

## INTEGRATION IN A NIGERIAN SOCIETY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE ILORIN EXAMPLE

H.O Danmole\*

**ABSTRACT :** This is a historical study of the process of integration in Ilorin in the nineteenth century. The concept of integration is discussed as a background to the study. This concept, as argued in the paper is not only relevant to modern nation states but also traditional African societies in general and Ilorin in particular.

Ilorin was an heterogeneous society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the role of the ruling elite in the distribution of political offices; the use of religious idiom of Islam; and the hostility shown towards Ilorin by her southern neighbours brought the people together. Furthermore, the military class was an integrative factor. Indeed, the economy of Ilorin promoted intergroup relations which led to diffusion of cultures which at the end of the century produced a distinct Ilorin culture.

### INTRODUCTION

Many African societies have been faced with the issue of integration or several centuries. As African kingdoms and states expanded, more culturally diverse peoples became part of the expanding states. Some of these peoples became acculturated through definite policies by the ruling elite or as a result of inter-group relations within the state. The level of integration that often took place depended on the efforts of the people of the state to accommodate one another. The concept of integration is so important that it has attracted various definitions from scholars. One of such definitions that is relevant to this paper is that of M. E. Doro and N. M. Stultz who see integration from the political angle by saying that "integration represents the cumulative effect of individual

\* Department of History - University of Ilorin.

allegiance to and identification with society and its goal"<sup>1</sup>. Related to this definition is that of Pye which can be summarized as bridging the gap between groups by "subsuming" their narrow interest in terms of culture, language and ethnic affinity to the larger interest of the national community<sup>2</sup>. Geertz also looks at integration in same vein<sup>3</sup>. Just as these definitions of integration may be adequate to modern nation states, they are equally relevant to developments in Ilorin in the nineteenth century.

Apart from the definitions of the concept of integration, Smock and Bentsi-Enchill have also identified conditions necessary for integration. They include language, education balancing political power, economic development and nationwide cultural patterns<sup>4</sup>. These conditions are not only necessary for contemporary states in Africa but also necessary for traditional African society such as Ilorin in the nineteenth century. Apart from the conditions enunciated by Smock Bentsi-Enchill, religion, and in the case of Ilorin, Islam was a very important factor.

In an article "The Ibadan Conference of 1855: Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in Mid-Nineteenth Century Yorubaland"<sup>5</sup> Falola highlighted the attempt by Yoruba leaders to achieve unity through diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflict which had engulfed Yorubaland since the final collapse of the old Oyo Kingdom in 1835. The peace sought for at this conference was aimed partly at re-integration various Yoruba groups that had fallen in the early decades of the nineteenth century<sup>6</sup>. While the peace conference as Falola has

(1) M. E Doro and N.M. Stultz (eds). *Governing In Black Africa: Perspective On New States*. Pretence-Hall Incorporation, New Jersey 1970, p. 171.

(2) L. W. Pye. *Aspects of Political Development* Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1966, p. 65. See also A. R. Zolberg "Patterns of National Integration" in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Volume V, N° 4, December, 1967, pp. 449-467.

(3) C. Geertz "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in New States", in Geertz (ed) *Old Societies and New States*, New York, 1963, p. 163.

(4) D. R. Smock and K. Bentsi-Enchill (eds). Introduction *The Search for National Integration in Africa*, The Free Press, Macmillan Publishers, London, 1976, pp. 3-17, see also the Introductory Chapter in J.S. Coleman and C.G. Rosberg, JR., *Political Parties and National Integration in Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 1970, pp. 1-12.

(5) Toyin Falola, "The Ibadan Conference of 1855: Yoruba Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution", *Geneve-Afrique* Vol. XXIII, N° 2, 1985, pp. 39-56.

(6) J. A. Atanda. "The Fall of Old Oyo Empires: A Reconsideration of its Causes", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)* Vol. V, N° 4, June, 1971, pp. 477-490, R. C. C. "The Chronology of Yoruba Wars In the Nineteenth Century: A Reconstruction", *JHSN* Vol. 5, N° 2, 1970,

shown did not allow for such integration, some of the "new" towns which emerged powerful in Yoruba politics achieved some measure of integration in the nineteenth century. One of such towns was Ilorin which became the seat of an emirate during the third decade of the nineteenth century.

Ilorin is taken as a case study because the town emerged in the nineteenth century from a small settlement of the old Oyo kingdom into a large town settled into by people of different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the Muslim revolutions that took place in Ilorin during the third decade of the nineteenth century introduced some complexities into the political situation of the town. This paper examines the different variables that came into play during the process of integration in Ilorin in the nineteenth century. It is also the intention of this paper to analyse the gradual amalgamation of the culture of the various groups into one. Finally, the paper focusses attention on what emerged in Ilorin at the end of the century consequent upon the integrative process.

## ILORIN BEFORE 1800

Not much is know about Ilorin before the beginning of the nineteenth century but of the little that is known, so much has been written that it will be a waste of ink and paper to repeat it here<sup>7</sup>. However, it is important to state that the accounts on Ilorin in Johnson, Abu Ikokoro, Sulu, Hermon-Hodge and others contain several controversies, though there are many areas of agreement<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, the areas of controversies continue to puzzle scholars in Ilorin history.

Apparently because of the inconsistencies in the account of Ilorin before 1800, attempts continue to be made by official and traditional historians to give various versions of the history of Ilorin before the nineteenth century. For instance, while acknowledging the authority of the *Alaafin* of Oyo over Ilorin as other towns in the old Oyo Kindom, official historians in Ilorin want us to

(7) Falola, "The Ibadan Conference".

(8) For Works on the History of Ilorin, see S. Johnson, *History of the Yorubas*, C.M.S. Lagos, 1921 Reprinted 1960 p. 199, Chief S.O Ojo, *Short History of Ilorin Oyo*, 1952; K.V Elphinstone, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, 1919; H.B. Hermon-Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London 1929, p. 63.

(9) Ahmad Ibn Abl Bakr (Abu Ikokoro), *Ta'rif akhbar al-gurun min umara bilad Ilorin*. This document will henceforth be referred to as *Talif* in this paper, M. Sulu, 'History of Ilorin', Typescript, Rhodes House, Oxford.

believe that Ilorin was a settlement of different independent ethnic groups each with its own ruler<sup>10</sup>. These independent groups were according to this source, Oke Suna with Solagberu as its ruler, Okelele was headed by Ojo Isekuse, Idi-Ape had Afonja as its ruler and two other settlements had Olufadi, a man of Fulani descent and *Sarkin Gambari* as the ruler of the Fulani and Hausa communities respectively<sup>11</sup>. This account is a complete departure from the evidence of Johnson, and Mallam Sulu's History of Ilorin<sup>12</sup>. While Ojo Isekuse has consistently been linked in the sources with the foundation of the town, there is no evidence to suggest that he was a ruler of a distinct group based at Okelele in Ilorin.

The growth of Ilorin seems to have preceded the development of different quarters in the town of which Okelele was and is still one. Oke-Suna has also been consistently linked with the Muslim settlers in Ilorin for which Solagberu was the leader<sup>13</sup>. It is doubtful if Oke-Suna existed as an independent entity from Ilorin. Indeed the settlement of both Olufadi and Sarkin Gambari were very near each other that it is very doubtful if they existed independently of each other.

Perhaps in the same vein, many Muslims in the Oke Imale area of Ilorin insist that their ancestors came from old Mali to settle in the town<sup>14</sup>. By this claim, it is suggested that their ancestors were in Ilorin well before the beginning of the eighteenth century as the settlement took place after the fall of the old Mali Kingdom. One is at pains to verify this historic claim which seems to remind one of a similar report from Iseyin<sup>15</sup>. However, it is not impossible that these Muslims were descendants of Wangara lineages which had their origins in the old Mali kingdom and who spread their trading network throughout West Africa. It is also possible that the claim to Mali origin is a recent reconstruction as it is difficult to establish contact with Mali. Indeed the term Oke Imale seems to have derived from Yoruba language referring to settlement of Muslims.

(10) See, 'Ilorin' in *Kwara State Local Government Series*. Published and Produced by the Information Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Information and Social Development, Ilorin, Kwara State. Undated p. 2. This view is widely gaining ground in spite of the fact that, no other written or early collected Oral traditions attest to it.

(11) *Ibid.*

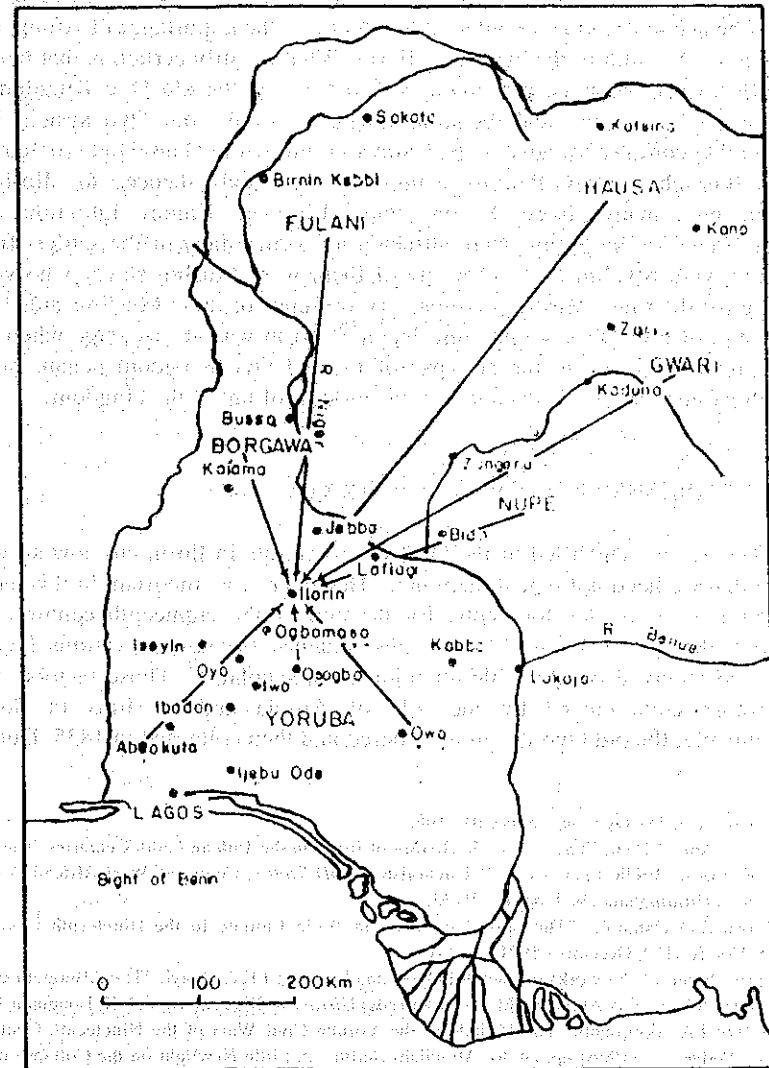
(12) Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, p. 199; Sulu History of Ilorin.

(13) Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, p. 198.

(14) *Oral Evidence*, Oke Imale, Ilorin, July, 1977, May, 1978, November, 1986. A Young Man, H. Afodun also insisted that he had a Mallian Origin.

(15) T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, London, Longman, 1978, p. 5.

Note: This map is extracted from a modern Map of Nigeria.



Map showing migration of different ethnic groups to Ilorin in the Nineteenth century.

What these accounts suggest is a modern synthesis of the various groups in Ilorin. The accounts evidently attempt to underplay the importance of Afonja and even that of Al-Salih in the history of Ilorin. What is fairly certain is that before 1800, Ilorin was an important town in *Ekun Osi* of the old Oyo Kingdom<sup>16</sup>. Because of its geographical location, Ilorin within the old Oyo system had considerable commercial advantage. Caravan routes from Hausaland crossed the Niger through Muragi-Patigi-Kusogi, Lafiagi and thence to Ilorin<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, many Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Kamberi, Kanuri, Igbomina and several other Yoruba groups were attracted to Ilorin. Many of the settlers from the north were Muslim although some of them were Muslim slaves who were working for their non-Muslim masters. The presence of these Muslims aided the conversion of other Oyo groups into Islam<sup>18</sup>. Ilorin was at this stage when the developments that led to the collapse of the old Oyo Kingdom began. Ilorin through Afonja played a crucial role in the process of fall of the kingdom.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ILORIN EMIRATE

The events which led to the birth of an emirate in Ilorin are now so well known that we need not repeat them here. However, it is important in this paper to highlight certain developments. By the end of the eighteenth century, the cracks in the old Oyo Kingdom became widened because of various factors which had received considerable attention from scholars<sup>19</sup>. Those factors were furthermore compounded by the role of Afonja and Muslims in Ilorin. Consequently, the old Oyo Kingdom tottered and then collapsed in 1835. During

(16) Law, *The Oyo Empire*, pp. 105-108.

(17) Ann O'Hear, "The Economic History of Ilorin in the 19th and 20th Centuries: The Rise and Decline of a Middle Man Society". Unpublished *PhD Thesis*, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham 1983, pp. 14, 21-22.

(18) H.O. Danmole, "The Spread of Islam in Ilorin Emirate in the Nineteenth Century". *NATAIS*, Vol. II, No 2, December 1981, pp. 1-13.

(19) Some of the works on the Old Oyo Kingdom are: J.F.A. Ajayi, "The Aftermath of the Fall of Old Oyo" in J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds) *History of West Africa* Vol. II, Longman 1974, pp. 129-166; I.A. Akinjogbin "The Prelude to the Yoruba Civil Wars of the Nineteenth Century", *ODU* 2nd Series 2.2. (1966) pp. 24-46, Abdullahi Smith, "A Little Newlight on the Collapse of the Alafinate of Yoruba", in G.O. Olusanya (ed), *Studies In Yoruba History and Culture*, Ibadan, 1983, pp. 42-71.

the process of the collapse of Oyo, Ilorin was ostracized from the kingdom in 1817<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, it was the force of the new emirate that finally sealed the fate of the old Oyo Kingdom.

Earlier in 1817, Afonja who as the *Area Ona Kakamfo* of the old Oyo Kingdom was resident in Ilorin, seized the opportunity of revolt by Muslim slaves against the authority of old Oyo to sever the political links with old Oyo<sup>21</sup>. This revolt coincided with the final arrival of Mallam Al-Salih in Ilorin. Mallam Al-Salih had earlier passed through Ilorin on preaching missions to other parts of Yoruba land; and he had acquired a wide reputation for himself as a pious Islamic scholar<sup>22</sup>. The arrival of this learned Mallam in Ilorin must have increased the morale of the revolting Moslems. Consequently, the Muslim factor became a crucial factor in the development in Ilorin. Al-Salih and Afonja, the evidence insists remained friendly for six years inspite of Al-Salih's efforts to convert Afonja to Islam<sup>23</sup>.

The speed with which Ilorin became an emirate was given impetus after the death of Al-Salih in 1823. Afonja who had hoped to use the combination of the revolt of Muslim slaves and the arrival of Mallam-Al-Salih in Ilorin to effect his break with Old Oyo and establish his own state was soon pushed aside by the Muslims whose population continued to increase because of the turbulence in the capital of the Old Oyo Kingdom<sup>24</sup>. Events during the six years of Al-Salih's stay in Ilorin can help to explain the loss of influence of Afonja. First, the Muslim community had become a force to be reckoned with in the affairs of Ilorin because of the success of the Muslim slaves revolt in 1817. Second, the presence of Al-Salih in Ilorin appears to have drawn both the Muslims of Oke Suna under Solagberu and those led by Al-Salih together. This gave the Muslims a unity of purpose in spite of their ethnic differences. Third, Afonja Muslim followers appeared to have dwindled as the main bulk of his supporters were Muslims who had changed allegiance to flock to Al-Salih and fourth, the sons of Al-Salih, Abdul-al-Salam and Shitta had come under the influence of the spate of Jihad further north of Hausaland were along with their supporters ready to turn Ilorin into an emirate.

(20) H.O. Danmole, "The Frontier Emirate: A History of Islam in Ilorin". Unpublished *PhD Thesis*, CWAS University of Birmingham, 1980, p. 36.

(21) *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

(22) *Ibid.*

(23) *Ibid.*

(24) *Talif*, Chapter one.

In the bid to achieve this objective, a conflict ensued between Afonja and the Muslims led by Abd al-Salam with considerable support from Solagberu, the Muslim leader of Oke-Suna, Afonja was killed. With the death of Afonja Ilorin became an emirate under al-Salam as emir. No sooner had Afonja died than Solagberu fell out with the Muslims who accused him of practices contrary to the *sharia*. Solagberu also lost his life in the struggle with the supporters of Abd-al-Salam<sup>25</sup>. Thus the new emir became the most powerful figure in the affairs of the emirate. It is important to stress here that in 1823, when Ilorin became an emirate, its Muslims and non-Muslims population was heterogenous that the survival of the new emirate depended on the integrating mechanisms which the new leadership evolved. These mechanisms coupled with the relationships that developed amongst the various ethnic groups resulted in political, social and cultural integration in Ilorin in the nineteenth century.

#### THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION

An important instrument necessary for an heterogenous society to achieve integration is the sharing of political power such that the participation of different groups in the society would be ensured. Consequently, through the involvement of the composite groups in the administration the aims and aspirations of the state can be guaranteed. When the emirate was established in 1823, the emirate was faced with the problems of survival and consolidation which required urgent attention. It was therefore imperative on the part of the emir, Abd-al-Salam (1823-1836) to take steps which he considered necessary to bind the emirate together with a view to solving his immediate problems.

One of the crucial steps taken by the emir was the establishment of a political structure which took cognizance of the major ethnic groups in Ilorin. He appointed four *Balogun*, namely Fulani, Ajikobi, Alanamu and Gambari. These *Balogun* represented the Fulani, Yoruba (Ajikobi and Alanamu) and Hausa who constituted the major ethnic groups in Ilorin at that time<sup>26</sup>. Apart from that, the three groups comprised the fighting force in the Muslim army although there were other smaller groups.

(25) Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate' pp. 51-56.

(26) *Ibid.*, pp. 68-71.

The appointment of these *Balogun* promoted the integration of different groups in Ilorin. As ward leaders, they exercised a large measure of control over the people in their various wards. For example, in the administration of the town, the *Balogun* had several *Mogaji* under their control for effective supervision of the wards<sup>27</sup>. Although the emir was at the head of the administration, the *Balogun* through their agentes interacted with the people. They also derived considerable support from the people in their wards. Apart from being ward leaders, the *Balogun* were members of the Emir's Council which was not only the highest policy-making body in the emirate but also constituted the council of electors on the demise of an amir<sup>28</sup>. Through the forum of the Emir's Council, the *Balogun* related with each other thus promoting integration in Ilorin.

The military was an important force in the process of integration in Ilorin in the nineteenth century. However, this integrative role performed by the military was not peculiar to Ilorin. Further south in Ibadan and the Egba Kingdoms with headquarters at Abeokuta the military contributed immensely to the degree of integration enjoyed by these Yoruba Kingdoms<sup>29</sup>. During the century, Ilorin conducted wars of expansion and also took part in most of the wars in Yorubaland<sup>30</sup>. These wars were led by the *Balogun*. Three examples will be sufficient to illustrate this point. *Balogun* Gambari Ali was the commander of the Ilorin army that brought many Igbomina and Ekiti territories under Ilorin in the 1840s and 1850s<sup>31</sup>. *Balogun* Ajikobi was one of those captured during the Ibadan-Ilorin war at Osogbo in 1840, while *Balogun* Karara led Ilorin forces to destroy Offa in 1887<sup>32</sup>. These *Balogun* led soldiers who were recruited from

(27) *Ibid.*, p. 82.

(28) *Ibid.*, pp. 68-71.

(29) P.C. Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, London, 1971, pp. 18-23; 30-33; For a Study of Ibadan and Egba in the Nineteenth Century see, B. Awe, "The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power 1851-1893", *D. Phil. Thesis*, Oxford 1964; T. Falola, *The Political Economy of a Pre-Colonial African State: Ibadan 1830-1900*, University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, 1984; S.O. Biobaku, *The Egba and Their Neighbours 1842-1872*, Oxford, 1957.

(30) On Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century, See J.F.A Ajayi and R.S Smith, *Yoruba Warfare In the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 1964; S.A Akintoye *Revolution and Power Politics In Yorubaland 1840-1893*, London, Longman, 1971.

(31) *Ta'if* Chapter Three, K.V. Elphinstone, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, 1921, p. 19.

(32) Johnson, 'The History of the Yorubas', p. 287, 437 S. Vandeleur, *Campaigning on the Upper Nile and Niger*, London, 1898, p. 273.

various quarters in Ilorin and who fought at the battle front for the larger interest of Ilorin rather than the interest of their various ethnic groups in the town. What was more, the estimated size of the Ilorin army which was put at about three thousand men in 1889 indicates that the soldiers must have been recruited from various parts of Ilorin and the emirate<sup>33</sup>. The Ilorin army was made up of volunteers, but unlike other parts of Yorubaland majority of those who volunteered did so with some specialisation. Most of the horsemen were from Gambari (Hausa) and Fulani wards. The footmen were mostly Yoruba from Ajikobi and Alanamu wards, although some also volunteered from the districts<sup>34</sup>. The fact that they were united under a single command seems to have promoted some measure of integration.

The military was also an important integrative factor because Ilorin soldiers shared common experience during the wars of expansion and consolidation. Many of the soldiers established personal relationships which transcended the period of wars. Not only that, some of the distinguished soldiers were rewarded with fiefs, land and titles for their performances and loyalty. These rewards cut across ethnic lines. For instance, *Balogun* Gambari Ali appointed some of his followers as *Ajele* in Igbomina and Ekiti districts of Ilorin emirate<sup>35</sup>. In Ilorin town, many of the *Mogaji* appointed earlier in the nineteenth century were followers of the four *Balogun* of Ilorin<sup>36</sup>.

The attitude of the immediate neighbours of Ilorin to the south, that is, Yorubaland, such as Ogbomoso, Ikoyi and other towns in Igbomina and Osun districts of the Old Oyo Kingdom facilitated the initial process of integration in Ilorin. These towns were hostile to Ilorin for several reasons, namely, the ostracization of Ilorin from the Old Oyo Kingdom consequent upon the Muslim revolution of 1823; the fact that the ruling elite in Ilorin was predominantly Fulani; and perhaps the most important the aggressive expansionist policy of Ilorin which was a threat to her southern neighbours<sup>37</sup>. The hostility towards Ilorin produced a unifying effect at home. The various ethnic groups that had

(33) Vandeleur, *Campaigning*, p. 273.

(34) *Oral Evidence*, Alhaji Elelu, April, 1978, Afua Sadiku May, 1978, December 1986. Baba Agba Adeeta, January, 1978.

(35) H.O Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate' p. 88.

(36) *National Archives, Kaduna, ILORPROF 829<sup>A</sup>/1917* Ilorin Emirate Reorganisation of Districts.

(37) H.O Danmole "The External Relations of Ilorin In the Nineteenth Century". Paper read at the 28th Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ilorin, 1983.

taken abode in Ilorin worked for the survival of the new state through active participation in her wars of consolidation and expansion.

Islam was perhaps the most important integrative factor in Ilorin in the nineteenth century. The Muslims who fought initially for the establishment of the emirate did so because of the religious bond between them. This religious affiliation remained the magnetic pull that drew the people of Ilorin together. Islam was so important to the different groups that right from the inception of the emirate religious offices were created to cater for their need. For instance, Emir Abd al-Salam established the offices of *Imam* Fulani, *Imam* Imale and *Imam* Gambari<sup>38</sup>. However, the creation of these offices did not mean that the three groups had their religious functions independent of one another. Rather, they complemented the religious affairs of the people of Ilorin. It is important to mention here that *Imam* Fulani was the Chief *Imam* while *Imam* Imale always acted for him whenever the position was vacant.

The process of integration in Ilorin in the nineteenth century was furthermore enhanced by Islam because an individual must be a Muslim before he could hold a political or military office in Ilorin during the period. Thus many problems were approached from the perspective of religion. Indeed, religion determined the attitudes of Ilorin leaders to the Christian Missionaries that visited the town during the nineteenth century<sup>39</sup>. It was also easier to apply the *sharta* as a code of law in Ilorin town, although other towns in the emirate were not forced to follow Ilorin's example<sup>40</sup>. Apart from that, the Muslim calendar played a prominent part in Ilorin military expeditions. Oral information indicates that expeditions were not normally carried out during the month of *Ramadan*<sup>41</sup>.

Islam was so much a driving force in the integrative process that the Emirs of Ilorin continually allocated lands to Muslim settlers many years after the emirate had been established. Not only was the allocation of land confined to settlers from the areas around Ilorin, the offer was extended to Nupe and Hausa returnees from Brazil during the reign of Emir Shitta<sup>42</sup>. These returnees as well as those from different parts of Yorubaland were able to integrate with the

(38) Danmole, 'Spread of Islam in Ilorin', *op cit*.

(39) H.O Danmole, "The Crescent and the Cross in the Frontier Emirate: Ilorin in the Nineteenth Century", *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. XVII/1 June, 1985, pp. 22-36.

(40) H.O Danmole, "The Alkali Court In Ilorin During Colonial Rule", paper presented at the 30th congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, April, 1985, 28 pp.

(41) The ninth month of Muslim calendar in which Muslims are expected to fast from dusk to dawn.

(42) *University of Ibadan Library (UIL) F. 084/1002*, Campbell to Clarendon, June, 1856.

various groups in Ilorin because of their religion which to a large extent had influenced their outlook to life. Christian missionary accounts indicate that by the middle of the nineteenth century about half of the population of Ilorin was not Muslim, however, the same sources would want to believe that by the end of the century, the whole population was essentially Muslim<sup>43</sup>. What is important here is that by the time many of the non-Muslim population were converted to Islam during the century, they had passed through a process of islamisation which integrated them into the society.

Ilorin by its geographical location played an important role in the north-south trade during the nineteenth century. The town had trading connections with Ogbomoso, New Oyo, Ikirun, Oshogbo, Ibadan, Ijebu, Abeokuta and Lagos to the south. It also maintained a lucrative long-distance trade relations with Kano and Borno to the north<sup>44</sup>. These trading network had implications for developments at home. Markets began to grow with specialization in goods demanded by buyers. Such markets were Gambari and Emir's markets. Through constant flow of traders there was improved communication resulting in cross-fertilization of ideas (religious, commercial etc). Both the Gambari and Emir's markets were international markets. As these markets were frequented by long-distance traders, the Hausa of Ilorin were able to act as middle-men by providing brokerage and lodging houses to these traders<sup>45</sup>. Indeed, the Hausa of the Gambari ward provided mediatory roles for their Yoruba and Fulani counter-parts in Ilorin. Ilorin garments needed in the north and woven by the Yoruba of Ilorin went through Hausa traders to the north. Conversely, during the same period, goods provided in north were exchanged in Ilorin and taken down south by the Ilorin Yoruba<sup>46</sup>. Consequently, there was booming trade in Ilorin for a considerable part of the century. The booming trade was facilitated by the mediatory roles of the Hausa, Yoruba, Nupe, Fulani, and other groups in Ilorin. The outcome of this was the promotion of understanding which brought the different groups together.

Apart from closer understanding through long-distance trade, internal trade within the surroundings of Ilorin was also an integrative factor. Each of the

(43) The Revd. Adolphus Mann Ca2/066/78, *Journal of the Mission Station at Ijaye*, September 23rd 1855, C.M.S. "Bishop Tugwell's visit to Ilorin", *Niger and Yoruba Notes*, Volume V, N° LIV, December 1898.

(44) Ann O'Hear, 'The Economic History of Ilorin', 63-64.

(45) Gavin R.J. "The Impact of Colonial Rule on the Ilorin Economy", *Centrepoint*, Volume 1, N° 1, 1977, pp-13-52.

(46) *Ibid.*, Ann O'Hear, 'The Economic History of Ilorin', pp. 63-64.

wards in Ilorin had markets under the control of the *Balogun* and their agents<sup>47</sup>. These markets were popular for local exchanges particularly food-stuffs and other items for local consumption. These markets served as important links with the villages around Ilorin where most of the articles were brought to Ilorin for sale. The markets provided access for diffusion of culture which took place among the people of Ilorin during the nineteenth century.

The pace at which the people of Ilorin were integrated during the nineteenth century was quickened by the high level of interactions by the different groups in Ilorin. Oral information insists that by the second half of the nineteenth century, many inter-marriages had taken place across ethnic lines<sup>48</sup>. These inter-marriages must have helped to cement relationships in the town. Inter-marriages in Ilorin was not confined to the ordinary people of the town, the ruling elite was also involved. The mother of Emir Moma was said to be a Yoruba woman<sup>49</sup>. Indeed the Emir's efforts at putting an end to the continual wars between Ilorin and other parts of Yorubaland were interpreted as deriving from the fact that his mother was a Yoruba<sup>50</sup>. Apart from inter-marriages other social interactions such as naming ceremonies and festivals helped the spread of cultural traits such as language and facial marks among the people of Ilorin.

During the first few years of the establishment of Ilorin emirate the official language with which business was conducted was Fulfulde, although contemporary accounts posit that Emir Shitta could speak one or two more languages<sup>51</sup>. However, by the 1870s and 1890s, Yoruba language seems to have replaced any other language as the official language of the ruling elite and it was also the language spoken by majority of the people. Three reasons can be proffered for the spread of the Yoruba language among the ethnic groups of Ilorin, namely, Yoruba were the largest single ethnic group in Ilorin;

(47) *Ibid.*

(48) *Oral Evidence*, Mallam Ahmad (1978) Alhaji Muritala (1978) DurosinOlorun-Saidu, Woru Adam; Alhaja Iyawo Kawu (last three informants were inter-viewed in March, 1987).

(49) Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, p. 609, Hermon-Hodge *Gazetteer*, p. 72.

(50) *Ibid.*

(51) W.H. Clarke, "Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland", edited by J.A. Atanda, University of Ibadan Press, 1972, p. 82, The Revd. Adolphus Mann reported in August 1855 that Emir Shitta did not speak Yoruba although he suspected that he could speak the language. See C.M.S. CA2/66 *Journal of the Mission Station at Ijaye*, 3rd August, 1855, see also the following: Robert Campbell, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland*, London, 1861, p. 85, S.A. Crowther, *Niger Mission: Bishop Crowther's Report of the Overland Journey from Lokoja to Bida on the River Niger and Thence to Lagos on the Seacoast from November 1871 to February, 1872*, London, 1872, p. 19., Captain A.F. Mockler Ferrymán, *Up The Niger: Narratives of Major Claude Macdonalds Mission to the Niger and Benue Rivers, West Africa*, London, 1892, p. 189.

geographically, Ilorin was within the Old Oyo Kingdom; and many of the emirate officials were Yoruba, they popularized the language in their official and private dealings. The use of Yoruba language must have helped to remove the problem of language barrier in inter-personal relations in the town. Consequently, the spread of the Yoruba language must have contributed to the integration of the people of the town in the nineteenth century.

One of the cultural traits that promoted integration in Ilorin towards the end of nineteenth century was the evolution of a common facial mark. At the beginning of the century, the various ethnic groups in Ilorin had facial marks characteristics of their group. These marks became useful in identifying each group in terms of its original places of migration to Ilorin. For instance, the Yoruba had among others, *keke*, *pele*, *abaja* and *baamu*. The Nupe, Kanuri Borgawa, kamberi Kanuri, Fulani and Hausa had theirs. However, by the last decade of the century, majority of the people of Ilorin had adopted a common facial mark of one on each side of the cheek. Opinion differs as to the origin of this facial mark. A school of thought believes that, it was because some Muslims preached against the multiplicity of marks, claiming that it was against the ethics of Islam.<sup>52</sup> As a result, the Muslims of Ilorin reduced the marks to one on each cheek<sup>52</sup>. However, another school of thought holds the view that the facial mark common in Ilorin resulted from the outbreak of an epidemic of fever which caused many deaths amongst the Young ones during the second half of the nineteenth century. According to this school of thought, the cure for this epidemic at that time was the making of an incision on each side of the cheek; this was then rubbed with dried herbs. The herbs were so efficacious that they became popular in the town. After the epidemic had subsided the facial mark became fashionable<sup>53</sup>. Related to the second position is the evidence that the facial mark of one on each cheek was begun by a certain *Balogun* Gambari who was very good in traditional medicine. He was said to use herbs on the marks for babies for the prevention of small pox. Consequently, the facial mark became popular<sup>54</sup>. While these arguments may not sound unconvincing, the view that the facial mark spread through epidemic of fever is more plausible. If Mallams had preached against facial marks of the various groups particularly those of the

(52) *Oral Evidence*, Alhaji Amin Onilemarun, Alhaji Abdul Wahab and Alhaji Kureem Akebloro, February, 1987, Magaji Agbabiaka, Alhaji Baba-Aro Abdulkadir March, 1987. Many others interviewed had the same view.

(53) *Oral Evidence*, Mogaji Olowo Compound, Oke Apomu; Alhaji Sadik Itakure, February, 1987. Alhaji Giwa, Popo Giwa, Ilorin, March, 1987. Some Others interviewed had the same opinion.

(54) Safi Jimba, *A Short History of Ilorin*, Jimba Book Publication Company, Ilorin, 1981, p.

Yoruba early in the nineteenth century, the practice would have been abandoned completely. Also, there is no Islamic injunction that forbids the practice of having facial marks. Moreso, many Muslims in different parts of Nigeria still have facial marks. The use of herbs to reduce the incidence of infantile mortality is a feature of traditional African medicine in Nigeria. It was therefore not impossible that the people of Ilorin resorted to such practice since it did not run contrary to the dictates of their religion. It is important to stress here that some of the old facial marks are still existing in Ilorin. The commonest facial mark of one on each side of the cheek would seem to have promoted a common sense of identity among the various groups in Ilorin.

#### THE POSITION BY 1900

By the end of the nineteenth century, Ilorin was politically integrated. However, this is not to say that there were no political tensions or crises in Ilorin during the process of integration. Two examples will be sufficient to illustrate this point, *Balogun* Kanara did not agree with the peaceful overtures of Emir Aliyu (1869-1891) over the invasion of Offa in 1887. The *Balogun* threatened to set up Prince Moma as emir at Gama<sup>55</sup>. Also, Emir Moma had to commit suicide in September, 1895 because of sharp disagreement with his *Balogun* over his friendly attitude towards Yorubaland and the colonial administration in Lagos<sup>56</sup>. The Emir of Ilorin although not as powerful as other emirs in the Sokoto caliphate remained the rallying point of unity. For example, when the independence of Ilorin was threatened by both the Royal Niger Company and the colonial administration in Lagos between 1885 and 1887, the *Balogun* and other chiefs gave the emir the much needed support. Eventually, Ilorin lost to the company in 1897, yet the whole town was united in her defiance of instructions from the company<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, after the imposition of colonial rule in 1900, the

(55) Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, p. 437. See H.O Danmole and Toyin Falola, "Ibadan-Ilorin Relations in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Imperial Struggles in Yorubaland". *Transafrican Journal of History*, Volume 14, 1985, pp. 21-36. See also H.O Danmole, "The Military in Ilorin Politics in the Nineteenth Century: The Career of *Balogun* Abubakar Karara (d. 1891)", Odu, Jan. 1989, Forth-coming.

(56) *Ibid.*

(57) H.O Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate' pp. 140-166.



various measures taken by the British to upturn the power structure were not able to disintegrate the people although these measures led to some disturbances<sup>58</sup>. Arguably, Ilorin at the end of the nineteenth century had passed through a process of integration which appears to have produced a common sense of identity.

Culturally, the people of Ilorin had achieved a high degree of integration at the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas it was possible between the 1820s and the 1870s to identify a particular individual with his place of migration to Ilorin through his name, the position was different at about 1900 as Yoruba names had been widely adopted by all the ethnic groups in Ilorin<sup>59</sup>. These names were and are still middle names of many people in Ilorin. Apart from ordinary names, the Yoruba practice of *Oriki* had become a common practice in Ilorin, even among the ruling elite<sup>60</sup>. Nevertheless, it is necessary to indicate that although Yoruba names were widely adopted by this period, a few Ilorin Yoruba had also abandoned their Yoruba names for Muslim names as in other parts of Yorubaland with significant Muslim influence<sup>61</sup>. The process of integration in Ilorin also resulted in the spread of Muslim and Hausa-Fulani culture of bearing names of towns and places. Thus, it was and still is not unusual for some people in Ilorin to bear names like Okelele, Pakata, Agbaji and many others<sup>62</sup>.

It has already been mentioned that the Yoruba language had become a common language of the people of Ilorin by the second half of the nineteenth century. The fact that the ruling elite particularly the emirs who were of Fulani descent also used the language has been mentioned. While the use of Yoruba by the Emirs of Ilorin could be paralleled to the adoption of the Hausa language by the Fulani emirs of Kano, Katsina and other parts of Hausaland in the nineteenth

(58) H.O. Danmole, "Colonial Reforms in Ilorin 1900-1919", *ODU A Journal of West African Studies*, New Series, No. 26, July, 1984, pp. 84-107.

(59) Many of the people interviewed in Ilorin whose ages range between 60 and 75 and who are not of Yoruba origin claimed that their parents and in some cases their grand parents had Yoruba names.

(60) Hermon-Hodge, *Gazetteer*, p. 65, "The Present Emir, His Highness Sulu Gambari is also referred to as Aiyelabowo V".

(61) Such Muslims who have abandoned their Yoruba names could be found in Lagos, Ijebu-Ode, Iseyin, Ibadan, Oyo and several other places.

(62) This is still a common practice up till this day.

century, the spread of Yoruba in Ilorin was not a one-way affair. In the process, the Yoruba language acquired certain vocabulary from the other languages such as Hausa, Fulani and Nupe which it had come in contact with in Ilorin. This language interference manifests itself not only in the choice of lexical items, but also in varying degrees, in the hand-ling of the prosodic properties of spoken Yoruba of Ilorin which deviates greatly from standard Yoruba.

Archival record suggests that during the first decade of the twentieth century, it was not easy to find pure blooded Yoruba, Fulani or Hausa amongst the population of Ilorin<sup>63</sup>. This was perhaps an exaggeration. Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that a considerable admixture had taken place amongst the people of Ilorin which had given them a peculiar identity. The amalgam of different sub-cultures and attitudes in Ilorin over the nineteenth century had permanent effect on the socio-cultural life of the people - marriage, naming ceremonies, dressing and social activities.

## CONCLUSION

Ilorin emerged from a small town within the Old Oyo Kingdom before the beginning of the nineteenth century into a large town with many ethnic groups by the third decade of the nineteenth century. The establishment of an emirate there introduced new elements of administration and culture into the town. However, the policy adopted by the rulers of Ilorin which attempted to balance political and military power helped to promote unity, although occasional quarrels often occurred. Besides, other integrative forces were at play during the nineteenth century. These were the hostility shown towards Ilorin by her neighbours, Islam, which provided spiritual upliftment and unity of purpose for the people, trading and the growth of markets which guaranteed avenues for the various ethnic groups to relate with one another, and other social relationships which helped to bridge the gaps between different groups.

The extent of integration which emerged in Ilorin at the end of the nineteenth century has continued to evade many large polities in Africa

(63) *National Archives Kaduna ILORPROF 900/1912*, Ilorin Town, Reassessment Report by Mr. Lethem, Assistant Resident.

including Nigeria up till this day. Perhaps a careful application of some of the variables that operated in Ilorin was likely to promote the much needed integration which has eluded Nigeria and many new states in Africa.

**RESUMO:** O present artigo analisa a cidade de Ilorin no seu processo de crescimento e consolidação e posterior integração, durante o século dezanove. Ressalta o papel dos militares, dos comerciantes e dos cidadãos nesse processo lento, porém forte, da integração no século passado. Analisa também com profundidade as questões culturais, demonstrando a importância do Islão na sociedade que se estratificava em Ilorin.

**UNITERMOS:** Crescimento, integração, camadas sociais, Islam, processo histórico séc. XIX, Ilorin, Nigéria.