

Artistic Objects & Forms of expression in the context of the cult of the òrìṣà

- Objects: Depictions of the Orisha, Dance Wands, Fans, Calabashes and the like
- Expressive arts: Drumming, Dancing, Oriki, Rituals that last for several days.

Cult of Òṣun in Oshogbo

- Water is carried in Brass-Containers from the River to the shrine of the Deity
- Adepts wear bangles of brass
- Priestess carries a fan: Lizards & birds
- Cross: the meeting of two spheres, divine & natural forces òrun & ayé



- Initiated Media (Women) receive the òrìsà in a state of possession
- Cult-groups, locally organised; may be inherited, may be by a „call“
- Yearly festivals for òrìsà, different cult-groups take part, sacrifice to communicate aṣé
- There are depictions of the òrìsà, but more often their adepts are represented in artwork; their power resides in the otan (stones in calabashes)

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

- Yemoja (Yemòó)
- Oluorugbo: Onisoro Obalase
- Eluyare represents the Igbo under Obawinni
- Òoni v. Ifé
- Obàtálá - Priests headed by Onisoro Obalale

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Tag 3:	Ojó Orù	Day of Invocations
Tag 4:	Isule	Procession
Tag 5:	Òké Ilé	Vigil
Tag 8:	Ìtápá	Visit of the palace
Tag 10:	Ojó Odun	Celebration day

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

- Carved figurine of Obàtálá
- Carved figurine of Yemoja
- òrìṣà Ilare (male)
- òrìṣà Yeye (female)
- Alajagun (war lieutenant)
- Drums
- Gongs

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Ojó Orù : day three- day of invocations

Morning: Sacrifice/Oracles at the shrine

Afternoon: Sacrifice, Cooking, Dancing

- Dance of all devotees (about Obàtálá's fate)
- Dance of the priests in white clothes around the shrine

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Ojó Orù : day three- day of invocations

1. The intension of O to go to exile
2. Gratitude of O towards Obawinni
3. The Òóni: War between Igbo and Ifé
4. Smallpox
5. Oath of secrecy
6. Optimistic Song: Erfolgsaussichten
7. Dance, where the whole crowd joins in:
withdrawal of O. from war

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Isule: day 4: procession to Ita-Yemòó

- Procession from Obàtálá-shrine
- Gathering of the 201 herbs
- „Office hour“ of Obàtálá
- Producing of a medicine

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Interpretation of the procession to Ita-Yemòó

- Relationship to myth of Obàtálá
- Relationship to myth of creation
- Framework of healing
- Sacral kingship
- Binding male power to female power

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Òké Ilé: day 5 - Vigil

- Statues of Yemòó & Obàtálá
- Yemòós stool
- Bottle with herbal medicine
- Gongs
- 16 snails, bush-rats, fish, and cola-nuts each
- Oracle
- Procession to the shrine outside the town

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Òké Ilé: day 5 - Vigil

- Dance of the priests in 3 phases:
 - With statue of Yemòó
 - With statue of Obàtálá
 - sacrificing the goat
- Dance of all devotees
 - Present of the Òóni
 - Symbolism of the snail
 - Symbolism of Returning

The cult of òrìṣà Obàtálá

The annual festival for Obàtálá in Ifé

Ìtápá: Day 8: Visit of the palace

- Reintegration of the Igbo-group
- Selection of the Mediums; Purification, gender-role
- Inhabitants: Ifé-Gruppe
- Priester: Igbo-Gruppe
- Messengers of Òóni
- Direct kontakt of Òóni and Yemoja is a taboo

Ojó Odun – day 10: Celebration Day

Cult of òrìṣà Ṣàngó

- Magba = „high priest“
- Elégùn = Media (special hair-style, special clothes; when in trance „wabi“ is worn and the dance-wand becomes part of the clothing)
- Laba = Bag of Magba
- Edun-ara = „Thunderbolts“ = neolithic celts
- Sere = Shaker
- Oṣe Ṣàngó = The dance wand of Ṣàngó

Cult of òrìṣà Ṣàngó



Cult of òrìṣà Ṣàngó

Annual festival for Ṣàngó

- End of October/ Beginning of November
- 1 month before the exact date is found out
- 3 Phases
 - 1. day: Invocation ceremony & Vigil
 - 2.-6. Tag: Trance & Manifestations
 - 7. Tag: The „grand finale“

Day one

- Ṣàngós calabash is brought to the river in the morning
- Afternoon: Praise-singing Ceremony
- Night: Ṣàngós priests dance his dance (lanku)
- Possession in the moment of sacrifice:

Cult of òrìṣà Ṣàngó

Day 2 to 6

- Dances of possession
- Manifestations of Ṣàngó's power
- Sacrifice and meals
- Processions to the market and the royal palace

Day 7

- Gathering at the market or the palace
- Groups of worshippers of Eṣu and Obàtálá
- Connection to the Myth of Obàtálá, Ṣàngó & Eṣu
- Feuerprozession

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Odù

- The name of the wife of Òrúnmìlà
- Name of one of the 256 „chapters“
- Each odu has a couple of „verses“ (Numbers given differ, might be symbolic)
- A beginner as a babaláwo has to know 4 „verses“ for each Odu
- 256 Figures are combinations of 16 Main Odu

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

Ogbe

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Ogbe

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Oyeku

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Ogbe

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Oyeku

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Iwori

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Ogbe

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Oyeku

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Iwori

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Edi

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I

I

II

II

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I	II
I	II
II	I
II	I

Irosun

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

Irosun

Owonrin

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I
I
II
II

II
II
I
I

I
II
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II

II
II
II
I

Irosun

Owonrin

Obara

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Owonrin

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Obara

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Okanran

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I	II
I	I
I	I
II	I

Ogunda

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I
I
I
II

Ogunda

II
I
I
I

Osa

II
I
II
II

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I
I
I
II

Ogunda

II
I
I
I

Osa

II
I
II
II

Ika

II
II
I
II

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I
I
I
II

Ogunda

II
I
I
I

Osa

II
I
II
II

Ika

II
II
I
II

Oturupon

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

Otura

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

Otura

Irete

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I	I	I	II
II	I	II	I
I	II	I	II
I	I	II	I

Otura

Irete

Oşe

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

I
II
I
I

Otura

I
I
II
I

Irete

I
II
I
II

Oşe

II
I
II
I

Ofun

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

IIII
Ogbe

IIIIII
Oyeku

IIIIII
Iwori

I IIII
Edi

I IIII
Irosun

II IIII
Owonrin

I IIII
Obara

II IIII
Okanran

IIIII
Ogunda

IIIII
Osa

II IIII
Ika

II IIII
Oturupon

I IIII
Otura

I IIII
Irete

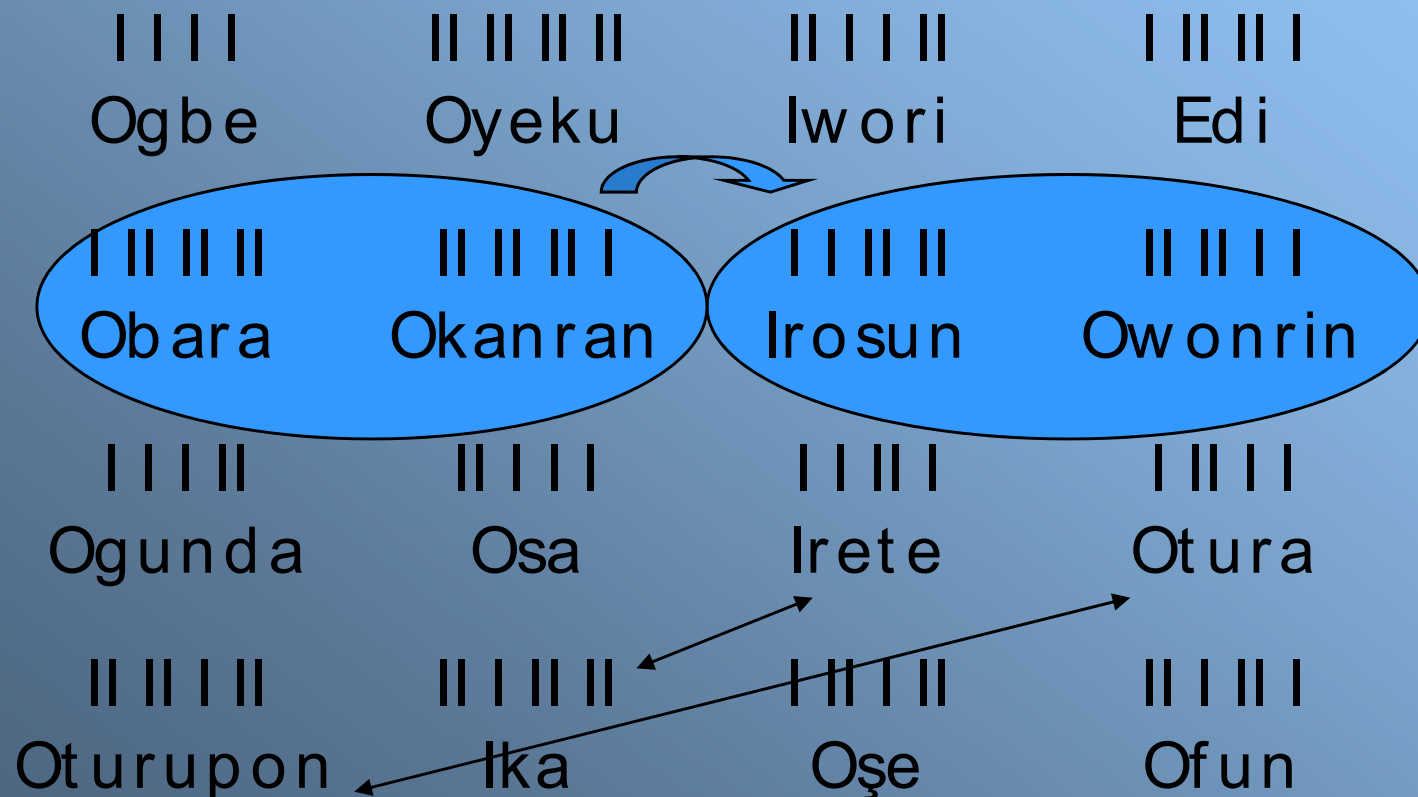
I IIII
Oşe

II IIII
Ofun

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù
Their order in Ifé



Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The 16 main Odù

1. Ogbe
2. Oyeku
3. Iwori
4. Edi/Idi
9. Ogunda
10. Osa
15. Oshe
16. Ofun

5. Irosun
6. Owonrin
7. Obara
8. Okanran
11. Ika
12. Oturupon
13. Otura
14. Irete

5. Obara
6. Okanran
7. Irosun
8. Owonrin
11. Irete
12. Otura
13. Oturupon
14. Ika

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The Odù

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Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

I II
I II
I I
II II

II II
II I
I I
I II

The Odù



II I
I I
II I
I I

Oturupon-Ogunda

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The Odù

I II
I II
I I
II II

II II
II I
I I
I II

II I
I I
II I
I I

Oturupon-Ogunda

Iwori-Owonrin

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

I II
I II
I I
II II

Oturupon-Ogunda

II II
II I
I I
I II

Iwori-Owonrin

The Odù



II I
I I
II I
I I

Ogbe-Ofun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The Odù

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Ogbe Meji
Eji Ogbe

Oyeku Meji
Eji Oyeku

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Iwori Meji
Eji Iwori

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Edi Meji
Eji Edi

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

The Odù

- The „Meji“-Figures: Sons of Ifá-Orunmila
- Ogbe-Meji is Father of Ogbe-Oyeku a.s.o.
- The Meji-Figuren were living on earth (like the Gods)
- Not looked at as divine beings (Òrìsà)
- They are central figures within the Ifá-verses (Diviners)

Ranking of the Odù

- Important for yes/no-questions
- Two alternatives given:
 - First Odù stands for yes
 - Second Odù stands for no
- Ranking is decisive
- Two times the same Odù : yes („confirming“)
- Certain Odù „close“
 - 2 Alt.: no second Odù is cast
 - 5 Alt.: the highest ranking before
- Example: Ofun Meji

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

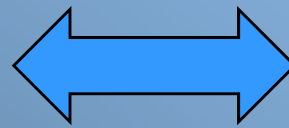
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Owonrin Meji (8 in Ifé)

The Odù

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Ofun Meji (16/8)



When both are cast, the first one is „stronger“

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

- Opele (Divination chain)
- Apo Ifá (Bag of the babalawó)
- Ikin (16 Palmnuts)
- Agere Ifá (Container of Ikin)
- Opon Igede (Container of ikin)
- Opon Ifá (Divination tray)
- Iyerosun (Wooden dust produced by Termites)
- Ìróké Ifá (Divination tapper)

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opele (Divination Chain)

- Originally halves of seeds
- Opele-tree (*Schrebera golungensis*)
- Concave / convex = I/II
- Concave side is marked in the middle
- Open end next to the Babalawó
- Marker for the left and right side
- Is část with the right hand



Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Apo Ifá

Only oba,
babalawós &
„beadworkers“
are allowed to possess
beaded objects



The crown of the kings

- Oduduwas Sons
- Former times:
Leather, pebbles,
shells
- Since the middle of
19. cent.: beads of
glass
- Face (Oduduwa, ori
inu, Olokun)
- Bird (okin): mystical
female power
- Medicine





Ile ori

„House of
the head“

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Ikin

16 Palmnuts
„Elais guinensis“
African Oilpalm



Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Agere Ifa

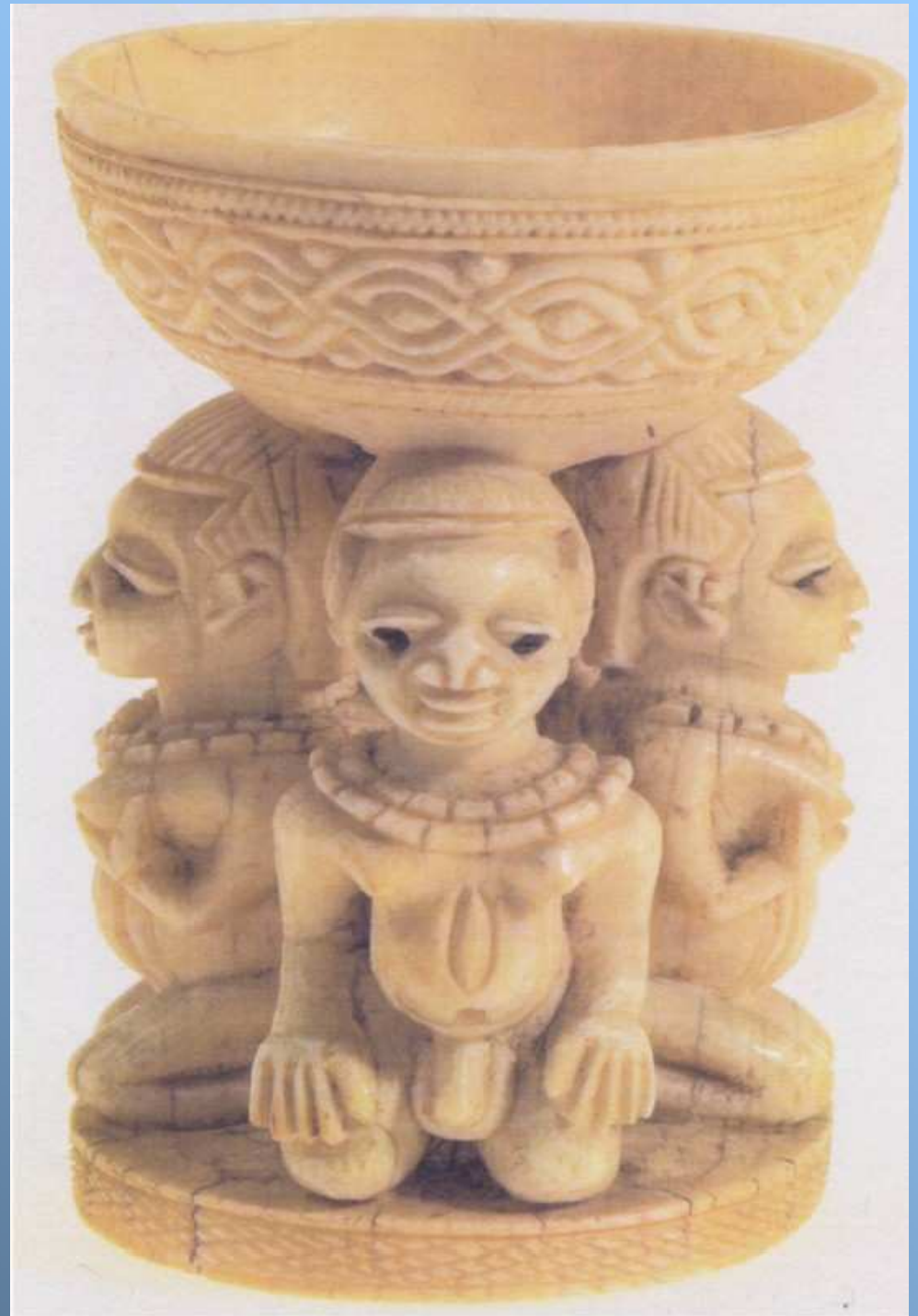
Container of Ikin



Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Agere Ifa

Container of Ikin



Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Agere Ifa

Container of Ikin



Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opon igede

Container of Ikin



Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opon igede

Container of Ikin



Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opon igede

Container of Ikin



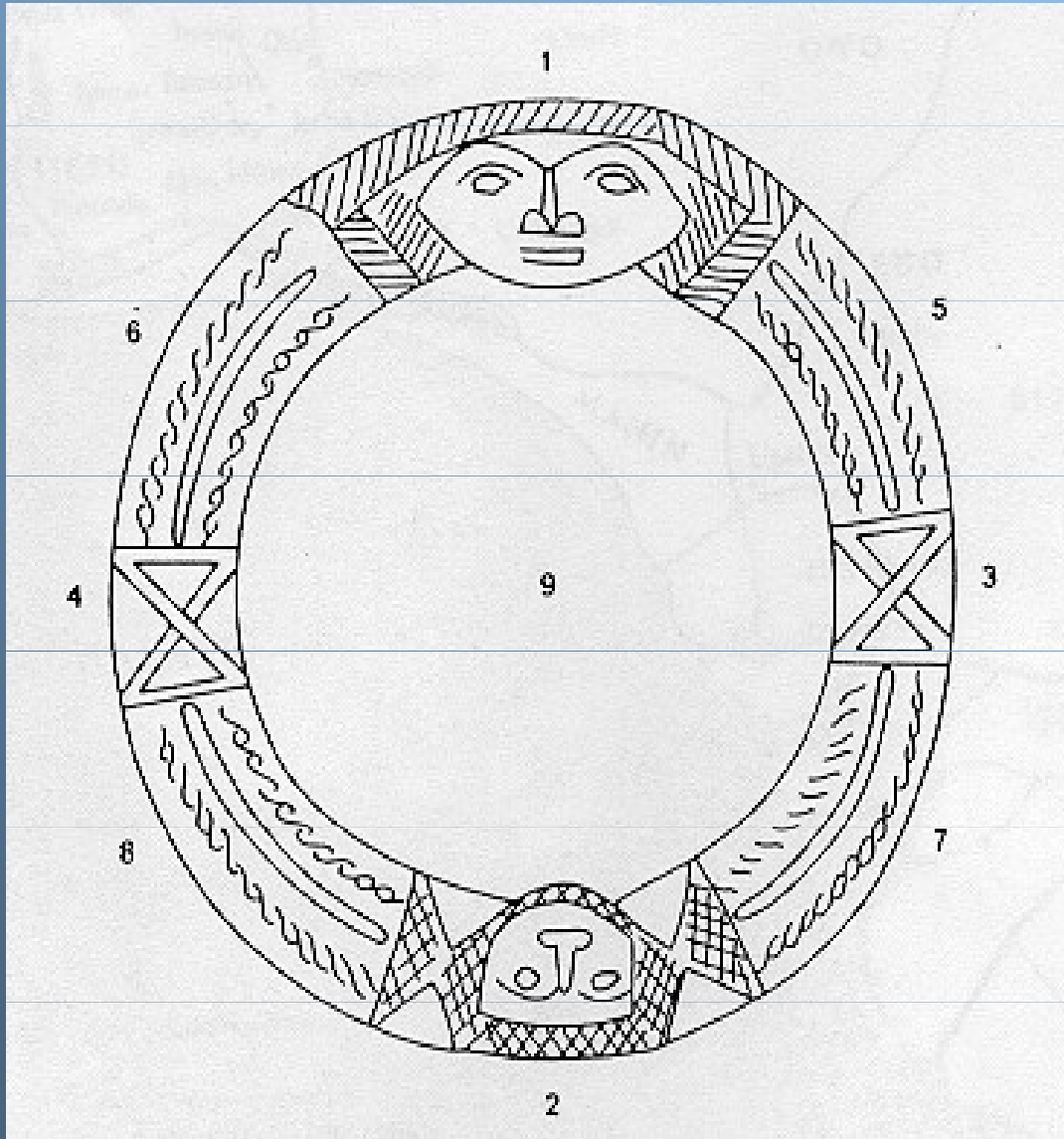
Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opon igede

Container of Ikin



Opon Ifá



1. oju opon: opposite of the diviner („head of the tray“)
2. Ese opon: next to the diviner („foot of the tray“)
3. Ona Oganran: the straight path (right)
4. Ona munu: der direct path (left)
5. Alabalotun: the one who plans with the right hand
6. Alaselosi: the one that works with the left hand
7. Aliletepowo: One who gets up early and has success
8. Afurukeresayo: One, that has the fly-whisk of a diviner and is happy
9. Eriade opon: The center of the tray holds the crown

Fig. 4.18.

Pub.: Frobenius
1912:ch. 14, pl. II.
60 cm. The size
given by Frobenius
seems doubtful. A
smaller tray with
nearly identical
figuration, but per-
haps from a differ-
ent hand, is in the
Staatliche Museum
für Völkerkunde,
Munich (pub.: Kec-
kesi 1989:fig. 4).



Fig. 4.19.

Private collection.
42 cm. Photo: M.
Coppens. Pub.:
Dobbelmann
1976:pl. 158; Witte
1982:pl. 14. Every
motif on this tray,
apart from the
bird with worm on
the lower right,
can be seen in
figure 4.18.



Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Opon-ifá
& Ikin



Kommunikation mit Òrun

Opon-Ifá from region of Osogbo; Sammlung Luttik; 36cm Ø; face of Esu with elongated eyebrows
In the lower half lefts and right two opele (Divination chains), above them a bird and a „Mudfish“ and an „Ibo-Ornament“ (in its basic structure)



Communication with Òrun

Opon Ifá, Collection of the
National Carillon
Museum, Asten;
37x35,2cm,
„Procession of animals“



Opon ifá from Ijebu,
Arnett Collection, Atlanta;
38cm;
At the foot of the tray two
figures hold an „Ibo-
Ornament“, In the middle
on the right and left a
figure with rays at their
heads; depictions of 4
mudfish and 2 Snakes
(left)



The „Ulm Opon Ifá“; 17. Jhdt; 55,5 x 34,7cm;
Collection Weickmann. Museum Ulm



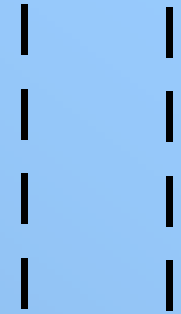
Communication with Òrun



Ìróké-Ifá

Òrúnmìlà & the elephant

Communication with Òrun



Babaláwos are traditionally man

Sometimes daughters/wives of babaláwos cast Ifá

From Eji Ogbe:

Òrúnmìlàs first child, which was female, has studied Ifá; from that time on women have studied Ifá.

Communication with Òrun

The container & the contained

The story about Agere & Òrúnmìlà

Agere has saved Òrúnmìlà by hiding him in her
belly.

The Ikin (Òrúnmìlà) are stored in the belly of
Agere

Communication with Òrun

Mérìndílógún:
16 Cowries



Communication with Òrun

Mérìndílógún:
16 Cowries

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The role of Òṣun

The common opinion: Òrúnmìlà has given the
Mérìndílógún to Òṣun

Story from Ogbèsá (Ogbe-Osa)

Communication with Òrun

Mérìndílógún:
16 Cowries

I I
II II
I I
I II

The role of Òṣun in creation of the world

Verse from Òṣétùúra (Oshe-Otura)

- Irunmole (descended òrìṣà)
- The first 17: 16 M & Òṣun
- Òṣun cares for òrìṣà, but does not take part in their work

Communication with Òrun

Mérìndílógún: 16 Cowries

Verse from Òṣétùúra (Oshe-Otura)

I I
II II
I I
I II

When they arrived on earth
They created a forest for Oro
They created a forest for Opa
They made a small road leading to Ifé
They sent people to make okun beads
They sent people to make brass objects
But nobody involved Òṣun in anything
Whereas Òṣun was the person taking care of them

Communication with Òrun

Mérìndílógún:
16 Cowries

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Verse from Òṣétùúra (Oshe-Otura)

- Work done by the Òrìṣà unsuccessful
- Òrúnmilà is sent to Olódùmarè
- Òrìṣà beg Òṣun for help
- Òṣun: only, when she gets a male child
- Obatálá changes the sex of the child
- Òṣétùúra, the son of Òṣun
- Role within initiation, sacrifice and ritual in Ifá

Communication with Òrun

I II

Mérìndílógún:
16 Cowries

I II

I II

I I

Verse from Okanransode (Okanran-Ogbe)

- Olódùmarè throws „bag of wisdom“ on the earth
- Òṣun finds it, puts it in the chest-pocket of her garment
- Looses it, Òrúnmìlà finds it
- Òṣun does not want to show the bag to Òrúnmìlá
- Òrúnmìlá finally gives a portion of the bag to Òṣun

Mérìndílógún: 16 Cowries

Wande Abimbola: Mérìndílógún älter als Ifá?

- Òṣun was the first to possess wisdom
- Mérìndílógún uses the main odu
(simple figures)
- Òṣun does not want to show it to Òrúnmìlá
- Iyerosun is yellowish

Divination

Obi abata - oracle with split Kolanuts

- 2 „female“, 2 „male“ inner sides
- simple usage: yes/no-questions, 5 figures
- more complex usage with respect to the „sex“ (9 figures) and distribution (16 figures)

Communication with Òrun

Divination

Obi abata

All up (inner side):

All down (outer side)

2 up / 2 down

3 / 1

1 / 3

Alafia

Oyeku

Ejife

Etawa

Okana

Im Ifá-Orakel:

Oyeku

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Okanran

Communication with Òrun

Divination

Obi abata

All up (= 2M/2F):

All down (= 0M/0F)

3 down / 1M

3 down / 1F

2 down / 1M & 1F

2 down / 2M

2 down / 2F

1 down / 2M/1F

1 down / 2F/1M

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Use within Rituals of Initiation

Ikose w'aye: step into the world
Imori: knowing the „head“



M/F

Itefa: establishing the self



Only M

Isode / Itude : to tie / untie the bond



Only F

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Ikose w'aye: step into the
world

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Imori : knowing the head

- Emi from the father's or mother's side?
- Ori = knowing the fate
- 5 objects for good and bad direction

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Imori : das Ori erkennen

- Stone
- Seed
- Bone
- Cowrie
- Sea-Shell

Thompson Drewal

- Stone
- Cowrie
- Snails house
- Bone
- Porcellaine

Bascom

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Symbols according to Thompson-Drewal

- Stone: long life / untimely death
- Seed: fertility/barrenness
- Bone: victory over enemies/suppression
- Cowrie shell: wealth/poverty
- Seashell: overall success/loss

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Symbols according to Bascom

• Stone	positive	negative
• Cowrie	long life	fight
• Snails house	money	need of money
• Bone	marriage	sickness
• Porcellaine	children	death
	Victory of enemies	loss

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

- Stone = longevity, because the stone does not die
- Cowrie = Wealth (served as money)
- Snails = Marriage because of gifts
- Bone = Children are „from the bones“ of parents
- Porzellaine = victory: when broken, useless

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

- Stone = fight (?)
- Cowrie = Need of money (served as money)
- House of snail = sickness; dirty on the inner side
- Bone = Death, the skeleton remains
- Porcellaine = loss: when broken, not repairable

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Ebo & Adimu

Bone: egungun

House of snail: òrìṣà funfun

Cowries: Ifá

Stone: forehead/ori (old man)

Porzellaine: back of the head like a pot

Other òrìṣà receive sacrifice, when indicated by the Odù

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Itefa

Day one: Symbolic journey to grove

Reason: Education

- appr. 20 m of journey
- ritual activities with ikin
- symbolic entrance in the grove
- Jump over fire, sacrifice to death
- Start of seclusion

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Itefa

Day 3 & 7 Divination, Dancing, Singing

Other days: Invocation of the òrìṣà

Day 14: Reintegration

- Ritual clothes are taken off
- Symbolic work is done