



ADO AND EKITI PARAPO WARS

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Abstract:

The paper focuses on the roles of Ado Ekiti in the Ekiti Parapo war. The 19th century history of Yorubaland was characterized with series of wars and crises. The war which was a bold step to throw away the Ibadan hegemony over the eastern Yorubaland saw the coming together of all towns in the eastern Yorubaland, hence the appellation of Ekitiparapo. The coming together of the people however saw the absence of Ado Ekiti in the grand alliance. The reason for Ado Ekiti not participating in the war is highlighted here. This paper therefore examines the factors that are responsible for Ado Ekiti absence in the war.

Keywords: Ekiti parapo, Ibadan, war, Eastern Yorubaland

Introduction

The Yoruba Ekiti Parapo War was an epic and chronic civil war between two powerful Yoruba confederate armies of mainly Western Yoruba and its Allies (Ibadan and its allies) and its Eastern Yoruba (Ijesha) Ekiti and the Igbomina Countries) The main action of the war took place in the North-East. It was a war that put an end to all manners of wars and semblance of war in Yorubaland. Indeed, it was a war for supremacy between Ilesha, Ekiti, Igbomina and Ibadan. It started on 30th July 1877.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the old Oyo Empire which was on the verge of decay eventually collapsed under the onslaught of the Muslim Fulani Emirate established at Ilorin. The collapse of Oyo by the Fulani raised the question of providing an effective military check to any further encroachment by the Fulani on Yoruba territories and maintaining peace and stability in the region. The solution to these problems were however, found in the Oyo Yoruba who had regrouped themselves in Oyo, Ibadan and Ijaiye.

Since the New Oyo could not provide the required security for the land, this responsibility therefore fell on Ibadan and Ijaiye. Ibadan was given the task of defending the Eastern parts of the Yorubaland. With this arrangement, Ibadan found itself the main bulwark against further progress of the Fulani. The defeat of Ilorin at

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Osogbo as early as 1840 checked further encroachment of the Ilorin to the South. Ilorin did not as a result of this defeat put an end to their aggression, they turned their attention to the Eastern part of the country. Thus bringing them into conflict with Igbomina and Ekiti countries.

Ilorin's attack on Ekiti town of Otun precipitated an outbreak of hostilities between Ilorin and Ibadan. Ibadan was however able to dislodge the Ilorin at Otun. Unfortunately, after the defeat, Ibadan set out systematically to bring the rest of Ekiti Country under its own control. The success enjoyed by Ibadan in her campaign must have prompted her to widen her operation in the region from a war aimed at defending the Ekiti, the war became a war of conquest.

The conquest of this area, called for a systematic administrative control. The answer to this problem was found in the system of administration called the Ajele System. Ajele, the actual word Ajele, is a distinctive of the word Ajala an Arabic word which means to dispatch. Among the Nupe and Ilorin Fulani, the word Ajele was actually used to describe the political agent sent to a tributary town to collect taxes. The system was however modified to suit Ibadan political system of military and administrative character.

Unlike the Fulani Ajele, the Ibadan Ajele was permanently resident in the subject town. His position was undefined and therefore limitless. He was placed in a position as to make him a formidable competitor with the local ruler and his chiefs. He was allowed to establish his court and followers as to rival that of the leader of the town, thus ensuring total and continued support of his stations to Ibadan. His economic advantage over the local ruler almost reduced the local ruler to a mere puppet.

As Ibadan became more powerful Ibadan became preoccupied with conquest without monitoring this system. Abuses crept into the system and the Ajele became corrupt, far too many citizens of Ibadan regarded the dependent towns as a source of enriching themselves. The abuses in the system were considered as one of the causes of the Ekiti Parapo war of 1878-1886: the eventual overthrow of Ibadan control in the Eastern part of Yorubaland. Among the Ektii and Ijesa, the Ajele and other Ibadan officials are spoken of as degenerates greedy and rapacious people, given to licentious debauchery, forcefully taken or stealing whatever caught their fancy, compelling wife and daughter to yield to their insatiable desire for example, Are Lotosa, the Ibadan leader of the 1870 and 1880s was reported to have said when Ibadan was asked to give up its Ektii tributaries, the Ekiti were their wives, slaves, their yam, their palm oil etc. Not so related but a fallout of the system was an accidental killing of an Ajele based in Ado by an Ikere man that led to the war between Ado-Ikere for a long time.

The Birth of Ekiti Parapo

The coming together of the people of the Eastern Yorubaland (Ektii, Ijesha, Igbomina countries) in 1878 had a lot of factors. The parapo owed its origin to many factors. Ajele's system with its adverse consequence on the social, economic and political life of the people was unbearable. And of great significance to the coming together of the

people. Many of the Ekiti elites have suffered from Ibadan brutality, to these set of people the facts of Ibadan conquest had a personal meaning to them. Many had experienced personal suffering and degradation at the hands of the Ibadan. These sets of men burned with a deep sense of the wrong they and their people had suffered and were suffering in the hands of Ibadan.

The activities of the Ekiti Parapo Society or Association in Lagos was instrumental to the forming of alliance against Ibadan. As early as 1852 returned émigrés from Sierra Leone and the America who were of Ekiti and Ijesa origin and a number of Ijesa-Ekiti origin formed themselves in an association called the Ijesa association. This group later changed the name of their Association to Ekiti Parapo society or Association. This association which began as a Christian prayer group holding weekly meeting was later as the situation of the day demand became pre-occupied with politics. Their initial aim which was to offered prayer that will ensure the intervention of God in the slavish condition of their people under Ibadan, The group discovered sooner or later that prayers said need to be backed with action hence the incitement of their people to react to the brutish condition experienced in the hand of Ibadan.

By 1875, the leader of this association in Lagos approached the Administrator of Lagos to give them and their people military training. This they hope will be useful in the event of a war with Ibadan. The association greatly influenced the development on affairs in the Ekiti and Ijesa countries. It was not long before Ibadan discovered the intrigues of the association and started to undermine their efforts. However, a solution was found in the newly established Ondo road. The activities of the association in the Ekiti Ijesa countries appear to have been the crucial factor in getting the minds, of the Ektii and Ijesa leaders ready for the big revolt when the opportunity came in 1877.

The much expected revolt was to come in 1877. The immediate cause of the war will continue to generate arguments. There are many versions. Distorted fabricated and collaborated, however there seems to be an agreement on certain aspect of the stories. The dramatic personal involved remaind Prince Fabunmi, the Ajeles Oyepetun, Ajayi Ogboriefon, Latosa and the Oba of Imersi Igboodo.

There were distorted versions of how the quarrel between Fabumi of Okemesi and the war General Ogboriefon, the incumbent Are Onakankanfo of Oyo empire began. One version had it that a petty trader who was a wife to Ogboriefon war trading between Ikirun, where the Oyo military post overseeing Ekiti Akoko area was situated and parts of Ekitiland. The woman soon acceded to Fabunmi love overtures and fell in love with him. Soon the love affairs between Fabunmi and Are wife become a common knowledge. It was reported that the Irate Ogboriefon demanded that Fabunmi paid the supreme sacrifice.

Another version had some historical ingredients that merely differed in details. The version said it was the high handedness of an Oyo/Ibadan resident stationed at Okemesi and his officers that led to the quarrel between warrior Fabunmi and the Are Onakankanto. The Ajele rough handed the wife of Fabunmi and broke her water pot. This action wars considered an abomination. The officers who rough handed Fabunmi

wife was said to be four in number. Fabunmi in anger went to them and cut off their heads. The Are was said to have sent for Fabunmi's head.

The third version recorded by Akintoye, it was said that Ibadan Ajele at Imesi Igbodo, Oyepetun, who was known for his greed and wickedness caused the problem. Account varies as to which outrage of his led to the outbreak. One account has it that he indecently assaulted Fabunmi's wife or a woman whose husband was a friend of Fabunmi, or that his men seized food or palm wine from the woman.

Fabunmi's reaction to the issue was violent, killing the Ajele and his men, many of the Ajeles were slaughtered following Fabunmi's example. The news of this killing spread all over Ekiti like wild fire. Throughout the length and breadth of Ekiti land Ibadan officials were murdered.

The report finally reached Ibadan and like previous revolt, Latosa underestimated the gravity of the action and called on the ruler of Imesi to effect the arrest and punishment of the offender. The position of Fabunmi in the society however made the action difficult to take. Latosa was unable to raise an army of reprisal because of the raging war between Ibadan, and Egba, and Ijebu countries. This however gave Fabunmi the opportunity to rally Ekiti support. To all known warriors in Ekitiland, Fabunmi sent messengers to them asking them to come together to get rid of Ibadan's menace. He sent gifts to all Ekiti kings asking them to rise up and give leadership to their children (warriors and chiefs) who are in the process of freeing themselves from Ibadan's oppression.

The Igbomina responded promptly, military preparations were put into operation, the response was almost favorable. Day by day, chiefs, troops and representatives or rulers from all over Ekiti, Ijesha and Igbomina arrived at Imesi Igbodo. In the end, a multi-state organization emerged under the name Ekiti Parapo a name probably imported into the interior by the Lagos men. Oaths were taken binding all the members of the confederacy together ADO. The call to arms was answered by Ekiti Obas except the Ewi of Ado and the Ogoga of Ikere who were then at war with each other. The response for this noble emancipation was almost total. Only Ado and Ikere and one must add Ise that failed to participate throughout. Ise was said to be still in ruin as a result of an earlier attack.

The non-participation of Ado was due to many reasons. Her not participating cannot be separated from the activities of her warriors, chief-Aduloju.

The Ijesha attack on Efon in about 1862 brought fame and glory to Aduloju. It was at Efon that he met Ogedengbe and there struck a friendship with him which was to last a lifetime. Aduloju was again able to check Chief Ayorinde's exploits at Irun near the Ado border. Aduloju was able to capture some of Ayorinde's men and arms. His defeat of Osi despite Ewi's protest almost cost him his life in the hand of Akogun before he fled to Igbemo. This incident was never forgotten and he never forgave Ado people for this ugly incident. This incident should be examined carefully to answer one of the reasons why Aduloju failed to heed Ado's calls to arms.

Aduloju again was involved in the Alawun grove encounter that worsted Ibadan's army led by Ajayi, Ajayi Ogboriefon was disgraced out of that forest the war in Igbo Alawun saw the duo of Ogedengbe Aduloju emerging as hero. Latosa, the Ibadan military ruler sought out the heroes of the fight and courted Ogedengbe and Aduloju. Ogedengbe and Aduloju were approached and ties were established between them. He initiated both to the Ogboni fraternity. He dispatched war staffs and gongs to them. With these gifts, it became imperative to them not to lift a finger against Ibadan. The friendship with Latosa became an albatross on Aduloju's for life.

A year after, Are Latosa sent a contingent to Ado to punish her for their insubordination. The Ibadan forces reached Ado and discovered that Ado forces and citizens had fled. The delay, the Ibadan encountered at Iyin due to the protracted war with Iyin had delayed her given Ado enough time to flee. The Ibadan armies looted what remained of the town. Aduloju and his men simply left the capital to his fate. He again would not fight with Ibadan because of the fraternity with Latosa.

Aduloju rise to power and military prowess saw him becoming a friend to Ogedengbe and both of them became mercenaries to Olowo. Both were at the siege of Idoani when embassies from the Ekiti Parapo camp reached them.

At Imesi Igbodo, Prince Fabunmi had sent messages to all for help. Apart from emissaries from the kiriji leaders to individual warrior of notes, messages were sent to rulers to contribute to the general will to throw off Ibadan Yoke. When such messenger - on mission got to Ado. The Ewi of Ado sent his staff and domo to accompany them to Aduloju, to lead his men to Kiriji and represent Ado. Aduloju refused. He hammered on the futility of the war. No doubt, he must have dreaded the consequence of his oat with the Ibadan general. He however argued against the objectives of the war. Ogedengbe offered him the command of the allied forces but to Ogedengbe's surprises, Aduloju refused.

When it was apparent that his excuse of ageing, and the warning of his oracle and his Ogboni's pledge will not allow him to participate, His swordman Falowo prepared to go and redeem Ado's name and Image. The news of Falowo's possible participation in the war arouses great expectation and hope, the sword of Oranmiyan was brought out. Ado was agog with celebration. Arms, guns and gun powder were procured in large quantity. While testing one of the guns, Falowo sustained a serious injury due to accidental discharge which led to the loss of one of his hand. The general had to commit suicide to cover the shame of losing one hand. In spite of this misfortune, Aduloju failed to participate in the war until the end of the war; Ado never participated in the war. However, un-confirmed reposts affirmed that many young men in search of fame and riches ran from homes to join the confederacy army.

Conclusion

The military careers of Aduloju of Ado-Ekiti is crucial to the study of Ado-Ekiti participation in the Kiriji war, It was not a personal war as defined by Ogedengbe (Latosa has earlier warn Ogedengbe of the consequences of breaking the old Ogboni

covenant between them, Ogbedengbe however told the Are that the war was a national war). Aduloju has for grudges against Ado which was because he failed to respect Ewi's call to hands off Osi. His grudges against Ado started from this event. He was also trapped by Latosa to join the Ogboni society that made him to shun any activity that will make him to lift a finger against Latosa "*His interpretation of Ogboni oat, was that he should never take the field openly against an Ibadan chiefs.*"

Thus, the willingness of Ewi Atewogboye and his chiefs willingness to join in the project, their intention was frustrated by the refusal of Aduloju who citing, oracular pronouncement advanced age and fraternity with Latosa argued against their participation.

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