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Foreword

An ¿risa devotee, advised through divination to receive the órísá Olókun asked, "What is Olókun for and why do I need it?"

For yesterday, today and tomorrow Olókun sybolizes the *justification of hope.* Every culture has such a symbol. Millions of Yorübá and Bini survived the death-horror of the middle passage and looked to Olokun and Yemoja as tangible symbols of deliverance and rebirth. Just the fact that we survive being born and live day by day into old age is a miracle. Olokun helps to produce the miracle of our coming to this world, prospering while here, and the means of our returning to our spiritual home.

For African Americans this is very important. You can't know what tomorrow will bring so make up your mind to either live or die; become mature, responsible, adult human beings or remain dependent, complaining children; improve yourself and the world or squander the precious gift of life. There are no guarantees. No matter how bright the day, much of the trip through life is done in darkness. One must push on with no assurances that tomorrow or in ten thousand tomorrows you will not be destitute, sick, unjustly hated, exiled, or prematurely dead.

Working Olókun offers the chance to partake of the mentally, emotionally, and spiritually proactive therapeutic magic/enlightenment that is present when we embrace and try to truly see the redemptive possibilities of a new start, a new day, a new life.

Our fear of the dark
Compels us to worship the owner of darkness.

Our terror of death and decrepitude
Forces us to worship the owner of strength.

Our dread of the pains of hunger
Pushes us to worship the owner of fullness.

Our anxiety over the scattering and
loss of things we have worked to acquire
Advises us to worship the owner of ropes.

Our love of children
Prompts us to worship the provider of children.

Our desire for wealth and status
Coaxes us to worship
the owner of the precious beads of title.

Our hope for immortality
Demands that we worship
The owner of the eternal rivers and seas.[1]

Olookun.' Owner of Rivers and Seas

I

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Olóókun.- Owner oF Rivers and Seas Begin with Words

For Edó (or 'Bini') and Yorúbá[2] people of the Forest region of southwestern Nigeria (Fig. 1), the órísa Olokun is God's selected and sanctioned "owner oF the seas' (ólókün/olóókun)[3]. it is a widely accepted Fact that Olókun worship diFFused from the Bini to the Yorúbá. The people oF these two national groups speak related languages From the Kwa and Benue-Congo language groups, and both look to ancient, ancestral homes in the Sudan, Nupe, and Ilé-lFe (fig.2).

The Bini word For the sea is ókún. The divinity who is "owner oF the sea" is Ólókün. This is also the name oF the *Etlv'ope River* which represents Ólókün, and is said to be the source oF all the bodies oF water in the world. The Bini also state that all the other rivers oF the world flow into the Ethiope river. As the owner of the rivers and seas, Ólókün controls the realm that human spirits must cross to be born or to depart on their way to the spirit world after death. In this connection, Ólokun is represented as a large box (okun), decorated with mirrors and white cloth, used symbolically in mortuary rites to contain the deceased's wealth and status.

Among the Yorúbá, the terms for strength (okun) and darkness (ookún) -unfathomable nature- help to define qualities of Olókun and his abode, the sea (okun). As the owner of the seas and rivers, Olókun lays claim to the all the wealth of beads made From shells (akún)[4] and those made From stones (okún). Olókun's ownership oF the inexhaustible, Fertile and proliFIc larder that is the sea; convinces his devotees (especially women) that he is "the owner oF Fullness" (oníkíkún). Women wanting children look to him as "the owner oF swelling bellies" (oníTkün Ikún). Olókun's Female devotees pray that their bellies/wombs will be filled (kun) with the sacred and privileged children (omo) oF their lord.

Ile-lFe, ancient city and birth place of the Yorúbá people, is one of the few places in Yorubaland where Olokun worship is maintained. In Ife, Olókun is considered Feminine,' although considered male by other Yoruba groups and the Bini[5]. There are two bodies oF water in the city that are said to belong to Olókun: one is called osara/osa (lagoon) and the other okun (sea). They are said to be respectively the original sources For the world's lagoons and oceans.

Olóókun; Owner oF Rivers and Seas Olókun's companions

Olókun and those unseen powers of water, earth, fire and wind that are associated with him comprise one of the most important religious, philosophic and cultural phenomenon to be brought into the Americas by Bini and Yoruba captives swept away in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. These international, cultural fusions, which have been going on for several thousand years in "West Africa, continue with heightened intensity in places like Brasil, Haiti, Trinidad, Cuba and the United States.

In Cuba, the central site of our Olokun study, this phenomenon was to find a new environment and new nomenclature in which to grow and to re-signify itself. The Fon of Ágbome, also taken to Cuba as slaves, added to the Olokun phenomenon. They brought and incorporated knowledge of Agbe, divine owner of the sea, whose name is now spelled-Agwe-In light of their sojourn in Haiti prior to their arrival in Cuba. Bini kingship rituals which commemorate ancient ancestors and important, pivotal

events of the distant past are held in honor of Ododuo and Oro. In Cuba, elements of these kingship rituals combined with their Yoruba counterparts. Ododuo is the same Oduduá who is credited with being the first king of llé-Ife and "father" of the Yoruba people. The Bini and Yoruba view Óro/Oro as the voice of the ancestors embodied in the bull-roarer. Ésango, the Bini divinity, is Sango the deified king of Oyo, whose worship came to Benin within the past few centuries. Ógun, deity of the hunt and the blacksmith's forge, has been worshipped in both nations from ancient times. The Bini divinity Ósun, deity of the medicinal power in leaves and plants, upon reaching Cuba, merges with and is subsumed by the Yoruba deity Osanyin[6]. The system of ancient wisdom known as Ifá, and Orunmila, Yoruba deity of divination, existed in the Edó kingdom alongside its Bini equivalent, *íha. Óminlgbpn* (divining chain divination)[7]. These facts, as we will see, added strength to the association, in Cuba, of Olókun and Ifá. Ésú, Yoruba deity entrusted with guarding Ase (authority, power, and the life force within all creatures), is the same as the Bini deity Ésú, right hand, most trusted subordinate and constant companion of God. Ésü and Ésangó have been linked in Bini culture and jointly replace the Bini deity *Ógíúwú*, ("king of death") who is the personified Death. Ógíúwú controls thunder, which is his voice, and like Ésangó/Sángó hurls stone thundercelts from the sky.

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

The Bini and Yorübá see the world as existing in two distinct yet bound and interdependent spheres. The Bini word Ágbon and the Yorübá word Alyé describe the visible, physical world in which humankind negotiates life's business. They respectively call the spiritual world of the divinities, ancestors and other invisible Forces-Érinmwin/Orun. Each human is also seen as a being composed of two halves. One part is the living half, and the other is ehí/orí[8], which is a person's prenatal destiny in one sense, and, in another sense, the person's spiritual counterpart, guide and mentor that resides in the spirit world. Both halves reunite at the death of the individual, give an accounting of its life and await the next reincarnation. The Bini name for God, the arch-divinity, is Ósanóbüa or Osa. This correlates with the Yorübá term Ósa/Órísá which is the name of the arch-divinity, pbatalá, and is ascribed to divinities in general. Each oF the arch-divinities is known as the "Father" oF the other divinities and uses white cloth as a sign oF his/her great age, majestic authority and pristine character. "Ósagbáyé (God occupies the world), the name oF Bini household shrines dedicated to Osa, could just as easily apply to Obátála as the creator who "contained" and "enveloped" each living tiling as it was modelled in his/her hands.

The aforementioned and briefly examined baggage of linguistic, ideological and spiritual correspondence brought to Cuba by the Bini and Yorübá gives us a small sample of the extensive array of cultural media transported by them. We will unlock, open and take a detailed inventory of their Olokun treasure chest filled with history, philosophy, medicine, masked performances, music, dance and multi-media sacred, shrine art.

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas **Birth of** the **world of spirits**

The Bini believe that Ósanóbüa, the arch-divinity, and Anume, his wife, have three children, called (in order of birth): **Óbiémwen, Ólókün,** and **Ógiüwu.** Bini customs establishing "male seniority" over females promote Olokun to a position of authority over his older sister, Obiemwen. As the eldest son, it is Ólókün's right to rule and to inherit all of his father's property. One day Osanobua sent his three children, empowered with his authority, to create the world. At that time the world was an endless expanse of water broken by a lone *íkhínmwTn* tree (Newboldia Laevis-Bignoniaceae[9]) in whose top branches lived *pwpnwpn*, the double-casque horn bill *(Ceratogymna atrata[10]).* As the trio of deities set out in their boat the hornbill cried out for them to take along a snail shell. When they reached the center of the watery world, Obiemwen turned over the snail shell and an endless stream of sand poured out. After the earth had been carefully walked on by the chameleon and found firm enough to support life, Ósanóbüa divided the world between his children. Óbiémwen was given control over childbirth and agriculture. She is called: "a wife of the earth", "mother of all human beings and all living things". Her title, Ühe-né-író, ("Vulva-opening of the wide road") praises her protection of pregnancy and childbirth. Because of her association with food and fertility, people also appeal to her in times of famine and pestilence. Ólókün received the power to bestow wealth, and Ógíüwú became the dispenser of death[11]. Osanobua then sent Olokun to the world to become óbá/king of the sea. Upon arriving at the sea Olokun met **itnene/imadese,** queen of the sea, who is called "Órá"[12]. She was so beautiful that Ólókün fell in love and married her. Although Olokun has many wives, Órá is his favorite[13]. So important is her position that anything requested of Ólókün must be asked in the name of and for the sake of Órá[14].

The Yorübá stories of creation closely resemble the Bini version. In one telling, Olódümaré (Almighty God) sent his first deputy, Órísá-nlá (the great órísá), to create the world. Another version credits Oduduwa with completing the task after Obátálá lost his primacy due to drunkenness. The tales tell of either a snail shell or leaf packet full of earth that was taken to be spread onto the waters. A five-toed hen and pigeon[15] replaced the hornbill, while the carefully walking chameleon[16] appears in all tales.[17]

Yorubá legends tell us that Obátálá and his wife Oduá[18] had two children, Yemoja and Aganju[19], who

married and had a son who was called *Orunga/Orungan* (Lofty sky). Orungan raped his mother. In fleeing from his further advances, she fell down and her body began to swell up. Two streams of water gushed from Yemoja's

breasts, and her womb burst open. From her womb the Following órisa were born: *Dada,, Spnpgnna, ¡pango, Ógurt, Olokun, Oloosa, Qya, Qsun, Oba, Órisa Oko, Ósópsi,* Ó/ce, *Ajé Salúgá, Orún, and Ósúpá*[20]. This legend credits Yemoja, daughter oF Odua, with being the direct maternal source oF: the kings oF Oyó, iFe, and Benin; deities that rule the earth, mountains, seas, rivers and lagoons; hunters; agriculture; wealth; the sun and the moon.

Another version oF this legend portrays Yemoja as the wiFe oF *Oranmiyan,* Father oF both the First Óba oF Benin and the First AlaFin oF Oyó. In this rendition she is the mother oF Dada, Sonponná and Sango.

The proceeding tale is told in Cuba as one oF the *itan* (history) From the odú iFá-Irósun Méji. In this version, Obátálá is the Father; Ógun replaces Orungan as the rapist, and Yemoja is subsumed by Yemowo (Female road oF pbatala), who is described as wearing garments made oF blue and white cloth (the colors associated with Yemoja). OF the children produced by the rape only Sango and Dada are mentioned in this connection, although Oya, Osanyin, and Orunmila also appear in the story.

For our study the Following Facts are noteworthy and will be examined in detail as we move along: Yemoja is said to be the mother oF Olokun; Sango becomes Olokun s brother,- pbatala and Odua. are Olókun's grandparents; either Aganjü or Oranmiyan is credited with being Olókun's Father; the odü iFá-lrosün Méji is very strongly associated with Olókun, Sango, Dada, íbéjí, Odua, Orúnmíla, and Yernowó.

These creation tales provide a cosmological lens For presenting, in sharper Focus, histórico-political Facts that have been blurred by the passage oF great periods oF time, shiFting political Fortunes, and mass migrations. We should consider that even though Óbíemwen created the world her brother Olokun was given rulership over it. Órisa-nlá's deFeat by Odüduwá pushed him into the secondary "Female" position. Yorúbá/LÜkümí[21] captives taken to Cuba, in reconstructing their culture, placed Órisa-nla/Osa-nla in the ranks oF the Female roads/avatars oF pbatálá. Ósa-nlá is given Female animals when sacrifices are made to her. In Cuba, it is interesting to note that Olokun, when considered male, is challenging pbatala For rule oF the world, and when considered Female is said to be the wiFe oF Odúduwa, another challenger oF Obatálá's sovereignty. Several odu iFa contain *itan* (histories) which tell oF the conFlict between Olokun and pbatala. The Following tale is Found in the odu IFa-Ówonrin Ose:

ífa[22]*, íre ayé, mbp* (Lucky advantage, the world's goodness, is coming)

Olódümaré had given each of the orísa his or her own particular ase (power/authority). Before retiring From the world, he left his deputy, Obatala, to rule the world and govern the aFFairs oF both men and divinities. Ésü Elégbá and Orunmlla assisted him in this task. All the órísa were satisfied except For Olókun who complained that he should rule the world since the earth was three quarters water and but one quarter land. Because he also felt that he was richer and more powerFul than Obatala was; Olokun challenged Obatala to a contest to see who was the more powerful and therfore better suited to rule the world. On the morning of the day of the contest Obatala sent his *adelé* (deputy), *Agemo*[23] (the chameleon), to fetch Olokun. When Olokun stepped out of his house he was shocked to see that Agemo was wearing the exact same outfit that he was wearing. Olokun quickly went back into his house and changed into an even finer outfit only to be dismayed upon coming outside to see Agemo in exactly the same outfit. Seven times Olokun changed into progressively more wondrous and spectacular outfits. Each time he was met by Agemo dressed in the identical thing. Utterly frustrated by Agemo, Olókun conceded rulership of the world to Obatala. He reasoned that if the deputy was powerFul enough to match him at every turn," what chance would he have against the master oF the deputy.

The preceding story is told by the Bini who substitute Ósanóbua For Obatala.

Another itan, associated with the odú Ifá-Irósún Ógúndá, tells us:

A time came when Olókun, owner of the sea, saw that the children of Obatala were trespassing on and stealing from the sea. Olókun complained to Olódümaré and pointed out that his children did not trespass on the land owned by Obatala. Olókun further suggested a switch; that he be given the land to rule and Obatala be given the sea. Obatala strongly objected to the suggestion to change kingdoms because his children could not live in the sea. Olódümaré refused Olokun s request to switch kingdoms but did decree that from that day onward

the children of Obatálá would have to offer *ebp* (sacrifice) to Olókun before they could travel or work

on the sea. Olókun looks on and complains when the children of Obatalá go fishing but can do nothing if they have offered the proper ebo.

Babatunde Agiri noted."

"...In the case of the migrations of the conquering bands into Yorúbáland in historical times, the method of legitlmization has been for the latter migrants to claim direct ancestry from the first and earliest. This is very evident In the case of the Oraányan story. The Óraányan migration was the last (so the tradition has described its eponymous leader as the youngest son of Odüduwá). It was also the most powerful and it attempted to subdue the earlier established kingdoms. Again oral testimonies have tried to explain this phenomenon by • stating that Oraanyan inherited the land because his father, Oduduwa, had distributed all his property to his elder brothers and there was nothing left but that inheritance. He utilized his position as the "owner of the land" to become the overlord of his much older (i.e. longer established) brothers who ruled the other kingdoms.

Although the extent of Its impact Is now being questioned, the Óraányan conquest appears to have had far-reaching consequences on the political (and religious) developments in Oyó, Ife and Benin. It established the royal dynasty In Oyó. It deposed the ruler of Ife whose title was Olófin and appointed the first Óoni to rule in his place. In Benin, its influence is attested in the coronation rituals of the kings."[24]

In Cuba, we will see that Olokun and Oduduwa are intimately associated. We can well surmise that the aforementioned odü tales are describing the ongoing intrigues between the kingdoms of Ife, Benin and Oyó to gain primacy. These tales seem to show how earlier matrilineal cultures were conquered (raped), suppressed, and how patrilineal cultures imposed their sovereignty. The princes or princesses (products of the rape) would reflect and pass on the features of the dominating parent.

The spiritual forces and political agendas of these divine historical personages travelled to Cuba and were effective In shaping the form, content and voice of not only Olókun worship but the worship of many other deities.

Olookun; Owner of Rivers and Seas **Ólokun's worship** begins

The Bini believe that at the dawn of remembered time a man called Omobé (harmful/rascal/never-do-well child[25]) was responsible for the beginning of Ólokün worship. Izevbigie recorded the following tale as told to him by Qmoruyi Ogbemudia of the Eastern Benin town of Ebvoesi;

Before Omobe came to earth as a physical being he was one of the best wrestlers in heaven. At the time of his birth his parents were strongly advised by an *obiro* (diviner) to prevent Omobé from ever climbing a palm tree. When he had grown into manhood he became a wrestler, in short time he became the best wrestler in his town. Travelling from town to town, he soon became the greatest wrestler in the world. One day, In the absence of his parents, Omobé decided to climb a palm tree just to see what all the fuss was about. From the top of the palm he could see into erinmwin (the spirit world). He saw that the deities were gathered together for a wrestling match. Immediately he climbed down from the tree and raced off to erinmwin to join In the match. Once In the spirit world he wrestled and defeated every opponent, ancestors, spirits, and deities (even Ógun), until he came to Ólókun. Omobe drew on all his wrestling skills while Ólokun summoned all his spiritual powers to prevent a defeat. It was a gruelling match for both of them. Suddenly, Omobe threw Ólókün who instead of falling to the ground ended up on Omobé's head. Ólókün resisted all attempts to be dislodged from Omobe s head and vowed to remain there as a glaring sign of his dissatisfaction with the arrogant and disrespectful actions of Omobe.

With Ólókün still on his head, Omobé returned to the world of the living and consulted a diviner. Omobé was advised to appeased Ólókün or die. The only way to appease Ólokun was to offer him four kolanuts, one coconut, and a rooster every day for seven days. On the seventh day a goat was to be sacrificed to finalize the rituals. During the seven day period Omobe was to undergo purification, and initiation into what would evolve to become the priesthood of Ólokun. Each day Omobe was painted, especially on his face and cranium, with *orhue* (white chalk). On the seventh day an *Ogiohg* (spiritual specialist) and an *Óhen Osa* (priest of the arch-divinity) performed the rituals needed to remove Ólókün from the head of Qmobé. An Aruolokun (Ólokün altar) was constructed and the following sacred items placed on it: *Akh(e) Ólókün* (clay waterpot that symbolizes Ólókün), *orhué* (white chalk), *adaXeben*[26] (swords of authority), and *uwenrhiotán* (glyphaea lateriflora)-magical, wishing staff. After all the ritual appeasements had been completed Omobé regained his health and composure. This was seen as a sign of Ólókün s acceptance of the propitiations and his departure from

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

the top of Qmobe's head.

Ogbemüdiá cites these events as the beginning of universal Ólókün worship and the First initiation rites

int» Ólókün's priesthood.[27]

Although the ritual procedures For initiating Olókun priests did not accompany Olókun worship to Cuba many other related religious procedures and ritual artifacts and details did. 'Lukümí owó mérlndílógún (sixteen, money-cowry divination) diviners recite the Following owe (proverbs) when the odú lFá[28]-É]íogbé írósün appears: "IF your head does not sell you, no one can buy you. ",• "Here marks the struggle between two intelligences." This type oF admonishment is Found in a great number oF variations throughout the corpus oF codiFIed ancient wisdom known as ¡fá. Omobé was seen by the diviner to be a precocious child who would not be easily kept within acceptable societal bounds. The diviner saw that Qmobe, unchecked, would prematurely climb the sacred palm tree, ladder between earth and the world oF spirits, whose Fronds are used to designate potentially dangerous and oFF-limits sacred space. Once free oF his parents control, his youthful zeal, superior ability, and lack oF experience prompted him (and so many other talented youth) to test his ability against the seated owners oF power (Death, Sickness, Wisdom, Ethical behavior, Medicine). This brash action oFten incurs the sometime deadly wrath oF those same owners oF power. Diviners oFten reveal this to a devotee by saying their deity or a deity is fighting with them. As subordinates we must attend to the wishes oF our on, órisa, égun (ancestors), and elders and stay within the bounds oF acceptable behavior or cause them to Fight with us. This "Fighting" oFten takes the Form of uncontrolled, random trance possession oF the disobedient devotee by his/her deity. Most oFten, initiation into the priesthood oF the offended and fighting deity is called for. The headstrong devotee will have his head shaved and painted with cooling *efun* (lime chalk) and other medicines that have been blended into a paste. These ritual actions and the training that accompany them will help the devotee to te[29] (to be bent) to the will of the deity and thereby become a valuable community servant. The shrine is the sacred place where the priest and other community members can attend to the will of the divinities and be bent to their service.

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas **Communal public Ólókün worship**

Edó tradition maintains that in the earliest times they were governed by rulers who carried the title *Ógiso* (Sky King). During the period when these kings ruled, the Edo kingdom was known as *Igodomigodo.* Owodo was the last of the Ógísó. His reign was characterized by Éghárévbá as, "a long course of misrule, failure and anxiety..."[30] Owodo was tricked and misled by his evil senior wife into banishing his only son and heir to the throne, Prince Ekaladeran, who was innocent. Prince Ekaladeran with his wife, mother and close relatives wandered in the forest for some time before he founded the river-port town of *Úghptón* (or "Gwatto")[31], just within the barrier of coastal mangrove swamp. Ughoton's prosperity especially in the 1500's was due in large part to European merchants who stopped there to obtain chili peppers, ivory tusks, and eventually slaves in exchange for imported cloth, coral beads, cowries, brass rods, and eventually guns. The town became very prosperous and Ekaladeran attributed this prosperity to Ólókün heeding his pleas for salvation and prosperity. Ekaladeran ordered that a temple be built where Ólókün would be worshipped by everyone in the town. Izevbigie points out the following/

> "The initiation of Olokun communal public worship by Prince Ekaladeran marks the practical beginning of the link between Olokun and the Oba of Benin. (Olokun is the first son of Osanobua and the Óbá is the first son of Ólókün) Before Ekaladeran, Olokun was neither the focus of communal worship nor was he acknowledged individually to any extent. When people saw the miraculous success of the banished Ekaladeran and his new found capital, Ughoton, where the Deity was worshipped communally and publicly, the popularity of Olokun took on new dimension. Everybody was eager to share the miracle of success which Olokun was thought to have bestowed upon Ekaladeran.
>
> Actually, Ekaladeran did not invent a new form of religion,* but he did lead what amounted to a religious revolution. The outcome of that revolution has been felt through the centuries. Its first effect was a revival of Olokun worship throughout the Benin Kingdom.[32]"

In the 14th. century (about 1334), Óbá Ohen became the first reigning monarch to officially encourage and lead in the worship of Ólokün. His actions popularized Ólókün and signaled the offical beginning of his worship in Benin. It is thought that Óbá Ohen, after

ruling For some twenty-five years, suffered from paralysis of his legs and that he appealed to Ólokun for a cure. After the Óba's death the populace became aware of his paralysis and were strengthened in their belief about the connection between Ólokun and Óba Ohen. The paralysed legs have come to be represented by mudfish *(maJapterurus e/ectricus)* and pythons/boas, Ólókün's messengers.

Oba Ohen had four sons. The reign of his eldest son, Egbeka, was undistinquished. Orobiru, the second son of Ohen, succeeded to the throne, had a peaceful and prosperous reign, and won the love and admiration of his subjects. Óba Ohen's third son and rightful heir, Ógún (the same name as the deity of iron) was banished from Benin City, along with his younger brother, Uwaifiokun. After killing his younger brother for attempting to usurp the throne, Ógún was crowned the Óba of Benin (about 1440 A.D.) and took the title, *Éwüáré* ("It is cool" or "The trouble has ceased")[33]. Éwüáré changed the name of the kingdom to *Edó* in honor of his deified friend who had helped to save him when he had been hunted, by opposition forces, while in exile. Ewüare, like Ekaladeran, had worshipped Ólókün as his last hope for salvation during his many years as a fugitive. Olokün is reported to have appeared to Éwüáré at Úghotón and promised to make him the greatest Óbá who had ever ruled the kingdom; a promise which he kept. After becoming Óbá, Éwüáré had a shrine constructed on the very spot that Ólokun had appeared to him. This became the second temple in the town. In order to promote Ólókün worship more widely, Éwüáré had another temple erected at *Uhunmwun-Idunmwun,* Benin City, the seat of the kingdom, izevbigie notes

> "It was Oba Ewuare who gave prominence to the worship of Olokun after his father Oba Ohen had popularized and made it the head and tail' of Bini religion__Following the lead of Oba Ohen and his son, Oba Ewuare, all other Oba who have ruled since then have remained loyal and faithful to the worship of Olokun."[34]

The initiation of Ólókün communal public worship by Prince Ekaladeran and the beginning of the link between the Óbá of Benin and Ólókün took place within the same period of change and unrest that saw the coming of the Yorübá invaders' to Benin City.

Égharévbá notes,

> "For some years after the banishment of Owodo, the last Ogiso, there was an interregnum and the Following leaders of the people, Evian and his son Ogiamwen, administered the government successively. ...When Evian was stricken by old age he nominated his eldest son, Ogiamwen, as his successor, but the people refused him. They said that he was not the Ogiso and they could not accept his son as his successor....
>
> While this was still in dispute the people Indignantly sent an ambassador to the pni

> Odudua, the great and wisest ruler of Ife, asking him to send one of his sons to be their ruler, for things were getting from bad to worse and the people saw that there was need for a capable ruler."[35]

Oranmiyan, the youngest son of Oduduwa, accompanied by Ogiefa, a doctor, was sent to Benin[36] by Obalüfon, Odüdúwa's oldest son and successor. Ogiamwen and the *Uzama nihinron* (council of seven elders)[37], who represented the older aristocracy, strongly opposed the installation of a foreign king and his new dynasty's attempt to concentrate power In its own hands. But, Óranmíyán shrewdly arranged to marry Erinmwinde, the daughter of Ósanego, the ninth onógié (hereditary village chief) of the town of Ego, and had a son by her. After some years had passed he renounced his title and stated that he would return to Ife leaving his son Éweká to be the king of Benin. Éweká was left in the care his maternal grandfather, the Ónógié of Ego, Ogiefa and others. Éweká had a long reign and was successively succeeded by his two sons, Uwakhuahen and Ehenmihen as Óbá. With the passage of time and after decisive military defeats, Ogiamwen and the Uzama nihinron had to make peace with Óbá Ewedo, the great grandson of Óranmíyán. So complete was this defeat that the Uzama were stopped from having swords of state (ada) carried before them into the palace or through the streets like the Óbá himself. The Uzama gradually became kingcrowners rather than kingmakers. Their ritual and symbolic role is now considered to be the legitimate custodians of the sanctions of the earth because they represent the owners of the land. In an interesting historical twist, they are also said to be

the descendents of the very elders of Benin who sent to Ife for Órañmíyan.

The revolution which transformed Benin is definitely of Yorúbá origin. Obayemi reports.-

> "The official title of the king of Benin is Óbá, the normal Yorúbá rendering of king'. This title is used nowhere else in the area of the Edo group of language and thus accords with the unique political status of Benin...Other oral traditions report that the corpses of the Óbá of Benin were sent to Ife for burial', and that the site known as Orun Oba Ádó was the cemetery for kings of Ádó (Benin)...One other vestige of the general Yorübá background of the dynasty in its origins is still expressed in the ritual when the Óbá of Benin is given facial marks in Yorúbá style in chalk which are then rubbed off at the sacrifice of a cow."[38]

Nevadomsky observes,

> "To this day, the division between the alien' palace and the indigenous' town continues to have both ritual and political relevance. For example, during every coronation ceremony, the new Óba symbolically buys' the land from the descendents of the first 'owners'."[39]

Paula Ben-Amos further states,

> "The establishment of a Yoruba dynasty brought Benin into a wider political and cultural orbit and redirected its spatial orientation from east to west. The east is the cardinal direction associated with the creator god, Ósanobüa, and with the creation of the land, which first rose out of the primordial waters in a place which today is the Igbo town of Agbor to the east of Benin. All the sites where once the *Ógisós* built their palaces and ancient quarters are on the eastern side of the present city, in contrast, the founder of the second dynasty came from Yorúbáland, to the west of Edó, and many of the important early óbás carne from western districts of the Benin kingdom. The change in spatial orientation was accompanied by a shift from a closed society to an open one,- Benin became cosmopolitan, receptive to

> Foreign ideas not only from the Yoruba, but, through expansion and trade, from other neighboring groups and eventually from the Western world."[40]

A pattern seems to have been established whereby the new authority, represented by a "male" head is legitimatized by a political marriage to queens or princesses of the land and the subsuming of other powerful female identities. Powerful males were characterized as unfit to rule, relegated to secondary positions and were then spoken of as "wives". Ólókün replaced his sister; Odudúwa upstaged Obátálá; Sango married Qba, pursued Osun[41], and incorporated the power of Iyamaase and Yemoja.[42]

The operating methods of conquest employed by the Odudúwa dynasty in Ilé-Ife, Benin and Oyó, as well as the resulting political-religious structure with its new alliances of divinities and their devotees, were to be carried into Cuba incapsulated in ritual procedures and */tan odu ¡fa* (historic divination tales) of the ancestors and órísa. With the passing on of many of the elders who knew of the historic events that formed the base for rituals or could answer the questions of why certain orísa walked together or didn't get along the need of a work of this type became imperative. After three hundred fifty plus years of continuing Yorúbá/'LÚkúmí culture in Cuba, with the most active period being in the last one hundred fifty years, many of the deep underlying meanings of ritual procedures, much like the Yorubá language used in those rituals, is not fully understood. If not remedied, real understanding can be replaced by ardor, invention or bluff. The lack of understanding bars the way to greater participation in the recreating of legendary journeys, conflicts and resolutions that connect one, as a cultural player, to an on-going, ancient process that admits you to ever evolving and increasing levels of empowerment.

come from the town of Ilóbí in what is now call Egbádo territory.[47] In reporting on the spread of Geledé, Drewal states,

> "A number of towns in present-day Égbádó record a secondary dispersal of Geledé from Kétu Yorúbá towns. At Kesan-Orile, traditions suggest that the original forefather came from Kétu, but that Geledé was introduced by the forefather's wife, who was from Ijoun, approximately 22 miles southeast of Kétu (Oguntade 1971). In Kétu, Odüdúa is the tutelary deity presiding over Geledé but, at Kesan, that position is held by Boromü, whose origin is Ijoun, according to both Ketu and Egbado traditions. "[48]

The performance of Geledé (to pet the vagina "carefully" to soften/soothe it) masquerade is designed to pay homage to women si that their secrets and innate life-giving powers may be enlisted to bring the goodness of wealth, children and long life to the community. When Geledé honors women it also honors the champions of women, Olókun and Yemoja, who represent the means of salvation and rebirth for those that have been abandoned, exiled and given up for dead. Women, whose primary desire is to have children, to gain Joy, to have prestige, to be well cared for in their old age, and to be mourned and then to be deified by their children are compelled to worship Olokun and Yemoja.

In piecing together the parts of various stories dealing with the period in question, I have determined that between 1820 and 1920 an Identifiable core group of knowledgeable and powerful priestesses and priests entered Cuba bringing some important ritual paraphernalia with them. Two towns, Regla and Matanzas, became the Founding sites for the development of Olókun worship and the associated órísá and masking traditions. (Figs. 5,6)

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas Regla

The town of Regla served as an entree port where newly arrived slaves had their chains removed. It was a truly African town built by both the infirm and manumitted slaves, the majority (whom were Egbádó and Ijebu, that were sent there. It was a tow were many of the important foundation stones of African religion in Cuba were laid. Regla was called Ara Olokun (relatives of Olokun and the city of Habana, right across the bay, was called Ara Ñlá (the important citizens)[49]. The town of Matanzas was known as **Ara** Ata[50] (citizens of the land of hot peppers).

In Regla the cabildo headed by the priestess of Osóos!, Doña Victoriana Rosalia-Efúnse[51] 'wárí kon dó (The one derived from Obatálá and who finds what he is searching for far and wide encamps) formed one of the most important pillars In the 'LÜkümí world. She introduced the presentation of more ónsa into the initiation ritual of priests and began to organize the initiation's ritual process by introducing songs and procedures.

A Yemoja priestess known only as Ebí Átinu Ayaba (the family member who from her stomach is a queen)[52], along with Tawaadé (our crown) a priestess of Qya, and Timotea Albeal-Latiiwa[53] (honor comes from good character) a priestess of Sango were three very famous and respected Egbádo *órlate* (diviners who act as masters of ritual ceremonies) who were to add to the body i 'LÜkümí ritual lore first in Regla and then in all of Cuba.

Regla was also the home, 64 Perdomo street, of the íjesá, Er Remigio Herrera-Adesina Ifaroola (the crown opens the way,- Ifá supports honor) the babalawo who brought Ifá to Cuba (fig.7). Adesina, reported to be a priest of Yemoja, was one of the founder: of the 'LÜkümí cabildo, Yemoja. His wife Panchita Herrera- Atíibolá (we are supported by acts of respect) was a priestess of Yemoja. Their daughter, Josefa Herrera, was the very famous priestess, Ésü BÍ (Ésü is born), who was initiated by the Yemoja priestess, Yen Ye T'olókun, who lived on Moraiz street and is reputed to have brough Olókun to Regla. Adésína initiated Eworio Rodriguez "Tata Gaitan"-Apárí Bo'fá (the bald-headed person worships Ifá) into Ifá. Eworio Rodriguez was a priest of Ósoosi. He was renown for his knowledge of Olókun and was the last person to dance the mask ol Olókun. He was married to Teresa Conde, Ire'lú (the goodness of the lord). Tata lived in Guanabacoa in the Palo Blanco section.

At 521 Perdomo lived Eño Filomeno Garcia-Átandá 'Fá'lúbí (brilliance is created; Ifá/Orúnmila the chief is born). He was a babalawo, olúbata (chief of the bata drums), an agbégi (carver of statues), and was instrumental in constructing and consecrating the first set of ritually complete bata in Cuba, about the year 1830.

Yemoja priestesses played an important role in the establishment of Olókun worship in Regla. The 'LÜkümí, Eña

Olóókun.- Owner of Rivers and Seas

Yemajada-Ógún NÍiké (Yemoja has come into being,- Ógún has a nee to be cared for) was the mother of the famous priestess of Yemoja, Serafina Castañeda "Munda Rivero'-Talabireo (a girl born covered i a caul is goodness). Panchita Cárdena, a priestess of Yemoja (fig.8) lived in a big house right in front of the bay and nextdoor to the famous Catholic church in Regla that housed the statue of the Virgin of Regla. Masked dances in honor of Gelede, Olokun and other deities were staged in the large yard at the back of her house and issued from there to perform in the street in front of the house. Oi of several waves of Yemoja/Olokun tradition came to New York by way of the Yemoja priestess, Evelia Collazo who was initiated by Dominga "Minga" Albear-Adé Osun (the crown of Osun), the niece c Latiiwa,. Evelia was the mother of the olubatá, Julito Collazo.

Robert Thompson was told by the highest-ranking priest of divination in the Lagos area, "Gelede is the worship of Yemoja, goddess of the sea and river. The masks of Gelede represent her and her female descendents.'" Égbá testimony in Ibara, quarter, Abéókúta, by a Geledé priest informed Thompson that Yemoja was the owner of Geledé. The senior priestess at Ajílete in southern Égbádó also said that Yemoja is the lord of Geledé. Another Lagosii associated Gelede with Olokun, deity of the sea, and stated that Geledé derives from Olókun.[54]

Another priestess of Yemoja was Eña Matilde Zayas who WE called Áwení (the one to wash and possess). Fernando Ortiz, the renown Cuban ethnographer, knew her. He commented about her and the celebration of Olókun,

> In the last century a festival of Olokun was held annually, accompanied by the sound of the tambores called "Gelede", which probably followed an ancient custom of the ethnic origin of Olókun,- but the musicians 'Égbádó', who knew the beats and rituals, died off and the beats were

generally substituted by bata beats. The annual festival was usually held around Easter Sunday, because it was popularly called the 'Easter of the Negroes'[55]. Today it Is celebrated rarely due to the great complexity and strictness of Its liturgy and above all due to monetary reasons. The ceremony is so exacting that it cannot be done without the killing of many animals for sacrifice and special 'feeding' of each orísa or the representative figure. These necessary victims cost a lot of money today. Like a goat for Elegba, a bull for Aganju, a ram for Sango, some geese for Yemaja, a deer for Osóosí, a duck for Osun, and various

Guinea hens, roosters, pigeons of diverse plumage, turtles etc. For the saints and a very Fat pig which should be oFFered to Olókun on the ocean so that it is required to ceremoniously travel by boat Far out to sea in the company oF many priests and drummers.

In that solemn religious ceremony the priests reverently and secretly (privately) oFFer all oF the órísa, their special Food annually. On the Following day is held the *Dance of the Órísa,* called commonly the *Dance of Olokun* (Master oF the Ocean, and oF the tremendous proFundities oF the deep sea). In the aFternoon are presented successive personiFications oF these mythological Figures or orlsa, with vestments and adornments typical oF the Form and color and with speciFic Features or makeup that the AFrican traditions have conserved.

...The gods appear one by one successively and execute their appropriate dance to the sound oF the sacred tambores (bata) and the chants oF the believers...This scene is only For one day, coming out oF the sanctuary oF the secrets and always guided and directed by special orations that are sung by the *Mitaagogp* (rapidly shaken bell)(fig.9) prepared secretly in order to produce that magical eFFect in unison with the tambores which also "talk' potent words. The órísa, come out and dance by the order oF the Órú (line-up oF prayers and songs to incite the deities). At the end goes the Dance oF Olokun, whose Face the uninitiated and the women cannot look upon, and who in this part oF the ceremony do not sing or participate whatsoever even iF they are priests or iyalosa[56]. In this regard was Famous Na Matilde Zayas, called Áwení, a Free negress oF the Egbádo nation, who in the middle oF the 19th. century celebrated with magnificent pomp the Festival oF Olókun in her temple on Perdomo street in Regla. The mask oF that goddess was carved by Átanda, a legendary negro who was a carver oF religious images, and her dress covered her body so that no Flesh was seen, marking her Femininity as goddess/mother by large rag breasts which bounced when she jumped as she danced. Her dance was the most beautiFul oF all and inspired the enthusiasm and unanimous devotion oF the olosa. They covered her with *fine shawls of burlap* in homage, while upon the Floor they placed rich mantles oF silk upon which the goddess danced. The dance of the orichas lasts

several hours and with its exotic figures, rich vestments, masks, emblems, pantomimes, music, chants and the reverential actions oF all, gives an impressive esthetic effect. "[57]

Cuban masking antecedents

The description, given by Ortiz, of the masked dancer wearing *"fine shawls of burlap"* seems to to be describing an Ókoorc masquerader rather than a Geledé masquerader. Drewal provides ar explanation,

"The Ijebu Yoruba masquerade cult known as Agbo (Magbo), or Ekine, pays homage to Olokun, goddess of the sea, and a host of water spirits...The clearest artistic interactions between Agbo and Geledé occur in western and coastal íjebu communities with close ties to Lagos, where some carving workshops make masks for both societies...Human fertility is a concern in both Agbo and Geledé; in Agbo, special children known as Molokun (Orno Olókun, literally "Children of the Goddess of the Sea") are thought to have come into the world through the intercession of the water spirits. Agbo masqueraders represent these water spirits. Like Gelede, annual Agbo festivals in Ijebu come just before the rains, and a herald masquerade, known as Ókooro, appears several weeks in advance to announce the festival date. Although this Agbo herald's mask can be mistaken for Gelede, the costume is quite distinct. It is made of *tightly woven mats* (fig. 10). Certain other Agbo headdresses are also similar to those of Geledé, and

the costumes that adorn them, like those at Lagos, consist of layers of rich cloth, which cover a woven fish trap to produce enormous buttocks (fig. 11). Also as in Lagos their dance evokes the grace of corpulent women...Whereas Gelede traditionally dance in pairs, Agbo perform in threes..."[58]

Elders in Cuba told me that in past times, on the first day ol January, Ókooro, 'Sun'mugágá[59] (the ooze of a breast tightly packed/dense) and Olókun masqueraders came out to dance in the towns of Regla, Habana, Majagua, Jovellanos and Matanzas. Ókooro would be the first mask to dance. Its presence symbolizes the removal of Death and its allies, Disease, Loss, etc.. Sun'mugágá, which represents life, followed and would be accompanied by twenty-one priestesses or older women who would lift their breasts

by cupping each in an upturned palm as they danced and sang. The famous singer and priest of Ésu, Lázaro Galarraga, who had seen this masked dance, told me that *sumugaga* referred to "big tits". He further pointed out that the dancer was covered with mariwo (young palm fronds) and fabric, and that sometimes a conical wooden mask was worn. Olókun's mask dances last and represents the ocean's ability to redeem and transform the world. Olokun s role of closing certain rituals is mirrored in all drumming celebrations of orisa. The lead singer invokes Olokun while all the people present stand in place, in two lines. As they sing they turn/spin to the left acting out cleaning themselves and casting away, to Olokun, the unseen negative. A pail or large basin of water which had been placed at the feet of the drums, ideally, is taken to be poured out into the street by a possessed priestess of Yemoja, who spins out and back, between the gauntlet of people, with the full then empty pail on her head. The turning down of the mouth of the pail on the floor in front of the drums closes the celebration.

"In Ijebuland a rite of communal catharsis, purification and renewal known as *Ebi* or *Ebi- Woro* preceded the Agbo festival. It is described by Ijebu "a New Year's festival".[60] We will encounter and more fully examine the term *Ebi* further on when we discuss ritual feeding of Olókun in Cuba and the United States.

There is one other area of correspondence that we should look at. In Cuba the Órisa, Yemoja's feast day is celebrated on September 7th., and the Órísa Ósun's is celebrated on September 8th. or 12th.. These two festivals would generally occur during the later part of the month of August in Yorubaland.



In the Ékití town of Ayede the Yemoja festival is celebrated in late August or early September. The main opening event is the *ebp pba* (the king's sacrifice) which is carried out at the *igbó Yemoja* (forest shrine of Yemoja) that is located at the boundary between the forest and the town. An *agbo* (ram), which is also the sacrificial animal of both Sango and Egungún, is sacrificed and the blood is fed to Yemoja's subterranean waters through a hole in the earth at the base of a large tree. The ram is provided for sacrifice by the king, the Átá of Ayédé, In return for Yemoja's protection and assistance. The priestesses pray for the the continued health and long life of the king and the propriety of the town[61]. The Ata brings the tethered ram to the shrine accompanied by an entourage made up of Yemoja drummers, the king's messenger, and several of the king's sons and wives. The Átá wears a beaded cap but one of his junior wives goes before him carrying on her head a tray containing a larger beaded Olókun crown topped by a beaded *¿kin* (egret/heron[62]). The king .never wears this crown because its power would kill him. As the entourage approaches the shrine, the Yemoja priestesses

announce, *"Átá maa de, Olu-Odo* -The Átá is coming, the chief of the river.[63]"

In Cuba we find a similar praise salute for Yemoja;

Yemoja Átá-ará-máa-wá[64] asa aya bí **Olókun**
Yemoja the owner of kingship titles is slow, but sought after for having a chest that shields like Olokun's

The word *ara* (slow) in the praise points out the fact that queens and kings don't rush when they walk. Their

processions move slowly at a stately pace. Kings and queens like *esin orlsa* (horses of the órísa) balance divine unseen powers on their heads and so must walk cautiously with self-composed dignity.

In Ayédé, the senior priestess of the Egbé Yemoja (Yemoja society) is called *YeyeoJokun.* She, while possessed by Yemoja, is the one who carries the *igbá Yemoja* (calabash containing the ase/power of Yemoja) from the forest through the town to the king's palace. If the calabash should fall or break the priestess will die and misfortune for the town will follow. Her counterpart in the forest is the senior priestess of Olókun, *íyáolókun.* At the shrine in the forest, the Iyáolókun sacrifices a white pigeon to Olókun at the sacred water where the spirit and "power" of Yemoja dwells[65].

The worship of Yemoja in Ayédé involves the worship of a core group of related órísa. These same órísa. and similar relationships can be seen In Cuba. Yemoja is married to Órísa Oko; Ógún and his junior brother Sango are her sons. Ógún married Oya but Sango stole her away. Sango is also said to have married Ósun, and both are related to Ibéjí. Baayonní, considered male, is placed between his brothers Ógun and Sango, while Erinle is identified as Osun's junior brother. Ésu, Óke, and Osányín are not part of the family but are associated with Yemoja.

In Regla, the praise name/title Yen Ye T'olókun is the only name remembered for the priestess of Yemoja who is credited with bringing one of the two founding ase of Olókun to Cuba circa 1850. It Is more than likely that she would have been associated with the famous Cabildo Yemoja since she was the person who Initiated Ésú BÍ, the daughter of Adésína, co-founder of the cabildo. Although Adésína didn't dance a crown of Olókun, he did dance a mask. Ortiz Illustrated a mask which closely resembled a Geledé mask surmounted by a bird. We can only wonder at the connection between Ayédé's crown of Olókun, the mask reported on by Ortiz and the mask of Olókun danced by Adésína (figs. 12-16).

We mentioned earlier that Adésína Initiated Eworio Rodriguez/Tata Gaitan[66] into Ifa. In an extraordinary ceremony,

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

Tata, who was considered the most knowledgeable babalawo in Cuba, although not the oldest, was installed (circa 1910) as the last *Oba* (King) to rule in Cuba. He is said to have had enormous knowledge about Olókun and would celebrate great feasts in honor of the deity. Not only did he dance the mask of Olókun, but is reported to have owned a wooden statue (another mask?) of Olókun that he would carry (most likely on his head) From his house to the edge of the ocean[67]. Tata Galtan died in 1944 shortly after dancing the mask of Olókun. This occurence, and the apprehension it created, coupled with the passing away of most of the elders who had come directly from Yorubaland and who possessed the ritual knowledge needed to successfully celebate this "delicate/serious" ritual, brought an end to the mask of Olókun being danced in Cuba. Annual communal rituals of propitiation and thanksgiving held in honor of Olókun and Yemoja continue to be carried out. These rituals sometimes involve the carrying of the sacred ase of these oriss to the seashore and the dancing of the sacred vessel containing the ase by a person whose life is in danger if things are "not done correctly" and the vessel should "fall". Fears that the person who danced the mask would die if all the proper offerings are not made temper the festive mood of the celebration. Failure is a serious matter; all participants would be possible targets of dire consequences. These fears have persisted to the present day.

The Yorübá are not alone in this regard. The Bini celebrate the *Ekaba* festival usually in February of each year. The festival lasts for nine days. In each town the event is directed by the *Odipnwere,* the oldest man, the *lyasere,* an elected elderly women who has reached menopause, and other officials. A day before the festival the *¡ghalegbe* is observed in Ólókün's temple. The *ighele* is the age grade which in olden times constituted the fighting force of the Benin kingdom. "The *ighele* represent the element of virility and physical strength within the community. The word *"ighele"* itself is a Bini praise name denoting someone who takes swift action or speaks forcefully...This enables him, and by extension the *ighele,* to effectively combat disease and perpetuate the community."[68] At this observance a special rhythm, similar to the Ekaba rhythm, accompanies seven songs that are played at midnight to remind the people, Olokün and the spirit world about the impending festival. Or *Okuo,* the following day, two oxen are sacrificed to Ólókün by the Odionwere. Before the sacrifice, prayers are offered to Ólókün, through his wife Órá, to bless the Óbá of Benin, the people of Benin and the ■worshippers. On the fourth day after the Ekaba festival the Ighele organize the *Ekpo* dance. During the Ekaba festival many evils, including diseases and negative spirits, come into the town. Ekpo dance marshalls beneficial spiritual powers in order to rid the town of all diseases and negative spirits and maintain the state of

ritual purity. Ekpo uses wooden masks to represent important personages and deities. The masks are ritually washed, fed and painted in the *Aruekpo* (Ekpo shrine), which women and the non-initiated are barred from. Although restricted from the shrine, pregnant women seek out Ekpo to rest their bodies against in order to insure safe delivery of healthy children.[69] The dancer is completely covered by palm-frond strips that are attached to the borders of the mask. In the town of *Avbiama* an Olókun mask (fig. 17) is danced in the hope that health, prosperity and children will be granted by the deity[70].

The worship of Yemoja was brought to Ayédé and is the guardian of the Átá's Olókun beaded crown. The worship of Yemoja represents the first Átá, Ésübíyif's, alliance with Ibadan through marriage.[71] The senior priestess of Yemoja married Ésübíyií and brought her Yéyéolókun title from íbadan to Ayédé. In relation to Cuba, we must note that íbadán was originally an Egbá settlement and that the Égbá were under the control of the Oyó Empire. The Égbá were forced to move out of Ibadan as it was taken over, in 1835, by Oyo refugees. The refugees were themselves pushed by the disintegration and impending fall, in 1836, of Oyó lié (Old Oyó). The displaced Égbá from Ibadan resettled at Abéókúta joining their fellow Egbá who had founded the town about 1830. The principal temple of Yemoja is located in Abeokúta's Ibara ward and the kingship title of "Átá" is known in Abéokuta. The period from the death of Aláafin Abíódún in April of 1789 to the British intervention, to stop the ÉkMparapo War[72], in 1893, was a time of unrest, warfare and the attendants upheaval and displacement of whole communities and regions of people. As a direct consequence if this, millions of Yorübá people were shipped from Porto Novo, Badágri, and Lagos into slavery in the Americas. Ortiz reported that the Cuban trade continued until 1880, and that between the years 185O and 1880 some 200,000 Africans were brought to Cuba[73]. As late as 1873 a Habana paper offered for sale "Negroes fresh from Africa.[74]" All of these facts taken together make a strong case for the likelihood that major segments of the followers of closely related órisa traditions from towns as disperse as-Iláa.ró, Ilóbí, Ota, Abéókúta, Ibádán, íjayé, Ilesa, Lagos, Badágri, Ayédé, etc.-were transplanted in Cuba.

Despite the prominence and notoriety of Regla-Ara *O/ókun,* popular sentiment among the elder priests in Cuba holds that the "biggest" most prestigious seat of Olókun's ase in Cuba resided in the town of Matanzas- *Ara Ata,* at 104 Salamanca street, (Figs. 18,18a) the home of the famous priestess of Yemoja, Ferminita Gomez-Osa BÍ (Órísa, is Born) (Fig. 19). Although it is widely held by the elders that there was no masking tradition specifically associated with Olókun in Matanzas, the combination of the presence of Olókun 's ase and the sacred ritual drums used in his worship are cited as the deciding factors in determining the ranking of Matanzas over Regla. By 1940, with the traveling home of the last Lukumi to come direct from West Africa, masquerades associated with Olokun, Ókooro, and Egúngún had passed into history in the town of Matanzas. This same trend took place in the towns of Cardenas, Jovellanos, Perico and Colon-all towns within the Province of Matanzas. Esteban Vega spoke to me about an elderly man, from Colon, named Tomian who when younger, danced wearing a mask that was called *Awppna* (crafted image)[75] to the beat of consecrated bata and Olókun's drums. After 1940, only 'Sun'múgágá was danced on Sundays, without masks, by LÜkümí descendents who carried seed pod shakers from the Flamboyan tree (Royal Poinciana). As we have already been informed, the death of Tata Gaitan was an important factor which helped to bring a halt to Olókun's mask being danced and his sacrifice being offered on the high sea. In 1944, Ferminita and the other elders in Matanzas resurrected the tradition of taking Olókun's sacrifice to be presented to him on the open sea.

Olókun's ase was brought to Matanzas, direct from the Égbádo region of Yorübáland, by the Sango priestess, Monserrate Gonzalez-Obateró (the king of the divination mat tells tales)(Fig.2O). Ferminita received

Olókun from Monserrate and was guided by her in religious matters although Monserrate was not the one who initiated Ferminita. Ferminita's first godmother was a LÜkümí priestess of Osun named Adelé[76] (the deputy) who was called Omodélé (child of the deputy). She assisted another LÜkümí priest of Osun known only as 'KÚdáásí (Death spared him)[77] as he prepared to initiate Ferminita to the órisa, Osun. Late in the initiation when they sang the invocation oriki for Yemoja, she mounted Ferminita. Because of some spiritual taboo that banned 'KÚdáásí from dealing with Yemoja, Obateró, after some costly coaxing, had to come and rectify the situation. From that time on Ferminita came under Monserrate's guidance. Ferminita was described as a very kindly and dignified person, who was very serious when it came to religious matters. She is said to have lived to be over one hundred years old and remained vigorous well into her eighties.

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Olookun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

In the 1850s, Matanzas was the home of many important Lukúmí who were involved with the celebrations of Olókun staged by Monserrate and Ferminita. From Óyo carne the babalawo, Noblas Cardenas, priest of O bátala, Oba-n-kólé (the king builds the house) who lived at calle Buen Viaje #96, Pueblo Nuevo, Matanzas, and Mauricio Piloto[78], priest oF Sango, Abíawo Ósabiówo (we give birth to an initiate; órisá gives birth to respect). These two men created the first set of fully consecrated bátá drums in Matanzas and taught others how to play bata. It is very likely that they were among the first drummers to play the drums of Olókun.

Monserrate was one of several important Yoruba women who helped to shape the religious traditions of Matanzas. About 1860, the Yemoja priestess, Dolores Calderón-Órókí (Fig.21) came to Cuba as a slave, very likely from the Ife region[79], and gained her freedom shortly after that. In 1932, she was the last surviving Lukumí to die in Matanzas. Her daughter Felipa Calderón-Maambóoje (always feeding the living one) was the first creóle to be initiated to Sango by the Lukumí in Matanzas. The priestess of Oya, Margarita Armenteros-Áiná[80] and her goddaughter, Tiburda Sotolongo-Osun Mliwa (Osun agitates character) were two very influential Égbádó priestesses[81] who founded important orisa lineages. Gregoria "Tula" Garcia was an Ijesa priestess of Osun and member of the Ijesa cabildo founded in 1854, at 187 Salamanca street, and maintained by the Garcia family who had been in Cuba since 1803. She was an active participant in the Olókun festivals celebrated by Ferminita. Tula's mother, Carmen Garcia also a priestess of Osun and a member of the cabildo, would have worked with Monserrate and Ferminita. Priestesses from other towns would also become involved in the ritual calendar of Matanzas. From the town of Palmiera, north-east of the town of Cienfuegos, the Yemoja priestess, Felicia "Mafea" Fernanadez Morales- "Queen of Palmiera" would come to Matanzas and participate in Olokun rituals. She was the first person to be initiated by Josefa Herrera-Ésú Bi, from Regla and Felipa Calderón of Matanzas. Felipa was the ojúbona (second parent who takes care of the initiate). Mafea's mother, Ma Lugada Fernandez, was a Lukumí priestess of Ágemo, a road of Obatála, who initiated her grandson, Mario Fernandez to Obatála. He was later initiated into Ifá by Tata Gaítan and became generally known as Owonrin-Ófun[82].

In Matanzas, the worship of Olókun was based in the large blood-family (six daughters, two sons) of Ferminita Gomez Torriente. The family consisted of: Celestina Torriente "Mamaita", Olobatálá-Olúfandéyii (the lord caused this one to be crowned) (Fig. 22); Concepción Torriente, Oníyemoja-Omi Ókúkókul'orun (water[83] is greeted that rushes suddenly from heaven); Celestina Gomez-Sango L'adé (Sango owns a crown); Aracelia Gomez, Olobatálá-Ála, Bunmi (white cloth gave me); Concha "Conchita" Gomez, Oniyemoja; Elena

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Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas Olókun's drums

Like many other orísa, Olokun has his own set of consecrated drums. That set consists of four goblet shaped with tapered foot, single headed, pegged drums (Fig.25). The drums of Monserrate are said to have come from the Egbado and Anago and were never played outside of the temple. In form they closely resemble drums used in Gelede performances (Fig. 26), and those used by the Arara of Dahomey (Figs. 27,28) and the Ewe of Togo and Ghana. Their form and the restriction of their use to the temple points out a relationship with *Gbedu and Ógbóni drums* (Fig. 29). These drums are played respectively for the king or for the Ógbóni society. Their use is restricted to specific occasions of importance on the royal calendar and attendance at these events would be limited to the king, members of the Ógbóni, and local chiefs, and diviners.[85] These drums are decorated with a carved central motif of a fish-legged figure often identified as Olokun. Monserrate's drum set also appears to be a combining of the *Em' Olokun* (Oiokün drums), *Ugbe drum* and *Em Edó drums* used by the Bini when celebrating Olókun during the Akaba festival (Fig. 30). Ortiz refers to Monserrate's/Ferminita's drums as Geledé drums.

Esteban Vega provided the names of Ferminita's drums. The smallest drum Is called the *Ge-Ge*

(exactly-exactly), the next one is called the *Campana* (the bell shaped drum), the third drum is called *Segundo* (second), and the largest/master drum is called *Alaga* (chairman). An *agogo* (bell)(see fig.9) is played in accompaniment. Vega first learned to play the bell patterns and then over time moved from playing the smallest drum to the master drum. The rhythm called *Lo'tókotó* (use the rudder for guidance) was played on the *Ge-Ge*. All the drums have six pegs that are used to hold and tighten the drum head. The Alaga drum Is played with bare hands and is dedicated to Olókun. The Segundo and Campana are dedicated to órisa Yéwa. The Segundo is played with bare hands while the Campana is played with a crooked drumstick in one hand. The Ge-Ge is dedicated to Odua and is played with two sticks. This trio of divinities, as we will see, works together in other ritual settings.

Ortiz provided another illustration of a Cuban drum which he reported was played only to worship Olókun and could be taken to be played at the sea. Its laced-on two heads, cylindrical shape, and the fact that it is made to be carried suggests an adaptation of the Bini *Emighan drum* (Figs.31). According to Izevbigie, the *Emighan* drum is one of the most important cultural drums of the Bini and is used for court music and Ekaba dance which honors Olókun. It is a two headed cylindrical drum that uses wooden pegs to hold and tighten the drum heads[86].

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Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

Between December 31st. and January 6th. Ferminita would celebrate Olókun. Sacrifices would be offered and the *Oró/Órú Olókun* (the traditional custom of inciting Olókun) performed. First the drums of Olókun play, without singing or dancing accompaniment, honoring Olókun with their drum praises alone, in the same manner as the sacred bata. Next, singing and dancing for the orisa Olókun, Odua, Obatála, and Yewa took place. No *Iyawo* (newly initiated priest with less than one year of priesthood) could dance in front of the drums of Olókun. After Olokun's drums played, the consecrated bata-Áyán-would play. When Olókun's drummers were going to turn the ceremony over to the *olúbátá* (master of the bata), Vega said they would sing these three songs;

Lead- *E mayé mayé te orno (O) lópwp (2x)*
You definitely respect, definitely respect, worship the Prince of Ówo[87]

Coro- Repeat

L- *Qsppsi ire o. Óní a se a! (2x)*
Osoosi is goodness. Today we cook (a feast) ah!
Iba ara Ógún a ye. Iba ara Ógun a. ye o.
Homage to the kin of Ógún; we praise you.
Homage to the kin of Ogun; we praise you.
Áina (p) mo wa se; ká ma se o.
Aína is the child who comes to be fulfilled,- let him definitely be fulfilled
Óní pmp wa j'e[88] *kf iba wa ayo e*
Óní, child who comes to survive, salute the king to embrace repletion.

C- Repeat

L- *A yi bp* e. *A yi bp e. E ki ilé yó. A yf bp e.*
We turn/roll to worship you. We turn/roll to worshipyou. You fill the house to be replete. We turn/roll to worship you.

C- Repeat

The first song touches on the connection between the Olóowo (King of Ówo), Orúnmíla, the pba of Benin, Olókun, and Obátálá. Like the Oba of Benin, the King of Ó wo is seen as a divine being, an or/53. They are both called the son of Olókun. With Olókun hailed as the "King" the Olowo can theoretically be called the Prince of Owo. The resourcefulness of the Owo is remembered as a source of strength and pride for the worshippers of Olokun in Matanzas. I wondered why the Olowo was held in such high regard.

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

Rowland Abiodun provided more background information by relating how Orúnmila (deity of divination), who had been childless for a long time, fathered eight sons who became kings of ancient and historically important Yoruba towns. The youngest son became the King of Owo and refused to pay homage to his father. He gave the following reasons:

> *You, Orúnmila, wrap yourself with odun cloth*
> *I, Olpwp, also wrap myself with odun cloth*
> *You, Orúnmila, carry osun walking stick made of brass*
> *I, Olpwp, also carry osun walking stick made of brass*
> *You, Órunmila, wear a pair of brass sandals*
> *i, Olpwp, also wear a pair of brass sandals*
> *You, Orúnmila, wear a crown*
> *i, plpwp, also wear a crown*
> *And it is usually said that*
> *Nobody uses a crowned head to bow down for another person.*[sg]

Olowo so angered Órunmila that he departed for orun leaving the world in a state of crisis. After much appeasement and propitiation Orúnmila gave his children *ikin* (sixteen sacred palm-kernal nuts), which would thereafter represent him and provide the answer to all their questions and problems.

The Olowo is further described as,

> "...an arrogant son who not only dressed himself exactly like Orúnmila, but refused to accept Orúnmíla's authority. The Olowo replicates Orúnmila's social, cultural, and artistic institutions and invokes a traditional Yoruba axiom to defend himself and his position. This strategy suggests the protective strategy and authority, or *ase*, of the *alagemp* (chameleon), one of the most revered animals in Yorúbá creation mythology."[90]

The Olowo used his head wisely and adopted the strategy of Obatálá in employing the tactics of Obatala's ambassador, Alágemo, who had proven his ability to win out over more powerful and aggressive adversaries. The chameleon is able to take any color in its immediate environment and use that color to protect itself. He is the ultimate guerilla/freedom fighter. The Owo wanted to survive as an independent neighbor of Benin, the most powerful forest state in the sixteenth century. This is the same goal of the 'LÚkúmí and their descendents in the diaspora who contend with the slavery institution and its permutations. The worship of Olokun is not a matter of blind faith. Olókun, although immensely powerful, was

once defeated because he did not use his head. He let his ego and insecurities become the source of his undoing by a physically weaker but mentally craftier opponent. The 'Lukümí incorporated this memory message concerning the Olowo into the ritual in order to better arm themselves in the future.

> "The defense strategy of Owo must have included the active use of *oogun* (traditional medical preparations) and other psychological weapons. It is even conceivable that such ancient skills as those employed by the first Olowo in his encounter with Orunmila were used. According to the late Ojomo of IJebu-Owo, the Olowo borrowed a tactic of the *alágemp* (chameleon), who not only protects itself but enriches its wardrobe by appropriating the "dresses" of other creatures in its environment. The Olowo appropriated certain Benin titles, chiefly paraphernalia, and other objects, which served magically as neutralizers, strengthening him and protecting the city against the menace of the Benin kingdom."[91]

The second song evokes the image of the successful hunter who provides a feast for the town and its children. Ósóosí, deity of the hunt, is the hunter's hunter who never misses what he shoots at. He is the son of Yemoja and brother of Olókun. Osóos! is closely related to his fellow master hunter Erinle (elephant in the earth). Erinle tranformed to become a deity that lives in the waters of the river with Osun and Yemoja. The Ówo connection is made clear when we consider the following:

"Elephants once inhabited the thickly forested areas around the city (Owo). As late as 1960, farmers in surrounding villages...complained of the menace of elephants on their farms. Not all hunters, however were permitted to kill them in Owo. One had to be experienced and graduate to the class of elephant hunters *(pde-aperiri),* in the guild of hunters...Any time an elephant was killed, invariably all the villagers in the area knew of it and were by custom entitled to a portion of it. This practice inspired another proverb: 'One encounters all shapes and sizes of knife during the sharing of elephant meat. It is there that you see farmers' children with their (strange-looking) kitchen knives.'."[92]

Olookun." Owner of Rivers and Seas

The children, whose knives the hunter provides meat to cut, are special children like *Aína,* the child born with the umbilical cord wrapped around her/his neck. Aína is considered a child of *Egúngún* in some traditions and a child of Erinle in others. Aína likes to eat black beans and chicken stew. *Óní,* born Facing the ground, is a strong, hard child who will not listen and will not cry. He is the child of a king[93] and is known to shout and kick people. Óní is the object of great Fear and is called "Owner of Bondage". This child is so independent that he literally makes a slave oF everyone (his Family, diviners, priestesses) as they try to bring him under control. Aína is a child that cries incessantly and must be given special palm-oil medicine to subdue it; while Óní is so obdurate that he will not cry unless splashed with cold water. These children, who represent the ancestors, hunters/warriors, those who will not be propitiated and those who will not be subdued (to produce good citizens) except with medicine, are advised to salute Olokun, the king, in order to realize their Full measure oF goodness.

The last song reminds us why we worship Olokun and prostrate ourselves beFore him. He gives us *"seven"* strong children as the cause to worship him with a Feast, and then provides the wealth that allows us to Feed the celebrating community. Like the ancestors, he eats ram.

Olóókun; Owner of Rivers and Seas **Olókun's Family and friends**

For the Lukumi, Olokun is thought of as the king of a group of orlsa that is made up of seven roads of Yemoja, seven special birth children and Sango. The seven roads of Yemoja are[94]:

Okute/Okunte-Okube, the royal ancestral staff, represents Soko, a queen of the íjébu town of idowá. (Fig. 32) Okute is the counterpart of the Opa-Ase (royal scepter) in some parts of Eastern Yorübáland.[95] Okunte is the road of Yemoja that is credited with laying down the ocean. She is the doorkeeper of Olókun who inhabits the ocean, coastal reefs, and forest bound rivers and lakes.

Asaba is renown for her knowledge of divination and medicine but is considered very dangerous. When she is angry she sends great floods and tidal waves to destroy the land.

MayélégúrP[6] (one who is always honored in the house of Ógún) is the water that feeds wells and is associated with the *otun* (clay water vessel) that sits on the shrines of initiates.

Asesun is the stream of water we discover gushing from the ground deep in the forest.

Okere/Okere puns on the road of Yemoja who was the wife of Odüdúwa, King of Ife. She left him to go to Abéókúta and marry *Okéré,* King of Saki, an Oyó town north of Ibadán. He broke one of her taboos and she left him by either turning into a river or by becoming one with the river. Okere turned into a mountain so as to block her escape, but Yemoja called on Sango, who hurled a lightning bolt that split the mountain in two. Yemoja escaped and made her way to the sea and her consort Olókun.[97]

Aró is the title of Yemoja the dyer of cloth and the owner of the dark, profound waters of mystery and wealth.

Ibu Áganna (stream for spent barren women) restrains the destructive tendencies of Okunte and Asaba. Aganna does not walk but drags herself along and uses a snake as her messenger.

We have already been introduced to the special children *Aína* and *Óni* who is called *Oro-Óní* (fierceness-Óní) by the 'LÚkumí. The Ibeji (twins), *Tafwo* and *Keehinde* are followed by *Idowu,* the child born after the birth of twins, and *Alaba,* the child born after ídówú. *Olówóorí* (the owner of a rich head) is a nickname for *Dada,* who, like *pmp Olokun* (children of Olókun), are children born with thick, curly hair (figs. 33,34,35). Dada is the name of the older brother of Sango. *Etá-Óko/lbéta* (triplets) complete the list of special children that are considered representatives of Olokun. The 'LÜkümí call triplets *Eta Win* which can be translated as "three earth spirits" *(/win),* or "three black tamarinds" *(íwíri)* because of their diminutive birth size.

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

We will look at the relationship between Olokun and Sango, and between Olokun and his wives In the next section.

The 'Lukumi have a proverb that says, "All waters by their actions pay tribute to the owner of the sea." Just as rivers flow into the sea and deposit a portion of the mineral, vegetable and spiritual wealth they have acquired in their travels, the deities that animate those rivers likewise pay tribute to Olokun. The odü Ifá-Éjiogbé Mejí tells us that the soul goes to heaven, falls to the earth as rain, and converts itself into stone at the bottom of the river. This is the sacred stone that the initiates, at the commencement of their initiations, pay Ósun and grope for in the river. The initiates return from the river carrying, on their heads, the *ptun* (clay Jug) (fig. 36,37) containing river water and the secret of the river[98]. Some of the stones, at the bottom of the river, are carried away by the current to go and live with Yemoja or fall into the murky abyss to dwell with Olókun. From the beginning of time the spirit of mankind migrates from being earth to flesh to rock and back to earth again. The sojourners of these three incarnations often times await their next transformation in the watery domain of Olokun. As we will see later in our discussion, these stones figure prominently in the worship of Olókun. The standard bearer of all stones is *Órisa Óké* (deity of the mountain). Periodically, powerful órisa, like *Oro Iná* (Fierceness of Fire), the lake of molten magma boiling at the core of the world, burst to the surface to flow as rivers of fire, causing death, destruction, and renewal. Part of this renewal is the reintroduction, to the light, of ancient stones containing ancient souls. This process is halted and cooled by the intercession of the waters of Yemoja and Olokun who make a profit on the mineral and spiritual wealth that has been belched up to the surface and deposited in their larders. Aganjú, (deity of the wilderness and the volcano) the son of Oro Iná, restrains and channels those destructive forces." Órisa Oko, deity of the farm, is the brother of Sango and Olókun. He profits directly from the actions of Aganju and Oro Ina who provide mineral rich new soil for his fields. Órisa Boromü represents the tangible profit, the produce of the earth. Oko has a close relationship with Obatála, Olokun, Erinle, Ósun and Ibeji. He is said to be married to Yemoja Áwoyo, who wears the adornments of Olokun (her consort) and crowns herself with Osumare (the rainbow).

In Olókun 's realm the *Éegún,* our ancestors, rest during their travels to their next destination. *Órisa Yewa* (mother of character)as owner of the cemetery has a close relationship with Éegun. Like those possessed by Olokun and Éegún, in Matanzas, the face of Yewa's horse must not be seen. The person possessed must be covered with a white sheet the moment the possession tremors begin and remain covered until Yewá has left the head. Priests of Obátálá

when mounted by certain roads oF the deity, like *Yekú-Yekú,* are also covered with a white sheet. The odu Ifá-Óbárá Éjiogbé contains an *itan* (historical narrative) that tells the following story:

> There was a time when Obátálá lived in a state of fear; he was surrounded by enemies. He had put himself in this position by not listening to the good advice of his wife and friends and now didn't know how to extricate himself from the situation. Ésü, the friend and advisor of Obátálá, felt sorry for him and offered to free him from his predicament. Ésü then went through the town and announced that at twelve o'clock, high noon, Oduá the powerful and terrible would pass in the streets. He further said that it would mean death for any person that was in the streets and saw this phenomenon. Ésü then covered Obatálá in a white shroud, made of mosquito net material, and went before him loudly ringing a bell to make certain his coming was announced, in this way Obatálá escaped his enemies with the "Passing of Odua at high noon. "

Yekú-Yekú is a road of Obátálá that wears a shroud and is closely associated with Egungun, and Oduá. Odua lives in a sealed calabash that is painted white and said to blind those that open the calabash to see him/her. Ésu was very wise in having Qbatála assume the guise of Odua, the very adversary that had cornered him.

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas **itan Olókun**

In this section we will look at *itan* (narratives) taken from odú IFá corpus that tell us more about the relationships between Olókun and the other órísa. As we have already seen there is a strong connection between Olokun and Sango. The odu Ifá-lrosün Osé tells us that Sango was born in the sea and was crowned there.[100] We are also told that Sango asked for Esu's help in devising a plan that would give him control over the commerce both on land and sea. Olokun also assured Sango of his complete support in developing this commerce. Ésu suggested that they leave the sea commerce in Ógún's charge. Upon hearing that he would be in charge of sea commerce Ógún sang the following song;

Erétni le njenje
The powerful high-seas are characterized by trembling.

Ógún eremi le njenje
Ógún of the powerful high-seas is characterized by trembling.
Agwé[wl] erémí le njenje
Agwé of the powerful high-seas is characterized by trembling.
E! Njenje máá njenje máa
It is always trembling always trembling!
Agwé erémí le njenje
Agwé of the powerful high-seas is characterized by trembling.

Although Sango would have lived somewhere between the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries, he remains the emblem of Oyó aspirations. This part of the story and song is a metaphoric way of talking about the establishment of the trade linkage and control by up-country Old Oyó over the coastal ports of Porto Novo and Badagry. (Fig. 38) Old Oyó lay on the main trade route from the north to the south. This trade route was a part of one of those trans-Saharan caravan routes which reached the Guinea coast. Beginning from either Badagry or Porto Novo the route passed through ípókía, the Égbádo town, and then to Saki, Igbóho and Old Oyó.[102] Important to the stability of the prosperity offered by this trade was the probable alliance between Oyó and Kétu. By the sixteenth century the port at Lagos would have been in the control of Benin. During the rule of Oba Éwuare, alias Ógún (c. 1440), the port at Úghotón became a scree of wealth as the first European goods reached Benin. By the reign of Esigie in 1504, the Portuguese had come to Benin and were fully Involved in trade and attempts to convert the Bini to Christianity.[103] The fact that both the Fon deity Agwé and Ógún are pictured as trembling lets us know

that Sango's/Oyo's warlike character is seen as responsible for the constant state of agitation and apprehension felt by the Fon and even, to a much lesser extent, by the Bini. The song overlays the image of Olókun with that of Agwé.

Because, in this story, Olókun was so important to ushering in the prosperity that the Yorübá enjoyed we must always bring offerings to the sea in thanksgiving. It is with good reason that Olókun is hailed as *Ájíbáajé* (the one who wakes up o find money). The Cuban diviner, Oswaldo Villamil, spoke of Ógún as the *First purger* of the land and Sango as the *second purger* who established the coronation process which was crowned by "flesh" (slavery) and cowries. Sango is said to have vied with Olókun so that his children (Sangó's) would have a firm place from which to pursue life and be able to come into their inheritance *(ogúrí).*

The last part of the story tells us that after the pact made between Sango and Olókun that opened the road on the sea, there was a pact made between Sango and Ibeji (twins) that opened the road on the land. This pact was arrived at after "war" had broken out between the twins and Sango. The twins wanted to rule the land commerce. Oswaldo sang the following song.-

Elegba ogungbe[104] sé eba aata ya
Elegba, the outdoor messenger,
is near the palm-oil drum that overflows.
Bara ku teé no se. Áata mbó
Elegba suddenly pressed on it (kicked it)
to loose it to gush out.
The palm-oil drum is falling.
Elegba Ogun yagbé se ebá aata ya
Elegba of War defecated near
the palm oil drum that overflows.
Bara ku tee no se. Áata mbó
Elegba suddenly pressed on it
to loose it to gush out.
The palm-oil drum is falling.

The twins mentioned in the story might be the royal twins of Kétu, *Akan* and *Edun* who are reported to have fought over who was the rightful heir to the kingdom of Kétu.[105] The king of Oyó might have played the role of mediator since both kingdoms had much to gain from a peaceful solution to the conflict as alluded to by the drum of palm-oil. Oyo would protect Kétu from attacks by Dahomey, and Ketu would recognize Qyo's control of

the trade route passing through Kétu territory. The cessation of twin infanticide is credited to Alááafin from Sango to Abíódun. Evidence shows that by 1750 the complete turn to veneration of twins was prompted largely by economic motives. As the Oyó intermingled with more people

that held twins and their mothers in sacred regard they had to modify their practices to insure the peaceful co-existence that was good for business. The King of Ketu was a twin.

Tradition credits Ésü as the tenth Alákétu (King of Ketu). The song plays on this fact and suggests that the Ogungbe, acting as the Oba's enforcers, protectors and procurers, were Elegbá-like in exhibiting rapacious appetites for the goods of the king's subjects and allies. This rapaciousness might have threatened the stable coexistence between Óyo and Ketu. It seems that the story is describing the period between the death of Abiodun, in 1789, and the beginning of the reign of Adébíya (Edun), in 1816. The song is telling us about the period between 1816 and the fall of Oyó in the 1880s when the powerful officials like the Ógüngbe would have been unleashed from the control of a strong central government to pray upon the population. In this way the overflowing drum of palm-oil, which represents wealth and the smooth movement of things, was kicked over.

The diviner advises when we see irósún Osé put a burning charcoal behind the door at noon because this odu speaks of war and Death is making the rounds looking for someone to take away. Bring a gourd of water and pour the water on the hot charcoal while saying," As water puts out fire so may Irosun Ose conquer my enemies."

Where Olokun found an ally in Sango, in one ?tan, he found an enemy in Ógun. The odu Ifa, Obara Ika contains an itan that tells us:

> One day Yemoja, the daughter of Olokun, dressed In her most elegant outfit, came out of the sea to meet her lover Óbárá.. On the way to Óbara's home she passed Orunmila standing in front of his house. He greeted her and invited her inside for a cool drink before continuing on her journey. She went in and they made love. After a while she left him to continue on her way to meet Óbara. The next evening Óbara, Orunmila, and Ógun were sitting together drinking palmwine. Yemoja passed before them in the street but didn't see them. Obara. said, "She came out of the sea dressed in that beautiful outfit just to see me." Orunmila smiled and said, "This's true but 1 had her first." Ógún could hardly control his rage as he said, "Yes, but she is my legitimate wife." He found Yemoja and killed her. There was such an outcry from Olokun that Ógun went to Órúnmíla to have divination performed. Orunmila marked ebo (sacrifice) with sixteen fans fashioned from ewe *árúkún* (leaves that are

> acceptable to the orisa)-*canutfflo-commetina elegans*-to calm the .anger of Olokun. The funeral rites were held at the seashore. Olókun reared up out of the sea. As he stepped onto the land, Ógun and all of the people assembled there began to fan Olókun with the fans made of *ewé arúkún* and sing the following song:
>
> *ÓÍÚ ye* re[106]
> Loss changes and fades
> *Qmp Ógún don no*
> The child of Ógún's counter-spell erases
> *Ébe[107] o awa la (í)'kú eye pmp Olokun*
> The ointment of propitiation saves us
> from the death honoring the child of Olókun
> *Qmp Ógún don no*
> The child of Ogun's counter-spell erases
> *Ebe o mdo oko Olókun*
> Supplication beseiges the stones thrown by Olokun.
>
> Olókun saw his dead daughter but the power of the fanning and the incantation softened his heart. Olókun lifted his dead daughter and returned to the sea. From that time on, Ógún and the people of the world sing the praises of Órúnmila.

The odu Ifá, Éjiogbe Méji has an itan that tells us about two of Olokun's wives.

Ayé, Olókun's wife, was always in a bad mood and was always fighting with Olókun. One day she got so mad that she left him. That very same day Yemoja Áwoyó fought with and left her husband Orisa Oko. She went to live with Olókun in his house. He treated her so well that she decided to remain with him. From first the moment she arrived the smallest thing she did had immense consequences. Wherever she put her foot a river was born. One day Aye sent her son to Olokun s house to get an *apo* (bag) that she had left there. When her son saw all the rivers he became frightened and ran home to tell his mother what he had seen. Ayé immediately went to Olókun s house to confront Yemoja. She burst into the house yelling that she, Aye, was Olokun s real wife. Before Yemoja could answer, Olókun confronted Ayé and told her that she wasn't his wife any longer and that Yemoja had

taken her place. Aye argued and Fought but could not get Yemoja to leave. In the end she gave In and went to live with Olokun and Yemoja. The other órísá, in amazement, wondered how could Olókun live with two such powerful and tempermental women. Olókun answered, "Because 1 can. One king alone governs a nation."

One of the *owe* (proverbs) For the odü iFá, Iwórí Mejí warns us, "You are not the only one that eats." One of the itan relates how this point was brought home to Olokun.

Once, the rivers united to condemn Olokun to OlóFin (Obatálá). They complained that Olókun took everything that the rivers produced for himself and never gave anything back to the rivers. Olófln sent for Olókun who had performed divination and made ebo (sacrifice) with *ewúré méji* (two goats). Olókun arrived at the palace with the two goat heads well roasted and tastily seasoned. Just as the rivers began to accuse Olókun, Olófin asked who had brought the two roasted goat's heads. Olókun stepped forward and answered that he had brought the heads for Olófin and gave them to his master. Olófin accepted the two heads and proclaimed that from that day on all things will have to end in the house of Olokun. In this way, Olokun would have knowledge of all the good and evil in the world.

You must sacrifice a goat to Elégbá where the sea and river meet in order to defeat your enemies.

The preceding story helps us to realize that Olokun/ocean and the stomach have much in common. They both symbolize reservoirs of profound spiritual and emotional power that constantly call for praise and replenishing. The following saying could just as easily apply to Olókun:

Órisa híT ikun ko sí; ojoofumpn lo n gba ebo There is no órísa as lucky as the stomach: for the latter receives offerings every day.

William Bascom recorded an ítan with a similar gist and ending, except that it was for the odu Ifa-É]iogbe.[108] In that story Obatálá prescribed a sacrifice .so that *Olókun would be able to surpass all waters.* Olokun was further advised *to refuse to be*

surpass all 'waters. Olókun was further advised *to refuse to be daunted by insults* and *to refuse to be daunted by suffering.* Olókun, literally and figuratively, accepted more rubbish than any river ever could and became king.[109] From that time all waters report to Olókun.

It is interesting that in both tales sixteen cowry divination was employed to solve the problem and Obatala was the ruling power. Olókun is shown that in order to rule one must acquire the patience and humility of Obátálá. Although the LÜkümí look to Órisa Osun as the one responsible for bringing money (cowries) to the

world/marketplace[110], it is Olókun, owner of all waters and their wealth, that is the ultimate provider of the cowries used in divination and the marketplace.

The proverb, "Nobody knows what is at the bottom of the sea," is one of several that is recited when the odú Ifá, Óyekún Mejí and Irósün Mejí appear (figs. 39,40). Olókun is the central deity in both odu.[111]

Óyekún Mejí contains an itan that tells of the time when Órúnmila, after giving birth to (siring) Farm, Market, War, Road, and House, went to the house of Olókun to divine. He lived in Olókun s house for sixteen years. On his return he stopped at the houses of his children Farm, Market, War, and Road. After being well fed in each of their homes he asked if he could defecate. In a display of poor hospitality they all refused his request. Lastly, he visited House and received the proper hospitality. As a reward he filled the rooms where he had defecated with precious beads and money. Órúnmila declared that from that day on the profits of everything that Farm, Market, War, and Road produced would be brought back to the House to be consumed.[112]

This story allows us to compare the roles of Olókun and House as the final destinations of all the profit that is produced on the land. Orunmila, who is sanctioned to own and wear beads, is shown to have earned those beads and possibly the right to dispense them while in the employ of Olokun, the owner of beads. Olókun s face is reputed to be the one depicted at the top of the diviner's tray since he (Olókun) is guardian of the abode of departed diviners.[113]

Órúnmila, we are told in the odu Ifa-Ófun Ógúndá, made sacrifice and was rewarded by Olokun with a pit full of rare and valuable *segi* beads, the beads associated with chieftaincy titles. Órúnmila, made the sacrifice with the head of a rat, a fish, a hen, and the feelers of the snail so that he could recoup all the losses that he had suffered. Another ítan in this same odu points out the fact that people should sacrifice so that their affairs reach a successful conclusion and so that their inferiors may not surpass them. If we

do not sacrifice we will not be able to become a person whom others gather to serve and will be regarded as of no importance by our companions.[114]

The issues of respecting seniority, using the head to assure success, and not letting inferiors and subordinates surpass you are central in any discussion that includes Olókun. Ágemo did his job well.

Olokun's Leaves

The leaves that are used to worship Olókun grow in or near water and are combined with other medicines to address the issues of women's well-being and the prevention of miscarriage. They also are used to address the community-wide issues of nutrition, madness, domination, and of procuring the goodness of renewal and prosperity.

In both Yorübáland and Cuba, *ósí bata* (Nymphea, Lotus Nymphaceae) Water Lily/Egyptian Lotus[115] is associated with Olókun and the órísa Yemoja and Ósun. Ósí bata, and *O/ú oró* (Pistia Stratiotes, Araceae) 'Water Lettuce (Figs. 41,42) evoke in their *pig* (incantations) the idea of superiority and domination in the following sentences:

> *Oj'ú oró ni i léké omi Ósí bata ni í léké odó Fila, ni i léké orí Ti Oba ni í léké orí*
>
> Water Lettuce is above the water Water Lily is above the river The Cap is above the head The King is above them all[116]

These floating plants mimic Olókun in that they are supported by the movements of river waters. Water lettuce speaks in the odu Ifá-Éjíogbé Mejí which is concerned with the role of the head as ruler of the body. These plants also in turn support the community. The *Nymphaea lotus* is native to Africa. Its rhizomes are roasted and used for food in times of famine. The tropical water lily is the crown of Olókun that blooms only from dusk until well before noon and shuns the heat of the sun. The beauty of its white or pale-blue flowers is saved for the dark of night when it is wrapped in the cool, moonlit cloak of mystery. The name *osí bata* refers to the leaf's shape which looks like the footprint impressed in the mud by a ^cloven-footed animal.

In Cuba and the United States, Romaine lettuce (Lactuca sativa) (Fig. 43) and Watercress *{Nasturtium ofTicinalé)* are often used

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in herbal bathes for children of water deities. Romaine lettuce is related to e/p *yanrin* (Lactuca Taraxacofolia) Wild lettuce, found in West Africa. Leaves of lettuce can be used to cover the eyes of the duck that is sacrificed to Olokun or Yemoja when *koko/isu kóko* (Colocasia antiquorum, Araceae), Taro/Cocoyam/Yautia leaves are not available. (Fig.44) The Taro that was cultivated in Egypt and India from remote antiquity and is now cultivated in the greater part of Tropical Africa is originally from Tropical Asia and Malaya. In many parts of Tropical Africa it is naturalised by streams and damp places in forests.[l17] The Lukúmí in Cuba use a large Taro leaf to cover or mediate the spiritual power of the *osu nile* (ball of medicine that sits at the center of a painted ground signature for summoning an orisa). In that part of the initiation process when the orisa is being called to come and mount the initiate the inverted mortar upon which s/he sits is placed on a reed or bamboo mat directly over the Taro covered signature. Water, leaves, and by extention Olókun mediate all movements of spirits. Just as lily pads keep the waters of streams cool by blocking out the heat of the sun that would allow unwanted algae to grow uncontrollably, thus strangling the aquatic life of the stream, the Taro leaf keeps the spiritually hot, ritual contact point cool and blocks out the arrival of hot, negative spirtual powers..

Taro is more commonly known by the Kongo name of ma/a/^a[118] which is the plural form of the word *elanga* (water lily). The term *malanga* also implies "to swamp" to deluge".[119]

The leaves of *teteregun/tete egun* (Costus afer, Zingiberaceae) Ginger lily/Bush cane, a plant associated with water deities, are used to wash their implements. The stem sap is used against urethral discharges and to prevent miscarriages. The Blni name for this plant is *úkhúeréoha.* [12o]

Imp Ósun (Osmunda spectabilis, Osmundaceae), Osun's fronds/knowledge, is a flowering fern whose fronds are used to wash the implements of all water deities and the implements of the other deities as well (see fig. 64). Fern frond tea is drunk to break fevers and to eliminate intestinal worms. Leather Fern (Acrostichum aureum), commonly called *helécho,* has a woody creeping stem (rhizome) that is scraped, boiled in water and the tea is given as a treatment for raging, frenzied behavior.

The last leaf that we will consider in relation to Olokun and water deities is *Ewé Woro* (the leaf that pours out wealth). There is the implication that this leaf also pulls (wó) spirits of trees, hills, and rivers *(pro).* At present, this leaf has defied definitive ^identification. But, when we consider its cordate shape, its riverside habitat, and the fact that it is talked about as "springing up", the possibility that it might be a variety of naturalized Taro is quite plausible.

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Olookun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

Ogunba reports that during the *Ebi* festival in most of the ljebu communities young women go to pluck woro leaves From nearby groves and bring them home For blessings. Woro is honored In song as they return home and is characterized as:

Ewe ploro	LeaF that owns wealth
Wprp Olori	Woro the Queen
Olorí re i ku	The Queen who never dies
Áikú, pmpran	Immortal, Custodian oF knowledge
Wprp, Olitre	Woro, ChieF of goodness

AFter each line Is sung the chorus sings out- *Gbáa gbáa te! (extensively extensively spread out!).*[lal]

Woro is also thought oF as a charitable Female who works when oFFered payment. She is so wealthy that even when she sheds her leaves (re) or has them plucked *(re)* she will not die. As a Queen *(olorl)* she is seen as a person in charge *(olorí).* It is these very attributes that makes her the prime target For a "bait and switch" scheme to separate her From a part oF her wealth. When we add the Fact that Woro Is collected at the river's edge and represents a sign oF renewal, hope, and prosperity For the up-coming year, it is most likely that Olókun is the king and Osun is the chieF being served along with other water spirits by Woro.

While woro is plucked by young women to signal the end oF the Ebi Festival, its Bini counterpart, *eb-éwére* (leaF of

goodness), also unidentified, is plucked by children and plays a similar role in the Bini state ceremony called *Llgie-ewere.*[12a] In both cases bonFIres are set at each crossroad. The crossroad is the Focal "hot" point where heaven and earth meet, where spirits and men do business. At an appropriate time the children/young women take burning brands From the fires and chase all evil from the town. They run to the river and extinguish the fires. This act of "water putting out fire" (odú Ifá-irosün Osé) symbolizes the restoration of coolness, pureness, and goodness to the city. The woro leaves are crushed with other medicines in water and used by priests to wash the heads of those seeking blessings.[123] In Benin, the children present the "leaves of goodness" to their parents and other adults. In the evening, the *Ihogbe,* a priest who deals with the royal ancestors and is a member of the Oba's family, presents "leaves of goodness" to the Oba.

Ewe woro and eb-ewere as "water" plants act exactly like ewé isu kókó does in extinguishing the heat of negative forces attracted to and transmitted through the ¿sú nile, the ritually ^constructed crossroads.

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas **Olókun Art**

The *ojú Olókun* (face/look/shrine of Olókun) is where one would go to see the form of the orisa. The shrine is a constellation of ancient and novel sacred ideas, held in orbit by a central concept and materialized as portable art monuments that define the qualities of the divinity. Like denizens of unfathomable water, these identifying signs appear clearly at the surface. Some, just below the surface, are deceptive and are not where they are seen to be. Others, in the depths, are felt but invisible.

As we have previously discussed there were two centers from which Olókun worship issued in Cuba, one in Matanzas and the other in Regla. These two founding shrines were markedly different in the makeup of the items used to illustrate the presence of Olokun. This initial difference lead, with each new generation of priest who received Olókun, to the permutation and hybridization of Olókun shrines in Cuba and then in the United States. These changes were the results of additions or deletions advised by the orisa during divination, or the coming together of two órisa house lineages in the initiation of a new priest, or the receiving of *adimu* orisa, and in the United States, by the addition of current ritual imput from Benin.

Stones and Pots

In Matanzas, the Olókun, brought from West Africa, by Monserrate Gonzalez and made famous by Ferminita Gomez, was represented by a single, covered water pot that contained brain coral- *okuta wa ido*[124] (stones that live in colonies)/o/cu£a *wa yf (o)'do* (stones that live in the roll of the river), branching coral, fan coral[125], starfish, large and medium sized shells, and *a hand of dílógun* (eighteen cowries) (fig. 45). Oswaldo Villamil distinguishes two types of stones associated with Olókun. The *okúta wa y ido* are the broken pieces (pebbles) that come off of the coral that is hammered by the surf. The second type of stone is the *okuta p pa-n-loke* (the stone that is cut from the mountain). It is also spoken of as a stone that falls from the sky (meteorites) into the sea with an entrapped soul. Olokun is the caretaker of souls.

Ókúta p pa-n-Joke[126]*, p pa-ñ-1'pbe agogo.*
The stone that is cut from the mountain
is cut with a bell-knife.
O bí ti kan. O bá-ñ pé e/ó.
It gives birth to and supports one to the ultimate.
It helps one to complete the transplanting.

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Olókun's stone helps us to complete the cycle that takes us from being spirit precipitation controlled by Sango, to stone spirit that lives with Olókun and other water deities, to the spirit of sandy clay Fashioned by pbatálá, back to

flesh again in the guise of a newborn baby. The proverb advises us, "If it doesn't rain corn can't grow[127]."

In Benin most of the shrines contain only Olókun pots used during initiations (fig. 46), while others contain mud or wood figures representing Olókun and his wives. The Olókun pot symbolizes Olókun. "In effect, there are two main art forms through which Olokun is represented-mud sculpture and Olokun pot."[128]

Both of these art forms came to Cuba. In Matanzas, Olókun is represented by the Olókun pot, while in Regla and Habana we see the pot being filled with *two hands of dílógun,* stones, coral, sea shells and with miniature tools and lead sculptures of Olokun s wives. The Olókun of Serafina Castañeda (Munda Rivero) contained ocean sand, nine stones, a lead statue of Olokun s wife, two hands of dílógun, and nine tools made of wood.[129]

Cabrera notes,

"The stone of Olókun, black and round, which at one time in Havana was only given by *Apart Wosa,*[130] is accompanied by seven other black stones and twenty-one conches.[131] She described a priest confiding in her, 'Here I have Olókun,' Odimara explained to us, sinking his hand into a large pail kept for this orisha (which can only be uncovered to sacrifice to her) and taking it out from the depths with a handful of shells, water still flowing from them, along with a live *macao*[132] (snake); 'one has to put *aye* (earth), large snails, a variety of small shells, mother-of-pearls, a fan-shell, seaweed, a large white sponge, twenty one small pieces of reef, a stone from the depths and seven black stones, mire and sand from the beach, and seven coins or multiples of seven ~^__ from as many countries as can be obtained. Two hands of cowries belong to Olokun; one is kept in his pail and will never be taken from there"[133]

The Olokun that come from Habana seem to have either one large stone accompanied by eight smaller ones or one large stone accompanied by seven smaller ones. The first type provides a large central stone for Olokun, and one smaller stone for each of the seven

roads of Yemoja and Sango. The latter type provides a central stone For Olókun and one smaller stone for each of the seven roads of Yemoja. As we previously pointed out the seven stones can also represent the seven "special children". Depending on which priest you ask Olókun's ritual number is either seven or nine. The stones that belong to Olokun as well as those that belong to Yemoja and Sango are dark grey to black in color. The shells of almost any sea creature can become candidates For inclusion in Olókun's pot. in Benin, Fresh river water[134] is used to fill Olókun's pot while in Cuba and the United States, ocean water is the ideal water to use when Filling Olókun's pot. Although ocean water is preFerred, oFten times river water is used and when neither is available, tap-water Fills the need.

Whether in Benin, Matanzas or Habana, the pot itselF is seen as symbolizing Olokun. In Cuba it is a covered water pot, constructed From hard-Fired terra-cotta (coral colored), that is glazed on the inside to make it watertight. The pot is usually without decorations and can be as tall as eighteen inches high with a seven inch wide mouth. The height oF the pot represents the depth oF the ocean. Like Qbatálá, Olókun's ritual color is white and his implements and Figures oF his wives are made From incorruptible lead. The color white, seen in the white plates that are used to oFFer Food to Olokun, not only represents the purity oF Olókun but also cools his destructive tendencies. His pot is colored blue to sybolize the unFathomable depths of his seas. In the late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds the Olókun pots of wealthy priestesses In Cuba, much like those oF their counterparts in Benin, were richly decorated with cowries and other types oF sea shells which symbolized Olókun being surrounded by the material evidence oF his wealth. (Figs. 47-50) Olókun pots made in the United States come in both the hard-glazed terra-cotta style or in the more popular style that Is made with a vitreous navy-blue glaze on the inside and outside oF the pot. Pictures oF sailing ships, mermaids, Fish, Olókun's tools

and Favorite animal (the duck) adorn these popular pots. As we will see shortly, this tradition of drawing pictures of items that are special to Olókun comes direct From Benin.

Olóókun.- Owner of Rivers and Seas **Olókun's little dolls**

Cabrera mentioned seeing miniature statues of stout women with their legs together, arms held high, and having disproportionately large breasts. One of these wives of Olókun held in her left hand, suspended by a chain, a disk which represented the moon, and in her right hand a snake that entwined itself around her arm and rested its head on her shoulder. That statue mimicked the actions of priestesses of Yemoja who, while in a state of possession by their deity, would dance before the drums with snakes wrapped around their shoulders.[135]

Among the Bini the python plays the role of Olókun's messenger who distributes his wealth and blessings. The Ijo view the' python as the forefather of the other water spirits. Two watersnakes entwined around a shepherds staff form the vertical axis of Erinle's (hunter transformed into river deity) standard (figs. 51,52,53). The python also figures prominently in the worship of *Mamí Watá* (mother of water), whose subsumed tradition, as we shall later see, reached Cuba along with Olókun.

In Cuba, there are two statues of females, cast in lead, that represent wives of Olokun. Depending on the particular lineage that the Olókun issues from they may or may not accompany his pot. The larger, standing statue, of the type observed by Cabrera, represents the senior wife who variously identifies with *Órá, Áwqyó,* or *Asesun.* The smaller, junior wife, cast in the likeness of a mermaid, identifies with *Mamí Watá,* or *La Sirena* (the siren) as she is sometimes addressed in Spanish.

The larger statue of the senior wife measures six and three quarter inches in height with an arm spread of three inches. The statue (Fig. 54) dates from the late nineteenth early twentieth century and holds in her right hand a python suspended from a chain. From her left hand hangs a mask which bears a strong resemblance to masks worn during *Ebl Woro* (Fig.55). The senior wife's nudity is a sign of the respect and reverence she shows for her lord. Her nudity speaks of the serious nature of the requests brought to Olokun. As the messenger who will deliver our request to Olokun, her nudity reminds us that powerful invocations or curses are voiced while nude. She stands on a star shaped base that represents either a star fish or a hard coral polyp (fig. 56). Later versions of this base depict leaf and bead designs. This senior wife is depicted as a mature women, with full breasts, ample hips and large firm buttocks, who is ready and able to bear children.

She has long hair that reaches to her shoulders. The two horn-like projections that stick out from her temples at the hairline represent braids. These same two projections/braids appear on

statues (Fig. 57) that began being cast from the 1940's onward and are seen in contemporary Olokun shrines (figs. 58,59). Although the female, still depicted nude but now slightly built, could possibly represent a young virgin of marriageable age, the two braids are prominent. One Bini shrine contains a mud sculpture of a priestess with an Olókun pot balanced on her head (fig.60); while another shrine contains a mud sculpture of one of Olokun s wives (fig.61). Both sculptures clearly shows the two braids. Similar types of braids are seen on the female of the *onile* (owners of the house) pair of brass castings, which represent the co-owners of the

Ósugbo/Ógbóni lodge, (figs.62,63) "The horned coiffure signals a head endowed with power...and is associated in ljebu with priests of the gods such as Odüdúwa, Eyinle, Osóosí, and Osun, and high-ranking women, (fig.64) It also appears on masquerade headdresses, and it is depicted on the royal ancestral staff *(okute)* (fig.32) representing Soko, a queen of Idowá."[136] Pairs of hornlike projections that represent braids appear on *Janus* headdresses of the ljebu (fig. 65) and are similar to those on' *Okooro,* (fig.66) and other water spirit masks. Drewal points out the relationship between the *"children of Olókun"* and other classes of water spirits.

> "Among the ljebu, children born through the intercession of water spirits are known as *omolokun* ("children of the sea," see fig.33) or *elekine* ("children of the water spirits"), and are praised in verse.-*"Omolokun ogbolu/Qha leni, oba Igla, ola nígba kúgba/lná orí omi kuku gbóná kú*- Children of the sea with shells on their heads/Rulers today, rulers tomorrow, rulers forever/Fire on the head that water quenches." Their thick, tightly curled hair is likened to seashells. An elaborate program of masquerades celebrates the role of water spirits who give birth to such children and effect the welfare of ijebu coastal communities.
>
> Benin influence in ijebu arts has not been the only influence from Ijebu's eastern neighbors. Ijebu ports on the lagoons along the coast served as entries for the exchange of goods, ideas, and arts. The lagoons connected them with the vast Niger Delta and its peoples, especially the ijo, who are renowned for their Ékiné masquerades in honor of the 'water people' (owu)-spirits that own' portions of lagoons and creeks, controlling their water level, currents, waves, and the depth of their fish shoals. It was from the Ijo that the Ijebu adopted and adapted masks which they call Agbo or Ékine.

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> The mask that announces the start of the Agbo festival is called *Ókooro*. *Ókooro* masquerades come in the form of elegant, elaborately coifTured women draped in finely woven mats, often with a single, long braid of hair, or sometimes two ascending to look like horns (fig.67). The finely woven mat is associated with coastal reeds, fishing traps, and therefore water spirits. "[137]

A head full of thick, tightly curled hair is the sign we look for in order to know that a child is either *Qmp Olokun* (child of Olókun) or *Orno Dada* (child of Dada). Children in both categories would be called *Olówóori* (owners of rich heads). Among the Bini, a child born with curly hair is an *Agbiyagha* and is known as an *Ikueken* (servant of Olókun). *Ágbo* (the ram), sacrificial food of Olókun, as well as Sango, Yemoja, and Egúngún, has a valuable wooly coat and mane that speaks of his relationship with the children of Olókun and Dada. His very name when punned reminds us that each of us was *pmp agbo* (a child that suckled), and that in order for us to grow to be both spiritually and physically strong we must bathe with and drink *omi agbo* (water containing an infusion brewed from leaves). River and sea water Is just such an infusion. On ancestral altars fh Benin and Owo we will find wooden carvings of ram's heads called *osanmasinmi.* In some cases this sculpture may also take the form of a human head with ram's horns or just a human head. The *osanmasinmi* serves as the focal point on the ancestral altar for delivering prayers and offerings to the ancestors and other unseen powers. Rowland Abiodun provided the following prayer, that would be recited In front of the *osanmasinmi,* along with comments about the nature of the ram:

> *" The children of the hand fflngersj*
> *cannot die while the hand is watching.*
> *The children of the foot [toes]*
> *never die when the foot is alert*
> *It is only a dead ram that cannot fight*
> *Please, stay awake, be vigilant.*
> *Let no evil thing come near your children.*
>
> The ram, because of its qualities of alertness and strength, and its ability to fight and defend itself, has become a most effective visual metaphor for the deceased ancestor. Human and animal virtues mingle, featuring in the verbal and visual arts of *osanmasinmi.*"[138]

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The *osanmasinmi* illustrated in figures 68, 69 and 70 depict braidlike horns and hornlike braids. Its form is mirrored in the ivory attachment *(omama),* depicting a ram's head, that is sewn to the *Orufanran costume* of the Ójomo of Ijebu-Ówo. (Fig.71) "An *orufanran* is a ceremonial costume which the Olowo uses to honor his high chiefs, particularly those with traditional military offices or distinguished military records."[139] The costume is constructed so that it resembles the scaled skin of the pangolin. When in danger, the pangolin protects itself by rolling into a tight ball, leaving only its hard scaly skin exposed. Sympathetically, the wearer of the costume is also thought to be so protected. Once again the theme of fighting to protect oneself and by extention one's family/domain is stated.

Braids of power become horns of power become feathers of power (figs.72,73,74,75). All three are projectors and collectors that assist In the transmission and reception of *ase* (spiritual voltage) radiating between all that is seen and unseen. The two braids on the head of Olokun's doll also represent feathers that are worn, in addition to the braids, by Olokun priestesses. The feathers would come from both the Vulturine Fish Eagle *(Gypohierax angoJensJs)*[140], said to be the king of birds, and the African Grey Parrot *(Psittacus erithacus erithacus),* a sacred bird that is thought to be the wisest and most intelligent of all birds. The wing and tail feathers of the Vulturine Fish Eagle are white with black tips. The white represents the purity of Olókun. The Grey Parrot's red tall feathers are used. ' They symbolize the powers of the red flannel cloth called *Ododo* which is an emblem of protection from the evils of destructive spirits, unnatural deaths, and *aráayé* (the secretly devised plans of people). "The *Ododo* is a symbol of success and victory, hence native doctors, warriors and devoted Olókun worshippers prefer using it for their uniforms."[141] *Ododo* cloth is used to make the *Orufanran* costume.

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> "Mami Watá represents a "Free," unencumbered spirit of nature detached From any social bonds. She is broadly identiFied with Europeans, rather than with any speciFic AFrican ethnic group. Although her name Mami,' sometimes spelled Mammy, is usually translated as mother,' she has no children, no Family oF any kind-she Is entirely outside any social system. Her appellation oF 'mother' connotes her sexual identity, her domination over the realm oF water, and those who come under her sway. Her relationship with her devotees is more as a lover than as a parent (Gerrits 1983)...the benefit she brings-monetary wealth-is acquired rather than inherited and is thereFore outside the kinship system. As a Foreigner, she provides alternatives to established cultural avenues. Her otherness and her Independence together legitimize novel modes oF action."[143]

The Yorubá model For the rich and powerFul, river/sea based Female deity moving independently oF the established cultural avenues is *Osun Pansága* (Osun the Prostitute). As a prostitute she trades on the richness oF her charming personality and beautiFul body to amass wealth and develop power. She is the source and provider oF the "goods' that are available to be marketed. Osun Pansága does not have to depend on inheritance she Is selF-reliant and will create her own Fortune. Osun is very much like Mami Watá in that she is so covetous

oF her children that she is said to bind them to her with her brass bracelets, the "First" handcuFFs and leg-irons. Slavery is said to be born in the odu iFá that she rules-Ose Méjí.

Osun and Yemoja are both represented by Fish and water snakes. *Oni* (the crocodile) is the animal we send to deliver our petition to Ósun. "The earliest documented example oF an AFrican rendering oF a mermaid juxtaposes her with crocodiles...As a result oF their increasing awareness oF European lore and imagery, AFricans adapted the concept oF the mermaid, whose most characteristic depictions show her emerging From the water combing her long luxurious hair as she gazes at her reflection in a mirror."[144] This same image oF Osun came to Cuba and is acted out when dancing in her honor, except that the glass mirror oF the Europeans replaced her original mirror which was made oF highly polished brass. In Cuba, AFricans would have been Further Introduced to the mermaid through paintings like the one entitled *"Catalan Siren"*, painted by the Spanish artist, Juan JoFFre in 1520. (Fig.78) This image would have been well known to Catalan immigrants who came to Cuba in search oF their Fortunes. Many oF them settled in the Habana-Regla area.

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The question is often asked. How can Qsun, renown among the Yorúbá for her beautiful, clear, black velvet skin, be depicted in the New World as a light-skinned mulatta? Light-skinned, oriental looking Mamí Watá provides part of the answer (Fig. 79). The mulatta, a product of miscegenation had one foot in the world of the African and the other foot in the world of the whites. In the Americas, this position in most cases allowed for greater facility of movement in the procuring of wealth and position. Ósun's traditional role as *Iyálóde* (titled mother who deals with external affairs/strangers) sets the New World stage for the mulatta/Osun/Mámí Watá/child of whites to step into the role.

Whether light-skinned or dark, Yoruba women pride themselves on maintaining long, beautifully kept hair. Priestesses tend to keep their hair braided or wrapped in a *gele* (headtle). To have their hair let loose in public is to open the door for their deity to come and visit.

Ósun and Mamí wátá keep flowers, perfume, and Scented talcum powder on their shrines. Mamí Watá priestesses play harmonicas and guitars in honor of their deity.[145] In Cuba, priestesses of Osun have violins played in her honor. Some quality in the sound of these instruments suggests the sound of moving water.[146] A drum will make you move your body and sweat. A violin will move your soul and make you cry. They both produce water.

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Olóokun; Owner of Rivers and Seas **Yemoja yes, Mamí Watá no**

The popular European chromolithograph, circa 1885, of the snake charmer who symbolizes Mamí Watá is not known in Cuba. Not even the name Mamí Watá is remembered in Cuba. It is quite possible that some numbers of West Africans brought to Cuba as slaves or returning as free persons after 1880 would have seen the image or its variations In Africa. Yet, there is no indication of that Information creating a space for a divinity distinct from Yemoja and Osun. It is only in the last few years in New York botánicas that plaster statues of *Santa, Marta La Dominadora* (Saint Marta the Dominator) have begun to appear. They are plaster representations of the snake-charmer depicted in the chromolitograph and identified with Mamí Watá.

It is Yemoja, owner of the sea in her own right, who, in her role as consort, door-keeper, and messenger of Olokun, subsumes the identity of Mamí Watá. Even the swimming gestures performed by Mamí Watá priestesses while possessed[147] are ascribed, in song, to Yemoja's followers.

A we ká ma dé'Jé o. Yemoja a we ká ma dé'Jé.
We always swim in a circle to arrive home.
Yemoja, we always swim in a circle to arrive home.
A we ma'Jé. A we ma Jé. A we. Yemoja fún mi Jówó.[i4s]
We always swim home. We always swim home. We swim.
Yemoja give me money.

Olookun.' Owner of Rivers and Seas **Olókun's** tools

The odü Ifá-Ódí íká tells us that the secrets of Olókun were put into Yemoja. The miniature lead tools of Olokun that were put into Yemoja are: *orun* (sun), *osupá* (moon), *irawp* (stars), *ídakpró* (anchor), *yika* (life-preserver), *keke to pkp* (ship's wheel), *aje* (oars), *¡si fiekun* (door opener/key), (figs.80,81) Miniature ship's propellers *(aje pkp)* and buoys are sometimes also put into Olókun (see fig. 56). Like Olókun, Yemoja controls the heavens, offers stability, preserves life, provides guidance and the means for social mobility, and holds the keys to the reservoir from which all human beings draw success. Miniature boats *(pkp)* and snakes *(ejp),* representing messengers of the water deities, are fashioned from tin or brass and used to adorn the sacred vessels of Yemoja and Ósun. (figs.82,83,84) "In Benin shrine objects include clay waterpots (uru) and miniature brass ladders and canoes with paddles that symbolize the worshipper's desire for social mobility."[149]

In Benin City, these tools and other items associated with Olokun and other deities are also drawn on the ground with dry or liquified chalk, camwood, and charcoal, (figs.85-91) These chalk pictures are very similar to the *veve* used in Haiti, and are related to the simplified earth signatures used by the Fon of Dahomey. In Cuba and the United States, órísa priests and priestesses call these signatures, that are drawn on the ground to attract a particular órisa, *Ósu nile* (ball of medicine on the ground). As we mentioned earlier, renderings of these tools are now found, drawn in white against a blue background, on Olókun pots that are offered for sale in botánicas.

The python *(ere)* held by Olokun s wife is said to represent Ósumare (the rainbow), symbol of ancestral continuity. Osumaré is Sangos attendant who is said to live in the sea but occasionally rises up to drink the sky. The python, as we have already stated, is also sacred to Erinle and Obatálá. *Da/Dan Ayido Hwedo* is the Fon rainbow- serpent that represents the union of male and female powers that maintain a balanced world.

The mask she carries suggests several connections. The first mask (see fig. 56), even with the bad angle of the photo, shows a structural relationship to Agbo masks. The second mask (fig.92) on close scrutiny is very likely depicting *Ósun,* Bini deity of the power of leaves and herbs (fig.93). Ósun and Ésango are very close. Birds, stone axe-heads, and snakes are all associated with Ósun's worship.

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> "The birds are similar to those depicted on the [Oba's] palace and have the same prophetic and protective powers. Snakes are the warriors of Ósún. The representations of snakes issuing from nostrils refers to the belief that those who are magically powerful vomit out snakes when setting out to destroy their enemies." [15o]

This mask's connection to Olokun is reinforced by the rows of beaded necklaces adorning its throat and the indications of incisions, seen also on Benin bronzes (fig.94), over the eye-brows and in the center of the forehead, where medicine would be placed. Related Bini and Owo counterparts of this Lukümí mask, recreated in Cuba, are worn as pendents, along with other miniature ritual tools, affixed to the ritual clothing of Olokun priestesses and the Orufanran costume worn by the Olowo and his chiefs.

As we mentioned earlier, Olokun receives two hands/sets of eighteen cowries, when issuing from Habana/Regla based lineages. One of these sets is strung and placed around the neck of the doll which represents the senior wife. This same placement of cowry necklaces is seen around the necks of the mud sculptures of Olokun and his wives in an Urhonigbe shrine (figs.95,96,97).

As we have stated, one of Olokun's ritual numbers is nine. The beaded necklace worn by his devotees repeats a pattern of either seven deep blue beads, two coral beads, seven soap colored white beads, and two coral beads; or seven crystal beads, one navy blue bead and one coral bead. These basic patterns have several variations. The important thing to note is that Olókun's ritual colors are white and dark blue and that *iyun* (coral) is sacred to him.

The elders tell us that the traditional necklace of Olókun was made up of thick blue-stone beads, like lapis-lazuli, that were strung on wire and brought from the Guinea coast.[15'](figs.98,99) One of his necklaces doubles as a divining chain made up of nine sections of nine, white soap-colored beads. Eight of the sections are separated by a cowry and the last separated by a coral bead. Olókun takes [N]the ritual number of his mother and adds two. The additional two beads might represent Olókun's relationship with Ibeji, twin children. The use of dark blue beads signifies not only his seniority but the deep and unfathomable nature of his water kingdom. Olokun, Yemoja, and Osun, when divination dictates, takes necklaces made up entirely of coral.

Órisa houses from the lineage of Ferminita Gomez as we have stated, aside from the coral and shells, do not use the dolls or any of the lead implements in Olokun. Other houses use the rocks, coral, shells and the doll of the senior wife with the snake and mask she holds. Still other houses use rocks, coral, shells and the senior wife

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and the mermaid, or just the mermaid alone. Some houses use rock, coral, shells and just the tools.

Calling the King

There was no seven day initiation process that existed in Cuba to produce a priest or priestess of Olókun. Olókun is an *adfmu órfya* (the orisa that one embraces) and Is received in addition to the orisa that owns the head of the initiate. When the process of divination and other signs disclosed that a person was a true child of Olókun, they were Initiated to Yemoja. Yemoja took the first position and was called the "mother". Olókun took the second position and was called the "father". The same thing was done when a person was seen to be a true

child of Órisa Oko. Today, this is also done for those who are true children of Erinle, although, in the past, people were initiated directly as priests of Erinle. The rituals needed to initiate priests of Ósóosi were preserved, although signs of Yemoja's influence are visible. The painting and loading with medicine of the *osu nile* (ball of medicine on the ground) creates a specifically signed, magnetic landing/launching pad for the órisa, being summoned. The Bini also create painted "earth signatures" using ground *orhue* and *ume* (chalk and camwood) as well as black and yellow pigment to summon their deities. The earth-symbol painted to represent *Ósa/Ósanóbúa*, the supreme divinity of the Bini (see ■ fig. 88), is cognate to the *osu lerf* (ball of medicine on the head) painted on the head of Yorübá initiates to the orisa and *veve* written on the ground in the Fon capital of Ágbómé.[15a] (figs. 100,101,102)

The four colors used by the LÜkümí to paint these signatures, in the order of their seniority are: *White, Red, Blue, Yellow.* Each of the orisa in question has a signature created by the specific arrangement of those four colors. The following are examples:

Yemoja= (B/W)R)B)Y)W)R)B)

\ *Olókun= (B)\V)R)B)Y)B)W)B)*

-\ *Orisa Oko= (B)\V)R)B)Y)B)Y)B)*

Qsóos¡= (B)W)R)B)Y)W)R)B)

Olóokun; Owner of Rivers and Seas Feeding the King

In the 1950s the longshoremen From the port of Matanzas under the direction of the elder priestesses and priests would take a boat out into deep waters far from shore and sacrifice to Olókun.

Cabrera writes,

> 'Before departing,' one of them told us, inside the house, all that the mouth eats is placed in baskets that are presented before the vessel that contains Olókun. Right before going out to the ocean we all cleanse ourselves. Those who do not have Olokun clean themselves with corn and pigeons. In earlier times, only *children of Olókun* could assist in the sacrifice. Even priestesses of Yemoja, who had not received Olókun, were barred from participation. The Égún are fed and asked if they are satisfied with the food that has been offered them. Their food is then taken to the place where they wish to receive it. One looks closely at what Olókun wants. We ask. Are you pleased? He says yes and we carry the offerings to the union hall and present them to the image of the Virgin of Regla that we have there.
>
> At seven In the morning, the boat is ready in which we will sail with the priests, the baskets, the animals, the drummers and their drums. It takes two and one half hours to get to Poceta. Once there the prayers paying homage to Olókun begin. All the prayers are in LÚkümí, in the old tongue. All the attendants are cleaned with everything that was taken to give to Olokun. Olokun is then called until he comes. First we sacrifice a ram to him (the largest we can find), then roosters, pigeons, guinea-fowl, turtles and ducks. The last animal sacrificed is the duck.
>
> As they are sacrificed the animals' blood is drained into the ocean and their bodies are piled up in the boat. When the last animal is sarificed their bodies, one by one, are lowered into the sea, but without violence and in such a way that they do not sink immediately. It seems that someone awaits them inside the ocean because they are picked up and immediately taken to the bottom of the ocean. That is how it is; he pulls them and hides them in the depths of the ocean. I do not lie. May my tongue

never speak again if it is not as I tell it! The same thing happens with the liquids. The baskets with the other offerings are put on the surface of the ocean. Blum! it suddenly sinks. Everything disappears In a moment and one does not see even a roll, a caramel, or a yam, float. Nothing remains on the surface. . For sure Olókun is not there by himself; there are others with him'...

The 'offerings of the mouth' consisted of the following: ground corn cooked with onions and garlic in lard, coconut paste fritters, eko, cane syrup, black-eyed peas, parboiled yam fritters, fried plantains, bunches of watercress, parboiled ears of corn, pork with cane syrup."[153]

Cabrera described an annual festival in honor of Olokun that involved the entire community. Today most offerings to Olokun revolve around the presenting of Olókun to a new initiate. Because Olókun is an *adlmu orfsa*, a person does not have to be a fully initiated orisa priest in order to receive him. These rituals usually take place in the house of the priest giving the Olókun. But, in some houses part of the ritual is performed at the ocean where offerings are made to Olókun. Ágbó (ram) is given to Olókun only out at sea.

In Cuba just as in Benin, Olókun is offered: *agbo Funfun* (white ram), *pepéiye funfun* (white male duck)[154], *akúkp funfun* (white rooster), *eiyelé fun fun* (white pigeon), and *etu funfun* (white guinea-fowl). For the ceremony done in the home, Olókun's pot and implements are consecrated with a ritual herbal bathe. The pot, filled with its implements, is fed. Unlike the ritual described by Cabrera, the duck is sacrificed first. The rooster follows, but is sacrificed to Boromü. This is symbolized by the blood of the rooster being dripped around the sides of Olókun's Jar. Olokun indirectly has a share of the rooster. The sacrifice of the pigeon and guinea-fowl completes Olókun's blood feeding. None of these birds is to be eaten by the people. They are placed in a reed basket lined with navy-blue cloth that hangs over the sides of the basket. The basket is placed in front of Olókun's Jars. Either seven, fourteen, or twenty-one white or blue and white plates are arranged in a circle around or a semi-circle in front of Olókun's Jar and his basket. The number of plates depends on the lineage. The plates are filled with *"what the mouth eats"*[155] and particular combinations depend once again on the lineage. Ferminita Gomez is said to have used only seven plates filled with: *eran e/ede din* (fried pork), *dódóklñdó* (fried ripe plantain), *eran ado*[156] (sweetmeat with cane syrup), *p/e/e tyeye*[157] (yellow olele without salt), *ekuru*[150] without salt, *ekp*[159] *ati qyJn kan* (ekp with molasses), *aghado bp* (boiled ears of corn). All

the people in the house, beginning with the eldest priest and finishing with the children, pick up a little of the Food From each plate, clean themselves and throw the Food into the basket. Each person then pours a Few drops oF cooking oil and vinegar and throws a Few coins into the basket. Singing, led by the master oF ceremonies and accompanied by a bell, is going on throughout this process. Two oF the songs that would be sung are;

L- *Ebi/Ebí a máa kí ísín iló ogún.*
Blood-relations and midwives always greet and worship the use oF the shrimp and lobster basket.
íyá/fyán máa bi inú.
SuFFering/Famine always annoys the stomach.

C- *Ehi a máa kí isin ho ogun.*
Blood-relations always greet and worship the use oF the shrimp and lobster basket.

L- *¡ya maa bi inu.*
SuFFering always annoys the stomach.

C- Repeat First chorus

L- *A wá ni Olókun* ee *(2x);*
Áti ná atí ná ee atí ná atí na ee.
We come to possess Olókun many times (2x);
in order to spend and spend and spend and spend.

C- Repeat

When all the people have taken their turns, the initiate who is receiving Olókun is cleaned with the Food From all oF the plates. In many houses two small Fish and two Fresh hen's eggs are the last items used to clean the initiate. These are also thrown into the basket. At this point, the priest who is acting as master oF ceremonies prepares the basket to be taken out to Olokun by making sure that a bit oF all oF the ingredients used in the ritual are Included in the basket. Once the basket is Filled, the initiate and the priestess giving the Olókun take the ends oF the blue cloth and First ties oFF two diagonal ends and then ties oFF the other ends creating a large bundle. With the bundle containing the sacrifice secured, the initiate and all oF those who have Olókun take hold oF the basket and dance it out oF the house to take it to Olókun. One oF the priestesses goes in Front oF the procession and sprinkles water on the Floor while the master oF ceremonies leads the singing accompanied by a lone bell.[160] In some houses the initiate and the person giving the Olokun have to take the sacriFice to the ocean. But, in most

house today, the basket with the sacrifice is danced to the door and there it is handed over to two persons who will deliver the sacrifice to the ocean. The ritual is not completed until these two individuals have returned. On their return they are met at the door with either an herbal bath or soap and water with which to wash and rid themselves of any trace of negativity they may have contracted while transporting the sacrifice that was used to clean the congregation.

Olokun songs

The order in which songs are sung to praise Olókun differs from elder to elder. This first group of songs[161] was sung to me by the priest of Óbatálá, Rodolfo Martin.

Lead- *Yemoja o! Áwoyó, fya ami" la mi m 'era wo!*
Oh! Yemoja; Awoyo, the sign of suffering that marked me is vanishing, behold!
E iye Olokun ya Áwoyó. Iya ami la mí m era. wo! You think of Olókun, turn to Áwoyó. The sign of suffering that marked me has vanished, behold! *Ibú Asesun Olóomi dáara; Ibú Asaba Oolóomi dáara* "Deep Place of the Gush of the Spring," "Owner of water that performs wonders,-" x "Deep Place of The one Chosen for Homage," "Owner of water that performs wonders." *Ya Áwoyó sí ye emi sii. Yemoja, Olokun mo for/ bale*
Turn to Awoyo to survive life for a long time. Yemoja, Olókun, I put my head on the ground for you.

Coro- Repeat Lázaro Ros variation:

L- *Yemoja o Awoyó si wá o gloso ké (o)'lódó.*
Yemoja Áwoyo will come forward if the good talker
I shouts[162] to the owner of rivers.
/ *Eee Olokun iyagba de gba wa o.*
I *Oka mi m era wo!*
Grandmother Olokun arrives to cleanse us.
My disease is vanishing, behold!
Áwoyó l'erí simi. Yemoja, Olókun mo for! bale.
Áwoyó on the head rests. Yemoja, Olókun I put my head on the ground for you.

C- Repeat

L- *lyá máa bíinú*[163]

Suffering always annoys the stomach.

C- *Ebi a máa. ki ti (g)'lgrg sun*[164]
Midwives habitually greet and support the owner of wealth that flows.

L- *P*^{m}*9 si to. (g) mg si to.*
In! Alase kg (g)'mg, yg kg (i)'tg.
Children are to be guided. Children are to be trained. Yes! The one with authority teaches the children, to be happy turn toward training.

C- Repeat

L- *Yo wu ya e. Yo wú ya e le. E kú sé.*
E kúf E te ru (i) 'lé o. To be satisfied turn to him. To be satisfied turn to who is powerful. May your work proceed smoothly. My respects to you (Olokun). You are worshipped to support the house. *E ru (i) 'le o. E kút E te ru (i) 'lé o. Olókun e te ru (i)'lé o.*
You support the house. My respects to you. You are worshipped to support the house. Olokun, you are worshipped to support the house.

C- Repeat

L- *La mba osi, la mbá (o) losi re. Olókun la. mbá o.*
Saved from encountering poverty, saved from joining the destitute, abused people. Olókun saves you from encountering it.

C- Repeat

L- *Eee Awa la te emi g. Olokun awa la te emi g.*
''/ We are saved to worship your spirit.
¡ Olókun, we are saved to worship your spirit.

C- *Eee awa la te emi g.*
; We are saved to worship your spirit.

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

L- *Olókun, awa la té emí g*
Olókun, we are saved to worship your spirit.

C- Repeat first chorus

L- *O Té ni lo agbo. 'Fe ni ákúko; o se emí p.*
You love to use the ram. You love the rooster; it fulfills your spirit.

C- Repeat

L- *(A) lagba lágba la mi se. Olókun la, mi se.*
Most honored elder save me to become fulfilled. Olókun save me to become fulfilled.

C- Repeat

L- *íyá ré emí isé bá yéyé (2x)*
Mothers are friendly with the spirit whose work helps mothers.

Owo lówo lóju BÓromü, emí isé bá yéye.
Honor is at hand in the presence of Boromü,
the spirit whose work helps mothers.
Áremu ire, ire ela wú l'aásó.
The "first bom's" goodness, the goodness of the first fruit
swells up to possess the coiffure worn by an *Áare* (chief).
A wá l'erí óó máa.
We come to possess a head always.

C- *Iya re emí ise bá yéyé (2x)*
Mothers are friendly with the spirit whose work helps mothers.

Ówp lówp lóju Boromü, emí isé bá yéyé. Honor is at hand in the presence of Boromu, the spirit whose work helps mothers. **I**

/ L- *Áremú ire; Olókun la mi sebo so odu. Odu la mi se*
The first bom's goodness,- Olókun saved me to make the
sacrifice to improve the odú.
The odü saved me to become fulfilled.

C- Repeat preceding verse

Olóókun; Owner of Rivers and Seas

L- *Ire Árémú odú la mi se. Olókun la mi se.*
The goodness of the first born's odü saved me to become
fulfilled.
Olókun saved me to become fulfilled.

C- *Árémú ire, ire ela wú íáásó. A wá l'erf óo máá.*
The first born's goodness, the goodness of the first fruit swells up to possess the coiffure worn by an Ááre.
We come to possess a head always.

L- *Áfo (e) ru lo énia kú kó. O de émííwo (2x)*

The vacant cargo space is used by a dead person to rush into (the world). He arrives with the look of a spirit.

C- Repeat

This next group of songs was sung to me by the priest of Ésü, Eugenio Lámar Delgado.

L- *Áwoyó sí wá g lo ose ke (o) lodo, Ye! Yemgja o!*
Áwoyó will come forward if you make use of the unhappy sigh to shout to the owner of the rivers,
Please! Yemgja!
Áwoyá sí wá g lo osé ké lodo.
Áwoyó will come forward if you make use of the unhappy sigh to shout to the owner of the rivers.
O lg Asesun, Oloomi Daara; Yemgja Ásábá, Olóomi Daara.
You shout to Asesun, owner of water that performs wonders.' (and)
Yemoja Asaba, owner of water that performs wonders. *Áwoyó síle'rí sí Yemgja. Olókun mo forl bale.*
Áwoyó settles on the head to become Yemoja. Olókun, I put my head on the ground for you.

C- Repeat

L- *O kú rere. La mi wo. Osa rere la mi wo (2x)*
Long life to goodness. Save me to behold it. Órísá of goodness save me to behold it. *Gbá ké*

Obalúayé, lié Órísá, Órísá wá!; awá ase! Loudly cry out to "Sovereign Chief of the World," "House of the Órísa;" Órisa. come! We search for power!

C- Repeat

66

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

L- *O máa yó eee. O máa. yó eee; ¡a mbá gsé*
You will be satisfied. You will be satisfied,-saved From encountering harm

C- *O máa yó eee.*
You will be satisfied.

L- *La mbá os? re; la mbá osé*
Saved from encountering an increase of poverty,-saved from encountering harm.

C- Repeat second lead

Lázaro Ros variation;

L- *O maa yo. Ola ba wá sfeJ'Jre.*
Maa yg Oba ba wo osi.
You will be happy. Wealth will come to make goodness.
You will be happy. The King will break down poverty.
Maa fmaa imaa ye ¡ya, Olókun o Olókun will always always stop sufTering.

C- Repeat

L- *Olókun gbá wa o.*
Olókun save us.

C- *Omi sg g/a gbá wa o aáye.*
Water that sprouts wealth save us to be alive.

L- *Mo sf to. (O)'mg sí tó. Iyá l'adé kó omi sókótó.*
To know is to guide. Children are to be guided. Mother, who owns the crown, collects the smaller waters.

C- Repeat

67

Olóókun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

L- *Da adé Olókun. A wá adé. O da adé Olókun.*
A wá adé (2x).
Create the crown Olokun. We search for the crown. You create the crown Olokun. We search For the crown.
A wá onfle. A wá ero (2x). A géédé Oba[le5]*,-a wá ero.*

We search For the owner oF the earth. We search For the antidote. We cut right through to the King; we search For the antidote.
Da ade Olokun. A wa ade. O da ade Olokun. A wá adé. Dá adé Olókun
Create the crown Olókun. We search For the crown. You create the crown Olókun. We search For the crown. Create the crown Olókun.

C- *A wá adé. Q dá adé Olókun. A wá adé.*
We search For the crown.
You create the crown Olokun.
We search For the crown. /

L- *Dá adé Olókun.* /
Create the crown Olókun.

C- Repeat chorus

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas Olókun's art in the United States

Beside the Oiokun art tradition that came to the United States from Cuba, there have been other styles of Olókun's art tradition that have been copied more recently and directly From Bini sources.

In April 1970 the Yorúbá village of Óyótúnjí (Oyó is once again awake) was Founded at Page's Point, South Carolina, by the Obatálá priest, Oseijeman AdéFúnmi, initiated in Matanzas, Cuba in 1959, and a group oF AFrican-American *olorisa* and Followers. This village was to move twice beFore being established in 1974 at its present location oFF Highway 17 near the town oF Sheldon, South Carolina. Óyótúnjí served as a Focal point in the United States For the renaissance oF Yorübá art From earlier times. Oseijiman and Babalórlsa Órísámolá Awolowo^ both professionally trained artists, spearheaded this art revival and were responsible For creating the majority of art that was created in the early years at Óyótúnjí.

As a result of their fervor to proclaim their African identities, and their determining that Oiokun represented the profoundness oF the spirituality, genius, and character oF AFrican peoples, some oF the Oiokun sculptural art they created exaggerated older Yoruba/Bini aesthetics and created monuments that were larger than HFe size. The Oiokun temple is the largest temple in Oyótunjí. Its construction was begun in 1973. Oseijeman Adéfunmi, Órísamola Awolowo, and Ósalola Ekunkoniiye together created the gigantic statue oF the .Fish-legged oba (Fig. 103), and each oF them created one oF the Forty Foot high Oiokun heads (fig. 104) that command three corners of the Oiokun temple courtyard. The images of Oiokun painted by Adéfúnmi (figs. 105,106,107) incorporated the male gender of the Bini Oiokun, the style of dress worn by the snake charmers depicted in the Mámi Watá chromolithograph, and the female gender of the Ife Oiokun. By giving the name

Mamí Watá to the mermaid carrying the ritual water vessel on her head (fig. 108), her formal inclusion into the órísa ranks of Óyótúnjí is proclaimed. This constituted a new direction since no such inclusion existed in the other New "World órísa communities.

Another, more important step in this new direction was the fact that beginning in 1973 devotees could be initiated as priests of Oiokun. The first Oiokun initiate was a young man who now goes by the name of Omotoiókun Omookíndé (child who belongs to Oiokun; the child of the white egret arrives), and lives in Milwaukee, "Wisconsin. In this process Oiokun stepped out from behind Yemoja and took his own seat at the head of his own priesthood. Adéfúnmi, in providing me with the details of the events before us, reported that he had visited Benin City, Nigeria in 1972 and seen the Oiokun shrine there. He was so impressed that on his return he inaugurated the first steps in the building of the Oiokun temple and the establishment of a priesthood, it seems that Oiokun took part in

guiding this process. An Olókun pot had been left in the village shrine by a past member of the old Yorübá Temple of Harlem, New York. He had received the Olókun from a Cuban priest and now no longer wanted to care for it. The Olokun pot, was housed in the temple since none of the priests in Óyótúnjí had received Olókun. At that time, Olúbunmi Adésojí (God gave me; the crown is revived) a priestess of Yemoja and estranged wife of Adéfúnmi carne back to the village and became caretaker of Olókun's shrine. After a while she left the village but did not take the Olókun pot with her. Adéfúnmi then decided that the twice abandoned Olókun would remain in Óyótúnjí's shrine. The first Olókun priest was initiated shortly thereafter. It wasn't until sometime in the mid-1980's that a Bini priest of Olókun, who had met Adéfúnmi in Benin,\came to Óyótunjí and provided additional information concerning the initiation of an Olókun priest..

The receiving of Olókun as an adímu órísa, which has existed in Cuba and the United States for more than a hundred and forty years, is said to elevate a person to the status of a *half seated* priest. The priests at Óyótúnjí have ventured to recreate the *other half* of the seat.

While Olókun is asserting himself in the South, Yemoja is asserting herself in the North. For many years, in the United States, the ¿risa have been mounting their priests and calling for the community of priests to unite, organize and put their differences aside for everyone's good. This call was made by mounted Cubans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and "Whites alike, but to little avail. On July 19, 1987 during the ritual drumming and dancing performed on the middle/second day of an initiation taking place in Brooklyn, New York, the now deceased Obatálá priest, Tony Reynolds (Adé Lola) was mounted. This Obatálá's call for unity was heeded. By May of 1991 seven Órisa Egbés/societies were formed.[166]

The Yemoja Egbé, founded in January of 1988, has captured the attention of the international órisá community. Each year in September they go down to the sea to bring offerings of food and music to Yemoja. In 1990, society members travelled to the Yoruba city of íbádán, Nigeria for the purpose of having a special statue, which would represent their society, carved and prepared with strong medicines. This statue, entitled *Ógun Leki* (Ógun River's Lagoon)[167] (fig. 109) is annually carried from its place in the shrine of one the society members to be seated in a temporary shrine which is constructed at the seashore. There, people can bring offerings to place in her shrine and pray to receive blessings before those offerings are put into the sea. Accompanied by drumming and singing, the image of *Ógun Lekí* is danced on the head of a selected member of the society (fig. 110). At the time of this writing, the society does not own a boat so that the offerings can be taken out

beyond the breakers. This would insure that Yemoja will accept the offering and not reject it by throwing the items offered back up onto the beach. Whereever deities of the water are worshipped-Yorübáland, Brasil, Cuba, Haiti-the boat is the messenger that is used to deliver offerings. The odú Ifá, Éjíókó Ógúndá tells us that *pkg* (boat/ship) is *ode* (a hunter) and is the favorite child and messenger of Yemoja. The odü further tells us that *gkg* was also Ósun's lover.[16é]

Item by item the members of Egbé Yemoja are securing those tools that help to create an institution that Will educate and care for the total needs of their membership and the rest of the Órísá community.

Here in the East, this author and Ógundípe Fayomi, the African American sculptor and orísa devotee, collaborated to create a new look for the wives of Olokun. This collaboration was in part Inspired by the bronze, sculpture, representing Olókun as the fish-legged Oba, created by Ógundípe. (fig. Ill) The piece stands just ten inches tall including the marble base but recreates the monumental aura projected by ancient Bini bronzes and

Olokun shrine sculptures made of mud, There have been only two casting of this Olókun figure. The first casting was created in 1978, for the priestess of Yemoja, Mary Curry, Olá'mi dé (water's wealth is crowned). The second casting, slightly different from the first, was created in 1987 for this writer. 1 have humorously given the piece the title of "Olokun s Revenge.' The title is suggested by the fact that the King has once again gained control of the chameleon, whom he holds clenched in his right hand, and the fish, whom he holds clenched in his left hand. The chameleon represents Obatálá and the fish represents Yemoja.

Once this author determined to write the work before you it became apparent that we would need to see clearly what the LÜkumí artists in Cuba were trying to do in their attempts to show the braids on the head of Olókun's wife. Lead castings defy fine detailing. There was also the need for us to explore and see what Olokun s wife would look like dressed as Áwoyo might dress. To these tasks Ógundípe brought his prodigious talents and fashioned beautiful, amply curvaceous African wives fit for a king. The first doll which represents Áwoyo, (see fig.8l) complete with feather adorned crown, was cast in brass in the Spring of 1988. The last doll which illustrated the braids was cast in August of 1995. (fig. 112)

In honor of Olókun and to provide devotees with the chance to own their own personal piece of Olokun art, this author has commissioned Ógundípe to create an Owo inspired Olokun pendent (fig. 113) to accompany the Yemoja pendent he created for me a few years earlier, (fig. 114) The aim of this author and Ógundípe Fáyomi

was to provide beautiful art, whether cast in brass or lead, that would please Olókun and adorn his shrine.

From East to West across the United States there are Bini, now living here, who either have formed or are forming Édo, self-help associations. Many of these persons are Blnl Olokun priestesses, such as the proprietress of a store, located Just seven city blocks from my home, which sells goods and traditional medicines from West Africa. She wished to remain anonymous. During my impromptu first visit to her store, she greatly impressed me with her thorough knowledge of Bini and Olokun history. There are even white Americans such as Norma Rosen, who was initiated as an Olókun priestess, in July of 1984, while completing studies at the University of Benin. Her title as an Olókun priestess is *Éze n ughégbe* (river of mirrors). She now lives and maintains her shrine in Long Beach, California along with her husband, Chief Priest Anthony Evbagharu Ogiemwanye. Mr. Ogiemwanye is *n ohert Éziza* (a priest of Ézízá, the whirlwind which carries medicinal forest herbs). Theirs is an active shrine that is administering to the spiritual needs of their community.

It will be very exciting to be on hand when we all discover one another having Olókun as our common denominator and we really begin to pool our resources.

Conclusion

For Prince Ekaladeran, Óbá Ohen, Óbá Éwuaré, the Bini, the Lukumi in Cuba, followers of orisa in the diaspora, and Bini abroad, Olókun Is the unseen power who has the ability to bring his children back from the death-like status of exile and give them the miraculous success evidenced by their building grander homes and nations, becoming materially and spiritually wealthier, and being able to provide more secure futures for their children and grand-children. As long as we fear the dark, are in terror of death, dread hunger, love children, desire wealth, hope for immortality, and are anxious about loss, we will worship Olokun.

In Benin and Ife the following Invocations are used to summon Olokun:

Ugbolu, atete wehe
Ugbolu mayan
Ayibieku
Azuwaghare
Asaibo
Akpatna
Ovbiobu
Órá
Ogfe né o mwén ehlagha Igho
Óbá né ame ne p se ne p rré oke

Merchant having great wealth
Olókun s power is spread throughout the world
Lover of children (one who plays with children)
One who distributes wealth in the world
Revealer of secrets
Creator
Son of God
Pure spirit from the water
The ruler who has hair that is made out of money
The King of the Sea who is greater than
the King of the Land[169]

Olóokún[170] hkún gbéra nilé o Qsin erupe gbéra 'le P[m]9 omi, Olókun dá owo Yeye (i) daana pmp

Strong owner of stone beads rise out of the earth Chief of the earth/soil rise out of the earth Children of water, Olókun creates money Mother (Olókun) gives children as presents

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[1] "Suck and Carrot" a poem by John Mason.

[2] Edó is the indigenous name for the kingdom, capital city, language and people of what is now called Benin Division and Province in the Bendel State of Nigeria. "Beny" or Benin is the name given to them by the Portuguese and is still used today. The Edo is an ethnic group distinct from other Yoruba ethnic groups.

The term "Yoruba" was coined in the mid-nineteenth century as the result of the colonial efforts of the Anglican mission in Abeokúta, Nigeria to create a written language based on the dialect of the Oyó. Yoruba is used as the common denomination for the Oyó, Egbá, Égbádó, ljesa, Ijebu, Ékíti, Nagó, etc. ethnic groups

[3] My colleague, Victor Manfred!, advised me that "owner of the sea" is an accepted, although not a literal translation for the term

Ólókün in Bini language. He wrote, "...Ólókün (as the name can be spelled in the tone system where a macron equals a downstepped H tone) or Ólokún (in the main alternative system, where a syllable without a tone mark has the same pitch value as the preceeding marked syllable). Mr. Manfredi is a Research fellow and instructor of Igbo at Boston University's African Studies Center.

[4] Henry John Drewal and John Mason, The Bead Goes On/ Art and Light In the Yoruba Universe, Los Angeles: Fowler Museum of Cultural History, In Press-Publication Date unknown, p.26.

"Today Olokun oral traditions state she was one of the wives of Oduduwa who lived at Walode compound, Ilode. She was the first to manufacture akún (beads); her workshop was at Igbo Olokun (Eluyemi 1987:17). Olókun was very rich but had no children. Her shrines at Walode and Wasin compound, liare (shrines controlled by priestesses) are the sites of the annual festivals when all beadmakers and sellers come together to celebrate their "wealthy heroine" (Eluysmi 1978:18)."

[5] William Bascom, Ifa Divination: Communication Between Gods and Men In West Africa, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969, p.141.

[6] Ósún of the Bini, like Osányín, is represented by a staff surmounted by a bird or birds and has a close relationship with Ógún. They both take the color red. When the Yorúbá/LÜkümí, in Cuba, speak of the osun Osanyin (staff of Osanyin) they are not just talking about the staff but are naming Osanyin himself.

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[7] My research has not detected the présense of the Bini divinatory forms, ewawa or *akpele* in Cuba, although there are minor similarities, In the materials and methods of manipulation employed, between these forms and the LÚkümí system of sixteen cowry divination.

Hans Melzian, A Concise Dictionary of the Bini Language of Southern Nigeria, Londor^fKigan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1937, p.44 & p.8. /

"éwawa- Á method of divination practised by the Ósún priests. Small images of human beings and animals, cowries, chalk, charcoal, and a model of a canoe are put on a drum. A chewed kolanut is spat onto it, whereupon the images are put into a cup and thrown on the drum again. The resulting arrangements of images are then analysed. If e.g. the image of a sick man falls into the "canoe", somebody will die. The image of a goat e.g. resting in the "canoe" points to the sacrifice of a goat required for some purpose, e.g. for curing an illness."

"akpele- A method of divination similar to that known as ewawa,- but in *akpele* a flat wooden plate is used instead of a drum, and the images are taken in the hand, not in a cup."

[8] The Yorubá think of the *ori/head* as being composed of two parts: *orí inú* (the inner head or spiritual self) and *orí ode* (the outer or physical head).

[9] Akóko is the Yorubá name for the ikhinmwTn. The akóko tree, the abode of spirits, is often planted In Égún's grove. The leaves are used to crown the heads of newly installed chiefs. The ikhinmwTn tree is the symbol of Ótóe-female deity who is represented by the soil/earth. An ikhinmwTn tree is planted to proclaim a person's ownership of land. Sacrifices of snails and palm oil are offered to Ótóe so that she will pacify the homes and make fertile the farms. Ótóe is equivalent to the Yorubá deity, Aye, who in several divination

tales is the wife of Olokun.

[10] David A. Bannerman, The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa, London.- Oliver and Boyd, 1953, vol.1, pp. 707-708.
This is most probably the hornbill known as the "Black-casqued hornbill". It is a bird of the dense forest and nests in hollow trees at 70 ft. or more from the ground, entering by way of a large knot hole or similar aperture, which is plastered up by the male when the female has entered. She is fed by her mate through a small opening left when the hole is sealed up.

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[11] Joseph Nevadomsky, "Religious Symbolism in the Benin Kingdom." In *Divine Inspiration.- From Benin to Bahid*, by Phyllis Galembo, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993, pp.22-23.

[12] Alfred Omokaro Izevbigie, Olokun.- A Focal Symbol of Religion and Art in Benin, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1978, p.29.
Mr. Izevbigie equates Ímadese/Ora with Mámí-Watá, a deity popular in the nearby Niger delta, worshipped in Benin City, and who controls wealth and fertility like Ólókün does.

[13] Nevadomsky, p.25.
"Some Ólókün (shrines) are known by the name of one of Ólókün's many wives who is then the central sculpture, for example Imene the favorite wife, Ákpówá the faithful servant, Igbahon the beautiful concubine."

[14] Paula Ben-Amos, The Art of Benin, London: John Calmann & Cooper Ltd., 1980, p.93^
"The yearly cycle ends as it began, with an agricultural rite, but one with wider implications. From the start of the New Yam Festival, *Ague*, until it Is over, it is forbidden to consume or offer to the gods newly harvested yams. *Ague* is held in extreme secrecy within a special room in the palace and only the óbá and a few members of *Ogbelaka* (Ogbe= oba's compound) guild know what happens inside. Óbá Eresonyen added a subsidiary festival to *Ague* called *Ague Osa (Ague* of the Supreme God). *Ague Osa* honors the progenitor of the royal lineage. Ódóduá, the father of Oranmiyan. The officiators are the chiefly titleholders *Osa* and *Ósúan,* who are the caretakers of the royal gods **Uwen** and **Ora,** a deified Ósun (herbal medicines) specialist and his wife who are said to have come from Ife with Oranmiyan. The dance of Ódodua is performed by seven masqueraders who wear brass helmet masks and hold ceremonial swords...."

Ósánóbúa/Odüduá sent his son Ólókün/Oranmiyan to rule the Bini. Ora, a countrywoman of the king, who saw her as someone familiar, Influential and a confidant, more than likely acted as go-between for those who wished to obtain the ear and favor of the king. The wife of the king's doctor, who in her own right would know much about herbal remedies, would have considerable power.

[15] The five-toed hen refers to those special persons, *Odu* and Olúgbódi, born with an extra digit on either their hands or feet. These persons are praised as //awo/a/a *Órúnmilá* (wives of Orúnmilá). Órúnmilá, is called the *Elérí-ipín* (the witness of destiny)

Olóokun: Owner of Rivers and Seas

and is said to have been with Obátálá at the creation of the world and its Inhabitants.

[16] *Agemg* (the chameleon) is the *ádélé* (deputy who acts for another

person) of Obatálá. There are several divination tales which deals with his encounters with Olókun.

[17] Both the Binl and Yorübá creation stories describe land rising out of a watery wasteland and its first inhabitants being birds, snails and chameleons.

[18] *Odua* is an orísá of the earth and the female counterpart of Oduduwa.

[19] *Aganju* is the órisá of barren wilderness land. *Yemgja* is the órisá of motherhood whose symbol is the sea.

[20] *Dada* is the deified older brother of Sango. He was deposed as king because of his mild character and later regained the throne. *Sgnpgnná* is an órísá of the earth who punishes evildoers with viral diseases. *Olggsa* is the órísá of the lagoon. *Qya* is the órisá of the whirlwind who owns the Niger River. *Ósun* is the órísá of sanitation who owns the Osun River. Obá is the órísá of navigation and commerce. She is the senior wife of sángó and owner of the Obá River. *Órisa Oko* is a hunter orisa who is associated with agriculture. *Osgpst* is the orisa of the hunt and the patron of hunters. *Óke* is the orisa of mountains. *Aje Saluga* is the orisá of money and wealth. *Orun* and *Ósüpa* are the sun and the moon.

[21] The term *'Lukumf* is found on several ancient maps of West Africa where the kingdom of Ulcumi or Lucumi or UlcamI is shown to the north-west of the kingdom of Benin. This was the name under which early travellers knew the Yoruba kingdom. In Cuba the term LÚkúmí describes not only the language spoken but is used when addressing Africans who clearly distinguish themselves as being Nagó, Egbádó, íjesá, Oyó, ijebu, etc..

[22] The Lukümí create a pun by comparing *Ifá* (divination/Orúnmílá) with *Ifa* (lucky advantage or gain)

[23] The chameleon is called either *agemg* or *gga*. *Oga* puns on the word *gga* (one's superior). The chameleon would prove to be both mentally superior to Olokun, and as the deputy of the king, acting in the king's absence, Olokun's senior.

[24] Agiri, Babatunde, "Yoruba Oral Tradition with Special Reference to the Early History of The Oyó Kingdom," in Yorubá Oral Tradition; Poetry in Music, Dance and Drama, ed. by Wande Abimbola, Ile-Ife; University of Ife, 1975, pp. 170-171.

[25] Omobé ne hunde= "harmful child who does not listen to advice."

[26] The *ada* is a sword of state worn by the Óbá, high ranking chiefs, and priests of Osa. The *eben* is a ceremonial sword worn by chiefs who have not attained the rank needed to wear the *ada.*

[27] Izevbigie, pp. 31-35.

[28] *Odu Ifa*= A major section or chapter of Ifá divination poetry.

[29] The word *te* also can mean "to be imprinted". One is said to be imprinted with the órísa - *Tefá* (to be initiated to Orúnmílá). If a person were disobedient we might say-Órísa *té* Omobé (The Órísá shamed Omobé).

[30] Jacob Egharevba, A Short History of Benin, Ibadan; Ibadan University Press, 1968, p.2.

[31] Izevbigie, p.41.

Quotation is taken from a personal interview of Imafidon Okundia, the Odionwere of Ughoton.

In the tape-recorded interview, Okundaye says that the prosperity of Prince Ekaladeran did not stop at Úghoton, it followed him to Úhe or Ile-Ife where he Initiated Olokun worship and was made a greater king under the name of Ododuwa. Because of the controversial nature of this point, it will require separate in-depth research before any conclusions can be drawn.

It is fair to add, however, that in Benin today, scholars like Air Iyare, Osaren Omoregie, J.A.O. Uzebu, D.N. Oronsaye, among others have come out in support of the theory that Ekaladeran was the father of Oranmiyan who was sent from Ife to be the king of Benin at the end of the Ogiso era. Cf. Air Iyare, "Bini Ife Dynasties; The True Focus on Our Historical Past," Sunday Observer (Daily Newspaper Article), (Benin City; Mid-West Newspapers Corporation, May 6, 1973), pp. 12-13.

In a tape-recorded interview with Uwabo Asemota and Chief D.N. Oronsaye, I was made to believe that Ododuwa of the Yoruba was the banished Ekaladeran from Benin. On arrival at Ife he is said

to have changed his name to: Imadoduwa or Izoduwa meaning "I have not missed the path to glorious life or I have taken the path to glorious life," respectively.

[32] Ibid., pp.45-46.

[33] Egharevba, p. 13.

[34] Izevbigie, p.50.

[35] Egharevba, p.6

[36] The first horse was brought to Benin by Oranmiyan at this time.

[37] Obayemi, Ade, "The Yoruba and Edo-speaking peoples and their neighbors before 1600*," in History of West Africa, ed. by J.F.A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, pp.247-248.

"...The identity of the chiefs and the nature of the influence are dramatically shown in the events ascribed in the traditions to the time of Ewedo, whose first concern was with 'the power and aggrandisement (of the Uzama) which equalled that of the Oba'. The Uzama at this time would have been the Oliha, Ezomo, Edohen, Eholo ñire, Ero, Eleema and the Ine together with the Ogiamwen and others. The next important step in the evolution of the kingdom was thus a military confrontation with these chiefs, resulting in territorial and constitutional adjustments..."

[38] Ibid., pp.246-247.

[39] Nevadomsky, pp.20-21.

[40] Ben-Amos, pp. 13-14.

[41] Oba, is a female órísá who is credited with the "invention" of

navigation and commerce. Her marriage to Sango probably made possible the opening up of the Oba, river to commerce and the providing, for Oyó, of direct access to the Osun river and the coast. She was elevated to the status of an orisa at the town of Igbon. During the disruptive wars of the nineteenth century, her main shrine was established at Ogbomoso. Both of these towns were firmly under the control of the Oyó, hence, Oba. is spoken of as "the legitimate wife of Sango." Osun on the other hand has her main shrine in the town of Ósogbo which was controlled by Ilesa and was never controlled by the Oyo Empire. As a consequence of this situation Sango is always talked about as pursuing Ósun and she is more

correctly talked about as his "concubine" and not as his wife. A concubine is a free woman you seek out for special favors but who is not married to you. She can give or sell her favors to whomsoever she chooses.

[42] John Mason, Orin Órísa,: Song for Selected Heads, Brooklyn: Yoruba Theological Archministry, 1992, p.216.

"Iyá Máése is the oldest female principle in Sangó's worship. She is said to be the mother of Sango who was put to death or "sent away" because the king's authority can never be challenged. A surrogate mother is appointed to take care of the king."

As the "mother" of Sango, Iyá Maase and Yemoja share a common identity.

[43] As a babalorísa. Obatálá, Initiated in 1970 by Cristobal (Christopher) Ollana-Oba Ilú Mi (King of my town), Aláaganjü (priest of Aganjú), I have received an intensive and extensive education in órísá studies and divination. This instruction has been augmented by the teachings of many other elders and masters of orísa culture from Cuba, Yorübáland, Brasil, Trinidad, Haiti, and Benin. The majority of the Olokun material that will be used in this work is the result of a decade of study in Cuba. The following elders were fundamental to the completion of the work before you: Eugenio Lámar Delgado-Ésúdi'na (Ésü becomes the road); Rodolfo Martin-lgbín KÓláadé (the snail collects the honor of a crown); Quintín Lecon Lombillo-Ifá Lola (irá owns honor); Juan Garcia Fernandez-Odü Fora (the odü speaks of freedom); Oswaldo Cárdena Villamil-Baba Ko Sesé (Father refuses to be broken/conquered); Eduardo Pastoriza-Sango Laárí (Sango is valuable); Oscar Francisco Morejon y Alfonso-Ósun De (Ósun is crowned); Esteban Domingo Vega-Osun Lade (Osun owns a crown); Jose Manuel Ginart-Oyadi'na (Oya becomes the road); Chief Nosakhare Isekhure, the Isekhure of Benin, Norma Rosen-Éze n'ughégbé (River of Mirrors).

[44] Boromü/BÓrornun (That which feeds and supports with rice) is a female órísa associated with the earth. Yewa (Mother of Character) is an órísa renown for her impeccable character and her powerful medicines.

[45] Ayalú (wife of the lord) Is an órísa whose worship has waned and whose name is only remembered by the oldest elders.

[46] Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal, Geledé: Art and Female Power among the Yoruba, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 1983, p.xvii.

[47] Ibid., p.225.

[48] Ibid., p.232.

[49] This name seems to be pointing out rather sharply what might have been viewed as the highbrow and condescending attitude of Africans living in the metropolitan "splendor" of Habana toward their possibly more marginalized countrymen in Regla.

[50] The designation/title *Ata* although translated as *peppers* by the elders I spoke with, should be considered in a wider context. Lagos from 1800 up until 1851 was the main center for exporting slaves on the Bight of Benin. Smith (1976, 106) tells us that the present áafin of Ékó/Lagos is located on a site called *fga [dunganran* (the pepper courtyard of the king), a recollection in the Lagos-Áworí dialect of the *pepper bushes* on Arómiré's farm. We should also keep in mind that the town of Matanzas, Cuba was seat to a very strong tradition of Qyo derived institutions and deities such as Egungun, Ayan, Osanyin, Babaluaiye and Órísa Oko; as well as traditions assoicated with Olókun, Geledé and Ókooro. There is some evidence that citizens of the Egbado town of *Ilaaro* might have had something to do with the *Ata* designation for Matanzas. A popular song sung in honor of the orisa, Sango takes on new meaning when it proclaims- **Ara** Popo **títí Ilaáro** (the brethren Popo are eternally citizens of ilaaro). An elder pointed out to me that many Popo, Ánago people who came from Dahomi, had come to Cuba.

Drewal, pp.242 & 233-234.

"According to a Freetown missionary newspaper (Methodist Herald, 1883), Geledé originated among the Aku and so-called Popo groups. It was described as "innocent and amusing, it danced about in the likeness of a female with grotesque breasts." The name Popo was ascribed to the liberated slaves who had sailed from the slaving port of Grand Popo in Dahomey. They were almost certainly Yoruba from Ketu and Egbado area sold by the Fon.

Circa 1770-1789, a son of Alaafin Abiodun established *Iláró* to oversee Oyo's new trade route through Egbado territory to Badagri (Morton-Williams 1964a,- Law 1977:113-115). Evidence or the historical introduction of a new ruling authority from Oyó is suggested by the Ilaro tradition that the *Osata of Uu Ata,* the earlier authority, should never come face to face with the Olu of Ilaro, the authority superimposed from Oyó...Odua, tutelary deity of Geledé in

Kétu, is also the deity of Geledé in Itolu and *I/áró...The* quarters of Ilaro responsible for Geledé are not' the same as those that perform the Óyó-related Egungun. Three quarters-Modeolu, *Ilu Ata,* and Onda-dominate Geledé in Ilaro; they maintain close ties with the ancient Ketu town of Itolu, where the central Odua shrine Is located. "

[51] Modupe Oduyoye, Yoruba Names." their structure and their meanings, Ibadan: Day star Press, 1972, p. 83.

"One hears in Ijebu *ogu* for *ogun* 'War", *efu* for *efun,..."* The name Efúnse is most often pronounced Efuse by elders. When this is added to the fact that the órísa. Osoosí originated at Ikija. -Ijebu-Ode, we have a strong case For assuming that Doña Rosalia was an Ijebu and as we will see would most probably have had knowledge of both Geledé and Ókooro masquerading traditions. Olokun is central to both traditions.

[52] *Átlnú* translates "from the stomach' which means to be

spontaneous from the core of your being. Also- *Átinúwá*- spontaneous; *Át¡núnké*= the one who is spontaneously petted/indulged, a female name.

[53] The full spelling of this name is-plátllwa. Some elders will pronounce her name-(Q)'Latiwon (honor comes from rareness).

[54] Robert Farris Thompson, Black Gods and Kings, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976, p.CH 14/2,3.

[55] Drewal, pp.242-243. "These feasts, known as Easter of the Blacks,' recall Easter Geledé performances in Sierra Leone and Lagos. The performance format and costumes described by Ortiz show remarkable similarities with Geledé practice, especially in Égbádó and Lagos areas."

[56] It would seem that only acknowledged members of the "Egbé Olókun" (Olókun secret society) would be able to participate at this most crucial and sacred ritual moment. Similar restrictions are applied at certain times in other rituals-Égún, Áyan, O be Ógún, Babalúaiye, Nana Burúku, Orúnmila., etc.-to those present who cannot put their hands in at certain times because they have not reached that level of initiation. For example, women who are menstruating usally refrain from involvement in ritual proceedings. This restraint has to do with the fact that a menstruating woman is temporarily infertile and cannot conceive a child, the ultimate symbol of goodness. All rituals are carried out to eliminate evil and to bring to life and secure goodness. Elaborate measures are carried out to ensure the success of the ritual procedure.

[57] Fernando Ortiz, Los Bailes y El Teatro de Los Negros en El Folklore de Cuba, Habana.- Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1981, pp.452-*453.*

[58] Drewal, pp.237-238.

[59] The complete spelling of this name is- */sun gmu gaga.* The phrase- *pmú gagágúgú* (ponderous breast) can also be used.

[60] Henry John Drewal, "Flaming Crowns, Cooling Waters: Masquerades of the Ijebu Yoruba," African Art, Vol. XX, November 1986, pp.32-34.

[61] Andrew Apter, Black Critics & Kings; The Hermeneutlcs of Power in Yoruba Society, Chicago: The University of Chiacgo Press, 1992, pp.99-100.

[62] Bannerman, pp. 148-149. The Great Egret (Casmerodius albus melanorhynhos) has pure white plumage throughout. In the breeding season the bill is probably yellow, but sitting birds with partly black bills have been recorded by reliable observers. The long ornamental plumes hanging from the scapulars (shoulders) are present only in the breeding dress. This is a solitary bird; its haunts are the rivers and streams, where it may be seen standing in the shallows of a quiet

backwater or slowly wading in a lagoon, ever alert to spear its prey. The clutch is normally four and the eggs are pale blue, measuring about 56-57 x 39-40mm.

[63] Apter, pp. 101-102.
The equating of *Átá* with *OIÚ* (chief) suggests a connection with the terms *Atari* (crown of the head) and *Átata* (important).

[64] The word *wa* (sought after) is sometimes replaced by the words; *gba* (acknowledged) or *gbe* (supportive). The phrase *Yemoja Átá rá mágbá* (Yemoja the Átá redeems the Sango priest). A pun is implied by the word *mágba-mógbá* (chief priest of the Órlsa Sango).

[65] Apter, p. 105.

[66] His name is also spelled- *Gaytán.*

[67] Lydia Cabrera, Yemaya y Ochun: Kariocha, Iyalorichas y Olorichas, Madrid: 1974, p.270.

Olóókun.- Owner of Rivers and Seas

[68] Paula Ben-Amos and Osarenren Omoregie, "Ekpo Ritual in Avbiama Village," African Art, Vol.Ii, Number 4, Summer 1969, p. 10.

[69] Izevbigie, pp. 185-193.

[70] Paula Ben-Amos and Osarenren Omoregie, p.79.

[71] In a personal communication, Andrew Apter related to me that in Ayede the word "Ata" is tongue-in-cheekly translated as *-A ta=* we sold it. This refers to the crown/title being sold by Ibadan.

[72] In 1878 Éklti and IJesá revolted against Ibádan oppression.

[73] Fernando Ortiz, Hampa Afro-Cubana: Los Negros Esclavos. Estudio Sociólogo y de Derecho Publico, Habana; pp.87-88.

[74] Arthur F. Cor win, Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817-1886, Austin; University or Texas Press, 1967, p. 183.

[75] This term could also be-.A *wo gna* (we put on something crafted)

[76] *Adélé* (deputy) is a chieftaincy title.

[77] This is an *abíkú* name. The abíkú are literally "children born to die."

[78] These men are respectively the great-grandfathers (on his mother's and father's side) of the Olúbatá, Felipe Garcia Villamil-Ógún dé yíí (Ógún crowned this one).

[79] Isaac Calderón, grandson of Órókí, provided me with these facts during a 1987 interview when he was a robust and sound 83 years old.

[80] *Áiná* is the name given to a girl that is born with the umbilical cord wound around her neck. A child born in this way is initiated

into Egungun. Oya is considered the mother of Egungún.

[81] Margarita Armenteros was an Egbádó direct from West Africa as were the parents of Tiburcia Sotolongo. Tiburcia was born in Cuba.

[82] In Cuba, Babalawo are often times known by the name of the odu that appeared when divination was performed for them during their initiation.

[83] The *water* referred to is either *rain* or *amniotic water.*

84

Olóókun/ Owner of Rivers and Seas

[84] It is quite possible that the elders were having a little fun when selecting an initiation name For Lino Gonzalez. *Osa XVeeye* (the órísa. to be washed was avoided) could be referring to the fact that the Africans refused to initiate Polo because he was white and homosexual. Despite the pleas of his mother, who thought that the órísá would convert him from his "errant" ways, the elders prepared *washed orísá* for him but refused to fully initiate him. They made him wait for some fifteen years before finally initiating him. The Africans resisted the initiation of all whites and homosexuals. It was not until the late 1930's that the children of the Africans began to ease these restrictions.

[85] Darius Thieme, A Descriptive Catalogue of Yoruba Musical Instruments, Ann Arbor; University Microfilms, Inc., 1969, pp.242-243.

86
Izevbigie, pp.145, 320, 331, 333.

[87] Abraham, p.531.
"Owo Division of Ondó Province: every town claims descent from Ife excepting Idóaní, ídógun, Ipele (in Owo district) and Imorü, Sobé, Ijágbá in Ifon District. The towns indicated are descended from Ibini. In early days the whole area was undoubtedly under the King of Benin..."

[88] This could also be.- *Óní orno o wáyé*= Óní the child is a great person.

[89] Rowland Abiodun, Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought, p.93.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., pp.96 & 99.

[92] Ibid., p. 104.

[93] Oloye Fela Sowande and Oloye Fagbemi AJanaku, Orúko Ámútorunwá, Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp.60-61. The first *On}* is reported to have come from the ijebu town of Isin and was the son of the Oba Oniisin (king of Isin). His mother was an itinerant trader. After she gave birth to Óní, six of the other wives of the king gave birth to children as obdurate as Óní. The King of Isin produced seven "hard" children.

[94] Mason, Orín Ortsa: Songs for Selected Heads, pp.286-291.

[95] O. Ogunba, "Crowns and Okute' at Idowa,' Nigeria Magazine, #83, 1964, pp.249-261.

"The *okute* are now something special to Idowa among other towns and villages of ijebu province. The idea of making an effigy For a departed oba is one of the ancient institutions of the ijebu Kingdom and is even probably as ancient as the Yoruba people themselves...Each *okute* is about four feet tall and of the size of a robuust walking stick. It is made oF very hard wood and carved at one end into the Facial Form oF particular past oba. It may be interesting to compare these *okute* with similar ones Found at the palace in Benin. The Benin ones are longer, about six Feet each, but they are made oF the same kind oF wood and patterned in the same way. There is also much similarity in the treatment oF the *okute* in both places. In each case special sacrifices (rams and he-goats) are offered to the effigies every year and the ancestors ritually partake in the victim oF the sacrifice. Usually the blood oF the sacriFicial victim is smeared on the *okute* and leFt to dry up."

[96] This title is usually seen as *MSyéléwo* (the one who is always honored In the house oF the initiates).

[97] Robert Farris Thompson, Face oF the Gods.- Art and Altars oF AFrica and the African Americas, New York: The Museum For AFrican Art, 1993, pp.270-272.

There is another version oF this story that has Yemoja married to Ógún. In Lagos, Okéré is considered another name For Aganju, the brother/husband oF Yemoja.

[98] Mason, Four New World Yoruba Rituals, p. 108.
The placement of a ritually prepared pot containing soul charged water and soul charged stone on the head of an initiate whose head has been prepared to support divine presence Is a sign of possession. This same posture and meaning exist wherever orisa, are worshipped and can be seen in both the public and private ritual arenas. Often times the initiate return From the river in a state of possession.

[99] Mason, Orin Órisa: Songs for Selected Heads, p. 169.

loo *This* history was told to me by the priest of Babaluaiyé, Oswaldo Cárdena Villamil, in the town of Matanzas, Cuba. Oswaldo Villamil Is considered the leading sixteen cowry diviner in Matanzas. His great-grandfather was from £>yo.

[101] Harold Courlander, Haiti Singing, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1973, p.31.

Agbé is the deity that lives in the sea with his wife/sister, *Naéte.* These deities are worshipped by the Fon of Ágbómé. In Haiti he is a Nágó *loa* (deity) called *Agwé* or *Agwé XVoyo* and is described as the chief of the sea and all the Islands of the sea. In the *hounfor* (temple) he Is usually symbolized by either a sailing ship or steamer. He is known affectionately as *coquinans-mer* (shellfish in the sea). When thunder rolls and lightning flashes over the sea and waves lash the coast people say that Agwe is shooting his cannon. In Dahomey, Agbé is one of the Thunder Pantheon. He is the son of the supreme deity, *Sogbo/Mawú* and the brother of *Xevioso* (the thunder deity), who is represented by a ram.

[loa] Atanda, p.26.

[103] Égharévba, pp. 26-29.
It is interesting to note that when Oswaldo Villamil told this story he spoke of *Ógún* as the *first baptist, the baptist of Christianity.* He plays with two important points. First, Ógún, in many Yorúbá histories, is described as the *first king of the orisa* because he alone was able to clear away *(purge)* the dense forest and create the road that allowed the other órlsa and mankind to have a place in which to settle. Second, during the reign of Esigie, "It is said that John Affonso d'Aveiro came to Benin City for the second time during this reign. He advised the Oba to become a Christian, and said that Christianity would

make his country better. Esigie therefore sent Ohen-okun, the Olókun priest at Ughoton, with him, as an Ambassador to the King of Portugal, asking him to send priests who would teach him and his people the faith....The work of the Mission made progress and thousands of people were baptized before the death of the great explorer John Affonso d'Aveiro, who was buried with great lamentations by the Qba and the Christians at Benin City."

[104] Abraham, p.279. The Ógüngbe is a society of outdoor messengers of the Óoni who are not allowed to enter the inner chambers of the palace.

William Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, pp.35-37.

"When a palace chief dies, his eldest son is taken to join the Ogungbe or police, the second to become an Emese or page of the king, and the youngest to join the Ogboni which funtioned as a

senior law court. When a town chief dies, his sons are taken for the Ogungbe and the Ogboni, but not for the Emese...The Ogungbe were the pni's bodygaurd and the town police...For minor offences the Emese were sent to summon people to court, but if an insane person (were) ran amuck or if a burglar, murderer, or traitor was at large, the Ogungbe were sent to apprehend them and hold them in the dungeon until they were executed at a place called Mesi Alukunrin. if the death penalty was commuted, the Ogungbe received a share of the money that the family paid. The Ogungbe were also responsible for securing the victims when human sacrifices were required...If there was no one in the dungeon, the Ogungbe went out at night and seized any solitary person they came upon in the street; a person seized could secure his release if a slave was provided to be sacrificed in his place...Similarly, the Ogungbe or the Emese secured the goats and sheeps for the many sacrifices for which the Oni was responsible, seizing animals that were wandering loose in the streets."

[105] Drewal, pp.228-229.
"Moulero identifies Edun, a name given to the second born of twins, as Adebiya. Edun's twin brother, Akan, wishing to rule, plotted to kill him..." Adebiya fled to Isale and then to Ilobi where he prepared a nighttime costumed trap to frighten his pursuers. His trick worked and *pro efe* of Gelede ritual was born. Oro efe is called by the name *Oloku-ajará-okotó* which means "man of the sea who fought with the sound of snail shells."

106 *The* word *¡yere* which Implies wailing for a loss. It also is applied to the deep chants associated with odu Ifa that are sung in a wailing/weeping voice.

[107] *Ébe* is an ointment used to propitiate Babalú.

i°[8] William Bascom, Sixteen Cowries: Yoruba Divination from Africa to the New World, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980, pp.177-181.

[109] ibid.
In the story recorded by Bascom, Olokun is called *Isemlade* which could be translated as Challenge is my crown. When punned the words *Ise* (self-denial) and *¡sé (distress) qualify the challenge.*

[110] The itan that records this fact appears in the odu Ifá-Osé Iwórí.

[111] Abiodun, p. 106. "...The fish-legged, central figure appears to be representing an *pba,* presumably the Olowo whose many *oriki* include "the mighty, expansive, and intimidating ocean whose bottom

[i.e., secrets] can never be known. As also with the bottom of the lagoon" *(Ókun aragbártgbí, ó ó rúdfn okun, ó ó*

rúdín osa). This *oríkt* also alludes to Olowo's high status as the *orfya* to whom all must pay homage as suggested in the incantatory line, "All rivers and streams must pay homage to the ocean" *(Gede omi e morí íghún olokurí)."*

In a personal communication, Professor Abíódún provided me with the proper diacritical marks and the expanded translation of the preceding oríkí.

[112] Bascom, Ifa Divination, pp.241-247.

[113] Henry John Drewal, Shapes of the Mind: African Art From the Long Island Collections, Hempstead.- The HoFstra Museum, Hofstra University, 1988, p. 12.

[114] Bascom, pp.523-525.

[115] Douglas Bartrum, Water in the Garden, London.- John GiFTord Limited, 1968, p. 13.

In the tombs at Beni-Hassan, a village on the Nile, there are pictures oF garden scenes dating From the XII dynasty (3000-2500 B.C.) that show water lilies being cultivated. The palace gardens of Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV) were famous for their lily ponds surrounded by flower beds; and Rameses III (c. 1225 B.C.) grew *'rushes and the Lotus...'*

[116] Pierre Fatumbi Verger, Ewe.- The Use of Plants in Yoruba Society, Sao Paulo; Editora Schwarcz, Ltda., 1995, pp. 17-18.

[117] J.M.Dalziel Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa, London.- The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1937,

[118] The Taro (Xantosoma sagitifolium, Araceae) that is native to Tropical America is called *Dasheen* In Trinidad. The leaves have the same shape as the *Arum lily, Araceae* to which the species is related.

[119] Daniel Dawson, a Kongo scholar and friend instructed me in the wider applications of the word.

[120] J. Hutchinson and J.M. Dalziel, Flora of West Tropical Africa, vol.2, London: The Whitefriars Press, Ltd., P.333.

[121] Oyinade Ogunba, Ritual Drama of the Ijebu People: A Study of Indigenous Festivals, Thesis submitted to the University of Ibadan for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. January 1967, pp. 158-159.

[122] Bradbury, p.59. This is a Benin state ritual whose aim is to chase evil from the city and procure the blessings of the Qba's ancestors.

[123] Drewal, p.34.

[124] Brain coral/o/cu£a *wa ido* is the stone used to represent Elégbá's mother, *Ayanyi,* (tough perseverance) (figs. 45a-b). His father is called *Operó* (the plotter or the one consulted). Brain coral is also used to symbolize Babalú, Yewa, and Boromü.

[125] Anita Ganeri, The Oceans Atlas, London; Dorling Kindersley, Ltd., 1961, pp. 30-33.

"Coral reefs are often described as underwater tropical rain forests or gardens. Like the rain forest, they are full of color and life. They swarm with brilliantly colored fish, starfish, giant clams, and sea slugs. In fact, nearly one-third of all the world's species of fish live in coral reefs...they are built by tiny creatures called polyps. Most polyps grow in partnership with tiny plants called algae. For that reason coral reefs can grow only in warm, shallow water where there is plenty of sunlight that the algae need to make food. There have been coral reefs on Earth for more than 450 million years."

The mollusks that inhabit the Cowries and Olive shells, used in divination, live in coral reefs. The Cuttlefish, a 10-armed marine cephalopod mollusk (family Sepiidae), able to mimic the coloring of anything in its immediate surroundings, could be considered the Agemo of the coral reef.

[126] Órísa, Óké is the deity of the mountain that is represented by the stone that lives with O batata. Óke is the first land to rise above the sea. He is the mountain that offers refuge to mankind against the raging and ever grasping waters of Olókun. The mountain refuses to be dominated and gives birth to other mountains, plateaus, plains and rich farmlands that all support mankind. The bell-knife is the carving tool of Obatala. It has a clapper in the bell-shaped handle. *Obe gggg* (hooked knife) is the same *gbe agogo* (bell knife).

[127] Sango's rain sperm fertilizes and causes "stone" corn seeds to germinate and produce many children.

[128] Izevbigie, pp.83-84.

[129] Told to me by the priest of Obatálá, Rodolfo Martin.

[130] Cabrera is using a variation of the priestly title of the babalawo, Tata Gaitan-Eworio Rodriguez. She lists *Apari Wosa* which is more likely *Apart iwospn* (the bald-headed person is a healer). To the best of my knowledge and that of his family in Ifá, his title was *Apari Bofa.*

[131] Cabrera, p.269.

[132] The priest most likely identified the live snake by a Yorúbá term *Máá-kgn/má-kpn/máakg,* which describes a thing which if touched, is considered to kill by magic (Abraham, p.418). Yéwá is said to possess this deadly power as evidenced by her title- *Afírímáákp* (the greatest, strongest elder who if touched kills (the sacrilegious one) by magic (Mason, Orin, p262.). Egungún also possess this power.

[133] Cabrera, p.269.

[134] Izevbigie, pp.71-72.

[135] Cabrera, pp.269-270.

[136] Drewal, p. 143.

[137] Ibid., p. 144. The phrase *"Fire on the head that water quenches"* reminds us of the incantation associated with the odú Ifá-

Irosun Ose-"As water puts out fire so may Irósún Ose conquer my enemies." Olokun's waters are used to procure, propitiate, and initiate the heads of his special children, subduing their warlike natures so that they may become useful and valuable members of the community.

[138] Ablódún, pp. 112-113.

[139] Ibid., p. 108.

[140] Bannerman, p.286. Vulturine Fish Eagle is the former name of the *Palm-nut Vulture.* The kernels of the oil-palm are its favorite food. It never captures fish unless the fish are stranded. Its name is probably derived from the fact that on the coast it will attend to the fishing boats for scrapes.

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Among the Ijó, the fishing eagle or *ogolo* communicates messages from the water spitits to humans.

[141] Izevbigle, pp.90-91.

[142] Henry John Drewal, "Performing the Other: MamI Wata Worship in Africa," in The Drama Review, ed. by Margaret Thompson Drewal, Cambridge: The MIT Press, vol.32, No.2(T118), Summer 1988, pp. 160- 161.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] The guitar and harmonica duo employed when playing Mississippi Delta Blues created by artists like *Muddy Waters* makes us wonder if they knew about or had seen Mamí Watá.

[146] In the United States, Dick Dale, *King of the Surfing Guitar,* created what is called *surfing music.* He played his guitar like a drum. The strident, staccato beat he created was influenced by the drum playing style of Gene Kruppa. Dick Dale employed glissando while he played to reproduce the roar of the wave and other sea/water sounds. It is interesting to note that Dick Dale's father was Lebanese. The guitar and the related family of Instruments is reported to have originated in Persia. The Kora was being introduced into West Africa about the same time that the guitar was being introduced into Spain in the 1300's.

[147] Drewal, p. 167.

[148] Mason, Orín Prisa, p.316.

[149] Nevadomsky, p.24.

[150] Ben-Amos, p.37.

[151] Cabrera, pp. 124-125

[152] Robert Farris Thompson, "Tap-Tap, Fula-Fula, KÍá-KÍá: The

Haitian Bus in Atlantic Perspective," African Arts, Vol.XXIX, Number 2, Spring 1996, pp. 42-45.

"As for Dahomey Itself, I saw *veve* (also called *amija* there) written on the ground by a priest of Sakpata, deity of the earth and moral intimidation, at Abomey, the capital of the Fon, on August 15, 1995 (Fig. 10). Haitian *veve* call and honor gods with complex visual

Olóókun.- Owner of Rivers and Seas

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[163] This line could also be; *Iyá ma hi Inu-* Mother (Olokun) definitely increases/augments stomachs.

[164] The words *ebi* (blood relation) and *ebl* (purification rites) both are appropriate in this line.

[165] Johnson, pi 26. The phrase suggests *Cedégbé oí O fa,* a Yorúbá noted for great wealth. It also suggests (Abraham, p.492) *Gede-ñ-gbe* v *agede-ñ-gbe Ópumáre* (The rainbow which sweeps across the firmament like a broad sword.

[166] Mason, Four New World Yoruba Rituals, pp.25-26.

167 T^g $_{wa}$te$_{rs}$ $_{o}$f the ogun and the Ósun rivers feed into the body of water east of Lagos that is called Lekl Lagoon. In Ibadan, the word Ógun is used interchangeably whenever one is speaking about Yemoja.

[168] IbejS, who are considered to be related to monkeys, also figure prominently in this odü. One story tells us that Éjíókó Ógúndá was a hunter. One day the animals united against him and were going to kill him. He climbed a tree and was saved by a female money who fell in love with him. She wrapped him in monkey skin and showed him how to swing away to safety.

[169] Deep thanks to Norma Rosen for providing us with this Bini invocation to Olokun which is performed at the edge of the sea.

[170] Frank Willett, Ife In the History of West African Sculpture, New York.- Me Graw-Hill Book Co., 1967, p.25.

Olokun is the owner of the ground red-stone beads that were produced in Óyo. These stone beads predate the introduction of coral beads. His identification as deity who owns beads predates his deity of the sea title. In Ife, Olókun is considered female and therefore is addressed as "Mother."

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Photo Captions

1. Map of Yoruba and Edo speaking people and their neighbors.
2. Map of Nigeria.
3 Map of the Oyó Empire in the 18th. Century.
4. Historical timeline From The Art of West African Kingdoms, Smithsonian Institution, 1987\
5. Map oF Cuba.
6. Map of Habana-Regla.
7. Photo by John Mason oF Eño Remigio Herrera-Adésína.

Ifároola from photo kept by his grandson, 1987.

8. Photo by John Mason of a photo of Panchita Cárdena kept by her granddaughter, 1992.

9. Bells of Olókun after Fernando Ortiz.

10. Ókooro masquerader with elaborate coiffure and mat draped over his shoulder, ijebu, 1982. Photo courtesy of Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

11. An ijebu Agbo masquerader, whose costume resembles that of Gelede, performs at an annual festival, Akio, 1982. Note the projection rising from the center of the top of the head. Photo courtesy of Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

12. Male Geledé mask that was carved in Cuba circa 1870. The closely shaven head suggests the representation of an órisa priest. The *abaja ¿oró* facial marks are used by the Egbá and Ijebu and are also used in the Egbádó town of Iláárό. The facial marks applied to the forehead just above and between the eyes of the mask can also be seen in iláaró masks, (see fig. 13a) The size of the mask's cavity suggests that it would have been worn above the head of the dancer. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba, 1986. Photo by John Mason.

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13. Geledé or Agbo mask that was carved in Cuba circa 1870. Although only two of the three Facial marks are present, this mask has a hole in the top (see fig. 16) to receive a carved image or some other tpye of extention, which suggests a possible Iláaró connection (fig. 13a). This mask would also be worn above the head of the dancer. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba, 1986. Photo by John Mason.

13a. Geledé masks and twin figures gathered together for a rite of purification, íláaró, 1978. Note the mask with the carved image of a bird fixed atop its head. Photo courtesy of John Henry Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

14. Drawing of Geledé mask reported on by Fernando Ortiz. Note similarity to Íláaró mask.

15. Side-view of Fig. 13.

16. Top-view of Fig. 13 showing the hole for receiving the carved image or extention.

17. Ekpo Masqueraders, Nigeria, 1993. The mask on the left represents Olokun; the one on the right represents *AUilakpa*, the leopard, the symbol of kingship. Photo courtesy of Phyllis Galembo.

18. Exterior of Ferminita Gomez's house. Matanzas, Cuba, 1986. Photo by John Mason.

18a. Interior of Ferminita Gomez's house. Note the photo of Ferminita's daughter, Celestina Torriente, hanging on the right-hand side wall. Matanzas, Cuba, 1986. Photo by John Mason.

19. Photo of a photo, by John Mason, of Ferminita Gomez; Matanzas, Cuba, 1986.

20. Photo of a photo, by John Mason, of Monserrate Gonzalez; Matanzas, Cuba, 1986.

21. Photo of a photo, by John Mason, of Dolores Calderón; Matanzas, Cuba, 1986.

22. Photo of a photo, by John Mason, of Celestina Torriente; Matanzas, Cuba, 1986.

23. Esteban Vega, Matanzas, Cuba, 1986. Photo by John Mason.

24. Eugenio Lámar Delgado celebrating his fiftieth anniversary as a priest of Ésü. Matanzas, Cuba, 1992. Photo by John Mason.

25. The Olókun drums of Monserrate Gonzalez and Ferminita Gomez photographed In the house of Eugenio Lámar Delgado. The Olókun of Ferminita can be seen, uncovered, in the white bowl at the foot of the largest drum. In the far left there Is the Olókun of Eugenio Lámar Delgado. Matanzas, Cuba, July 1986. Photo by John Mason.

26. The Geledé drum ensemble is composed of two lead drums supported by one to three small drums, iláárό, 1977. Photo courtesy of John Henry Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

27. Arará drum constructed in Cuba by descendents of the Fon of Ágbomé In the latter part of the nineteenth century. This drum and many others were seized by the police and are now in the Collection of the Museo National de Música, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

28. Arará drum constructed in Cuba In the latter part of the nineteenth century. The drum is decorated with two rainbow serpents that represent Danbala and Ayida Wedo, who are husband and wife Rada deities that represent water, the rainbow, coolness and wisdom. Collection of the Museo National de Música, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

29. Ógbóní/Gbedu drum carved with the central motif of a fish-legged figure often identified as Olókun. Photo courtesy of the British Museum.

30. Bini drums used to worship Ólókün-(l-r) Ugbe drum, Em 'Edó drum and Em 'Ólókün drums. After Izevbigie.

31. Ortiz's illustration of an Olókun drum (1) and an Emighan drum (r) used by the Bini to honor Olókun. After Izevbigie.

32. Royal ancestral staff (Okute) representing Soko, a queen of Idowá. After Ogunba.

33. A "child of the owner of the sea" (orno Olókun) with distinctive hair that is likened to sea shells, carried by a woman wearing a shirt commemorating the annual Agbo

festival for the water spirits. Ijebu, 1982. Photo courtesy of Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

34. Olókun shrine in Benin City with mud sculptures of Olókun's wfe with her two children. Note the "child of Olókun" on the left with a head full of tightly curled hair. Photo courtesy of Ulli Beier.

35. Adéyemí Mason, the youngest son of the author, sporting the very fashionable and cool "Rasta-power-do." Photo by John Mason.

36. Olókun priestess returning from the river carrying Olokun's vessel on her head while being possessed by the deity. Benin City, 1990. Photo courtesy of Phyllis Galembo.

37. Hand carved wooden doll, with movable arms, depicting a priestess of the orísa, Osun carrying an *ptun* (ritual water pot) on her head. The use of white beads for the eyes gives the doll the look that tells us that the priestess is in a state of possession. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

38. Map of Dahomey Kingdom and its neighbors after the 1730 settlement.

39. Odü Ifá-Oyekún as it would appear on reed divining tray when either obi (kolanut/coconut) or mérindílógún (sixteen cowries) is cast. Photo by John Mason.

40. Odü Ifá-írósün as it would appear when either obi or mérindílógún is cast. Photo by John Mason.

41. Water Lily.

42. Water Lettuce.

43. Romaine Lettuce

44. Taro (1) and Tannia (r).

45. Olokun of Fermlnita Gomez, in uncovered white bowl with brain and branch coral prominent, photographed July 1986 in the Matanzas, Cuba home of Eugenio Lámar Delgado by John Mason.

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45a. Free-standing Ésü head fashioned from brain coral. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Phot» by John Mason.

45b. Ésú head fashioned from brain coral sitting in terra-cotta clay dish. A metal blade protrudes from the top and leans to the back of the head as if mimicing Ésü's coiffure. The cowry eyes and mouth are missing. There are 16 beads (8 red, 8 black) attached to the base. Collection of Casa sde Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

46. Ritual objects brought from Benin City by Chief priest A.E. Ogiemwanye, Aduri, Uzebienegba, Ne Óhen Ezíza, on loan for the 1988 exhibition -*Benin Divination Croup*- at the University Art Museum of California State University at Long Beach. The objects: Ritual cloth from a shrine (background); Ada (staff of office carried before the Oba)(r); Uru (a ritual water vessel of fired clay usually found in the Olokun shrine),[1] Eben (ceremonial sword marking the status of a chief) (1); Miniature wooden boat paddles; Órhue (white chalk); Aza (bell for calling Olókun).

Uru are decorated with modeled forms such as female figures carrying ceremonial pots, ladders, Ada, Eben, canoes and paddles, and snakes. These pots are also carried to the river during Olókun ceremonies. Photo and caption text courtesy of Norma Rosen.

47-50. Richly shell encrusted Olókun pots made in Cuba in the late nineteenth century and confiscated by the police are now part of the collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photos by John Mason.

51-53. Three ritual staffs of the ¿risa, Erinle that illustrate the entwined serpents that represent a connection with water spirits, Ósúmáré (the rainbow), and Dan bala and Ayida Wédo. Sango as the bringer of rain is the master of Ósümáré and closely related to Erinle. The fish symbolizes Erinle and his connection to Yemoja and Olókun. Erinle's role as hunter is remembered by the presence of barbed, fishing arrowheads. Photos taken in Habana, Regla, and Madruga, Cuba by John Mason.

54. Lead Olókun doll, cast in Cuba in the late nineteenth century, with outstretched arms holding a mask and a water snake. The two porjections on her forehead represent braids. Shell

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encrusted Olókun pot can be seen on her left. Collection of Museo de Guanabacoa, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

55. A mask with "Orisha-Ebi" written on the Forehead, one of the diverse types of masquerades worn at Ebl-V/oro, a New Year's rite that precedes the Agbo water-spirit Festival. íjebu area, Nigeria 1982. Photo courtesy oF Margaret Thompson Drewal and Henry John Drewal.

56. Lead Olokun doll, cast in Cuba in the late nineteenth century, with outstretched arms holding a mask and a water snake while standing on a star shaped base surrounded by emblems oF Olokun-bouy, mermaid, HFe-preserver, key. Collection oF Museo de Guanabacoa, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

57. Lead Olókun doll, cast in Cuba From the 1940's to the present, with bent arms holding a mask and a water snake while standing on a round base. Collection oF Museo de Guanabacoa, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

58. Close-up oF the head of the Olókun doll illustrated in Fig.57 showing the two braids projecting from its Forehead. Photo by John Mason.

59. Close-up oF the head oF Olókun doll, modelled by Ógúndípe Fáyomi in 1995, Featuring its braids. Photo by John Mason.

60. Olókun shrine with mud sculpture oF Olokun priestess with hair braids and ritual pot on her head, 1985 Benin City, Nigeria. Photo courtesy oF Phyllis Galembo.

61. Mud sculpture oF a pregnant wiFe of Olokun in Benin City shrine. Note the prominent hair-braids. Photo courtesy oF Ulli Beier.

62. Plaster replica oF a brass casting of the Female oF an *Onilé* (owners oF the house) pair oF large Freestanding metal-cast Figures, symbols of the Ósügbó/Ogbóni Society. Note the prominent hair-braids. Photo courtesy of British Museum.

63. Close-up of the coiffure of the female of an Onile pair. Photo courtesy of the British Museum.

64. ljebu-Yorübá priestess of Ósóosí dancing as she returns from the river with her *Wgrg Cup* filled with water, Wore leaves and ferns. The empty cup was carried to the stream in her

right hand, but when filled is switched to her left hand For the trip home. A whip is then placed in the right hand. Note the *Oke Mefi* hair- braids. Photo courtesy of Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal, 1982.

65. Janus Headdress, Ijebu, 19th- 20th century. The two hornlike projections are braids similar to those on other water spirit masks. They recall the coiffures oF priests, queens, and elders in Ijebu. Photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum oF Art.

66. Ókooro headdress with two braids of hair and strands of beads at the back, ijebu. Photo courtesy oF the British Museum.

67. Ókooro headdress with two braids oF hair and strands oF beads at the back, ijebu, 1982. Photo courtesy oF Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal.

68. Osanmasinmi-Ram's Head Altarpiece (sideview), Owo, 18th-19th century. This wooden sculpture oF the ram is usually placed on the ancestral altar. Note the carved panel in the background with carved images associated with the ancestors and kingship. Photo courtesy oF the British Museum.

69. Ram's Head Altarpiece (Front-view), Ow<p, 18th-19th century. Photo courtesy oF the British Museum.

70. Ram's Head Altarpiece, Owo, 18th-19th century. Note the second set of smaller horns projecting From the center of the figures forehead that suggests braids or feathers. Photo

courtesy of Zehr Photography.

71. Ram's Head Omama, Owo, 17th- 18th century. This ivory attachment is one of many potent attachments sewn to the Orufanran costume. Photo courtesy of Jerry L. Thompson.

72. Close-up head shot of mud sculpture of a pregnant wife of Olókun (fig.6l) illustrating hair braids. Photo courtesy of Ulli Beier.

73. This bronze head was cast in the 16th/17th century In a style connected with a village called Udo, located about forty miles from Benin. Udo attempted to rival Benin City and this piece, one of thirteen similar ones, represents the Udo version of the Early Period memoriall heads. Note the two braids

protruding from above the temples. Photo courtesy of Dirk Bakker.

74. Detail of plaque showing a warrior and his attendents, Benin, 17th century. A warrior chief is shown in full ceremonial dress, a sword in his right hand and a spear in his left. He wears a cap with two large feathers projecting, one from each side, a leopard's-tooth necklace, and a bell on his chest. Photo courtesy of Dirk Bakker.

75. Headdress medallion from the "Tada Warrior;" (1) after Eyo and Willett 1980:149. Head with braid-and-bead "snakes" emerging from the temples (r), from an Ó wo ivory cup; after Dark 1973.-111.15.

76. This chromolithograph of a snake charmer is the 1955 edition printed in Bombay, India, by the Shree Ram Calendar Company from a European source. African devotees regard it as a picture of Mamí Watá.

77. "Authentic Mami Wata" painted by S. Sinaba from Mali, 1993. Courtesy of Ernie Wolfe Gallery. Photo by John Mason.

78. "Catalan Siren," painted by the Spanish artist, Juan Joffre, 1520. Photo by John Mason.

79. Mami Wata as a mermaid with water snake messenger, painted by S. Sinaba from Mali, 1993. Courtesy of Ernie Wolfe Gallery. Photo by John Mason.

80. Lead castings of Lukümí Olókun doll holding a mask and a snake, one in each hand, mermaid, and ritual tools of Olókun. Photo by John Mason.

81. Lead castings of Órá/Áwoyó doll holding a mask and a snake, one in each hand, Mamí Watá, and ritual tools of Olókun. Both dolls modelled by Ógúndípe Fayomi. Collection of John Mason. Photo by John Mason.

82. Miniature brass knives, boats, ladders, chairs and other tools

adorn the brass crown that sits on the sacred vessel of Osun Ibu Yemu (The Source of the Deep Place of Mother who is Immerced in the Water). This road of Osun is close to Ógún and her crown is said to carry 105 brass tools. Yemu is the richest of all the Osuns. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

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83. Wooden mortar (odó) for Yemoja, carved with breasts. Yemoja Okute's vessel sits on the mortar and wears a tin crown topped by a sailboat and hung with 21 tools and emblems that represent Ógún and Yemoja. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

84. Close-up of Yemoja Okute's tin crown. Collection of Casa de Africa, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

85. Bini miniature iron tools and bow and arrow for Ogun. Photo courtesy Richard Todd.

86. Ógún pot with diverse assortment of tools arranged on tiers, surmounted by a bow and arrow and spear head. Note chain with miniature tools attached. Collection of El Museo de Belles Artes, Habana, Cuba. Photo by John Mason.

87. This drawing, done by hand and sifted in powdered white chalk (órhué) on the ground before the entrance to the shrine, was created prior to an Ugie Avan (afternoon dance) for Ógún, May 1984, Benin City. The image was made by the owner of the shrine, Chief Priest Amalawa Orumwense Igiohen." Ebibierhen. The drawing represents Ogun's ability to overcome obstacles and his power to operate day and night. The bow and arrow at the top of the image reminds us of the Lukumi placement of Ogun's bow above an assortment of suspened tools. Five of the tools Illustrated are (1-r): *Eben* (ceremonial sword marking the status of a chief),- *Ero* (a forged metal native knife); *Ümómg* (an iron rod used as a native hammer); *Áválana* (a metal rod with a bent end like a crow-bar); *Awan* (metal tongs used for pulling hot irons from the fire). Photo and caption courtesy of Norma Rosen.

88. This drawing, done by hand, is sifted in powdered white chalk by Chief Priest Amalawa Orumwense Iglohen: Ebibierhen, Benin City. The small circle surrounded by a larger circle represents Ósanóbúa, the Creator (see figs. 100-102). The perpendicular line ending in two circles represents man's inability to obstruct the power of the deities to act once invoked through prayer. The various spear-like projections represent Ógún's warrior forcefulness and his ability to protect and defend people throughout the day and night. Ólókün is represented by the large fish In the drawing. The design on the fish's body of connected oblong circles represents cowry shells. Cowries, an ancient monetary form, Is still used as sacrificial currency in

ceremonies. Prosperity, fertility and happiness are associated with Olokun. Photo and caption courtesy of Norma Rosen.

89. Drawings of water imagery before the shrines of Óhen Patience Obazenu, 1989, Benin City. Patience Obazenu is an óhen (priestess) of Ólókün, Mamí Watá, and Ogbanje. Two circular white fields are decorated with snakes, palm-fronds, cowries, sleeping mats, and a ladder. The saying, "The center of the palmtree always grows toward heaven," can be applied to the *egbalaka* (14 rung ladder) which connects the world of men and the world of spirits. Ladders are for reaching greater heights. Our lives should always go up with blessings. These drawings are made by finger painting upon the floor with a water and chalk paste mixture. Photo and caption courtesy of Norma Rosen.

90. Detail shot of the drawings of water imagery (see fig. 89). The large fish represents Ólokun and the two headed snake represents his messengers. Photo courtesy of Norma Rosen.

91. Altar to Yemoja erected by Babalórísa John Robinson -Omi Ijolá (Water of Prestige), November 20, 1989, in honor of the 18th anniversary of his initiation as a priest of Yemoja. One large and seven smaller white cloth fish appliqued to a blue cloth background. The scales and eyes of the fish are done in cloth with bead accents. The appliqued fish net at the top of the photo is composed of seven concentric circles which remind us of the *ósu nile* (fig. 102). Strands of cowries and coral adorn the top of the shrine while strands of cowries like rope ladders connect the top/heaven and bottom/earth of the shrine. Like Bin! shrine a doll, dressed in white clothes and wearing Yemoja's beads, stands in attendance. Photo by John Mason.

92. Lead mask carried hanging from the left hand of the doll that represents the wife of Olókun in Cuba. Note the facial scarification that are strongly suggestive of some styles of Bini brass "belt masks" (see fig.94) that are associated with the power of the Bini deity Ósún. Photo by John Mason.

93. Brass head of the Bini deity Ósún which symbolizes the mystical and magical powers of kingship. The birds, miniature thunder-stones, and snakes are all associated with the deity Ósún who controls the power found in leaves and herbs. The birds have prophetic and protective powers. Snakes are the warriors of Ósún. The representation of snakes issuing from nostrils refers to the belief that those who

are magically powerful vomit out snakes when setting out to destroy their enemies. Note the hair braids, the scarification over the eyebrow, and the strands of beads around the neck. Photo courtesy of the British Museum.

94. Bini brass "belt mask" that is associated with the power of the Bini deity Osun. Note scarification design over and

between the eyes. Photo courtesy Richard Todd.

95. Olókun shrine in the Bini city of Urhonigbe, some sixty miles south-east of Benin. Mud sculpture of Olokun sits in the center with his wife on his right side and a female attendant on his left side. All three mud figures wear multiple strands of cowry shells around their necks. Photo courtesy of Ulli Beier.

96. Close-up of the mud sculpture of Olókun's female attendant with multiple strands of cowries around her neck in the Olókun shrine in the city of Urhonigbe. Photo courtesy of Ulli Beier.

97. Lead doll that represents the wife of Olokun in Cuba with lead mask and snake hanging from her left and right hands respectively, and a strand of eighteen cowries hanging around her neck. She is accompanied by the lead doll of the mermaid-La Sirena/Mami Watá. Photo by John Mason.

98. Necklace of stone beads from Oyó, Nigeria for the deity Olókun. Collection of The American Museum of Natural History, New York. Photo by John Mason.

99. Close-up of the necklace of stone beads of Olokun, from Oyo, Nigeria. Collection of The American Museum of Natural History, New York. Photo by John Mason.

100. Decorated head of an initiate-Iyawó órísa (bride of the orisa) showing the ósü l'erí and fínfín (different colored concentric circles that identify the orisa, of the initiate and the decorative dots/slashes of color) in Cuba. Photo by Lydia Cabrera.

101. Initiate to the deity Omolú, In the the town of Ifanhln, Dahomey (Republic of Benin), decorated with the ósü l'erí and fínfín that mark her as a wife of that deity. The red tail feather (ikólde) of the African Grey Parrot *(ayekootp)* is a further sign that this head is claimed by a deity and has been elevated in rank. Photo by Pierre Verger.

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102. Dahomean ritual ground painting (veve) by a priest of the deity Sakpatá. Abomey, Benin, August 1995. Photo courtesy of Robert Farris Thompson.

103. Concrete statue of Olókun, 40 feet tall, portrayed as the fish-legged Oba, created by Oseijeman Adéfunmi, Órisamola Awolowo, and Ósalola Ekunkoniiye in 1974. Oyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by John Mason.

104. One of three Olókun heads, 40 feet high, placed at three corners of the Olókun Temple wall. This head was sculpted by Ósalolá Ekunkóníyé in 1974, Oyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by John Mason.

105. Temple wall painting (8x10') of Olókun painted by Oseijeman Adéfunmi in 1973. Óyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by

John Mason.

106. Temple wall painting (8'xlO') of Olókun, incorporating elements from the Mamí Watá chromolithograph, painted by Oseijeman Adéfunmi in 1973. Óyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by John Mason.

107. Painting of Olókun as female on the wall of the *Candle and Occult Shop,* Traders Bazaar Market, painted by Oseijeman Adéfunmi in 1981. The odü Ifá-Osé Méjí, an odú of victory is displayed on the stomach of the image. Óyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by John Mason.

108. Emblem of Mamí Watá, carrying a ritual pot on her head, painted by Oseijeman Adéfúnmi in 1983 and used as a sign outside a shop selling cloth *{asp)* and souvenirs *(Irántf).* Óyótúnjí Village, South Carolina. Photo by John Mason.

109. Statue of Ógún Lekí, which represents the Yemoja Egbe, sits in state at Far Rockaway Beach 44, Queens, New York, September 9, 1991. Photo courtesy of the Yemoja priestess, Diane Payne-Omi Aró.

110. Statue of Ógún Lekí is danced on the head of a priestess who is a member of the Yemoja Egbe. Members of the Egbe lend support in steadying the image on the head of the dancer. Far Rockaway Beach 44, Queens, New York, September 10, 1994. Photo by John Mason.

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111. Bronze sculpture (lO"h) representing Olókun as the flsh-Iegged Oba, cast by Ogúndípe Fáyoml in 1987. Collection of John Mason. Photo by John Mason.

112. Brass doll of Olókun's young wife, with braids being emphasized, modelled by Ogúndípe Fáyomi in August 1995. Collection of John Mason. Photo by John Mason.

113. Olókun pendent with Ówo design elements modelled by Ogúndípe Fayomi in May 1996. Collection of John Mason. Photo by John Mason.

114. Yemoja pendent with double fish-tail motif modelled by Ogúndípe Fáyomi in September of 1990. Collection of John Mason. Photo by John Mason.

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Ówe-10,41
Owodo-11,13
Owó Merindílógún- 10

Owu- 50
O wo-30,32,51,58,71
Qwonwon-5 (see Hornbill)

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Oyó- 3,6,8,16,27,34,37 0yo Ué (Old Oyó)-25,37 Oyó refugees-25 Oyótúnjí- 69,70 (see Yorübá Village)

Page's Point-69
Palmiera- 27
Panchita Cárdena- 19
Panchita Herrera-18
Pangolin-52
Pepéiye Funfun-61
Perico- 26
Poceta-60
Porto Novo- 16,25,37 (see Ájase)
Prostitute-54 (see Ósun Panságá)
Pythons/Boas- 12,49,57

Rainbow-57 (see Ósümáre) Regla- 18,21,26,46,58 Robert Thompson- 19 Rodolfo Martin-63 Romaine lettuce-43,44 Rowland Ábíodun-31,51 Royal Poinciana-26 (see Flamboyan tree)

Salamanca Street, 187-27 (see Ijesa Cabildo)
Salamanca Street, 104-27
Santa Marta la Dominadora-56
Sakí-37
Sango Ladé-27 (see Celestina Gomez)
Segundo drum-29
Serafina Castañeda- 19,47 (see Munda Rivero)
Segi-42 (see Beads)
Shawls of Burlap-20
Sheldon South Carolina-69
Shepherd's staff-49
Snakes-58
Soko-34,50
Special children-34
-Aina-30,33,34
-Alaba-34
-Dáda-6,34
-Etá-ókó/Ibéta-34
-£tá-'win-34
-lbejí-6,34,35,38,58
-ídówú-34
-Keehindé-34
-Olówóorí-34,51 (also Dada)
-Óní-30,33,34
-Oro Iná-35
-Táíwo-34
Starfish-49
Stomach- 41
Sudan-2
'Sun 'múgaga- 21,26

Taro/Yautia-44 (see Isu Kokó)
Tata Gaitan- 18,24,26,27 (see

Eworio Rodriguez)
Tawaadé- 18
Teresa Conde- 18
Te-10
Teteregún-44 (see Ginger lily)
Tiburcia Sotolongo-27 (see Ósun MÍíwa)
Timotea Albeal- 18 (see Látiíwa)
Togo-29 (see Ewe)
Tomian-26
Tony Reynolds (Adé L'olá)-70
Trinidad-3

Ugbe drum-29
Úghotón-11,12,37 (see Gwatto)
Ügié-éwéré-45
Uhunmwun-Idunmwun- 12
Úkhúereohá-44 (see Teteregún)
Ume-59
United States-3,43,46,69
Urhonigbe shrine-58
Ürü-57
Uwaifiokun-12
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vévé-57
Veve-59
Victor Manfredi-74(n3)
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Pangolin-52
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Perico- 26
Poce ta-60
Porto Novo-16,25,37 (see Ájase)
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Virgin of Regla- 19,60
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^Watercress- 43
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Yemoja Egbe-70
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