The Oṣun Groves of Osogbo

(A handbook for visitors)

by

Susanne Wenger

All the Yoruba towns have Sacred Groves, or had them in the past. These areas of virgin nature are totally reserved for the Orijá, the traditionally worshipped gods, and for their rituals. The patroness of the Oṣogbo Groves is the goddess Oṣun.

Oṣun is the Yoruba impersonation of the “Waters of Life”, and the spiritual mother of the township and all its inhabitants. To her belong the Groves, but a number of otherwise sovereign godheads take lodging on her ground.

The goal of the world famous annual procession is the pond, river-altar and river-shrine Ojúọ Osogbo. The procession nowadays takes place around the end of August, when the day of the four-day week sacred to the god Sango falls on a Friday. This occasion marks, to the traditional devotee, the renewal of mystical bonds between the goddess and the people of Osogbo, who then ritually represent all of humanity.

Oṣogbo township’s regal head (Ọba) bears the title Aṣaṣe, “The One Who Holds the Fish in his Hand”. (This title refers to the myth of Oṣogbo’s establishment.) From the time of his installation until his death, the Aṣaṣe incarnates Oṣogbo’s mystic founder Láró. Ọba is an ancient theocratic institution, whose earthly vehicle is the psychosomatic organism of a person elected from one of certain specific families. As the overlord of all religious institutions in his township, the Ọba is responsible for the Sacred Groves. Because of the traditionally generous attitude toward all sacred forces, the Ọba is, paradoxically enough, also the overlord of the aggressive, missionary-minded imported creeds, which aim at the destruction of that which puts him in power.

There were times when, under the influence of struggling literacy and the colonial-minded importation of what one may call “petit bourgeois respectability”, all African cultural heritage was declared doomed, as if just saying so would achieve this result. During that era, parts of the Sacred Groves were allotted by the Local Authorities to the governmental departments of Forestry and Agriculture. While the agricultural experiments proved abortive, the teak plantation was a “success”. At the sight of wildly falling groups of sacred giant trees, all of which were beloved saints and devotees of the gods, the minds of the artists of New Sacred Art were beaten into revolt. To save what remained, we adopted the plan to save nature by means of “pure form”. Good art, which is ritual in the service of the Orijá, the Yoruba gods, has had the strength to save a few miles of sacred river and a few million trees - the gods’ aspect as flora - together with the animals which inhabit them.

The District Officer ordered the then Western State Survey Office to map the Oṣun Groves of Osogbo, following the boundaries pointed out by the elders. These boundaries are reinforced by the Ojúọ river altars, traditionally frequented for worship. The authentic plans, number OS 162, were signed by the Western State Surveyor General in 1976. The survey and plans were paid for by the Department of Antiquities, National Museum, Lagos. First one, then three, and now seven caretakers, watchmen and gardeners for the Groves are employed by the (now) National Commission for Museums and Monuments, National Museum, Lagos. Most of these caretakers are themselves artists of the New Sacred Art.

New Sacred Art is modern art in the ritual service of the traditional religion and philosophy of the Orijá. We regard this religion to be still alive, however much it may be threatened by changing circumstances and by violent missionary fanaticism. We regard the Orijá as intensely alive, a fact which is realistically proved to us every so often. All that is alive is modern in its time. Art is a mirror to reality in one of reality’s aspects. Our art, like the gods, is alive to the circumstances of the present time. While our art is modern, our artists are traditionally cultured and have not seen exhibitions or books of “modern art” from abroad. Their works are spontaneously modern in form, because the artists are modern in their humanity.

The trees along the river are Oṣun’s clothes. We receive much help from the Federal Forestry Department in protecting and replanting these trees, and repairing the damage done to those parts of the Groves. Only recently was farming stopped, for the sake of preserving this area for
cultural purposes exclusively. The Forestry Department also helps us to stop hunting, fishing, building, woodcutting and burning — activities which are illegal both in the Groves and in the town's immediate surroundings.

How to Find the Groves

Coming from Lagos, Ibadan or Ile-Ife and arriving on Òṣogbo ground, the motorist can see a signboard on the right side of the highway. After this signboard, enter the first road to the right and then turn half left, a bit uphill, on a bumpy road. (The right branch would lead even more directly to the Groves, but is hardly passable at the moment.) This joins the main street, Station Road. Turn right on Station Road, and take the right branch at the roundabout. Arriving at Òjá Òba, the King's Market, the Atiṣẹ's palace is on the right, and the ancient Òṣun market shrine on the left. Coming to the crossroad, turn into the road on the right, so that the Central Mosque now stands on the left and the side wall of the Palace premises is on the right. (Within these premises' outer cement and brick enclosure can be seen the painted walls and carved veranda posts of the Òṣun shrine in the palace.)

This road, which descends slightly, leads straight into the Groves. It goes first out of town and into an area which, unfortunately, was illegally destroyed not long ago. This area was once ritually intensely important, containing (on the left side) the grove of Òrò and (on the right side) the Ògbo ìpà, the hunters' burial grove. The growing township had encroached on these heavily tabooed areas; already years ago, we anticipated oncoming disaster from the violation of taboo, and, when an inquiry to the oracle permitted it, we transplanted these forest altars, loaded with symbols, into the Groves' interior.

After passing the line of NEPA electric poles, the road enters the Sacred Groves of Òṣogbo, the Òṣun Groves, in their present, ritually guarded extent. The teak plantation, established some time before we started New Sacred Art, are certainly no sacred premises, but they do not interfere with us.

The Òṣun Groves of Òṣogbo

The Sacred Groves

The visitor's first encounter with Òrìṣà, the Òrùbá gods, is Ògbó Òṣù, the Òṣù Grove, on the left. The original Òṣù Grove was in town, behind the present Òjú Òrì Òba Kòso, Dúró Ládipò's mausoleum and the former Òmàbí Òmàbí Òṣù, art club. The grove was transferred long before the beginning of New Sacred Art. Now and here, on the spot and altar where Òyà priests lay down atonement offerings, stand magnificent statues of the goddess Òṣù and her beloved husband, the god Òṣàrò. The twin sculptures, carved by Kàsàlì Àkàngbà, are really one, carved from a single teak tree stem (embedded in the ground) which branches into two. This symbolizes the ritual and emotional closeness of these divine personages in the oneness of ideal marriage.

The forest which abuts Òṣù Grove is that of Òbalùáyé and Àlàjere, but while the Òṣù Grove reaches the river, Òbalùáyé's grove reaches close to Àwówò, the steep precipice where Òṣùn Òmòyín encountered the helpers of the god of floral-magic potencies, Òṣẹyín, an encounter which catapulted Òmòyín into divine status and beyond time. Thus Òṣogbo's timeless mythingers on here under taboo, led by the river's Mystic prowess.

The visitor is advised against roaming about unguided in this and other parts of the Sacred Groves. This warning should not be disregarded. The visitor who treats frivolously what we feel to be serious is not welcome in our precincts of worship. Accepting our warnings about poisonous snakes (in the service of the gods, like all that lives here), the visitor may follow the guide.

As one advances uphill, nearly ascending the height of Òmòyín, the teak plantation recedes. The teak replaced what were once the Groves of Ògbó. Bravely invading the havoc of scattered roots and branches, under cover of night, we managed to save a few of our dying florics friends by wrapping white cloths around their doom-expecting bodies. (One of those saved then was recently burned alive, however.) Between this plantation sector and the present Òrò grove, a path branches off. On this intersection
of three paths (all the roads were once forest paths) is iYe Esu. Esu is always ritually remembered on crossroads, which physically correlate with his meta-intellectual complex of multidimensional assignments. Esu is responsible for regulating traffic among the illimitable thought complexes of his friend, the oracular Ifa. The statue on iYe Esu is by the artist Saki.

Oró Grove is separated from the premises of Ògbônì by a path which belongs to the teak plantation but is also used by us, so as to reach Ojú Oòòòòò directly, without intruding into Ìlédì Oòòòòò, the Ògbônì club-house. (Ògbônì activities are often under taboo.) Oró and Ògbônì are closely linked in ritual. This is why the walls are adored together, as one work of Sacred Art, with representations of the egungun, Sacred Masks, by the the artist Òjewàle Òmpò, the first Òṣogbo person to produce New Sacred Art.

Facing Ògbônì Oró across the highway are the premises of Òbasáàa (Òrisàààà or Òrisa Òààà, “The Great Òrisà”), whose buildings house symbols of some of the “white gods”, a multiply-branching cult complex of enduringly creative sacred-force impersonations. The building which is taller on its left wing, and deeply sculptured on its front, is the shrine of Òrisa Ìwàjeàmpò. It is named Ayé Dáunk Yiòpà “World, I beg you to reconsider your ways”. The artwork represents the embrace of Òbasáàà and Òṣànà, a meta-psychically contradictory embrace in which the two gods simultaneously meet and part. This double spiral of antipodal intellectual forces from different Òrisà hierarchies can be seen inside this shrine. The shrine’s steep, winding staircase resembles the inner column of the shell of Ògbônì, the big, edible snail, and symbolically correlates with the Baroque Marlolatry, the ritual representation of the Mother-of-God. Ògbônì is Òbasílà’s ritual food, through offerings, and is one of his organic instruments of creation.

Inside the middle tract, secured in the ground behind fences, are buried magic-mystic-emanating objects of Òrisà Òlùfèn and Òrisà Ògìnyòn, two eminent branches of the Òbasílà religion. A bending passage leads from here to Ayé Dáunk Yiòpà and to the base of the winding stairs. This long, half-lit room and its furniture represent the florid aspect of Ògbônì, the heavenly complex of angelic soul-particles from whence our souls come like bees from a hive. Where that room empties out onto the base of the stairs is the altar of Oya, representing the dark heaviness of the spiral thunder-

clouds from whose inner magic cauldron her husband Òṣànà takes the flash of lightning (which is his emblem, not hers). At the top of the stairs is Òtò Orí, a meditation chamber dedicated to Orí, Òódùmarè’s meta-intellect.

The building’s right wing leads through a number of preparatory symbol rooms towards a chamber in which kneels a statue of Òlàjère. (Occasionally housed here are also Òlàjère’s priests, both humans and snakes.) The front of the building is bedecked with sculptured thorny creepers, sacred to the god for their psychodynamic qualities. The priests’ living quarters are furnished with an earthen bed, shelf and cupboard in the inner room, and a floral altar whose abrupt position, shockingly near the entrance, represents the god’s pupescent unpredictability. Outside, between sculptures representing elements of Òlàjère’s myth, a path leads away to the god’s mediation sites. Where the path bends to the right towards Òwòòò, there stands a statue of Òbasílà gesturing atonement and welcome to Òlàjère, his ideal son, Òlàjère, was driven from the outer spaces of the universe into Òbasílà’s meta-psyche awareness.

On this bend, the path is crossed by two scissor-like pythons, who probe the purity of one’s intentions. (Symbolic reality is passive, so the truth of this statement is relative.)

The height of the Òwòòò-precipice is flanked by two statues of Òlàjère, as unlike in character as the different sides of his nature. Here, on the brink, he dances lyrically for Òṣun who, as the river, silently flows by far below. There, he jumps over the cliff. This death-life, life-death representation flows to the flow of physical bodies back and forth from the universe from where they come.

The visitor may now be guided back across the road to the premises of Ìlédì Oòòòòò, the club house and ritual site of the earth cult, the Ògbônì “secret society”. Visitors are advised to refrain from entering (with or without a guide) if ritual is in progress. At other times, they can enter, together with the guide, but only as far as the first room of the right-hand entrance.

The totality of Ìlédì Oòòòòò, and especially its roofs, represent three prehistoric (or pre-genetic) lizards and one toad. The leftmost wing with the deeply sculptured front wall is the intensely tabooed altar room. Such taboos do not primarily hide material riches or curiosities, but are estab
lished for the hygiene of emanations. The visitor is therefore not missing anything by leaving it alone. Even a glimpse over the walls is felt to be an intrusion, and a priest, discovering such impertinence, may become rude.

From the first room mentioned above, over the carved gate, can be seen a long, wide hall with traditionally painted walls. It bears repeating that visitors are admitted to the Ògbōni area only with a guide or as our personal guest, accompanied by one of us.

We may leave the Òlèdèi premises by the back road, although it is not to be entered from there. Along this forest path, we next reach a flat rock, Òjà Ònúkòò. Òjà means "market", and in the present-day language this has the same implications as in Western languages. Less than 25 years ago, however, every market was a complex ritual situation, and the act of buying and selling was just one part of a wider range of outdoor ritual procedures, all of them sacred as spiritual-material interchanges. Òjà Ònúkòò is a market for gods, subterranean and supernatural beings, angels andclairvoyant humans, i.e. those humans who “see” gods and spirits. It is an amphitheater where earthly and heavenly beings are actors and audience combined. The holes in the rock floor are remnants of a prehistoric time before geologic upheaval raised the riverbed and sea floor. Later on, these whirlpool pans were used for grinding raw iron before smelting.

It is from Òjà that Òmíyìn, the subsequently apotheosized hunter and Òjà’s mystic discoverer, first heard the sound of the Òsun River. A path (sometimes closed to the public) leads from there to the river shrines and altar of Òsun Lòkòkan. The riverbank both upstream and downstream of this shrine are presently closed to the public, so the visitor will return along the same path back to Òjà and, along the road which circumvents the Ògbōni premises, back to the highway.

The highway descends past a small group of cement figures representing Òsun. These were the first works of the artist Àdèbíṣì Àkánjí. Then a small shrine and a big arch mark the place where the annual Òsun procession branches towards its final goal. The continuation of the Àwòwò-precipice is Arugbá’s own path, but the crowd must continue on the main route under the big arch.

Arugbá (arú-igbá) means “carrier of the calabash” containing sacred symbols which, “reloaded” on that day with Òsun’s emanations, can physically represent for the goddess for another ritual year. Her path leads through the small but intensely form-intent Òlà ìyem̀ò̀ò. This shrine represents birth into another dimension of reality. Only deeply initiated priests protectively accompany Arugbá on this, her exacting and into the spiritual realms of Ómí, the “Waters of Life”, i.e. into the parallactic instant when physicality and metaphysicality coincide, in which only the gods may procreate physical offspring. (It is for offspring that most of the pilgrims come, on that day of sacred fecundities.)

Arugbá next approaches Òdígíǹ, the spot of the annual man–river encounter when promises must be renewed. Arugbá’s mind is ecstaticed by ancient incantatory songs, as she “descends” into the depths of Òsun’s metaphorical truth forms, whose paragon she is on that day. Whip–bearers accompany her, not only whipping the air for the sake of transcendental fecundities (a world-wide archaic practice), but also, if necessary, to fend off persistent non–initiate intruders from this vulnerable ritual privacy.

The crowd, which numbers many thousands, proceeds under the arch, which represents — oddly enough — a flying giant tortoise. The tortoise symbolizes the heaviness of matter, and its taking to the air evokes a turning point in one’s rational habits. For here, other laws prevail.

Arugbá’s path then rejoins the public way. Protected from view by her entourage, she enters the shrine, where she will rest until they all go back. Meanwhile, her mind is with Òsun, while Òlá Òsun and other priests receive food offerings and kola nuts, heaping all of them up on an enormous tray. In the evening, the river will be fed from this tray. That is when, to their spiritually opened gaze, the goddess and her messenger, Òkòdò, will appear and bless them. (To the metaphysically dull eye of the merely curious, and to the ever-ready—for-the–kill camera, this sight remains blank.) After the river has been fed, and everyone has gone home, the river and its precints are drawn once again into reverie and silence.

The main shrine is ancient, older than the town of Òsògbò (which is not older than 400 years, according to Chief Ôlúgunna’s research). The outer shrine walls and central altar room were almost intact when the late Òlá Òsun appealed to us, worshipper-artists who at the time were rebuilding Òdí Òbá. Termites had invaded the shrine, eagerly devouring the altar, walls, pillars and roof. We responded, destroying the termites and repairing damage. Our minds, inspired by our own annual ceremony, spiritually
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urged some of us to create art on the repaired walls. This was the beginning of New Sacred Art.

The outer portico's clay walls were still standing in almost their original condition, very solid from endless wetting and patting by the hands of the worshipper-builders: an antiquity par excellence with which we would not tamper. But the original veranda posts had fallen prey to the excesses of our climate. We could not repair them, so we created them anew.

Evolution is a fact, neither to be hailed nor to be regretted. This great religion, no matter how intensely harrassed, is still intensely alive. Alive, too, are our correlated talents. The living gods and our living art are, both, modern. Repetition of the past cannot but be an absurdity.

The floric forms of our architecture — sometimes they are faunal or environmental — are the outcome of submission to Nature's perfection. Gods are Nature's sublimest manifestation. We would never impose on it. Admiration helps us to underline it.

The statue where the river bends at Ojúbo Osogbo is from the hand of Ìká. It is a rather reverent replacement for one which fell when its author, Ìjewálé Amọ, violated one of the god's taboos. The stone sculpture and ritual objects near the pond do not belong to Osun, but to Ìkà, whose sanctuary on Ìkà Òbánedo was destroyed.

Other sculptures occupy the places where the priests of various gods sit on the bank of the Osun river processions. On that day, all the ìrìṣà are represented with drum orchestras, which resound together with a multitude of sacred emanations and rhythms, all drummed-out praises of the gods, one big symphony in praise of inspired life.

Visitors to the premises and river shrine of Ojúbo Osogbo as well as to the Osun shrine at the Aájọ's palace (which is Ìjá Osun's residence) are hereby informed that, traditionally, it is their due to give a decent amount of money to the priests. These people have no other income than the fees which they receive as indispensable intermediaries for the supplicant who seeks the goddess' favours. This is a fact of the culture on whose ground they stand.

Visitors should give politely and according to their ability. This act can, after all, be understood as compensation for the intrusion of an outsider.

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The Osun Groves of Osogbo

On Yorùba ritual grounds, including Ojúbo Osogbo, grows Peregun (Dracanea Fragrans), a short, treelike plant with sheath-leaves. These are to be cut short annually — according to the traditional hygiene of the sacred — so as to prevent their sudden outbursts into blossoms, which appear overnight, without warning, on armlong branches. An oversight in pruning is said to be catastrophic, as from these explosive blossoms would emanate swarms of Òṣípẹ̀rẹ̀'s most horrible helpers.

Palm fronds, split along mid-rib and hung up curtainlike, indicate "Stop! Ritual in Progress!" to those who are not involved.

Exiting Ojúbo Osogbo through gateways, the visitor may turn to the left along the small road to the "old" suspension bridge, brainchild of one Welsh District Officer in colonial times. In the open space by the entrance to Ojúbo Osogbo stand two (formerly three) giant trees, which jointly impersonate one of Osun's epiphanes, Òjímiyọ̀̀òò. "The One with Many Children." There existed one sacred carving which represented Òjímiyọ̀̀òò playing ìyọ̀ so with Eṣù. When this was stolen, together with several other ancient images, the third tree withered within four days to such an extent that it had to be down as a danger to the approaching annual procession. Ìkà's beautiful cement work was created on top of the stump cross-section, but as the wood decayed this base was replaced by stone and cement.

Before, when coming from the suspension bridge, one could see the entrances to the ìgbòfà, the ìfà Grove. This is now under ritual preparation and not open to the public. The ancient ìfà forest altar is still frequented by the oracle priests, despite its desperate situation of progressing destruction.

Returning to the highway, the visitor may continue along ìbù ìyá Mọ̀pò, the potterfield (èbù) of that goddess, who is the patroness of all women's occupations including childbirth. Ìyá Mọ̀pò is, more than anything, a potterwoman and — since the creative artist and his work are essentially one — she IS the pot. To put it another way, she is the space in the pot, which defines the pot (a concept reminiscent of the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching).

As one enters the èbù under the arch of the chameleon (a animal which plays an important part in the creation myth), the statue of ìyá Mọ̀pòis
back to the right. This statue is really a shrine which houses, fenced away in an inconspicuous place, the magically-mystically potent symbols of the goddess. The inside, still under construction, is supported by a flight of winding stairs, the spiral pillar at the center of creation. It is the dark polar opposite of the spiral in Òrìṣà Ajágémo’s Ayé Dákun Yipada shrine.

Ìyà Mọpó is traditionally represented (as a bronze altarpiece) with two children, one head-up on her breast, one on her back, head-down. In the context of natural inspiration, we have taken the liberty of representing her children — still in accord with symbolism — as àtiṣà-àtìòró, the sacred bird-epiphany of Òbààlà. The goddess stretches out three pairs of arms. She gestures blessings, advice and regrets. She herself has wings: she represents the ethereal dimension of matter.

On all these constructions, as well as on Òrìṣà-òò and the Òbààlà shrines and the Ògbóni clubhouse, the most sensitive first assistant was Adébísì Ìkànì, who is an excellent artist in his own right, working with cement screens and batiks. In the works of these years, he was the most empathetic and gifted helper. Nowadays, Susanne Wenger works alone on her monumental art, without assistants except for constructing foundations and scaffolding.

The tall slender statue is Ëlà. An intensely sacred principle in the Ìfá oracle cult, he represents the dynamism of the god’s pubescence. Important Ìfá ritual is opened with the request: Èlárò Òlà relent!” The third statue also represents the youthful force of a godhead: Alájere, who is the adolescent Ìjọbọ. Three is Ìjọbọ’s sacred number symbolism, and is also the sacred number of transsubstantiation.

As the works on the riverbanks behind Èbu Ìyá Mọpó are still in progress, the paths are presently closed to the public.

This ends the brief journey through the river groves. We now will mention several attractions to visitors within the town.

Those interested in purchasing works of the artists of New Sacred Art in Òṣogbo can do so in their art shop, which is located in Ìlẹ̀ Àbolúbóde, Ìbókun Road 41a. Coming from the Òṣun Groves, cross the Iléṣà road (by going straight ahead between the Palace and the Central Mosque). Do not turn to either side at this crossing, but, having gone a short distance along
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traditional grave, sanctified by ritual, and transformed in the classic Yorùbá way into a Sàngó shrine. The visitor can see it in Catholic Street, the main street which leads up to the King's Market.

Proceeding along Catholic Street, leaving behind the market and the mausoleum, the visitor will see the signboard of the so-called ìfè Museum. This is Ulli Beier's collection, left to the University of ìfè on condition that it stay in Òṣogbo. The curator is the artist Afûnlabí.

We warmly recommend the visitor not to leave Òṣogbo without visiting Art-Man's Gallery, which is the studio and residence of the great artist Twins Seven Seven. There is also Jimoh Buraimò's African Heritage Gallery, in the quarter of town called Òdù Òlòwó. Every taxi driver knows these places and can lead the stranger there.

While these places are not part of New Sacred Art, we are all proud of each other and wish visitors to know all of our achievements in the ways of culture.

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shrine, the visitor may ask to be shown, by anybody sitting in the veranda of the story house, to the palace Òṣùn shrine. This is the residence of ìyà Òṣùn: it is respectful to greet her and her entourage, not just to look at them like animals in the zoo. The visitor may not forget the gift of money to her, which is her due traditionally.

Some visitors will remember the great Yorùbá dramatist Dùró Ládipò, who toured the world with his most famous opera, Òba Köso, with the greatest success. Dùró was himself an initiated Sàngó priest, and "Òba Köso" is one of the god's praise songs meaning "The king did not hang". This refers to the god's tragic myth, according to which he was driven away from his town Òṣùn because of his violent temper. Deserted even by his beloved wife, the goddess Òṣùn, he hanged himself on an ayan tree. But no corpse hung, as he was mystically transformed into his ethereal other self.

Before Dùró died, he voiced the wish to be buried in Ìgbòmọ̀lẹ̀, the gods' wilderness. He also wanted to return to his family's traditional affiliation with Òṣùn, whose original grove lay in the backyard of the same house which he inherited as the eldest surviving son, and part of which he dedicated to the Artists and Writers Club Mbara Mbayọ. This club was founded by Dùró, Susanne Wenger and Ulli Beier. Beier had first of all begun a similar club, which was named Mbara after the decorated shrine buildings of the ìgbò and ìbìbì people of eastern Nigeria.

Dùró wanted to establish an Mbara in (the then nearly totally illiterate) Òṣogbo, as part of Òṣogbo's first palmwine bar, which he had already established (with an inspiration very similar to Beier's own). Ulli and Georgina Beier made the resulting Mbara Mbayọ world famous. The ìgbò word Mbara was reinterpreted by Yorùbá punsters in their own language as Mbari, meaning "When I would see it". The same jokesters then added the Yorùbá word Mbayọ, meaning "I would be happy". The new name thus meant "When I see it, I will be happy". This embellishment was readily accepted — a typically Yorùbá process.

This place is no longer an art club, but Dùró's mausoleum. It was developed by his ritual sister Susanne Wenger and her then assistant Adébisi Akànji, into ìgbòmọ̀lẹ̀. As such, it is now named Ojú Orí Òba Köso, because "Òba Köso" was Dùró's ritual Sàngó-name. Ojú Orí is a
Dear Segun,

we did expect you but....

we hope that you are still as happy as while writing your last letter.

(1) I enclose two items: A copy of my reply to a newspaper notice, in which was mentioned my "award" from the Fed. Govt. touristboard — you know how I like that — and this may enlighten you to our present situation without further comment. WHO however DOES know the devellish implication of such vulgar perceptions of what-one-can-do-with-art-and-religious-dingspums. How to get money out of it?

(2) This enclosed handout is part 2 — but may be (not hopefully) the only what we could publish soon. We try to go ahead of all the shit which these idiots may produce. It needs a few pages more, then I will send it too.

PLEASE do not go to sleep today before having edited these pages!

PLEASE send it back at once.

much love to you and yours

[Signature]
I have read the handbook as you have helped to appear so well.

Page 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 are fine with exception of one or two omitted Buchstaben. Page 10 lower half line 14 copied from the bottom the name is Baka ('s beautiful...) line 11 from the b. not; could but one can... line 9 from the b. altar, and grove, which later not inside the Oshun Groves, is still ...... line 8 from the b. the visitor may turn to the left and continue on the highway till he comes to Ebu Iya Wopo, the potterfield....

Page II we should may be add the English (and or Latin) name. Allied Hornbill (Lophoceros semifasciatus) After copying the two lines Osun from the b., we MUST bring in a few words on Busseyin (which I will write presently).

Page 12 is likely (line 1) interested not interesting. After line 9 from the bottom we must bring a few words on Ibi Baba. (which I forgot but will do now).

Page 14 line 9 Obafemi Awolowo University museum (my fault).

We have mentioned the names of Adebisi Akunji, Baka and Cjewale Amoo. So it may be better to make a short list of artists of New Sacred Art.

We have to decide whether we want to spell Sango or Sango. I also have now agreed on your spelling Osun - Osogbo everywhere.