IS OORE SUPERIOR TO EWI AND OTHER EKITI OBAS?

I wish to be circumspect and open minded about our recent discussions on EKITI HISTORY and OBA ALADEMERINDILOGUN for the following reasons viz.

1. It is a controversial issue with different versions of the tradition coupled with evidence of conspiracy and supremacy theories
2. Four lists have been peddled on the versions of the Chiefs status and grading over time by scholars
3. The crux of the discussion is part of the central theme of my Ph.D. Thesis. I cannot extensively discuss it at this stage, until I am through with the study.
4. It will continue to pit Ekiti people against each other as long as we hold on to one specific version of the history without a holistic interpretation of historical facts.

Findings have shown that majority of scholars who studied the history of Ekitiland of that era were consistent and cautious in presenting each list without details of what brought about each list in order to validate their relevance. Others downplay its reference as a factor militating against continuous unity of Ekiti Obas and the peaceful co-existence of Ekiti towns.

Compilations of prominent Ekiti Kingdoms at the early parts of 20th century from various sources which invariably suggest issue of seniority or supremacy contests with elements of politics and misconception indicate thus:

1903 Government Service List
Ewi of Ado
Ajero of Ijero
Ogoga of Ikere
Olojudo of Ido
Obalufon Alaaye of Efon
Arinjale of Ise
Olojaoke (Owa) of Okemesi
Alara of Aramoko
Oloye of Oye
Ologotun of Ogotun
Ata (attah) of Aiyede
Onitaji of Itaji
Onisan of Isan
Onire of Ire
Arinjale of Ise
Onitaji of Itaji

1921 Rev. Samuel Johnson List
Oore of Otun
Ajero of Ijero
Ewi of Ado
Elekole of Ikole
Alara of Aramoko
Alaaye of Efon Alaaye
Ajanpada (Deji) of Akure
Ologotun of Ogotun
Olojudo of Ido
Ata of Aiyede
Oloja Oke of Igbo Odo
Oloye of Oye
Olomuo of Omuo

1971 S.A. Akintoye List
Oore of Otun

1979 Monsgr. A. Oguntuyi List
Ewi of Ado

Elekole of Ikole	Ajero of Ijero
Ewi of Ado	Elekole of Ikole
Oloye of Oye	Oore of Otun
Ajero of Ijero	Deji of Akure
Olojudo of Ido	Alara of Aramoko
Ogoga of Ikere	Olojudo of Ido
Deji of Akure	Ogoga of Ikere
Arinjale of Ise-Ekiti	Oloye of Oye
Elemure of Emure	Arinjale of Ise
Alaaye of Efon	Elemure of Emure
Oloja of Imesi	Alaaye of Efon
Alara of Aramoko	Onitaji of Itaji
Onisan of Isan	Olojaoke (Owa) of Okemesi
Onitaji of Itaji-Ekiti	Onisan of Isan
Olobo of Obo	Ologotun of Ogotun
Ologotun of Ogotun	Onire of Ire

Please find below an extract of the list of the Ekiti Obas and towns from the works of Kenyo (1952) as presented below:

ODUDUWA SONS CROWNED AS KING AT DEPARTURE IN ILE-IFE

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Division
1	Ajero Ile Ijero	Ekiti	Ekiti	
2	Alara Ile Ara-moko	Ekiti	Ekiti	
3	Alaye Efon	Ekiti	Ekiti	
*4	Deji Akure	Ekiti	Ondo/Akure	
5	Elemure	Emure	Ekiti	Ekiti
6	Ewi Ile Ado	Ekiti	Ekiti	
7	Elekole	Ikole	Ekiti	Ekiti
8	Olojudo	Ido faboro	Ekiti	Ekiti
9	Olomuo	Omuo Akoko (Now	Ekiti)	Owo (Now Ekiti)
*10	Onirun	Irun	Ekiti/Akoko	Owo
11	Onisan	Isan	Ekiti	Ekiti
12	Ore Otun	Ekiti	Ekiti	
13	Ologotun	Ootun	Ekiti	Ekiti
*14	Ologbagi	Ogbagi	Ekiti/Akoko	Owo
15	Oloja-Oke (Owa)	Okemesi	Ekiti	Ekiti
16	Oloye Ile Oye	Ekiti	Ekiti	
*17	Owalobo	Obo	Ekiti	Ilorin

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 2, p. 15-17

ROYALTIES WITH CROWNS RECEIVED FROM BENIN KINGDOM

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Division

18	Ogoga	Ikere	Ekiti	Ekiti

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 4, p. 20

ROYALTIES WITH CROWNS GIVEN IN PARTS OF YORUBALAND

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Source
19	Arinjale	Use (Ise)	Ekiti	Okeluse
20	Ata (Attah)	Aiyede	Ekiti	Iye
21	Owa	Odo Owa	Ekiti	Ilesa

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 8, p. 25

CROWNED KINGS FROM IFE BARRED FROM WEARING IT

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Division
22	Olojudo	Ido Irapa (Ido-Ile)	Ekiti	Ekiti
23	Olosi	Osi Ekiti	Ekiti	Ekiti
24	Onimesi	Imesi Lasigidi (Imesi Ekiti)	Ekiti	Ekiti

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 9, p. 26

KINGS FROM ILE-IFE WITH CROWNS BUT UNRECOGNIZED

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Division
*25	Alara	Ilara Akure (Ilara Mokin)	Ekiti	Ondo
26	Alare	Are	Ekiti	Ekiti
27	Alawe	Ilawe	Ekiti	Ekiti
28	Alawo	Awo	Ekiti	Ekiti
29	Alaye	Aye Moba	Ekiti	Ekiti
30	Arajaka	Ugbara Odo (Igbara Odo)	Ekiti	Ekiti
31	Aworoko	Iworoko	Ekiti	Ekiti
32	Ekiri	Ero	Ekiti	Ondo/Akure
33	Elewu	Ewu Ileje	Ekiti	Ekiti
34	Eleda	Eda Ileje	Ekiti	Ekiti
35	Elejelu	Ijelu	Ekiti	Ekiti
36	Elepe	Epe Ijero	Ekiti	Ekiti
37	Elepe	Epe Moba	Ekiti	Ekiti
38	Elesun	Ilesun Ikole	Ekiti	Ekiti
39	Olode	Ode	Ekiti	Ekiti
40	Olosin	Osin Ikole	Ekiti	Ekiti
*41	Olujare	Ujare (Ijare)	Ekiti	Ondo/Akure
42	Olukoro	Ukoro (Ikoro)	Ekiti	Ekiti
43	Olupere	Ipere Ileje	Ekiti	Ekiti
44	Oluporo	Uporo	Ekiti	Ekiti
45	Oluro	Uro Ikole	Ekiti	Ekiti
46	Olusi	Usi	Ekiti	Ekiti
47	Olusin	Isin Pakunde	Ekiti	Ekiti
48	Oluyin	Uyin (Iyin)	Ekiti	Ekiti

49	Onigede	Igede	Ekiti	Ekiti
50	Onikun	Ikun Moba	Ekiti	Ekiti
51	Onire	Ire	Ekiti	Ekiti
52	Oniye	Iye Ileje	Ekiti	Ekiti
*53	Oba	Ilofa	Ekiti	Ilorin
54	Obaleo	Erimope	Ekiti	Ekiti
55	Oloja	Egosi	Ekiti	Ekiti
56	Oloja	Ora Ido	Ekiti	Ekiti
57	Olora	Orin Ido (Ora Ido)	Akoko (Ekiti)	Akoko (Ekiti)
58	Olorin	Orin Ido	Ekiti	Ekiti
59	Owajumu	Omu Ijelu	Ekiti	Ekiti
60	Owalosun	Osun Moba	Ekiti	Ekiti
61	Owalogbo	Ilogbo	Ekiti	Ekiti
62	Owatapa	Itapa	Ekiti	Ekiti

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 10, p. 28-31

KINGS WHO OBTAINED CROWN FROM BENIN

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Division
63	Onijan	Ijan	Ekiti	Ekiti
64	Oro	Agbado	Ekiti	Ekiti

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 11, p. 32-33

KINGS FROM OTHER PLACES OUTSIDE ILE-IFE OR BENIN

S/N	Title of the King	Township	District	Source
65	Adapogun	Ipogun	Ekiti	Ile-Oluji
66	Ajagun	Ilu Omoba	Ekiti	Ile Ado (Ado-Ekiti)
67	Akota	Ikota	Ekiti	Akure
68	Alawo	Awo	Ekiti	Ile Ado (Ado-Ekiti)
69	Alara	Ara	Ekiti	Ikole
70	Alara	Ara Ijero	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
71	Alasa	Ilasa	Ekiti	Imesi Lasigidi
72	Alaye	Oke Igbira	Ekiti	Okene
73	Alaye	Aye Ido	Ekiti	Efon Alaye
74	Apalufin	Aisegba	Ekiti	Ile Ado (Ado-Ekiti)
75	Bale (Elesure)	Esure	Ekiti	Ile Ado (Ado-Ekiti)
76	Elerio	Erio	Ekiti	Ile Ara-Moko
*77	Ejisun	Arigidi	Ekiti	Oye Ora
*78	Elewe	Ita Ogbolu	Ekiti	Akure
79	Eleyin	Odo Eyin	Ekiti	Ile Ijero

80	Eleyio	Eyio	Ekiti	Ile Ado
81	Esaoye	Isaoye	Ekiti	Otun
82	Elemobo (Balemo)	(Araromi) Obo	Ekiti	Ile Ado
83	Okiti	Uju (Iju)	Ekiti	Akure
84	Olikun	Ikun Ikole	Ekiti	Ikole
85	Olupoti	Ipoti	Ekiti	Ajase Ipo
86	Oluroye	Iroko	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
87	Oluropora	Iropora	Ekiti	Ile Ado
88	Onibule	Ibule	Ekiti	Akure
89	Onifisin	Ifisin	Ekiti	Ido Ekiti
90	Oninu	Inu	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
91	Onio	Iogo	Ekiti	Iwo (Io)
92	Oniyapa	Iyapa	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
93	Oba	Igbemo	Ekiti	Ile Ado
94	Obaisa	Igbole	Ekiti	Ido Ekiti
*95	Obajagun	Arigidi	Ekiti	Oye Ora
96	Obala (Obanla)	Ijesa Isu	Ekiti	Ilesa
97	Odofin	Afao	Ekiti	Ile Ado
98	Ojurin	Ijurin	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
99	Oloja	Ifaki	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
100	Oloja Eseta	Eseta	Ekiti	Ile Oye
101	Oloja	Egbe	Ekiti	Ile Ado
102	Olorin	Orin Ikole	Ekiti	Imesi Lasigidi
103	Oloro	Oro Ijero	Ekiti	Ile Ijero
104	Olosan	Osan Moba	Ekiti	Otun
105	Olowa	Ugbara Oke (Igbara Oke)	Ekiti	Ugbara Odo
106	Owa	Odo Igbira	Ekiti	Okene

Source: E.A. Kenyo, 1952, Chapter 13, p. 37-45

Nonetheless, I wish to briefly correct an impression here escalating beyond historical facts using the template below:

HYPOTHESIS

A. That ‘The history you shared before this said that Owore (Oore) of Otun Ewi of Ado were believed to control the largest territories in Ekiti. In fact, we in Otun believe he was at the forefront of all Ekiti Obas’.

B. That ‘History has it clearly that he led other Ekiti Obas during Kiriji and they moved from Otun’.

C. That ‘a copy of the 1886 document showing Owore as the 1st of only 3 signatories from Ekiti to the treaty that ended Kiriji. We should note that Alaafin, Owoni, Awujale et

al were also signatories to the document thereby debunking the impression that he and the other 2 were just nominees'.

ANTI-HYPOTHESIS (OBSERVATIONS ON A-C ABOVE)

The political instability in 18th and 19th century and the attempts to invent a culture of power shift and political relevance coupled with the erosion of influence and powers of major traditional rulers and their struggle for survival since that era constitutes the basis of this discussion of superiority or supremacy contests.

Oguntuyi (1979) was very cautious about his studies of Ekit Obas either to create a balance, to keep their unity or to be silent about aspects of the tradition that he was unable to validate/discuss or out of avoiding a rustling of the hordes. He looked at the period of turbulence and conflicts in Ekitiland in mid 19th century and briefly discussed the status/prominence of Ekiti Obas which invariably constitute a degree of their superiority or prominence in that era.

Akintoye however could not hide the historical facts about the prominence and status of Ekiti Obas despite the equality theory and generalization that often attends his submissions in - Akintoye, S.A. 'Obas of Ekiti Confederacy since the advent of the British' in Crowder, M & Ikime, O. (eds), West African Chiefs: Their changing status under the Colonial Rule and Independence, (Ile-Ife, University of Ife Press, 1970), p. 262; Akintoye, S.A., Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland (1840-1893), Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo, London, Longman, 1971, p. 21-25; Ade-Ajayi, J.F and Akintoye, S.A: Yoruba land in the 19th Century in Obaro Ikime (ed.), The Groundwork of Nigerian History, Ibadan, Heinemann Books, 1980, p. 280-302. He invariably recorded at certain point that there is no single crowned traditional ruler in Ekitiland like the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti because he enjoyed the length of influence in pre-colonial era above others, when he made references thus: 'Ado kingdom was perhaps the largest and most powerful Ekiti kingdom. It had the advantage over Otun that while Otun occupied the less densely forested parts of northern Ekiti and was vulnerable from the Oyo and Igbomina countries in the North, Ado occupied the thick forests of central Ekiti and was surrounded by Ekiti territory on almost all sides.'

Olomola (1985) (2005) who studied the social crisis and dislocation experienced in Ekitiland in 18th and 19th century made references to the realm of Ewi and the expansion of Ado-Ekiti where he identified main town and subordinate towns surrounding it, observed that Ewi's Kingdom expands in Ado-Ekiti traditions to communities such as Lasigidi, Ode, Igbegede, Ilawe and Igbaro-Odo etc. He admitted that some inexplicable vicissitudes of war led some communities such as Osi to come under Ado, for protection. He also traced the extent of Ewi's influence across Ekitiland through and concluded that Ewi's realm was 'virtually co-terminus with all the towns and villages that constitutes the former Ado District Council Area, the Gbonyin Area of Ekiti East, part of Ero Local

Government Council Area and part of Ekiti South-West Local Government Council Area'. He concluded that Ewi became an overlord with huge expanse of territorial realms after he overran and conquered 'weaker and uncoordinated' neighbouring communities between 17th and 19th centuries.

Another scholar, Oke Akande (1985), described the expanse of Ado-Ekiti kingdom and influence of the Ewi in 19th century by affirming thus: 'Ado-Ekiti had boundaries with Ijero, Ogotun, Oye, Ido, Ikole, Irun, Ise, Ijesha and Bini. In reality and politically, Ado's influence transcended the geographical boundaries.' He further attributed that the traditions of rising Ewi's political status and sphere of influence in Ekitiland to a refined diplomacy of stalking hostile neighbours, celebrating confidence in subordinate towns, protecting allies and bringing rebellion to a stop as he recounted in Ewi's traditional prose (oriki) on visits to some palaces in Ekiti thus:

'O sak'erekere l'oe Ukere,
O rin gbaragbara l'ode Ugbara,
O gb'Ologotun pon yin,
B'Orunaja wijo'

J.E. Babatola (1989) equally stated that the influences exerted by Ewi across Ekiti towns and villages to the borderlands of Ekiti extended across several communities in Ado traditions that now constitutes 10 out of 16 present-day Local Councils of Ekiti State of Nigeria from Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area to Ido/Osi Local Government Area, Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Area, Ekiti West Local Government Area, Ekiti South West Local Government Area, Gbonyin Local Government Area, Ise-Orun Local Government Area, Ijero Local Government Area, Oye Local Government Area and Ikole Local Government Area.

Falegan (2014) on his part noted that the continuous opposition to Ewi's paramountcy by some Ekiti Obas is a pointer to the fear inherent in Ewi's imperial ambitions since 17th century, which became a threat on the status/economy of their Kingdoms as they aim for equal prominence as regional powers in Ekitiland. He concluded that tradition places premium on Ewi's paramountcy as he render thus:

Ogun, ye'ye	So much is the adversity
B'Ewi ja,	contending with Ewi,
Aja'se,	the weapon of victory
E'lo'Ewi	Remains with Ewi

This invariably underscores any hypothesis that Owore (Oore) of Otun Ewi control large territory in Ekiti like Ewi or that he was at the forefront of all Ekiti Obas' (at all times). In giving any consideration to Oore's claim however on supremacy contest between him, Ewi and other Ekiti Obas, the currency of Oore of Otun contentions with his fellow Obas

on his seniority or supremacy would suffice based on the following historical developments:

1. Oore was the first Ekiti Oba to accept British rule.
2. Oore received the first letter of recognition as an Ekiti Oba from the British officials at the end of Kiriji wars
3. Oore was one of the Ekiti representatives that signed the end of Kiriji War Treaty
4. Oore was listed as No. 1 Ekiti Oba in the minutes of the 1900 Oke-Imo meeting
5. A 1901 Report recognized his role at Kiriji wars and in the pacification of Ekiti towns coupled with his earliest acceptance of British rule which influenced the drawing of itinerary of Major Tucker's visit to Ekiti and the list of Ekiti Obas for the invitation to Oke Imo meeting.
6. Atolagbe's version of Oore history presented him as a founder-king and equated him in the stead of Oduduwa, being the eldest son of an Olokun and Odua benefactor. (Yet 'no Oni of Ife had ascertained or substantiated Oore's claim on that tradition. Moreover, the attempt to equate Oore with Oduduwa lacks archeological and anthropological veracity).

It is also obvious in the balance that Oore claim to superiority is a suspect and contestable for many reasons. For instance, Akintoye and Olomola among others noted the dispute between Ajero of Ijero and Oore of Otun. It was a rider to Oore's status.

1. If Oore was superior to Ajero or more prominent in that clime, Ajero would have controlled less border space than he had.
2. If Oore was very prominent/powerful than Ajero in that clime, Oore territory in pre-colonial times would have been with Ewi and not Ajero.
3. If Oore was a superior and equally powerful like Ajero, the passage of Oore's allies – Ibadan Armies through Ikoro-Ekiti forcibly and coming back later on a reprisal mission to attack Ijero would not have been necessary with contention. Indeed, Oore was not prominent in Ekiti history in the pre-19th century era. Ajero was rather prominent in that clime just as Elekole and Ewi were prominent in elsewhere.
4. Ife version of history regarded Oore as a son of Oduduwa and Ekiti Oba rather than an Obatala adherent/Oduduwa benefactor that Atolagbe produced as a new version of history of Oore to equal him to Oduduwa. If Oore was not an Ekiti Oba or a Yoruba descent that accepted Ekiti as his brothers, he would:

a. not have fought in Ekitiparapo war
b. not have cried when he was joined to Ilorin as an Ekiti who should be returned home to his brothers at Ekiti.
c. have accepted to be given a separate recognition in Ilorin that would trace him directly to Ooni as a co-equal and benefactor.

Indeed, the rise of Oore to prominence during and after Kiriji and his need to cling to that tradition of recognition and prominence could made him to support a deliberate

reconstruction of Moba history, when his fellow Obas began to challenge his seniority. If he was not a mercenary Oba or a conqueror of Ekitiland or able to raise a huge army that came from most parts of Ekiti to join him and Fabunmi in Kiriji, there would be no history of Oore's political and military influence in Ekiti in 19th century that would co-equal him to the Ewi among paramount Ekiti Obas. **No one will, however, contest Oore's role at Kiriji. He was prominent and it was a good opportunity to bring him from the rear to fore, not as a superior though, but as a prominent and recognized Ekiti Oba.** *(My personal opinion).*

Olomola looked at the rallying of Ekitiparapo Armies under Oore Okinbaloye of Otun, after his inability to bring all the major Ekiti Obas together in Otun (since paramount rulers do not meet face-to-face in the old tradition). Oore mainly assembled their warlords and military envoys. (Less than 20 Ekiti Traditional Rulers attended the meeting. When Obas attend meeting they don't see eye to eye in old traditions. They turn the back to each other and discuss). **The absence of Ekiti Obas like Ewi, Ogoga and Deji amongst others at the meetings of Otun, point to some limitation of Oore's influence or capacity to bring Ekiti Obas together whatever could have been the degree of influence he wield by age or the issue at hand.**

Ojo Falegan observed that there were limits to how communities and their Chiefs could be involved wars or alliances at that period as shown in the case of Alara of Aramoko under Ibadan hegemony. He observed further that the absence of some Obas from Kiriji did not indicate that they were not champions of Ekiti or lower in status and prominence to those who took up arms. Rather, it is suggestive in other Yoruba climes that the **paramountcy or seniority of a Yoruba (Ekiti) Oba can hinder his readiness to be directly involved in wars as found in Oyo where Aare Ona Kankanfo leads war for the Alaafin. Paramount Obas like Deji of Akure, Olomuo of Omuo, Alaaye of Effon, Ologotun of Ogotun, Olojudo of Ido etc did not attend the Otun meetings too.**

The above indicates that the role performed by Oore at Kiriji had little or no impact on the generality of the thoughts and preference of Ekiti Obas and their people. Though it attracted the attention of the British who began to accord Oore and his successors some relevance, the moment the British Agents discovered the importance and status of Ewi, Deji, Elekole, Ajero and few other Obas, the tide changed. The prominence of Oore dwindled because tradition ought to be respected and the prominence of Ewi's Kingdom in relation to those of Oore showed that Oore was never important or played any superior role above any major Ekiti Obas like Ewi, Elekole and Ajero before the Kiriji wars. Other Obas therefore regained their status and recognition gradually.

Jadesola
Student of History

N:B This is merely an academic exercise. I love and respect all Ekiti Obas, inclusive of Oore, Ajero, Elekole, Oloye, Alaaye, Onisan, Alare, Oluyin etc though my sentiments for my own monarch remains – **The Ewi Ado, Adimula, Elempe Ekiti, Osoko Ekiti, Soko Akoko, Saaki Alaaye.**