

# The Legend of Timi Agbale of Ede Land and the Mystery behind his Arrow of Fire

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*Abstract- The legend of Timi Agbale, the warrior-king of Ede Land, a historic town in Osun State, Nigeria, that encompasses the present-day local government areas of Ede North and Ede South, is associated with his enigmatic "Arrow of fire," a supernatural weapon that is central to his mystique. This paper explores the cultural and historical dimensions of the Arrow of fire, interrogating its role in shaping Timi Agbale's legacy and Ede's communal identity. Through an in-depth analysis of Yoruba oral traditions, historical accounts, and cosmology, the study investigates the Arrow's dual symbolism as a divine instrument of justice and a metaphor for political authority. It critically addresses unresolved questions about the Arrow's origins, evaluating whether it represents ancient technology, ritual symbolism, or mythic exaggeration. By examining the Arrow's enduring presence in Ede festivals, proverbs, and contemporary art, this paper argues that the mystery surrounding Timi Agbale's weapon reflects broader themes of cultural memory and resistance within Yoruba historiography. Ultimately, the study highlights how legends like that of Timi Agbale bridge history and myth, offering insights into precolonial Yoruba worldviews and their enduring relevance to modern identity politics.*

*Index Terms- Timi Agbale, Arrow Of Fire, Oral Tradition, Ede Land, Yoruba History.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ede, situated in the Guinea savannah region of Yorubaland, is approximately latitude 7° 4' North and 4° 3' East (Oyeweso 2). The town comprises of the twin local government areas of Ede North and Ede South; a historic town situated in Osun State, in the Southwest part of Nigeria — formerly part of the Old Oyo Empire, during the Yoruba precolonial administration. It shares boundaries with Iwo and Ejigbo in the West, Osogbo and Edun-abon in the North and South respectively. Being one of the most populous and largest cities in the Yoruba region, Ede serves as a focal point for the economic, cultural, and political heritage of the Yoruba people. In Osun

State, only Ife and Ilesa are on par with Ede as regards 'landship' because it incorporates several adjoining Ede villages such as Akoda, Sekona, Alajue, Ogobi, Oloki, Owode and many more.

Like many other towns in Yoruba history, Ede town originated from the Old Oyo Empire, far back as the 16th century. As expected of oral tradition or history as the case may be, there are variations amongst custodians of the Ede historical narrative as to which Alaafin was instrumental to the formation of the town and whose regime it was. In African Sacred Spaces, Ogunbayo and Adekunle argue that it was Alaafin Kori who had established Ede under the authority of Agbale Olofa Ina (167). However, in a personal interview with Mogaji Ajeniju, the head of one of the ruling houses and the oldest chief in the Timi's palace (2025), the old historian reveals with certainty that it was indeed during the reign of the 4th Alaafin of Oyo (Alaafin Sango). Agbale Olofa Ina, the founder of Ede, was tasked with defending Oyo-Ile's territorial integrity against frequent Ijesha invasions, particularly protecting towns like Awo, Ara, and Ojo (Oyeweso 3). Being one of Alaafin's most trusted bodyguards, Agbale set out with his mystical arrow and bow and defeated the bandits.

However, instead of returning to Oyo Empire after winning the "battle of Ijesha Arara bandits", he chose to camp at a place near the base of these bandits with the belief that they might regroup. With Alaafin Sango's permission, he settled at a strategic place between Awo and Ara to ensure that these bandits never return and if they do, they would be walking into "the lion's den". For his sustenance and that of his men warriors, he taxed the traders a little sum of money which can be classified as security levy and sent part of it to the Alaafin who resides in Oyo-Ile. Gradually, this became a norm that people, especially traders, from all over the established Yoruba states

began to settle down in the community because of its economic benefits. Sighting this as an opportunity, Timi reached out to Alaafin Sango again to seek his permission to create a little town where he would solely direct the affairs of the people but would be under the Alaafin as the Supreme Ruler — more like a unitary system of government but with delegated legislation. The Alaafin, although skeptical, gave his blessings. The settlement where Agbale and his warriors camped happened to be surrounded by Ede leaves. Thinking of what name to give his newly founded town, the name of the leaves was restructured phonologically to Ilu Ede or Ede Ile, and that was how this town came into being.

About the Yoruba political system, Law (52) posits that the principle of separation of power and checks and balances existed between the Alaafin (king), the Oyo Mesì (council of chiefs), and the Basorun (prime minister). So also is the relationship between the Alaafin of Oyo, who is the Supreme ruler of the Yoruba precolonial administration, and kings who were answerable to him, amongst whom is Agbale Olofa Ina (owner of the arrow of fire) of Ede.

#### A. Timi Agbale: Warrior-King and Legend

The Yoruba oral tradition venerates individuals who exemplified self-sacrifice, particularly warriors who confronted existential threats. As Peel (2000) observes, ‘These legends served not only as historical records but as moral compasses, guiding communities through the virtues of bravery and selflessness’ (117). Like Lisabi of Egba, Moremi Ajasoro of Ife, Oluyole of Ibadan, and our eponymous hero, Agbale Olofa Ina of Ede land.

Agbale, an incredible archer, was one of the two generalissimos of Alaafin Sango and famous for his arrow of fire (Research in African Literatures 122). Mogaji Ajeniju (our interviewee as stated earlier in this paper) reveals that his arrow, once fired, kills not less than 5 people at a time and the opponents are consumed by the fire it emits — an appellation cum panegyric originally meant for Alaafin Sango — the god of thunder, lightning and justice — *olukoso ayara ina* which loosely translates as great warrior, wielder of lightning fire. Although open to debate because of its conflicting narrations, some believed that Agbale’s use of fire through his arrow caused the legendary friction between Alaafin Sango and Agbale

Olofa Ina which led to the “disappearance” of the latter. Indeed, Crookall reveals in Handbook for History Teachers in Africa, that Agbale Olofa Ina was sent to face the Ijebu bandits by Alaafin Sango with the hope that he would be killed in battle, fully aware of the notoriety of the enemy (203) but somehow, he survived. This suggests that the enmity existed between them way before Agbale became King of Ede land.

Interestingly, in many publications and oral narrations, the relationship between Timi and Agbale Olofa Ina is blurred. Historians often refer to them as the same person which is false. It is pertinent to note that Agbale Olofa Ina is the founder of Ede land and the first ruler of the town while “Timi” is coined from the name Alapotiemitiemi who is the second ruler of Ede-Ile (personal interview with Mogaji Ajeniju, 2025). On this note, it is essential to bring to limelight, the rise and fall of Agbale Olofa Ina and how he was replaced with Alapotiemitiemi by Alaafin Sango of Oyo Ile, as well as the heroics of the latter whose name was later coined as part of the title for future kings of the land — Timi (second king) + Agbale (first king) = Timi Agbale of Ede land.

Much like Agamemnon’s betrayal of Palamedes in Greek myth, the friction between Agbale Olofa Ina and Alaafin Sàngó reflects the paradox of power: loyalty becomes a threat when it overshadows the ruler’s authority. As Beard notes, such narratives reveal the ‘pathology of autocracy’ (112), a theme as relevant to Yoruba oral traditions as it is to classical antiquity. Many Yoruba historians believed that Agbale Olofa Ina never lost a battle — which earned him a legendary status in the history of Yoruba warlords.

According to research, after establishing the Ede land, Sàngó, fearing the growing power of Agbale, who had subdued many lands for the Oyo Empire, dispatched his trusted warrior and friend of Agbale Olofa Ina, Gbonka Ebiri, to bring about his downfall. Agbale was defeated, and Alapotiemitiemi was installed as ruler of Ede (Johnson 168). Others believed that he was never defeated in battle but was exiled and never to be seen again. In some versions, Agbale’s ‘exile’ to Oyo is a euphemism for his

execution, while others insist he died in battle against Gbonka Ebiri. These contradictions reveal how oral traditions adapt to serve communal memory and political agendas (Olátúnjí 112). However, it is essential to note that despite Agbale being the founder of Ede land, Alapotiemitiemi's legacy in the town should not be underemphasized as the latter also fought numerous wars to protect the land and never lost any.

Many a historian believed that Agbale Olofa Ina wasn't killed in Oyo but fought valiantly in the Jakuta war against an Ijesha sub group where he was betrayed by his favourite wife and because he could not bear the pain of this betrayal, he caused an opening to appear on the earth and therein buried himself (Oyeweso, 7) which is presently known as Igbo Agbale (Agbale's bush). However, the old Ede historian, Mogaji Ajeniju revealed in a personal interview that Agbale Olofa Ina never returned from Oyo Ile after being summoned by the Alaafin and it was indeed Alapotiemitiemi who fought in the Jakuta war and got betrayed by his wife. Therefore, in the historical narrative of Ede land, both Agbale Olofa Ina and Alapotiemitiemi are revered as mythical figures who played a huge role in the formation and protection of the town. Hence, the adoption of the title "Timi Agbale Olofa Ina" for all consecutive rulers of Ede.

#### B. The Arrow of Fire as Central Mystery

It has been established that Agbale Olofa Ina (the one with arrow of fire) was the progenitor of Ede land. According to an online publication, Johnson's History of the Yoruba from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate describes Agbale as "an archer, noted for his deadly arrow who more than justified his appointment as Aare Onakanfo by the Alaafin." And that during his reign, it was blasphemous to address him without the appellation "Olofa Ina". Thus, it is pertinent to discuss the significance of this arrow as a mysterious element and a cultural emblem of the Ede people.

Many researchers have tried to unravel the mystery behind Agbale's arrow of fire by linking it with Alaafin Sango's spiritual fortification, being known as the god of thunder and lightning. However, it is essential to note that the mystical power behind Agbale's arrow of fire remains unknown as the

warriors of old tell no one about the source of their power for fear of betrayal (like what happened to Alapotiemitiemi).

While many believed that the arrow of fire is a myth that never existed, others argue that it is an exaggeration of the archer's swift technique of fighting the enemies with the arrow. Yet, no one can deny that this arrow is a significant war tool used in founding the town, conquering her enemies and widening the geographical boundaries. Mogaji Ajeniju, in a personal interview, revealed that Agbale's arrow, when fired, kills multitudes of people at once and sometimes these enemies are consumed by fire.

It is worthy to note that till today, the symbol of Agbale with his arrow and bow has become a symbol of royalty in the town and the sculpture is found at the T-junction which leads to the king's palace. Similarly, the symbol of bow and arrow has been adopted as the cultural insignia of the Ede people which can be found in the logo of both the Ede North and South local governments. Nevertheless, the power of the arrow remains unknown and whether, till today, all the Timis of Ede, past and present, possess the ability to shoot an arrow of fire like their ancestor. In addition, Mogaji Ajeniju reveals that only through war can we know how powerful the king can be, which he ended by saying "Ede has never lost a war". Importantly, "Timi Agbale Olofa Ina" will be used to represent the legend of Agbale Olofa Ina in consequent chapters.

#### C. Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate the legend of Timi Agbale Olofa Ina, focusing on the mystery of his Arrow of fire and its historical, cultural, and symbolic significance. The main objectives are:

- (i) To analyze the symbolism of the Arrow of fire within Yoruba perspective, particularly its associations with divine power, political legitimacy, and resistance.
- (ii) To explore the origins of the Arrow of fire, evaluating oral traditions, historical records, and possible metallurgical or ritual interpretations.
- (iii) To assess the cultural legacy of Timi Agbale and his Arrow in contemporary Ede, including its

presence in festivals, oral traditions, and artistic representations.

(iv) To examine the interplay between myth and history in shaping perceptions of Timi Agbale's leadership and the broader historical narrative of Ede Land.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method approach to analyze Timi Agbale Olofa Ina as a legend in Yoruba traditional folktale, particularly to the Ede people and the myth that surrounds his arrow of fire or flaming arrow as used interchangeably, by combining qualitative historical research, oral interview and in-depth literary analysis. This methodology is adopted to address the juxtaposition of myth, history and cultural memory in Yoruba oral tradition.

### A. Research Design

Combining approaches from folklore studies, anthropology, and history, the study questions the historical roots, symbolic implications, and modern modifications of Timi Agbale and his flaming arrow. Also, data from oral interview and written records are cross-referenced to validate findings and address contradictions.

### B. Data Collection

This study adopts both the primary and secondary mode of data collection: The primary source involves a 30-minute one-on-one interview with the Ede palace historian; a 90-year-old man who is the head of one of the 7 ruling houses in Ede, known as Mogaji Ajeniju (2025) to gather first-hand accounts of Timi Agbale's legend amongst other related information. The secondary sources involve critical engagement of scholarly works that revolve around the precolonial Yoruba society, the Oyo Empire, the history of Ede and the legend of Timi Agbale, the warrior king and many more.

### C. Data Analysis

Interview transcripts and oral narratives are coded for recurring motifs. Contrasted oral accounts (e.g., Agbale's exile vs. execution) with written records to identify narrative shifts. The Arrow's duality as a spiritual and political symbol is also analyzed.

### D. Ethical Considerations

**Informed Consent:** Mogaji Ajeniju's consent was obtained for recording and quoting his testimony. **Cultural Sensitivity:** The interpretations of sacred symbols (e.g., the Arrow) respect Ede's cultural protocols. **Anonymity:** While Mogaji Ajeniju consented to being recorded, he chose to provide his title rather than real name.

### E. Limitations

**Subjectivity of Oral History:** Contradictions in accounts (e.g., Agbale's fate) reflect the subjective nature of oral traditions. **Single Interviewee Bias:** Reliance on Mogaji Ajeniju's perspective risks overlooking alternative narrations. **Archaeological Gaps:** No physical evidence of the Arrow exists, limiting conclusions about its material origins.

## III. ANALYSIS

### A. Arrow as Myth vs. Reality

Researchers often find it difficult to categorize Agbale's Arrow of Fire as either a myth or reality because it encompasses elements of reality in different narrations. However, it is important to put into consideration its supernatural ability — to emit fire. Reality refers to events, facts, or situations that can be proven through evidence, observation, or historical records. It is ironical that before something can be tagged a historical record, it must have first been witnessed by someone. Hence, what is considered a myth can also be a reality. Nevertheless, for an occurrence as far back as the 16th century during the Yoruba precolonial society, Timi Agbale's flaming arrow or arrow of fire as so called can be regarded as a myth, solely because of the Westernized use of discourse and semantics — things they could not believe, they gave that name; and for events they witnessed and found logical, they call reality.

Many a warrior witnessed Agbale's heroics on the battlefield. Many saw him fire his arrow with precision like the legendary Commander Ju-Mong in the eponymous Korean drama. Many saw him become the Are Ona Kakanfo, a position that only the powerful elite can attain. Yet, the Westerners would make us believe that myth and reality are mutually exclusive. It is pertinent to note that this

research, having juxtaposed the primary source (physical interview) and secondary sources (various scholarly works), concludes that the flaming arrow is much a myth which is passed down through generations as story and a reality because it is the historical narrative of a particular set of people. Having established this fact, there is also the need to observe it as a symbolic weapon. Also, the panegyric of the Ede people alludes to the mightiness of the flaming arrow. The panegyric reads as thus:

Ede màpó arógun  
Ede, the land of the war camp, the warrior's domain,  
Iyako agbo  
Èyin Ọmọají lala ọsò  
You, the children who wake up dreaming of fashion  
Ọmọají ọsọ  
The children who wake up in fashion  
Ọmọají f'ọjọá gbogbo dára bí egbin,  
You, the children who every day, glows like the gazelle  
Ede ọmọlepo rédẹ,  
Ede, the child of the red palm oil merchant,  
Ọmọwà a dodo,  
Child of beans and fried plantain merchant,  
Èyin ọmọaròhàrà,  
You are the children of dazzling splendor,  
Ọmọaje ní ju,  
Children of prosperity and abundance,  
Èyin ọmọagbale gbira tó l'ede ilé,  
You are the children of Agbale, the mighty warrior  
who founded Ede-Ile,  
Èyin ọmọalápò tí'emi tí'emi  
You are the children of Alapotiemitiemi  
Èyin ọmọarógun má fi t'ibonse  
You are the children who see war but care less about  
the gun  
Ede ilú timi Ọloofà iná.  
Ede, the city of Timi, the one with the arrow of fire.

This panegyric further ensures that the tale of Agbale Olofa Ina is both a myth and reality. By making reference to the merchants — palm oil, beans and plantain — it provides credibility to the background of Ede as being a town of merchants who used to come from all over the Yoruba land to trade their wares.

B. The Arrow of Fire as a Symbolic Weapon

As stated in the introductory part of this paper, how Timi Agbale got his flaming arrow remains a mystery because warriors of old trust no one with such information. It is essential to note that the arrow being the most notorious weapon of the founding father of Ede, it is a no brainer to view it as a symbol of power and authority. First, because of its capacity to subdue the enemies at the battlefield and secondly, because it was with it that Ede came into being. Hence, the need to analyze this historical instrument using the elements of symbolism.

The Yoruba precolonial society was characterized by various concepts like ase (power) and ogun (warfare). In relation to this, Abimbola posits that objects of war, in Yoruba metaphysics, are usually imbued with supernatural forces, by invoking the spirits of powerful deities or the application of ritualistic fortifications through spiritual incantations (87) — an aspect of the Yoruba religion. The flaming arrow is said to fall in this category because it is literally impossible for an instrument carved with wood to emit fire like Agbale's, as it is believed to have possessed an extraordinary ability to kill multiple enemies at once and set them ablaze. While some scholars consider the flaming arrow a myth or an art of exaggeration often common in Yoruba storytelling because they cannot bring themselves to understand Yoruba spirituality, others argue that the flaming arrow represents not just a physical weapon but also a metaphor for divine intervention in battle, akin to the thunderbolts of Sango, the Yoruba god of lightning and war (Olatunji, 43) which some scholars believed played a vital role in the cause of the feud between Agbale and Alaafin Sango.

In addition, the flaming arrow also symbolizes political legitimacy. In precolonial Yoruba society, one of the criteria of a leader is to have supernatural power — the ability to wield mystical power is often considered a prerequisite for rulership and this, Agbale possessed in excess. His flaming arrow earned him the title of Aare Ona Kakanfo and being an ambitious man, he used this mystical power to fight against the enemy of Oyo Empire and carved his town out of it, against the plot of the Alaafin, albeit with his grudgingly given permission. Timi Agbale's mastery of this weapon cemented his authority, not only as a military leader but also as a

king whose power was sanctioned by spiritual forces which was transferred to his successor, Alapotiemitiemi, which gave the narration that the flaming arrow is a gift from Alaafin Sango himself more credibility. The continuous adoption of the title “Timi Agbale Olofa Ina” by successive rulers of Ede highlights the arrow’s enduring legacy as an emblem of leadership and divine right.

#### C. The Arrow as a Metaphor for Resistance

Timi Agbale’s flaming arrow can also be viewed beyond its mystical attributes. It is pertinent to recall that it is through this war instrument that Ede land was created. Its essentiality can also be analyzed as an instrument of resistance. Yoruba historiography often glorifies people who challenge oppressive forces, making them into heroes whose legacies transcend time. Just as Moremi Ajasoro’s sacrifice for Ile-Ife is celebrated, so too is Agbale’s resistance, with the Arrow of Fire serving as a testament to his defiance, against the Fulani bandits, Ijesha Arara and the Alaafin Sango himself. This metaphor of resistance extends to modern interpretations of Ede’s cultural identity. During annual festivals such as the Ipede Festival, where the king, his children and his chiefs would tour the 3 parts of Ede Titun (Bode, Alajue, Idi), leaving out Sagba (after Lalemo’s children; the grandchildren of Alapotiemitiemi moved from Ede Ile due to a civil war), references to the Arrow of Fire reinforce the notion of Ede as a land that has never been conquered. Oral traditions emphasize that the arrow was not merely a tool of destruction but a symbol of the people’s resilience and determination to protect their sovereignty.

#### D. The Arrow in Contemporary Ede Culture

In the year 1500 when Ede land was founded by Timi Agbale, the one with the flaming arrow, little did he know that the instrument of war he used in defending that land from invaders would go on to become an identity associated with the people. The significance of the arrow in contemporary Ede Society cannot be overemphasized. Centuries later, this arrow has become a cultural symbol that has been subconsciously ingrained in the mind of the Ede people and her offspring from all over the world, which is crafted on the king’s throne and his statue standing erect at the T-junction that leads to the king’s palace amongst many others. Additionally,

historical plays, poetry/chants, and songs performed during traditional festivals continue to reference the legend of Timi Agbale Olofa Ina, ensuring that his story is passed down to future generations.

Furthermore, the arrow has been incorporated into local governance and community leadership which can be seen as the symbol in the local government certificates. Traditional rulers in Ede make allusions to Agbale’s legacy when addressing matters of security and justice, often drawing parallels between his military exploits and their role as custodians of peace. This reinforces the idea that the Arrow of Fire is not just an artifact of the past but an active element in shaping socio-political narratives in contemporary Ede society.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study has elucidated the legend of Agbale Olofa Ina, the founder of Ede and the mystery behind his flaming arrow. Also, clarity has been made on the distinguished difference between Alapotiemitiemi and Agbale, with emphasis on how the appellation of “Timi Agbale of Ede land” came into being. Through a detailed and careful observation of Yoruba oral traditions, historical records, and contemporary cultural expressions, the analysis has demonstrated that the flaming arrow is far more than a mere weapon — it is a potent symbol of divine sanction, political legitimacy, and communal resilience.

Further investigation reveals that the flaming arrow or arrow of fire as used interchangeably in this paper is rooted in both myth and reality which exemplifies the complexities of Yoruba precolonial society. On one hand, the supernatural features of the arrow, as acclaimed, highlights the role of leadership in those days as being intertwined with mystical forces and the interrelationship of the Yoruba culture with the spiritual and temporal world. On the other, the historical narratives within local oral literature explores the role of the flaming arrow as a symbol of resistance and identity, one that has fortified the people of Ede against external threats and internal challenges alike. Also, the study investigates the legacy of Agbale and his flaming arrow in contemporary Ede culture.

To conclude, while acknowledging the limitation that comes with oral narration of story, the paper introduces readers into several ways by which mythic narratives are constructed, transmitted, and reinterpreted over time. Having concluded that there would always be different variations of an oral history, it is encouraged that further research be made on Yoruba mythology and its interdependence on the precolonial political leadership.

## V. APPENDIX

### A. Interview Transcription

This interview took place on the 24th of January, 2025 at the Timi Agbale Palace, Ede at exactly 11:00 am. The interviewee is a respectable chief in the king's palace and also the eldest of one of the 7 ruling houses in Ede. He is the palace historian and above 90 years of age with his memory as sharp as Timi Agbale's pointed arrow and he goes by the sobriquet, Mogaji Ajeniju. It is important to note that this interview was conducted in the indigenous language — Yoruba — but because of the language barrier and keyboard issue as regards diacritics, only the transcription is provided. Below is the transcription of a 30-minute personal interview on Timi Agbale and his flaming arrow between the man and I:

Interviewer: Good morning, sir. My name is Awwal from Ile-Oloshe compound in this same Ede town. I am here to get information about Timi Agbale Olofa Ina (flaming arrow). The first question I would like to ask is...

Mogaji Ajeniju: You are yet to complete your statement. Where are you from? Which institution?

Interviewer: Oh... I am from the University of Lagos where I study English and Literary Studies.

MA: Very good.

Interviewer: So, we were given an assignment on African Literature that pertains to one's particular hometown. My colleagues have gone to their various hometown and I'm here to know about Timi Agbale Olofa Ina.

MA: I am Mogaji Ajeniju, the head of a ruling house. We have 7 ruling houses in Ede and out of these

ruling houses, I am the head of one of them which is Ajeniju. Agbale Olofa Ina is from the Old Oyo Empire. He is one of the bodyguards of Alaafin Sango. He is one of the bravest of his warriors, a friend to Gbonka Ebiri. If he fires an arrow, sometimes it kills 6, sometimes 7 and sometimes more and the arrow always emit fire. It happened that the Alaafin rules over majority of the Yoruba land if not all. Ede came to being when some bandits known as Ijesa Arara waylay merchants from Oyo who are going to trade in Awo, Ara and Apomu. With constant report of this incident to the Alaafin, he then made a decision to send his most powerful warrior, Agbale Olofa Ina to go and face these Ijesa Arara bandits. He was asked to camp between Aro and Ara to fight with these bandits and that's where he and his boys settled to fight against the enemies of Oyo. After fighting and defeating these bandits, he did not return to Oyo. Rather, he sent a message to the Alaafin asking him for his permission to stay there permanently so that the bandits would not regroup and return to disturbing the peace of the merchants, of which Alaafin Sango gave his consent. To feed himself, he taxes the merchant that passes through the route and that's how he started his administration like the Oyo government. The agreement was to send some percentage to the Alaafin while he and the boys use the remaining for his sustenance. This means that while Agbale acts as the regional head, Alaafin Sango remained the supreme ruler.

Interviewer: Thank you, sir. The next question I would like to ask is that, how was the cultural and political administration of the town during Agbale's era?

MA: That's what I answered earlier by saying he started by taxing the people for protecting them against bandits by which he sends a specific remuneration to the Alaafin in Oyo.

Interviewer: The next question I would like to ask is about how Agbale became Timi and what's the mystery behind his arrow of fire?

MA: In the olden days and even till now, there are many people who are spiritually fortified. It is through his spiritual power that makes him kill many people with just an arrow that emits fire. However, he was not yet a king at that time. In the settlement where he camped with his boys to fight the bandits,

there is a huge plantation of trees that people use to brush their teeth. This tree is known as Igi Ede which was turned to Ede and that's where the name Ede came from. With the question you asked, you know, if it's not that the arrow was fortified, there is no way it would emit fire.

Interviewer: Sir, is it possible to say because Agbale was close to Alaafin Sango who is the god of thunder and lightning that's why he is so powerful that he commands fire out of his arrows?

MA: No, that's not it. Agbale is very powerful on his own and not because the then King of Oyo was known as Alaafin Sango.

Interviewer: Have you heard any story about Agbale's heroics in the battlefield, especially with his arrow of fire?

MA: Before you become Alaafin's bodyguard, that means such a person is an exceptional warrior. That's it. Now, moving forward, that was the story of Agbale Olofa Ina. His replacement was Alapotiemitiemi and that's where Timi was coined from, for short. And he's also very powerful.

Interviewer: Is this Alapotiemitiemi a child of Agbale?

MA: No. He is not. He's also one of the warriors of Alaafin Sango. After the mystery that surrounds Agbale's disappearance (Some said he was murdered on the Alaafin's orders), Alapotiemitiemi was chosen by Alaafin to go rule over the Ede people and act as their king.

Interviewer: Is it only Agbale that possesses the flaming arrow or every other king of Ede after him also possess the same?

MA: You know that's what this town was created with. Therefore, anything they do afterwards had to carry the emblem of the arrow. If you check the King's throne, there is an arrow...everything related to Ede has to carry the arrow symbol.

Interviewer: Thank you, sir. Please do you think this story of Agbale Olofa Ina is different amongst historians like yourself or the story is the same everywhere?

MA: After he defeated the bandits and formed his own administration and then got replaced by Alaafin

Sango with Alapotiemitiemi. This Alapotiemitiemi known as Timi was also a brave warrior who fought a lot of battles and won everything, conquering and acquiring more land for Ede. You can see we have a large land, the boundaries of Ede, it was all conquered by Timi. Even when we left Ede Ile (the old settlement) to Ede titun (current base) we still have a lot of land. It'd interest you to know that 12 kings died at Ede Ile to Ede titun. All these lands were acquired through battle.

Interviewer: Alright, sir. Like I said, so, the story about Agbale has no variation? I watched a movie about Timi Agbale where it was told that he commanded the ground to open and he entered it alive. Is that true?

MA: When you mentioned that the earth swallowed someone alive, I knew we were coming to that. It is Alapotiemitiemi who replaced Agbale Olofa Ina that led a very good administration. And this is because everything the Alaafin wanted, that's what he did. The extent to which he fought wars, he gave birth to 7 children. It was his children that moved to this new place; he had already entered the ground in Agbale at Ede Ile which is known as Igbo Agbale (Agbale's forest) along Ido Osun. When he was at the battlefield with the Ibariba, they plotted with his wife so they could conquer him. His wife who happened to also be an Ibariba went ahead to destroy all his powers. For fear of being held captive, he fought with his last might and after he got surrounded, he, with his last power commanded the ground to open after which he entered it alive but not without conquering the Ibariba.

Interviewer: Alright. But what happened to Agbale Olofa Ina himself, did he willingly accept to be replaced as the King of Ede?

MA: He was replaced. There is a reason but I don't want it written down. So, let's say it's because he didn't perform well. Gbonka Ebiri and Agbale are close friends and warriors but the Alaafin has the intention to eliminate them. However, all his schemes to eliminate Agbale made him more powerful. It was Gbonka Ebiri who on the orders of Alaafin Sango, eliminated his bosom friend and was replaced by Alapotiemitiemi. A lot of people do think it's Agbale who entered the ground but it was Alapo. Although,

we also call him Agbale because that was the founder of the land.

Interviewer: What lesson do you think we can learn from the story of Agbale Olofa Ina?

MA: One lesson that we can learn is not to be a betrayer.

Interviewer: Another question, sir. How did you get to know about this story that you have told me?

MA: If a child doesn't meet history, he would meet (aroba) and (aroba) is the father of history. Just like I told you, you have also known the history of Ede like that.

Interviewer: Alright, sir. Is there any panegyrics, proverbs or songs that relates to Timi Agbale Olofa Ina?

MA: Well, that relates to the different culture we have. We have Sango (god of thunder and lightning), we have the masquerade, a lot of them praises the history of Ede in relation to the festival or culture.

Interviewer: Do you have any proverb or panegyrics of Ede that you can recite for me?

MA: I can't know that. You have to find those who know the panegyric of Ede. It's not that I don't know it but I can't recite everything off heart.

Interviewer: Is there any festival that is done to commemorate Agbale Olofa Ina?

MA: Good. We do Ipede. Meaning all the boundaries of Ede as discussed earlier, especially now in New Ede, Egungun festival, Oya festival, and so on. Every year, we do a remembrance of when we move into this new Ede. While at Ede Ile (old Ede), we are all offsprings of Alapotiemitiemi. He gave birth to 7 children; Lamodi, Lalemo, Olaokun, etc. But when the children of Lamodi dominated the old Ede, the children of Lalemo disagreed and crossed the Osun River from Sagba to this town.

Interviewer: So, are there still people over there?

MA: Nobody is there again. The civil war has separated all of them and some of them are now with us here. The place we passed to get here, every year during the Ipede, we won't go there again. We would pass the remaining 3 corners and ignore the last. We celebrate it every year with Sango Timi leading the

way, then the kings, the chief and so on in that particular order. That day, we ride the horse. From the palace to Bode, we can't go to Sagba, so we go to Alajue and then Idi.

Interviewer: Is there a particular day for it?

MA: Yes, after Ramadan fasting. Around July.

Interviewer: Finally, sir. Is it the politicians that appoint the later kings of Ede?

MA: Before, it was the Alaafin that is the supreme leader of Yoruba land but when the white men came and then politics joined, that's how the traditional society got politicized. Now, in the state, the governor is the number 1 citizen while at the local level, the local government chairman is the number 1 citizen which is not like that in the olden days.

Interviewer: What's your opinion about politics in traditional society?

MA: It is preposterous! Imagine those we voted for are now leaders in our own land.

Interviewer: The contemporary obas, are they as powerful as the old ones?

MA: That depends on the individual. We can only know when there is the need for it.

Interviewer: This is the final question. Who are those who tell historical stories in the town?

MA: Not really about the age or position, it depends on those who showed interest in knowing history at a tender age. Like me, I was very curious since I was a kid and I do ask questions from the elderly ones about things whenever I come to the palace, that's how I got to know these things.

Interviewer: Finally, what do you have to tell the next generation from the story of Agbale Olofa Ina?

MA: The power of old is different from recent ones. Only those who look for power will get it. If there is war now, everybody will bring out their powers. May God not let us see anything like war again. Amen.

This is the end of the interview between the interviewer, Awwal Olanrewaju Owolabi and the interviewee, Mogaji Ajeniju of Ede land.

Attached is a picture of the interviewer and interviewee at the end of the session.

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