HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORANYAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL IN NEW OYO: A STRATEGIC MEASURE TO PRESERVE YORÙBÁ ANTIQUITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the different ways in which Yorùbá cultural indigenous identities are presented to the world in contemporary times through the Oranyan festivals. The Oranyan festival in New Oyo is a traditional celebration of Yorùbá heritage, with roots dating back to the late 14th century. The cultural festivals of Oyo Yorùbá are diverse, but the Oranyan festival is unique in New Oyo because of its global acceptance orchestrated by His Royal Highness, the Alaafin of Oyo, the late Oba Lamidi Adeyemi Olayiwola III. The festival is one of the special annuals that attracts people from different parts of the universe. The event, since its commencement, has uniquely portrayed Yorùbá cultural values, mainly to present Yorùbá cultural values from a historical perspective against Eurocentric views, and characterised by handmade attire, sculptures, liturgical objects and other traditional instruments. This paper gave an in-depth analysis of the historical development of the Oranyan festival among the Yorùbá and its impact on global assessment in the African past. The study used primary and secondary data to elicit information. Primary sources involved archival materials, structured questionnaires, and in-depth interviews with rural and urban dwellers. Secondary sources included texts, articles, and newspapers to complement data from primary sources. The finding shows that the Oranyan festival plays a critical role in the affirmation of African pantheon and preserving Yorùbá antiquities in the 21st century. The paper concludes that the continued practice and celebration of the festival are essential for preserving Yorùbá antiquities and promoting a sense of identity and cultural heritage.

Introduction

The Yorùbá culture is fundamentally based on ancestral worship. Cultural festival connects the Yorùbá social realm to the invisible world for worshipers of deities such as Oranyan and other Yorùbá gods know generally as the Orisa.[1]The hundreds of gods who make up the Yorùbá pantheon are revered for a wide range of reasons, with each one symbolising a different aspect of nature, spirituality, or human emotion. A few gods predated the earth's creation while other are historical heroes or heroines who attained godhood after their deaths. Some gods are natural objects found in their environment, such as mountains, hills, and rivers,that have shaped people's lives and cultural history.[2]

These gods are honoured, venerated, and worshipped in Oyo, especially during cultural festivities that frequently start with a Yorùbá narrative being told. This is made clear at the Oranyan festival, which examines Oyo history to elucidate the Oyo empire's founding and eventual faith.[3]The Oranyan festival establishes a body of relationships and transformations with the adherents. With its followers, the Oranyan festival create a corpus of relationship and changes. These include preserving the bond between a person and the ancestors; mastering and passing down, incantation, traditional dances, songs and ontology; and ensuring the cultural heritage of Oyo town is perpetuated. In New Oyo, customary celebrations dated back as far as the locals themselves, and they are observed throughout the year in the various ways.

The essence of traditional celebration in Yorùbá land is further established by a brief classification of the festival into three categories. First, Agricultural items like new yam are celebrated at the festivals. Another event was held in honour of some notable historical; people who had made history triumphed for their community, and produce history. So each year festivals are planned to honour them. In New Oyo, few instances of these kinds of celebrations are Oranyan, Ogun, and Sango festivals among others. Historical festivals, whether positive or negative, are organised to commemorate a specific event that occurred in a community and fall under third categories.[4]As a result, ceremonies are held to honour individual who have departed.

However, this study is about historical development of the Oranyan cultural festival and its importance in the affirmation and preservation of Yorùbá antiquities in the 21st century. For clarity and understanding, the paper is structured into six segments: introduction, history of Oranyan and geographical location of New Oyo, tourist sites and historical development of the Oranyan festival sin Oyo, traditional practice and program of the festival, the myth surrounding Oranyan staff, and conclusion of the paper.

History of Oranyanand Geographical Location of New Oyo

Oranyan, also called Oranmiyan, was the final ruler of the Yorùbá Kingdom of Ile-Ife.And is credited with founding the Oyo empire.[5]After offending their father, Oduduwa, the first Ooni of Ife, Oranyan his brothers decided to conduct a retaliatory assault on their neighbours.[6] The brother argued On the way toward the fight, and the army dispersed. Too tiny to mount a successful counterattack, ambled down the southern shore till he came to Bussa. There, the chief of the village gave him a show and gave him a big snake with a charm around its throat. Oranyan given instructionsby the chief to pursue the snake until it halted and vanished

[1]Idowu, E.B. (1963). Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, Oxford University Press, London Longman. 98

[2]https://www.britannica.com/books was retrieved on December, 2022.

[3]Courlander, H. (1996). *Tales of Yoruba Gods and Heroes, Myths, Legends and Heroic Tales of the Yoruba People of West Africa*, Crown Pub; First Edition (January 1, 1973). 88

[4]https://booksgoogle.com/books/about/peoples_and_empire_of_westafrica.htm/?/d=AAAAMMJ.

[5]Daramola, O. Ati A. Jeje. (1967). *Awon Orisa ile Yoruba*, (Ibadan:Oniboje Press, 1967). 15

[6]Johnson, S. (1921). *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Time to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Lagos CMS Bookshops. 85

into the ground. Oranyan followed the advice and founded Oyo, where the serpent shipped.[7]Oranyan made Oyo his new empire and became the first ruler "Oba" (means' king' in the language of the Yorùbá) with the title "Alaafin of Oyo"."Alaafin" means the palace owner' in the Yorùbá language.[8]He left his accumulated wealth in Ife to make it possible for another king to rule there. Once upon a time, Oyo-Ile was at war with the Bariba of Borgu, who was trying to conquer a new city still under construction. Orangun Ajagunla of Ila, Oranyan's older brother, rushed to his men. Shortly after winning the war, Ajuwon welcomed Ajaka; much later, Arabambi was born to a Tapa woman. It is believed that the name "Sango" was given to him by his maternal grandfather, the chief, who took the local name for the god of thunder. However, the royal family was dedicated to the spirits of thunder (Jakuta) and war (Ogun).[9] Oranyan, the first Oba (king) of Oyo, was succeeded by Oba Ajaka, the Alaafin of Oyo. Ajaka was deposed because he lacked Yorùbá's military virtue and allowed his sub-chiefs too much independence. Leadership was then conferred upon Ajaka's brother, Sango, who was later defined as the deity of thunder and lightning.[10] Ajaka was restored after Sango's death. Ajaka returned to the throne more warlike and oppressive. His successor Kori managed to conquer the rest of the area that later historianscalledthe Oyo metropolis. The metropolitan centre of Oyo was the capital, Oyo-Ile (also known as Old Oyo, Oyo Katunga, or Oyo-Oro). By the end of the 14th century, Oyo had emerged as a formidable force in the interior.[11] For more than a century, the Yoruba nation has expanded at the expense of its neighbours. During Onigbogi regin, Oyo suffered a military defeat at the hands of the Nupe led by Tsoede. Around 1535, the Nupe occupied Oyo and forced their ruling dynasty to seek refuge in the Borgu kingdom.[12]The Nupe sacked the capital and destroyed Oyo as a regional power until the early 17th century. The Yorùbá people of Oyo experienced an 80-year interregnum as a dynasty in exile after their defeat at the hand of Nupe. In 1837, they established a New Oyo at Ago Oja that was more intensive and expansive than ever vast Empires. In the 17th century, Oyo developed into large empire after a long period of growth. New Oyo was part of the Western region, which alsoincluded Ọsun State, which was split off in 1991. Oyo State is a homogeneous state, inhabited primarily by the Yorùbá people.[13]

The indigenouspeoples mainly comprise the Oyo, Oke-Ogun, Ibadan, and Ibarapa peoples, all of whom belongto the Yorùbá family and the Africa people's city of African. Ibadan has been the administrative and government centre of Nigeria's formalwestern region since the days of British colonial rule.[14]Other notable cities and towns in Ọyọ State include Ogbomọsọ, Iseyin, Iroko, Lanlate, Oja-Owode, Sepeteri, Ilora, Awe,

[7]Curtin, P. D. (1995). *Africa History*. Addison-wesley Longman Ltd. htpp:www.worldhistory.org. retrieved January, 2023.

[8]Ogot, B.A. (1999). *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol 5,* Abridged Edition. University of California Press,188

[9]Ogot, B.A. (1999). UNESCO *General History of Africa, Vol 5,* Abridged Edition. University of California Press. 189

[10]Ajayi, J.F.A., and Smith, R. (1971). *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*,London: Cambridge University Press. 87

[11]https://www.black.org/global-africa-history/oyo/ was retrieved on July, 2023.

[12]https://www.worldhistory.org/Oyo-Empire retrieved in October, 2022

[13]Hrbek, I. (1992). UNESCO *General History of Africa, Vol. 111*, Abridged Edition, University of Califonia Press. https://www.worldhistory.org/Oyo-Empire accessed in November, 2022.

[14]Oliver, Roland. (1981), Cambridge Encyclopedia of Africa. Cambridge University Press. 491

Ilero, Igbeti, Iseyi, Igboho, Fiditi,Igbo-Ora and other.[15]

Tourist Sites and Historical Development of the OranyanCultural Festival inOyo

According to oral testimony given by Prince Ayo Ladigbolu[16], on August 6, 2021, in Isale Oyo, the first ever Oranyan Festival of Arts, Culture, and Tourism was orchestrated in 2012 by his descendant and reigning successor, His Royal Highness, Alaafin of Oyo, late Oba Lamidi Adeyemi lll, who mandated that subsequently festivals were to be celebrated annually between the 8th and 15th days of September in Oyo, Oyo State, in the south-west region of Nigeria. In an interview with Alhaja Ladigbolu[17] conducted on September 12, 2022, in Oyo, the Oranyan festival is a cultural practice that connects Yoruba in the home and diaspora. The Yorubas have been gifted with a unique culture and history that dates back 3000-1000 BC. They have withstood the test of time despite deadly inter-tribal conflicts. Traditional rulers in these ages were able to retain sacrosanct, revere and undamaged theYorùbá Nation's significant past, which history has taught every African descendant. Without a question, the yearlyOranyan celebration in the historic town of Oyo, no doubt, has left a lasting impression.

The Oranyan festival was introduced when Alaafin of Oyo, the late Oba Lamidi Adeyemi lll, received visitors from the Guild of Tourism Journalists (GTJ), which paid him a courtesy visit in his palace in Oyo, Oyo State. Alaafin said one of the reasons why the Oyo Kingdom has taken it upon itself to celebrate one of his heroes, Oranyan, was because the celebration of heroes is done all over the world and Nigeria should not be an exception. The festival will expose tourists to sites like Sango Shrine in the palace, Sogidi Stream in Awe, Agidam Hill of gods and goddesses at Isale Oyo, the Grinding Stones of the Queen at Arole Oba House, Bara (the burial place of past kings), Soro Hill, or the talking forest, and many others.[18]

Traditional Practice and Programme of the Festival

Festivals are events and a social phenomenathat occur in virtually all human cultures.[19] It provides opportunities for a social solidarity, cultural expression and continuity for human beings and the fetusof society. A festival is a special event celebrated by a community and focuses on some distinctive aspects of that community and its religion or culture. Festivals as "thematic, public celebrations" is the most practical approach.[20] However, Egungun and Sango are two traditional customs that are well known in New Oyo. "Egungun" refers to a particular mask-wearing custom among the Oyo Yorùbá, from whom it is taught to have migrated.[21] Egungun alludes to the idea of "powers concealed",which is relevant to customs that honour gods and ancestors, who are both regarded as beings from

[15]available at https://www.Oyostatehistotry.com; https://en.m.wikipedia.org.wiki//oyo. Accessed in November, 2022

[16]Prince Ladigbolu, A. (2021), Oral evidence obtained from a retisred Clergyman, Isale Oyo area, Oyo.

[17] Ladigbolu, A.R. (2022). Oral evidence obtained from Ladigbolu area, Oyo area, Oyo.

[18] Available at http://www.guardian.ng; retrieved January, 2023, https://www.vanguardngr.com; retrieved January, 2023

[19]Falassi, A. (1987). Time out of time: an essay on the festival. Albuquerque: University of Mexico press. 185-189

[20]Getz, D. (1987). Event Management and Event Tourism New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation. 78

[21]Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). What is culture? A Compilation of Quotations Global PAD Core Concepts. UK Global PAD Open House, University of Warwick. 20

beyond.[22]According to Witt & Brown[23], Egungun has become morespecifically linked to the society, honouring the ancestors in particular, and a descendant commitment to continuing the traditions of his predecessor and maintaining the reputation of his lineage. While the Egungun of Oyo has been specifically associated with ancestor honouring, Ogunsakin Iyabo[24]noted that the practice can be regarded as a masking ritual that tries to respect both gods and ancestors.Like Paaka Egungun, agba are distinguished by their multi-layered, vividly coloured lap pets or strips of cloth cut with a saw, as well as the dredging affixed to a wooden and cloth sculptural headdress that is devoid of the horizontal superstructure that distinguishes paaka Egungun. Even within the Yorùbáland, headpieces can differ significantly and may feature more abstract carving in addition to figure carvings depicting human or animal shapes. A full body suit thatenvelope the performer is fastened to the helmet and is most often made of Aso-Oke or strip-woven indigo cloth, locally produced and usually hand-woven. The cloth comprising the lappets is commonly a mix of imported cloths from America, Europe, and sometimes even Southeast Asia, imported to and sometimes produced from the African textile market. In an interview, Sangodiji Adediran[25] claims that the typicaltextiles are damask, which is referred to as " the royal, gold thread cloth that has a strong metallic sheen in the sun" and velvet, which is regarded as "the epitome of good taste" (aran ni olori aso), in Yoruba culture (mosaadi aso oba tii tanna yan ran yan ran). Additional physical features include a face panel made of knotted mesh that is black and white and allows the performer to see through it, the use of buttons, cowry shells, and medals to embellish, especially the region around the knotted mesh, and the usage of amulet or medicinee packets fastened to the costume. Similar to the worship of the ancestor, the construction of the masquerades (Egungun) is made possible by a broad network of family and community involvement. As though the ensemble is meant to honour the ancestor, it also speaks about the patron and family who finance the construction of the masquerade.

The purpose of the ancestral ensembles, according to the Yorùbá, is to reveal the position and filial piety of the "owner" of an Egungun, as well as the existence and power of the living dead. In this sense, the ensemble tells us as much about the living as it does about the deceased it is designed to honour, reflecting the riches, prestige, and affiliations of a specific family.

In Oyo, Oyedemi's[26] oral interview statesthatthe festival involves not only the costume itself but also dancing, drumming, and singing or chanting of particular verses. Just as many members of the community are involved in its box initial production, the community participates in the (Odun Egungun) masquerade festival, where one or more Egungun will perform. Masqueraders and drummers are almost exclusively men, although women actively participate in the singing or chanting of verses. The Egungun is a secret society among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. A hereditary chief called (Alagba baba Egungun) in Yorùbá language means Alagba heads the society, which celebrates its most important festival in June every year for seventeen days.[27] However, this Egungun festival in Oyo town was always peaceful and colourful. On the last day of the festival, a large cross-section of the people from the ancient town, including the Oyo-Mesi and Baales, as well as foreign nationals from about ten countries, gathered at the palace of the Alaafin of Oyo for the grand finale of the festival. About 30 masqueraders (Egungun) in long, colourful robes gather in a grove not far from town and then arrive as a group to perform their dance in the palace. Addressing the large gathering of people who witnessed the grand finale of the festival in the palace of His Royal Highness, the Alaafin of Oyo, the late Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi lll, said the Egungun festival is part of the religious practices

[22]Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). What is culture? A compilation of quotations Global PAD Core Concepts. UK Global Pad Open House, University of Warwick. 25

[23]Witt, M.A.F., Brown, C.A, (1993). The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities, Vol. 1. (Lexington: CC Heath and Company, Forth Edition). 25

[24] Ogunsakin, I. (2020), Oral evidence, trader, Isale Oyo.

[25] Sangodiji, A. (2020), Oral evidence, Parakoyi Area, Oyo.

[26] Mr Oyedemi, (2020), Oral evidence, a retire soldier, Aguo, Oyo town.

[27] Professor Bade, A. (2018), Oral evidence, Educationist, Oro, Kwara State.

of the Yoruba people of Oyo. The Yoruba religion is based on oral traditions; beliefs and practices are preserved by passing history, customs, and traditions from one generation to the next.[28] Authority for interpreting events and establishing proper conduct of ethics and morals rests with a bureaucratic structure of rulers who function in both religious and political realms."According to traditional Yoruba belief, all power in the universe emanates from a supreme being, Olodumare. Olodumare, known as the owner of everlasting abundance, among many other praise names, holds all power and is the giver of all life. Olodumare is the mystical, remote source of all things and is not identified by gender. All that exists, including supernatural divine realities and natural earth realities, is part of Olodumare''.[29] As the supreme almighty source, the late Oba Adeyemi stated that Olodumare is directly involved in the affairs of the earth through a complex core of sub-divinities called Orisa. The Orisa are authoritative divine emissaries who serve as intermediaries between the people of Eearth and Olodumare. They are the major objects of veneration and ritual obligation. The names and numbers of Orisa vary according to national and local customs, but they number in the hundreds. It is also one of the most ancient, traditional land-major festivals of the Yoruba race. As such, it encompasses all the range of techniques, skills, and crafts through which the cultural values, customs, and traditions of the Oyo people are manifested. The aboriginal place of this traditional and cultural event is in the city of Oyo, located in Oyo State in the southwest region of Nigeria, but it also takes place in other towns in Yorùbáland. Due to the expansion of Oyo territory, old Oyo was once a markable and vast empire of West Africa that ruled for over 600 years, imprinting its culture, language, and traditions across the region, known today as Yoruba common culture.[30] Still, New Oyo is perceived as a place where tradition is strongly preserved in its essence. Since the eighteenth century, when the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade began, the traditions of Sango and Oyo were also widely spread to the New World, being preserved today in several countries in the diaspora.[31] The World Sango Festival is a social practice and festive event deeply connected to the social, religious, cultural, and political institutions in Oyo. It is a key element for the maintenance of the city's identity, unity among the people since immemorial times, and the survival of the heart and mind of the Yoruba culture. It is the maintenance of coexistence with the ancestral world and nature. The international cultural event usually lasts for ten days and consists of intensive traditional and religious practices that accommodate many cultural features. It is during the period of strong rains, which marks the beginning of a productivity season cycle and a renewal bond between the Alaafin and Sango, the ancestral spiritual world. It is a festival that reflects the traditional diversity of its environment. Several activities will take place, which include traditional prayers, reciting oral poetry under the rhythms of traditional drums, followed by traditional dancing to evoke the ancestors, and the exchanging of traditional presents between the royal palace and the Sango Koso main shrine.[32]Highlights of the festival take place on the last day; when the city's population assembles in Koso and waits eagerly for the arrival of the Elegun-Koso, representing the ancestral spirit of Sango, who leads the crowd towards the palace for the final spiritual blessing of the city. The Alaafin does not see an eye for eye with the Elegun-Koso, as it is strictly forbidden for him to see the manifested

[28]Dopamu, P.A. (1993). "Religion in a Secular State: Problems and Possibilities within the Nigerian Context." In indo. British Review: *A Journal of History*, Vol. xxi, No. 1. 122-136

[29]Dopamu, P.A. (1993). "Religion in a Secular State: Problems and Possibilities within the Nigerian Context." In indo. British Review: A Journal of History, Vol. xxi, No. 1., 122-136

[30] Akinjogbin, I.A and Ayandele, E.A, (2008), Yoruba Up to 1800, In Obaro Ikime (Ed), Ground Work of Nigeria History, Ibadan, Heinemann Education Books (Nigeria) Plc, 123

[31]Ikime, O. (Ed.). (1974). Groundwork of Nigerian History, Ibadan: Heinemann Press.

[32]Ayansola, K. (2021). Oral evidence obtained from drummers lsokun area, Oyo

ancestral spirit of Sango.[33] The archaic Yorùbá language is still used to transmit the embedded linguistic values of the ancestral identity of the traditional community in general. For instance, reciting the traditional oral "Oriki-Sango pipe" poems (eulogies) as a form of encoding historical antecedence in an interpretable and intelligible manner is a clear example of the rich oral heritage related to the ancestor Sango and indispensable for the conduction of the festival. In an interview at Isale Oyo, Efunsetan explained that the learning of "Oriki-Sango Pipe" poems, chants, prayers, liturgical rites, dancing, divination, drumming, and even dancing starts at a young age.To ensure that parts of this rich and complex oral legacy, performing arts, and apprenticeship are not lost, traditional families transmit their knowledge through the informal method by teaching their male and female children and other members of the community.This cross-compound learning system is the base of the successful endurance of Oyo traditions, which are gender-friendly traditions as women are involved in the activities. Also, depending largely on craftsmanship, the festival cannot be held without traditional handmade attire, sculptures, liturgical objects, and other traditional instruments. Prince Ayo Ladigbolu[34], in an oral interview in Oyo Palace, Mr Orisumbare Alabi[35]asserted that the Federal Government had expressed its support to the Alaafin of Oyo, the late Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi, and the Paule Gomes Cultural Foundation in the pursuit of preserving and safeguarding both the tangible and intangible heritage of ancient Oyo town, with a view to prepare candidature dossiers for World Sango heritage nominations. This is stated in an official letter submitted to the National Commission for Museums and Monuments by the then Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and National Orientation. Alaafin cultural Ambassador is Dr. Paule Gomes of Portugal.[36] According to the letter, Oyo town, in Oyo State, southwest Nigeria, has a noteworthy and richest collection of tangible resources such as temples, palaces, markets, and traditional compounds, as well as natural resources like rivers and forests. According to the federal government, this significant collection of structures and natural resources; will ensure the survival of a millenary civilization based on a distinct and complex traditional, political, and religious system. The interview with Ayo Ladigbolu,[37] the deputy chairman of the planning committee of the festival in 2012, revealed that the Oyo State Progressive Association of North America, Inc. was ready to prepare to create the Oranyan World Heritage Centre and Institute in the historic town. Another interview with Mr Oyekola,[38] who watched the events, remarked in another interview that "this is a most encouraging and challenging development, which will serve as a boost to the morale of Yorùbás, who see the Oranyan festival as a labour of love for this generation and prosperity. "It is a clarion appeal to all, especially the sons and daughters, to embrace the attributes and traits of Oranyan that qualify anyone to be called 'Omoluabi.' "Whoever upholds beliefs and practices the customs is also a true descendant of Oranyan.

The Myth Surrounding Oranyan Staff at Ile- Ife

Ile-Ife is the cradle of the Yorùbá race and a historical townwith several tourist attractions, including the Ife museum, the Palace of the Ooni of Ifeand many others. The Oranyan Staff (Opa Oranyan) is one of Ife's most popular attractions. The staff is nearly 18 long and decorated with intricate designs. It is surrounded with myths, cultures, and histories. It is a must-see attraction for tourists. A journey to the ancient city of Ife would be incomplete until you see the staff. The Oranyan Staff can be seen at the Oranyan Shrinein Ile-Ife Arubidi district. Despite the fact that certain traditional rites are performed there, it is nevertheless open to tourists. However, some areas of the shrine are exclusively accessible to initiates. The staff could be seen around 40 feet away while entering the temple. It features a stones made elevated boundary in the shape of a square. There are three steps down from the top of

[33]Ayansola, K. (2021). Oral evidence obtained from drummers lsokun area, Oyo

[34] Prince Ladigbolu, A. (2017), Oral evidence, a retired Clergyman, Isale Oyo area, Oyo

[35] Mr orisumbare, A. (2020), Oral evidence, a retired civil servant, Oke-Apo, Oyo area, Oyo

[36]Dr. Paule Gomes (2012). Oral evidence from the Cultural and Festival Ambassador to the Alafin Oyo, the late Olayiwola Adeyemi, Alaafin Palace, Oyo.

[37]Prince Ladigbolu, A. (2017), Oral evidence, a retired Clergyman, Isale Oyo area, Oyo.

[38] Mr Oyekola, (2020), Oral Evidence, a retired civil servant, Asipa, Oyo area, Oyo.

divider to reach the crew. A metal chain separates it even more. White clothes cover the base of the staff. A little grove to the left is protected from visitors by dense trees. Walking further behind the staff will take you to the inner sanctuary, which is only accessible to initiates. The Oranyan obelisk dated back hundredsyears and is steeped in history.[39] Lawrence Omidiora, an Ife destitute acted as a guide on the shrine tour. "Opa Oranyan represents the essence of Ile Ife, first as the traditional source of the Yorùbápeople, because Oranyan is a descendant of Oduduwa, the progenitor of the Yorùbá race. He was Oduduwa grandson," he explained. Although Oranyan is claimed to have used Oranyan staff, the round obelisk does not appear to be a staff any person can carry wield.[40] Omidiora stated that he was not aware of any archaeological studieson the obelisk that would prove the authenticity of the staff tales. Omidiora[41]narrated the legend and history of the staff. "Oranyan was a fantastic warrior". He possessed a sword. He dropped the sword at the moment of his death, and it turned into the staff we see today. The letters on it, according to some experts, have a close affinity with Greek letters.[42]Tourists are permitted to stand at the elevated demarcation and take photographs, but they are not allowed to approach or touch the obelisk. According to Omidiora, the obelisk still possessed powerful magical abilities. "it is a belief that the staff has a living soul that must appeased. That is why members of the two families, Akogun and Eredumi, have continued to participate in its worshipto this day.[43] During the time of inter-tribal warfare, the staff was always consulted before wars, and staff helped to secure victories over enemies," he explained. Despite its wisdom and history, the staff is still usedin the installation of traditional rulers in some towns and cities. He went on to say, "Before some kings are installed, the sword of office for each of these kings must be removed from the Oranmiyan Shrine and given to them".[44]The Oranmiyan Staff also plays a role in the installation of a new Ooni of Ife, according to the guide, because the staff is not just the spirit of Oranyan but of all the past Ooni who have reign Ile-Ife.

[39]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state.

[40]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state

[41]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state

[42]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state

[43]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state

Conclusion

The paper examined the historical development of the Oranmiyan cultural event in New Oyo as well as the strategic measure of maintaining Yorùbá antiquities in the 21st century. Overall, this studydiscovered that the Oranyan festival is a major emblem of Yoruba culture and values as well as a successful vehicle for preserving Yorùbá artifact. Its annual celebration has served as a forum for the reaffirmation of Yorùbá bonds and the history of the founding of the Oyo Empire. It also serves as the foundation for global awareness of Yorùbá sociocultural identity, as Alaafin of Oyo the late Lamidi Adeyemi Olayiwola lll influence nurturing a Yorùbá identity and consciousness among the black race across generations and boundaries. The study demonstrates the view that the New Oyo is a land of great and dynamic culture. Its huge culture outflow plays an important part image and influence of the Alaafin, Oba lamidi Adeyemi lll in the rest of Yorùbáland, and much of black Africa. The cultural festival named Oranyan or Oramiyan serves as an occasion to showcase the beauty of Yorùbá culture and the glory of the African past. At its best, it was an ambitious cultural jubilee lasted for a full ten days during which rulers and chiefs of Yorùbáland, ordinary citizens, poor and rich from around the globe were there on the last day to honour Alaafin and see the beauty of Yorùbá civilization from a very great height.

This research suggests that the Oranyan festival should continue to further strengthen its roots as a cornerstone ofYorùbá culture while ensuring that Yorùbáantiquities are safeguarded for future generations. Nevertheless, the Oranyan festival is a mirror reflection of the history, beliefs, and traditional identity of the people of Yorùbá at home and abroad in contemporary times.

The study recommendations include strengthening cultural heritage in the country,

[44]Omidiora, L. (2017), Oral Evidence, custodian of Oranmiyan Staff, Ile-Ife, Osun state

allocating more funds to the Ministry of Youth and Culture, and improving human capacity development. As a result, cultural tourism will increase, jobs will be created, and revenue generation for the government through the tourist centre will increase.