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THE BALOGUN INSTITUTION AS AN ETHNIC REPRESENTATION IN THE TRADITIONAL EMIRATE SYSTEM IN ILORIN

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Introduction

Balogun, is a Yoruba word that can be literally translated as War Commander. Scholars like Samuel Johnson¹, J.F.A. Ajayi², J.A. Atanda³, R. Smith⁴, Oguntomisin and Falola⁵ in various studies of Yoruba history, provide a general platform for understanding the military arrangements in pre-colonial Yorubaland⁶. Military titles like *Basorun*, *Aare Ona Kakanfo*, *Otun Balogun*, *Osi Balogun*, *Sarumi*, *Seriki* and *Aare Ago* are commonly used in different parts of Yorubaland. While the title of *Balogun* is used in other parts of Yorubaland for unit Commander, such as *Otun* (right) or *Osi* (left) in Ilorin emirate setting, a *Balogun* is a full field commander that has his own unit commanders⁷. Apart from this, a *Balogun* in Ilorin represents his linguistic unit of Ilorin community in the emirate council⁸. This explains why the leaders of the three main linguistic groups of Hausa, Fulani and the Yoruba were originally appointed into the office of *Balogun*.

The exigency of war in about 1831 brought about the fourth *Balogun*, Alanamu, in Ilorin⁹. This increased the number of the Yoruba *Baloguns* in the emirate council to two, while the other linguistic groups of Hausa and the Fulani remained one.

There are many schools of thought on the evolution of the *Balogun* Institution in Ilorin. The first is of the opinion that the title of *Balogun* was a mere award by the first *Emirs* of Ilorin, Abdulsalami, to stretch an arm of friendship to the existing multi-lingual group leaders of Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani in Ilorin before he proclaimed an emirate on the area¹⁰. The second sees the evolution as a phase in the militarized environment created in Ilorin following *Aare Afonja's* declaration of independence for the area, from the old Oyo empire¹¹. The third and the last of the schools associate the evolution of the *Balogun* in Ilorin to the need and exigency of the time before the area was proclaimed an emirate¹². A critical appraisal of these schools of thought will provide the basis for understanding the dominant influence of the military

class in the political transformation witnessed in Ilorin. Also a better understanding of the reasons for the decision of the first *Emir*, Abdulsalami, to co-opt group leaders of the three major linguistic groups in Ilorin before his proclamation of emirate on the area and reasons for adopting Yoruba war titles even by non Yoruba group leaders of Hausa and Fulani.

While the first school of thought which describes the award of *Balogun* title as a friendly gesture could not be substantiated, later events in Ilorin emirate history confirm that the emergence of *Balogun* Institution in Ilorin was a trend in the militarized phase and the dictate of the time. The adoption of a Yoruba title of *Balogun*, even for the non-Yoruba group leaders like the Hausas and Fulani points to the fact that the political transformation of Ilorin into an emirate was from Yoruba political system and that the Yoruba population is dominant in the area.

The political transition of Ilorin from a traditional Yoruba provincial setting into an emirate, which was totally alien to the history and culture of the area, was a product of the change in the military leadership in the area. The *Emir*, being of Fulani stock and fully aware of the insignificant population of the non-Yoruba groups in Ilorin, appreciated the need to bring the varying linguistic groups in the town on board in his administration. This was a survival strategy. Apart from this, the survival of the newly declared emirate depended mainly on its military strength to withstand the contending powers around Ilorin at the time. Therefore, the co-option of the leaders of the major linguistic groups in Ilorin, as *Balogun* could better be regarded as a normal evolution rather than the creation of the first and the second *Emir*.

The involvement of the three major linguistic groups in the political administration of Ilorin was essentially borne out of the necessity for the emirate system to survive. Ilorin, being a Yoruba dominated community that had been under the authority of the *Alaafin* of Oyo could not be easily changed to a foreign political system without some element of force. This explains why full force and totalitarian policies were used by the rampaging soldiers led by the sons of *Shehu* Alimi (Abdul-Salami and Shitta) to ensure the transformation of Ilorin as an emirate.

First to be appointed as *Balogun* into Ilorin Emir's council were, *Dose*, for the Hausa, the *Olufadi* for the Fulani, and *Usman*, *Balogun* Ajikobi for the Yoruba. The many wars of survival fought by Ilorin emirate to ward off Oyo attack, warranted the appointment of Yusufu Bale also amongst the Yoruba, as the fourth *Balogun* in Ilorin. He was called *Balogun* Alanamu¹³.

The circumstances under which the *Balogun* institution emerged among the various linguistic groups in Ilorin, gave the *Baloguns* a dual role in the Emir's council. They jointly arrived at decisions with the Emir on the political

administration of the emirate and also executed such decisions, either in the administration of their respective wards within Ilorin township, on the battlefields or in the conquered areas. Being field officers, the *Balogun* stood at vantage position to give information on issues to be deliberated upon in the Emir's council. In this way they led the council in formulating policies and taking decisions.

The *Balogun* and the Defence of Ilorin as an Emirate Ogele War

Following the tragic death of *Aare Afonja* in the hands of his soldiers, and subsequent proclamation of an emirate over Ilorin by the sons of *Shehu Alimi*, the Oyo Yoruba were united in their determination to resist what they regarded as political insult, for the *Fulani* to proclaim a rule on any part of Oyo empire. An army was raised under *Toyeje*, the Bale of *Ogbomoso*, who succeeded *Aare Afonja* as *Kakanfo*. The army camped at *Ogele*, expecting to easily run over the *Fulani* authority in Ilorin¹⁴. The *Fulani* had anticipated and prepared for the attack. They demanded that each of the newly appointed *Balogun* should raise an army among their respective linguistic group to complement the *Jamma*¹⁵.

Having carefully studied the organizational weakness of the Yoruba army on the battle field, the Ilorin army concentrated on the use of Calvary. This inflicted heavy human losses on the Yoruba army. A good number of Yoruba towns in the *Ibolo* areas were destroyed and some others were fully captured¹⁶. The defeat of the allied forces of the Yoruba was a moral booster for the emerging forces in Ilorin. On the other hand, the morale of the Yoruba allied forces waned because of the betrayal noticed amongst them. The tactical error on the part of the Yoruba allied forces was that they concentrated mainly on the military organization. They were not sufficiently diplomatic. Their situation would not have been as bad had they penetrated into the rank and file of Yoruba people that were aggrieved by acts of the *Fulani*, who imposed themselves as the authority in Ilorin.

The *Mugbamugba* War

After a short respite, the Yoruba re-organised and resolved to get rid of the *Fulani* in Ilorin. This time, they went into alliance with *Monijia*, the King of *Rabbah*¹⁷. The encounter took place between March and April, when the locust fruit were ripe for harvest. The lingering effects of the previous war was apparent. A good number of places were still deserted, while there were not enough farm that could sustain the long camping of the army. Both the

besiegers and the besieged soon resorted to living on the locus fruit (Igba). Hence the war took its title *Mugba Mugba*¹⁸.

Once again, the allied forces of the Yoruba were defeated. Their knowledge of how to deal with the power of Ilorin was still defective. The successive defeat of the Yoruba allied forces made them to lose the courage for launching further attack. On the other hand, the emirate army grew to be more confident and aggressive. Consequently, many more Yoruba towns and villages were destroyed and the peoples' property were looted by the ravaging army of Ilorin.

Two major factors were responsible for the success of the Ilorin army: superior use of the cavalry and the personality clash amongst the Yoruba chiefs and commanders. There was, for instance an intense rivalry between Toyese, the *Kakanfo* of Oyo at Ogbomoso and Adegun, the Onikoyi. These eventually led to a war between the two.

The destruction of most of the Yoruba towns and villages by the victorious army of Ilorin, turned a good number of Yoruba who lived in them, refugees. They were scattered all over Yorubaland and this continued to be a source of worry for cities that had not been touched by war. This explains why the Yoruba leaders could not live with the reality of Ilorin emirate army's victories. Hence they regrouped to launch another attack¹⁹.

Kanla War

As a result of successive Ilorin victories over the Oyo forces, the powers and influence of the *Alaafin* of Oyo continued to dwindle to the point of being limited to the capital. More and more of old Oyo empire's provinces declared their independence from Oyo's authority and tributes were no longer paid to the *Alaafin*. It was at this period of anarchy and confusion that *Alaafin* Amodo, one of the grandchildren of *Alaafin* Abiodun's twin brother, came to the throne. Understanding the situation as it was, the *Alaafin* began his reign by trying to consolidate the remaining loyalists to his institution and stretching arm of friendship to prominent chiefs around Oyo.

The *Alaafin* identified Lanloke, the Chief of Ogodo as one of such prominent and powerful chiefs. Ogodo, according to its historical origin used to be a Nupe town²⁰. But by the end of the 18th century, Yoruba migrants from Oyo had taken over the town for commercial reasons²¹. Ogodo grew to become a big commercial city that served as the exchange centre for the Yoruba and Nupe traders. They traded in different merchandise and thus the powers and influence of its ruler grew with its relevance.

Alaafin Amodo's interest in Ogodo was to renew the blood ties with the Yoruba population in the town, use their influence and contacts to rebuild the powers of his institution. He gave out his daughter in marriage to Lanloke, the chief of Ogodo²². Rather than appreciate this kind of gesture of *Alaafin* Amodo Lanloke grew to become more conscious of his new influence, powers and wealth. He treated *Alaafin* Amodo's daughter with indignity and disrespect. This was deliberately to spite her father as the *Alaafin*. At one of such contemptuous treatment of *Alaafin* Amodo's daughter, Lanloke nearly beat his wife to the point of death²³.

Lanloke was neither remorseful for his act, nor appreciate the possible consequence of his action. He was rather boastful and care free about what the *Alaafin* would do²⁴. He allied with Ilorin, and assumed a more aggressive posture²⁵. With the support of Ilorin soldiers, Chief Lanloke attacked Oyo town and the city was sacked. Oyo thus became an Ilorin tributary²⁶.

Alaafin Amodo became very bitter and depressed as a result of the humiliation he suffered and as a result of the destruction of Oyo. He remained very hopeful. He continued with the diplomatic efforts at fostering unity among the Yoruba chiefs that had been divided by jealousy and petty rivalry²⁷.

Alaafin Amodo eventually brought the divided Yoruba chiefs together and therefore raised a formidable force to engage the Ilorin army. The battle took place at Kanla, from where the battle took its name. The Yoruba chiefs were together physically, but they were spirits apart. The rivalry among them resulted in treachery. For instance, the Onikoyi was known to be sick and unfit to be on the field but the *Edun* of Gbogun deliberately encouraged him to man a weak point so that Ilorin army, which he had arranged with, could penetrate the Yoruba forces and rout them²⁸.

Already informed of the treachery in the Oyo camp, the Ilorin forces, merely mounted defences on the other fronts as they attacked from the Onikoyi's front²⁹. The Onikoyi was rounded up and killed. Ilorin quickly seized the opportunity to penetrate the Yoruba lines and drive the soldiers out of the battle field.

Many of the remaining towns and villages still loyal to the *Alaafin* were attacked, destroyed and deserted. Chief Oja, the first settler at Ago (the present day Oyo town), was among those that were drowned in river Ogun³⁰ as they fled from the invading Ilorin forces.

The recurring victory of Ilorin army over the allied forces of the *Alaafin* was naturally bound to boost the morale of the emirate army and its allies, yet successive *Alaafin* of Oyo were undaunted. Consequently they continued to regroup and re-launch attack against Ilorin.

The Eleduwe War

The distress that followed the last defeat of Oyo empire and its allies by the ravaging army of Ilorin and its allies was attributed to the depression of *Alaafin* Amodo, who eventually got ill and died³¹. Prince Oluewu was unanimously elected as the new *Alaafin*³². Going by the process of selecting the preceding *Alaafin* of Oyo before Oluewu, potential candidates used to engage themselves in fierce contests that it was never possible to select an *Alaafin* by unanimous votes of the Oyo mesì, (Oyo empires' king makers). This explains the very low morale of both the royal families and people. The position of the *Alaafin* had been reduced to titular institution, rather than the historically known *Alaafin* that does not only reign but rule.

Alaafin Oluewu was fully aware of the situation at the time of his enthronement but like his predecessors, he was full of hope and determination to reverse the situation. *Alaafin* Oluewu as a person, could be described as haughty and irritable in temperament. He however, acceded to the call when *Emir* Shitta of Ilorin, requested him (the *Alaafin*) to pay him the traditional homage of a vassal³³. The chiefs of Oyo and members of the royal family prevailed on *Alaafin* Oluewu to accede to the call of *Emir* Shitta, to save the capital and the remnant towns that still paid their allegiance to Oyo³⁴.

Emir Shitta received *Alaafin* Oluewu with every mark of honour and distinction; but he confiscated the *Gbedu* drum that was often beaten before an *Alaafin* to show his royalty. In the words of *Emir* Shitta: "there cannot be two kings in my dominion but one only, and that is myself"³⁵. By *Emir* Shitta's statement, the *Alaafin* and his institutions were reduced to mere subjects of the ravaging foreigners based in Ilorin.

Alaafin Oluewu felt badly humiliated and insulted by the act of *Emir* Shitta. He refused to honour the second call on him by the *Emir* to come down to Ilorin. Not even the counsel by both Basorun and Asipa could change his mind for the fear of the consequences on Oyo, by *Alaafin's* refusal to honour *Emir* Shitta's call, both Akioso, the Basorun and Ailumo, the Asipa went against the express order of *Alaafin* Oluewu forbidding them to go³⁶.

The *Emir* was disturbed and, in fact, felt insulted by the refusal of *Alaafin* Oluewu to honour his call. The *Emir* therefore decided to punish the *Alaafin*. He ordered Lanloke the Chief of Ogodo to ravage the suburbs of Oyo and in fact threaten the city³⁷. *Alaafin* Oluewu was not unprepared. He had sought and got the support of the Bariba to subdue his enemies both within and

outside. Those within were the Basorun and the Asipa who defied his instruction not to go on his behalf to *Emir Shitta* in Ilorin and those outside were the *Fulani* authority in Ilorin and their allies.

With the alliance of the Bariba led by Eleduwe, *Alaafin* Oluewu was able to punish both the Asipa and the Basorun with death³⁸. He went further to attack Ogodo and raised down Gbodo³⁹. Ilorin army and its allies were defeated⁴⁰. They were pursued until they ran into the flooded Ogun River. Most of the Ilorin soldiers were drowned.

Alaafin Oluewu and his Bariba allies were naturally elated by their victory over the combined army of Ilorin and its allies. Therefore, he decided to summon warriors and chiefs all over the old Oyo empire's territories. *Alaafin* Oluewu was unaware that some of these Yoruba chiefs he invited were, in alliance with Ilorin and all of them cherished their independence from Oyo's authority. *Alaafin* Oluewu was of the belief that those in alliance with Ilorin were doing it out of necessity and not out of convenience. He held the opinion that there was a general resentment of foreigner's rule over Ilorin⁴¹.

The immediate response of the Yoruba chiefs to *Alaafin* Oluewu's confirmed his feelings that they would be glad to be free from the foreigner's yolk. At a meeting of the war council chaired by *Alaafin* Oluewu and in which Eleduwe, the Bariba warrior and invited Yoruba chiefs were present the *modus operandi* for prosecuting the war to overrun Ilorin and reclaim the old Oyo empire's territories were concluded⁴².

The *Fulani* authority in Ilorin was indeed distressed by the response to Oluewu's assemblage of the Yoruba warriors and chiefs. Being fully alive to the seriousness and the extent of Ilorin's defeat at the Gbodo encounter, the *Emir* was desperate to avert the impending calamity on his territory and people. Added to the desperate moves of the *Emir* was the fear of the Bariba warrior, Eleduwe or Waru Kura, the commander of the Bariba ally of Oyo Empire. The Ilorin people referred to him as *Ikoko* (Wolf)⁴³ because he was commonly known for destroying every living being in the area he captured.

The *Emir* embarked on both internal and external moves to save the situation. On the external wing, *Emir Shitta* sent for assistance from the *Sultan* of Sokoto his suzerain. Ibrahim Khalil, the third *Emir* of Gwandu, personally led a joint force of Sokoto and Gwandu warriors to aid Ilorin⁴⁴. On the local side, the *Emir* tried to identify individuals and groups of people among the Yoruba that had an axe grind with the *Alaafin*. He was able to locate one Yusufu Bale, the progenitor of the present Alanamu family of Ilorin. Yusufu was a renowned warrior specially known for the manner in which he overcame his enemies. He physically beat the enemy to capture them. And was therefore fondly referred to as Alanamu.

Yusufu *Bale* or Alanamu considered his invitation to join the Ilorin army against the organized team of *Alaafin* Oluewu, as good opportunity to revenge the bad circumstances under which he packed out of Oyo town and settled at Reke, a village not too far from Ilorin⁴⁵. He supported Ilorin with his army, and was also involved in the diplomatic game, employed by the authority in Ilorin to play the Yoruba chiefs against one another⁴⁶.

At the time Ilorin was preparing for the impending war with the combined forces of the Yoruba and the Bariba's from all fronts, old rivalry, sharp differences and fears of Bariba domination were seriously drumming in the war camp assembled by *Alaafin* Oluewu. For instance, special privileges and reference accorded to the Bariba by *Alaafin* made the Yoruba warriors fear that the Bariba would only be replacing the established *Fulani* hegemony already in Ilorin and that the Bariba dominance or rule over them will be real rather than mere rendering of assistance to engage Ilorin⁴⁷.

Most of the Yoruba chiefs assembled by *Alaafin* Oluewu to sack Ilorin, actually cherished their respective independence. Their fears were further compounded by the experience of their direct encounter with the Bariba, who had actually begun to behave like the new lords of the Yoruba chiefs. They had no doubt that they would be treated later like a captured people after the war. This explains why some of them made up their minds to undermine the proclaimed interest of the joint Yoruba forces against Ilorin. At the heat of the battle, Prince Atiba of Ago and Timi, Bamgbaiye of Ede, deliberately left the wing of their command, to make the penetration of Ilorin army possible. Both *Alaafin* Oluewu and the Bariba warrior Wari kura were therefore rounded up. Both of them fell in the battle⁴⁸.

The death of *Alaafin* Oluewu, and the leader of the Bariba allied forces, Warikura, was indeed a turning point in the History of Ilorin as a sovereign state and power; the entire politics of Yorubaland and warfare that characterized the whole of the nineteenth century. Some scholars and philosophers attributed the high rate and degree of treachery exhibited by the Yoruba at a point that their unity was crucial to their collective survival to the historical curse evoked by *Alaafin* Aole, after his failure to get *Aare* Afonja and other prominent Oyo chiefs exterminated by sending them to attack Iwere⁴⁹. Others see it as a normal trend in political evolution. Such rivalry, treachery and suspicion are prevalent in some other personal and group relations⁵⁰.

The news of the death of Warukura and *Alaafin* Oluewu readily aggravated the confusion in old Oyo. This led to the exodus of its inhabitants. The attack on old Oyo and remnants of places that still paid allegiance to the *Alaafin* by Lanloke the Chief of Ogodo, who had always been an inveterate enemy of Oyo and an active ally of Ilorin, accelerated the people's migration

to different directions. While a good number of Oyo migrants went to Kisi, some others went to Igboho. A noticeable number even went to Ilorin⁵¹. Thus, Oyo was deserted and it went into ruins.

Balogun as the *de facto* Head of Ilorin Emirate

The enormous powers and influence of the four *Balogun* of Ilorin in the administration of the emirate have remained a subject of controversy among scholars of the caliphate. For instance, there are those who believe that the position held by the *Balogun* was a mere expression of their respective ambition⁵². There are also those who consider the political institution to have been a product of security situation in which Ilorin found herself before, during and after it became an emirate⁵³. In contrast to all the other emirates of Sokoto caliphate where the Emir was the supreme authority, to whom war title holders like Waziri, Wali and Maiyaki deferred in authority⁵⁴.

In Ilorin, the *Balogun* Agba (the oldest on the throne among the four *Balogun*) was the actual ruler⁵⁵. The involvement of Ilorin emirate army in the protracted wars which ravaged Yorubaland throughout the whole of nineteenth century, naturally placed the warlords who were led by the *Balogun* at a vantage position to rule. For major part of the periods Ilorin emirate existed, before the advent of direct colonial rule, the *Balogun* Agba rather than the Emir was the actual ruler of the emirate. Even though the *Balogun* attended the emirate council meetings at the *Emir's* palace where major decisions were taken, they were actually not attending the meeting to take instructions from the *Emir*, rather they were the pilots and pivots of all decisions reached.

For instance, different positions held by *Emir* Aliyu (1868 - 1891) and the then *Balogun* Agba Abubakar, (popularly known as Karara, the *Balogun* Gambari) over Ilorin's retaliation on Offa for its roles in causing the mass death of Ilorin army in the Jalumi war, shows, and clearly too, the power base of the emirate. While the *Emir* openly expressed his desire that Ilorin should not attack Offa the *Balogun* Agba, Karara held a totally different view. In fact, the *Balogun* had to openly caution the *Emir* not to over stress his views and that if the *Emir* defied his instructions, he would dethrone him and enthrone his younger Brother Mama⁵⁶. The *Balogun* eventually left Ilorin with Mama to attack Offa and vowed not to return to Ilorin until *Emir* Aliyu died⁵⁷.

In relating the traditional political arrangement in Ilorin emirate with the contemporary structural system the Ilorin emirate could simply be said to have operated a confederacy. Apart from the fact that each of the *Balogun* ran autonomous government in his administrative ward within the township, their control of conquered territories, remained a clear testimony of their powers.

As at the time that the British colonial government decided to change its policies in Africa to establish colonial rule in 1900, the actual power holder in Ilorin was the *Balogun Agba* and not the *Emir*⁵⁸. This explains why it was the *Balogun* that sternly resisted the colonial rule, while the *Emir* Sulyman (1895 - 1915) collaborated with the British authority to cause the dethronement and deportation of many of the *Balogun*.

The *Balogun* and British rule in Ilorin

In accordance with one of the cardinal reasons for *Shehu* Usman dan fodio's Jihad (Holy war) of 1804 to 1809, which gave birth to the emirate system of government in various parts of the present Northern Nigeria, violent resistance against political domination or rule by those regarded as non-Muslims, is a religious obligation on the Muslims⁵⁹. Heavenly rewards are even promised those Muslims that lost their lives in the course of such struggle⁶⁰. Hence, the full commitment of the Muslims in various parts of the caliphate to resist the British incursion into the established emirate system in different areas.

However, the resistance to the British influence or rule in Ilorin emirate, will properly not be explained through religious reasons alone but from political, social and economic perspectives. While the entire people in Ilorin emirate could simply be said to be Muslims by religion, the political leadership of the emirate, symbolized by the *Balogun* saw the establishment of the British rule as an erosion of their powers and influence. Apart from this, the *Balogun* saw the British as already taking side with the people of Ibadan, who were their age long rivals in the acquisition of the areas previously under the authority of the old Oyo empire. Added to the political and social reasons for mounting hard resistance to the British influence in Ilorin emirate, was the need to maintain the economic gains that accrued to the *Balogun* from fief administration. For instance, the boundary agreements imposed on Ilorin emirate by Captain Bower, a European officer sent by the Colonial Governor in Lagos to mediate in the perennial conflicts between Ilorin emirate and Ibadan, excised part of the traditional areas covered by the emirate to Ibadan. Places like Ayiede-Ekiti, Ikole and a host of others were allocated to Ibadan⁶¹.

As a result of Ilorin Emirate army's defeat by the British forces in 1897, the *Balogun* of Ilorin avoided open confrontation with the British forces. Rather, they mounted campaigns to incite their subjects not to give any form of co-operation to the British. They withdrew their people from the labour force involved in the construction of the telegraph line passing through Ilorin. They also instructed the people not to sell food to them or even give them water to drink⁶⁴. It was this increasing hostility that made the commander of

the British troops stationed at Jebba, Captain Somerset, sent a corporal and a few soldiers to the *Emir* of Ilorin, with a warning letter in August 1898.

There was no other military encounter between the Ilorin emirate traditional army and the British forces till Lord Lugard formally pronounced the take-over of the areas previously under the Royal Niger Company as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. By Lord Lugard's proclamation of 1st of January 1900, the British government had changed its policies in Nigeria from that of mere economic co-operation to the full establishment of colonial government. The various colonial agencies adopted diplomatic tactics to manage the resistance organized by the traditional authorities in Ilorin. It was as a result of this that the root of the problems were traced and new policies were formulated to meet the local problems.

The Ethnic Balancing in Ilorin Political Leadership

Given the pivotal role of the Balogun Agba in Ilorin traditional political emirate system, the natural process by which the Balogun Agba emerges provides a natural leadership rotation amongst the major linguistic groups in Ilorin before the advent of colonial rule. The fact that the Balogun Agba is the oldest Balogun on the throne, dictates that it is only natural phenomenon (death) that confers the title on the holders of the office. By this, the four Baloguns in Ilorin, representing different linguistic groups, at different times of Ilorin emirate history, had emerged as the Balogun Agba. For instance, the leading role played by Balogun Karara, a Balogun Gambari, on the imbroglio between Ilorin and Offa, on which he directed Emir Aliyu (1868 - 1891) to stop his persuasion on the Balogun's determined effort to revenge the role of Offa in the Jalumi war, was because the Balogun was the Balogun Agba.

Indeed, it was the Balogun Agba that the first set of Colonial Residents sent to Ilorin recognized as the "real ruler" in Ilorin by the time they arrived the area in 1900. Both David Carnegie and P Dwyer, who respectively sent reports on the situations in Ilorin between June and August 1900, confirmed that Balogun Inakoju Ali, the Balogun Alanamu was the actual ruler in Ilorin⁶³. It was on this basis that the colonial government schemed to dethrone and deport the Balogun in 1902⁶⁴. As the Balogun Agba, who was simply referred to as the leading Balogun by the colonial officers. Both the Colonial Residents and Colonial High Commissioner, Lord Lugard, opined that the dethronement of Balogun Inakoju Ali, and his deportation from Ilorin will serve as a strong warning to the other Baloguns not to make further troubles with the colonial authority⁶⁵.

As a failure to the colonial government's postulations, the next Balogun Agba, who was Balogun Ajikobi, Biala, also had to suffer dethronement and deportation from Ilorin in 1907, over the Olofin Ganga hunters' revolt against colonial policies, which were against their interest⁶⁶. Indeed, the rotational nature of the political leadership in Ilorin through the process by which the Balogun Agba evolved, provided an ethnic balancing in the political leadership of Ilorin emirate, since the Balogun Agba was the *de facto* ruler in Ilorin emirate, long before the advent of the colonial rule in the area.

Endnotes

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4. J.F.A. Ajayi and R. Smith, Op.cit p. 87
5. Toyin Falola and Dare Oguntomisin, *The Military in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics*, University of Ife Press (1984) pp. 48 - 49
6. Ibid
7. Oral interview with Alhaji Sulaiman Balogun, a retired staff of Ilorin Native Authority. Aged 76 years.
8. Ibid
9. Oral interview Mall. Babatunde Ishola, an Islamic cleric aged 85 years.
10. Oral interview with Alhaji Musa Aliu, a trader, Aged 72 years
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28. Oral interview Mallam Abubakar Balogun a descendant of Balogun Fulani, aged 67 years.
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33. Ibid.
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45. Balogun S. A. Op. cit pp. 19 - 22.
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49. Oral interview with Alhaji Ayinde Adelabu a Trader aged 78years and Alhaji Shehu Mohammed an Islamic scholar and preacher.
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51. NAK/SNP/15/11 Dwyer to High Commissioner, Monthly report, August, 1900
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59. Ibid.
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61. Letter from the first Colonial Resident in Ilorin, David Carnegie to the High Commissioner at Lokoja

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