

38

AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT
ON THE
A D O DISTRICT
IN THE
E K I T I DIVISION
OF THE
O N D O P R O V I N C E
BY
H. A. C. WEIR
ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER
20TH NOVEMBER, 1933.

Ati of Aiyedade was placed in the Southern Provinces and in 1914, the Deji of Akure was re-transferred so that the Ekiti Division which had been formed in 1913 consisted of 15 Districts each under an Oba. In 1920 the Eleme of Ekuire was recognised as an independent Balo and appointed a Native Authority in 1929 making the present number of 16 Districts.

CLAIMS TO INDEPENDENCE.

17. While it is easy to be critical of the formation of the Ekiti Council in 1900 as one views the matter thirty-three years later it must be remembered that Major Reeve Tucker, whose policy was ably supported by Captain W.G. Ambrose, succeeded in bringing order out of chaos but that does not get away from the fact that the powers of the Obas were greatly increased and that some towns and villages, who claimed independence but who were unable to produce a crowned head were somewhat arbitrarily placed under these District Heads. The only records which I have been able to trace locally for the years 1898 to 1913 is one official diary (1899 to 1902). Major Reeve Tucker in writing daily notes of his tour shows that the following sub-towns declared their independence at that time :-

1. The Olosi of Osi - of the Ewi of Ado
2. The Olowa of Igbara-Odo - of the Ewi of Ado.
3. The Alara of Ilora - of the Deji of Akure
4. The Alapa of Ape - of the Alaiye of Effon
5. The Owalogbo of Olegbo - of the Olegjudo of Iddo
6. The Eleme of Ekuire - of the Arinjale of Ise.

18. From then until 1924 claims to independence have been made by :-

1. The Owa of Ijebu-Ode - of the Elikole of Ijebu
2. The Gwa of Itappa - of the Elikole of Ijebu
3. The Onimensi of Imossai (Iaspigidi) of the Ewi of Ado

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4. The Ologe of Odo - of the Ewi of Ado
5. The Aluwa of Ilaro - of the Ewi of Ado
6. The Oniyappa of Iyekpa - of the Ejero of Ilaro
7. The Olown of Igbara-Odo - of the Daji of Akure
8. The Olojudo of Iddo-Irappa - of the Alaiye of Effon
9. The Omire of Ire - of the Okpue of Owo.

19. These claimants were punished and only the Eleumos succeeded in becoming a District Head. They all adopted the same cry that they were Obas or crowned heads appointed originally by the Ooni of Ife. This claim was somewhat natural because the Ekitis would be inclined to believe that only Obas could be recognized as District Heads although the case of the Eleumos should prove that this was not necessarily so. They have appealed to the Ooni of Ife - sometimes successfully - but apparently the Ooni of Ife is not an infallible guide on the matter. I am informed that four lists of crowned heads have been published by the Ooni and that not one of them is the same. Only the 1903 list is available in the Ekiti District Office.

CLAIMS IN THE ADO DISTRICT.

20. To revert to the Ado District in which my investigations have been made. Out of the twenty-two sub-towns six declare that they are independent of the Ewi.

These are :-

- (1) Osi
- (2) Odo
- (3) Lashigidi (or Imessi)
- (4) Egbe
- (5) Ilaro
- (6) Igbara-Odo

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L. T. P. E. T. S. C. S.* Their claims are briefly recorded below, but one or two comments

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Comments should be made on my line of action in dealing with these matters. In every town or village visited in the ADO District details of the town and family organisation were obtained; particulars were taken of every titled person showing the method of his election, the conduct of judicial affairs in the old days was recorded, information was given concerning the various gods or "orishas" worshipped by the people, the clubs and age-groups, what history was known including lists of previous rulers and the wars in which the town took part, what tribute was paid to the District Head and what communal obligations were performed. In matters affecting organisation and chieftainship the details given were much the same everywhere. Similar procedure was adopted in judicial matters. The gods worshipped would vary from town to town. History is not a strong point with the people; every place claims to be descended from the mythical cradle of Ife and their chiefs have a very vague idea of the wanderings of their community before they arrived at their present site. A large number of the Edoes mentioned as their predecessors were legendary and had appropriate appellations. A number of wars took place within the memory of the elders or accounts have passed down by those who took part in them and taking everything into consideration I find that such accounts form a more valuable Index of the position between clans and towns in pre-Government days than any other source of information. Finally, the question of tribute - a most debatable subject. I went armed with a list given me by his advisers of the yearly tribute paid to the Ewi and it was more inaccurate than the Oni of Ife's list of crowned heads because in only four cases out of twenty-two did the townspeople concerned admit what was expected of them. There certainly appears to be no idea of a

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fixed tribute at the present time but some towns undoubtedly send gifts-wide or other presents to the Oba when he is celebrating important festivals in his town. These presents are complimentary nowadays but if there were none forthcoming in the old days the defaulting town would have received an unpleasant visit from the Oba's supporters.

21. It will be seen then that it is far from an easy matter to decide whether a particular town is independent. A reference to Ife is unreliable; customs, organisation and judicial procedure are similar; gods are worshipped according to taste; history is vague and the payment of tribute is not obligatory. We are thus left with the old-time alliances or wars. A weak community might have been obliged to join themselves to a stronger one to avoid total annihilation and even to-day they are willing to abide by their old time alliance but a conquered town is in a different category. Modern ideas of administration permit it to express its detestation of its position.

22. The claims of the six anti-Ewi sub-towns will now be reviewed.

(a) OSSI (THE OLOSI) (POPULATION 3113).

23. This is the sixth largest town in the Ado district consisting of 6 quarters and 46 families and situated 15 miles north north west of Ado town close to the district boundary with Ijero and Iddo. This community has the least land of any under the Ewi.

24. The Olosi who is always chosen from the Akumbo family of the Iludi quarters claims to be the 18th holder of the title and a crowned head originating from Ilorilefe. The founder of the town was one Ogumogbokale, the first Olosi, who introduced the gods named Olofin (or Obalufon) and Ore.

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(2) - E14 -

took place in the reign of the 11th Olosi, Ofiorisakalu, when he parted company with the Olggutun of Oggtun and the whole town was completely scattered or that it was about that time that the town of Osi was founded as a result of a quarrel over an important title - possibly that of Olggutun. We must await the Oggtun Intelligence Report to throw further light on the matter. I think that there will be doubt that it will be shown that Oggtun and Osi towns had the same origin and that neither were Ado people, and it is now impossible to say whether the Olosi is entitled to consideration as a crowned head.

31. It should be also recorded that Osi claim that Iyappa, a town on the Iddo - Ilorin road now under the Ajero of Ijero, originated from them and that some of their people live in Ikerre and Emure.

(b) ODE (THE OLODE) (POPULATION 1860).

32. This small town is situated about 2½ miles east of Ado town and is in the corner of the district which borders that of Ikole. It consists of 4 quarters and 18 families, two of which migrated from other parts.

33. The Olode claims to be the tenth holder of the title and a Yoruba crowned head. This chief is always selected from the Ola family. The founder of the town was named Olabomoju and he is said to have migrated from Ile-Ife reaching the present site by way of Ilesha, Ara, Ogutun, Ijesha-Ishu (in the Ikole District) and a place called Agazugo which is not far from the present town. The Olode states incidentally that when the Oda people settled at Oggtun that no Oggtun people were there.

34. When the seventh Olode, Ogarala, was ruling the town was attacked by the Ados (Benis) (N.B. not the Ados under the Ewi) and the people fled to the Ikole district. It is stated that that was the occasion on which

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which the Olode had his crown confiscated. The people returned later on a promise of assistance from the Ewi of Ado should they be attacked again. They agreed and thus regarded the Ewi as their overlord. Ogarala never returned to Ode but died in Irun, a neighbouring town in the Owo Division.

35. Apparently this assistance was not forthcoming later because the eighth Olode by name Aboribioke was forced to leave the town on the approach of the victorious Ilerin War captain named Ali. Not long after the Ibadans under the Are also attacked the town but on this occasion the Ewi had no chance to aid his ally as all his own towns were driven eastwards by the Are as far as Lashigidi (Imessi).

36. The present Olode, Ifashusi (or Dekaiyesimi) must have been appointed about 1890. His town took no part with the Ekiti Parape. The first recorded European visit to Ode is Major Reeve :cker's on August 20th, 1900, after the formation of the Ekiti Council. No remarks are made to the effect that the Olode then claimed his independence. As I have stated before there are no records in the Provincial or Divisional Office from 1902 to 1913 but apparently he denied that he was subject to the Ewi in 1910 or so because he was deported to Oyo in August, 1911, for refusing to acknowledge him. He was not allowed to return to his town until 1915 or early in 1916 and even then he still persisted in his refusal and his people continued to ignore the Ado Native Court. Since 1917 he has lived peaceably with the Ewi but his people are not ardent supporters of the Native Court if the 1932 figures can be taken as an example - only 13 cases from Ode being down for hearing (10 criminal, 1 adultery, 2 civil).

37. The Odes admit that they are on Ado land and

have

- 516 -

have acknowledged the Ewi in the past but they declare that they are not Ados. They say however that they are closely related to the Imessis, the small clan mentioned in the next few paragraphs, and that intermarriage between them is frequent.

(a) LASHIGIDI (OR IMESSI) (THE ONIMESSI, (POPULATION 456)).

38. The head chief of this village, who is titled the Onimessi, claims to be the head of the Imessi clan. The village itself consists only of seven families of which one migrated from Ado, one consists of aborigines, and two come from villages in the Qwq Division. Lashigidi is 23 miles east south east of Ado town.

39. The Onimessi says that the following villages used to be under his control:-

Village.	District.	Division.
1. Egbe	Ado	Ekiti
2. Isin Pakunde	Ikole	Ekiti
3. Edda	Ikole	Ekiti
4. Ilasha	Ikole	Ekiti
5. Ufe	Ikole	Ekiti
6. Ure	Ikole	Ekiti
7. Irun	Ogbagi	Qwq

40. Particulars of this claim have been forwarded to Mr. J.H. Beeley, Assistant District Officer, who is compiling Intelligence Reports in the Ogbagi District in which Irun is at present situated.

41. The Onimessi declares that his people are Ekitis and originated from Ile-Ife and that they took a northern route via Igbojo near Ikirun, Ijero, Qwq and Ikole and when the founder of the town by name Ojugbaje

reached

- 217 -

reached the present site he discovered some people there called Ajagemo. Ojubaye brought three families with him named Qashq, Ekiti and Udoshere.

42. The second Onimessi, Adelglaokun, is alleged to be the father of the founders of the large villages of Irun and Isin Pakunde.

43. When the seventh Onimessi, Otutubiosun, died there was a dispute concerning the successor to the title as a result of which the unsuccessful candidate who was Otutubiosun's eldest son left the town and went to live at Ibokun north of Ilesha. He was given land at Ipole by the Qwa of Ilesha from which the present town of Okemessi-Oke is founded. The Onimessi therefore considers himself senior to the Qloja of Okemessi, who lives in the north western part of the Ekiti Division, is a crowned head and recognised as one of the sixteen District Heads. Curiously enough the Ado town chiefs informed me on August 29th that the Onimessi held a bigger title than the Qloja of Okemessi. *

44. It is the Onimessi's contention that his clan has been practically obliterated by war and that the 11th Onimessi by name Asoluja was killed when all Ekiti fought against him. Many years later the 17th Onimessi, Qwajoba, was driven from his village by Ali the Ilorin Captain and he died at Ode. Ali occupied Imessi for 5 or 6 days. During the time of the 18th Onimessi, Osode Okederg, (circa 1857) the Imessi assisted the sub-town called Agbado against the town of Isq, where the Arinjale, another District Head, lives. The Isqs procured assistance from the Ado (Benis) and Ibadans under Ayorinda who raided Lashigidi. The 19th Onimessi, Ogbekunrin, was ruling when the Ibadan War had a marked effect on the fortunes of the Imessis. When the War Captain, Alatosisa, the Are, invaded the Ewi's territory he caused most of the Ado sub-towns

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- E18 -

to retire and the Ewi took up a position just to the east of the Osse River and a few minutes west of Imessi village (N.B. the old walls can be seen now). The Imessi villages retreated for safety to a place called Igbo-Ewu near Uro in the Qwq Division, whersupon the Akoko clan drove them back towards the Osse River. In the meanwhile the Ados managed to check the Ibadan advance and after returning to their towns and villages which had been raided by the Ados left a certain number of their people in Imessi village under a man called Aduloju. It is said that this accounts for the fact that the Ado family called Oke-Ode lives in Imessi village to-day and also that the name of the village was changed by the Ados from Imessi to Lashigidi which is supposed to be a term of derision. The Imessis sent no contingent to the Ekiti Parap at Ikiriji.

⑥ 45. Major Reeve Tucker visited the place on August 20th, 1900, during the time of the 20th Onimessi, Adegitte (1876 ? to 1909) and he described Ode, Lashigidi and Egbe as Ado villages. In June 1902 when Captain W.G. Ambrose and Captain Larrymore were endeavouring to fix the position of the boundary between the Lagos Government and Northern Nigeria there was considerable discussion about the position of Lashigidi and Egbe as well as the other Ekiti villages to the east and now in the Omu and Ogbagi Districts of the Qwq Division. Captain Ambrose objected strongly to the portioning of the Ekiti people between the Governments and both officers claimed Lashigidi. Eventually the Onimessi was placed under the Lagos Government as he did not wish to be cut off from the rest of Ekiti although by doing so he says he was obliged to give up a staff presented to him by the Resident at Lokoja. The River Oyimo was made the boundary between Lashigidi and Irun as it is to-day between the Ekiti and

Qwq

Qwq Divisions.

46. When the present and 21st Onimessi, Ola Ibiyemi, succeeded in 1909 he claimed that he was independent of the Ewi of Ado. He was therefore deported in November, 1910, to Qwq and some of his chiefs were also recommended for the same punishment. The Onimessi was sent back to Ado town in 1916 and was detained there six months but although he refused persistently to acknowledge the Ewi he was allowed to return home and since that time he has lived quietly although maintaining his claim that he is an independent district head. In 1932 the Lashigidi villagers brought four cases to the Ado Native Court.

47. There is one notable difference between the chieftainship of Ode, Lashigidi and Egbe and the other Ado sub-towns. In Appendix C it will be noticed that their principal men are known as the IWAREFA MEFA (six Iwarefa Chiefs). This term is not used anywhere else in the Ado District.

48. My impression is that the people of Lashigidi and Egbe are not Ado but Imessis as they claim to be and that they are associated more closely with Ods than any other place at present under the Ewi. With the permission of the District Officer, Qwq Division, I interviewed some Irun chiefs on August 22nd. They said that they were Imessi people but would not admit that their village head, the Onirun, was under the Onimessi. The Onimessi's statement about Isin Pakunde, Edda, Ilasha, Ufe and Uro can be supported or otherwise when the Intelligence Report on Ikole is undertaken. If Mr. Baeley can confirm that Irun is an Imessi village it would appear advisable either to transfer Lashigidi and Egbe to the Qwq Division making the Osse River the inter-divisional boundary or transfer all the Ekitis now in the Qwq Division to the Ekiti Division and re-group them in accordance with their clan system.

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- 65 -

178. In conclusion I am of opinion that the only changes necessary will be those sufficient to educate the chiefs from the Ewi downwards in their responsibilities and duties towards their people. There is no necessity to search for the ancient organisations or to resurrect some forgotten institution. The councils are here waiting to be reanimated and recognised. There is no need to revert to primitive forms of judicial procedure but merely to afford more facilities for the people to enjoy the benefits which are afforded by the Native Court Ordinance.

Neil Weir

ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER
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