas 1968; Peel 1968a, 14; Bookchin 1980).

Pave Horton, it's far from "obvious" that "the African convert"—a generic cutout assuming what was to be proved—perceived Christianity as an instance of "change and development in his [sic] concept of the supreme being" (1971, 100). Sold into Christian forced labor regimes in *Lucumí* Cuba and *Nagô* Brazil, Yorùbá speakers subsumed Jesucristo into the pagan "pantheon" by parsing human characteristics of the New Testament's chief *agonist* as insignia of the *òrìṣà* cluster that continentals call *Obàtálá* [<'king of the big courtyard, *ita lá'* (Verger 1957, 438)], *Òrìṣà Nlá* ['big *òrìṣà*'] or *Oba Òrìṣà* ['king of the *òrìṣà*'] (Ortiz 1906/1973, 129/31; Verger 1954a, 192; Bastide 1960, 366f., cf. Cabrera 1954b, 9=117. This bricolage makes sense in a division of supernatural labor where *Obàtálá* held the portfolio of physical creation but tragically blew his big chance to act in that capacity on opening night, when his initial descent to ground level snagged on an oilpalm branch. There he nodded out after improvidently imbibing a bellyful of *emu*, the tree's ambrosial, spontaneously alcoholic sap (Verger 1982, 250), only to dangle helplessly in mid air with a droopy crucified appearance. Gospel-like Yorùbá folktales of this 'white god' (*òrìṣà funfun*) tell how *Obàtálá*'s naïve purity of intent brought unearned torments into which the victim nevertheless entered with willing foreknowledge, "accepting bitter and unpleasant consequences without complaint" (Verger 1982, 259, cf. Wenger 1983, 88-93, Manfredi 2014).²¹⁸ The mutual attraction of the two supernaturals is visible in a century-old sketch of *Cristo Crucificado* planted on a Cuban *Obatalá* altar.

176

HAMPA AFRO-CUBANA



Figura 24.—Altar brujo. (De un apunte del natural)
Ortiz (1906/1973, 176/63)

In this case at least, it's excusable to wonder who 'converted' who.

In response to such counterexamples, conversion mavens may object that abrupt creole outcomes in crowded, cruel American slaveyards need not match more gradual developments in vaster, more lightly administered African colonies. However, to dismiss *santería* as mere heresy already concedes half the battle because it repeats the old puritan reproach that European Catholics are just as polytheistic as their pagan ancestors (Middleton 1729 cited by Manuel 1959, 23, Barbot 1732 cited by Sansi 2011, 32; Hislop 1862, Peel 1968a, 299). If even European churchgoers pay more heed to physical Jesus than to metaphysical *YHWH*, Horton needs to say why Africans should be analysed by different standards (cf. Boyer 2010, 36). A more distant—Martian or anthropological—observer might conclude instead that supreme beings are inherently a tough sell everywhere at all times, and that it's less informative to analyze any really existing form of Christianity or Islam according to its self-assigned doctrinal categories, than to allow the colorfully heroic characters of Jesus and Muhammad to wear the tangible identities of *òrìṣà*, each one sporting the vivid cultural characteristics of his respective localization (cf. Boyer 1996). Such a humane assessment of 'religion' was advanced already half a century ago:

Si l'on s'en tient à l'exemple des systèmes africaines, on sera tenté de donner raison à Bataille [1973, 46] lorsqu'il écrit que l'effort pour concevoir un Être Suprême a partout échoué: abstrait et lointain ou proche et manipulable, le dieu païen n'est en tout cas jamais l'équivalent de la figure simultanément intime et transcendante du destin individuel qu'a élaborée le christianisme. La différence entre monothéisme et polythéisme se situe dans le rapport de l'homme au(x) dieu(x): rapport nécessaire de reconnaissance individuelle et réciproque qui ne s'accomplit qu'au-delà de la vie dans un cas, rapport fonctionnel uniquement mis en cause par les aléas de la vie individuelle et sociale dans l'autre.

(Augé 1982, 139)²¹⁹

Considered in these terms, 9ja's commercial evangelical churches are less mono-, and more poly-, theistic than they admit. Unremarkably they evoke a standard pagan interest in this-worldly wellbeing, promoting prosperity and denouncing its abstract opposite, called 'witchcraft' in popular translation (Jenkins 2006, 91-97, 186 *fn* 6; Oppenheimer 2010).

Horton's circularity is clearest when he stipulates that "nearly all known African traditional religions feature a supreme being who is the creator and sustainer of all that is" (1964, 95). The Whig interpretation that "the monotheistic God is foreshadowed in the high gods of some primitive peoples" (Bellah 1964, 359) relies on catechistic translations of local nomenclature compiled by monotheists themselves (Parrinder 1949, 1962, Mbiti 1969, Ari'ize 1970).²²⁰ This ahistorical howler, continentally critiqued (Okot 1971, Taban 1988, Wiredu 2003, Cox 2014), is extra embarrassing for Horton to espouse, given that he later mocked Africanist theologians as "devout" (1984, 392). Metaphysician, heal thyself.

²¹⁸ Pretended omniscience tripped by earthly accident is a leitmotif of southern 9ja lore (e.g. Egharhevba 1951, 46; Manfredi 1991, 342).

²¹⁹ [Sticking to African examples, let's agree with Bataille [1973, 46] that the attempt to imagine a Supreme Being has consistently failed. Whether abstract and distant or nearby and easily influenced, a pagan god is never equivalent to Christianity's simultaneously intimate and transcendent divine figure of individual destiny. The difference between monotheism and polytheism lies in the relationship between person and god(s), on the one hand a logical link of individual and reciprocal recognition that occurs only outside of lived experience, and on the other a practical relationship activated by the hazards of individual and social life.]

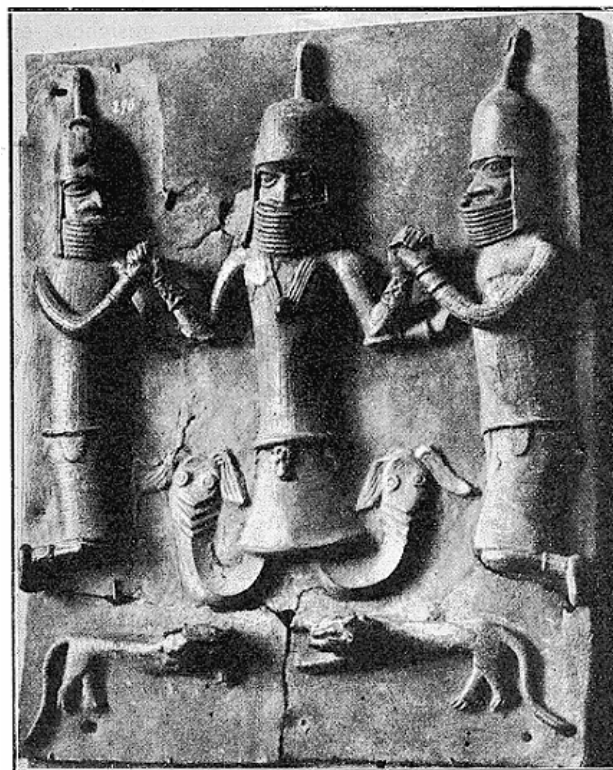
²²⁰ Parrinder-Mbiti syncretic Afro-theism persists in newagey "phenomenology" of "Ìgbo rituals and eco-spirituality" (Nwáncò 2020).

On the contrary, Verger (1966) found no evidence of a “Yorùbá high god” being recognized before Arabian influence or European contact. Even Idòwú admitted that “[t]he name of Olò.run [‘owner or personification of *òrun*’]... appears to have gained its predominating currency through Christian and Muslim impact upon Yorùbá thought” (1962, 37).²²¹ If supreme god notions nonetheless pervade Yorùbá studies, it only proves the “ambition of scholarly accounts... to construct... a map of the spiritual world which assigns to spiritual beings determinate and permanent positions in a comprehensive scheme of... hierarchical ranking (Olò.dùmarè and his ‘ministers’ in order of seniority or importance, as described by Idòwú (1962))” (Barber 1990, 314). Horton scratches the same itch in the Niger Delta when he says that Kalabari *Izòñ tamunò* [HHH] is “conceived as creator of the entire world” (1962a, 206), but his Port Harcourt colleague Alagoa objects: “In the Nembe language, as in Kalabari, the word *tamunò* means that part of a man which exists before he is born and leaves his body at death” (1964, 3). Alagoa’s correction makes the *Izòñ* phrase *opu tamunò* ‘big *tamunò*’ (cited by Horton) an uncanny parallel of Igbo *Chúkwu* (< *chí ukwu* ‘big *chí*’), for which a convincing and non-Hortonian account is at hand (cf. §1.4 above). Descriptively, *Chúkwu* became the Arù name for the town’s patron divinity by translating “the conceptual code of another culture”, namely *Abàsi Ibùm* ‘big *abàsi*’ from the neighboring Èfík trading state, whose “Ibinukpabi” oracle—known to Englishmen as “the long *jùjú*”—was instrumental to Arù slave dealers (Nwàòga 1984, 57, 60). If a Hortonian then replies *Aha! But where did the Èfikés get their own big abàsi idea from? Didn’t they trade a lot and so become cosmopolitan? the simple answer is Who cares? To dismiss the claim that supreme skygods emerge from intellect alone, it’s enough to show that at least some of them have legs and follow the money*. Horton’s theory is unfalsifiable: any part of Africa whose “indigenous religious tradition” is noticed in colonial literature is guaranteed by the time of observation to be already engaged in some kind of “intercommunal trade” if not “long-distance commerce”, so any such correlation is less informative about internal dynamics than may casually appear.

It would be miraculous indeed if material considerations did not assist “white power... in conversion to Christianity [in] Eastern Nigeria” (Ifekà-Moller 1974, cf. Èkèché 1972), but Horton & Peel refuse commonsense causality in favor of their favored scenario that “monolatry” is attracted to “weakening microcosmic boundaries” (1976, 484). Lacking historical or psychological evidence for such linkage leaves only logical necessity, but the logic in question is illogical:

Mais, s’il est bien certain que l’interprétation des événements individuels, familiaux, villageois ou à l’échelle du groupe, de la chefferie ou du royaume peut mettre en œuvre des principes d’explication d’ampleur variable, il ne s’ensuit pas qu’il y ait une correspondance terme à terme entre la nature des maux, l’intensité ou le nombre des gens atteints et la situation «hiérarchique» des entités spirituelles ainsi mises en cause. Aucun panthéon n’a l’allure d’une pyramide.²²²
(Augé 1982, 138)

The Èdó example complicates Horton’s framework by introducing a concept of supremacy that’s oceanic, not atmospherical. Around the 15th century, when the Èdó capital was literally being entrenched behind huge concentric earthworks called *ìya* (Connah 1967, Darling 1976, 1984), the earth-sky dialectic was mediated by the ritualisation of salt water, incarnated in the *Ọba*-*Ọlokún* ritual dyad. As frequently noted, it’s conventional for the *Ọba* to move in public with each arm supported by a courtier as if his legs are ill-suited to locomotion on land, and the same gait is the main stylistic trait of *Ọlokún* dance. Some artistic representations go further to replace the *Ọba*’s downward-pointing legs by upward-pointing catfish. Both traits are illustrated in this circa 16th-century cuprous palace plaque, showing vivid lift-off with real human assist, not astral Odùduwàn descent on a ‘celestial’ string.²²³



Luschan (1901, 25, cf. also Read & Dalton 1898, plate 18.2; Bradbury 1967, 32)

Proposed Portuguese transmission of this “fish-legged” motif (Drewal 2008, 43f. in reply to Fraser 1972) would only reinforce *Ọmọ n’Ọba N’Èdó*’s role as dryland representative of *Ọlokún*’s “new cult of sea wealth” (Belasco 1980, 115)

- ²²¹ Similarly, Melzian cites circumstantial evidence including diverse crucifix and rosary motifs in incorporated in state icons, suggesting that the Èdó *Ọsanóbua* “high god” cult appeared “as a later outcome of the early Portuguese missionary activity” (1937, 148).
- ²²² [But granting that interpretation of events affecting an individual, a family, a village or an entire group, whether chiefdom or kingdom, could deploy explanatory principles of varying scale, from this it doesn’t follow there should be a one-to-one correspondence between the nature of the ill, its intensity or the number of people affected and the ‘hierarchical’ arrangement of supernatural entities held responsible for it. No pantheon resembles a pyramid.]
- ²²³ Cf. “any goddam church, any goddam mosque, any goddam celestial including Serafoom and Cheraboom” (Aníkúlà.pò Kù.tì 1977).

channelling Bradbury 1959, 1967).²²⁴ However, even accepting that the rubber-leg trope was launched as a Feuerbachian reflection of burgeoning prosperity from ocean trade, Ólokún hegemony is not fully exogenous. At least since the 17th century, Èdó inhabitants have regarded the sea not just as a supernatural force or a tutelary divinity in the henotheistic sense of *primus inter pares*, but as the ancestral realm itself, supplementing or taking over the previously recognized location of departed humans underground:

The natives of Benin have all a singular veneration for the sea, and use [sic] to swear by it in matters of concern. They celebrate a feast on a certain appointed day in the year, that it may prove a beneficent deity to their country at all times; and they as ridiculously [sic] imagine the state of bliss or torment in the other life will be in the sea.
(Barbot 1688-1732, 375)

Ólokún is the only deity who must be appeased in order to guide and accept the dead on the way to Èrínbín. As he goes to Èrínbín the dead travels through *Ókenalubode* (The hill on which one must not fall down) at [the seaport of] Ughòtón, which is thought to be the final place of departure from this earth.
(Izevbigie 1978, 98f.)

Ùrhobo—the most likely transmission gate for the 8-bit oracle from Ìgbo to Èdó, cf. §§1.3.3 and 2.4 above—tells an origin myth about the so-called Lower Niger copper-alloy casts deploying a unique concept: *Úrbié Enù* ‘the celestial river [sic]’ (Foss 2004, 47, diacritics in Ukere 1986). This seems to be a creative fusion between the common skygod motif and the specifically 9ja-deltan doctrine that “*Èdjo n’ame rhé...* ‘Spirits come from water’” (Foss 2004, 47).²²⁵

Thus the sky was not the only direction where medieval 9ja horizons could expand, and this finding encourages in turn more local explanations for medieval Ifè’s skyward turn than monolatric elective affinity to global markets *à la* Max Weber via Robin Horton. The Ùrhobo and Èdó examples make plausible that the Ifè developments too were as much borrowed as invented spontaneously. The duplicated skychain motif of Òrúnmìlā’s and Oòduà’s descents to ground is not isolated in the neighborhood, rather it resembles “*èghan Tsoèdè*—the ‘chain of Tsoèdè’... the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom’... the mediator of the [sky] god Sòkó” (Weise 2003, 283, cf. Banfield 1914, 401, Nadel 1935, 278).²²⁶ Nupe Sòkó is said to derive in turn from Igálá (Nadel 1935b, 129, cf. 1935a, 1942, 73, Eccles 1962, 25) and hypothetical southwestward movement of this metal relic together with its dedicated orature would parallel the best available conjecture for the realistic source of the two dozen “Ifè” copper-alloy casts (cf. §2.9 above). By similar considerations, the mysterious and ambiguous presence in Ifè of the cult-less Olókún divinity, cheek by jowl with abstract Olókún, transparently reflects the geographic slot of Ifè town in between the much larger Èdó and Kákánda culture zones.

That the *babaláwos*—acute technicians of the duplex 4-bit oracle—led Ifè’s radical skyward reorientation is beyond dispute, as is their ongoing role in Yorùbá accommodation to jihādi-Islamic and colonizing Christian ideologues:

The *babaláwo[s]* sought to incorporate material from the world religions within their own cosmology. They did do so not just for pragmatic reasons, to enhance the flexibility and appeal of their own system, but from reasons of conviction. For they were intellectuals...
(Peel 1990, 350)

*Symbolic violence*_{af}—“power which manages to impose semantic relations... as legitimate while concealing underlying coercive relations... [and] adds its own force to theirs” (Bourdieu & Passeron 1970, 18, cf. Boyer 2020b)—obtains “the consent of the dominated to their [own] domination” (Godelier 1978, 176).

From the stupidity and confusion of the people brought about by the trickery of priestcraft, despotism, which despises both, draws for itself the advantage of undisturbed domination and the fulfilment of its desires and caprices, but is itself at the same time this same dullness of insight, the same superstition and error.
(Hegel 1807, 490/1977, 330 §542)²²⁷

Ifá is suited to this task by its status as a “pedagogical authority” (Bourdieu & Passeron 1970, 22). When *Ifá*’s urban specialists launched a renaissance of cosmopolitan “self-fashioning” (cf. Greenblatt 1980), detaching rites from earthly ancestors and inscribing supernatural signifiers on the blank slate of ‘heaven’—the new meaning of *òrun*—they paralleled Gramsci’s organic “southern intellectuals” who “mediated between the great landholders and the peasantry” (Brennan 2001, 176, 2006, 270). That’s how their imaginative creature Òrúnmìlā, poetic personification of *Ifá*, pre-qualified as a “precursor of Christ” (Brivio 2008, 247, citing Peel 1990, cf. Manfredi 2014). Continued inculcation of Òrun-ism by middle players in the 9ja game in diverse *Wá-ṣó-bì-án* guises prolongs the “long conversation... of formalized, ritual communication... dominated by the past in the present” (Bloch 1977, 287, 289), stretching out a timescale of legitimacy beyond the reach of collective fact-checking. As in other historical expansions of powerful text platforms, whether fully written (West Asia), mainly oral with visual mnemonics (West Africa, *pace* Goody 1986) or dual-channel (South Asia), the “strategic” (Pollock 2006, 499) state capture of ideology by medieval *babaláwos* entailed that “national memory was implanted on a base of ritual oblivion” (Sand 2009, 189, cf. Cohn 1994, 76f.). Nevertheless, as sampled in the foregoing pages, sufficient indirect evidence subsists, widely dispersed in public domain, to recover a more plausible sequence of events by applying inferences of comparativist prehistory *à la* Darwin and Schleicher.

Naturalistic rethinking is of more than antiquarian interest. Justified disenchantment with Weberian *Entzauberung*—enlightenment—and the poisoned wake of world-scale capital accumulation doesn’t require in response a postmodern relativist embrace of world ‘religions’ which, *pace* Gould, thrive as zones of mental shelter from the natural-science glare. Enough has been described above about Niger-Benue artisans of the late *Medioaevum*, working at the dawn of modern times, to recognise their empiricist orientation applying ancestral habitus to immediate projects. What separates that era from today is less Gellner’s unique, self-satisfied cognitive break from a “coercive” past (1988) than a negatively instructive, coercive global detour fueled by cruel forced labor and toxic fossil carbon (Williams 1944, Malm 2016) such that “crude expropriation of wealth (resources and labor) through brute force yielded a quantum jump in the capital available for investment in European production” (Abu-Lughod 1989, 372 *fn* 2). The anthropocene’s new, material niche in turn has nurtured illusory adventures of national consciousness and the cognitive hubris of economic individualism in its peculiar Protestant form, but more plausible paths of human activity can be discerned.

²²⁴ Belasco assumes “the founding of the Ólokún cult by Óba Ohèn probably in the 15th century...” and concludes that “Ólokún worship was established prior to European landing” (1980, 78f.) but the conjectural date could easily be another example of how Egharhevba’s inflated oral chronology anticipated medieval events on the order of “a hundred years” (Bradbury 1959, 286). According to Izevbigie, “There is no doubt that communal Ólokún worship began in Ughòtón” (1978, 282), consistent with Kramer’s dynamic analysis as an “interpretation of the alien by mimesis” in “epochs of cultural intermingling” (1993, 250, 253).

²²⁵ To the extent ascertainable from available comparanda, Ùrhobo *énù* ‘up/atmosphere’ has no Èdó(id) etymology but could well be borrowed from *enu*, the synonymous form of northwestern Ìgbo (= *enu* in eastern Ìgbo varieties).

²²⁶ Sad to say, the modern tokens of this sacred relic may literally be recycled Portuguese slaving shackles (Nadel 1935b, 130).

²²⁷ [...aus der Dummheit und Verwirrung des Volks durch das Mittel der betrügenden Priesterschaft, beide verachtend, den Vorteil der ruhigen Beherrschung und der Vollführung seiner Lüste und Willkür zieht, zugleich aber dieselbe Dummheit der Einsicht, der gleiche Aberglaube und Irrtum ist.]

3.1 Appendix. *Áfa* simulation [audio] by *díbbà* Chúkwuùma, Àgbádaàna, Nri, August 1977²²⁸

Each numbered line was spoken after a single cycle (throw) of two 8-bit chains, yielding four 4-bit arrays which can be labeled ABCD from right to left. In principle six 8-bit words can be read from each throw, although in practice fewer can be called, and with some mutations such that in the course of 31 throws in this text, ten basic patterns occur:

“AB, BC, AC, CD, BD, AD.” [= the full parse]
 “AB, BC, BD, CD, AD.” [alt.-a]
 “AB, BC, AC, CD, AD.” [alt.-b]
 “AB, AC, AD, BD, BC.” [alt.-c]
 “AB, BC, BD, CD, AC.” [alt.-d]
 “AB, AC, BC, CD, AD.” [alt.-e]
 “AB, AC, BC, CA, CD.” [alt.-f]
 “AB, CA, CD, DB, CB.” [alt.-g]
 “AB, CB, DB, CA, DA.” [alt.-h]
 “AB, CA, DA, DB” [alt.-i]

Identical arrays in sequence are called X-*námbo* or *námbo* (double-X) or X-*náátò* (triple X). (Quadruples did not occur.) Each pair of distinct array names is pronounced with the normal derived tones of a X + Y genitive construction meaning ‘X of Y’, except that LL+L is unperturbed in line (14), and metalinguistic L tone appears in (23). Consonant substitutions are marked <in angle brackets> and annotated as [x] → [y].

1. Àká Ọra, Ọrá Àwụ, Àká Àwụ, Àkwụ Otúle, Ọrá Ótule, Àká Ótule.
2. Òtúle námbo, Òtúle Obi, Óbí Óse, Òtúle Óse. [AC=BC, AD=BD]
3. Ọrá námbo, Ọrá Ète, Ógbú Ète. [alt.-a truncated AD, A=B]
4. Óbí Atúrụkpà, Àtúrụkpà Áka, Àká Ọyeri, Àtúrụkpà Ọyeri. [truncated AD], [g] → [y]
5. Óbí Óse, Ósé Ọkala, Ósé È<k>e, Ọkalá Ète, Ógbú È<k>e. [t] → [k], [b] → [gb]
6. Ìjíte Áka, Àká Óhu, Òhú námbo, Ìjíte Óhu. [alt.-b, BC=BD, AC=AD]
7. Àtúrụkpà Áka, Àká Ọ<y>eri, Àká Ógute, Ọgori Ogúte. [truncated AD], [g] → [y]

[hits tortoise shell once with *òfò* stick]

8. Àká Òtúle, Àká Ète, Àká Obi, Òtúle Obi, Ógbú È<k>e. [alt.-c], [b] → [gb]
9. Àtúrụkpà Óse, Ósé Àkwụ, Ósé È<k>e, Àkwụ Ete, Àtúrụkpà Àkwụ. [alt.-d], [t] → [k]
10. Òhú Ọgori, Ọgori Ọkala, Òhú Ọkala, Ọkalá È[k]e, Ọgori È<k>e, Òhú È<k>e. [t] → [k]

[hits double *ògèné* bell repeatedly with *òfò* stick]

11. Óbí Akwụ, Àkwú Ọra, Ọrá Ùrúrù, Àkwụ Urúrù, Óbí Urúrù. [dropped AC]
12. Òdí Óhu, Òdí Ọkala, Óhu námbo, Óhú Ọkala, Òdí Ọkala. [alt.-e plus extra AD, AB=AC]
13. Èté Óhu, Òhú Ète, Ète náábò, Ète náátò. [alt.-b, A=C=D]
14. Ète Atúrụkpà, Ète A<hw>ụ, Àtúrụkpà Àhwụ, Àkwụ Ete, Àkwú Óhu. [alt.-f], [kw] → [hw]
15. Òdí Àtúrụkpà, Òdí Ète, Òdí Óse. [alt.-c truncated last two]
16. Àtúrụkpà Ète, Àtúrụkpà A<y>ári, Àgári Ọ<r>a, Èté Ọha, Àtúrụkpà Ọ[r]a. [dropped BC], [g] → [y], [h] → [r]
17. Ète A[hw]ụ, Àgári À<hw>ụ, Àkwú Óhu, Àgári Óhu. [alt.-a truncated AD], [kw] → [hw]
18. Àká naàbo, Àká Ọbala, Ọbalá Óse, Àká Óse, Àká Óse. [A=A]
19. Àgári Obi, Àgári Áka, Ọkalá Áka, Óbí Áka. [alt.-e, reversed CD, truncated AD]
20. Àká À<hw>ụ, Àká naàbo, Àká Ọ<y>eri, Àkwú Áka [alt.-d, A=C], [kw] → [hw], [g] → [y]
21. Àtúrụkpà Óhu, Òhú Àkwụ, Àwú Ọbala, Àtúrụkpà Ọbala. [alt.-b dropped BD]
22. Ùrúrù Óhu, Ùruru Ọkala, Ọkalá Ète, Òhú Ète, Ùrúrù Ète. [dropped BC]
23. Àgári Ògúte, Ìjíte Ọbala, Ọbala Odí, Ìjíte Odí, Àgári Odí. [dropped AC]

[laughs theatrically]

24. Ìjíte Ótule, Òtúle Ọ<y>eri, Òtúle Ọkala, Ọgeri Ọkala, Ìjíte Ọkala. [alt.-b], [g] → [y]
25. Ọkalá Ọbala, Òhú Ọkala, Óhú Ùrúrù, Ùruru Ọbala, Òhú Ọbala. [alt.-g]
26. Àká Óhu, Òhú Ọkala, Àká Ọkala, Ọkalá Óhu, Òhú námbo. [dropped BD]
27. Óbí Ọbala, Àká Ọbala, Àtúrụkpà Ọbala, Àká Obi, Àtúrụkpà Óbi, Àtúrụkpà Ọbala [alt.-h repeating DB?]
28. Àká Ọkala, Ọkala Otúle, Òtúle Ọgeri, Àká Ótúle. [alt.-d dropped BD].
29. Ọrá Á[y]ari, Ọgeri Ọrá, Àtúrụkpà Ọrá, Ọgeri A<y>ári. [alt.-i], [g] → [y]
30. Ùrúrù Àhwụ, Ùruru Atúrụkpà, Àtúrụkpà Otúle, Ùruru Otúle, Àhwụ Otúle. [dropped BC]
31. Òhú Ése, Àtúrụkpà Óhu, Ósé Á<y>ari, Òhú Á<y>ari, Àtúrụkpà Á<y>ari. [dropped BC, reordered], [g] → [y]

[hits tortoise shell with *òfò* stick]

32. Ònyé bù Okéréké bù ndị à? Ndí Okéréké dịkwa!
 Who are these So-and-So family? So-and-So family are indeed present!

33. Òkéréké kéné òfufe! Kèdì ikénnga gí?
Mr. So-and-So should greet by worshipping! Where is your *ikénnga*?
34. Ò sí nà ó nwèrè ife jídeni gí... ñke ñdì ụdò... tògbó yá nà nkí tì!
It then says something is holding you... relating to the people at home... causing suffering!
35. ...gwá m ife ọ bù, kà m gwa Òkéréké.
...tell me what it is, so that I can tell Mr. So-and-So.
35. Ò sí nà ọ bù ñdụ mílí, yá ndị dī nà mílí, ife a kwadobe nà mílí.
He says it is the ones of water, it's those which are in the water, something kept in water.
36. Nà ọ bya nà-enyè gí ife ị gà-iji ebú ife ọhụ áwụsị.
That he will come and give you what you will use to pour the thing away.
37. Nà í me nyá, ị mé echí.
That you should do it tomorrow.
38. Nà anyí gà-èjì égó, gbákọsị ifé, jèè nà mílí, wánye yá.
That we will use money, assemble everything, go in the water, submerge it in.
39. Yá bù, é were ụbọsị nwerò me Eké jee nyá, ọ dīghị mmá.
That is, if you go and do that on any other day than Èké (the main market and ritual day), it is not good.
40. Kèé egó jee mezi na, ị gà-afụ ya afụ, ị gà-afụ yá, nà ife kwụụ ọtọ, ife na-úzọ ñkáná, n'úzọ áka èkpè. Yá bù é mesịa, ọ mé gíní? Ọ má-èrù ákà. N'ime ife à, ị mé égo.
If you divide money go and invest in it, you will surely see it standing on the left side. Then, what it is doing? It will not be too large. Then inside this thing, you put the money.
41. Ị ríjuo afọ [g]ụ, àrụ adùá gí mmá, ị dī ka ị nwèzína uchè.
If you have eaten belly full and your body feels OK, you still ought to think further!
42. Ị nwete ife ụmụáká gà ná-èrì? Ọ ọ gà-adị mmá. Ụmụáká na-èrì-ifé, mà nwóké mà nwàanya í nwèrè. Fàà ná-èrìjuo afọ.
Have you got what the children will be eating? [Then] it will be good. Children need something to eat, whether you have boys or girls. They just keep on eating until their bellies are full.
43. Òkéréké mà gí eména jì ife? Nà ádì ife a dī ekwé, kà úrúu madị? Ónye eména jì ife, àrụ adị ekwé yá. Òkéréké wèré nzu bàá!
Mr. So-and-So, shouldn't you have things? That there is anything that is more appropriate than human profit? If someone should not have things, his body will not agree. Mr. So-and-So crumble chalk (as a sacrifice).
44. Nà ọ bù íjé tère na ị byà nà bé m, wèé gbagha ife dī etu à. Màna kwó aká ọtọ màka Chínàékè!
It's a long journey you came to my place and started doing something like this. Raise up your open hands to the Sky God.

[side discussion between Chúkumà and Àkụnné]

45. Ífe m nà-ekwú, díbyà m nà-emé, ọ màrà m amá, nà mụ asàtara ya asatá, nà ó dùlégbu ányị, onye ọ màrà, o mébe.
What I'm saying, the oracle I practice, it suits me, I've mastered it thoroughly, it has guided us through, someone it suits, practices [it].
46. “Ète Akwụ” bù ñnekwu ọkụkụ, ọ dīrọkwa nyá? “Ète Akwụ” ñnekwu ọkụkụ.
Ète Akwụ is [signifies] a big hen, isn't it so? Ète Akwụ [is] a big hen,
47. “Òghorì Ète”, áwọ ya árụ.
Òghorì Ète [means] s/he has a stomach ache.
48. “Òdí Òsé”, íwe, “Àtúrụkpá Òsé” ájì ohwú.
Òdí Òsé [is] quarrel, Àtúrụkpá Òsé is a piece of coarse wrapper cloth.
49. “Ùrúru námbo” úgwó. “Èté Òsé”, íyí a gà-àn ú.
Double Ùrúru [means] debt; Èté Òsé [means] an oath that to be sworn [drunk].
50. “Àkwú Àká”, Ñkwó, èvínì.
Àkwú Àká [means] Ñkwó [day], a ram.
51. “Àká Òtúre”, ọhwó.
Àká Òtúre [means] an ọfọ lineage staff i.e. the ancestors.
52. “Àkwú Ìjíte”, ụnò.
Àkwú Ìjíte [means] household.
53. “Àkwú Òhú” bù chí. “Àkwú Ùrúru” yá bù nwá.
Àkwú Òhú is the chí life-force. Àkwú Ùrúru, that is a child.
54. “Ọrá Obì”, ọbí bya.
Ọrá Obì [means] a visitor.
55. “Àká naàbo”, há nà-abya.
Àká naàbo [means] they are coming.

Comparison of 4-bit array names and associated information from oracle localizations across 5 historical zones

[Victor Manfredi](#)

African Studies Center, Boston University

zone A					zone B					zone C					zone D					zone E				
<i>Ifá</i>					<i>“Agbigba”</i>					<i>Ìba</i>					<i>Áfá</i>					<i>Khet’t er remel</i> (‘sand-writing’ of literate Arabs)				
i	ii	<i>gloss of doubled array</i>	iii	iv	i	ii	iii	<i>gloss of single array</i>		i	ii				i	ii	iii	<i>gloss of single array</i>		i	ii	iii	iv	<i>gloss of single array</i>
◇◇◇◇	Ogbè	(1) good visitor	Gbè	♂	[Oṣika]	(1) [Ṣikan]	(6) [Shi]	(1) leg		Ógbì	(1/5) Ogbi	(1)			Óbì/Ógbù	(11) Obi	Èbí	(5) open door= <i>e</i>		(5/16)	♂	(7) (4) (1)		tarik ‘road’
◆◆◆◆	Ọyẹ́kú	(2) longevity/good journey/wives	Yẹ́kú	♀	Oyẹ́ku	(2) Eyako	(5) Kum	(16) crisis		Àkó	(2/6) Ako	(5)			À(k/h)wù	(3) Akwù	Ọyẹ́kwu/Ákwù	(13) meeting= <i>e</i>		(16/5)	()	(16) (6) (2)		jemāh ‘assembly’
◆◇◇◆	Ìwòrì	(3) children; ending of good luck	(W)óli	♂	Ogori	(7) Gori	(8) G(y)iri	(8) stomach trouble		Òghoi	(3/2) Oghori	(10)			Ògori/Ọyeri	(2) Ogoli	Ògòli	(11) 4-legged animal= <i>e</i>		(11/10)	♂	(8) (3) (5)		ijitima ‘unity, meeting’
◇◆◆◇	Èdì/Òdí	(4) bad visitor/avoid journey	Dí	♀	Oji	(8) Eji	(7) [Nwa]	(9) death		Òdín	(4/1) Edi/Odi	(9)			Òdí	(10) []	Òjì/Òdí	(10) stomach		(10/11)	♀	(11) (11) (6)		ocleh ‘deception’
◇◆◆◆	Ọ̀bàrà	(7) coming of good luck	Ab(á)là	♂	Ọ́bara	(4) Bara	(15) Mbara	(15) annoyance		Ọ̀kan	(6/11) Ọ́kanran	(4)			Ọ̀bala	(7) Ọ́karaọ	Ọ̀bàlà	(2) blood sacrifice		(2/3)	()	(12) (12) (3)		lahyān ‘bearded person’
◆◆◆◇	Ọ̀kànràn	(8) accident; honor	Aklán/Akàná	♀	Ọ́kọ́na	(3) Kana	(16) Gina	(4) silence/dark skin		Ọ̀(v)ba	(5/12) Ọ́(v)bara	(6)			Ọ̀kala	(1) Ọ́bara	Ọ̀kọ̀nọ̀/Ọ̀kàlà	(8) blood sacrifice		(8/13)	♀	(13) (10) (4)		nekys ‘reversal’
◇◇◆◆	Ìròsùn	(5) poverty	Lósò	♂	Orosun	(15) Rusu	(1) Lusu	(14) illness		Ọ̀gháé	(8/4) E/Aghare	(3)			Ùrúrù	(5) Ègali	Òlòrù	(9) laughter= <i>e</i>		(9/12)	()	(10) (5) (16)		nousra el khārijah ‘victory leaving’
◆◆◇◇	Ọ̀wọ̀nrín	(6) longevity; slander	Wọ̀lín/Wẹ̀lé	♀	Ọ́ga	(16) Ega	(2) [Chiyong]	(3) woman		Òrúùhu	(7/3) Urhur(h)u	(7)			Àgárí/Àyári	(13) Uhu	Ègálí	(12) machete		(12/9)	♀	(9) (2) (15)		nousra el dākhilah ‘victory coming’
◇◇◇◆	Ọ̀gúndá	(9) sudden trouble; double wealth	Gùdá	♂	Ogunta	(14) Guta	(11) Kura	(13) fame/conciliation		Ọ̀há	(10/15) Ọ́rha	(2)			Ìjíte/Ọ̀gúte	(9) Oha	Ogwuta/ẹ̀/Èjítà	(14) youngest son		(13/8)	♀	(15) (14) (8)		atabah el khārijah ‘outer threshold’
◆◇◇◇	Ọ̀sá	(10) difficulties in work	Sá	♀	Osa	(13) Esa	(12) Saa	(2) man/‘idol’		Ìghítan	(9/16) Ighite	(8)			Ọ̀rá	(15) Ijite/Ogute	Ọ̀rá	(3) elder’s walking stick		(3/2)	(♂)	(14) (13) (7)		atabah el dākhilah ‘inner threshold’
◇◇◆◇	Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀	(14) prosperity despite enemies	Lẹ̀tẹ̀	♀	Irẹ̀tẹ̀	(10) Etia	(14) Lete	(6) misfortune		Ètúrẹ̀	(12/13) Erhurẹ̀	(12)			Ète/Èke	(8) Oture	Ọ̀lẹ̀tẹ̀/Ètè	(1) fire running forward		(1/4)	♂	(2) (7) (13)		gandele ‘solid’
◇◆◇◇	Òtú(ṛ)á	(13) peace and consensus	Túlá	♂	Otura	(9) Turia	(13) Toro	(7) delay		Ète	(11/14) Ete/ʔEke	(13)			Òtúre	(12) Ete	Òtúlá/ẹ̀	(16) loud noise= <i>e</i>		(14/7)	♂	(1) (8) (14)		naki el khadd ‘beardless’
◆◆◆◆	Òtúrúpọ̀n	(12) accept advice	Trúkẹ̀	♀	Ọ́taru	(6) Rakpan	(9) Matpa/e	(10) elder woman		Èká	(16/10) Eka	(15)			Àtúrụ̀kpà	(16) Eka	Átúnúkà	(4) elder woman= <i>e</i>		(4/1)	♀	(3) (16) (11)		bayādh ‘white color’
◆◇◆◆	Ìkà	(11) health and prosperity	Ká	♂	Oyinkan	(5) Yikan	(10) Mishpa/e	(11) dark skin		Èrhóxuà	(13/9) Erhokpo/a	(14)			Àká	(4) Ètúrụ̀kpà	Èká	(7) young woman= <i>e</i>		(7/14)	♂	(4) (1) (12)		homra ‘red color’
◇◆◆◆	Ọ̀sẹ̀	(15) good wife; journey/prosperity	Chẹ̀	♂	Ọ́kin	(11) Arikin	(4) K(y)e	(5) victory		Òhún	(15/8) Ophu	(16)			Òsé	(6) Ohu	Òché	(6) unearthed/uncovered		(6/15)	♀	(6) (15) (10)		cabdh el khārijī ‘outgoing arrow’
◆◆◆◇	Òfún	(16) share with friends; be alert	Fú	♀	Ofun	(12) Efu	(3) [Kapla]	(12) light skin		Òsé	(14/7) Ose	(11)			Òhú	(4) Ose	Òfú	(15) compliant person		(15/6)	♀	(5) (9) (9)		cabdh el dākhil ‘incoming arrow’

Last updated 28 August 2014. Posted at [people.bu.edu/manfredi/4bit-ArraySpreadsheet.pdf](#). For cited references, see [people.bu.edu/manfredi/Ifa-AfaNri.pdf](#). The fullest available comparison of 8-bit wglossaries from zones B/C/D is collated in [people.bu.edu/manfredi/8bitSemanticKey.pdf](#).

Notes. Left side of transcription = top of array; ◇ = concave up, ◆ = concave down, corresponding to single vs. double line in *yanrìn títẹ̀* ‘sand-writing’. Omitted here is Èfík “Efa”, briefly mentioned by Talbot (1912, 274) as well as Southern African “four tablet divination” (Binsbergen 1996, 21*f*) which shows no resemblance (other than the use of binary numerology) to the oral Niger-Benue systems in Zones **A - D**, and only faint similarity to the literate Arabic systems in Zone **E**.

Graph mutation in Zone C and Zone D-ii: all asymmetric arrays rotate 180° with respect to their counterparts in Zone **A**, despite the impression given by Armstrong’s chart (1964, 139). Emọvọn notes that this flip is due to explicit adoption of a perspective “as if the reading was done from the side of the client sitting opposite the diviner” (1984, 4), although the matter is more complex because even rotated arrays are nevertheless read from the oraclist’s right to left, just as obtains in the nonrotated zones.

[A-i] Ọyọ (Abímbólá 1976), listed in the order recorded in Òmu-Ìlọrín (Clarke 1939, 252) as well as in “Ifẹ̀, Ìlẹ̀ṣà, Èkìtì and Ìgbómìnà” (Bascom 1969a, 47). A variant order of **[A-i]**, recorded in “Òndó and Bínì [=È̀dó]”, shifts *Ìká/È̀ká* to final position (Ìbié 1986, 65). **[A-ii]** is the order “primarily associated with Lagos, Òdè Rẹ̀mọ̀... and the provinces of Abẹ̀ókúta and Ìbàdàn” plus Cuba and Brazil, called by Bascom “the dominant pattern” (1969a, 47; cf. 1961, 1966). **[A-iii]** also occurs in Nàgó and eastern Gbè, for which **[A-iii]** gives Àgbómẹ̀ names (Maupoil 1943a, 414*f*. plus variants from Trautmann 1940 and Herskovits 1938, 210*f*., cf. also Lóngé 1983, 30-33). Glosses of double arrays (= *ojú odù* ‘major *odù*’) from Clarke (1939, 255). Trautmann, Maupoil (1943a, 430-572) and Abímbólá (1976, 30*f*) list more detailed semantics of single names, based on folk etymologies, associated narratives or other mnemonics. **[A-iv]** lists a gendering of arrays as reported by Hébert (1961, 152 citing Johnson 1899, Maupoil 1943a, 414-16 and Alápini 1952). The Ajá-speaking variant of *Áfá* **[A-ii]** demotes *Ká* to its **[A-i]** position: “*Gbe, Yẹ́ku, Wólí, Dì, Loso, Anlọẹ̀, Ábla, Akla, Guda, Sa, Trukpe, Tu(mi)la, Lẹ̀tẹ̀, Ka, Tṣẹ̀, Fu*” (Kligue[h] 2001, 205, 2011b, unreliable diacritics), whereas a nearby Èdè-speaking tradition has the **[A-i]** order (Spieth 1911, 201*f*) and yet a different order is reported nearby: *Gbe, Yẹ́ku, Wólí, Dì, Loso, Ọ̀yọ̀lì, Ábla, Akla, Guda, Sa, Ka, Trukpe, Tula, Lẹ̀tẹ̀, Tṣẹ̀, Fu* (Surgy 1981, 43).

[B-i] Yàgbà-Yorùbá (Bascom 1969, 7 no tones, citing Ògúnbiyí 1952). **[B-ii]** Nupe (Ọ́báyẹ́mí 1983, no diacritics); Nadel (1954, 41) gives a different order. **[B-iii]** Angas, West Chadic (Danfulani 1995, 81*f*., 195, no diacritics, noncognates in [square brackets]), individual 4-bit glosses included.

[C-i] È̀dó (names from Egharhevba 1936, 7-10, tones from Melzian 1937, 137). The first ordering is from Egharhevba (1936, 7-10, 10-39), who notes a variant with *Òsé* (13), *Òbún* (14), *È̀rhóxuà* (15); the second ordering is from Melzian (1937, 137); Emọvọn (1984, 5) gives yet a third order. **[C-ii]** Ùrhobo (Nabofa & Elugbe 1981, inconsistent transcription, no tones, significance of ordering not stated). Similar nomenclature occurs in Ìsókó *Èva* (Peek 1982, 189 no tones). BK1 tonemarking convention in È̀dó: no mark = same as previous mark.

[D-i] Ǹri-Igbo (Ọ̀nwẹ̀jìọ̀gwù 1997, no diacritics, significance of order not stated). Revised transcription based on 1977 recording of *dìbì*à Chúkumà at Águ-Ukwu Ǹri (= Appendix of [people.bu.edu/manfredi/Ifa-AfaNri.pdf](#)). **[D-ii]** Ǹsùká-Ìgbo (Shelton 1965, unreliable diacritics, no ordering given, ◇◆◆◇ not named). BK1 tonemarking convention in Ìgbo: no mark = same as previous mark. **[D-iii]** is from the “*Ifa-anwa*” (seed-casting) method of Ígàlà (Boston 1974, no tones), significance of order not stated, approximate tones and alternate names from Armstrong (1964, 139 via Bradbury *p.c*). Boston also documents “*Ifa-ebutu*” (sand-writing), a less specialized oracle which resembles “*Ifa-anwa*” substantially, not only in the names of the 4-bit signs but also to a lesser extent in semantics: seven out of the sixteen simplex “*Ifa-anwa*” glosses—those suffixed with “=*e*” in the table above—closely match the glosses reported by Boston (1974, 359) for their “*Ifa-ebutu*” counterparts.

[E-i] Before the slash is given a “mathematical” order attributed to the Berber author Ez-Zenati, also found in Porto Novo (Maupoil 1943b, 5-6, cited by Hébert (1961, 155 and 156, *fn.* 1), in Chad (Jaulin 1957 cited by Hébert 1961, 156, *fn.* 2) and in “Atimi” collected at M̀ẹ̀kọ̀, Nigeria (Bascom 1969, 8 citing Monteil 1932, 89*f*., no tones). Trautmann (1940, 151). The order after the slash is obtained by reversing the parity of each bit (Hébert 1961, 182). The genders are given by Ez-Zenati (Maupoil 1943b, 61). The **[E-ii]** order was collected in Mauritania (Trancart 1938, via Hébert 1961, 150). **[E-iii]** is from Grande Comore (Hébert 1961, 146 who gives three alternate orders from Madagascar, cf. also Trautmann 1940, 153). The **[E-iv]** order and the Arabic glosses are from Darfur (Tūnisī 1845 via Hébert 1961, 121, 188*ff*). Jaulin (1957, 1966) documents semantic shifts in Chad.

Áfà (Ñrì) n=256		Èha (Ñsúkà) n=12	Èpha (Ûrhobo) n=64, Ñrì match=35%	Ìha (Èdó) n=256	Eba (Nupe) n=32	“Ìfa anwa” (Ígálà) n=20, Ñrì match=50%	Ìfá (Ilé-Ifẹ̀) n=58 Ñrì match=31% Èdó match=26% (nn=47)	Fá (Àgbómè) n=83 Ñrì match=14% min, 18% max Èdó match=17% min, 18% max (nn=77)	Afá (Adzá-Tádó) n=256 Ñrì match=15% min, 21% max Èdó match=13% min, 16% max (nn=233)
duplex array name ²									
Àkà <i>naàbọ̀</i>	run/escape, {coming}		<failure/no>	[deed done in anger]	[gifts]	journey/no rest	<elephant’s demise>	[how elephant became big/yam vs potato]	<i>Lisa</i> flees home trouble to die on a journey
Àkà Àkwú	ancestors			[trap/something that you sacrifice monkey for]		old person			initiation society [?]
Àkà Àgàrí	animal sacrifice		[joy]	[do something very thoroughly]		blood sacrifice			[hen lays eggs in wide riverbank not forest]
Àkà Ètè	<i>álú.sí</i> of water		fish	fish/fisherman, sacrifice	[death]	<i>ẹ̀bọ̀</i> (≈ Ìgbo <i>álú.sí</i>)			[knife kills wandering child/can’t kill pigeon]
Àkà Ìjíte	earth force of <i>òbú</i>			<selfishness>	<profit>	creator			[small drum beats large/thunder hits in ass]
Àkà Ọ̀bala	earth force			[service to your father/someone else is not lost]		[cloth/youngman]			[a child doesn’t marry a half-dead widow]
Àkà Ọ̀bì	said/decided			messenger to someone or next world		[sky]			unacknowledged son wins inheritance case [?]
Àkà Ọ̀hú	<i>chí</i> procreative force			[mother’s concern for her children]		<i>q̣jọ̀</i> (≈ Ìgbo <i>chí</i>)			[refuse advice, become orphan and suffer]
Àkà Ọ̀ghorì	bad-death ones		spirit world/the dead	ancestral home angry with you		no ancestral staff		[tortoise becomes the oraclist of the animals]	[strength in numbers]
Àkà Ọ̀kala	illness			[flirtation/wild behavior]		[bad day/omen]			[hawk kills by nature/spear lost in battle]
Àkà Ọ̀rá	life		<father, ancestor>	<primogeniture>		<paternal home>			[knife can’t cut pap/heron beauty wins throne]
Àkà Ọ̀sé	peace		<destiny>	<beg your destiny/ <i>ẹ̀bí</i> not to go wrong>		[death of children]			[catfish is not caught easily on land]
Àkà Ọ̀túré	<i>òjọ̀</i> ancestral staff			submission to ancestors for success	<misfortune>	[fish/no greeting]			[initiation/bring out object]
Àkà Àtúrùkpà	iroko tree			[lineage members, family matters]		<<childbirth>>			<bereaved<mother>stay in> sacred grove [?]
Àkà Ọ̀dí	earth force			nature forces, powerful people and things		hilly land[?]			[tobacco pipe burns pocket, due to greed]
Àkà Ùrùrù	ancestors			[children that you will give birth to]		<i>q̣jọ̀</i> (≈ <i>chí</i>)			[flirtatious wife exposed by dog bite]
Àkwú <i>naàbọ̀</i>	bad situation		corner	confinement, immobility due to illness			[childbirth/illness/immortality of red cloth]	caught by spiderwebs of death [?]	adapt to bad situation
							[wealth at home, oblivion in farm/crowd]		
Àkwú Àkà	ram/ <i>Nvúúkwọ̀</i>	ram or sheep	[head]	hindrance					[ineffective tools]
Àkwú Àgàrí	animal sacrifice			animal sacrifice			sacrifice	[outdoor shrine for smallpox vodun <i>Sakpata</i>]	[contested seniority]
Àkwú Ètè	‘big man’			<weeping for violation of taboo>					[sorcerer at home]
Àkwú Ìjíte	domestic unit			[jaw gathers leaves for goat to chew]					[death at] home
Àkwú Ọ̀bala	cow			duke who eats cow/[palace shrine]			[redemption/bride/longevity/family title]	[oracle priest should not rest in total darkness]	[in easy reach]
Àkwú Ọ̀bì	goat			[multitude of people and things]				the he-goat is the bearer of light	[forest purification]
Àkwú Ọ̀hú	<i>chí</i> force			[goat sacrificed for ancestors]			<pregnancy>		[precedence]
Àkwú Ọ̀ghorì	abandon home		[ears/dry season]	rotten crops/trouble from the thick forest				<medicine for childbirth>	funeral away from home
Àkwú Ọ̀kala	meetings			[bad thought, wrong action]					[unsold <i>àkàrà</i>]
Àkwú Ọ̀rá	house		house	house that is occupied				[the handsome unknown suitor]	smallpox at home [?]
Àkwú Ọ̀sé	ambush			gathering or living or of ancestors				[<i>gbá</i> ’s people poach elephant killed by <i>Death</i>]	initiation by assembly
Àkwú Ọ̀túré	announce			meeting, council for decision					[disowned child]
Àkwú Àtúrùkpà	behind <i>iroko</i> /big <i>òbú</i>			[restlessness, not settled in one place] [?]			[contempt/impotence/pregnancy]		baobab resists wind
Àkwú Ọ̀dí	grave/hole in earth			grave					[jealousy] (≈ Ọ̀dí Àkwú, 180° rotation)
Àkwú Ùrùrù	ancestors, {child}			[failure of enterprise]				[red palmfruit], <disobedient son>	<disobedient daughter>
Àgàrí <i>naàbọ̀</i>	knife, <i>íkèngà</i>			<pray for victory to mother alive or deceased>	<death>		[journey]	<victory over death>	<jealousy brings accidental death>
Àgàrí Àkà	male child		<rich person>	[anger/jealousy/shame]	[many deaths]				[drums distract buffalo, tortoise wins bride]
Àgàrí Àkwú	medicine			[worrying shrine of <i>Ọ̀gún</i> /iron weapons, fetters]			[marriage contest of hoeing farm heaps]	<rich king will meet death across water>	[goat versus ram; threshing of beans]
Àgàrí Ètè	vengeful one			[illness/dog warming jaw in fire]	[rain/peace]				plotter falls victim to his own plot [?]
Àgàrí Ìjíte	handcuffed			[incomplete/incorrect/elephant without tail]					mice provoke cat’s claws to grow [?]
Àgàrí Ọ̀bala	white/wicked one			[children]					[liar, thief, rivalry]
Àgàrí Ọ̀bì	legs/watchfulness			cripple or chief riding on a horse				<death and woodcutting>	<death and woodcutting>
Àgàrí Ọ̀hú	money		money, [male child]	money					[pregnancy, knock on the door]
Àgàrí Ọ̀ghorì	child		[mourning]	[leopard uses left hand/emptiness/paralysis]					child’s fatal violation of taboo
Àgàrí Ọ̀kala	titled elder			[Àkẹ̀, divinity of bow & arrow]					[blind man steals deaf man’s wife]
Àgàrí Ọ̀rá	dispute			[weak/not fully well/sacrifice roasted yam]					[water of life/elephant kills crocodile]
Àgàrí Ọ̀sé	shame/billygoat			shame/billygoat					mockery of adulterous trader
Àgàrí Ọ̀túré	blacksmith			[prophecy, words becoming true]					<i>[avant-garde vs. arrière-garde]</i>
Àgàrí Àtúrùkpà	useless talk			[sacrifice to the head for success]					failure to listen to one’s father’s advice [?]
Àgàrí Ọ̀dí	left moiety			[illness, crisis]					[disputed inheritance]
Àgàrí Ùrùrù	refusal/crazy talk			[impotence/castration]	anger, <gifts>				enemies, <rival gifts>
Ètè <i>naàbọ̀</i>	accident	[<i>òyè</i> day]		[double, two equal things]	misfortune			avert misfortune	[maternal inheritance/tortoise broken shell]
Ètè Àkà	ancient event			[walking somewhere/dog]					[ram saved by a stone]
Ètè Àkwú	hen		[words, quarrel]	[evening activity]					[death]
Ètè Àgàrí	vendetta			struggle, adversity	[good relations]		[a shameful secret is revealed]		[wasted food on the farm]/co-wife rivalry [?]
Ètè Ìjíte	cooking tripod			[something given and taken back]					three witches, three hind legs of game
Ètè Ọ̀bala	light/alright		<{town}>	[generation/acquaintance]					<a grown child should leave home>
Ètè Ọ̀bì	across river		<forest>	<coming from the forest>				[marital quarrel/sea becomes big/	[python king of snakes/unproductive curses]
Ètè Ọ̀hú	settled/alright		<river>	[early morning]				[why horses suffer under humans]	[snakes kill co-wife]/<river kills stepmother>?
Ètè Ọ̀ghorì	adultery/vagina			[roaming about to die in forest or elsewhere]					[theft of bright plumage is not death]
Ètè Ọ̀kala	female child			[kolanut in a pod/leaf for the ancestors]			[troublemaker is caught by an ordeal trial]		[profit from keeping a secret]
Ètè Ọ̀rá	warn			delay/loss of opportunity			[frog’s improvidence/sacrifice to mother]	[a poor person can make a token sacrifice]	[respect death/python stretches lizard’s neck]
Ètè Ọ̀sé	sworn oath		[destiny]	sworn oath			[hunter marries death/awo’s empty house]	[a portent too terrible to be pronounced]	[repair the alias of death]
Ètè Ọ̀túré	kolanut			kolanut	[greatness/evening]				[collect honey from hive with fire]
Ètè Àtúrùkpà	female child		woman, wife	[adversity, suffering]					hunter’s wife crushed by his greed [?]
Ètè Ọ̀dí	close door/night		night	[war coming to the town]					[Afa reveals secret of death’s drum]
Ètè Ùrùrù	hen			<roaming about to die in forest or elsewhere>	<danger on road>		[struggle over a house/hunter take care]		<i>[Azukpe, don’t walk in front of broom!]</i>

NOTES

- * This file (5pp. 438x320mm) is posted at people.bu.edu/manfredi/8bitSemanticKey.pdf. Coding of more data is in progress. Most recent update: 26 May 2015. For references and discussion see the main text, parts one (people.bu.edu/manfredi/I/a/A/aNri.pdf) and two (people.bu.edu/manfredi/BeforeW'azobia.pdf). n = total number of attested cases per locality. nn = *shared* number of cases between localities, in case of data gaps on both sides.
- As discussed in the main text (§4.3 of part one), Ñsúká, Ûrhobo, Ìsóko and Èdó glosses attest a systematic 180° rotation of binary 4-bit arrays with reference to the Ñri orientation. In Èdó, the rotation is explicitly recognized by practitioners as reflecting the oraclist’s virtual perspectival shift, “as if the reading was done from the side of the client sitting opposite the diviner” (Emòvòn 1984, 4). Importantly this geometric mutation, apparently contained in a contiguous area, did not in itself affect the semantic mapping of the array names; in other words, the ‘deep structure’ of the oracle is the set of (linguistically meaningless) names and not the geometric arrays that call these names in the binary procedure.
 - The listing order of the 256 cases follows Ònwùèjiógwù (1997), who apparently used alphabetical sequence based on the spelling of one version of the Ìgbo array names; this does not necessarily correspond to some of the variants given here, due to the extreme phonetic variability of the array names at Ñri. The corresponding names of the individual 4-bit arrays in the other localities are given at people.bu.edu/manfredi/4bit-ArraySpreadsheet.pdf.
 - Maupoil (1943a, 580 *fn.* 1) plausibly identifies this oracle text with a Ìgbo folktale (Ànekwé 1936).

SOURCES

Column 1 is based on Ònwùèjiógwù (1997) with supplementary translations in {curly brackets} from the recording posted in audio form at manfredi.mayfirst.org/chukwumaDibyaNri.mor and transcribed in the Appendix of part one of this monograph.

Column 2 is based on Shelton (1965b).

In Column 3, glosses in {curly brackets} are from Peek (1982, 199), otherwise from Nabofa & Elugbe (1981). The aggregation of Ûrhobo and Ìsóko is obviously a simplification intended to compensate for the sparseness of the data reported for both localities.

In Column 4, glosses in {curly brackets} are from Erivwo (1979) and Emòvòn (1984), otherwise from Egharhevba (1936a), a source whose first edition is apparently lost and whose second edition (loaded with typos and obscurities) urgently requires full translation. Incomplete and unedited English versions of 73 out of the 80 chapter narratives recorded by Egharhevba (1965, 90-168) can be consulted at people.bu.edu/manfredi/Egharhevba1965.pdf.

Columns 5-9 are based respectively on Nadel (1954), Boston (1974), Bascom (1969), Maupoil (1943a) and Kligue[h] (2011b).

Other sources exist for some of these oracle localizations (e.g. the works of Abímǒlǎ), but I know no other localizations of this oracle (i.e. any oracle with a semantic key in 256 parts where the array names are at least partly cognate to those above) that has been described in ethnographic literature with even a partial a sample of the 8-bit semantic table. (Exception: 14 Tiv glosses (Downes 1933, 69*f.*) are omitted here.) Any such information, whether from secondary or primary sources, can be mechanically added to the compilation above, and appropriate comparisons made. For example, it will be straightforward to to add a full column for any *libreta* of Cuban *Iḡá*, such as typically comprises several hundred typewritten pages of mixed *Lucumí* (Cuban ritual Yorùbá) and Afrocuban Spanish, all systematically indexed by *odù* name. Such indexation was demanded by the literate nature of Lucumí *Iḡá* consultation, in contrast to the African situation where indexed compilations emerged only gradually through the 20th century (e.g. Lǐǎdu 1908, Ìbié 1986).

No glosses have been sampled here from the unordered 16-cowry oracle (e.g. Bascom 1980), which happens to be well attested on both sides of the Atlantic. While the scale of information retrived by the cowry oracle is smaller, the content is relevant in principle, because some names of the unordered arrays in the cowry system are clearly cognate to those of the ordered 8-bit system.

METHODS

The topline scores in the chart are calculated directly from the glosses in each column as a proportion of the available sample less than or equal to 256 meanings, as compared to the index set in Ñri. Recorded glosses in a given column *not* matching Ñri by the semantic criteria discussed below appear [in square brackets] and are not counted. Borderline/tenuous matches are flagged by “[?]” and excluded from the lower bound statistic where a range is given. Matches between any localities excluding Ñri are not counted in the topline, but are flagged <in angle brackets> for independent calculation; a few ratios are noted in the headers. This table calculates relationship **to Ñri** because Ñri is represented by a complete 256-part sample, but in principle the exercise could be carried out using any other localization as the index without obtaining a different degree of similarity to Ñri, since the similarity relation is both transitive and reflexive.

Three kinds of considerations, unavoidable either in practice or in principle, reduce the quality of the semantic matching scores obtained here with respect to a theoretical ideal, but without vitiating the results.

- In most of the sources, the main share of interpretations are cited in English or French translation, whose accuracy naturally varies with the investigator’s fluency in both object language and meta-language; with the quality of philological resources—grammars and dictionaries—which are available for the object language and the investigators ability to utilise same and especially with the investigator’s position on the insider-outsider scale with respect to the oracle knowledge. In all these respects, no scholar of any localization this oracle is ever likely to come close to Professor Abímǒlǎ (whose research is not sampled in the above table), who is famous for his balanced bilingualism and possession of a strongly insider perspective, and who enjoys the leading status of Yorùbá in terms of extant philological resources. In my view, the second highest level of adequacy among scholars of this oracle was occupied by Verger and Ònwùèjiógwù, both of whom were bilingual (though asymmetrically and in different directions, neither one as balanced as Abímǒlǎ) and both of whom underwent thorough, long-term initiation in the respective oracles from monolingual virtuosi (though neither one employed his initiation to practice the oracle professionally). Both Verger and Ònwùèjiógwù had the further advantage of sustained selfcriticism and were personally sp opposed to dogmatism as to be exceptionally sensitive to conceptual difficulties in translating cosmological concepts. On a third rank in my opinion are Egharhevba (1936a) and Kligueh (2011). Egharhevba has the advantage of transcribing the 8-bit meanings directly in the source language (Èdó), but unfortunately only in a pioneering way, without tonemarking, with very many typos and without benefit of a dictionary or grammar. As a result, many key terms of Ìha are obscure, but it is not always clear if this is because they are esoteric or just wrongly transcribed. Kligueh like Egharhevba is a nonprofessional scholar, moreover he describes a nonstandard variety of a Gbè language and does not translate either completely or consistently. Other sources quoted here occupy yet a fourth level of semantic and pragmatic adequacy overall: they contain very valuable indeed irreplaceable information, but convey much less about the object of study. Although the wide range of this scale determines many incommensurabilities, it probably does not grossly change the relative degrees of similarity between the different localizations sampled, as calculated above.
- For the oracles on the eastern side of the area (Ñri, Ûrhobo, Ìsóko, Ígálà), the oracle returns short phrases, so normalization is relatively straightforward. In counting semantic matches in these systems, strict identity of denotation is relaxed just in two situations: partial matches (e.g. ‘said’ = ‘messenger’) and translation-independent links supported by culturally canonical pragmatics (e.g. ‘rooster’ = ‘good head’). These cases are relatively few in number, so they don’t substantially affect the statistical results and they can be manually excluded by the reader in case of differing judgement of plausibility.
- Semantic normalization in the above sample is more arbitrary for the systems located further west (Èdó, Nupe, Ilé-Ifè, Àgbómè, Adzá-Tádó). This is beacuse the more western oracles return longer and multiple texts per array. A total limit on the scale of such texts is nevertheless imposed by the fact that they are learned (orally), so any stability observed from one practitioner and one location to another is a testimony to mental discipline supported by oracle professionalization based on appropriation of economic surplus. The learnability of these texts is also enhanced by their stereotypical linguistic and poetic format. The expanded circumstance of oracle semantics in the west poses a problem of comparison to data of the eastern area, where the cultivation of human memory is sustained by a more rudimentary/less professionalized guild or social class of oracle specialists. Therefore in comparing the western systems to each other and especially to those of the east, less stringent (more subjective, more abstract) criteria of identity are required. Provisionally, in addressing this issue, I have not calculated any statistical penalty for negative matches for a given 8-bit array (= a Yorùbá *odù*), which penalty would dilute whatever positives appear. This decision obviously reduces the absolute significance of the measurement, because comparison of texts of infinite length and infinite number would always yield identity (100% resemblance) between any two systems purely as a matter of chance. Such *reductio ad absurdum* is escaped, however, thanks to the relatively short length of most of the western texts (approximating standard folktales) as well as to the relatively small number of alternative texts recorded in a given locality (a handful at most). In some instances, stability and identifiability of the semantic core of the *odù* is reinforced by an accompanying one-sentence motto (Èdó *eria*, French *devise*). In Ilé-Ifè, these mottos have been systematically integrated in the narrative text in a specific poetic format, namely as “the name(s) of the Ifá priest(s) involved in the past divination that the *ẹsẹ* alludes to” which are immediately followed by the formula “*a dī(F)á jún...*” ‘the one who cast for...’ (Abímǒlǎ 1976, 43). Similar nominal attribution of the motto occurs in some of the Àgbómè narratives, undoubtedly reflecting Ilé-Ifè influence (via Òyó) as noted by Maupoil. Borderline matches are noted in the table by [?] and reflected in the topline statistics as a min/max range where the amount is significant. To be sure, disregard of negative matches is better adapted to the retrospective demonstration of shared archaism and common origin than the more interesting and challenging question of prospective, innovative, evolutionary developments, i.e. it is closer in spirit to Greenberg (1963) than to Watkins (1962). This limitation is temporary!

3.4 re: Ògúndiran (2020)

Archaeology, like all historical reconstruction, is partly a work of imagination. But it is constrained by evidence and underpinned by scientific principles of discovery, interpretation and refutation. Occasionally, it has the power to challenge myths and overthrow dogma. The strength of the past lies precisely there, in its unpredictability, its capacity to surprise and upset conventional wisdom.
(Wengrow 2022, 61f.)

In order to inject headline features of modern Yorùbá culture into “a continuum of deep-time changes stretching back at least two millennia” (2020, 4), Ògúndiran’s “new history” invokes comparative linguistics despite the author’s glaring unfamiliarity with the field, and even flaunts this professional difficulty as a badge of rebel honor:

My use of eclectic methodology is consistent with the nature of cultural history as a transgressive form of historical studies.
(2020, 24)

Edgy postmodern attitude also informs the anonymous, hyperbolic blurb announcing the book’s Lagos launch:

lagosstudies.wcu.edu/?page_id=1426

Book Panels at virtual Lagos Studies Association Conference (June 22–26, 2021)

[...]

The Yoruba, a New History by Akinwumi Ogundiran (Indiana University Press, 2020)

This book documents the ideas, imaginations and meaning that shaped the Yoruba experience, covering over two thousand years. Akinwumi Ogundiran brings new conceptual, methodological and theoretical insights into Yoruba studies in ways unmatched in previous scholarship. He carries out a close examination of the four core principles that shaped Yoruba identity (house, town/urban, gendered duality, and immortality) using rigorously-mined historical, archeological and linguistic evidence to tackle how the Yoruba developed a community of practice between the 11th and 14th centuries. From the age of turmoil in the 15th century to the era of restoration in the 16th century, Ogundiran crafts engrossing prose, laced with imaginative writing to give intellectual visibility to previously neglected ideas.

The Yoruba, a New History is a new template for studying African ethnicities. The author disturbs existing paradigms, exposing the loopholes in decades of scholarship that overlooks vital agents and agencies in the evolution of ancient civilizations. His Yoruba language competence aligns perfectly with his critical understanding of nuances embedded in ideologies, practices and metaphors that operated within and across historical timelines and locations. From material culture, archeological multi-layered interpretations, and social memory to ethnohistoric and oral tradition, this book tells a deep-time history of the Yoruba in truly new ways, invigorating the gendered and even material culture produced and circulated within the Atlantic world. The author’s high regard for hermeneutics allows him to read and interpret sources beyond and above casual rendition. *The Yoruba, a New History* is a turning point in the scholarship of one of Africa’s most studied ethnic groups.

Similarly uncritical celebration cannot however extend to several of the book’s key assertions about Yorùbá prehistory.

Well-known considerations of demographic ‘drift’ (isolation by distance) in dialect geography (§2.1 above) leave no doubt that languages directly ancestral to the modern Yorùbá-Ìgàlá/Yoruboid/Macro-Yorùbá cluster were spoken close to the Niger-Benue confluence in the remote past. This uncontroversial premise, however, is not reason enough to baptise, Frobenius style, a human burial dated roughly 2500 years ago in the confluence-adjacent town of Uhè-Ijumu [colonially spelled “Ifè-Ijumu”] with an emblematic name, *Oni*, coyly intended to signify a generic Yorùbá-Ìgàlá identity. Ògúndiran wisely retreats from this ethnic flourish to use “proto-Benue-Kwa” (2020, 34) as a default label for the prehistoric cultural affiliation of those human remains, but fails to inform the reader that the more abstract term is near-vacuous: throughout the half century ever since

...de Wolf (1971, 180) combined [Greenberg’s Kwa and Benue-Congo] into one branch for which Hyman (*pers. com.*) suggested the name ‘Benue-Kwa’...
(Williamson 1989, 16)

BK spans almost every language of the entire Niger-Congo family apart from the Atlantic, Gur and Mandeng branches and some distant isolates. Such broad ambiguity verges on meaninglessness. Even assuming that the Uhè-Ijumu burial could be optimistically assigned to the BK2 subclade (§0.4 above), this narrower domain still encompasses three other large daughter clusters alongside Yorùbá-Ìgàlá, moreover the present extreme ethnic diversity of the modern confluence zone is an unpromising basis for a hypothetical argument of default ethnic continuity appealing to presentist inertia.

Easy slippage between hazy labels is a recipe for overconfidence, and the terminological fog is not dispelled by staking the case on the authority of a survey chapter by a veteran non-westafricanist (Ehret 2017) who earned his spurs as the linguistic blesser (1973) of “circular” and “wishful” East African archaeology (Eggert 1981, 323; 2005, 316, cf. Seidensticker 2024, 321). The same single nonspecialist is further credited with supplying direct to the author detailed calendric dates for successive stages of internal diversification of the Yorùbá-Ìgàlá cluster (2020, 44), without hinting that the underlying method of “lexicostatistics” (Swadesh 1952) responsible for such overconfidence has been “rejected” by most nonmissionary linguists (Campbell 1998, 186) as “showy but meaningless number games” (Lunt 1964, 252, cf. Alinei 1991, Lehmann 1993, 37). Lexicostatistic profiles for the Niger-Benue confluence itself were eventually found “objectionable” by the very scholar who first applied Swadesh in Nigeria (Armstrong 1983, 146 *contra* 1962, §1.2 above). Without these faulty props, the only motive to guess that “proto-Yoruboid ancestors began to spread from their southwest confluence at the end of the first millennium BC”, or to conjecture with incredible concreteness that “[b]y the year 800, the Yorùbá dialects in what is now the central, northeastern, eastern and southern areas of the Yorùbá world had assumed their distinctive identities” (2020, 46f.), is the selfregarding imperative to attach ethnohistoric tags on mute archaeological remains—the same ahistoric impulse that propelled the standard ‘art history’ literature of this region (§2 above), outdone only by practitioners of “biblical archaeology” who legitimise an ethnonationalism of “territorial self-fashioning” that “assembles the nation-in-history as an object... finding in ancient remains early evidence of modern peoples” (Abu El-Haj 2001, 128, cf. Whitelam 1996, Said 2003).

Lack of plausible temporal anchors does not prevent ideas to be reconstructed at prehistorical time depth from shared protolanguage vocabulary (Dumézil 1940, Benveniste 1969, Watkins 1995), but the reliability of this step depends on philological controls against the accidental confounds of later borrowing events. Such precaution is properly applied by the same cultural historian of east Africa where Eastern Cushitic donkeys are concerned (Ehret 2012), but is apparently thrown to the winds when projecting a metaphysical creature onto a far remoter prehistorical epoch:

Oni’s deep-time proto-Benue-Kwa ancestors also practiced a version of monotheism in which the ‘Creator God’ or ‘God of Beginning’ sat atop a pyramid of spirits and deities. According to Christopher Ehret [*sc.* 2016] we can reconstruct a specific word for the Creator God, *Nyambe*, in the proto-Benue-Kwa language to the 6th millennium BC and he also noted that the wide distribution of the term in contemporary Niger-Congo languages indicates that it may well go back to the very beginning of Niger-Congo civilization in the 12th millennium BC. ...The proto-Yoruboid [speakers] believed that the sky god ruled over the elements of the sky—thunder, lightning, rain—and their earthly implications—fertility of the soil, water and agricultural productivity.
(Ògúndiran 2020, 38, cf. 84 *fn* 21)

4. Literature cited²³⁰

- Abimbólá, W. [1967]. Ifá divination poems as sources of historical evidence. *Lagos Notes & Records* **1**, 17-26.
- . [1973a]. The Yorùbá concept of human personality. *La Notion de personne en Afrique noire*, edited by G. Dieterlen, 73-89. Éditions C.N.R.S., Paris.
- . [1973b]. The literature of the Ifá cult. *Sources of Yorùbá History*, edited by S. Biòbákú, 41-62. Oxford University Press.
- . [1975]. *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifá*. Gaskiya, Zaria, for UNESCO, Paris.
- . [1976]. *Ifá; an exposition of Ifá literary corpus*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1977]. *Ifá Divination Poetry*. Nok, New York.
- . [1981]. From monster to king to divinity; stories of *ibéjì* in the Ifá literary corpus. Manuscript presented at the National Museum, Lagos. [Not personally consulted; cited by Chemeche & al (2003).]
- Abimbólá, W. & I. Miller. [1997]. *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World; thoughts on Yorùbá religion & culture in Africa & the diaspora*. Aim Books, Roxbury, Mass.
- Abimbólá, W. & S. Oyèláràn. [1975]. Consonant deletion in Yorùbá. *African Language Studies* **16**, 37-60.
- Abiódún, R. [1975]. Ifá art objects; an interpretation based on oral traditions. *Yorùbá Oral Tradition; poetry in music, dance & drama*, edited by [O. Oyèláràn &] W. Abimbólá, 421-69. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè.
- . [1976]. A reconsideration of the function of *àkó* 'second burial effigy' in Òghò ["Òwò"]. *Africa* **46**, 4-20.
- . [1987]. Verbal and visual metaphors; mythical allusions in Yorùbá ritualistic art of *Orí*. *Word & Image* **3**, 252-70.
- . [1994]. *Àṣẹ*; verbalizing and visualizing creative power through art. *Journal of Religion in Africa* **24**, 309-22.
- . [2014]. *Yorùbá Art & Language; seeking the African in African art*. Cambridge University Press.
- Abraham, R. [1951]. *The Ìdómá Language*. University of London Press.
- . [1958]. *Dictionary of Modern Yorùbá*. University of London Press.
- Abraham, R. & Mallam Mai. [1949/1962]. *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. Crown Agents for the Colonies, London/University of London Press.
- Abu El-Haj, N. [2001]. *Facts on the Ground; archaeological practice & territorial self-fashioning in Israeli society*. University of Chicago Press.
- Abu-Lughod, J. [1989]. *Before European Hegemony; the world-system A.D. 1250-1350*. Oxford University Press.
- Àchébè, C. [1958/1962]. *Things Fall Apart*. Heinemann, London/Lagos.
- . [1975]. *Chí* in Ìgbo cosmology. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, 93-103. Heinemann, London.
- . [2011]. Nigeria's promise, Africa's hope. *New York Times*, 15 January. www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/opinion/16achebe.html.
- Adams, J. [1823]. *Remarks on the Country Extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo; including observations on the manners & customs of the inhabitants*. Whittaker, London.
- Adams, R. & al. [1952/1981]. *Èṣù k-English Dictionary*, 3rd edition. Philip, Liverpool/Manson, Òrón.
- Addison, J. [1924]. Ancestor worship in Africa. *Harvard Theological Review* **17**, 155-71.
- Adébáyò, I. [2009]. Lawyer says Land Use Act is a military document. *234Next* [Lagos], 1 March. www.234next.com/esp/cms/sites/Next/News/National/5339710-147/Lawyer_says_Land_use_act_is.asp.
- Adébóyè, O. [2007]. The changing conception of elderhood in Ìbàdàn, 1830-2001. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* **16**, 261-78.
- Adéiran, B. [1989]. In search of identity; the eastern Yorùbá and the Odùduwà traditions. *Odù* **36**, 114-36.
- . [1991]. Pleasant imperialism; conjectures on Benin hegemony in eastern Yorùbáland. *African Notes* **15**, 83-95.
- Adégbolá, E. [1976]. *Ifá & Christianity among the Yorùbá; a study in symbiosis & the development of Yorùbá Christology 1890-1940*. Dissertation, University of Bristol, England. [Not personally consulted; cited by Peel (1990).]
- Adégbolá, T. [2025]. Èṣù is not Satan—a Christian apologist's perspective. *Premium Times* [Lagos], 15 January. www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/766908-esu-is-not-satan-a-christian-apologists-perspective-by-tunde-adegbola.html.
- Adémákinwá, J. [1958]. *Ifé, Cradle of the Yorùbá; a handbook on the history of the origin of the Yorùbás*, 1-2. Pacific Printing Works, Lagos.
- Adéoyè, C. [1979]. *Àṣà àti Ìṣẹ Yorùbá*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- Adépégba, C. [1981/1983a]. Èrè, the essence of the image in Yorùbá religious sculptures. *African Studies Association* **24**, Bloomington Indiana, 21-24 October/*Nigeria Magazine* **144**, 13-21.
- . [1983b]. The question of lineal descent; Nok terracottas to Ifè and the present. *African Notes* [Ìbàdàn] **9.2**, 23-32.
- . [1983c]. The artist in the set-up of Yorùbá traditional religions; a reassessment of the approach to African arts. *Nigeria Magazine* **145**, 28-36.
- . [ca. 1983d]. Òṣun Òṣogbo groves; Susanne Wenger's sculptures viewed against Yorùbá religious thinking. 27pp. undated typescript. Smithsonian Libraries NB1099.N5A23.1983a.AFA, Washington DC.
- . [1986]. The descent from Odùduwà; claims of superiority among some Yorùbá traditional rulers and the arts of ancient Ifè. *African Historical Studies* **19**, 77-92.
- Adétúgbò, A. [1967]. *The Yorùbá Language in Western Nigeria; its major dialect areas*. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York.
- Adéyémí, M. [2018]. Olúgbò unveils other side of Mòrèmi. *Guardian* (Lagos) 16 August. guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/olugbo-unveils-other-side-of-moremi.
- Adler, A. & A. Zempléni. [1972]. *Le baton de l'avengle; divination, maladie & pouvoir chez les Moudang du Tchad*. Hermann, Paris.
- Àdùnbí, O. [2011]. Mythic oil; resources, belonging and the politics of claim-making among the Ìlájè Yorùbás of Nigeria. Presented at the workshop on The Making of the Yorùbá, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2 April.
- Áfígbo ["Afígbo"], A. [1966]. Revolution and reaction in eastern Nigeria 1900-29; the background to the Womens' Riot of 1929. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **3**, 539-57.
- . [1967]. The warrant chief system in eastern Nigeria; direct or indirect rule? *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **3**, 683-700.
- . [1972]. *The Warrant Chiefs; indirect rule in southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929*. Longman, London.
- . [1977]. Precolonial trade links between southeastern Nigeria and the Benue valley. *Journal of African Studies* **4**, 118-39.
- . [1981a]. Through a glass darkly; 18th century Ìgbo society through Equiano's narrative. *Ropes of Sand: studies in Ìgbo history & culture*, 145-86. University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [1981b]. Ìgboland under colonial rule. *Ropes of Sand: studies in Ìgbo history & culture*, 283-353. University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [1983]. Traditions of Ìgbo origin, a comment. *Nigeria Magazine* **144**, 3-12/*History in Africa* **10**, 1-11.
- . [1986/1989]. Federal character, its meaning and history. Rada Publishing Company, Òweré ["Owerri"]/*Federal Character & Federalism in Nigeria*, edited by P. Ekeh & E. Osaghae, 3-18. Heinemann, Ìbàdàn.

- . [2002/2005a]. *Ìgbo énwé ezè; beyond Ònwumèchili and Ònwùjìógwù*. Self-published, Òkígwí [“Okigwe”], Àbà State/Ìgbo History & Society; the essays of *Adièle Afūgbo*, edited by T. Fálólá, 477-94. Africa World Press, Trenton New Jersey.
- . [2005b]. The Benue valley in precolonial Nigerian history. *Nigerian History, Politics & Affairs*, edited by T. Fálólá, 63-76. Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey.
- Agbontaen-Eghafona, K. [2010]. If the treasures are returned; views on museums and the cultural heritage in Benin-City. *Whose Objects? Art treasures from the Kingdom of Benin in the collection of the Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm. Kulturspektiv* 23, edited by W. Östberg, 22-27. Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.
- Aghẹyisi, R. [1986]. *An Èdó-English Dictionary*. Abridged version of Melzian (1937) with modernized spelling. Ethiope, Benin-City.
- Agíńrí, B. [1975]. Early Òyó history reconsidered. *History in Africa* 2, 1-16.
- Agíńrí, B. & S. Barnes. [1987]. Lagos before 1603. *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, edited by A. Adéfuyè & al., 18-32. Lantern Books, Ikeja.
- Aikhionbare, M. [1988]. The verbal suffixes in Èdó. *Afrika & Übersee* 71, 205-28.
- Aimuwu, O. [1971]. Odùduwà. *Nigeria Magazine* 107-09, 85-90.
- Ajibóyè, O. [2005]. *Topics on Yorùbá nominal expressions*. Dissertation, University of British Columbia.
- Àjàyí, E. & al. eds. [1998]. *A History of the Àwòrì of Lagos State*. Adéní.ran Ògúnsanyà College of Education, Lagos.
- Àjàyí, J. [1960]. How Yorùbá was reduced to writing. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* 8, 49-58.
- . [1974]. The aftermath of the fall of Old Òyó. *History of West Africa*, Vol. 2, edited by J. Àjàyí & M. Crowder, 129-66. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- . [2004]. Yorùbá origin controversy; you can't just wake up and say Odùduwà was a Benin prince. *Punch [Ìbàdàn]*, 16 May. groups.yahoo.com/group/AlukoArchives/message/316.
- Àjàyí, J. & E. Alagoa. [1980]. Nigeria before 1800; aspects of economic development and intergroup relations. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by O. Ikime, 224-35. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Àjàyí, J. & R. Smith. [1964]. *Yorùbá Warfare in the 19th Century*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ajibádé, G. [2009]. Šàngó's *éérindínlogún* divinatory system. *Šàngó in Africa & the African Diaspora*, edited by J. Tishken & al., 63-77. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Ajísafé Moore, A. [1924]. *The Laws & Customs of the Yorùbá People*. Fólá Bookshops, Abéòkúta. [Not personally consulted; cited by Forde (1951), Òjó (1966).]
- Aka[h], P. & al. [2012]. Genus *Detarium*; ethnomedicinal, phytochemical and pharmacological profile. *Phytopharmacology* 3, 367-75.
- Ákènzùà, È. [2008]. *Ekaladerhan*. Inter Press, Lagos.
- Akéré, F. [1982]. Social motivation for ongoing sound change in a Yorùbá dialect. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria* 1, 1-34.
- Akíndélé, A. & C. Ageşin [“Aguessy”]. [1953]. *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire de l'ancien royaume de Porto-Novo. Mémoire* 25. I.F.A.N., Dakar.
- Akínjídé, R. [2000]. The amalgamation of Nigeria was a fraud. *Guardian* [Lagos], 9 July. dawodu.com/akinjid3.htm.
- Akínjógbin, I. [1971]. The expansion of Òyó and the rise of Dahomey 1600-1800. *History of West Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by J. Àjàyí & M. Crowder, 304-43. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- . [1992]. Ifè, the years of travail 1793-1893. *The Cradle of a Race; Ifè from the beginning to 1990*, edited by I. Akínjógbin, 148-70. Sunray Publications, Port Harcourt.
- . [1998]. Keynote address. *War & Peace in Yorùbáland 1793-1893*, edited by I. Akínjógbin, 1-6. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Akínjógbin, I. ed. [1998]. *War & Peace in Yorùbáland, 1793-1893*. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Akínkugbé, F. [1978]. *A comparative phonology of Yorùbá dialects, Ìyèkírì & Ígálà*. Dissertation, University of Ibàdàn.
- Akinlabí, A. [1985]. *Tonal underspecification & Yorùbá tone*. Dissertation, University of Ibàdàn.
- Akinolá, G. [1976]. The origin of the Èwéka dynasty of Benin; a study of the use and abuse of oral tradition. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 8.3, 21-35.
- Akinpèlú, Y. [2021]. British university hands over stolen Benin bronze cockerel to Nigeria. *Premium Times* [Abuja], 27 October. www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/492086-british-university-hands-over-stolen-benin-bronze-cockerel-to-nigeria.html, cf. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-59065225.
- Akínrèfón, D. [2019]. Echoes of 1966; some Ìgbos are lying over Awóló.wò's civil war role—Adébáñjò. *Vanguard* [Lagos], 25 August. www.vanguardngr.com/2019/08/echoes-of-1966-some-igbo-are-lying-over-avolowo-civil-war-role-adebanjo.
- Akíntóyè, S. [1969]. The northeast Yorùbá districts and the Benin Kingdom. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, 539-53.
- . [1971]. *Revolution & Power Politics in Yorùbáland, 1840-1893; Ibàdàn expansion & the rise of Èkítì Parapò*. Longman, London.
- . [2010]. *A History of the Yorùbá People*. Amalion, Dakar.
- Akoha, A. [2010]. *Syntaxe & Lexicologie du Fòn-Gbè, Bénin*. Harmattan, Paris.
- Alagoa, E. [1964]. *Idu*, a creator festival at Okpoma (Brass) in the Niger delta. *Africa* 34, 1-8.
- . [1976]. The Niger Delta states and their neighbors, to 1800 [revised version]. *History of West Africa, 2nd edition* 1, edited by J. Àjàyí & M. Crowder, 331-72. Longman, London.
- . [1980]. Peoples of the Cross River valley and the eastern Niger delta. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by O. Ikime, 56-72. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Alápíní, J. & P. [1950/n.d.]. *Les Noix sacrées; la géomancie au Togo; étude complète de Fá-Abidég[o]un, génie de la sagesse & de la divination au Dahomey*. Éditions Regain, Monte-Carlo/ONEPI, Kútónu (“Cotonou”).
- Alinei, M. [1991]. The problem of dating in historical linguistics. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 12, 107-26.
- Alter, S. [1999]. *Darwinism & the Linguistic Image; language, race & natural theology in the 19th Century*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Althusser, L. [1970]. Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'état; notes pour une recherche. *La Pensée* 151, 3-38.
- Àlùkò, S. [1965]. How many Nigerians? An analysis of Nigeria's census problems. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, 371-91.
- Amali, S. & R. Armstrong. [1968]. *Ònùgbò Mlòko*. Insitute of African Studies, University of Ibàdàn.
- Ámayo, A. [1975]. The structure of verbal constructions in Èdó (Bini). *Journal of West African Languages* 10, 5-27.
- . [1976]. *A generative phonology of Èdó (Bini)*. Dissertation, University of Ibàdàn.
- Amin, S. [1973]. *L'Échange inégal & la loi de la valeur; la fin d'un débat*. Anthropos, Paris.
- Ammerman, A. & L. Cavalli-Sforza. [1971]. Measuring the rate of spread of early farming in Europe. *Man* 6, 674-88.
- . [1984]. *The Neolithic Transition & the Genetics of Populations in Europe*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Amselle, J.-L. [2022]. *L'Invention du Sabel*. Éditions du Croquant, Vulaines-sur-Seine.
- Án[a]-èné, J. [1966]. *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906; theory & practice in a colonial protectorate*. Cambridge University Press.
- Andah, B. [1979]. Iron age beginnings in West Africa; reflections and suggestions. *West African Journal of Archaeology* 9, 135-50.

- . [1982]. Urban ‘origins’ in the Guinea forest with special reference to Benin. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **12**, 63-71.
- Anderson, B. [1983]. *Imagined Communities; reflections on the origin & spread of nationalism*. Verso, London.
- Ànekwé, P. [1936]. Une fable des Ì[g]bos en Nigéria. *Anthropos* **31**, 241-42.
- Ànìákò [‘‘Aniakor’’], C. [1997]. Do all cultural roads lead to Benin? The missing factor in Benin and related art studies; a conceptual view. *Paideuma* **43**, 301-11.
- Ànìkpò, M. [1979]. *Patterns of integrations; a study of Ìgbo ethnic identification in Jos, Nigeria*. Dissertation, Cambridge University, England.
- Anikulá.pò Kú.tì, ‘F. [1972]. *Shakara*. EMI LP 008N, Lagos.
- . [1976]. *Mr. Follow Follow*. Coconut PMLP 1003-B, Lagos.
- . [1977]. *Shuffering & Shmiling*. Coconut PMLP 1005, Lagos.
- . [1981]. *Original Sufferhead; Power Show*. Lagos International LP 2, Lagos.
- . [1989]. *Beasts of No Nation*. Kalakuta LP K008, Lagos.
- Ánòzie, F. [1979]. Early iron technology in Ìgboland; Lẹ̀ẹ̀ja and Òmúndù. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **9**, 119-34.
- . [1993]. Ìgbo Úkwu after Thurstan Shaw. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **22**, 40-46.
- Antilla, R. [1972]. *Introduction to Historical & Comparative Linguistics*. Macmillan, New York.
- Apter, A. [1987a]. The historiography of Yorùbá myth and ritual. *History in Africa* **14**, 1-25.
- . [1987b]. *Rituals of power; the politics of òrìṣà worship in Yorùbá society*. Dissertation, Yale University, New Haven Connecticut.
- . [1992]. *Que faire?* Reconsidering inventions of Africa. *Critical Inquiry* **19**, 87-104.
- . [2004]. Herskovits’ heritage; rethinking syncretism in the African diaspora. *Syncretism in Religion; a reader*, edited by A. Leopold & J. Jensen, 160-84. Equinox, London.
- . [2017]. *Odùdunwà’s Chain; locations of culture in the Yorùbá-Atlantic*. University of Chicago Press.
- . [2022]. Frobenius unbound; Black Atlantis and the poetics of displacement in the Yorùbá diaspora. *Paideuma* **68**, 119-48.
- Arango, P. [1963]. *Dice Ifá*. Self-published, Havana. [Not personally consulted; cited by Martínez Betancourt (2024).]
- Aric, E. & al. [2020]. Cannabis and frankincense at the Judahite shrine of Arad. *Tel Aviv, Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University* **47**, 5-28.
- Àrì ñze, F. [1970]. *Sacrifice in Ìgbo Religion*. Ìbàdàn University Press.
- Armstrong, R. [1962]. Glottochronology and African linguistics. *Journal of African History* **3**, 282-90.
- . [1964a]. *The Study of West African languages; expanded version of an inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ìbàdàn on 20 February*. Ìbàdàn University Press.
- . [1964b]. Linguistic and ethnographic data in Ìdòmà and Yorùbá history. *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, edited by J. Vansina & al., 127-44. Oxford University Press.
- . [1965]. Comparative wordlists of two dialects of Yorùbá with Ígàlà. *Journal of West African Languages* **2**, 51-78.
- . [1967]. *Comparative Wordlist of Five Ìgbo Dialects*. Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn. [In the absence of page numbering in this publication, references cite the index number that serves as a unique lemma identifier.]
- . [1968]. Yàlà (Ìkóm), a ‘terraced level’ language with three tones. *Journal of West African Languages* **5**, 49-58.
- . [1978]. The development of Fulani studies — a linguist’s view.” *Struktur und Wandel afrikanischer Sprachen*, edited by H. Jungraithmayr, 7-89. Reimer, Berlin.
- . [1982]. Is Earth senior to God? An old West African theological controversy. *African Notes [Ìbàdàn]* **9**, 7-14.
- . [1983]. The Idomoid languages of the Benue and Cross River valleys. *Journal of West African Languages* **13**, 91-149.
- Armstrong, R. & al. [1969]. Èkiti traditional dirge of Lt. Colonel Adékúnlé Fájuyi’s funeral. *African Notes [Ìbàdàn]* **5.2**, 64-94.
- Asad, T. [1983]. Anthropological conceptions of religion; reflections on Geertz. *Man* **18**, 237-59.
- . [1993]. *Genealogies of Religion; discipline & reasons of power in Christianity & Islam*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- . [1999/2003]. Secularism, nation-state, religion. *Nation & Religion; perspectives on Europe & Asia*, edited by P. v.d. Veer & H. Lehmann, 178-96. Princeton University Press, New Jersey/ *Formations of the Secular; Christianity, Islam, modernity*, 181-201. Stanford University Press, Palo Alto California.
- Àsíégbu, J. [1984]. *Nigeria & its British Invaders 1851-1920, a thematic documentary history*. Nok, New York.
- Aṣíwájú, A. [1976]. Political motivation and oral historical traditions in Africa; the case of Yorùbá crowns, 1900-60. *Africa* **46**, 113-27.
- Assmann, A. [2008]. The religious roots of cultural memory. *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* **4**, 270-92.
- Assmann, J. [1997]. *Moses the Egyptian; the memory of Egypt in western monotheism*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Atran, S. & A. Norenzayan. [2004]. Religion’s evolutionary landscape; counterintuition, commitment, compassion, communion. *Behavioral & Brain Sciences* **27**, 713-70.
- Auerbach, E. [1938/1959]. *Figura. Archivum Romanicum* **22**, 436-89/ *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature; six essays*, 11-76. Meridian, New York.
- Augé, M. [1982]. *Génie du paganisme*. Gallimard, Paris.
- . [1986]. Le fétiche et le corps pluriel. *Corps des Dieux; le temps de la réflexion* **7**, edited by C. Malamoud & J.-P. Vernant, 121-37. Gallimard, Paris.
- . [1994]. *Pour une anthropologie des mondes contemporains*. Aubier, Paris.
- Awé, B. [1967]. Ìbàdàn, its early beginnings. *The City of Ìbàdàn; a symposium on its structure & development*, edited by P. Lloyd & al., 11-25. Cambridge University Press.
- Awóbúlúyì, Q. [1978]. *Essentials of Yorùbá Grammar*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [2004]. On the so-called genitive morpheme in Standard Yorùbá. 24th West African Languages Congress, Ìbàdàn, 1-6 August. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ajíbóyè (2005).]
- Awólò.wò, Q. [1947]. *Path to Nigerian Freedom*. Faber, London.
- . [1968]. *The People’s Republic*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- Àwòm, U. [2010]. We are ready to create more states—Mark. *Leadership [Abuja]*. 26 May. www.leadershipnigeria.com/news/cover-stories/15514-politicians-stole-300b-since-1960-icpc.
- Awóniyi, T. [1981]. The word Yorùbá. *Nigeria Magazine* **134/35**, 104-07.
- Awórindé, A. [1965/1978]. *Ìyèrè Ifá [The Deep Chants of Ifá]*. *Occasional Publication* **32**, Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn/ *Nigerian Cultural Records* **16-17**.
- Awóyalé, ‘Y. [1978]. On the deep structure of Yorùbá ideophones. *Research Papers in the Linguistic Sciences* **1**, 3-37.
- . [2008]. *Global Yorùbá lexical database*. Ms., Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

- Àyándélé, E. [1969]. How truly Nigerian is our Nigerian history? *African Notes* [Ìbàdàn] **5.2**, 19-35.
- Aye, E. [1967]. *Old Calabar through the Centuries*. Hope Waddell Press, Calabar.
- Ayějina ["Aiyējina"], 'F. [2010]. *Èyùn Èlẹ̀gbára; a source of an alter/native theory of African literature & criticism*. Center for Black & African Arts & Civilization, Lagos. Preliminary version: sta.uwi.edu/news/pics/2009/Esu_Elegbara3.pdf.
- Àzị kàíwè ["Azikiwe"], N. [1949]. Presidential address, Ígbo State Conference. *West African Pilot*, 6 July. [Not personally consulted; cited by Coleman (1958).]
- al-'Azam, S. [1981/1984]. Orientalism and orientalism in reverse. *Khamsin, journal of revolutionary socialists of the Middle East* **8**, 5-26. *Forbidden Agendas; intolerance & defiance in the Middle East*. Khamsin, an anthology, edited by J. Rothschild, 349-76. Al Saqi Books, London.
- Bàabàngidáa, I. [2018]. A goodwill message on [the] 30th anniversary of FRSC; why we [sì] appointed 'Wólé Sòyínká to head FRSC 30 years ago—IBB. *Daily Times* [Lagos], 21 February. www.nairaland.com/4361050/why-appointed-wole-soyinka-head.
- Babalólá, A. [1966]. *The Content & Form of Yorùbá Ìjalá*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1975]. Further discussion on Ayò Bámgbósé's article 'The meaning of Oló.dùmarè; an etymology of the name of the Yorùbá high god'. *African Notes* [Ìbàdàn] **7.2**, 104-05.
- Babalólá, A. & O. Àlàbá. [2003]. *A Dictionary of Yorùbá Personal Names*. West African Book Publishers, Lagos.
- Babalólá, A. [2015]. *Archaeological investigations of early glass production at Igbó Oló.kun, Ilé-Ife (Nigeria)*. Dissertation, Rice University, Houston Texas.
- . [2018]. Medieval glass bead production and exchange. *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time; art, culture & exchange across medieval Saharan Africa*, edited by K. Berzock, 223-39. Block Museum of Art, Evanston Illinois.
- Babáyémí, S. [1973] Bẹ̀rẹ̀ Festival in Ọ̀yọ́. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **7**, 121-24.
- . [n.d.=1988]. *Content Analysis of Oríkì Orílẹ̀*. Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn.
- Babáyémí, S. & O. Adékolá eds. [1987-1991]. *Ìsẹ̀dálẹ̀ Àwọn Odù Ifá 1-4*. Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn.
- Baikie, W. [1856]. *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora & Binue (commonly known as the Niger & Tsadda) in 1854*. John Murray, London.
- Bailey, M. [2010]. Is the Oló.kun Head the real thing? A 'copy' of one of the greatest African sculptures may be genuine, researchers believe. *The Art Newspaper* 213 [May], 3. <http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Is-the-Olokun-Head-the-real-thing/20683>.
- Baker, M. [1995]. Conclusion; on the nature of parameterization, 11.3.3. A theological explanation. *The Polysynthesis Parameter*, 512-15. Oxford University Press.
- Bámgbósé, A. [1966a]. *A Grammar of Yorùbá*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1966b]. The assimilated low tone in Yorùbá. *Lingua* **16**, 1-13.
- . [1968]. The form of Yorùbá proverbs. *Odù* (Ìbàdàn) **4**, 74-86.
- . [1972]. The meaning of Oló.dùmarè; an etymology of the name of the Yorùbá high god. *African Notes* [Ìbàdàn] **7.1**, 25-32.
- . [1986]. *Yorùbá, a Language in Transition*. Qdúnjọ Memorial Lectures Committee, Yába.
- Bámgbósé, A. (ed.) [1976]. *Mother Tongue Education; the West African Experience*. UNESCO, Paris.
- Banfield, A. [1914]. *Dictionary of the Nupe Language, Nupe-English*. Niger Press, Shonga, Northern Nigeria.
- Bánjọ, A. & al. [eds., 1991]. *Quadrilingual Glossary of Legislative Terms: English, Hausa, Igbo, Yorùbá*. Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council, Lagos.
- Baqué, P. [2020]. Polémique sur la restitution des objets d'art africains; au-delà de la crainte de voir les musées français se vider. *Le Monde Diplomatique* **797** (Août), 14-15.
- Barber, K. [1981]. How man makes God in West Africa; Yorùbá attitudes towards the òrìṣà. *Africa* **51**, 724-45.
- . [1990]. *Oríkì*, women and the proliferation and merging of òrìṣà. *Africa* **60**, 313-37.
- Barbot, J. [1688-1732]. *A Description of the Coasts of North & South-Guinea & of Ethiopia Inferior, vulgarly Angola* **5**. Churchills, London.
- Barnes, S. [2001]. Review of Akínjógbin ed. (1998). *Journal of African History* **42**, 123-24.
- Barnet, M. [1966/1970]. *Biografía de un Cimarrón/ Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*. Instituto de Ethnología y Folklore, Havana. Galerna, Buenos Aires/Penguin, London. [Caveat lector, cf. Zeuske (1997)]
- Barquera, R. & al. [2024]. Ancient genomes reveal insights into ritual life at Chichén Itzá. *Nature* **533**, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07509-7>, 1-6.
- Bascom, W. [1939]. The legacy of an unknown Nigerian "Donatello", *Illustrated London News* **194**, 592-94. [Not personally consulted; cited by Tignor (1990).]
- . [1941]. The sanctions of Ifá divination. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **71**, 43-54.
- . [1944]. *The Sociological Role of the Yorùbá Cult Group*. American Anthropological Association, Menasha, Wisc.
- . [1961]. Odù Ifá; the order of the figures of Ifá. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique noire* **23**, 676-82.
- . [1965]. The forms of folklore; prose narratives. *Journal of American Folklore* **78** [307], 3-20..
- . [1966]. Odù Ifá; the names of the signs. *Africa* **36**, 408-21.
- . [1969]. *Ifá Divination; communication between gods & men in West Africa*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- . [1980]. *Sixteen Covries; Yorùbá divination from Africa to the New World*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Basden, G. [1921]. *Among the Ígbo of Nigeria; an account of the curious & interesting habits, customs & beliefs of a little known African people by one who has for many years lived amongst them on close & intimate terms*. Seeley, London.
- . [1938]. *Niger Ígbo, a description of the primitive life, customs & animistic beliefs, &c., of the Ígbo people of Nigeria by one who, for thirty-five years, enjoyed the privilege of their intimate confidence & friendship*. Seeley, London.
- Bassani, E. [1983]. Il vassoio dell'oracolo di Ifá di Ulm e le statuette del culto àbíkú. *Africa, Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto Italo-Africano* **38**, 580-90.
- Bastide, R. [1958]. *Le Candomblé de Babia Brésil (rite Nagô)*. Mouton, Paris.
- . [1960]. *Les Religions africaines au Brésil; vers une sociologie des interpenétrations de civilisations*. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.
- . [1970a]. Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage. *L'Année sociologique* **21**, 65-108.
- . [1970b]. Review of Bascom (1969). *L'Année sociologique* **21**, 350-52-108.
- . [1970c]. Le rire et les court-circuits de la pensée. *Échanges & Communications, Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi -Strauss à l'occasion de son 60ième anniversaire*, edited by P. Maranda & J. Pouillon, 953-63. Mouton, The Hague.
- Bastin, Y. & al. [2005]. Bantu lexical reconstructions **3**. [Searchable database.] Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika, Tervuren. www.africanmuseum.be/research/discover/human_sciences/culture_society/blr.
- Basu, P. [2016]. N.W. Thomas and colonial anthropology in British West Africa; reappraising a cautionary tale. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **22**, 84-107.

- Bataille, G. [1973]. *Théorie de la religion*. Gallimard, Paris.
- Battestini, S. [1991]. Reading signs of identity and alterity; history, semiotics and a Nigerian case. *African Studies Review* **43**, 99-116.
- . [1997]. *Écriture & Texte; contribution africaine*. Présence Africaine, Paris.
- Baudin, N. [1884]. *Fétichisme & féticheurs*. Séminaire des missions africaines, Lyon.
- Baumard, N. & P. Boyer. [2013]. Explaining moral religions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* **17**, 272-80.
- Baumard, N. & C. Chevallier. [2015]. The nature and dynamics of world religions; a life-history approach. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* **282**, 2015.1593.
- Beard, M. [1990]. Priesthood in the Roman republic. *Pagan Priests; religion & power in the ancient world*, edited by M. Beard & J. North, 17-48. Duckworth, London.
- Beaujard, P. [2012]. *L'Océan Indien, au cœur des globalisations de l'ancien monde (7e - 15e siècles)*. [= Les Mondes de l'Océan Indien 2]. Armand Colin, Paris.
- Beck, C. [2015]. *The Value of Art; studies in the material character of the terracotta figurines of the Nok culture of central Nigeria*. Dissertation, Goethe University, Frankfurt. [Not personally consulted; cited by Breunig & Rupp (2016).]
- Beidelman, T. [1970]. Myth, legend and oral history; a Kaguru traditional text. *Anthropos* **65**, 74-97.
- Beier, U. [1955]. The historical and psychological significance of Yorùbá myths. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **1**, 17-25.
- . [1956a]. Before Odùduwà. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **3**, 25-32.
- . [1956b]. Mud shrines of Ólokún. *Nigeria Magazine* **50**, 280-95. [Published anonymously; credited by Ògúndélé (2003, 272).]
- . [1957]. The dancers of Ágbò. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **7**, 41. [with 4 unnumbered pages of plates]
- . [1958]. Yorùbá enclave. *Nigeria, a quarterly magazine of general interest* **58**, 238-51.
- . [1959]. *A Year of Sacred Festivals in One Yorùbá Town*. Nigeria Magazine, Lagos.
- . [1963a]. *African Mud Sculpture*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1963b]. *Ọsẹ́ Èzì festival in Ágbò*, *Nigeria Magazine* **78**, 184-95.
- . [1969]. Introduction; on translating Yorùbá poetry. *Yorùbá Poetry; an anthology of traditional poems*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1994]. *The Return of Šàngó; the theatre of Dúró Ládiṣò*. Ìwàlẹ̀wà Haus, Bayreuth.
- Belasco, B. [1977/1980]. *Ethnomarketing & entrepreneurs; the apotheosis of trade in Nigeria/The Entrepreneur as Culture-bero; preadaptations in Nigerian economic development*. Dissertation, New School for Social Research/Praeger, New York.
- Belgore, S. & al. [1981/19820]. *University of Ife Students Incident Tribunal of Enquiry. Main Report*. Federal Government Press, Àpápá.
- Bellah, R. [1964]. Religious evolution. *American Sociological Review* **29**, 358-74.
- . [2011]. *Religion in Human Evolution, from the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Bellamy, B. & J. Diamanti. [2018]. Introduction. *Materialism & the Critique of Energy, ix-xxvii*. M-C-M', Chicago.
- Bello, A. [2016]. Vision of ancestorhood and apotheosis in alternative Yorùbá music. *Ìbàfá Journal of African Studies* [Lagos] **8**, 199-217.
- Bello-Osagie, O. [2000/2017]. *Names; origin, meanings & significance, the Benin perspective*. [Benin-City ?]. [Not personally consulted; cited by D. Edebiri p.c.]
- Belting, H. [1990/1994]. *Bild und Kult; eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*. Beck, München/*Likeness & Presence; a history of the image before the era of art*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ben-Amos [Girshick], P. [1972]. Symbolism in Ólokún mud art. *African Arts* **6.4**, 28-31, 95.
- . [1980]. *The Art of Benin*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- . [2007]. The symbolism of ancestral altars in Benin. *Benin Kings & Rituals; court arts from Nigeria*, edited by B. Plankensteiner, 151-59. Snoeck, Heule (Belge).
- Bender, W. [1980]. *Kolonialismus, Bewusstsein u. Literatur in Africa; sur Veränderung des Bewusstseins der Yorùbá in Westnigeria durch den Kolonialismus von 1850 bis Heute aufgezeigt an literarischen Dokumenten insbesondere an Beispielen aus der Oralliteratur*. Übersee-Museum, Bremen.
- Benjamin, W. [1921/2019]. Kapitalismus als Religion [Fragment]. *Gesammelte Schriften* **6**, 100-02. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/*Le Capitalisme comme religion*. Payot, Paris. raumgegendement.blogspot.de/2009/11/02/walter-benjamin-kapitalismus-als-religion-fragment-1921/.
- . [1928/1979] Zum Planetarium. *Einbahnstrasse*, 80-82. Rowohlt, Berlin/*To the planetarium. One-Way Street & Other Writings*, 103f. New Left Books, London. platypus1917.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/benjaminwalter_totheplanetarium.pdf.
- Bennett, P. [1983]. Patterns in linguistic geography and the Bantu origins controversy. *History in Africa* **10**, 35-51.
- Bennett, P. & J. Sterk. [1977]. Benue-Kwa; internal and external relations. 8th Conference on African Linguistics, UCLA, Los Angeles. Published as: South Central Niger-Congo; a reclassification. *Studies in African Linguistics* **8**, 241-73.
- Bentor, E. [1988]. Life as an artistic process; Ìgbo *ikénga* and *ìfú*. *African Arts* **21.2**, 66-71, 94.
- Benveniste, É. [1969]. *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*. **1**, Économie, parenté, société. **2**, Pouvoir, droit, religion. Minuit, Paris.
- Bernal, M. [1987/1991/2006]. *Black Athena, the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. **1**, *The fabrication of ancient Greece 1785-1985*. **2**, *The archaeological and documentary evidence*. **3**, *The linguistic evidence*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick New Jersey.
- . [1997]. Responses to Black Athena; general and linguistic issues. *Talanta* **28/29**, 65-98.
- Bernoulli, J. [1713/2005]. *Ars Conjectandi* **4**. *Usum & applicationem praecedentis doctrinae in civilibus, moralibus & oeconomicis/The Art of Conjecturing* **4**. *Use & application of the foregoing lessons in civil, psychological & economic affairs*. Thurnisiorum Fratrum, Basel. www.sheynin.de/download/bernoulli.pdf.
- Berry, S. [1988]. Property rights and rural resource management; the case of tree crops in West Africa. *Cahiers sciences humaines* **24**, 3-16.
- Bertho, J. [1936]. La science du destin au Dahomey. *Africa* **9**, 359-78.
- Besançon, A. [1994]. *L'image interdite; une histoire intellectuelle de l'iconoclasme*. Fayard, Paris.
- Besser, S. [2003]. Tropenkoller; the interdiscursive career of a German colonial syndrome. *Framing & Imagining Disease in Cultural History*, edited by G. Rousseau & al., 303-20. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Al-Bīrūnī [1967]. *The determination of the coordinates of positions for the correction of distances between cities*. American University, Beirut. [Not personally consulted; cited by Toomer (1969)].
- Binsbergen, W. v. [1997]. Rethinking Africa's contribution to global cultural history; lessons from a comparative historical analysis of mankala board-games and geomantic divination. *Talanta* **28/29**, 219-51.
- Bitiyong, Y. [1993]. Culture Nok, Nigeria. *Vallées du Niger*, edited by J. Devisse, 393-414. Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris.
- Blackburn, B. [2010]. The Rev. Franklin Graham says President Obama was "born a Muslim". 20 August. abcnews.go.com/WN/franklin-graham-president-obama-born-muslim-pew-poll/story?id=11446462.
- Blair, A. [1940]. *Intelligence report on Mèkò, Ìlààró*. [Not personally consulted; cited by Abraham (1958).]
- Bleek, W. [1862]. *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* **1**. *Phonology*. Trübner, London.

- Blier, S. [2015]. *Art & Risk in Ancient Yorùbá; Ifé history, power & identity c. 1300*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bloch, E. [1932//1962/1977a]. Ungleichzeitigkeit und Pflicht zu ihrer Dialektik. *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*. Oprecht & Helbling, Zürich/
Werkausgabe 4, 104-60. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Nonsynchronism and the obligation to its dialectics. *New German Critique* 11, 22-38.
- . [1963/1977b]. *Tübinger Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.
- Bloch, M[arc]. [1940]. *La Société féodale 2, Les classes & le gouvernement des hommes*. A. Michel, Paris.
- Bloch, M[aurice]. [1977]. The past and the present in the present. *Man* 12, 278-92.
- . [2002]. Are religious beliefs counterintuitive? *Radical Interpretation in Religion*, edited by N. Frankenberry, 129-46. Cambridge University Press.
- . [2005]. Where did anthropology go? On the need for 'human nature'. *Essays on Cultural Transmission*, 1-19. Berg, Oxford.
- . [2008]. Why religion is nothing special but is central. *Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society B* 363, 2055-61.
- Bloom, H. [1973]. *The Anxiety of Influence; a theory of poetry*. Oxford University Press.
- Boas, F. [1896]. The limits of the comparative method of anthropology. *Science* 4, 901-08.
- . [1910]. Ethnological problems in Canada. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 40, 529-39.
- . [1911]. Introduction. *Handbook of American Indian Languages* 1, 1-83. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.
- . [1940]. *Race, Language & Culture*. Macmillan, New York.
- Bohannon, P. & L. [1950]. The meaning of *akombo* and the life cycle. *A Source Notebook in Tiv Religion* vol. 5. *Ethnography Series, Human Relations Area Files* FF 57008. Yale University, New Haven Connecticut.
- Bohr, F. & U. Knöfel. [2021]. »Manche Museumsdirektoren haben schlicht gelogen.« In Deutschlands Museen lagern Zehntausende Objekte, die in der Kolonialzeit in Afrika geraubt wurden. Bénédicte Savoy verlangt die Rückgabe und schildert, wie sich der Westen trickreich dagegen wehrt. Kunstwerke aus dem früheren Königreich Benin: »An den Bronzen klebt Blut.« *Der Spiegel* [Hamburg], 19 March. [publisher firewall.] www.spiegel.de/kultur/kunsthistorikerin-benedicte-savoy-neber-koloniale-bente-manche-museumsdirektoren-haben-schlicht-gelogen-a-8bab7bd6-0002-0001-0000-000176418828.
- Bondarenko, D. & P. Roesé. [1999]. Benin prehistory; the origin and settling down of the Èdó. *Anthropos* 94, 542-52.
- . [2004]. Between the Ògísó and Òba dynasties; an interpretation of interregnum in the Benin Kingdom. *History in Africa* 31, 103-15.
- Bookchin, M. [1980]. *Toward an Ecological Society*. Black Rose, Montréal.
- . [1990/1996]. Introduction; a philosophical naturalism. *The Philosophy of Social Ecology; essays on dialectical naturalism*, 1-35. Black Rose, Montréal.
- . [1994/1996]. History, civilization and progress; outline for a criticism of modern relativism. *The Philosophy of Social Ecology; essays on dialectical naturalism*, 147-79. Black Rose, Montréal.
- Bortolini, E. & al. [2017]. Inferring patterns of folktale diffusion using genomic data. *PNAS* 114, 9140-45.
- Bosman, W. [1705/1907]. *A New & Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, divided into the Gold, the Slave & the Ivory Coasts, written originally in Dutch*. James Knapton/Ballantyne Press, London.
- Boston, J. [1962]. Notes on the origin of Ígàlà kingship. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, 373-83.
- . [1968]. *The Ígàlà Kingdom*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [1974]. Ifá divination in Ígàlà. *Africa* 44, 350-60.
- . [1977]. *Ìkénga Figures among the Northwest Ígbo & the Ígàlà*. Ethnographica, London.
- Bottéro, J. [1981]. Prophétisme babylonien et monothéisme d'Israël. *Recherche & documents du Centre Thomas-More* 31. [Not personally consulted; cited by Augé (1982).]
- Boullier, C. & al. [2002]. Bilan chronologique de la culture Nok et nouvelles datations sur des sculptures. *Afrique, Archéologie, Arts* 2, 9-28.
- Bourdieu, P. [1971a]. Une interprétation de la théorie de la religion selon Max Weber. *Archives européennes de sociologie* 12, 3-21.
- . [1971b]. Genèse et structure du champ religieux. *Revue française de sociologie* 12, 295-334.
- . [1971c]. Champ du pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe. *Scolies, Cahiers de recherche de l'École normale supérieure* 1, 7-26.
- . [1977]. Sur le pouvoir symbolique. *Annales* 32, 405-11.
- . [1982]. *Ce que parler veut dire*. Fayard, Paris.
- . [1987a]. Sociologues de la croyance et croyances de sociologues. *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 63, 155-61.
- . [1987b]. La dissolution du religieux. *Choses dites*, 117-23. Minuit, Paris.
- . [2013]. *Sur Manet; une révolution symbolique. Cours au Collège de France (1998-2000) suivis d'un manuscrit inachevé de Pierre et Marie-Claire Bourdieu*. Seuil, Paris.
- Bourdieu, P. & J.-C. Passeron. [1970]. *La Reproduction; Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*. Minuit, Paris.
- Bouthoul, G. [1950]. *Histoire de la Sociologie*. Que Sais-Je? Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.
- Bouveresse, J. [2007]. *Peut-on ne pas croire? Sur la vérité, la croyance & la foi*. Agone, Marseilles.
- Bowen, T. [1858]. *Grammar & Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language with an Introductory Description of the Country & People of Yorùbá*. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- Bowley, G. [2017]. Damien Hirst controversy at Venice Biennale. *New York Times*, 10 May. www.nytimes.com/2017/05/10/arts/design/damien-hirst-controversy-at-venice-biennale.html.
- Boy, J. & J. Torpey. [2013]. Inventing the axial age; the origins and uses of a historical concept. *Theory & Society* 42, 241-59.
- Boyer, P. [1996]. What makes anthropomorphism natural; intuitive ontology and cultural representations. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2, 83-97.
- . [1998]. Cognitive tracks of cultural inheritance; how evolved intuitive ontology governs cultural transmission. *American Anthropologist* 100, 876-89.
- . [2005]. A reductionistic model of distinct modes of religious transmission. *Mind & Religion; psychological & cognitive foundations of religiosity*, edited by H. Whitehouse & R. McCauley, 3-29. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek California.
- . [2010]. *The Fracture of an Illusion; science & the dissolution of religion*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- . [2019]. Informal religious activity outside hegemonic religions; wild traditions and their relevance to evolutionary models. *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 10.
- . [2020a]. Why divination? Evolved psychology and strategic interaction in the production of truth. *Current Anthropology* 61, 100-23.
- . [2020b]. Informal religious activity outside hegemonic religions; wild traditions and their relevance to evolutionary models. *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 10, 459-72.

- Boyer P. & N. Baumard. [2016]. The diversity of religious systems across history; an evolutionary cognitive approach. *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology & Religion*, edited by T. Shackelford & J. Liddle. Oxford University Press.
- Bradbury, R. [1956]. *The Benin village*. Dissertation, University of London, excerpted in (1973, 149-209).
- . [1957]. The Benin kingdom. *The Benin Kingdom & the Èdó-speaking Peoples of Southwestern Nigeria. Ethnographic Survey of Africa Part 13*, edited by D. Forde, 18-58. International African Institute, London.
- . [1959]. Chronological problems in the study of Benin history. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **1**, 263-87. Reprinted (1973, 17-43).
- . [1961]. Èzomọ's *ikéèga obó* and the Benin cult of the hand. *Man* **61**, 129-38. Reprinted (1973, 251-70).
- . [1964]. The historical uses of comparative ethnography with special reference to Benin and the Yorùbá. *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, edited by J. Vansina & al., 145-64. Oxford University Press. Reprinted (1973, 3-16).
- . [1965]. Father and senior son in Èdó mortuary ritual. *African Systems of Thought*, edited by M. Fortes & G. Dieterlen, 96-121. Tavistock, London. Reprinted (1973, 213-28).
- . [1967]. The kingdom of Benin. *West African Kingdoms in the 19th Century*, edited by D. Forde & P. Kaberry, 1-35. Oxford University Press. Reprinted (1973, 44-75).
- . [1968]. Continuities and discontinuities in pre-colonial and colonial Benin politics (1897-1951). *History & Social Anthropology*, edited by I. Lewis, 193-252. Tavistock, London. Reprinted (1973, 76-128).
- . [1969]. Patrimonialism and gerontocracy in Benin political culture. *Man in Africa*, edited by M. Douglas & P. Kaberry, 17-36. Tavistock, London. Reprinted (1973, 129-46).
- . [1973]. *Benin Studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Brain, R. [1967]. The Bangwa of West Cameroun. Ms., University College, London. www.lebialeme.info/The-Bangwa-of-West-Cameroon.pdf.
- . [1969]. Friends and twins in Bangwa. *Man in Africa*, edited by M. Douglas & P. Kaberry, 213-27. Tavistock, London. www.lebialeme.info/Friends-and-Twins-in-Bangwa.pdf.
- Brain, R. & A. Pollock. [1971]. *Bangwa Funerary Sculpture*. Duckworth, London. www.lebialeme.info/Bangwa-Funerary-Sculpture.pdf.
- Braudel, F. [1946/1949/1979]. Préface. *La Méditerranée & le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Colin, Paris.
- . [1958]. La longue durée; histoire et sciences sociales. *Annales* **13**, 725-53.
- Brelich, A. [1951]. Deux aspects religieux de la Rome archaïque. *L'Antiquité classique* **20**, 335-42.
- Brennan, T. [2001/2006]. Antonio Gramsci and postcolonial theory: 'southernism'. *Diaspora* **10**, 143-87 / *The southern intellectual. Wars of Position; the cultural politics of Left & Right*, 233-72. Columbia University Press, New York.
- . [2003/2006]. The empire's new clothes. *Critical Inquiry* **29**, 337-78 / *Wars of Position; the cultural politics of Left & Right*, 170-204. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Brenner, L. [1989]. 'Religious' discourses in and about Africa. *Discourse & its Disguises; the interpretation of African oral texts*, edited by K. Barber & P. de Moraes, 87-105. Center of West African Studies, Birmingham England.
- . [2000]. Histories of religion in Africa. *Journal of Religion in Africa* **30**, 143-67.
- Bresnan, J. [1971]. Sentence stress and syntactic transformations. *Language* **47**, 257-97.
- Breunig, P. & N. Rupp. [2016]. An outline of recent studies on the Nigerian Nok culture. *Journal of African Archaeology* **14**, 237-55.
- Breunig, P. ed. [2013]. *Nok; African sculpture in archaeological context*. Africa Magna Verlag, Frankfurt.
- Brivio, A. [2008] «Le tron est un vodou propre.» Vodou entre islam et christianisme. *Vodou*, edited by J. Hainard & al., 235-56. Musée d'Ethnographie, Genève.
- Brockmann, R. & G. Hötter. [1984]. *Adùnni; a portrait of Susanne Wenger*. München, Trickster.
- de Brosses, C. [1760]. *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches, ou parallèle de l'ancienne religion de l'Égypte avec la religion actuelle de Nigritie*. Paris.
- Brown, P. [1975]. Society and the supernatural; a medieval change. *Dadalus* **104.2**, 133-51.
- Brun, S. [1624]. *Samuel Brun, des Wundartzt und Burgers zı Basal, Schiffarten*. Basel. Translated in Jones (1983, 44-96).
- Buck, C. [1933]. *Comparative Grammar of Greek & Latin*. University of Chicago Press.
- Burkert, W. [1984/1992]. *Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur*. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heidelberg / *The Orientalizing Revolution; Near-Eastern influence on Greek culture in the early archaic age*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Burquest, D. [1973]. *A grammar of Angas*. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Burton, R. [1863a]. *Abéòkúta & the Camaroons Mountains; an exploration*. Tinsley Brothers, London.
- . [1863b]. The renowned city of Benin. *Fraser's Magazine for Town & Country* **67**, 273-89, 407-22. [Not personally consulted; quoted by Kalous (1968).]
- Cabrera, L. [1954a]. *El Monte; igbo finda, ewe orisha, vititinfinda; notas sobre las religiones, la magia, las supersticiones y el folklore de los negros criollos y del pueblo de Cuba*. Ediciones C.R., Habana.
- . [1954b repr. 1989]. El sincretismo religioso de Cuba; santos orisha ngangas. Lucumis y Congos. *Orígenes; revista de arte & literatura* **36**, 8-20/7, 116-28.
- Campbell, L. [1998]. *Historical Linguistics; an introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Canguilhem, G. [1964]. Histoire des religions et histoire des sciences dans la théorie du fétichisme chez Auguste Comte. *Mélanges Alexandre Koyré publiés à l'occasion de son 70ième anniversaire*, **2**. L'aventure de l'esprit, 64-87. Hermann, Paris.
- Capo, H. [1978]. Prolegomena to the teaching of African languages. *Africana marburgensia* **17.2**, 22-39.
- . [1981]. Towards efficient orthographies for West African languages. *Cahiers ivoiriens de recherche linguistique* **10**, 87-100.
- . [1984]. Neo-language; orthography-oriented comparative linguistics in Africa. *Journal of the Linguistic Society of Nigeria* **2**, 83-88.
- . [1985]. On the high nonexpanded vowels of Yoruboid. *Studies in African Linguistics* **16**, 103-21.
- . [1989]. Defoid. *The Niger-Congo Languages*, edited by J. Bendor-Samuel, 275-304. American Universities Press, Lanham Maryland.
- . [1991]. *A Comparative Phonology of Gbè*. Foris/de Gruyter, Berlin.
- . [1992]. "Let us joke over it; Nigeria as a Tower of Babel". Inaugural lecture, University of Ilorin, 23 January.
- . [2008]. Questions orthographiques en Afrique. *Journal of West African Languages* **35**, 185-98.
- Capone, S. [2005]. *Les Yorùbá du Nouveau Monde; religion, ethnicité et nationalisme noir aux États-Unis*. Karthala, Paris.
- Caquot, A. [1970]. La religion d'Israël des origines à la captivité de Babylone. *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade; Histoire des Religions* **1**, edited by H.-C. Puech, 359-461. Gallimard, Paris.
- Castrizio, D. [2019]. The Riace bronzes; recent research and new scientific knowledge. *Actual Problems of Theory & History of Art* **9**, 67-74, 812-13.
- Cavalli-Sforza, L. [2000]. *Genes, Peoples & Languages*. North Point Press, New York.

- . [2019]. *L'Evoluzione della Cultura*. 2da edizione. Codice Edizioni, Torino.
- Cayley, A. [1857]. On the theory of the analytical forms called trees. *Philosophical Magazine, 4th series* **13** : 172-76.
- Chandhoke, N. [2005]. The political consequences of ethnic mapping. *Discussion paper* **14**, Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics. www.crisisstates.com/download/dp14.pdf.
- Chappel, T. [1974]. The Yorùbá cult of twins in historical perspective. *Africa* **44**, 250-65.
- Chatterjee, P. [1986]. *Nationalist Thought & the Colonial World; a derivative discourse?* Zed, London.
- Chemeche, G. & al. [2003]. *Ìbẹ̀jẹ́, the Cult of Yorùbá Twins*. 5 Continents Editions, Milano.
- Chemillier, M. [2007]. Divination, (1) règles de la géomancie; (2) cognition. *Les Mathématiques Naturelles*, 159-208. Odile Jacob, Paris.
- Chemillier, M. & al. [2007]. Aspects mathématiques et cognitifs de la divination sikidy à Madagascar. *Homme* **181**, 7-40. [Revised as Chemillier (2007).]
- Chesi, G. & G. Merzeder, eds. [2006]. *The Nok Culture; art in Nigeria 2500 years ago*. Prestel, München.
- Chikwendù, V. & A. Òmẹ́jì. [1979]. Local sources of raw materials for the Nigerian bronze/brass industry, with emphasis on Ìgbò Òkwu. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **9**, 151-65.
- Chikwendù, V. & al. [1989]. Nigerian sources of copper, lead and tin for the Ìgbò Òkwu bronzes. *Archaeometry* **31**, 27-36.
- Childe, V. [1951]. *Social Evolution; The Josiah Mason lectures in anthropology 1947-48*. Watts, London.
- Chirikure, S. & al. [2013]. New pathways of sociopolitical complexity in southern Africa. *African Archaeological Review* **30**, 339-66.
- . [2017]. No big brother here; hierarchy, Shona political succession and the relationship between Great Zimbabwe and Lhami, southern Africa. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* **28**, 45-66.
- . [2018]. Elites and commoners at Great Zimbabwe; archaeological and ethnographic insights on social power. *Antiquity* **92/364**, 1056-75.
- Chiro, D. [1985]. The rise of the West. *American Sociological Review* **50**, 181-95.
- Christaller, J. [1875]. *A Grammar of the Asante & Fante Language* [...]. Missionsbuchhandlung, Basel.
- Chomsky, N. & M. Halle. [1968]. *The Sound Pattern of English*. Harper & Row, New York.
- Chouin, G. [2013]. Fossés, enceintes et peste noire en Afrique de l'Ouest forestière 500-1500 AD. Réflexions sous canopée. *Afrique: Archéologie & Arts* **9**, 43-66.
- Chouin, G. & Q. Lásisi. [2019]. Crisis and transformation in the Bight of Benin at the dawn of the Atlantic trade. *Power, Political Economy & Historical Landscapes of the Modern World*, edited by C. DeCorse, 285-306. SUNY Press, Albany New York.
- Claidière, N. & al. [2014]. How Darwinian is cultural evolution? *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* **369**, 20130368.
- Clark, J. [1961]. *Song of a Goat*. Mbari Publications, Ìbàdàn.
- Clark, M. [1989]. *The Tonal System of Ìgbò*. Foris, Dordrecht.
- Clarke, J. [1939]. Ifá divination. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **69**, 235-56.
- Clifford, J. [2003]. *On the Edges of Anthropology (Interviews)*. Prickly Paradigm, Chicago.
- Clifford, M. [1936]. A Nigerian chiefdom; some notes on the Ìgàlà tribe in Nigeria and their "divine king". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **66**, 393-436.
- Cohn, R. [1994]. Before Israel; the Canaanites as other in biblical tradition. *The Other in Jewish Thought & History; constructions of Jewish culture & identity*, edited by L. Silberman & R. Cohn, 74-90. NYU Press, New York.
- Coccia, E. [2016]. *La Vie des plantes; une métaphysique du mélange*. Payot, Paris.
- Cole, H. [1982]. *Mbàrì, Art & Life among the Òwèré ["Owerri"] Ìgbò*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Cole, H. & C. Ànìákò ["Aniakor"]. [1984]. *Ìgbò Arts; community & cosmos*. Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Coleman, J. [1958]. *Nigeria; background to nationalism*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Colleyn, J.-P. [2005]. La géomancie dans le contexte bamana; signes et objets forts. *Mande Studies* **7**, 9-20.
- Comte, A. [1839]. *Cours de Philosophie Positive* **4**. Bachelier, Paris.
- Conan-Doyle, A. [1894]. Silver Blaze. *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, 9-63. Newnes, London.
- Connah, G. [1967]. New light on the Benin City walls. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **3**, 593-609, map insert in back cover.
- . [1968a]. Radiocarbon dates for Benin City and further dates for Daima, N.E. Nigeria. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **4**, 313-20.
- . [1968b]. Review of Willett (1967). *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **4**, 350-51.
- . [1975]. *The Archaeology of Benin; excavations & other researches in & around Benin-City, Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Cook, T. [1985]. *An Integrated Phonology of Èfík Vol 1. The earlier stages of the phonological derivation with particular attention do the vowel & tone systems*. Dissertation, Leiden University. ICG Printing, Dordrecht.
- Cooper, D. [1970]. *The Cubist Epoch*. Phaidon, London.
- Copeland, L. [1939]. Sources of the seven-day week. *Popular Astronomy* **47**, 175-82.
- Cordwell, J. [n.d.]. [Image of ancestral altar in the Èdó palace]. Justine Cordwell Collection, Northwestern University Library. images.northwestern.edu/image-service/inn-dil-940abcc-6160-4832-8fac-937b0af9d413/full/1600/0/default.jpg.
- Courlander, H. [1973]. *Tales of Yorùbá Gods & Heroes*. Crown, New York.
- Cox, J. [2008]. Community mastery of the spirits as an African form of shamanism. *Diskus; Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions* **9**. www.basr.ac.uk/diskus/diskus9/coc.htm.
- . [2010]. The invention of the Christian god in Africa; Geoffrey Parrinder and the study of god in African indigenous religions. *Le Monothéisme; diversité, exclusivisme ou dialogue? Actes du 2ieme Congrès, Association européenne pour l'étude des religions, 11-14 Septembre 2002*, edited by C. Guittard, 315-28. Société Ernest Renan, Paris.
- . [2014]. *The Invention of God in Indigenous Societies*. Acumen, Durham/Routledge, London.
- Craddock, P. [1985]. Medieval copper alloy production and West African bronze analyses 1. *Archaeometry* **27**, 17-41.
- Craddock, P. & J. Picton. [1986]. Medieval copper alloy production and West African bronze analyses 2. *Archaeometry* **28**, 3-32.
- Craddock, P. & al. [1993]. The technical origin of the Ìgbò bronzes. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **22**, 191-201.
- . [2013]. The Olókun head reconsidered. Un ré-examen de la tête d'Olókun. *Afrique: Archéologie & Arts* **9**, 13-42.
- Creelius, W. [1879]. Joshua Ulsheimers Reisen nach Guinea und Beschreibung des Landes. *Alemannia* **7**, 97-120.
- Crowther, S. [1852]. *Vocabulary of the Yorùbá Language*. Seeleys, London.
- Crowther, S. & al. [1911/1937]. *Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language*. C.M.S. Bookshop, Lagos/Ìbàdàn University Press.
- Curnow, K. [1983]. *The Afro-portuguese ivories; classification & stylistic analysis of a hybrid artform*. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.

- D'Alessandro, R. & T. Scheer. [2015]. Modular PIC. *Linguistic Inquiry* **46**, 593-624.
- Dalton, G. [1976]. Review of A. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* [Longman, London 1973]. *African Economic History* **1**, 51-101.
- Dalziel, J. [1937]. *The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa, being an appendix to the Flora of West Tropical Africa*. Crown Agents for the Colonies, London.
- Dammann, E. [1978]. Review of Adler & Zempléni (1972). *Journal of Religion in Africa* **9**, 73f.
- Danfulani, U. [1995]. *Pebbles & Deities; Pa divination among the Ngas, Mupun & Mwaghavul in Nigeria*. Lang, Frankfurt.
- Dark, P. [1960]. Introduction. *Benin Art*, edited by W. Forman & al., 9-28. Batchworth Press for Paul Hamlyn, London.
- . [1973]. *Introduction to Benin Art & Technology*. Oxford University Press.
- Darling, P. [1976]. Notes on the earthworks of the Benin Empire. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **6**, 143-49.
- . [1981]. A change of territory; attempts to trace more than a thousand years of population movements by the Bini and Esan peoples in southern Nigeria. *African Historical Demography* **2**; proceedings of a seminar held in the Centre of African Studies, 24-25 April 1981, edited by C. Fyfe & D. McMaster, 105-20. University of Edinburgh.
- . [1984]. *Archaeology & History in Southern Nigeria; the ancient linear earthworks of Benin & Ishan*. [= *Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology* **11**.] Archaeopress, Oxford.
- . [2001]. *Sungbo's Eredo, Africa's largest single monument*. School of Conservation Sciences, Bournemouth University. apollo5.bournemouth.ac.uk/africanlegacy/sungbo_eredo.htm.
- Darwin, C. [1959]. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Murray, London.
- Davison, C. [1972]. *Glass Beads in African Archaeology; results of neutron activation analysis, supplemented by results of x-ray fluorescence analysis*. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. [Not personally consulted; cited by Lankton & al. (2006).]
- Décobert, C. [1998]. La conversion comme aversion. *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* **104**, 33-60.
- Delafose, M. [1926]. Review of R. Allier, *Psychologie de la Conversion chez les Peuples Non-civilisés*. *Revue d'Ethnographie & des Traditions Populaires* **27/28**. [Not personally consulted; cited by Maupoil (1943).]
- Dé.là.nò, I. [1958]. *Atumò Èdè Yorùbá; a short Yorùbá grammar & dictionary*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1966]. *Òwè l'ẹ̀ṣin ọ̀rọ̀, Yorùbá proverbs, their meaning & usage*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- De Martino, E. [1941]. I principi della scuola storico-culturale. *Naturalismo e storicismo nell'etnologia*, 119-67. Laterza, Bari.
- . [1948]. *Il Mondo Magico; prolegomini a una storia del magismo*. Einaudi, Torino.
- Denham, A. [2008]. *The Spirit-Child Phenomenon & the Nankani Sociocultural World*. Dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Dennett, R. [1906]. *At the Back of the Black Man's Mind*. Macmillan, London.
- Derefaka, A. [2003]. *Archaeology and & Culture History in the Central Niger Delta*. Onyoma, Port Harcourt.
- de Wolf, P. [1971]. *The Nounclass System of Proto-Benue-Congo*. Mouton, The Hague.
- Diantell, E. [2024]. *L'Oracle & le temple; de la géomancie médiévale à l'église d'Ijá*. Labor & Fides, Genève.
- Díké, O. & F. Èkèjiúbá. [1990]. *The Àrù ["Aro"] of southeastern Nigeria, 1650-1980; a study of socioeconomic formation & transformation in Nigeria*. University Press Limited, Ìbàdàn.
- Dobbelmann, T. [1976]. *Der Ògbóni-Gebeimbund; Bronzen aus Südwest-Nigeria*. Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal, Netherlands.
- Dodds, E. [1965]. *Pagan & Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Cambridge University Press.
- Donald, M. [1991]. *Origins of the Modern Mind*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Dòpámú, P. [1986]. *Èsù the Invisible Foe of Man; a comparative study of Satan in Christianity, Islam & Yorùbá religion*. Inaugural lecture, University of Ilorin. Privately printed.
- Doroszewski, W. [1933]. Quelques remarques sur les rapports de la sociologie et de la linguistique: Durkheim et F. de Saussure. *Journal de psychologie normale & pathologique* **30**, 82-91.
- Douglas, M. [1973]. Away from ritual. *Natural Symbols; explorations in cosmology*, 19-39. Barrie & Jenkins, London.
- Downes, R. [1933]. *The Tiv Tribe*. Government Printer, Kaduna.
- Drewal, H. [1987]. Art and divination among the Yorùbá; design and myth. *Africana Journal* **14**, 139-56.
- . [1989]. The meaning of Òṣùgbó art, a reappraisal. *Basler Beiträge zur Ethnologie* **30**, 151-73.
- . [2008]. Introduction; sources and currents. *Màmi Wátá; Arts for water spirits in Africa & its diasporas*, edited by H. Drewal, 23-69. Fowler Museum, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles.
- Drewal, H. & al. [1989a]. Exhibition preview. Yorùbá; nine centuries of African art and thought. *African Arts* **23.1**, 68-77, 104.
- . [1989b]. *Yorùbá; nine centuries of African art & thought*. Center for African Art, New York.
- Dudley, B. [1968]. *Parties & Politics in Northern Nigeria*. Cass, London.
- . [1973]. *Instability & Political Order; politics & crisis in Nigeria*. Ìbàdàn University Press.
- . [1978]. The political theory of Awóló.wò and Àzịkàíwè. *Themes in African Social & Political Thought*, edited by O. Otùẹ, 199-216. Fourth Dimension, Ènugwú.
- Dumézil, G. [1940]. *Mitra-Varuna; essai sur deux représentations indo-européennes de la souveraineté*. Leroux, Paris.
- Dumont, L. [1962]. The conception of kingship in Ancient India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* **6**, 48-77.
- . [1966]. *Homo hierarchicus; essai sur le système des castes*. Gallimard, Paris.
- Dunn et al. 2008. Broad phylogenomic sampling improves resolution of the animal tree of life. *Nature* **454**, 745-49.
- Dupigny, E. [1920]. *Gazetteer of Nupe Province*. Waterlow, London.
- Durkheim, É. [1898]. Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives. *Revue de Métaphysique & de Morale* **6**, 273-302.
- Èbégbulerín, S. [2008]. Why the Èsà.má was suspended by Óba of Benin. *Vanguard* [Lagos], 9 February. www.vanguardngr.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1756&Itemid=42.
- . [2012]. Benin monarch pardons Ìgbínédíón. *Vanguard* [Lagos], 14 June. www.vanguardngr.com/2012/06/benin-monarch-pardons-igbinedion.
- Eccles, P. [1962]. Nupe bronzes. *Nigeria Magazine* **73**, 13-25.
- Èchèrúó, M. [1979]. A matter of identity. Àhịájíókú Lecture, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports, Òweré ["Owerri"], Ìmò State. ahiajoku.igbonet.com/1979.
- Èdó State Government. [2013]. Oshiomhole warns Ìgbínédíón: we will bring you to justice. 2 April. www.edostate.gov.ng/node/9290.
- Edwards, P. [1962]. Embrenché [sic] and ndichie. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **3**, 401-02.
- Eggert, M. [1981]. Historical linguistics and prehistoric archaeology; trend and pattern in early Iron Age research of Sub-Saharan Africa. *Beiträge zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Archäologie* **3**, 277-324.

- . [2005]. The Bantu problem and African archaeology. *African Archaeology, a Critical Introduction*, edited by A. Stahl, 301-26. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Egharheva ["Egharevba"], J. [1933]. *Èkèhébe vbe èbè itan Èdó*. C.M.S. Press, Lagos. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ûsuánlèlé & Fálólá (1998).]
- . [1936a/1965]. *Ìha Ominigbon; efèr nokaro, noguwa, nogieba, nogiene, nogisen keebe nogiehan*. Privately published, Benin-City. Photocopy in University of Benin Library/Kopin-Dogba Press, Benin-City. The first edition is possibly lost.
- . [1936b/1953/1960/1968]. *A Short History of Benin*. C.M.S. Bookshop, Lagos/Ìbàdàn University Press. [Note: a copy of the 2nd edition is marked as being printed or perhaps reprinted by Ìbàdàn University Press but with a correction label "Benin; published by the author; 1953" gummed over the original imprint "Church Missionary Society Bookshop; Lagos".]
- . [1946/1971a]. *Benin Law & Custom*. Privately published, Benin-City/Kraus Reprint, Nedeln.
- . [1951/1971b]. *Some Stories of Ancient Benin*. Privately published, Benin-City/Kraus Reprint, Nedeln.
- . [1972]. *Itan Èdagbon Mwen*. Ìbàdàn University Press.
- Èhigiamusoe, R. [2013]. *A Herbarium of Nigerian Medicinal Plants*. University of Calabar Press, Cross River State Nigeria.
- Ehret, C. [1973]. Patterns of Bantu and Central Sudanic settlement in central and southern Africa ca. 1000 BC - AD 500. *Transafrican Journal of History* 3, 1-71.
- . [2012]. Linguistic archaeology. *African Archaeological Review* 29, 109-30.
- . [2016]. *The Civilizations of Africa; a history to 1800*. Second edition. University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ogúndiran (2020).]
- . [2017]. Agricultural origins; what linguistic evidence reveals. *Cambridge World History* 2, edited by G. Barker & C. Goucher, 55-92. Cambridge University Press. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ogúndiran (2020).]
- Eisenhofer, S. [1993]. *Höfisches Elfenbeinschnitzerei im Reich Benin; Kontinuität oder Kontinuitätspostulat?* Akademischer Verlag, München.
- . [1995]. The origins of Benin kingship in the works of Jacob Egharheva. *History in Africa* 22, 141-63.
- . [1997a]. „Ein Übermaß an Autorität": Zur Problematik der Datierung der Elfenbein- u. Metallarbeiten aus Benin. *Kulte, Künstler, Könige in Afrika; Tradition & Moderne in Südnigeria*, edited by S. Eisenhofer, 109-22. Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Linz.
- . [1997b]. Felix von Luschan and early German-language Benin studies. *African Arts* 30, 62-67, 93-94.
- . [1997c]. The Benin kinglist/s; some questions of chronology. *History in Africa* 24, 139-56.
- Eisenstadt, S. [1971]. *Social Differentiation & Stratification*. Scott, Foresman, Glenview Illinois.
- . [1982]. The axial age; the emergence of transcendental visions and the rise of clerics. *Archives européennes de sociologie* 23, 294-314.
- . [2000]. Multiple modernities. *Dædalus* 129, 1-29.
- Èjiṣòfó[r], L. [1982]. *Ìgbo Kingdoms; power & control*. Fourth Dimension, Ènugwú.
- Èjiṣògù, E. [2011]. *Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria; political evolution & development in the Niger basin*. Ashgate, Farnham England.
- Èjizù, C. [1991]. Ritual enactment of achievement; *ikénga* symbol in Ìgboland. *Paideuma* 37, 233-51.
- Ekanem, I. [1972]. *The 1963 Nigerian Census; a critical appraisal*. Ethiope, Benin-City.
- Èkéèchí, F. [1972]. *Missionary Enterprise & Rivalry in Igboland, 1857-1914*. Cass, London.
- Ekeh, P. [1989]. The structure and meaning of federal character in the Nigerian political system. *Federal Character & Federalism in Nigeria*, edited by P. Ekeh & E. Osaghae, 19-44. Heinemann, Ìbàdàn.
- Ekhosuèhi, A. [2014]. Percussion staff in culture. *Nigerian Observer* (Benin City), 12 September, p. 14.
- Ekuerhare, B. [1994/2007]. Ùrhobo and the National Question; Ùrhobo's environment and natural resources. *History of the Ùrhobo People of Niger Delta*, edited by P. Ekeh, 555-62. Ùrhobo Historical Society, Buffalo N.Y.
- Èlá ["Ellah"], F. [1983]. *Nigeria & States Creation; based on "The Unfinished Motion"*. Haig-Betanova, Port Harcourt.
- Eldredge, N. & S. Gould. [1972]. Punctuated equilibria; an alternative to phyletic gradualism. *Models in Paleobiology*, edited by T. Schopf, 82-115. Freeman Cooper, San Francisco.
- Elimelech, B. [1976]. *A tonal grammar of Etsako. Working Papers in Phonetics* 35. Dissertation, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles.
- Ellis, A. [1894]. *The Yorùbá-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa; their religion, manners, customs, laws, language &c.; with an appendix containing a comparison of the Tshi, Gà, Èwè & Yorùbá languages*. Anthropological Publications, Oosterhout Netherlands.
- Ellis, S. [2008]. The Òkìja shrine; death and life in Nigerian politics. *Journal of African History* 49, 445-66.
- Elugbe, B. [1969]. *Ìká phonemic statement*. B.A. thesis, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1973]. *A comparative Èdó phonology*. Dissertation, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1979]. Some tentative historical inferences from comparative Èdoid studies. *Kiàbàrà* ["Kiabàrà"] 2, 82-101.
- . [1984]. Sound and letter in Èdoid orthographies. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria* 2, 91-97.
- . [1986/1989]. *Comparative Èdoid; phonology & lexicon*. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Elugbe, B. & K. Williamson. [1977]. Reconstructing nasals in Proto-Benue Kwa. *Linguistic Studies Offered to Joseph Greenberg on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, edited by A. Juillard & al., 339-63. Anma Libri, Saratoga California.
- Elúyemí, O. [1975]. The role of oral tradition in the archaeological investigation of the history of Ifè. *Yorùbá Oral Tradition*, edited by W. Abímóbólá & S. Oyèláràn, 115-56. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè.
- . [1976]. Ifè traditional art and craft industries; an investigation into their origin and development. *Proceedings of the Conference on Yorùbá Civilization*, edited by I. Akínjògbín & G. Èkè mòdè, 315-55. Mimeo., Department of History, University of Ifè.
- . [1987]. The technology of the Ifè glass beads; evidence from the Igbó Olókun. *Odù* [Ifè] 32, 200-16.
- Ellul, J. [1973]. *Les nouveaux possédés*. Fayard, Paris.
- Embleton, S. [2005]. Review of Kessler (2001). *Diachronica* 22, 429-38.
- Èménánjò, N. [1971]. *Aspects of the phonology & morphophonemics of Ònìcha*. B.A. thesis, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1977]. *Òmálì nṣe; a book of Ìgbo folktales*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [1978]. *Elements of Modern Ìgbo Grammar*. Oxford University Press, Ìbàdàn.
- . [1984]. Ìgbo verbs; transitivity or complementation? 5th Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria, Department of Linguistics & Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsóká ("Nsukka").
- Emmanuel, A. [1969]. *L'Échange inégal*. Maspero, Paris.
- Emovon, A. [1984]. Òminigbón divination. *Nigeria Magazine* 151, 1-9.
- Enogholase, G. [2009]. Benin monarch gives Ìgbínédíón ultimatum. *Vanguard* [Lagos], 22 December. www.vanguardngr.com/2009/12/22/benin-monarch-gives-igbinedion-ultimatum.
- Epégà, D. [1931/1951]. *The Mystery of Yorùbá Gods/The Basis of Yorùbá Religion*. Hope Rising Press/Ìjámídó Printers, Lagos.

- “Equiano”, O. [1789/1969]. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, written by himself*. Printed for and sold by the author, London/Negro Universities Press, New York.
- Erediauwa, Òmọ n'Òba N'Èdó. [2004]. The Benin-Ifè connection. *I Remain, Sir, Your Obedient Servant*, 205-12. Spectrum, Ìbàdàn. Reprinted in *Vanguard* [Lagos], 9 May. www.edo-nation.net/erediauwa1.htm.
- Erim, E. [1981]. *Ìdòmà Nationality 1600-1900; problems in studying the origins & development of ethnicity*. Fourth Dimension, Ènugwù.
- . [1993]. The use of migration tradition in reconstructing Ìdòmà culture history. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **22**, 78-84.
- Erivwo, S. [1979]. Èphá divination system among the Ùrhobo of the Niger delta. *African Notes* (Ìbàdàn) **8.1**, 21-25. [Many typos.]
- Espinoza Agurto, A. [2014/2021]. *Una sola casa; salsa consciente & the poetics of the meta-barrio*. Dissertation, Department of Music, Boston University/Michigan State University Press, East Lansing.
- Ètù, Y. & T. Miáchi. [1991]. *Ígálá ékòché, Òtákáda ejódùdu* [sic, typo for “èkèlè”]; *Òtákáda àbùnè itíchá, Teachers' guide* [= book 4]. Heinemann, Ìbàdàn.
- Evans, J. & al. [2024]. *Religion & spirituality in East Asian societies*. Pew Research Center, Washington DC. www.pewresearch.org/religion/2024/06/17/religion-and-spirituality-in-east-asian-societies.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. [1937]. *Witchcraft, Oracles & Magic among the Azande*. Oxford University Press.
- Éwéka, I. [2000]. We are, because he was. 3rd Egharheva memorial lecture, Institute for Benin Studies, Benin-City, 4 December. www.edo-nation.net/eghar3.htm.
- Éyò, E. [1974]. Odò Ogbè Street and Láfogido; contrasting archaeological sites in Ilé-Ifè, Western Nigeria. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **4**, 99-109.
- . [1977]. *Two Thousand Years of Nigerian Art*. Federal Department of Antiquities, Lagos.
- . [1997]. The dialectics of definitions; “massacre” and “sack” in the history of the Punitive Expedition. *African Arts* **30.3**, 34-35.
- Ézè, E. & V. Manfredi. [2001]. Ìgbo. *Facts About the World's Major Languages, Past & Present*, edited by J. Garry & C. Rubino, 322-30. H.W. Wilson, Bronx, New York.
- Ézikéojákù, P. [1984]. Ìgbo divination poetry (*ábù áfá*), an introduction. *Nigeria Magazine* **50**, 37-39.
- . [1987]. [Poetry in *áfá*]. *Nigeria Magazine* **55.4**, 57-65. [Title not printed on piece.]
- . [2000]. The *dibì a áfá* in Ìgbo society. *Ígèdè, Journal of Igbo Studies* [**1**], 69-75.
- Ezra, K. [1992]. Altars to the hand. *Royal Art of Benin; the Perls collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 106-13. Abrams, New York.
- Fabian, J. [1983]. *Time & the Other; how anthropology makes its object*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- . [1998]. Curios and curiosity; notes on reading Torday and Frobenius. Appendix; on the ethnography and economics of collecting, from Leo Frobenius' *Nochmals zu den Bakubavölkern*. *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa*, edited by E. Schildkrout & C. Keim, 79-108. Cambridge University Press.
- Fábùnmi, M. [1969]. *Ifè Shrines*. University of Ifè Press.
- Fáfúnwa, A. & al. eds. [1989]. *Education in [the] Mother Tongue; the Ifè Primary Education Project*. University Press Ltd., Ìbàdàn.
- Fagg, B. [1959]. The Nok culture in prehistory. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **1**, 288-93.
- Fagg, W. [1950]. A bronze figure in Ifè style at Benin. *Man* **50**, 69-70 [preceded by an unnumbered plate].
- . [1951]. Tribal sculpture and the Festival of Britain. *Man* **51**, 73-76.
- . [1958]. The Guinea coast. *The Sculpture of Africa*, edited by E. Elisofon, 55-66. Thames & Hudson, London.
- . [1963]. *Nigerian Images; the splendor of African sculpture*. Humphries, London.
- . [1965]. *Tribes & Forms in African Art*. Tudor, New York.
- . [1970]. *Divine Kingship in Africa*. British Museum, London.
- . [1981]. Benin; the sack that never was. *Images of Power; art of the royal court of Benin*, edited by F. Kaplan & M. Shea, 20-21. Museum Studies Program, New York University.
- . [1982a]. On the art of the Yorùbá. *Yorùbá Sculpture of West Africa*, edited by W. Fagg & al., 5-24. Knopf, New York.
- . [1982b]. The Yorùbá and their past. *Yorùbá Sculpture of West Africa*, edited by W. Fagg & al., 25-34. Knopf, New York.
- Fagg, W. & P. Plass. [1966]. *African Sculpture; an anthology*. Studio Vista, London.
- Fagg, W. & L. Underwood. [1949]. An examination of the so-called ‘Oló.kun head’ of Ifè, Nigeria. *Man* **49**, 1-7 [and 2 unnumbered pages].
- Fagg, W. & F. Willett. [1960]. Ancient Ifè; an ethnographical summary. *Odù* [Ìbàdàn] **8**, 21-35.
- Fákúwádé, G. [1992]. Guosa, an unknown linguistic code in Nigeria. *Language Problems & Language Planning* **16**, 260-63.
- Fálána, F. [2001]. How Abíólá was killed. *This Day*, 21 July. www.nigeriamasterweb.com/nmwpg1abiola2death.html.
- . [2022]. State pardon: Buhari should pardon all thieves in prison, says Fèmi Fálána. *Vanguard* (Lagos) 16 April. www.vanguardngr.com/2022/04/state-pardon-buhari-should-pardon-all-thieves-in-prison-says-femi-falana.
- Fálóyè, ọmọ-ọba J. [2018]. History roundtable presentation. 17 July. <http://ashefoundation.org/perspectives> [archived].
- Farias, P. [1990]. Yorùbá origins revisited by Muslims; an interview with the *Arókin* of Òyó and a reading of the *Asl Qaba'il Yuruba* of Al Hajj Adam al-Iluri. *Self-assurance & Brokerage; early cultural nationalism in West Africa*, edited by P. Farias & K. Barber, 109-47. Center for West African Studies, Birmingham. [Not personally consulted; cited by Peel (2000a).]
- Farrow, S. [1926]. *Faith, Fancies & Fetich, or Yorùbá Paganism; being some account of the religious beliefs of the West African negroes, particularly of the Yorùbá tribes of Southern Nigeria*. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London.
- Faustino, S. & al. [2022]. The myths and legends of King Satoshi and the Knights of Blockchain. *Journal of Cultural Economy* **15**, 67-80.
- Feuerbach, L. [1841/1854]. *Das Wesen des Christentums/The Essence of Christianity*. Wigand, Leipzig/Chapman, London.
- Finnegan, R. [1970]. A note on oral tradition and historical evidence. *History & Theory* **9**, 195-201.
- Finocchiaro, M. [1989]. *The Galileo Affair, a documentary history*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Firpo, L. [1949]. *Il Processo di Giordano Bruno*. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli.
- Fisher, H. [1973]. Conversion reconsidered; some historical aspects of religious conversion in Black Africa. *Africa* **43**, 27-40.
- Flint, J. [1960]. *Sir George Goldie & the Making of Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Foley, R. [2004]. The evolutionary ecology of linguistic diversity in human populations. *Traces of Ancestry; studies in honor of Colin Renfrew*, edited by M. Jones, 61-71. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge.
- Foley, R., & C. Gamble. [2009]. The ecology of social transitions in human evolution. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* **B 364**, 3267-79.
- Foley, R., & M. Mirazón. [2009]. The evolution of the diversity of cultures. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* **B 366**, 1080-89.
- Folórúnso, O. & A. Akínwálé. [2009]. A conceptual analysis and design of a management system for “Ifá” (an African traditional oracle). *Kybernetes* **38**, 625-34.

- Forde, D. [1951]. *The Yorùbá-speaking Peoples of Southwestern Nigeria*. International African Institute, London.
- Forman, W. & B. Brentjes. [1967]. *Nok, Ifé, Benin; alte afrikanische Plastik*. Koehler & Amelang, Leipzig.
- Fortes, M. [1959]. *Oedipus & Job in West African Religion*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1965]. Some reflections on ancestor worship in Africa. *African Systems of Thought*, edited by M. Fortes & G. Dieterlen, 122-42. Oxford University Press.
- Fortes, M. & E. Evans-Pritchard. [1940]. *African Political Systems*. Oxford University Press.
- Foss, P. [1977]. Òrhobo statuary for spirits and ancestors. *African Arts* **9.4**, 12-23, 89.
- . [2004a]. Gifts from the gods; works in copper alloy from Òrhobo medicine shrines. *Where Gods & Mortals Meet; continuity & renewal in Òrhobo art*, edited by P. Foss, 47-51. Museum [for] African Art, New York.
- . [2004b]. *Iphri*—art for controlling aggression. *Where Gods & Mortals Meet; continuity & renewal in Òrhobo art*, edited by P. Foss, 59-71. Museum [for] African Art, New York.
- Fourchard, L. [2018/2021]. *Trier, Exclure, Policer; vies urbaines en Afrique du Sud & au Nigeria/Classify, Exclude, Police; urban lives in South Africa & Nigeria*. Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris/Wiley, New York.
- Fracchia, J. & R. Lewontin. [1999]. Does culture evolve? *History & Theory* **38.4**, 52-78.
- Franke, G. [2015]. *Potsberds in Time; the pottery of the Nigerian Nok culture & its chronology*. Dissertation, Goethe University, Frankfurt. [Not personally consulted; cited by Breunig & Rupp (2016).]
- . [2016]. A chronology of the Central Nigerian Nok culture, 1500 BC to the beginning of the Common Era. *Journal of African Archaeology* **14**, 257-89.
- Fraser, D. [1972]. The fish-legged figure in Benin and Yorùbá art. *African Art & Leadership*, edited by D. Fraser & H. Cole, 261-94. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- . [1975]. The Tsoede bronzes and Òghò ["Owo"] Yoruba art. *African Arts* **8.3**, 30-35, 91.
- Frazer, J. [1890]. *The Golden Bough, a study in comparative religion* **1-2**. Macmillan, London.
- Fréchet, A.-L. [1994]. Quelques faits prosodiques du gùngbè de Porto-Novo (Bénin). *Togo-Bénin; Cahiers du CRA* **8**, 25-52.
- Freeze, R. [1992]. Existentials and other locatives. *Language* **68**, 553-95.
- Fresco, E. [1970]. *Topics in Yorùbá dialect phonology*. Dissertation, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles. *Studies in African Linguistics Supplement* **1**.
- Freud, S. [1939]. *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion; drei Abhandlungen*. Allert de Lange, Amsterdam/Moses & Monotheism. Hogarth, London.
- Friedman, J. [1975]. Tribes, states and transformations. *Marxist Analyses & Social Anthropology*, edited by M. Bloch, 161-202. Malaby, London.
- Frobenius, L. [1912/1913]. *Und Afrika sprach, 1. Auf den Trümmern des klassischen Atlantis/The Voice of Africa vol. 1. [On the ruins of classical Atlantis]*. Vita, Berlin/Hutchinson, London.
- . [1926/1949]. *Atlantis; Volksmärchen & Volksdichtungen Afrikas, 10. Die Atlantische Götterlehre — die Menschen, die Götter, Volksdichtung*. Forschungsinstitut für Kulturmorphologie, München/Mythologie de l'Atlantide — le «Poseidon» de l'Afrique noire, son culte chez les Yorouba du Bénin. Payot, Paris.
- Frobenius, L. & H. Freytag-Loringhoven (eds.) 1917-25. *Die Feinde Deutschlands und seiner Verbündeten 1-5*. H. Klemm, Berlin-Grunewald. www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/XL5TVTFH2FUISZ3KYN53NQULZEC3PSRK.
- Frumpp, D. [2022]. Who benefits when Western museums return looted art? The repatriation of stolen objects has become a ritual of self-purification through purgation, but who it really serves is less clear than it might seem. *The Atlantic* [New York], 14 September.
- Gailey, H. [1970]. *The Road to Àbá; a study of British administrative policy in Eastern Nigeria*. New York University Press.
- Gaillard, D. [1907]. Étude sur les lacustres du Bas-Dahomey. *L'Anthropologie* **18**, 99-125. [Not personally consulted; cited by Maupoil (1943a).]
- Galeano, E. [1971/1973]. *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. Universidad de la República, Montevideo/The Open Veins of Latin America; five centuries of the pillage of a continent. Monthly Review, New York.
- Gamkrelidze, T. & V. Ivanov. [1973]. Sprachtypologie und die Rekonstruktion der gemeinindogermanischen Verschlüsse. *Phonetica* **27**, 150-56.
- Gane, M. [1983]. Durkheim, the sacred language. *Economy & Society* **12**, 1-47.
- Garenne-Marot, L. & L. Hurltel. [1993]. Le cuivre; approche méthodologique de la métallurgie du cuivre dans les vallées du Niger et au sud du Sahara. *Vallées du Niger*, edited by J. Devisse, 320-33. Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris.
- Garlake, P. [1977]. Excavations in the Woyè Àsírí family land in Ifé, Western Nigeria. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **7**, 57-96.
- Gbàdàmósí, G. [1977]. *Odù Ìmàlè — Islam in Ifá divination and the case of predestined Muslims*. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **7**, 77-93.
- Gbèto, F. [2024]. *Les populations gbè (Èvè) du Golfe de Guinée en Afrique de l'Ouest. Contribution de la linguistique historique à la connaissance de leur histoire, de leur peuplement et de leurs migrations*. Éditions universitaires européennes, London/Chisinau (Moldova).
- Gbile, Z. [1984]. *Vernacular Names of Nigerian Plants; Yorùbá*. Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Ibadán.
- Gellner, E. [1962]. Concepts and society. *Transactions of the 5th World Congress of Sociology* vol. **1**, 153-83. International Sociological Association, Louvain.
- . [1978]. Notes towards a theory of ideology. *L'Homme* **18.3/4**, 69-82.
- . [1988]. *Plough, Sword & Book; the structure of human history*. Collins Harvill, London.
- Gervais, W. & A. Norenzayan. [2012]. Like a camera in the sky? Thinking about God increases public self-awareness and socially desirable responding. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* **48**, 298-302.
- Gilli, B. [1982/1997]. *Naissances humaines ou divines? Analyse de certains types de naissances attribués au Vodou*. Dissertation, EHESS, Paris/Éditions HAHO, Lomé.
- Gillies, E. [1988]. The coming of Christianity to a Middle Belt Nigerian community. *Vernacular Christianity; essays in the social anthropology of religion presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, edited by W. James & D. Johnson [= *JASO Occasional Papers* **7**], 105-11. Anthropological Society of Oxford, England.
- Ginzburg, C. [2017]. On dichotomies. *Hau, Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **7**, 139-42.
- Gleason, J. & al. [1973]. *A Recitation of Ifá, the Oracle of the Yorùbá*. Grossman, New York.
- Godelier, M. [1984]. *L'Idéal & le Matériel; pensée, économies, sociétés*. Fayard, Paris.
- . [1996]. *L'Énigme du don*. Fayard, Paris.
- Goedicke, C. & S. Henschel. [1993]. Zur Chronologie der Berliner Benin-Bronzen: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen naturwissenschaftlicher Datierungsmethoden. *Baessler-Archiv N.F.* **41**, 299-321.
- von Goethe, J. [1809]. *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Cotta'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Tübingen.

- González, R. [2008]. *American Counterinsurgency; human science & the human terrain*. Prickly Paradigm, Chicago.
- Goody, J. [1971]. *Technology, Tradition & the State in Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1986]. *The Logic of Writing & the Organization of Society*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gordon, R. [1990]. From republic to principate; priesthood, religion and ideology. *Pagan Priests; religion & power in the ancient world*, edited by M. Beard & J. North, 177-98. Duckworth, London.
- Gore, C. [1997]. Remembering R.E. Bradbury; an interview with Peter Morton-Williams. *African Arts* **30.4**, 36-45, 93.
- . [2007a]. *Art, Performance & Ritual in Benin City*. Edinburgh University Press.
- . [2007b]. Conceptualising royal, community and personal shrines in the Èdó Kingdom. *Benin Kings & Rituals; court arts from Nigeria*, edited by B. Plankensteiner, 131-39. Snoeck, Heule (Belge).
- Gore, C. & J. Picton. [2010]. Denis Williams in Africa; a new approach to its arts and technologies. *Denis Williams; a life in works. New & collected essays*, edited by C. & E. Williams, 153-68. Rodopi, Amsterdam.
- Goucher, C. & al. [1978]. Lead isotope analyses and possible metal sources for Nigerian 'bronzes'. *Archaeological Chemistry* **2** [= *Advances in Chemistry* **171**], 278-92.
- Gould, S. [1988]. Kropotkin was no crackpot. *Natural History* **97.7**, 12, 14, 16-18, 21.
- . [1997]. Nonoverlapping magisteria. *Natural History* **106.2**, 16-22, 60-62.
- Gould, S. & R. Lewontin. [1979]. The spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian paradigm; a critique of the adaptationist programme. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B* **205**, 581-98.
- Gould, S. & E. Vrba [1982]. Exaptation—a missing term in the science of form. *Paleobiology* **8**, 4-15.
- Graça da Silva, S. & J. Tehrani. [2015]. Comparative phylogenetic analyses uncover the ancient roots of Indo-European folktales. *Royal Society Open Science* **3**, 150645. <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/content/royopensci/3/1/150645.full.pdf>.
- Graeber, D. [2001]. The false coin of our own dreams, or the problem of the fetish, IIIb. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value; the false coin of our own dreams*, 229-61. Macmillan, Houndmills England.
- . [2007]. *Lost People; magic & the legacy of slavery in Madagascar*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- . [2011]. *Debt; the first 5,000 years*. Melville House, New York.
- Graeber, D. & M. Sahlins. [2017]. Theses on kingship. *On Kings*, edited by D. Graeber & M. Sahlins, 1-22. Hau Books, Chicago.
- Graeber, D. & D. Wengrow. [2007]. *The Dawn of Everything; a new history of humanity*. Allen Lane, London..
- Gramsci, A. [1930-32/1975]. L'immanenza e il 'saggio popolare'. *Quaderno 4* (xiii) §17, 55/*Quaderni del Carcere*, edited by V. Gerratana, 438. Einaudi, Torino.
- . [1935/1975]. Osservazioni sul 'folclore'. *Quaderno 27* (xi) §1, 2/*Quaderni del Carcere*, edited by V. Gerratana, 2311-14. Einaudi, Torino.
- . [1971]. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited by Q. Hoare & G. Smith. Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Green, M. [1947]. *Ìgbo village affairs, chiefly with reference to the village of Òmúéke Agbaàja*. Sidgwick & Jackson, London.
- Green, M. & G. Igwè. [1963]. *A Descriptive Grammar of Igbo*. Akademie, East Berlin for Oxford University Press.
- Green, T. [2019]. *A Fistful of Shells; West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution*. Allen Lane, London.
- Greenberg, J. [1941]. Some problems in Hausa phonology. *Language* **17**, 316-23.
- . [1952/1957]. Historical linguistics and unwritten languages/Genetic relationship among languages. *Anthropology Today, an encyclopedic inventory*, edited by A. Kroeber, 265-87/*Essays in Linguistics*, 35-45. University of Chicago Press.
- . [1963]. *The Languages of Africa*. Mouton, the Hague. [= *International Journal of American Linguistics* **29.1**].
- . [1972]. Linguistic evidence regarding Bantu origins. *Journal of African History* **13**, 189-216.
- Greenblatt, S. [1980]. *Renaissance Self-fashioning, from More to Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press.
- Greene, S. [2000]. Cultural zones in the era of the slave trade; exploring the Yorùbá Connection among the Àṣṣà-Evè. *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery*, edited by P. Lovejoy, 86-101. Continuum, New York.
- Gross, D. [2018]. The troubling origins of the skeletons in a New York museum. *The New Yorker* 24 January. www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-troubling-origins-of-the-skeletons-in-a-new-york-museum.
- Gurjewitsch, A. [1978]. *Das Weltbild des mittelalterlichen Menschen*/Verlag der Kunst, Dresden. [Not personally consulted; cited by Tribe (1980)].
- Guthrie, M. [1962]. Some developments in the prehistory of the Bantu languages. *Journal of African History* **3**, 273-82.
- Guthrie, S. [1995]. *Faces in the Clouds; a new theory of religion*. Oxford University Press.
- Guyer, J. [1995]. Wealth in people, wealth in things—introduction. *Journal of African History* **36**, 83-90.
- . [2004]. *Marginal Gains; monetary transactions in Atlantic Africa*. University of Chicago Press.
- Haak, W. & al. [2010]. Ancient DNA from European early neolithic farmers reveals their Near Eastern affinities. *PLoS Biology* **8.11** e1000535.
- ter Haar, G. & S. Ellis. [2009]. The occult does not exist; a response to Terrence Ranger. *Africa* **79**, 399-415.
- Haas, M. [1969]. *The Prehistory of Languages*. Mouton, The Hague.
- Habermas, J. [1968/1971]. Technology and science as 'ideology'. *Toward a Rational Society*, 81-122. Heinemann, London.
- . [1976/1979]. Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus. *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus*, 144-99. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Toward [the] reconstruction of historical materialism. *Communication & the Evolution of Society*, edited by T. McCarthy, 130-77. Beacon, Boston.
- . [1986/1989]. Sovereignty and the Führerdemokratie. *Times Literary Supplement* 26 September, 1053f./The horrors of autonomy; Carl Schmitt in English. *The New Conservatism; cultural criticism & the historians' debate*, 128-39. MIT Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Hailot, J. [1936]. Sur la géomancie et ses aspects africains. *Bulletin du Comité d'Études historiques et scientifiques de l'AOF* **19**, 131-39.
- Hale, K. [1986]. Notes on world view and semantic categories; some Warlpiri examples. *Features & Projections*, edited by P. Muysken & H. v. Riemsdijk, 233-54. Foris, Dordrecht.
- Hallgren, R. [1988]. *The Good Things in Life; a study of the traditional religious culture of the Yorùbá people*. Plus Ultra, Loberud.
- Hamberger, K. [2011]. *La parenté vodou; organisation sociale et logique symbolique en pays ouatchi (Togo)*. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris.
- Handlin, O. & al. [1986]. Kenneth Ònwukà Dìkè. Memorial minute, Faculty of Arts & Sciences. *Harvard Gazette* 25 July, 9, 11.
- Harnischfeger, J. [2012]. Igbo nationalism and Jewish identities. *African Zion; studies in Black Judaism*, edited by E. Bruder & T. Parfitt, 65-86. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.
- Hébert, J. [1961]. Analyse structurale des géomancies comoriennes, malgaches et africaines. *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* **31**, 115-208.
- Hegel, G. [1807/1977]. *Phänomenologie des Geistes/Phenomenology of Spirit*. Goebhardt, Bamberg & Würzburg/Oxford University Press.

- Henderson, R. [1972]. *The King in Every Man; evolutionary trends in Ònicha Igbo ["Onitsba Ibo"] society & culture*. Yale University Press, New Haven Connecticut.
- Henderson, R. & I. Òmùnnà. [1988]. Leadership symbolism in Ònicha Igbo crowns and *ijèlè*. *African Arts* **21.2**, 28-37, 94-96.
- Herbert, E. [1984]. *Red Gold of Africa; copper in precolonial history & culture*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- Herissé, A. le. [1911]. *L'Ancien royaume du Dabomey; mœurs, religion, histoire*. Larose, Paris.
- Herskovits, M. [1938]. *Dabomey; an ancient West African kingdom*. Vol 2. Augustin, New York.
- Hertz, S. [2016]. Benin Bronze "permanently removed" from Jesus hall. *The Cambridge Student*, 8 March. www.tcs.ac.uk/news/0035366-benin-bronze-permanently-removed-from-jesus-hall.html.
- Heusch, L. de. [1962]. Cultes de possession et religions initiatiques de salut en Afrique. *Religions de Salut*, 127-68. Institut de Sociologie Solvay, Université Libre de Bruxelles.
- . [1965]. Possession et chamanisme. *Les religions africaines traditionnelles*, 133-46. Seul, Paris.
- . [1966]. *Le Rwanda & la Civilisation interlacustre*. Institut de Sociologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles.
- . [1970]. Pour une approche structuraliste de la pensée magico-religieuse bantoue. *Échanges & Communications, Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss à l'occasion de son 60ième anniversaire*, edited by P. Maranda & J. Pouillon, 801-18. Mouton, The Hague.
- . [1980]. Heat, physiology and cosmogony; *rites de passage* among the Thonga. *Explorations in African Systems of Thought*, edited by I. Karp & C. Bird, 27-43. Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.
- . [1986]. *Le Sacrifice dans les religions africaines*. Gallimard, Paris.
- . [2009]. *Pouvoir & Religion; pour réconcilier l'Histoire & l'anthropologie*. CNRS Éditions, Paris.
- Hilton, R. [1976]. A note on feudalism. *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, edited by R. Hilton, 30. New Left Books, London.
- Hislop, A. [1862]. *The two Babylons, or, The papal worship proved to be the worship of Nimrod & his wife*. James Wood, Edinburgh. [Not personally consulted; cited by ?????.]
- Hobsbawm, E. [1983]. Introduction; inventing tradition. *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. & T. Ranger, eds. [1983]. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hodgkin, T. [1960]. Introduction. *Nigerian Perspectives; an historical anthology*, 1-52. Oxford University Press.
- Höftmann, H. & M. Ahohunkpanzon. [2003]. *Dictionnaire Fõn-Français avec une esquisse grammaticale*. Köppe, Köln.
- Höhn, A. & K. Neumann. [2016]. The palaeovegetation of Janruwa (Nigeria) and its implications for the decline of the Nok culture. *Journal of African Archaeology* **14**, 331-53.
- Hopkins, A. [1973]. *An Economic History of West Africa*. Longman, London.
- Hopkins, K. [1999]. *A World full of Gods; pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.
- Horkheimer, M. & T. Adorno. [1947]. *Dialektik der Aufklärung; philosophische Fragmente*. Querido, Amsterdam.
- Horton, R. [1956]. God, man and the land in a northern Ìgbò village-group. *Africa* **26**, 17-28.
- . [1960]. *The Gods as Guests; an aspect of Kalabari religious life*. Nigeria Magazine Publications, Lagos.
- . [1961]. Destiny and the unconscious in West Africa. *Africa* **31**, 110-16.
- . [1962a]. The Kalabari world-view; an outline and interpretation. *Africa* **32**, 197-220.
- . [1962b]. The high god; a comment on Father O'Connell's paper. *Man* **62**, 137-40.
- . [1964]. Ritual man in Africa. *Africa* **37**, 85-104.
- . [1967]. African traditional thought and Western science. *Africa* **37**, 50-71, 155-87.
- . [1970]. The romantic illusion; Roger Bastide on Africa and the West. *Odù [Ifè]* **3**, 87-115.
- . [1971]. African conversion [=review of Peel (1968)]. *Africa* **41**, 85-108.
- . [1973]. Lévy-Bruhl, Durkheim and the scientific revolution. *Modes of Thought; essays on thinking in Western and Nonwestern societies*, edited by R. Horton & R. Finnegan, 249-305.
- . [1975]. On the rationality of conversion. *Africa* **45**, 219-35, 373-99.
- . [1979]. Ancient Ifè, a reassessment. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **9.4**, 69-149.
- . [1984/1985]. Judeo-christian spectacles; boon or bane to the study of African religions? *Cahiers d'études africaines* **96**, 391-436.
- . [1987/1993a]. Back to Frazer? Sir James Frazer Memorial Lecture, University of Cambridge. *Patterns of Thought in Africa & the West; essays on magic, religion & science*, 105-37. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1993b]. Postscript. *Patterns of Thought in Africa & the West; essays on magic, religion & science*, 347-87. Cambridge University Press.
- Horton, R. & J. Peel. [1976]. Conversion and confusion; a rejoinder on Christianity in eastern Nigeria. *Canadian Journal of African Studies* **10**, 481-98.
- Howe, R. [1978]. Max Weber's elective affinities; sociology within the bounds of pure reason. *American Journal of Sociology* **84**, 366-85.
- Hroch, M. & A. Skýbová. [1988]. *Ecclesia Militans; Inquisition im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation/Ecclesia Militans; the Inquisition*. Edition Leipzig/Dorset Press, Dorchester England.
- Hubert, H. & M. Mauss. [1904]. Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie. *L'Année sociologique* **7**, 1-146.
- Human Rights Watch. [2006]. "They Do Not Own This Place." Government discrimination against 'non-indigenes' in Nigeria. Report **18.3**, 25 April. New York. www.hrw.org/reports/2006/nigeria0406.
- Hunwanu ["Hounwanou"], R. [1984]. *Le Fa; une géomancie divinatoire du golfe du Bénin (pratique & technique)*. Nouvelles Editions Africaines, Lomé.
- Hyman, L. [1972]. A phonological study of Fe^hfe^h Bamileke. *Studies in African Linguistics Supplement* **4**.
- Iacono, A. [1983]. Sul concetto di «feticismo» in Marx. *Studi Storici* **24**, 429-36.
- . [1985/2016]. *Teorie del feticismo; il problema filosofico e storico di un «immenso malinteso»/The History & Theory of Fetishism*. Giuffrè, Milano/Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- . [1989]. Politeismo e feticismo. La storia delle religioni nelle teorie di Hume e de Brosses. *Studi Settecenteschi* **11/12**, 101-13.
- Ìbiẹ, C. [1986]. *Ifism; the complete works of Òrúnmìlà*. Èfẹ̀hì Ltd, Lagos.
- . [1993]. *Òrúnmìlà Volume 3; the odùs of Òyèkú Mèjì*. Èfẹ̀hì Ltd, Lagos.
- Ìbílẹ̀kẹ̀, J. [2021]. Why we handed over repatriated artifacts to Oba of Benin - Buhari. *PM News [Lagos]*, 13 December. pmnewsnigeria.com/2021/12/13/why-we-handed-over-repatriated-artifacts-to-oba-of-benin-buhari.
- Ìdòwú, 'B. [1962/1994]. *Oló.dùmarè, God in Yorùbá Belief*. Longman, London/Wazobia, New York.
- Ìdúuẹ̀wẹ̀, A. [ms.]. *History of Greater Àgbẹ̀*. Archived typescript of 1977-80. people.bu.edu/manfredi/Iduuwe.History.pdf.
- Ífẹ̀kà-Moller, C. [1974]. White power; social-structural factors in conversion to Christianity, Eastern Nigeria, 1921-1966. *Canadian Journal of African Studies* **8**, 55-72.

- Ífemésja, C. [1976]. Review of Bascom (1969). *African Arts* **9.4**, 86-88, 92.
- . [1979]. *Traditional Humane Living among the Igbo; an historical perspective*. Fourth Dimension, Énugwú.
- Ífèùkò ["Ifukor"], A. [2010]. Spelling and simulated shibboleths in Nigerian computer-mediated communication. *Ms.*, Universität Osnabrück.
- Ígbàfè, P. [1967]. British rule in Benin 1897-1920; direct or indirect? *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **3**, 701-17.
- Ígboanúsi, H. & M. Pütz. [2008]. The future of French in Nigeria's language policies. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development* **29**, 235-59.
- Ìgè ["Igué"], O. [1974]. The role of the towns in the creation and development of Yorùbá oral literature. *Papers in Yorùbá Oral Literature*. University of Ibàdàn Press. [Not personally consulted; cited by Oyèláràn (1977).]
- . [1976]. Quelques aspects du peuplement et des populations Yorùbá en République Populaire du Bénin. *Proceedings of the Conference on Yorùbá Civilization*, edited by I. Akinjógbin & G. Èkémòdé, 74-102. Mimeo., Department of History, University of Ifè.
- Ígwè, G. [1985/1999]. *Ìgbo-English Dictionary*. University Press Ltd., Ibàdàn.
- Ígwè, G. & M. Green. [1970]. *Ìgbo Language Course 3—dialogues, translations, sayings*. Oxford University Press.
- Ìjèqma ["Ijoma"], J. [1983]. Kingship in three West Niger Igbo chiefdoms. *African Notes* [Ibàdàn] **9.2**, 33-40.
- Ilogu, E. [1964]. *Òfó*, a religious and political symbol in Igboiland. *Nigeria Magazine* **82**, 234-35.
- Ìlòrí, J. [2009]. Noun-plural formation in Ígàlà. *Current Perspectives in Phono-Syntax & Dialectology*, edited by G. Adika & al., 1-15. Department of Gur-Gonja, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.
- Ílozùè, C. [1999]. *Ìkénà, òfó* symbols in Òweré ["Owerri"] removed. *Vanguard* [Lagos], 26 April.
- Ìmáhìagbe, J. [1981]. An account of the *Òsì ézi* festival of the Ìkà people. Term paper for Lit. 140, University of Nigeria, Nsóká.
- Insoll, T. & T. Shaw. [1997]. Gao and Igbo Úkwu: beads, interregional trade and beyond. *African Archaeological Review* **14**, 9-23.
- Ìtá, J. [1973]. Frobenius, Senghor and the image of Africa. *Modes of Thought; essays on thinking in Western and Nonwestern societies*, edited by R. Horton & R. Finnegan, 306-36. Faber, London.
- Izevbigie, A. [1978]. *Ólokún, a focal symbol of religion & art in Benin*. Dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle.
- . [1987]. Ìbàrí and Ólokún compared. *Nigeria Magazine*, **55.4**, 32-36.
- Jablonka, E. & M. Lamb. [2005]. *Evolution in Four Dimensions; genetic, epigenetic, behavioral & symbolic variation in the history of life*. MIT Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Jaggat, P. [2001]. *Hausa*. Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- Jahn, J. [1966/1968]. *Geschichte der neofrikanischen Literatur; ein Einführung / A History of Neo-African Literature; writing in two continents*. Diederichs, Düsseldorf/Faber, London.
- Jakobson, R. [1944]. Franz Boas' approach to language. *International Journal of American Linguistics* **10**, 188-95.
- James, V. [1994]. Kenneth Murray, father of the museum movement in Nigeria. *Nigerian Heritage* **3**, 69-74.
- Jansen, J. & N. Kanté. [2010]. *La géomancie des Monts Mandingues; l'art de lire l'avenir dans le sable*. Éditions Yeelen, Bamako.
- Jaspers, K. [1949/1953]. *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. Artemis, Zürich/*The Origin & Goal of History*. Routledge, London.
- Jaulin, R. [1957]. Essai d'analyse formelle d'un procédé géomantique. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique noire* **19-B**, 43-71.
- . [1966]. *La Géomancie; analyse formelle*. Mouton, The Hague.
- Jeffreys, M. [1935a]. The divine Ìmùnrì ["Umundri"] King. *Africa* **8**, 346-54.
- . [1935b]. *Old Calabar; & notes on the Ibibio language*. Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar.
- . [1936]. Additional steps in the Ìmùnrì ["Umundri"] coronation ceremony. *Africa* **9**, 403-06.
- . [1941]. Òràrì mask. *The Nigerian Field* **10**, 140-43. [Not personally consulted; cited by Neaher (1979a).]
- . [1951]. The winged solar disk or Ì[g]bo íchi ["itSi"] facial scarification. *Africa* **21**, 93-111.
- . [1954]. *Ìkénà*, the Ì[g]bo ram-headed god. *African Studies* **13**, 25-40.
- Jell-Bahlsen, S. [1989]. *Mammy Water; in search of the water spirits in Nigeria*. 60 minutes. Documentary Educational Resources, Watertown, Mass.
- . [1998]. Flora Nwápá and Ìhámímiri/Ògbúidè Èzè Nwáanyí, the Lake Goddess; an evolving relationship. *Emerging Perspectives on Flora Nwápá; critical & theoretical essays*, edited by Marie Umeh, 77-110. [All Igbo orthographic diacritics were preemptorily deleted from the final manuscript by the publisher.] Africa World Press, Trenton New Jersey.
- . [2008]. *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology; Ògbúidè of Ògwuntá ["Oguta"] Lake*. Africa World Press, Trenton New Jersey.
- Jenkins, P. [2006]. *The New Faces of Christianity; believing the Bible in the global South*. Oxford University Press.
- Jensen, S. [1994]. Is ʔ an element? Towards a non-segmental phonology. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics* **4**, 71-78.
- Johnson, J. [1899]. *Yorùbá Heathenism*. Townsend, Exeter.
- Johnson, S. [1897/1921]. *The History of the Yorùbás from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. C.S.S. Bookshops, Lagos.
- Johnston, H. [1913]. A survey of the ethnography of Africa and the former racial and tribal migrations in that continent. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **43**, 375-421.
- Jones, A. [1983]. *German Sources for West African History 1599-1669*. Steiner, Wiesbaden.
- . [1984]. A collection of African art in 17th-century Germany; Christoph Weickmann's Kunst und Naturkammer. *African Arts* **27.2**, 28-43, 92-94.
- Jones, A. & I. Voigt. [2012]. 'Just a first sketchy makeshift'—German travellers and their cartographic encounters in Africa. 1850-1914. *History in Africa* **39**, 9-39.
- Jones, G. [1956]. *Report of the position, status & influence of chiefs & natural rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria*. Government Printer, Énugwú.
- . [1963]. *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers; a study of political development in eastern Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Jones, W. [1786/1807]. The 3rd anniversary discourse, on the Hindus, delivered 2nd of February, 1786. *The Works of Sir William Jones* **3**, 23-46. Stockdale, London.
- Jordan, J. [1949]. *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, with an introduction by His Grace, Most Rev. David Mathew & a note by His Excellency Rt. Rev. Charles Heerey*. Clonmore & Reynolds, Dublin. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ònwùjéíógwù (1974).]
- Jorre, J. de St. [1972]. *The Nigerian Civil War*. Hodder & Stoughton, London.
- Joseph, R. [1987]. *Democracy & Prebendal Politics in Nigeria; the rise & fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jung, C. [1962/1963]. *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*. Rascher, Zürich./*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Pantheon, New York. [Consulted in excerpt at <https://carljungdepthpsychologysite.blog/2020/06/24/freud-10/>].
- Junge, P. [2007]. Age determination of commemorative heads; the example of the Berlin collection. *Benin Kings & Rituals; court arts from Nigeria*, edited by B. Plankensteiner, 185-97. Snoeck, Heule, Belgium.

- Jungwirth, M. [1965]. Zeremonie der Ifá-Òr[ó]nmílà-Union; lieder. Benin-City, Nigeria. Archivnummer **B 10067**. Phonogrammarchiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien. catalog.phonogrammarchiv.at/session/9461.
- Kabir, A. [2021]. PHOTOS: Wólé Sòyínká decorated as Àmòtèkùn marshall [sic]. *Premium Times* (Abuja), 1 April. www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/452708-photos-wole-soyinka-decorated-as-amotekun-marshall.html.
- Kalous, M. [1967]. A contribution to the problem of the hypothetical connection between Ifè and the Gold Coast before 15th century. *Archiv Orientalní* **35**, 549-55.
- . [1968]. Frobenius, Willett and Ifè. *Journal of African History* **9**, 659-63.
- Kasfir, S. [1989]. Remembering Ojiji; portrait of an Ìdòmà artist. *African Arts* **22**, 44-51, 86-87.
- Kassibo, B. [1992]. La géomanie ouest-africaine; formes endogènes et emprunts extérieurs. *Cahiers d'études africaines* **128**, 541-96.
- Kaufman, E. [1972]. *Ìbibio Dictionary*. Institute of International Studies, Department of Health, Education & Welfare, Washington D.C. [Retranscribed as Urua & al. (2012).]
- Kawu, A. [2002]. *Variation in Nupe phonology & morphology*. Dissertation, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- Kaye, J. & al. [1985]. The internal structure of phonological elements; a theory of charm and government. *Phonology Yearbook* **2**, 305-28.
- Kayne, R. [1993]. Toward a modular theory of auxiliary selection. *Studia Linguistica* **47**, 3-31.
- Keay, R. [1989]. *Trees of Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Kessler, B. [2001]. *The Significance of Word Lists; statistical tests for investigating historical connections between languages*. CSLI, Palo Alto California. [Not personally consulted; cited by Embleton (2005)].
- Kinzer, S. [2007]. *Overthrow; America's century of regime change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt, New York.
- Kitson, A. [1913]. Southern Nigeria, some considerations of its structure, people and natural history. *The Geographical Journal* **41**, 16-38.
- Klein, N. [2007]. *The Shock Doctrine; the rise of disaster capitalism*. Knopf, Toronto.
- Kligue[h], B. [2001/2011a]. *Le Vodou à travers son encyclopédie la géomancie AFà* [sic]. Éditions Afridic, Bagneux/Éditions Anibwé, Paris.
- . [2011b]. *Les mythes créateurs du Vodou*. Éditions Anibwé, Paris.
- Konen, A. [2009]. *Rites divinatoires & initiatiques à la Havane; la main des dieux*. Harmattan, Paris.
- Konstan, D. [2011]. Epicurus on the gods. *Epicurus & the Epicurean Tradition*, edited by J. Fish & K. Sanders, 53-71. Cambridge University Press.
- Koschorke, A. [2003]. *The Holy Family & its Legacy; religious imagination from the Gospels to Star Wars*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Koster, J. [1988/1993]. On language and epistemology. *Groningen Papers in Theoretical & Applied Linguistics* **TENK 6**. Translated as Langage et épistémologie. *Recherches Linguistiques de Vincennes* **22**, 59-74.
- . [2003]. Ritual performance and the politics of identity; on the functions and uses of ritual. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* **4**, 211-48.
- . [2009]. Ceaseless, unpredictable creativity. *Biolinguistics* **3**, 61-92.
- Kramer, F. [1987/1993]. *Der rote Fes; über Besessenheit & Kunst in Afrika/The Red Fes; art & spirit possession in Africa*. Athenäum, Frankfurt/Verso, London.
- Kravagna, C. [2008]. The preserves of colonialism; the world in the museum. transversal.at/transversal/0708/kravagna/en.
- Kripke, S. [1970/1972]. Lecture 1. Princeton University, 20 January/*Naming & Necessity*, 22-70. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Kronfeldner, M. [2007]. Is cultural evolution Lamarckian? *Biology & Philosophy* **22**, 493-512.
- Kuhn, T. [1962]. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kuryłowicz, J. [1927]. *a* indo-européen et *h* hittite. *Symbolae Grammaticae in Honorem Ioannis Rozwadowski* **1**, *Linguistique générale*, edited by W. Taszycki & W. Doroszewski, 95-104. Drukarnia Uniwersytetu, Kraków.
- . [1956]. *L'Apophonie en indo-européen*. Polska Akademia Nauk, Wrocław.
- Kwarteng, K. [2011]. *Ghosts of Empire; Britain's legacies in the modern world*. Bloomsbury, London.
- Labouret, H. & M. Travele. [1927]. Quelques aspects de la magie africaine, amulettes et talismans au Soudan français. *Bulletin du Comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'Afrique occidentale française* **10**, 477-545.
- Labov, W. [1963]. The social motivation of a sound change. *Word* **19**, 273-309.
- Lackner, H. [1971/1973]. *Social anthropology and indirect rule; the colonial administration and anthropology in Eastern Nigeria 1920-40*. Dissertation, London University/*Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter*, edited by T. Asad, 123-51. Ithaca Press, London.
- Ladefoged, P. [1964]. Ebira notes and wordlist. *Journal of West African Languages* **1**, 27-37.
- Ladefoged, P. [1972]. The features of the larynx. *Journal of Phonetics* **1**, 73-84.
- Ladefoged, P. & al. [1976]. The stops of Òweré ["Owerri"] Ìgbo. *Studies in African Linguistics Supplement* **6**, 146-63.
- Ladendorf, O. [1907]. *Historisches Schlagwörterbuch*. Triebner, Strassburg.
- Lakoff, G. [1970]. Linguistics and natural logic. *Synthese* **22**, 151-271.
- Lankton, W. & al. [2006]. Early primary glass production in southern Nigeria. *Journal of African Archaeology* **4**, 111-38.
- Lapping, B. [1985]. *End of Empire*. Granada Television, London.
- Larkin, B. & B. Meyer. [2006]. Pentacostalism, Islam and culture; new religious movements in West Africa. *Themes in West Africa's History*, edited by E. Akyeampong, 286-312. Woeli, Accra.
- Làsisi, O. 2019. History of archaeological research in the Yorùbá-Èdó region of Nigeria; new directions for urban earthen works. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **47**, 169-201.
- Latour, B. [2014]. Formes élémentaires de la sociologie, formes avancées de la théologie. *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* **167**, 255-75.
- . [2015]. *Face à Gaïa. Huit conférences sur le nouveau régime climatique*. La Découverte, Paris.
- Law, R. [1973]. The heritage of Odùduwà; traditional history and political propaganda among the Yorùbá. *Journal of African History* **14**, 207-22.
- . [1976]. The northern factor in Yorùbá history. *Proceedings of the Conference on Yorùbá Civilization*, edited by I. Akinjóbín & G. Èkè mòdè, 103-32. Mimeo., Department of History, University of Ifè.
- . [1977a]. *The Òyó Empire c.1600-c.1836; a West African imperialism in the era of the Atlantic slave trade*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1977b]. Towards a history of urbanization in precolonial Yorùbáland. *African Historical Demography* **1**; *proceedings of a seminar held in the Centre of African Studies, 29-30 April 1977*, edited by C. Fyfe & D. McMaster, 260-71. University of Edinburgh.
- . [1982]. Jean Barbot as a source for the Slave Coast of West Africa. *History in Africa* **9**, 155-73.

- . [1983]. Trade and politics behind the Slave Coast; the lagoon traffic and the rise of Lagos, 1500-1800. *Journal of African History* **24**, 321-48.
- . [1984]. How truly traditional is our traditional history? The case of Samuel Johnson and the recording of Yorùbá oral tradition. *History in Africa* **11**, 195-221.
- . [1984]. The 'Hamitic hypothesis' in indigenous West African historical thought. *History in Africa* **36**, 293-314.
- . [1989]. 'My head belongs to the king'. On the political and ritual significance of decapitation in precolonial Dahomey. *Journal of African History* **30**, 399-415.
- . [1991]. *The Slave Coast of West Africa 1550-1750; the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on an African society*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1996]. Local amateur scholarship in the construction of Yorùbá identity, 1880-1914. *Ethnicity in Africa; roots, meanings & implications*, edited by L. de la Gorgendière 55-90.
- . [1997]. *The Kingdom of Àlādà*. Centre for Non-Western Studies, Leiden.
- Lawal, T. [1971]. *Yorùbá Šàngó sculpture in historical retrospect*. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- . [1977a]. The present state of art historical research in Nigeria; problems and possibilities. *Journal of African History* **18**, 193-216.
- . [1977b]. The living dead; art and immortality among the Yorùbá of Nigeria. *Africa* **47**, 50-61.
- . [1996]. *The Gèlè dé Spectacle; art, gender & social harmony in an African culture*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- . [2011]. Sustaining the one-ness in their two-ness; poetics of twin figures (*ère ibéjì*) among the Yorùbá. *Twins in African & Diaspora Cultures*, edited by P. Peek, 79-98. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Láiyíwólá, P. [2014]. Walker and the restitution of two Benin bronzes. Blogpost, 16 July. www.museum-security.org/2014/07/peju-layiwola-walker-and-the-restitution-of-two-benin-bronzes.
- Lehmann, W. [1993]. *Theoretical Bases of Indo-European Linguistics*. Routledge, London.
- Lepsius, C. [1854]. *Das allgemeine linguistische Alphabet: Grundsätze der Übertragung fremder Schriftsysteme und bisher noch ungeschriebener Sprachen in europäische Buchstaben*. Wilhelm Hertz, Berlin.
- Levins, R. & R. Lewontin. [1985]. *The Dialectical Biologist*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. [1962]. *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.
- . [1964]. *Le cru & le cuit. Mythologiques* **1**. Plon. Paris.
- Lewis, C. & C. Short. [1879]. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford University Press.
- Liddell, H. & R. Scott. [1940]. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition. Oxford University Press.
- Líjádú, E. [1908/1972]. *Òrùnmílà! ["Òrùmla"] Nípa*. Richards, Nottingham England/Òmóláyò Standard Press of Nigeria, Adó-Èkiti.
- Ling-Roth, H. [1898]. Notes on Benin customs. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* **11**, 235-42.
- Lipson, M. & al. [2020]. Ancient West African foragers in the context of African population history. *Nature* **577**, 665-70.
- Lloyd, P. [1955]. Yorùbá myths—a sociologist's interpretation. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **2**, 20-28.
- . [1959]. Sunbo's *Eredo*. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **7**, 15-22.
- . [1962]. *Yorùbá Land Law*. Oxford University Press.
- Lóngé, O. [1983/1998]. *Ifá divination and computer science; an inaugural lecture*. University of Ìbàdàn Press.
- Lorenz, C. [1987]. The Esan ["Ishan"] cult of the hand. *African Arts* **20**, 70-75, 90-91.
- Lovejoy, H. & O. Òjó. [2015]. *Lucumi, Terranova* and the origins of the Yorùbá nation. *Journal of African History* **56**, 353-72.
- Löwy, M. [2006]. Le capitalisme comme religion—Walter Benjamin et Max Weber. *Raisons politiques* **23**, 203-19.
- Lucas, J. [1948]. *The Religion of the Yorùbás; being an account of the religious beliefs & practices of the Yorùbá peoples of southern Nigeria, especially in relation to the religion of ancient Egypt*. C.M.S. Bookshop, Lagos.
- Luckham, R. [1971]. *The Nigerian Military; a sociological analysis of authority & revolt 1960-67*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lunt, H. [1964]. Discussion of I. Dyen, 'On the validity of comparative lexicostatistics'. *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Linguistics, Cambridge Mass., August 27-31, 1962*, edited by H. Lunt, 247-52. Mouton, The Hague.
- v. Luschan, F. [1911]. Anthropological view of race. *Papers on Interracial Problems Communicated to the First Universal Race Congress Held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911*, edited by G. Spiller, 13-24. P.S. King, London.
- . [1919]. *Die Altertümer von Benin*. [= *Veröffentlichungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde, Staatliche Museen z. Berlin* **8-10**.] De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Luxemburg, R. [1915/1921/1968]. *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals oder Was die Epigonen aus der Marx'schen Theorie gemacht haben; eine Antikritik/The Accumulation of Capital*. Franke, Leipzig/Monthly Review, New York.
- Macdonell, A. [1929]. *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary with Transliteration, Accentuation & Etymological Analysis Throughout*. Oxford University Press.
- MacGaffey, W. [1972]. Comparative analysis of central African religions. *Africa* **42**, 21-31.
- . [1974]. Oral tradition in central Africa. *African Historical Studies* **7**, 417-26.
- . [1978]. African history, anthropology and the rationality of natives. *History in Africa* **5**, 101-20.
- . [1983]. *Modern Kóṅgò ["Kongo"] Prophets; religion in a plural society*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- . [1986]. Epistemological ethnocentrism in African studies. *African Historiographies; what history for which Africa?*, edited by B. Jewsiewicki & D. Newbury, 42-48. Sage, Los Angeles.
- . [1990a]. The personhood of ritual objects: Kóṅgò *minkisi*. *Etnofoor* **3**, 45-61.
- . [1990b]. Religion, class and social pluralism in Zaire. *Canadian Journal of African Studies* **24**, 249-64.
- . [1998]. "Magic, or as we usually say, art"—a framework for comparing European and African art. *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa*, edited by E. Schildkrout & C. Keim, 217-35. Cambridge University Press.
- Macgregor, J. [1909]. Some notes on *nsibidi*. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **39**, 209-19.
- . [1927]. *The Negro*. [*The Races Beyond Series*.] United Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh. [Not personally consulted; cited by Jeffreys (1935b).]
- Madan, T. [1987]. Secularism in its place. *Journal of Asian Studies* **46**, 747-58.
- . [1998]. Coping with ethnicity in South Asia: Bangladesh, Punjab and Kashmir compared. *Ethnic & Racial Studies* **21**, 969-89.
- Madan, T. ed. [1971]. *On the Nature of Caste in India; a review symposium on Louis Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus*. *Contributions to Indian Sociology, New Series* **5.1**. Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.
- Mádùká-Duruñze, O. [1990]. Igbo adjectives as morphologised relatives. *Studies in African Linguistics* **21**, 237-51.
- Mahfouz, N. [1985/1998]. *Akbenaten, Dweller in Truth*. American University in Cairo Press.
- Maine, H. [1861]. *Ancient Law; its connection with the early history of society & its relation to modern ideas*. Murray, London.
- Mair, L. [1962]. Indirect rule in Ìlgbò land. [Letter.] *West Africa* 2335 (3 March), 238.

- Májà-Pearce, A. [2007]. Our credulous grammarian. *London Review of Books* **29.15** (2 August), 11-12. www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n15/adevale-maja-pearce/our-credulous-grammarian.
- Malamoud, C. [1980]. Théologie de la dette dans le Brāhmanisme. *Puruṣārtha; recherches de sciences sociales sur l'Asie du Sud* **4**, 39-62.
- Malinowski, B. [1935]. An ethnographic theory of the magical word. *The Language of Magic & Gardening*, 213-50. Allen & Unwin, London.
- Malm, A. [2016]. *Fossil Capital; the rise of steam power & the roots of global warming*. Verso, London.
- Mamdani, M. [1996]. *Citizen & Subject; contemporary Africa & the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Mandelbrot, B. [1982]. *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*. Freeman, San Francisco California.
- Manfredi, V. [1991]. *Àgbò & Èbùgbò; Igbo linguistic consciousness, its origins & limits*. Dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge Mass. people.bu.edu/manfredi/dissertation.pdf.
- . [1992]. The limits of downstep in Àgbò sentence prosody. *IRCS Report 92-37*, edited by M. Liberman & C. Maclemore, 103-15. Institute for Research in Cognitive Science, University of Pennsylvania. people.bu.edu/manfredi/IRCS.pdf.
- . [1994]. Syntactic (de)composition of Yorùbá 'be' and 'have'. *Langues et Grammaire, Actes du Premier Colloque*, édité par L. Nash & G. Tsoulas, 237-52. Département des Sciences du Langage, Université de Paris-8, Vincennes à Saint-Denis. people.bu.edu/manfredi/LetG.pdf.
- . [1997]. Igbo initiation; phallus or umbilicus? *Cahiers d'études africaines* **145**, 157-211. people.bu.edu/manfredi/OedipousOttensberg.pdf.
- . [2003]. A fonosyntactic parameter within Benue-Kwa and its consequences for Èdó. *Typologie des langues d'Afrique et universaux de la grammaire, vol. 2: Benue-Kwa, Soninke, Wolof*, edited by P. Sauzet & A. Zribi-Hertz, 127-62. Presses Universitaires de Vincennes/Éditions de l'Harmattan, Paris. Manually corrected proofs: people.bu.edu/manfredi/paris8corrected.pdf.
- . [2004]. Philological perspectives on the Southeastern Nigerian diaspora. *Contours; a journal of the African diaspora* **2**, 239-87. people.bu.edu/manfredi/Contours.pdf.
- . [2008]. Nuclear stress in eastern Benue-Kwa (Niger-Congo). *Focus Strategies in African Languages; the interaction of focus & grammar in Niger-Congo & Afro-Asiatic*, edited by E. Aboh & al., 15-54. DeGruyter, Berlin. people.bu.edu/manfredi/nsrEasternBK.pdf.
- . [2009a]. Morphosyntactic parameters and the internal classification of Benue-Kwa (Niger-Congo). *Historical Syntax & Linguistic Theory*, edited by P. Crisma & G. Longobardi, 329-43. Oxford University Press. people.bu.edu/manfredi/DIGS9.pdf.
- . [2009b]. The referential prosody of bare arguments. Workshop on bare nouns, syntactic projections and their interpretation, UParis-7, 27 November. people.bu.edu/manfredi/ReferentialProsody.pdf.
- . [2013a]. A recurrence of structures in collapsing Nigeria. *Radical Egalitarianism; local realities, global relations*, edited by F. Aulino & al., 119-36 plus endnotes and references aggregated at end of volume. Fordham University Press, Bronx NY. people.bu.edu/manfredi/AAArevised.pdf.
- . [2013b]. The etymology of *ogan* (*ogā*) proves the Gùn-gbè origin of Candomblé Jeje. people.bu.edu/manfredi/OganGungbeJeje.pdf.
- . [2014]. *Èlà kò là!* The Disneyfication of Òṣun Òṣogbo. people.bu.edu/manfredi/JesuOs.ogboEvirato.pdf.
- . [2016]. Research note — Òminigbón facing Èdó past and future. *Ùmèwàwèn, Journal of Benin & Èdoid Studies* **1**, 136-41. people.bu.edu/manfredi/OminigbonResearchNote.pdf.
- . [2018]. Cyclic accentuation in Yorùbá. Chapter 10 of *Data-rich Linguistics; papers in honor of 'Yínplá Awóyálé*, edited by A. Akinlabí & O. Adéşòlá, 211-36. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. people.bu.edu/manfredi/YorubaCyclicAccent.pdf.
- . [2019]. Phonosemantic subordination. people.bu.edu/manfredi/PhonosemSubord.pdf. Submitted to *Contemporary Studies in African Linguistics; essays in memory of Rev. Sr. M.A. Òwaláàka*, edited by L. Yuka. Benin-City, Nigeria. [In press.]
- . [2020]. A toneless theory of 2-and-a-half tonemes in Gbè. *African Languages in Time & Space; papers in honour of Professor Akinbiyi Akinlabí*, edited by E. Urua & al., 40-64. Zenith BookHouse, Ibadán.
- . [2023]. *Gbogbo àwọn gbajumọ élégbè pro-democracy na ọwọ́n nọ́nyen dà lónií?* [Where are all those our treasures, famous/trendy pro-democracy supporters now?]. Blog post, 24 March. people.bu.edu/manfredi/theSilenceOfTheOketes.pdf.
- Mangabeira Unger, R. [2014]. A note on the three orientations and the idea of the Axial Age. *The Religion of the Future*, 445-56. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Mann, K. [2007]. *Slavery & the Birth of an African City; Lagos 1760-1900*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Mannheim, K. [1952]. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. Routledge, London.
- Manuel, F. [1959]. *The 18th Century Confronts the Gods*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Marcus, G. [1993]. Negative evidence in language acquisition. *Cognition* **46**, 58-85.
- Marcuse, H. [1965/1968]. Industrialisierung und Kapitalismus. *Max Weber & die Soziologie Heute*, edited by O. Stammer, 161-80. Mohr, Tübingen/Industrialization and capitalism in the work of Max Weber. *Negations; essays in critical theory*, edited by J. Shapiro, 201-26.
- Marten, L. [2006]. Bantu classification, Bantu trees and phylogenetic methods. *Phylogenetic Methods & the Prehistory of Languages*, edited by P. Foster & C. Renfrew, 43-55. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge England.
- Martin, M. [2006]. All encounters produce change—Africa, Picasso and beyond. *Picasso & Africa*, edited by L. Madeleine & M. Martin, 151-67. Bell-Roberts, Cape Town.
- Martínez Betancourt, J. [2024]. Un acercamiento a la historiografía de Ifá en Cuba. *Afro-Hispanic Review* **41**, 39-51.
- Marx, K. [1842/1902]. Brief 6 von Karl Marx an Arnold Ruge 30 November. *Documente des Socialismus, Hefte für Geschichte, Urkunden und Bibliographie des Socialismus, Aus der Geschichte des Socialismus*, edited by E. Bernstein, 392-94. Socialistische Monatshefte, Berlin.
- . [1845/1888/1941]. Anhang: Karl Marx über Feuerbach vom Jahre 1845. *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der Klassischen Deutschen Philosophie von Friedrich Engels*, 69-72. Dietz Verlag, Stuttgart/Theses on Feuerbach. *Ludwig Feuerbach & the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, 82-84. International Publishers, New York.
- . [1894]. *Das Kapital, Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* **3.2**, *Der Gesamtprozess der kapitalistischen Produktion*, edited by F. Engels. Otto Meissner, Hamburg. www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/marx_kapital0302_1894.
- Mary, A. [1988]. La schème de la naissance à l'envers; scénario initiatique et logique de l'inversion. *Cahiers d'études africaines* **110**, 233-63.
- . [2000]. *Le Bricolage Africain des Héros Chrétiens*. Éditions du Cerf, Paris.
- . [2010]. *Les Anthropologues & la Religion*. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.
- Mason, B. [2007]. Britain rigged election before Nigerian independence. 9 August. baroldsmithmemorial.wordpress.com/2011/01/05/britain-rigged-election-before-nigerian-independence, cf. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007tyz0.
- Mason, J. [1996]. *Olùòkùn, Owner of Rivers & Seas*. Yorùbá Theological Archministry, Brooklyn New York.
- Masuzawa, T. [2005]. *The Invention of World Religions; or, how European universalism was preserved in the language of pluralism*. University of Chicago Press.
- Matera, M. & al. [2012]. *The Women's War of 1929; gender & violence in colonial Nigeria*. Macmillan, London.

- Matibag, E. [1996]. *Afro-Cuban Religious Experience; cultural reflections in narrative*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Matory, R. [1994]. Rival empires; Islam and the religions of spirit possession among the Ọ̀yọ́ Yorùbá. *American Ethnologist* **21**, 495-515.
- . [1999]. The English professors of Brazil; on the diasporic roots of the Yorùbá nation. *Comparative Studies in Society & History* **41**, 72-103.
- Maupoil, B. [1943a]. *La Géomancie à l'ancienne Côte des Esclaves*. Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris.
- . [1943b/1945]. Contribution à l'origine musulmane de la géomancie dans le bas Dahomey. These complémentaire pour le doctorat ès lettres. *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* **13**, 1-94. fr.calameo.com/read/000903947cd9e2989264c?autbid=jXJrlejUsNvf.
- Mauss, M. [1923-24]. Essai sur le don; Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques. *Année Sociologique n.s.* **1**, 30-186.
- Mbembe, A. [2002]. On the power of the false. *Public Culture* **14**, 629-41.
- Mbiti, J. [1969]. *African Religions & Philosophy*. Heinemann, London.
- McCall, D. [1974]. Review of Goody (1971). *African Historical Studies* **7**, 537-40.
- McIntosh, S. & R. McIntosh. [1988]. From stone to metal; new perspectives on the later prehistory of West Africa. *Journal of World Prehistory* **2**, 89-133.
- McLuhan, M. [1964]. *Understanding Media; the extensions of man*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Meek, C. [1931]. *A Sudanese Kingdom; an ethnographical study of the Jukun-speaking peoples of Nigeria*. Kegan Paul, London.
- . [1937]. *Law & Authority in a Nigerian Tribe; a study in indirect rule*. Oxford University Press.
- Meillassoux, C. [1973]. Y-at-il des castes aux Indes? *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* **54**, 5-29.
- Meillet, A. [1922]. *Les Dialectes indo-européennes*. Champion, Paris.
- . [1924]. *Traité de grammaire comparée des langues classiques*. Champion, Paris.
- . [1925]. *La Méthode comparative en linguistique historique*. Aschehoug, Oslo.
- Meinhof, C. [1899/1932]. *Grundriss einer lautlehre der Bantusprachen, nebst Anleitung zur Aufnahme von Bantusprachen. Anhang: Verzeichnis von Bantuwortstämmen/Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages*. Brockhaus, Leipzig/Reimer, Berlin.
- Meinhof, C. & F. v. Luschan. [1912]. *Die Sprachen der Hamiten nebst einer Beigabe: Hamitische Typen*. Friederichsen, Hamburg.
- Melie, E. & B. Wass. [1983]. Ọ̀zọ́ title-taking insignia in Ọ̀nicha ["Onitsha"]. *African Arts* **17.1**, 65-71, 87-88.
- Melzian, H. [1937/1986]. *Concise Dictionary of the Bini Language of Southern Nigeria*. Kegan Paul, London. Abridged and reprinted with modern spelling as R. Agheysi, *An Èdó-English Dictionary*. Ethiope, Benin-City.
- . [1942]. *Vergleichende Charakteristik des Verbums im Bini (Südnigeria)*. Harrassowitz, Leipzig.
- Merlo, C. [1975]. Statuettes of the *àbíkú* cult. *African Arts* **8.4**, 30-35, 84. [N.b. the article text implicitly walks back the label of *Àjá-gbè rẹ̀nàwí* 'mother-of-twins' figures as *àbíkú*, a vague art market term that ended up in the title of the text apparently by default.]
- Merton, R. [1936]. The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action. *American Sociological Review* **1**, 894-904.
- Messenger, J. [1957]. *Anaang acculturation, a study of shifting cultural focus*. Dissertation, Northwestern University, Chicago.
- Metcalfe, T. [1994]. *Ideologies of the Rājī*. Cambridge University Press. [Not personally consulted; cited by Satia (2020).]
- Meyerowitz, E. [1940]. Four pre-Portuguese bronze castings from Benin. *Man* **40**, 129-32 [preceded by an unnumbered plate].
- Middleton, C. [1729/1733]. *A Letter from Rome, shewing an exact conformity between popery & paganism: or, The religion of the present Romans derived from that of their beathen ancestors*. W. Innys & R. Manby, London.
- Mignolo, W. & C. Walsh. [2018]. *On Decoloniality; concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press, Durham North Carolina.
- Miller, I. [2009]. *Voice of the Leopard; African secret societies & Cuba*. www.upress.state.ms.us/Books/V/Voice-of-the-Leopard. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.
- . [2022]. The Ékpè-Abakuá continuum; articulating transatlantic African diaspora heritage in Cuba and the Cross-River region (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria). *Zanj* **4**, 36-58.
- Mithen, S. [1996]. *The Prehistory of the Mind; a search for the origins of art, religion & science*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- . [1998]. The supernatural beings of prehistory and the external storage of religious ideas. *Cognition & Material Culture; the archaeology of symbolic storage*, edited by C. Renfrew & C. Scarre, 97-106. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge England.
- Moliner, I. [1992]. *Los cabildos de africanos en la ciudad de Matanzas*. Manuscript, Matanzas, Cuba.
- Monteil, C. [1932]. La divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique Occidentale Française. *Bulletin du Comité d'Études Historiques & Scientifiques de l'Afrique Orientale française* **14**, 27-136. [Not personally consulted; cited by Bascom (1969).]
- Moore, J. [2003]. Nature and the transition from feudalism to capitalism. *Review* **26**, 97-172.
- Morton-Williams, P. [1956]. The *egúngún* society in southwest Yorùbá kingdoms. *Proceedings of the 3rd Conference of the West African Institute of Social & Economic Research*, 90-103. University College, Ibadán.
- . [1960]. The Yorùbá Ọ̀gbóni cult in Ọ̀yọ́. *Africa* **30**, 362-74.
- . [1964]. An outline of the cosmology and cult organization of the Ọ̀yọ́ Yorùbá. *Africa* **34**, 243-61.
- . [1966]. Two studies of Ifá divination. Introduction; the modes of divination. *Africa* **36**, 406-08.
- Mueller, G. [2006]. Why Nanos uses precomposite Greek characters in preference over composite ones. www.e-ternals.com/nanos/data.htm.
- Mufwene, S. [2008]. *Language Evolution; contact, competition & change*. Continuum, London.
- Müller, Max. [1878]. *Lectures on the Origin & Growth of Religion, as illustrated by the religions of India*. Longman, London.
- Mukarovsky, H. [1976]. *A study of Western Nigritic*, 2. Institut für Ägyptologie und Afrikanistik, Universität Wien.
- . [1977]. *A study of Western Nigritic*, 1. Institut für Ägyptologie und Afrikanistik, Universität Wien.
- Murdock, G. [1934]. *Our Primitive Contemporaries*. Macmillan, New York.
- Murray, K. [1941]. Nigerian bronzes; work from Ifè. *Antiquity* **15**, 71-80.
- Nabofa, M. & B. Elugbe. [1981]. *Èppha*, an Ùrhobo system of divination and its esoteric language. *Oríta; Ìbàdàn Journal of Religious Studies* **13**, 3-19. Incomplete OCR with induced typos: www.waado.org/UrhoboCulture/Religion/Nabofa/Divination/Eppha.html.
- Nadel, S. [1935a]. Nupe state and community. *Africa* **8**, 257-303.
- . [1935b]. The king's hangmen, a judicial organization in central Nigeria. *Man* **35**, 129-32.
- . [1936/2006]. The fieldwork diaries of S.F. Nadel. [www.rogerblench.info/Anthropology data/Text/Nadel/Nadel composite.pdf](http://www.rogerblench.info/Anthropology%20data/Text/Nadel/Nadel%20composite.pdf).
- . [1942]. *A Black Byzantium; the kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1954]. *Nupe Religion; traditional beliefs & the influence of Islam in a West African kingdom*. Oxford University Press.
- National African Language Resource Center. [2002]. *Ìgbo* [p.r. brochure, 2pp.]. lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/resources/press/brochures/igbo.pdf.
- Ñdjméle, Q. ed. [2003]. *In the Linguistic Paradise; a Festschrift for E. N'òlùé Eménánjo*. National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Àbá

- Neaher, N. [1976a]. *Bronzes of southern Nigeria & Igbo metalsmithing traditions*. Dissertation, Stanford University, Palo Alto California.
- . [1976b]. Igbo metalsmiths among the southern Èdó. *African Arts* 9.4, 46-49, 91-92.
- . [1979a]. Òka ["Awka"] who travel; itinerant metalsmiths of southern Nigeria. *Africa* 49, 352-66.
- . [1979b]. Nigerian bronze bells. *African Arts* 12.3, 42-47, 95-96.
- Nevadomsky, J. [1993]. Religious symbolism in the Benin Kingdom. *Divine Inspiration; from Benin to Bahia*, edited by P. Galembo, 19-32. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- Njókú, Q. [1994]. Itinerant Igbo smiths of precolonial Nigeria. *Nsúká Journal of the Humanities* 7, 1-21.
- Nnòlì, O. [1978]. *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension, Énugwú.
- Noble, D. [1997]. *The Religion of Technology; the divinity of man & the spirit of invention*. Knopf, New York.
- Nóbrega, C. & R. Echeverria. [2002]. *Verger; Um Retrato em preto & branco*. Corrupio, Salvador, Bahia, Brasil.
- Nock, A. [1933]. *Conversion; the old & the new in religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. Oxford University Press.
- Northrup, D. [2000]. Igbo and myth Igbo; culture and ethnicity in the Atlantic world 1600-1850. *Slavery & Abolition* 21.3, 1-20.
- Nowak, M. & al. [2010]. The evolution of eusociality. *Nature* 466, 1057-62.
- Nurse, D. & G. Philippson. [2003]. Introduction. *The Bantu Languages*, edited by D. Nurse & G. Philippson, 1-12. Routledge, London.
- Nwáchukwu, A. [1976]. *Noun Phrase sentential complementation in Igbo*. Dissertation, University of London.
- . [1995]. *Tone in Igbo Syntax*. Department of Linguistics & Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsúká.
- Nwánchò[r], O. [2020]. Sacred objects and Igbo eco-spirituality. *Àkụ, an African Journal of Contemporary Research* 1.1, 32-46. <https://www.apas.africa/aku.php>.
- Nwàgà [Nwoga], D. [1984]. *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*. Hawk Press, Mbàisén.
- Nwáúwa, A. [1991]. Integrating Àrùchúkwu ["Arochukwu"] into the regional chronological structure. *History in Africa* 18, 297-310.
- . [2008]. Hypotheses of state formation and the evolution of kingship (éẖè-ship) tradition in Ìgboland; a sociopolitical anatomy of the origin of the Àrù ["Aro"] Kingdom. *International Journal of African Studies* [Wilberforce Ohio] 6, 171-95.
- Nzekwú, Q. [1959]. Òka ["Awka"], town of smiths. *Nigeria Magazine* 61, 136-56.
- . [1961]. *Wand of Noble Wood*. Hutchinson, London.
- Nzewí, M. [1978]. Ancestral polyphony. *African Arts* 11.4, 74, 92-94.
- Nzewúnwa, N. [1988]. Extending the chronology of the east Niger Delta. *Nsúká Journal of the Humanities* 3/4, 37-49. [Not personally consulted; cited by Derefaka (2003).]
- Nzímíro [Pnẓeímíro], I. [1962]. *Family and Kinship in Ì[ḡ]bo Land; a study in acculturation process*. Wasmund, Köln.
- . [1972]. *Studies in Igbo Political Systems; chieftaincy & politics in four Niger states*. Cass, London.
- Ọbáyémí, A. [1976]. The Yorùbá- and Èdó-speaking peoples and their neighbors before 1600. *History of West Africa, 2nd edition* 1, edited by J. Àjàyí & M. Crowder, 196-263. Longman, London.
- . [1978]. The Sókoto jibād and the Òkún Yorùbá; a review. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9, 61-87.
- . [1979a]. Ancient Ilé-Ifè; another cultural-historical reinterpretation. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9, 151-85.
- . [1979b]. Ifá divination and historical dates; an adventure into the chronology of Yorùbá history. Ilé-Ifè. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ọbáyémí (1983, 87 fn. 50).]
- . [1980]. States and peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence area. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by O. Ikime, 144-64. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- . [1981]. The political culture of the Èkitì and the challenge of the historiography of the Yorùbá. Staff and Post-Graduate Seminar, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 2 April.
- . [1983]. History, culture, Yorùbá and northern factors. *Studies in Yorùbá History & Culture; essays in honour of Professor S.O. Biobáké*, edited by G. Olúsanya, 72-87. University Press Ltd., Ibàdàn.
- . [1985]. Nine places called "Ifè" history, symbols or what? Faculty of Arts Seminar, University of Ilorin. Manuscript, Àkòdì-Afrika, Uhè-Ijumu ["Ifè-Ijumu"].
- . [1991]. Beyond the legends: a discussion of Èdó-Yorùbá relation in precolonial times. *Cultural Studies in Ifè*, edited by 'B. Adédìran, 33-41. Institute of Cultural Studies, Ọbáfémí Awólówò University, Ilé-Ifè.
- . [1992]. The phenomenon of Odùdùwà in Ifè history. *The Cradle of a Race; Ifè from the beginning to 1990*, edited by I. Akínjóbín, 62-76. Sunray Publications, Port Harcourt.
- Òbí, P. [2010]. Àkúnýìlì condemns use of 'Naija' in place of Nigeria. *This Day* [Lagos], 15 November. www.thisdaylive.com/articles/akunyili-condemns-use-of-naija-in-place-of-nigeria/74183.
- Ọchì àgha, T. [2015]. *Achebe & Friends at Òmààhýá ["Umuahia"]; the making of a literary elite*. James Currey, Martlesham England.
- Ochonu, M. [2010]. Jos and beyond; the Middle-Belt Christian problem. 25 March. www.saharareporters.com/articles/external-contrib/5631-jos-and-beyond-the-middle-belt-christian-problem.html.
- Ọdítà, E. [1973]. Universal cults and intra-diffusion; Igbo ìkèṅga in cultural retrospection. *African Studies Review* 16, 73-82.
- Odokuma, E. [2011]. Views on the origins, structure and hierarchy of some Niger Delta mud sculpture styles of southern Nigeria. *Anthropologist* 13, 47-59.
- Odùyoyè, M. [1971]. *The Vocabulary of Yorùbá Religious Discourse*. Daystar, Ibàdàn.
- Ofeimu ["Ofeimun"], Q. [2003]. In search of Ògún; Sòyínká, Nietzsche and the Èdó century. Egharheba Memorial Lecture, Motel Benin Plaza, 19 December. www.edo-nation.net/eghar6.htm.
- Ọgbàlù, F. [n.d., circa 1970]. *Igbo Institutions & Customs*. University Publishing Company, Ọnìcha ["Onitsha"].
- Ogbechie, P. [2021]. Ulli Beier, cultural brokerage and Cold War parapolitics. *Parapolitics, Cultural Freedom & the Cold War*, edited by A. Franke & al., 541-57. Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.
- Ogierakhi, E. [1973]. *Context as a grammatical category in Èdó*. *Linguistics Series Monograph* 2. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Lagos.
- Oguagha, P. & A. Okpoko. [1984]. *History & Ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Nigeria; a study of Igbo-Ìgàlá relations with special reference to the Anamb[a]ra valley*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 7. B.A.R., Oxford.
- Oguagha, P. [1989]. Precolonial trade in the Igbo-Ìgàlá borderland. *Odù* 36, 43-58.
- Ògúnbà, O. [1964]. Crowns and 'okute' at Ìdowá. *Nigeria Magazine* 83, 249-61.
- Ògúnbiyí, T. [1952]. *Ìwé Itàn Ifá, [Agbigba], Yanrin Titè àti Onó Èrindilogún*. Ifè-Olú Printing, Lagos. [Not personally consulted, cited by Bascom (1969).]
- Ògúndélé, W. [2003]. *Omólúwàbí; Ulli Beier, Yorùbá society & culture*. [= Bayreuth African Studies 66.] Breitingen, Bayreuth.
- Ògúndìran, A. [2000]. *Settlement cycling & regional interactions in central Yorùbáland, AD 1200-1900; archaeology & history in Ilàrè District, Nigeria*. Dissertation, Boston University.

- . [2002a]. Filling a gap in the Ifè-Benin interaction field 13th-16th Centuries AD; excavations in Iloyi settlement, Ifè sàland. *African Archaeological Review* **19**, 27-60.
- . [2002b]. Of small things remembered; beads, cowries and cultural translations of the Atlantic experience in Yorùbáland. *African Historical Studies* **35**, 427-57.
- . [2003]. Chronology, material culture and pathways to the cultural history of the Yorùbá-Èdó region, 500 BC-AD 1800. *Sources & Methods in African History; spoken, written, unearthed*, edited by T. Fálólá & C. Jennings, 33-79. University of Rochester Press.
- . [2005]. Four millennia of cultural history in Nigeria ca. 2000 BC-AD 1900; archaeological perspectives. *Journal of World Prehistory* **19**, 133-68.
- . [2013]. The end of prehistory? An Africanist comment. *American Historical Review* **118**, 788-801.
- . [2020]. *The Yorùbá, a New History*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Ògúndiran, A. & O. Ìgè. [2015]. 'Our ancestors were materials scientists'—archaeological and geochemical evidence for indigenous Yorùbá glass technology. *Journal of Black Studies* **46**, 751-72.
- Ògúnlé, yé, F. [2002]. Preserving culture through new artistic forms; the case of Dúró Ládíúpò's folkloric theatre. *Research Review* [Legon] n.s. **18**, 63-71.
- Ògúnwùsì, A. [2019a]. Qòni links Ajé Festival to industrious Ìgbo people. 30 March. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ8B.A4I9oK0.
- . [2019b]. Without Ifá's existence, there would not have been Google, says Qòni of Ifè. *Vanguard* (Lagos), 11 April. www.vanguardngr.com/2019/04/without-ifas-existence-there-would-not-have-been-google-says-ooni-of-ife.
- Ògúnýemí, Y. [2010]. *The Oral Traditions in Ilé-Ifè; the Yorùbá people & their book of enlightenment*. Academica, Palo Alto California.
- Òhadíkè, D. [1994]. *Àníòma; a social history of the western Ìgbo people*. Ohio University Press, Athens.
- Òhirí-Àníchè, C. [2003]. Reconstruction of initial consonants of Proto-Benue Congo; insights from inter-branch comparisons. 34th Conference on African Linguistics, Rutgers University, 22 June.
- Òjò, G. [1966]. *Yorùbá Culture, a geographical analysis*. University of London Press.
- Òjò, J. [1974]. The diffusion of artefacts over a limited geographical region. *Seminarbericht* **25**, edited by S. Soo & al., 317-36. Symposium Leo Frobenius, Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, Köln.
- . [1976]. The diffusion of some Yorùbá artefacts and institutions. *Proceedings of the Conference on Yorùbá Civilization*, edited by I. Akinjógbin & G. Èkékè mòdè, 364-98. Mimeo., Department of History, University of Ifè.
- . [1979]. Semiotic elements in Yorùbá art and ritual. *Semiotica* **28**, 333-48.
- Òjò, Q. [2008]. Beyond diversity; women, scarification and Yorùbá identity. *History in Africa* **33**, 347-74.
- . [2009a]. The root is also here; the nondiaspora foundations of Yorùbá ethnicity. *Movements, Borders & Identities in Africa*, edited by T. Fálólá & A. Usman, 53-80. University of Rochester Press.
- . [2009b]. *Heṣpà* (hail) *òrìṣà*—the *òrìṣà* factor in the birth of Yorùbá identity. *Journal of Religion in Africa* **39**, 30-59.
- Òjòadé, J. [1980]. Some Ìlájẹ wellerisms. *Folklore* **91**, 63-71.
- Òjúkwu, C. [1968/1969]. State of the nation. (Broadcast, May 30 1968). *Biafra volume 1; selected speeches of C. Òdumégwù Ojúkwu, General of the People's Army, with diaries of events*, 254-71. Harper, New York.
- Òké.dijì, M. [1998]. Yorùbá facialographic art and Ọyọ expansionism. *War & Peace in Yorùbáland 1793-1893*, edited by I. Akinjógbin, 487-96. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Ókenwá, S. [2008]. Royal rumble: Ìgbínédíṣon vs. Ọba Erediauwa. 23 April. nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/sunny-chris-okenwa/royal-rumble-igbinedison-vs-oba-erediauwa.html.
- Òkónjò, I. [1974]. *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950; a Nigerian View*. Nok, New York.
- Okot p'Bitek. [1971]. *African Religions in Western Scholarship*. East African Literature Bureau, Kampala.
- Okpewho ["Okpewho"], I. [1998]. *Once Upon a Kingdom; myth, hegemony & identity*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Olalde, I. & al. [2018]. The Beaker phenomenon and the genomic transformation of northwest Europe. *Nature* **555**, 190-96.
- Oláníyan, R. [1992]. The Modákéké question in Ifè politics and diplomacy. *The Cradle of a Race; Ifè from the beginning to 1990*, edited by I. Akinjógbin, 266-86. Sunray Publications, Port Harcourt.
- Oliver, R. [1968]. Western historiography and its relevance to Africa. *Emerging Themes of African History; proceedings of the International Conference of African History held at University College, Dar es Salaam, October 1965*, edited by T. Ranger, 53-60. East African Publishing House, Nairobi.
- Ọlómọlà, G. [1998]. Demographic effects of the 19th-century Yorùbá wars. *War & Peace in Yorùbáland 1793-1893*, edited by I. Akinjógbin, 371-79. Heinemann, Ibàdàn.
- Ọlómọlà, I. [1976]. The eastern Yorùbá country before Odùduwà; a reassessment. *Proceedings of the Conference on Yorùbá Civilization*, edited by I. Akinjógbin & G. Èkékè mòdè, 34-73. Mimeo., Department of History, University of Ifè.
- Olóròdè, O. [1993]. Aspects of plant naming and classification among [the] Yorùbá. *Ifè, Annals of the Institute of Cultural Studies* **4**, 46-61.
- Olúpòná, J. [2008]. The code of twins; *ibé.ji* in Yorùbá cosmology, ritual and iconography. Ms., Harvard University, Cambridge Mass.
- . [2011]. *City of 201 Gods; Ilé-Ifè in time, space & the imagination*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- . [2014]. God has many names; religious plurality and civic society. Bóláji Idowú Memorial Lecture, University of Ibàdàn, 20 August.
- . [2016]. *Odù Ìmòlẹ*; Islamic tradition in Ifá and the Yorùbá religious imagination. *Ifá Divination; knowledge, power & performance*, edited by J. Olúpòná & R. Abíódún, 168-78. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Olúpòná, J. & R. Abíódún (eds.) [2016]. *Ifá Divination; knowledge, power & performance*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Omọregie, O. [1997]. *Great Benin 2; the age of Ọdúnwèrè (600-900 AD)*. Neraso Publishers, Benin City. [Not personally consulted; cited by Agbontaen-Eghafona (2010).]
- Omóruyí, Q. [2001]. *Beyond the tripod in Nigerian politics; lessons from the past experiment with NPP (1977-79)*. Amfitop Books, Benin-City.
- Omózùwá, V. [1989]. Speech tempo, consonant deletion and tones in Èdó nouns. *Studies in African Linguistics* **20**, 317-37.
- Ọnụọha, C. [2019]. RE: Qòni of Ifè and [the] Ìgbo-Yorùbá relationship. *Vanguard* (Lagos), 17 August. www.vanguardngr.com/2019/08/re-ooni-of-ife-and-igbo-yoruba-relationship.
- Ọnwuẹjìógwù ["Onwuejeogwu"], M. [1970a]. *A brief survey of an Anamb[a]ra civilization in the Ìgbo culture area*. Tàbánsí Press, Ọnicha.
- . [1970b]. The typology of settlement patterns in the Ìgbo culture area. *African Notes* [Ibàdàn] **6**, 60-69.
- . [1972]. Outline of the dawn of Ìgbo civilization in the Ìgbo culture area. *Ọdìnaní* **1**, 15-56.
- . [1974/1981]. *An Ìgbo Civilization; Nri Kingdom & Hegemony*. M.Phil Thesis, University College, London/Ethnographica, London for Ethiope, Benin-City.
- . [1975]. The *íkéniga*—the cult of individual achievements and advancements. *African Notes* [Ibàdàn] **7.2**, 87-95.
- . [1978/1997]. *Áfa Symbolism & Phenomenology in Nri Kingdom & Hegemony; an African philosophy of social action*. Dissertation, University College London/Ethiope, Benin-City.

- . [1980]. A study of the cultural evolution of Benin Kingdom. *Ìwé; Nigerian Journal of Arts & Culture* **1.2**, 18-35.
- . [2001]. *Ìgbo nwe èzè, Ìgbo have kings*; the evolutionary development of complexities in the Ìgbo political system. Ígúarò Heritage Inaugural Lecture. [Not personally consulted; cited by Áfigbo (2002).]
- Ọnwụẹjìógwù [Onwuejiegwu], M. & R. Òkó[h]. [1981]. *Distinctive Characteristics of Western Ìgbo Civilization; a sociocultural ideology for Aníqma State*. Ambik, Benin-City.
- Ọnwụẹjìógwù [Onwuejiegwu], M. & B. [1977]. The search for the missing links in dating and interpreting the Ìgbo Úkwu finds. *Paidentma* **23**, 169-88.
- Ọnwụ́émé, O. [1988]. *The Reign of Wazobia; a play*. Heinemann, Ìbàdàn.
- Ọnwụ́mèchìlì, C. [2000]. *Ìgbo énné ezè; the Ìgbo have no kings*. Àhìajìókú Lecture, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports, Óweré [“Owerri”], Imò State. abiajoku.igbonet.com/2000.
- Oppenheimer, M. [2010]. On a visit to the U.S., a Nigerian witch-hunter explains herself. 21 May. www.nytimes.com/2010/05/22/us/22beliefs.html.
- Ọróbátò, S. [1987]. The Biafran crisis and the Midwest. *African Affairs* **86**, 367-83.
- Ortiz, F. [1906/1973]. *Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)*. [= *Hampa afro-cubana* **1**]. Librería F. Fé, Madrid/New House, Miami. [The Florida edition is abridged.]
- . [1924]. *Glosario de afronegrismos*. Siglo XX, La Habana.
- . [1940]. *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar; advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación*. Montero, La Habana.
- . [1959/1975]. *Historia de una Pelea Cubana contra los Demonios*. Departamento de Relaciones Culturales, Santa Clara/Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, la Habana.
- Östberg, W. ed. [2010]. *Whose Objects? Art treasures from the Kingdom of Benin in the collection of the Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm. Kulturspektiv* **23**. Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.
- Òsújì, C. [2020]. ‘Christian leaders can’t outlaw òsú caste system in Ìgboland’. *Guardian* [Lagos], 16 June. guardian.ng/news/christian-leaders-cant-outlaw-osu-caste-system-in-igboland.
- Ọ̀ṣúntó.kun, A. [1984]. *Chief S. Ládòkè Akíntólá, his life & times*. Cass, London.
- Ọ̀ṣúntó.kun, J. [2004]. Ifè-Benin relationship. 23 June. www.lagosforum.com/comment.php?NR=1164 [dead link; text archived].
- Otiṭẹ, O. [1975]. Encapsulated political systems. *Colonialism & Change; essays presented to Lucy Mair*, edited by M. Owusu, 67-84. Mouton, The Hague.
- Ottenberg, S. [1984]. Two new religions, one analytic frame. *Cahiers d'études africaines* **96**, 437-54.
- Otzen, E. [2015]. The man who returned his grandfather’s looted art. 26 February. www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31605284.
- Owómoyèlà, O. [2005]. *Yorùbá Proverbs*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Oxford English Dictionary. [1933]. *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. 9th Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Oyèláràn, Q. [1970]. *Yorùbá phonology*. Dissertation, Stanford University, Palo Alto California.
- . [1975]. On rhythm in Yorùbá poetry. *Yorùbá Oral Tradition; poetry in music, dance & drama*, edited by [Q. Oyèláràn &] W. Abímólá, 701-75. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè.
- . [1977]. Linguistic speculations on Yorùbá history. Seminar Series **1**, 624-51. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè. Delivered 30 May.
- . [2011/2020]. Èṣù Elégbára, an enduring icon of conceptual resistance in the Atlantic cultures. Conference on Africa & People of African Descent, Issues & Actions to Re-envision the Future, Howard University, Washington DC, 13-17 September/Èṣù and ethics in the Yorùbá world view. *Africa* **90**, 377-407.
- Oyètádé, A. [2000]. The verb ‘go’ in Àkókó Yorùbá. *Proceedings of the 2nd World Conference of African Linguistics, Leipzig 1997*, edited by H. Wolff & O. Gensler, 691-716. Köppe, Köln.
- Oyècémí, R. [2019]. Of fallacious history and pseudoscience; the Ọ̀nì Ẹ̀nitan’s dalliance with diddle. sabarareporters.com/2019/05/04/fallacious-history-and-pseudo-science-oni-enitan-s-dalliance-diddle-remi-oyeyemi.
- Ozainne, S. [2014]. West and Central African Neolithic; geography and overview. *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith, 7744-59. Springer, New York.
- Ozainne, S. & al. [2014]. A question of timing; spatiotemporal structure and mechanisms of early agriculture expansion in West Africa. *Journal of Archaeological Science* **50**, 359-68.
- Ozanne, P. [1969]. A new archaeological survey of Ifè. *Odù [Ifè]* **1**, 28-45.
- Palmer, H. [1931]. Introduction. *A Sudanese Kingdom; an ethnographical study of the Jukun-speaking peoples of Nigeria*, by C. Meek, xiii-xxciii. Kegan Paul, London.
- Palmié, S. [2001]. Of pharisees and snark-hunters: Afro-Cuban religion as an object of knowledge. *Culture & Religion* **2**, 3-19.
- Parés, L.-N. [2005]. The birth of the Yorùbá hegemony in post-abolition candomblé. *Journal de la société des américanistes* **91**, 139-59.
- . [2016]. *O Rei, o Pai e a Morte; a religião vodu na antiga Costa dos Escravos na África Ocidental*. Companhia das Letras, São Paulo.
- Parrinder, E. [1949]. *West African Religion, illustrated from the beliefs & practices of the Yorùbá, Èvè, Àkàn & kindred peoples*. Epworth Press, London.
- Pasolini, P. [1975]. Il distacco dagli intelletuali. *Epoca* **1268** (25 January), 15. Reprinted: L’ignoranza vaticana come paradigma dell’ignoranza della borghesia italiana. *Scritti Corsari*, 118-22. Garzanti, Milano.
- Paulme, D. [1976]. Review of Williams (1974). *Africa* **46**, 105-06.
- Peachey, P. [2012]. Jailed: the slave trader in Britain who sold women around Europe for sex under the spell of his ‘juju’ witchcraft. *Daily Independent* [London], Friday 26 October. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/jailed-the-slave-trader-in-britain-who-sold-women-around-europe-for-sex-under-the-spell-of-his-juju-8228574.html.
- Peavy, D. [2009]. *Kings, Magic & Medicine*. Privately published.
- Peek, P. [1976]. Ìsòkó sacred mud sculpture. *African Arts* **9.4**, 34-39, 91.
- . [1980]. Ìsòkó bronzes and the lower Niger bronze industries. *African Arts* **13.4**, 60-66, 87-88.
- . [1982]. The divining chain in Southern Nigeria. *African Religious Groups & Beliefs; papers in honor of William R. Bascom*, edited by S. Ottenberg, 187-205. Archana Publications for Folklore Institute, Meerut India.
- Peel, J. [1968a]. *Aládùúrà, a religious movement among the Yorùbá*. Oxford University Press.
- . [1968b]. Syncretism and religious change. *Comparative Studies in Society & History* **10**, 121-41.
- . [1969]. Understanding alien belief-systems. *British Journal of Sociology* **20**, 69-84.
- . [1977]. Conversion and tradition in two African societies, Ìjẹ̀bú and Buganda. *Past & Present* **77**, 108-41.
- . [1989]. The cultural work of Yorùbá ethnogenesis. *History & Ethnicity*, edited by E. Tonkin & al., 198-215. Routledge, London.

- . [1990]. The pastor and the *babaláwo*; the interaction of religions in 19th-century Yorùbáland. *Africa* **60**, 338-69.
- . [1993]. Between Crowther and Àjàyí; the religious origins of the modern Yorùbá intelligentsia. *African Historiography; essays in honor of Jacob Adé Àjàyí*, edited by T. Fálólá, 64-79. Longman, London.
- . [2000a]. *Religious Encounter & the Making of the Yorùbá*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- . [2000b/2016a]. Time and difference in the anthropology of religion. Frazer Lecture, Oxford, 9 May/Hau, *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **6**, 533-50.
- . [2016b]. *Christianity, Islam, Òrìṣà Religion; three traditions in comparison & interaction*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Pels, P. [1998]. Religion, consumerism and the modernity of the New Age. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* **29**, 263-72.
- Perelman, M. [2008]. The Ì[g]bos of Nigeria; members of the tribe? Part of a trend in subsaharan Africa to claim Jewish ancestry. 2 October. www.forward.com/articles/14317.
- Perham, M. [1937]. *Native Administration in Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Perlès, V. [2023]. *Un roman Dahoméen. Francis Aupiais & Bernard Maupoil, deux ethnologues en terrain colonial*. Éditions B42, Montreuil.
- Pfeiffer, R. [1976]. *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850*. Oxford University Press.
- Picton, J. [2007]. Frank Willett 1925-2006. *African Arts* **40.2**, 13-15.
- Pike, E. & K. Wistrand. [1974]. Step-up terrace tone in Acatlán Mixtec. *Advances in Tagmemics*, edited by R. Brend, 82-104. North Holland, Amsterdam.
- Plankensteiner, B. [2007a]. Introduction. *Benin Kings & Rituals; court arts from Nigeria*, edited by B. Plankensteiner, 21-39. Snoeck, Heule, Belgium.
- . [2007b]. The “Benin affair” and its consequences. *Benin Kings & Rituals; court arts from Nigeria*, edited by B. Plankensteiner, 199-211. Snoeck, Heule, Belgium.
- Pocock, J. [1975]. *The Machiavellian Moment; Florentine political thought & the Atlantic republican tradition*. Princeton University Press, New Brunswick New Jersey.
- Polanyi, K. [1944]. *The Great Transformation*. Farrar & Rinehart, New York.
- . [1966]. *Dahomey & the Slave Trade*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Pollock, S. [2006]. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men; Sanskrit, culture & power in premodern India*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Pouillon J. [1979/1982/1993]. Remarques sur le verbe «croire». *La Fonction Symbolique; essais d'anthropologie*, edited by M. Izard & P. Smith, 43-51. Gaillimard, Paris/Remarks on the verb ‘to believe’. *Between Belief & Transgression; structuralist essays in religion, history & myth*, edited by M. Izard & P. Smith, 1-8. University of Chicago Press./Le cru et le su. *Le Cru & le Su*, 17-36. Seuil, Paris.
- Poynor, R. [1978]. The *egún* of Òghò [“Owo”]. *African Arts* **11.3**, 65-76, 100.
- Prothero, S. [2010]. *God is Not One; the eight rival religions that run the world & why their differences matter*. Harper, New York.
- Putnam, H. [1981]. *Reason, Truth & History*. Cambridge University Press. [Not personally consulted; cited by Tambiah (1990).]
- Rāhula, W. [1974]. *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu; a short history of the bhikkhu in educational, cultural, social & political life*. Grove Press, New York.
- Rapp, N. & al. [2005]. New studies on the Nok culture of central Nigeria. *Journal of African Archaeology* **3**, 283-90
- Rattray, R. [1934]. What the African believes. *West African Review*, November. [Not personally consulted; cited by Maupoil (1943).]
- Read, H. & O. Dalton. [1898]. Works of art from Benin City. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain & Ireland* **27**, 362-82.
- . [1899]. *Antiquities from the City of Benin & from Other Parts of West Africa in the British Museum*. Longman, London.
- Renne, E. [2001]. Twinship in an Èkitì Yorùbá town. *Ethnology* **40**, 63-78.
- . [2011]. The ambiguous ordinariness of Yorùbá twins. *Twins in African & Diaspora Cultures*, edited by P. Peek, 306-26. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Riederer, J. & H. Forkl. [2003]. Metallanalyse und typologische Reihen von Messingobjekten aus dem Reich Benin (Nigeria) im Linden-Museum Stuttgart. *Tribus* **52**, 210-35.
- Roberts, D. [2011]. A tone orthography typology. *Written Language & Literacy* **14**, 82-108.
- Robinson, J. [2016]. Jesus votes in cockerel row. *Varsity*, 18 February. www.Varsity.co.uk/news/9877.
- Rodney, W. [1970]. *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545-1800*. Oxford University Press.
- Rosen, G. [1981]. *Hegel contra Sociology*. Athlone, London.
- Rosen, N. [1993]. The art of Èdó ritual. *Divine Inspiration; from Benin to Babia*, edited by P. Galembo, 33-45. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- Rostow, W. [1960]. *The Stages of Economic Growth; a noncommunist manifesto*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roth, H. [1903]. *Great Benin, its Customs, Art & Horrors*. F. King, Halifax.
- Rótímí, Q. [1974]. *Òvónrànmmen Nógbáísí; an historical tragedy in English*. Ethiope Publishing Corporation, Benin-City.
- Rouch, J. [1949]. *Les magiciens du Wanzeribe*. Documentary film, 33 min. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Paris.
- Rouget, G. [1980/1990]. *La musique & la transe; esquisse d'une théorie générale des relations de la musique & de la possession*. Gallimard, Paris.
- . [2001]. *Initiatique Vódun; images du rituel*. Éditions Sépia, Saint-Maur.
- Rowland, I. [2008]. *Giordano Bruno, Philosopher-Heretic*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York.
- Roy, O. [2005]. La crise de l'État laïque et les nouvelles formes de religiosité. *Esprit* **312**, 27-44.
- . [2008]. *La Sainte Ignorance; le temps de la religion sans culture*. Seuil, Paris.
- Rubin, A[ndrew]. [2002/2012]. *Archives of Authority; the state, the text & the critic/ Archives of Authority; empire, culture & the Cold War*. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York/Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Rubin, A[rnold]. [1970a]. *The arts of the Jukun-speaking peoples of Northern Nigeria*. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- . [1970b]. Review of Willett (1967). *Art Bulletin* **52**, 348-54.
- Ruxton, F. [1907]. Notes on the tribes of the Muri Province. *Journal of the [Royal] African Society* **7**, 374-86.
- Ryder, A. [1965]. A reconsideration of the Ifè-Benin relationship. *Journal of African History* **6**, 25-37.
- . [1969]. *Benin & the Europeans 1485-1897*. Longman, London.
- Ryle, J. [1988]. Miracles of the people; attitudes to Catholicism in an AfroBrazilian religious center in Salvador da Bahia. *Vernacular Christianity; essays in the social anthropology of religion presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, edited by W. James & D. Johnson [= *JASO Occasional Papers* **7**], 40-50. Anthropological Society of Oxford, England.
- Sagay, I. [2000]. The 1999 constitution and Nigeria's federalism. *Burning Issues in the 1999 Constitution; an NBA (Ìkejà Branch) special publication on the issues in controversy in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999*, edited by D. Adèṣinà & al., 38-59. Nigerian Bar Association, Ìkejà, Lagos.

- Sacks, J. [2014]. Palestine and sovereign violence. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa & the Middle East* **34**, 368-88.
- Sahlins, M. [1963]. Poor man, rich man, big man, chief; political types in Melanesia and Polynesia. *Comparative Studies in Society & History* **5**, 285-303.
- . [2017a]. The original political society. *HAU, Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **7**, 91-128/*On Kings*, edited by D. Graeber & M. Sahlins, 23-64. Hau Books, Chicago.
- . [2017b]. In anthropology, it's emic all the way down. *HAU, Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **7**, 157-63.
- . [2017c]. The atemporal dimensions of history, in the old Kōŋŋo kingdom for example. *On Kings*, edited by D. Graeber & M. Sahlins, 139-221. Hau Books, Chicago.
- . [2017d]. The cultural politics of core-periphery relations. *On Kings*, edited by D. Graeber & M. Sahlins, 345-76. Hau Books, Chicago.
- Saïd, E. [1993]. *Culture & Imperialism*. Knopf, New York.
- . [1998/2000]. Between worlds; Edward Saïd makes sense of his life. *London Review of Books* **20.9**, 7 May/*Reflections on Exile & other essays*, 554-68. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v20/n09/edward-saïd/between-worlds.
- . [2003]. *Freud & the Non-European*. Verso, London.
- Sand, S. [2008/2009]. *Matai ve'ekb humtza ba'am bayehudi?/The Invention of the Jewish People*. Resling, Tel Aviv/Verso, London.
- . [2012]. *Matai ye-ekb humtse'ab Erets-Yisra'el/The Invention of the Land of Israel, from Holy Land to Homeland*. Resling, Tel Aviv/Verso, London.
- Sansi, R. [2003]. *Fetishes, images, commodities; Afrobrasilian art & culture in Bahia*. Dissertation, University of Chicago.
- . [2011]. Sorcery and fetishism in the modern Atlantic. *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic*, edited by L. Parés & R. Sansi, 19-39. University of Chicago Press.
- Santangelo, F. [2013]. *Divination, Prediction & the End of the Roman Republic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sarr, F. & B. Savoy. [2018]. Rapport sur la restitution du patrimoine culturel africain. Vers une nouvelle éthique relationnelle. Ministère de la Culture/Université Paris Nanterre. www.restitutionreport2018.com.
- Sassoon, D. [2013]. Review of Sand (2012). *Guardian* [London], 18 April. www.theguardian.com/books/2013/apr/18/invention-land-israel-sblomo-sand.
- Satia, P. [2020]. *Time's Monster; how history makes history*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- de Saussure, F. [1879]. *Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes*. Teubner, Leipzig.
- Savoy, B. [2017]. Das Humboldt-Forum ist wie Tschernobyl. Interview von Jörg Häntzschel. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* [publisher firewall] 20 July, via nitter.net/CJabnz/status/888380618958147585.
- . [2021/2022]. *Afrikas Kampf um seine Kunst; Geschichte einer postkolonialen Niederlage*. Beck, München/*Africa's Struggle for Its Art; history of a postcolonial defeat*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Schacter, D. [2012]. Adaptive constructive processes and the future of memory. *American Psychologist* **67**, 603-13.
- Schadeberg, T. [1986]. The lexicostatistic base of Bennett & Sterk's reclassification of Niger-Congo with particular reference to the cohesion of Bantu. *Studies in African Linguistics* **17**, 69-83.
- Schaller, D. [2008]. *From Conquest to Genocide; colonial rule in German Southwest Africa & German East Africa*. Berghahn, Oxford.
- Scheer, T. [2015]. A world without voiced sonorants; reflections on Cyran (2014). *Studies in Polish Linguistics* **10**, 125-51, 223-47.
- Scheid, J. [1985]. *Religion & piété à Rome*. La Découverte, Paris.
- . [n.d.]. Les prêtres officiels sous les empereurs julio-claudiens. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* **2**, 16, 610-54. www.bu.edu/ict/anrw/pub/11/16/scheid.html.
- . [2010]. Polythéisme et monothéisme—un faux problème? L'exemple du Capitole à Rome. *Le Monothéisme; diversité, exclusivisme ou dialogue? Actes du 2ieme Congrès, Association européenne pour l'étude des religions, 11-14 Septembre 2002*, edited by C. Guittard, 95-105. Société Ernest Renan, Paris.
- Scheid, J. & J.-M. de Montrémy. [2011]. *Pouvoir & religion à Rome*. Pluriel, Paris.
- Schleicher A. [1848]. *Zur vergleichenden Sprachengeschichte*. König, Bonn.
- . [1868]. Eine Fabel in indogermanischer Ursprache. *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der arischen, celtischen & slawischen Sprachen* **5**, 206-08.
- Schmidt, J. [1872]. *Die Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Böhlau, Weimar.
- Schuh, R. [1997]. The use and misuse of language in the study of African history. *Ufahamu* **25**, 36-81.
- Segurola, R. & J. Rassinoux. [2000]. *Dictionnaire Fōn-Français*. Société des Missions Africaines, Kútūnu ["Cotonou"].
- Seidensticker, D. [2024]. Pikunda-Munda and Batalimo-Maluba; archaeological investigations of the iron age settlement history of the western and northern Congo basin. *African Archaeological Review* **41**, 317-44.
- Seligman(n), C. [1913]. Some aspects of the Hamitic problem in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **43**, 593-705.
- . [1930]. *Races of Africa*. Butterworth, London.
- . [1934]. *Egypt & Negro Africa; a study in divine kingship*. Routledge, London.
- Seromi, P. [1987]. *Art & metal works of Bida*. M.F.A. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsùkà.
- Seton, R. [1928]. Installation of an Attah of Idah (Nigeria). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **58**, 255-78.
- . [1929]. Notes on the Igàlà tribe, Northern Nigeria; part 1, religion and customs. *Journal of the African Society* **29**, 42-52.
- Shain, R. [2005]. The salt that binds; the historical geography of a central Nigerian regional identity. *The Spatial Factor in African History; the relationship of the social, material & perceptual*, edited by A. Howard & R. Shain, 245-59. Brill, Leiden.
- Shaw, F. [1897]. Nigeria. *The Times*, Friday 8 January, 6.
- . [1905]. *A Tropical Dependency; an outline of the ancient history of the western Sudan with an account of the modern settlement of northern Nigeria*. Nisbet, London.
- Shaw, T. [1969]. Further spectrographic analysis of Nigerian bronzes. *Archaeometry* **11**, 85-98.
- . [1970a]. *Ìgbò Úkwu; an account of archaeological discoveries in Eastern Nigeria*. 2 Volumes. Faber, London.
- . [1970b]. The analysis of West African bronzes; a summary of the evidence. *Ìbàdàn* **28**, 80-89.
- . [1973]. A note on trade and the Tsoede bronzes. *West African Journal of Archaeology* **3**, 233-38.
- . [1976]. The prehistory of West Africa [revised version]. *History of West Africa, 2nd edition* **1**, edited by J. Àjàyí & M. Crowder, 33-71. Longman, London.
- . [1978]. *Nigeria, its Archaeology and Early History*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- . [1981]. Ifè and Raymond Mauny. *Le Sol, la Parole et l'Écrit; mélanges en hommage à Raymond MAUNY, Tome 1*, 109-35. Harmattan, Paris.

- . [1985]. Prehistory. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by O. Ikime, 25-53. Heinemann, Ibadan.
- Sheba, E. [2002]. *Ìkálẹ̀ Masquerade Traditions & Artifacts*. Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, Cape Town.
- . [2007]. The Ìkálẹ̀ (Yorùbá, Nigeria) migration theories and insignia. *History in Africa* **34**, 461-68.
- Shelton, A. [1965a]. Departure of the *ńshie*; a northern Nsúkà Igbo origin legend. *Journal of American Folklore* **78**, 115-29.
- . [1965b]. The meaning and method of *Áfá* divination among the northern Nsúkà Igbo. *American Anthropologist* **67**, 1441-55.
- . [1971]. *The Igbo-Igálá Borderland; religion & social control in indigenous African colonialism*. SUNY Press, Albany.
- Shennan, S. & R. Sear. [2020]. Archaeology, demography and life history theory together can help explain past and present population patterns. *Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society B* **376**, 2019.0711.
- Shimizu, K. [1971]. *The Kente [Ikán] Dialect of Kpàn*, pt. 1. *Research Notes [Ibadan]* **4.2-3**.
- . [1980a]. *Comparative Jukunoid. Veröffentlichungen der Insitute für Afrikanistik & Ägyptologie der Universität Wien* **7** = *Beiträge zur Afrikanistik* **5**. Afro-Pub, Wien.
- . [1980b]. *A Jukun Grammar. Veröffentlichungen der Insitute für Afrikanistik & Ägyptologie der Universität Wien* **11** = *Beiträge zur Afrikanistik* **9**. Afro-Pub, Wien.
- Siertsema, B. [1958]. Some notes on Yorùbá phonetics and spelling. *Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, Série B, Sciences humaines* **20**, 576-92.
- Singler, B. [2023]. "Will AI create a religion?" Views of the algorithmic forms of the religious life in popular discourse. *American Religion* **5**, 95-103.
- Sklar, R. [1963]. *Nigerian Political Parties; power in an emergent African nation*. Princeton University Press.
- Skoglund, P. & al. [2017]. Reconstructing prehistoric African population structure. *Cell* **171**, 59-71.
- Slater, E. & F. Willett. [1988]. Neutron activation analysis of clay cores from Nigerian castings. *Science & Archaeology, Glasgow 1987*, edited by E. Slater & J. Tate, 247-58. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.
- Slogar, C. [2005]. *Iconography & continuity in West Africa; calabar terracottas & the arts of the Cross River region of Nigeria/Cameroon*. Dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.
- Smith, M. [1978]. *The Affairs of Daura; history & change in a Hausa state 1800-1958*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Smith, R. [1962]. Ìjáyè, the western palatinate of the Yorùbá. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* **2**, 329-49.
- Şolárin, T. [1967]. [Interview with Maj. C. Nzeogwu]. *Nigerian Tribune*, 2 July. [Not personally consulted; cited by Luckham (1971).]
- Souty, J. [2007]. *Pierre Fátumbi Verger; du regard détaché à la connaissance initiatique*. Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris.
- Sow, I. [2009]. *La Divination par le Sable; signes, symbolismes & technique d'inscription*. Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, Dakar.
- Şówàndé, 'F. [1963]. *Ifá*. Forward Press, Yabáá. [Not personally consulted; cited by Abimbólá (1967).]
- Sówólé, T. [2014]. Govt receives artefacts from U.S museum, Nigeria Custom. Blogpost, 28 June, mirrored from *Guardian* (Lagos). www.africanartswihtaj.com/2014/06/govt-receives-artefacts-from-us-museum.html.
- Şóyínká, 'W. [1966]. *Before the Blackout*. Orisun Press, Ibadan.
- . [1972]. *The Man Died; prison notes of Wólé Şóyínká*. Collings, London.
- . [1973]. *The Bacchae of Euripides; a communion rite*. Methuen, London.
- . [1977/2019]. The scholar in African society. Public Lecture 5, FESTAC Colloquium, Lagos, 22 January/FESTAC '77 *Decomposed. An-arranged & Reproduced by Chimurenga*, edited by N. Edjagbe, 82-87. Chimurenga, Cape Town.
- . [1986]. This past must address its present. Nobel Lecture, Stockholm, 8 December. www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1986/soyinka/lecture.
- . [1994]. 'The smell of roast yam'. *Ibadan, the Pènkèlémé's Years*, 355-76. Spectrum, Ibadan.
- . [1996]. *The Open Sore of a Continent; a personal narrative of the Nigerian crisis*. Oxford University Press.
- . [2006]. Olóríkunkun and orí Olókun. *You Must Set Forth At Dawn; memoirs*, 213-61. Bookcraft, Ibadan. [N.b. beware many OCR-induced typos in the Random House edition like "Overawhen" p. 188, written almost correctly chez Bookcraft p. 222.]
- . [2017]. Biafra has not been defeated. *Vanguard* (Lagos), 10 July. www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/biafra-has-not-been-defeated-wole-soyinka.
- Speed, F. & D. Simmonds. [1966]. *Art of Ifé. Art & People in Nigeria Publication* **2**. Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Sperber, D. [1975]. Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement? *L'Homme* **15.2**, 5-34.
- . [1982]. Apparently irrational beliefs. *Rationality & Relativism*, edited by M. Hollis & S. Lukes, 149-80. Blackwell, Oxford.
- . [1984]. Anthropology and psychology; towards an epidemiology of representations. *Man* **20**, 73-89.
- . [1997]. Intuitive and reflective beliefs. *Mind & Language* **12**, 67-83.
- . [2001]. Conceptual tools for a natural science of society and culture. Radcliffe Brown Lecture. *Proceedings of the British Academy* **111**, 297-317.
- . [2004]. Agency, religion and magic. [Commentary on Atran & Norenzayan (2004).], *Behavior & Brain Sciences* **27**, 750-51.
- . [2010]. Paul the Octopus, relevance and the joy of superstition. 13 July. www.cognitionandculture.net/home/blog/9-dan/671-paul-the-octopus-relevance-and-the-joy-of-superstition.
- . [2011]. A naturalistic ontology for mechanistic explanations in the social sciences. *Analytical Sociology & Social Mechanisms*, edited by P. Demeulenaere, 64-77. Cambridge University Press. www.dan.sperber.fr/?p=751.
- Sperber, D. & N. Claidière. [2006]. Why modeling cultural evolution is still such a challenge. *Biological Theory* **1**, 20-22.
- . [2008]. Defining and explaining culture (comments on Richardson & Boyd, *Not By Genes Alone*). *Biology & Philosophy* **23**, 283-92.
- Sperber, D. & L. Hirschfield. [2004]. The cognitive foundations of cultural stability and diversity. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* **8**, 40-46.
- Spith, J. [1906]. *Die Eve Stämme; Material zur Kunde des Eve Volkes in Deutsch-Togo*. Reimer, Berlin.
- . [1911]. *Die Religion der Eever in Süd-Togo*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- Spivak, G. [1985/1987]. Subaltern studies; deconstructing historiography. *Subaltern Studies* **4**, 330-63/*In Other Worlds; essays in cultural politics*, 197-221. Methuen, New York.
- Spurio, M. [2015]. *Particles & Astrophysics, a multi-messenger approach*. Springer, Cham Switzerland.
- Staal, F. [1986]. The fidelity of oral tradition and the origins of science. *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks* **49.8**, 251-88.
- Stade, B. [1887]. *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* **1**. Grote, Berlin.
- Stahlke, H. [1971]. The noun prefix in Èvè. *Studies in African Linguistics Supplement* **2**, 141-59.
- Stanish, C. [2017]. *The Evolution of Human Cooperation; ritual & social complexity in stateless societies*. Cambridge University Press.

- Sterelny, K. [2006]. Memes revisited. *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* **57**, 145-65.
- Stevens, P. [1966]. Òrìṣà-Ìlá festival. *Nigeria Magazine* **90**, 184-99.
- Stewart, J. [1973]. The lenis stops of the Potou Lagoon languages and their significance for pre-Bantu reconstruction. *Papers in Ghanaian Linguistics* **2**, Research Review Supplement **4**, 1-49. Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- . [1976]. *Towards Volta-Congo reconstruction*. Universitaire Pers, Leiden.
- . [1993]. The second Tano consonant shift and its likeness to Grimm's Law. *Journal of West African Languages* **23**, 3-39.
- Storch, A. [2004]. Traces of a secret language; circumfixes in Hone (Jukun) plurals. *Proceedings of ACAL* **34**/WOCAL **4** (Rutgers 2003), edited by A. Akinlabi & S. Adesọlá, 337-49. Köppe, Köln.
- Strathern A. [1993]. Great-men, leaders, big-men; the link of ritual power. *Journal de la Société des océanistes* **97**, 145-58.
- Struck, B. [1911/1912]. Linguistic bibliography of Northern Nigeria including Hausa and Fula, with notes on the Yorùbá dialects. *Journal of the African Society* **11**, 47-61, 213-30.
- . [1923]. Chronologie der Benin-Altertümer. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* **55**, 113-66.
- Suhr-Sytsma, N. [2017]. Mbári Publications and the CIA. *Poetry, Print & the Making of Postcolonial Literature*, 60-74, 229-33. Cambridge University Press.
- de Surgy, A. [1981a]. *La Géomancie et le culte d'Afa chez les Èvè du littoral*. Publications Orientalistes de France, Paris.
- . [1981b]. Principes de la divination Mwaba-Gurma (Circonscription de Dapaong, Nord-Togo). *Revue de l'histoire des religions* **198**, 3-28.
- . [1983/1987] *La divination par les huit cordelettes chez les Mwaba-Gurma (Nord-Togo)*. **1**: Esquisse de leurs croyances religieuses. **2**: L'Initiation du devin et la pratique divinatoire. Harmattan, Paris.
- . [1988a] *Le système religieux des Èvè*. Harmattan, Paris.
- . [1988b] *De l'universalité d'une forme africaine de sacrifice*. Éditions du CNRS, Paris.
- . [1990]. Le prêtre-roi des Èvhés du Sud-Togo. *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire* **10**, 93-120.
- Sutherland, W. & C. Wordley. [2018]. A fresh approach to evidence synthesis. *Nature* **558**, 364-66.
- Swadesh, M. [1952]. Lexicostatistic dating of prehistoric ethnic contacts, with special reference to North American Indians and Eskimos. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* **96**, 452-63.
- Swidler, A. [2012]. Where do Axial commitments reside? Problems in thinking about the African case. *The Axial Age & its Consequences*, edited by R. Bellah & H. Joas, 222-48. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
- Swift, L. & al. [1962]. *Ìgbò Basic Course*. Foreign Service Institute, Washington D.C.
- v. Sydov, E. [1938]. Ancient and modern art in Benin-City. *Africa* **11**, 55-62.
- Taban lo Liyong. [1988]. Reverend Doctor J.S. Mbiti is a thief of gods. *Criticism & Ideology; Second African Writers Conference, Stockholm 1986*, edited by K. Petersen, 81-92. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.
- Táíwò, O. [1999]. Reading the coloniser's mind; Lord Lugard and the philosophical foundations of British colonialism. *Racism & Philosophy*, edited by S. Babbitt & S. Campbell, 157-86. Cornell University Press, Ithaca New York.
- . [2004]. Ifá, an account of a divination system and some concluding epistemological questions. *Companion to African Philosophy*, edited by K. Wiredu, 304-12. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Talbot, P. [1912]. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. Heinemann, London.
- . [1926]. *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria; a sketch of their history, ethnology & languages, with an abstract of the 1921 census*. Vol. 2, Ethnology. Oxford University Press.
- Tall, E. [1995]. Démocratie et cultes vodouns au Bénin. *Cahiers d'études africaines* **137**, 195-208.
- . [2012]. *Le Candomblé de Bahia, miroir baroque des mélancolies postcoloniales*. Éditions du Cerf, Paris.
- Tambiah, S. [1968]. The magical power of words. *Man* **3**, 175-208.
- . [1977]. The Galactic polity; the structure of traditional kingdoms in Southeast Asia. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* **293**, 69-97.
- . [1984] *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest & the Cult of Amulets; a study in charisma, hagiography, sectarianism and millennial Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1990]. *Magic, Science, Religion & the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1992]. *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, politics & violence in Sri Lanka*. University of Chicago Press.
- . [2000]. Transnational movements, diaspora and multiple modernities. *Dadalus* **129**, 163-94.
- Taylor, T. & E. Taylor. [1993]. *The Biology & Evolution of Fossil Plants*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey.
- Taylor, F. [1939]. The word "Nigeria". *Journal of the Royal African Society* **38**, no. **150**, 154-59.
- Tehrani, J. [2010]. The past and future of the evolutionary taxonomy of cultures. *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* **8**, 169-82.
- . [2013]. The phylogeny of 'Little Red Riding-hood'. *PlosOne* **8.11**.
- Tehrani, J. & J. d'Huy. [2017]. Phylogenetics meets folklore; bioinformatics approaches to the study of international folktales. *Maths Meet Myths; quantitative approaches to ancient narratives*, edited by R. Kenna & al., 91-114. Springer, Cham Switzerland.
- Testart, A. [1993/2006]. *Des Dons & des Dieux; anthropologie religieuse & sociologie comparative*. Armand Colin/Éditions Errance, Paris.
- . [2012]. *Avant l'Histoire: L'évolution des sociétés de Lascaux à Carnac*. Gallimard, Paris.
- . [2021]. *Principes de Sociologie Générale 1. Rapports sociaux fondamentaux & formes de dépendance*. CNRS Éditions, Paris.
- Thomas, N. [1910]. *Anthropological Report on the Èdó-speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, **1**. Law & custom. Harrison, London.
- . [1913a]. *Anthropological Report on the Ìgbò-speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, **1**. Law & custom of the Ìgbò of the Òka neighborhood, S. Nigeria. Harrison, London.
- . [1913b]. *Anthropological Report on the Ìgbò-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, **2**. English-Ìgbò & Ìgbò-English Dictionary. Harrison, London.
- . [1914a]. *Specimens of Languages of Southern Nigeria*. Harrison, London.
- . [1914b]. *Anthropological Report on the Ìgbò-speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, **4**. Law & custom of the Ìgbò of the Àhaba ["Asaba"] district, S. Nigeria. Harrison, London.
- . [1914c]. *Anthropological Report on the Ìgbò-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, **5**. Addenda to Ìgbò-English Dictionary. Harrison, London.
- Thomas-Éméagwalì, G. [1984]. *Model building, explanation & history; the Marxian pre-capitalist model & pre-colonial socio-economic formations in Igboland, Eastern Nigeria*. Dissertation, ABU Zaria.
- . [1989]. Class formation in pre-colonial Nigeria; the case of Eastern and Western Nigeria and the Middle Belt. *Domination & Resistance*, edited by D. Miller & al., 299-315. Unwin, London.
- Thompson, E. [1968]. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Penguin, London.

- Thompson, R. [1970]. The sign of the divine king, an essay on Yorùbá bead-embroidered crowns with veil and bird decorations. *African Arts* **3.3**, 8-17, 74-80.
- Thornton, J. [1988]. Traditions, documents and the Ifè-Benin relationship. *History in Africa* **15**, 351-62.
- Thurber, J. [1939]. The secret life of Walter Mitty. *The New Yorker*, 18 March.
- Tignor, R. [1990]. W.R. Bascom and the Ifè bronzes. *Africa* **60**, 425-34.
- Todorov, T. [1989]. *Nous & les Autres; la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*. Seuil, Paris.
- Tomasky, M. [2018]. The worst of the worst: Michael Wolff's *Fire & Fury* and David Frum's *Trumpocracy; the corruption of the American Republic*. *New York Review of Books*, 25 January. www.nybooks.com/articles/2018/02/22/trump-wolff-worst-of-the-worst.
- Toomer, G. [1969]. Review of Al-Birūnī (1967). *Speculum* **44**, 103-05.
- Tovey, D. [1929]. *Report on Ujalli [sic] court areas, Òkè ["Awka"] Divisional Office*. Intelligence Report. [Not personally consulted; cited by Ònwejiògǔwù (1974).]
- Trautmann, R. [1939]. *La Divination à la Côte des Esclaves et à Madagascar. Le Vòdoù Fa; Le Sikidy. Mémoire 1*. I.F.A.N., Dakar. [Based on fieldwork conducted in 1920-24, as noted on p. 155.]
- Tribe, K. [1980]. Medieval systems of representation. Review of Gurjewitsch (1978). *Economy & Society* **9**, 359-66.
- Trubetskoy, N. [1923/1991]. Vavilonskaia bashnia i smeshenie iazykov. *Evrasiiskii vremennik* **3**, 107-24/The tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. *The Legacy of Genghis Khan & Other Essays on Russia's Identity*, edited by A. Liberman, 147-60. Michigan Slavic Publications, Ann Arbor.
- Tucker, A. [1964]. Systems of tonemarking African languages. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* **27**, 594-611.
- Turner, B. [1978]. *Marx & the End of Orientalism*. Allen & Unwin, London.
- . [1993]. Preface to the new edition of Karl Löwith's *Max Weber & Karl Marx*, edited by T. Bottomore & W. Outhwaite, 1-32. Routledge, London.
- Tútùolá, A. [1952]. *The Palm-wine Drinkard & his Dead Palm-wine Tapster in the Dead's Town*. Faber, London.
- Tylor, E. [1871]. *Primitive Culture; Researches into the development of mythology, religion, art & custom, in 2 volumes*. John Murray, London.
- Ùbáhàkwé, E. [1981]. *Ìgbo Names; their structure & their meanings*. Daystar, Ìbàdàn.
- Úchèndù, V. [1965]. *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*. Holt, New York.
- . [1977]. Slaves and slavery in Ìgboland, *Nigeria Slavery in Africa; historical & anthropological perspectives*, edited by S. Miers & I. Kopytoff, 121-32. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- Údò, R. [1968]. Population and politics in Nigeria; problems of census-taking in the Nigerian federation. *The Population of Tropical Africa*, edited by J. Caldwell & C. Okónjo, 97-105. Longman, London.
- . [1970]. The Nigerian political scene, a postscript. *Geographical Regions of Nigeria*, 208-10. Heinemann, London.
- . [1975]. *Migrant Tenant Farmers of Nigeria; a geographical study of rural migrations in Nigeria*. African Universities Press, Lagos.
- Ukere, A. [1986]. *Ùrbobo-English Dictionary*. Ìlúpéjù Press, Benin-City.
- [www.rogerblench.info/Language/data/Niger-Congo/Benue-Congo-West/Edoid/Urbobo dictionary web.pdf](http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/data/Niger-Congo/Benue-Congo-West/Edoid/Urbobo%20dictionary%20web.pdf).
- Ullman, W. [1961]. *Principles of Government & Politics in the Middle Ages*. Methuen, London.
- Ulsheimer, A. [1916]. *Warhafft Beschreibung ettlicher Reisen in Europa, Africa, Ostindien und America*. Ms., Tübingen. [Not personally consulted; cited by Jones (1983) and Crecelius (1879).]
- Underwood, L. [1949]. *Bronzes of West Africa*. Tiranti, London. [Not personally consulted; cited by Eisenhofer (1997a).]
- Urua, E. & al. [2012]. *Ńwèd Usem Ibìbìo (Ibìbìo Dictionary)*. Fruities' Publications, Ùyó Nigeria. [Retranscription of Kaufman (1972).]
- Ùsuánlélé, U. [2005]. Precolonial Benin; a political economy perspective. *Precolonial Nigeria; essays in honor of Tóyìn Fálólá*, edited by A. Oğundiran, 259-80. Africa World Press, Trenton New Jersey.
- Ùsuánlélé, U. & T. Fálólá. [1994]. The scholarship of Jacob Egharhevba of Benin. *History in Africa* **21**, 303-18.
- . [1998]. A comparison of Jacob Egharhevba's *Èkèbèrhe vbe èbè itan Èdó* and the four editions of its English translation *A Short History of Benin*. *History in Africa* **25**, 361-86.
- Ùwaláàka, M. [1996]. *Òfó, its Judicial & Linguistic Potency*. Afrika-Link Books, Ìbàdàn.
- Vansina, J. [1961]. *De la Tradition Orale; essai de méthode historique*. Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika, Tervuren.
- . [1971]. Once upon a time; oral traditions as history in Africa. *Daedalus* **100**, 442-68.
- . [1984]. *Art History in Africa; an introduction to method*. Longman, London.
- Varoufakis, Y. [2022]. Crypto, the left and technofeudalism. metacpc.org/en/crypto-blockchain. [N.d., first posted by 26 January].
- . [2024]. *Technofeudalism; what killed capitalism*. Melville House, New York.
- Vaughan, F. [1988]. Les chefs traditionnels face au pouvoir politique. *Politique Africaine* **32**, 44-56.
- . [2000]. *Nigerian Chiefs; traditional power in modern politics, 1890's-1990's*. University of Rochester Press.
- Verger, P. [1954a/1995]. *Dieux d'Afrique; culte des orishas & vodouns à l'ancienne Côte des Esclaves en Afrique & à Bahia, la Baie des tous les Saints, au Brésil*. Hartmann/Revue Noire, Paris.
- . [1954b]. Rôle joué par l'état d'hébertude au cours de l'initiation des novices aux cultes des òrìṣà et vodun. *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., Série B* **16**, 322-40.
- . [1957]. *Notes sur le culte des òrìṣà & vodun à Bahia, la Baie des tous les Saints, au Brésil, & à l'ancienne Côte des Esclaves en Afrique*. *Mémoire 51*. I.F.A.N., Dakar.
- . [1966]. The Yorùbá high god; a review of the sources. *Odù [Ifè]* **2.2**, 19-40.
- . [1972]. Automatism verbal et communication du savoir chez les Yorùbá. *L'Homme* **12.2**, 5-46.
- . [1973]. Notion de personne et lignée familiale chez les Yorùbá. *La Notion de personne en Afrique noire*, edited by G. Dieterlen, 61-71. Éditions du C.N.R.S., Paris.
- . [1977a]. The use of plants in Yorùbá traditional medicine and its linguistic approach. Seminar Series **1**, 242-95. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè. 25 October.
- . [1977b]. Poisons (*orò*) and antidotes (*èrò*): evil works (*àbílù*) and protection from them (*ìdààbòbò*). Stimulants and tranquilizers. Money-wives-children. *Seminar Series* **1**, 296-353. Department of African Languages & Literatures, University of Ifè. 15 November.
- . [1981/1982]. *Orixas; deuses iorubás na Africa e no Novo Mundo/Òrìṣà; les dieux Yorùbá en Afrique & au nouveau monde*. Corrupio, Salvador, Bahia/Métailié, Paris.
- . [1984/1989]. *Dilógún; Brazilian tales of Yorùbá Divination discovered in Bahia*. Dédalo, São Paulo/Centre for Black Arts & Civilization, Lagos.
- . [1995/1997]. [Contributions by G. Fágòbòrun, A. Oyètádé, D. Simmonds.] *Ewé, the Use of Plants in Yorùbá Society*. Editora Schwarcz, São Paulo/*Ewé, le verbe & le pouvoir des plantes chez les Yorùbá (Nigeria - Bénin)*. Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris.

- Vernant, J.-P. [1965]. *Mythe & pensée chez les Grecs*. Maspero, Paris.
- . [1990]. *Figures, idoles, masques*. Julliard, Paris.
- Vesperini, P. [2024]. What to do with the past? Reflections on ‘cancel culture’. *New Left Review* **146**, 99-119.
- Vickers, M. [2000]. *Ethnicity & Sub-Nationalism in Nigeria; movement for a Mid-West State*. Worldview. Oxford.
- . [2010]. *A Nation Betrayed; Nigeria & the Minorities Commission of 1957*. Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey.
- . [2011]. Harold Smith, obituary. saharareporters.com/article/harold-smith-obituary-michael-vickers. Shorter version: www.royalafricansociety.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=796, 7 February.
- Voegelin, E. [1938-39/1986]. *Die politischen Religionen/Political Religions*. Bermann Fischer, Stockholm/E. Mellen, Lewiston New York.
- Vogel, S. [1974]. *Gods of Fortune; the cult of the hand in Nigeria*. Museum of Primitive Art, New York.
- . [1979]. Art and politics; a staff from the court of Benin, West Africa. *Metropolitan Museum Journal* **13**, 87-100.
- Wagner, M. [2005]. *Prosody & recursion*. Dissertation, M.I.T., Cambridge Mass.
- Wallerstein, I. [1974]. *The Modern World-system; capitalist agriculture & the origins of the European world-economy in the 16th century*. Academic Press, New York.
- . [2006]. *European Universalism; the rhetoric of power*. New Press, New York.
- . [2010]. Structural crises. *New Left Review* **62**, 133-42.
- Ward, I. [1941]. *Ìgbo Dialects & the Development of a Common Language*. Heffers, Cambridge.
- . [1952]. *An Introduction to the Yorùbá Language*. Heffer, Cambridge.
- Watkins, C. [1958]. Review of Kuryłowicz (1956). *Language* **34**, 381-98.
- . [1962]. *Indo-European Origins of the Celtic Verb 1*. Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin.
- . [1989]. New parameters in historical linguistics, philology and culture history. *Language* **65**, 783-99.
- . [1995]. *How to Kill a Dragon; aspects of Indo-European poetics*. Oxford University Press.
- Watkins, C. & al. [1969]. Appendix of Indo-European roots. *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, edited by W. Morris, 1503-50. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.
- Weber, M. [1920]. *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. [= *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie, Vol. 1.*] Mohr, Tübingen.
- Webster, J. [1975]. Spirits of the kingdom. *Benue Valley Project Paper* **7**. Killam Library, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia.
- . [1981]. The three phases of Kwararafa, a peripatetic state. *Benue Valley Research Papers* **49**. Killam Library, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia. [Not personally consulted; cited by Nwāṅwa (1991).]
- Wegner, D. [1987]. Transactive Memory; a contemporary analysis of the group mind. *Theories of Group Behavior*, edited by B. Mullen & al., 185-208. Springer, Berlin.
- Weinfeld, M. [1988]. The promise to the Patriarchs and its realization; an analysis of foundation stories. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* **23**. *Society & Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean c. 1500-1000 BC*, edited by M. Heltzer & E. Lipinski, 353-69. Peeters, Leuven.
- Weise, C. [2003]. Kingship and the mediators of the past; oral tradition and ritual performance in Nupeland, Nigeria. *Sources & Methods in African History; spoken, written, unearthed*, edited by T. Fáló lá & C. Jennings, 268-94. University of Rochester Press.
- . [2013]. *Governance & ritual sovereignty at the Niger-Benue confluence; a political and cultural history of Nigeria's Ígálá-, Yorùbá- & Nupoid-speaking peoples to 1900 CE*. Dissertation, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles California.
- Welch, J. [1934]. The Ísóko tribe. *Africa* **7**, 160-73.
- Welmers, W. [1949]. *Speaking Jukun, Takum dialect—dĩyĩ*. www.uni-koeln.de/phl-fak/afrikanistik/download/jukun/JukunSpeaking.pdf.
- . [1968]. *Èfík*. *Occasional Publication* **11**. Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1973]. Functional and vestigial noun class systems. *African Language Structures*, 184-210. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Welmers, W. & B. Welmers. [1968]. *Ìgbo—a learner's dictionary*. Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Welton, M. [1968]. The function of the song in Ólokún ceremony. *Nigeria Magazine* **98**, 226-28.
- Wenger, S. [1956]. Drawings of pagan ceremonies by a Christian boy from Òrà. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **2**, 3-13.
- . [1977]. *The Timeless Mind of the Sacred; its new manifestation in the Òsun groves*. Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1983]. *A Life with the Gods in their Yorùbá Homeland*. Perlinger, Wörgl, Austria.
- Wengrow, D. [2006]. *The Archaeology of Early Egypt; social transformations in northeast Africa 10,000 - 2,650 BC*. Cambridge University Press. [Not personally consulted; cited by Bloch (2008).]
- . [2020]. The roots of inequality; an exchange. *New York Review of Books* **69.1**, 61-62 (13 January). Perlinger, Wörgl, Austria. www.nybooks.com/articles/2022/01/13/the-roots-of-inequality-an-exchange.
- Wengrow, D. & D. Graeber. [2015]. Farewell to the ‘childhood of man’: ritual, seasonality and the origins of inequality. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **21**, 597-619.
- Werner, O. & F. Willett. [1975]. The composition of brasses from Ifè and Benin. *Archaeometry* **17**, 141-256.
- Wescott, R. [1962a]. *A Bini Grammar. 1, Phonology*. African Studies Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing.
- . [1962b]. *A Bini Grammar. 2, Morphology*. African Studies Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing.
- . [1963]. *A Bini Grammar. 3, Lexemics*. Research Program in African Languages, New Haven College, Connecticut.
- . [1964]. Did the Yorùbás come from Egypt? *Odù [Ifè]* **4**, 10-16.
- Westerlund, D. [1985]. *African Religion in African Scholarship; a preliminary study of the religious & political background*. Almqvist & Wicksell, Stockholm.
- Westermann, D. [1905]. *Wörterbuch der Èvè-Sprache*. Reimer, Berlin.
- . [1927]. *Die westlichen Sudansprachen und ihre Beziehungen zum Bantu*. [= MSOS **29** Beiheft]. De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Wheatley, P. [1970]. The significance of traditional Yorùbá urbanism. *Comparative Studies in Society & History* **12**, 393-423.
- Wheeler, M. [2007]. *Anatomy of Deceit; how the Bush administration used the media to sell the Iraq war & out a spy*. Vaster Books, Berkeley California.
- White, L. [1949]. *The Science of Culture; a study of man & civilization*. Farrar, Straus & Co., New York.
- Whitehouse, H. [2004]. *Modes of Religiosity; a cognitive theory of religious transmission*. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek California.
- Whitelam, K. [1996]. *The Invention of Ancient Israel; the silencing of Palestinian History*. Routledge, London. [Not personally consulted; cited by Saïd (2003).]
- Willett, F. [1958]. The discovery of new brass figures at Ifè. *Odù [Ìbàdàn]* **6**, 29-34. [Repeated in part in Willett (1959).]
- . [1959]. Bronze and terracotta sculptures from Ìta Yemòwó, Ifè. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* **14**, 135-37.

- . [1960]. Ifè and its archaeology. *Journal of African History* 1, 231-48. [Reprinted with minor changes as Willett (1970).]
- . [1964]. Spectrographic analysis of Nigerian bronzes. *Archaeometry* 7, 81-83.
- . [1966]. On the funeral effigies of Ọghò [“Owo”] and Benin and the interpretation of the life-size bronze heads from Ifè, Nigeria. *Man* 1, 34-45.
- . [1967a]. *Ifè in the History of West African Sculpture*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- . [1967b]. Ifè in Nigerian Art. *African Arts* 1.1, 30-35, 78.
- . [1969]. New radiocarbon dates from Ifè. *West African Archaeological Newsletter* 11, 23-35.
- . [1970]. Ifè and its archaeology. *Papers in African Prehistory*, edited by J. Fage & R. Oliver, 303-26. Cambridge University Press.
- . [1971a]. Nigeria. *The African Iron Age*, edited by P. Shinnie, 1-35. Oxford University Press.
- . [1971b]. A survey of recent results in the radiocarbon chronology of western and northern Africa. *Journal of African History* 12, 339-70.
- . [1973]. The Benin Museum collection. *African Arts* 6.4, 8-17, 94.
- . [1976]. True or false? The false dichotomy. *African Arts* 9.3, 8-14.
- . [1986]. A missing millennium? From Nok to Ifè and beyond. *Arte in Africa; realtà e prospettive nello studio della storia delle arti africane*, edited by E. Bassani, 87-100. Panini, Modena.
- Willett, F. & S. Fleming. [1976]. A catalogue of important Nigerian copper-alloy castings dated by thermoluminescence. *Archaeometry* 18, 135-46.
- Willett, F. & E. Sayre. [2006]. Lead isotopes in West African copper alloys. *Journal of African Archaeology* 4, 55-90.
- Williams, D. [1967]. Bronze casting molds, cores and the study of classical techniques. *Lagos Notes & Records* 1, 27-28.
- . [1973]. Art in metal. *Sources of Yorùbá History*, edited by S. Biòbákú, 140-64. Oxford University Press.
- . [1974]. *Icon & Image: a study of sacred & secular forms of African classical art*. Allen Lane, London.
- Williams, E. [1944]. *Capitalism & Slavery*. Deutsch, London.
- Williams, J. [1930]. *Hebrenisms of West Africa; from Nile to Niger with the Jews. An effort to trace through diffusion, from the Nile to the Niger, the many Hebrenisms, real or apparent, which are to be found among distinctly Negro tribes in West Africa in general, but particularly among the Ashanti*. Allen & Unwin, London.
- Williams, R. [1977]. *Marxism & Literature*. Oxford University Press.
- Williamson, K. [1962]. Changes in the marriage system of the Kịrịkẹ IẸẸn [“Okrika Ijo”]. *Africa* 32, 53-60.
- . [1966]. The status of /e/ in Ọnịcha [“Onitsha”] Igbo. *Journal of West African Languages* 3, 67-69.
- . [1968]. *An Introduction to Ìká & Ûkàrà*. Occasional Publication 14, Institute of African Studies, University of Ìbàdàn.
- . [1972/1984a]. *Ìgbo-English Dictionary, based on the Ọnịcha dialect*. Ethiopie, Benin-City. 2nd edition *ms.* lost by the publisher, now recovered at [web.archive.org/web/20140723134555/http://rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/VN/Igbo/Igbo Dictionary.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20140723134555/http://rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/VN/Igbo/Igbo%20Dictionary.pdf).
- . [1973a]. More on nasals and nasalisation in Kwa [with corrigenda]. *Studies in African Linguistics* 4, 115-38, 347-49.
- . [1973b]. The sound system of Proto-Lower Niger. Presented at 4th Conference on African Linguistics, Queens New York.
- . [1983a]. Untitled [charts of comparative Ìgbo phonology]. Lecture notes, Hum 433.1, University of Port Harcourt.
- . [1983b]. The application of linguistics to the study of Nigerian prehistory. 4th Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria, Benin City.
- . [1984b]. Vowel merger in harmony languages. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria* 2, 61-82.
- . [1989]. Niger-Congo/Benue-Congo overview. *The Niger-Congo Languages*, edited by J. Bendor-Samuel, 3-45/247-74. American Universities Press, Lanham Maryland.
- . [2000]. Reconstructing Proto-Igbo obstruents. *Trends in African Linguistics 4/Selected papers from ACAL 28*, Cornell University, edited by V. Carstens & F. Parkinson, 1-18. Africa World Press, Trenton New Jersey.
- . [2003]. Implosives in Atlantic-Congo. Circulated in absentia at the 34th Conference on African Linguistics, Rutgers University, 22 June.
- Williamson, K. & al. [1973]. *Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist*. West African Linguistic Society, University of Ìbàdàn.
- Williamson, K. & R. Blench. [2000]. Niger-Congo. *African Languages; an introduction*, edited by B. Heine & D. Nurse, 11-42. Cambridge UPress.
- Williamson, K. & C. Óhirí-Ànjíché [1996]. *Comparative Ìgboid. Ms.*, University of Port Harcourt.
- Williamson, K. & A. Timitimi (eds.) [1983]. *Short IẸẸn-English Dictionary*. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Wilson, C. [2008]. *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*. Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, F., with I. Karp. [1993]. Constructing the spectacle of culture in museums. *Art Papers* 17.3, 2-9.
- Wilson-Haffenden, J. [1927]. Ethnological notes on the Kwotos of Toto (Panda) District, Keffi Division, Benue Province, Northern Nigeria, Part 2. *Journal of the African Society* 27, 24-46.
- Winston, F. [1960]. The ‘mid’ tone in Èfík. *African Language Studies* 1, 185-92.
- Wiredu, K. [2003]. On decolonizing African religions. *The African Philosophy Reader*, edited by P. Coetzee & A. Roux, 20-34. Routledge, London.
- Wolf, E. [1982]. *Europe & the People without History*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Yáí, O. [1978]. African ethnonymy and toponymy; reflections on decolonization. *African Ethnonyms & Toponyms*, 39-50. Unesco, Paris.
- . [1992]. From *Vodun* to *Máwú*; monotheism and history in the Fòñ cultural area. *Sapina Newsletter* 4.2-3, 10-29.
- Yates, F. [1954]. The art of Ramon Lull; an approach to it through Lull’s Theory of the Elements. *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes* 17, 115-73.
- Zeuske, M. The *cimarrón* in the archives; a rereading of Miguel Barnet’s biography of Esteban Montejo. *Nieuwe Westindische Gids* 71, 265-79.
- Zimmerman, A. [2001]. *Anthropology & Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*. University of Chicago Press.

5. Typographic notes

Footnotes not endnotes.

Three graphical figures are embedded in the text above their respective captions:

ManfrediFig1.jpg
Figure 1. Comparison of 4-bit array names across 12 localities

ManfrediFig2.jpg
Figure 2. Comparison of 8-bit semantic translations across 7 localities

ManfrediFig3.jpg
Figure 3. Comparison of asymmetric 4-bit arrays across 5 localities

All characters in the file are set in Garamond except for the following:

AppleGothic (1 glyph)

Hz Square HZ (Unicode 3390)

Lucida Sans Unicode (25 glyphs)

ŋ LATIN SMALL LETTER ENG (Unicode 014B)

ḃ LATIN SMALL LETTER B WITH HOOK (Unicode 0253)

υ LATIN SMALL LETTER UPSILON (Unicode 028A)

ṽ LATIN SMALL LETTER V WITH HOOK (Unicode 028B)

ϳ GREEK SMALL GAMMA (Unicode 03B3)

χ GREEK SMALL LETTER CHI (Unicode 03C7)

ε GREEK SMALL LETTER EPSILON (Unicode 03B5)

ɔ LATIN SMALL LETTER OPEN O (Unicode 0254)

ʔ MODIFIER LETTER GLOTTAL STOP (Unicode 02C0)

´ COMBINING ACUTE ACCENT (Unicode 0301) unless an integrated acute accent exists for the vowel

` COMBINING GRAVE ACCENT (Unicode 0300) unless an integrated grave accent exists for the vowel

ˉ COMBINING MACRON (Unicode 0304) only on m and n (upper or lower case), and lower case a

¨ COMBINING DIARESIS (Unicode 0308)

˙ COMBINING VERTICAL LINE BELOW (Unicode 0329) can be substituted by COMBINING DOT BELOW (Unicode 0323)

◆ BLACK DIAMOND (Unicode 25C6)

◇ WHITE DIAMOND (Unicode 25C7)

∩ INTERSECTION (Unicode 2229)

∪ UNION (Unicode 222A)

ʔ LATIN LETTER GLOTTAL STOP (Unicode 0294)

β MATHEMATICAL ITALIC SMALL BETA (Unicode 1D6FD, D835, DEFD)

मुण्ड (string of 5 glyphs written together)

Times New Roman (11 glyphs)

é LATIN SMALL LETTER E WITH MACRON AND ACUTE (Unicode 1E17)

ə LATIN SMALL LETTER TURNED E (Unicode 01DD)

ḥ LATIN SMALL LETTER H WITH BREVE BELOW (Unicode 1E2B)

ẓ LATIN SMALL LETTER Z WITH DOT BELOW (Unicode 1E93)

♀ FEMALE SIGN (Unicode 2640)

♂ MALE SIGN (Unicode 2642)

← LEFTWARDS ARROW (Unicode 2190)

→ RIGHTWARDS ARROW (Unicode 2192)

↔ LEFT RIGHT ARROW (Unicode 2194)

{ side bracket up

[side bracket down

Menlo Regular (4 nonalphabetic glyphs)

˘ COMBINING DOUBLE INVERTED BREVE (Unicode 0361)

⤵ TOP LEFT CORNER (U+231C)

<https://www.fileformat.info/info/unicode/char/231c/index.htm>

– HORIZONTAL BAR (U+2015)

<https://www.fileformat.info/info/unicode/char/2015/index.htm>

⤴ TOP RIGHT CORNER (U+231D)

<https://www.fileformat.info/info/unicode/char/231d/index.htm>